

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

22 MARCH 2006 AT 5.00 PM

BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Edmond Smith (Convenor), Councillors Battle, Cobb, Forester, Hazelgrove, Mallender, Older, Pidgeon and Willows

Also present: Mark Strong, Chris Todd, Beth Simmons

Apologies received from Councillor Davidson

PART ONE

57. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

57a Declarations of Substitutes

- 57.1 Councillor Pidgeon for Councillor Kemble.
Councillor Older for Councillor Mrs Theobald.
Councillor Willows for Councillor Oxley.

Beth Simmons represented the Environment Agency and will continue to do so while Alan Hopkins works on matters relating to the drought.

57b Declarations of Interest

- 57.2 Councillors Forester and Older declared a prejudicial interest as members of Planning Applications Sub-Committee in Item 63 and refrained from discussing or voting on the recommendation relating to the Preston Barracks site.

57c Exclusion of Press and Public

- 57.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any items contained in the agenda, having regard to the nature of the business to be transacted and the nature of the proceedings and the likelihood as to whether, if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100A(3) or 1001 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 57.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items on the agenda.

58. MINUTES

58.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2006 be approved and signed by the Convenor, subject to amending paragraph 52.3, where it refers to "Page 28" by deleting the words "by discouraging cars from entering the city".

58a. UPDATE

58.2 The Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy reported that the Draft Climate Change Action Plan had been revised with the Commission's comments. Rather than sending out individual copies of the full document, the public consultation would consist of leaflets aimed at residents and businesses referring them to a web link.

59. CONVENOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

59.1 The Convenor had attended an international cycling conference. There had been a particularly informative presentation on the town of Odense, Denmark.

59.2 Members were invited to attend a Presentation about New Road on 23 March at 2 pm.

59.3 A Legibility Conference had been scheduled for 28 March at 6 pm at the Quality Inn. (The date might be changed subject to the public sector strike.)

59.4 The Convenor reported on the Sustrans Conference in Brighton.

59.5 The Convenor referred to recent media coverage of the inadequate cycling facility at Jubilee Library. Contrary to press reports, the council was still in discussion with the developer.

59.6 **RESOLVED** - That the Convenor write to the owners of the Jubilee Square development, Keir, stating that the Sustainability Commission wishes to see better provision for cycle storage in the Square.

60. GREEN ARCHITECTURE DAY

60.1 The Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy reported on Green Architecture Day. 115 people, including architects and engineers, had attended and there had been a number of interesting presentations. Francesca Iliffe, Sustainability Officer, had made a presentation on the city's more sustainable buildings. The organisers had requested that the council support the Day again. It was agreed that a report of the Day be appended to the minutes (see appendix).

60.2 It was noted that the Sustainability Officer was working with City Planning on a Supplementary Planning Document on Refurbishment and New Build. The Commission agreed that they would wish to see tax incentives for eco-renovation work or grants under Government's new Microgeneration Strategy.

60.3 The Commission emphasised the importance of mainstreaming sustainability in schools and education. It was agreed to invite an officer from Children, Families and Schools to report to a future meeting.

60.4 Mr R Scott raised the possibility of the council undertaking a pilot project in private sector housing to insulate Regency properties, which are not eligible for grants under the

Warm Front Scheme. It was agreed that officers should investigate.

61. SCOPING OF THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT SITES AND THE PROTECTED SPECIES SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

61.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment regarding the process to ensure sustainability is at the heart of both the Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Document and the Protected Species Supplementary Planning Document and setting out the recommended amendments to the scoping of the sustainability appraisal (see minute book).

61.2 Members were informed that the Wildlife Advisory Group is consulted on SPDs but not the Sustainability Appraisal or Scoping. It was recommended that the Strategic Planning Team should consult the WAG at the Scoping stage in future.

61.3 The Commission continued to be concerned about its own involvement in the Scoping of sustainability appraisals. It had previously resolved that it did not wish to receive the full reports, yet it was difficult to understand the recommendations in the briefer reports. The Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy requested members to trust his staff's professionalism. It was agreed that members should contact Anne Hugh-White in Strategic Planning if they had any further comments.

