

Environment and Regeneration (E&R SSP) Meeting Minutes

Willow Room, Municipal Building, Widnes

5th February 2012

Present:

Mick Noone (Chair)	(MN)	Halton Borough Council
Ian Boyd	(IB)	Halton Borough Council
Eleanor Carter	(EC)	Halton Borough Council
Rhian Davitt	(RD)	HCA
Hayley Dooley	(HD)	Job Centre Plus
Debbie Houghton	(DH)	Halton Borough Council
Allison Kirk	(AK)	Norton Priory Museum
Clare Olver	(CO)	Mersey Forest
Jimmy Unsworth	(JU)	Halton Borough Council

Apologies:

Cllr John Gerrard	(JG)	Halton Borough Council
Alan Graham	(AG)	Halton Borough Council
Claire Griffiths	(CG)	PlusDane Housing
Andrew Sharp	(AS)	STFC – Daresbury Labs
Karen Wickstead	(KW)	Cheshire Constabulary
Jim Yates	(JY)	Halton Borough Council

				<u>Actions</u>
1.	Apologies, Minutes & Matters Arising	1.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.	JU
		1.2	It was noted that promotion of Green Deal/ Viridis could be part of a package including Collective Switching. JU agreed to progress	
2.	Presentation on the Mersey Forest Plan	2.1.	Clare Olver from the Mersey Forest gave an excellent presentation to the group outlining the background, role and function of the Mersey Forest and the draft consultation plan that is currently being developed.	
		2.2.	The Mersey Forest is a partnership made up of seven local authorities (Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Warrington), Natural England, the Forestry Commission, the Environment Agency. Landowners, businesses and local communities.	

		2.3	The partnership advises and helps landowners, but does not own any land itself.	
		2.4	The partnership is coordinated by a dedicated team with each Local Authority having an officer and elected representative on the steering group.	
		2.5	Under the new Planning regulations, it must be taken as a material consideration in any planning decisions.	
		2.6	The Mersey Forest plan is refreshed every 10 years and it out for consultation at the moment, finishing in April 2013 with the formal launch due to take place in November during National Tree week.	
		2.7	JU agreed to find out who was coordinating the response from HBC and to feed this to the group.	JU
		2.8	The importance of including the Mersey Gateway team was also noted.	
3.	Environmental and Housing update	3.1	DH gave an overview of many of the funding schemes currently available, and initiatives such as Green Deal and issues such as SEAP and the Covenant of Mayors.	
		3.2	A note of this comprehensive overview is attached to these minutes.	
4.	Local Sustainable Transport Fund update	4.1	The joint Halton/St Helens/Warrington bid is to build cross-boundary links and the focus in Halton is the Daresbury Enterprise Zone. In addition to the provision of new bus services, the bid will also look at marketing greenways, cycling, walking and improving cycle routes.	
		4.2	It was noted that an Active Travel Fund is available to support sustainable transport to and from employers and it was agreed that JobCentre Plus help promote this.	RT/HD
		4.3	It was noted that Arriva have applied for financial support to purchase a further 10 gas buses via the next round of the Green Bus Fund. The buses are more expensive to buy but cheaper to run. Eco Manager has also been installed in a number of buses.	

		4.4	Travel planning services to individuals and businesses were discussed, along with an update on the Real Time Information work.	
5.	Any other business	5.1	It was noted that JU is updating the waste management strategy. It was agreed that this circulated around the group.	
		5.2	It was agreed that the ongoing cycling consultation be shared with colleagues from The Mersey Forest.	
		5.3	RD gave an update from the HCA: £10bn housing guarantees to be managed by DCLG to encourage delivery of new affordable homes (to be built by March 2015), and private rented units; £100m Build to Rent fund – This is loan/equity provided to developers for schemes which provide new market rented properties. Units need to be on site by March 2015; Firstbuy Round 2 –Developer allocations announced – potentially includes 5 sites in Halton, comprises 2012 units to be built across the NW; Empty Homes Round 2 – Liverpool City Region to coordinate 1 bid by 25th March 2013. Plus Dane are leading the bid on behalf of the City Region. There is potential to link this to Runcorn Old Town. Priority is to bring empty commercial units back into use as affordable housing; Custom Build – Bidding round open and there is potential for Plus Dane to submit a scheme adjacent to Lakeside/ ‘The Barge’ site; HCA land holdings at Sandymoor – Currently Galliford Try are on site installing infrastructure to open up the site for future housing development. The scheme will be marketed shortly, with the intention that c.100 units will commence on site by March 2014.	

