

Subject:	The Living Coast - update on the Biosphere Programme		
Date of Meeting:	27th June 2017		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Rich Howorth	Tel: 01273 294720
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Biosphere programme and the significant progress made over the past year. The Brighton & Lewes Downs UNESCO World Biosphere Region was designated in 2014, and the city council is the lead partner.
- 1.2 The progress includes creating and launching a new brand identity as 'The Living Coast', developing priority projects through both individual partners and the programme team, strengthening governance and engaging new partners and securing support.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress made on The Living Coast Biosphere as a firm foundation for its future development.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Brighton & Lewes Downs UNESCO World Biosphere Region was designated in 2014 as an international demonstration area for sustainability, part of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of 669 sites (including six in the UK) that "inspire a positive future by connecting people and nature today".
- 3.2 Biosphere Regions have three objectives: (i) Conserve and enhance nature (ii) Support human development that is sustainable (iii) Encourage environmental knowledge, learning and awareness and engagement.
- 3.3 Our Biosphere area covers 150 square miles of Downs, Towns and Coast with Brighton & Hove at its heart and a local population of 371,500 people (2000 of whom have signed up as "Friends" supporters).
- 3.4 The BHCC Corporate Plan 2015-19 'The Way Ahead' includes service priorities to: "promote and preserve our Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere, using it as a focus to celebrate and protect the quality of biodiversity in the city region", and

“use our international UN Biosphere Reserve status and our cultural offer to promote the city region as a unique, international destination”.

- 3.5 The city council is the lead partner of the Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership, composed of over 40 local organisations with three working groups active to pursue the Biosphere objectives.
- 3.6 The Biosphere programme is directed by the Biosphere Delivery Board, composed of 20 organisations that represent a range of sectors and areas, with a Chair and Vice-chair appointed from partner bodies. The partnership continues to expand through additional strategic partners formally joining to increase its spread. The Chair is currently held by Southern Water.
- 3.7 The Biosphere programme team, working within City Regeneration, consists of the Biosphere Programme Manager (part-funded externally), working with the Sustainability Programme Officer and a Programme Support Officer.
- 3.8 The Board is developing a portfolio of 14 priority projects (Appendix 1), which include partners’ delivery of:
 - Stanmer Estate restoration (HLF-funded project, led by the city council) – includes integration of Biosphere communications and experiences in the interpretation and activities delivery plans
 - Groundwater quality (‘Brighton ChaMP for Water’ partnership project, led by Southern Water) – includes measures to reduce pollution inputs from rural and urban sources to the drinking water chalk aquifer
 - Water efficiency domestic programme (Southern Water) and ‘ReFill’ project proposal (led by city council Public Health) – aims to encourage free tap water provision by local businesses to the public
 - Biosphere Research & Monitoring Strategy (led by the local universities) – publication of a framework to encourage and steer applied research studies on priority topics to inform policy and practice in local environmental management of the Biosphere
- 3.9 Further projects already delivered with external funding secured by the programme team include:
 - ‘Rain Gardens’ – two pilot schemes implemented to help address local flood risk and water quality issues in Portslade parks, with associated public amenity and biodiversity benefits
 - Environmental education – ‘Our Water Matters’ programme delivered to 25 local primary school classes (including 20 in Brighton & Hove) using innovative virtual and outdoor learning to engender awareness of the local water cycle and encourage sustainable lifestyles
- 3.10 Furthermore there are two major EU funding project proposals under development with international partnerships:
 - BioCultural Heritage Tourism (Interreg Channel programme) – to create new sustainable tourism business opportunities based upon and benefitting combined natural and cultural assets
 - Nature Based Solutions (Horizon 2020 programme) – to learn from others as a ‘follower’ city how ‘green infrastructure’ can support social and economic regeneration

- 3.11 The City Sustainability Action Plan (2015-17) has constituted the corporate framework for numerous projects that deliver the Biosphere objective of sustainable socio-economic development. In future, it is likely that internal delivery of sustainability actions will be embedded in Directorate Plans linked to corporate KPIs, and progress reported to Policy, Resources and Growth Committee. There is potential scope for external city-level and wider actions to be integrated with the Biosphere programme.
- 3.12 A major milestone has been achieved by creating a new identity for the Biosphere programme and area as 'The Living Coast'. New communications materials (sponsored by Southern Water) have been developed that include a new website www.thelivingcoast.org.uk and leaflet (Appendix 2). The rebrand was launched at an event at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery in March 2017, kindly supported by RPM and Southern Water.
- 3.13 The next steps are to actively promote The Living Coast new identity, both directly and through project partners (including Visit Brighton for example), based upon an adopted marketing programme and seeking further professional communications support. Additionally, both the Board's priority projects and other Biosphere projects will continue to be developed by seeking external funding, including corporate sponsorship, for their implementation.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 No alternative options are deemed necessary for consideration currently.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Both the Biosphere programme of projects and the new identity of The Living Coast have been developed through close working with partner organisations.
- 5.2 Communication with wider stakeholders and 'Friends' supporters has also taken place on the new identity through the rebrand launch event in March 2017 and monthly e-newsletter issue in April 2017 respectively.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Committee is requested to note the recent progress made on The Living Coast's Biosphere programme, and help support and promote this UNESCO-designated initiative led by the city council.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report and the Biosphere programme team, working within City Regeneration, is funded from direct revenue budgets plus some external resources to support the team.
- 7.2 The Board assists in delivering a number of priority projects throughout the region. Each of these projects such as the Stanmer Regeneration project will have separate funding arrangements and supporting business cases.

Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen

Date: 07/06/17

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The Biosphere designation is not a statutory designation and does not impose new regulations on land management. It does however encourage higher standards in environmental policy and planning to promote sustainability.

Lawyer Consulted: Alison Gatherer

Date: 13/06/17

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 There has not been an Equality Impact Assessment carried out at the present stage of the programme, as one was produced when the formal consultation exercise was carried out prior to UNESCO designation.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 The Biosphere programme focus is on delivering positive benefits for sustainability.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 No other significant implications have been identified.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Biosphere Delivery Board priority projects portfolio
2. The Living Coast communication materials example – new leaflet

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

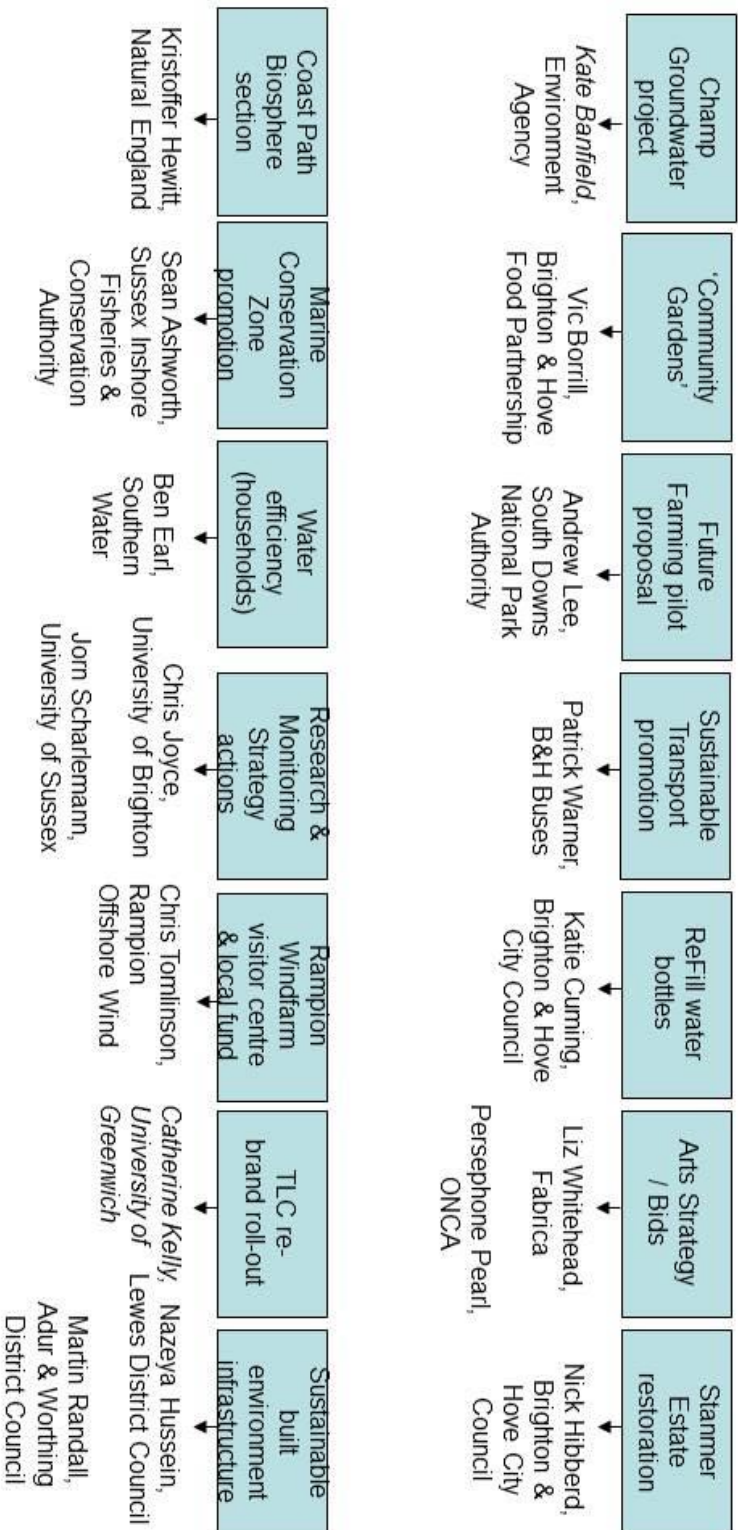
1. None

Appendix 1

Biosphere Delivery Board priority projects portfolio

Biosphere Delivery Board Priorities

Projects Map – June 2017



Appendix 2

The Living Coast communication materials example – new leaflet



We are The Living Coast

The Living Coast is the place where people and nature come together in our world-class environment of Downs, Towns and Coast.

Here we care about people and the rest of nature in the "Biosphere", our mission being to pioneer a positive future that better connects both – by building relationships and inspiring better ways of living.

We are thus recognised as a **World Biosphere Region** by the United Nations body UNESCO – a special place that serves as an international demonstration area for sustainable living.

Downs to Towns, and into the sea

The Living Coast includes both the land and sea, bringing together our three local environments:

- Countryside** – part of the South Downs National Park
- City & Towns** – including Brighton & Hove, Lewes, Newhaven and Shoreham
- Coast** – including the Marine Conservation Zone chalk reef

Get out and enjoy The Living Coast, by exploring some of the special places highlighted on the **map overleaf!**

Here you can visit renowned natural attractions such as Devil's Dyke, as well as lesser-known treasures like Castle Hill.

We share our Biosphere with a wealth of wildlife, which includes rare species like the beautiful Adonis Blue butterfly and the Short-nosed Shearwater.

Global Connections

We are part of a global family of hundreds of UNESCO **World Biosphere Regions** spread across more than a hundred countries – including six sites in the UK. This connects communities around the world who are all pioneering a positive future.

All are places that champion life, connect and empower people, and model solutions to solve global challenges.

The **Biosphere objectives** are to:

1. Conserve and enhance nature
2. Support sustainable human development
3. Promote environmental awareness, knowledge, learning and engagement



Our Biosphere

The vision of the Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere is: **To create a world-class environment, that is economically successful and enjoyed by all – forever.**

Our Biosphere's **priorities** to add value include:

1. **Nature Conservation** – improving urban green spaces with wildflowers, and creating "rain gardens" for ground water quality and flood alleviation.
2. **Sustainable Socio-Economic Development** – promoting water efficiency, active travel, outdoor recreation and eco-tourism.
3. **Environmental Awareness** – actively engaging local people, delivering learning in schools, and working with universities to build knowledge.



The Living Coast needs our TLC!

The Living Coast is all about people, with more than a third of a million of us living here and a further twelve million visiting every year.

We depend on our local environment for our daily needs. It provides us with pure water, fresh air, local food, clean energy and outdoor space for recreation, almost for free! We need to help our nature, so we can help our selves – so please give your "TLC" (tender loving care) to The Living Coast!



we are The Living Coast

Follow Your Better Nature

Follow Your Better Nature

We invite everyone to play a part in creating the positive future that we wish to see for The Living Coast.

Residents – lighten your environmental footprint, and lend a hand by volunteering to improve your local environment

Schools – teach children about the special nature of their local environment, and encourage them to get out and enjoy it

Businesses – show your support for The Living Coast, and provide more local and sustainable goods and services

Visitors – take time to experience our fantastic nature, and only take what you really need from our environment

Everybody – sign up for free as a "Friend" to connect with what's happening in The Living Coast!

Together we are stronger – if we all do one thing, then collectively we can make a real difference!

Get Connected

Become a "Friend"!

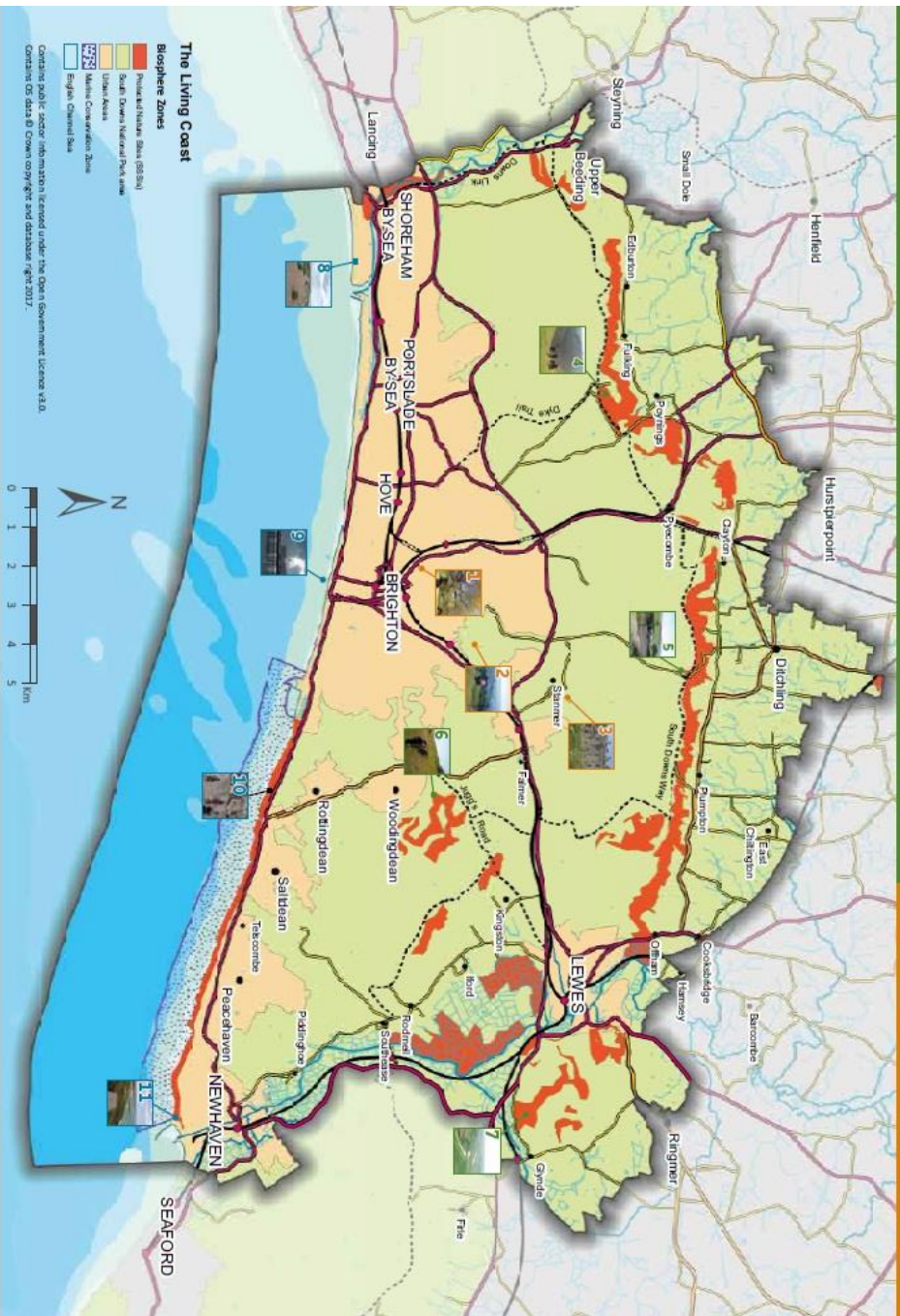
www.thelivingcoast.org.uk
info@thelivingcoast.org.uk
[theivingcoastuk](https://www.facebook.com/thelivingcoastuk)
[@theivingcoastuk](https://twitter.com/theivingcoastuk)

Biosphere Programme Manager:
 Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership
 c/o Brighton & Hove City Council, Hove Town Hall,
 Merton Road, Hove BN3 3BQ

Photos: Murray Ballard, Judge Pflum, Rich Howarth and Nick Raeburn



Printed on 100% recycled paper
 Leaflet kindly sponsored by Southern Water



The Brighton & Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership brings together more than forty local bodies, united in our work to connect people and nature to inspire a positive future - today.

The Living Coast

Our Best Nature

City & Towns

- 1 Preston Park, Brighton** Historic 'Green Flag' park with unique giant Elm trees, the 'Preston Twins'
- 2 Hollingbury Hill, Brighton** Iron Age hill fort with wildflower grassland and panoramic Biosphere views
- 3 Stanmer Park, Falmer** Historic landscaped parkland with traditional village. Brighton's gateway to the Downs

Countryside & Downs

- 4 Devil's Dyke** The "grandest view in the world" with an awe-inspiring dry chalk valley
- 5 Ditchling Beacon** Highest point of our Biosphere, on the wildflower-fringed South Downs Way
- 6 Castle Hill, near Woodingdean** National Nature Reserve of colourful chalk grassland, next to the ancient Jugos Road
- 7 Mount Caburn, by Lewes** National Nature Reserve and Iron Age hill fort sited atop chalk grassland above the Ouse valley

Coast & Sea

- 8 Shoreham Beach & River Adur** Local Nature Reserve with wild flowers amongst shingle, over the river estuary with its saltmarsh and mudflats for birds
- 9 Brighton Seafront** Masses of startings over the piers, and shingle beach wildflowers along the Volks railway
- 10 The Undercliff, Brighton Marina to Saltdean** Fossil-filled white chalk cliffs, towering above beach rock pools and chalk reef, with traffic-free path
- 11 Castle Hill, Newhaven** Extensive sea views from this flower-rich Local Nature Reserve, above Newhaven Fort, West Beach and Friars Bay marine conservation area

