

BHCC DOWNLAND ADVISORY PANEL – terms of reference

1. Name

Downland Advisory Panel

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the Downland Advisory Panel ('the DAP') is purely consultative. It exists to allow Brighton & Hove City Council ('BHCC') to draw on and access local skills, experience and expertise, to advise on the management of the City Downland Estate and assist with the strategic direction and implementation of the City Downland Estate Plan ('CDEP') – its policy development, plans and delivery.
- 2.2 The collective views of the DAP will contribute to presentations and committee papers which are prepared by officers of BHCC. In this way, the DAP will support and inform the decision-making processes followed by BHCC as responsible authority (see below).

3. Status

- 3.1 The DAP shall provide a purely advisory function to the Council's Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration ('SFCR') Committee and its City Environment, South Downs & The Sea ('CESS') Committee. It is a partnership body which includes both Council members and external organisations and does not have subcommittee status. While the political balance rules in section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 will not apply, it is expected that those members of the DAP who are elected members of the Council ('BHCC') will be appointed on a cross party basis.

4. Area of focus

- 4.1 The DAP's aim is to provide advisory support to contribute to BHCC's implementation of the following vision -

"A rejuvenated City Downland Estate will be carbon negative and climate resilient, its biodiverse grassland landscape fully restored and teeming with wildlife. The estate will be a locus for natural farming, where local food production will flourish.

By creating new amenities and opening up more land to the public – and by making it easier for all to visit and enjoy - the estate will fulfil its potential to boost the wellbeing of everyone who experiences it. The estate will be managed to reflect the will of the community. This land is yours."

- 4.2 With the above in mind, members of the DAP will collectively:
 - Advise on the implementation of the CDEPs vision, purposes, and outcomes;
 - Broaden engagement through the active involvement of individuals and groups for whom its relevance and potential benefits have been limited until now;
 - Establish the DAP as a shared vehicle for collaborative change across partners and sectors;
 - Mobilise additional resources, knowledge, skills and commitments;
 - Offer support to assist BHCC in overviewing progress towards CDEP outcomes across partners and sectors, identifying weak areas and helping to address them;
 - Give strategic advice and objective feedback to the DAP Chair to assist with CDEP implementation as required.

5. Reporting

- 5.1 The work of the DAP will be reported bi-annually through an officer report that will be presented to the Council's CESS Committee and/or SFCR Committee. DAP members may feed into that report and be invited to present to committee on their section. DAP members may also report on an ad hoc basis to the DAP Chair with advice as necessary, the expectation being that if a CDEP-related item is on the agenda for CESS, the DAP's views will have been sought in advance.

- 5.2 Where decisions relating to the CDEP are to be taken by officers under delegated powers, officers will consult with DAP members and the DAP Chair. If a proposed decision has corporate policy or financial implications, the decision will go to the SFCR Committee in accordance with the Council's constitution. The Council Officers and DAP Chair will report back to the DAP on decisions that are made and the reasons for those decisions.

6. Membership

- 6.1 The Chair of the DAP will be the Chair of the Council's CESS Committee, supported by 2 vice chairs to be selected from the DAP's membership, and representing different sectors. The Chair and 2 vice chairs are referred to collectively in these Terms of Reference as the 'DAP Chairs Group'.

Membership of the Panel shall consist of appointees from the following sectors. NB Substitutes will not normally be permitted given the complexity of the subject matter:

- 1) BHCC Members and officers
- 2) Organisational stakeholders
- 3) Farm tenants and independent agricultural experts
- 4) Community and voluntary Groups

These sectors will make up the core membership of the DAP. Make up of each of the sectors is as follows:

BHCC Members

- 6 members (reflecting the political balance of the council) including the Chair of the CESS Committee. In cases where council members of the DAP are not also members of CESS, there is an expectation that the former will fully brief the latter on DAP proceedings. Councillors who are not selected by their group to sit on the DAP shall be able to attend DAP meetings as observers.

BHCC Officers

- Officers with responsibility for managing the City Downland Estate and giving corporate advice including Property & Design, Cityparks, Sustainability, Public Health, Sports & Leisure, Education, Planning, and others as necessary. Up to 3 BHCC Officers will attend DAP meetings on a regular basis and others will be invited to present to the DAP for specific agenda items on an ad hoc basis.

Organisational stakeholders (including those with statutory advisory role):

- The Aquifer Partnership (1 representative)
- South Downs National Parks Authority (SDNPA) (2 representatives)
- The Living Coast (1 representative)
- Local Access Forum (1 representative)
- Sussex Wildlife Trust (1 representative)
- Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (1 representative)
- Others as necessary

Farm tenants/agriculture

- Two representatives from those holding farm tenancies within the City Downland Estate
- One independent sustainable agricultural expert

Community Groups

- Brighton and Hove Estate Conservation Trust (1 representative)
- Brighton Downs Alliance (2 representatives)
- Trust for Developing Communities (1 representative)
- Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society (1 representative)
- Brighton and Hove Wildlife Forum (1 representative)

- Local experts as necessary

6.2 Other relevant parties may be invited to participate in meetings on a meantime basis where particular areas of work would benefit from specialist input. Any additional individuals wishing to attend may do so as observers (at the reasonable discretion of the chair).

7. Quorum

7.1 A minimum of ten people is required for Panel meetings to proceed provided each of the groups listed at 1) – 4) in paragraph 6 above is represented.

8. Meetings and ways of working

8.1 DAP will meet at least 4 times a year. Meeting dates will be set annually to ensure optimal attendance and ensure coordination with other relevant meetings such as CESS.

8.2 The Chairs Group will be responsible for agreeing agenda items for DAP meetings.

8.3 The DAP Chairs Group will be supported by BHCC officers and other admin support.

8.4 Any DAP members identifying subjects for discussion at DAP meetings should contact either supporting officers from BHCC or members of the Chairs Group to add to agenda for a future meeting.

8.5 While the purpose of any potential items should be clearly stated, the DAP is not a decision-making body. It provides advisory input to the Council, which is responsible for all decision-making relating to the City Downland Estate. The purpose of the DAP is to enable the Council to seek the views of stakeholders. Officers may be asked to provide context, but this is not the forum for officers or Councillors to give their views.

8.6 BHCC officers may be asked to present input agreed by DAP to CESS. Please see point 5.1 for further information.

8.7 DAP members will be invited to declare any conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting.

8.8 Where there is a discussion item on the DAP agenda that would benefit from expert input from organisations who are not DAP members, or from organisations not represented on DAP, DAP members may be invited to suggest people or organisations with relevant expertise. Any such request will be considered by the DAP Chairs Group.

8.9 Task and Finish groups may be set up in between scheduled meetings to undertake specific pieces of work and present their findings to DAP.

8.10 Substitutes (whether of elected BHCC members or other representatives) will not normally be permitted due to the complexity of the subject matter and the sort of input required from all participants. With this in mind, there is an expectation that any representative who fails to attend a scheduled meeting three times or more shall be replaced by an appointee from the same sector (farmers/institutional stakeholders/community groups).

9. Review

9.1 Membership will be reviewed annually by DAP from May 2024 to ensure the correct balance is achieved and to take account of unforeseen issues arising following agreement of the CDEP by BHCC and the SDNPA.

9.2 These terms of reference may be reviewed annually and changes will in any event be subject to approval by the Council's SFCR Committee.

