

**Bridging the Rural Urban Divide**

**Green economic opportunities for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

Tuesday 25th January 2011

The Pavilion, Moor Lane, Birmingham B6 7AA

1. **Outcomes report**

This report features outcomes from the workshop directly transcribed from comments written on cards by delegates during the session. As such they are inevitably written in short-hand and will make most sense to those who directly participated in the sessions themselves.

1. **Attendees**

**SPEAKERS**

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| **Name** | **Job Title** | **Company** |
| Councillor Tim Huxtable | Cabinet Member (Transport Environment & Regeneration) | Birmingham City Council |
| Craig Jordan | Development Executive | Lichfield District Council |
| Alister Scott | Reader, Spatial Planning | Birmingham City University |
| Simon Slater | Executive Director | Sustainability West Midlands |
| Karen Davies | Chief Executive | Heart of England Fine Foods |
| Ruth Hytch | AONB Officer | Cannock Chase |
| Simon Jones | Director, Land & Environmental Business Services | Groundwork West Midlands |
| Robert Moody | Managing Director | Jack Moody Limited |

**DELEGATES**

|  |  |  |
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| **Name** | **Job Title** | **Company** |
| Ben Horovitz | Principal Planner (Sustainable Development) | Worcestershire County Council |
| Beryl Metcalf |  | WMRSF |
| Brendan Hunter | Regional Account Manager | WRAP |
| Chris Crean | Campaigner | Friends of the Earth |
| Chris Harris | Area Manager | Basepoint Centres Ltd |
| Chris Marks | Research Officer | Birmingham City Council |
| Chris Ward | LALO Support Officer | West Midlands Fire Service |
| Clive Wright | Senior Drainage Engineer | Birmingham City Council |
| Councillor Jill Dyer | Planning Portfolio | Bromsgrove District Council |
| Councillor John Reeve | Cabinet Member Economic Development & Regeneration | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Councillor Peter Whittaker | Housing & Environment Portfolio | Bromsgrove District Council |
| Councillor Roger Hollingworth | Portfolio Holder Economic Development | Bromsgrove District Council |
| Damian Mohann | Relationship Director | Lloyds TSB |
| David Collier | Regional Director, West Midlands Region | NFU |
| Denise Barrett | Policy & Partnership Manager, Regeneration | Birmingham City Council |
| Dr Steven Henderson | Lecturer | University of Wolverhampton |
| Dr Zahida Shah | Business Development Manage | WAITS - Women Acting In Today's Society |
| Ed Brown | Local Authority & Community Support Coordinator | Energy Saving Trust |
| Graham Bould | Local Employment Development Manager | Groundwork West Midlands |
| Gursharan Judge | Business Development Manager | Birmingham Enterprise |
| Heike Schuster-James | Business & Programme Manager | Digital Birmingham, BCC |
| Jackie Homan | Birmingham Science City Manager | Birmingham City Council |
| James Dunham | Graduate Sustainability Planner | Mott MacDonald |
| Janette Murdoch | Consultant | Zehariyah Foundation |
| John Harris | Senior Regeneration Manager | British Waterways |
| John Horseman |  | Sustainable Housing Action Partnership (SHAP) |
| Julie Wozniczka | Project Manager | Central Rivers Initiative |
| Karen Leach | Coordinator | Localise West Midlands |
| Kate Bullock |  | Birmingham Chamber of Commerce |
| Keith Budden | Manager | Birmingham Environmental Partnership |
| Ken Harrison | Policy & Regeneration Manager | Wyre Forest District Council |
| Kim Martin | Regional Transition Policy Advisor | Defra |
| Lesley Vallely | PA | East End Foods |
| Lisa Zdravkovic | Public Liaison Officer | Birse Civils Ltd |
| Lynn Melling | Manager | Energy Saving Trust |
| Lynsey Melville | Senior Researcher | Birmingham City University |
| Mark Clemson | Director | New World Solar |
| Mark Middleton | Head of Strategic and Environmental Planning | Worcestershire County Council |
| Matt Dove | Anaerobic Digester Project | Harper Adams University College |
| Maureen Griffiths | Assistant Category Manager | Finditinbirmingham |
| Michael Youé | Regeneration Manager | British Waterways |
| Neil Wyatt | Chief Executive | The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham & the Black Country |
| Paul Clarke | Strategic Development Director | Smurfit Kappa Recycling UK |
| Paul Cobbing | Adaptation Action Plan Officer | Birmingham City Council |
| Paul Hanna | Director of Economic Development & Partnership | Birmingham Chamber of Commerce |
| Paul Webster | Woodland Officer for Warwickshire, West Midlands Metropolitan and the Forest of Mercia. | Forestry Commission |
| Paul White | Project Manager | Green Homes, Green Skills Ltd |
| Peter Michael | Economic Development & Town Centre Manager | Bromsgrove District Council |
| Phil James | Group Commander - Birmingham Fire Reduction Manager | West Midlands Fire Service |
| Roger Stone | Land Agent | Business Voice West Midlands |
| Rupert Harris | Senior Manager | Lloyds TSB |
| Sarah Cook | Planning and Corporate Services Manager | Environment Agency |
| Saska Petrova | Doctoral Researcher | Charles University, Prague |
| Shariat Rokneddin | Operations Manager, Economic Development & Partnership | Birmingham Chamber of Commerce |
| Shawn Riley | Evesham Market Town Partnership Manager | Wychavon District Council |
| Simon Jones | Director, Land & Environmental Business Services | Groundwork West Midlands |
| Simon Vick | Senior Development Manager | Midland Heart |
| Stefan Bodnar | Parks and Conservation Manager | Birmingham City Council |
| Stephen Trotter | Chief Executive | Warwickshire Wildlife Trust |
| Steve Havins |  | Birmingham Chamber of Commerce |
| Steve Singleton | Economic Development & Tourism Manager | Wyre Forest District Council |
| Stuart Horton | Project Manager | Finditinbirmingham |
| Suzanne Ashby | Regional Manager | Momentum |
| Teresa Haddon | Director/Research Assistant | West Midlands Foodlinks |
| Tom Freeland | Director | CSV Environment |
| Tony Deep Wouhra | Chairman | East End Foods |
| Will Thornton | Regional Development Manager | Action for Blind People, RNIB Group |

