

**Minutes from the 1st Steering Group meeting on
the Joint UK-Sweden initiative
12th December 2004, Defra, Ashdown House, London**

Present

Ian Davidson, Chair
Tony Clark, minute-taker
Kerstin Wennerstrand
Åke Iverfeldt
John Holmberg
Pat Bowen
Sue Innes
Lennart Heinitz
Yogesh Kumar
Andrew Large
Caroline Neil
Erica Gyllhed
Neil Moore

Trevor Graham
Rachel Flecher
Kevin Scobell
David Arkell
Johnny Kronvall
Susan Eruohwo
Mikael Edelstam
Sue Beaumaut
Gudmundur Kristjansson
Axel Wenblad

Apologies

Roland Clift

1. Introduction

The meeting began with **Helen Marquard**, director..., who welcomed everyone to London and gave some introductory remarks. She pointed out the priorities of DEFRA as being 1) climate change, 2) sustainable use of resources, and 3) sustainable consumption & production patterns. She saw the bringing of this group together as a way of putting life in the joint UK-Sweden work and wished success in the future endeavours of the group.

2. Background to the UK-Sweden initiative

Ian Davidson (Chair) presented the background to the UK-Sweden co-operation in the area of environmental technologies by referring to the first initiatives by Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Göran Persson, the two previous joint UK-Sweden environmental technologies meetings in Göteborg (2003) and London (2004) and the current focus on sustainable construction and building. The **Chair** introduced document no. 1 paper no. 1.

3. Objectives and make-up of the initiative

The **Chair** also gave a brief introduction to the document no 1, paper no 2.

John Holmberg (JH) drew the attention to the work on energy efficiency in Sweden and that this group, after it has decided on what areas it should focus on, should look into the use of instruments put forward in the ETAP, such as performance targets (1% improvement in energy efficiency a year in 50 years would result in an amazing 50 % efficiency), public procurement and the establishing of technology platforms. There is a lot of “Best practices” but not too much is happening. There is a need for “bridging” activities.

Axel Wenblad (AW) suggested that the way forward shouldn't be too wide. It could include the following elements:

1. Identify the environmental aspects of our work, where energy is one but it should also include chemicals, bio-diversity, sustainable forestry, local impact on construction and so on.
2. Decide on what kind of constructions to focus on (residential, commercial, public, civil construction), since these kind of projects differ a lot.
3. Choice on what kind of contracts to focus (designing and building, PFI:s...), since the choice of contract (between the client and the contractor) to a great extent will effect the way in which sustainability will be put into the buildings.
4. Finally, one should argue for Life Cycle costing.

Axel concluded by referring to how this model had been followed and had led to a energy- and resource efficient passive housing area in Landskrona, Sweden.

Kerstin Wennerstrand (KW) stressed that the group not only should look at the building of new houses but also at refurbishment.

Lennart Heinitz (LH) advised that that the examples put forward should be of commercial relevance and that there are many good examples but they will never have any market relevance.

Sue Innes (SI) mentioned how a good communications strategy could make an impact on the outcome.

Pat Bowen (PB) stressed the importance of not forgetting the skills when offering a technical fix.

Kevin Scobell (KS) referred to his experiences with best practices of public policy and in commercial use.

Andrew Large (AL) pointed out that there ought to be a representative in the group from the UK client side. He welcomed a focus on refurbishment and pointed out that today we have to live decisions taken several years ago. When it comes to outreach activities one must be aware of the fact that a web-page and the sending out of electronic newsletter might be of no use, since only 65 % of the UK SME:s in this area have access to a computer. The output for the SME:s must be seen in more practical projects and money resources. As Axel stated earlier, the focus of the

project shouldn't be too wide. He also agreed with Lennart that the work should have a commercial focus. Practical day-to-day activities would be included in the work with tangible outcomes.

Neil Moore (NM) pointed out that there is a challenge on how to transfer things into common practice. There are blockers that must be addressed. Construction companies like Skanska can deliver efficient buildings but they are not specified by design, since buyers don't want them. If the decisions are left to the commercial market, sustainable aspects in the building sector will not be delivered. There has to be other reasons for buyers to make that decision.

