

# Better lives for all

A vision for South Hams



September 2021



South Hams  
District Council





# A vision for South Hams

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*A place to prosper*





## The South Hams we know

Situated in one of the most beautiful locations imaginable, South Hams is seen as a haven, a popular tourist destination, a retirement dream and a rural heartland. With over 60 miles of stunning coast and countryside that is designated as an Area of Outstanding Beauty, there is nowhere quite like South Hams.

Home to 86,000 people, South Hams' flourishing green and blue landscapes and breathtaking scenery provides a moment of calm, a place to just be, and a place to breathe.

We are an incredibly popular destination for tourists with a largely seasonal economy. This, coupled with a high percentage of second homes, means housing affordability is a real challenge for our residents.





# *A place to breathe*





Let us take you on a journey through our picturesque coastlines, ancient woodlands, and rural homeland. Gaze upon our thriving market towns and picturesque villages, each one playing a vital role in shaping our future and driving our economy.

Imagine taking a boat trip if you will, from Wembury Bay to the River Dart. Take in the medicinal sea air and marvel at the vastness of the sea. Travel up the river inlets to the stunning villages of Noss Mayo and Newton Ferrers. Along the way why not enjoy the hospitality and the stunning local produce from our rural and coastal communities. Taste the wares of our successful shellfish industry which is also exported across the UK and Europe. The scenery is stunning and you could all too easily overlook the real and costly threat of coastal erosion faced by our seaside communities in the years ahead.

Further round the coast you will discover the golden sands of beaches at Thurlestone, South Milton, and Hope Cove and visit some of the National Trust's local gems, including Overbecks, Coletton Fishacre, Greenway, and acres of woodland and farmland.





*A place to discover*





Our Towns are rich with culture and heritage. Explore the Port of Dartmouth, with its Castle and enjoy the vibrant activities of Salcombe Harbour, or meander through the shops in Kingsbridge.

Each coastal town has a diverse business community and a pioneering spirit but changing consumer demands and lower than national average wages mean that our towns must continue to adapt in order to thrive.

Further inland South Hams has several modern commuter towns, such as Woolwell, Sherford, and Ivybridge, all of which are expanding to meet the needs of Plymouth; itself a city with big ambitions.

**We know we have our challenges. But by working together, we can seize every opportunity to enhance and protect the very special environment and the unique economy that we are proud to be custodians of.**





# *A place to protect*





## Our 20 year vision for South Hams

**There is no denying that South Hams is an incredibly special place. At the forefront of our planning for the future is ensuring the wellbeing and prosperity of residents, stimulating a resilient and diverse economy and protecting the built and natural environment.**

Underpinning our vision, we must ensure that we deliver quality Council services that are responsive to the needs of South Hams, its residents and businesses.

We have a broad basis for this strategy. We have already pushed ahead to develop a Housing Strategy and Climate and Biodiversity Strategy – both supported by detailed action plans.

The Covid-19 pandemic may have held us up but our ambition is not dimmed. We will deliver with renewed vigour over the next few years, achieving improvement and opportunity for the lives of our residents.

Together we will support better lives for all.

Cllr Judy Pearce,  
Leader South Hams District Council





# *A place to grow*



# Achieving our Vision

These themes set out our key deliverables for the next three year period to May 2024.



## Adapting & mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity

An environment where people and nature thrive together



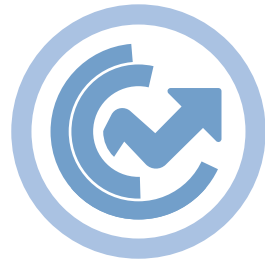
## Improving homes

Better homes enabling better lives for all



## Protecting, conserving & enhancing our built and natural environment

Planning for our future, celebrating our past



## Stimulating a thriving economy

A district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and space for business to grow



## Strengthening community wellbeing

Strong and prosperous communities where residents live healthy lives and are empowered to make a positive impact



## Delivering quality Council services

Delivering quality services to our residents and communities





*A place to inspire*





## How we are working towards realising our Vision

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Dartmoor National Park
- South Hams District Boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority Boundaries

- Major roads
- Main roads
- Mainline railway

District wide Community Grants & Crowdfunding specifically to support the shift to more sustainable South Hams

- 1 Revamping two play areas in Totnes – Westonfields & Collapark
- 2 Work with the Town Council to bring forward a housing scheme for adults with learning disabilities
- 3 Investing £9m in Ivybridge Town Centre
- 4 Plymouth and South Devon Freeport creating jobs and a hotbed for innovation
- 5 Supporting (through S106) the renewal of Torfield Play Area
- 6 Working with the NHS to deliver a £4.7m Health and Wellbeing Hub in Dartmouth
- 7 Supporting aspirations for Kingsbridge Orchard Town





*A place to succeed*





# **Adapting & mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity**

**An environment where people  
and nature thrive together**



If greenhouse gas emissions continue at the current rate, it is estimated that the average summer temperature in Devon will increase and extreme weather will become more frequent by the end of the 21st century. Residents, businesses and the Council must all play our part to reduce this increase.

