



## Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel** held in the **Warren Room, Lewes House, High Street, Lewes**, on **Wednesday, 17 January 2018** at 2:00pm.

*The meeting was inquorate and therefore the recommendations made in Minutes 4 are those of the councillors who were present at the meeting.*

### **Present:**

Councillors J Carter (Elected Chair) and R O’Keeffe MBE.

### **Officers Present:**

K Barrett, Regeneration Project Manager

P Sharp, Head of Regeneration

J Victory, Scrutiny Officer

## **Minutes**

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors S Adeniji and V lent.

### **2 Election of Chair**

#### Resolved:

- 2.1 That Councillor Carter be elected Chair of the Affordable Workspace Panel for the duration of the Panel.

### **3 Declaration of Interest**

- 3.1 Councillor O’Keeffe declared a non-prejudicial interest in that her partner currently rented affordable workspace in North Street.

### **4 Scrutiny Review of affordable workspace in the Lewes District**

The Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel received the report of the Scrutiny Officer, which recommended that the Panel finalise the scope and terms of reference for a scrutiny review into the supply of low-cost and affordable

workspace within the Lewes District, and with specific attention to the employment space requirements of the creative sector.

The Regeneration Project Manager presented a recommended timeline for the Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel, taking into account sufficient time for officer research and appropriate notice to be given to external guests invited.

WEEKS	ACTION	ENGAGEMENT
1 (w/c 15 Jan)	Agree programme timeline	Scrutiny Panel
2-3 (w/c 22 Jan)	Organise consultation	
3, 4, 6 and 7 (w/c 29 Jan)	Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key terms</li> <li>• Types of creative workspaces</li> <li>• Review of published evidence of typical support needed by creative businesses</li> </ul>	
3, 4, 6 and 7 (w/c 29 Jan)	Short review of supply of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable workspace</li> <li>• Creative workplaces</li> </ul>	
3, 4, 6 and 7 (w/c 29 Jan)	Map: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic partnerships</li> <li>• Support to creative businesses</li> <li>• Commercial property databases</li> </ul>	
6-11 (w/c 19 Feb)	Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key terms</li> <li>• Functions of the strategic partnerships and how to engage and influence</li> <li>• Supply of affordable workspace</li> <li>• Provision of support to creative businesses</li> <li>• What support do creative businesses need?</li> <li>• Functions of commercial property databases</li> <li>• Types of creative workspaces</li> <li>• Supply of creative workspaces</li> </ul>	Scrutiny Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South East Cultural Enterprise Network, East Sussex County Council, Culture East Sussex – Sally Staples</li> <li>• Locate East Sussex and Business East Sussex – Philip Johnson and Fred Thomas</li> <li>• The Alliance of Chambers East Sussex - Christina Ewbank</li> </ul>
6-11 (w/c 19 Feb)	Create methodology on how to measure effectiveness of commercial property databases and apply	
12, 14 and 16 (w/c 2 Apr)	Review findings	
17-18 (w/c 7 May)	Write draft report including evidence base	
19-20 (w/c 21 May)	Consultation of draft report	
21 (w/c 4 Jun)	Amendments	
22 (w/c 11 Jun)	Final report	

The terms of reference of the Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel would be to scrutinise;

- How Lewes District Council engaged and influenced South East Creative Economy Network and other strategic partnerships to support the development of affordable workspaces;
- What Lewes District Council could do better to support creative businesses and;
- How effective the commercial property databases and the Locate East Sussex service were in searching for affordable and creative workspace.

The Panel would meet four times, and at the Panel's second and third meeting the following external guests would be invited to attend and contribute to the Panel's review into the supply of low-cost and affordable workspace within the Lewes District:

- South East Cultural Enterprise Network
- East Sussex County Council
- Culture East Sussex
- Locate East Sussex
- Business East Sussex
- The Alliance of Chambers East Sussex

At the Panel's final meeting, which is anticipated to take place in June, a draft report written by the Regeneration Project Manager outlining the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny topic would be presented to Panel members for feedback and amendments. This feedback would inform the final report, which would be presented to the Scrutiny Committee meeting at its meeting on 28 June 2018.

Members' discussion included:

- The broad range of industries that the Panel would like 'creative businesses' to encompass, such as; welding and metal fabrication industries, architectural industries, leather industries and creative digital media industries. These are to be considered alongside traditional creative art and craft industries.
- The importance of including other towns and areas within Lewes District, such as; Northern Villages and rural farms.
- An acknowledgement that affordability is not the only concern for creative businesses, but also issues such as the type of workspaces, size of workspaces and tenures on offer.
- An interest in existing creative and cultural hubs that are being successfully run in Eastbourne, such as The Devonshire Collective which offer studios, makerspaces and workshops.

Officers responded that:

- The broad definition of 'creative businesses' for this Panel was noted and will be considered when officers are doing their research.
- Areas across the Lewes District would be incorporated into the research and consultation process of this Panel. With regard to rural areas and

issues such as farm diversification, officers felt that Locate East Sussex would be able to give more information about this when they are invited to a future meeting of the Panel.

Recommendations:

1. That a representative from South East Creative Enterprise Network, East Sussex County Council and Culture East Sussex be invited to the next meeting of the Panel, to contribute to the Panel's review into the supply of low-cost and affordable workspace within the Lewes District. SO
2. That the draft timeline and terms of reference for the Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel be agreed, subject to the following amendment: SO
  - a) That an additional meeting be included in the Panel's work programme, whereby representatives from creative clusters/collectives would be invited to provide anecdotal evidence with regard to their experience of affordable workspaces within the Lewes District.

Reason:

- a) To provide a focussed programme of work which will enable the District Council to consider whether any changes to its existing policies, or any other actions, are to be recommended when considering the supply of low-cost and affordable workspace within the Lewes District.

The meeting ended at 3:20pm.

J Carter  
Chair