

SOUTH HAMS EXECUTIVE



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Executive** held on **Thursday, 26th May, 2022 at 10.00 am** at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Pearce
Vice Chairman

Cllr Baldry
Cllr Holway

Cllr Hawkins
Cllr Hopwood

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Abbott
Cllr O'Callaghan
Cllr Reeve
Cllr Taylor

Cllr Brazil
Cllr Pringle
Cllr Spencer

Officers:
Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director - Place & Enterprise
Director – Governance & Strategy
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Head Of Housing
Head of Operations and Support Services

1. **Minutes**
E.01/22
The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 7 April 2022 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

2. **Urgent Business**
E.02/22
The Chairman advised that she had agreed for one item of urgent business to be raised at this Committee meeting that related to the making (adoption) of the Frogmore and Sherford Neighbourhood Plan.

This item was considered urgent in light of the time constraints associated with the making of Neighbourhood Plans and would be considered at agenda item 11 (Minute E.10/22 below refers).

3. **Declarations of Interest**

E.03/22

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.

4. **Public Question Time**

E.04/22

The Leader informed that no public questions had been received in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules.

5. **Executive Forward Plan**

E.05/22

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.

6. **Housing Crisis Update - Strengthening Housing Delivery**

E.06/22

The Executive was presented with a report that provided an update on the actions and activities undertaken to date help address the Housing Crisis declared by the Council in autumn 2021.

Following a recent Resources Review, the report also set out measures that the Council was taking to deliver against the priorities, including the recommended changes to be made to the staffing levels and structure of the Housing Team.

In discussion, Members felt that the proposals demonstrated the Council's commitment to its declared Housing Crisis and the Housing Team was thanked for its hard work and tireless effort in such a difficult housing time.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed approach to increase resources within the Housing Delivery Team be endorsed and the revised Housing Team Structure detailed in Appendix 1 of the presented report be noted; and
2. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve an annual revenue cost pressure of £44,700 (SHDC share) to be built into the budget process for 2023/24 onwards, and a one off expenditure of £150,780 be funded from the 2021/22 Government Homeless Prevention grant. This funding will double the resource in the

housing delivery team and drive forward the ambitions of the Council in tackling the Housing Crisis.

7. Council Tax Rebate Discretionary Scheme

E.07/22

Consideration was given to a report that sought to enable the Executive to make a decision on the discretionary element of the Government's Council Tax Rebate scheme

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) Officers were congratulated for their performance in being able to release the funds to 92% of those households who were entitled to be in receipt;
- (b) With regard to accessing those hard to reach groups, officers set out the proposed measures that would be undertaken by the Council. These were welcomed by Members with the importance of ensuring that residents were helped, supported and protected being reiterated. In relation to a specific query, officers committed to finding out whether or not local Ward Members could be provided with resident information that they could then use to attempt to contact those hard to reach individuals within their local Wards;

It was then:

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Discretionary Council Tax Rebate policy and scheme be approved;
- (ii) That the current approach to distributing the main Government's Council Tax rebate for households in Bands A to D be endorsed; and
- (iii) That the existing discretionary support schemes the Council operate be noted and increasing the public and voluntary sector awareness of the schemes and support that are available for residents be recommended.

8. Contact Centre Service Review Update

E.08/22

The Executive considered a report that provided an update on the recently undertaken Customer Contact Centre service review.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) A Member was of the view that a target of five minutes for a telephone call to be answered was unreasonable and should be lowered. In reply, officers advised that any reduction in time target would result in the Council needing to dramatically increase officer capacity within the Contact Centre;
- (b) The importance of improving Channel Shift to reduce the volume of telephone calls into the Contact Centre was recognised;

- (c) In noting the difficulties of remotely managing and operating the Contact Centre during the pandemic, Members wished to record their thanks to the Contact Centre staff for continuing to deliver an excellent service.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the approach taken with the Contact Centre review, and the subsequent and ongoing Improvement Plan be endorsed;
2. That the performance of the Contact Centre and the recent improvement in total calls answered, and calls answered within 5 minutes be recognised; and
3. That the timescales of the Contact Centre Improvement Plan as set out in Appendix A of the presented report be noted, and that a further update on progress be brought to the Executive in six months.

9. **Planning Improvement Plan Update**

E.09/22

The Executive considered a report that provided an update on proposals to restructure the Council's Development Management and Enforcement Service as part of continuing implementation of the Planning Improvement Plan (the Plan) approved by the Executive on 16th September 2021 (minute E42/21 refers).

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the staff feedback during the consultation exercise. Since the deadline for consultation responses had now expired, the Director for Strategy and Governance provided the following summary on the staff feedback received:

- the general tone of the feedback received was positive with the current lack of management capacity being recognised. In particular, support was expressed for the proposed area based teams approach and the additional management resilience;
- there were some specific questions raised in respect of management responsibility that were made as a consequence of the two Heads of Service proposal.

The officer also advised that a comprehensive response would be produced following the consultation exercise that he would ensure was also circulated to all Members;

- (b) general support for the proposed restructure. Whilst general support was expressed and the pressure on the service was recognised amongst the membership, the ongoing recruitment challenges were also highlighted;
- (c) an additional recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that read as follows:

'That a progress review of the Service be presented to the Executive six months from when the Assistant Director has been in post.'

In support of the addition, Members felt that it would be useful to receive a progress update that set out the success of the Improvement Plan.

When put to the vote, the addition was declared **CARRIED**.

It was then:

RESOLVED

- i) That the proposed restructure of the Development Management Service be endorsed;
- ii) That a progress review of the Service be presented to the Executive six months from when the Assistant Director has been in post; and
- iii) That it be noted that the cost of the restructure, £98,000 per annum, will be funded for the first three years from the additional planning income held in the Planning Earmarked Reserve.

10. **Urgent Item: Frogmore and Sherford Neighbourhood Plan**

E.10/22

As highlighted above (Minute E.02/22 refers), the Executive considered an urgent item that sought approval of the making (adoption) of the Frogmore and Sherford Neighbourhood Plan.

In discussion, congratulations were extended to the Neighbourhood Planning Group in reaching this milestone. That being said, the importance of the parish making consultation responses on local planning applications based upon their Neighbourhood Plan was also emphasised.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Frogmore and Sherford Neighbourhood Development Plan be made (adopted).

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINUTE E.06/22 PART 2 (WHICH IS A RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 14 JULY 2022) WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON WEDNESDAY, 8 JUNE 2022 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).

The Meeting concluded at 11.05 am

Signed by:

Chairman
