

Energy Strategy Consultation 2017 - tenants feedback

Group	What does energy efficiency mean to you?	What problems do you experience?	What do you think the most important issues are?	Previous works the council have done, what do you think has worked/not worked?	Projects we are trying to develop What do you think will work/not work? Why?	How would you like to be communicated with and involved in future?
Tenant Focus Group						
1 Nov 2017	Cost of heating	Issues not getting reported or solved	Looking after the vulnerable	Checking the work has been successful	The projects which are affordable might work	Information available online Homing In
	Cutting costs	Many companies cold calling to say that they can install a smart meter, this maybe an issues for the old and vulnerable (see Q&A's)	BHCC / Housing to share its savings with residents	Cavity wall insulation worked as did the double glazing Combi boiler was also good	Finance will play ultimate part in success	Through local LATS
	Sufficient energy at an affordable price and optimum efficiency	Vents in external walls letting in cold air which cavity wall insulation aims to prevent. House remains cold in places.	Reduced bills	Timing is important – winter is to be avoided for works to happen	Solar panels – however will they effect loft ventilation and insulation? (see Q&A's)	Tenant Disability Network
	Warm homes	The lighting in common way halls, corridors and stairways is not consistent or sufficient. Light bulbs are	Help and guidance for vulnerable residents	Reducing damp wasn't successful, had to use dehumidifier constantly which has an energy	Completing (doing works on) empty properties before placing new families in them	City wide groups City wide conference

		not replaced and when they are, why not all replaced with LED which is much cheaper?		impact		
	Better funding	Long delays for repairs to lights in common ways.	If residents have to move out temporarily during any works then communicate this effectively	Previous necessary works needed and successful But, residents certainly not sufficiently informed about how inconvenient living conditions would be during work being carried out. Although necessary it can make one feel extremely disrespected. Forewarned is forearmed.		Include Energy Strategy on future residents meeting agendas
	Most efficient and practical means of conserving energy on all housing stock while maintaining building condition	Damp issues in home requiring de humidifiers to be on 24 hours a day, costs money when damp issue should be fixed				More communication and involvement with older people maybe through scheme managers
	Affordability					Consultation prior to financial commitment
	Making sure you only use what you need					Ensuring that any issues reported are dealt with in a reasonable time

Q: What happens if a property is all electric (e.g. senior housing scheme)

A: There is potential to change to gas as an interim measure, which is generally more efficient (e.g. older storage heaters compared to A-rated boiler). Tenants can check what tariff they are on, however as prices keep changing, this would have to be done regularly – ideally tenants should shop around. The SHINE project includes assistance for those who need help with switching energy tariffs.

Q: Why aren't all communal lighting systems LED?

A: Alex to update on Mears programme.

Q: Why don't residents benefit from Solar Panels?

A: Panels on houses benefit residents directly, when it's sunny. Additionally all new builds tend to include panels where possible.

Q: Efficiency improvements do not help if windows are old and need repair.

A: There is a window replacement programme being carried out across the city. If windows are not secure a repair job can be raised.

Q: How do residents know if they fall into fuel poverty category?

A: This is something residents would have to look into individually, as it would be an individual assessment. Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-Op can carry this out and the SHINE project can help.

Q: Will Band C homes still meet standards after 2030?

A: Monitoring of standards will be taking place; homes which meet band A to C, will also be included in improvements to ensure they continue to meet standards.

Q: Are homes meeting Band D and above already identified?

A: Analysis is currently being carried out; the council is looking to capture as much information as possible to provide accurate recommendations.

Q: Nearly one third of people do not have access to the internet, how would smart meters be useful to them?

A: Smart meters do not require internet access, they work on mobile phone technology at no cost to the consumer or council.

Q: How are the council officers supporting vulnerable tenants?

A: The SHINE project is engaging with tenants identified as needing additional support. Senior Housing Schemes are also supporting their tenants on a day to day basis.

Q: The Energy Strategy is going to Area Panel in January; this leaves two months for consultation, is this enough time to capture relevant feedback?

A: The strategy won't yet be complete by this point, options will not yet be agreed. Feedback from these sessions will be an important part of the final report.

Q: In light of Grenfell Tower tragedy, why is the council still considering using cladding on buildings.

A: The East Sussex Fire & Rescue Services have confirmed that the council's Housing-owned properties meet all fire safety requirements. All cladding planned must also meet this strict criteria to be considered. We will still have to use this option to achieve energy efficiency aims.

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Tenant Representatives Focus Group						
7 Nov 2017	Comfort and health	The cold and drafts affect my health	Old properties and new technology	Solar panels in conjunction with insulation	Adaptations unusable through lack of effective heating	We would like to be made aware of the cost breakdowns per property
	Lower bills, being mindful of use	Lack of communication	Value for money	Upgrade buildings even if tenants move out	Cavity wall insulation degrades over time	Information available on line dedicated web page
	Saving energy Saving Money	No one point of contact	Communication	Solar panels	Previous attempts to establish community energy failed due to lack of cooperation from council	By email; Consultation meetings; To be kept informed about how future projects will effect residents
	Keeping warm and healthy for the best price possible	Not enough electrical sockets for modern living	Climate change renewable energy	Energy projects should be targeted for the most needs, not individual areas.	Setting up energy company for cheaper tariff	By word of mouth
	Planet protection	Damp	Saving as much energy as possible e.g. with insulation and solar		Make use of funds available for heating networks	Homing In

	Insulating properties: Porches Windows (heat) Reflective panels, Should be standard	Transparency	Highlighting what energy efficiency is and how residents could do more to save energy		Insulation as standard for all	
		Heat loss through draughty windows	Educating people about energy saving		Roll out efficiency measures on EPCs	
		Heat loss through doors	Making every home as energy efficient as possible		Look for a cheaper way of producing solar panels	
		No individual thermostats in rooms or blocks to control and measure energy use	Cheaper energy tariffs offered e.g. Sussex tariff			
		Adaptations being costly i.e. electric fan heaters in bathrooms/toilets are expensive to run and people can't afford to have them running all day				

Tenant Representatives questions and answers

Q: The council is pushing 'smart meters'. Type 1 are currently being installed, these are linked to one provider and don't allow for switching to find a better deal. The next generation of meters will provide this capability but people shouldn't be encouraged to have the less flexible version.