We're already taking positive steps, having adopted a Climate & Biodiversity Strategy and formed a community forum to support its delivery.

The Council will lead by example and encourage all others to take their own steps to adapt and mitigate climate change and increase biodiversity.

## We will know we are succeeding by:

- ◆ Reducing the Council's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030
- ◆ Working with partners through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to reduce carbon emissions across the South Hams district to net-zero by 2050 at the latest
- ◆ Achieving a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in the habitat value of green and wooded public open space managed by the Council, by 2025





# We will transition to an environment where people and nature thrive together



Focus	Aims	Actions
<b>Reducing our carbon footprint</b>	The Council will lead by example in reducing our carbon footprint through delivery of our Climate and Biodiversity Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Converting our environmental management vehicles to electric</li> <li>● Carry out feasibility studies for renewable energy on our land and buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Working towards net-zero</b>	<p>We're taking steps to enable our communities to play their part in working towards net-zero.</p> <p>Community Led projects will be able to bid for funding to implement projects that will contribute to a net-zero South Hams.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explore renewable energy opportunities across the District</li> <li>● Deliver £300,000 funding for community projects</li> <li>● Adopting an electric Vehicle Charging Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Increasing biodiversity</b>	The Council is responsible for a wide range of open spaces. We'll take steps to increase biodiversity by investing and redesigning our ground maintenance service which will increase biodiversity on our land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A 10% increase in biodiversity on Council land</li> </ul>

## Check our progress so far

➤ [Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan](#)





## Play Your Part

- Take the Go Zero challenge
- Sign up for our newsletter
- Identify local projects and apply for funding to make it happen
- Don't have a garden? plant window boxes





## **Strengthening community wellbeing**

**Strong and prosperous  
communities where residents  
live healthy lives and are  
empowered to make a  
positive difference**



As we emerge from a global pandemic, our communities are rightly proud of how they came together to support each other and make a positive impact on each others lives.

The pandemic will however have a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities. We will work together with partners including Devon County Council, the NHS and the voluntary sector to understand the impacts and identify opportunities to strengthen community wellbeing.

Within our direct control as a Council, we can make a positive impact on community wellbeing by ensuring good quality housing, supporting vulnerable residents to access advice and support and by promoting active lifestyle choices.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- We have less poverty, particularly in rural areas
- More of our communities feel empowered to make a positive impact
- Our leisure provider, Fusion, see an increase in the numbers of people participating in regular sport and leisure activities
- We have delivered investments in community spaces

We can only deliver our vision of safe and strong communities by developing effective partnerships with both statutory and voluntary partners – working together to ensure that no community is left behind and that all residents are proud of their area.

Our partnership working will include:-

- Working with DCC, health, and voluntary partners to support the delivering of the Happy Health and Communities Strategy
- Working with the NHS to support community health outcomes





# We will support safer and stronger communities in South Hams



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Reducing health inequalities and rural poverty</b></p>	<p>We will ensure that no community is left behind by developing a pilot rural poverty scheme.</p> <p>Employing practical solutions such as community transport, training and fuel poverty grants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with partners to pilot new approaches to tackling rural poverty in an area identified as in the most deprived area of South Hams</li> <li>● Delivery of £4m Dartmouth Integrated Health Hub</li> <li>● Support more people to live independently for as long as they chose through efficient delivery of housing related grant schemes</li> <li>● Increase active participation in sport and leisure activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improving open space, sport and recreation</b></p>	<p>Building on past success, we will continue to work with local community groups, parish councils and sports clubs to deliver improvements to these important facilities.</p> <p>Funding from housing developments will be used to lever in external funding and maximise impact.</p> <p>We'll ensure that our communities have open spaces and facilities that they can be proud of.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Delivery of 32 projects (investment of £2.5m) in enhancing public outdoor spaces</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support the voluntary sector to improve outcomes for our residents</b></p>	<p>The voluntary sector in South Hams play a crucial role in supporting our communities. We will work with them to understand local issues and identify ways to work together to make a positive difference for our residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with the voluntary sector to plan how we can work better together in the future, building on experiences through the pandemic</li> </ul>





## Play Your Part

- Take pride in your neighbourhood
- Volunteer
- Take up a new sport or physical activity
- Report Anti-Social Behaviour





# Improving homes

Better homes enabling better lives for all



South Hams is an incredibly popular place to live but we know that housing affordability and availability is a particular concern for our residents.

