

FULL COUNCIL

5TH JULY 2022

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE, PLANNING AND HOUSING

1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE, PLANNING AND HOUSING

1.1 Purpose of Report

To update Members on activities, good news items and issues of interest covering the CPH Climate Change, Planning and Housing portfolio.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 There were no decision sessions since my last report on 5th April 2022. Members wishing to view all decisions can find these at <http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

1.3 Future Decisions - 28th June 2022

1.3.1. Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) covering technical guidance on Green Travel Plans will be presented to my portfolio holder meeting on the 28th June. The report is with a view to seeking approval to consult on the draft SPD. Its aim is to help provide further guidance to support enhanced s106 funding and improved travel planning across new developments. I will provide a verbal update to Council.

1.3.2 Do It Yourself Shared Ownership Scheme (DIYSO)

- 1.3.3 This report will be seeking to approve the extension of the DIYSO Scheme and will be presented at the 28th June meeting. I will provide a verbal update to Council.

1.4 Council Plan and Priorities

1.4.1 Local Plan

- 1.4.2 Members will be aware that our draft Local Plan remains subject to public examination. Following the submission of additional information regarding the proposed residential development at the NEC and updates to our housing land supply, a further hearing session has been announced for the 8th July. We remain hopeful this will be the final session and that the Inspectors will invite us to consider main modifications thereafter. If that does materialise then a further report will come before cabinet and council to seek approval to consult on those modifications.

1.4.3 Chelmsley Wood Net Zero Neighbourhood

- 1.4.4 We are currently preparing to submit our plan for a Net Zero Neighbourhood in Chelmsley Wood to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). The plan focusses on a 15-minute walking radius around the town centre and puts inclusive growth and the just transition to net zero at its core. The 15-minute neighbourhood seeks to layer retrofit, transport, natural environment, behaviour change and future mobility interventions, with directing available existing interventions into a package of measures that benefits the local community whilst reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

1.4.5 Green Homes and Sustainable Warmth

1.4.6 The Council's implementation plan for the Sustainable Warmth Competition (SWC) was formally approved by the Midlands Net Zero Hub on 12th May. Solihull's SWC grant allocation is £1.265 million and the target is to undertake home improvements to 140 properties during the year. Achieving approval of the plan was a detailed process.

1.4.7 Our initial focus is on Alston Road in the Silhill ward. This will help support existing work by SCH under the 'Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund' to deliver External Wall Insulation to 50 properties. The SWC funding will support work to privately owned homes and homeowners will not have to pay a contribution towards the scheme. Letters to homeowners are being sent out in early June.

1.4.8 The Sustainable Warmth and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund programmes mark significant next steps as we work to improve the thermal (energy) efficiency of private homes across the Borough and we recognise that this will be a long-term programme spanning the next couple of decades.

1.4.9 There are good partnerships in place (across the Council and externally) and we are working with the Council's Strategic Marketing Manager, SCH, Act on Energy and Dodds to deliver the improvements at Alston Road.

1.4.10 At the same time, we are working with the West Midlands Combined Authority to support the delivery of their Sustainable Warmth programme in the Elmdon Ward. A share of 300 properties (with another neighbourhood in Coventry) will benefit from home improvements to improve energy efficiency with marketing and community engagement activity to promote the scheme now underway with the support of Members in the area.

1.4.11. Electric Vehicle update

1.4.12 I am pleased to report that following my approval to progress with procurement of an electric vehicle rapid charging charge point operator partner, approval to go to market has been granted. A formal tender will be opened in July, with the award expected in September. The focus of this contract will be the provision of charge points across the Borough's car parks. As well as this significant step forward for EV charging in the Borough, I am happy to inform that officers have submitted an application for approximately £1.5m of grant funding to support the installation of 200+ EV chargers at Community EV Charging Hubs across the Borough. An application was submitted into to the new Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot fund at the end of June.

