

City Sustainability Partnership Meeting – 13th September 2010

Hanover Room, Brighthelm Centre, North Road, Brighton, BN1 1YD

Public Services:

Councillor Ayas Fallon-Khan
Councillor Paul Steedman
Councillor Gill Mitchell
Alison Hadfield – Eco Schools

Community and Voluntary Sector

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

Agencies

Chris Wick – Environment Agency – **Vice Chair**
Phil Belden – South Downs Joint Committee

Guests included

Marie Harder - University of Brighton
John Patmore - Eco-Logically
Susan Wilson

Council Officers

Thurstan Crockett - Head of Sustainability - **Partnership Manager**
Matthew Thomas – Ecologist
Lisa Shaw – Policy Development Officer
Mita Patel – Senior Sustainability Consultant

Meeting notes

Catherine Miller – City Sustainability Partnership Support Officer

1. Apologies and Actions from the previous meeting.

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr David Watkins, Jan Jackson, Vic Borrill, Mike Creedy, Stuart Laing, Lorraine Bell and Charlie Allesbrook.
- 1.2 The response from Richard Davies and Tom Shaw regarding the Open Market Redevelopment Proposal was discussed and members agreed to request further information regarding biodiversity and the greening of the site before the proposal was submitted to Planning Committee to ensure that CSP recommendations were considered before the application was finalised.

ACTION – That Chris Todd will draft a response letter to Richard Davies requesting more information and communication with the CSP about the proposal.

- 1.3 Partners **agreed that Policy Development Officer Lisa Shaw should undertake a local State of the Environment study as well as the Local Climate Impacts Profile during her six months with the Sustainability Team. It was agreed that they would review the scope of the study at the next CSP meeting to approve its focus and to help ensure its independence of B&HCC.**
- 1.31 Partners were informed that the One Planet Living Plan working group had failed to arrive at a clear decision on a future plan for this work. Thurstan Crockett told the partnership that Emma McDermott, Policy Development Team Manager would be returning from maternity leave and could undertake a review of the OPLP work to date and make clear suggestions for its future direction. This was considered a particularly good arrangement due to Emma's previous work critiquing the original Bioregional proposal for developing their original draft. **Partners agreed to this course of action.**
- 1.4 Amendment to previous meeting minutes: Ken Bodfish was not a Brighton and Hove member but one of the seven members appointed by the Secretary of State.
- 1.5 Phil Belden gave a further update and answered questions regarding the presentation on the South Downs National Park Authority that he gave to the partnership at the previous meeting. He stated that on the 30.07.10 some South Downs Committee staff had received letters regarding the transfer of their employment to the authority under TUPE and that the new authority was still due to be up and running by the 01.04.10. He stated that the SDNPA would be meeting on the 21.09.10 to decide on the use of the Interim Management Plan.
- 1.51 The future funding allocations for the SDNPA were discussed and Phil informed partners that this was still unconfirmed but outlined the costs and stated that an allocation of £12million would be the amount required to effectively manage the SDNP, £10million would be an average amount needed and that any less would not be sufficient.
- 1.52 The location and design of the SDNPA headquarters and

satellite buildings was discussed and **partners agreed that the CSP should make representations to the SDNPA about this, calling for sustainability to be a key consideration, re strong public transport connections particularly.**

ACTION – Chris Todd to send a letter to the South Downs National Park Authority requesting information regarding the criteria, location and carbon footprint of their proposals for the SDNPA headquarters and satellite buildings.

- 1.6 Phil Belden noted that the previous meeting's presentation on the Downland Initiative had lacked a clear breakdown of the allocation of re-investment and requested more information from the council and/or Smiths Gore in due course regarding the nature of the re-investment of the quoted 50% of profit generated by council owned Downland.

2. Partnership Review and Draft Recommendation

- 2.1 Catherine Miller gave a presentation outlining the structure and focus of the CSP review that she is currently working on. This included some draft recommendations for the partnership to discuss and agree on and a breakdown of the proposed timescale for the completion of the review. Partners also discussed the purpose and format of the working document mapping the CSP's work in relation to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) to determine the next stage of this work.
- 2.2 Partners agreed that the SCS work was valuable for CSP purposes as it would serve to monitor CSP performance, aid the appropriate setting of meeting agendas (tying CSP work to the priorities laid out in the SCS) and help achieve greater efficiency and focus for the CSP's work. This was needed for the Intelligent Commissioning Framework for the financial climate and proposed cuts in funding of public services. It was suggested that the format could be similar to performance reports on the Local Area Agreement, including a similar 'traffic light' system for indicating the progress of projects and actions. A core document could then be held online, with just an "exception" report brought to the Partnership, showing poor or weaker progress areas. It was also suggested that this work should show the directorates and lead officers responsible for individual projects.
- 2.3 Partners questioned the appropriateness of the recommendations relating to the CSP and community

engagement. It was felt that the CSP was an advisory and strategic partnership and that extensive use of the partnership's limited resources to undertake better community engagement / outreach itself would not be justified. Instead it should be advocating improved community engagement strongly to service providers within its scope of influence (e.g. the council's wildlife work).

