

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. Openness

- 1.1 As a public body the business of the Assembly will be open to public scrutiny; its meetings will normally be open to the public and papers will normally be available for public inspection. Within this general rule of openness the confidentiality of personal information concerning members or employees will be maintained. Exceptionally the Assembly or appropriate committee, group or forum may agree that the circulation of information before it should be restricted for commercial or other reasons.

2. Conduct of Meetings

- 2.1 Plenary meetings of the Assembly will be held at suitable venues within the region.
- 2.2 The Assembly's Chair and Vice-chairs are entitled to attend all meetings of the Assembly's committees, groups and forums, and automatically to receive agendas and papers.
- 2.3 The quorum for plenary meetings of the Assembly, the Executive Committee, and any other committee shall be a third of the membership at the commencement of the meeting. No quorum will apply to meetings of groups or forums.

3. Agendas and Distribution of Papers

- 3.1 Agendas for meetings of the Assembly and committees, together with any reports or related documents, will be circulated at least 10 days before the meeting.
- 3.2 Proposed matters for inclusion on an agenda for a meeting should be agreed by the appropriate Chair, and notice should normally be sent to the secretariat at least 20 days before the relevant meeting.
- 3.3 Individuals who are not members of the Assembly or of the committee concerned may be invited by the Assembly/committee or its Chair to attend meetings as observers; they may be invited to speak at meetings at the discretion of the relevant Chair.

4. Resolutions

- 4.1 Any member of the Assembly may propose a resolution either to the Assembly as a whole or to the Executive Committee or other committees in so far as the subject of the resolution falls within the terms of reference of the committee being invited to consider it.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Assembly may rule that a resolution is outside the remit of the Assembly or its committees, but only with the agreement of a majority of the Vice-Chairs; in such circumstances the resolution will not be considered either by the Assembly or any of its committees.
- 4.3 Resolutions for plenary meetings of the Assembly or its committees should be lodged with the Secretariat at least five days before the meeting to allow time for circulation. Amendments to be proposed to such resolutions should be made available in writing to all members in attendance before the start of the group meetings immediately preceding the Assembly plenary or committee meeting. Deleted: ten
- 4.4 Resolutions missing the five day deadline may exceptionally, if considered urgent, be put before the meeting subject to the agreement of the Chair of the Assembly or Committee as appropriate. Such 'late resolutions' must be available in writing before the start of the group meetings preceding the full Assembly. The Chair will seek the meeting's consent to a debate before such resolutions can be formally moved. Amendments to be proposed to such resolutions should be made available in writing to all members in attendance before the start of the meeting. Deleted: ten
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5. Standards of Conduct

- 5.1 All members and staff of the Assembly are required to observe the standards of probity and behaviour established by the Nolan and Neill Committees for those holding public office. Members are obliged to record their own, their family, their company or employer interests in the Assembly's Register of Interests. Any direct or indirect pecuniary interest, or any personal interest they may have in the proceedings of the Assembly or its committees in which they are involved must be declared verbally at the meeting.
- 5.2 Where those participating in the proceedings of the Assembly or its committees have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest or a clear and substantial personal interest the secretariat will advise their withdrawal from such proceedings.

6. Membership

- 6.1 The Government's guidance requires that the Assembly should achieve an appropriate gender, ethnic and disability balance amongst its membership. In choosing their nominees for the Chamber, therefore, local authorities and social environmental and economic partners should have close regard to the

following:

- (i) the Government is expecting to see 'steady progress towards a position in which men and women are equally represented on Regional Chambers'; while no timescale is prescribed, the gender balance will be kept under close review;
- (ii) since the proportion of those from ethnic minorities within the region's population is 3.4%, there is a target expectation that those from ethnic minorities will constitute at least 3.4% of the membership of the Assembly, i.e. a minimum of four seats;
- (iii) the proportion of those with disabilities within the region's population has been estimated at 7%; there is therefore a target expectation that at least 7% of the Assembly's membership (eight seats) will consist of those with disabilities.

6.2 In order to increase the participation in the Assembly's affairs of women, young people, people with disabilities and those from black and ethnic minorities, constituent bodies are encouraged to nominate their alternate member from an under-represented group if their full member is not.

