

# SUSTAINABILIT CABINET COMMITTEE

## Agenda Item 27

Brighton & Hove City Council

**Subject:** Sustainable Cities Index  
**Date of Meeting:** 19 January 2009  
**Report of:** Director of Strategy & Governance  
**Contact Officer:** Name: Thurstan Crockett Tel: 29-2503  
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**Key Decision:** No  
**Wards Affected:** All

### FOR GENERAL RELEASE

#### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To give committee members details of Brighton and Hove's ranking in the 2008 national Sustainable Cities Index.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) That the Cabinet Committee notes the content of the report and considers what might be done to improve performance across all indicators.

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

- 3.1 Brighton and Hove was last year judged the most sustainable city in Britain according to The Sustainable Cities Index produced by independent sustainable development charity Forum for the Future.
- 3.2 This year the City dropped one place in the overall sustainability rankings, but still finished 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 20 UK cities "with Bristol just snatching the top slot from Brighton & Hove" in a very close contest, according to the Forum report authors. "With third-placed Plymouth, these are the cities which continue to outperform the rest of the group".
- 3.3 The city was still top for groups of indicators relating to quality of life and "future proofing". The overall sustainability ranking table, with 2007 rankings for comparison, is as follows:

2008 position	City	2007 position
1	Bristol	3
2	<b>Brighton &amp; Hove</b>	1
3	Plymouth	4
4	Newcastle	8
5	Cardiff	6
6	Edinburgh	2

7	Sheffield	7
8	Leicester	14
9	London	10
10=	Bradford	9
10=	Nottingham	11
12	Sunderland	13
13	Leeds	5
14	Coventry	17
15	Manchester	12
16	Wolverhampton	16
17	Liverpool	20
18	Glasgow	15
19	Birmingham	19
20	Hull	18

- 3.4 Though not scored, the City also recorded the lowest carbon dioxide emissions per capita. This is no cause for complacency, as per capita emissions may be lower here due to relatively milder climate and denser living patterns, as well as relatively high public transport use; and the city has also been relatively fortunate in the indicators selected for measurement overall, but it is nonetheless relatively good performance.
- 3.5 The top score in “future proofing” is particularly pleasing as this reflects:
- The council’s commitment to preparing for climate change
  - The number of green businesses in the city
  - The city’s biodiversity
  - Recycling and composting rates
- 3.6 Top score in quality of life is important because it measured levels of education, health (life expectancy), employment and satisfaction with green space and transport in each city. Researchers also spoke to local residents about their views.
- 3.7 The city came 14= (compared to 15<sup>th</sup> in 2007) on an environmental impact group of indicators that aim to reflect the condition of land, water and air. The scoring in this group of indicators may well have worked against the city’s position for two reasons:
- a) the city was again given an average score for river water quality as it has no river, in spite of suggestions that bathing water quality be measured instead;
  - b) a change in the way that air quality is measured from PM10 (particulates) to nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>2</sub>). This is a questionable decision as the health impact of particulates is more demonstrable than NO<sub>2</sub>. It must also be harder to monitor progress with changing criteria.

3.8 Overall it would appear that the city has just slipped a place not due to worsening performance but to relative improvement by Bristol, which came first.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 Environmental Health and Communications colleagues have been consulted and the views of Environmental Health officers incorporated above.

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

##### Financial Implications:

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Peter Francis*

*Date: 11/12/08*

##### Legal Implications:

5.2 There are no adverse legal implications contained in this report but the public sector are expected to lead the way in energy efficiency and the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act contains specific provisions for local authorities to have regard to information on energy measures in exercising functions.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Anna MacKenzie*

*Date: 22/12/08*

##### Equalities Implications:

5.3 The affluence and high educational achievement of a significant number of city dwellers in the Quality of Life section of Forum's report does not reflect the substantial inequalities in the city.

##### Sustainability Implications:

5.4 This index is just one, albeit high profile, way of measuring the comparative sustainability of the city and its overall performance.

##### Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 None.

##### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 There are reputational risks for the city and the City Council, especially if the city's ranking were to slip further. This could be mitigated by occasional review of performance against all the indicators in the Index - some of which are not currently monitored formally - with action taken according to performance.

5.7 There are opportunities for the city to promote itself (see below), particularly in relation to top ranking in quality of life and future proofing baskets of indicators.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The Index receives considerable publicity each year on its publication and may therefore have an impact on reputation and public perception of the city as a whole, as a place to live, work, invest, or visit.

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 None

**7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The city has slipped one place in the rankings and it may be useful to have a closer look at why and whether this can be affected for next year.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Sustainable Cities Briefing Note – Brighton & Hove (source: Forum for the Future)

**Documents In Members' Rooms**

None

**Background Documents**

1. Sustainable Cities Index 2008:  
[http://www.forumforthefuture.org/files/sustainable\\_cities\\_051108\\_links\\_final.pdf](http://www.forumforthefuture.org/files/sustainable_cities_051108_links_final.pdf)
2. Sustainable Cities Index 2007:  
<http://www.forumforthefuture.org/files/sustainablecities07.pdf>