

## Overview and Scrutiny Climate Change Sub-Committee: Climate Change Strategy Feedback – 7 December 2023

At the December meeting, Members raised the following:

1. Whether there could be **better signposting** on the council website of energy efficiency initiatives (such as CHiL) based off the results in the Life in Wyre Survey (page 44 of the agenda pack).
  - We update the website regularly and are in the process of improving signposting across other areas of the website. A wide range of actions that individuals, communities, businesses and schools can take are listed within the 'how you can help' section of the website, which links to energy efficiency initiatives such as CHiL. These are all viewable on the website - <https://www.wyre.gov.uk/climate-change>.
  
2. Concerns over the **simplicity** and usage of the website for residents.
  - We have re-evaluated the website and improved the language and organisation of the climate change section of the website. If you find any further issues, please forward these to us and we will amend them.
  
3. Action 1.A2 and 1.A3 - continued **concerns over EPC** ratings guidelines; members have asked for the audit report of council assets to understand what work needs to be carried out to get to EPC rating E and potentially C and where to go from there.
  - We are currently undertaking heat decarbonisation plans and detailed designs on eight council buildings that are currently heated by gas (Civic Centre, Thornton Little Theatre, Copse Road and the five leisure centres), funded by the Low Carbon Skills Fund. These will detail the actions needed to reduce emissions on our key sites.
  - The council have a schedule of EPCs which include a number of recommendations to reduce impact on carbon emissions, including payback periods. However, this does not specifically detail how to increase EPC ratings from an E to a potential C and above. This is an extensive piece of work that officers are exploring options for moving forward.
  - It is important to note that EPC ratings measure energy efficiency in terms of likely fuel costs and carbon emissions. This means that a cheaper fuel could have a better rating. For many years gas has been considerably cheaper than electricity, which means that EPC ratings favour the installation of new fossil fuel gas boilers over the installation of heat pumps that use electricity. The government have published an action plan to improve the way EPCs are calculated, however until this is complete, we will need to keep in mind that measuring EPCs may not be the most effective measure for decarbonising buildings.

4. Suggestion to change wording of 1.A3 to something more general - "Ideally meeting **EPC** rating C but at minimum meeting government guidelines"
  - Following discussions with management the wording has been altered to – "All sites to achieve an EPC rating in line with government guidelines and to implement additional efficiency measures where feasible and economically viable".
  
5. Suggestion for a list of **recommended traders** to be signposted to help residents/business retrofit homes and buildings.
  - The council does not currently provide recommendations for traders in order to protect the council's reputation and avoid any potential legal action should an issue arise. However, the climate change team is exploring options to progress this suggestion with the legal department by way of a disclaimer and selection criteria to assess traders before they could go on a recommended list.
  - In the meantime, an approved contractors list is available from the Care and Repair Team, which we can signpost to on the website. Lancashire County Council (LCC) also have a Safe Trader Scheme that residents can use and be signposted to.
  
6. Members also raised the issue of **recycling** and the potential to incentivise or penalise those incorrectly recycling – potential to create a task group on LCC recycling strategy.
  - Our current process is as follows:
    - Our Recycling Collection Teams currently undertake a visible inspection for contamination in every bin they empty, but if the contaminates are buried it becomes quite challenging to determine the bin is clear of contaminates.
    - Once a bin is identified as being contaminated, it is left unemptied and a sticker placed on the bin to highlight the bin contains contaminates, which prompts the resident to contact us. We then make the resident aware that the bin will not be emptied unless the contaminates are removed.
    - If the contaminates remain within the bin, we make the resident aware that we will be removing the bin (as all bins remain the property of the Council) and if the residents decide they would like the bin to be returned, there will be an Administration & Delivery Fee of £24. If they refuse to pay the A&D Fee, they only have the limited capacity of the Grey Bin to deposit all their waste (and we will not remove any additional non-recyclable waste), which ensures the vast majority of householders become compliant.

7. Members also raised the issue of **transport**/re-instatement of the rail line and would like to view the National Bus Strategy when it is available. Discussions around a potential task group inviting LCC to discuss partnership work on transport, waste, etc.
  - The current action plan aims to “Support the Government and key stakeholders in progress to reopen of the Poulton to Fleetwood railway line”, but as this is a project managed by central government, we have limited influence as a council.
  - The recently updated National Bus Strategy is available here - [lancashire-enhanced-partnership-updated-january-2024.pdf](#).
  - The climate change team are in contact with the appropriate officers at LCC and have requested an invite to the next Enhanced Partnership forum. As part of the National Bus Strategy an Enhanced Partnership was created with bus operators to deliver service improvements across Lancashire. Wyre colleagues already attend this meeting. LCC are happy to receive feedback relating to public transport on the needs, aspirations and requirements of the residents and authority.
  
8. Agreed to invite **representatives from LCC** following consultation response to discuss partnership work.
  - We work closely with LCC on a range of areas regarding climate change, including attending regular Lancashire Climate Officer meetings to discuss partnership working and best practice. A representative from LCC attended one of the recent key stakeholder events to understand more about the strategy and comment on the content of the draft action plans.