6.	Next Meeting & Future Diary Dates	6.1	Future meetings for 2013 have been booked as follows:	
		6.1.1	7 th May, 11am, Willow Room Municipal Building, Widnes	
		6.1.2	6 th August, 11am, Willow Room, Municipal Building, Widnes	
		6.1.3	5 th November, 11am, Willow Room, Municipal Building, Widnes	

Fuel poverty DECC funding £115,000

Funding is predominately to give grants to vulnerable households for heating and insulation measures. Grants are targeted at owner occupiers and private tenants who are in receipt of means tested benefits or have a low income (less than £15,860) and who have inefficient boilers and/or need insulation and who have either a dependent child, older person or someone with a disability or limiting long term illness living in the property. (a leaflet promoting the scheme is attached). The grant is being administered by Energy Projects Plus and all measures must be installed by 31st March 2013. Grants, which are allocated on a first come, first served basis to eligible applicants, can be accessed through the Save Energy Advice Line on 0800 043 0151. Grants are available Borough-wide but some targeted promotion work will take place in Appleton ward which has the highest levels of fuel poverty in the Borough.

The funding will also be used to purchase a property specific energy database which will enable the authority to target Green Deal/ECO and other initiatives more effectively.

Also other funding we got on green deal with Liverpool

Halton has also secured £40,000 of funding through the LCR City Deal to provide show homes to help promote the benefits of Green Deal. It is hoped that as part of the targeted grant promotion work in Appleton to identify 2 properties to receive a full package of Green Deal work so that the energy savings can be measured and the "Golden Rule" tested.

Housing Green Deal/Eco work in Halton

Jim Yates of HBC is having discussions with Eon to develop an ECO model (he will be able to provide more info on this) – he has also been in talks with Armistead Solutions. We have also set up and are facilitating a meeting with Registered Providers to explore the feasibility of a joined up approach to ECO and Green Deal.

Warm Homes, Healthy People

The authority has been successful in securing over £80,000 from the Department of Health under the second round of its Warm Homes, Healthy People programme. The fund is to be used to support vulnerable people through the winter months of 2012/13. Projects that will benefit include:

Healthy Homes Network – a portion of the money will be used to fund Halton's contribution to the local Save Energy Advice Line administered by Energy Projects Plus on behalf of Merseyside and Cheshire LAs; it will also be used for further funding for Heat Aware visits which provide tailored energy advice within the home and a small portion has been used to develop promotional materials including thermometers for the Network.

Winter Survival packs – includes identification of vulnerable people who need additional support when temperatures drop and development of a supply and delivery network of in house and local support providers;

Expansion of telecare service - purchase and delivery of ambient temperature sensors

Achieving affordable Warmth training programme – delivery of intensive full day training sessions for front line RP staff so that they can deliver practical and relevant advice to residents within the home.

SEAP and Covenant of Mayors – HBC agreed to sign.

Covenant of Mayors is a European charter of commitments, signed by the local authority Mayor or other authorised representative. The key commitments are:

- To go beyond the objectives set by the EU for 2020, reducing CO₂ emissions by at least 20%;
- To submit a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) within one year of signing, outlining how the objectives will be reached;
- To submit with the SEAP a Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI);
- To submit an implementation report at least once every two years;
- To organise community 'Energy Days' to encourage energy efficiency; and
- To attend and contribute to the annual EU Conference of Mayors for a Sustainable Energy Europe (this has been confirmed as optional with the Covenant of Mayors Office).

The scope of the local SEAP is action at a local level within the competence of the local authority, covering the whole geographical area of the authority, with the main target sectors being buildings and transport.

Signing the Covenant allows access to alternative European funding schemes and advice/support from the Covenant of Mayors Office.

Liverpool Council signed the Covenant in October 2011 and are the only Liverpool City Region authority to do so to date. The City Region SEAP, launched in July 2012, included as a key recommendation that all LCR authorities sign the commitment. A total of 33 UK local authorities are registered as signatories.

Viridis

Registered providers from across the Merseyside sub-region are looking at joint schemes to take advantage of ECO and other funding in order to improve housing stock. Each registered provider has contributed to the costs of a project manager post to develop the project. Each registered provider has been asked to identify their programmes for 13/14, most of which have now been received. Looking at each RP doing an archetype profile and identifying best measures to suit each property type. Also looking at joint working on behavioural change and sharing best practise.