We have a high proportion of homes that are under occupied (or second homes) in the South Hams. This brings serious social challenges that are difficult to address solely within the remit of the local authority and so we will work with partners to ensure sufficiency in Housing for Place and Housing for People.

We have adopted a five year Housing Strategy to underpin how we will ensure better homes lead to better lives for all our residents.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ We deliver local homes for local people that meet their needs and make this available at a cost they can afford in the next five years.
- ◆ More people are supported to live independently for as long as they choose, particularly in later life or with health conditions or impairments.
- ◆ We improve the overall quality of housing with more homes exceeding the minimum energy efficiency standards.
- ◆ No one finds themselves without a roof over their heads.





## We will enable better homes for better lives



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Housing for place</b></p>	<p>Our priority is to support the delivery of local homes that enable local people to remain in the area and for those that already have a home, to live independently for as long as they chose.</p> <p>We'll also continue to ensure that all homes pay the fair contribution to the services that they use, including second homes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Deliver at least 500 local homes for local people that meet their needs over the next five years (across South Hams and West Devon)</li> <li>◆ Carry out an evidence-led feasibility study for delivery of affordable housing in South Hams</li> <li>◆ Continuing to lobby for closing of the business rate loophole for second homes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing for people</b></p>	<p>We'll promote energy efficiency in homes and support making the best use of and improving the quality of existing housing in the District.</p> <p>We'll also ensure that no one finds themselves without a roof over their heads.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Improve the overall quality of housing with more homes exceeding the minimum energy efficiency standards</li> <li>◆ Delivery of Homelessness Strategy</li> </ul>

## Check our progress so far

➤ The Housing Strategy 2021-2026

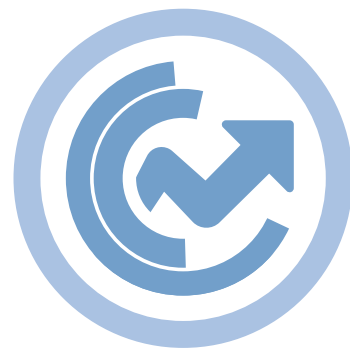




## Play Your Part

- Increase the energy efficiency of your home
- Register your interest in affordable homes
- Let us know about empty homes





# Stimulating a thriving economy

A district that attracts  
high quality employment  
opportunities and space  
for business to grow



South Hams is a great place to do business, well connected with the A38 and with nearby international airports. That said we know that transport links remain a cause of concern to our residents – something that we will work with partners to address.

We will create the environment for all size of business to flourish, through direct and indirect support and policy. This will include infrastructure, regeneration schemes and development aligned to the our priorities.

We recognise the significance of our visitor economy which employs 1 in 10 people and will align our services and financial support to strengthen it where it is needed.

Through delivery of key actions, we will support our £260m/yr tourism economy and a significant agricultural and marine sector.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ The visitor economy remains strong after the pandemic
- ◆ Our strategic employment sites are delivered
- ◆ We have a strong relationship with our key business sectors and can work with them for the benefit of our whole economy
- ◆ The marine export sector is supported through the post-Brexit transition





# Energising the South Hams



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Promoting South Hams coastal and visitor economy</b></p>	<p>We will allocate funding to support marketing activity to boost the visitor economy across the whole district, not just the coastal fringe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Enhancing the coastal areas</li> <li>◆ Marketing and advertising of the area</li> <li>◆ Development of a specific budget for the promotion of the visitor economy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting South Hams town and businesses as they prepare for the future</b></p>	<p>Our Economic Development team will work to secure inward investment and conditions to support existing business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provision of grants for our key towns and advice for our businesses</li> <li>◆ Enhancing Ivybridge as a retail and social destination with a £9m investment</li> <li>◆ All of South Hams main towns will have had the opportunity to update or create a Town Centre plan by 2024</li> <li>◆ Develop starter units to provide affordable employment space &amp; marine facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting strategic employment and infrastructure</b></p>	<p>We will ensure maximum opportunity for infrastructure funding and development aligned to our priorities through collaboration with Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Deliver A38 infrastructure improvements at Lee Mill, Deep Lane Junction and Voss Farm Junction</li> <li>◆ Support the application of a Plymouth and South Devon Freezone (Freeport)</li> <li>◆ Invest in land and business to secure employment outcomes</li> </ul>





