

SOUTH HAMS EXECUTIVE



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Executive** held on **Thursday, 15th September, 2016** at **10.00 am** at the **Repton Room - Follaton House**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Tucker
Vice Chairman Cllr Ward

Cllr Bastone
Cllr Hicks

Cllr Gilbert
Cllr Wright

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Baldry
Cllr Bramble
Cllr Brown
Cllr Green
Cllr Holway
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Pringle
Cllr Wingate

Cllr Blackler
Cllr Brazil
Cllr Cane
Cllr Hodgson
Cllr Hopwood
Cllr Pennington
Cllr Saltern

Officers:

Darren Arulvasagam

Group Manager Business
Development
Section 151 Officer
Executive Director
Senior Case Manager

Lisa Buckle
Sophie Hosking
Kathryn Trant

20. **Minutes**

E.20/16

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 21 July 2016 were confirmed as a true record and signed off by the Chairman.

21. **Declarations of Interest**

E.21/16

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting but none were made.

22. **Public Question Time**

E.22/16

In accordance with Executive Procedure Rules, the following question had been submitted:

Question from Ms Caroline Moxley:

Will SHDC executive please ask our MP:

The conservative party manifesto pledged to implement the referendum result, but also to protect the economy. Will you assure us that the economy and well being of the South Hams takes precedence over implementing a consultative non binding referendum?

In responding to the question, the Leader stated that he would liaise with both MPs but whatever resulted from Brexit, the council would have a duty to abide by. This authority considered both economy and well being as priority areas and business growth within the district outstripped the national position.

To demonstrate this, the Leader went on to advise that the Council had recently received an award from the Federation of Small Businesses in respect of 'Better Business for All'. It was an award received by all local authorities across Devon for their work in promoting businesses.

He concluded by confirming that the Council would continue to support the economy and local businesses, whatever the outcome of the Brexit fallout.

23. **Annual Treasury Management Report 2015/16**

E.23/16

Members were presented with a report that set out the income from investments and percentage return and sought authority to approve the prudential and treasury indicators as set out in the presented report.

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Support Services introduced the report. In response to questions regarding the Council investing in opportunities for higher rate returns such as social housing, the Section 151 Officer advised that it may be appropriate to ask Capita to undertake an options appraisal of a list of investment vehicles including expected return and level of risk.

The Leader concluded this item by reminding Members about the budget workshop that was scheduled to take place on 21 September 2016.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the actual 2015/16 prudential and treasury indicators as set out in the presented report be approved; and
2. That the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2015/16 be noted

24. **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/18 - 2021/22**

E.24/16

Members were asked to consider a report that presented an annual review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It was based on a financial forecast over a rolling five year timeframe to 2021/22 which would help to ensure resources were aligned to the outcomes in Our Plan. The forecast was intended to provide a framework within which decisions could be made regarding future service provision and council tax levels whilst building an approach that guaranteed the longer term viability for South Hams District Council.

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Support Services introduced the report and drew Members attention to the key elements. He explained that the elements within the first recommendation would be discussed as part of the budget workshop to be held on 21 September 2016.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- Members discussed the growth in business rates and the s151 Officer advised that an analysis of rateable values would be carried out. In response to a question regarding business rates appeals, the s151 Officer advised that there would be a revaluation of business rates in 2017 and it was expected that more appeals may be forthcoming as a result;
- The s151 Officer advised that whilst the Council could demonstrate a broadly balanced budget until 2020/21, there was some uncertainty after that date as existing grants would be lost and rolled into one figure with business rates;
- The Group Manager Business Development responded to questions regarding potential investment opportunities;
- The Lead Executive Member for Business Development confirmed that the Local Plan was moving through housing numbers into the economy and there was some work ongoing about how they could be joined up;
- Finally, the Deputy Leader advised that an update from the Economy Working Group would be presented to the next meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 6 October 2016.

It was then:

RESOLVED:

1. That the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered and indications given of the budget principles to be adopted, with particular reference to:
 - The level of council tax increase
 - The use of New Homes Bonus to support the revenue budget

- Bringing forward income generation and budget savings and
- Maintaining the current Council policy on the minimum level of unearmarked reserves being £1.5 million (as set out in section 10 of the presented report)

That Council be **RECOMMENDED**:

2. To accept the four year financial settlement being offered by the Government as set out in Section 2 of the presented report;
3. That the approval of the Efficiency Statement (for the four year funding settlement) be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader, Executive Portfolio Holder for Support Services and the s151 Officer (COP Lead Finance); and
4. To inform Town and Parish Councils on an annual grant reduction of 9.85% for the next three years in the Local Council Tax Support Grant, as set out in Appendix E of the presented report.

25. **Write Off Report Q4 2015/16**

E.25/16

Members considered a composite report that detailed the debts for all revenue streams within the Revenue and Benefits Service remit up to the value of £5,000, written off by the S151 Officer under delegated authority.

The Lead Executive Member for Support Services introduced the presented agenda report.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Financial Regulations, it be noted that the s151 Officer had authorised the write-off of individual South Hams District Council debts totalling £1,657.34 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 of the presented agenda report.

26. **Write Off Report Q1 2016/17**

E.26/16

Members considered a composite report that detailed the debts for all revenue streams within the Revenue and Benefits Service remit up to the value of £5,000, written off by the S151 Officer under delegated authority, and for those debts in excess of £5,000 for which permission to write off had been sought.

The Lead Executive Member for Support Services introduced the report and provided information in relation to the individual debt of over £5,000.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That in accordance with Financial Regulations, it be noted

that the s151 Officer had authorised the write-off of individual South Hams District Council debts totalling £15,524.87 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 of the presented agenda report.

2. That the write off of individual debts in excess of £5,000, totalling £5,394.07 as detailed in Table 3 of the presented agenda report, be agreed.

27. **Consultation Response on 'Self Sufficient Local Government - 100% Business Rates Retention'**

E.27/16

Members were asked to consider a report that set out a proposed response to the consultation on the introduction of 100% Business Rates Retention and other reforms to the business rates regime. The consultation period was due to close on 26 September 2016.

The Portfolio Holder for Support Services introduced the report. The Leader advised that in view of the late circulation of the report, Members would have the opportunity to forward their comments to the s151 Officer over the following week. The recommendation was therefore amended to enable any comments to be taken into account or any minor amendments to be made to the response.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That approval of the content of the Authority's response to the Consultation document 'Self-sufficient local government: 100% Business Rates Retention' be delegated to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader, Executive Portfolio Holder for Support Services and the s151 Officer.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF E.24/16 (parts 2, 3 and 4), and E.27/16, WHICH ARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2016, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON MONDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2016 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).

The Meeting concluded at 10.55 am

Signed by:

Chairman
