



Lewes District Council

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Housing Working Party

Minutes of a meeting of the **Housing Working Party** held in the **Warren Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes** on **Monday 13 October 2008** at **2:00pm**

Present: Councillors S Saunders (Chair on election), M P Chartier, S B Davy, P F Gardiner and I A Nicholson

Officers Attending:

R Simms, Policy Development Officer

L Frost, Director of Planning and Environmental Services

P Hoppen, Assistant Director (Strategy and Regeneration)

S Walker, Planning Policy Manager

D Feintuck, Committee Officer/Scrutiny Secretary

Minutes

4 Election of Chair

Resolved:

4.1 That Councillor Saunders be elected Chair for the meeting.

5 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of that meeting Councillor Gardiner.

6 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors P L Bennett and J V S Page and from the Director of Finance and Community Services and the Housing Strategy Manager.

7 Review of Affordable Housing Provision

The Working Party considered Reports No 188, 189, 190, 204 and 205/08 which summarised the work of the task groups.

Councillors and officers agreed that the recent global and local economic downturn limited the recommendations the Working Party could make.

In discussion the following points were made:

Action

Action

- Any work on an Affordable Housing (AH) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was subsidiary to work on the statutory core Local Development Framework;
- Any work on the SPD should draw from best practice – which in the current economic climate was shifting and not readily identifiable - and would preferably include internal space standards;
- While there was regional guidance of 40% AH in the draft South East Plan (for which evidence of need was essential), the identified need for AH in the district actually exceeded the total of all 4,400 houses identified in the Plan;
- It was possible to meet government AH targets without lowering the development threshold size which might in itself further slow development;
- Registered Social Landlords could access central government funding unavailable to the Council;
- A change of plans by developers who sold to Registered Social Landlords would usually necessitate a fresh planning application; and
- While brownfield sites were preferable for development, they could present particular problems which made them difficult to develop.

Recommended:

- 7.1** That the Council continues to apply the existing requirement of 25% affordable housing to sites over 15 units and considers any waivers on a case-by-case basis;
- 7.2** That the Council continues to work on Housing Needs with neighbouring authorities, including the possible use of joint consultants;
- 7.3** That the Council considers approaching developers of suitable sites which already have planning permission but are currently stalled in building progress to investigate whether such developers might be receptive to selling developments to Registered Social Landlords;
- 7.4** That, should the Council provide additional funding for consultants to work on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Site Analysis, any resources thus released be directed to developing the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document; and
- 7.5** That the Council adopts the “One Stop Shop” recommendations at paragraph 6 of Report No 190/08.

Action

The meeting ended at 3:35 pm

S Saunders, Chair