

Environmental Sustainability Thematic Group

Date: 7th December 2009
Time: 10am-12pm
Venue: Committee Room 1, County Hall

Attending: Cheshire West and Chester Council	Peter Bulmer, Climate Change Team Leader Richard Nickson, Network Strategy Gill Rogerson, Performance Manager Cllr. Neil Ritchie, Environment Portfolio Holder Alan Slater, Head of Strategic Planning & Spatial Planning
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service	John Salt, (Vice Chair), CW&C Unitary Manager
Groundwork, Cheshire	Jane Staley, (Chair), Executive Director

Support Staff: Elaine Grant, Partnership Support

Apologies: Helen De Lemos, Waste Strategy, Jim Hughes, NHS Western Cheshire, Steve Kent, Director of Environment, Robbie Taylor, Partnership Adviser

Item 1 Welcome, Apologies & Introductions	Jane welcomed everybody to the meeting and apologies were noted.
Item 2 Minutes and actions from the last meeting (9 th November)	Jane invited John Salt to respond to this item as he had chaired the previous Environmental Sustainability Thematic Group (ESTG) meeting. Item 4 - Joint Consultations - There was an opportunity to highlight environmental issues via the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by the ESTG contributing to its three themes. Item 3 – Whatever it Takes – (update from Helen De Lemos)The Waste Management and Streetscene Service’s scheduled “Love Food Hate Waste” road shows as part of a “Whatever it Takes Day” in Winsford on 17 th March. John would be supplied with leaflets providing information on how to recycle old electrical items for his advisors to take to home visits.
Action/Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 4 – The Group to send individual ESTG responses to the SCS consultation through to Gill Rogerson so that she can produce a draft response on behalf of the ESTG. Please find the link to the questionnaire(s) at the end of the minutes
Item 3 LAA Delivery Plans/NI	Gill reported that although today’s updates would be provided verbally the delivery plans for the next (3 RD) quarter should be written.

<p>updates</p>	<p>NI's 154 & 155 – Alan presented a paper to the ESTG to report on the current situation regarding GONW (Government Office North West) removing the “lockdown” to NI's 154 and 155 in order to give the LA's an opportunity to review in light of the economic downturn and difficulties in delivering new build homes.</p> <p>NI 155 (Affordable Homes) is quite healthy and no changes had been proposed. However the situation with NI154 (Net New Homes) is far more serious, with the proposed target being revised/reduced by 50% to reflect the reality of the current situation both with developers and previous policies relating to planning permission that had meant that many sites had not been progressed to a planning stage. There is now a challenge for GONW to meet the Governments housing targets and included in Alan's report were the actions being taken to address the current situation.</p> <p>The discussion that followed highlighted the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developers are waiting for the mortgage market to become more accessible. • There is an appetite to start development on specific schemes but kick start funding was required in order to do this. • This is a national problem and trends were showing that although there was more overcrowding, homelessness had in fact been reducing with the mortgage lenders now more likely to make payment arrangements rather than repossess. However, debt levels were rising. • It was also suggested that as there is now a large ageing population, more developments of self sufficient retirement communities would possibly free up accommodation further down the line. • Alan asked that the ESTG endorse the actions that are currently being taken but in order to be pro-active, resources were needed. • As there were clearly aspirations but no funding, the public sector were required to step in to start the market off , planning needed to be more flexible and land or land value should be donated. • Lack of resources may also cause a negative environmental impact as money required for energy efficiency may be freed up to use elsewhere. <p>NI169 (non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered) Richard reported that there is no change in the target for this indicator but again as in the previous report on housing, a decline</p>
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	<p>in funding by as much as 50% is a major issue and there is a requirement to ascertain what funding is currently available. However, more encouragingly Richard reported that the Asset Recovery Plan, although not giving the funds that would be hoped for, would meet the managed decline of the network. Richard summarised by informing the Group that this is a complicated scenario which is dependant on funding.</p> <p>NI 186 (Per Capita CO2 emissions) Peter updated the Group on NI186 which was focussed on three areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with local businesses (in partnership with Groundwork) which had been extended by a further three years. • Domestic – which included data collection on the housing sector • Carbon Reduction Group <p>In the public sector network 20 organisations were meeting with the Carbon Trust and work was ongoing with Low Carbon communities.</p>
Action/Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alan’s report on NI’s 154 & 155 to be circulated electronically • Jane to highlight NI154 update at the next Thematic Leads meeting (14.12.09) • LAA/NI updates to be a standing item on ESTG agenda
Item 4 Updates on SCS, LDF and LTP Consultations (Sustainability Appraisal)	<p>This item had been partly covered in Item 2. The Group agreed that the LDF (Local Development Framework) would be an important vehicle for renewable energy policies and perhaps street lighting which would be easily measurable, should be a focus for the Group.</p>
Action/Decision	As in item 2
Item 5 LSP Board/Thematic Leads feedback	<p>The last Thematic leads meeting had been on the 16th November and the next “West Cheshire Together “LSP would be held at the end of January.</p> <p>At the previous thematic leads meeting, the thematic groups had been asked to submit bids for the Second Homes Taxation income. Only two bids had been tabled which included a bid from the ESTG (“Green Doctor”). This item is now back on the agenda for the Thematic Leads meeting on the 14th December.</p>
Action/Decision	None

<p>Item 6 Links to other Thematic Partnerships and governance arrangements</p>	<p>The LSP, Thematic Groups, Area Partnership Boards and Community Forums framework was discussed.</p> <p>The ESTG suggested that there should be a discussion with each APB to ascertain where support could be given. The Group acknowledged the possibility that duplicate pieces of work could be produced (e.g. response to Climate Change).</p> <p>John as Chair of Winsford & Rural East suggested that the APB's should be focused on the biggest priorities in their area and that the thematic groups needed to ascertain how they can tie into the Governance paper and release resources.</p> <p>The draft paper on governance arrangements (author: Alison Armstrong, LSP Director) was discussed with particular emphasis on any resources that the framework may be allocated and how the bidding process would work.</p> <p>The proposed quarterly meeting between the APB chairs and the chairs of the Thematic Groups to provide update on progress, co-ordinate local action and ensure that any potential duplication is minimized was also drawn to the Groups attention.</p>
<p>Action / Decision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane/Peter to discuss with each APB how mutual support can be achieved. • Jane to ask question at the Thematic Leads meeting on Monday on the process of bidding into resources. • To ensure that any resources are “new”, i.e. not already spent • ESTG noticed that there was not a chair listed on the paper for the Groves, Whitby, Sutton & Manor Community Forum. Sean Daley as Area Manager to be contacted
<p>Item 7 Suggested Approach to ESTG/Area Partnership Board working</p>	<p>Following on from the previous item, it was noted again the importance of starting discussion with the APB's, although it was suggested that this should be done on a tailored basis to each APB and not as a presentation x 5.</p>
<p>Action/Decision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To also discuss approach with the five CW&C Area Managers
<p>Item 8 Best Practise/Case Studies</p>	
<p>Action/Decision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESTG decided to pick out the relevant parts from the case studies and discuss at the next ESTG meeting in January
<p>Item 9</p>	<p>John informed the Group that the Fire and Rescue Service were</p>

Any Other Business	now in possession of some Environmental Pods supplied by the Environment Agency which were specifically for the use of extracting spillages (e.g. petrol out of rivers). John proposed to give the Group a demonstration in the new year.
Item 10 Future Meetings	The next meeting is due to take place on Friday 8th January, Room 269c, County Hall @ 10.00 am

Signed (Chair):

Date:

Link to Joint Questionnaires:

http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/planning_for_the_future.aspx