61.4 **RESOLVED** – That the amendments set out in Appendix One to the report be endorsed as the official comments of the Commission on the scoping of the sustainability appraisal of the Nature Conservation and Development Sites and the Protected Species Supplementary Planning Documents.

62. THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT OF BRIGHTON & HOVE

62.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment concerning the recent ecological footprint of Brighton & Hove produced by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) (see minute book).

62.2 John Patmore regretted that the footprint was humanocentric and did not take the natural environment or other species into account.

62.3 While the Commission agreed that the footprint was a useful tool, the Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy advised that it would cost £7,000 (at least) for the SEI to take this work forward. He added that there were other sources of data that might be used to provide a baseline and an annual comparison. The Convenor suggested that it might be more valuable to spend the money on action rather than obtaining more data. However, it was felt that the 2020 Community Partnership should investigate the best way forward. The Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy was asked to report the Commission's views to the 2020 Community Partnership and to feedback the Partnership's decisions.

62.4 **RESOLVED** – That the city's 2020 Community Partnership be urged to adopt the Footprint as a tool in gauging the impact of the city, and to adopt an aim to reduce it.

63. WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP: MINUTES OF 17 JANUARY 2006

63.1 The Ecologist reported on the recommendations in his report (see minute book). He stated that the Preston Barracks Project Manager had assured him that the wildlife corridor was protected on the plans and that it would also be protected on the adjacent site of Watts Bank. He also confirmed that there would be a Protocol on tree clearance on railway embankments in place shortly.

63.2 Clarification was given, in regard to the paragraph in the WAG minutes referring to Brighton Marina Planning Application, that the welfare of wildlife had been considered but had not formed part of the reason for refusal.

63.3 RESOLVED – That the Commission

- Supports the WAG's recommendations to Policy & Resources Committee that the Assistant Director Economic Development and Regeneration be instructed to ensure that integrity of the wildlife corridor to the west of the Preston Barracks site is conserved as part of any future redevelopment of the site.
- Requests that the Arboriculture and Countryside Teams liaise with Network Rail to agree a written protocol for dealing with tree clearance along railway lines and report on progress with this to a future Commission meeting.

64. TACKLING THE DROUGHT: COUNCIL ACTION

64.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment containing an update on the serious water shortage situation in Sussex and planned actions: the Sustainability Conference and Water Events (see minute book).

64.2 Beth Simmons advised members on the severity of the current situation. The Commission noted that Southern Water had applied to the Environment Agency for a Drought Order. Members were informed that the council would work to support businesses that use water (eg car washes) during the drought and that there will be a special weekend at Stanmer Nurseries in May demonstrating how to plant and care for dry weather gardens.

64.3 Councillor Forester had attempted to purchase a diverter for a water butt. She had found that hoses and sprinklers were abundant on the shelves and apparently selling well, while the limited stock of diverters had been almost invisible. It was agreed that the Convenor should write to B&Q and other distributors pointing out that there was a ban on the use of hoses and sprinklers. This letter should be copied to Seeda and Southern Water. Mark Strong suggested that the council should compile a register of water butt fitters in Brighton & Hove.

64.4 Mark Strong pointed out that the report did not mention water meters. Councillor Mallender stated that there should be individual meters in HMOs; shared meters did not encourage people to save.

64.5 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the report and the seriousness of the water shortage situation be noted.

(2) That the Chief Executive should ensure immediate action to reduce water use throughout all council operations and services.

65. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

65.1 Chris Todd reported that the LSP was intending to restructure and to invite the Commission to be a partner. The Community Strategy had been revised to include reduced carbon emission. The section on indicators was currently under revision.

65A ADDENDUM

The Convenor has agreed that this information, provided by David Braund, can be added to these minutes:

David Braund and Roy Newell attended the Sustainability Commission meeting as representatives of the Brighton & Hove Online Issues Forum steering committee. The forum has been going for about a year now and was set up under the government's e-democracy initiative for encouraging local democracy by online discussion of relevant local issues. A useful archive of over 200 such issues has already been established on the website at <http://e-democracy.org/brighton-hove>. There is also the chance to join in any of the active threads or start you own thread. The more people have their say, the more valuable the forum will become and the more local movers and shakers will take note of it.

The meeting concluded at 6.40 pm.

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2006