





Brighton & Hove  
City Council

Environment & Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Title:	<b>Scrutiny Panel on Renewable Energy Potential</b>
Date:	<b>16 February 2011</b>
Time:	<b>2.00pm</b>
Venue	<b>Committee Room 2, Hove Town Hall</b>
Members:	Dr Adrian Smith (Chair & University Co-optee)  <b>Councillors:</b> Morgan Watkins West
Contact:	Karen Amsden, Scrutiny Support Officer <a href="mailto:karen.amsden@brighton-hove.gov.uk">karen.amsden@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>

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# AGENDA

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- |  |               |
|--|---------------|
| <b>17.</b> Procedural Business             | <b>1 - 2</b>  |
| <b>18.</b> Chairman's communications       |               |
| <b>19.</b> Minutes of the previous meeting | <b>3 - 18</b> |

The draft minutes of the previous meeting are attached.

**20. Witnesses**

The Panel will hear from:

**Thurstan Crockett**, Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy, Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC)

**Martin Randall**, Head of Planning & Public Protection, BHCC with **Roger Dowty**, Design & Conservation Manager, BHCC and **Samuel Rouse**, Senior Technical Advisor, Air Quality, Environmental Protection Team, BHCC

**Angela Dymott**, Head of Property & Design, BHCC & **Glynnan Barham**, Energy & Water Manager, BHCC

**Jugal Sharma**, Lead Commissioner Housing, BHCC

**Nigel Manvell**, Value For Money Programme Director, BHCC

**21. A.O.B**

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For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Karen Amsden, (01273 291084 – email [Karen.amsden@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.amsden@brighton-hove.gov.uk)) or email [scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

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## Agenda Item 17

### To consider the following Procedural Business:-

#### A. Declaration of Substitutes

Substitutes are not permitted on ad-hoc panels.

#### B. Declarations of Interest

- (1) To seek declarations of any personal or personal & prejudicial interests under Part 2 of the Code of Conduct for Members in relation to matters on the Agenda. Members who do declare such interests are required to clearly describe the nature of the interest.
- (2) A Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a Select Committee has a prejudicial interest in any business at meeting of that Committee where –
  - (a) that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by the Executive or another of the Council's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and
  - (b) at the time the decision was made or action was taken the Member was
    - (i) a Member of the Executive or that committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee and
    - (ii) was present when the decision was made or action taken.
- (3) If the interest is a prejudicial interest, the Code requires the Member concerned:-
  - (a) to leave the room or chamber where the meeting takes place while the item in respect of which the declaration is made is under consideration. [There are three exceptions to this rule which are set out at paragraph (4) below].
  - (b) not to exercise executive functions in relation to that business and
  - (c) not to seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.
- (4) The circumstances in which a Member who has declared a prejudicial interest is permitted to remain while the item in

respect of which the interest has been declared is under consideration are:-

- (a) for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the item, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise, BUT the Member must leave immediately after he/she has made the representations, answered the questions, or given the evidence,
- (b) if the Member has obtained a dispensation from the Standards Committee, or
- (c) if the Member is the Leader or a Cabinet Member and has been required to attend before an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committee to answer questions.

### **C. Declaration of Party Whip**

To seek declarations of the existence and nature of any party whip in relation to any matter on the Agenda as set out at paragraph 8 of the Overview and Scrutiny Ways of Working.

### **D. Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

*NOTE: Any item appearing in Part 2 of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is confidential and therefore not available to the public.*

*A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls.*

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY PANEL ON RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL**

**10.00am 7 FEBRUARY 2011**

**FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Present:** Dr Adrian Smith, Councillors Morgan, Watkins and West

**Also in attendance:** Thurstan Crockett (Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy), Tom Hook (Head of Scrutiny) and Karen Amsden (Scrutiny Officer)

**12. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

No declarations.

No party whip.

**13. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**14. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

Due to pressure of time, the Chairman just wanted to welcome everyone to the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Panel. They were looking forward to learning valuable lessons from those who had sought to develop renewable energy in the city.

**15. WITNESSES**

**Peter Davies (PD)** introduced himself as the Development Director, Shoreham Port Authority. He told the Panel that the Port had a 250 year history, including that of power generation – including an early power station in the 1800s. The current power station had been built 10 years ago by Scottish Power. Shoreham was a Trust Port set up by Parliament and the Port Authority was run by a Board, which meant that no profits could be made and any surplus had to be put back into the Port. It was a relatively small regional port, which dealt with cargos for mainly customers in Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey. It dealt with about 2m tonnes per annum and covered a large area 3.5 miles long.