- 2.4 It was agreed that Chapter four of the review should be expanded to incorporate the SCS work and would now include an audit / analysis of the CSP's influence over the progress of the work covered in this section to ascertain CSP added value.
- 2.5 **Partners agreed that the review and the recommendations would be refined by the Chairs group and then come back to the CSP for further discussion and final amendments.**

3. Intelligent Commissioning and the Council Restructure

- 3.1 Partnership manager, Thurstan Crockett, gave a more detailed presentation and updated the Partnership on the Intelligent Commissioning framework and the council restructure which included an explanation of the division (but not separation) between decider and provider in commissioning and delivery units; the process of the commissioning cycle; the appointment of new strategic directors and their roles and responsibilities. The description of the commissioning cycle detailed the four stages required, deciding outcomes, needs analysis, commissioning and review and he went on to describe the inclusion of 'aspirational' needs which is of particular relevance to environmental sustainability work.
- 3.2 Partners discussed the CSP's role within the Intelligent Commissioning framework. Chris Todd stated that he saw the role of the CSP as one of championing, lobbying and publicising / promoting sustainability priorities. He also stated that the CSP should not be solely focussed on B&HCC but be citywide in its scope.
- 3.3 Councillor Steadman noted that there was a danger that CSP function within the new structure could crowd out CSP focus on other work and suggested that to counter this possibility the CSP work to set their meetings programme and agendas further in advance. He suggested the setting of an annual agenda for CSP work which would ensure some balance in its

scope.

- 3.4 Marie Harder pointed out the dangers of separating commissioning and delivery units, arguing that practical expertise and knowledge in specific areas was likely to be held by those involved in the practice and the provision of services. She questioned the level to which the potential for a break in communication between commissioning and delivery units had been considered. Thurstan responded that there was a division between decider and provider but not a separation and argued that in many key service areas such as waste that it would be inconceivable that commissioners would not communicate with delivery units. He stated that the pilot schemes would serve to inform and direct the design of the commissioning and delivery units and argued that there were whole areas of service provision where extensive commissioning was already taking place.
- 3.5 Cllr Fallon-Khan added that the CSP was a highly respected body and that it would be extremely foolish for the new directors not to take on board its advice and input, as the CSP could provide insights, decide outcomes and identify needs which they might not have considered. He suggested inviting the strategic directors to future meetings to facilitate working relations between the directors and the partnership.
- 3.6 Thurstan said work was underway to explore formalising and achieving clarity regarding the council's working relationships with partnerships, beyond participation in the needs analysis element of the commissioning cycle. An overarching partnership review was being undertaken by the Brighton & Hove Strategic Partnership. He added that the focus of the CSP Chairs on the priorities of the SCS fitted well with this.
- 3.7 The remit of the CSP's future work was discussed in relation to other partnerships and sectors within the Intelligent Commissioning structure and the priorities within the environmental chapter in the SCS. There was discussion as to whether this would involve greater cross partnership work or whether it could allow for strategic decisions and needs analysis in specific areas to be achieved without CSP influence. Thurstan replied that the Brighton & Hove Strategic Partnership's overarching partnership review should bring clarity and answer a lot of the partners' questions. He added that the priorities within the SCS were not solely the responsibility of B&HCC to deliver but were citywide.

4. Biosphere Reserve Update

- 4.1 Chris Todd updated the Partnership on the progress of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve bid. He stated that the visit by the four delegates from UK Man and Biosphere in July had been very successful and stated that they had been suitably impressed. He thanked Mathew Thomas for his work on this project.
- 4.2 Chris informed partners that it had not been possible to go for 'Urban' biosphere status at this time as such a category did not exist at present though there was potential for Brighton and Hove to lobby to be the first such designated site in the future.
- 4.3 Partners discussed how to take the project forward and decided that it was a good time to consider widening the group of stakeholders to include other Local Authorities and relevant bodies.
- 4.4 Mathew Thomas informed partners that there had been discussion regarding the progress of the Local Wildlife Sites Review and the Biodiversity Action Plan and stated that this would still work to the same timetable.
- 4.5 Chris Todd asked how this would relate to the development plans across the city in terms of green space. Mathew replied that Cityparks recognised the need to pull together and implement the actions of the plans and deliver policy on the ground. He stated that the issues raised through the community engagement work relating to the management of Wild Park had highlighted the need to work more closely with local communities at the planning stage.
- 4.5 Marie Harder agreed that more need to be done to include stakeholders at the planning and implementation stages of management planning. She stated that community engagement should 'step up a gear' and run draft plan workshops and recruitment drives to run the sites. Marie also suggested that the University of Brighton could have a more significant role in this given the proximity of Wild Park to the University's campus and the potential to involve students in this work.
- 4.5 Chris Todd informed the partnership that the Biosphere

