

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

4 JUNE 2003

5.00 P.M.

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Edmond-Smith (Convenor), Councillor Mallender, Meadows, McCaffery, Norman, Older, Peltzer Dunn, Theobald and Tonks.

PART 1

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1A Declaration of Substitutes

1A.1 Councillor For Councillor
Older Mrs Cobb

1B Declaration Of Interests

1B.1 There were none.

1C Exclusion Of Press And Public

1C.1 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.

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

2. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

2.1 Chair welcomed new Members to the meeting and introduced Karen Gardham, the newly appointed Sustainability Co-ordinator.

- 2.2 A Sustainability Conference would be held on 23rd June, this would focus on sustainability and business.
- 2.3 Global Action Plan will work with the Sustainability Team on a waste minimisation programme, recruiting members of staff as 'Environment Champions'.
- 2.4 The Commission no longer had a Deputy Convenor. In her absence Convenor would expect the Commission to nominate a member to take the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- 3.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2003 be agreed.
- 3.2 Members noted that (min.52a) the Project Team on the Preston Barracks site were keen about the principles of the BedZed project (as previously discussed by the Commission).
- 3.3 Members noted that (min 52b) that members of the Farm Policy Steering Group would be meeting with DEFRA to discuss their views on farm policy.
- 3.4 Members noted the (min52c) successful Food Conference held in April. A Brighton & Hove Food Partnership was in the early stages of formation, and a 'draft mission statement' with 'aims and objectives' had been developed. Funding was being sought to implement the aims of the partnership.
- 3.5 Members noted that (min 52d) a meeting would soon be taking place to discuss the planning guidance for renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- 3.6 Chair invited the Director of Human Resources to update the Commission as to the progress of the Staff Travel Plan (STP)
- 3.7 Director informed the meeting that staff had been able to spend more time looking at the STP and were considering the following:
- Abolishing the administration fee for season tickets for staff travel.
 - Introducing free loans for staff to buy a bicycle.
 - Introducing an allowance for staff who cycle to work.
 - Improving showering and changing facilities used by staff cyclists.
 - Investigating discounted bus travel for staff.
 - Extending flexible working hours.

- 3.8 Director informed the meeting that other, similar Authorities had been consulted on their STP, chiefly Southampton and Surrey.
- 3.9 Mark Strong (English Regions Cycling Development Team) offered to assist in the development of the STP
- 3.10 Director noted Members concerns for a timetable showing the progress of the STP and suggestions that STP guidelines used in the Planning process might prove useful. The lack of useful cycle racks at Brighton Town Hall and other council venues was also noted.

4. STANMER ORGANICS PRESENTATION

- 4.1 The Commission received a presentation from representatives of Stanmer Organics (for briefing notes, see minute book).
- 4.2 Members accepted an invitation to the Stanmer Organics site. (An open day was being held on 28th June 2003)
- 4.3 Members noted that future funding for the project had not yet been determined because of a question about security of tenure at the site. This was currently under review and would be reported to the Environment Committee.
- 4.4 The Commission felt it important to get the review completed as soon as possible.
- 4.5 Members commented on the low profile of the project. Representatives explained that the first few years had focussed on setting up and sustaining the project. 'Going public' was the next phase.
- 4.6 It was not possible for the Stanmer Organics to be totally self sufficient as the project was made up of many individual groups. Some of these were virtually self-sufficient. Others that offered, for instance, training or education could not. However the aim was to increase the self-sustainability as the whole project developed.
- 4.7 Members discussed the impact of increased visitors to Stanmer Park (location of Stanmer Organics) and the effect that larger numbers of vehicles may have. Representatives commented that the improvement in foot access to the park would mean minimal impact for the area as a whole. Chair commented that the bus service to the area would be part of the overall review.

- 4.8 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Sustainability Commission recognise the work carried out at Stanmer Organics and hope this will continue.
(2) That the support of the Sustainability Commission be taken into account during the review of the lease.

5. FAIR TRADE CITY PRESENTATION

- 5.1 The Commission received a presentation from representatives of Oxfam about Fair Trade (see appendix 'A').
- 5.2 Oxfam Representatives suggested that Brighton & Hove become a Fair Trade City.
- 5.3 Members were supportive of the idea, but hoped that it would be more than a gimmick and would have ongoing benefits. Representatives explained that becoming a Fair Trade City was the beginnings of a process that would hopefully have greater benefits as the project developed.
- 5.4 Members discussed the relationship between outlets and suppliers and the draft vision contained within the Food Partnership. Chair commented that it was important to ensure that there was compatibility between Fair Trade and local food producers.
- 5.5 Commission felt that younger people were most likely to be receptive to the idea of Brighton & Hove becoming a Fair Trade City.
- 5.6 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the presentation be noted.
(2) That officers be requested to prepare a report to Policy & Resources Committee seeking support for the Sustainability Commissions proposal that the City of Brighton a& Hove become a Fair trade City.
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6. BRIGHTON & HOVE CAR CLUB - PRESENTATION

- 6.1 The Commission received a presentation from Mark Hillyer of Smart Moves about Car Clubs.
- 6.2 Members of a car club would pay an initial joining fee (somewhere in the region of £100.00) and then rent a car for £2.50 (approx.) per hour. Longer journeys would be at a negotiated rate.

