

# SOUTH HAMS EXECUTIVE



## Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Executive** held on **Thursday, 7th April, 2022 at 10.00 am** at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present:           **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Pearce  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Bastone

Cllr Hopwood  
Cllr Hawkins

Cllr Baldry  
Cllr Holway

### **In attendance:**

Councillors:

Cllr Birch  
Cllr Reeve (via Teams)  
Cllr Taylor

Cllr Brazil  
Cllr Spencer (via Teams)

Officers:  
Senior Leadership Team  
Monitoring Officer  
Democratic Services Manager  
Senior Specialist – Parking  
Senior Specialist - Place Making  
Senior Specialist - Housing  
Senior Specialist – Climate Change  
Head of Strategy & Projects

98.           **Minutes**  
E.98/21  
The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 March 2022 and the Special Executive meeting held on 31 March 2022 were both confirmed as a true and correct record.
99.           **Declarations of Interest**  
E.99/21  
Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting, but there were none made.

100. **Public Question Time**  
E.100/21  
The Leader informed that no public questions had been received in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules.

101. **Executive Forward Plan**  
E.101/21  
Members were presented with the most recently published version of the Executive Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Executive meetings for the next four months and duly noted its contents.

102. **Off Street Parking Order Amendment**  
E.102/21  
A procedural report was considered that sought the implementation of changes within the Council's Off-Street Parking Places Order so as to remain compliant with its enforcement following changes within the associated legislation

In discussion, the reasons contained in the published agenda report for the proposed amendments at the Dartmouth Market Square and the Quayside Leisure Centre, Kingsbridge were reiterated.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Head of Assets be authorised to publish notice of proposals for the South Hams District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2022 to consolidate with amendments to the current off-street parking places order; the amendments to be made to be:
  - 1.1 The Dartmouth Market Square, Dartmouth: no parking restriction to no parking between 6.00am and 9.00am Tuesday, Friday and Saturday;
  - 1.2 To introduce no parking restrictions along the access road to Quayside Leisure Centre to the Off Street Parking Order; and
  - 1.3 For relevant parts of the Order to reflect changes to legislation in respect of Parking Enforcement; and
2. That the Head of Assets be requested to prepare a report summarising the representations received in response to the notice of proposals for consideration by the Executive before making a decision as to whether to make the off-street parking places order as proposed or with modifications.

103. **Better Homes Better Lives Year 2 Update and Homelessness Strategy 2022-27**  
E.103/21  
The Executive was presented with a report that reviewed progress made to date against the themes and priorities during the first year of the Housing Strategy and provided the new draft delivery plan for the second year. The report also sought approval for the adoption of the Joint South Hams and West Devon Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 and

## Joint Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2022-23.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In recognising the importance of downsizing to free-up additional housing, the need to both develop smaller accommodation and to offer incentives to downsize were noted;
- (b) With regard to the action relating to the establishment of a Community Benefit Society with Registered Provider status, the request was made for swift progress to be made in order to enable for the development and delivery of affordable housing in the South Hams;
- (c) Officers apologised for the incorrect initial publication of the appendices and reference was made to the correct versions having been uploaded as a supplementary paper to the agenda. A Member expressed his personal view that the format of the report (i.e. being divided into two parts: the Housing Strategy Action Plan and the Homelessness Strategy) was unhelpful and he felt that the two items should have been standalone individual agenda items.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

For Part 1 – Housing Strategy Year 2 Action Plan:

1. That progress made to date on ‘Better Homes, Better Lives’ be noted; and
2. That the Year 2 Action Plan be endorsed; and

For Part 2 – 2022/27 Homelessness Strategy:

3. That, with effect from 1 April 2022, the Joint South Hams and West Devon Homelessness Strategy 2022-27 be adopted; and
4. That, with effect from 1 April 2022, the Joint Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2022-23 be adopted.

104.

### **Revenue and Benefits Service Review Update**

E.104/21

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the service review undertaken in 2021 across the Revenues & Benefits Service, and the actions taken since then to implement the recommendations of the Review.

During discussion, reference was made to the current financial pressures that were facing households and a Member questioned whether this had started to place additional pressures on the Benefits team. In reply, officers made the following points:

- Whilst very early in the 2022/23 Financial Year, there had not yet been a noticeable impact on benefits related issues;
- It was intended that a Discretionary Benefits Payment Policy would be developed in the upcoming months that would be presented to a future Executive Meeting for further consideration; and

- A Member Briefing on the work of the Benefits Team was to be convened in the near future; and
- The general advice for all local Ward Members was that, for any constituents suffering from financial hardship who contacted them, to ask those constituents to contact the Council as soon as was practically possible.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the achievements of the Revenues & Benefits Team in maintaining core service delivery, whilst also ensuring that businesses and residents were supported throughout the pandemic through the administration of business grants, personal grants such as Track and Trace and administering benefits schemes, be recognised;
- (ii) That the approach taken following the Revenues & Benefits Review and the subsequent Implementation Plan be endorsed;
- (iii) That the progress of the Revenues & Benefits Implementation Plan be noted and a further update in six months' time be requested;
- (iv) That the recruitment of a Head of Service for Revenues and Benefits, to be funded on a self-funding basis be endorsed. That it be noted that the next iteration of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will increase both the annual staffing budget by £45,000 (the Council's share of the staffing cost) and the annual income from council tax by £45,000 (to reflect the anticipated increase in council tax collection rates by at least 0.5%); and
- (v) That it be endorsed that the stretching targets that the new Head of Service will be set, will mean that the Council will continue to improve collection rates across council tax and business rates generating significant further income for the District Council.

105.

