

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY CABINET COMMITTEE

3.00PM 9 FEBRUARY 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Mears (Chairman), Fallon-Khan and Young

Also in attendance: Councillors Mitchell (Opposition Spokesperson, Labour) and Steedman (Opposition Spokesperson, Green)

PART ONE

34. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

34(a) Declarations of Interests

34a.1 There were none.

34(b) Exclusion of Press and Public

34b.1 In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Cabinet Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I(1) of the Act).

34b.2 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

35. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

35.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35.2 The following comments were made in response to matters arising from the minutes highlighted by Councillor Steedman:

- In relation to Councillor Steedman's suggestion for the council to work with the universities to consider ways of obtaining better data on the city's ecological

footprint, The Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy explained that it was felt the best opportunity to take the idea forward was through the City Sustainability Partnership workshop on the city's ecological footprint on February 28 as Councillors Steedman, Mitchell and Fallon-Khan were all invited.

- In relation to a request from Councillor Steedman for the Chairman to write the Secretary of State about the future measurement of carbon emissions, the Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy advised that it was no longer necessary following an announcement from the Government that national indicators NI185 and NI186 would continue to be measured.
- In relation to sustainable procurement and the contract for provision of school meals, the Procurement Strategy Manager reported that sustainable objectives were built into the tender evaluation, including significant staff training.

35.3 The Chairman advised that, following on from her presentation at the last meeting, Vic Borrill, Director of the City Food Partnership had been invited to the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee to discuss the planned review and revision of the city's Food Strategy.

36. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

36.1 The Chairman advised that Shoreham Port had produced a Masterplan and discussions had taken place with the Port Development Director Peter Davies in relation to their potential role in the offshore windfarm and their own renewables ideas; in the light of the exciting opportunities, Peter Davies would be invited to the next Cabinet Committee meeting to outline their vision on these important issues.

36.2 The Chairman reported that a number of events were taking place in the next month:

- the University of Sussex was organising a Sustainable City Day on 5 March in Jubilee Square with events and stalls and the council's Adult and Community Learning team were helping to organise it. Councillor Fallon-Khan and other Members would be taking part in a Question Time-style event on the same day, organised by Friends of the Earth.
- The city 10:10 campaign was preparing to celebrate its achievements over the year on 10 March in the city.
- Fairtrade fortnight would be marked through a wide range of events in the city from 28 February to 13 March and Councillor Fallon-Khan had been actively involved as part of the rejuvenated city Fairtrade Steering Group, which the Cabinet Committee had helped to set up last year.

37. ITEMS RESERVED FOR DISCUSSION

37.1 **RESOLVED** – That all items be reserved for discussion.

38. PETITIONS

38.1 There were none.

39. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

39.1 There were none.

40. DEPUTATIONS

40.1 There were none.

41. LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS

41.1 There were none.

42. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

42.1 The Chairman reported that two written questions had been received.

42.2 Councillor Steedman had submitted the following question:

“The Leader and the Cabinet Member for Housing have encouraged the Council to develop programmes for the installation of solar panels on homes, offices, schools and other buildings, to take advantage of the Feed-in Tariff system. This is very welcome. The Feed-in Tariff rates are scheduled to decrease in April 2012, and rates are also due to be reviewed in that year. Conservative Climate Change Minister Greg Barker has recently suggested that a review of rates may be triggered before even this date, due to budget constraints imposed by the Chancellor George Osborne.

Could the Leader therefore:

- (a) confirm that the necessary resources will be provided to ensure that the Council has completed all solar installations identified as viable locations within its property portfolio, including the housing stock, before April 2012?;
- (b) confirm that the programme will be extended to private residents and landlords wishing to take advantage of the quality assurance and bulk-buying discounts that the Council’s scheme can provide, in order to maximise the environmental and financial benefits?; and
- (c) write to Greg Barker MP expressing this Council’s concern about the threat of an early cut in FiT rates and the damaging impact that it could have on Brighton and Hove’s plan to tackle climate change?”

