

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

9 SEPTEMBER 2005 AT 5.00 PM

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Edmond Smith (Convenor), Councillors Battle, Cobb, Forester, Hazelgrove, Kemble, Mallender, Pidgeon and Mrs Theobald (OS)

Also present: Alan Hopkins, Environment Agency; Mark Strong; Chris Todd

PART ONE

14. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

14a Declarations of Substitutes

14.1 Councillor Pidgeon substituted for Councillor Oxley.

14b Declarations of Interest

14.2 There were no declarations of interest. It was noted that Councillors Forester and Mrs Theobald are members of the Planning Applications Sub-Committee but that this did not preclude them from considering Item 19.

14c Exclusion of Press and Public

14.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

14.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items on the agenda.

15. MINUTES

15.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2005 be approved and signed by the Convenor.

16. CONVENOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

16.1 The Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy updated members on matters arising from the minutes. The Sustainability Action Plan Progress Update 2005 had been sent to libraries. The organisers, local traders and the public had all expressed satisfaction following the second Farmers Market in Hove. The Procurement Code of Practice had been sent to the LGA, who had requested that it also be forwarded to the Improvement and Development Agency.

16.2 The Convenor was pleased to advise that four council departments had won Green Apple Environment Awards.

16.3 The Convenor stated that a bid to Defra had been successful, giving the council the opportunity to encourage local households to recycle more.

16.4 It was noted that there would be a presentation on domestic wind turbines at the next meeting.

17. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

17.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment on progress in developing the Climate Change Action Plan and the next steps in developing the Plan (see minute book). It was noted that useful ideas had resulted from the Sustainability Conference and from workshops involving officers from council departments. The Sustainability Team and University of Brighton were working on a carbon emissions baseline for the city, and a meeting with RiverOcean was scheduled in the near future. The Convenor stressed the need for council departments to recognise that there would be future financial and resource implications. She stated that there would be a Members Workshop in the autumn, which the Chairs of Executive Committees would especially be urged to attend.

17.1 **RESOLVED** – That the process and timescales for the development of the Climate Change Action Plan be noted.

18. INTERNAL REVIEW OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

18.1 The Commission received an oral update on progress with the Internal Review of the Sustainability Commission. Interviews with members and officers had taken place and research into the outcome of recommendations made at Commission meetings was also being included. It was noted that there would be a written report to the next meeting.

19. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS: CIRCUS STREET MUNICIPAL MARKET SITE AND EDWARD STREET QUARTER

19.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment concerning progress on the production of supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for the potential development of the Former Municipal Market at Circus Street and land around Amex House at Edward Street Quarter, and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisals (see minute book).

19.2 The Commission expressed concern that the Sustainability Appraisals had not been received by the council until after the agenda was despatched and that, although e-mailed to members, due to a technological hitch they had not been received. However, members commented on the Sustainability Appraisal Sheets appended to the report. Members commented on those for the Circus Street site and authorised the Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy to compile similar responses for the Edward Street site.

19.3 The Commission's comments would be passed to the Environment Committee meeting of 8 September and to the consultants, in detail. In general members considered that the appraisals were poorly presented, unclear and unhelpful in places and lacking in credible analysis. In particular it was felt that there were omissions in terms of: accessibility and transport, energy efficiency, features to promote biodiversity, sustainable urban drainage, carbon emissions & renewables, and the management of demolition waste.

19.4 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

20. INDICATORS

20.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment concerning the sets of indicators of sustainability produced by Defra, the Audit Commission and the Sussex Environmental Reference Group (see minute book). Members were advised that the Audit Commission would be setting up a new website collating information and comparing local authorities' performance by April 2006.

20.2 A member commented that one Audit Commission indicator – on river water quality - was irrelevant to the city and the Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy confirmed there was a need to produce other local indicators, in addition.

20.3 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Commission recommends to Policy & Resources Committee, and to the 2020 Community Partnership, that the Audit Commission's Quality of Life Indicators be adopted as a minimum in order to measure the city's progress and to inform and focus strategies, policies and actions.

(2) That the Commission wishes local indicators to be brought into the system as soon as possible.

21. REVIEW OF THE BRIGHTON & HOVE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

21.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the process and time-frames involved in the review of the Brighton & Hove community strategy (see minute book). The Commission would be invited to comment on the first draft of the revised strategy in due course.

21.2 **RESOLVED** – That the process and opportunities to contribute to the consultation on the revised strategy be noted.

22. SUSTAINABLE ENERGY BEACON COUNCILS – OPEN DAYS

22.1 The Commission noted a report of the Director of Environment informing members about the open days organised this autumn by a number of local authorities that have achieved Beacon Council status for their work on Sustainable Energy (see minute book).

