

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF
THE INFORMAL EXECUTIVE
HELD VIA SKYPE ON THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2020**

Members in attendance by skype:			
* Denotes attendance			
∅ Denotes apologies for absence			
*	Cllr K J Baldry	*	Cllr N A Hopwood
*	Cllr H D Bastone (Vice Chairman)	∅	Cllr D W May
*	Cllr J D Hawkins	*	Cllr J A Pearce (Chairman)

Also in attendance
Cllrs Abbott, Birch, Holway, Long, O’Callaghan, Pringle, Reeve, Rowe, Smerdon, Spencer, Sweett, and Taylor.

Officers in attendance and participating		
All items		S151 Officer; Deputy Chief Executive; Director of Governance and Assurance; Director of Place and Enterprise; Head of Strategy and Projects; Democratic Services Manager; Specialist Democratic Services
Items 8	IE.4/19	Specialist Place Making
Items 9 & 10	IE.7/19 & IE. 8/19	Senior Specialist – Car Parking and toilets
Item 12	IE.10/19	Senior Specialist – Assets
Item 13	IE.11/19	Head of Commissioning & Contracts

IE.1/19 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

The protocol for the meeting was outlined, in light of the change from a formal Executive Meeting to an Informal Executive.

Items 8 and 9 (Reference IE.6/19 and IE.7/19 below refer) were due to be matters that could be approved at the formal Executive meeting. If this informal meeting was still minded to make a recommendation on these agenda items, then it would be a matter for the Deputy Chief Executive to decide whether it was appropriate to exercise his ‘Emergency Powers’ and make one (or both) of these decisions on behalf of the Executive.

Items 7, 10, 11, 12, and 14 (Reference IE.5/19, IE.8/19, IE.9/19, IE.10/19 and IE.12/19) were matters that were due to be recommendations to the next Council meeting. It was noted that the views arising from this meeting and the agenda report and (any) appendices would be sent to all Members with an opportunity to ask (any) further questions and make (any) further comments. Once the deadline for comments had expired, then the Deputy Chief Executive would consider all of the points raised before deciding whether or not he wishes to exercise his ‘Emergency Powers’ and make the decisions on behalf of the Council. Officers also confirmed that legislation dictated that some decisions could only be made by the full

Council and not under 'Emergency Powers' provisions and these would need to be referred to the next formal Council meeting.

IE.2/19 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 6 February 2020 were not able to be signed off as a 'true and correct record' since this was now an Informal Executive meeting. These minutes would be carried forward to the next formal Executive Meeting, currently 14 May 2020.

IE.3/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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.

IE.4/19 **EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**

Members were presented with an interim Executive Forward Plan setting out items on the agenda for Executive meetings for the next four months and noted its content.

IE.5/19 **COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION FOR CARE LEAVERS AND COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM FOR LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY**

Members were presented with a report outlining recommendations to bring long term empty homes back into use. Following clarification that the number of homes involved was relatively small, and that each was carefully scrutinized, it was **RESOLVED** that the Informal Executive:

1. Notes that there is a scheme in place run by Devon County Council to assist Care Leavers under the age of 25 with the cost of their Council Tax bill.

2. **RECOMMEND** to Council to:

(a) effect an increase in the Council Tax Premium from the current 50% to the relevant maximums set down in the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018.

(b) increase the Council Tax Premium to 100% for properties that have been empty for 2 years or more*, this to be effective from 1 April 2020 onwards.

(c) that, to increase the Council Tax Premium to 200% for properties that have been empty for 5 years or more*, this to be effective from 1 April 2020 onwards.

(d) that, to increase the Council Tax Premium to 300% for properties that have been empty for 10 years or more*, this to be effective from 1 April 2021 onwards.

(* any period of not exceeding six weeks, where the property is not empty, shall be disregarded for the purposes of calculating the two year period).

3. Council be **RECOMMENDED** to ensure that increases in the Council Tax Premium for the 2020/21 Financial Year be effective from 1 October 2020, to allow for affected Council Taxpayers to take action (independently or with assistance from the Council) to bring their property back in to use (NOTE. the increase for 2021/22 will take effect from 1 April of that year).

IE.6/19

RELEASE OF SECTION 106 FUNDS FOR AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT AT ST ANNS CHAPEL

A report was considered which would allow the Council to use S106 monies to provide affordable homes by converting the St Anns Chapel into 13 homes (3 open market, 5 discount sales, 3 affordable rent, and 2 landowner. The 5 rented homes and 3 discounted sales would be covenanted to have a local connection to Bigbury; and the 3 open market homes would have a covenant to insist they were primary residence only and local connection only as this is tied to the properties and not the purchasers.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

The Informal Executive support the Deputy Chief Executive utilising his 'Emergency Powers' to approve the allocation of Section 106 funds for Affordable Housing projects as set out below:

- a) £97,700.91 – from the contribution from the former Old Chapel Inn, St Anns Chapel, Bigbury to spend on a community housing scheme at St Anns Chapel being developed by South Hams District Council; and
- b) £65,193.00 – from the contributions from the Hollywell Stores, Bigbury to spend on a community housing scheme at St Anns Chapel being developed by South Hams District Council.

