



**Lewes District Council**

[www.lewes.gov.uk](http://www.lewes.gov.uk)

## **Scrutiny Panel – Provision of Affordable Housing in Urban Areas**

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Panel – Provision of Affordable Housing in Urban Areas** held in the **Warren Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes** on **Thursday 9 May 2013 at 10.00am**

**Present:**

Councillors S J Osborne (Chair), P F Gardiner, J V Harris, E C Merry and J Stockdale

**Officers Attending:**

R Allan, Scrutiny and Committee Officer  
L Frost, Director of Planning and Environmental Services  
R Parmar, Graduate Intern

**In attendance:**

L Southam, South Downs National Park Authority

### **Minutes**

**13 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**14 Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors A T Jones and E E J Russell.

**15 Provision of Affordable Housing in Urban Areas**

The Chair of the Panel drew the Panel's attention to the draft list of recommendations, as attached to the Agenda. She explained that she had met with officers in the Housing and Planning Departments of the Council, as well as the relevant Cabinet Members, in order to draft the list for consideration by the Panel at this meeting.

The Director of Planning and Environmental Services took the Panel through the draft list of recommendations. He explained that the list would form the basis of the Report for the Scrutiny Review and that the purpose of this meeting was for the Panel to finalise the list of recommendations.

Officers would then draft a Panel report for circulation and comment, prior to the report going to Cabinet in July 2013.

The Chair welcomed Ms L Southam of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNP) to the meeting. Ms Southam advised Councillors of the SDNP's feedback on the draft recommendations. She explained that the SDNP was in support of the recommendations, and advised areas where the Council and SDNP could work together so they were achieved. She added that it was important that any partnership work between the Council and the SDNP was undertaken at an early stage of any project that delivered affordable housing.

The Panel examined the draft list of recommendations and advised that it fully supported affordable housing being made a corporate priority at the Council. It added that it was important that the final Report explained why affordable housing was a corporate priority and what that meant to the Council.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Director of Planning and Environmental Services advised that, if the panel wanted, it could ask Cabinet to consider allocation of money from the New Homes Bonus Scheme in order to fund new affordable housing projects in the District. The Panel suggested that it should be made a priority as part of Recommendation 10 which examined resources for the delivery of affordable housing in the District.

The Panel considered whether the target of 500 homes as a minimum should be raised, and agreed that a minimum target was the most sensible approach. It expressed concern that there was no current formal delivery arrangement for partners and the Council to discuss the provision of affordable housing in the District, and requested that a new recommendation was added that reflected this.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Director of Planning and Environmental Services advised that cross boundary initiatives could be considered between local authorities for the delivery of affordable housing, and that Arun District Council was currently exploring similar options.

The Panel considered whether the use of empty shops and empty properties or spaces above shops could be used for affordable housing in the District. It advised that empty shops should only be used where suitable and with public support.

In response to a Councillor's question, the Director of Planning and Environmental Services explained that it was important that the Panel defined what "social value" meant, as listed in Recommendation 8.

The Panel considered whether the Local Enterprise Partnerships that covered the District could be consulted as part of the future work around the

delivery of affordable housing at the Council.

The Chair thanked the Panel and officers for their work on this Review.

Resolved:

- |             |   |     |
|-------------|---|-----|
| <b>15.1</b> | That the draft list of recommendations for the Scrutiny Review – Provision of Affordable Housing in Urban Areas be agreed;  |     |
| <b>15.2</b> | That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to add the words “where appropriate and with local support” to the end of Recommendation 6 of the draft list of Recommendations;   | SCO |
| <b>15.3</b> | That the Scrutiny and Committee Offer be requested to add a new recommendation to the draft list of recommendations for the Scrutiny Review – Provision of Affordable Housing in Urban Areas, requesting the establishment of a formal arrangement between partners and the District Council to discuss the delivery of a higher level of affordable housing in the District; | SCO |
| <b>15.4</b> | That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to add the New Homes Bonus as a potential funding stream for the delivery of affordable housing in the District to Recommendation 10 of the draft list of Recommendations;   | SCO |
| <b>15.5</b> | That the Chief Executive be requested to raise the contents of the Scrutiny Review Report once finalised at the next Local Enterprise Partnership meeting;  | CE  |
| <b>15.6</b> | That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to include a description of what “social value” means in the Scrutiny Report for the Provision of Affordable Housing in Urban Areas; and   | SCO |
| <b>15.7</b> | That the Scrutiny and Committee Officer be requested to circulate the draft Report for comment to all members of the Panel, prior to submitting any Report to Cabinet.  | SCO |

The meeting ended 11.55am

S J Osborne  
Chair