

CAMDEN COUNCIL SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

**SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS – AUTUMN
2006**

Introduction

The Sustainability Task Force was created following the local elections in May 2006, as a focus for the new Liberal Democrat/Conservative partnership administration to champion sustainable development across the Council and with the Council's partners.

The Task Force acts as an advisory body to the Council's Executive, and is made up of elected members from across the four political parties represented in Camden. The membership is:

Councillor Alexis Rowell – Eco Champion, Liberal Democrat
Councillor Penny Abraham, Labour
Councillor Frederic Carver, Liberal Democrat
Councillor Russell Eagling, Liberal Democrat
Councillor Maya de Souza, Green
Councillor Rebecca Hossack, Conservative
Councillor Chris Knight, Conservative,
Councillor Adrian Oliver, Green
Councillor Paul Braithwaite, Liberal Democrat

As part of its role in championing sustainable development within the borough, Camden Council's Sustainability Task Force was asked in October to lead on consulting Camden residents on sustainability related issues as part of the *Camden Together* Community Strategy consultation.

This consultation work took three key forms:

- A series of visits to a selection of Camden schools to discuss environment and climate issues with pupils getting their views and thoughts.
- A business breakfast held on 15 November 2006 at the local office of a leading multi-national corporation based in Camden – ARUP.
- A public meeting held on 18 November 2006 at Camden Town Hall.

This report is a brief summary of the key issues raised through this consultation. The report will be submitted, alongside other submission to the community strategy consultation.

CAMDEN SCHOOL VISITS

The Task Force wrote in October to all Camden schools to enquire whether they would be interested in receiving a visit from a Camden councillor to:

- discuss environment and sustainability issues with young people at the schools, and
- get their views on how the Council and partners could tackle climate change through the new Community Strategy.

In total there were visits to 6 Camden schools, from 1 November to 27 November as part of this work. These schools were:

- South Hampstead School
- Mulberry House School
- Argyle primary School
- Fitzjohns school
- Acland Burghley school
- Hereward house school

The discussions at these schools were with a variety of different age groups in some instances from age 4 to age 17. These discussions with Councillors covered a range of different issues and points of view. A short summary of discussions at each of the schools follows, including comments from the young people.

South Hampstead School for girls – 1 November

Cllr Alexis Rowell, Camden Council's eco-champion led a discussion with the politics group at South Hampstead School for girls, which was made up of approximately 20 girls from ages 15-18.

There was a mixture of comments as part of the discussion, including incentives and fines to encourage individuals to be more environmentally friendly. Some of the group questioned whether climate change was actually happening.

A number of the young people completed consultation postcards with their views on the issues that Cllr Rowell had raised. Some of the points and suggestions about how to tackle climate change that were raised through discussion and on the postcards are outlined below:

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'The biggest thing you can tackle is transport'

'Limit amount of time you spend on bus'

'Make some places bus only'

'Incentivise walking more or bicycles'

'Lots of people can't afford road pricing – financial incentives don't always work'

'Tax more car manufacturers'

'Make flying more expensive'

'More education on solar panels and wind turbines'

'It is difficult to make homes energy efficiency – costs so much'

'It is clear that to have a substantial impact on climate change, all need to help. Though every little helps it is going to be key to target large businesses placing incentives such as subsidies or fines to encourage greener practice' –

'I have the opinion on global warming which is seen as unfashionable – I simply don't think it exists – it is due to a pre-glacial environment. However I do think that the environment needs to be protected, and recycling is a good idea'

'I think that transport is a large problem in Camden and that we need to try to reduce the number of cars being used.'

'Personally I think the main problem is creating an incentive for people to be 'greener'. Schools and small businesses should be targeted more personally to make people realise just how important the environment is.'

Mulberry House school – 9 November

Cllr Russell Eagling led a discussion with a number of 6 and 7 year olds at Mulberry House school about 'being green' and recycling. Cllr Eagling used a rhyme about throwing garbage away to engage the children in the issues. The school had prepared for the event, briefing the children about the types of issues that the discussion would involve. This included the school producing pictures about recycling.

