



**Lewes District Council**

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## **Scrutiny Panel – Call-in**

**Minutes** of a meeting of a **Scrutiny Panel – Call-in** held in the **Warren Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes** on **Monday 26 September 2011** at **10.00am**

**Present:**

Councillors A Dean (Chair on election), P A Howson and E E J Russell

**Officers Present:**

R Allan, Scrutiny and Committee Officer

M Stallard, Head of Development Management

### **Minutes**

### **Action**

**1 Election of Chair**

Resolved:

1.1 That Councillor A Dean be elected Chair for the meeting.

**2 Call-In – Cabinet, 7 September 2011, Resolution 54.1 – Review of Lewes Conservation Area Boundary**

The Panel considered Report No 160/11 which provided background information to support the call-in procedure.

At the request of the Chair, the Scrutiny and Committee Officer outlined the procedure as defined in Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 (Appendix A to the Report). The Panel considered the Report presented to Cabinet on 7 September 2011 (Appendix B) and Resolution 54.1 (within Minute 54 at Appendix C), the subject of the call-in. It further considered in detail the reasons for the request for a call-in (Appendix D).

On 7 September 2011 Cabinet had considered Report No 147/11 relating to a proposal to prioritise work on reviewing Conservation Area boundaries in Lewes. The recommendations in that Report were that:

- Lewes District Council should endorse the prioritisation of boundary changes to Lewes Conservation Area as recommended in the 2007 Conservation Area Appraisal
- The Director of Planning & Environmental Services should seek the

agreement of the South Downs National Park Authority, as Local Planning Authority, for the prioritisation of, and funding for, the project.

The 2007 Appraisal recommended that the boundary of the Conservation Area be extended in Lewes to include an area to the west of St Pancras Road and south of St Anne's Crescent, as far as Bell Lane in the west. If that recommendation was implemented, several sites would be included in the extension such as County Hall and the former St Anne's School and its playing fields. However, Cabinet concluded not to prioritise the progression of the boundary changes to Lewes Conservation Area and that no further action should be taken by the Council on the matter.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- Councillors noted that the proposed extension to Lewes Conservation Area would include the East Sussex County Council County Hall site and the former St Anne's School. It was noted that the Appraisal recognised that the County Hall building is not an attractive or well-liked building in Lewes, but that its inclusion in the conservation area extension would not prevent redevelopment and would encourage the construction of well designed new buildings.
- The Head of Development Management clarified the features of a conservation area to the Panel, and commented that if the area in question were to fall within Lewes Conservation Area it would be subject to stricter controls in terms of development. These controls would ensure that future development remained in keeping with the character of the area, and put certain restrictions on the demolition of buildings and works to trees.
- The Panel agreed that it was essential that extensive consultation within the community occurred before any extension to Lewes Conservation Area took place. The Head of Development Management explained that consultation had already taken place at the time of the Conservation Area Appraisal in 2007, but that more extensive consultation would occur if the proposed extension of the conservation area was agreed.
- The Panel commented that the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) would have the final decision in determining the extension of Lewes Conservation Area, and that if the proposed extension were to go ahead the SDNPA would undertake the work, or fund Lewes District Council to do so. This meant there would be no cost implications to the Council.
- Councillors were concerned that this area could attract development, but added that if Lewes Conservation Area were extended it would give the Council greater powers over development.
- The Head of Development Management explained that the Lewes

Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2007 had recommended that the conservation area be extended to include the area in question.

- The Panel commented that this should be an area with additional protection in order to promote quality development and for the Council to have greater control of new development.

Recommended:

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| <b>2.1</b> | That the matter be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration;   | S&CO |
| <b>2.2</b> | That Cabinet be requested to endorse the prioritisation of the progression of the boundary changes to Lewes Conservation Area, as recommended in the 2007 Conservation Area Character Appraisal; | DPES |
| <b>2.3</b> | That the Director of Planning and Environmental Services be requested to seek the agreement of the South Downs National Park Authority for the prioritisation and funding for this project; and  | DPES |
| <b>2.4</b> | That Cabinet be requested to ensure that the period of consultation, as detailed in paragraph 1.14 of Report No 147/11, be implemented.  | DPES |

The meeting ended at 10.35am.

A Dean  
Chair