## Play Your Part

- Shop Local
- Get Support with growing your business [businessinfopoint.co.uk](https://businessinfopoint.co.uk)
- Consider a 'Staycation' and explore from your door
- Support the High Street





# Protecting, conserving & enhancing our built and natural environment

Planning for our future,  
celebrating our past



From the Southern edge of Dartmoor through to the rugged South Hams coastline, we have an incredibly diverse built and natural environment.

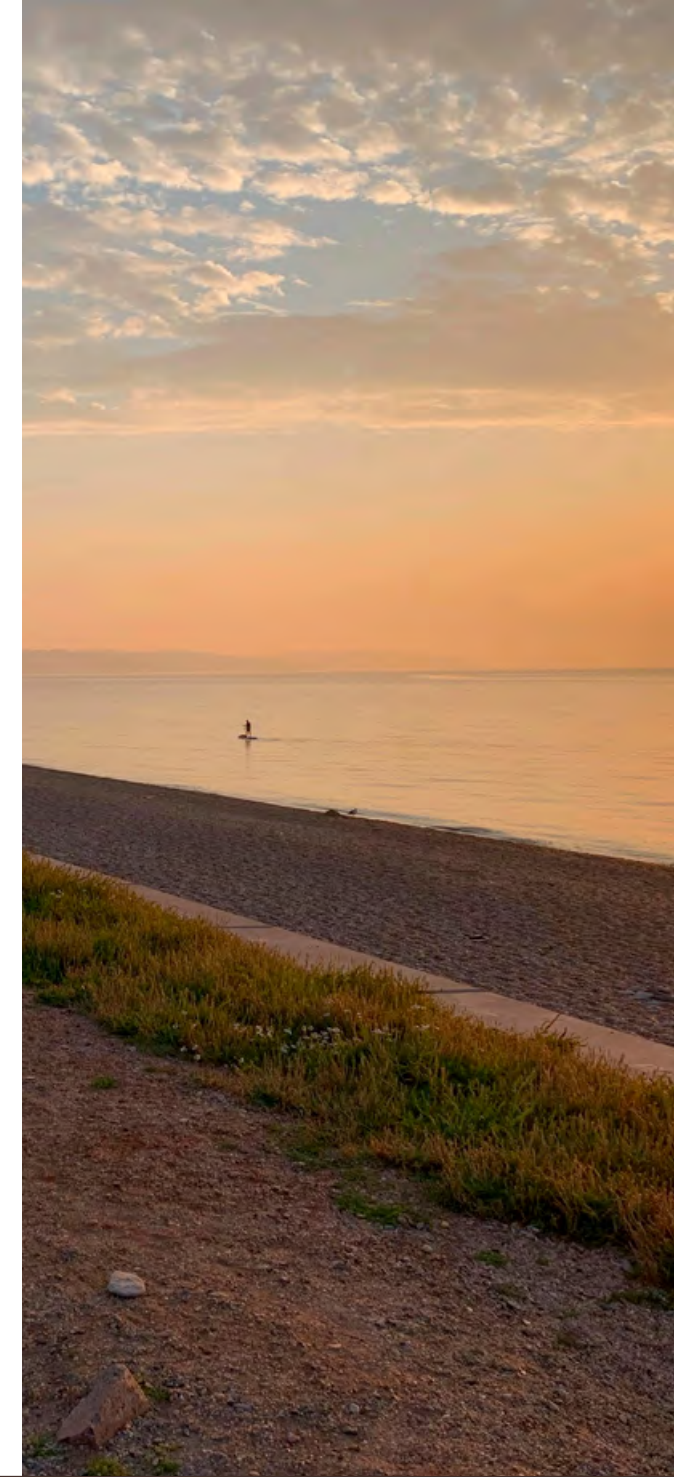
South Hams, together with West Devon and Plymouth have published a strategic plan for the area (Joint Local Plan) which sets out the future vision, policies and plans for our built and natural environment up to 2034.

We will work with our communities to produce new visions for all our towns, setting out the opportunities and actions required to ensure they remain thriving active places. By the end of 2024, all main towns will have the opportunity for up to date Town Centre strategies.