Following from the recycling presentation that Cllr Eagling did, the group responded with their thoughts about their local environment and what they thought. The group emphasised the need to get more people to recycle and try and stop people throwing things away. Also discussed the possibilities of

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cars. They also discussed the need to reduce bubble gum on the street and reducing graffiti, to help Camden look like a better place..

Argyle primary school – 9 November

Cllr Penny Abraham led a discussion with the school council at Argyle school. Support for the discussion was provided by the Deputy Head teacher, Helen Adams, in addition to an officer from Street Environment Services.

A number of points were made by the young people and important local issues about being green and environmentally friendly were raised.

'make recycling shoots for housing estates to make it easier to recycle'

Should grow more plants on the window sill to encourage more wildlife

Have bigger recycling bags

Save energy in school and help make parents understand.

'Camden streets are dirty'

We should have shoots to put our recycling goods down, to make it easier to

The group discussed the need to discourage use of plastic bags, but use reusable bags. The group also discussed asking more people to recycle, use recycled paper, and recycle clothes. The group also discussed how to protect wildlife in Camden.

Fitzjohns School – 13 November 2006

Cllr Alexis Rowell led this discussion with 10 young people, that were from reception year until year 7. The young people made a number of different points about how they could contribute to tackling climate change on a Camden level.

Cllr Rowell raised the differing possibilities in tackling climate change and how the Task Force wanted a greener Camden by 2012. The young people were asked to voice their views on a series of points. Some of the key points that came out of discussion were the need to make cycling easier, and safer, providing coaches for schools.

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'I think that there should be more bike paths for people cycle'

'Coaches for schools could help less parents to travel to school'

'Make more bike paths and protect cycle lanes'

Being energy efficient – 'Shutting doors and windows' 'Wear more clothes'

'There should be prizes for recycling'

The group discussed the effect of climate change on animals and plants, and suggested the need for more green on buildings. They also discussed reusing water.

The children had recently discussed energy efficiency with their teacher and were able to share what they had learnt about how they could be much more energy efficient and avoid wasting energy. This included using more solar powered batteries, and energy saving light bulbs.

Hereward House school – November 20 2006

Cllr Russell Eagling visited Hereward House school in Hampstead, and did a short presentation outlining some key issues. This was to a large assembly and a smaller group of children in year 6.

There was lively discussion, with a number of points raised. These included:

'Scare people into behaving more sustainably'

'Fine people who use too much carbon'

'Have a national power off day'

'Only allow people to use a certain amount of carbon each year.'

The group also discussed ways in which energy could be saved. One school pupil used an example that that playing on a Play station portable whilst also charging it used twice as much electricity.

Acland Burghley Secondary school – 17 November 2006

Cllr Maya De Souza, and Cllr Fred Carver visited Acland Burghley and discussed issues with the 'environment sub group' of the school council. The group discussed a number of issues including some of the dilemmas around charging for use of cars or increasing the cost of flights.

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The group also mentioned their green classroom rules aimed at being more energy efficient. Some of the specific points that the group made are as follows:

Cars should have solar panels on the roof'

Why are energy saving light bulbs so expensive? Shops should stop selling normal light bulbs to get more to use energy saving light-bulbs

It is difficult to increase the cost of air travel. People work hard all year to go on holiday, and they should be allowed to go on holiday abroad if they want.

'Make fewer planes'

The bus is too expensive, and they keep putting the price up'

'It is quite expensive to get a green roof. Green roofs should be advertised more, there should be better information about these and how to do them. Maybe we could use money from congestion charge for green roofs'

'We have a 'pig bin' that we put all our food waste in which is fed to pigs at the local farm'

'Private jets are a large waste of fuel'

The group discussed the need for loft insulation, and also had a discussion about whether supermarkets should charge for plastic bags. It was suggested that every house should have a green bag, or a bag for life

The group and the teacher at the school, Richard Henley, suggested that it might be useful in future to hold an environment summit for the different school councils to come together in the borough and discuss the environment, building on existing successful initiatives such as the youth question time, and plans for a Youth Council in the borough. In making the school more sustainable, it was also suggested that guidance and standards for schools on the environment would be helpful.

