

**Agenda Item No:** 6 **Report No:** 154/08  
**Report Title:** DRAFT Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2007/08 and Work Programme 2008/09  
**Report To:** Council **Date:** 24 September 2008  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Report By:** Scrutiny Committee, Chair – Councillor E E J Russell  
**Contact Officer:** David Feintuck, Scrutiny Secretary

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### **Purpose of Report:**

To inform Council of the Scrutiny Committee's activities for the municipal year 2007/08 and to seek approval of its work programme for 2008/09.

### **Committee Recommendation:**

- 1 To note the Report and agree the Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2008/09 as set out in the Appendix.
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### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

- 1 To meet the requirement of the Council's Constitution with regard to the Scrutiny Committee Annual Report, including any recommendations for amended working practices if appropriate (Article 6, Paragraph 6.3e), and the preparation, execution and adjustment of the Work Programme (Article 6, Paragraph 6.3f).

### **Information**

- 1 The Scrutiny Committee, comprising 9 councillors from May 2007 as opposed to 5 councillors previously, met seven times during the municipal year 2007/08.
- 2 The Committee's Work Programme was agreed by Council on 26 September 2007 and subsequently updated regularly.
- 3 The Scrutiny Committee and Panels completed three Reviews during the period, namely:
  - Health and Safety at Work Enforcement Review
  - Land for Future Cemeteries
  - Role of Ward Councillors (Interim Report)

the first two of which were presented to Cabinet and the third to Council. Recommendations within were accepted and have led in some cases to ongoing work. The Committee thanks those councillors and officers who contributed to those reviews.

4 The Committee also considered aspects of other topics, namely:

- Council's transport costs
- Waste and Recycling
- Communications Strategy
- Local bus services
- Consultants' costs
- Evening training sessions/meetings

and decided Scrutiny Reviews were not appropriate at the time. The Committee again thanks those councillors and officers who assisted.

5 The Committee also considered and made recommendations on the Service Budgets and Capital Programmes and the Housing Revenue Budget 2008/09, the Audit Commission's Direction of Travel Report and the Chair of Council's Business Report.

6 In April 2008 councillors, Corporate Management Team officers and the chairs of the Area Partnerships were canvassed for suggestions for the Committee's Work Programme 2008/09. Ongoing work and resultant proposed new work is detailed for Council's approval in the Committee's Draft Work Programme (attached as Appendix) which was agreed at the Committee's 11 September 2008 meeting.

### **Financial Appraisal**

7 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report

### **Environmental Implications**

8 I have completed the Environmental Implications questionnaire. This report is exempt from the requirement because this is a progress report.

### **Risk Management Implications**

9 I have completed a Risk Assessment in accordance with the Council's Risk Management methodology. The Council risks disadvantageous comment in a subsequent Comprehensive Performance Assessment should the statutory Scrutiny requirements placed on the Council not be met.

### **Background Papers**

10 Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee minutes June 2007 – May 2008.

### **Appendix**

## APPENDIX - SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Ward Councillors Role (ongoing) Review	To proceed Autumn 08 – <i>draft remit for consideration at September 2008 meeting attached at page 4</i>
Clean and Green Team Operations Review	To commence Autumn 08
Delegated Powers	Reconsideration of whether Review is required after Ward Councillors Role Review is concluded
Parks and Open Spaces Contracts	Reconsideration of whether Review is required after Clean and Green Team Review is concluded
Partnerships – grant funding Development Workers beyond 2008/09	<i>Information gathered from Area Partnership Chairs re- Development Workers' contributions attached at page 10 – any information received after agenda dispatch to be reported at September 2008 meeting</i>
Surveillance camera usage	Cabinet Report to be considered in due course

### ONGOING MATTERS

Quarterly Performance Indicators Cabinet Report	Considered in Committee Jun 2007 - councillors to bring any future issues to Committee
Topics for Council-wide seminars/ presentations	Agreed by Council July 2007 Traveller Sites – to be held autumn 2008
Councillor Call for Action	Considered in Committee Aug 2007 - possible future statutory work

### ANNUAL FIXED POINTS

June	Consider Work Programme and Chair of Council's Annual Report
September	Consider Annual Report and fix Work Programme (to September Council)
January	Consider budgetary matters (to February Cabinet)
April	Consider Direction of Travel document; Councillors, CMT, Chairs of Area Partnerships consulted re-suggestions for following year's Work Programme

## LEWES DISTRICT COUNCIL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### SUBJECT FOR CONSIDERATION FOR SCRUTINY REVIEW 2008/09

**Proposed subject:** Role of Ward Councillors – Development of Voluntary Ward Councillor Compact and Action Plan

**Why suggested:** Continuation of 2007/08 Review – see attached Council Minute 16 May 2008 and Draft Compact and Action Plan

**Desired outcome (eg efficiency or service improvement):** To develop a voluntary Ward Councillor Compact and Action Plan, based on the draft previously considered, and to report back to Council within the municipal year 2008/09.

