



Croydon Borough Council

Croydon has opted to establish a number of partnerships to take forward and deliver each of the priority themes of the community plan.

Croydon launched its Environment Partnership in January 2003 to act as the main forum in Croydon for developing the environment agenda. It is one of a number of theme partnerships that comprise the Croydon Strategic Partnership. The Partnership is facilitated by the Council's Environment and Sustainability Team (EaST), formerly Local Agenda 21. Croydon previously had a successful Local Agenda 21 Partnership that developed projects with individuals and organisations in the community with an interest in sustainability. The formation of the Environment Partnership, and its place in the Croydon Strategic Partnership structure, has raised the environment and sustainability agenda to a more strategic level.

The Environment Partnership takes responsibility for three specific areas of priority within the community strategy: cleaner streets and open spaces, environmental sustainability and sustainable transport. Further, the partnership is responsible for ensuring that the development of the community strategy is increasingly in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

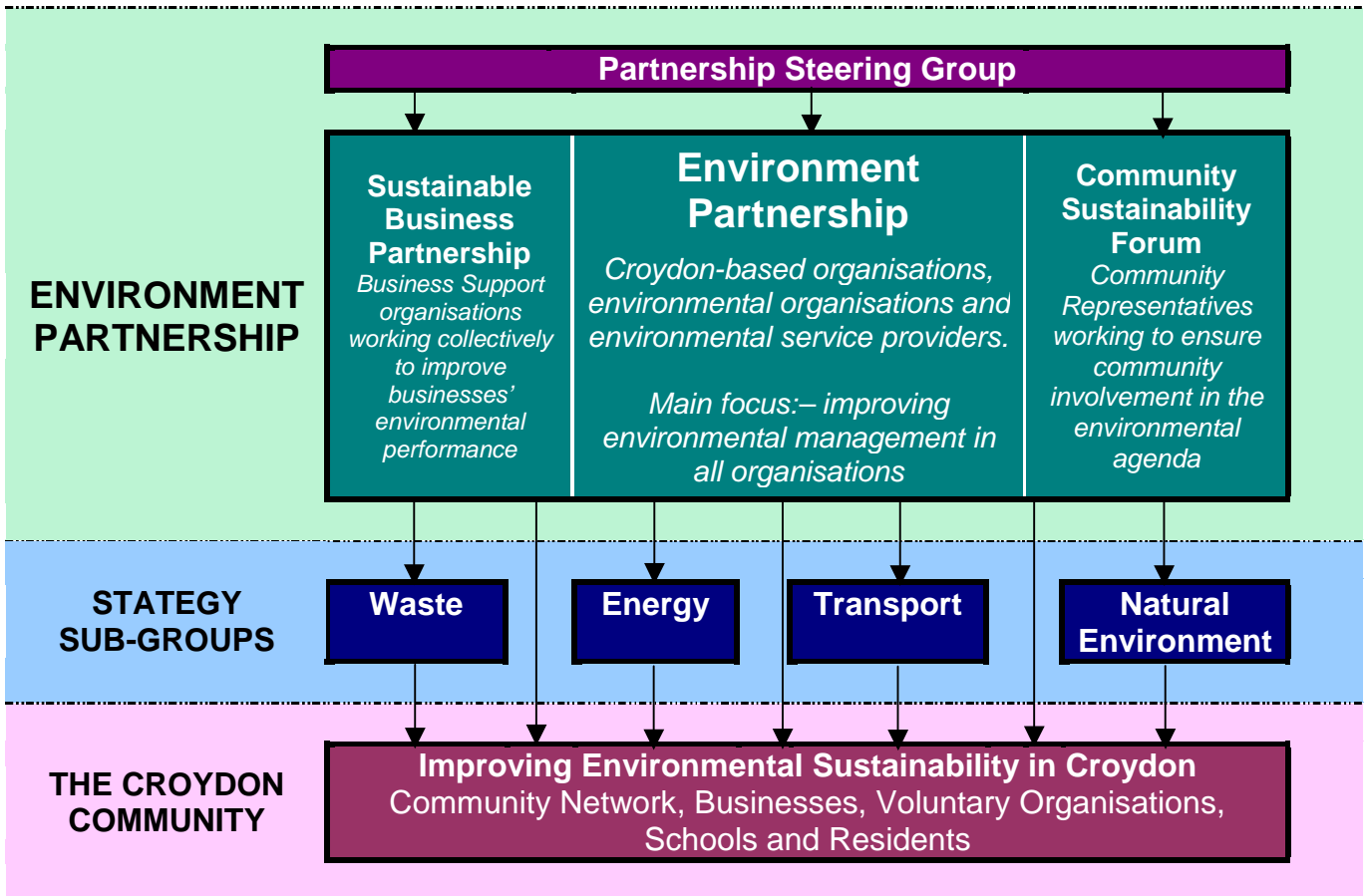
The partnership comprises 20 representatives from a wide range of public, private and community sector organisations. It is chaired by the cabinet member for planning, urban regeneration and the environment and meets three times per year. To date, agenda items have included Environment Partnership sub-themes together with items proposed by partnership members. Meetings involve presentations, action-oriented discussions and informal lunchtime networking.

