

Fuelsavers Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 6th July 2007, 10.00am-12.00pm
The Carriageworks, Millennium Square, Leeds

1. Welcome & Introductions

Cllr B Anderson (Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed all members.

2. Present

Cllr Barry Anderson (Chair) (Cllr A) (Leeds City Council)
Alan Jones (AJ) (Leeds City Council)
Cllr Adam Ogilvie (Cllr O) (Leeds City Council)
Cllr David Blackburn (Cllr B) (Leeds City Council)
Dave Pearson (DP) (Npower)
Gavin McAuley (GMc) (Eaga)
George Munson (GM) (Environment City, Leeds City Council)
Keith Gibson (KB) (Environmental Services, Leeds City Council)
Nick Hodgkinson (NH) (Leeds Citizen Advice Bureau)
Rosemary Young (RY) (Social Services, Leeds City Council)
Steve Kettlewell (SK) (Private landlord)
Sajda Khaliq (Minutes) (SK) (Leeds City Council)

3. Apologies

Angela Miller (AM) (Connect Housing)
Bill Rollinson (BR) (Care & Repair)
Darren Adams (DA) (Leeds City Council)
John Statham (JS) (Strategic Landlord, Leeds City Council)
Julia Freer (JF) (Leeds Tenants Federation)
Lucy Watson (LW) (Leeds Federated Housing Association)
Mudite Turcins (MT) (Leeds Pension Service)
Steve Blighton (SB) (Leeds Benefit Service)

| ITEM DISCUSSED | ACTION |
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| <p>4. <u>Minutes of the Fuelsavers Board Launch 21st May 2007</u></p> <p>The Board agreed there were no errors or emissions in the minutes.</p> <p>5. <u>Matters Arising</u></p> <p>Cllr A asked if anyone was invited from the Development Department? Currently when planning applications are received in, Cllr A commented that we were not doing the best we could with making properties more energy efficient with more economical heating being encouraged and less economical heating measures being discouraged.</p> <p>Cllr B commented that people have come to him asking what was being done about renewable energy and microgeneration. It has been mentioned to planners, who tell him why they can't install renewable measures for various</p> | |

reasons. Cllr B would like to engage with planners and would like to resolve this.

Cllr A suggested we contact the Chief Planning Officer and ask if he could send someone along from the appropriate office. Cllr A commented that renewables must be built into new properties and hence major developments coming into the City are encouraged to install these measures, unfortunately at this stage we can't force them.

Cllr A mentioned that there is not a great deal of data on what the standards are throughout the City in all the homes. We need to invite people to go out into the ALMO's and private landlords and get energy assessments carried out both by the tenant and other people as well. Cllr A also commented that this data may already be held but may not be fully dissimilated.

6. Purpose of the Group/Terms of Reference (paper attached)

The Terms of Reference sets out the strategic aims, the role of the Board and the objectives.

Members were given an opportunity to make any comments on the document or if they further needed to consult with others in the sector they are representing. All members were happy to sign up to this as it is currently set out.

NH explained that he could only represent CAB in Leeds and suggested that a representative be sought from VOICE or VAL as a Board member who represent 500 voluntary organisations in Leeds on a practical level.

Cllr B noted that there is a gap in membership which needs to be addressed.

AJ asked GM if he approved of the objectives of the AWS and its CoP and the Warm Homes Cool Planet (WHCP) and if anything was omitted from the objectives that needed to be integrated in the forthcoming Climate Change Strategy. Should there be another objective saying 'supporting Climate Change Strategy'?

GM agreed that he would like to include in the AWS objectives that this will lead into the forth coming Climate Change Strategy.

Cllr A confirmed that the AWS is not explicit and it does not say Climate Change Strategy. However it does make a point of reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Reducing carbon dioxide by improving energy efficiency is one of the major drivers behind the AWS. AJ suggested that it's better worded like this and words like Climate Change can get further confused by people.

7. Strategy Update- Leeds AWS & Leeds Energy Strategy (papers attached)

Leeds AWS 2007-2016

AJ updated everyone on where we are with the Leeds AWS and that he would like to give members of the Board an opportunity to comment. A copy was circulated to the Board which is close to being the final draft with only pictures to go in. The document will be shared with members prior to print, at this point members will be given a final opportunity to comment, if no further comment are made it will go to print.