22.2 The Convenor stated that she had reserved a place on the Woking Open Day and asked members to contact the Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy if they wished to be the member to attend the Lewisham, Leicester or Nottingham event.

22.3 **RESOLVED** – (1) That it be recognised that this Beacon Council theme is timely and relevant to the development of a city Climate Change Action Plan; that one Commission member and one Council officer attend open days at Woking, Lewisham, Leicester and Nottingham in order to learn about good practice on sustainable energy, and that this be reported back by the member to the Commission; and that the Commission places be allocated on a rotation basis.

(2) That other council committees be recommended to actively consider attending the open days in order to help the authority act upon its commitments as a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

23. CONSULTATIVE ROLE OF THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION FOR THE LDF

23.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Strategy & Governance concerning the Commission's consultative role on Sustainability Appraisal matters for the Local Development Framework (see minute book). The report proposed an alteration to the consultative role of the Sustainability Commission.

23.2 Members felt unable to agree the recommendation as set out in the report. Instead it was agreed that before the start of future public consultations the Planning Strategy Team should send a briefing note to each member of the Commission offering them the opportunity to see the full Appraisal document and to comment by the end of the public consultation. Members should send their comments to both the Planning Strategy and Sustainability Officers, who would then produce a report for Commission members to consider.

23.3 **RESOLVED** – That the Sustainability Commission does agree to a revised consultative role for the Commission on Sustainability Appraisals, produced as part of the preparation of local development documents, as set out in paragraph 23.2 above.

24. WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP

24.1 The Commission considered the minutes of the meeting of the Wildlife Advisory Group (WAG) held on 5 July 2005, which contained three recommendations for the consideration of the Sustainability Commission (see minute book).

24.2 Regarding Recommendation 1, damage to the ancient hedgerow at Green Ridge, Westdene, the Ecologist confirmed that he had contacted the council's lawyers, who would be prepared to write to the local residents concerned, subject to a site visit to ascertain necessary information. Members approved Recommendation 2 referring to the production of a Biodiversity Strategy, although it was noted that there would be resource implications in taking the strategy forward. With regard to Recommendation 3, Brighton & Hove Goes Wild, the Ecologist stated that the Countryside Team already appreciated the need for better publicity for events and would be working more closely with the Communications Team in future.

24.3 **RESOLVED** – That the three recommendations set out in the WAG minutes of 5 July 2005 be supported.

25. UPDATE ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR THE FOOD STRATEGY

25.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment concerning the public consultation process being undertaken for the draft Food Strategy: Spade to Spoon (see minute book). A member requested that Patcham Community Centre be included and the Convenor added that the PCT should be asked to invite ward councillors to the presentations. Commission members were invited to send the Sustainability Officer their comments.

25.2 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the information in the report be welcomed.

(2) That it be agreed that a separate council Food Action Plan for the Sustainability Strategy need not be developed (as referred to in the report of 10 March 2004) as this would replicate the City Food Strategy.

26. WATER

26.1 The Commission considered a report summarising the water shortage situation in the South East and recommending action (see minute book). The Convenor recommended that paragraph 5.1 of the report be amended by deleting the last nine words and the Financial Implications paragraph by deleting the first sentence. She added that there should be a fifth recommendation that the council should explore other sources of funding, including sponsorship. The Commission agreed to these amendments.

26.2 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Sustainability Commission notes with grave concern the drought afflicting the South East of England and resolves to make water the theme of the council's annual Sustainability Conference in Spring 2006 and the subsequent subject of an Action Plan for the city, leading on from the Sustainability Strategy.

(2) That the Sustainability Commission recommends to Policy & Resources Committee that The Assistant Director, Property and Design, reports on water use levels across the council and explores water use reduction measures with renewed urgency.

(3) That the Sustainability Commission notes that water use has become a key quality of life indicator for the city and will be reported by the Audit Commission regularly from April 2006, and so urges the 2020 Community Partnership and the City Council to develop targets for reducing water use.

(4) That the Sustainability Commission recommends to Policy & Resources Committee that the Council allocates £5,000 in its 2006/7 budget towards a public event on water use for World Environment Day in 2006, working with the Environment Agency.

(5) That the Council explore other sources of funding, including sponsorship.

27. FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH EAST

27.1 The Commission considered a report informing members about the key findings of The Commission on Sustainable Development in the South East, which produced its final report at the end of July 2005. The report also provided information about follow up work by the report's authors (see minute book).

27.2 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

28. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

28.1 Simon Newell updated the Commission on the recent activities of the LSP including the Transport Sub-Group and the Strategic Housing Partnership.

The meeting concluded at 7.20 pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2005