

Overview and Scrutiny Panel Our Plan: South Hams – Review

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Date: **19 November 2015**

Title: **Our Plan: South Hams – Review**

Portfolio Area: **All**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Overview and Scrutiny**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Executive**
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision)

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Recommendations:

That the Panel recommends to Executive that it recommends to Council to

- (1) Note the monitoring of *Our Plan: South Hams* and the 2015/16 action plan**
- (2) Issue *Our Plan: South Hams* for the start of the 16/17 Financial year as a document that
 - Recognises *Our Plan: South Hams* as the single comprehensive Council Plan**
 - Restates the Council's corporate Vision and Objectives**
 - Establishes the common basis for the Councils Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan, Local Plan and all other Plans and Strategies**
 - Establishes long term and short term priorities for delivery including a delivery plan commencing in 2016/17**
 - Establishes mechanisms for delivery**
 - Establishes engagement, monitoring and review procedures**
 - Provides context for subsequent incorporation of the Local Plan element currently subject to separate preparation****
- (3) Agree a process of member participation in concluding this work**

(4) Require the final document to return to Executive and Committee for agreement prior to publication.

1. Executive summary

The Council has made clear its vision to enhance the quality of life for South Hams individuals and communities through all available means. *Our Plan: South Hams* is the comprehensive, overarching plan that delivers this vision.

Our Plan: South Hams sets out the objectives that underpin this vision and draws together all the mechanisms at the Councils disposal to ensure delivery. This includes use of the Councils finances, staff, Members, assets, partnerships and development & legislative powers.

Central to *Our Plan* is a future development strategy for homes, employment and formal planning policies (the Local Plan). The extent of changes to planning legislation and issues relating to this part of *Our Plan: South Hams* has diverted attention away from the wider role in recent months. The suggestion to members is that *Our Plan: South Hams* is reinvigorated and focusses afresh on delivering measured outcomes and an excellent customer service whilst allowing the statutory Local Plan element to be incorporated once it's formal legal process is completed. Whilst *Our Plan: South Hams* imbeds the Local Plan it shouldn't be held back by planning matters and the proposal is that *Our Plan: South Hams* push forward in a format that can bring the Local Plan on board when it is ready.

Publication of *Our Plan: South Hams* focussing on key priorities and a delivery plan commencing in 2016/17 is proposed.

2. Background

Historically the Council had two strategic plans; the *Local Development Plan* and the *Connect Strategy* - alongside numerous other plans and strategies. Given the need to work more efficiently in the new operating model and the new duty to produce a Local Plan with potential for a much wider remit beyond traditional planning policy Members approved the production of *Our Plan* as the Council's one over-arching, strategic, document in April 2014. Public consultation on vision and objectives followed on during 2014.

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The consultations during 2014 provided much support for *Our Plan: South Hams* – particularly around the vision, objectives and the ambition of the Council to use its range of powers to plan and deliver positively for individuals and communities. What generated concerns, and deferment of publication, were a range of local and national issues that challenged the statutory Local Plan and development elements of the plan. These concerns and issues were reported to Executive in October and came before Council in early November.

In March Members also agreed to progress the wider long term ambitions of *Our Plan: South Hams* and it was decided to produce an interim action plan which would draw out, and deliver upon, key priorities for the current year. This plan was adopted by Executive on 5th March 2015 (minute ref E68/14). The intention is to introduce a full delivery plan for the start of the 2016/17 financial year. Outcomes of the 15/16 actions are reported later in this item.

Overall the vision to bring together and deliver a single and coherent plan has clear merit. The local and national turbulence around the planning and housing legislation and case law has disrupted the smooth flow of *Our Plan: South Hams* but there is now opportunity to refocus the approach to target delivery and outcomes on elements within our control whilst setting context for the subsequent incorporation of the Local Plan element.

It is worth noting that in West Devon the Our Plan process resulted in the publication of *West Devon Our Plan* for 6 week formal “Regulation 19” public consultation back in spring 2015. Given both the local and national challenges around the planning issues WDBC has now decided to review the timing of the Local Plan element (to align with the SHDC approach) and will also be considering a general *Our Plan* review at the O&S meeting just ahead of the South Hams O & S. A verbal update will be provided.