AJ

All to feedback

Cllr A

The Board were given the opportunity to discuss the launch date of the Leeds AWS 2007-2016. Two timings were discussed 1) just before Energy Saving Week (w/c 22nd October 2007) or, 2) as soon as possible. The Board did not agree when this date should be. The Board agreed that there should be a formal launch with the Lord Mayor, Leader of the Board and members of the Fuelsavers Board invited to the launch too with a discussion on fuel poverty and its effects in the City. An opportunity should be given to bring in other players we are not aware of. The press must also be asked to attend.

Cllr A said he would like to encourage a formal signing of the Code of Practice (CoP) by everybody who is going to be a signatory and mentioned the Nottingham Declaration as an example where organisations effectively sign up on the day. It would be a good PR opportunity to invite the press to the launch of the CoP so they can report on the organisations that have made a commitment.

The Board agreed that this would be a good way of promoting the CoP to get maximum exposure and encourage further sign ups across the city.

Leeds AWS 2007-2016 -Code Of Practice (CoP)

AJ explained the intention behind the CoP and stated that the idea and structure is to allow organisations with various remits in terms of advice or building improvement or grant facilitation, to refer applicants. The aim is to get as many people signed up to the CoP as possible including main players. To ease the registration process AJ suggested an online registration process and application be established.

Cllr B suggested a certificate should be issued to those organisations that sign up so that they can display and gain some additional PR.

AJ said that a certificate will be issued to those organisations that sign up to the CoP. AJ went on to explain that an organisation can elect to sign up to any of or all elements of the Code depending on what their operational structure is and that this Code does not form a contract with any individual to provide support or resource. Agencies would then have a certificate which would say they have signed up to section 1 or section 2 of the Code. The Code itself would go out in those organisations public outlets and be provided to their tenants. They will need to return something to us which would then trigger action, we are anticipating them to be a gateway to refer people to us for energy saving measures and efficient heating in their homes. The CoP is nearly ready and is in its finalised version.

Cllr A said the CoP needs to be released before winter and we need to communicate with the media in advance, and prepare a briefing pack. Organisations that have committed to the CoP, should offer some positive phrases or paragraphs proving their commitment to be issued to the press. The press could then contact these organisations to find out more information. Need to persuade Yorkshire Evening Post (YEP) to do a centre page article, that they often do, to try and promote it. This will need to be lead by an officer, however no promotion of councillors can be included in the article.

GM said he has met with Sarah Hyman. Who is looking for at least one environmental story per month. It would be ideal for the CoP launch.

AJ

Cllr A

Cllr A agreed that it would be a good idea to meet with Sarah Hyman to discuss the sort of PR we are hoping for and would like the Board to be updated at the next meeting, or send it out electronically to Members setting out what the proposed communication plan is going to be, what the rough time scales are and would like to seek the Board's comments and input.

AJ asked GMc how EAGA will cope with an influx of Warmfront grant referrals?

GMc responded by saying that EAGA are well prepared for an increase in applications. GMc also explained that EAGA keep a register of landlords who refuse energy saving measures improvements in their properties and have a process in place to notify the local authority with a view to enforcement action taking place. There is also the provisions of referring applicants on for a benefit entitlement check.

Cllr A said he would like a case study to be produced, ideally a householder in one of the key fuel poor areas who has benefited from improved heating measures and improved energy saving measures after receiving a grant i.e. Warmfront. In turn this will send out a message to other householders in the fuel poor areas to apply for grants.

GMc

Leeds Energy Strategy. Warm Homes Cool Planet. Home Energy Efficiency And Conservation Plan 1996-2011.

AJ explained to the Board that the strategy is based on the state of housing stock in the City 15 years ago. The national average energy efficiency improvement in housing built prior to 1995 is 16% this does not include newly built properties. Leeds is currently at 18%, slightly ahead of the national average, but need to achieve a further 12% to achieve the 2011 target. Due to the funding coming from the fuel companies through the Energy Efficiency Commitment, this has accelerated the improvements that local authorities have been able to support people. Last year's annual HECA report to DEFRA stated that £147 million had been spent in the City, of which Fuelsavers can lay claim to directing people to £40 million of this.