We will develop conservation area plans to preserve and enhance important historic building and places across the South Hams. For our rural and coastal spaces we will work with key partners including AONB's to protect, adapt and enhance the natural environment.

## We will know we are succeeding by:

- ◆ Having up-to-date and actively managed conservation area plans
- ◆ Increasing access to our wonderful countryside through promotion and developing walking and cycling trails
- ◆ Supporting the development and adoption of Neighbourhood Plans





# We will ensure South Hams has a sustainable built and natural environment



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Making the best use of development land, green spaces and coastal places</b></p>	<p>Finding a balance between the development people need and the natural environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support Neighbourhood Plans</li> <li>● Facilitate urban tree planting</li> <li>● Support schemes that contribute to enhancing the marine environment including improving water quality</li> <li>● Map land uses to support good decision making</li> </ul>
<p><b>Celebrating our heritage and protecting it for future needs</b></p>	<p>We will plan and secure the infrastructure to meet the needs of our future population through direct delivery, the planning system and partnering with relevant authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commission work leading to delivery of priority cycle routes and a 20 year vision for the network</li> <li>● Work to facilitate delivery of broadband connectivity where it's needed – supporting digital infrastructure for the future</li> <li>● Commissioning Conservation Area Appraisals and plans</li> </ul>





## Play Your Part

- Enjoy South Hams respectfully
- Contribute to consultations including local neighbourhood plans





# Delivering quality Council services

Delivering quality services to our  
residents and communities



The Council has been through a major period of change and improvement which has meant that we have continued to deliver services through the pandemic.

We will continue to be a modern organisation that is responsive to the changing needs of our residents, businesses and communities.

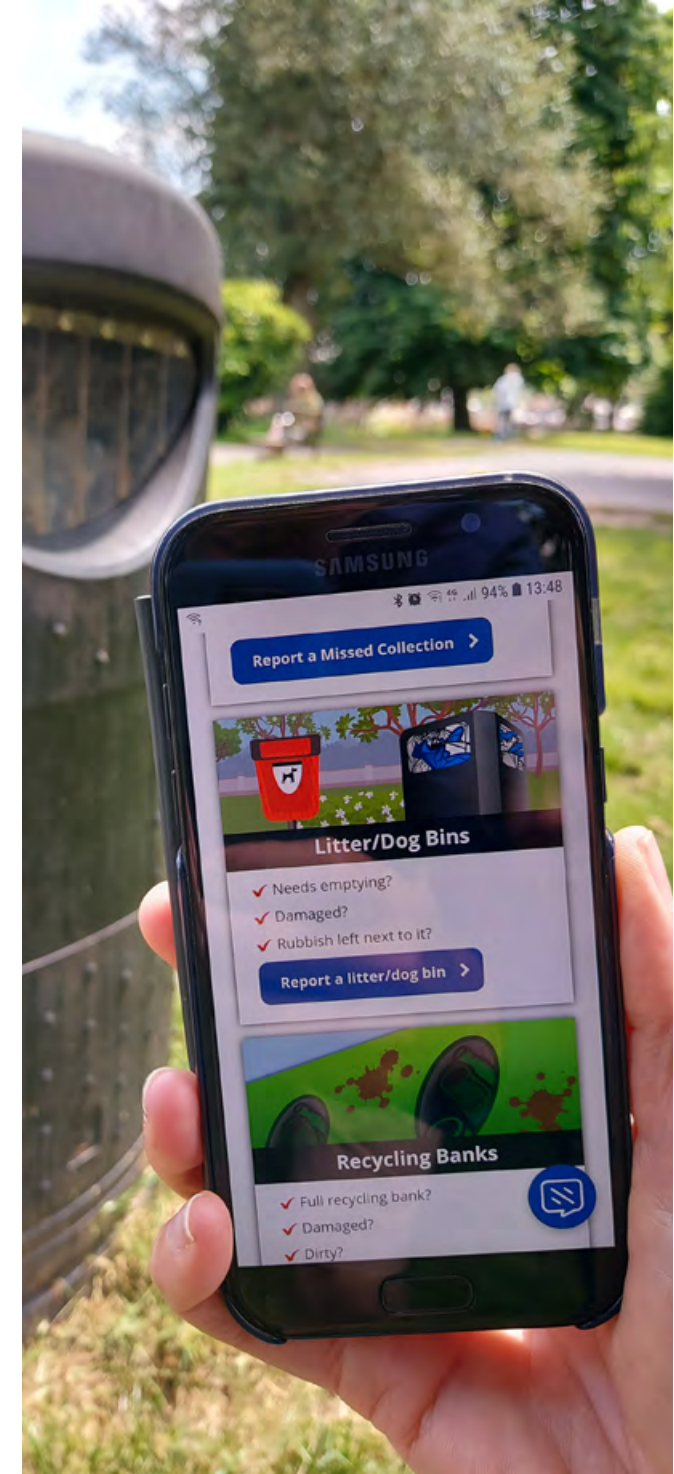
We will further modernise the way we work through making use of technology and striving to continually improve the services we offer.