A: This "push" is from central government policy and through energy supply companies – the council is not directly involved in their deployment. You can switch to a new supplier who may offer a deal which includes the installation of a new (type 2) meter.

Q: How do energy efficiency figures come about? Have had cavity wall insulation installed that is failing and has since been told that it can't be changed.

A: A Domestic Energy Assessor surveys the property and would measure the thickness of walls and the amount and type of insulation as part of the survey. To identify failed CWI, thermographic photography is used and CWI can be replaced. This strategy will include plans in delivery to address these problems.

Q: Has looked at an EPC for Clarendon & Ellen, which claimed that there was no insulation, but this is incorrect. What accuracy can be guaranteed if it is not inspected by a surveyor?

A: A Domestic Energy Assessor has to sometimes make a judgement based on what they can see and evidence, sometimes it is not possible to identify presence of insulation, or type and how much if it cannot be seen.

Q: Full Carbon emissions assessments are not usually included in many planned works and should be.

A: The Clean Growth Strategy mentions this issue. It is true that assessments for new build are very detailed, but retrofit works less so. It is very dependent on the type of project, e.g. if cladding a property the u values of the walls will have an assessment of the change in Carbon emissions for that element of the building.

Q: Can EPC ratings be arranged by residents for their homes?

A: These would be arranged when properties are re-let, although this might not have been done if a resident has been in the one property for a long time. The information should be in the pack new tenants receive.

ACTION: Alex to look into why these are sometimes not passed on.

Q: Can an estate-wide EPC be carried out?

A: The cost is approximately £60 per assessment, they are carried out in compliance with the law when necessary. They are not currently being offered outside of this due to cost. We have estimates on record where we do not have an EPC.

Q: How does the installation of PV panels affect structure of buildings? Had experience of a wall having to be pinned a year after installation, there is concern that older houses in the city can not support the weight.

A: It is highly unlikely that this was a result of the installation of PV panels, there would be an underlying problem with the building.

Q: What are the benefits of smart meters?

A: *(By tenant rep) They give current update of usage at any time. Can see how much appliances use and cost instantly. As a result made efficiencies like buying an instant kettle which saves approx. £4 per month.*

Q: Had electric hot water replaced; as a new tenant there were two switches and was landlord controlled. Now it's not clear who is paying.

ACTION: Alex to check with M&E Team to find out more.

Q: What is the status of the solar panel programme? There is an opportunity to link in to this strategy. How can residents benefit from solar panel savings? Are there plans for biomass, anaerobic digestion, or other energy generation?

A: The solar panel programme had a finite budget and is now complete. Residents do benefit directly from solar panels where installed. Biomass energy is difficult to deploy particularly in cities, however there may be scope for this and other energy sources within the city.

Alex: The council is looking at ways for residents to trade in energy directly, rather than via the national grid. There is currently no legislation on consumer protection with this, so it is challenging. However the council is intending to look into it if the 'Solarise' project (which is EU funded) is successful.

Q: The Hollingdean Trust was asked to pay additional insurance after the solar PV installation, is this something the council would also insist on?

ACTION: Alex to check and find out more.

Q: How is it decided which properties have solar panels installed?

A: This was allocated through areas on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, with homes in wards highest on the scale prioritised.

Alex: The council funded the budget through the 'feed in tariff' – government subsidy that covered the cost of the systems. Hopefully the 'Solarise' project will be successful and more installations will be planned.

Q: Are heat networks planned?

A: An energy study was carried out by Planning in 2012, it identified 14 areas in Brighton & Hove where heat networks could be effective. These are inherently complicated, costly and long term. The council is currently working on additional policy to support their deployment and is carrying out feasibility studies on some areas so that they might be delivered in future.

Q: What is the Sussex Tariff?

A: This is a 'white label' energy supply due to be available in December 2017. This is where a smaller company is set-up, usually to provide lower cost energy, that is backed by a fully licenced and regulated energy supply company. The Sussex Tariff will be available to Brighton & Hove residents and should provide a competitive and low price option for people to switch to.

Q: New boilers installations have been carried out at Laburnum Grove and gas boiler upgrades, are there comparative figures to show efficiency?

ACTION: Alex to look into this, M&E will have boiler specifications.

Q: There seems to be a lot of redundant equipment across the city and costs aren't transparent.

A: It's for this reason that the strategy is focusing on assessing the energy efficiency of buildings and their services and ultimately upgrading them. Smart meters will provide transparency for flats particularly around electric consumption, also heat network metering and billing will provide data and information for communal heating systems. The data and information will help provide the evidence for change and be more efficient. Heat meters for communal systems are planned, but probably not for a year or two; the council is working on making individual metering of flats effective.

Q: Is gas still the cheapest option?

A: On the whole yes, by a small margin. It depends on many factors.

Q: Some instances of installations with thermostats in the living room mean that other parts of the property are too hot. Why aren't there thermostats on each radiator?

A: All heating now installed will offer this as standard and most radiators should already have thermostatic radiator valves (control).