

Peterborough Parish Council Liaison Meeting

**Minutes of the Parish Council Liaison Meeting
Held at 6:30PM on Wednesday 9th November 2022 Virtual Meeting
via Zoom
Hosted by Good Neighbours Rural Peterborough CIO**

Present:

Cllr David Over		Chair Parish Liaison Group
Cllr Janet Armstrong		Orton Longueville Parish Council,
Cllr Neil Boyce		Castor Parish Council, Co-opted Member Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Keith Lievesley		Ufford Parish Council
Cllr John Bradshaw		Wittering Parish Council
Cllr Margaret Long		Thorney Parish Council
Cllr Anne Perkins		Ailsworth Parish Council
Cllr Alan Gasparutti		Bretton Parish Council
Cllr Richard Clarke		Wansford Parish Council
Vince Moon		Werrington Neighbourhood Council
Cllr Denis Batty		Glington Parish Council
Cllr Sue Welch		Marholm Parish Council
Cllr Steve Jackson		Glington Parish Council
Cllr Michael Samways		Ailsworth Parish Council
Cllr John Fox		Newborough Parish Council
Cllr Margaret Palmer		Barnack Parish Council
Cllr Roland Pickett		Orton Waterville Parish Council
Cllr Irene Walsh		Bainton & Ashton Parish Council
John Haste		Clerk for Castor and Glington Parish Council
Sharon Malia		Team Manager - Housing Programmes Home Service Delivery Team PCC
Cate Harding		Good Neighbours-Rural Peterborough
Nisha Beg-Khan		Think Communities PCC
Matt Oliver		Head of Service Think Communities PCC

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Henry Clark, Peakirk, June Bull Orton Longueville, , Susie Lucas Bainton & Ashton, Jane Hill & Phil Thompson Deeping Gate, Northborough, Parish Council

2. Minutes of the Parish Council Liaison Meeting held 13 July 2022

The minutes of the meeting we agreed as a true and accurate record
Proposed: Cllr Richard Clark and Seconded by Cllr Neil Boyce

3. Planning Department Update including questions and answers with Jim Newton,

The Chair welcomed Jim Newton, the Interim Assistant Director for Planning and Building Control at Peterborough City Council.

Jim had prepared a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix 1) based on areas of concern, as provided by the Parish Liaison Working Group.

3.1 Staff Structure

Currently Some posts are shared with various other councils and some of our own staff work for other councils, principally on local plans. All of the formal agreements we have with those other councils are due to end on the 31st of March 2023. Following a review, a new budget and structure will be devised. We are investing one and a half million pounds into the service area over the next three years starting on the 1st of April 2023, mostly in the local plans team where there is currently no resource.

The end of the review process involves consultation with the staff and with the unions on the draught new structure, intended for a January launch with 2 months for set up before the new local plan is initiated. After a review of processes for the way we do things, we're switching towards a more outcome focus: what the desired outcome should be and how can we achieve it. Part of that is a programme of 28 'Quick Wins' across the whole of the department, 20 are completed or nearly completed. Of the eight outstanding, five are currently being reviewed for suitability and workability An improvement plan is nearing completion as is a draught new structure.

The Chair asked for questions following slide 1 of the presentation.

Q Cllr Over asked if the council is ending working with other councils or will new contracts be created.

A. Most will be finished but exploring what to do with Fenland.

There are a number of other individual things where we are working out new service level agreements. e.g for the biodiversity net gain change, the council have a service level agreement with East Cambs to share a senior ecologist (post presently being recruited). But these are the exception rather than the rule now. Originally there was an income target that was put against local plans for selling our services to other councils and that kept being achieved so was escalated. Now it is about the cost of the service area resulting in about 0.6 FTE doing planning policy for Peterborough, which is completely unacceptable. Jim is keen to move the income target of 1.5 million in the service area to somewhere else within the directorate so that they are not under that pressure to earn money, but to do positive proactive planning for Peterborough.