BUSINESS BREAKFAST - 15 NOVEMBER 2006

ARUP – CARLOW HOUSE, CAMDEN TOWN

The business breakfast was held on Wednesday 15 November 2006

The largest private sector employer in Camden, the multi-national engineering company, **ARUP** was the host for the event.

10 local businesses attended this event, which were from different sectors.

Introduction

Camden Council's Eco-champion provided an outline of sustainability issues and the role of the community strategy, and stimulated discussion as to how businesses will engage.

ARUP director, John Turzynski provided an overview of ARUP's efforts to ensure its business and those of its clients are as sustainable as possible. This included highlighting aspects of ARUP's environmentally friendly policies and examples of ARUP's building projects that particularly exhibit sustainable development approaches such as use of renewable energy.

Baishakhi Sengupta, Environmental Policy officer, provided the group with an outline of the Better Climate for Camden Project, and London Development Agency initiative aimed at providing businesses with support to become more sustainable.

Cllr Penny Abraham, Member for Bloomsbury also provided a short outline of her work with fellow Councillor Rebecca Hossack, on a 'lights out campaign' in Bloomsbury, aimed at encouraging businesses in the area to turn all their lights off at night.

Discussion points

From discussion with businesses a number of points emerged:

Landlords

It was suggested that Camden businesses themselves maybe ready and willing to act in a more sustainable and environmentally friendly way, particularly with regard to the energy efficiency of their offices, but that there is a limit to the action that can be taken. It was suggested that that landlords do not always take energy efficiency issues seriously. Businesses suggested that some landlords leave it to clients to buy portable air conditioner, and do not see any responsibility to deal with issues themselves in a more energy efficient way.

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To try and encourage landlords to take more action, it was suggested that businesses should pressurise landlords, and ultimately if no action is taken they would consider moving from the area. It was felt this approach could help persuade landlords to act on these issues, or face the prospect of a loss of rental income.

It was noted that approximately 3-4 landlords own a lot of the Fitzrovia area. One representative suggested that the Council could approach these landlords about a more sustainable and environmentally friendly approach to managing the properties.

It was identified that while there are some problems in the way in which some landlords approach these issues, that there is a need to showcase landlords that exhibit especially good practice, such as British Land.

Engaging businesses - The group discussed the merits of incentives and penalties to encourage businesses to act in a more sustainable way. The group felt there was a need to use both incentives and penalties to engage businesses in the sustainable development agenda.

It was felt that there was a need to regularly remind people through business newsletters, and make it easy as possible for businesses to take action.

There was also a need for commercial recycling system for Camden businesses, not just south of the borough, and a need to incentivise this as much as possible.

One particular issue of concern was use of plastic bags, particularly within supermarkets. It was felt there was a need for the Council and partners to lobby for a plastic bag tax.

The group also discussed the need to pressurise the entertainments industry to recycle their glass.

Business rates - One major issue that the group discussed was the use of the business rates system to encourage businesses to be more sustainable. It was acknowledged that this was not a tool that the local authority could use at the moment, but could lobby on this issue with other local authorities to government to bring about change.

Recycling loops - The group identified a need to 'close recycling loops' by aiming to re-use materials locally. There was also a need to educate the public about what happens to their waste following negative article in the national press recently about waste ending up in China.

Top-down approach - It was noted that to facilitate change in any organisation, in this case to introduce more sustainable approaches, a top down approach was helpful. Buy in from a Chief Executive was important to start with, who could then feed down to the rest of the organisation. It was

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important to get senior buy-in. For example a recent email from the head of University College Hospital had resulted in real action by staff to save energy.

In conclusion, Cllr Rowell thanked John Turzynski and ARUP for providing the venue and acting as host for the event, and all those that had attended and offered their views.

