

DRAFT

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY Regional Planning Committee: Working Principles

1. Terms of Reference

The Assembly's constitution provides for the Assembly, as the Regional Planning Body for the South East, to advise the Government on strategic planning for the region through the preparation of draft Regional Planning Guidance, including Regional Transport Strategy, and to work jointly with the London Assembly and other regional chambers/assemblies to ensure complementary strategic planning advice to the Government for London and the Rest of the South East (ROSE) area.

The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) is responsible for advising the Executive Committee, and through that Committee, the Assembly as a whole, on all matters relating to its function as Regional Planning Body in order that the Assembly can act effectively in that role.

2. Composition

The RPC will comprise 20 members as follows:

Local government	14
Economic partners	3
Social and Environmental partners	3

The following template, which is advisory in respect to type of authority, will apply to the local government membership of the Committee, adjusted as necessary by the Secretariat, to reflect the political balance within the region as determined by council seats held following each May's local elections:

	Con	Lib Dem	Labour	Other	Total
County	5	2	-	-	7
Unitary	1	-	3	-	4
District	-	2	-	1	3
Total	6	4	3	1	14

Note: party distribution above based on council seats in the region as at May 1999.

3. Nominations to the Committee

At the Assembly AGM the three principal party groups and the two partner groups (Economic partners, and Social and Environmental partners) will nominate RPC members with regard to the following:

- The template for the Regional Planning Committee in respect of balance between local government and economic and social and environmental partners, and type of authority (the template is advisory in the latter respect).
- In the case of local government members, political party in proportion to the balance of council seats held following the most recent May local elections.
- In the case of social, economic and environmental partners, capacity to represent the interests of the respective partner grouping as a whole.
- Individuals' understanding and experience of planning and transport matters.
- The desire to ensure geographical representation across the region.

Each party group must nominate to the RPC a full member of the Assembly who is also on the Executive Committee. It is desirable for the two partner groups to do the same.

Individuals with appropriate knowledge and experience who are not full members of the Assembly but who are members of a constituent organisation or network of the Assembly (e.g. a local authority, economic partnership, voluntary or business organisation) may be nominated to the RPC.

However, of the 20 members of the RPC a majority must be full members of the Assembly; the Executive Committee may require a party or partner group to amend their nominations in order to ensure that this is achieved.

The Executive Committee may review at any time the nomination to the RPC of individuals who are not full members of the Assembly. Should the Executive Committee, as a result of such a review, decide to ask the relevant party or partner group to amend their nomination, that place on the RPC will fall vacant immediately, pending a new nomination.

4. Chair and Vice-chair

The RPC shall elect a Chair and a Vice-chair at its first meeting following the Assembly AGM each year. The Chair of the RPC must be a full member of the Assembly. If not already a member of the Executive Committee, the Chair shall be an *ex officio*, non-voting, member of that Committee. The Vice-chair of the RPC will normally be the Chair's alternate in this respect.

5. Ways of working

The RPC will meet in full at least three times a year. The Committee may decide to meet more frequently as circumstances dictate.

The RPC should adopt an inclusive and consultative approach to its work, and in particular should ensure that the whole Assembly membership is engaged at key stages. The Chair will be required to make a report to each ordinary plenary meeting of the Assembly.

The RPC may set up and dissolve permanent or time-limited working groups of committee members in order to deal with specific aspects of its remit. Such groups may involve Assembly members who are not on the RPC. In line with the Assembly's constitution, membership of such working groups should normally be in proportion to the balance of local government and economic, social and environmental partners in the Assembly.

The RPC may not co-opt, but is encouraged to invite to meetings of the Committee or working groups such experts and representatives as appropriate, e.g. of particular areas and/or interests, in order to contribute to debates.

The RPC will advise the Executive Committee of the Assembly in respect of pan-regional planning arrangements, including the representation of the Assembly at any pan-regional forum or on any joint committee or working groups. The Executive Committee may decide that such representation should include members beyond those drawn from the RPC, e.g. the Chair of the Assembly.

6. Allowances

The Executive Committee will recommend to the Assembly if financial allowances should be paid to the Chair of the RPC, and to the Vice-chair and other members of the Committee, once experience has been gained of the burden of work involved. No allowances will be paid in 2000-01.

7. Conflicts of interest

Members of the RPC will be expected to act in the interests of the region as a whole, and not in the interests of particular areas or business sectors.

All members of the RPC are required to observe the standards of probity and behaviour established by the Nolan and Neill Committees, and to declare any direct or indirect pecuniary interest, or any personal interest they may have in the proceedings in which they are involved; the Secretariat will advise the withdrawal of members of the Committee from such proceedings where they have a direct pecuniary interest or a clear and substantial personal interest.