

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

8 SEPTEMBER 2004 AT 5.00 PM

COMMITTEE ROOM 1, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Edmond Smith (Convenor), Councillors Davidson, Mallender, Meadows, Meegan, K Norman (OS), Older, Mrs Theobald and Tonks.

Apologies received from Councillor Oxley, Alan Hopkins (Environment Agency), Simon Newell (Local Strategic Partnership).

PART ONE

10 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

10a Declarations of Substitutes

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| 10.1 | <u>Substitute Councillor</u> | <u>For Councillor</u> |
| | Older | Oxley |

10b Declarations of Interest

10.2 In respect of item 13, King Alfred Site, Councillors K Norman, Mrs Theobald, Older and Tonks declared that they were members of the Planning Applications Sub-Committee. Councillor Edmond Smith, Convenor, stated that the Commission's responsibility was to ensure that sustainability was at the heart of the new development and not to consider the merits of the planning application, which had not been made available to the Commission.

10c Exclusion of Press and Public

10.3 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 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 100A(3) or 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

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

11 MINUTES

11.1 Councillor Mallender referred to paragraph 6.6 of the minutes and stated that he had not yet received details of progress on compostable maize containers. The Sustainability officers undertook to write to him.

11.2 Further to paragraph 2.1, the Convenor drew attention to leaflets advertising a Local Produce Festival at St Luke's Junior School on the morning of 25 September.

11.3 Mark Strong advised that paragraph 9.1 should refer to the CVSF and not the LSP.

11.4 Regarding paragraph 7.4, Councillor K Norman stated that he had received many complaints from constituents that wheelie bins were not suitable in their area.

11.5 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2004 be approved and signed by the Convenor.

12 CONVENOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

12.1 The Convenor congratulated Thurstan Crockett on his appointment as Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy and welcomed him to the meeting. He would transfer full-time to the new post in November.

12.2 The government had consulted the council about the National Sustainable Development Strategy. The document had been circulated to Commission members and any comments received incorporated. A copy of the Sustainability Commission's response was printed with the agenda (for copy see minute book).

12.3 Following the presentation at the previous meeting, the Convenor had visited the community composting project in Hackney and looked forward to a similar project taking place in a high rise block in Brighton & Hove. Detail of any proposal would be reported to a future meeting.

12.4 The Convenor referred to the "Making the Community Strategy Sustainable" conference. The conference report was tabled at the meeting. Councillor Mrs Theobald stated that she had attended, although she was not listed in the report.

12.5 The Convenor stated that Mark Strong had made useful contributions to the work of the Commission and proposed that the Commission should co-opt him as a member.

12.6 **RESOLVED** – That Mark Strong be co-opted to the Sustainability

Commission.

13 KING ALFRED LEISURE CENTRE SITE

13.1 Anthony Wilson of Faber Maunsell gave a presentation concerning the strategy, which was in place to ensure that the new development at the King Alfred site was sustainable. Josh Aghiros of Karis and Chris Mortimer, Major Projects Team, also attended the meeting.

13.2 Chris Mortimer stated that members had received two documents prepared by Karis and Faber Maunsell setting out the strategy and key development themes, and one entitled Environmental Sustainability: Guidance & Policies prepared by the council (for copies see minute book).

13.3 Ant Wilson began his presentation by explaining that sustainable buildings were buildings that people liked being in. He then referred to the overall development in the context of council and government policies; the national code written in conjunction with the DTI, DEFRA and ODPM; and BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) minimum standards. Faber Maunsell needed to consider water usage in the buildings, the use of recycled materials and the social cost of carbon. Ant Wilson confirmed that, even though the original brief had been prepared 18 months earlier, the development would meet the new Building Regulations due to be introduced in 2005. He then explained that previous regulations had meant that some modern buildings were over-insulated. SAP energy assessments now were made to ensure that buildings did not overheat and CO₂ emissions were considered.

13.4 Ant Wilson stated that a CABE survey had found that a high percentage of the public wanted eco homes as they meant low energy bills. The continuing change in climate meant that the means of cooling new buildings had to be considered. The transport infrastructure was another key issue. Ant Wilson referred to airtightness testing, the thermal imaging of buildings and energy efficiency technologies. Faber Maunsell would advise on the materials to be used and the sourcing of materials. He assured members that the materials and the energy efficiency aspects would be addressed before the design appeared. He anticipated that there would be many meetings between the interested parties to decide on the design.

13.5 Ant Wilson stated that the buildings must be sustainably managed in the future. Living City would be involved in this. He went on to explain that there had been a bespoke BREEAM, customised for the site, and there was a checklist of objectives to meet.

