

Housing & Public Protection Policy Development Advisory Group
28 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillors: Tricia Youtan (Chairman), Liz Kitchen, Louise Potter, Sam Raby, Kate Rowbottom, Jack Saheid, Claire Vickers, Belinda Walters, John Blackall and Martin Boffey

Apologies: Councillors: Andrew Baldwin and Mike Morgan

Also Present: Councillors: Martin Boffey and Ruth Fletcher

1 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 26 April were received.

2 **NOTICE OF MOTION ON MEASURES TO REDUCE DOMESTIC ENERGY USE WITH HIGH STANDARDS OF INSULATION ACROSS THE DISTRICT**

Following a Notice of Motion at Council proposed by Councillor John Milne, the PDAG received a presentation from the Environmental Health Technical Officer.

This Notice of Motion was set to strengthen procedures to enforce minimum standards of energy efficiency in the private rented sector and publish a statement of intent to access Energy Company Obligation funding to allow more vulnerable and low-income households access to funding to better insulate their homes.

Members were reminded of details relating to fuel poverty, councils having limited control due to external factors and how assistance could be given to improving home energy efficiency.

Within the Horsham District, there had been an increase in families within the fuel poverty definition, usually within older properties.

The presentation covered Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), which is a statutory requirement applying to rental properties in the private sector to meet a minimum 'E' energy rating. The PDAG were informed there were some exemptions to meeting this rating in some rental properties on the register and limitations on database information did not provide the most accurate information required.

Environmental Health had enforcement provision under the Housing Act (2004), the Housing Health and Safety Rating system and Horsham District Council enforcement policy as well as support through MEES regulations. Enforcement usually took place when tenants contacted the Council reporting issues.

Members were advised that there was an Energy Company Obligation (ECO) on suppliers to help households cut energy bills and emissions through

installation of energy saving measures. This was normally through measures such as cavity wall and loft insulation. Further guidance was expected within the next few months under an updated version called ECO 4.

The Environmental Health Technical Officer explained Local Authority Flexible Eligibility (LA Flex) which allowed authorities to set eligibility criteria through a Statement of Intent (SOI) as part of an energy saving scheme. Horsham were working under a joint West Sussex Policy and SOI hosted by Arun District Council where insulation companies could approach councils with applications from residents for energy saving grants for improvements.

Other opportunities and offers currently being explored were the Warmer Houses Programme – where potential funds could become available, ECO LAFlex, Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP), Citizens Advice and Fuel Vouchers.

The PDAG were extremely positive about the hard work being undertaken to assist Horsham District residents and thanked the Environmental Health Technical Officer for an informative presentation.

It was discussed and agreed that a detailed update would be given yearly and should significant changes occur, the PDAG would be advised as soon as possible at future meetings.

Members asked if the schemes were being well publicised for residents and informed that an article was in the latest 'Our District' Magazine, targeted mailing was taking place, parish councils given up to date information to circulate and there were future plans to work collaboratively with Horsham Wellbeing to identify those residents who may benefit from some additional help.

3 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION PORTFOLIO**

The forward plan extract was noted.

The meeting closed at 6.20 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN