

City Sustainability Partnership Meeting - Monday 7th September 2009

Brighthelm Community Centre, North Road, Brighton

Public Services:

Councillor Tony Janio

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

Jan Jackson - Sussex Enterprise/Business Link

Community and Voluntary Sector

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

Angela Marlow – Brighton & Hove Wildlife Advisory Group

Council Officers

Anthony Pope - Policy Development Officer

Mita Patel - Sustainability Co-ordinator

Simon Newell - Head of Partnerships & External Relations

Richard Butcher Tuset - Acting Head of Policy

Partnership manager

Thurstan Crockett - Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy

Meeting notes

Sarah Costelloe - Administrator, Sustainability

1. Apologies

Vic Else - Brighton & Hove Food Partnership

Thea Allison – Brighton & Hove Business Community Partnership

Phil Belden - South Downs Joint Committee

Lorraine Bell – Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce

Chris Wick – Environment Agency

Sharon Philips - University of Sussex

Tony Mernagh - Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership

2. Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting

2.1 Notes agreed, with some amendments which will appear in the online version.

2.2 Paul expressed concern that there appears to be nothing on the agenda about One Planet Living Plan. It was explained that this would be covered under item 7.

3. Comprehensive Area Assessment: Environmental Sustainability performance

- 3.1 Simon Newell gave a presentation on environmental sustainability performance in the Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- 3.2 Issues around transport performance were raised & members looked forward to the resurrection of a forum to tackle these. Simon explained that the Audit Commission has reinforced this view that a sub group is important if we are to understand where we are and what needs to be done. Stuart said that the CSP should comment on the proposals for a working group. Chris asked if this would be a working group of the LSP or an independent, inclusive transport partnership, bringing in all key players and facilitating real debate. It was agreed that CSP should press for the latter, broader forum.
- 3.3 Mike took the opportunity to offer a brief update on the Shoreham development, where transport infrastructure is also an issue. Money has been made available to develop transport links, WSCC are leading.

Action - wait for the LSP Transport sub group proposals to be made and comment accordingly.

4. Climate Change self-evaluation & CSP funds

- 4.1 Thurstan presented a short paper on proposals to allocate some CSP funds to resource the Climate Change self-evaluation and enhance CSP support.
- 4.2 Recommendation 2 should be amended to read '*up to* £30,000' as final costs of this appointment were likely to be lower.
- 4.3 Gill commented that resourcing the self-evaluation work is extremely important and this would be money well spent, but was less clear about the value of the £9,500 being allocated to support the development of the CSP. Paul shared these concerns. Thurstan explained that there is currently no dedicated officer time or resources to help with administration, development and planning the CSP's work. This is a 'stop-gap' solution which would enable stronger support of CSP over the next six months. Long-term admin support may need to come from another sector/ organisation. Tony added that the Sustainability Team are currently 'maxed out' and that this 6 month proposal would guarantee the CSP has appropriate support until improved arrangements can be developed.
- 4.4 Chairs both commended the recommendations to the partnership. Stuart pointed out that if the posts were in place it would create an obligation to perform better. Chris agreed but had some reservations about what happens to the momentum generated by 6 months of good admin support if this does not continue longer term. Further more it could take some time to recruit into the more substantial post. Thurstan confirmed that there is no obligation to use all the money in this period, that it can be carried over past April, and that this would be the first allocation from the £100k (notionally £50k this fiscal year and £50 next year).

Action - It was agreed that the funds be allocated to the council for the proposed posts.

5. Waste Strategy Working Group submission - feedback on process

- 5.1 Several members praised the Waste Strategy Consultation response. Particularly given the rushed time frame it was felt that the group had done a very good job, producing a suitably challenging response which fulfils a key function of the partnership and may be a good template for future working, once a support officer is in place. Tony didn't agree with every point in the response but said it was exactly the sort of challenge that the partnership should be providing.

Action - TC to find out waste strategy time-table so Chairs and working group can consider next steps. Point of info for next meeting.

6. Sustainable Community Strategy consultation

- 6.1 Anthony Pope presented a summary of progress on the Sustainable Community Strategy refresh. He thanked the CSP for their input. The consultation period runs to 5th October. Public consultation events are currently taking place at Jubilee Library; the next two sessions will take place Wednesday 9th and Tuesday 15th September.
- 6.2 The document lacks the 'big vision' introduction which is important for context, it was felt. The chapter on *Promoting sustainable transport* seems to have too little general background information, *Living within Environmental Limits* too much. There will be a foreword at 2nd draft stage. The final document is intended for a partnership audience; there will be an additional, shorter document written for a public audience.
- 6.3 It was noted that the chapter on *Living within Environmental Limits* is very long. Can it be streamlined without losing impact? There was general agreement with content but it was felt that the way it is presented could be improved.
- 6.4 Regarding the chapter on *Promoting sustainable transport*, a lack of integration of LAA targets across all partnerships was noted, e.g. links between sustainable transport and improving health and well-being. It was further noted that the chapter is of poor quality, with many typos, and in need of simplifying. There seems to be a lack of understanding about some of the issues. For example, the key priority *giving our children the best start in life* is addressed exclusively in terms of the journey to school, with no reference to other uses of sustainable/ public transport by children.
- 6.5 A lack of reference to the uses of ICT was also noted. The text service now offered by Journey On was cited as an example of ICT enabling transport services to be used more regularly, appealing particularly to the young (see

6.4). It was generally agreed that more reference needs to be made to the potential applications of environmentally sustainable technologies.

6.6 It was noted that there is little explicit focus on equalities issues.

6.7 It is important that the final edit does not lose anything important. A key function of the reconvened working group should therefore be to significantly edit the chapter for clarity.

Action - reconvene working group (for 2 sessions if possible) before October 5th.

7. Plans and strategies

7.1 Cllr Tony Janio gave a presentation on new immediate council priorities relating to sustainability. He outlined three new priorities:

- A Low Carbon Brighton & Hove – the top priority
 - Going for Urban Biosphere status for the city
 - Sustainable Development Education for all
- ... backed up by improved communications

7.2 The first priority refers to both the city as a whole and the council in particular, which needs to lead by example.

7.3 There was some discussion about the second priority, going for *Urban Biosphere status*. Paul asked if the Action Plan was going to include a Biodiversity Action Plan for the city. Chris noted that the council's Core strategy doesn't mention Urban Biosphere status as a key aim. Thurstan explained that the Sustainable Community Strategy contains a commitment to develop the city BAP. The Urban Biosphere Action Plan would be specific to UNESCO accredited status but would not be incompatible with the BAP. Angela suggested that a BAP could drive the UNESCO status bid, sharing the objective to create quality habitats. The bid would require a working group, which would direct the forming of the action plan. Questions included whether forming a creditable Action Plan was enough to meet the criteria for this status, or if it needed to be successfully actioned - i.e. what is the extent of the commitment required to put in a bid? Would this be a council or city-wide bid? Who would group report to? How will it be funded? Tony explained that it doesn't rely on external funding, although that would be desirable. He emphasised that this is seen as a city-wide, partnership project.

7.4 There was some discussion regarding the third priority, *Sustainable Development Education for all*. Paul stressed that education must be accompanied by policy changes as young adults quickly lose enthusiasm because society is not set up for a sustainable lifestyle. There was some interest in examining the extent to which sustainable practice, e.g seasonal food, is embedded in the management of schools. What is the success of the Food 4 Life award discussed at a Sustainability Commission meeting? School food providers suggest that the Food 4 Life standards cannot be achieved under current contracts while meeting recently introduced statutory nutrition

requirements. Tony suggested that the best approach was to persuade rather than impel sustainable practises, citing the example of a reduction in plastic bag use across the city, which he attributes to good education. Chris made the point that good education needs to be supported by good infrastructure and that, unless the Waste and Transport strategies support the right choice, education may not be effective.

- 7.5 The administration will not be pursuing the OPL plan, although it will be taking the best ideas from it. The plan is too aspirational and many of the targets (e.g. organic food shop within 400m of everyone in the city, 75% of residents on a low-meat diet) are simply unachievable. The plan is now wholly owned by the CSP who now need to influence decisions re: which targets are adopted, which left out. Jan noted that it seems strange to reject the aspiration of OPL but adopt a bid for Urban Biosphere status when there seems to be much uncertainty about what the criteria actually are.
- 7.6 Thurstan said council officers felt that the Sustainability Strategy has been superseded by the Sustainable Community Strategy, and the focus needed to be on action plans.

Action: Urban Biosphere bid to be raised again in future CSP meeting now it has the support of the administration.

Action: further discussion needed on way forward for OPL at next meeting.

8. Wildlife Advisory Group update

- 8.1 Angela Marlow gave a brief update on WAG work, including talks with Gillian Marsden regarding conservation issues within the city and how the WAG can get involved.

9. Any other business

- 9.1 Next meeting:
Monday 19th October
5.30pm - 7.30pm
The Brighthelm Centre
North Road
Brighton
(tbc)

