



Working together for a greener, warmer city

Support for Birmingham Climate Change Strategy

At its February board meeting, Birmingham Strategic Partnership approved the consultation draft of the Birmingham Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

The Strategy will set out how Birmingham will achieve a 20% reduction in its carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.

There will be a full public consultation on the Climate Change Strategy beginning in June 2006 – watch out for further announcements!

Birmingham Energy Advice Manual—order your copy now!

The Birmingham Energy Advice Manual (BEAM) is aimed at everyone whose work (paid or voluntary) involves giving help and advice to residents about any aspect of welfare, debt, housing, employment, immigration or saving energy.

To order your free copy of the BEAM CD-ROM, please phone Phil Beardmore on 0121 262 6408 or email phil.beardmore@groundwork.org.uk

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**Local action
for affordable warmth
Global action
on climate change**

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Birmingham family plug into the sun

The Duggan family from Balsall Heath have become the first household in the area to install a solar electricity (photovoltaic) system in their home. The photovoltaic system, which was installed by Sunpowered Energy Systems Ltd, will generate around 900 kilowatt hours of electricity a year, one-third of the Duggans' annual use. Unlike fossil fuels, it produces no greenhouse gas emissions and will stop 510 kilogrammes of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere each year. Jane Duggan, who is a Community Midwife and a parent governor at Tindal Primary School, said, "We have a portable hand-held meter that shows how much electricity the panels are generating and how much carbon dioxide we are saving. The system cost us £6000 and we got a grant of £3000 from the government towards that. We've put the remaining cost onto our mortgage. It's made us think harder about the electricity we use around the house too – if we use a bit less by switching unnecessary lights off and using more energy efficient bulbs, we have the satisfaction of generating a higher percentage of our needs."

Chris Duggan works for Balsall Heath Jungle, a charity that helps local people to grow some of their own food. He said, "the solar panel doesn't supply all our electricity so we still have to buy some from the grid. We are on a 'green' tariff where the electricity supplied is from renewable sources (mainly wind). In summer the solar panel will sometimes generate more power than we need! When this happens, we export power to the national grid and our electricity supplier buys it off us at an agreed price. This helps the electricity supplier meet their targets for renewable energy. You have to have a special type of contract with your electricity supplier to do this. Our old electricity supplier made this a bit too bureaucratic, so we've switched to a new supplier who does."



"It's nice to see that even on dull days in winter we generate a bit of electricity, and it's quite a lot on really sunny days. Roll on the summer! If loads of people with south facing roofs like ours did this, it would make a major contribution to the UK's energy needs."

There are many ways to do your bit on climate change, including low-cost and no-cost measures. To find out how you can do your bit, contact the Energy Saving Advice Centre (residential) on 0800 512012, www.savenergy.org, or the Carbon Trust (business) on 0800 085 2005, www.thecarbontrust.co.uk.

New social enterprise network

A group of local social enterprises have founded a new network – Birmingham Social Enterprise Energy Network (B-SEEN).

B-SEEN's mission is for its members to become the leading providers of environmental building services in the West Midlands. It aims to add value to energy efficiency programmes through local procurement and spend, to take energy efficiency to the 'hard-to-reach', and to create sustainable job opportunities in disadvantaged communities. This means that energy efficiency schemes will get 'more for their money' – they will be helping regeneration as well as saving energy.



Working Herts on the doorstep—as a social enterprise they have a caring attitude to their customers (pictures—Working Herts)

Sharing knowledge

B-SEEN will be helping its members with business planning, marketing and training. It will share knowledge within the network and encourage inter-trading between members.



Working Herts personnel insulating a loft—social enterprises offer a high quality service

B-SEEN's founder members are: Saltley and Washwood Heath Practical Care Project; North Handsworth Project; Community Advocacy, Support and Advice (CASA); All Saints Action Network; Jericho Community Business; East Birmingham Community Energy Company. B-SEEN members aim to provide a service that is 'reliable, local and caring'.

