

City Sustainability Partnership Meeting – Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009 DRAFT 1

### **City Sustainability Partnership Meeting - Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

Jury's Inn, 101 Stroudley Road, Brighton

#### *Public Services:*

Councillor Denise Cobb – **Vice Chair**

Councillor Paul Steedman

Councillor David Watkins

Councillor Gill Mitchell

Stuart Laing, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) University of Brighton – **Chair**

Alison Hadfield – Eco Schools

#### *Business*

Lorraine Bell –

Thea Allison – Brighton & Hove Business Community Partnership

#### *Community and Voluntary Sector*

Chris Todd, Friends of the Earth – **Vice Chair**

Vic Else - Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

Angela Marlow – Brighton & Hove Wildlife Advisory Group

Phil Belden -

Sharon Philips -

#### *Agencies*

Chris Wick – Environment Agency

#### *Council Officers*

Richard Miles - Performance Analyst

Emma Mc Dermott - Senior Policy Development Officer

Anthony Pope - Policy Development Officer

Mustapha Semanda - Consultation Officer

Oliver Dixon - Lawyer

Mita Patel - Sustainability Co-ordinator

#### **Partnership manager**

Thurstan Crockett - Head of Sustainability

#### **Meeting notes**

Sarah Costelloe - Administrator, Sustainability

#### **1. Apologies**

Jan Jackson, Jane Simmons, Mike Creedy

#### **2. Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting**

2.1 Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

- 2.2 **Action** - Thurstan Crockett to circulate complete LAA targets report so partners can see sustainability targets in context.
- 2.3 Venue for social event after next meeting has yet to be decided. This should be near Jury's Inn but Thurstan welcomes suggestions.
- 2.4 Thurstan has removed 2% emissions reference from draft Sustainability Community Strategy consultation and sent draft targets to CSP group for comment.
- 2.5 **Action** (carried forward) - Thurstan will update Strategies & Consultation Programme draft. Please continue to send updates.
- 2.6 National Park update - 95% of boundaries have been confirmed for new South Downs National Park. Further consultation is planned on 6 areas, 3 of which are pertinent to Brighton & Hove. Loss of Green Ridge is disappointing - the council may be able to apply some pressure.  
**Action** - CSP to look at this in detail in future meeting and agree recommendations.

### **3. Sustainable Community Strategy review response**

- 3.1 Thurstan has drafted response from discussions in two working group meetings and circulated information.
- 3.2 Anthony Pope is now collating all responses and will have completed whole 1<sup>st</sup> draft by the end of the month for 12 week consultation to July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- 3.3 2<sup>nd</sup> draft will be made available for a brief consultation from mid-August to mid-September.

**Action** - CSP to look at Thurstan's draft in next meeting for comments in time for July 10<sup>th</sup>. Working group to try and meet between 18<sup>th</sup> May and July 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **4. Local Area Agreement targets and progress**

- 4.1 Richard Miles gave a presentation introducing the Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- 4.2 Starting this month, the CAA is a broad ranging process driven by Audit Commission. It is a two stage process consisting of an Area Assessment, looking at what it is like to live in Brighton & Hove, and an Organisational Assessment relating to the performance of service delivery. The Area Assessment will involve assigning Green Flag status to high scoring areas and Red Flag status to areas where something has not been working well and there is no apparent prospect for improvement. Information relating to the Area Assessment will be published on the web. The Organisational Assessment will look at use of resources by public service organisations and the way in which they manage performance.

**Action** - Thurstan to circulate LAA Performance Improvement Report to CSP members.

- 4.3 The potential role of the CSP in this process was discussed in some detail. Terms of reference allow the partnership '[t]o direct the performance of key city stakeholders against the environmental sustainability indicators in the new National Indicator Set' enabling it to monitor progress against CAA targets, acting as an internal watchdog for the process. A common framework for public service organisations and the work of the CSP presents an opportunity to highlight good practise in other organisations. There was some concern, however, about the possibility that in focussing on the area of Brighton & Hove the county and area-wide implications may be lost. There is a need to cross connect and recognise the importance of the regional economic context.