The Port had adopted a Masterplan which can be found at <http://www.shoreham-port.co.uk/Masterplan>

and Renewable Energy (RE) was part of that plan. It was anticipated that there would be a 25% growth in throughput in the next 15/20 years, which would boost the local economy and jobs market.

They hoped to take advantage of the planned offshore wind farm (Rampion) and the Port was committed to going green. Examples included:

- considering this issue when renewing waste contracts in April 2011
- examining their own energy use
- working on a travel plan in conjunction with Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC)

The Port Authority only owned 70% of the Port and so needed to work with private organisations on these greening proposals.

Ports were a sustainable means of transporting local products – for example, shipping grain to Scotland to make porridge oats. However the Port did take in timber from Scandinavia. They were in the process of learning about RE and were keen to be involved in projects in this sector. They were used to handling major projects e.g. waste water pipe at Peacehaven.

One big opportunity was the 450,000 sq ft of warehousing which could e.g. be fitted with solar panels. There were also significant chances for private investment in both new buildings and retrofitting. They were building a steel processing plant for £10m and renewable energy would be a key part of this project (<http://www.shoreham-port.co.uk/Latest-News/CONSTRUCTION-OF-STEEL-PROCESSING-PLANT-GETS-UNDERWAY-AT-THE-PORT>). They had won a contract with Eddie Stobart to transport biomass to Germany and Sweden for up to 10 years. If biomass plants were to be built in the UK, then the Port could both import and export biomass.

Edgeley Green Power wanted to come to Shoreham, in order to transport the oil it would need to fuel their planned biofuel power plant. It was hoped that the generation of power would happen by the end of next year.

There were real opportunities for solar panels because there was so much roof space. This could be to the value of £6m in the first phase of the development. The Port Authority could not afford to make this investment and was looking for a partner to finance the investment. They were examining the possibility of doing this through a community interest company rather than a purely commercial arrangement.

The Authority also believed that the site could provide opportunities for wind turbines, as it was a really good location. A planning application had been refused in the mid-90s and so they were fearful of getting their fingers burnt again. Due to the proximity of people living near the site, the turbines would need to be medium sized.

If one wanted to compare the work of this port, compared to e.g. Blyth and Lowestoft, it was important to remember that no two ports are the same. Blyth and Lowestoft had the advantage of being in an earlier round of development, whereas Shoreham is part of Round 3. While Blyth and Lowestoft was large enough to get involved in construction, there were not the same opportunities at Shoreham, although they could run demo projects.



PortZED (<http://www.zedfactory.com/portzed.html>) was primarily a housing led project. Bill Dunster, was the principal architect, and the project involved zero carbon housing, office and retail space. They had already potentially gained funding (previously known as Eco Town funding) which would provide around £3m for regeneration and still leave money for Port ZED, if they gained planning permission – which was going ahead at the moment.

This project would present real opportunities for the Port and developments next to it and could result in 2,000 homes and 4,000 new jobs in the area. This was significantly less than had been expected 3 years ago, but the opportunities it would bring included district heating (DH) – although the stock would be quite spread out. For example the Edgeley Power Station could be used in some way to heat businesses. At present the sea is being heated up by the power produced in Shoreham, which could be employed for good. However, one would need a sophisticated system to link it up and provide constant heat – the Authority would need a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party to come in and do this.

In summary, it was an exciting time at the beginning of a process and the Authority was confident that it could make a difference to the area.

### Questions to Peter Davies

*Q: What model do you think should be established to deliver RE energy projects in the port?*

PD: Solar Panels could be installed as a community project. The Authority could provide the roof spaces and it could be the role of a council to pull the right people together to make this project happen. It is not the core business of the Authority and it takes time to win people over. Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) could take on the role of ‘selling’ different kinds of technology, such as wind turbines, to the community. If the community had a stake in such a project, it was more likely to be a wonderful project. However, due to the funding opportunities, this needed to happen in the next few months.

*Q: Have you undertaken any particular testing e.g. to see how PV panels would work on a sea fronting site?*

PD: Seagulls are an obvious problem in this location.

Howard Johns (HJ): The key factor is which material is used in construction. The location may affect the design of the system, but is not an insurmountable problem. Solar PV has been put on Shoreham Beach.

*Q: Would it be possible to temporarily place PV panels on land which is not currently being used?*

PD: When putting solar panels on roofs, one can incur increased costs if need to strengthen the roof. However there is very little land in the port area that could be let out on such contracts. However there are some small areas of land which are no good to us, or land a long the top of the beaches which could be used to put up turbines. The possibility of putting panels on poles had been looked at, however there was concern about possible vandalism.

HJ: If one puts panels on roofs there is not much extra cost. But if one was to erect panels temporarily one would lose the opportunity to earn a 25 year income. One would not want to erect panels in a place where the possible vandals could reach them.

*Q: There appear to be a lot of opportunities for RE, but realise it is away from the core business of the Port. What kind of organisation do you think would be most useful for delivering RE e.g. community energy?*

PD: The Authority has an open mind. Some purely private organisations have made attractive offers, however as they were a community port – they could be interested in a community based group.

*Q: It had been suggested by other witnesses that the Port Authority could speak to the Brighton Energy Co-op and OUVESCo.*

*Q: Is there sufficient demand in a 50 mile radius to sustain the Port, or will you have to extend the area you serve?*

PD: As part of the Master Plan process, they were able to identify a long list of business opportunities. These could come from organisations who currently use other ports which are further away e.g. Hull. The Port is popular because it has invested in its infrastructure. Because it is a Trust Port, it considers what is best for the area and not always on strictly commercial lines.

Thurstan Crockett (TC): To place this in a planning context, Shoreham Port was identified in the Core Strategy as a large opportunity for RE. There is a history of redevelopment in the areas. The previous vision for the port relied on a £200m+ link road, which was not fundable.

*Q: One can see how important the Port is – how can BHCC enable your work?*

PD: We are not sure how, but we do need the assistance and need to get on with it quickly. Help could include guidance, putting together the different interest groups and helping it to be seen as a community project. Other assistance could include:

- help with establishing a DH scheme
- Signing people up to projects
- Expertise in the local authority
- Skills that could assist in the process as EoN applies for consent in the next 12-18 months
- Supply chain and jobs

*Q: Are you getting the same level of co-operation from the other local authorities – West Sussex and Adur?*

PD: They had all been working together to concentrate on getting the planning right, but had not yet been able to get on with the projects on the ground. So now wanted to get on with it and make it happen. For this they needed the help of the councils, both in hand holding and offering practical guidance e.g. who are good suppliers/installers and technicians?

**Dr Phil Webber** (PW) introduced himself (using Skype) as the Head of the Environment Unit at Kirklees Council. He felt that RE had not been the priority for his Council. Instead their priorities had been to improve housing conditions, including insulation, and reduce CO<sub>2</sub>. Their biggest programme had been Warmzone, which had undertaken 65,000 free home insulation measures. This had included a programme to improve boilers and a boiler scrappage scheme. After undertaking these energy efficiency works, the Council saw their role as helping to increase the % of RE in the UK.

They had managed to obtain a small grant from the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to install 50 Solar PV systems on terraced properties. The Council were really using Solar PV as a way into this area. They would be using the Feed in Tariff (FIT) income to establish and maintain a Community Fund. This work was also seen as a lever into getting the community e.g. to increase their level of recycling. The Council was also providing energy advice, as sometimes low income households had extremely high energy bills.

Kirklees was looking at the ways of exploiting FIT. They were planning to put in £6m to install solar on 5,000 local authority homes and then the income from FIT would pay back the costs over 10 years. It was also possible to fund such projects if you were able to access loans at a reasonable rate. For example, Public Boards were able to offer loans at a reasonable level but they still had to deal with the issue of maintenance costs.

The Council had found there were big capacity issues due to insufficient certified installers. However, this was an opportunity to combat the recession. There were big opportunities for local authorities to insist on local suppliers, local workforce and training opportunities. If one spends £1 on insulation, one got a lot more CO<sub>2</sub> savings than from RE – however RE brought good employment opportunities. This was why the Council needed to do insulation first, but there was the worry that improving the insulation of the home just resulted in a warmer home, rather than achieving CO<sub>2</sub> savings. With RE, consumers could see the energy being generated, which may change their patterns of energy use. There was also a lack of capacity when it came to insulating homes. To deliver their programme required them to train and pull in crews from across the UK to deliver the volume they needed, due to the high take up rate. For this kind of volume needed 10,000s or 100,000s of installers.

When it came to partnerships, the key issue was working on existing housing stock. The Council had found that the District Network Operator (DNO) was on board, and had to take notice of the issues due to the legislation. In their experience the community was interested in RE if the price was right. The key task for the Council was to put together the business case, where all the participants gained some benefit e.g. the FIT income was going to a community fund and the home occupiers were receiving the energy. They had focussed on the poorest sectors of the community. A distinction had been made between those who could, and would, pay for renewable energy and those in poverty. To this end the Council was going to use £6m from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to fund further RE work. There were other funding models available, such as the companies who will install panels and then take the FIT income for a certain period.

The main advice that Kirklees would give to other Councils, was to prepare for the Green New Deal. This would include how to contact people and persuade them about the range of opportunities which could be out there for RE. People needed to be persuaded about the different technologies, which was more difficult if the technology was new or more disruptive to the community. One needed to sell the payback period of RE technologies. Reliable surveys of

properties were also needed and getting good advice e.g. on which projects to pursue. It was taken as a given that everyone should insulate their homes, but when deciding on which RE technologies would suit people – this would depend on individual preference e.g. Solar PV or Thermal.

The Council had not had a positive experience with Biomass.

### Questions to Phil Webber

*Q: Why were you undertaking the solar panels project now and why were you using £6m from the HRA? If you are like BHCC, our housing stock is often in a poor condition and tenants may prefer to have a new kitchen.*

PW: Kirklees is in exactly the same situation regarding the state of its housing stock, but solar panels will generate income and then the money could be used later to improve kitchens. The Council is also still in a situation where it can offer micro-loans and revolving loans towards improving kitchens and bathrooms. This is a big issue, because the funding for adaptations has gone.

*Q: Do you think when trying to introduce such large programmes, should the council take a lead or use a 3<sup>rd</sup> party? Is it best to introduce blanket measures or target specific areas?*

PW: The 65,000 insulation measures have meant that 65% of the housing stock now has cavity wall insulation. With Solar PV, the Council was targeting its own properties, hard to treat homes and people in fuel poverty. Where properties are owned by the Council, then it is right that they should take the lead in improving them. In relation to the private sector, it was the Council's role to act as the independent checker of what is going on and getting a good price – because there are a number of companies offering bad prices and systems. Such companies gave RE a bad name, so quality installers were needed – and the local authority had a role in checking.

With the Green New Deal, councils would be needed in the role of 'honest broker'. While 3<sup>rd</sup> parties could be quicker, local authorities had many of the needed skills in-house, e.g. their legal department.

*Q: Having established that reducing CO2 was your policy driver and an outcome has been building a relationship with your community, what do you see as the next steps? How will the FITs be used to set up a community fund?*

PW: The Community Fund income from FITs will be used to carry out general improvements in an area. These would need to be the collective decision of the local authority, the community and any 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. One of the areas of improvement that are most sought after are play area improvements. The process has to be fair, otherwise it will be divisive. It will be a challenge to see how this project works out. They have put £500,000 into the project and the work is being done on a continuous bank of 60 terraced properties. It is anticipated that it will generate £20,000 p.a. income. The process needs to be open and sensible.

Kirklees Council has a reputation and has been seen to deliver projects which were free. The relationship with the community is very important. The Council had to operate in a commercial way e.g. using billboards, appearing on the radio to promote issues/schemes and put up

information in libraries. They had done a lot of work to brand this issue and address indifference. They feel that this has had an impact on the way companies, such as British Gas, promote this issue.

*Q: There are a lot of national programmes such as the Low Carbon Community Programme and the anticipated Green New Deal, which require a lot of dynamism to implement in the local area. How have you managed this in Kirklees, has it been the role of the Environment Unit and/or the political leadership?*

PW: Recently the number of the staff in the Environment Team had been reduced from 20 to 15. There was also a lot of cross-departmental working e.g. Housing and community workers. They had brought together all the people who needed to be involved to make it work. There had been a high level of need for capacity and skills in the Environment Unit. For example, 6 people had been working on this full-time dealing with RE related issues such as the 150 responses they had received to a tendering exercise. One would need staff such as legal and procurement people. It was not a straight forward process e.g. setting up a Supply and Fit contract. Due to government funding, they worked closely with DECC, but this meant that many people visited them to see what the Council was doing. Kirklees were happy to offer advice to other local authorities.

**Howard Johns** (HJ) introduced himself as the Managing Director of Southern Solar, the Chairman of the Solar Trade Association and the founder of OUVESCo Ltd.

He told the Panel that today the Government had announced their intention to review FITs immediately [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn11\\_010/pn11\\_010.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn11_010/pn11_010.aspx)

The Government were concerned that there was too much uptake of the scheme, which was a real kick in the teeth. This review would affect all projects over 50kW. This would be a complete nightmare for the solar industry. Southern Solar were currently working on the site of a 300kW project. The sector had only had FIT for 10 months, resulting in 15,000 installations. The reason given for the review, was to prevent the development of solar farms.

He had set up Southern Solar 9 years ago and the company had grown to the size where it needed 6 offices including in Lewes, London and South Wales. The company was installing solar on 15 homes per week and 300kW was the size of their largest project. They worked with a number of local authorities and installed both Solar thermal and PV. They used to offer a full range of technologies, such as wind turbines. However around 90% of homes are suitable for solar, compared to 1 in 1,000 for a wind turbine. They felt that small wind turbines were not worthwhile for them, unless it was in the middle of the countryside. These were the reasons why their focus was on Solar PV and thermal. The biggest installation they have worked on in Brighton & Hove (B&H) was at Portslade School.

The UK's PV market represented 50MW this year, up from 10MW last year. However in Germany the sector is 8,000MW. The biggest market was China, also the largest consumer of PV. The UK was hemmed in by the politics of the issue. The sector was operating in a situation where 12 months ago it had not known what were the details of the FIT scheme, and now faced a review of the scheme 10 months later rather than in 24 months. This process had worked by stimulating the market by taking it out of taxation, which was also going to be done for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), and the scheme then funded by a levy on bills. However as a result of the Spending Review, these schemes would be part of the taxation process and a budget would be set up for them. This would mean that as soon as too much

money was being spent in this area, if the take up was too good, then the expenditure would need to be reduced. This review of FIT had been announced even though not as much RE had been done in the UK as expected.

It seemed that every local authority was saying it planned to invest £10m in this sector, and now a lot of projects will fail. Councillors should lobby their MP because PV creates jobs. It was projected that it would create 17,000 jobs this year. The number of companies working with PV has grown from 500 to 1,200 in a year. This had raised issues of quality and ethics. But the right stimulus is needed, or this number of companies could fall.

He had first tried to set up a community energy company in B&H, but then went on to found OUVESCo which was about to go public with its share issue. But the % of its projects were over 100kW, so their future could be affected by this review of FITs.

*Q: Is this review of FITs just a sensible reaction to fears over solar farms?*

HJ: There has been campaigning and pressure put on politicians about this issue. He had worked with the Council, including Sustainability and Architects, on RE issues. In his experience there had been a lot of planning in the city, but not masses of action. He was surprised by how little uptake there had been of this technology in the town, compared to Woking (who had installed 10% of all PV to date) and Kirklees. He attributed this to the visionary leadership of these councils. He believed that councillors in this city needed to get together and decide to do it, which was what Kirklees did in the early '90s.

The possibilities were huge including the Council's housing stock and its property portfolio. Both of which could be used to generate solar heat and energy. The Council could lead schemes which would increase the credibility of the sector in the city. If they took measures on their stock, like Kirklees, this would be well received by the community and increase the amount of microgeneration in the city.

Renewable energy was caught up in the political process and there was still to be an announcement on the Green New Deal details – which were not likely to be known until the next year.

The use of Solar Thermal in a Scottish project had reduced households' heating bills by 30%. Such projects were pretty maintenance free and offered huge opportunities, for example at the King Alfred.

Renewable energy projects would decrease the amount of gas bought from Russia and oil bought from Saudi Arabia. This would be money that would remain within that community. The scale of the RE programmes in Germany were because they realised that it kept money in the country.

It would be possible to make B&H a 'hub' for RE. Kirklees were a 'hub' because they had just got on with the projects. It would be best to start with small projects, go and actually do them and then see if they work. In their experience, people find out that they like having RE installed on their properties and often a year later become an evangelist for it. Such projects would result in inhabitants changing their attitude to energy and increasing their energy saving. This was unlike insulation which did not change behaviour and often resulted in people turning their heating up.

He did not think there would be a problem with the grid, although this could be possible for the port. The DNO in the area – EDF – were pretty co-operative and one could normally get an answer from them.