13.6 Ant Wilson and Josh Aghiros then responded to questions. A member of the public commented on the appearance but was advised that this was not a sustainability issue. Councillor Mrs Theobald enquired about the possibility of the towers forming wind tunnels and about refuse & recycling facilities. She was

advised that air flow models and a wind impact analysis had been made and that the segregation of waste was being addressed. Councillor Mallender was concerned about materials and how they would be affected by the salty sea air and was advised that Frank Gehry, who had a unique approach to materials, would take this into consideration. Councillor Mallender also enquired about energy generation and was advised that the target for renewables in this project was the highest ever undertaken by Faber Maunsell. Councillor Meegan was assured that low flush and use of grey water & rainwater was being addressed. The Convenor asked about the heating of the swimming pool and he had advised that it would be heated using the latest sustainable technology. A member of the public enquired about heating the development and was advised that this was still under consideration but Ant Wilson favoured electricity.

13.7 The Convenor thanked Ant Wilson and Josh Aghiros for the presentation.

[NOTE: In respect of the above item, Councillors K Norman, Mrs Theobald, Older and Tonks declared that they were members of the Planning Applications Sub-Committee. Councillor Edmond Smith, Convenor, stated that the Commission's responsibility was to ensure that sustainability was at the heart of the new development and not to consider the merits of the planning application, which had not been made available to the Commission.]

14 SOLAR PIER

14.1 Arthur North, a retired lecturer in design from London Metropolitan University, made a presentation in which he suggested an eco-friendly design for the redevelopment of the West Pier as outlined in his letter to the Sustainability Co-ordinator (for copy see minute book). He stated that the public perception was that no more could be done now that English Heritage had withdrawn from the scheme, but he considered that the council, West Pier Trust and public could work together to secure the restoration.

14.2 He stated that his design was sustainable, simple and aesthetically pleasing. It was acceptable to the West Pier Trust, of which he was a member. He proposed a promenade with solar panels. The electricity generated could be sold to the National Grid. There might be a bio-dome in the middle area and a commercial use at the sea end, for example, a seawater spa, a conference or entertainment venue. A landing stage could be installed. He requested a feasibility study and help in seeking sponsors. He advised that solar panels could be purchased most cheaply from China.

14.3 The Convenor stated that, while she supported the idea, the council would be unable to contribute any money. Councillor Tonks agreed that a spa might be a good idea; he stated that a casino might be a better option financially but possibly less acceptable to the public. He regretted that a feasibility study would be expensive. To a question from the public, Arthur North advised that the effect of currents, winds and future rises in sea levels would need to be modelled. Councillor Meegan stated that the pier was currently an

eyesore and a risk to beach users. He recommended rapid action. A member of the public suggested that the Brighton Pier owners might be encouraged to install solar panels and a turbine windmill and Councillor Mallender supported this.

14.4 Mark Strong suggested that the best idea might be for Arthur North, on behalf of the West Pier Trust, to contact large power companies suggesting they construct a power station in the form of a pier. Councillor Mrs Theobald supported this proposal. She requested that consideration also be given to fishing from the pier.

14.5 The Convenor considered Mark Strong's proposal to be a good idea and undertook to contact the Assistant Director, Major Projects and Procurement to ask whether he could support Mr North in approaching power companies.

14.6 **RESOLVED** – To invite Arthur North to report back to the Commission on progress in about six months' time.

15 PLASTIC BAGS

15.1 The Commission considered a discussion paper (for copy see minute book) written by the Sustainability Co-ordinator concerning the implications of plastic bags for the environment. Members noted that Brighton & Hove citizens used up to 33.5 million carrier bags each year. The problem was very gradually being recognised nationally and globally and the paper referred to action taken by other authorities.

15.2 This agenda item had been initiated by Rachel Kendon writing to her ward councillor. Rachel Kendon attended the meeting and expressed her concerns about the effect of plastic bags on the environment and in particular, marine wildlife. As a seaside resort she considered that Brighton & Hove should take the initiative to stop retailers from handing out free plastic bags to every customer. She had written to supermarkets herself but they had not been helpful.

15.3 Members agreed that it was desirable to take action. They made various suggestions including charging for plastic bags, degradable bags, an increase in "bags for life". Councillor Meegan displayed his "Irish shopper" bag; these were provided very cheaply in Ireland.

15.4 The Convenor outlined the action the Commission could take: a motion to council; a publicity campaign in conjunction with the council's press office and the Evening Argus; writing to retailers suggesting a voluntary code of conduct; asking neighbouring local authorities to enter a joint campaign. She stated that it was essential to raise public awareness. Rachel Kendon stated that in her work at a school she had shown children photographs of wildlife trapped and entangled in plastic, which had had a profound impact. The Sustainability Manager stated that, during the council's work with school children, officers

could ask children to request their parents not to take unnecessary plastic bags.

