

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON
THURSDAY 22 JANUARY 2015**

Panel Members in attendance			
* Denotes attendance		∅ Denotes apology for absence	
*	Cllr A D Barber (Chairman)	*	Cllr J T Pennington
∅	Cllr J I G Blackler	∅	Cllr R Rowe
*	Cllr B F Cane	*	Cllr P C Smerdon (Vice Chairman)
*	Cllr B S Cooper	*	Cllr M Stone
*	Cllr P Coulson	*	Cllr R J Vint
*	Cllr C M Pannell	*	Cllr K R H Wingate

Non Panel Members also in attendance and participating
Cllrs H D Bastone, B E Carson, R D Gilbert, M J Hicks, P W Hitchins, T R Holway, J A Pearce, J W Squire, R J Tucker and L A H Ward
Non Panel Members also in attendance and not participating
Cllrs I Bramble and S A E Wright

Item No	Minute Ref No below refers	Officers in attendance and participating
All Items		Group Manager Commercial Services (GM CS) and Member Services Manager
9	EE.38/14	Parks and Greenspaces Officer, Green Infrastructure Coordinator
12	EE.41/14	Estates Manager
14	EE.43/14	Environment Services Manager and Commercial Waste Manager

EE.32/14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Panel held on 13 November 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EE.33/14 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that there was a typographical error on the agenda front pages and that item 12 should read 'Renewable Energy Solar Panels on Council Assets'. He drew Members attention to information that had been circulated relating to a Rural Broadband update. Finally, he asked the Executive Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economy and Community to update Members on the position in relation to an outstanding query on a renewable energy matter. The Portfolio Holder set out the background to the issue, and advised that the Council was waiting for a response from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) before further action could be taken.

EE.34/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Cllr Pannell declared a personal interest in item 9: 'Green Infrastructure Plan' (Minute EE.38/14 below refers) by virtue of being a member and volunteer of the National Trust. She remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote thereon;

Cllr Cane declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 14: 'Trade Waste Fees and Charges' (Minute EE.42/14 below refers) by virtue of being a Trade Waste customer and he left the meeting before the start of this item.

EE.35/14 PUBLIC FORUM

No items were raised.

EE.36/14 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Chairman advised that the only forthcoming report of relevance to this Panel was the AONB Update report, which was to be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 29 January 2015.

EE.37/14 PRESENTATION FROM SOUTH WEST WATER (SWW)

The Chairman welcomed Mr Nick Murch and Mr Steve Rosser from South West Water, who had agreed to attend to respond to questions that had been raised as follows:

In respect of concerns about eroding river banks at Ermington, the representatives confirmed that river banks were the responsibility of the riparian landowner. A local Ward Member maintained that the bank had moved as a result of work undertaken by SWW putting in a new sewer pipe, but another Member confirmed that rivers do move and the riparian landowner had responsibility. Another local Ward Member reiterated the concerns and suggested that a meeting of those concerned may be helpful. She also thanked SWW for their communication with traders in respect of issues in Modbury, as this approach had been positive. The Chairman agreed that local Ward Members could progress this issue with SWW representatives and local landowners.

In respect of issues at Modbury, the representatives confirmed that works were ongoing and should be complete by end March/early April 2015. In terms of keeping the river clear, this was not a SWW responsibility although they did undertake to keep the river clear at discharge points where it was safe to do so.

In respect of issues at Salcombe, the representative gave a detailed response in respect of how SWW wanted to undertake phasing of the work required, what would be done and the steps taken to progress this matter, despite there being no funding support from Devon County Council. A meeting was due to take place between the Mayor of Salcombe and the SWW delivery team, although the Ward Members had not been made aware of it. The County Council Member for the area suggested that contact should also be made with him, as he could assist in progressing the discussions with County Highways Engineers, who had to give permission for works to be undertaken on the highway. Local Ward Members reiterated their concerns about the importance of the timing of the works on the local economy.

One Member questioned whether towns were approaching capacity and whether this would require a limit on development or new infrastructure. In response, the representative advised that SWW could not refuse planning applications and they did have a strategic planning department that held regular liaison meetings. Most sites currently had adequate headroom.

Members raised additional queries in relation to whether Wembury needed a new sewer system, a situation in Kingsbridge around Mill Street where there had been no recent communication from SWW and future plans that SWW may have in respect of passing responsibility for culvert watercourses to landowners. The representatives agreed that these queries would have a response as soon as they were able after the meeting. In addition, any future queries could be forwarded in writing via the Member Services Manager.

The Chairman concluded this item by thanking the representatives from SWW for their attendance.

EE.38/14 **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

Members were asked to consider a report which advised that the Council had produced a Draft South Hams Green Infrastructure Plan and sought their recommendation for adoption of the Plan.

