

City Sustainability Partnership Meeting - Monday 18th May 2009

Jury's Inn, 101 Stroudley Road, Brighton

Public Services:

Councillor Paul Steedman
Councillor David Watkins
Councillor Tony Janio
Councillor Ayas Fallon-Khan
Alison Hadfield, Eco Schools
Stuart Laing, University of Brighton – **Chair**

Business

Lorraine Bell – Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce

Community and Voluntary Sector

Chris Todd, Friends of the Earth – **Vice Chair**
Vic Else - Brighton & Hove Food Partnership
Angela Marlow – Brighton & Hove Wildlife Advisory Group
Phil Belden - South Downs Joint Committee
Jacqui Cuff – Transition Brighton & Hove
Mike Creedy – Brighton Peace & Environment Centre

Agencies

Chris Wick – Environment Agency

Council Officers

Mita Patel - Sustainability Co-ordinator

Partnership manager

Thurstan Crockett - Head of Sustainability & Environmental Policy

Meeting notes

Sarah Costelloe - Administrator, Sustainability

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Gill Mitchell, Thea Allison, Sharon Philips and Jan Jackson send apologies.
- 1.2 New member Cllr Tony Janio, replacing Cllr Denise Cobb as member with responsibility for Sustainability.
- 1.3 Observer - Cllr Ayas Fallon-Khan.

Action - Partnership will elect a new co-chair at the next meeting.

2. Notes/Actions from previous meeting

- 2.1 LAA target paper has been circulated electronically.
- 2.2 Details of future social meeting will be circulated.
- 2.3 Chris Todd and Phil Belden report some progress regarding National Park boundaries and will keep partnership updated.
- 2.4 Sustainable Community Strategy will be ready for consultation June/July.

- 2.5 Vic Else & Mike Creedy are on the panel that will consider the 18 eligible projects submitted under Sustainable Communities Act. They report a good range of projects and are happy to brief the partnership on the forthcoming public process at a later meeting.
- 2.6 The issue of Peak Oil, raised by Cllr Steedman in the previous meeting, cannot be given justice here but will be returned to in a future meeting.
- 2.7 The Sustainability Conference, now that the theme of 'the sea' has been confirmed, should be raised at a future meeting.
- 2.8 **WAG report - actions? item 5 review**

3. Harvest presentation

- 3.1 Vic Else, from Food Partnership, gave a presentation on the successful Harvest lottery bid and current plans for implementation.
- 3.2 **[Summary]** Major launch in September, withholding of information until then.
- 3.3 Lorraine Bell raised the issue of retailer/business access to locally produced food, which has often proved more expensive and therefore not a viable option, particularly in current financial climate. Vic is keen to explore this, and will work with Lorraine to identify appropriate fora for this discussion.
- 3.4 Phil Belden put forward the farm perspective, asking how broad the approach will be and if there will be links to businesses and communities beyond the urban, in the greater South Downs area. Vic explained that the Food Partnership regards it as crucial to work with neighbouring farms.
- 3.5 Marie Harder suggested links to International Biodiversity Year and highlighted research to identify contaminated sites near roads which may present further funding opportunities, and that she would be willing to explore with Food Partnership.
- 3.6 Cllr Steedman asked about communication strategy - will Food Partnership be using tools such as the Channel 4 landshare to tell people about the project?
- 3.7 Cllr David Watkins expressed a feeling of déjà vu and suggested the timing is right for such a project, citing the emphasis on food growing at this year's Chelsea Flower Show as evidence for this.
- 3.8 Cllr Tony Janio raised the possibility that the project may lead to mini-mass production on allotments but was reassured that allotment regulations prevent this. Vic emphasised that if this kind of production were to occur outside allotments, it would be a welcome development if produce were supplying local markets.
- 3.9 Angela Marlow highlighted useful links between aims of food Partnership and mapping work undertaken by Brighton & Hove Wildlife Advisory Group.

4. LAA round table

- 4.1 Most areas in the third quarter Local Area Assessment are amber or green. Some areas in environment section do not have baseline targets established yet. Per capita CO² (p.22-23) is red. This can partly be explained by a 2 year lag in data. 2005-6 emissions remained static against a target 4% reduction. The Audit Commission will be asking if this was achieved in 2008 and, if not, what measures are being taken to address the situation. Is there a sense that the city is moving towards achieving this?

