

# SOUTH HAMS EXECUTIVE



## **Minutes** of a meeting of the **South Hams Executive** held on **Thursday, 18th June, 2015** at **10.00 am** at the **Cary Room - Follaton House**

Present: **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Tucker  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Ward

Cllr Bastone  
Cllr Hicks

Cllr Gilbert  
Cllr Wright

### **In attendance:**

#### Councillors:

Cllr Blackler  
Cllr Bramble  
Cllr Brown  
Cllr Foss  
Cllr Hawkins  
Cllr Hitchins  
Cllr Hodgson  
Cllr Holway

Cllr May  
Cllr Pearce  
Cllr Pennington  
Cllr Rowe  
Cllr Steer  
Cllr Vint  
Cllr Wingate

#### Officers:

Executive Director – Strategy & Commissioning  
Executive Director – Service Delivery & Commercial Development  
Group Manager – Customer First  
Group Manger – Support Services  
CoP Lead – Assets  
CoP Lead - Finance

### 1. **Minutes**

E.01/15

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 5 March 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

E.02/15

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting and the following were made:

Cllr H D Bastone declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 7: 'Dartmouth Indoor Pool Update' (Minute E.04/15 below refers). He left the meeting during the discussion and debate on this item.

Cllr R D Gilbert declared a personal interest in item 11: 'Disposal of land at Trebble Park, Kingsbridge' (Minute E.08/15 below refers), by virtue of knowing residents who lived at Trebble Park. As a local Ward Member, he abstained from the vote on this item.

3. **Public Question Time**

E.03/15

In accordance with Executive procedure rules, it was noted that two public questions had been received. The questions and responses were as follows:

1. Question to Cllr Tucker from Mr Brian Boughton:

*If Millwood Homes do not submit a more suitable planning application to South Hams Council, could the LDF site for 210 new homes in Dartmouth be lost to long term land banking?*

Cllr Tucker responded that since the question had first been submitted prior to the local elections, the planning application had been refused and was now at appeal stage. The Planning Inspector's decision was awaited. In terms of landbanking, that was the privilege of the landowner and there was no intention to compulsorily purchase the land.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Boughton asked how the Leader could reach the position of not compulsorily purchasing the land. The Leader responded that it was his personal view and, at the time of the consultation on the Local Development Framework, that was also the view of many Dartmouth residents. He concluded by confirming that Dartmouth councillors could bring a proposal to the Council at a later date.

2. Question to Cllr Bastone from Mrs Susan Hannis:

*"Faced with possible reductions in housing association properties in the South Hams due to tenants exercising their 'right to buy', how do you plan to safeguard the current supply of social housing for rent and expand it to meet high local demand for affordable rented homes?"*

Cllr Bastone responded that "we are in a state of uncertainty at this time about this proposal. It was announced during the run up to the

election, which was followed up with the inclusion in the Queens Speech, no further details have as yet been given. I understand from our Housing Association partners that they are awaiting further details before responding. As a rural local authority with high house prices and low average wages, we are deeply concerned about any proposals that could undermine our valuable rented affordable housing stock. We are actively lobbying the Local Government Association and have written a letter outlining our concerns to the cabinet minister representing the Lords on Communities and Local Government. Our Local MP Dr Sarah Wollaston has been made aware of our feelings on this matter and how the policy could have negative unintended consequences for rural areas. She is suggesting to government, that caveats to the policy will be required in areas of outstanding natural beauty and where affordable housing supply is short, such as South Hams District Council”.

By way of supplementary comments, Mrs Hannis stated that she was pleased to hear of the Council’s concerns and added that there was an opportunity for people to provide their own affordable housing through Community Land Trusts and Eco housing schemes. Cllr Bastone responded that these were all matters to take forward within Our Plan.

#### 4. **Dartmouth Indoor Pool Update**

E.04/15

Members were asked to consider a report that set out a number of options and sought authority to progress the matter of Dartmouth Indoor Pool.

The Leader introduced the report and advised that he was aware of the importance of this matter to the people of Dartmouth and the time and effort put into the project by the Trustees. He also thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for its work (Minute O&S.5/15 refers).

He outlined his concerns to the Members, but added that the recommendation was clear and provided a way forward with no further expense to the Council.

The Deputy Leader noted concerns relating to the proposed school use and the impact that may have on future revenue. She hoped that the Trustees could use the energy and enthusiasm they had so far demonstrated to encourage footfall, and on the whole, supported the recommendation.

The Portfolio Holder for Support Services made a number of comments relating to the business case, the failure to meet Sport England specifications and the lack of a physical link to the existing leisure centre. He also noted that this was a superb community project that had raised significant sums of money and felt the recommendation should be supported.

Another Member **PROPOSED** an amendment to the published recommendation, which was subsequently **SECONDED**, and when put to the vote was declared **CARRIED**, to ensure that any land transfer be completed by 3 July 2015, in order to comply with the deadlines outlined in the presented agenda report.

A local Ward Member thanked the Executive for its comments and hoped that the Trustees and the officers had the capacity to ensure the required work was done within the specified deadlines. He noted that he had requested the release of s106 funds to be transferred to support the inclusion of a link between the Indoor Pool and the existing leisure centre. The Leader responded that this matter could be addressed at the next meeting of the Executive when the Capital Programme would be next discussed.

To conclude this item, the COP Lead for Assets confirmed that any land transfer would be based on the existing plans but that did not preclude further transfers at a later date.

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the grant of £400,000 be paid to Dartmouth and District Indoor Pool Trust (DDIPT), with the land being transferred to Dartmouth Town Council or DDIPT along with it,  
  
or, if the land transfer cannot be agreed by 3 July 2015,
2. That the drawdown of the grant to DDIPT be held until the initial market feedback on the operation costs of the future facility are received via the Leisure Review (est. September 2015) and any revenue funding deficit resolved.

#### **5. Write Off Report**

E.05/15

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. The Finance COP Lead responded to questions relating to how overpayments arise and how, once written off, attempts were still made to recover outstanding monies. Members suggested that a report be tabled to a later meeting advising of sums recovered following them being written off.

Members also noted that the number of cases being written off had risen. The Leader stated that the increase in numbers reflected the economic climate and other Members suggested that central

government should be lobbied to support authorities whose collection rates were being impacted as a result of austerity measures.

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 £102,574.01 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 as detailed in Table 3 of the presented agenda report be agreed.

6. **Reports of Other Bodies**

E.06/15

**RESOLVED**

That the following be received and that any recommendations contained therein be approved:

a) **Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 4 June 2015**

[Note: the recommendation arising from minute O&S.5/15 was dealt with under agenda item 7 – Minute E.04/15 above refers]

7. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

E.07/15

**RESOLVED**

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.

8. **Disposal of land at Trebble Park, Kingsbridge**

E.08/15

Members were asked to consider an exempt report that sought authority to progress the disposal of land at Trebble Park, Kingsbridge.

Following discussion, it was then:

**RESOLVED**

- 1 That the freehold disposal of the land (Roadway at Trebble Park, Kingsbridge) be approved as identified in Appendix 1 of the exempt agenda report;
- 2 That the principle that the Council receives a percentage share of the net land receipt of the 'K1' land for selling the land (under an Option Agreement) to either the adjoining land owner or subsequent purchaser of the land be approved; and
- 3 That authority be delegated to the Assets Community of Practice Lead in consultation with the Assets Portfolio Holder to conclude the legal and financial negotiations to complete an Option Agreement and any other legal documentation in this matter

**(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON MONDAY, 29 JUNE 2015 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).**

The Meeting concluded at 11.10 am

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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