Johnny Kronvall (JK) stressed the need for having a physical infrastructure that will make dissemination of sustainable technologies possible. In his experiences of working with the IEA, there are many examples of successful dissemination mechanisms, such as "Air Infiltration Centres" or "Heat Pump Centres".

David Arkell (DA) addressed the need of developing a product-and marketing strategy. The consumers should be involved in the process and a holistic approach should be used.

AW agreed with previous speakers that consumers are important in this context. There is not yet a consumer drive for sustainable buildings. The driver today is mainly on getting a good location. To help consumers understand the potential, Skanska has encouraged the Nordic Swan to develop eco-label criterions for small houses, which would make it easy for consumers to make their choices.

Sue Beaumont (SB) expressed that she wanted to the issue of land-use being included in the work of the group.

Åke Iverfeldt (ÅI) argued that focus shouldn't just be on buildings. If one look in the energy area, and especially at district cooling and district heating, one will find problems related to monopoly preventing the full development of new technologies. Energy infrastructure is an important area in the context.

KW stressed the fact that the focus of the work in the group shouldn't be too wide. A lot of work has already been done in other forums, such as in the working group within the EU (Cion) on Competitiveness and Sustainable Construction. *KW offered to pick out the main points in this work and make it available to the group.*

The Chair clarified that environmental technologies must be in the focus of the work in the group and that it would be impossible to cover all sectors and all aspects. Focus should be on how to make commercial best results out of several existing good examples.

ÅI suggested that focus should be on different tools, like commercial drivers.

KS explained that *½ million houses will be built until 2016* and that there currently is a chance to make a difference.

JH suggested that if the framework for our work is commercial drivers and the Lisbon process, maybe focus should be on how to make sustainable solutions in a way that they can be introduced on growing markets like for example in China or The Baltic States.

LH stressed that we need to start looking at the present situation in UK and Sweden, why things are the way they are and find ways on how to push it in the right direction.

SI mentioned that according to a study made by the WWF, 86 % of the consumers in the UK would like to live in more sustainable homes – there is a clear market niche.

AW, LH and others kept coming back to the issue about making basic business out of sustainable construction ideas.

KS saw a great potential in how the UK could bring a more commercial approach to the area of environmental technologies.

AL explained that there are many tenders out within the UK construction industry and the situation as regards sustainable construction would change dramatically if those designing these would put sustainable development into the criteria.

KW mentioned the role that insurance companies can play when it comes to promoting more sustainable construction.

YK emphasized the role of different incentives, such as taxes and regulation. If better used, they would result in better outcome.

KS mentioned that there is 600 Pounds construction waste produced from every new house being built (one-family houses). The amount of waste is in itself a great incentive. There are existing commercial drivers that could be better utilized.

NM mentioned that tax on landfills can be used as an instrument to influence designs etc.

YK explained that the reasonable price-levels on heat pumps in Sweden are the result of Government incentives.

The Chair explained that we are in a learning process between our countries, where we need to look at both good and bad examples, why some work and others don't and how bad examples can become good and good examples can become transferable.

AW saw a problem with continuity, since when projects are completed, a lot of valuable information is usually lost. It requires some effort to get hold of that info.

KS offered *SmartLife* as an example to study.

KW suggested that the first issue of the group should be to collect several good examples, where the owners of the projects have to be open and accessible.

SI mentioned an on-going work her organisation is doing, where they have sent out questioners about 12 projects. That information could very well be used in this context as well.

ÅI brought up the issue about criteria to be used when evaluating different projects. The group must first decide relevant criteria.

PB also proposed that the group should decide on what sectors should be evaluated.

JH asked for more clarity about the process involved?

KW explained that she through the discussion had become more optimistic about finding good and relevant examples and that the process that should be pursued should be from the “cradle to grave”.

LH was of the opinion that there should be more focus on *process* and less on *technology*.

Caroline Neil (CN) stressed the importance of establishing a dialogue between different sectors.

The Chair explained that as regards the political context of this joint UK/Sweden initiative, both Governments can provide it with a policy framework for relevant questions.

