

LONDON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Full Commission meeting
13 December 2007, 10-1pm, Committee Room 3, City Hall

Minutes

Present:

June Barnes (Chair)	East Thames Group
Robin Stott	Consultant Physician
Samantha Heath	LSx
Mike Tuffrey	GLA Assembly
Richard Stephenson	Transport for London
Chris Church	Chair, London 21
Prof Maria Lee	Faculty of Laws, UCL
Cllr Andrew Pakes	LB Southwark
Pamela Gardner	East Thames Group
Peter Head	Arup
Cllr Andrew Judge	London Councils, LB Merton
Sue Riddlestone	Bioregional
Robert Runcie	Environment Agency
Cllr Andrew Pakes	LB Southwark

GLA:

Niall Machin	GLA Policy Support Unit
Bryony Mathie	GLA Policy Support Unit
Abbe Marks	GLA Policy Support Unit
Frances Mapstone	GLA Policy Support Unit
Jeff Jacobs	Mayor's Office

Apologies:

Dinah Cox, Paul de Zylva, Shaun McCarthy, Penny Bramwell, Tony Medawar

1. Introductions and declarations of interest

No interests declared.

Chair's Announcements

JB:

- Notified the Commission that Craig Cordice has resigned from the Commission.
- Due to prolonged absence the Secretariat will write letter to Ranjit Baxi asking him if he wishes to remain on the Commission.
- JB and FM confirmed that the Commissioner would be involved in the appointment of a new Chair – one Commissioner will be on the interview panel.
- JB confirmed that she will remain as Chair for the March Commission meeting.
- JB and the Commission formally thanked Niall for his work over the last 5 years. Niall will leave the GLA at the end of February 2008.

2. Housing presentation: Issues around delivering sustainable housing in London

JB presented an overview of the current issues around delivering sustainable housing in London, looking at the Mayor's 'Towards a Housing Strategy' and the current funding framework for social housing.

Key London housing challenges:

- Providing more affordable homes
- Providing a range of larger homes for people on low and moderate incomes – and retaining housing built at a discount from moving into the outright sale market
- Creating higher density mixed tenure developments that are well managed – and what do we do with new private sector rented housing that is poorly managed
- Making land available at a value which is affordable
- Having some simple guidance around environmental issues and new homes.

The presentation focused on the issue of high density housing and referred to the toolkit produced by East Thames providing design guidance. Two case studies were explored: Abbots Wharf in Tower Hamlets and Tanner Street in Barking.

An approach for the future:

- Creating new ways of accessing public land for affordable housing using:
 - Equity retention vs discounted sale
 - Overage arrangements for collecting value overtime
- Using planning powers positively:
 - Local Development Frameworks and site-specific briefs focussing on family housing
 - Density ceilings as well as density floors
- Promoting the use of CPO powers to site assemble recognising the role of smaller sites in providing new homes
- Putting housing associations into schemes at the beginning using their skills to develop long term housing solutions
- Pulling together development period issues with long term management approaches and an approach to sustainable social infrastructure
- Ensuring a comprehensive investment approach to infrastructure
- Broadening the range of tenure models available.

Other points to note:

- English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation and an element of CLG's function will merge in 2008 to form a new body – currently named the Housing and Communities Agency.
- East Thames has commissioned a piece of research by Cambridge University on service charges and their associated carbon take.
- Design for London is currently developing a practical design guide – LSDC need to be aware when this is published.

Commission discussion regarding where the LSDC can best contribute to the issues raised:

- Should the Commission hold an inquiry into new housing in London?
- Promote appropriate use of CPO (compulsory purchase order) powers.

- Can a tool be developed to measure 'good', retrofit the tool to East Thames developments to demonstrate how it works, and promote to help plan future developments. (SH)
- What role can the London Leaders play, for example Elliot Lipton? (SH)
- Can the LSDC identify a geographical location to produce a model for action, and demonstrate the linkages needed for a sustainable community? (PH)
- Should the LSDC promote the development of a Social Infrastructure SPG? (FM)

CC commented that there is a role for tower blocks, despite the concerns raised in the presentation, especially when tower blocks have a concierge or super-concierge service as this can save on management/maintenance costs, and tower blocks can suit CHP models better. The role of tenant management in planning and on-going management was also emphasised.

PH commented that at present the development of Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) is not very sophisticated and these need to improve to deliver on sustainable housing. CCAP targets need to be integrated with the place shaping agenda.

RoS highlighted the potential role of the communications industry to improve community cohesion and interaction. PH commented that there is a development in Ipswich pioneering the use of high-tech communications in social housing communities.

Jennifer Daothong from the GLA Housing Team requested that the LSDC continue to contribute to the consultation on the Mayor's Housing Strategy.

Action: Secretariat to obtain more copies of East Thames high-density toolkit to distribute to Commissioners.

3. Quality of Life Indicators

Abbe Marks outlined the proposed changes to the QOL indicator set in preparation for the 2008 report.

The Commission reached consensus that the report should still be structured by the 4Rs rather than by topic/theme and the Commission approved the new indicators selected. The Commission also support the 3-report suite structure suggested: stand-alone summary, full report and virtuous cycle examples.

A number of additional comments on potential indicators and the emerging indicator set were made:

- SH commented that the LAA KPI #27 - understanding local concerns – may be a valid alternative or addition to neighbourhood satisfaction. If no data is available the Commission agreed this should be included in the emerging issues section.
- Some debate regarding the differences between deficiencies of 'open' space and access to 'nature'. RR raised the issue to waterfronts and which indicator reflects 'blue' space as well as 'green' space. At the moment there is no one indicator that adequately reflects quality green space, which includes waterways and therefore the Commission agreed that this is an indicator that needs further consideration in the future.

- SR suggested that incorporating benchmarks and targets would strengthen the report and findings. Currently the direction of travel is the main mark of progress, however, Commission agreed that where targets already exist these would be included in the commentary and the issue of additional targets will be revisited for future work.
- SH requested that the report indicates the gradient of improvement or decline in performance, e.g. by the number of smiley faces or strength of the tick.
- AJ suggested that in the future there is an indicator on the number of homes with CHP or tri-generation.
- PH commented that life expectancy as an indicator is very blunt and health needs to be better represented within the indicator suite. One issue to reflect is the link between biodiversity and mental health, perhaps at this stage as an emerging issue. Commission agreed that the relationship between asthma and air quality should be reflected in a virtuous cycle example rather than a single indicator at this stage.
- JJ raised support for a new indicator on physical health and exercise, particularly because of the link with the Olympics and social legacy, the sport agenda and new national targets. Commission agreed that this would be incorporated as a new indicator for 2008.

Action: Secretariat arrange for SH to present on the Well-London programme early in the new year due to its links with QOL work.

4. Report back from SDC meeting of the regional commissions (brought forward in agenda)

Chris Church gave feedback to the Commission on the last SDC meeting of the regional commissions in Birmingham, 26th November.

- Much of the meeting involved a discussion on the 'Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration' (SNR). This is of limited interest to us, due to our unique structure but it was interesting to see the varying approaches and the underlying issues.
- It appears the key problem is the lack of interest / engagement with sustainability from the non-London RDAs. The various secretariat bodies were concerned to varying degrees (see below) about the lack of interest in anything other than economic development. It really emphasised how the lack of leadership and governance at a regional level is hampering moves towards sustainability when compared with London.
- Discussion and sharing of experiences was informative and illuminating. Chris talked about the London leaders, SCP project and the 2012 Sustainability Strategy. There was a lot of interest in the Leaders idea.
- There is a huge spectrum of capacity, skills and interest within these bodies. West Midlands and NE appear to have little interest in anything other than business engagement in SD through to Sustainability South-West who are the most active. The South-East group – Sustainability Futures – have some good ideas, but they are also treading a careful line due to political tensions within

the region, but there might be grounds for closer links given the way they almost surround London.

- The issue of the tension / linkages between SD and Climate was also discussed. This is a big issue for the South-West. They are now a freestanding charity with staff and members. They are running a major climate awareness campaign, based on a mutated version of contraction / convergence – quite different to the London approach. There might be some value in a discussion on regional approaches to climate change.

Discussion:

- Commission supported the idea to have a joint meeting with the SE roundtable.
- FM commented that Nicky Gavron chairs the planning forum of SEEDA and EEDA and it may be worth having an LSDC slot at a forthcoming meeting.
- CC stated that a new London 21 report promoting an LDF level approach to good practice will be published in January 2008.

Action: Secretariat to draft a letter from the LSDC to UK SDC about the lack of understanding of integrated sustainability across the regions, to offer support and share good practice.

5. London Leaders

Bryony Mathie provided an update to the Commission on current activity. The first London Leaders sub-group meeting is on 17th January and the purpose of discussion was to reach on consensus on a few items prior to this meeting.

In relation to the 3-tiered programme structure proposed, the Commission agreed that the new consideration is how this is communicated and to ensure that we are clear and transparent in our messages. Level 2 should be thought of as programme 'members' to prevent the possible confusion between London Leader champions and London Leaders.

The Commission approved the allocation of the remaining budget for 2007-08: £25k will be split between securing an external media contract and phase 2 of the website development.

Bryony advised the Commission that talks have been initiated with the GLA Sponsorship team and that the Secretariat are hoping to appoint an intern for 3 months, starting in January, to support the London Leaders programme.

PH commented that feedback on the London Leaders programme after his Arup One Big Day presentation on 11th December was very positive. Melbourne has expressed interest to adopt a similar approach and there may be positive links to make with the C40 Initiative.

6. Sustainable Consumption and Production in London

Arup were unable to attend the meeting due to sickness, therefore the Commission agreed that the final report would be circulated via email for comment.

Initial feedback is that whilst the project analysis is good, further work is required on the recommendations and therefore AM requested that Commissioners pay particular attention to this section.

RoS emphasised that it is very useful to highlight particular areas for attention when the Secretariat are requesting feedback on reports/documents from Commissioners.

7. Sub-group updates

Niall Machin gave an overview of the new sub-group structure and membership. Richard Stephenson will chair the new London Leaders sub-group.

One change to the meeting paper: Andrew Judge will remain on the Planning and Development sub-group, as well as joining the new London Leaders sub-group. Peter Head raised a current conflict of interest and will therefore step down from chairing the Planning and Development sub-group until Arup's position in the Olympic master-planning framework is confirmed. Robin Stott will be acting Chair until further notice.

JB commented and reminded Chairs that sub-groups have the option to co-opt other Commissioners and experts for particular work streams if this is beneficial.

- *CSL*: Shaun McCarthy was unable to attend but it was noted that CSL has requested the LSDC's input into the skills review in 2008. Current priority for the CSL team is budget negotiations.
- *Promotions*: Paul de Zylva was unable to attend but BM noted that some discussion is needed in conjunction with the London Leaders sub-group due to the importance of communications and marketing to both groups and the potential overlap.
- *Planning and Development and GLA*: RoS and AM gave a brief overview of the current strategy reviews and comments. Both groups have received presentations from strategy authors over the last few months that have been very beneficial for providing informal feedback at the early stage.
- *Executive*: the last meeting was cancelled but has been re-scheduled for 29th January.

8. Minutes of the last meeting – 14th September 2007

One error in the Minutes was acknowledged. Section 5 on the Away Day – it is Kieran Stanley from the Environment Agency, not Kevin. Otherwise the minutes were accepted as accurate.

Skills and Employment update

AM provided an update on the Skills and Employment Strategy and has arranged a meeting between a small group of Commissioners and the LSEB in January. Commission agreed that Dinah, Pamela and Samantha would be invited to attend to represent the Commission. Agreed that if after this meeting the Commission are still unhappy with progress then a meeting with the Mayor will be arranged.

Other comments:

- PH asked whether CCAP targets have been taken into account in this strategy. NM responded that this question was also raised in the Sustainability Appraisal.

FM advised that she has been talking to Shirley Rodrigues and the GLA Environment Team about 'green' skills and LSCD comments correspond with that of the Environment policy leads.

- PH commented that he sits on the Groundwork London Board and that this could be a good avenue for encouraging engagement between the LSCD and LDA on the skills issue.
- JB commented that the LSEB should have better voluntary and public sector representation. CC advised that BASAC (British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres) are also commenting on the strategy.
- AP would like to raise some questions about work-based learning and will send notes to the Commissioners attending the January meeting in advance.

Cross-ventilation update

Commission approved the paper for Nicky Gavron and also requested that a copy is sent to Shirley Rodrigues, Debbie Matheson, and the Environment Agency (CHECK NAME).

Action: Secretariat to check whether Sue Riddlestone would like to add comments on vertical draft paths, and then distribute.

Joint Commission Working

AM suggested that a potential LSCD work stream on income inequalities in 2008 would provide an opportunity for cross-Commission working.

LSCD/ UK SDC event

NM advised that the nature of this event is still under discussion but the proposed date is 11th February.

Away Day

Commission agreed that the Away Day had been a great success and the outcomes will be taken to the January Executive sub-group meeting for discussion.

Business Cards

Action: Secretariat to arrange for Commissioner business cards as requested.

Transport Strategy

Commission stated that they would like to see virtuous cycles explicit in the new Transport Strategy. RS stated that a formal update on progress would be given to the Commission at the 13th June meeting.

9. AOB

1. RR would like to discuss the replacement of the Thames Barrier at the March Commission meeting before the formal consultation starts.
Action: Secretariat to liaise with Robert in preparation for next meeting.
2. FM raised the opportunity to hold an event on housing and social infrastructure as the next step to take forward the housing agenda. Further work required to confirm scope and audience. PH stated that Arup has done recent work to produce an Urban Design Compendium, which could contribute to this.
3. NM advised that new SD Senior Policy Officer Nusrat Yousef will join the GLA team on 7th January.

4. NM's last day at the GLA will be 22nd February and the advert will be circulated to the Commission to forward through their networks.

Next meeting of the Commission: Friday 7th March, 10.30-2pm.