- 4.2 £100k from LSP has been allocated to CSP between now and March '11 towards work focusing on emissions reduction. Some of this could be used to produce an evaluation of where we are now, within the partnership and the LSP, but it is up to the partnership to decide how this money is allocated.
- 4.3 The biggest rise in emissions during 2005-6 were in the business sector, with a slight but relatively low increase in vehicle emissions and a similarly slight increase in emissions from domestic gas and electricity sources. The business sector is an obvious area to target and there is business community interest despite the need to focus on other priorities. Lorraine suggested that while funding may be available to businesses, this isn't seen as a priority. The majority of businesses in the city are SME, making a lot of support inaccessible as it is only available to larger companies. Could the Business Rates team offer lower rates as an incentive for carbon reduction? There are also clear opportunities to work with business support organisations around training and education. There is evidence that peer education delivers strong effects compared to cash incentives, builds capacity and may attract match funding.
- 4.4 Some work around reducing carbon emissions may already have been done via the One Planet Living Plan for Brighton & Hove. This has been produced in draft form and will be finalised after consultation with the new sustainability lead member although there is not yet a clear date for this process to be completed.
- 4.5 Climate and tourism were discussed as factors affecting previous performance. There was also some discussion about the length and scope of potential evaluation work as well as the sufficiency of £100k to achieve targets. Ultimately, although fund may not be enough to achieve aims, asking businesses 'what are you doing?' to cut emissions is still a good idea, presenting value for money opportunities.
- 4.6 There is a need not to lose sight of long term goals, (e.g. 80% reduction in...), to use the opportunity to deliver a long term strategy and to avoid audit targets dictating this. Opportunities to find match funding and work with other organisations doing similar work, such as local sustainable business partnerships, should also be explored. Relating tough targets to the economy is an opportunity to get ahead; the reputation of Brighton & Hove for innovation suggests we are well placed to pick up and lead on the green technology agenda.
- 4.7 There is a need to avoid inadvertently setting other long-term problems in motion and to encourage joined up thinking, for example between planning and transport teams, to avoid ramifications such as the subsidy of car use represented by plans for 950 car parking spaces in London Road. By focusing on one thing, there is always a danger of not for-seeing other consequences. It may be that future resolutions and decisions taken by the partnership should be taken with a clear rider that they should not produce adverse consequences.
- 4.8 As we are unable to determine where main priorities for reducing emissions lie, if audit study can be completed by the end of the summer, this could be a good use of funds. It can be taken to the LSP with a duty to cooperate, the Brighton & Hove Chamber of Commerce can organise an SME survey, with the help of Peter Jenkins. An enquiry into the potential for environmental industries in Brighton & Hove is well underway and will soon produce a strong

sense of action priorities in this area. Thurstan can work with LSP manager to set up early July workshop and draft results by September's CSP meeting. A timeline for OPL draft was requested, as well as a brief guide to the audit process.

Action -

5. Review of previous CSP meetings

- 5.1 Partnership members were invited to share their thoughts about how well they felt the partnership was established and how they would like to see it develop.
- 5.2 The group considered the focus and role of the partnership; as a vehicle for the delivery of shared ambitions under the Sustainable Communities Strategy, as a body with the legitimacy to shape strategy and act as champion to apply moral pressure on council, as an opportunity to meet partners outside the council and build work in other organisations as well as getting the council to do the decent thing.
- 5.3 There is a need to know what the partnership has authority to do, what its teeth are. Without power/authority what is the difference between a council committee and the CSP?
- 5.4 Members felt that work carried out in sub-groups, taking something back to wider partnership, has been satisfying, although meetings seem infrequent. Resourcing sub-groups would be a fruitful use of any additional resources available. Although Thurstan's presence at these meetings is valuable it may not always be necessary.
- 5.5 Knowledge being power, the partnership has the potential to help the council increase knowledge base if resources are limited, or to act as conscience for the council, but there is a need to establish what the pressures are and what can be undertaken. There is also the need to consider the core process, knowledge and documents that should be shared by all partnership members whilst recognising that no-one really knows what 'sustainability' is yet and leaving room for evolution.
- 5.6 Terms of reference give the partnership mandate to *lead* (on OPL, Climate Change Plan), *direct* and *monitor*. Partnership can affect strategy by championing local and national priorities and has as much power as it chooses to exert.
- 5.7 The need for targets & specific outcomes to work towards was discussed. One of the reasons for the success of the sub-groups was specific outcomes. A possible approach may be to focus on one area of terms of reference at a time, eg have we got the right people at the table? This question is difficult to answer without setting specific outcomes.
- 5.8 Consultations are beginning to stack up: delays in timeframe will strain resources and sub-groups will be needed to draft meaningful responses. Stuart suggested a 45 minute full meeting followed by 45 minutes on sub-work could be more effective.
- 5.9 A semblance of an action plan exists in the form of these consultation dates. Once OPL plan and Climate Change Strategy work is completed an overview of what the partnership needs to work on will emerge.
- 5.10 Lorraine raised the idea of using technology (podcasts, social networking sites etc) to discuss ideas before meetings.

- 5.11 Jacqui highlighted the need to focus on proactive as well as reactive work, suggesting the setting up of a proactive/championing subgroup.
- 5.12 Partnership is now moving into a focused phase, with actions focusing on clear targets and Terms of Reference.

Action -

6. Any other business

- 6.1 Possible venue for future meetings was discussed in the context of resourcing issues. PSB & LSP both meet in Jury's Inn - is this being co-ordinated to maximise discount? Has the USP/ marketing advantage of the partnership meeting at the hotel been fully exploited? General agreement that it may be appropriate to look for more inexpensive venue.
Action - TC to look into alternative venue. Partnership members to forward suggestions.
- 6.2 Sustainability Team is clearly struggling to manage the partnership and there was some concern expressed about whether or not efficiency savings will be enough. Some of £100k should be used to support dedicated admin time. Some discussion took place about the feasibility of attracting sponsorship or other match funding but the partnership may not be a strong sponsorship option. Some clarity needed about how restricted this money is but, if possible, general agreement and support for use of money to provide admin support.

