

LONDON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Full Commission meeting
14 September 2007, 10-1pm, Committee Room 1, City Hall

Minutes

Present:

June Barnes (Chair)	East Thames Group
Dinah Cox	Race on the Agenda
Penny Shepherd	UK Social Investment Forum
Robin Stott	Consultant Physician
Samantha Heath	LsX
Mike Tuffrey	GLA Assembly
Paul de Zylva	Friends of the Earth
Shaun McCarthy	Chair, CSL
Penny Bramwell	Government Office for London
Tony Medawar	London Development Agency
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

GLA:

Niall Machin	GLA Policy Support Unit
Emma Synnott	GLA Policy Support Unit
Bryony Mathie	GLA Policy Support Unit
Abbe Marks	GLA Policy Support Unit

Observer

Adrian Gurney	Associate Director, ARUP (sub-group member)
---------------	---

Apologies:

Peter Head, Cllr Andrew Judge, Robin Stott, Sue Riddlestone, Robert Runcie

Presentation given by:

Kirsty Bennett	London Development Agency
----------------	---------------------------

1. Introductions and declarations of interest

No interests declared.

Chair's Announcements

JB:

- welcomed new commissioners to the meeting.
- formally thanked Emma Synnott who will be leaving the GLA at the end of October to return to Australia;
- provided an update on her meeting with the Mayor, the deputy Mayor and GLA Officers (David Lunts and Niall Machin). Key points to note were:
 - the Mayor is supportive of the London Leaders programme and is prepared to offer greater media support through the Mayor's media team

- an approach for recruiting a new Chair to the commission was discussed (covered below);
- further financial support for the commission was raised, but JB noted that while this was not necessary at the moment, if LL became a success there would be a need for greater support in future – a proposal would be put together at this point linked to a business plan;
- future meeting with the UK SDC and the Mayor and the LSDC – the UK SDC are interested in some of the work of the LSDC and are keen to engage;
- housing issues – questions of density, quality and appropriateness need to be addressed both regionally and nationally – in particular the issue of cross ventilation.- JB agreed to put a note to Nicky Gavron on this.

Action: ES and BM to pull together note on cross-ventilation for Deputy Mayor.

2. Skills and Employment Strategy

Kirsty Bennett from the LDA presented the background to the establishment of the London Skills and Employment Board and the key findings from the work to date, including:

- London is unique in that it is the only region with a LSEB;
- The Board is able to set priorities for the three agencies providing Learning and Skills support to the 19+ market (the LDA, the LSE and Job Centre Plus);
- A report on the evidence base is to be published in October (has been prepared by London Economics);
- The key findings are that:
 - Skills Gap is not an issue in London because of London's position globally and its magnet effect;
 - Londoners competing for jobs against global highly skilled migrants is a key issue
 - Londoners' qualifications are average nationally but need to be better than average to secure work in the capital;
 - Structural barriers to work exist but employers are not greatly incentivised to address because of the ease in which they can seek suitable candidates;
- The two priorities for the Board are:
 - Help Londoners compete for jobs
 - Tackle worklessness (which is the highest in the country).

Key issues are:

- Incentivising employers
- The knit together of processes and how to communicate a better process to people
- Focussing the delivery agencies to deal with customers - employers, individuals and employees (as opposed to within their programme restrictions)
- Support agencies as they go through their current funding/programme changes (from block grants to delivery led funding)

Questions and discussion

Discussion focussed on the following issues:

- Close link with poverty and housing (price, quality) there are particular issues for London in this regard;
- The link to private sector provision

- The focus on private sector employers as opposed to public sector employers and the role that the voluntary and community sector currently plays in providing pathways to work through programmes such as volunteering (no current representation from voluntary and community sector on the board);
- The wider implications for the greater south east;
- The link between sustainable communities and employment and skills – through place making;
- The lack of London planners is a skills gap and the impact this has on planning for London (ie lack of local knowledge and understanding of these issues);
- The lack of evaluation of the wider benefits to communities of volunteering and other pathways to work;
- Links to assurance of the 2012 Games – particular focus on economic capacity and learning and skills;
- Incentives for employers to employ Londoners – looking at the CSR process as a spotlight for what is happening in other countries (ie the ‘brain-drain’ from developing countries to places like London)
- Challenge around whether there is a skills gap in London – ie the level of unemployment is a national disgrace –this is clearly a skills gap which is being filled by inward migration and commuters;
- Challenge around making assumptions about what works in terms of pathways into work and assistance for people – eg travel needs, childcare, flexible working etc

Actions:

- LSDC to hold a session at the next Commission meeting on how it would like to respond to the report of the LSEB, focussing on what issues are not being adequately addressed and on identifying specific pathways which could be considered as part of an overall sustainable approach to pathways to work.
- LSDC to engage with the LSEB directly either at next meeting or in a separate session.
- LSDC to input into the draft Strategy via these processes.

3. Joint Commission Working

Abbe Marks briefed the commission on work between the LSDC, the London Child Poverty Commission, the London Health Commission and the London Equalities Commission to identify a joint programme of work. Chairs from each of the commissions had met in the past few months and expressed an appetite for a joint approach.

A paper is to be circulated in the next week which will highlight three immediate priorities, with a more developed workplan following in the near future. The three priorities are:

- 1) strategic commentary on Mayoral strategies (to be piloted on the Housing Strategy and coordinated by the Housing Team and LSDC Secretariat)
- 2) London 2012 Games (particularly legacy) - suggest a meeting with the other commissions after the LSDC Awayday in November
- 3) cross-cutting policy issues including indicators and the income inequalities work (suggest that the session on this at the away-day be opened to other commissions to attend – addressed below).

4. WWF London Regional Checklist update

AM presented the London Plan Team presentation on the WWF London Regional Checklist. (Included in papers).

Key questions and discussion focussed on:

- The scope of the checklist only being around environmental sustainability;
- Whether a development application could be refused on the basis of poor performance on the sustainability checklist;
- Question of whether local authorities will be able to adapt the checklist for their use;
- Question of why BRE have continued to use a weightings approach after engagement from LSDC since 2004 has argued against this methodology; and
- The relationship of the SPG to broader social and economic sustainability issues and how these can be effectively levered into the planning process.

It was noted that the SPG on Sustainable Design and Construction will be reviewed in March 2008, which is an opportunity to pick up broader issues.

It was generally agreed that the LSDC concerns should be linked to the overall policy development, not simply on the checklist which is a tool. In this regard, it was agreed that the LSDC would write to the Mayor with a copy to Yvette Cooper arguing for a broader approach to sustainability assessment of developments to take into account:

- The cumulative impact of development applications on an area; and
- Social and economic issues relating to the development – such as access, mobility, safety and security, child play space.

Action: Secretariat to draft letter for consideration by P&D subgroup and JB.

5. Forthcoming events

UK SDC joint event with GLA and LSDC

It was noted that there is a joint event to be held at the GLA between the UK SDC and the GLA/LSDC. It was noted that this event should be a truly joint approach by the UKSDC and presented an opportunity to discuss LSDC and UKSDC joint funding projects.

Away day

The focus of the away day will be on the 2012 legacy in the morning and income inequalities in the afternoon. Discussion focussed on whether to include other commissions in the discussion particularly on income inequalities and on whether the focus of the session was appropriate. There was general agreement that it was a good opportunity to feed in strategically into a range of work including the health inequalities strategy and that other Commissions should be invited to this session.

There was concern that the suggested speakers on income inequalities were too academically focussed. Some other suggestions were:

- Eric Samuels (London Food Board);
- Kevin Stanley from the Environment Agency (in relation to mapping of environmental inequality issues);
- Robin Stott re his approach to virtuous cycles; and
- Someone with a practitioner focus.

The focus of the session was discussed, and key suggestions and comments included:

- Whether it was appropriate to focus on income inequalities as opposed to environmental inequalities;
- The need to focus the session around how the Commission can influence the agenda and in particular what specific approach the Commission can take with its unique cross-cutting point of reference and therefore the away day session should focus on what SD linkages might be;
- The usefulness of the session in providing all commissioners a common understanding of the broader impacts of being poor in London.

6. Subgroup updates

GLA Group

The GLA Group met previously in July. The GLA's energy team leader, Andy Deacon briefed the sub-group on the Climate Change Action Plan and the draft Energy Strategy.

Tony Medawar and Gulnar Hasnain also presented to the sub-group on the LDA's approach to capacity building. It was noted that a future meeting would seek an update on the TfL balanced scorecard approach.

AM noted that the sub-group had also considered the issue of macro indicators to link with the Quality of Life Indicators and that further discussion was proposed on this issue at the next GLA Sub Group.

Action: A separate scoping paper will be presented to the sub-group in October updating the LSDC Quality of Life Indicators in preparation for the next QoL report being prepared next year.

Promotions

PDZ briefed commissioners on progress in developing the new LSDC brand and logo. He noted that this was much more about strategic positioning than simply designing a new logo and that the new website would reflect a more outward-facing accessible approach.

It was noted that the commissioners would receive LSDC business cards with the new logo and website address in the near future.

PDZ highlighted that there were a number of potential strap lines which had been developed as part of the design process for the London Leaders programme which could be used as appropriate. For example, one played on the term 'greater London' as in 'we all live in Greater London' but are you a part of it?'

PDZ thanked Itineris for their excellent work on the project to date and the secretariat for their support in this regard.

Action:

Secretariat to organise business cards for LSDC commissioners and for London Leaders.

CSL

SMC provided an update on progress of CSL in completing the first review of governance of the 2012 programme. It was agreed to ask CSL secretariat to provide LSDC commissioners with hard copies of the assurance framework.

Action: ES to facilitate LSDC commissioners receiving the assurance framework.

Planning and development

AM briefed commissioners on the strategies the planning and development group had decided it would focus on. These included:

- Housing
- Transport
- Public realm
- The London Plan

On the TfL Transport Strategy, it was noted that further clarification was being sought from TfL on whether there would be any consultation on the draft prior to May 2008. It was generally agreed that if there was an opportunity to work with TfL on developing the draft strategy that this should be pursued.

Housing Strategy - it was noted that the next meeting of the Planning and Development Sub-Group would focus on preparing a response to the Mayor's Housing Strategy and to the Housing Green Paper, which is currently out for consultation

Executive

NM provided an update on the Executive Group meeting which had been held on the 4th of September. It was noted that the Commission will write to GoL on joint-working on LAAs - in particular on opportunities to highlight best practice through work in Barking and Dagenham, Westminster and Hounslow and Brent.

Other issues discussed at the Executive Group included progress on London Leaders and the Away Day.

DEFRA Innovation Fund Projects

AM provided an update on the progress of the projects funded in 2007-08. She noted that all projects were on track although the Low Carbon Technologies project was needing to realign resources but was still progressing. JB highlighted the need for future LAA projects to focus on place-making given their direct link to Sustainable Community Strategies and LSPs.

TM noted that advice was due to be sent from GoL to local authorities on what was mandatory for inclusion in the current LAA round. PB agreed to follow this up.

On the sustainable consumption and production (SCP) project, SH raised the issue of whether the 4Rs could be incorporated into the assessment matrix in stage one of the report. AM also sought comments and input into stage II of the project – compiling a shortlist of case studies. Chris Church agreed to join the steering group for the SCP project.

LSDC Recruitment

It was noted that commissioner recruitment was ongoing and that particular gaps were in equalities and in finance. The panel consists of JB, NM and RSt.

The recruitment for the Chair's role would continue. One possibility would be to use the London Leaders event to advertise the position. JB made it clear that she would like to leave after the December meeting, but only if another Chair had been appointed.

JB suggested that recruitment to sub-groups was now a priority focussing on seeing where new commissioners would like to go, and then on whether there were non-commissioners who could be co-opted onto sub-groups.

London Leaders

BM provided an update on programme planning and proposals for the launch.

It was agreed that meeting the Leaders had been a success. JB asked for specific feedback. It was agreed that it would be good to highlight some of the leaders' stories in the speech for the Mayor to give at the launch.

It was suggested that commissioners buddy with leaders as an effective way of joint working and mentoring. CC noted that London21 could through London Sustainability Weeks provide a forum for showcasing leaders and their events/activities.

JB highlighted that the Mayor's Office had been approached to assist on gaining sponsorship for the programme and that the initial response had been positive on the viability of this approach. This would be considered in more detail after the launch.

8. Minutes of the last meeting held on 15 June 2007

Approved.

It was noted that there should be a formal update on reporting against the business plan at the next Commission meeting.

9. Any other business

SH noted that LSX had launched an interns programme and that it was looking for organisations which would be willing to take on interns. All interns were competitively selected. SMC chairs the interns group.

Date of next meeting:

13th December 2007