1. **Identifying green economic opportunities that cross the urban/rural divide**

Delegates agreed the following criteria for identifying a set of Key Opportunity areas that could be adopted by the LEP:

* Cross or challenge traditional urban/rural boundaries
* Promote an integrated approach embracing environmental, social and environmental concerns
* Work across traditional sectors e.g. planning, landscape, economic development, community
* Work across different scales
* Involve different stakeholders within an inclusive process
* Take a long term approach that is adaptable to change

Table groups identified Green Economic Opportunity Areas that make a virtue of the urban/rural nature of the LEP area. They were then invited individually to choose the three that they felt most closely linked with the agreed criteria, and voted as follows:

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| **Opportunity Area** | **Votes** | **Rank** |
| Exploit waste as a resource  SMEs/business start-ups to access recyclates  Use of food waste for local energy generation  Urban food waste technologies for rural enterprises | 38 | 1 |
| Energy – reduce reliance on imports; grow our own energy; renewables expansion | 34 | 2 |
| Localise food and drink procurement – create local demand  Urban/rural food security  Make Birmingham wholesale markets a hub for the region’s food produce | 29 | 3 |
| ‘Sweat’ green and blue infrastructure for packages of sustainable economic development e.g. tourism | 27 | 4 |
| Sustainable transport development | 24 | 5 |
| Housing retrofit (community green deal for urban and rural) | 13 | 6 |
| Opportunity for gateway projects to improve image of LEP area and demonstrate links between urban/rural (e.g. HP Site East End Foods using food and bio-fuels)  Hunt for high profile opportunities with economic, social environmental value | 12 | 7 |
| Joining up environmental regulation | 7 | 8 |
| Link long-term housing needs to train routes | 5 | 9 |
| Abolish/reduce void rates | 3 | 10 |

1. **Opportunity Area insights and ideas**

Delegates agreed to focus on the top 6 areas and spent a short amount of time sharing insights and ideas to enrich each area. Individuals were invited to sign-up and comment on areas where they might be able to offer support or advice in future.

