

Subject: *Establishment of Sustainability Committee: Supplementary information*

Date of Meeting: 10 July 2008

Report of: *Director of Strategy & Governance*

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Key Decision: No -

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 At the Governance Committee on 1 July, members asked for clarification and further information on the role and purpose of the proposed Sustainability Cabinet Committee. This supplementary report provides that information and proposes one amendment to the terms of reference in the main report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet note the additional information and clarification provided in this report.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet note that, to ensure that the existence of the Committee does not prevent urgent issues being delayed before consideration at Cabinet, the terms of reference are revised to substitute “may receive any” for “will receive all”.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Members of the Governance Committee asked for more information on:

- a) The purpose of the Committee
- b) 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

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, e.g.

- 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

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.

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

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.

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

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.

Meeting dates have yet to be scheduled, pending the decision to establish this committee.

Membership

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

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

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

4. CONSULTATION

None required.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 As in main report.

Legal Implications:

5.2 As in main report.

Equalities Implications:

5.3 As in main report.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 As in main report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 As in main report.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 As in main report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 As in main report.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 Not applicable.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To clarify and provide additional information on the Sustainability Cabinet Committee, and to make a small amendment to the terms of reference.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Terms of Reference

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

Sustainability Cabinet Committee – Proposed Terms of Reference

Purpose

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, e.g.

- environmental management within the council itself
- the council's role in, and response to cross-cutting issues like reducing carbon emissions, projections of a changing climate locally, improving resource efficiency, developing sustainable energy etc.

Membership

The membership of the Sustainability Cabinet Committee will be as follows:-

- The Leader of the Council (Chair);
- The Cabinet Member for Central Services;
- The Cabinet Member for Housing

The Leader of the Council may co-opt other Cabinet Members on to the Cabinet Committee when issues arise and decisions need to be taken that coincide with their portfolios.

The Deputy Leader of the Council with the lead role on sustainability will routinely be invited to attend the committee, providing a link to the work of the city Sustainability Partnership.

Role

The Sustainability Cabinet Committee may receive any report relating to sustainability issues for a decision or for recommendation to Cabinet for a decision, where appropriate.

Frequency of Meetings

The committee will meet in public every 8 weeks, starting in September 2008.