AW suggested that the group should take the joint work forward in three phases:

- 1) Decide on criteria for potential projects, including looking at how a structured evaluation can be made of the processes in each project of interest.
- 2) Look at the role of the designer, builder etc in the projects.
- 3) Look at Swedish experience with UK eyes and vice versa.

The selected projects should share similar views on things such as LCC etc.

KW emphasized that focus also must be made on refurbishment of old buildings.

The Chair explained that when we develop our selection criteria, we should have in mind already existing sustainable construction projects in our Countries and the criteria used when developing these. The projects should include both new buildings and refurbishments.

SI mentioned that she already had access to more than 475 relevant projects, of which ones some could be selected.

Trevor Graham (TG) mentioned that there are several good examples from re-generation projects, also in a UK/Sweden context. There are also examples of ones that have failed.

ÅI agreed that projects chosen should have market relevance. If projects lack market relevance, one could also look into how it could have had market relevance if it would have been done in another way.

KW mentioned that it could be interesting to look at the reasons for certain techniques being chosen. What tools are at the disposal of the clients (consumers) for example instruments to be used in the procurement procedure, are there education concerning sustainable construction for different actors ?

KS and JH both spoke about bridging from demonstration projects to market relevance examples. There are many examples available that could be used in this context. JH stressed the importance of dialogues with sectors and parties involved as well as the use of a political framework to create the market.

LH meant that it is better to focus on reducing energy-use by 10 % in every new building being built than by 50 % in only some scarcely spread out examples.

KS agreed that it is better to have more houses reaching a minimum “eco-standard” level than having just a few houses perform “excellent”.

The Chair asked the group about what sectors, projects and selection criteria to be used?

KW stressed that good examples from both UK and Sweden must be chosen. As regards sectors, both refurbishment/new build and residential/public buildings (schools, hospitals) should be included. Significant aspects to be addressed would be issues such as energy, waste, water, construction materials, chemicals and indoor air quality.

ÅI brought up that all this had to be done using a life cycle perspective.

The discussion continued in the same spirit and **the Chair** brought up the issue of a web-page and the planned conference and in what way these could contribute to raising the awareness among relevant stakeholders.

Caroline Neil (CN) stressed the importance of these issues being pushed down in the organizations and that they must reach those making the decisions.

AL said that one obvious way forward would be to go through relevant trade-bodies and their already established routines for disseminating information. The only problem with this is that most construction companies are SME:s and several of them even lack access to e-mail and internet.

AW suggested that the only way forward would be to use existing channels

Both **SI** and **YK** offered to use their organizations and channels to disseminate information to relevant stakeholders.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

4. Terms of reference for the steering group

The Chair went through document no. 2 about “Terms of Reference for the Steering Group”.

This item didn't result in any discussion.

5. Proposal for launching the initiative

The Chair went through document no. 3 on “Proposal for launching the initiative”.

TG explained that they are in the process of preparing for a European Conference on Sustainable building/construction, partly financed by DG Tren, which would invite 200 participants. The City of Malmö would like to propose that the UK/Sweden launch takes place as a separate event in conjunction with this planned conference.

There was a consensus about the value of joining these two events together, with either the UK/Sweden launch before or after the European conference.

AW stressed that the launch should make our “hands-on” approach more visible rather than just showing power-point presentations of nice building sites.

During the discussion that followed, some issues that came up were:

1. Target-group should include both industry and politicians.
2. The outcome should not only be a description of projects but more displaying sustainable solutions.
3. If focus and measures were on state-owned buildings only, it would quickly put demand on the market.
4. However, even in this context (state-owned buildings), there is a need for developing tools that can be used effectively.
5. Maybe one role of this group would be to develop tools that could be used in a year or so.

6. Proposal for a website

The Chair went through document no. 4 handed out at the meeting concerning the setup of a joint website.

YK offered his organization as a Swedish co-host in hosting the website in cooperation with SI and her group.

AW brought up the issue about involvement and that we need to think about *who* we want to get involved in our work and also receive the information we put out on our website.