**Scope and content (eg areas to cover, activities to be undertaken, possible consultees):**

- Produce a questionnaire for all councillors re- possible amendments to the draft Compact – invite comment and discussion with the Panel
- Focus on the areas identified in the draft Action Plan, ie Communications, Training, Scrutiny and Community Engagement, and set clear, achievable and time-limited targets

**Priority (eg urgent, medium or longer term):**  
Timescale September-December 2008

**Submitted by:** Scrutiny Secretary for 11 September 2008 Committee meeting

**Contact details:** David Feintuck, Scrutiny Secretary,  
telephone: 01273 484201, email: [david.feintuck@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:david.feintuck@lewes.gov.uk)

MINUTE EXTRACT

**Council – 14 May 2008**

**16 Scrutiny Review of Role of Ward Councillors**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel, Councillor MacCleary moved, and Councillor Lambert seconded, the motion that the recommendations contained in Report No 91/08 on page 29 of Council Document 'A' relating to the Scrutiny Review of the Role of Ward Councillors, be approved.

Councillor Eiloart moved, and Councillor Bowers seconded, an amendment as follows:

“That the recommendations contained in Report No 91/08 on page 29 of Council Document 'A' relating to the Scrutiny Review of the Role of Ward Councillors, be approved subject to the amendment of the text of recommendation No 1 to read 'That the Council agrees in principle the adoption of a Ward Councillor Compact if a suitable Compact can be provided; and'.”

Following discussion of his amendment and with the consent of Council, and of his seconder, Councillor Eiloart withdrew his amendment.

Councillor Jones moved, and Councillor O'Keeffe seconded, an amendment as follows:

“That recommendation No 1 contained in Report No 91/08 on page 29 of Council Document 'A' relating to the Scrutiny Review of the Role of Ward Councillors, be deleted and that recommendation No 2 contained in that Report be approved.”

The amendment was put to the meeting and Declared Carried.

Councillor O'Keeffe moved, and Councillor Harrison-Hicks seconded, an amendment as follows:

“That the text of recommendation No 2 be amended by the insertion of the word ‘voluntary’ before the word ‘Ward’.”

The amendment was put to the meeting and Declared Carried.

The substantive motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

- a. That the Scrutiny Committee be requested to set up a Panel with a remit based on Report No 91/08 to take forward the development of a voluntary Ward Councillor Compact and Action Plan and to report back to Council within the municipal year 2008/09.

## **DRAFT WARD COUNCILLOR COMPACT**

This two-way agreement between the council and councillors:

- helps to define best practice for ward councillors, suggests how to take that forward and addresses issues about support, development, and performance standards;
- sets out the council's expectations of the role, encouraging basic minimum standards of activity in each of the dimensions and functions of the job, combining specific tasks with suggested approaches, skills and behaviours; and
- sets out the council's commitment to provide guaranteed minimum levels of support and training for councillors.

### **Best Practice**

Councillors need to:

- communicate via websites, blogs and surveys to a public who are provided with an accurate picture of the councillor's role<sup>3</sup>
- be empowered and supported to engage actively with residents and community groups
- identify their own training needs and work with officers and political groups to address these
- be an advocate for local residents in their relations with the District Council and other local and national government bodies
- provide a conduit through which residents can make better use of council services
- be the key link between council officers and local communities
- keep up-to-date with local concerns by drawing information from diverse sources including hard to reach groups
- make people from all backgrounds feel valued, trusted and included
- look for ways to promote democracy and increase public engagement
- identify areas suitable for scrutiny and ensures that citizens and communities are involved in the scrutiny process

### **Expectations of the Role**

- Councillor recruitment, whether by political groups or through the council, should promote equality and diversity and encourage councillors from all ages, genders and backgrounds
- Councillors and the Council need to agree minimum standards of activity including ward, committee and outside body responsibilities<sup>5</sup>
- The role should be enhanced by the development of the Scrutiny process to empower ward councillors
- Councillors attend and participate in meetings of the council and committees to which they have been appointed

## **The Council's Commitment**

The council needs to:

- provide basic induction training plus continuous development in a variety of time slots and formats, strategically planned and including support and development in appropriate skills
- identify officers to provide information to and support each ward councillor
- disseminate relevant and useful ward intelligence to councillors
- encourage officers to actively participate in the scrutiny procedure suggesting topics for scrutiny and actively supporting the committee