ONE CAMDEN? ONE CLIMATE? A SUSTAINABLE CAMDEN FOR 2012

CAMDEN TOWN HALL

PUBLIC MEETING – 18 NOVEMBER 2006

Approximately 25 people attended this public event. These included representatives of the Local Agenda 21 group, a local school and representatives and residents from a number of local organisations and groups. Several Camden Council staff also attended.

A number of Councillors attended the event including 5 representatives of the Sustainability Task Force, these were: Cllr Alexis Rowell, Cllr Russell Eagling, Cllr Paul Braithwaite, Cllr Maya De Souza and Cllr Penny Abraham. Cllr Pat Callaghan, member for Camden Town and Primrose Hill also attended.

Introductory presentation

Cllr Alexis Rowell, Camden Council Eco-champion started the afternoon with a presentation outlining several key issues relating to sustainability and climate change, and the overall aim of the event to feed into the Camden's new Community Strategy, Camden Together.

Those in attendance then split into four different break-out groups to discuss issues in depth and feed in their views.

Break out groups

Each of the four break-out groups focused on different policy areas discussing what issues and areas should be included within Camden's new community strategy. These were:

1. Waste & recycling
2. Biodiversity & water
3. Transport
4. Energy & energy efficiency

Each break-out group was facilitated by an elected member or a Camden Council officer.

A range of policy issues were discussed within each group and ideas about what Camden Council and partners could do to tackle these areas over the next few years were highlighted.

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The following section of this document summarises the issues raised in each group.

1. Waste & recycling

Education

This group identified the need for much greater communication and education around recycling and waste, including specific information about what individuals can recycle. There was an emphasis on targeted information in different areas of the borough, and that the Council should visit households to advise on recycling. One suggestion was that the Council could create sustainability advisors for this task.

This targeted work was also discussed in terms of developing waste minimisation / sustainability 'beacon' wards. This could working in a couple of specifically selected wards to concentrate waste minimisation / environmental sustainability work and so highlighting what can be achieved. It was also suggested that the results of this work could be used as examples of good practice across the borough to prove what can be achieved.

It was also suggested that there could be greater publicity on independent farmers markets.

The group also felt individuals could make more efforts to minimise waste such as buying fruit and vegetable loose, instead of within bags. But it was felt that information was needed to explain how individuals could make a difference themselves.

Packaging and plastic

The group discussed whether taxes on plastic bags in supermarkets were appropriate. The group felt that there needed to be greater efforts to get residents to use canvas bags, rather than plastic bags. Alternatively residents could be encouraged to use boxes to carry goods from supermarkets.

In tackling packaging, it was felt that the Council could target distributors of goods in Camden on packaging. The Council could emphasise the reduction in costs for businesses when using less packaging.

Home composting

The group discussed home composting and wormeries, noting that there was limited space for composting green waste. The group also noted there was currently no subsidy for wormeries, and also wondered whether there was enough information available about these.

Penalties and incentives

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Discussion highlighted possibilities of using penalties and incentive to ensure residents recycle more. For example some members of the group felt there were questions about whether charging residents for waste collection or fining residents to not recycling was the best approach. But it was suggested that some incentives were needed. If it was not possible to incentivise recycling then there would need to be greater information for residents to encourage more recycling.

Working with businesses

It was felt that further pressure should be applied to businesses to ensure they were more sustainable. It was suggested that the new 'Better Climate for Camden' initiative would help achieve engagement and dialogue with businesses, providing tailored support to their needs.

It was also discussed whether supermarkets should divide their goods into organics and non-organics to avoid labelling problems – or whether everything should be organic.

The group made a number of other points, questioning whether it was bad that separated waste went to landfill, particularly as the market demand for green glass is low.

The group also noted that there was a need to improve infrastructure in Camden & the UK to deal with recyclables.

Four overarching key points that the group made were:

- Need for targeted education – using specific wards as 'beacons' of good practice
- Pressurising businesses about packaging
- Limiting household refuse thoroughly through the use of bags or bins
- Introduction of sustainability advisors

2. Water & Biodiversity

This group highlighted a range of issues in relation to these two important areas.