7. Groups and Templates

7.1 In order to expedite the work of the Assembly six party and partner groups are recognised, namely the Conservative, Liberal Democrat, and Labour Party groups, a group comprising representatives of independent councillors and other parties, the social and environmental partners group and the economic partners group. The secretariat will propose templates for the Assembly's committees, groups and forums that reflect as far as possible the balance in the Assembly between local government and the social environmental and economic partners. The three Assembly representatives of the region's town and parish councils will be taken into account within such templates in line with their party affiliation, if any,

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7.2 Government guidance requires that local authority representation on the Assembly should include all the main political parties, whether or not they control any of the region's local authorities. The secretariat will prepare templates for the Executive Committee and the Regional Planning Committee that reflect the distribution of council seats between political parties across the region. The balance shown in such templates between tiers of local authority will normally only be advisory; it will be for party groups to achieve an appropriate balance by tier and geography when they determine their nominations. The party political element of the templates will be recalculated by the secretariat annually, following each round of local elections, and will apply as from the annual meeting of the Assembly in that year. Where a party has more than 6% of council seats in the region but no Assembly representation, nominations of councillors to Assembly committees will be sought from the regional organisation of that party.

7.3 This methodology will be kept under review in the context of government guidance on party representation.

8. Regional Planning Body

- 8.1 The three principal party groups and the two partner groups (economic partners on the one hand, and social and environmental partners on the other) will nominate to the Regional Planning Committee having 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.
- 8.2 Each party group having five Assembly members or more must nominate to the Regional Planning Committee 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.
- 8.3 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 Regional Planning Committee. No more than two such members may also be members of the board of SEEDA. However, of the 25 members of the Committee 15 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.
- 8.4 Members of the Regional Planning Committee, whether members of the Assembly or not, may only be substituted by full Assembly members.
- 8.5 The Executive Committee may review at any time the nomination to the Regional Planning Committee 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 Committee will fall vacant immediately, pending a new nomination.

8.6 Both the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Regional Planning Committee must be full members of the Assembly. The Chair shall be an ex officio, full voting member of the Executive Committee; they may nominate another Assembly member of the Committee to substitute for them at the Executive Committee when necessary.

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8.7 The Regional Planning Committee may establish sub-groups to undertake specific tasks on its behalf either on a continuing or time-limited basis. Such groups should where possible include one Regional Planning Committee member from each of the five main party or partner groups.

9. Regional Housing Board

9.1 The Regional Housing Board is a partnership board functioning under the Assembly's auspices, responsible for providing strategic advice on the implementation of housing policy and the co-ordination of housing investment in the South East. The Assembly nominates members to the Housing Board who are therefore accountable to the Assembly. However as a partnership, the Board as a whole is not accountable to the Assembly, and the Assembly is free to disagree with Board's advice.

9.2 The Board's responsibilities are to:

- i) Develop an understanding of the key housing issues and priorities in the South East using research where appropriate;
- ii) Develop a Regional Housing Strategy and keep it up to date and under review;
- iii) Develop a broad consensus for the strategy, working with the Regional Housing Forum;
- iv) Develop a clear set of priorities for the distribution of resources for housing in the South East;
- v) Advise on the allocation of housing funds in line with the regional strategy;
- vi) Ensure consistency between the regional housing strategy, regional spatial strategy, including the regional transport strategy, and regional economic strategy, and other regional plans for the South East and adjoining regions;
- vii) Develop and implement an information and dissemination strategy to inform and involve relevant organisations in the Region;
- viii) Advise on matters of regional and inter-regional significance especially where national policy may not relate well to regional needs;
- ix) Liaise with the Boards of adjoining regions on matters of common interest.

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9.3 The Housing Board's membership will be drawn from the Regional Assembly and other partner bodies as follows:

Regional Assembly 6 members: 2 from the party with the largest representation on the Assembly.

	and 1 from each of the other main parties and the two partner groups
<u>SEEDA</u>	<u>1 member</u>
<u>Government Office</u>	<u>1 official</u>
<u>Housing Corporation</u>	<u>1 member or official</u>
<u>English Partnerships</u>	<u>1 member or official</u>

Deleted: 5 members: 1 from each of the three main political parties and each of the two partner groups

9.4 The Board will be chaired by one of the Assembly members nominated to the Board, elected annually by the Assembly nominees. The Chair of the Regional Housing Board shall be an ex officio, full voting member of the Executive Committee, and will report regularly on the business of the Board to the Committee and to the full Assembly as appropriate. The Chair may nominate another Assembly member of the Board to substitute for them at the Executive Committee when necessary.

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9.5 Board members nominated by the Assembly may be substituted at meetings by full Assembly members from the party or partner group they represent. Other Board members may be substituted at meetings by colleagues from the organisation they represent.