IE.7/19

RE-PROCUREMENT FOR CASHLESS PARKING PAYMENT SYSTEMS

The Lead Officer outlined the report which sought approval to commence the tender process to re-procure the cashless parking payment system contract for a period of four years, with the ability to extend for two years in accordance with the Council's Procurement Rules. This tender is for the procurement of the cashless parking payment system in all of the Council owned off street car parks. The

cashless parking payment contract allows motorists to pay for their parking by mobile phone, internet/web page or smart phone application. It was confirmed that cash payments would still be acceptable and that officers are investigating the addition of bank card reader equipment being added to the carparks.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Informal Executive support the Deputy Chief Executive utilising his 'Emergency Powers' to agree:

1. To the commencement of a collaborative procurement tender process with nine other Devon authorities as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the attendant report for the re-procurement of the cashless parking payment system be approved; and
2. To enter into a contract for four years with the appointed supplier.

IE.8/19

PARKING PERMIT REVIEW

Members discussed the report outlining the methodology for standardising parking permits across the District with the aim of bringing more parking spaces into use for day trippers and shoppers. Following a request, the Lead Officer agreed to send Members all the public feedback received so far. The Lead Member outlined the points to the report's recommendation.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Informal Executive **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that:

1. the permit charges and permits be amended in accordance with Appendix A;
2. the proposed Parking Permit Review be deferred at least until the Autumn (i.e. not before 1 September 2020); and
3. with immediate effect, Parking Permits be put back on sale at their existing prices.
4. As it be acknowledged that consultation has been undertaken with towns and parishes but a further 21-day public consultation will be undertaken following the Council meeting (as outlined at paragraph 3.4 of the presented agenda report).

IE.9/19

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A report was given to Members outlining the joint approach to be taken by South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council and Plymouth City Council in how they would all engage with their communities. The primary aim of this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was to ensure that consultation is meaningful. It was

recommended that SCIs were reviewed every five years, with South Hams last reviewing in 2012.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Informal Executive **RECOMMENDED** to Council that, subject to West Devon and Plymouth agreeing likewise, the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is formally adopted under section 23 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

IE.10/19 **FOLLATON HOUSE: STRATEGIC ACCOMMODATION REVIEW**

Members were presented with a report that set out the findings of the Accommodation Working Group.

Although a Member stated his opposition to recommendation 1, other Members (who were also Members of the Working Group) stated that the business case was compelling for the Council to remain at Follaton House for the foreseeable future.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Informal Executive **RECOMMENDED** to Council that:

1. South Hams District Council remains at Follaton House for the foreseeable future recognising that the net accommodation costs (£150,000 as set out in 4.4.) represent good value for money;
2. The Council considers developing a wedding venue in the Listed Building with effect from 2021 and that the Accommodation Working Group and officers agree a plan of how the interior of Follaton House should be reshaped before officers procure a more detailed cost plan and tender for associated improvement works to the House and Garden. A sum of up to £30,000 is allocated from the Land and Development Earmarked Reserve for this purpose; and
3. A sum of £25,000 is allocated from the Land and Development Earmarked Reserve to undertake infrastructure improvements to Follaton Arboretum to enhance use of the site by staff, tenants and visitors and also to support biodiversity and carbon capture in response to the Council's commitment to tackle climate change. This funding would enable match funding to be sought for improvement works.

(NOTE. Cllr Baldry advised that he did not support part 1 of the recommendation)

IE.11/19 **IMPLEMENTING A NEW RECYCLING SERVICE**

The Lead Member presented the exempt update to the implementation of the new recycling service covering the increase in costs associated with the new scheme. It was noted that whilst delivery of the service implementation remains on target, this may be impacted with the

current COVID-19 situation, and that there would be financial implications if this were to occur.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Informal Executive **RECOMMENDED** to Council to:

1. note the progress and future plan in relation to the implementation of the new recycling service.
2. approve the increase in the cost of building the new depot at Ivybridge, as set out in Appendix A, to be funded by internal borrowing and to build this increased cost into the Budget for 2021-22. This amounts to an increase of £25,600 in paying back the borrowing costs per year, as set out in Appendix A.
3. approve the increase for the capital costs of the containers and their distribution, as set out in Appendix A, to be funded by internal borrowing and to build this increased cost into the Budget for 2021-22. This amounts to an increase of £8,852 in paying back the borrowing costs per year, as set out in Appendix A.
4. approve the increase from £125,000 to £175,000 for the one-off costs of implementation of the Devon Aligned Service. To fund the increase of £50,000 from the New Homes Bonus Earmarked Reserve in 2020/21.

(Meeting commenced at 2:00 pm and concluded at 3:17 pm)