Education

Education was identified as important in encouraging residents to reduce their water usage. It was highlighted that people need to take responsibility for their water use.

Incentives

Incentives were discussed as a possible way of encourage residents to save water, and to improve gardens (if they have one) front and back.

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Specific measures

The group identified some specific measures that the Council could use to help residents reuse water, such as:

- Providing grants to reduce water usage;
- Use of rainwater diverters for use in baths;
- Encouraging residents not to pave over gardens, to reduce flooding and increase bio-diversity;
- Target landlords to install water saving devices

The group also discussed a need for collection of rain water by residents, but also within Camden parks. It was also suggested that the Council could target landlords to install water saving measures.

A further key issue highlighted was the need for the Council to lobby and work with its partners OFWAT and Thames water to resolve leakage rates, through which a large amount of water is often wasted.

Biodiversity

In terms of bio-diversity, the group discussed how the council should build on existing initiatives to generate interest in bio-diversity, such as a Camden version of 'wildlife watch'. The group felt there would be value in Camden changing its planting over to perennials, particularly more Mediterranean plants.

The group also felt that encouragement needed to be made for green roofs, and ways of incentivising these, such as including green roofs in the Camden in Bloom competition. The group highlighted that Council buildings should if possible have green roofs or facades.

Priorities:

- Need to target landlords to install water saving devices
- Encourage window boxes / bird boxes on flats and communal areas. As many people live in flats council should be encouraging wider window sills
- People need to take personal responsibility to reduce water use – greater education needed
- Council could provide grants to reduce water use
- Lobby Thames water to reduce leakage rates in Camden – could start a postcard campaign
- Council buildings should have green roofs and facades – need to encourage green roofs to increase biodiversity and increase open space access. – could have open green roofs days and add a category to camden in bloom

3. Transport

This group discussed the role of public transport, and the damage that car use, and other forms of transport can have on the environment.

Discouraging car use

The group expressed a particular need for the Council and partners to reduce car usage, and also tackle freight travel, and if possible increase use of the canal for transport. The group also felt that reducing air travel and opposing airport expansion were important issues.

The group discussed the need for effective and efficient public transport to encourage more residents to use this form of transport rather than cars.

The group also discussed and suggested the need for additional congestion zones, but with lower charges for smaller vehicles and parking permits that were revenue neutral.

It was felt there was a need for some revisions in parking policy, including reducing parking spaces to discourage car use. There was a further suggestion of a higher tax on second cars.

Further attempts at reducing car usage were also discussed, included encouraging greater car sharing and car clubs and the need to incentivise these approaches.

Bus routes

The need for better bus routes, and working with Transport for London on these routes was suggested. A particular need for orbital bus routes was highlighted and a need for the public to be considerate towards bus drivers was also mentioned.

Schools and transport

The group had some discussion on school transport suggesting that travel routes should where possible coincide with school admissions policy. Safety for children getting to school was mentioned, including the continuing need for safety crossings.

Priorities:

- Dealing with: Car use, Flying, Freight, Canals
- Road pricing - Additional congestion zones, Low charges for small cars, Parking permits – revenue neutral
- Parking policy - Integrated parking policy, Reduced parking spaces, Second cars – higher tax

4. Energy and energy efficiency

This group had a number of ambitious proposals and suggestions about future energy policy that could be raised within Camden's new Community strategy.

Public engagement and education

The group emphasised the need for engagement with the wider public to be a key feature of any future policy in this area, ensuring that as many residents as possible are brought into new policy proposals. The group also emphasised the need for education and awareness raising about energy efficiency.

Individuals action and choices

Some straightforward choices that individuals could make to save energy, were highlighted, such as wearing more clothes in doors. The value of civic action and volunteering in bringing about change, was also noted, however it was acknowledged that volunteering rates are in fact falling.