9.6 The Board will be supported by a team of officials drawn from the constituent bodies; they may participate in Board meetings but will not have a vote. The Board may also invite experts or representatives to attend its meetings to contribute to debates; such invitees will not have a vote.

10. Regional Transport Board

10.1 The Regional Transport Board is a partnership board functioning under the Assembly's auspices, responsible for providing strategic advice on the implementation of transport policy and the co-ordination of transport investment in the South East. The Assembly nominates members to the Transport Board who are therefore accountable to the Assembly. However as a partnership, the Board as a whole is not accountable to the Assembly, and the Assembly is free to disagree with Board's advice.

10.2 The Board's responsibilities are to:

- i) Provide advice on strategic transport matters;
- ii) Develop a transparent methodology for prioritising transport improvements in the South East;
- iii) Advise on the allocation of regional transport funds;
- iv) Review the delivery of transport infrastructure;
- v) Ensure alignment of regional transport strategy and delivery with other regional policies and implementation frameworks.

10.3 The Transport Board's membership will be drawn from the Regional Assembly and other partner bodies as follows:

<u>Regional Assembly</u>	<u>6 members: 2 from the party with the largest representation on the Assembly, and 1 from</u>
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	<u>each of the other main parties and the two partner groups</u>
<u>SEEDA</u>	<u>1 member</u>
<u>Government Office</u>	<u>1 official</u>
<u>South East Forum for Sustainability</u>	<u>1 member</u>
<u>Highways Agency</u>	<u>1 official</u>
<u>Confederation of Passenger Transport</u>	<u>1 member or official</u>
<u>Network Rail</u>	<u>1 official</u>

- 10.4 The Board will be chaired by one of the Assembly members nominated to the Board, elected annually by the Assembly nominees. The Chair of the Regional Transport Board shall be an *ex officio*, full voting member of the Executive Committee, and will report regularly on the business of the Board to the Executive Committee and to the full Assembly as appropriate. The Chair may nominate another Assembly member of the Board to substitute for them at the Executive Committee when necessary.
- 10.5 Board members nominated by the Assembly may be substituted at meetings by full Assembly members from the party or partner group they represent. Other Board members may be substituted at meetings by colleagues from the organisation they represent.
- 10.6 The Board will be supported by a team of officials drawn from the constituent bodies; they may participate in Board meetings but will not have a vote. The Board may also invite experts or representatives to attend its meetings to contribute to debates; such invitees will not have a vote.
- 10.7 The Board will ensure liaison with political stakeholders by extending a standing invitation to elected members holding the transport portfolio in each of the 19 transport authorities. Such members would have the status of observers at the Board; they will be seated separately. At the invitation of the Chair, observers may contribute to discussions affecting the transport authority area they represent, having given notice to the Chair before the meeting as far as is possible. The Chair will limit each such contribution to no more than three minutes duration, and will aim to ensure that together such interventions take up no more than 45 minutes of each meeting.

Paul Bevan
Chief Executive

SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

RULES OF DEBATE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Assembly is a regional forum of representatives of a wide range of constituencies. The majority of members - local authority councillors - represent geographical constituencies, but other members - social, environmental and economic partners - speak for constituencies of interest. Members with different backgrounds bring with them different ways of working; in order therefore that all representatives can contribute to the Assembly's affairs, it is important for the Assembly to establish its own straightforward ground-rules.
- 1.2 The following simple Rules of Debate build upon the Assembly's Constitution; they augment and have the same status as the Assembly's Rules of Procedure. They were agreed by the Assembly's Executive Committee on 18 January 2002.
- 1.3 These rules apply to all meetings where decisions are taken, whether plenary meetings of the full Assembly or meetings of Assembly committees. The main distinction relates to voting procedures, in that a card ballot involving the weighted voting system can only be held at a plenary meeting; elsewhere voting is always by a show of hands, with one vote per member.
- 1.4 The Assembly is a forum for debate. The purpose of debating is to arrive at an informed decision with the benefit of hearing expressed the full breadth of views on the issue in question. It can therefore be helpful to the debate for members representing particular interests to voice their views even though the same or a similar point has already been made.
- 1.5 In an Assembly plenary, in order that the Chair can ensure only Assembly members are called to speak, members wishing to contribute should hold up the coloured form included in their packs for the meeting. Members contributing to Assembly debates should address the Chair. They should be courteous, and as succinct as possible, remembering to avoid jargon. Procedural terminology such as 'point of information' or 'point of order' should be avoided.

