

Subject:	Greater Brighton Low Carbon Economy Blue/Green Print
Date of Meeting:	20 July 2021
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board
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LA(s) affected:	All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Greater Brighton Economic Board ('the Board') is in a good position to help with the national roadmap to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) taking place in Glasgow in November this year. The Board has strategic commitment and allegiance with the GB10 Pledges and recognises that transitioning to a net zero carbon region is vital to sustaining and optimising the economic engine of the south east.
- 1.2 The Board is ideally placed to create a regionalised Investment Plan for transition and investment on land and coastal communities. This will have the ability to strengthen and align public investment, with business investment and could improve consumer confidence. The Board is working with the Greater Brighton Infrastructure Panel on developing a clear narrative that sets out how the wider city region is developing leadership in developing a low-carbon economy.
- 1.3 This narrative, both demonstrates and will show that the Greater Brighton area can be an exemplar to government about how to decarbonise a small city, rural communities and coastal areas. This undertaking will assist the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership and the Greater Brighton Economic Board in future discussions with government and with negotiations on funding.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board agree to the development and production of a net-zero innovation led economy Investment Plan (Blue/Green Print) to use as a lobbying tool. This investment plan will outline the region's investment requirements to be leaders in the UK's green industrial revolution and transition to net zero.
- 2.2 That the Board attend, support and promote the events taking place across the region in the lead up to COP26 this November in Glasgow.
- 2.3 That the Board tasks officers to look at working with other regional partners to host a Greater Brighton led Climate Summit in October 2021 to showcase the work and current aspirations happening within the region as part of the preparation for the road to Cop26. This showcase could demonstrate the benefits

of partner collaboration enhancing our collective action to address the climate crisis whilst promoting economic recovery.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The UK government's intention is to enshrine into law the world's most ambitious climate change target to cut emissions by 78% by 2035, which has accelerated and re-focussed the efforts that need to be made. Many policy announcements have been made to support the effort, with more expected:
- The Build Back Better: our plan for growth (Mar 21) focuses on investment in infrastructure, skills, innovation and transition to net zero.
 - The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (Nov 2020) is about building back better, supporting green jobs, and accelerating the path to net zero.
 - The Energy White Paper - Powering our Net Zero Future (Dec 2020) sets out the government's policies and commitments that will put us on course to net zero.
 - Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy (Mar 2021) sets out how industry can decarbonise whilst remaining competitive and without pushing emissions abroad.
 - The development of green skills. Creating opportunities to develop skills centres under alternative funding structures, by universities and FE colleges working together in partnership. There is the aim to provide a progression pathway for acquiring new skills, retraining, reskilling, upskilling, as part of the preparation for developing new jobs to support the new technologies required to build back, greener.
- 3.2 In order to make a case for green investment in the region, a digital document could be commissioned (a 'Blue/Green Print') to be launched in the run up to COP26. It would serve to showcase the Greater Brighton region as a home to pioneering businesses, new technologies and green innovation as we make progress to net zero emissions, laying the foundations for economic growth in a way that creates thousands of jobs. This will in turn make the case for attracting investment in the region. This Blue/Green Print would take the form of a 'Pitch Document' that would be owned by the city region as a whole, including the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), and form the basis of future negotiations with government about the areas that government could leverage national benefits by investing in. This piece of work can be naturally entwined to support other strands of development, demonstrating a cultural engagement with the green agenda, as it connects threads through other investment opportunities.
- 3.3 A Climate Summit could aim to underscore the urgency and the economic benefits of stronger climate action and could be a key milestone for Greater Brighton on the road to COP 26.
- 3.4 The Greater Brighton Economic Board and the Greater Brighton Infrastructure Panel are well established and regionally recognised bodies which offer local leadership on a number of work strands that are pushing the city region towards a low carbon/post carbon economy. The overarching partnerships with local

authorities, further and higher education partners, business, economic partnerships provide an effective showcase with insight into a variety of issues.

- 3.5 The Infrastructure Panel brings together technical experts and infrastructure providers and there has been some substantive background work that is already underway, and this could be showcased in the Blue/Green Print, including:

The Greater Brighton Energy and Water Plans were developed by the Infrastructure Panel with the aim of unlocking sustainable growth.

- The Energy Plan identifies proposals to accelerate the delivery of energy projects that will boost resilience and security and at the same time help reduce carbon emissions to zero.
- The Water Plan builds on work around the water environment that's already in progress across a number of organisations to set out a range of opportunities to address ongoing challenges in new, innovative ways, yielding much increased benefits for the local area, compared to current, 'conventional' approaches. The intention is to move new development towards 'water neutrality.'

