



**Lewes District Council**

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## **Scrutiny Panel – Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector**

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Panel – Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector** held in the **Warren Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes** on **Monday 25 February 2013** at 2pm

**Present:**

Councillors S J Gauntlett (Chair), J V Harris and E E J Russell

**Officers Attending:**

R Allan, Scrutiny and Committee Officer

J Blackwell, Intermin Property, Regeneration and Enterprise Project Officer

**In attendance:**

Councillor R Blackman

P Rideout, Third Sector Policy Manager, East Sussex County Council (Co-opted Member of the Panel)

### **Minutes**

#### **1 Election of Chair**

Resolved:

- 1.1** That Councillor S J Gauntlett be elected Chair of the Scrutiny Panel – Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector.

#### **2 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor S J Gauntlett declared his personal, non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 3 (Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector).

#### **3 Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the importance of adding specific objectives for this Review. He added that it was essential that this Panel had a clearly defined focus designed to be inclusive but not so broad that no outcomes could be realistically achieved, and that it was important to include the idea of “valuing the voluntary sector”.

The Panel discussed the importance of the relationship between the Council and the voluntary and community sector. It agreed that an insight was required to map out which third sector organisations the Council currently engaged with, perhaps through 3VA, an organisation that provides support for voluntary and community organisations across

Eastbourne, Lewes District and Wealden and is part funded by the Council.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Third Sector Policy Manager advised that it was important to consider how the Council could better work with the voluntary and community sector and to consider what benefits the Council gained from supporting them. He added that an important part of the Review should be the examination of how the Council could support the voluntary and community sector other than through means of financial support, such as helping organisations to work more intelligently through increased partnership working.

The Panel discussed the use of volunteers and voluntary and community sector groups and how they could be recognised through means other than financial. It added that the continuing economic situation in the District could lead to an increased reliance on the work undertaken by volunteers and groups.

The Panel highlighted that one of the pillars of the One District One Council vision at the Council was the following "To enhance the working relationship with the public, private and voluntary sector partners to deliver more efficient and effective joined up public services in the District". It agreed that this tied in well with the purpose of the Scrutiny Review, as the Council needed to work out how the Council supported the voluntary and community sector to deliver more.

The Chair advised that it was important to set the structure of this Review. A discussion followed, and the Panel agreed that the Cabinet meeting on 30 September 2013 would be the right place to present the Report from this Review. The Chair explained that it was important that members of the voluntary and community sector were consulted throughout this review, perhaps through a series of focus groups. The Panel added that the Democratic Society could be contacted in order to ascertain if they could assist with the delivery of an innovative and interactive consultation process. Councillors advised that focus groups could have specific themes.

The Third Sector Policy Manager advised the Panel that it was important that the communication of this Review was undertaken in a positive manner and that all voluntary and community sector organisations were certain of the intent of the Review. He reminded the Panel of the East Sussex Compact, of which the Council are a member, an agreement between the public sector and voluntary and community sector about how they work with each other.

*(Note: Councillor Gauntlett declared his personal, non-prejudicial interest in this item as he was a trustee of the Citizens Advice Bureau and, therefore, was able to take part in the consideration, discussion and voting thereon)*

**Resolved:**

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| 2.1 | That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to change the title of the Review to Scrutiny Review - Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector;   | SCO |
| 2.2 | That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to bring draft consultation material such as invitation letters, draft questionnaires and consultation exercises plans, to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel – Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector for approval; | SCO |
| 2.3 | That Paul Rideout, Third Sector Policy Manager at East Sussex County Council, be co-opted as Member to the Scrutiny Panel - “Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector; and  | SCO |
| 2.3 | That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to contact 3VA in order to establish a list of voluntary and community sector groups in Lewes District.  | SCO |

**3 Date of Next Meeting**

**Resolved:**

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| 3.1 | That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to arrange a further meeting of the Scrutiny Panel – Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector to be held on 22 April 2013 at 1pm in a venue to be notified by the Scrutiny and Committee Officer. | SCO |
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The meeting ended at 3pm

S J Gauntlett  
Chair