



Lewes District Council

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MINUTE EXTRACT

Cabinet – 9 September 2008

101 Community Engagement – Summary of the Impact of the Government White Paper

The Cabinet considered Report No 173/08 relating to the potential impact of the recently published Government White Paper concerning Community Engagement.

The recently published White Paper “Communities in Control – Real People Real Power” sets out the government policy proposals for local authorities to work with their local communities to shape the future of service provision.

Although the document had a significant focus upon future “ideas”, there were also a number of tangible changes which would occur within the near future as a result of the proposals including the “Duty to Involve” that would arise from 1 April 2009.

That new Duty required all local authorities to take those steps they considered appropriate to involve representatives of local persons in the exercise of any of their functions, where they considered that it was appropriate to do so. It specified the three ways of involving that needed to be covered in such consideration, namely:

- providing information about the exercise of the particular function;
- consulting about the exercise of the particular function; and/or
- involving in another way.

The Report set out details which explained what was meant by “representatives of local persons” and what was meant by informing and consulting.

A significant proportion of the White Paper related to proposed measures to allow the transfer of assets and local service provision to

the local community through a variety of means, further details of which were set out in paragraph 2.13 of the Report.

The White Paper also included some proposed changes to widen the eligibility for becoming a councillor and retaining those who already held that office, suggestions for which were set out in paragraph 4 of the Report.

Details relating to the impact of the White Paper upon the Council, including the Duty to Involve, were set out in paragraph 5 of the Report.

The Scrutiny Committee was due to undertake a review of the role of Ward Councillors insofar as it related to the development of a voluntary ward councillor compact and action plan in the near future. The Report therefore suggested that, as much of the White Paper would impact upon the future role of councillors, it might be an opportunity for the Committee to consider the White Paper recommendations and to make suitable recommendations to Cabinet.

Resolved:

- 101.1** That Report No 173/08 relating to Community Engagement – Summary of the Impact of the Government White Paper, be received and noted; and
- 101.2** That the Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider including consideration of the White Paper recommendations in its work programme for 2008/09, with a view to making suitable recommendations to Cabinet.

Reason for the Decisions:

Government are signalling a number of changes to the way in which public services are delivered and local communities are engaged in the process of shaping those services and holding providers to account.

Cabinet was asked to consider how the Council might best be placed to take advantage of legislative changes and new duties that will arise in the near future.