3. What outcomes are required?

The Original intentions for *Our Plan: South Hams* might best be summarised as

- Establishing *Our Plan: South Hams* as the single comprehensive Council Plan
- Establishing the Council’s corporate Vision and Objectives
- Establishing the common basis for the Councils Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan, Local Plan and all other Plan and Strategies
- Establishing long term and short term priorities for delivery including a recurring Annual Delivery Plan
- Establishing mechanisms for delivery
- Establishing engagement, monitoring and review procedures

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This item provides some summary feedback for member consideration

Establishing the Council's corporate Vision and Objectives

The vision for South Hams agreed by members early in 2015 was
*Vibrant Towns and Villages; Enhancing the Quality of life for
Individuals and Communities whilst conserving the natural
environment*

This derived from Member workshops and the consultations and was brought forward alongside the following themes (under which objectives are set).

- Our Wellbeing
- Our Communities
- Our Homes
- Our Economy
- Our Infrastructure
- Our Environment
- Our Heritage
- Our Resources

Members may wish to consider how recent workshops around future priorities and budget setting sit within this context in terms of which areas are likely priority areas for delivery with limited future resources.

Members may also consider that in order to make clear the corporate vision, objectives and delivery priorities that issuing a version of *Our Plan: South Hams* to coincide with the start of the next financial year may now be appropriate.

Establishing the common basis for the Councils Plans and Strategies

Historically the Council has adopted numerous plans and strategies around distinct service areas. Under *Our Plan: South Hams*, and the new way of working, these need to be simplified and harmonised – and only be produced where there is legislative requirement and/or a clear link to ensuring delivery of the vision and objectives.

Plans relating to finance, assets and the Local Plan need to sit at the heart of, and be co-ordinated through, *Our Plan: South Hams*. There may be opportunity to clarify this important function in any agreed publication for 16/17.

Monitoring Progress and Agreeing Priorities

The anticipated publication of *Our Plan: South Hams* would have included a 2031 horizon. This is driven by the need for a 15 year Local Plan timescale. However the council's ability to deliver services has to be planned on much shorter timescales – primarily driven around the annual budget and medium term financial strategy. The Council will clearly

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need to establish the long term planning led horizon but within this needs to establish both medium term financial approaches to delivery and an annual delivery plan.

This can be clearly explained in any version produced ahead of 2016/17. It should also be recognised that *Our Plan : South Hams* – with its outward looking community focus, is managed and delivered alongside the more internally focussed T18 work. This ensures that the outward ambition and internal processes underpinning delivery are being managed in tandem.

In order to focus on delivery Members decided to establish an interim action plan for 2015/16. Work was undertaken at both West Devon and South Hams on such plans and members came up with closely aligned priorities and actions.

These were adopted by members at both Councils and delivery has been underway since. For monitoring purposes the actions have been amalgamated into a single table and are presented at Appendix 1 for member's consideration. At both Councils the actions were grouped under the following headings

- Homes (within the Our Homes Objective)
- Jobs (within the Our Economy objective)
- Natural Environment (within the Our Environment objective)
- Customer Services (within the Our Communities objective)

In reviewing Appendix 1 Members may wish to focus on

- From within the 8 objectives where are the priority areas for action in 16/17 and beyond?
- Which actions will be completed in 15/16 and can be deleted?
- Which actions will need to be carried into 16/17 – and what financial and staff resources will be required?
- What new actions might Members wish to see included – and if so what resources will need to be put in place?
- How effective are the current monitoring measures and how can these be improved?

