

# ITEM 5

## Camden Local Strategic Partnership

<b>Meeting</b>	8 May 2008
<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Draft notes on the Sustainability seminar held on 15 April 2008</b>
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<b>Purpose</b>	The LSP held a seminar on 15 April 2008 at the Town Hall entitled "Making Camden a Low Carbon, Low Waste Borough".
<b>Recommendations</b>	The LSP is asked to note the report, particularly the actions to take forward summarised in section 4.

### Present

- Cllr Andrew Marshall, London Borough of Camden, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Equalities and Community Development (Chair)
- Charlie Legg, Camden Community Empowerment Network and Camden Central Community Umbrella
- Chief Supt Dominic Clout, Metropolitan Police, Borough Commander
- Stephen Jordan, London & Continental Stations and Property, Managing Director
- Moira Gibb, London Borough of Camden, Chief Executive
- Chris Shaw, Camden Town Unlimited, Chair
- Michael Quy, London Fire & Emergency Planning Authority, Borough Commander
- Professor Anthony Kessel, Camden Primary Care Trust, Director of Public Health

### Also attending

- Cllr Alexis Rowell, London Borough of Camden, Eco-Champion and Chair of the Sustainability Task Force
- Maxine Holdsworth, London Borough of Islington, Head of Sustainability
- Will Lochhead, Government Office for London, Head of Climate Change and Sustainable Development
- Robert Scourfield, London Borough of Camden, Assistant Director Public Realm and Sustainability
- Oliver Myers, London Borough of Camden, Interim Head of Sustainability
- Dean Stokes, London Borough of Camden, Head of Strategy and Projects
- Mary Burguieres, London Borough of Camden, Head of Policy
- Mike Webb, London Borough of Camden, Senior Policy Officer
- Matt Pinner, London Borough of Camden, Senior Policy Officer

## **1 Welcome, apologies and introductions**

- 1.1 In the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair, Cllr Marshall chaired the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Cllr Moffitt, Rob Larkman, Mick Hickey, Heather Schroeder, Kevin Munslow, Karen Wilson, Barry Peskin, Simone Hensby and Pat Stack.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Cllr Rowell, Maxine Holdsworth and Will Lochhead and there was a round of introductions.

## **2 Presentations**

### **Camden Council's Sustainability Task Force - Cllr Alexis Rowell**

- 2.1 Cllr Rowell began by describing his commitment to sustainability issues and his role as Eco-Champion and Chair of the Sustainability Taskforce. This cross-party group reports directly to the Executive and is tasked with proposing radical but practical steps the Council can make to become more sustainable.
- 2.2 It does this through quarterly themed reports. The first report was on decentralised energy, which proposed a number of actions such as combined heat and power (CHP) feasibility studies, green audits, an eco-centre, carbon accounting within the Council and a revolving energy fund. The latter directs energy savings into a fund which can be used to invest in further energy saving projects. More detail on these proposals can be found in the Community Strategy progress report circulated at the LSP meeting on 27 March.
- 2.3 The second report was on waste and recycling and addressed two particular issues; the reduction and the effective disposal of food waste, and a critical assessment of recycling. In the latter case, the Council needs to be sure that recycling is done in the most energy-efficient way. For the moment, however, the priority is to encourage recycling among residents before looking at improving the system.
- 2.4 The third report was on transport and focused on incentives, since other actions the local authority can take are limited. There were recommendations on cycling and expanding 20 mph speed limit zones. However the key proposal was a local carbon offset fund to allow businesses to offset the carbon they produce, particularly through flying. It could also be used as part of the planning process – developers can be given the choice between reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and offsetting them.
- 2.5 The fourth report due in May will look at food, water, biodiversity and green spaces. One issue is that there is nobody who has cross-council responsibility for any of these four policy areas. There are many

underused and/or not very biodiverse green spaces in Camden e.g. in housing estates. In Middlesbrough such spaces have been used by residents to grow food with the council's support, a project which could work in Camden. Camden's underground rivers such as the Fleet could be used as storm drains in a wetter future and/or opened up to improve liveability, as in Germany.

- 2.6 Taken together the measures in the reports could provide a blueprint for sustainable urban living which mitigates the effects of and adapts to climate change. Cllr Rowell ended his presentation with an offer to LSP members to visit their organisations to give a talk on sustainability.

### **Making Camden a Low Carbon, Low Waste Borough – Robert Scourfield**

- 2.7 The slides from the following three presentations are available electronically to LSP members on request from Mike Webb.
- 2.8 As the senior officer responsible for sustainability across the council, Robert Scourfield outlined the Council's commitments and the considerable resources it is devoting to the issue such as £500,000 for a revolving energy fund. Robert also emphasised the importance of collaborative working given the increasing requirements from government and the new LAA performance framework which will quantify progress on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and residual waste. A climate change partnership similar to that in Islington could help meet the CO<sub>2</sub> targets.

### **Camden PCT's Corporate Social Responsibility Plan – Professor Anthony Kessel**

- 2.9 Professor Anthony Kessel began his presentation by outlining the historical links between the environment and public health. Sustainability is a major issue for the NHS but has been a low priority to date. Camden PCT compares well with its peers in London but work is still at an embryonic stage.
- 2.10 Professor Kessel went on to outline Camden PCT's Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy, which has a strong focus on sustainability. The Strategy is backed up with considerable funding and builds on an audit carried out by the Carbon Trust.

### **The Islington Climate Change Partnership – Maxine Holdsworth**

- 2.11 Maxine was invited because Islington were the first local authority in the country to have CO<sub>2</sub> reductions as part of their LAA, in the form of a commitment to reduce emissions by 55,000 tonnes by 2010. This is the equivalent to a 5% reduction. Islington were in a slightly better position than local authorities with a CO<sub>2</sub> LAA target under the new performance framework because they had a year to carry out a carbon baseline study. After establishing the baseline, the challenge was to influence

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the borough. The approach taken was a partnership. Organisations signing up committed to a 15% reduction which would mean the 5% target would be met even if the rest of the borough did nothing. The partnership has grown from 27 members two years ago to 100 now and includes many high profile businesses and institutions in the borough.

- 2.12 Although Year 1 performance has not been formally published, indications are that progress towards the target is on track. However it will get more difficult since reductions are cumulative.
- 2.13 Organisations have been willing to join the partnership because there is a strong focus on practical help such as workshops, business-to-business mentoring and visits from the LSP-funded carbon reduction officer. However it has been harder to get national businesses with local branches to sign up to the partnership, even though they may be doing good work nationally.
- 2.14 The Islington Climate Change Partnership has generally been successful and focusing on the issue has encouraged the council to up its game – it was originally aiming for an 8% target rather than 15%.

### **3 Discussion**

- 3.1 The Chair suggested the discussion begin with the general challenges around sustainability before looking in detail at the climate change partnership model.
- 3.2 Maxine Holdsworth was asked if the CO<sub>2</sub> targets were challenging for the organisations that signed up. She replied that it had already been on the agenda for most of the organisations that joined the steering group but a few organisations were frightened off by the target during the process.
- 3.3 The LSP heard that businesses were more than willing to engage with this agenda but found it confusing because the science is so fast moving. It was suggested that they really needed help in making the right choices and the business to business mentoring sounded like a particularly good way of approaching it. In response, the LSP was told that this showed the need for a best practice forum which the partnership could provide. A further concern for business was that a climate change partnership might involve another set of meetings to attend.
- 3.4 Maxine Holdsworth was asked if Islington had been able to measure the engagement of residents. She replied that the partnership has been more focused on business but residents can sign up for the Islington Climate Change Challenge on its website and there are schemes like a light bulb amnesty targeted at individuals. However she acknowledged that people often tend to over-claim their commitment to sustainability.

On the other hand, the latest residents' survey found that many more respondents think Islington Council are taking the issue seriously, which should encourage them to do the same. It was added that 79% of respondents in the Camden residents' survey thought climate change was a major issue for them and 73% thought the council should take a lead on the issue.

- 3.5 One LSP member said sustainability had not really ever been addressed in voluntary sector organisations. He had never really considered local government as a source of leadership on the issue before (central government has been disappointing in this respect) and was willing to make changes but was unsure where to find support.
- 3.6 From the perspective of the private sector, there have been costly mistakes when businesses have invested in technologies that have not turned out to be sustainable e.g. boilers in new developments. The challenge is to future-proof investments since technology evolves so fast that good practice can quickly become poor practice. In this context, a partnership could add value by providing accessible information on best practice over the long term and value for money. In response, Cllr Rowell said he believed energy efficiency was more of a priority than generation and will provide more value for money. He agreed that information sharing is crucial.
- 3.7 The LSP heard about good practice in the London Fire Brigade which was planning for a 15%-20% reduction in energy use in its four Camden premises. Another London fire station installed a wind turbine and experienced a 40% drop in energy use, more from changed behaviours than the turbine itself.
- 3.8 The LSP was informed that Camden is one of five London boroughs leading the way on climate change along with Islington, Kingston, Richmond and Sutton. Kingston is using the ecological footprint model and Sutton is aiming to be a carbon-neutral "sustainable suburb" by 2025. The inclusion of a CO<sub>2</sub> indicator in the National Indicator Set has stimulated a number of forums to share good practice – London Councils, the Energy Saving Trust, the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships – since 19 London boroughs have included it in their LAA. Defra is also providing support at a national level and there could well be a role for the Government Office for London in filtering information.
- 3.9 An issue where more progress could be made for relatively little effort is reducing unnecessary energy use. Some business premises use vast amounts of energy because they are 24 hour operations. This could involve widening the green champions scheme used in the council to other organisations.
- 3.10 Although improving energy efficiency including boilers and insulation is a quick win, the LSP was told that in the local context energy supply will

need to be addressed. New developments need to be ready for decentralised energy such as gas-fired plants and heat networks even if the technology is not yet available and this requires partnership working. British Land's North East Quarter project will have decentralised energy supplied by an Energy Supply Company (ESCo) thanks to a section 106 agreement. The equipment required for decentralised energy does not take up much more space than current plant on housing estates. Another aspect of future-proofing infrastructure is ensuring the pipes are in place. As development gets denser in Camden, this needs to be coordinated through the Local Development Framework and the planning system. The planning process has changed in the last couple of years and developers are much more willing to install pipes. It is easy and cheap to do while building new developments, much less so if retrofitting is needed. It was suggested that conduiting should be a planning requirement for all new large-scale developments.

- 3.11 The view was expressed that eco-grants for wind turbines and photovoltaic cells could be better spent on replacing inefficient boilers for free. In response, the LSP were told that these grants are much smaller than funding for energy efficiency and were always primarily intended to raise awareness. In addition, there has been a lot of recent learning on renewables in an urban context. This is another area where businesses have invested in now-redundant technologies. However new turbines can better cope with the gusting prevalent in cities. Older turbines are still useful to businesses as a symbol of their commitment.
- 3.12 The LSP heard that the Metropolitan Police is doing a lot at a London level but recently missed a trick in its Asset Management Plan. While the strategy to centralise its estate would result in the disposal of old, energy-inefficient buildings, the police did not consider the energy saving implications. This shows that sustainability is still not always mainstreamed.
- 3.13 The LSP learnt that housing associations were now required by the Housing Corporation to provide for renewable energy in new builds. This can be challenging for some of the smaller associations although they are getting better at finding funding. However, given the existing stock in Camden, retrofitting is also crucial.
- 3.14 The discussion moved on to the climate change partnership. The LSP were told that there is consensus among Camden politicians to take the idea forward but its support was needed as well. Bearing in mind the partnership would not be a series of meetings, the LSP agreed that Robert Scourfield and Oliver Myers would bring some proposals to its business meeting on 4 July. This was supported by the view that the existing goodwill on climate change needed to be galvanised by local leadership.
- 3.15 The LSP heard that Camden is in a different place to Islington three years ago and that it should consider using the Camden Business

Summit to sound out businesses. Another LSP member supported this view, saying that it could be used to enthuse them, particularly about a possible local carbon offset scheme.

3.16 The LSP also agreed that there should be a practical focus on advice, mentoring and best practice rather than meetings and governance. This was supported by the experience in Islington where, while the steering group met every 2 months, the wider partnership never met. Islington restricted the focus of its partnership to CO<sub>2</sub> reductions rather than including recycling or other sustainability issues.

3.17 The LSP were informed that any climate change partnership in Camden was always going to be light touch. While the LSP member organisations might form the kernel of a partnership, it would not become a business item at its meetings. The partnership would be developed by staff within the LSP organisations, building on the successful Better Climate for Camden initiative, which now involves 100 businesses in the borough.

#### **4 Summary of actions to take forward**

- Proposals for a climate change partnership with a strong practical focus would be brought to the LSP meeting on 4 July.
- The Camden Business Summit would be used to sound out business interest in a partnership.