Q Cllr Over asked Where does this 1.5 million come from?

A. The way we do budgeting is changing. Traditionally it has been done by considering the current year's budget, then take off that intended cuts for next year, and then work out how to achieve those cuts. This has led to gradual budget erosion: the planning department is half the size it was a decade ago, and consequently struggling. But other areas can earn more

easily than planning. In the new system we will set the cash limits, where instead of stating a staff budget, the amount of money you have to earn is set. If you earn more as a department, then you can have more staff or you can spend money on different things so that when that is rolled out across the whole council, that's where these, these sums of money get moved around.

Q Cllr Clarke asked if Jim could provide a quick flavor of what 28 quick wins he was exploring

A Jim gave an example that in building control, for builders to book site inspections from our building control surveyors, the old process was labor-intensive and expensive, and lacking flexibility. But now business cards have been introduced for the building surveyors with QR codes on them and the builders can scan it on their smartphone and they can book a visit directly.

Cllr Clarke reflected back that these are process things rather than actually reducing the scope of what is done. Jim confirmed that the intention is to streamline as many of the processes as possible to make life as easy as possible. Driving costs down releases time to do other things and maybe earn money doing something else, focusing more on discretionary income through planning performance agreements with applicants where they pay a fee that's based on our hourly rates. We can offer certain guarantees about our performance in determining their planning application. Generally speaking they are easy to do and needed to be done rather than operating business as before.

Q Cllr Bradshaw 1.5 million as a figure sounds quite impressive. Put it into some sort of context, what is your total budget per annum?

A the 2.8 million is about the net. We have income and we have expense: the wage bill is more than that. But we earn more money through statutory fees and discretionary fees. So, the planning policy income target referred to is about 430,000 a year. We are reducing that right down and also adding in a third of £1million per year over the next three years to prepare a local plan.

Q Cllr Lievesley asked if when talking about outcomes, are PCC effectively using performance indicators for the staff?

A No. The national central government sets sourced performance indicators. They are a useful guide as to how stretched or not your planning department is. But they are not the whole story. Many planning departments are focused on getting to 100% of planning applications in eight or 13 weeks. But then everything is geared up to achieving that target, which I don't think is the way that we want to go. I think it better to work together as a council so that then when we're asked a question about a site, we answer consistently with one voice having considered all of the angles rather than separate views from planning, highways, etc. That is aimed at making us much lower risk as an investment proposition, because we're competing with everybody else to attract the development that then earns us money through council tax and business rates, thus taking a wider view of what is good for the district, and good for the council as a whole, and what is good for the people who live and work in the area as well as our own bottom line.

Q Cllr Over asked if PCC are defining outcomes in terms of the deliverables from the applications?

A It depends on the situation. The top priority outcome for a planning application is not whether it's determined within eight or 13 weeks, but whether it is in accordance with the

local plan. Is it what we want to achieve? Are there other benefits? Can we articulate that in a sensible way that people will understand it and accept it if they initially disagreed with it. Michael Gove is Secretary of State again, who previously promoted about 'zoning' in a white paper that was universally criticized. Over the last month or so, then there's been talk about housing targets but many think they should be abolished. Then they were brought back in, but they're going to reduce or stay the same, or sometimes we'll have local discretions. As far as a new planning bill is concerne, it is difficult to predict and no timetable for it. What I'm focusing on is that we are organised and act together to be better placed to respond to any changes in planning legislation. I would say my advice to you is the same advice I would give to PCC members and PCC staff, which is try not to worry too much about what's going to happen.

Q Cllr Long When you start your new local plan, does that mean the neighbourhood plans will also have to be rewritten?

A No. Neighbourhood plans, they have a life time. The same as a local plan has a lifetime time. A Neighbourhood plan needs to be consistent with a local plan but that is not the same thing as being exactly the same in all respects. All we've managed to achieve so far is to provide a little bit certainty to the staff about what's going to be happening and some assurance of the budget.

