



Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel** held in the **Ditchling Room, Southover House, Lewes**, on **Friday, 20 April 2018** at 10:00am.

Present:

Councillor J Carter (Chair)
Councillors S Adeniji and V Ient

Officers Present:

K Barrett, Regeneration Project Manager
P Sharp, Head of Regeneration
J Victory, Scrutiny Officer

Minutes

6 Quorum

The resolutions from the inquorate Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel meeting held on 17 January 2018 were approved with the following comments:

Members noted that, whilst the representative from South East Creative Enterprise Network, East Sussex County Council and Culture East Sussex (Sally Staples) was invited to the Panel meeting in accordance with the recommendations of the previous meeting, she unfortunately did not attend.

Members noted that an updated schedule would need to be circulated, which took into account sufficient time for officer research and appropriate notice to be given to external guests invited. The Panel now anticipated to present their findings to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 February 2019.

7 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8 Apologies for Absence

None.

9 Declaration of Interest

None.

10 Scrutiny Review of Affordable Workspace in the Lewes District

The Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel received the covering report of the

Scrutiny Officer, which reaffirmed the terms of reference of the Panel:

- How Lewes District Council engaged and influenced South East Creative;
- Economy Network and other strategic partnerships to support the development of affordable workspaces;
- What Lewes District Council could do better to support creative businesses; and
- How effective the commercial property databases and the Locate East Sussex service were in searching for affordable and creative workspace.

The Regeneration Project Manager presented a report to the Scrutiny Affordable Workspace Panel, which went over the Panel's proposed interview questions to Sally Staples to address the objectives of the review.

Members' discussion included:

- Additional suggestions for invitees to future meetings of the Panel included: South Downs Network, The Hive, Wired Sussex, South Downs National Park and the Newhaven Enterprise Centre.

As Members recognised that inviting all of the Members on the list would be unattainable for the lifespan of the Panel, Members recommended that the following actions be carried out **before** the next meeting was scheduled:

1. The Regeneration Project Manager would, in cooperation with the Chair, finalise a list of whom to contact initially via an introductory email, as well as a shortlist of anticipative invitees to future Panel meetings.
 2. The Regeneration Project Manager would then contact those on the list with an introductory email to the Affordable Workspace Panel and its purpose. The purpose of this email would primarily be to help to gauge the organisations which would be more likely to attend a scheduled meeting.
 3. The Scrutiny Officer would schedule two meetings during summer; one meeting would be for Creative Businesses and one meeting for Business Support organisations.
- If Locate East Sussex could provide more information concerning how many enquiries they received regarding the commercial property databases in searching for creative workspace and affordable workspace in the Lewes District.
 - The importance of inviting a diverse selection of external representatives in order to encompass the expansive definition that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport provided regarding industry and occupation classifications of the creative industry.

- How Lewes District Council could contribute to the priorities of creative businesses having an open workspace and working alongside complimentary businesses.
- Whether it would benefit the Panel to invite a Planning Officer to contribute to the discussion regarding policies which may affect affordable workspaces in the Lewes District.
- Members expressed disappointment that Sally Staples was unable to attend the meeting on 20 April 2018. Furthermore, whilst thankful for the answers that Sally provided, Members felt that the answer to the following question was not substantive enough:

Q: Do you have any knowledge on the effectiveness of commercial property databases in searching for creative workspace and affordable workspace in the Lewes District?

A: ESCC warmly encourage LDC to take up their standing invitation to the Locate East Sussex progress review meetings where reports on both enquiries and conversations to secured workspace are reported on.

It was therefore requested that a further invitation be sent out to a future meeting of the Panel.

Officers responded that:

- Suggestions for additional invitees to future meetings, as well as the recommended steps before the next meetings would be scheduled, were noted.
- Officers would contact Locate East Sussex for more information concerning how many enquires they had received regarding the commercial property databases in searching for creative workspace and affordable workspace in the Lewes District. This would then be circulated to the Panel members before the next meeting.
- The expansive definition of creative businesses was noted, and when the list of potential invitees was further shortlisted officers would aim to have a diverse selection from various industries.
- Lewes District Council was able to contribute to the priorities of creative businesses having an open workspace and working alongside complimentary businesses in its capacity as a Landlord.
- As a new Head of Planning had yet to be appointed, officers suggested that the Planning Policy Lead be invited to a future meeting of the Panel.

RPM /
SO

SO /
PPL

Resolved:

1. That, before the next meetings were scheduled, the following steps would be followed:
 - a) The Regeneration Project Manager would, in cooperation with the Chair, finalise a shortlist of anticipative invitees to future Panel meetings.
 - b) The Regeneration Project Manager/Scrutiny Officer would send an email to all on the updated list to introduce the Affordable Workspace Panel and outline its purpose.
 - c) The Scrutiny Officer would schedule two meetings during summer; one meeting would be for Creative Businesses and one meeting for Business Support organisations.

2. That the representative from South East Creative Enterprise Network, East Sussex County Council and Culture East Sussex be once again invited to a meeting of the Panel, to contribute to the Panel's review into the supply of low-cost and affordable workspace within the Lewes District, and provide clarity regarding their knowledge on the effectiveness of commercial property databases in searching for creative workspace and affordable workspace in the Lewes District.

3. That the Planning Policy Lead be invited to a future meeting of the Panel.

RPM /
Chair /
SO

SO

SO

Reason:

To contribute to the focussed programme of work which will enable the District Council to consider whether any changes to its existing policies, or any other actions, are to be recommended when considering the supply of low-cost and affordable workspace within the Lewes District.

The meeting ended at 11:30am.

J Carter
Chair