

Brighton & Hove City Council

For general release.

Meeting: Sustainability Commission
Date: November 1 2006
Report of: Director of the Environment
Subject: Sustainability Conference Themes 2007 and 2008
Ward(s) affected: All

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To seek the Commission's views on proposed Sustainability Conference themes for 2007 and 2008.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Sustainability Commission instructs the Sustainability Team to develop an annual conference on the themes of Education for Sustainable Development in 2007, and Biodiversity in 2008.

3. Background

- 3.1 Over the past four years, the annual Sustainability Conference organised by the council has grown in popularity and credibility to become a highlight in the year and an important platform for learning and developing ideas in the city.
- 3.2 Previous themes have covered Water shortage (2006) Climate change (2005), Sustainable Community Strategy (2004) with the 2020 Community Partnership, Sustainable Business (2003) and Sustainable City (2002).
- 3.3 Between 150 and 200 people locally attend the conference each year and feedback and experience have shown that it is important to begin planning early in order to make it as valuable as possible.

4. 2007 and 2008 Themes

- 4.1 Officers in the Sustainability Team have considered options for future conference themes and have liaised with the University of Brighton/Engineering for Excellence, who also organise an annual sustainability conference in the city.
- 4.2 Education for Sustainable Development emerged as the top preference due to:
- The team's expanding work on Eco-Schools – there are now 45 across the city.
 - Adult and Community Learning's successful pilot programme, Neighbourhood Action on Climate Change developed with the University of Brighton.
 - The Department for Education & School's recent commitment to support a Sustainable Schools programme as part of the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy.
 - The significant role played by the two universities locally in this field.
 - The increasing role of voluntary and not-for-profit organisations in Brighton & Hove in Sustainable Development.
 - The onus being put on all learning development organisations and institutions on integrating sustainable development into their curricula and performance, work which would benefit locally from good practice lessons from further afield.
- 4.3 Nonetheless, while there was a strong feeling from the team that the "time was right" for this theme in 2007, the theme of Biodiversity was also felt to be overdue for the conference and it is recommended that this be adopted for 2008 so that planning can begin early.
- 4.4 The date proposed currently for the 2007 conference is March 20 or 21. Venue options are currently being explored.

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<p>Financial implications The conference will be staged within the current resources available and will cost in the region of £3,500. The 2006 event managed to secure sponsorship of £2,000 to reduce the overall cost to the council and this will be sought again in future years. Alasdair Ridley 20/10/06</p>
<p>Legal implications There are no legal implications which need to be drawn to the attention of the Commission in connection with this report. John Heys Principal Solicitor 18/10/06</p>

<p>Corporate/Citywide implications The annual Sustainability Conference has grown in significance and attendance for the city over the past few years and helps shape policies and plans locally.</p>	<p>Risk assessment There is a risk that sponsorship will not be secured, but this should not prevent the conference from taking place on a relatively modest scale. There is always a risk with a free conference that demand outstrips supply and this needs to be managed carefully. There can be a risk of preaching to the converted, and this must be managed through marketing. There is a risk that different political control post May 2007 may take a different view of the conference and proposed theme.</p>
<p>Sustainability implications Both education and biodiversity are central to sustainability.</p>	<p>Equalities implications Equalities issues are central to education work. Conference monitoring has led to increased targeting of marketing to under-represented groups in the city.</p>
<p>Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder None anticipated.</p>	

Background papers

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sustainability

Contact Officers

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