

KEY ENVIRONMENT ISSUES FOLLOWING 18 FEBRUARY 2004 MEETING

At the most recent meeting of the Environment SSG, following a review of action plan progress, we undertook a structured brainstorming session to identify the issues that could be placed before the board for them to consider. The Group was invited to examine both procedural and topic issues. The most interest was shown in developing views on the topics that the board should consider in formulating objectives and a useful session was held on this. It was recognized that certain of the topics raised may not ultimately be for the Environment Group to address, but it was felt that these should be placed before the Board in any event to assist them in identifying priorities.

The topic issues identified by the Group fell into six main categories:-

- 1. Improvement of the quality of the natural and built environment**
- 2. Transport**
- 3. Energy conservation**
- 4. Waste – sustainable waste management**
- 5. Health issues**
- 6. Other issues**

These topics are set out below together with the main bullet point summary of issues to address.

MAINTAIN & ENHANCE QUALITY OF THE NATURAL & BUILT ENVIRONMENT:-

MANAGE HUMAN IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

- Develop more sustainable communities with local homes for local jobs.
- Design the fear of crime out of the built and natural environment.
- Create clean, pleasant and inviting open space environments throughout the District.
- Promote sustainable access to recreation and the Countryside.

- Improve the understanding that open space can provide health and well-being in urban areas.
- Maximise use of local, regional and national protection regulation and legislation.
- Encourage positive land use through best practice.
- Develop integrated land drainage policy, closer co-operation WCC, STW, WDC and EA.
- Continue progress on flood alleviation.
- Engage the public in the drive for a cleaner environment.
- Volunteer groups to adopt public open spaces and other areas to do or fund projects.

ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Encourage sustainable bio-diversity and caring for the Environment.
- Protect, and enhance the natural landscape, rural character and rural communities of Warwick district.
- Promote Warwick District as part of the Forest of Arden.
- Conserve and enhance ecologically valuable urban and suburban environments.
- Promote and provide access to recreation facilities, open space and the countryside.
- Implement planting and management schemes for parks, open spaces, roundabouts etc. that reduce Fear of Crime.

IMPROVE THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Protect and enhance the built environment, town and streetscapes of local character.
- Maintain historic and architectural character of valuable buildings.
- Permit sympathetic re-use of redundant farm buildings and urban properties.

- Encourage sustainable, multi-functional excellence in design and use of new buildings.
- Improve access to and quality of open space and community parks and facilities.

TRANSPORT

Is seen to have major impact on the environment, in terms of pollution, congestion and quality of life in the District.

- Traffic Congestion.
- Reduce the impact of the car and provide attractive alternative.
- Environmental Traffic Management.
- Reduce impact of traffic on the environment and enhance non-car modes of transport.
- Better Public Transport.
- Lack of viable alternatives to the car.
- Less conflict with cars.
- Park & ride for Leamington & Warwick.
- Network of Safe Pedestrian / Cycle Routes.
- Improved pedestrian environment.
- Improved access to Countryside via better maintained footpath network.
- Sustainable Transport i.e. use of LPG, use of biodiesel, go back to petrol valuing.

ENERGY

Need to reduce amount of energy consumed and to encourage production and use of renewable energy:-

Energy Conservation

AIM:-

Reduce the amount of energy consumed throughout the district, improve home comfort and encourage the use of sustainable energy.

OBJECTIVES:-

1. Promote improved energy efficiency in homes to achieve the environmental objectives of the Home Energy Conservation Act.
2. Encourage the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy in homes, businesses and public buildings through sustainable planning policies.
3. Support education projects that promote responsible energy use.
4. Improve health through affordable warmth.
5. Create and promote sustainable energy schemes within the district utilising renewable energy technologies.
6. Establish a sustainable building philosophy in the district with due regard to the historic environment.
7. Support the local economy and encourage increased business opportunities by providing local energy services and sustainable energy supplies.

WASTE

Develop “Sustainable Waste Management” Improve the way waste is managed within the district promoting reduction re-use and composting of waste. Make waste recycling services for a range of materials available to domestic householders and businesses.

Create a clean, healthy environment by:-

- Reducing the amount of waste going to Landfill sites.
- Reducing the amount of waste being incinerated.
- Making it easy to recycle waste.

- Providing a doorstep recycling scheme.
- Promote composting of organic waste.
- Promoting recycling to businesses.
- Encourage people to buy recycled products.
- Reducing litter in open spaces.
- Promote creative recycling projects – using waste for art.
- Make use of grant money available to support recycling e.g. Landfill Tax Credit Scheme and National Lottery New Opportunities Fund.

HEALTH

Environmental issues strongly impact on our health as a society. Often an environmentally friendly lifestyle will also be the most healthy one.

- Reduce air pollution, recognising the links between vehicle and industrial emissions and health.
- Promote walking and cycling as a non-polluting form of transport and an easy way to lead a physically active healthy lifestyle.
- Promote energy efficiency as a way of providing affordable warmth and reducing number of cold-related health problems.
- Provide access to quality green space for the community, recognising the exercise and positive mental health benefits this brings.
- Promote the growing, cooking buying and eating of fresh, locally produced food, organic where possible to all sections of the local community.

Community Involvement

It is essential to involve the local community in the above actions because:-

- Local People have local knowledge and therefore have an insight into what will and will not work in their local area.
- The above priorities will not work without the participation of local people. Therefore it is essential that they understand and endorse it.

Process Although discussion on process was limited, a number of points were raised regarding the manner in which proposals and indicators should be addressed. These are set out below:-

- Sustainable living - relevant benefits, what does it mean?
- Detail the reasons for taking actions and list their benefits.
- A community house where volunteers can meet each other for the whole DC, so what goes to the board is not felt to be parochial.
- Package & present LSP in an accessible and relevant manner with action plans.
- Indicators need to be meaningful what makes 'nice' place to live?
- Define the qualities of life which are capable of environmental improvements.
- Trends as important as comparisons.
- Board to consider how to give "Hearts & Minds" leadership.... Many indicators dependant on sum of individuals' actions.
- Try not to separate and segregate aims, objectives and actions – integrate them.

Future Meeting Dates for the Environmental Strategy Steering Group 2004 are -:

Friday 26 March, 2.00pm to 4.00pm
Wednesday 19 May, 2.00pm to 4.00pm
Tuesday 14 September, 2.00pm to 4.00pm

All meeting will take place at the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre, Shrubland Street, Leamington Spa.

For information dates of Local Strategic Partnership Board Meetings 2004 are:-

20 April, 22 July, 21 October