

Title:	Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs Biosphere Reserve UNESCO Bid Submission
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Purpose/Key Messages:	To seek the formal endorsement by BHSP of the proposed application by the Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership to UNESCO in September 2013 to be recognised as an international Biosphere Reserve
Significance to BHSP and Delivering SCS outcomes:	The designation of the area as a Biosphere Reserve is a SCS ambition (p64, SCS) and is a CSP priority
What is BHSP being asked to do?	To formally endorse the proposed application to UNESCO (and accompanying management strategy) by the Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership
Next steps and report back mechanism:	The bid will be formally submitted to UNESCO by the end of September, with a final decision expected from them in June/July 2014

Background

BHSP endorsed the Biosphere Project in May 2011 and the bid was recently supported by the City Sustainability Partnership in their 16th May meeting. The CSP is now asking the BHSP to formally support the bid submission.

Public Consultation

1. The formal public consultation on the Biosphere proposal, objectives and draft management strategy ran for 16 weeks until 22nd May, and was widely promoted through 70 events/meetings as well as through different media locally.

The 1776 respondents were overwhelmingly in favour:
 94% support the area becoming a Biosphere Reserve
 95% support the three Biosphere objectives (conservation, sustainable development, and knowledge-learning-awareness)

Monitoring of equalities information provided found no apparent links between the nature of respondents and their support.

Spatial analysis of respondents' locations shows a reasonably balanced spread of inputs from across the proposed area, concentrated principally in the urban areas and especially Brighton & Hove (the source of 78% of mapped responses).

2. Provisional analysis (based on c. 1100 digital responses only) has been carried out of the detailed individual responses to the two open questions of the survey with the following main findings:

- *What do people value most?* – accessibility to the local environment; nature conservation of varied features; promotion of health and wellbeing through nature

- *What environmental improvements would people like to see?* – sustainable transport connections; dealing with waste; public awareness; nature conservation (especially urban)

A complete detailed analysis is ongoing meanwhile.

3. Detailed technical inputs on the draft management strategy (see <http://biospherehere.org.uk/get-involved/biosphere-consultation/>) were limited in number, in contrast, from 7 professional organisations and 5 individuals.

The main comments received included the following topics: local food growing, urban nature conservation, public health, cultural heritage, public engagement, recreational sea angling, and downland farming practice.

4. New areas have been added to the proposed Biosphere area during and as a result of the formal consultation exercise. These are Shoreham-on-Sea, Shoreham Beach and Southwick within Adur District and two SDNP rural areas near Ringmer as well as Ditchling parish within Lewes District.

Partnership

5. The Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs Partnership continues to expand and diversify to include private sector partners also. There are now 30 project partners in total (including individual town and parish council members in Lewes District).

UNESCO Visit

6. An invited advisory visit by the principal UNESCO officer in Paris was made on 21-22 May. She was very positive about our proposed application and provided constructive feedback on how it can be further improved.

She felt that we could make a very valuable contribution to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (now numbering 621 sites across 117 countries), and felt that our connectivity between the urban areas and our surroundings was a key strength.

General points requiring more clarity included: the added value a Biosphere would bring, governance, finance, monitoring and future engagement.

Specific points included better defining the project links with universities' research, tourism, farming, fishing, archaeology and equalities.

Bid Process

7. The formal UNESCO application form is being completed, with a final draft of Part 1 ('Summary') available (*attached for information*); Part 2 ('Description') is presently being drafted. The application document will be accompanied principally by the finalised Biosphere Management Strategy as well as other appendices.

8. Formal sign-off of the proposal by key Biosphere partner organisations is scheduled to take place during June-July.