The network has already held its first training event, a day-long seminar on social enterprises and energy efficiency. Paul Watkinson, of Working Herts, shared his wealth of knowledge with us on how Working Herts has become a mainstream provider of energy efficiency works while maintaining its social enterprise ethos. B-SEEN members aim to follow Working Herts' example in the Birmingham area.

News in brief

Birmingham's Environmental Footprint

A report on Birmingham's Environmental Footprint has been published on the Resources and Energy Analysis Programme website.

'Environmental Footprinting' is a measure of the city's impact on the global environment. The report confirms that Birmingham needs to reduce its environmental impact and contains fascinating information about the impact of activities such as buying food.

To view the document, visit <http://www.sei.se/reap/> and click on 'local'. Registration is required but the site is free to use.

Energy Efficiency made easy for West Midlands Private Landlords

The Energy Efficiency Investors in Tenants scheme is due for launch shortly and will offer a range of grants and discounts to all landlords. The grants will cover a variety of measures including loft and cavity wall insulation, hot water tank jackets and draughtproofing.

Tenants on benefits will be able to get 100% grants towards insulation, whilst all other tenants can get 30% off qualifying energy efficiency measures. There will be specific help for student landlords who will be able to get free insulation and additional grants towards energy saving measures.

For further information on the proposed scheme or to express an interest contact Sam Haseen on 0121 262 6410 or email sam.haseen@hestiaservices.co.uk

Multi faith conference on Climate Change

BSEP and Birmingham Friends of the Earth are working with faith-based groups across the city to organise a Multi-Faith Conference on Climate Change on the afternoon of 4 June 2006.

The aim of the conference is to help us to launch actions to prevent climate change. If you're interested in getting involved please contact Phil Beardmore on 0121 262 6408 or Maud Grainger on 0121 632 6909.

Climate Change and Fuel Poverty

A new report from the Policy Studies Institute has provided further evidence about the effect of climate change on people who struggle to pay their fuel bills. To see a copy of the report, visit http://www.psi.org.uk/publications/publication.asp?publication_id=590

Delivering Sustainable Regeneration Conference

Development, regeneration and environmental professionals, as well as government officials from the West Midlands and beyond attended the Delivering Sustainable Regeneration conference on 2nd March in Birmingham.

The new Matthew Boulton College was an appropriate venue to host the conference, as it is part of the multi-million pound regeneration of the eastside of the city centre. The conference was organised by the Sustainable Eastside project (Groundwork Birmingham and Solihull) in partnership with Sustainability West Midlands and UK Climate Impacts Programme.

The ambitious agenda covered; Birmingham's approach to sustainability, focusing on the Eastside regeneration scheme and the work of the exemplar Sustainable Eastside project, how to get ahead of the game by anticipating sustainable development requirements and how sustainable development and regeneration must adapt to climate change.

Keynote speakers included Councillor Ken Hardeman (cabinet member for regeneration) Councillor Paul Tilsley (Deputy Leader Birmingham City Council), Alan Bishop (Development Manager, Eastside, Birmingham City Council), Alan Simpson (MP for Nottingham South) Shelia Healy (Regional Director, Government Office for the West Midlands), Professor Michael Benfield, (Benfield ATT).



*Delegates braved the snow on the Eastside biodiversity tour
(photo: Andrew Rudge)*

Intrepid delegates braved a small blizzard to take part in themed walking tours of Eastside. The tours focused on biodiversity, the Warwick Bar regeneration scheme, planning, regeneration and heritage. Workshops on the Climate Change Strategy for Birmingham, Sustainability Indicators, Sustainable Housing and Government Office best practice gave attendees an opportunity to explore issues around these topics and share expert knowledge.

Delegates commented that they gained a wider knowledge of sustainability and climate change and their impact on urban regeneration. Many left the conference with the intention of spreading the word and pushing for greater consideration of sustainability in their projects.

