

## Appendix 1

### Sustainability Forum

19 October 2021

**Present:** Councillor Stotesbury (Chair)  
Councillors Clarke-Taylor, Hamid, Hofman, A Saffery, Stiff, Trebar,  
Watling and Williams

**Officers:** Group Head of Community and Environmental Services  
Head of Planning and Development  
Energy and Renewal Surveyor  
Sustainability Officer  
Democratic Services Officer (IS)

#### 9. Welcome, introductions and apologies.

The Chair welcomed all to the forum and gave a broad overview of the work of the forum and the scope of tonight's meeting.

There were no apologies received.

The Chair introduced the Head of Community and Environmental Services and invited him to introduce the newly appointed Sustainability Officer.

#### 10. Welcome to the new Watford Borough Council Sustainability Officer

- The Group Head of Community and Environmental Services introduced the new Sustainability Officer to the forum and gave a brief summary of the scope of her responsibilities:
  - To lead the coordination and support for the Sustainability Strategy for part 1 (prioritise actions for the carbon strategy within the council), and part 2 (involving the community). The aspirational target was to be net zero carbon by 2030.
  - Appointing sustainability champions from the community and council. This will include facilitating networking of local businesses with a mutual goal of improving sustainability.
  - To represent the council together with the Chair of the Sustainability Forum at the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership.
- The Sustainability Officer then gave the forum a brief summary of her background, qualifications and experience for the role.
- Watford was praised for its holistic approach to sustainability and not just focussing on carbon emissions.

- She stressed the importance of not only setting an end target to achieve by 2030, but to have a series of interim goals at key stages.

The Chair thanked the Sustainability Officer and welcomed her to Watford.

### **11. Update on home insulation projects**

- The Energy and Renewal Surveyor provided an update on the home insulation project to the forum.
- Six projects currently being progressed, total scale of work is £11 million, with £6 million in Watford.
- Partnering with Buckinghamshire and Three Rivers, with £2.2 million actually in progress at the present time.
- 50 homes have already been completed, out of a total target of 465 homes (assuming all funding bids are successful).
- Now in the delivery phase, although still bidding.
- Possibly additional bids in the light of recent government announcements.
- Continuing support for vulnerable tenants with boiler replacements etc.
- The Chair thanked the Energy and Renewal Surveyor and commended the ongoing work to the forum members and invited any questions.
- In response to a question, the Energy and Renewal Surveyor explained the primary target for the scheme: 465 homes to be brought up to an EPC band C and added that this would be included in a future report to Cabinet.
- The Chair commended the work of the Energy and Renewal Surveyor in securing so much funding from successful bids.
- The Energy and Renewal Surveyor explained that whilst the authority might be behind some large authorities, which had whole teams dedicated to this work, the council was one of only five out of ten local authorities in Hertfordshire to have successful bids and was well on its way to achieving its targets.
- The Energy and Renewal Surveyor commented that the high number of Victorian houses in the town was the reason for the significant number of EPC band D homes in Watford, but all this would be included in a future report.
- The average energy costs for each rating were explained, with an A rating costing an average of £1,000 over three years, C rating would be £2,000, D rating £3,200, E rating £3,500 and a G rated house costing £6,600.

### **12. Feedback from the Great Big Green Week**

- The Chair introduced the Great Big Green Week and invited the Energy and Renewal Surveyor to address the forum.
- 12 main events through the week, including litter picks, butterfly walks, Beryl bikes etc.
- Produced a downloadable sustainability booklet.  
[https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/1220/a\\_greener\\_cleaner\\_watford\\_making\\_our\\_town\\_more\\_sustainable](https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/download/1220/a_greener_cleaner_watford_making_our_town_more_sustainable)
- This was a national initiative to highlight sustainability leading up to COP26.

- In response to a suggestion to conduct a survey to assess attitudes to sustainable transport, the Chair responded that such a survey had only recently been conducted and there had been 1300 responses. These were still being assessed.
- Discussion around Oxhey Ward and the community's significant enthusiasm for the Great Big Green Week.
- Discussion regarding allotments, composting, organic growing and the relevance to sustainability. Noted for future inclusion in any future green weeks.

**Actions:**

- Group Head of Community and Environmental Services to ensure that the report from the sustainable travel survey is included in the next agenda.

**13. Proposals for the name of this group**

The Chair introduced this item and explained the procedure for the name change and that it would have to be agreed by Council. He directed the members to the suggestions on the agenda and stated that he felt the name, "Climate Emergency and Sustainability Forum" seemed to best sum up the group's remit.

**Resolved:**

That the name "Climate Emergency and Sustainability Forum" would be put to Council for approval.

**Actions:**

- For the Democratic Services Officer to write to the Group Head of Democracy and Governance to inform her of the forum's recommendation to be put before Council.

**14. Any other business**

- The Chair asked for members to let the forum know of topics they wanted to hear about in future meetings.
- The Energy and Renewal Surveyor commented that Watford was seen as progressing sustainability by various climate activists and had so far escaped any protest activity. However, 6 November would be a global day of action and a demonstration march was expected in Watford and there may be some constructive criticism of council policies.
- The Chair informed the forum that he expected the format to move more towards action plans.
- In response to a question about the road map for progress and a suggestion to undertake carbon audits, the Energy and Renewal Surveyor informed the forum that there was an independent annual report on our borough wide emissions, which were used as the baseline. Regarding the council's carbon emissions, there was a consultant engaged in joint cooperation with Three

Rivers, to establish a baseline, which in turn would inform part 2 of the Sustainability Strategy.

- The Head of Planning and Development provided the forum with some recent news regarding an online launch of a planning guidance document - planning for climate change. He noticed that two of Watford's draft local plan policies were mentioned positively.  
<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/planning-for-climate-change>
- He added that the Town and Country Planning Association was looking for organisations to endorse the guidance and suggested that Watford might like to be involved.
- In response to a question raised by a member, there was a discussion around some small problems with the Beryl Bikes scheme:
  - Inadequate kickstands – first generation was inadequate, but improved stands being rolled out and retro-fitted.
  - Bikes not being returned to dock and left – all bikes have GPS and are collected. Work ongoing on ways to encourage proper return.
  - Abandoned bikes on private property can be recovered with Police assistance, if needed.
  - Council contact for Beryl Bikes reporting is Kim Bloomfield:  
[Kim.Bloomfield@watford.gov.uk](mailto:Kim.Bloomfield@watford.gov.uk)
  - Discussion around high usage (success) of the bikes and the resulting empty bays on the outskirts, with numerous bikes at the railway station.
  - Issue of faulty locks resulting in multiple unlocking charges (usually refunded).
  - The Chair stated that these issues would be raised at the monthly liaison meeting with Beryl Bikes.

**Actions:**

- The Head of Planning and Development to obtain further details on the planning for climate change guidance and to report back to the forum.
- The Head of Planning and Development to summarise the salient points of the guidance and circulate to the forum.
- The Group Head of Community and Environmental Services to note the issues with Beryl Bikes and to bring to the next meeting with the provider.

**15. Date of next meeting**

TBA

Began: 18.30  
Finished: 19.30