Incentives and penalties

The group discussed possible incentives and penalties for encouraging individuals to become more energy efficiency. The groups suggested introducing a congestion charge for whole of Camden, and also increasing the charge for 'gas guzzlers'. Incentives for more energy efficient boilers were also suggested.

A further proposal raised was the possibility of a link between Council tax rates and car ownership and energy rating of a property, and introducing some of green tariff.

It was acknowledged that some of these proposals could be controversial or unpopular and that engagement with the wider public and all of Camden's communities was important to fully test opinion and views before implementing the proposals.

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Specific proposals

Some of the specific proposals that the group felt ought to be considered:

- Taking all Camden buildings off the national grid.
- Introducing carbon accounting and rationing
- Internalise the price of Carbon emissions within the Council
- Undertaking more publicity and lobbying
- Use nuclear power
- Planning policy should be much tougher but simpler in relation to energy efficiency measures and every planning application should be linked to a mandatory 'green audit';
- There should be prescriptions in favour of solar energy
- That there should be a plan for decentralising energy provision in Camden by end of 2007

Green audits and tackling energy inefficient buildings

The group raised the possibility of the Council undertaking green audits of properties. In helping to encourage landlords to undertake energy efficiency measures, it was suggested that green audits should be mandatory and that there should be a minimum efficiency level for buildings.

The group suggested that the Council form partnerships with energy providers to refurbish inefficient homes. In connection with this, the group identified that there should be a role for the council in renewing properties to make them more energy efficient, especially given the high population turnover in Camden. It was further highlighted that grants could be given to residents to make buildings more efficient.

To ensure more energy efficient buildings in future, it was suggested that architects could be used to create 'deemed acceptable' designs. It was further felt that a green buildings register should be created, to register all key green buildings.

Heat and power

The group discussed the need for combined heat and power for big projects, and a suggestion that Camden create its own energy services company.

It felt that the Council should develop incentives for new condensing boilers that are more energy efficient, and provide residents with a registered list of condensing boilers to set up these boilers. They also highlighted the need for investment in wind turbines, for example in the Thames estuary.

The group also suggested that there needs to be some level of prescription in future, in favour of solar thermal and photovoltaic (PV) panels, using the sun to heat water and create electricity.

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The group also highlighted the use of geothermal heat pumps as a way of reducing the amount of energy use within homes, as these heat pumps use power within the earth itself to create energy, and would reduce the number of emissions.

Learning lessons from elsewhere

The group noted that the Council and partners can learn lessons from the development of energy policy within other local authority areas, such as Lewisham and Leicester.

As this summary suggests this group identified possible action in a number of areas.

'ETHICAL CAMDEN'

Following the break out groups, a video from BBC Newsnight's Ethical Man, Justin Rowlatt was shown at the meeting. This included some of the highlights in which Justin had tried to become more environmentally friendly through his time as Newsnight's 'ethical man'.

PLENARY DISCUSSION

A discussion was held towards the end of the day reflecting on the issues that had been raised. This involved a Panel of some key individuals to discuss issues raised.

Panel:

Suzy Edwards - Chair, LA21 Core Group
Helen – Adams - Assistant Head, Argyle Primary
Cllr Alexis Rowell – Chair, Sustainability taskforce

Chair:

Phillip Colligan - Assistant Chief Executive

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Opening Remarks

- **Cllr Rowell** was interested to hear about ideas to deal with the problem of recycling and waste collection in multiple occupancy dwellings. Also about incentives versus penalisation. Cllr Rowell provided the example of Barnet that have introduced fines for not recycling. Though this works in Barnet where most properties are single house, he was not sure that this would work in Camden where most people live in flats.
- **Suzy Edwards** expressed some frustration that people do care already about the environment but are not finding it easy to make positive changes to their lifestyles. A key question therefore was how the Council could make it easier for them.
- **Helen Adams** suggested that Argyle Primary School were currently transforming the curriculum to cover sustainable education. However due to pressure on teachers it is only possible to deal with children once they are at school. It is the responsibility of parents and the Council to get them to school safely.

