

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 49

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Monitoring Outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Renewable Energy Potential		
Date of Meeting:	7 March 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director Place		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Scrutiny Panel on Renewable Energy Potential in September 2010. The work of this panel supports the council's Corporate Plan priority, "Creating a More Sustainable City", and strongly supports the council's emerging One Planet approach to sustainability, with Zero Carbon being a key principle. The City's Climate Change Strategy incorporates 'renewable and sustainable energy' as one of its five high-level outcomes.

1.2 This report enables ECSOSC to monitor and track progress towards addressing recommendations for Renewable Energy Potential in the city. The recommendations and update are included in Appendix 1 to this report. The report will help the Commission to assess the impact and consequences of the scrutiny recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) That the Committee considers the action taken against the Renewable Energy Scrutiny Review recommendations set out in Appendix 1
- (2) That the Committee provides feedback for the consideration of the Strategic Director, Place.
- (3) That the Committee agrees the approach for ongoing monitoring of progress of this work through the committee system.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The Scrutiny Review

- 3.1.1 The Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Scrutiny Panel on Renewable Energy Potential in September 2010. The panel was suggested because there had been no large-scale support or uptake of renewable energy in the city. The aim of the panel was to find out “What is the renewable energy potential of the city? Is this being maximised; and if not, why not?”
- 3.1.2 The panel comprised Dr Adrian Smith (Chairman) of the Science and Technology Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, Councillor Warren Morgan, Councillor David Watkins and Councillor Pete West.
- 3.1.3 The panel held four public meetings, hearing from 26 expert witnesses. The Panel’s completed report was endorsed by ECSOSC in April 2011 and referred to the Council’s Cabinet in July 2011, where all 13 recommendations were endorsed.

3.2 Progress

- 3.2.1 The focus for addressing the recommendations of this panel to date has mainly been on the solar photovoltaic (PV) programme for council housing and corporate buildings. The original business plan and procurement route has been affected by changes to the Feed in Tariff. While the government’s decision has been challenged, this has delayed the implementation of the new rate to March 12. This does not provide enough time to finalise a procurement solution at scale, and other solutions are now being evaluated. The industry is responding, and the Council is exploring options combining renewables with energy efficiency and finance packages, and other measures to improve commercial viability.

Detailed progress against recommendations is set out in Appendix 1.

- 3.2.3 A more comprehensive overall approach has now been adopted, informed by the recommendations of this panel. This will take forward the council’s policy for renewable and sustainable energy and its wider role in the city. A meeting with relevant council officers took place in January 2012 to consolidate progress to date and define a commissioning scope for this work in the context of the recommendations of this panel and other policy links. It will include the council’s One Planet approach, the Climate Change Strategy and a review of the effectiveness of existing renewable energy installations to date. A draft policy will be produced for approval and adoption by the council.
- 3.2.4 The city’s [Climate Change Strategy](#) has now been published, and ‘Renewable & Sustainable Energy’ is one of its 5 key outcomes. This is now a citywide strategic commission, incorporated in the council’s commissioning work plan. Working groups are being established to deliver practical interventions that promote or catalyse local investment to mitigate or adapt to the impact of climate change. The Renewable and Sustainable Energy outcome will be

taken forward through the City Sustainability Partnership (CSP) and the Sustainable Energy Working Group.

- 3.2.5 The Sustainable Energy Working Group presented its terms of reference to the CSP on 16th January 2012 and is awaiting formal endorsement. It will then develop a work programme to support the delivery of recommendations of this panel that relate to citywide work (3, 5, 10, 11, 12 and 13). This group brings expert knowledge and experience across relevant sectors including energy efficiency retrofit, microgeneration and community energy.
- 3.2.6 A City Energy Study is currently being scoped to inform the development of the City Plan, planned for March 2012.
- 3.2.7 The council's Energy and Water Team will produce a report on feasibility and costs for the Heat Mapping exercise, programmed for autumn 2012.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The scrutiny panel met four times and heard evidence in public from a wide range of contributors.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The implications of the Government's feed in tariff review continue to be assessed. The corporate Solar PV programme will focus on Council buildings within the Workstyles programme. Policy development to take recommendations forward on renewables and sustainable energy will include an investment options appraisal and identify any additional resource requirements.

Finance Officer consulted: Anne Silley Date 23 February 2012

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The purpose of this report is to enable the Overview & Scrutiny Commission to monitor progress against the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel on Renewable Energy Potential. The Panel's recommendations were referred to Cabinet in July 2011 for executive response and action planning. In monitoring progress against those recommendations and actions, the Commission is entitled to refer specific matters back to Cabinet for further consideration. Equally, the Commission may refer matters to a Cabinet member or a council committee, if appropriate.

Lawyer consulted: Oliver Dixon Date: 24 February 2012

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The Housing PV report considered fuel poverty, and the role of renewables in the council and rental sector. Ongoing work through the officers working group and Sustainable Energy Working Group will be subject to review against the City Sustainability Partnership checklist.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Further progress towards the meeting the recommendations of this panel will help to develop the city's capacity for renewable energy, and support the council's One Planet approach to sustainability, in particular the Zero Carbon principle, and contribute to one of the five key outcomes of the city's Climate Change Strategy (2011).

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None identified.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Failure to mitigate against unpredictable future energy price and availability of supply for purchased electricity, gas and oil; and unsustainable energy bills and future budget pressure risks.

There is an opportunity for the council to lead the city by example, support the expansion of renewables, and stimulate the environmental industries sector across the city.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 This work support the council's corporate plan priority to create a more sustainable city, and supports the delivery of the city's Climate Change Strategy

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel on Renewable Energy Potential, Cabinet response and progress against the recommendations.

Documents in Members' Rooms/ Background Documents

None.