

SUSTAINABILITY PANEL

TUESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Marion Mills (Chairman), Nicola Pryer, Derek Sharp and Lynda Yong

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Steve Johnson and Naomi Markham

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coppinger and Werner.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mills – Declared a personal interest in the Maidenhead Matters item as she knows Donna Stimpson personally.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2018 be approved.

OPEN FORUM

Steven Johnson, Enforcement Principal, explained to Members that the previous Energy Manager had left the Borough and so he was attending to update the Panel regarding the recruitment of the new Energy Manager.

James Thorpe had been recruited and was due to start at the end of October 2018. He was currently working at Reading University in a similar role. Lisa Pigeon, Environmental Health Lead, said he was a top candidate and there was little gap between posts. The Environmental Health Lead was due to sit down and go through the Borough's energy priorities with the new recruit when he started.

The Chairman stated when Michael Potter left the Borough, he was working on the new Water and Energy Strategy, so when the new person started, they would have a good idea of where the Borough were. She added that the new strategy would need to be published as soon as possible and so that should be a top priority. The Enforcement Principal agreed that was a very good idea and suggested the new Energy Manager attended the next Sustainability Panel and could discuss dates and timeframes for the new strategy.

The Chairman explained some presentations from outside companies had been put back so they could link in with the new manager. When the new Energy Manager was up to date, she would look at scheduling the presentations. The Chairman also said that if Members had ideas on what should be brought to Panel, they email them to the Chairman and to the Enforcement Principal so they could be added to the agenda.

Councillor Sharp said the biggest issue he had was when Members asked for information but did not receive it. When Members wanted something done, it did not happen. Members wanted residents to know what the Sustainability Panel did. The Chairman said it was also about the publicising that was needed. The Borough wanted to publicise the money saved by the replacement LED light scheme but, the information being displayed on the screens in the library dated back to 2017. The Enforcement Principal responded recruiting the new Energy Manager was a good opportunity to improve the system and communication. Councillor Sharp

said the previous Energy Manager tried very hard but, he came up against it. He felt the Panel should invite responsible officers to attend and explain why things were not getting done. The Chairman said the previous Energy Manager saved the Borough an awful lot of money so she was sad to see him go. She felt the Communications Team needed to be instructed to publicise the work of the Panel. Councillor Sharp stated he wanted the public to know what the Panel did and how much money and energy the Borough had saved. The Enforcement Principal said he would invite the new Energy Manager along to the November 2018 Sustainability Panel, and if Members could email him their suggestions and ideas and he would report back to them in November 2018.

MAIDENHEAD CHALLENGING PLASTICS AND MAIDENHEAD MATTERS

Donna Stimson and Rushi Millns gave a presentation on Maidenhead Challenging Plastics and Maidenhead Matters and started by providing Members with a little background information about themselves.

Donna Stimson stated she had lived in Maidenhead for 25 years. She had five children, an MBA and been a builder and worked in management. Her children were almost grown up and she felt it was time to give something back to the community. She added she was crazy about Maidenhead as it was a friendly place and she had been exploring options on how she could give back. Everyone wanted to make Maidenhead better.

Donna Stimson said it was fascinating how the interest in plastics had peaked and noted there had been a Blue Planet effect which started in November 2017 and had really taken off. She added it was a good time to excited around the issue.

There had been responses to reduce plastics from both government and the industry and in October 2015, the plastic bag tax was introduced. In February 2018, the issue had become larger and more noticed and lots of responses were given to try and tackle the issue.

The key points of the presentation included:

- Filling stations:
 - Donna Stimson and Rushi Millns came up with a filling station idea, filling water bottles at cafes and restaurants.
 - They discovered there was already a national scheme in place with a phone app.
 - In the last month, Donna Stimson and Rushi Millns had signed up 24 local cafes and restaurants to the scheme.
 - They had also added the names of businesses that allowed free refills to the app so people using the app could locate them.

