

Agenda Item 8

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date: 9 June 2000

Subject: **Regional Planning Committee**

Report of: Director

Recommendation

That the Committee adopts the working principles for the Planning Committee as drafted.

1. Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose a set of working principles for the Regional Planning Committee following consultation with the Assembly membership.
- 1.2 The Committee on 24 March agreed that there should be consultation on the detail of how the Planning Committee would operate, ahead of nominations to that Committee at the Assembly's AGM. The attached working principles were drafted and circulated to the Assembly membership. These principles cover terms of reference, nominations, ways of working, allowances and rules governing the Chair and Vice-Chair. They also incorporate the template for the committee determined by the Assembly on 9 February. It is this last matter that the majority of respondents to the consultation have addressed.

2. Comments

- 2.1 The recurring enquiry on the question of the template was the party balance on the committee following the 4 May local elections. Our preliminary analysis of council seats held across the region indicate the following apportionment of seats:

	Share of seats across region	Allocation on Committee	Rounded
Conservative	46.75%	6.54	6
Liberal Democrat	27.72%	3.88	4
Labour	19.43%	2.72	3
Other	6.09%	0.85	1

The change in council seats following the May elections does not therefore seem to have been sufficient to alter the political party dimension of the template. Definitive confirmation of the share of council seats is awaited from the University of West of England.

- 2.2 A further principal comment on the template concerned type of authority, namely that there is insufficient representation of district councils. However the working principles for the committee as drafted reiterate the agreement by the full Assembly on 9 February that the template should only be advisory in this respect; it will be up to party groups to nominate representatives from various tiers of authority as they feel appropriate.
- 2.3 Finally, SERCAF, representing the town and parish councils, contend that they should have direct representation on the committee. While town and parish councils have a role in town and country planning I had taken the view that, because of their very local focus, their case for direct representation was less strong than that of district councils, who are local planning authorities in their own right. Town and parish council representatives will of course be in a position to contribute to debate as full members of the Assembly as a whole, as will all our constituent organisations, whether they be those unitary or district councils, or those social environmental and economic partners with no direct place on the Planning Committee. It is the Assembly as a whole that will be the Regional Planning Body; the Planning Committee's clear role is to advise the Executive and the Assembly in that regard.

Paul Bevan
Director

26 May 2000