1.5. Good News and Issues of Interest

1.5.1. BBC Gardeners' World Live 2022 Schools Wheelbarrow Competition - Commonwealth Countries in a Barrow (16th – 19th June 2022)

1.5.2. To celebrate the arrival of the Commonwealth Games, several Solihull schools planted up a barrow representing one of the Commonwealth Countries. School groups were encouraged to look at flora and fauna, garden styles, national heritage, cuisine and cultures from the Commonwealth Countries, picking one country to be the inspiration behind the design and planting of their wheelbarrow.

1.5.3. **Recycled Flag Project**

1.5.4. Schools are celebrating the Commonwealth Games with an eco-friendly activity, creating flag artwork for their chosen Commonwealth country from recycled materials. The artwork will be displayed as part of the CWG exhibitions at The Core during the upcoming celebrations.

1.5.5. **Toy Amnesty**

1.5.6. Blossomfield School received a prize cheque for £300 from the Recycling Appliance Group for the heaviest collection of waste electrical items for the Solihull Schools toy amnesty. In total eleven schools took part in the challenge, collecting 113kg worth of toys.

1.5.7. **Elmdon Sustainable Warmth Campaign - engaging schools**

1.5.8. Schools in Elmdon area have been offered workshops for pupils on climate change and energy efficiency as part of the Elmdon Sustainable Warmth Campaign. The National Energy Initiative will provide renewable energy trailer visit. They are also providing class sessions on energy saving in the home.

1.5.9 **Biodiversity Net Gain**

1.5.10 A response was submitted to the Defra consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain: Regulations and Implementation, and the Government is expected to publish its report shortly. A new Defra consultation on the Biodiversity Metric is expected to be published in early July.

1.5.11 **CIEEM Award (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environment Management)**

1.5.12 Following the CIEEM awards ceremony on the 22nd June, I am delighted to confirm that the Council won the Large-Scale Nature Conservation Award. The award is fantastic recognition for the hard work of our team and excellent recognition of the Council's wider work and ambition in relation to enhancing our natural environment over recent years.

1.5.13 The award reflects a three-year programme of woodland, grassland, wetland and water quality improvements which was delivered across publicly accessible green space within the urban areas of Solihull. The project delivered enhancements to 24 individual habitat projects to collectively increase and strengthen the capacity of the natural environment to deliver ecosystem services across Solihull, enhancing over 100 hectares of green space. The Environment Agency (EA) and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) were our strategic delivery partners.

1.5.14 **West Midlands Climate Adaptation Working Group**

1.5.15 Solihull Council is now a member of the West Midlands Climate Adaptation Working Group, joining stakeholders from both the public and private sector, including WMCA, Environmental Agency, Severn Trent Water and Tarmac. The group has been convened to support the West Midlands response to climate change adaptation and the actions in the West Midlands Climate Adaptation Action Plan.

1.5.16 **West Midlands Funders Network Annual Conference**

1.5.17 Solihull Council continues to show leadership chairing and presenting at the West Midlands Funders Network Annual Conference: Sustainability, Funding, Climate Change on 18th /19th May. The session on 'Insights into strategic and operational priorities to reduce the carbon footprint in the West Midlands' was chaired by Austin

Rodriguez, Head of Stronger Communities, and saw SMBC officers join colleagues from WMCA to discuss the challenges of funding to the public sector.

1.5.18 The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) Awards

1.5.19 The achievements of its members and partners were celebrated at [ADEPT's annual President's Awards](#) on 26 May. Solihull Council picked up the top national award in the 'Delivering Clean Growth' category for its pioneering work in developing an autonomous shuttle for moving people. Commenting on [Solihull's winning entry](#) the judges said that not only did this project address all the criteria but that it was also 'applicable to others and provides opportunities for greater learning'.

1.5.20 Street Lighting

1.5.21 I would like to congratulate the Street Lighting Service on their first full year of being zero carbon. This removes around 1,500 tonnes from our Council's operational emissions and demonstrates their commitment to the net zero ambitions.

1.6 Future Decisions

1.6.1. I have a further decision session in July 2022 when I will be looking to approve a Renovation policy to provide enabling assistance to support sustainable warm retrofit programmes.