He did not think there were massive barriers in the city, but one of the key challenges were the planning hoops they had experienced 9 years ago.

He had been involved with both OUVESCo and the Brighton Energy Co-op and talked about leasing roof space from BHCC. However, this had not been met with huge enthusiasm from the Council. What was needed in the Council was leadership and risk taking. But it could happen in the city, because it was happening elsewhere.

### Questions to Howard Johns

*Q: At the last Panel meeting we heard about Photo-Voltaic Thermal (PVT) technology – is there an argument for waiting for the technology to be right to invest, will there be an advance which is worth waiting for?*

HJ: PV is in a solid state. The panels of today are a 1/3 of the cost and produce twice the output as one bought 9 years ago. There is no major breakthrough moment yet – did not believe that PVT was this breakthrough. At some time grid parity will be achieved, in about 5 years, when:

cost of energy from a power station = cost from renewable energy

*Q: If the FIT is removed, where will this leave PV? How can we plan our strategy now?*

HJ: The outlook will be bleak in the UK if FIT is removed.

Adrian Smith (AS): Kirklees kick started their programme before PV, so one needs to consider how to do this kind of programme without Governmental support.

HJ: We need both the FIT and microgeneration. I do not have an answer on how to plan without FIT.

*Q: This issue has been politically pushed in Kirklees? Do you think a 3<sup>rd</sup> party is needed to help? Especially considering that you have already met the leaders of BHCC?*

HJ: Silence has been the main reaction from BHCC. I had already discussed the possibility of an ESCo with the Head of Sustainability. This was because the ESCo established in Woking, Thameswey ESCo, reduced by 40% the energy costs of their HQ which enabled them to invest in further projects. I met with a lukewarm reaction when I told various people in the Council about ESCos. There is a need for political leadership. It is a complex area because there is not an obvious procurement route, which makes people cautious. The difficulty community groups face is that they do not have a track record or investment credibility. This means that their projects are treated as laughable, and they find it difficult to make them stack up.

**Ross Gilbert** told the Panel that he was the Director of Quoin Estates and Developments. In July 2009 he had approached BHCC about setting up a Community Energy Centre in

Portslade. He had produced a matrix which had been distributed to panel members, which recorded what an extremely frustrating process this had been. Mr Gilbert had been prepared to put up the £20,000 needed for the future development of as a co-op for both PV and a wind turbine. So it would have been a self-funded project. It had been a long process and involved a lot of work, but he had been hopeful of taking the project forward. For example, this process had been slowed down by a 3 month wait for the replacement of a cabinet member.

He had found dealing with the Council extremely frustrating, for example having to explain what a KW was. He had been told that the authority still supported the process. Then in October 2010, he had received a rejection letter out of the blue, having being told that the organisation wished to concentrate on PV. The model that he had developed would have involved a co-op which would have given an income to the Council. This income could have been used to establish the energy information centre, with the Council retaining the ownership of the land the installation was on. This was a community based scheme and would have needed the support of BHCC. In Kirklees they had a let's see how it works attitude, which does not seem to be here in BHCC.

One of the reasons given by the Council for stepping back, was that it was going to carry out its own desktop analysis of wind sites in the new year. He was told that the sites were not yet identified and it took 3 emails to receive back information on the Council's progress. He felt that BHCC lacked ambition when it came to wind energy, even though this technology could produce large amounts of energy. He had not been the first person to try and use on-shore wind in the city.

In contrast when he had contact with the Planning Department regarding putting up solar PV panels, he had had a very good experience with the process being sorted out in 12 weeks. Ross Gilbert had also a good experience with the council when installing solar thermal. He felt that BHCC should have enabled his organisation, by letting them get further with the project.

He had not yet experienced capacity issues yet. He felt that there was good competition in the field of Solar PV. With on-shore wind, there was a larger national issue as there were only 7 approved producers under the MicroCertificationScheme (MCS) programme. The largest of these products was 12kW.

HJ: For larger wind systems, the accreditation happened afterwards.

Ross Gilbert felt that there was a huge opportunity to make this city a 'hub' for RE. There were a large number of targets and papers on issues, but a lack of action. He felt that the council's role should include:

- enabling networking
- having the right knowledge and skill set
- having the desire to see projects happen

### Questions to Ross Gilbert

*Q: It was important to acknowledge the experiences of Ross Gilbert and was upset to hear about them. There seems to be a thread of council officers and the political leaders in the city needing a willingness to succeed and a vision for RE.*



RG: A lot of market research had shown that there was a poor public image of wind energy. However there had been 84-85% public approval of the plans at Glyndebourne. Therefore the issue should not be pre-judged and it should be recognised that the planning application process takes up a lot of resources.