15.5 A member of the public requested that the council stop lining litter bins with plastic liners. Although easier to empty, this was not sustainable.

15.6 It was agreed that the Sustainability team would consider the best way to move forward with respect to the ideas proposed and report back.

15.7 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Convenor supported by other elected members of the Commission submit a motion to council requesting action to reduce the number of plastic bags used in Brighton & Hove.

(2) That the sustainability team:- initiate a campaign in conjunction with the council's press office to include articles in City News and involve the local media; write to retailers suggesting a voluntary code of conduct; and ask neighbouring local authorities to enter a joint campaign.

(3) That officers investigate whether the bin liners used to line litter bins could be biodegradable.

16 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE THROUGH RESOURCE EFFICIENCY (betre)

16.1 Commission members considered a briefing paper about the betre project (for copy see minute book). Janette Ackroyd of EcoSys made a presentation concerning the 2-year project which helped local businesses use resources efficiently. She referred to the training given to businesses, environmental site visits, green action awards, the betre helpline and opportunities for businesses to network. Businesses were advised on resource inefficiencies and how rubbish could be a resource. Awareness of sustainability was generally very low and so the impact of the training was great. A full evaluation would be made at the end of two years. Janette Ackroyd referred to examples of local businesses that had realised the savings that could be made by recycling and reducing their waste of energy and water. The Setting Sun public house was saving water, TN Lawrence re-used paper in their printer and the Brighton Media Centre was making savings in several areas. EcoSys always made follow up visits to offer further help and evaluate progress. Janette Ackroyd concluded by saying that EcoSys would soon be making bids in the hope of securing a further two years' funding. She could be contacted on 01273 245552 or jackroyd@ecosys.org.uk.

16.2 The Convenor thanked her for her presentation, congratulated EcoSys on the good results achieved so far and hoped that they could secure funding to continue the project.

17 NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE

SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

17.1 The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment outlining the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and reporting on the setting up of a Sustainability Working Group of senior council officers to discuss and implement sustainability measures (for copy see minute book).

17.2 The Convenor reported that the Leader of the Council had signed the Nottingham declaration (for copy see minute book) on behalf of Brighton & Hove Council. Councillor Edmond Smith had written to the Chief Executive about the declaration. The Environment Committee had considered her letter at its meeting on 2 September together with a Notice of Motion from the Green party. The Committee had resolved that the matter be referred to the Sustainability Commission, as it considered that all areas of the council needed to be involved and not just the Environment Department. The Convenor confirmed that a cross-council team had now formed.

17.3 The Sustainability Manager stated that the first meeting of the Sustainability Working Group would take place in October and the implications of climate change for Brighton & Hove would be on the agenda. The Convenor requested reports back to the Commission. She suggested that the aim should be to draft a climate change strategy, which would need to be approved by the Policy and Resources Committee.

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

(2) That the Sustainability Team draft a corporate Climate Change Strategy as per the Nottingham Declaration.

(3) That regular updates be given to the Sustainability Commission regarding the work of the Working Group.

18 FAIRTRADE CITY

18.1 The Commission considered a briefing note by the Sustainability Co-ordinator concerning the Fairtrade City initiative in Brighton & Hove (for copy see minute book). A steering group had been formed and its membership and terms of reference were appended to the briefing note.

18.2 The Convenor stated that Brighton & Hove would officially become a Fairtrade City on 15 October. Commission members would be invited to attend a number of events to celebrate this. Councillor Tonks requested the Sustainability Co-ordinator to meet the caterers for the Brighton Centre as conference delegates had requested Fairtrade coffee to be provided there. The Convenor agreed that this should be done before 15 October.

18.3 A member of the public also requested the concessionaires in Brighton &

Hove parks to be asked to provide Fairtrade beverages.

19 ENVIRONMENT CHAMPIONS

19.1 The Commission considered a briefing note by the Sustainability Co-ordinator concerning the waste minimisation programme being implemented at the Oxford Street Neighbourhood Office and Hove Town Hall (for copy see minute book).

19.2 After discussion, the Sustainability Co-ordinator undertook to contact Beacon Press with a view to extending the CD recycling scheme to schools and libraries. The Commission noted that EU legislation would require the recycling of batteries in future. A member of the public drew attention to the difficulty of finding cardboard recycling facilities in the city.

20 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

20.1 The Sustainability Co-ordinator updated members on the proceedings of the last meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership. She stated that councillors could read the LSP agendas and minutes on the LSP website.

The meeting concluded at 7.05 pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2004