The GB10 Pledges:

- The Economic Board has overseen development of GB10 Pledges that sit above the Energy and Water plans. These 10 environmental pledges are approved actions agreed and ratified by the Board in October 2020. The Pledges, in addition aid as a promotional tool which is used to push the work the city region is doing to move towards a post carbon economy through a variety of channels.
- To accompany the pledges a video has been produced to help bring the pledges and plans to life.
- Green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic is high on Government's priority list and these ambitious environmental pledges are very much in-line with this thinking, as they clearly demonstrate to Government and regional stakeholders the Board's aspiration for the City Region to grow back in a sustainable and responsible way.
- The 10 pledges and the underlying Energy and Water Plans are very much linked to the economic recovery and future prosperity of the City Region.

Examples of the strategic/practical actions as a result of the pledges are:

Kelp Forests

One project championed by the GB10 Pledges is the restoration of the **kelp forests** off the West Sussex coastline being sponsored by the Help Our Kelp partnership. Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority have obtained approval for a new Nearshore Trawling Byelaw. The byelaw creates a trawling prohibition area along the coastline of Sussex to protect important habitats. The kelp forests will be regenerated and act as a carbon sink, as well as improving marine biodiversity. The city region is looking at options for how the kelp can be actively restored as part of a carbon offsetting proposition for businesses in the area. Adur & Worthing Councils are set to become the first local authorities in the UK to lease the seabed off their coast from the Crown Estate and could pave the way to create a Sussex Bay marine park along the entire county coast, east and west.

Hydrogen Sussex

There is great potential and ambition for the development of a hydrogen economy and projects in the region. **Hydrogen Sussex** emerged from the Greater Brighton Energy Plan work and is the body supporting and facilitating the hydrogen economy across Sussex. The city region is well placed to lead on the delivery of a new hydrogen economy because of:

- Natural resources (huge potential for wind and solar)
- Infrastructure (Gatwick & Brighton City Airports / Shoreham & Newhaven Ports and close to London)
- Engineering advantage (Ricardo, Ceres Power, Steamology, Supercritical Solutions)
- Intellectual capital with the research excellence of the universities of Sussex and Brighton.
- Partnership (exceptional public / private sector partnership)

Low Carbon heating

Decarbonisation of housing stock is a priority as it is a key factor in meeting the Government target of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Board is supporting the roll-out of planned heat networks in Crawley, Shoreham, and Worthing. In rural villages it will work with the Community Energy sector on replacing outdated and polluting oil heating with electric heating and other low-carbon fuels. Lewes District Council and The University of Brighton have put together a proposal which seeks to set up a retrofit task force that will short-list practically focussed zero-carbon solutions suitable for decarbonising housing stock. It will put the Greater Brighton Economic Board in a good position to maximise any additional funding streams and fast track the green revolution, future proofing local supply chains and built environment.

- 3.6 The output from this project would be the Blue/Green Print pitch document, which would include with it a co-ordinated pipeline of investment projects that would support transitioning the city region to a net zero economy. The Blue/Green Print would be the strategic narrative and overall strategy and each of the projects in the pipeline would have an outline business case in readiness to pitch for investment.

- 3.7 The main benefit from this work will be to shape the thinking of local government, business partners and the LEP into how they approach a post-carbon economy for the area. Once shaped amongst the partners, it will result in a pitch or proposition that can be communicated to government to drive government interest in the activities of the region and then investment – potentially through deals with government departments rather than relying on the Levelling Up Fund.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 There is a timely and unique opportunity to link with the objectives of COP26, and the ambition, achievement and action of Greater Brighton, which is already underway.
- 4.2 The preliminary showcase for us, prior to COP26, linking the work to the aims of the COP 26, may encourage and permit, thought leaders from the Universities, Innovation Businesses, local government, MPs and possibly Ministers to engage with the summit and lift our National and International positioning, as a place that is proactive in formulating a cultural shift aligned to development and practical actions.

5. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The project will start by bringing the key stakeholders together in the run up to COP26 to affirm what the ambition and ‘Blue/Green Print’ plan is for the city region going forward. It should include aligning local authority leaders and MPs in order that any potential pitch and proposition to government around COP26 and regional decarbonisation is understood and signed up for
- 6.2 The output from this project would be the Blue/Green Print pitch document, which would include with it a co-ordinated pipeline of investment projects that would support transitioning the city region to a net zero economy. The Blue/Green Print would be the strategic narrative and overall strategy and each of the projects in the pipeline would have an outline business case in readiness to pitch for investment.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Any cost in relation to the Greater Brighton led, SE7 wide Climate Summit in October 2021 and the development and production of a SE7 net-zero innovation Investment Plan will be met from the Greater Brighton Economic Board operation budget for the current year.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen, Principal Accountant Date: 05/07/21

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 At this stage, there are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Lawyer Consulted:

Joanne Dunyaglo

Date: 05/07/2021