It is important to note that these are transcribed headline notes from brief initial conversations

1. **Waste as a resource**

* Develop furniture recycling across whole of LEP
* Explore opportunities for building waste management
* Small scale IVC/AD projects
* Community waste co-ordinators
* Cooking oil for bio-diesel production
* Consult on previous mistakes (seek best practice)
* Voluntary organisations work co-operatively on job creation
* Look at finance through FiTs or RHI
* Facilitate revolving loans to private enterprise
* Make funds available for waste enterprise development
* Share resources across all LEP partners
* Provide consistent iconography over LEP
* Use biomass and waste streams as feedstock for off-grid energy generation

**Key Message:**

There are both large scale high-tech/cost) and small scale (low-tech/cost) opportunities

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| **Name** | **Comment** |
| Ken Harrison | £multimillion business in Kidderminster with recycling links |
| Jackie Homan | Working to bring partnerships together between research/ private and public sector orgs to develop demonstrators – developing a project with EBRI and Birmingham University |
| Keith Budden | BCC waste/energy |
| Matt Dove | We have capacity for 12,000 tons of food waste in our AD plant |
| Brendan Hunter | Can help linking civil society with waste as a resource |
| Janette Murdock | Potential for NEETS to be involved in volunteering with view of gaining a qualification in environmental health |
| Cllr John Reeve, Solihull | Cabinet Member EDER |
| Denise Barrett | Regeneration strategies – including micro energy enterprise development |
| Lynsey Melville | Bio-energy research projects |
| Karen Davies | Would like to know more about waste management opportunities for food businesses |
| Mark Clemson | Renewable energy company employing people from within local community |
| Julie Wozniczka | If we develop use of river corridors, composting toilets would be good to save need for new sewers/chemical toilets |
| Saska Petrova | Research on waste recycling, engagement of local communities from urban/rural areas |

**2. Energy generation**

* Energy security
* Fuel poverty in rural and urban areas
* Opportunities for micro generation
* Need decentralisation and low carbon energy system
* Learn from off-grid rural communities for urban projects
* Individual CHP and individual estates use
* Highlight existing CHP and other projects
* Biomass/waste supply chain
* Create demand in existing woodlands to supply
* Manage woodlands – biodiversity
* Solutions for flats/high density dwellings
* More housing retrofit for all tenures and locations
* Reduce demand/manage use
* Smart grids – manage items in house and network
* Use GOWM renewables Strategy to inform plan plus Birmingham Energy Strategy
* Develop Birmingham Energy Savers into new locations, bigger scale, private dwellings, commercial and industrial

**Key Message:**

Aim to achieve energy security – need clear plan for

* decentralised energy
* biomass/waste supply chains
* learning from existing rural off-grid practice

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| **Name** | **Comment** |
| Lynsey Melville | Algae, AD, CHP from bio-energy research group |
| Neil Wyatt | Looking to invest in up to 50-100kw of wind power generation on a rural site to offset the wildlife trusts energy use – any offers? |
| John Horseman | SHAP wants to connect to this agenda |
| James Dunham | Sustainable energy options evaluation and identification |
| Matt Dove | We have experience of building AD plants, biomass and PV. Happy to provide consultation and demonstration |
| Brendan Hunter | WRAP offers expertise and some capital funding |
| Keith Budden | Biomass, AD, EBRI |
| Ken Harrison | Potential of Wyre Forest and larger regeneration sites (biomass and CHP) |
| Jackie Homan | Working on demonstrators around energy production (with EBRI and Birmingham University |
| Saska Petrova | Research on energy from waste and energy intensity and efficiency in urban and rural areas |
| Simon Slater | SWM working with BEP to develop low carbon energy agency |
| Ben Horovitz | Worcestershire County Council coordinating a strategy to communicate benefits of renewables – exploding myths – campaign of education (June 2011) |

**3. Local Food Production**

* Education on healthy food
* Connect local restaurants
* Distribution
* Legislation and packaging
* Local retail development
* Production facilities
* Farmers markets
* Use of waste
* Co-ops
* Local food tourism
* Recognise the value of food
* Transition town movement
* Develop links between farmers and ethnic producers
* Urban farming opportunities
* Feed in tariffs for producing food
* Allotments home-grown vegetables
* Educating the general public – local home-grown
* Local food stores
* High level of local micro project failure - issue of achieving critical mass
* Don’t reinvent what’s already there
* Need joined up thinking
* Utilise public procurement as drive

**Key Message:**

Need to reconnect local growers and consumers. Could Birmingham Wholesale Market have a role in this?

