

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4.00PM 4 APRIL 2011

COMMITTEE ROOM 3, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Morgan (Chairman); Janio (Deputy Chairman), Davis, Drake, A Norman and Rufus

PART ONE

44. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

44.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting – the last of the 4-year electoral cycle.

44a Declarations of Substitutes

44.2 There were none.

44b Declarations of Interests

44.3 Councillors Ann Norman and Warren Morgan declared personal interests in Item 49, as owners of well-behaved dogs.

44c Declaration of Party Whip

44.4 There were none.

44d Exclusion of Press and Public

44.5 In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, it was 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 100I (1) of the said Act.

RESOLVED: That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

45. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2011

45.1 The Chairman advised that a report on pedestrian crossings prioritisation (minutes Item 39) is scheduled to be presented to 26 May Environment CMM.

45.2 RESOLVED; that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2011 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

46. CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

46.1 No-one from this Committee had been able to attend the South Downs National Park Authority Seminar on 23 March; instead of a verbal update, presentation handouts were being tabled here.

47. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/ LETTERS FROM COUNCILLORS/REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES/NOTICES OF MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

47.1 There were none.

48. RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL - REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL

48.1 The Chairman Councillor Morgan welcomed Dr Adrian Smith, researcher on sustainable energy systems at Sussex University and Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel on Renewable Energy Potential. The Scrutiny Panel also comprised Councillors Morgan, West and Watkins.

48.2 Dr Smith said he was pleased to have chaired the Scrutiny Panel, which gave the opportunity to promote renewable energy locally and to take a closer look at policy and innovation and community energy projects.

48.3 The Panel held four public witness sessions hearing evidence from 25 people as detailed in the report. It investigated the status and potential of renewable energy and considered the role the Council could adopt on city-scale projects and programmes over the short and medium term. It did not focus on large schemes such as offshore wind farms; or wave and tidal technologies for which in any case Brighton & Hove is not well placed. Energy efficiency and reduction in energy demand, though clearly linked, were also beyond the Panel's remit.

48.4 Transitional technologies such as combined heat and power and district heating schemes were investigated. National and local policies also helped inform the report.

48.5 Dr Smith highlighted the six main lessons identified:

- 1) Reliable technologies do exist for a range of diverse situations. Therefore policies and activities need to be tailored for different technical and business models.
- 2) There are several developments happening in the City for example at least 10 planning-driven exemplars for both newbuilds and refurbishments
- 3) Renewable energy is not an end in itself but also a means to other goals including;
 - a) Economic development – local finance stays local, with a multiplier effect
 - b) Tackling fuel poverty

- c) Underpinning energy security – energy prices likely to rise affect business competitiveness and household wellbeing
 - d) Providing a focus for apprenticeships and skills development – linked with a finding of the Environmental Industries scrutiny review
 - e) Helping deliver sustainability goals by cutting the carbon footprint, helping reduce climate change; and potentially reducing food waste.
 - f) Developing the City's reputation for sustainability
- 4) There were new opportunities in the energy market such as feed-in tariffs and others, which would then attract further development and help retain investment locally. The national picture is fast-moving. Other areas are ahead of Brighton & Hove so the city needs to 'step up' and promote more learning, if it wishes to commit to renewable energy.
- 5) Renewable energy opportunities need a wide range of skills which do exist within different parts of the Council and across organisations but which need coordination. Since renewable energy is not the core business of one individual, expertise seems fragmented. For example laudable solar photovoltaic schemes in council housing could be extended to social landlords and the private sector; and a policy on this would be helpful.
- 6) Effective leadership plays a large part in actioning policies. The City does have entrepreneurs, investors, advocates and community groups but they need coordinating, supporting and empowering.
- 48.6 Dr Smith outlined the scrutiny recommendations as set out in the report. At Recommendation 2 he pointed out that renewable energy was not part of 'everyday business' for landowners and landlords. The heat mapping in Recommendation 7 would indicate the sources of major heat demand and where for example energy from food waste could be suitable. The City's vision about renewable energy was key, as referred to in Recommendation 12. At Recommendation 13 he stressed that energy companies were indeed getting interested in rolling out alternative energy programmes. Community groups could well become an integral part in a broad package for sustainable energy in the future.
- 48.7 Dr Smith thanked the Panel Members, people who gave evidence and the scrutiny team; and commended the report for ECSOSC to endorse.
- 48.8 Members noted the short timescale for local authorities to take up financial incentives and the need for a 'step change' if alternative energy was to be taken seriously. Recommendation 1 was for the Strategic Director Place to publish in 3 months time the council's investment plans for sustainable and renewable energy.
- 48.9 There was discussion on the potential in the City for energy from food waste, for instance from restaurants.
- 48.10 Answering questions Dr Smith said there was no single answer to whether one technology or another was more effective for newbuild and/or retro-fitting. Solar photovoltaic cells were suitable in many instances – not only on south-facing roofs of new buildings, for example. Various technologies could provide large quantities of

renewable energy and each could be tailored to the circumstances. Therefore coordination of knowledge and skills were essential. Leadership was needed to harness local enthusiasm, enable local opportunities to be taken and to work with developers.