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Assets introduced the Plan and the officers who would give a presentation on the plan today.

The Parks and Greenspaces Officer set out the requirement, as detailed in the National Planning Policy Framework, for a strategic approach by local authorities to creation and enhancement of green infrastructure. He also advised that as this document would sit within 'Our Plan', it would be re-titled Green Infrastructure Framework and the recommendation would be amended accordingly. He went on to explain how the document had been developed through the South Devon Green Infrastructure Partnership. The Green Infrastructure Coordinator then gave Members a powerpoint presentation which supported the report and framework.

Following the powerpoint presentation, the points raised included the following:

- In response to a query about who would be responsible for maintenance of green infrastructure at Sherford, a Member was advised that this detail formed part of the s106 agreement. He stated that continuing commitment was important. Other Members felt that maintenance of green space was an important issue with any development;
- Another Member raised concerns about how maintenance of public spaces was financed. The Green Infrastructure Coordinator agreed that it was challenging to obtain grant funding to maintain spaces. The Member added that he had concerns that the Framework should include a clear indication of how spaces would be maintained rather than be an aspirational document that set out projects and actions that could not be achieved;
- The Green Infrastructure Coordinator confirmed that promotion of allotments and community orchard space would be part of the Framework. One Member asked that allotments were not placed next to main roads;
- A local Ward Member asked that the Woodland around Dartmouth Castle be maintained. In response, the Parks and Greenspaces Officer confirmed that a five year management plan had been drawn up and a restoration programme had been embarked on;
- Some Members were surprised that the Dartmoor National Park Authority was not a member of the Partnership. It was confirmed that communication with them did take place and there was scope for working together. There were also concerns that the Framework was split into four areas around the market towns as there were green spaces around the Plymouth Fringe that were of importance and a Member suggested that a future Council may like to consider reinstating the Plymouth Urban Fringe Group;
- Another Member stated that some of the areas of open space were for people of all abilities and it was important to enable access e.g. enough car parking spaces to enable people to get to green space areas and enjoy them. Members also asked that cycle paths be for cyclists and footpaths for pedestrians as joining the two together did not always work well;
- In response to a query on the invasion of non-native species, the Parks and Greenspaces Officer advised that there was a duty of care on the Council estate but district wide was the subject of a broader initiative by the Environment Agency;

- One Member asked that there be a prioritisation of projects and this was agreed as a number of aspirational projects were included. A number of Members also agreed that an annual delivery plan would be beneficial as the Framework would have to be sufficiently flexible to include opportunities as they arose.

Finally, a number of Members praised the Framework and the report. The point was reiterated that Members did not want it to be a Framework with no action and principles of sustainable management would be embedded going forward.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That the Executive **RECOMMEND** to Council that the South Hams Green Infrastructure Framework be adopted and an annual delivery plan be published, with any amendments prior to adoption being delegated to the Natural Environment and Recreation Manager in consultation with the Chairman of Economy and Environment Scrutiny Panel and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Assets.

EE.39/14

TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE - RENEWABLE ENERGY SOLAR PANELS ON COUNCIL ASSETS

The Vice Chairman updated the Panel on the recent meeting of the Task and Finish Group and advised that the Group had received a presentation from a representative of a company that had experience of siting solar panels on car parks.

During the presentation, it became evident that large scale multi storey car parks, such as those at airports, were more suitable than smaller operational car parks such as those within the district, where maintenance and vandalism could be an issue. However, the representative had agreed to provide further information and costings.

The Estates Manager responded to a number of questions and Members asked that solar panels on assets be considered. Whilst there may currently be an issue with the condition of a leisure centre roof, for example, allowing solar panels may generate income to enable cross subsidising the cost of a replacement roof. Members asked that this be taken into account in any future contract negotiations.

The GM CS added that the meeting had enabled a better understanding of current technology and where the Council may be able to use that in the future.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

EE.40/14 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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 items of business in order to avoid the likely disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

EE.41/14 TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES – WASTE POLICY

The GM CS updated Members on the position with vehicle procurement. In response to a query raised, she also confirmed that the vehicle maintenance contract was currently out to tender.

EE.42/14 TRADE WASTE FEES AND CHARGES

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment Services introduced the item. Following a brief discussion, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Executive **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

1. the continuation of present fees and charges (2014/15) as set out in Appendix A of the presented agenda report be approved (with the exception of Landfill sacks zone 2);
2. the green landfill collection sacks be provided at the capacity suggested in para 1.6 of the presented agenda report; and
3. The GM CS be authorised to allow a discounted rate, of up to 20%, on multiple container contracts for an introductory period when competing to attract new business.

(Meeting started at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.05 pm)

Chairman