## Draft Action Plan for Councillor Compact

### **Communicate**

**Action:** Increase your ability to communicate with residents by setting up own website through the [www.councillor.info](http://www.councillor.info) site by contacting Kalpna Dice at LDC.  
[kalpna.dice@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:kalpna.dice@lewes.gov.uk)

Some examples of LDC councillors sites already up and running can be seen by following these links:

<http://www.councillor.info/lewes/lhallett/0/Default.aspx?init>  
<http://www.councillor.info/lewes/jmaccleary/0/Default.aspx>

### **Training**

**Action:** Think about what elements of your role as a councillor you have found particularly challenging, or that you could improve, and suggest that a training session is set up in this area.

You can make suggestions through your group leader, or directly to John Clark at LDC.  
[john.clark@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:john.clark@lewes.gov.uk)

Some example areas of training that are already offered to LDC staff that could be relevant to councillors are:

Communication skills  
Diffusing aggression  
Media skills  
Negotiating skills

### **Scrutiny**

**Action:** Engage with the scrutiny process and make suggestions for areas of council activity or policy that could be scrutinised.

The Scrutiny Committee is the principle way in which backbench councillors can hold the Executive to account. Any suggestions can be sent to Scrutiny Secretary David Feintuck.  
[david.feintuck@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:david.feintuck@lewes.gov.uk)

Some areas that the committee have looked at this year include cemetery provision in the district, and staffing levels for health and safety enforcement. **Remember** – topics for scrutiny do not have to be direct responsibilities of LDC.

### **Community engagement**

It is essential that councillors find ways to engage their communities effectively. A good way of doing this is by actively participating in community organisations such as residents associations, neighbourhood watch or voluntary charitable groups.

**Action:** Locate a local group or organisation that you are not currently involved with and arrange a meeting to establish how you can help them better connect with council services and resources.

**The role of the Area Partnership Rural Voices Rural Choices, is to provide a voice for the views and interests of the rural communities in the Lewes District and aims to identify priorities for action that will bring benefits to the quality of life for people in rural areas.**

## **Main Achievements**

**Jan 2006 – Aug 2008**

### **Transport & Traffic**

#### **Lewes District Transport Group**

As a result of Parish survey (undertaken Dec 2005), **a Lewes District Transport group started up in May 2006, to address and resolve transport issues that had been identified by young people and the Parishes.** This group has subsequently met twice a year and has included representation from various ESCC transport departments, Coach and Bus Transport operators, Lewes District Senior's Forum and Chailey School Council. This project is on-going. (See notes of some issues raised at the last meeting held 19 May)

#### **Minibus Audit**

A minibus audit was carried out and the Rural Transport Partnership directory was distributed to Lewes District Parishes.

#### **SID Machine**

In order to have safer roads and slower traffic, RVRC purchased a Speed Indicator Device which is being shared by the villages and is being used more regularly once volunteers in relevant villages have been trained.

#### **Community Transport Scheme**

RVRC applied to the Seedcorn Fund to fund a Community Transport Scheme in the areas of Iford, Swanborough & Kingston for the amount of £5000. The aim of this scheme is to reduce dependency on private car usage and provide people in Kingston, Iford and Swanborough alternative access to main public transport routes during out of bus service hours. **£5000 was awarded in June 2008**

#### **Children & Young People**

##### **Chailey School – transport event**

Worked with students of Chailey School to 1) identify transport issues that young people confront in rural areas and 2) to host an event to present the questionnaire findings. The event was held at Chailey School in **March 2006**. This was a very good example of young people's full participation in the consultation process and in planning/hosting the event. The issues raised at this event were linked into the Lewes District Transport Group (see above)

## **Barcombe Youth Shelter**

A youth shelter was installed in Barcombe village so that young people have an independent place where they can socialise together, unsupervised. With support from development worker, Barcombe Parish Council **received funding** for this project from **Viridor Credits, the Sussex Police Joint Initiative Fund and Lewes District Council Rural Local Action Team**, coming to a fund of around **£7000**. Kingston also initially applied to **Awards for all (£3500)** to install a youth shelter however returned the money as decided not to go ahead with the youth shelter.

## **Mapping Exercise – of existing Children’s Activities**

The development worker worked with individual parishes in Lewes District and carried out a mapping exercise to identify existing activities for children and young people in Lewes District.

## **Consultation Exercise – South Heighton**

As a result of the above exercise, South Heighton was identified as an area where there were gaps in childrens’ activities. So undertook a survey and consulted with young people in Denton School (who live in South Heighton) to identify need. Feedback results of survey to Parish Council and youth worker in S. Heighton.