Establishing mechanisms for delivery

The Council is well placed to influence and co-ordinate local services and has the benefit of numerous mechanisms at its disposal with which to deliver the vision, objectives and delivery plan. These mechanisms include

- Direct delivery
- Use of funding and Grants
- Staff resource
- Members involvement
- Legislation and powers
- Partnerships

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- Liaison and influence
- Assets
- Locality working

The new way of working within T18 has opened up new opportunities to deploy these approaches. It is suggested that any publication of *Our Plan: South Hams* looks to utilise these approaches to best effect. In many instances this work is already underway – for example the scoping of trading opportunities, the review of partnerships and the refreshed Asset Management Plan. However as the vision, objectives and delivery plan bed in there is clearly opportunity to look afresh at the most effective mechanisms for enhancing the quality of life for individuals and communities. As was originally intended *Our Plan: South Hams* will inform commissioning decisions and this will increasingly come to the fore in coming months.

Establishing engagement, monitoring and review procedures

The establishment of *Our Plan* in early 2014 included an Engagement Strategy that set out how, where and when communities and individuals would be able to influence the work. Much consultation has taken place which has largely endorsed the approach being taken in *Our Plan* and provides a mandate that takes forward the established vision and objectives.

There will clearly need to be further consultation around the Local Plan element of *Our Plan: South Hams* as it emerges next year – but less need to consult further at this stage on the vision and objectives that were generally well supported.

4. What are the options?

Potential options, with headline risks and benefits, include

Option	Benefits	Risks
No further action and leave <i>Our Plan</i> unpublished and no accompanying delivery plan	No resource required	Process falls into disrepute. No long term or short term priorities for Council No context for corporate activity or delivery.
Publication of <i>Our Plan</i> focussing on vision, objectives, priorities and achievable outcomes ahead of 16/17. Local Plan element to be incorporated subsequently.	Clarity over corporate vision. Relatively short document. Establishes corporate approach and delivery. Establishes priorities and delivery plan for 16/17 onwards.	Falls short of comprehensive plan with Local Plan development policies and allocations omitted at this stage.
Comprehensive review awaiting	Will set out full and comprehensive approach.	Will require further evidence and arrangements to be put

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outcome of Local Plan element		in place. Full range of Council activity stalled by planning uncertainties.
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5. Summary and conclusions

The approach to a comprehensive and overarching plan has much to commend it. Members took a significant step towards this goal by agreeing the introduction of *Our Plan* in early 2014.

Unfortunately some of the momentum and focus has been lost with the complexities that have arisen around the Local Plan element. This has diverted both attention and time away from the real benefits of the single plan, simplified vision & objectives and the delivery plan.

This item takes stock of the current situation. There is clear opportunity to refocus and pick up momentum ahead of the next financial year. Issues are identified for member consideration and have been distilled into recommendations for Overview and Scrutiny to consider.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	Localism Act 2011 (Section 1 – Powers of General Competence). Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 National Planning Policy Framework 2012 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004
Financial	Y	There are no specific Financial implications from this item – however the agreement of any reviewed <i>Our Plan</i> and Annual Delivery Plan will need to consider financial implications.
Risk	Y	A failure to publish Our Plan could lead to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coherent policy and delivery • Reputational harm

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ineffective use of resources • Poor quality service to those in need of support • Inequality of delivery across the District <p>These risks are mitigated by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of <i>Our Plan : South Hams</i> • 2016/17 Annual Delivery Plan • Identification of resources to support delivery • Scope to integrate Local Plan as appropriate • Scope of opportunities for efficiencies through joint approach with WDBC
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	Our Plan approach and policies imbed equal opportunities and help prevent discrimination in our communities. Equalities review will be undertaken.
Safeguarding	Y	Our Plan approach and policies imbed safeguarding measures where necessary.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	Y	Our Plan approach and policies support community safety and partnerships to support this
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Y	Our Plan approach and policies include Health, Safety and Wellbeing. A health impact assessment will be undertaken
Other implications		None identified

Supporting Information - Appendices:

- Appendix 1. 2015/16 Action Plan Review

Background Papers: None

Process checklist	Completed
Portfolio Holder briefed	Yes
SLT Rep briefed	Yes
Relevant Exec Director sign off (draft)	Yes
Data protection issues considered	Yes
If exempt information, public (part 1) report also drafted. (Committee/Scrutiny)	No