*Q: A lot of surveys have shown reduced levels of opposition after wind farms have been constructed. But what would be the perfect process? What are the most important approaches that a local authority could take?*

RG: In-house expertise on the subject or willingness to partner with another organisation and let out roof space. Like the Port, this was not central to BHCC's business – so why not allow partners to get on with it. Why not just do it once?

**Daren Howarth (DH)** runs CLEVEL and told the Panel that he was a consultant who was currently working with one of the big 6 energy companies. He had installed a wind turbine in Islingwood Road in the city as part of the 'try things out' approach. He had found the turbine only generated significant power in higher wind speeds, which proved to be a problem on his particular house because of the vibration. He had issues with both the technology and installation of that particular turbine and had to turn it off in the end. He was aware that revised versions were being worked on and integrated with solar.

The Council had given him full planning permission to install solar panels on the Earth and Stars pub, but it had been a very slow process. The Green New Deal could mean the growth of external insulation. Cladding houses could bring real carbon and money savings, but could lead to huge planning issues. It would be good if BHCC could start to prepare for this, pre-empt the problems and fast track such cases.

Monitoring of schemes had been a big issue with BHCC, leading him to offer to do it himself. For example noise had been a big issue for planning, and he did not feel that this monitoring was done by BHCC. Monitoring had been done well with other projects he had initiated - both the Earthship and Groundhouse – he had lived in the latter building for 1.5 years and got to test how well the building worked. He had put his own money into Groundhouse and got to try out different technologies, which had resulted in a beautiful house which had been featured on the Grand Designs programme. The monitoring he had carried out had included checking that the building was a good temperature all year round without a heating system.

His experiences showed, using interesting configurations of technology e.g. using solar thermal for space heating which was then linked to a massive tank, that there were big opportunities for the city. These kinds of technologies/configurations were now standard in Germany. Another example was roof integrated technology, which looked like a nice tiled roof. This could be a planning default, which could then be plugged into central heating.

In order to encourage RE in the city, Daren wanted to know whether the Council had in its teams enough people who could drive practical action and navigate through this field.

### **Questions to Daren Howarth**

*Q: It is important to try out and tailor each house to specific needs? As so far we have been talking about off-the-shelf projects. For example, are homes being written off because of the angle of their roofs?*

HJ: Only north facing roofs should be written off for solar. In Scandinavia they put solar thermal on the west face of walls and match to space heating. One could reclad the south face of tower blocks. An ESCo is needed to run such a project, because one would have to put in a District Heating System instead of individual boilers. This would be a complex project and would need up front investment. BHCC could build a model which could be replicated across the city.

*Q: The Earthship was the first of your buildings and I remember that when sitting on the Committee, that the Planning Officers were against it. Did this feel like a big battle?*

DH: It was the first earthship in the country and there were a lot of issues because it was a Greenfield site. Considering that, the Council was very supported and enabled the development.

*Q: As a pioneer, do you feel that such projects instil confidence?*

DH: If you build an unusual building then people can come and see, then they can be inspired to do things themselves, taking some of the aspects of the project back with them.

TC: Just to add that the Earthship has been monitored by the Low Carbon Trust and University of Brighton. It has been found to stay c. 18°-21° all year round.

*Q: Why do you think that B&H has not done better so far with RE? We have heard about the need for political leadership, but is there the interest in engineers? What about the need for links with the Universities?*

HJ: Most of the Research & Development (R&D) has been done in Germany, what needs sorting out in the UK is the politics.

*Q: How could the Universities help to build up political support for this sector?*

DH: The University of Brighton was involved in monitoring the Earthship and now lots of people want to do the same thing. But a lot of the aspects of the project provide opportunities for further innovation and research. For example, when demolishing a building to grind it up and use it to help build heavy thermal mass walls from rubble, using gabions (steel cages). These are engineering issues and so links with Engineering departments in the Universities would be useful.

*Q: Do you not think that developers are driven to use the cheapest materials?*

HJ: The Code for Sustainable Homes sets the key planning thresholds for the City. This code normally kicks in after 10 homes.

TC: There is a 9 units threshold.