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| **Name** | **Comment** |
| Denise Barrett | HEFF delivery model – include in regeneration strategies |
| Peter Michael | Organise markets and farmers markets (which actually make a profit for the Council!). Plus running business start-up programme: 300 new businesses since 2001, 750 jobs, high survival rate |
| Theresa Haddon | Vast practical and academic experience in most aspects of food and farming |
| Roger Hollingworth | Understand rural economy and starting new businesses |
| Brendan Hunter | WRAP promotes ‘love food hate waste’ campaign |
| Matt Dove | We run a field to fork scheme with food served measured in food metres not food miles |
| Karen Leach | Conducted feasibility on Birmingham Wholesale Market which may be of use |
| Simon Jones | Connecting local communities and urban growing areas; teaching local communities to grow food, develop allotments |
|  | Central rivers initiative really interested in local food production along Tame and Trent valley from Tamworth to Burton. If farmers create wetter land with better habitat, need a way to sell the meat produce at a premium |
| Tom Freeland | Community food growing/education |
| Karen Davies | We are doing much of this work – please don’t duplicate but work with us – speak to me |
| Jackie Homan | We are looking to develop a project around urban farms. We are also working to stimulate innovation through public procurement |
| Simon Slater | SWM involved with Smarter Working Project (Coventry University) driving flexible working with business |
| Ken Harrison | Identify key target sites for food and drink processing and manufacture |

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| Shawn Riley | Support many fresh food producers looking to tap into Birmingham markets |
| Peter Whittaker | Food producer and possible facilitator for larger group of producers |

1. **Green and blue infrastructure**

* Integrate areas together through green infrastructure
* Exploit natural links between urban and rural areas
* Rivers and canals connect urban and rural people
* Sustainable tourism e.g. canoe trail, swimming, central rivers initiative
* Facilitating community ownership of rivers and canals
* Get urban stakeholders to value services that rural areas give – and visa versa
* Better flood risk management infrastructure will save insurance payouts
* Businesses can adopt a stretch of river/canal and improve it (e.g. Cincinnati, Tyburn Road)
* Measure economic and social benefits of improving infrastructure
* Integration of climate change and economic benefits
* Identify mutual benefits – economic, social and economic
* Make people who own land responsible for communication with the community
* Communicate benefits of investment in an area
* Link quality of place to economic growth
* Invest in environment to attract enterprise and improve people’s lives
* Central rivers initiative addresses all the selection criteria
* Pride – in open space – Sutton Park symbolic CRI
* LEP should make business support contingent on support for G (and B) I Business
* Collaboration with private sector on flagship projects
* Have business improvements areas based on green/blue infrastructure projects
* Enterprise – bringing rural businesses into the city Go Ape, canoeing, cycling
* Blue/green corridors are a focus for partnership working
* Make environment and wellbeing benefits of places explicit

**Key Message:**

We need to communicate, influence, act on, inform decision making about the economic value of our environmental assets – and link quality of life and quality of place

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| Name | | Comment |
| Sarah Cook | | Keen to discuss with the LEP what support and advice we can give to demonstrate how the environment can assist with economic growth |
| James Dunham | | Mitigation and opportunities identification through integrated assessment |
| Alister Scott | | Research this as a mechanism for understanding and planning the rural-urban fringe |
| Neil Wyatt | Birmingham waterways ‘Living Lands’ project could gather great community involvement and attract resources here |
| Julie Wozniczka | On Trent is going to do a project on Blue infrastructure – maximising the potential of rivers, canals etc throughout Trent catchment (including Tame) |
| Steve Singleton | Making tourist attractions both environmentally attractive but profitable businesses |
| Mike Youe | British Waterways focus is canal and associated enterprise development |
| Ken Harrison | Environmental tourism ‘playground of the Midlands’ |
| Saska Petrova | Research on landscape protection and local community participation |
| Simon Slater | SWM would like to promote environmental infrastructure to LEPs and others - but need clear evidence! Offer? |
| Tom Freeland | Whole community ownership of green spaces |