A summary of the points and issues raised in the discussion is below.

Questions & Answers

Waste and recycling

In response to the initial point raised by Cllr Rowell, some individuals felt that multiple occupancy was not a problem for recycling, and was in fact more efficient than a single dwelling. Cllr Penny Abraham suggested that there were no problems with recycling in her flat, as everyone takes their recycling downstairs for collection.

Some felt that the Council should charge for waste removal on a block basis and allow residents to sort it out themselves. This could promote community spirit. Alternatively, the Council could encourage landlords to sort waste out.

One individual identified that in Ireland there is a bar code system so that bins and amount of waste from each household can be identified, and questioned whether such a scheme could be introduced into the UK. Cllr Rowell felt that that this could lead to residents dumping in other people's bins or fly tipping. However Suzy Edwards suggested that the Council are very good at preventing fly tipping and felt this would not present a problem.

Some suggested that the Council could pilot a penalty scheme for recycling, and that advising and encouraging may not be enough. Suzy Edwards felt that although people won't thank the Council for enforcing recycling now, that they will later see how easy the behaviour change has been.

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Congestion charging - Discussion highlighted differing views about the effectiveness of penalties and incentives, in particular in relation to congestion charging.

Some felt that the proposed increase in the congestion charge unfairly penalised people in sports utility vehicles (SUV) as the charge was very high compared with the impact of such vehicles in terms of the carbon emissions. However it was suggested that the congestion charge relates to engine size not SUV's specifically.

While some felt that penalties and charging would be effective, Cllr Rowell felt that electric cars and energy efficient vehicles should not be penalised. In he felt particular that it would be unfair to penalise small families who take their children to school via car.

Economic consistency - A need for economic consistency in the council's approach to the environment was raised. This would involve ensuring that the different elements of the council's policy on parking, car usage, and energy usage more generally were more integrated.

Council setting an example - It was felt that in relation to energy, ideally the Council needed to lead by example. It is difficult for the Council to encourage businesses and residents to become more sustainable, when its own operations are less than excellent in terms of energy efficiency or use of renewable energy. It was felt that ideally Camden should ensure that no future building projects are less than excellent in terms of energy efficiency.

School run - The school run was the subject of considerable discussion and in particular the impact that the school run has on traffic congestion. The discussion reflected the difficult dilemmas around discouraging parents to drive their children to school, when parents are rightly concerned about the safety of their child in getting public transport or walking from school.

Social cohesion issues were raised by Helen Adams, in relation to the school run. It was suggested that parents meeting at the school are often the only chance some families have to build relationships outside of their communities, and is thus useful in building social cohesion.

It was identified that the impact of the school run on the environment should not be overplayed, when in fact the use of cars for this purpose only makes up approximately 1% of all car use. The school run caused traffic congestion, but was not necessarily a major cause of carbon emissions.

Education- The role of education in engaging people in sustainability was emphasised, particularly by Helen Adams. It was noted that Argyle primary school's had a sustainable development curriculum. One delegate, a school governor, wanted to ensure that sustainable development was more rooted into schools work.

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More generally education was identified as central to building the sustainability agenda, with a need for efforts by the Council to be more sustainable such as introducing wind turbines. Furthermore, lots of people are still not aware of the link between carbon dioxide and switching off lights

A wider point about ensuring issues were directly relevant to the various communities in Camden was also made, such as ensuring translation and appropriate venues and forums are available to engage people, including the Bangladeshi community.

Council role in facilitating change - A further point raised was the fact that a key role of the Council was to help facilitate change, including focusing on the cheap and simple thing that can be done to ensure a greater focus on sustainability.

Green audits - Green audits for households was also raised as a way forward in the future, and that there needed to be a step change in the energy efficiency of the housing stock.

Necessities or luxuries - A final point raised, that in many senses car use and other lifestyle choices and how they effect the environment, are a question of what is a luxury and what is a necessity. Encouraging individuals to give up what others may consider to be luxuries however could be very difficult.

Andrew Knox
Strategy & Policy
November 2006