

Coventry's Climate Change Board Meeting – 14th September 2022

Board members present	MS Teams
Margot James(MJ)–Chair, WMG Cllr Jim O’Boyle (JOB) -Vice -Chair, Coventry City Council Martin Reeves (MR)– Coventry City Council Suzanne Ward (SW) – Environment Agency Ed Green(EG)-Warwickshire Wildlife Trust Russ Hall (RH)-WMG Matthew Rhodes (MRh)– Camirus Ian Marshall (IM)-Coventry University Tony Evans (TE)-Sarginsons Phillip Wallace (PW) – Eon Claire Harrold (CH) – Eon Si Chun Lam (SCL) – Coventry City Council Bret Willers (BW) – Head of Sustainability & Climate Andy Williams (AW)- Director Coventry City Council Colin Knight (CK)- Director Coventry City Council Josie Bamford (JB) – Commissioning Director, Coventry City of Culture Trust Darren O’Shaughnessy (DOS) – Coventry City Council Communications Officer Corin Crane (CC) – Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce	Claire Wheatley (CW), WMG Coventry City Council Hopi Sen (HS)– WMG Chris Ennew (CE) – University of Warwick Clive Robinson (CR) Samantha Taylor – Canal and River Trust Sophie Mason (SM)– Coventry Building Society Lizzie Frost (LF)– Severn Trent Water Darryl Darkin (DD)- West Midlands Fire Service Liz Hopkins (LH)- West Midlands Fire Service Carol Hardingham (CH)– Galliford Try
Apologies	
Clare Wightman – CEO Grapevine	

1. Welcome & Introductions

Welcome and updates - Margot James, WMG. Welcome to new members:

New Chair of the Resilient Pathway Group – Suzanne Ward, environment agency. One meeting already underway. Group have had introductory meeting.

Carol Hardingham from Galliford Try, heading up Net Zero ambitions. Knowledge of construction and development.

Josie Bamford – Coventry City of Culture Trust, will be co-chairing the Equitable Pathway Group (heading up public communication).

Corin Crane – New CEO of Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, will replace Louise Bennett on the Board.

Liz Hopkins – new in post as Environment Manager of West Midlands Fire Service.

Clare Wightman (CEO of Grapevine) unable to make it but she will be co-chairing the Equitable Pathway Group alongside Josie Bamford - Commissioning Director, Coventry City of Culture Trust.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Nothing raised see Action Tracker spreadsheet.

3. The cost-of-living crisis: the impact of rising energy costs Si Chun Lam (Insight Manager, Coventry City Council) & Bret Willers (Head of Sustainability and Climate Change, Coventry City Council).

Analysis of impact of cost-of-living crisis over coming months. National estimates by Child Poverty Action Group – adding in data from Coventry to assess local impact (use of local income estimates, price cap estimates).

Government's Low Income Low Energy Efficiency Measure (LILEE) – energy efficiency of housing and income. EPC A, B or C – household can't be considered fuel poor using this definition; therefore, this methodology has not been used. Instead, using definition still in place in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: households spending 10% of their income to stay warm.

October 2021 – 12% of households in fuel poverty (17,000 households)

April 2022 – 24% of households in fuel poverty, (35,000 households)

October 2022 (estimate) – 62% of households in fuel poverty.

October 2022 (estimate with Prime Minister's proposed price guarantee) – 36% of households in fuel poverty.

Price cap will help households but still a large increase of those being classified as fuel poor.

Foleshill has been targeted as an area to undergo retrofitting measures to improve fabric efficiency of housing stock – still 45% of the area in fuel poverty.

More data visualisations can be found on the following [Git Hub Page](#).

MJ: does the data post price cap include interventions announced in summer? **SCL:** just used price cap of two and a half, doesn't take earlier measures into account. Can be updated with those figures if needed but would only be a few percentage points out.

MRh: data is important, great to bring it together. Important to consider businesses too. Price cap uses figure of x 2.5 a year ago but actual gas prices are tenfold compared to a year ago. Business community is directly exposed to these costs. Government announced price cap will include businesses – however, likely to be a month later.

Local authorities can be key to delivering assistance to both households and businesses – devolve interventions to a local level. Energy Taskforce trying to get this message across via WMCA. Government should be supporting local programmes that are already working well – Coventry has a good programme already underway ([Coventry and Warwickshire Green Business Programme](#)). Programmes such as these need further funding.

JOB: Thank you for the presentation, data displayed well – shows that most deprived areas will suffer the most from price increases. People will struggle to pay fuel bill as well as other living costs – food etc. Housing stock in these areas has poor fabric efficiency and levels of insulation. What early measures can be put in place as an early intervention? (Retrofit projects underway but longer-term

project). Local authorities are exempt from the price cap and therefore will struggle as an organisation – this restricts the amount of help available.

MRe: Important to also overlay health inequalities, impact of inflation from household items and services. If the data encompassed other cost of living measures it would show how concerning the full picture is.

What can the board do follow this data? Government lobbying is key, but what other measures can be put in place at a local level? Business impact is also key. ‘Bottomline pessimism’ but role of the Board could be powerful in delivering interventions.

ACTION: All Pathway Groups to look at this ongoing issue to see how it can be addressed.

RH: Every business is different in the way they use energy; many businesses are highly concerned about rising energy costs. ‘You can’t change what you can’t measure’ – WMG putting together an offering for SMEs of free energy audits, a weeks’ worth of work. SMEs in W Mids. Being put together by SME team. OEMs, mid-caps, larger businesses – different problem as bigger scale, would need input from a partner such as Eon / infrastructure partners.

ACTION: RH to update on this programme in next Board meeting.

CC: Great data – the cap buys time for households. Couple of years to move towards more sustainable energy means and improved insulation. Business front – can we have a similar map for businesses? We know that businesses will be closing over the next six months as a result of price increases, and they are not as protected by the price cap. Audits are great and Chamber can advertise these; how do businesses pay for these measures?

ACTION: Can Insight put together an equivalent map highlighting increasing energy costs for businesses?

ACTION: RH (WMG) will produce a report and full costings as well as explaining what funding might be available across the area to act on recommendations.

PW: Social tariff available. Working with businesses. Energy efficiency support – Eon is obligated to invest in energy efficiency measures, a fifth of this budget (£250 million). Businesses – number of meetings with local SMEs e.g., Sarginsons. 400-110% increase in energy bills at a number of businesses. Capex still a stumbling block for businesses e.g., fabric efficiency / roof replacement before solar PV installed. Local investment via central government money is required.

AE: Sarginsons– next level of carbon saving – upgraded lighting, compressors and machinery via Coventry and Warwickshire Green Business Programme. Recognise there are further opportunities for the business. Every business is different – specialist applications. Business owners know what they need to do but upfront investment is a stumbling block, especially for SMEs.

MJ: Government backed favourable loans could still be an option?

PW: There is private sector funding but more difficult for SMEs without the credit available and the risk involved.

4. CH: Eon Presentation – see slides.

Key points:

Eon Energy Solutions and retail. Collaboration with the City's Climate Change and Sustainability Team. Collaboration with other teams such as Transport and Public health – fuel poverty alleviation is not the remit of just one department – good support from the Council and joint working on a fuel poverty exemplar.

Cost of living may see a better uptake of efficiency measures. More awareness and willingness to look at energy usage.

ECO4 – Energy Company Obligation, Eon working with Coventry City Council and Acton Energy.

SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund), GHG (Green Homes grant) – LAD (Local Authority Delivery), HUG (Home Upgrade Grant) – being led by local authority.

BUS (Boiler Upgrade Scheme) – led by homeowner.

LAD Phase 2 Sustainable Warmth Competition.

Working on joint branding – needs to be simple for end user. Under brand of 'Keeping Coventry Warm'. One brand and various funding streams. 100 x households covered by GHG LAD2 – the issue is scaling up. There are issues such as access to supply chain, getting work done over winter – particularly solid wall insulation.

ECO4 looks at a whole house approach – more effective but a lot more difficult to achieve. 3-4 measures, a fabric first approach.

504 properties commercially viable in-line with ECO4 guidance. 957 potential properties viable with financial contribution.

ECO Flex – Local authority can describe who needs assistance e.g., if they have specific health requirements.

Data is King.

ACTION: EON to liaise CCC Insite Team to Overlay Insight cost of living data onto Eon data set.

Acton Energy are delivery partner.

Work around behaviour change underway to realise more effective retrofit practice. What are the barriers for people to undertake retrofit measures?

BW: Is there opportunity to link up with other organisations such as Fire Service during home safety checks when people are already within the house and undertaking surveys? For example, could we link up with Severn Trent. Working smarter - one way of doing home surveys and capturing energy efficiency information at the same time. Are there also ways to incentivise energy efficiency measures such as discounts for leisure centres.

MJ: 504 homes fitting the criteria seems a low amount, can more be done to overcome this?

JO'B: This is a national issue and a national emergency which needs action on a massive scale. Customer interaction is important.

ACTION : Can Eon establish the cost of decarbonising heat and moving away from mains gas use in Coventry and installing heat pumps?

ACTION: Low Emissions Pathway Group- to put forward ideas on heat decarbonisation with demonstrable evidence to back this up.

BW: highlighted some of the obstacles to retrofitting homes, such as the need for Planning permission for roof space / cladding, Issues around scaffolding – neighbours complaining, Colour of the rendering – planning issue and covering of roof features below the roof.

MRh: We have skills in the Climate Change Board that can address this issue. There are problems with Government funding schemes such as, schemes such as ECO 4 are proving too complex, and the eligibility criteria needs simplifying. Can we lobby against this?

RH: Cost of heat pumps need to come down to make heat pumps more financially viable on a larger scale. There needs to be cheaper ways to decarbonise heat in the longer term. There are midlands-based supply chain such as Worcester Bosch and Baxi – can they become involved?

CC: Local supply chain is important – keep work local to create a marketplace.

Smart local energy systems are required.

Is it possible to identify how much it would cost to retrofit every home in Coventry?

ACTION: Andy Gouldson's Zero Carbon Route – Map Report to be shared when available.

5. Sophie Mason, Coventry Building Society

Green mortgage product landed last year. Cashback if you perform an energy efficiency measure (£2,500 minimum spend, £500 cashback). Take up has been low to date. Looking at best approach to improve take up and get out to customers.

Looked at 'financed emissions' on the homes they lend to – EPC distribution. UK wide but a lot of the portfolio is based in Coventry and surrounding areas. EPC D rated properties make up majority of customers. Detached homes and bungalows contribute more to financed emissions.

Lower value homes have a higher average intensity ratio, 'more bang for your buck'. These homeowners don't have the cash to upgrade and install more expensive energy efficiency measures. £500 cashback initiative has been offered but there is a question on whether this goes far enough. Looking to improve take up as this could be a good opportunity to fund energy efficiency measures and create warmer homes.

(Slides from the meeting not available for circulation).

MJ: Is £500 enough of an incentive? May need to be higher.

BW: Alot of properties in Coventry are EPC 'D' rated but government often caps the number of EPC 'D' properties included on some programmes and therefore money is sometimes being handed back. How do we work collaboratively to tackle this, including lobbying powers to be?

MJ: Clear message that a lot of support, policies etc. aren't necessarily fit for purpose and are out of date. Work is needed around lobbying to change government policy.

6. AOB –

Due to time restrictions, it was agreed to defer some items: Colin Knight - Green Futures Board and Public Transport Challenge updates to be added as agendas for the next meeting.

It was suggested that Chairs of Pathway Groups can give a progress update in relation to the issues raised at this meeting.

RH suggested games could be an important way to get message across e.g. Circular Economy Game – E-Sports.

ACTION: RH to feedback on at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 11th January 2023

12:30-2:30

NAIC (dept WMG)

The University of Warwick

Lord Bhattacharyya Building

Lord Bhattacharyya Way, Coventry CV4