One of the challenges for the Environment Partnership has been establishing a cross-sectoral membership that can work at a strategic level on the local environmental agenda. There is not the same range of obvious statutory post-holders with a clear responsibility for 'the environment' and sufficient focus on 'Croydon' as is in other theme areas. Therefore, the Partnership is developing its remit and membership so that more local organisations can gain directly from involvement in the partnership.

The Environment Partnership also steers the work of its strategy sub-groups, set up to address specific environmental topics, with representatives made up of appropriate organisations across the public, private and community sectors.



Going forward, membership of the Environment Partnership will be oriented towards



Croydon-based organisations, environmental organisations and environmental service providers who are keen to improve their own environmental performance and work with others to spread opportunities for good practice on environmental sustainability. The Sustainable Business Partnership and Community Sustainability Forum work in association with the Environment Partnership with particular emphases on the roles of business and the community in the environmental agenda.



Strategy sub groups

The strategy sub groups each have a more specific remit and draw together representatives with particular expertise and influence with regard to the area concerned. In this way, focused activities are undertaken that benefit and advance specific sub-sectors of the Croydon community in terms of environmental sustainability. For example:

- The Waste Group includes two commercial waste contractors, business and community representatives, the Environment Agency and relevant council officers. It is primarily concerned with the production and implementation of an integrated five-year waste strategy to minimise production of waste and maximise levels of recycling and re-use.
- The Energy Group includes Croydon Energy Network (CEN) and has recently delivered a conference in conjunction with the Healthy Croydon Partnership and EAGA, to educate community organisations, health professionals and practitioners on the benefits of providing free energy reviews through CEN to address those affected by fuel poverty.
- The Transport Group takes a different form to the other groups. Road-users, cyclists, pedestrians, rail-users, businesses and residents are invited to present and attend an annual standing conference to seek agreement on priority areas for the year ahead. These priorities are agreed against the backdrop of sustainability i.e. encouraging the adoption of green travel plans on the part of business, and the adoption of more sustainable forms of transport by residents.
- The Natural Environment Group is made up of a range of representatives from local community and voluntary organisations that are to manage and undertake a quality audit of Croydon's local open space and prioritise those most in need of protection and enhancement. This will form part of an open space strategy, the production of which will also be steered by the group.

PROJECT EXAMPLES

To meet the community strategy's environmental targets, there is a range of projects (in addition to those described above) that are being delivered through the Environment Partnership.



For example:

- **Schools programme** – working with local school children is a good way not only to encourage them as individuals to be environmentally responsible, but also to make connections with local households and those they go home to after school. The environment and sustainability team offer free recycling, energy and water assemblies advertised to schools in a number of different ways. After the recycling assembly the children receive free ‘feed me’ green box magnets to encourage their households to use their kerbside green boxes and after the energy assembly they receive a household energy-use survey form which, once complete, is exchanged for a free energy efficient light bulb.
- **Business Partnership** – there is increasing engagement with business in environmental sustainability. First, there are businesses on the Environment Partnership itself who, through sharing best practice, can improve their environmental management. Second, the Sustainable Business Partnership brings together those organisations that advise and support businesses in improving their environmental performance to work collaboratively, for example working together with businesses in the Crystal Palace area to actively make a difference. Finally, there is a corporate social responsibility initiative developing through the local strategic partnership that is likely to result in a brokerage linking local and global needs, including environmental, to Croydon based businesses that chose to respond.

ISSUES AND GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Steering group: A small steering group made up of the relevant council cabinet members, chief officers, business and community representatives oversees the work of the Environment Partnership. This provides a forum for agreeing the direction and evolution of the partnership, ensuring actions are delivered and providing sponsorship of the partnership at a senior level.

Finding ways to develop new areas of work: From the outset, the work of the Environment Partnership and its strategy sub-groups has always concerned itself with ‘adding value’ and using the benefits of the partnership model to deliver programmes that would not otherwise be possible or achievable.

Fully utilise the local strategic partnership (LSP): In addition to new areas of work, the Environment Partnership has been able to fully utilise the LSP to add weight to funding approaches, provide routes for the dissemination of information, and provide the strategic positioning required to drive a number of projects forward.



Successful cross-working between partnerships: The Environment Partnership has benefited significantly from the synergies that have been possible through working with other areas of the LSP such as the Healthy Croydon Partnership in delivering the fuel-poverty work and the Cultural Partnership in developing the open space agenda.

Contact: Eddy Taylor, Tel: 0208 760 5791, Email : eddy_taylor@croydon.gov.uk, Anna Eltringham, Tel: 0208 686 4433 x2709/Email: anna_eltringham@croydon.gov.uk

Web site:

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/DCandE/SustainableDevelopment/?a=5441> contains more information on the projects outlined in this case study.

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy/localorganisations/localstrategicpartnership/?a=5441> contains membership details of the local strategic partnership at large and its component parts.