2. The Role of the Chair

- 2.1 The Chair's job, with the assistance of the Chief Executive, is to ensure a fair debate, in which a reasonable opportunity is given for views to be aired, and which reaches a conclusion supported by the majority. It is for the Chair to decide who is invited to speak, and how long the debate should continue. The Chair may pause proceedings to take soundings from the Chief Executive or the Vice-Chair(s), and indeed may test the opinion of the meeting as a whole. However, the Chair's decision is final.

3. Recommendations and Resolutions

- 3.1 In order to take a decision a meeting has to have before it a proposal with which members can agree or disagree. This can take the form of a recommendation in a report from officers of the Assembly, or a resolution proposed by a member of the Assembly. Any such recommendation or resolution must be available in writing before the start of the meeting. Section 4 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure governs the submission of resolutions.
- 3.2 An officer's report may propose a set of recommendations; similarly a resolution may comprise several points for decision. Only one recommendation or resolution can be debated and decided at a time. However, in order to expedite matters the Chair may seek the meeting's agreement for the various elements of a proposal to be taken together for the purpose of discussion, voting, or both.
- 3.3 In inviting debate, the Chair's job is to focus discussion on the proposal before the meeting. If the proposal is in the form of a recommendation s/he will ask the officer to introduce the report giving rise to the recommendation. If the proposal is in the form of a resolution, the Chair will invite the proposer of the resolution to make the opening statement.
- 3.4 Once a resolution has been proposed, the Chair will ask members to indicate whether it has wider support. If no-one raises their hand at this point, the Chair will conclude that there is no prospect of agreement on the resolution and will move the meeting on to the next item of business. Otherwise, the Chair will invite contributions to the debate. It is helpful if participants introduce themselves and, in the course of their contribution, make it clear, if they have formed a view, whether they support or oppose the proposal being discussed.

4. Amendments

- 4.1 During the course of a debate on a proposal an amendment may be proposed to a recommendation or a resolution. An amendment takes the form of an alteration in the wording of the recommendation or resolution, that is, suggesting the deletion of certain words or phrases and/or the insertion of new text; however it may not alter the sense of the recommendation or resolution so fundamentally as to have the effect of a vote against it.
- 4.2 At a plenary meeting amendments should be circulated in writing before the meeting. In the interests of reaching a decision however, the Chair may allow for an amendment to be proposed verbally during the debate. At a committee meeting, where the numbers are smaller, the Chair may allow a form of words attracting majority support to be developed through discussion.

- 4.3 The Chair will invite the proposer of an amendment to introduce it. Before any further debate the Chair will ask members to indicate whether the amendment has wider support. If there seems to be negligible support, the Chair will conclude that there is no prospect of agreement on the amendment, and the debate on the original recommendation or resolution will continue. Then again, if there is overwhelming support the Chair may suggest that the amendment is simply agreed, the debate continuing on the original recommendation or resolution as now amended.
- 4.4 In chairing the debate on an amendment to a recommendation or resolution, the Chair will aim to ensure that views both in favour and against the amendment are adequately aired. The Chair will then invite members to vote on the amendment. If the amendment is agreed the debate, and the final vote, will now be on the original recommendation or resolution as amended.
- 4.5 Although there is no limit to the number of amendments that can be proposed, only one amendment can be proposed and debated at a time. It follows that an amendment cannot be proposed to an amendment.

5. Voting

- 5.1 When the Chair judges that sufficient debate has taken place on a proposal s/he will put the recommendation or resolution to the vote. Members will be invited to vote in favour of or against the recommendation or resolution. Normally votes will be by a show of hands, on the basis of one member one vote, with the decision taken on a simple majority. In an Assembly plenary, members will be asked to hold up their coloured form so that their vote can be counted by Assembly officials.

6. Card Ballots

- 6.1 In an Assembly plenary only, a member may request, at any time during the debate before the vote, for the decision on the recommendation or resolution to be taken by means of a card ballot. A card ballot involves the completion of one of a number of voting slips supplied in the member's pack for the plenary meeting in question. Once completed, these slips will be collected by Assembly officials and counted outside the room. These votes are weighted in accordance with section 9 of the Assembly's Constitution. Each party or partner group may nominate one of their number to attend the count to be satisfied that it is properly undertaken.
- 6.2 Votes cast by card ballot are a matter of public record. However a card ballot will be confidential where it is carried out for the purposes of electing individuals to office.

Paul Bevan
Chief Executive