

Subject: Sustainability Conference 2010
Date of Meeting: 23 July 2010
Report of: Director of Strategy & Governance
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Key Decision: No
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief members on the outcomes of the Sustainability Conference 2010.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Committee notes the report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Sustainability Conference, titled the Evolving Seas was held on 15-16 April 2010. It was a two day event focusing on the marine and coastal theme and was supported by and held at the University of Brighton. The conference was agreed upon by Sustainability Cabinet Committee in February 2009 and particularly links in with the Leaders priority for supporting the Sussex offshore wind farm – a subject that was a significant component of the programme.

- 3.2 The conference was structured into three broad themes:

- Marine & coastal policy including the new Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 and the implications for the city council, the local marine space, and the shoreline.
- Climate change in the impact of sea-level rise and stormier weather events for our marine and coastal space.
- The new offshore wind farm development planned off the Sussex coast – the impacts and opportunities this will be bring for the marine space and for Brighton & Hove.

See Appendix 1 for the complete conference programme.

- 3.3 The conference included exhibition stalls from over 20 organisations, environmental interest groups and projects. Also, two coastal ecology tours were conducted on Shoreham beach for delegates from a local marine educator and also from the council's Keeper of Natural Sciences from the Booth Museum.

- 3.4 A total of 230 delegates attended over the two days of the conference. The delegate profile was incredibly varied including local residents, representatives from local community groups, businesses, national organisations, NGOs, local authorities (including officers from BHCC), government agencies, media, education, and academic institutes.
- 3.5 Delegate feedback was very positive, particularly for opportunities for networking and on the speakers/presentations. Also delegates gave very high marks to 'potential long term value' of the conference and to the conference agenda as a whole.
The conference report detailing the entire conference, including summaries of all the conference presentations, a detailed analysis of the delegate feedback and photos from the event, is downloadable from the conference website (see Appendix 2 for website link).
- 3.6 **Sponsorship & support**
Organising the conference in partnership with the University of Brighton, provided expert input into the conference programme, contributions to the delivery of aspects of the programme as well as provided the venue and covered catering which significantly reduced the overall conference costs.
The conference was sponsored by E.ON Climate & Renewables (the developers of the Sussex offshore wind farm) who sponsored an evening reception for speakers, conference organisers and special invited guests; Searoc (a offshore energy consultants based in Brighton) who sponsored USB memory sticks to all delegates; the Sea Life Centre who provided the schools art competition prizes; and finally CleanUp UK who supported the council in organising a beach litter-pick for local primary schools.
- 3.7 **Next conference** – City Parks and the Sustainability Team will be providing organisational support to the Big Nature biodiversity conference that will be held on the **10 November 2010** at Dorothy Stringer High School. The conference titled 'Big Nature: A big deal for Brighton & Hove' will be a key event within a whole calendar of biodiversity events being held in the city throughout 2010 to celebrate 2010 - International Year of Biodiversity (see Appendices 3 & 4 for relevant website links)
The conference will include international & national speakers on biodiversity as well as provide opportunities for show-casing local case study biodiversity projects from across the city.

4. **CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Coastal Protection Engineer, City Parks, Legal

5. **FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The University of Brighton provided the location and catering for the sustainability conference, and other support was provided by sponsors. The actual costs incurred by the council was approximately £1,000 and related to bus hire, ecological tour leader, speaker accommodation and travel expenses, and was

met from the sustainability budget. The staff time incurred on the conference was covered within existing workloads and resources

Finance Officer Consulted: Peter Francis

Date: 12/07/10

Legal Implications:

5.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Lawyer consulted: Oliver Dixon

Date: 12/07/10

Equalities Implications:

5.3 None.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 As a coastal city, Brighton & Hove has a real impact on the local marine ecology and protecting the natural environment is a key component of sustainability. Development of the Sussex offshore wind farm is also like to have significant social, economic and educational opportunities for the city.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 None anticipated.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 n/a

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 The Sustainability Conference was a free event for the wider Brighton & Hove community. It raised awareness on a broad range of current marine and coastal sustainability issues.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 The council could in theory choose not to support the scheme or to look to maximise local employment.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Raising public awareness on issues relating to our local marine and coastal environment is important for improving the environmental quality as well as the opportunities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix:

1. Sustainability Conference 2010 programme

Documents In Members' Rooms

None.

Background Documents

1. www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sustainabilityconference2010
2. Brighton & Hove City Council website on www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/index.cfm?request=b1157084
3. Brighton & Hove Big Nature website: www.bigbiodiversitycount.org.uk