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SUSTAINABILITY PANEL

TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Mills (Chairman), Sharp, Yong, Pryer and Werner.

Officers: David Cook and James Thorpe

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Coppinger.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

MINUTES

Resolved unanimously: that the Part I minutes of the meeting held on the 22 January 2019 were approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

The chairman reported that although she was disappointed that this was the last meeting of the Sustainability Panel the work carried out by the Council would continue.

Cllr Werner mentioned that if there was a change in administration following the election he would ask for the panel to be re-instated. The Chairman reported that the Lead Member was keen to continue with the work implemented by the Panel.

ON STREET CAR CHARGING POINTS

The Panel received a presentation from Ubitricity regarding the possibility of installing a residential on street electric vehicle charging solution.

The Panel were informed that ubitricity's 'SimpleSockets' were easily integrated into existing street lights and thus reducing the capital costs of EV charging provision and increasing the ability to install into residential areas. Where a resident did not have off street parking this provided a solution for AV charging without having to have cables across the pavement. The solution helps remove barriers to owning an electric vehicle.

There would be no requirement for planning permission as this was not required for retrofitting existing street lights, this had the benefit of allowing charge points to be installed using an 'on demand' approach and reducing the time to install.

It operated on a 5.8kw charge that was useful for overnight charging, the installation was discrete and in close proximity to the vehicle which made the solution ideal for residential areas. The sockets could also be removed and used in another location if it was under used or the resident moved home. They solution could also be installed into rising bollards if required.

The Panel were informed that EV charging could be done with a SmartCable on a residents own mobile power tariff or spontaneously with a standard charging cable by activating the charge point via a mobile phone using a QR code. The billing would be based on kilowatt hours.

The Panel were shown possible locations that could be used for a trial period, informed that it could be rolled out borough wide and were shown feedback from residents.

Cllr Werner informed that it looked like an excellent solution that reduced tripping hazards that other options had. He asked if there would be an issue as the responsibility for street lights had been contracted out and how much would it cost the council as the more installed the better for the company. The Panel were informed that they had worked with contractors who operated lampposts before so this was not an issue. With regards to costs it was about £2k compared to about £20k for free standing charging points. There would be pay as you go or monthly bills available for residents.

Cllr Sharp informed that he was an advocate of electric vehicles but he raised concern that if there were a number of charging sockets in a street in use they could blow the power supply and he also asked if it was possible for someone to unplug a charging cable to use in their car. In response the Panel were informed that when a car was locked the cable was also locked so it could not be removed when charging. There were provisions for unlocking them in an emergency. With regards to the power supply they had had no need to replace existing cables or any issues with power supply. When there was a lot of charger in use the amount of power drain could also be lowered or raised.

The Panel noted the presentation.

ENERGY STRATEGY 2019-2023, ENERGY POLICY AND PROJECT PLAN 2019-2020

The Panel received a presentation from MaidEnergy.

The Panel were informed that MaidEnergy were formed in 2010 as a Community Benefit Society (CBS) which was a democratic co-op that benefited the community and returns profits to it. RBWM granted MaidEnergy a £10k Social Enterprise seed funding to set up and then invested a further £10k in solar PV.

The operated across the borough, Runnymede and surrounding areas as necessary as this is where the 5 volunteer Directors lived or worked. There were 68 members across the UK who have invested in solar PV capital.

The companies objectives were to identify and design renewable energy projects for schools and community groups according to local interests and opportunity. MaidEnergy was one of 222 UK community energy organisations (total membership of 48,000)

The directors also run Our Community Enterprise which was a spin out of the Council which provides the Development and Funding service. MaidEnergy recently commissioned Our Community Enterprise to establish the current solar expansion project on the basis of payment by results.

The Panel were informed that so far the achievements had been:

- Two projects which had been crowdfunded in 2015 by £187k of long-term share investment; most had been used to buy 100kWp of solar PV on two sites which had secured government subsidies (Feed-in Tariff): Norden Farm Arts Centre and Magna Carta secondary school, Egham.

- MaidEnergy retains ownership of the solar PV and sold energy to the sites, at a lower price than grid providers. Over time, it was expected electricity prices to increase faster than inflation, so the savings made will increase year-on-year. If this proved wrong, they guaranteed not to charge sites more than the grid price.
- After 20 years the solar PV would have paid back all investment and panels were gifted to sites.
- Last year the first dividend payment of 2.5% was made, this year it would be 4%.
- Our two sites have generated 226MWhrs of solar energy.

The Panel were informed that at the end of March 2019 the government was ending the Feed-in Tariff, which made most solar installations viable. However, as a community group, MaidEnergy had the opportunity to register potential new sites by this date with Ofgem and use the next 12 months to plan and install. MaidEnergy had commissioned Our Community Enterprise to seek sites and project manage this.

MaidEnergy also aimed to launch multiple share offers for this half-megawatt programme during the Summer, totalling approx. £380,000.

The Panel were also informed that MaidEnergy was seeking to expand the pool of voluntary expertise and capacity by inviting more local environmentalists, engineers, communicators, community groups, students and future engineers of all backgrounds.

They were also a member of Community Energy South which among other renewables projects, is launching a pilot to supply solar power to Southern Rail services through the Riding Sunbeams project, a world first in powering electric trains directly from trackside solar power.

The Panel noted the presentation.

COMMUNITY SOLAR PRESENTATION

The Panel received an update on the Energy and Water strategy for 2019-2023.

The Panel were informed that the strategy had been shared with Members prior to the meeting and comments had been fed back. The plan strategy was for the next four years and had been written as a user friendly document that was not too cumbersome. The strategy was still in draft format so there was further opportunities to send in comments. It had been designed for the council to say it planned to do.

The Strategy set out plans to achieve a further 10% reduction in the Council's energy consumption, for next year this equated to a £100,000 reduction across all projects.

Cllr Werner said he was disappointed about the lack of ambition. There was a lot of talk about savings but there also needed to be more efforts into sustainability as an example to the rest of the borough. The targets could be more ambitious and there were no mention of the BLP or leisure centres that we owned. He also said that the RBWM Property Company should also be in scope.

Cllr Werner also said he felt the strategy should be longer in its ambitions and not just for four years. The Panel had previously looked at renewable green energy but it no longer seems the case.

The Panel were informed that when scoping the strategy it had been decided to set targets on those areas where we had data, we did not have energy usage for the leisure centres and they owned their own energy. The Chairman mentioned that there would be solar panels on

the Braywick LC. With regards to green energy this could be something the new scrutiny panel responsible for sustainability could look at.

The Panel were also informed that there had already been a lot of work undertaken to achieve a reduction of 15%. This made further reductions more challenging and hence we had to be realistic when setting targets.

Cllr Sharp asked that with regards to the water strategy what was happening with waterless urinals. The Panel were informed that they had previously received a demonstration on these and that further investigation would be undertaken on which one would be used for a trial. Further work would be undertaken on water usage in the town hall as well as the heating / cooling systems including making the best use of the BMS system.

The Panel recommended that the annual report should be presented to scrutiny in place of this panel.

UPDATE ON PLASTIC DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME IN SCHOOLS

Due to unforeseen circumstances the presenting officer had been called away at late notice and could not attend the meeting.

WASTE FIGURES

Due to unforeseen circumstances the presenting officer had been called away at late notice and could not attend the meeting.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 8.40 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....