AJ asked Members to consider that about 45% of the actions have been taken forward in the plan and need to focus on taking some of the other actions forward. It is possible that some are defunct as they are past their sell by date.

A revised strategy will be issued, which will indicate what the viable options are and those that are not with a view to them being taken forward for discussion within this group as to what we should be prioritising next year.

AJ

The 2007/2008 service plan for Fuelsavers is complete and any work to be done by the Fuelsavers Team will effectively be done next year. However, there is a small tolerance in the service plan, as to what the team can do extra from now until the end of March 08. AJ will present a copy of the Fuelsavers service plan prior to the next meeting so the Board can view what the Fuelsavers Team are working on.

AJ

A revised statement within the strategy will be issued at the next Board meeting and a discussion can take place on how some of the energy elements of the plan can be taken forward.

AJ

Leeds AWS 2007-2016. Action Plan 2007-2016 Objectives

Cllr A said he wanted to encourage all members of the Board and others in the sectors that they are representing to sign up to the CoP. Board Members are to act as facilitators in encompassing sign up to the CoP. In return, Cllr A said he would like them to endorse it and communicate it to their partners.

All

AJ informed the group that baseline data on Fuel poverty in the City is available, so in the future, progress can be monitored. Presently, the Fuelsavers Team carry out 100,000 households survey annually, usually at the end of July. The survey also encourages householders to complete a Home Energy Check survey. The 20,000 households excluding public sector properties are used to establish what the level of Fuel Poverty is in the City on a ward-by-ward basis. Members of the Board can scope off that data.

AJ reported that the Energy Action Grants Agency (EAGA) produces a report annually on what has happened in the City. The report is published at the end of the financial year in-line with the service plan. AJ will report in April/May on what this group has actually done with (EAGA) in the annual report and in the Fuelsavers service plan

Discussion then moved onto private landlord engagement to reduce levels of fuel poverty in their properties and improving energy efficiency.

Cllr A asked KG how the Department is trying to engage with landlords not in the accreditation scheme, for instance, the hard to reach group and asked KG what strategy is in place?

KG said that the private rental sector strategy is working on an initiative targeting the hard to reach groups. These are mainly small landlords who have 1 or 2 houses and are doing it as a part time thing. When rouge landlords are identified, Environmental Health Officers go to the property and serve a notice on them under the new legislation of the Housing Health and Safety Ratings Systems (HHSRS). While the officers are at the property, they will look at the heating and the intention is to develop an overall action or an individual action plan.

AJ highlighted that fuel poverty is at 51.6% in privately rented properties which is slightly lower than in housing associations. The number of privately rented properties in the City is about 35,000. 50% of people in private sector properties admit to being in Fuel poverty and this is a key focus area.

AJ said he would like to start a process resulting in a strategy in its own right for the private sector. AJ would like to liaise with the 350 code landlords on the Leeds Landlord Accreditation scheme and encourage them to all sign up to fuel poverty reduction and take up grants. The starting point of which is to ask them to complete a Home Energy Check

AJ

As mentioned earlier, GMc added that when a landlord refuses Warmfront measures, Eaga are now passing their information to the local authority so that it can now act upon it. Eaga are also working in partnership with landlords and assisting them, for example, in Bradford, Eaga are direct mailing landlords with information on Warmfront to encourage them to get involved and refer their tenants for grants.