42.3 The Chairman had circulated the following response:

“Thank you for your very detailed question Cllr Steedman. Each of its three parts covers an enormous amount of work, too much to explain adequately now and much of it undertaken by distinct areas of the authority.

Officers from Housing, Property and Sustainability are working to thoroughly address your concerns and I have instructed them to respond to you in writing so that you receive a level of detail worthy of your queries.

As you will be aware, some of this work may be affected by a review of feed in tariffs announced on Monday by the Energy and Climate Change secretary Chris Huhne. I would therefore be grateful if you were able to allow officers time to consider how this might impact on us before replying.

In outline however I can advise that our Housing Strategy and strategies related to sustainable energy are being aligned to ensure they complement one another and drive forward the innovative work of the council.

Our current Housing Strategy alone aims to improve housing quality by reducing fuel poverty and minimizing CO2 emissions.

The Council's Energy Manager and the Energy & Water Team are working to ensure that emissions are monitored, managed and reduced across all Council properties.

And a programme of work has been identified to investigate the feasibility of using renewables within Council stock and across the city to improve our offer in this area.

Our options with regards to the use of solar PV installations across both the council's housing and non-housing property portfolio are being appraised.

Alongside this the Housing Capital programme for 2011-14 includes home energy efficiency investment as a housing commissioning investment priority. We await information on the limits of the recently announced review to see if this impact on our developing proposals.

With regards to 'extending the programme to private residents and landlords' I can advise we already have a comprehensive renewal programme for private sector housing within the Housing Strategy and an existing sub-regional partnership (BEST) through whom we are working to review and take forward FIT and other investment options for Housing, both Council and Private Sector.

As a recent member of the Housing Management Consultative Committee and sitting on the Tenants Energy Efficiency Working Group, you will have received briefings on our work in this area already.

The Energy Manager has also been meeting with colleagues across the region to discuss energy matters and identify joint partnerships. One of the benefits to emerge has been the opportunity to bulk buy with other local authorities.

I am mindful of writing to Greg Barker MP at this specific point in time, especially as the review of feed in tariffs has just been announced. Our initial impression is that the review threshold is unlikely to affect council plans, but we have not yet had time to consider whether there may be wider city impacts on larger PV arrays."

42.4 Councillor Steedman asked the following supplementary question:

"The announcement of the review of feed in tariffs so soon is quite shocking. Where is the sense of urgency in the council's programmes to make the most of feed in tariffs and when will we be tendering for the contract to provide solar panels?"

42.5 The Chairman gave the following response:

“I have met with Greg Baker MP, Minister for Energy & Climate Change, and have been told that the Government will soon announce their solar energy policy. We need to capture what the Government is going to be doing before we proceed. I expect the announcement by June of this year. It is important that we know what the Government is planning.”

42.6 Councillor Steedman had submitted the following question:

“Sustainability encompasses local environmental quality, as much as it does big global questions such as climate change. Residents, community groups, council officers and ward councillors, have been working over the last two years on a scheme to improve the much degraded environment of Richmond Parade (Queen’s Park ward), to help improve road safety, tackle anti-social behaviour, increase tree planting and provide the many residents of the Albion Hill Estate and beyond, who use this route every day to get to work, school and the shops. The work was identified as a priority by the Tarner Area Partnership, and has been developed via a series of interactive public workshops. Funding for the first phase of the project has been identified, from the Section 106 contributions made as part of the Ebenezer Church development.

I understand that the Council Leader herself has taken an interest in the scheme, which I am delighted about. Can she announce today the start date for the works to begin?”

42.7 The Chairman had circulated the following response:

“I am very mindful of the work undertaken by the local community and ward councillors to improve the Richmond Parade area of Tarner. Having personally visited the site, I am also aware of the section 106 contributions made as part of the Ebenezer Church development.

I am cautious that the budget available may not be able to meet the expectations of residents as funds are limited and we may need to prioritise.

A lot of work has been done to determine improvements to the area and officers are working to develop a plan that will, as far as possible, meet the aspirations of residents. I am sure, once all parties are happy, that they will prove an attractive and sustainable addition to the area.”

