

Greater Brighton Economic Board: Proposed Call-in Protocol

Call-in

1 Requesting a Call-in

- 1.1 Call-in is a process via which decisions made by the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) but not yet implemented can be challenged by GBEB members and referred to an independent 'call-in panel' for consideration.
- 1.2 Any decision made by the GBEB may be called-in up to five working days from the date of the meeting at which the decision was taken.
- 1.3 Call-in may triggered by any one or more of the constituent members of the GBEB. Such a request shall be made in writing to the Chief Executive of the lead Local Authority (i.e. the Local Authority responsible for GBEB administration at the time of the call-in request) and shall include the reasons for the request and any alternative decisions proposed.
- 1.4 Whilst call-in may only be requested by members of the GBEB, each member organisation is free to devise its own internal procedures with regard to influencing or instructing its GBEB member around call-in – for example a local authority might agree a protocol enabling a minority political group to require that the organisation call a decision in.
- 1.5 A request for call-in may be made by any GBEB member:
 - (i) where a local authority voted to agree a recommendation at a GBEJC meeting, but the decision of the Board was against the recommendation;
 - (ii) where a local authority voted against a recommendation at a meeting of the GBEJC but the decision of the Board was to agree the recommendation;
 - (iii) where any Board member considered that the interests of the body they represent had been significantly prejudiced; or
 - (iv) where any Board member considered that the Board had made a decision beyond its scope of authority.
- 1.6 The Chief Executive may refuse to accept a call-in request which in his/her opinion is frivolous, vexatious or defamatory or where no reason for the decision to be called-in is given.

- 1.7** Should the request be accepted, the Chief Executive will call-in the decision. This shall have the effect of suspending the decision coming into force and the Chief Executive shall inform the relevant decision-makers of the call-in. The Chief Executive shall then call a meeting of the GBEB call-in panel to scrutinise the decision.
- 1.8** The GBEB call-in panel must meet within seven working days of the Chief Executive accepting the call-in request. Should the call-in committee fail to meet within this period, or meet but not be quorate, then the original decision shall come into force at the expiry of the seven day period.

2 The GBEB Call-in Panel

- 2.1** The GBEB call-in panel shall include members representing each of the constituent members of the GBEB (i.e. both the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee and the Greater Brighton Business Partnership).
- 2.2** The GBEB call-in panel could potentially also include co-opted members from other bodies. Any decision on co-option would be made annually by the GBEB.
- 2.3** Each constituent member of the GBEB shall appoint a member to the GBEB call-in panel. No member of the GBEB call-in panel may also be a member or substitute member on the GBEB – GBEB call-in panel members should be independent of the GBEB to the degree that they have not as individuals been involved in the decision that they are being asked to consider as a call-in.
- 2.4** The Chair of the GBEB call-in panel shall be appointed annually by the GBEB.
- 2.5** Appointments to the GBEB call-in panel shall be annual.
- 2.6** Substitution is permitted on to the GBEB call-in panel. However, no substitute member may be or have been a GBEB member or substitute.
- 2.7** The GBEB call-in panel shall make decisions on the basis of a majority vote. If the vote is spilt then the panel Chair shall have a casting vote.
- 2.8** **Quorum.** To be quorate a meeting of the GBEB call-in panel shall require at least one third of members to be in attendance.
- 2.9** For the purposes of call-in no distinction shall be made between representatives from the members of the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee and representatives from the members of the Greater Brighton Business Partnership: all members of the call-in panel will vote together.

3 Call-in meetings

3.1 The GBEB call-in panel will consider call-in requests at a special call-in meeting. Typically, the call-in panel will hear from:

a) the GBEB member who made the call-in request (where a request has been made by more than one member the Chair of the GBEB call-in panel will decide whether to take representations from all the signatories to the call-in request or to ask the signatories to make a single representation). The member(s) who requested a call-in will explain why they feel the original decision was unsound and will suggest an alternative decision.

b) the GBEB. The GBEB Chair (or another GBEB member or an officer supporting the GBEB at the request of the GBEB Chair) will explain why the original decision was made and will provide any additional information they feel is germane. Where the GBEB Chair is a signatory to the call-in request, then another GBEB member (or officer supporting the GBEB) shall attend the call-in meeting to represent the GBEB. This representative will be chosen by the Chief Executive of the lead authority, after discussion with GBEB members.

c) Other organisations, stakeholders or members of the public may be granted the right to make representations to the call-in panel at the discretion of the GBEB call-in panel Chair. However, in general the intention should be to re-examine the decision originally made not to hold a broader enquiry into the decision in question.

3.2 Call-in does not provide for the call-in panel to substitute its own decision for the original GBEB decision, but merely to refer the matter back to the GBEB. The GBEB can only be asked to reconsider any particular decision once.

3.3 In essence the call-in panel is simply tasked with deciding whether the decision in question should be referred back to the GBEB to be reconsidered. Therefore the only substantive decision the GBEB call-in panel can make is whether to refer the decision back to the GBEB or to let the original decision stand.

3.4 In deciding whether to refer a decision back to the GBEB, the call-in panel shall have regard to:

- Any additional information which may have become available since the original decision was made
- The implications of any delay in implementing the original decision
- Whether reconsideration is likely to lead to a different decision
- The importance of the matter raised and the extent to which it relates to the achievement of the GBEB strategic priorities

- Whether there is evidence that the decision-making rules in the GBEB constitution have been breached
 - Whether there is evidence that the GBEB consultation processes have not been followed
 - Whether the decision taken is not in accordance with a policy previously agreed by the GBEB
 - Whether there might be an alternative way of dealing with the matter in hand short of referral back to the GBEB
- 3.5** If having scrutinised the decision, the GBEB call-in panel feels that the decision was seriously flawed, it may refer it back to the GBEB for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns.
- 3.6** Implementation of any decision referred back to the GBEB remains suspended until the GBEB has met to reconsider the matter. However, should the GBEB call-in panel choose not to refer the matter back to the GBEB for reconsideration then implementation may begin immediately following the call-in committee meeting.
- 3.7** The GBEB shall reconsider any matter referred back to it by the GBEB call-in panel either at its next scheduled meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose. Having considered the concerns expressed by the GBEB call-in panel the GBEB is free to make any decision it chooses *including re-affirming its original decision*.

4 Call-in and urgency

- 4.1** The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the interests of the GBEB or the general public across the 'Greater Brighton' region. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public, shall state if in the opinion of the GBEB the decision is an urgent one and therefore not subject to call-in. This is subject to the agreement of the Chief Executive of the lead authority.
- 4.2** Any decision exempted from call-in for reasons of urgency shall be communicated to the Chair of the GBEB call-in panel by the Chief Executive of the lead authority, together with an explanation as to why the decision has been deemed urgent. The intention is that urgency exceptions are used sparingly and only where there is an overriding reason to do so.