KS shared his own positive experiences with regularly sending out *electronic newsletters*.

Rachel Fletcher (RF) explained that the website should be seen as a place for ideas and potential partners to meet.

7. Examples of initiatives in the area of Sustainable Construction (Malmö/Newcastle/SmartLife/Västra Götaland)

KS, David Arkell (DA):

Cambridge has to deliver 70 000 houses before 2016. The choice is whether to deliver “normal” standard or sustainable houses. Cambridge has neither capacity nor skills to do it in a sustainable way. To better inform about the sustainable alternatives, a *SmartLife* centre has been setup in Cambridge. Similar centres have also been setup in Malmö and Hamburg. While the Malmö centre focuses on dock-side re-development, focus in Hamburg is on refurbishment. Through cooperation, Cambridge has found out that while there is a lack of skilled teachers in sustainable construction available in the UK, there is a surplus in countries like Germany. There are several areas that could be addressed. Just look at the waste-situation, where there today is no separation of waste in the building sector. Industry is involved in discussions about how to solve the future waste-situation. There is a need for 1) Local infrastructure for waste processing with recycling facilities and 2) Permanent education and training facilities. Re-use is currently a non-issue. Cambridge is also cooperating with other Swedish Cities, such as Karlstad, Göteborg and Linköping (Vägverket).

TG:

The **Malmö** projects focuses on changing the image of the City. The overarching strategy includes develop a green environment, use old industrial land, tackle social problems such as integration issues and unemployment. Another important factor has been to develop a concept of 100 % locally renewable energy system. Several areas are now into second phases of development and the new focus will be more on affordable houses. Several regeneration projects and some new areas are underway. There is a close cooperation with the Newcastle regeneration projects.

Gudmundur Kristjansson (GK):

The **Region Skåne** focuses on how to raise its sustainable development profile with everything from a couple of show-offs to more commercial ways of success. Focus is on everything from public financing to mainstream.

The issue about trained personnel came up once more. It was stated that there is a huge interest for status quo in the construction sector. Since 90 % of the construction industry employs less than 10 persons, technological advancements take some time to sip through.

YK made a presentation of the “Building and Living” dialogue.

LH explained that there are two good projects going on in Sweden, one being the “Building and Living” dialogue and the other one the voluntary system called “*Byggsektorns Kretsloppsråd*”.

JH meant that standards were not enough but that legislation also was needed.

AL agreed that there is a larger need for regulations among SME:s. It all boils down to competence, where “*most are competent to do what they are told to do but not to work out what to do*”.

JH

There are many good examples that can be gathered from **Region Västra Götaland**. There is one new project in *Norra Älvstaden* which began with a LCC process. A building and housing expo is planned in Göteborg in early autumn next year. There are also plans for a conference on Sustainable Cities during 2005.

8. POSSIBLE PROJECTS

The Chair asked for ideas for joint project. One he mentioned himself was to look closer into the UK experience with PFI. What have UK learnt and could it be used in Sweden?

During the discussion several examples of potential joint project came up. Among those proposed one can find:

- Sustainable skill analyzes/exchanges,
- Malmö/Nottingham/Cambridge University exchanges,
- Further development of the Chalmers/Manchester Cooperation,
- Projects where industry from both countries are involved,
- Simple steps on how to make a refurbishment sustainable,
- Conflicts between cultural heritage and energy efficiency,
- CLASP program on refurbishment on UK schools,
- Book “LCC for dummies”, a demoralized version,
- Use of other frameworks such as the Concerto project.

It was decided that the group should continue its work with nominating examples that could be evaluated. It should not only be the good examples but also the ones that were not all successful.

The Chair concluded the meeting by announcing that the 2nd Steering Group meeting on the Joint UK-Sweden initiative will take place in Stockholm on 1 April, 2005.

ACTIONS POINTS FROM MEETING

Focus for the Initiative

Action: A working group will be asked to provide a draft document detailing an initial focus for the initiative and associated criteria for project selection. This will be circulated in late January.

Communication and dissemination

Action: A draft communication strategy will be considered by sub-group of the steering committee. Its recommendations will be circulated to all in late January.