*Q: How could there be a link-up between Universities and training courses needed for this sector?*

HJ: There are masses of such courses all over the country, but need the industry to be there to keep them in jobs. Do not see a capacity issue.

**Helmut Lusser (HL)** introduced himself as the Chair of the Hove Civic Society (HCS). This was one of 3 overarching Civic Societies in the City. It was not a residents' association, and was set up 50 years ago to look after and encourage high standards in architecture and planning. They had focussed on physical appearance and were increasingly looking at the function of buildings. As part of this shift, were looking at RE to consider how a building performed - as well as how it looked. They have acted as a constituent group on conservation issues/applications. They had closely examined council policies, such as dwelling standards. The Society believed that the BHCC policy for local authority housing standards should be extended to the private sector housing in the City and were lobbying the Council on this issue.

The Society had set up the Renewables Infrastructure Group (RIG) to consider such issues. Other campaigns included the maintaining Victorian street heritage campaign, in terms of sustainability and biodiversity. The Society also wished to see more public art in Hove. The Society ran an annual lecture series and their focus would be on RE both this year and the next. The Group felt that this debate about RE had not yet reached members in the city. There was a need for a big publicity campaign to convince citizens. The focus of RIG is to look at how it can push the RE process, using its lobbying power and standing in the community.

It was felt that B&H should be the Solar City of the UK, because we are not using our sun as we should be. Their written evidence outlined their programme for 2011 and their initial strategy. The Society was keen to help knit together different interest together and was trying to attract Lottery Funding to carry out schemes such as 'Hard to reach homes' in certain sectors of Hove. Such homes faced significant numbers of obstacles when trying to treat them.

The Society had started to monitor planning applications for their ability to improve their RE capacity. The intention was to look at them for 6 months and then make representations to BHCC about the major opportunities in this sector. They were also keen to convince the other Societies in the city, especially Brighton Society and the Regency Society, about the importance of this sector.

The Society felt that it was important for the big schemes to succeed e.g. Rampion and Edgeley Green Power Station (which they were interested in even though it was not in the city) and had written a letter of support for PortZED.

As a former Town Planner, he believed that one could not always assume that a Planning Department would learn from exemplar projects. He felt that a project such as PortZED could either be a catalyst or fall flat on its face.

He found it heartbreaking that one could not deal with the power being produced by the Shoreham power station. This was producing heat energy of the same scale as the Rampion project would, and one needed to be able to harness this kind of heat loss. He would like to see BHCC commission some serious consultancy on this issue.

He believed that in Hove the geography made the installation of RE on individual houses, less than optimal. This area needed careful treatment and work needed to be done on hard to treat homes. BHCC could offer advice and information to residents and help them procure good quality installations.

Cumulative improvements were needed to planning applications. He thought one should consider how BHCC could use the Planning process to drive up standards, and potentially use the Localism Bill to achieve this. It was up to BHCC to pick up this issue and run with it.

HCS consider RE a non-party political issue and of keen concern to the city. He expressed concern that the panel hearing the evidence was not made up of representatives from all the major parties.

**John Kapp** (JK), A Member of Hove Civic Society and secretary of the Renewables Infrastructure Group, then highlighted the 5 key points they wanted to raise:

1. Renewables could be developed in the city by setting a target of making all energy (240MW) renewable and all vehicles electric by 2020 (a target from Al Gore)
2. Setting a target of making the city 'Brighton Town – Solar City of the UK'
3. The Council should procure/initiate a feasibility study of a Combined Heat and Power/District Heating (CHP/DH) scheme to use the waste hot water from Shoreham power station to heat buildings in Brighton and Hove and other coastal towns
4. The Council should establish an Energy Advice Centre in the city, as Newcastle and other towns have done
5. Establish an energy forum which is open to all in the city, modelled on the lines of the Brighton Housing Forum

#### **Questions to Helmut Lusser and John Kapp**

*Q: I appreciate the importance of securing the input of Planning and educating officers. I understand that there are Conservation Advisory Group (CAG) advisors, is there any sustainability representation on planning issues?*

TC: There was a one-off sustainability group to advise on the Core Strategy. This was not a permanent set up, but one would need to check with Martin Randall.

*Q: A recommendation could be to put a sustainability representative on planning. This would be good practice as this issue needs to be institutionalised and reported on. One needs to collect information on this issue.*

#### **16. A.O.B**

There was no A.O.B.

The meeting concluded at 12.45pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