Q. Is the present one due to run until 2036

A. Yes. But we do need at least a partial review because we've already run out of employment land. The circumstances have changed quite rapidly about the take up of employment land and the land price has got to the point where it is peaking above the residential land price in some places in those prime locations. There is a national shortage of larger employment sites, and there's a local shortage of the smaller starter units in the grow on spaces. There is a tension there that we need to resolve and we need to do that urgently.

Q Cllr Lievesley stated: Prior to your arrival in Peterborough, the City Council desired a university in response to various reports that came out that Peterborough was a low skilled, low wage economy. And yet in the last two years, PCC has continued to approve large sites for large sheds which doesn't respond to the criteria for a university. So the lack of employment land is still a problem, apart from large warehouses permissions.

A. Each of the last three years has seen a record take up of distribution floor space. Last year, Amazon took up a large proportion of all new distribution floor space which is fueling demand and raising land prices, leading landowners of big greenfield sites on the edge of towns and cities near strategic highway junctions to sell. We will get half a million an acre after fees. For residential land, we get 600,000 an acre, after fees, for a large distribution site. Why would someone wait 20 years for a half-million acre when they can have 600,000 an acre in 18 months? But that tension that you have identified is one of the drivers for us needing to review the local plan. The university will have a more limited impact on the city if the graduates just move elsewhere straight away so we need to retain them. And that one of the strands that we will look at in maximising the benefit, because it's a fantastic opportunity.

3.2 Administration and Engagement with Parish Councils

The understanding in the department is that there is not a universal understanding or support for the way that we go about notifying parish councils of planning applications. It is important to set out why we do what we do and why this is with a positive intent.

The government sets out in regulations a requirement for us to notify statutory Consultees but you are also our local democratic eyes and ears. You give us a more granular understanding of what is going on and what local opinion is. I would always want parish councils and the city council to see each other as friends. We could just send you the formal planning application consultations for your parish area but there could be a big proposal next door to you that you wouldn't find out about necessarily if that was all we did. So, what we also do is include parish councils on the weekly list of applications that we email round with the intention that you get a more-comprehensive picture of what is going on. You can choose to see what is happening elsewhere or you can choose not to. You can learn of applications as soon as the opportunity arises because the weekly list goes out at the same time every week.

Q Cllr Lievesley and others stated that they have never seen the weekly list. Every one is advised to check with their clerk your clerk because this is who they are distributed to.

Cllr Alan Gasparutti stated: unfortunately, we do not receive any updates from the local Councillors and this can cause problems. We were told a couple of years ago that there was funding for certain areas from the Towns Fund but we have heard nothing since. We don't know what's going on.

Jim responded that this is a delicate situation as Councillors will only know what is going on with developments, principally from what we the planning department tell them. Jim will address improving the briefings for Ward Councillors and look at how they can best monitor the major developments going on across the city as he is aware this needs to be addressed as this has not been done on a regular basis.

Cllr Alan Gasparutti gave a further example of the removal of a basketball court that was agreed to be relocated but after much chasing was told this has been withdrawn.

Q. Cllr Clarke asked if it would be possible to have the majority of planning applications in a particular parish handled by an individual planning officer which would be helpful. This used to happen a few years ago. I know it's always not possible because you've got to balance up the loads, the different planning officers, etc. but if we were regularly talking to the same one or two individuals, it would be much easier because of familiarity with the case.

A. Jim That approach gives us a resilience problem. There is a shortage of good planners, which means that they are moving around more than they were. If you have a small number of planners covering a specific patch and they move on, then we lose that local knowledge. From an operational point of view, it makes sense to organise ourselves differently: around the scope of the applications rather than where they are geographically. There's another really good reason why I wouldn't advocate us organising ourselves geographically, and that is because we are a really compact area and this minimises travel time.