- 6.3 A car club would be supported by a named individual who would be on call in case of emergency or breakdown. Funding and 'pump priming' for the set up of the club could come from the Lottery and other grants / funding streams.
- 6.4 Existing car clubs were most heavily used at weekends and during the evening. The need to maximise use throughout the day was important for future viability.
- 6.5 Existing car rental outlets had found that car clubs in the same vicinity increased their trade. For car club members, it was more economical to rent a hire car for a number of days than to use a car club vehicle. Car club vehicles made economic sense for members for short use, but for longer journey or longer use, hire cars were cheaper.
- 6.6 Car clubs were non-profit making organisations. They required approximately 15-18 users per vehicle to break even. Edinburgh car club had approx. 200+ members.
- 6.7 The proposed Hanover car club was asking residents to pledge to sign to the scheme, to see if it was viable.
- 6.8 Members discussed the complex funding issues and opportunities available to help assist the formation of a car club in the Hanover area.

6.9 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the presentation be noted.

(2) That officers be requested to prepare a report to Policy and Resources

Committee seeking support for the Sustainability Commissions proposal that the Hanover Car Club be the basis for a City Car Club

7. **SUMMARY STRATEGY - BRIGHTON & HOVE'S HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

- 7.1 The Commission considered a report of the Acting Director of Environment requesting the Commission's comments and inviting its endorsement of the Strategy (for copy see minute book).
- 7.2 Members welcomed the report and hoped that the theory would be put into practice as soon as possible.

7.3 Councillor Mrs Theobald was particularly concerned about the dovecote in Patcham. Officers reported that a funding report regarding the dovecote was in preparation.

7.4 Members made the following general points on the report:

- Registered concern about the shift from CAAG to a Design Panel. If this was to happen Members would need to be ensured that the make up of the Panel reflected the conservation and sustainability expertise in the City.
- The method of selection for any Design Panel should be open and transparent
- Street signs and clutter should be reduced from the street scene.
- Practice should take into account the Bio-Diversity Action Plan.

7.5 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Acting Director of Environment be instructed to report the comments of the Commission to the Environment Committee for its consideration.

8. GM FOODS. 'THE PUBLIC DEBATE'

8.1 **RESOLVED** - Members noted a public debate to be held on 9th July at the Pelham Theatre, Pelham Tower Building, City College Brighton & Hove, Pelham Street.

9. SCHOOL BIO DIVERSITY AUDIT

9.1 The Commission considered a report of the Acting Director of Environment informing Members on progress with the development of a Bio-diversity Action Plan (BAP) for Brighton & Hove and to seeking approval for the publication of a bio-diversity audit of school grounds in the City.

9.2 Members were concerned that action had been too slow regarding the implementation of the Bio-Diversity Action Plan. Members felt colleagues needed reminding that the plan was a corporate one and not just the responsibility of the Environment Committee. The timetable for the plan was queried, but accepted as flexible and workable.

9.3 Members discussed the possibility of producing a leaflet for people who had a garden, which gave information on the plan.

9.4 A sub-committee of the Wildlife Advisory Group was overseeing the development of the BAP for Brighton & Hove.

- 9.5 Members requested that the foreword to the plan be amended to underscore the importance of resident's gardens to bio-diversity. This was agreed.
- 9.6 Chair introduced Jenny Bowen, from the Wildlife Advisory Group (WAG). Jenny explained that WAG had been inaugurated in 1999, it's aim was to help implement 'Wildlife for People', council's Wildlife Strategy, with local groups and specialist conservation bodies.
- 9.7 Jenny reported that since the demise of the Open Spaces Sub-Committee WAG had lost their formal link with the council. Attempts to develop links with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) had, so far been unsuccessful.
- 9.8 Chair would be meeting with the Chair of the LSP and would take this issue forward under the remit of 'attractive city'.
- 9.9 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the timetable for development of a City BAP as set out in the report be endorsed.
- (2) That the school grounds biodiversity audit report and its recommendations (see Appendix 1) be endorsed for publication; and in particular that:
- (3) A steering group be established to produce and co-ordinate implementation of a BAP for school grounds.
- (4) The steering group should establish a children's biodiversity advisory group, to contribute to the development and implementation of the BAP.

The meeting concluded at 8.10pm

Signed

Chair

This

day of

2003