- Litter and Litterati:
 - It was a worldwide campaign – volunteers photographed the litter, posted the location and then put the litter in the bin.
 - Litterati used an app which identified 'hotspots' and posted the locations.
 - It helped to organise litter picking teams
 - Some people picked litter and councillors also helped
 - Holyport Litterati met up on the first Sunday of each month to carry out a litter pick
 - If a place was dirty or messy, it made it easier for people to drop litter. If a place was clean, any litter dropped really stood out so made it harder for people to litter.

- Maidenhead Matters – Website and blog:
 - It was a central place to share initiatives
 - It promoted events such as litter picking
 - The website linked to Twitter and Facebook

- The blog contained regular stories regarding the community
- There were minimal costs to set up: £50 to register the web domain, and then £100 per year thereafter. Donna Stimson and Rushi Millns had produced a pro forma that people could use if they wanted to set up something similar in their own areas.
- Litter artist competition:
 - It was a fun competition which used recycling to make art
 - Helped engage children and their families
 - A Heroes Exhibition was being held which tied in with the art competition.

Councillor Yong stated the Nike building in Shanghai was built using 100% recycled material and projects like that inspired children to recycle. She added there could be a competition for older children and those going to university.

Councillor Hollingsworth stated litter picking can be dangerous and enquired as to whether any safety equipment would be provided. Donna Stimson and Rushi Millns confirmed they had submitted a grant to the Council to pay for Hi-Vis vests and grabbers for litter pickers. Councillor Hollingsworth stated litter picks required some organisation and asked if the Adopt-A-Street scheme was still in place. He added his son and granddaughter would often go litter picking during the weekend on his street and now the neighbours helped too. Councillor Pryer confirmed Adopt-A-Street was still in place and residents could still sign up to the scheme and adopt their streets. Councillor Sharp stated the Panel should demand that Council buildings be plastic free by January 2019. He added there were a number of cafes in the area striving to remove all plastics and were looking for alternatives that were biodegradable.

Councillor Yong said the building in Shanghai made of recycled materials was built in 2013 which meant as a country, Britain was five years behind. The government should be looking at facilities in this country that recycled plastics. She added there were mobile machines where plastic went in one end and a tile that could be reused came out the other. That was needed in this country. Councillor Yong stated she had sent the Chairman the web link for the details as she felt a discussion was needed on how the Borough could get a scheme like that up and running. The Borough should be lobbying the local MPs to implement solutions as plastics were already here and they needed to be recycled.

Councillor Yong said she had a surgery with the Prime Minister and took two gentlemen that worked in packaging with her to speak to Defra to make Britain's packaging environmentally friendly. Councillor Sharp said the Borough was looking at measures to stop littering and increase the powers of wardens for when people were caught littering. Councillor Pryer confirmed the Adopt-A-Street scheme had 1,200 volunteers and all had been given hi-vis vests and equipment once they signed up. The Borough needed to look at how it publicised the scheme. the Chairman stated the Borough needed to share the Maidenhead Challenging Plastics message and encourage all other Councillors to help encourage others to take up the challenge to reduce plastics and keep the Borough cleaner and tidier. She added she thought the Holyport Litterati had a great idea having one day per month where everyone knew they could volunteer.

Rushi Millns requested Council support to contact schools regarding the litter art competition. She asked the Council to endorse the scheme. the Chairman said she would take the idea away with her and run it by the Lead Member. The Council had run school competitions before so she could look into it. Rushi Millns said she would love to hold an exhibition in the Borough of recycled art.

WASTE MANAGERS UPDATE

Naomi Markham, Waste Strategy Manager, gave Members a brief presentation on food waste recycling and Members noted the following key points:

- The food waste campaign ended in 2015 and increased collections of food by 35% in 2016.
- The increase in food waste remained steady during the 2016/17 financial year and then dropped slightly in 2017/18
- The current year's projections for food waste was lower so another food waste campaign was planned to begin shortly.
- The 2015 campaign included the distribution of food waste bin liners which helped to increase the amount of food waste collected.
- The vehicle that collected the food waste also collected regular household waste but, they were emptied into separate compartments on the lorry to keep them separated.
- Sadly, there was no evidence to suggest the reduction in food waste recycling was due to people shopping smarter. Therefore, a new campaign reminding people to recycle food waste could potentially help increase food waste recycling.
- The plan for the new campaign included the distribution of information and liners to be provided in the autumn.
- The Waste Strategy Manager said there were issues with people recycling things that they should not and also, with people not recycling at all.
- WRAP had produced new recycling guidelines
- A wide consultation with the recycling industry had been carried out
- A definitive list of items that could and could not be recycled had been produced
- Consumer testing revealed low levels of awareness and much confusion
- A key barrier to recycling was a lack of knowledge.
- Research highlighted the most common incorrect items included in the recycling:
 - Laminated foil pouches – baby food, cat food etc
 - Drinking glasses such as wine glasses - they melted at different temperatures.
 - Dirty or stained paper
 - Glass cookware such as Pyrex
 - Greetings cards with glitter on them – the glitter is very difficult to remove
 - Sticky papers
 - Nail varnish bottles
 - Window glass
 - Crisp packets.
- Recycling contamination campaigns were being carried out and included:
 - All kerbside recycling bins were being stickered with information on what could and could not be placed in bins.
 - The stickers had reduced the levels of non-recyclable material that was placed in bins
 - Common materials that were placed in the recycling bin included rigid plastics, plastic film, metal items and general rubbish
 - New truck panels were also being introduced
 - The Waste Strategy Manager was looking to introduce a kerbside electrical waste service
 - The new truck panels showed what could and could not be recycled on the sides of the refuse trucks.
 - A new recycling contract was going out to tender
 - The Waste Strategy Manager said the Borough's residents did do really well at recycling.

The Chairman asked for clarification on recycling plastic bottles. The Waste Strategy Manager confirmed the best message was to leave caps and lids on bottles and jars as they were easier to sort if still attached. Councillor Hollingsworth asked if there was any evidence of changing buying habits. The Waste Strategy Manager responded with the blue planet effect, people were more aware of what they were buying and thinking about reducing plastic waste. Supermarkets were announcing that their customers could take containers to store to fill them up and save waste.

Councillor Sharp asked how much the scheme cost. Three years ago, Councillor Sharp said if food waste bin bags were not replaced, the scheme would not work and, from the Waste

Strategy Manager's data, the only spike in recycling of food waste was when the bags were distributed so the Council needed to start distributing bags again. The Waste Strategy Manager responded it was something she was looking at adding to the new contract when the contract was procured. Councillor Sharp asked how much the scheme cost. The Waste Strategy Manager stated she did not have the figures with her but she would bring them with her to the next Panel meeting.

Councillor Yong stated when recycling fabric, residents leave their bag of fabric at the kerbside and when it was collected, the bin men left a new spare bag to be filled again; the same should happen with food waste. Only one bag should be handed out each week. Councillor Pryer stated she remembered when she was younger that bin men would distribute bin liners. She now bought her own bin liners and felt that just handing out one liner for food waste bins at a time would not be enough for a family of four; responsible individuals would use a bulk supply of liners responsibly. The Chairman said she agreed, she collected her food bin bags from the library. The Waste Strategy Manager confirmed residents could use any bags for food waste.

A member of the public asked how much it cost to sort contaminated recycling and how much that costs the tax payer in council tax. The Waste Strategy Manager confirmed it did not cost the tax payer in that way but, the Council was about to go out to procure a new contract. She added there was not value in recycling now. Two contracts were going out to tender, one for collections and one for reprocessing of recyclable materials. The new contracts would give the Council the ability to earn money on valuable recyclables and the Council would be able to say how much the Borough paid for non-recyclable materials and that would be communicated to residents

- ❖ **Action** – The Waste Strategy Manager to bring the figures to the next Sustainability Panel of how much the scheme of replacing food waste bin bags cost.

DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the details of the dates of the future meetings:

- ❖ 8 November 2018
- ❖ 22 January 2019
- ❖ 19 March 2019

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.50 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....