

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>City Downland Estate Advisory Board – Terms of Reference</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> July 2013</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director of Environment, Development &amp; Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Gillian Marston</b>	<b>Tel: 29-4701</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 The Environment and Sustainability Committee of the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012 agreed the establishment of the City Downland Estate Advisory Board. This Board will advance the One Planet Living, Landuse and Wildlife principle to protect and expand old habitats and create new space for wildlife, and meet the Biosphere objectives. In addition, it will allow the council to fully consider and develop options which allow the objectives of economic development; the conservation and improvement of landscapes and wildlife; and enjoyment of the countryside, to be met.
- 1.2 The committee requested that the terms of reference for the Board should be brought back to committee for approval.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 To agree that the purpose of a City Downland Estate Advisory Board is to provide expert advice for the advancement of the City Downland Estate policy, plans and delivery, the SDNPA aims and duty and the Biosphere objectives..
- 2.2 To agree the terms of reference for the City Downland Estate Advisory Board as set out in Appendix 1
- 2.2 To note that the arrangements and Terms of Reference for the Board are subject to review by the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee

**3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 At 11,923 acres Brighton & Hove's City Downland Estate is the largest area of the South Downs falling under single public ownership and control
- 3.2 The council has adopted the policy statement to ***'Sustain natural resources provided by the council's downland estate by working in partnership with relevant stakeholders and potential beneficiaries and pursuing an economically sustainable approach for the council and its tenant farmers.'***

- 3.3 The Environment and Sustainability Committee of the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012 agreed the establishment of the City Downland Estate Advisory Board and that the terms of reference for the Advisory Board should be referred back to committee for approval and the draft terms of reference are enclosed with this report.
- 3.4 The Board will provide expert advice to officers to allow the Council to advance its policy aims, revise policy and review its practices as required. This expertise is reflected in the board membership. The Council will retain its powers and functions in relation to policy, operational and financial matters in accordance with the council's constitution and standing orders. Any changes to policies will be brought before members for decision.

#### **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 A range of organisations have been consulted on the idea of a City Downland Advisory Board as well as the terms of reference. These organisations included the South Downs National Park, Sussex Wildlife Trust, the Food Partnership, the Biosphere Partnership, Natural England, the National Trust, the Environment Agency, the Council's Land Management Agents and through them some tenant farmers.
- 4.2 Positive responses have been received from the South Downs National Park, the Food Partnership, the Biosphere Partnership, the Sussex Wildlife Trust, National Trust and the tenant farmers that have been approached. Natural England's view is that they can be represented through the South Downs National Park.
- 4.3 As some organisations on the Biosphere Partnership are also being invited to the City Downland Estate Advisory Board, it will be important to coordinate meetings to reduce the demands on partners' time.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 It is not proposed that the City Downland Estate Advisory Board will have decision making powers and as such it will not be able to commit the Council to expenditure. Administration of the Board will be undertaken within existing Council resources.

*Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld Date: 29/05/13*

##### Legal Implications:

- 5.2 It is not proposed that the Board will have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of the Council and therefore matters requiring formal decision will be dealt with using the Council's existing decision making structures

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date: 3rd June 2013*

##### Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 There is a need to develop new ways of attracting new visitors from underrepresented groups to the countryside surrounding Brighton and Hove and the City Downland Estate Advisory Board includes this as part its purpose.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The City Downland Estate Advisory Board will further the ambitions of One Planet Living and in particular Landuse and Wildlife principles and high level actions to:

- Extend further the high quality landscape and diversity of the Downs into the City, breaking the traditional distinction between urban and rural in terms of biodiversity value
- Achieve an overall increase in biodiversity and biological productivity, as well as supporting beautiful landscapes
- Actively promotes and educates on the value of biodiversity, ecosystem services and urban green networks

In particular a medium term action is to review and implement the City Downland Policy to increase conservation of habitats and species on the council farmland estate.

- 5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

None

- 5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

None

- 5.7 Public Health Implications:

A further aim of the City Downland Estate Advisory Board is to create and promote wider access and enjoyment of the Downs for all groups of people.

## **6. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Environment and Sustainability Committee has agreed the establishment of the City Downland Estate Advisory Board and requested that the terms of reference be presented to committee for consideration.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

#### **Appendices**

1. City Downland Estate Advisory Board- Terms of Reference
2. Map of the Downland Estate

## **Background Documents**

1. None

## Appendix 1

### City Downland Estate Advisory Board – Terms of Reference

#### Introduction

Brighton and Hove City Council holds, in public ownership, 11,923 acres of Downland Estate surrounding and within the City of Brighton and Hove. It is one of the largest landowners in the South Downs.

The council has adopted a City Downland Estate policy to:

***‘Sustain natural resources provided by the council’s downland estate by working in partnership with relevant stakeholders and potential beneficiaries and pursuing an economically sustainable approach for the council and its tenant farmers.’***

The Downland Estate is within the South Downs National Park which has two statutory purposes and a Special Duty:

- *To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park;*
- *To promote the opportunities for public enjoyment and understanding of the special qualities of the National Park;*
- *A duty to foster the economic and social well-being of communities living within the National Park. The Partnership members will work closely with each other, and with the South Downs*

Finally, the council is the lead partner in the Brighton & Hove and Lewes Downs Biosphere Partnership, which extends from the Adur to the Ouse and covers the Downland Estate. The Biosphere has three key objectives:

- *Nature Conservation - improve important local wildlife habitats and species, and precious environmental resources such as water, through better downland and floodplain management, more eco-friendly urban spaces, and new marine conservation initiatives.*
- *Sustainable Socio-Economic Development - take positive action on reducing energy and water use and waste generation, encouraging sustainable transport and local food, and developing new social and economic opportunities such as outdoor health and eco-tourism.*
- *Knowledge, Learning and Awareness – increase awareness and knowledge of our environment by working with local universities, schools and colleges, and the public to actively engage people in the use, appreciation, conservation and management of their local area.*

There are other legislative drivers such as the Water Framework Directive which will shape future policy development for the Downland Estate.

#### **Purpose**

The City Downland Estate covers the council's tenanted farmland and grazing land managed by the Estates Team and downland managed by Cityparks. A map of the area is enclosed in Appendix A.

The purpose of a City Downland Estate Advisory Board is to provide advice for the advancement of the City Downland Estate policy within the SDNPA aims and duty and the Biosphere objectives. This means advice on policy development, plans and delivery. This means advice on policy development, plans and delivery:

- *To ensure a viable and local farm economy that is compatible with conservation of the landscape and cultural heritage, ecosystems and biodiversity.*
- *To support diversification and the development of other viable businesses and social enterprises such as ecotourism on the Downland Estate that is also compatible with improving and sustaining the environment.*
- *To protect the natural services provided by the Downs including the ground water supplies.*
- *To reconnect the City with the Downland by promoting industries such as sustainable food production and supply, cultural activities and events.*
- *To create and promote wider access and enjoyment of the Downs for all groups of people, and develop new ways of attracting new visitors from underrepresented groups.*

The advice will be used to inform decisions made by the council to further its policy aims.

Day to day management of the estate will be undertaken by the council within policies agreed by the Council.

## **Membership**

Membership of the board needs to reflect the main and varied interests in the Downland Estate as well as bringing in different expertise from different organisations able to advise on aspects of Downland policy which will allow the purpose of the board to be met. Membership will be by invitation by the Council and the Board and will be kept under review as the Advisory Board develops.

- Farming representatives x 2
- SDNPA x 1
- Local Access Forum representative x1
- Food Partnership x 1
- National Trust x 1
- Council officer representatives and Land Managing Agents.
- Sussex Wildlife Trust x 1

Expert advice will need to be drawn in as required and decided by the Advisory Board from, for example, investment and business experts, tourism professionals, and ecologists.

## **Governance**

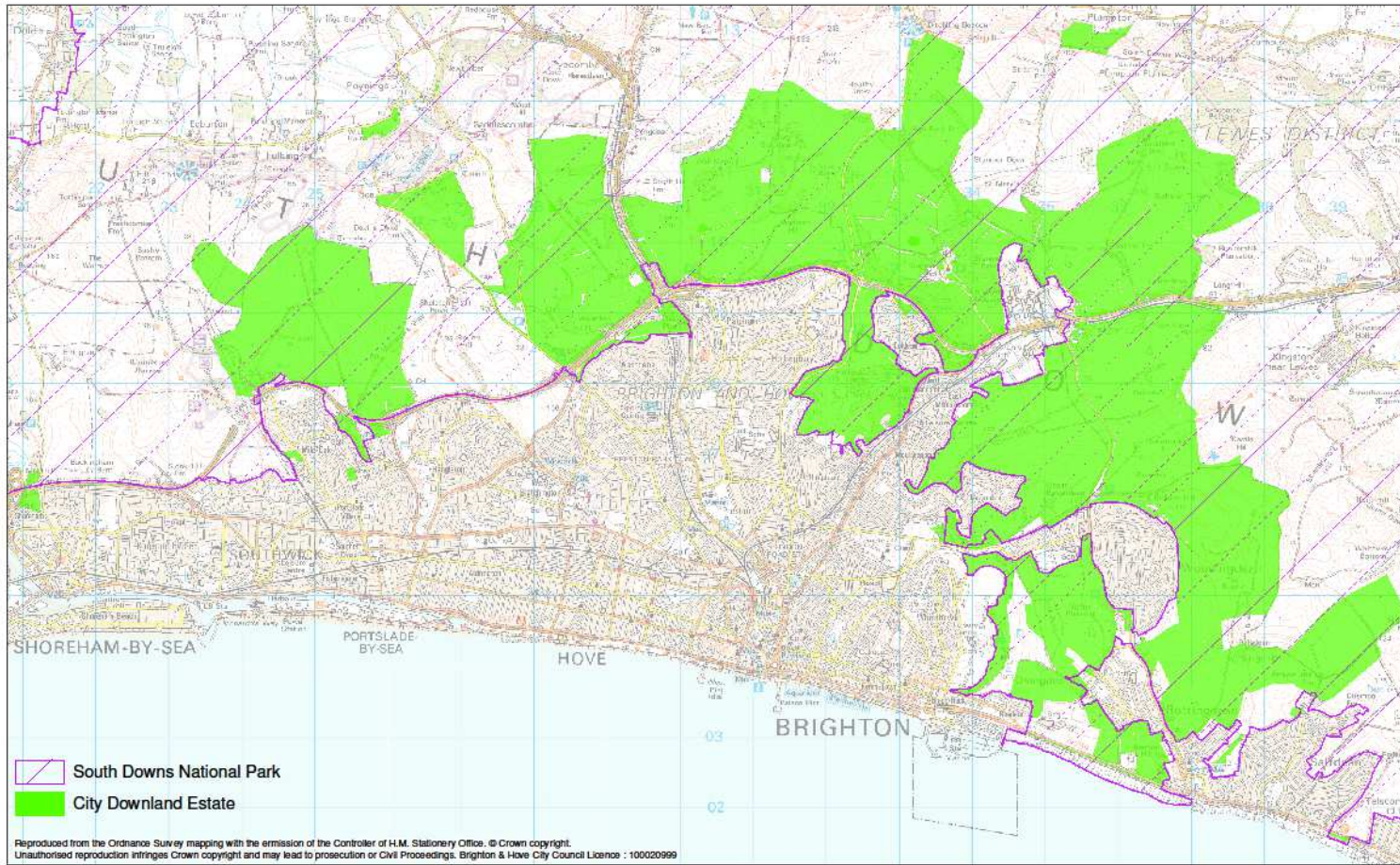
The Advisory Board will be chaired by a Council officer. The secretariat will be provided by Brighton and Hove City Council.

The schedule of meetings will need to be agreed by the Advisory Board with regard to the level of advice requested. Each year the Council should set out its work programme with the Advisory Board. This will provide an indication of the type and level of advice that is likely to be needed and a schedule of meetings can be established as required which also allows for flexibility.

### **Review**

The work of the Advisory Board is subject to review by the Environment ,Sustainability & Transport Committee.

# Appendix B Map of the Downland Estate



City Downland Estate

Scale 1:47,000







