

## ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (GoToMeeting ID: 676-746-253) of the CLIMATE ACTION SUB COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held on Thursday 25 March 2021 at 11.00am.

PRESENT Cllr    Rose Allwork                      Karen Hunt  
                         Ian Bark                                 Dave Rickard  
                         Kelvin Clayton

ALSO PRESENT: Will Austin (Town Clerk), David Dixon (Project Manager and Community Initiatives Officer), Jon Bird (Healthy Homes Dorset), Pete West (Dorset Community Energy), Yogesh Vadgama (Magna Housing Ltd) and Jason Hawkes (Magna Housing Ltd).

### PUBLIC FORUM

No issues were raised at the Public Forum.

### 52. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

### 53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 54. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the notes of the meeting of the committee held on 25 February 2021 be agreed and signed by the Chairman at the earliest practicable opportunity.

### 55. FUEL POVERTY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Consideration was given to a report, ENCL: 3606.

Members were joined by representatives of Magna Housing Ltd and Healthy Homes Dorset, to discuss what actions were required to support Bridport residents improve the energy efficiency of homes, tackling both fuel poverty and decarbonisation.

Yogesh Vadgama gave an introduction to Magna Housing Ltd and outlined their work to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock, and the education of tenants. Actions included:

- A plan to reach a target of delivering 200 new, carbon efficient homes per annum within two years.
- Retro-fitting of existing properties, which would follow the development of a carbon reduction strategy, with a key driver being the reduction of energy costs for customers.
- An environmental strategy that would link with the development programme for new homes and the management of the existing stock.

- Development of links with the supply chain and local partners.
- Work to define zero carbon and target dates.
- Consideration of whether SAP ratings or energy costs were the best measure of carbon efficiency.
- Education of householders to use measures to reduce energy use, which was considered the most cost-effective action.

Jason Hawkes set out his role in developing Magna's work on energy efficiency:

- The first step was to obtain good data.
- Work to date had not been properly directed, across the housing sector.
- Discussions were taking place with Energy Action.
- Jason's role in gathering data was to identify properties with the highest heating costs, to help prioritise interventions.
- He was concerned not to cause unintended consequences, for example, damp caused by energy-proofing measures.
- Help and grant funding were available to train builders to carry out retro-fit installations in the most effective way.
- Bridport had a good degree of local knowledge, through groups such as Bridport Cohousing and Energy Local Bridport.
- A meeting would be taking place with Dorset Council in the next two weeks, and work was under way with Colfox Academy.

Yogesh Vadgama added that there was a lot of passion for this subject and it was important not to adopt the first solution that appeared. There was a need to work with partner organisations to co-ordinate and find the right solutions. Magna was already working with Dorset Council, Somerset County Council and other Registered Providers.

Jon Bird outlined the background to Healthy Homes Dorset and its work:

- Public policy was to reduce carbon.
- Insulation was a key recommended action.
- Mains gas was a focus, as there was a move away from it. It was unclear what would follow, for example green hydrogen.
- Healthy Homes Dorset provided mainly telephone advice, on measures including cavity and loft insulation.
- The service was simple for the user, whose call would prompt a survey and if suitable, free carbon reduction measures.
- A four-year pilot and a new tender had been completed, with a new launch scheduled for 29 March 2021 with a new contractor.

The Chairman asked what the level of take-up was in Bridport. Jon advised that localised figures were not available, but that there had been 3,000 inquiries across Dorset in 2019. These could be by self-referral, or referral by an agency.

- The Project Manager & Community Initiatives Officer updated on Energy Local Bridport, as a representative had been unable to attend:
- The initiative was making gradual progress towards supplying members who had signed up.
- The aim was to focus on houses in fuel poverty, with the offer of savings of up to £100 per annum possible. It could however be two years before there was sufficient capacity to deliver these savings.

A discussion followed, covering:

- The scope for Magna to provide capacity to Energy Local Bridport or to the grid by installation of solar panels on its properties. A survey was being carried out and funding would be sought.
- Whether Energy Local Bridport could include an education package for customers in its offer.
- The advantages and disadvantages of smart meters.
- The importance of engaging hard to reach communities, and the means to do this, including through local community groups. Jason Hawkes identified a programme of 'green doctors' as an ideal solution, which was being looked at. Magna would welcome ideas.
- Use of the law and the lure of savings as two key drivers for change.
- The role of local organisations such as Transition Town Bridport.
- The need for national planning policy changes to enable more retro-fitting, particularly on listed buildings.
- The availability of energy efficiency data for Bridport. This could be accessed via the EPC Register.
- The need for solutions to be available when public engagement was offered.
- A possible project to train builders and obtaining funding for this.

The Chairman thanked the attendees for their input, and summarised the development of coordination, education, support and engagement as key opportunities for Town Council involvement. These would be considered at a future meeting.

Yogesh Vadgama, Jason Hawkes and Jon Bird left the meeting at this point.

## **56. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3607.

Members discussed a revised schedule of priorities and timings, and

RESOLVED: that the Climate Action Sub Committee Priority Action Schedule 2021/22 be approved as tabled.

## **57. PREPARATION FOR NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman advised that this item had been incorrectly included on the agenda.

RESOLVED: that this item be deferred.

## **58. COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATES ON OTHER ISSUES**

Cllr Ian Bark requested that Morrisons be asked to consider solar panels on the proposed new filling station kiosk, and that this be a consideration for any appropriate planning application when considered by the Council's Planning Committee. The Town Clerk advised that he would pursue this.

The Chairman advised that she would circulate details of the Co Cars Scheme to members. She further advised that the April meeting of the sub committee would

consider energy reduction measures for Mountfield, and a follow-up on the discussions earlier in the meeting, regarding fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

**59. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED: that the next sub committee meeting will take place on Thursday 29 April 2021 at 11.00am.

The meeting closed at 12.37pm.