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| <p>AJ said he would also like to analyse and identify council tax shifting where the householder is changing 2 or 3 times a year as an indicator of where rental property is. Those householders could be sent direct mail.</p> | <p>AJ</p> |
| <p>8. <u>Annual Action Plans</u></p> | |
| <p>Cllr A said that all Board members should come back with their own annual Action plan for the next Board meeting. Each sector will have to articulate how they are going to meet the objectives in Appendix 6 of the Affordable Warmth Strategy (AWS).</p> | <p>All</p> |
| <p>KG suggested that each sector represented at the Board meeting should go through the items on the action plan and commit to those things on the action plan through their individual Service Plans.</p> | <p>All</p> |
| <p>Cllr A informed the elected Board Members that they should write out to their stakeholders .The sectors represented on the Board are already known and a persuasive letter could seek how they intend to support the actions in Appendix 6 of the AWS.</p> | <p>Cllr A/B/O</p> |
| <p>AJ said he will feedback to the Board the outcomes of the meeting on 31st July looking at securing some additional energy efficiency funding for Leeds by slicing up some of £3.5 million on West Yorkshire and if Leeds have been able to secure some of that resource.</p> | <p>AJ</p> |
| <p>9. <u>Information Sharing</u></p> | |
| <p>KG said that a Private Sector House Condition Survey is underway which should report its findings at Christmas time or late January. It will seek out the condition of private sector housing and the work that will be required to bring it up to decency.</p> | |
| <p>GM informed the group that DEFRA has just announced its local government performance framework which will look at energy efficiency/Climate Change indicators and SAP ratings as an indicator of fuel poverty. GM also added that the climate change reporting agenda has an emphasis on local authorities and their engagement with the community, particularly their engagement with small businesses and the transport sector.</p> | |
| <p>GMc spoke, of the DEFRA funded pilot on installing solar thermals in properties that use electric storage heaters to heat their homes. EAGA are working with NEA on some 700 properties that are not on the gas network. GMc also commented that the spend so far in Leeds has been £1.1 million on energy saving measures and heating improvements.</p> | |
| <p>DP informed the Board of a new scheme by npower to tackle fuel poverty. Npower have implemented a new social tariff called 1st Step to help householders that are in fuel debt and fuel poverty.</p> | |
| <p>AJ informed the Board that the Leeds, Hull & Bradford EEAC (Energy Efficiency Advice Centre) are based within the Fuelsavers Team providing energy efficiency advice to 32,000 households a year. The Energy Saving Trust (EST) will establish a number of Sustainable Energy Centres (SEC) throughout the UK as part of the requirements of the new energy white paper to put in place a</p> | |

Sustainable Energy Network by April 2008. The area covered by a Centre will be larger than it is at present and it is anticipated that one will include the whole of West and South Yorkshire. Leeds is currently working with partners in Doncaster and Kirklees in a joint bid for submission late Autumn 2007. The EEAC will be changing to a regional centre from April 2008 which will include a higher level of renewables and transport advice. AJ said he will keep the Board updated as to the progress of that process and hopefully Leeds will be successful in their bid.

AJ told the Board about South Leeds Homes (now known as Aire Valley Homes) who have just installed five air source heat pumps and will be reporting on installation and the monitoring.

AJ spoke about the Fuelsavers Team's Health Through Warmth trainer who has trained 1200 staff and at present is revisiting those staff to see how more referrals can be generated to reduce fuel poverty. In addition, Fuelsavers are also offering City and Guilds training in Energy Advice at cost price to agencies and hope to attract a range of organisations out there who will take advantage from the accredited training to bring their work on energy and fuel poverty up to speed

10. New 5 ward Initiative.

AJ informed the Board about the Warmzone bid which was outlined in the AWS. Warmzone is a national approach and is delivered on a door-to-door basis by carrying out an energy survey and referring householders to grants and additional benefits. First operated by NEA in Newcastle, there are 20 or so Warmzones in the UK. There are alternatives to Warmzones, which whilst a good operational model, there is always scope for improvement.

An energy supplier had initially presented a proposal to work in one ward within the City. However, within the AWS action plan it is necessary to work in the top 5 fuel poor wards and the energy supplier has now agreed to support a 5 ward initiative. AJ said he is not in a position to highlight which fuel company this is and will be taking this forward. He said it would be a door-to-door scheme with the private sector initially. The initiative is offered at zero cost, Warmzones approach that basically involves people going to the door and carrying out the survey. From the information obtained, a grant cascading process would begin to see if the residents are then eligible for Warmfront, Energy Efficiency Commitment, Home Improvement Assistance (HIA) scheme, £1000 Care & Repair grants & Health Through Warmth. AJ will bring a workable template to the Board for the next meeting for information and comments. The initiative will start in late autumn and even October.

AJ

11. Agree tasks for Completion by Next Meeting Including Draft Work Plan

Members representing sectors need to come up with their individual action plans action plans.

12. Date and time of next meeting

Monday 17th September 2007, 14:00-16:00, Leeds Art Gallery, Headrow, Leeds, LS1 3AA

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