Q Cllr Over Given a more granular understanding of local issues (presentation bullet point 3) to the contrary, there has been no understanding of local issues that, in fact, the planners have seemingly ignored local concerns completely. Helpston is a good example.

A It depends on what the planners are told to do and how the planners are told to go about their job. if they are told to stick to the local plan and it's black and white, but then they get

other intelligence that's grey, then they say, well, that's not black and it's not white it is grey and the plan says, either yes or no. What Jim is asking the planners to do is to come back to focus on the outcome. What is the right answer? It could be that the plan hasn't foreseen this and the local area has a specific need or has a specific constraint that means that we can apply diminished weight to the plan in that case. He is hoping for a less rigid application of a planning document. The purpose of the plan is to guide new developments to the best places at the best times, and for the developments to have the best form to bring about the best outcome for everybody who lives and works there. Sometimes the proposal that is in front of us is different to what the plan envisaged it would be, and we shouldn't say no to it in that circumstance.

3.3 Attitude to Village Envelope

The primary legislation says that PCC determine planning applications in accordance with the local plan, unless there's a material consideration that says that we should make a different decision. There is a question of what weighting to apply to our local planning policies and what weighting to apply to other material considerations. There is no single definition of what is a material consideration and what is not. There is a list available of things that are definitely *not* material considerations. There is no definitive list of things that are. The biggest thing that would diminish the weight of our housing strategy in our local plan is if we didn't have a five-year supply of housing sites in the pipeline. But we do. So, PCC can apply full weight to our housing strategy but we have to weigh the benefits of the scheme against any harm. The definition of harm can be 'against the local plan', but in my experience, almost any planning application will conflict or have a tension with at least one local planning policy because local plans have 50 to 60 policies in them. You're never going to get a scheme that complies 100% with every single policy in the local plan and with all the other material considerations like ministerial statements and the national planning policy framework and everything else. The High Court has established that local planning should be read as a whole, not as a series of individual policies. And there is case law on that as there was judicial review that was carried out to investigate that issue. That was then changed by the MPPF because originally, the judgement was each of the policies is a gateway. But the MPPF challenged this. You can see it as a whole. So, the starting point is, what does the local plan say? Then we consider what weight to apply to that, the relevant local plan policies. Then we consider what other material considerations there may be, both in favour and against. And then we apply the planning balance. And then that gives us an outcome. It is very rarely black and white. It is almost always that there is a different shade of grey and so the 'Wednesbury reasonableness' principle applies to legitimate planning judgement. Consequently, a decision is only unreasonable if no reasonable person would make that decision, which gives huge scope and so there has never been a successful Wednesbury case brought. There have been wins. They have always so far found that the decision maker applied a legitimate planning judgement, and that includes delegated decisions by officers and committee decisions and appeals inspector decisions and Secretary of State decisions.

Q. Cllr Clarke stated that he felt all of this explanation justifies the need for dedicated planning officers

A. Jim repeated that he is convinced that the way to organise the optimal development management section in the planning department is by the scope of the applications. Over the last decade or so where there's an unusual case or a case that's new to a planning officer they will always seek advice from elsewhere in the department. They all have managers who can give them advice. And they know what they're doing. I've got no concerns about any of

the planning officers in the department in terms of their competence. We give the more straightforward applications to the less experienced members of staff, and we get the more challenging applications to the more-experienced members of staff. That's the best way and it's the lowest risk way, actually, from a legal challenge and a losing appeals point of view as well, because those are considerations I have to take on board protect the planning authority as a whole from financial risks as well as other risks. So again, we are saying that if I was in your shoes, I'll be saying exactly the same thing. Hopefully I've articulated why I disagree. Cllr Clarke agreed to disagree

Q. Cllr Lievesley asked to what extent is the local planning policy of village envelope and open countryside somewhat of a moveable feast?