42.8 Councillor Steedman asked the following supplementary question:

“Residents are aware that the full scale transformation won’t be achieved in one go, but when will the public be able to see the plans and why is there further delay to work starting?”

42.9 The Chairman gave the following response:

“The proposal is to bring part of the scheme forward at the beginning. We must fully understand the impact on Grand Parade before work begins because we don’t want to start and then have to stop. It is important to get the whole scheme right for residents to

prevent any knock on effect on other areas. We know that residents are happy with the scheme and aware that it will be completed over three years. I met with officers yesterday and the start of work is not too far off.”

43. NOTICES OF MOTION

43.1 There were none.

44. CLIMATE CONNECTIONS

- 44.1 The Cabinet Committee received a presentation from Paolo Boldrini from the Brighton Peace & Environment Centre (BPEC) concerning the Climate Connections project, which was a partnership between BPEC, the council, Oxfam and UK Aid (see Appendix 1).
- 44.2 Mr Boldrini explained that the project was a three year programme aiming to raise awareness of the impact of climate change from a global to a local level, engage residents and communities to act on climate change, and promote local community projects, initiatives, organisations and businesses supporting residents in making informed choices. Progress to date included the launch of an interactive website, an outdoor exhibition which moved around the city, day events and 10 workshops for communities focusing on setting actions. The interim evaluation report showed that the project was succeeding in increasing take-up of local climate change related resources, initiatives and projects and in encouraging people, particularly those who participated in workshops, to take positive actions to mitigate climate change. Future plans included three more exhibitions, continued attendance at events, more workshops, a more interactive website and delivery of training and support for individuals and communities in partnership with the city 10:10 campaign.
- 44.3 Councillor Mitchell praised the outdoor exhibitions and stated that they had succeeded in catching the attention of the public. She welcomed the planned workshop with Bristol Estate residents, which was part of the ward she represented. She asked whether the programme included any work with schools.
- 44.4 Councillor Steedman commended the project and queried its future when funding ended.
- 44.5 Councillor Fallon-Khan welcomed the community workshops undertaken and asked for more information on which groups had been approached to take part.
- 44.6 In response to the question from councilor, Mr Boldrini made the following comments:
- Climate Connections was primarily an adult education programme, but BPEC worked separately with schools in other ways.
 - It was likely to be difficult to secure more funding, however, it was hoped that working with organisations and going in to areas of the city to establish community champions would ensure that the progress made would be sustained. The website could also be maintained by the BPEC.

- Two workshops had taken place with MOSAIC, the black, ethnic minority & mixed parentage family community support group, one with a refugees and immigrants group and four with different groups for older people.
- It was important to target groups with high carbon footprints and deliver to a broad range of groups; interpreters could be provided where required.

44.7 The Chairman thanked Mr Boldrini for his presentation and invited him to report back to the Cabinet Committee in six months time.

44.8 **RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted.

45. 10:10 CITY CAMPAIGN UPDATE

45.1 The Cabinet Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources concerning the implementation to date and next steps for the Brighton and Hove citywide 10:10 campaign.

45.2 The Senior Sustainability Consultant reported that the national 10:10 campaign had become international and the national campaign was set to continue under the new strap line of “cutting carbon 10% at a time”. The city campaign had achieved significant success under strong leadership and was being used as a model approach. Local buy-in had been considerable and the city campaign had now been established as a community interest company. A dedicated project manager was in place and an inclusive and engaging approach was being achieved using pioneers.

45.3 Councillor Mitchell welcomed the report and noted the hard work of all those involved in successfully raising awareness of the campaign and engaging the business community. She supported the establishment of a community interest company and continuation of a long term project manager for the city campaign.

45.4 In response to a question from Councillor Mitchell regarding measurement of the impact of the campaign on the city’s carbon emissions, the Senior Sustainability Consultant explained that measurement was difficult, partly because of cost, therefore the steering group was focussing on case studies that demonstrated how people could cut emissions. She added that the council’s own data collection had improved significantly and agreed that it would be valuable to highlight larger organisations’ emissions reductions.