Further details available from www.sustainable-eastside.net.

Katie Prangle

Community buildings training event

BSEP recently held a successful training event on Saving Energy in Community Buildings.

Keith Budden, from Birmingham Strategic Partnership, told delegates about the forthcoming Birmingham Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Phil Beardmore from BSEP and Debbie Cartwright from Hestia talked about energy efficiency and renewable energy in community buildings.

After lunch, Majid Hussain from energywatch helped delegates to make sense of the ever-complicated issue of understanding energy bills.



Building users were consulted at all stages of the design of the eco-friendly SureStart building in Balsall Heath

The afternoon also featured a 'green technology showcase'. Ian Edwards from St Paul's Community Development Trust explained how they managed to develop an eco-friendly building, the Balsall Heath SureStart centre (see photos). Steve



*The completed SureStart building
(photos—St Paul's Community Development Trust)*

Dewar from Groundwork Birmingham and Solihull talked about how vehicles could be run on biodiesel and how social enterprises could fill a gap in the market for biodiesel.

Finally, delegates were introduced to the Carbon Trust's online tools to help building managers save energy, including their easy-to-use action planning tool – see www.thecarbontrust.co.uk

CAfE Conference 2006

It was freezing outside, but the success of the CAfE conference makes a warming story

Over 170 people attended the annual Community Action for Energy conference that took place in Birmingham on 1 March 2006. This was the largest gathering in CAfE's four-year history, and reflects the dynamic state of the community-energy sector.

The event - entitled 'Switching on your Community' - was held at Thinktank, Birmingham's high-tech new science museum. Undeterred by the snow that fell overnight in many areas, delegates came from all over the UK to share their experiences of running community-energy projects, to meet people working in the same field and to be inspired by the presentations and workshops on offer.

The day's keynote speaker was Dr Brenda Boardman, Head of Lower Carbon Futures at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute. Her presentation centred on the 40% House Project which looks at how dramatic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved in Britain's housing stock by 2050.

Dr Boardman, a trustee of CSE, is an acknowledged expert in energy efficiency and fuel poverty and was awarded an MBE in 1998 for her work on energy issues.

Inspiring

Her talk was followed by a selection of inspiring presentations, including Phil Beardmore from Birmingham Sustainable Energy Partnership speaking with Paul Watkinson from Working Herts. One presentation that created a particular buzz was Garry Charnock's introduction to the 'zero-carbon village' project in Ashton Hayes, Cheshire (www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk).

A package of six workshops either side of lunch provided something for everyone: from funding advice to ecological footprinting, and low-carbon building to the benefits of networking.

The conference's closing session was led by Tim Curtis, Director of Operations at the Energy Saving Trust and featured innovative and entertaining 'electronic voting' on a variety of topics. Finally, a panel made up of Dr Boardman, The Centre for Sustainable Energy's Chief Executive Simon Roberts and Matthew Knight, Head of Community Partnerships at the Energy Saving Trust, took questions from the audience. Tim Curtis' closing words acknowledged the great work that CAfE members are doing, and assured the hall of the commitment of EST to the programme.

New Chair for Energy Partnership

We are pleased to announce that Richard Green is the new Chair of Birmingham Sustainable Energy Partnership.

regeneration

Until recently, Richard worked for Birmingham City Council, where his most recent position was Director of Eastside. Previously, he was Director of Economic Development at the Council. Richard is an experienced creative urban specialist skilled in the art of City making and regeneration. He has over 30 years of experience of transforming cities and towns with specialist knowledge in town planning, economic development, employment policies, inward investment and the attraction of funds to finance development and change.

Richard is now self-employed and does consultancy work for several clients. He brings a wealth of experience to BSEP at a time when we are playing a key role in taking action on climate change in Birmingham.

Athlete

Richard, a former international athlete, lives in Moseley with his wife Judy, and is a keen photographer, gardener and cyclist.



BSEP is supported by:



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