48.11 Location-specific factors and maximising financial returns were both important. However the aftermath of the 1970s energy crisis had shown that European countries that had kept up investment in alternative energy technologies such as wind and solar power were now benefiting in terms of sustainability and job creation.

48.12 Dr Smith said there was cross-party support for sustainable energy and national policy was moving in the 'right direction' but there was still a question of scale and timing.

48.13 On behalf of the Committee the ECSOSC Chairman thanked the Panel for their work on an interesting and important subject and for producing a landmark report.

48.14 The Committee agreed the outcomes of the scrutiny review and asked for the Executive reply to be reported back to ECSOSC. Members wished for a monitoring report 6 months after the actions have been agreed.

48.15 **RESOLVED** that

1) the scrutiny panel report be endorsed

2) the report be referred to the Council's Executive, the appropriate partner organisations and to full Council

3) the Council's investment plans relating to recommendation 1 be reported to Members

4) a six-month monitoring report be requested back to ECSOSC

49. DOG FOULING IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

49.1 The Environmental Health Manager introduced the report on dog fouling and set the context of the work of the environmental health team, which comprises the equivalent of 4.1 full-time officers.

49.2 He told the meeting that during the year the team had collected 400 stray dogs, of which 125 were reported 'out of office hours'. There were 222 investigations of animal welfare, plus 17 animal cruelty cases and 239 incidents of dog attacks.

49.3 Including inspections of pet shops and zoos miscellaneous inquires and miscellaneous, this amounted to more than 2,000 recorded activities in the year. Of these there were 226 patrols and 293 investigations dealing with dog fouling.

49.4 The Environmental Health Manager referred to the large areas of the city that could be affected by dog fouling and were all patrolled; around 200 open spaces, historic squares and cemeteries, coastline and thousands of streets.

49.5 There had been big improvements compared with twenty years ago when there was no requirement to pick up after dogs. Dog Control Orders had been introduced under recent

legislation and dogs were banned from children's play areas. Park ranges and seafront officers had been trained in collecting evidence to be used in court; there were now 20 authorised and equipped officers.

49.6 There was already close working with partners including the Police, Local Action Teams and Friends of the Parks plus RSPCA. It was the Irresponsible dog owners – who are only the minority of dog owners - that needed to be dealt with.

49.7 Brighton & Hove had a record of innovation nationally, being the first local authority to bring a successful prosecution on animal mutilation and the first to develop a code of conduct for professional dog walkers. The Environmental Health Manager was proud of the team, who worked well beyond the call of duty.

49.8 Members were pleased at the work in progress and agreed that the town centres had improved over the years. But they stressed that dog fouling was unacceptable particularly in places where children play. It had been identified in a Citizen's Panel survey as of higher priority even than animal cruelty.

49.9 The Committee discussed patterns of behaviour of irresponsible dog owners plus the difficulties of gathering robust evidence and issuing penalty charge notices. Some 'hotspot' areas were flagged up.

49.10 There were a number of suggestions for example on innovative types of scientific evidence for use in court, further publicity and work with dog-walker businesses and 'communities' of dog owners and the potential role of additional officers such as PCSOs.

49.10 Members were supportive of the team's work and thanked the officers. They asked that their positive ideas be followed up and agreed to refer the report with the minutes of the meeting to Environment CMM.

49.11 **RESOLVED** 1) that the report be noted
2) That the report and minutes of this meeting be referred to Environment CMM.

50. ECSOSC DRAFT WORK PLAN

50.1 Members noted the work plan. It was suggested that the CPZ be referred on to the next cycle of ECSOSC meetings.

51. ITEMS TO BE REFERRED TO CABINET MEMBER, CABINET OR FULL COUNCIL

51.1 Members noted that the Renewable Energy Potential scrutiny report (Item 48) was being referred to the Executive and on to full council.

51.2 Item 49 on dog fouling would be passed to the Environment CMM.

At the end of the meeting the Chairman thanked all the Members for their hard work on the Committee.

On behalf of the Committee Councillor Ann Norman thanked the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 5.15pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of