A It is being consistently raised by parish councils wherever I've worked over again in the last decade, Class Q barn conversions in particular. Regarding the matter that that you referred to me via Cate, this has been very controversial and it continues to be very controversial because it provides a fallback position. When I talk about risks to the planning authority just now, when I talk about losing appeals, if we go in to defend a refusal of permission and the other side has a fallback position where they say they could have done a class. Q because all they want to do is change the materials, the impact is actually different and we just argue about whether that different impact is acceptable or not. It will be 50/50 at best if we are going to win that appeal. Whereas if somebody comes in for 1200 houses on the edge of a village where there's only 500 houses there at the moment and it's outside the village envelope, then I would be quietly confident of defending an appeal there. That's not to say that the that the village envelope can be set aside. It just means that there will be some people who are clever enough to find a way around it or ideally for them, they can find a fallback position. We know that an appeal inspector will apply the boundary of our village envelope with reduced weight. It all comes back to that planning judgement and what is the outcome that we want to achieve. If the outcome is actually ok in general, then we will approve it and/or if we think we are not confident of winning an appeal, then we will reluctantly approve it. We know that we will take some flak for that.

Cllr Lievesley went on to say that if you don't defend the village envelope, you will see a developer spotting a farmer's field next to the village envelope and then the pressure starts for a development outside the village envelope and the next thing you've got an estate on the edge of the village. Is that something that you recognise?

Jim Yes, it is. We have a five-year supply of housing land in our housing strategy and our plan will have full weight so we will be confident of defending that kind of position. What I was talking about was the class Q barn conversion scenario, where really central government has tied one hand behind our back there, but as far as estates on the edge of villages is concerned, we are in a strong position at the moment, and I expect us to continue to have a strong position.

3.4 Planning Enforcement

I everybody hates planning, then they really hate planning enforcement because we never get it right for everybody.

If we start with the legal position, the council has a legal duty to consider whether to take enforcement action against an alleged planning breach. If we conclude that there is a

planning breach, there is no requirement for us to take any action. Generally speaking, enforcement will look to negotiate a solution before taking formal action, even if we think there is a case there for some formal action, because it is much quicker and much cheaper for us to resolve things informally if we can. In a lot of cases, people genuinely don't know that they breach planning. In some cases, they know very well that they breach planning. and those are the people who we can throw the book at. The Ombudsman has ruled that we don't have to take enforcement action, although we do have to have a functional planning enforcement system. We have 2.6 FTE doing planning enforcement, which is quite a lot. Similarly, to planning applications, alleged breaches of planning, has grey areas. They are not necessarily black and white. People will often try and make a case to try and find a loophole or will try and find a way to argue that they are not actually breaching planning. This is where expediency comes in, sometimes known as the public interest test. They are the same thing but are interchangeable terms, in planning enforcement speak. This is where the council make a judgement. Effectively the judgement is the cost and risk of us taking formal action outweighed by the remedy? If there is a technical breach, then we are much less likely to take formal action than if it's a serious breach.

If we have 20 Traveller caravans show up on a registered park or garden, which is effectively just the same as listed building status for an area of green space, then that's a clear and serious breach. There is also scope for quite significant harm if we don't address it straight away, so this is a stick on enforcement case.

If somebody has built something that is one course of bricks taller than it should be, according to their approved plans, then we will wind up asking if it is actually a problem and just because something doesn't comply 100% with approved it plans doesn't mean that we are going to take action. It means that we're going to go and have a look at it and we will measure it and it could be that we would say that's okay. So how we will work out the long spectrum of extremes an alleged planning breach could be is set out in a planning enforcement policy. PCC are currently going through the process to adopt a new updated planning enforcement policy, and it is expected to go to Cabinet soon for formal consideration and approval.

This will establish a range of categories for alleged breaches:

Category one example: Someone just starts building a house without any kind of planning.

Category three example: category three: someone has put the wrong shade of paint on the windows.

Harm plus urgency will make category one the most important and PCC will set targets to respond. The targets will differ depending on the severity and which category of alleged breach it is. We will monitor performance against targets. To give room to do this, the team need to complete a review of (team titled) 'zombie cases' If they have been dormant for a couple of years they will be closed. If something changes or if something new happens on them, they will be reopened. The focus will be on the cases that need to be progressed to a prosecution. There are currently quite a few cases that are being prepared for prosecution as a result of the review.

The last point to make, which again is a common cause of tension, is people wanting to know what's going on with enforcement cases. We have to say that when a case is open, we are unable to say too much, as this could put costly prosecutions at risk.

Q. Cllr Boyce asked reference to Parish Council Neighbourhood Plans, what weight they hold with those policies against developers? Because many developers do not take note of them.

Jim The Neighbourhood Plans have the same weight as local plans in decision making.

Q. Then the question was why do developers not take notice of them and why doesn't the Planning Office pick that up on receipt of an application and ask them to go back and have a look at it.

Jim Planning officers know the Neighbourhood plan is all part of the development plan so they should pick it up and they should go back to the developers and tell them about it.

Q Cllr Clarke: You talk about zombie cases being deleted from the files. Is there any way of finding out which particular cases those are? I mean, we have one in the village, for instance, where somebody dumped a load of plainings onto a piece of land, which is actually part of a county wildlife site. There was a decision taken that it should be removed, but it's never been enforced. This is going back ten years now. Is there any way of finding out whether, for instance, that application is still current or whether it's been dropped completely?

Jim That's a good question. And I will take that away and think about how best to do that. Cllr Over gave thanks to Jim and said that it was very informative and he is sure many people will take that back to their parish councils or whatever organisation they're representing and have a full discussion because planning, of course, for the parishes are extremely

4. Working Group Update:

- **4.1 Update following Matt Gladstone's presentation**

Cate advised that there has been no update has been received regarding potential area funding Matt Oliver agreed to continue to chase this.

- **4.2 HRC Permits Trial and Process**

- Cllr Boyce advised that Amy Nebel is working through data for what has been taken to date, but they have agreed that they would like to take on two more two additional parish councils onto the trial. Please notify Cate if you would like to participate. The process is quite simple involving an online registration for the permit. A car registration is no longer required, just the name of the parish council wanting the permit. required along with the Clerk's name and contact details on behalf of the PC.

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- **4.3 PCC Scrutiny Committee updates**

- Cllr updated from the Growth, Resources and Communities Committee that met on the 1st of November. The main topic of discussion was the Task and Finish Group report on Car Cruising. The report proposed an injunction citywide to stop car cruising within the city. Neil has questioned the wording to ensure this would read as 'authority-wide to ensure this activity would not be displaced into the rural areas. it could take 12 months to come into force.

Cllr Over stated there are a number of vacancies for co-opted members on the scrutiny committees, and I've written to the City Council and in fact I've written Democratic services to say what vacancies over and what is being done to encourage rural parish councils to actually come forward. At the moment I've had nothing but which is par for the course these days, but I will push that.

- Cllr Boyce clarified that Paulina has now retired and there is a new Senior Democratic officer dealing with matters. The nominations for co-opted membership from the Parish Councils was not shared with Cate in time to complete the election process and so the parish councillors elected in the previous year agreed to continue. This will be addressed well in advance in the next year.
 - A progress report was presented to from the Cabinet Member for the Climate Change and Planning and Housing Committee. As Jim just alluded to, the main update was in relation to Planning department. The City College Peterborough also presented their annual report and it was noted that funding approved from the Department of Work and Pensions to do learning in the community based on the cost of living crisis. One example was to would be to demonstrate to people how to cook up a healthy meal at a lower cost and actually teach them different ways of cooking and things instead of using an oven'
 - Cllr Boyce also attended the Adult and Health Committee as substitute for Cllr Bull. A key item was the was the England Ambulance Service Overview and performance. There is big problem with delayed discharges, resulting in ambulances queuing. The national standard is 15 minutes. They are looking at working with partners to try and reduce this.
 - There next item is there's a new mental health response car because clearly mental health is becoming an issue and that is staffed by a mental health nurse and also a paramedic. This will be based in Peterborough. They are currently looking for more community volunteers
 - Finally, the system wide winter plans by the PCC. This is the plan put into place to tackle to respiratory issues in the winter period with flu. An additional 60 beds will be available at Peterborough City Hospital and those will be via what will be eventually permanent modular buildings on the existing grounds. They also plan to have to have more preventive work with partners, keeping people out of hospital
- **4.4 Climate Change Summit / Training for Parish Councils**
- . Following the latest meeting of the working group. The Virtual Climate Change Summit will be held on the 29th of March between 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
- **4.5 Cross Party Working Group to tackle speeding on rural roads**
- Cllr Fox will approach the council to ask if the previous cross-party group could be resurrected.
 - **Cllr Walsh** stated that this is a huge issue for all and asked if Parish Councillors could be on the group so that it would not be a 'cross party' but a 'cross parish group.
 - Cate responded that was certainly in the written request parish councillors would be able to participate directly in the group.

- **Cllr Over** shared that the Leader of the council would support any rural working group as opposed to a cross party working group. We want a rural parish working group with people who are grounded in the countryside rather than people coming from central Peterborough. The Barnack Ward Group recently met with Charlotte Palmer, Head of Highways, who suggested a variety of ideas about reducing traffic. All were dependent on funding.
- Cllr Gasparutti stated that speeding is not just a rural matter as Bretton Parish Council are also trying to get local roads reduced to 20 miles an hour as well as traffic calming measures. He requested this be reviewed as an Authority-wide matter.
- **Cllr Boyce** stated that at a recent scrutiny meeting, Charlotte Palmer was in attendance and, relevant to all areas, is the concern of construction site traffic signs being left in the area after the works have completed. The problem is recognised and it is suggested that this is reported via the 'Fix My Street' App. If they are not removed, repeat the process but reporting it as fly-tipping.

Presentation from Sharon Malia

Information has recently been shared with all Parish Councils on behalf of Sharon in relation for the current energy crisis. A lot of work is being done by the Council with regard to the Household Support Fund and vouchers for fuel and food.

In addition is the awareness raising on the energy efficiency measures that are also available. Some of these have been funded by the council and some are funded by central government money, which the city council has won as part of a consortium.

There are some significant amounts of money available, mainly for insulation, but also solar panels. There are grants available for on gas properties up to £10,000 per property. The property has to have a low energy efficiency rating or the property is a household with income of less than £30,000. For on gas properties, grants of up to £10,000 for energy efficiency measures are available. If the property is off gas, then there are grants available up to £25,000. There are a range of issues assessed such as insulation and looking at different technologies to try and eliminate those fossil fuel heating systems. Air source heat pumps are available and solar PV. High retention storage heaters are available for those off-gas properties. The scheme is looking at the housing condition, affordable warmth and fuel poverty, but also to health and social care as well. So really just to tie in the play for me is to try and disseminate information as much as possible. The team has a roadshow and presentation leaflets. Please get in touch if you would like a presentation.

Q Cllr Boyce asked if there is an approved list of contractors working on this to protect elderly people in particular

A Absolutely, all that is done as part of the grant process. There is a framework of contractors all approved, all trust mark quality assured and relevant quality criteria. All of which is put in place for them. A contractor will be appointed, they will get a full survey of what can be done and then it will be delivered and project managed by the project management team that works with the consortium.

Cate stated that all of this information has been shared with all parish councils, so please, can you check that your clerks are disseminating that information onto the Councillors and the community

5. Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday March 8th 2023. 6:30pm via Zoom

CHAIR 6:30pm – 8:10pm