



Environment Theme Group

Update on the five exciting projects for Coventry – June, 2009

Back in September fifty members of the Coventry Partnership attended the re-launch of the Environment Theme Group at the Transport Museum and identified five key projects that would have impact for Climate Change for the City. Groups of interested partners attended workshops in December to set in motion activities to begin implementation and to make the vision for the five projects a reality

This is a brief update on the actions that have taken place over the past 3 months and the progress that has been made since the last report in March '09.

Innovative network of decentralised energy production + distribution

The vision for this project is to provide heat and power on a local basis, to offer a low carbon solution to communities across the City.

An increasing number of regeneration programmes across the city are looking to include district heat and/or power schemes. The regeneration champions for Swanswell and Friargate development regions are now also interested to pursue the opportunities.

Substantial bids to the Home and Communities Agency (HCA) were submitted for the infrastructure for district schemes in the WEHM and Canley regeneration areas earlier this year. The HCA are managing a Low-Carbon Exemplar fund (£10-12M nationally) which is aimed at growth point areas. Schemes for a heating scheme for the first phase of the WEHM development and for 30 highly sustainable houses in Canley were submitted together with an application for early-stage design and procurement for a large scale combined heat and power (CHP) scheme at Canley.

In addition to this funding stream, the HCA are now managing a £20M initiative for DECC (the Green Stimulus package) which is specifically for district heat/power schemes. A further bid for funding for a heat line from the existing energy from waste plant at Whitley to the City Centre has been submitted. Coventry has been successful in getting through to a shortlist of projects from five local authorities. The process has been very convoluted but we are hopeful of getting confirmation of possible funding in the next fortnight. Schemes approved must be delivered by mid-April '10. Of the projects submitted, the scheme for WEHM and the heat line to the city centre look most promising.

Meetings with several energy supply companies have proved useful in crystallising ideas and developing a clearer picture. These early schemes, if successful, will begin to form the backbone of a network of CHP systems around the city.

A submission to Advantage West Midlands (AWM) has been made for a strategic review of district schemes, both within the city-centre and for the city as a whole. A meeting has been scheduled with AWM on the 8th June to discuss details. AWM and the Carbon Trust commissioned a review of potential carbon –saving programmes across the West Midlands region. The study included the proposals for Coventry University and the city-centre and identified a carbon opportunity of around 295 ktonnes /yr (nearly 15% of Coventry's current emissions). This was by far the greatest opportunity of the 12 regional programmes.

Growing Coventry – Celebrating Local Food

The vision for Growing Coventry is for a series of linked sites and events to provide the backdrop for celebrating the growing of food in Coventry.

Growing Coventry was successfully launched to the public at the Herbert and Garden Organic on the 4th/5th April. 1700 visitors attended the Herbert event (800 more than a typical Saturday) and 700 people attended the national Garden Organic event. A vacant shop in the city centre was opened for Growing Coventry and generated considerable interest. A free bus service to Ryton on the 5th April was not as well-used as expected. Good media coverage was achieved.

The Godiva festival will be held at Memorial Park on the 3rd-5th July. A dedicated team are exploring options for Growing Coventry in the Green Space tent.

A Harvest Festival event is proposed for the 3rd/4th October – city centre on the 3rd and Garden Organic on the 4th.

The Coventry Telegraph is launching an interactive blog. CV-One's Britain in Bloom website is being converted to a Growing Coventry website.

Summer 2009 City of Coventry Ambassadors' Meeting

Members of the City of Coventry Ambassadors' group will meet at Garden Organic on 25th June with three speakers presenting their views on how the city can move forwards:

Martin Reeves, CEO of Coventry City Council: Martin will be talking about his perceptions of the city before arriving to take up the CEO post last month, his finding since beginning the role and how he sees the way forward for us as a city.

Myles Bremner, CEO of Garden Organic, (Ryton): As well as discussing how he sees Garden Organic's relationship growing with the city of Coventry, Myles will explain the Growing Coventry concept and the partnership possibilities available with London's Capital Growth project.

Tim Holmes, MD of Parenthesis: Tim will explain the latest developments in the Be Inventive proposition for Coventry and how practical steps are being put in place to involve the entire city in the project.

After the meeting there will be a chance to take a tour of Garden Organic to understand the work carried out by the team at Ryton.

Coventry to become a world leader in the development and deployment of low carbon vehicles

This project hopes to achieve wide-scale deployment of low-carbon vehicles in Coventry, alongside a centre of excellence for research, design, development, manufacture and a supply base – bringing new manufacturing jobs back to the City.

Further announcements regarding low-carbon vehicle deployment in Coventry are expected on 21st/22nd June. Funding for purchasing low-carbon fleet vehicles in City Council and the two universities (Coventry and Warwick) over the next three years has been confirmed by CENEX, who has yet to identify the supply companies. City Council is also part of a wider consortium bid to the Technology Strategy Board for a larger number of low-carbon passenger vehicles and associated infrastructure. June's announcements may confirm that the bid has been successful; if this is the case, further details can then be released. Both these schemes could see a noticeable uptake of low-carbon vehicles in the city and provide valuable experience in their operation – in terms of technical and social issues.

The current economic climate has had impact on the work with AWM regarding the centre of excellence for low carbon vehicles in the city and on available funding streams. Support funding packages for vehicle manufacturers across the UK are linked to low-carbon vehicle development. Links between key players in low-carbon vehicles in the Coventry area are being forged more strongly with a long term view to bring expertise, in terms of research, development and supply chain, into the city when circumstances allow.

The concept of a low-carbon motor show at the Ricoh Stadium is being investigated. Several partners would be involved in this event, which would be a forum for industry and the general public to review the vehicles currently available as well as the broader issues.

There is scope for the Partnership to review the vision, following the June announcements and to focus on the deployment of low-carbon vehicles as a spur to the original, wider ambition.

Coventry's gateway to a low carbon future

This project aims to provide an eco-centre in Coventry – either an area for low-carbon living and working or a visitor attraction (or a series of eco-buildings) that showcases low-carbon schemes and projects in Coventry.

Several regeneration programmes are looking to adopt sustainability as a key feature for development. Sustainability studies for both Canley and WEHM have been commissioned and will be used for consultation with the local communities. Both offer some exciting opportunities. One particular parcel of land in Canley has been considered for a low-carbon development with a novel heating and drainage scheme. An eco-district near Keresley has been proposed within the growth plans of the Council's core strategy, causing local protest because of the green-belt location. Possibilities for low-carbon developments at the Bishopsgate site, part of the original vision, are also being considered.

The possibility of a short-term climate change centre, using a vacant city centre shop, is being investigated by Climate Change Solutions. A 'vision document' and a concept brief have been drafted for possible issue to potential partners. AWM funding had been anticipated for developing and drafting the business case. This is currently on hold.

The possibility of a vacant shop being used during Switch It Off week (w/c 9th November) is being proposed. This would showcase projects by Coventry University students, relevant to climate change and may also include exhibition materials linked to 'Earth from the Air'. Support from the Partnership during this week would help to reinforce carbon reduction messages. This very temporary facility would provide some early piloting of the ideas with a view to making the facility a semi-permanent feature.

Detailed aerial thermal survey of the City

The vision for this programme of work is to use data from an aerial thermal survey to focus attention buildings that appear as the biggest carbon emitters.

The survey took place at the end of March. The data is being processed and will be available w/c 1st June. Some early black and white renderings have been made available and these show very good detail. The Council is gearing up in terms of the geographic information systems which will be needed to display the data.

Dialogue has begun with the local DIY outlets and builders merchants. There has been a good response with at least four companies on board to link up as partners by offering discounts and offers on appropriate insulation materials.

A further meeting of the steering group for this project is scheduled for 2nd June. This will establish a strategy for publicising the results, with preparation of press releases an official launch and arrangements for accessing the information.