We will do what we say, when we say and we will do it as efficiently as possible.

We recognise that our reputation is dependent on the quality and responsiveness of the services we provide.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- You're able to get what you need, when you need it
- We get things right, and if we don't we take responsibility and fix it quickly
- You tell us that we're doing a good job





## We will ensure we deliver quality services



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Being Digital First</b></p>	<p>Using smart digital technology, we'll become a digital first Council.</p> <p>Digital First will support us to deliver further efficiencies and tangible improvements for our residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Implementing IT systems that make it easy for customers to access Council Services</li> <li>◆ Develop a strategy setting out how our customers can access our services in the future</li> </ul>
<p><b>Being inclusive and accessible</b></p>	<p>We'll ensure our residents know what we do and support those in most need to get access to the services that they need.</p> <p>We'll promote visibility and accessibility in our communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ask our residents, businesses and partners for their views when developing plans for the area so that they can inform our decision making</li> <li>◆ Carry out a residents satisfaction survey so that we know how we're doing and can compare our performance to other local authorities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making the best use of our resources</b></p>	<p>We'll ensure that we manage our resources including employees, budgets, buildings and systems efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>At all times seeking to deliver our services in the most cost effective way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Set a balanced budget annually</li> <li>◆ Review our service areas to ensure that our customers get the best possible service</li> <li>◆ Manage and support our employees to deliver good outcomes for our residents and businesses</li> </ul>

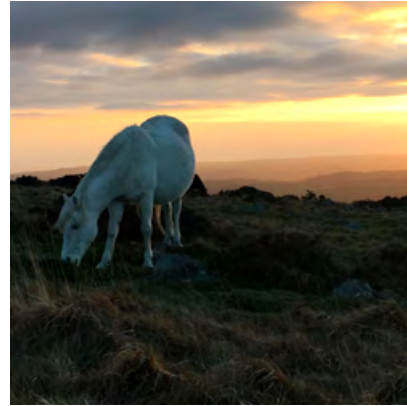




## Play Your Part

- 'Do it Online'
- Tell us what we can do better
- Take part in consultations to help us make the right decisions

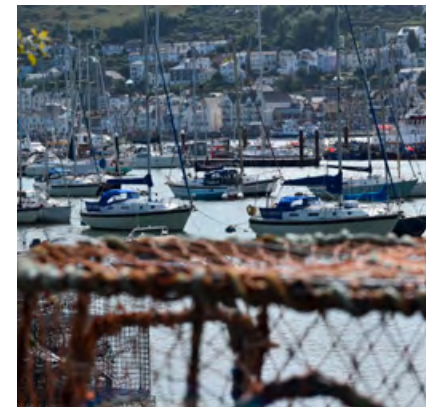




## Your South Hams

This plan has set out some of the key actions we will take to protect that which makes South Hams a special place. We will keep the plans under review to ensure they remain focused on delivering Better Lives for All.

Over the coming pages, we're pleased to share photos that you, the residents of South Hams, have taken. From stunning scenery to community spirit, they illustrate why we can all be proud to call this place our home.



















**Better lives for all**

**Thanks to the many  
local people, businesses,  
organisations and  
community groups for  
sharing their photos -**

Phil Hemsley p.2, p.44

Juliet Wilde p.3

Elizabeth Croughan p.6

Sophie Rennie p.5

Abi Marshall-Smith p.8

Neville Cregan p.10

Andy Amor p.17

Fusion Lifestyle p.20

John Allen p.24, p.29

Ewins Aerial p.27

Ribeye Boats p.28

Katie Smith p.31

South Dartmoor Community Energy  
and Ivybridge Town Council p.32

Geoff Langridge p.33

Jim Bishop p.35

Some more of our photography  
competition entries p.40 - p.43



**South Hams  
District Council**

[www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk)