

Brighton & Hove City Council

For general release

Meeting: Sustainability Commission

Date: 18 January 2006

Report of: Director of Environment

Subject: Improvements to the Sustainability Commission –
Proposals

Ward(s) affected: All

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out proposals to implement the recommendations arising from the internal review of the sustainability commission.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Commission agrees terms of reference for a Pool of Expertise in Sustainable Development issues and gives responsibility to the Head of Sustainability to establish it.

2.2 That the Commission approves revised Terms of Reference clarifying the role and participation of co-optees, as set out in para 3.5 below.

3. Information

Members will remember that they considered a report of the Director of Environment setting out the findings and recommendations arising from the internal review of the Sustainability Commission and agreed the following:

3.1 An advisory pool consisting of local experts on sustainability issues should be appointed to draw on their international and national experience to advise the Commission on sustainability issues.

This is being pursued. The draft terms of reference are as follows:

The purpose of this group would be to bring expertise and new thinking on sustainability development to the council in a non-party political format.

Brighton & Hove has a number of residents who work nationally and internationally in the field of sustainable development. A number have expressed interest in the idea of contributing to the development of ideas or policies in the city.

It is proposed that a pool of experts, hosted by the chair of the Sustainability Commission and routinely attended by the Leader and / or Deputy Leader, would meet informally, three to four times per year.

Membership would be drawn from recommendations by the Commission, the Leader's office, Directors and the Sustainability Team. A group of between 7 and 12 people is envisaged.

Meetings would not be formal but notes would be taken of the discussions, comments and ideas. Recommendations would be made to the Commission, which could then refer them to Policy and Resources Committee for more detailed consideration.

3.2 The Commission could explore alternative meeting formats for specific items that would encourage greater application of innovative thinking and Best Practice.

It is proposed that we trial 2-3 different meeting formats on certain topics during the year e.g. seminar, workshops, open meeting. This could partially be covered by the induction sessions too.

3.3 The Commission should investigate the reasons for limited engagement with business sector and consider ways in which existing work in this area can be built upon.

Closer work with Economic Development recently has resulted in some firm actions in the Climate Change Action Plan, not least around raising awareness with the business sector. A number of presentations are being planned with key business groups during the year as part of this.

3.4 The Communications Team should support the Commission in steering how the council promotes sustainability and consider ways of reaching new audiences.

Communications has allocated officer time to assist the Sustainability Team and this should be extended to work with the Commission.

3.5 The role of co-optees should be clearly defined in the terms of reference which should also define for how long an individual is co-opted onto the Commission.

A recently approved constitutional change allows the Commission to have "up to 3 co-optees nominated by the Sustainability Commission or the Local Strategic Partnership". It is now further recommended that these be drawn from: the LSP, from business, and/or from voluntary and other public sector bodies; that their role is to give the commission a broader perspective and to strengthen its links with partnerships and networks; and that each co-optee should serve for a maximum of two years before being up for re-consideration.

3.6 Updates on past Commission meeting items could be provided on request to communicate successes and identify areas for additional action.

This should be an item on every other Commission agenda.

3.7 All new members and co-optees should be offered an induction to the Commission and additional support (when appropriate) to support their involvement with the Commission.

An induction session will be held after each year's Committee changes, for commission members, and offered one-to-one for each new Commissioner. The main induction session this year has provisionally been set for 2.30pm on May 24 in Brighton Town Hall, in advance of the evening Commission meeting. Existing members of the Commission are welcome to attend.

COMMITTEE REPORT APPENDIX



Meeting/Date	<i>Sustainability Commission 18 January 2006</i>
Report of	<i>Director of Environment]</i>
Subject	<i>Improvements to the Sustainability Commission: Proposals</i>
Wards affected	<i>All</i>

Financial implications

To follow, verbally

Legal implications

To follow, verbally

Corporate/Citywide implications -	Risk assessment -
Sustainability implications -	Equalities implications -
Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder -	

Background papers *[Part 1 reports only]*

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