45.5 Councillor Fallon-Khan commended the creation of pioneer groups and advised that the campaign had engaged both individuals and organisations. He stated that new business had been established directly as a result of the campaign and that he was hopeful that methods of collecting data from individuals would become easier in the future.

45.6 In response to a question from Councillor Steedman regarding the plans for the next phase of the campaign, the Senior Sustainability Consultant advised that the steering group was due to meet the following week to consolidate ideas for the future and that she would report back to Members on the outcome.

45.7 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Committee accepted the following recommendations:

- (1) That the progress of the city-wide campaign over the past year be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that the campaign was set to continue.

46. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT UPDATE

- 46.1 The Cabinet Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources advising Members of the recently awarded Sports Facilities Management Contract, which had built-in social and environmental sustainability objectives.
- 46.2 The Procurement Strategy Manager explained the benefits of the contract and reported that Freedom Leisure would invest £125,000 in the first year of the contract in energy saving measures to help reduce the carbon footprint of facilities and that further investment was likely to be made in the future. Freedom Leisure was a local company, but was large enough to make use of economies of scale and was committed to address social and environmental concerns during the 10-year contract.
- 46.3 Councillor Steedman welcomed the report and noted that the contract included a commitment to a 15% energy reduction. He queried how the council could align its aspirations with citywide sustainability targets through its procurement process without prescribing targets up front.
- 46.4 The Procurement Strategy Manager explained that all contracts were continuously reviewed to monitor performance against targets, but that it was necessary to consider what was appropriate for the contract in light of the key priorities. She advised that quality was always balanced carefully against cost and that the Procurement Team worked closely with the Sustainability Team.
- 46.5 Councillor Mitchell thanked those involved and highlighted the importance of promoting the contract as an example of what could be achieved, particularly as the council moved towards becoming a more contractual organisation. She also welcomed a more structured contractual management process.
- 46.6 The Chairman advised that she had requested the report to demonstrate to Members what the council could achieve for the city and to showcase the expertise within the Procurement Team.
- 46.7 Councillor Fallon-Khan welcomed the emphasis on contract management, which would enable the council to assess future bidders and protect itself. He thanked the Procurement Strategy Manager and officers involved.
- 46.8 Councillor Young thanked the council's contract managers for their significant contributions to the Value for Money programme.

46.9 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Committee accepted the following recommendations:

- (1) That the commitments made by Freedom Leisure within their winning tender submission be noted.
- (2) That Freedom Leisure's Policy Statement setting out how they will operate the facilities, including in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner, be noted.

47. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT

47.1 The Cabinet Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources updating Members on the outcome of Round One of the Sustainable Communities Act and the process for submitting future proposals.

47.2 The Acting Central Policy Development Manager advised that two proposals put forward through the council had been accepted by the Government and were being progressed:

1. That the council be given the power to offer discretionary business rate relief to encourage and sustain small and medium local businesses. This was being taken forward through the Localism Bill.
2. That the installation and use of renewable energy by households be made more accessible and affordable. This had been addressed through the recent announcement made in relation to feed in tariffs.

47.3 The Chairman paid tribute to the considerable work undertaken by officers in working with groups and organisations on all of the proposals.

47.4 Councillor Steedman suggested that consideration be given to staging an event to encourage submissions be made through the new ongoing process.

47.5 The Chairman advised that the Community & Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) would be the best platform to discuss putting on an event and explained that the new portal made it possible for individuals, and not just groups, to submit proposals at any time.

47.6 Councillor Fallon-Khan thanked the officers involved and acknowledged the significance of having two proposals accepted by the Government.

47.7 **RESOLVED** – That, having considered the information and the reasons set out in the report, the Cabinet Committee accepted the following recommendation:

- (1) That the outcome of Round One of the Sustainable Communities Act and the process for submitting future proposals be noted.

48. REPORT OF THE CITY SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP

48.1 The Cabinet Committee considered the minutes of the City Sustainability Partnership meeting of 1 November 2010 and the draft minutes of the meeting of 17 January 2011.

48.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes be noted.

The meeting concluded at 4.05pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of