

## SCRUTINY BOARD

### SUSTAINABILITY REVIEW

Report by the Environment and Neighbourhood Quality Panel  
Councillor D Keast (Scrutiny Lead)  
Councillors R Cousins, H Farrow, O Kennedy, C Mackey, D Smith

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Climate change is a massive subject in itself. The Panel has concentrated on how HBC has sought to contribute to improving the local environment, whilst embracing sound sustainability at the same time.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Climate change and sustainability are part of the Council's corporate strategy along with the vision for a low carbon future.
- 2.2 In 2009/10 the Energy Saving Trust provided the Council with free support and advice and this helped to shape HBC's priorities and the production of a sustainability plan.
- 2.3 In February 2010 the Council signed up to the Nottingham Declaration to show its commitment to face climate change.
- 2.4 In 2012 the Council included in its Corporate Strategy a commitment to develop and implement the Council's approach to sustainability a low carbon economy.

#### 3.0 KEY ISSUES – HAVANT'S FUTURE

- 3.1 Following the success of "Insulate Hampshire" when 1104 insulation measures have been installed in homes in the Borough, a new initiative "Solent Green Deal" is now in place supported by local councils. This involves residents self funding the scheme that comes as a "pay as you save" package. It is more complicated than the previous scheme and requires trained staff to initiate.
- 3.2 Landlords have minimum energy efficiency targets to achieve by 2018.
- 3.3 There Government have legally committed to a target meeting 15% of the UK's energy demand from renewable sources by 2020
- 3.3 A further scheme, Energy Company Obligation(ECO), was launched in 2013 involving the Big 6 Energy Producers. This should benefit the more vulnerable members of our community and also residents with hard to treat properties that do not meet Green Deal rules.
- 3.4 In November HBC bid for a share of £80m of government funding in a whole street approach to insulation. The result is awaited.

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- 3.5 A new “Switch Hampshire” offer has just closed and the results are awaited. This collective approach enables our residents to obtain a lower rate for energy from suppliers.
- 3.6 We need to build on our undoubted successes like the Plaza.
- 3.7 We have a work place travel plan. Several checks on the secure cycle facility showed that just 10/11 people were using this Plaza facility, even on fine days.
- 3.8 Over the past 10 years there has been a massive improvement to our vehicle fleet and our renewals policy. The oldest vehicle is 12 years old and shortly due for replacement. It is pleasing to note that fuel consumption has come down in each of the last 4 years, saving some £20,000. During our enquiries we found that a diesel automatic pool car was based at the depot. This appeared to be under used. The question was also raised of the need for two 4x4 Pick-ups at Beachlands (costing around £16,500 each before VAT) These two matters could be included in a possible future scrutiny of our vehicle fleet.
- 3.9 The Council has some 64 buildings in its asset portfolio. 73% of these are rated A3 (satisfactory). It is felt that more should be done to improve efficiency on at least the 24% which are rated B. It was noted that some £138,00 is being spent over the next two years, including solar panels, but even more is needed but we suspect that financial considerations and constraints will dictate this matter.
- 3.10 Water usage is an area where we can save resources and money. It is of concern that because meters are only read once a year, a leak could occur and exist for months before it would be picked up. We noted a very heavy increase in water consumption at Beachlands W.C.s. On investigation we found that this was caused by a massive leak near the Inn on the Beach. After it was discovered it was another 4 months before repairs could be made. It is thought that possibly hundreds of thousands of litres were lost and at a high cost to this Council. This could possibly have been picked up by more frequent readings being taken.
- 3.11 Fuel Poverty in Havant is 9.6% (2011) down from 12.5 in 2009. The trend is down and there are several measures in place to reduce this further including the ECO scheme, Hitting the Cold Spots, and linking in to gas networks. It was noted that East Hants figure is 10.2
- 3.12 Much has been made nationally of the need for sustainable homes. We were therefore disappointed to discover that the Core Strategy Inspector modified our plan so that new homes until 2026 only need to conform to Code level 3.

## **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The Solent Green Deal and the ECO plan needs a serious commitment by this Council to make it a success. We need to promote the offers available by every means possible. Schemes are in place to reduce fuel poverty and they too need to be well publicised and implemented by us working with residents.

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- 4.2 More needs to be done to encourage staff savings. The use of Skype or similar means of communication could be used to reduce journeys between the Plaza and Penns Place. Conference calls should also be the norm as they are in the private sector. Cycle use is disappointing as is the under use of the pool car.
- 4.3 A future plan to upgrade all our portfolio of buildings to an A3 category should be put in place. We should be setting the example.
- 4.4 Refuse vehicles average just 4mpg. Electric bin lifts and smaller vehicles should be investigated as an alternative as large savings could be made on both running costs and fuel consumption.
- 4.5 Staff should, if possible, use the free shuttle bus to and from the depot.
- 4.6 More frequent water metre readings should be considered to reduce leakage.
- 4.7 Finally we need to be focused on every aspect of energy saving and carbon footprint reduction.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Approach to Sustainability at Havant Borough Council**

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