Steering Group would be meeting the next day, 14th September 2010, to discuss the next stages of the bid.

5. CSP Future Administration Options

- 5.1 Thurstan Crockett presented a report to the partnership detailing the administrative requirements of the CSP and options for future administrative support.
- 5.2 Partners discussed the funding implications of the different options and how this would affect the funding allocation for CSP work. The potential for applying for a Short Knowledge Transfer Partnership grant was discussed and although Thurstan thought that this may not offer the continuity the partnership required and might tie its OPL work to one institution it was agreed that he would explore this option to evaluate its potential.

ACTION - Thurstan Crockett will make inquiries regarding the potential for applying for a Short Knowledge Transfer Grant to cover the expenses of CSP administrative support.

- 5.3 The implications of the agreed delegation of the State of the Environment report to Lisa Shaw (see 1.3) was discussed and it was agreed that this had effectively saved the partnership from commissioning this work out of the OPLP allocated funds. **It was agreed that up to £5,000 of this money could therefore be used to extend the contract of the existing support officer by six months working for 8hrs per week.**
- 5.4 The level of support required was discussed and Thurstan said the council would seek to fund additional hours for the Support Officer until the end of the year from existing budgets
- 5.5 This was because the support officer's work streams would include finishing the CSP review and the SCS working document, the rewriting of the partnership's Terms of Reference and the redesign of the CSP web pages.
- 5.6 Other funding options for future support were discussed including the potential for raising funds from partners' organisations or from sponsors and it partners felt 6 months would provide breathing space to help secure more resources.

6. Climate Change Action Plan Update

- 6.1 Mita Patel gave the partnership a verbal update on the progress of the Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). She stated that there had been some confusion regarding the previous update in that the CCAP work had included a self-assessment rather than a consultation on the plan; the assessment had served to provide a snapshot of what was already being done by organisations in the city and would inform the CCAP.
- 6.2 The response to the self assessment was discussed and it was suggested by partners that the design of the original questions could have been too 'closed', i.e. 'What are you doing re Climate Change?' which could have deterred responses from organisations for whom this was not a priority; and that only large organisations had someone with overall responsibility for climate change and could respond easily. As a way forward it was suggested that Mita could focus on the main stakeholders who had not responded and conduct telephone interviews to make the self assessment more representative. The possibility of approaching the 10:10 city campaign to gather information regarding organisations' commitment was discussed and it was agreed that this could be a useful source of further data.
- 6.3 It was suggested that the responses could be reviewed to ascertain gaps in areas / sectors of the city and in adaptation work. These could guide the direction and scope of the CCAP. Mita agreed and said that this could be a main area of work for the working group.
- 6.4 It was also suggested that neighbouring Local Authorities' CCAPs should be reviewed for good practice.
- 6.5 Partners suggested that the respondents that had been particularly committed to Climate Change Adaptation could be invited to join the working group.

ACTION - Mita Patel will contact the some of the key respondents to the self assessment to invite them to join the CCAP working group.

7. City Wildlife Forum

- 7.1 John Patmore informed the CSP that there had been no meeting of the City Wildlife Forum since the last CSP meeting so there were no minutes.

- 7.2 John said there was still no project plan for the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). He stated that although there were some aims, objectives and targets there were no timescales for actions. He stated that there was a need for a comprehensive project plan for the BAP to facilitate community engagement with the project and that at present the BAP seemed vague and ad hoc.
- 7.3 Matthew Thomas responded that he did not agree re the usefulness of a project plan but suggested that John write to him detailing his rationale for one. He also stated that there was a more detailed paper and project plan that John had seen but that he had decided not bring this to the CSP due to the technical content of the report.

ACTION – It was agreed that Mathew would circulate this report and any other relevant documents to the Partnership.

8. A.O.B.

- 8.1 Mita Patel updated the Partnership on the progress of the Biodiversity Conference at Dorothy Stinger School on November 10.
<http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=c1231956>

Next meeting: **Monday November 1st, 5.30pm, Brighthelm Centre.**