## **Youth Awareness Events**

Youth awareness events were held at Ringmer Community College Nov 2007 and Chailey School March 2008 (Priory School Nov 2008) aiming to 1) promote awareness about the services of organisations that work with young people 2) consult with young people about what activities they would like and 3) promote awareness around specific health issues e.g alcohol and drug misuse. **Grants awarded to RVRC** for Ringmer event were:- **Social Inclusion grant £550 and Rural Lats grant £500** and for Chailey event:- **ESDWPCT grant £500 and Rural Lats grant £500**. (See notes of outcomes that came out of the Chailey Event)

## **Communication Networks**

### **RVRC Logo**

Worked with Hrs Graphics designers to create a recognisable logo for RVRC.

### **Extend Membership**

Widened Rural Voices Rural Choices membership to Youth Parliament, Rural Villages Project and Bluebird Community Transport.

## Environment

### Identifying Funding

Worked with Westmeston Jubilee Trust to try and identify funding for the third stage of a footpath project between Westmeston/Ditchling.

### Applause Rural Touring Project

Worked in partnership with Applause Rural Touring and applied for Awards for All Funding (£8000) to support a community arts project in the villages of Lewes District. **Grant of £8000 awarded in August 2008.**

Total grants awarded:- £25,550

## Specific Outcomes from the Chailey Event

- Barcombe who are thinking about setting up a youth club found out important information from the other two youth clubs represented (i.e Chailey Youth Club & Hamsey, Cooksbridge & Offham Youth) that will further help them in the process of setting up.
- East Sussex Driving Awareness made links with Hamsey, Cooksbridge & Offham Youth and discussed the possibility of a safe rural driving project involving young people at Plumpton College.
- Hamsey, Cooksbridge and Offham Youth made links with Starfish and are going to hold a music event during the Summer holidays.
- Wave Leisure increased their membership so found it a valuable event for promoting their service to young people.
- RVRC distributed 200 questionnaires (153 responses) to find out if there is a need to hold any after-school activities that are not already in place and if there are any transport requirements that are preventing students from participating in after-school activities. Majority students were keen to see more sports, drama, art and music after school. 50% of students said that lack of transport prevented them from participating in after-school activities, two thirds of these live in Lewes District. This information was made available to members attending the Transport Issues meeting on 19 May e.g ESCC Passenger Transport, Local Partnerships for children and Countryliner. Consequently, ESCC passenger transport are thinking of putting an extra journey of the 121 bus on to meet the needs of students appropriately.
- Act on It achieved fantastic results from their consultation exercise with young people and this information will link into the Double Measure project e.g Chailey Youth Club have requested information about this project and are going to promote to their members
- Report of the Chailey Event has been circulated to Parish and Town Councils in relevant areas. Rural Voices Rural Choices are aiming to link in to the proposed Safe Rural Driving Project that Hamsey, Cooksbridge & Offham Youth are involved in.
- RVRC & Lewes Town Partnership are jointly going to work with Priory School and the school council to hold a youth awareness event in the Autumn. Priory are keen to do this.

## Lewes District Transport Forum

Main issues raised from the 19 May meeting:-

- Kathy (who works with care groups and other older people in Lewes District) reported that many people are finding that they cannot use their free bus passes in the Lewes District, because of the new system of 9.30 a.m start. Many people have to travel prior to 9.30 because of the infrequency timing of buses in rural areas (not like buses in town areas which are more frequent).
- Charging for duplicate Freedom Tickets and Travel Permits is for several reasons. Firstly, to cover the costs of producing new tickets which are now plastic 'credit card' type. The cards are more durable but are more costly and we have to have two special printers to produce them. Secondly, a charge may deter fraud as Freedom Tickets, in particular, could be quite valuable if sold on to those who don't qualify for free transport. Finally, charging for duplicates does encourage more care to be taken with them.
- Local Partnerships for Children set up 18 months ago, 22 across the County (Ringmer LPC and Chailey LPC) and the aim is to pull together different services to address various needs of young people, children, their families and carers. Members of LPC include different representatives from ESCC childrens' services, health, voluntary sector providers, social services and housing. The rural LPCs have raised the complexities of rural transport.
- Local Partnerships for Children pointed out that within the extended schools agenda, Chailey School would need to deliver after school activities by 2010. There needs to be forward planning and the 121 diverted to meet transport needs of students in relation to after school activities.
- Air Quality Management area – Fisher Street – Station Road. Assess extent of exhaust fumes which affects air quality. There is a working group who have been working on various initiatives to try and find ways to prevent people from driving through Lewes e.g signage, cycle maps, walking buses, public transport.