**5. Creative thinking on sustainable transport**

* Park and ride
* Car clubs
* Ring and ride
* Integrated service for special needs
* Bus integrated to rail
* Roll out online parking payments
* Integrate parking fees around stations
* Green digital transport programme
* Plug in points at urban/rural stations
* Local work - home working
* Broadband
* Higher frequency of trains
* Transport information in real time
* Public transport info at home/on the way
* Video/phone conference
* Hubs and pubs
* HS2
* Simplified train pricing and ticketing
* Freight transport – equalise load
* Smart card for transport
* Cycling
* More cycle space on trains
* Change/influence green belt
* Rural economy hampered by planning
* Subsidy/finance (in rural areas)
* Regulate transport in LEP area

**Key Message:**

Better, easier to use, integrated public transport system

Develop integrated transport system that is easy to use

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| **Name** | **Comment** |
| Ed Brown | Transport fleet reviews, eco driver training services for businesses/local authorities |
| James Dunham | Sustainable transport planning |
| Chris Harris |  |
| Theresa Haddon | Rural to urban transport contacts systems that work |
| Lynsey Melville | Centre for low carbon technology - engine testing/bio-fuels |
| Julie Wozinczka | Trent Valley Way sustainable transport solutions |
| Cllr Jill Dyer | Integrated, reliable transport between town and country and across rural areas |
| Ken Harrison | Kidderminster rail/bus interchange – access to jobs and visitors (urban/rural) |
| Jackie Homan | Connected into HyRaMP network (hydrogen regions and municipalities to develop fuel cell buses and infrastructure |
| Roger Hollingworth | Have good feel for sustainable transport needs to connect rural and urban areas |

**6. Building Retrofit**

* FiTs
* Community ownership
* Fabric innovation ‘the how’
* Green deal
* RHI
* Public sector leading with LEP support
* LWM FitS and fuel poverty research – used to improve offer
* Energy supply to rural areas
* Using rural materials and rural enterprise for retrofit materials
* Local supply chain
* Strategic planning that supports retrofit
* Influence core strategies (for urban/rural retrofit
* BES, SHAP etc involvement with LEP?
* Identification most suitable areas through local authorities

**Key Message:**

Building retrofit to improve energy efficiency of housing, commercial and industrial premises to reduce CO2 emissions, create employment and tackle fuel poverty in urban and rural areas.

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| Name | Comment |
| Denise Barrett | Regeneration strategies – retrofit to maximise value/benefit from local assets |
| Saska Petrova | Research on energy efficiency, fuel poverty, engagement of local communities |
| Karen Leach | LWM (with Encraft) designed Birmingham Energy Savers and have some useful focus on local supply chains |
| Jackie Homan | We have project on ‘intelligent’ retrofit – taking data from retrofitted buildings and understanding which technologies work best. |
| Simon Jones | Setting up social enterprise retrofit teams using unemployed people and similar |
| Keith Budden |  |
| Phil James | Reduction of fuel poverty |
| John Horseman |  |
| Ken Harrison | Major construction and energy company specialising in retrofit (Stourport Road) |
| Ed Brown | EST accredited. Advise provision for home owners/tenants on EE, renewable technologies |

**5. Next steps from today**

* Produce and circulate workshop outcomes report
* This is a first step. Iteration required following initial report
* Core group to produce summary issues paper to be forwarded to the LEP Board
* Need to consider governance and co-ordination role – perhaps with Board Champion
* Consider structure BEP to work with LEP?
* There is limited ‘new money’ so how do we redeploy resource to deliver outcomes
* Opportunities for community ownership/management
* There are dilemmas – build way to deal with in open discussion
* Concern about AWM asset striping – need to ensure good work of value to the public good is not lost or privatised
* Consider communication to keep everyone involved
* Cllr Roger Hollingworth (LEP Board Member) to act as champion
* Do we need to create a green conscience for the LEP

**Peter Woodward**

**SWM Associate**

**January 2011**