

SUSTAINABILITY CABINET COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 2

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Terms of Reference		
Date of Meeting:	8 October 2008		
Report of:	Director of Strategy & Governance		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Oliver Dixon	Tel: 29-1512
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Key Decision:	No	Forward Plan No. N/A	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Sustainability Cabinet Committee (SCC) of its delegated functions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the SCC notes its Terms of Reference at Appendix 1.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The terms of reference for the SCC were first considered at the Governance Committee meeting of 1 July. Here it was resolved that the establishment of the SCC be recommended to Cabinet in accordance with the terms of reference agreed on 1 July.
- 3.2 Also at that Governance Committee meeting, members asked for clarification and further information on the role and purpose of the proposed SCC. This was provided in a supplementary report taken to Cabinet on 10 July 2008, appearing as agenda item 43A, and is reproduced below at 3.4.
- 3.3 On 10 July the Cabinet resolved to approve the establishment of a SCC in accordance with the revised terms of reference provided in the associated officer's report. The revision in question was an amendment to the role of the SCC to ensure that the Committee does not prevent urgent issues being delayed before consideration at Cabinet. That amendment is reflected in the Terms of Reference reproduced at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Supplementary information about the SCC provided to Cabinet on 10 July 2008:
- Members of the Governance Committee asked for more information on:
- The purpose of the Committee
 - The Committee's role in relation to the Cabinet

- c) The frequency of meetings
- d) The role of the Deputy Leader with responsibility for sustainability
- e) Possible issues that the Committee might consider
- f) Whether the meetings of the Committee will be in public

More information on these issues is outlined below.

Purpose of the Committee

- 3.5 The purpose of this committee is to make decisions or recommendations to Cabinet on sustainability issues that are not the sole responsibility of other Cabinet members, eg:
 - a) environmental management within the council itself;
 - b) the council's role and response to cross-cutting issues like reducing carbon emissions, projections of a changing climate locally, improving resource efficiency, developing sustainable energy etc
- 3.6 The Committee is not intended to discuss all issues with any sustainability implications – which would be most of the Council's work – but rather those issues that cross the responsibilities of multiple cabinet members. The terms of reference are drawn widely to ensure that any issue the Committee wishes to consider is within its scope.
- 3.7 Those issues not considered by the Committee will have their sustainability implications assessed and set out, as now, in the standard report template.

The Committee's role in relation to the Cabinet

- 3.8 The existence of the Committee will not prevent major decisions on sustainability issues being considered at Cabinet. At present all key decisions are considered at Cabinet, and key sustainability decisions will be handled in the same way.
- 3.9 The Committee can consider sustainability issues on their way to Cabinet, as current Cabinet Member meetings can on issues within their remit. Some members of the Governance Committee expressed concern that the (Sustainability Cabinet) Committee might delay or prevent Cabinet discussions on important sustainability issues. For the avoidance of doubt on this issue, it is proposed to amend the terms of reference so that "any" rather than "all" sustainability issues are within the remit of the Committee. With this change, the Committee will still be able to consider any issues as it sees fit, but urgent issues can be sent directly to Cabinet without the Committee needing to consider them first.

Frequency of meetings

- 3.10 The Committee will meet in public every 8 weeks, starting in September 2008. Additional meetings may be called if the pressure of work demands. The meeting timetable will be reviewed in the light of experience along with other elements of the new constitution in November 2008 and May 2009.

Membership

- 3.11 Membership is the Leader of the Council (who is the cabinet member with responsibility for sustainability); the Cabinet Member for Central Services (whose role has responsibility for both the council's property portfolio and policy development); and the Cabinet Member for Housing (because of the high priority attached to cutting carbon emissions from the city's housing stock). Other Cabinet members may be invited onto the Committee when it considers specific issues or items that relate to their portfolio.

The role of the deputy leader

- 3.12 The Deputy Leader with responsibility for Sustainability will routinely be invited to attend the committee, providing a link to the work of the Sustainability Partnership, of which it is expected she will be a member.

Possible work programme

- 3.13 Issues that might come to the Committee in the next twelve months include:
- a) The City Council's role regarding the work of the planned city Sustainability Partnership e.g. on the environmental sustainability indicators in the National Indicator Set for which the council has lead responsibility
 - b) The city's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
 - c) Implications for service planning of new projections for climate change in the South East
 - d) The One Planet Living Plan for the city, based on reducing the city's ecological footprint
 - e) Addressing the Use of Resources sustainability requirements of the council to be inspected by the Audit Commission
 - f) The city council's Carbon Management Programme review and revision
 - g) Other council environmental performance issues e.g. on recycling, water consumption etc
 - h) Sustainable business development proposals

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Terms of Reference

