

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>European Commission Covenant of Mayors on Climate Change</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup> January 2013</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Strategic Director, Place</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Mita Patel, Senior Sustainability Consultant</b>	<b>Tel: 29-3332</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 The Covenant of Mayors is a voluntary European Commission initiative involving local authorities from across Europe to formally commit to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions beyond EU 20% targets by 2020 from the baseline year of 1990. It has now been signed by over 4,000 cities throughout Europe. Signing would directly support the city council's Corporate Plan priority – creating a more sustainable city.
- 1.2 This report presents the key reasons for Brighton & Hove to sign the Covenant and seeks approval to sign up to the Covenant of Mayors and its commitment to meet and exceed the EU 20% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction objective through increased energy efficiency and development of renewable energy sources. By signing the Covenant, leaders of cities and towns commit to developing, within a year, a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP). It is proposed that this would be drawn directly from key city sections of the One Planet Living Sustainability Action Plan, to avoid duplication.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Policy & Resources Committee approves the city council becoming a signatory to the Covenant of Mayors.

**3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

**Background and current activity**

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council set out its commitment to address the causes of climate change and to prepare the community for its impact when it signed the [Nottingham Declaration in July 2004](#). In subsequent years, this resulted in a series of activities, initiatives and projects that helped in supporting this commitment.

- 3.2 The [Brighton & Hove City Climate Change Strategy](#) produced in 2011 provided a framework for achieving the city's carbon reduction target as set out in the Brighton & Hove Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.3 More recently these commitments are being structured and identified within the context of a detailed set of actions set out in the [Brighton & Hove One Planet Living Sustainability Action Plan](#). Amongst a broader set of sustainability actions, this action plan will identify and commit partners both within the council and across the city to actions that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
- 3.4 This is in the context of the city needing to re-double its efforts if its own targets are to be met. These are not directly comparable with the EU minimum target of 20% because of the different baseline year, but modelling can provide a clear comparison and the city would be expected to confirm its higher target. The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) commits the City to reducing carbon emissions by 42% by 2020, and by 80% by 2050, from a 2005 baseline of 5.7 tonnes per person.
- 3.5 The latest year for which direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were measured – 2010 – was a bad year for emissions, largely due to poor insulation against very cold winters at the beginning and end of the year. As a result the city achieved only a 12.28% reduction in per capita measured emissions between 2005 and 2010 against a target of 20%. The figures for South East (13.41%) and England (13.85%), are both slightly better than Brighton and Hove's.

### **The Covenant of Mayors**

- 3.6 The Covenant of Mayors is a voluntary European Commission initiative which has now been signed by over 4,000 cities throughout Europe. Signatory towns and cities commit to go beyond the targets of EU energy policy (20% reduction by 2020 from the baseline year of 1990) in terms of reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through enhanced energy efficiency and cleaner energy production and use. There are 34 UK signatories, including Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Nottingham from the core cities group.
- 3.7 Participating in the Covenant of Mayors initiative would allow Brighton & Hove the opportunity to exchange information, best practice and knowledge with key European cities and gain further support in delivering the City's commitment to tackling climate change on the international stage.
- 3.8 The key requirement for signing the Covenant is the creation and submission of a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) within one year of formally signing the Covenant, and would include a Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI)<sup>1</sup> which outlines how the objectives will be reached. This is new work that needs to be completed already for the Zero Carbon city section of the Sustainability Action Plan, currently in draft form during a further development stage. It is proposed therefore that this is how the SEAP will set out the specific reduction target and define the concrete measures that Brighton & Hove will undertake to achieve it by 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> The Baseline Emission Inventory **quantifies the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> emitted due to energy consumption in the territory of the Covenant signatory**. It allows to identify the principal sources of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and their respective reduction potentials

- 3.9 The city council would then be required to report on the progress that is made in implementing the SEAP.
- 3.10 As carbon emissions make up about half of the city's ecological footprint, they should rightly be the biggest focus for actions within the One Planet Living Sustainability Action Plan and so the opportunity to join the Covenant of Mayors is timely.

#### **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The Council's International Team and City Regeneration Unit have been consulted in developing this proposal; and the city's Sustainable Energy Working Group and City Sustainability Partnership will be consulted at the partnership meeting on January 10 which will have a Zero Carbon and energy focus. The draft OPL Sustainability Action Plan which would include the actions in a Sustainable Energy Action Plan is being discussed with a range of city partners and stakeholders during a further development phase.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### 5.1 Financial Implications:

Membership will not cost the city a subscription. There will be a resource implication for the creation of a baseline emissions inventory but it is not possible to fully cost this yet. The costs are not expected to be significant and could potentially be met through work with the University of Sussex's research-based Sussex Energy Group, supporting the city's Sustainable Energy Working Group. This option will be explored first but if this is not possible then it is anticipated that the costs will be met from within the Sustainability Team's budget.

- 5.2 There is an expectation that the Leader or a senior representative of the city council will attend an annual EU Conference of Mayors. Although this is not obligatory, it is considered useful to attend the first one to participate in an official signing ceremony and evaluate benefits of annual attendance. The costs of this will be met from the Sustainability team's budget. Membership will require a commitment to prepare a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for the city. But the requirements for the SEAP will be delivered through the One Planet Living Sustainability Action Plan.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Jeff Coates*

*Date: 19.12.11*

##### Legal Implications:

- 5.3 Participation in the Covenant of Mayors is a voluntary initiative. It can be agreed using the Council's general power of competence (Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011). The Mayor in the context of this EU programme should be taken to be the Leader of the City Council, rather than the city's ceremonial mayor. There is currently no requirement for local authorities to take action on climate change but the council can choose to do so.

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 18.12.12*

#### Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 Fuel poverty - households spending more than ten per cent of their income on heating - rose to 13.5% in Brighton & Hove in 2010. This is higher than the South East average and so should be the priority focus of carbon reduction activities developed for the SEAP.

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 Participation in the Covenant of Mayors will directly support the commitments for reductions in carbon emissions as set out in the Brighton & Hove Climate Change Strategy, and will support the broader sustainability commitments and activities included in the Brighton & Hove One Planet Living Sustainability Action Plan.

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 None anticipated

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.7 The various risks and opportunities are listed below:

##### Risks for signing include:

- § If we fail to hit city CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction targets in future, it will damage the city's reputation and standing on an even wider stage. The Zero Carbon plan and an extensive energy efficiency and renewables programme in the city should ensure that targets are met; additional modelling and the new city energy study will strongly support this work.
- § If we fail to comply with signatory requirements we could face expulsion from the Covenant of Mayors which could compromise regional and individual funding bids and result in missed opportunities for Brighton & Hove. Clear responsibilities and accountabilities built into business planning should ensure this is avoided.
- § Resourcing the modelling and reporting work and the annual visit might prove more difficult over time as council budgets are squeezed further, though the overall costs involved are likely to be relatively small and should be outweighed by the benefits.

- 5.8 Risks of not signing include:

- § A missed opportunity to improve performance through access to network of signatory cities and European funding.
- § Reduced chance in developing partnerships with other regions, and for securing competitive funding bids.
- § Government and funders wondering why we haven't signed. The Covenant is increasingly being recognised as the new benchmark for cities with

aspirations to develop a low carbon future. There are 34 UK signatories, including Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Nottingham from the core cities group.

5.9 There are clear opportunities that could come from signing and these include:

- § Signing would support our City Deal bid and its aspirations to create a more sustainable city-region with a strong eco technology focus.
- § Providing Brighton & Hove with the opportunity to exchange information, ideas and experience with key European cities and further highlight the City's commitment to tackling climate change on the international stage.
- § The commitment would contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan, in particular in terms of 'a strong and low carbon economy' (P2).
- § The development of a One Planet Living Sustainability Action Plan and a Green Deal approach, making it an appropriate time to join the Covenant of Mayors
- § Signing the Covenant of Mayors would strengthen the city's case when submitting related EU funding bids and, more specifically provide access to alternative funding streams and financial advice from bodies such as the European Investment Bank (EIB); Intelligent Energy Europe fund; and the Smart Cities Fund.
- § Technical support is provided by the Covenant of Mayor's office and the European Commission Joint Research Centre to help signatory cities develop a robust and achievable Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP)
- § Europe-wide recognition of the work being done in the City, which can lead to further investment opportunities and an improved case for further infrastructure grants.
- § The City would not have to reinvent the wheel as experiences of others can be used and adapted to the local context.

#### Public Health Implications:

5.10 None anticipated

#### Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.11 Signing the Covenant of Mayors would enhance the city's reputation and further the chances of city European funding bids and City Deal opportunities.

### **6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

6.1 The council could decide not to sign up to the Covenant of Mayors – this is not recommended for the reasons stated at 5.6.2 and 5.6.3 above

### **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 The opportunity to sign up to the Covenant of Mayors arose during the leader of the council's recent visit to the Eurocities annual conference and on exploring this further, officers believe there are real benefits to doing so now.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

None

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

None

### **Background Documents**

Appendix 1: EU Covenant of Mayors Declaration

[http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/IMG/pdf/covenantofmayors\\_text\\_en.pdf](http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/IMG/pdf/covenantofmayors_text_en.pdf)

EU Covenant of Mayors brochure

[http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/IMG/pdf/brochure\\_com\\_web\\_FINAL\\_18\\_11\\_2011.pdf](http://www.covenantofmayors.eu/IMG/pdf/brochure_com_web_FINAL_18_11_2011.pdf)