



Environment Theme Group

Update on the five exciting projects for Coventry – March, 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. Workshops were held in December for each of these projects, which clarified the aims and objectives and set in motion a series of activities to reach the grand vision. For each one a champion and team of strategic partners were identified to begin implementation and to make the vision a reality.

This is a brief update on the actions that have taken place since December and the progress that has been made.

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.

A number of regeneration projects around the City are considering using district heat and power. Sustainable energy studies have been commissioned by the Council for Canley and WEHM. These studies will include the feasibility of community energy systems and renewable energy schemes.

Seven energy supply companies (ESCOs) are being approached and meetings are being arranged with these ESCOs to understand the process for engaging partners in district heat and power schemes. A meeting with Utilicom has already taken place (Utilicom has provided district schemes in Birmingham and Southampton). Further meetings will take place over the coming weeks.

Advantage West Midlands has agreed to fund a strategic review of the potential for district schemes across the City with particular focus on the options for the new City Centre. The City-wide review will be an exemplar case study, giving a local application for a wider regional study into the opportunities for district heat and power. This review will be used as a model for other cities in the West Midlands. The City-wide strategy will start to map out the energy supply and demand, in particular identifying clusters of public buildings and schools as well as the regeneration zones that can act as a focus for the schemes. With this level of detail, it will be possible to begin the more detailed procurement process with the ESCOs.

Sources of biomass materials are also being reviewed. One scheme is being established in Warwickshire over the next 3 years, bringing parts of existing woodland under management. Other suppliers will be contacted in the coming weeks. A project to grow biomass crops on old landfill sites is being explored with Coventry University.

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.

Garden Organic has proposed some exciting events to launch a community-growing project in early April. Use of the Godiva Festival for Growing Coventry and engaging local families with local food has also been discussed. In September/October a final harvest is proposed. CV-One is also offering support as a key partner, with the potential to use city-centre displays and planters for growing vegetables. Further details of the package will be discussed at a stakeholder workshop on the 9th March at Garden Organic.

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.

Consultants, Ricardo has taken the lead on this project and has developed a discussion document which covers the potential for low-carbon vehicles, what Coventry already offers and what is missing. The next step is to secure funding to examine the business case in more detail with an implementation

G:\Coventry Partnership - Thematic Groups\Environment\2009\Environment Group\Coventry Env Theme_Summary of five projects Mar 09.doc

4th March, 2009

Melody Stokes, Coventry City Council (Tel: 024 7683 2093 email: Melody.Stokes@coventry.gov.uk)

plan. In parallel, City Council is looking to secure potential incoming businesses linked to low-carbon vehicles and is involved in early-stage discussions. Attendees at the December workshop suggested that a renowned champion was needed for the project. Lord Bhattacharyya of the Warwick Manufacturing Group, University of Warwick has agreed to take up this role. A meeting is being set up in mid March to discuss who should attend the official launch of the project on the 30th April (09:00 – 13:00).

Meanwhile, the City Council, along with Coventry University and the University of Warwick will shortly be able to purchase electric fleet vehicles at preferential rates, under the CENEX scheme. The Council is also involved in a second call to TSB with the local Universities, Birmingham City Council, electric vehicle manufacturers and EON to take part in a demonstrator project for the use of electric vehicles within the region. The consortium has been successful in the first round of bidding and is currently preparing a full application. If successful, the consortium will be provided with 154 electric passenger vehicles to be run by selected users to evaluate the vehicles. Under the programme we would also be installing the infrastructure for both electrical and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles within the City of Coventry. These programmes provide early experience in the use of low-carbon vehicles and a positive link to Coventry.

Coventry Bishopsgate - 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. The initial scheme centred on the Council depot site at Bishopsgate. A visionary concept document was prepared for this site. It has since been decided that this site is not appropriate and a technology park near the new Coventry University buildings could be more suitable. Further details on this have yet to be determined.

Sustainability studies are also under way for various regeneration zones in the City – including Canley, WEHM and, in the next few weeks, the new City Centre. Proposals include using improved energy efficient housing with district heat and power schemes as well as attention to sustainable urban drainage schemes and opportunities for training and employment related to woodland management. Attractive, natural green spaces are being considered to provide ecological green routes and improved biodiversity. These schemes are subject to further review and public consultation.

A short term measure (up to 2 years) is being investigated which would provide a centre, using retail space in the City centre that is currently empty, for energy advice, showcasing projects in the local area and potentially training in low-carbon materials and technologies. Discussions are underway with the Council (to identify locations) and with AWM for funding. With a temporary facility in place, a longer term low-carbon centre will be investigated – possibly linking a regional attraction with Stoke and Birmingham.

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 has not yet taken place. Although weather conditions were good over the Christmas period, clearance to use airspace was not available. It is still possible that the survey will go ahead this winter – three cold days followed by two clear nights are necessary – without rain or snow. This combination limits when the survey can go ahead.

Meanwhile, the project team has met with the Energy Saving Trust (EST) to find how additional support can be provided. A further meeting is scheduled for the 10th March. Previous programmes run by City Council have helped provide insulation packages – 6 testimonials are being gathered to support publicity once the survey has been completed. A meeting with representatives of the LEGI programme is being arranged to help support expansion in the supply chain and to help expand existing businesses into the 'green' sector. Both the EST and Chamber of Commerce are being asked to support effort to link energy use in the home and at work. Act on Energy are to supply a list of local suppliers for low-carbon installations (insulation, renewable energy, etc). A letter has been drafted for the major DIY stores in the City to advise that demand may be particular high following the campaign and suggesting a linked approach with discounts. Landlords will be approached via the Landlords Forum meeting in March.