**Climate Change and Biodiversity Action - Council net-zero update**

E.105/21

Members considered a report that set out progress and the potential carbon savings (or biodiversity net gain) from significant projects aligned to two of the three aims as stated in its Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy, these being Aim 1, reducing its carbon footprint to net-zero by 2030 and Aim 3 increasing biodiversity on its own land by 10% by 2025.

The report also contained a business case that recommended the investment of a further £500,000, in the form of a loan to Fusion Leisure (the chosen provider for the Council's leisure facilities), to install solar arrays on the four leisure centres within the District.

In discussion, the following points were made:-

- (a) If ultimately adopted, the proposed reforms to Joint Local Plan Policy DEV 32 were recognised to be ground breaking;
- (b) Widespread support was expressed for the proposal to install solar arrays on the four leisure centres in the South Hams and it was hoped that this would be the first of many similar initiatives to come forward for Member approval;
- (c) The lead Member and lead officers were thanked for their input in allocating a grant to the Sustainable South Hams (SSH) organisation. Such was the excellent work being undertaken by SSH, a Member hoped that this would be the start of a strategic partnership between the organisation and the Council;
- (d) In respect of Council Car Parks, a Member set out his vision whereby affordable housing could be developed above these Car Parks, with each of these properties having solar panels installed on their roofs;
- (e) With regard to the opportunity for installation of solar panels on agricultural buildings, it was acknowledged that the capital finance outlay was a major barrier. As a possible solution to this barrier, the Section 151 Officer advised that exploratory and feasibility works could be undertaken into whether a loan scheme could be established.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the progress on plans aligned to the aim of the Council being net-zero by 2030 and increasing biodiversity on its own land by 10% by 2025, be noted;

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the lead Executive Member for Finance to:

2. approve and agree the lending terms to Fusion Leisure for a loan of up to £500,000 to facilitate solar panel installation across all four Council Leisure Centres over the remaining term of the leisure contract, in accordance with treasury management advice; and
3. update the Council's Capital Strategy, Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 for a £500,000 loan provision to Fusion Leisure for the solar installation, in accordance with treasury management advice.

106.

**Quarter 4 Integrated Performance Management Report**

E.106/21

Members considered a report that set out the Integrated Performance Management report covering the Quarter 4 period (from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022). The report also provided detail on a revised suite of operational Key Performance Indicators for the Executive to consider.

In turn, each Executive Member presented relevant aspects of the performance report

that were related to their respective portfolio areas of responsibility and paid particular attention to those actions that were currently identified as being 'not on track'.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the progress in achieving our plans as adopted in the Better Lives for All Strategy be recognised;
- (ii) That the proposed Key Performance Indicators as set out in Appendix B of the presented agenda report be endorsed; and
- (iii) That the Executive commence work with Lead Officers on refining the 2023/24 delivery plans for consideration by Council in Autumn 2022.

107.

**Reports of Bodies - O&S Committee 17 March 2022**

E.107/21

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17 March 2022**

The Executive was invited to consider the following recommendations that had arisen from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 March 2022:

**i) O&S.61/21 Leisure Contract – Fusion Annual Report 2021**

*“That the Executive be RECOMMENDED to establish a Working Group to progress the much needed improvement works at Totnes Leisure Centre. The Working Group to consist of the Executive Lead for Leisure, the three local Ward Members, a representative of Tadpool, a representative of Fusion, and relevant lead officers. The first meeting to be held within four weeks of the Executive decision”.*

During discussion, the Executive felt that, instead of establishing a formal Working Group, it would be more appropriate for a meeting to be set up. As a consequence, it was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote was declared **CARRIED**.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That a meeting be set up within four weeks of this Executive meeting to progress the much needed improvement works at Totnes Leisure Centre with invitations to this meeting being extended to: the Executive Lead Member for Leisure; the three local Ward Members; a representative of Tadpool; a representative of Fusion, and relevant lead officers.

**ii) O&S.62/21 Better Lives For All Thematic Update: Community Wellbeing**

*“That the Executive be RECOMMENDED to NOTE that ‘Better Lives for All’ was not applying to the smaller communities in the South Hams and that it should ensure that these communities were better represented by the actions in the strategy”*

During discussion, a number of Members took issue with this recommendation and, in citing a number of examples, felt it was unjust.

As a result, Members were not willing to formally accept the recommendation and it was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that:

*'That the Executive does not accept the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of Minute Reference O&S.62/21.'*

When put to the vote, this alternative motion was declared **CARRIED**.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Executive does not accept the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of Minute Reference O&S.62/21: 'Better Lives for All Thematic Update: Community Wellbeing.'

**iii) O&S.63/21 Task and Finish Group Updates: Housing**

*"That the Executive be RECOMMENDED that:*

- 1. Officers explore the formation of a Strategic Partnership with a Housing Association (or Housing Associations) and other partners to deliver affordable rented housing through schemes similar to those mentioned at discussion point 1 of the attendant report "Affordable Rural Housing – Final Recommendations", with such partnership(s) to include the location of suitable sites within the district; and*
- 2. Officers explore the setting up of a Community Land Trust modelled on the Cornwall Community Land Trust; including the possibility of working with other Devon local authorities in its formation; and*
- 3. The list of exemplar schemes be submitted to officers and that these be used to identify best practice for sites in the South Hams."*

In discussion, the Executive felt that, specifically regarding part 3 of the recommendation, there was greater work to be undertaken by the Task and Finish Group to enable for a more informed decision to be taken. Therefore, the Executive was of the view that consideration of this matter should be deferred to a future meeting.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the conclusions of the Review be deferred to a future Executive meeting to enable for the Task and Finish Group to undertake further work.

The Meeting concluded at 11.35 am

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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