**Action** - item on next agenda to work on detail of how CSP will respond to this.

## **5. Sustainable Communities Act**

- 5.1 Emma McDermott gave a presentation introducing the Sustainable Communities Act.
- 5.2 Driven by concern regarding community decline, the Sustainable Communities Act offers an opportunity for councils in England, working with local people and community groups, to put forward proposals on sustainable improvements to economic, environmental and social wellbeing of their area. This includes plans involving decentralisation and reconfiguration of public services, and changes to the pattern of public spending, which would contribute to these goals. It specifically places a legal duty on Government to 'assist local authorities in promoting the sustainability of local communities'.
- 5.3 Anyone can submit an idea which must require national government action – new/change in legislation or transfer of powers from one public organisation to another. Eligible ideas are considered by a local panel. The panel and council reach agreement on which idea(s) to submit. Submission is then signed off at city council Cabinet or Council meeting after which the idea is submitted to Local Government Association. Finally, the LGA and Secretary of State reach an agreement about which ideas to implement.
- 5.4 Key dates:  
**17th April** – deadline to express interest in panel  
**4th May** – deadline to submit proposals to City Council  
**Mid-May** – when local panel considers proposals  
**Early/Mid July** – Council signs off final submission  
**31st July** – deadline for submissions to Local Government Association
- 5.5 Members felt it would be useful to have examples of the kind of ideas that may be submitted as there is a wide range of possibilities and potential for the panel to be inundated with inappropriate ideas. Lorraine Bell raised the

possibility of Portland Rd traders asking for government action against proposals for a large supermarket nearby, an example of an idea which would be inappropriate for government action. Thurstan suggested that action on how local business rates are spent, for instance to support particular local industries, would be an example of a more appropriate action. He raised concerns about the likelihood that the processes involved would inevitably lead to a 'suggestion box' of ideas passing from the Cabinet to Sustainability with serious resourcing implications for an already under-resourced team.

- 5.6 The role of the CSP in this process was discussed. The partnership can encourage ideas to come forward, illustrate routes through which they can travel and should play a part in shaping the criteria for decision making. CSP should send delegates to sit on the local panel - Vic Else has already applied.
- 5.7 Some concern was expressed regarding what looks like a time-consuming process and the importance of effectively communicating expectations of success to avoid disappointing participants. Oliver Dixon explained that the council's existing powers are broad enough for 95% of proposals to be enacted without going through the full bureaucratic process. What needs capturing is the energy of the proposals in order to analyse priorities, take forward under existing powers, and monitoring/ communicating with those who have made proposals. This is a good opportunity to get funding and support for bottom-up ideas and priorities. Timescales do not allow CSP to put forward ideas at this time. Emma will publish info on the website re: ideas that come forward in first round.

**Action** - Emma to report on first round of process for future meetings to give opportunity to learn how CSP can engage with this process.

## **6. Funding Bids update: Harvest & Climate Connections**

- 6.1 Harvest decision due in March but delayed to end of this week.  
Action - Vic Else to update at next meeting.
- 6.2 Climate Connections - funding provisionally secured from Department for International Development (£186k), subject to checks. This is a 3 year city-wide public engagement project around concept of global interdependence aimed at raising awareness of climate change issues. The council is working in partnership with BPEC and Oxfam. Project leader will be recruited and based at BPEC (lead partner). Project consists of a) an outdoor photo exhibition based on local/global individuals and their experience of climate change, b) workshops delivered by the co-ordinator and c) a website maximising access for a wider audience. A media campaign will be supported by the BHCC communications team.
- 6.3 Ruth England, overall project co-ordinator, will give a more detailed presentation about the Climate Connections at the next CSP meeting.

## **7. Updates from the city council**

- 7.1 Theme of next Sustainability Conference will be 'The Sea' and is likely to take place in March 2010.
- 7.2 1<sup>st</sup> hearing of the cross-party panel enquiry into the potential of environmental industries has taken place. Further meetings will take place on March 31<sup>st</sup>, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, May 13<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup>. Report due in December.
- 7.3 Enquiry into city's work preparing for climate change adaptation will be scoping into May.
- 7.4 Henry Christie has been appointed as Schools Carbon Management Officer. He will be giving advice to schools about grants, energy and carbon management. He will be supporting schools Display Energy Certificate work.

## **8. Wag meeting report**

- 8.1 Angela Marlow highlighted key discussion points from the WAG meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> April.
- 8.2 WAG is concerned about uncollected grass cuttings on chalk grassland. Environment Agency is in favour of finding pragmatic, common sense solutions. Light touch approach is preferred although there are potential risks to public health around groundwater pollution. CSP needs to flag this issue to relevant council officers as an important issue requiring a strategic approach, particularly if aspiring to become an Urban Biosphere.
- 8.3 Concern about biodiversity and Shoreham Harbour development. Thurstan plans to raise this at June 29<sup>th</sup> meeting with consultants.

## **9. Any other business**

- 9.1 Food Strategy review has been agreed - Food Partnership will be leading. Meetings with officers will take place over the next two months and a draft will be produced by the end of the summer.

**Action** - table agenda item on Food Strategy for next CSP meeting.

- 9.2 Business Lifebelt - Brighton & Hove Business Show at Hove Town Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> April - free event, contact Chamber of Commerce for more information.
- 9.3 UK biodiversity indicators released on Friday show decline in grassland biodiversity. Some serious concerns needs attention but will be taken to WAG first.

