

# SOUTH HAMS EXECUTIVE



## Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Executive** held on **Thursday, 13th October, 2022 at 9.30 am** at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present:           **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Pearce  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Bastone

Cllr Baldry  
Cllr Hopwood

Cllr Holway

### **In attendance:**

Councillors:

Cllr Abbott  
Cllr Foss  
Cllr Reeve  
Cllr Spencer  
Cllr Taylor

Cllr Brazil  
Cllr O'Callaghan  
Cllr Smerdon  
Cllr Sweett  
Cllr Thomas

Officers:

Chief Executive  
Director of Strategy & Governance  
Director of Place & Enterprise  
Section 151 Officer  
Monitoring Officer  
Democratic Services Manager  
Head of Revenues & Benefits  
Head of Housing  
Deputy Section 151 Officer  
Head of Strategy, Corporate Projects & Partnerships

40.

### **Minutes**

E.40/22

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 21 September 2022 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

41. **Declarations of Interest**  
E.41/22  
Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting, but there were none made.
42. **Public Question Time**  
E.42/22  
The Leader informed that no public questions had been received in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules.
43. **Executive Forward Plan**  
E.43/22  
Members were presented with the most recently published version of the Executive Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Executive meetings for the next four months and duly noted its contents.
44. **Cost of Living Response Plan**  
E.44/22  
The Executive considered a report that set out the Council's draft plan to respond to the Cost of Living crisis.

In the ensuing discussion, it was highlighted that the Council had a range of help and energy saving tips available to support families and it was recognised that these needed to be promoted as widely as was practically possible.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Cost-of-Living Response Plan (as set out in Appendix 1 of the presented agenda report) be endorsed;
2. That any minor amendments required to the Cost-of-Living Response Plan be delegated to the lead officer (the Head of Housing and Lead Officer for Cost of Living), in consultation with the lead Executive Member; and
3. That officers be instructed to take immediate steps to progress support payments to families in receipt of Council Tax reduction (as set out in paragraph 2.12 of the presented agenda report).

45. **Key Partnerships Funding**  
E.45/22  
Members were presented with a report that provided an update on the Partnerships currently receiving funding from the Council and were asked to consider the merits of extending funding for a further two years.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- a) In reply to a question, a local Ward Member was encouraged to instruct the Ivybridge Museum to sign up to the South West Museum Development Trust. In addition to providing guidance and support, a further benefit of the Trust was that it was able to source and draw down additional external funding;
- b) A Member specifically welcomed the proposal to continue to financially support the Ivybridge Ring and Ride organisation. In so doing, the Member felt that the organisation carried out a vital role to many constituents in the western part of the South Hams;
- c) A Member expressed his disappointment over the work of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit, particularly regarding the timing (and often lack) of written reports being submitted to the Council's Development Management (DM) Service on relevant planning applications. The Member proceeded to question the value for money that was being received by the Council for its annual funding contribution. In reply, some other Members felt this criticism to be harsh and it was acknowledged that the additional grant funding proposed would help to fund a post within the AONB Unit to support the DM function. At this point, an addition to recommendation 3 was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**. The addition sought to add that the proposed Service Level Agreement with the South Devon AONB should be agreed by the Executive prior to the approval of the funding extension. When put to the vote, this addition was declared **CARRIED**.

It was then:

#### **RESOLVED**

1. That the positive contribution of the Council's key funded partners in supporting our ambitions as set out in our Corporate Strategy, Better Lives for All, be noted;
2. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to agree to extend the funding for the following key partners for a further two years as follows:
  - SW Museum Development Trust - £4,000;
  - Ivybridge Ring and Ride - £5,710; and
  - South Hams CVS - £10,000;
3. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to agree an increase in funding for each of the next two years in recognition of additional activities being delivered for the following partners:
  - Citizens Advice South Hams – £70,867 (an increase of £10,000 per annum funded from Covid-19 vulnerability grant underspend);
  - South Devon AONB - £28,749 (an increase of £8,000 per annum), subject to a Service Level Agreement (being prior agreed by the Executive) in respect of focused support to meet the demand of South Hams District Council Development Management Service; and
4. That officers be required to work with Newton Abbot Ring and Ride to request further information about the service provided within the district and, if appropriate, then consider an updated application.

46. **Proposed Changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24**

E.46/22

Members were presented with a report that set out the annual requirement for Councils to revisit their existing council tax support scheme and decide whether to replace or revisit their scheme, the requirements for changing the scheme and the associated time constraints.

In discussion, Members were supportive of the planned changes to the Scheme. However, Members also recognised that this was a particularly complex area to grasp and, in recognition of their Community Leadership role coupled with the extreme difficulties being suffered by residents as a result of the cost of living crisis, it would be very useful to arrange an all Member Briefing session on this subject matter in the upcoming weeks.

Whilst all major precepting authorities (e.g. Devon County Council and the Fire and Police authorities) would be consulted on the proposed Scheme for 2023/24, the Section 151 Officer confirmed that she had already held informal discussions with colleagues at Devon County Council.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the proposed public consultation on a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24 (as detailed in section 3 of the presented agenda report), be approved; and
2. That the results of the public consultation be presented to the Executive prior to a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24 being considered for approval by the Council.

47. **COVID-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF)**

E.47/22

The Executive was presented with a report that provided an update on the Council's Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) following the closure of the Scheme on 30 September 2022. The report acknowledged that the Council had delegated the approval of the CARF Policy and its administration to the Members of the Council's Rate Relief Panel.

In discussion, whilst the data protection implications were recognised, a Member asked if he could be sent the list of businesses that had received rate relief through the CARF Scheme.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the content of the presented agenda report be noted

48. **Month 5 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/2023**

E.48/22

A report was considered that enabled Members to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budget for 2022/23 and that also provided a forecast for the year end position.

In the ensuing discussion, reference was made to

- (a) the impact on the revenue budget of the Waste Service being brought back into the Council's control. It was confirmed that this would be addressed as part of the update report that is to be presented to the Executive at its 1 December 2022 meeting;
- (b) the instances where car parking meters had needed to be repaired, which was resulting in a loss of car parking income. A Member cited a number of examples where meters were not working for a short period across the district. In reply, the Leader thanked the Member for raising this issue and gave a commitment to keep this matter under review. As a general point, the Section 151 Officer advised that she would provide a response to Members outside of the meeting regarding the proportion of transactions that were paid via the RingGo facility.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2022/23 financial year and the overall projected deficit of £54,000 (0.5% of the total Budget £10.464 million), be noted.

**49. Capital Programme Monitoring 2022/23**

E.49/22

The Executive considered a report that advised of the progress made on individual schemes within the approved Capital Programme, including an assessment of their financial position.

In discussion, the addition of photographs and visuals to the published agenda report to illustrate the development of the Capital projects was commended.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the content of the Capital Programme Monitoring Report be noted

**50. Housing Crisis Update**

E.50/22

The Executive was presented with a report that provided an update on two specific elements of the Council's work on the Housing Crisis, relating to progress made in relation to two council owned sites in Kingsbridge and also the recommendations of the now concluded Housing Task and Finish Group.

The Leader introduced this agenda item and, in referring to section 2.3.2 of the published agenda report, wished to put on record her apologies if this paragraph gave

the wrong impression that Kingsbridge Town Council was the sole reason for the deferral of the previous planning application.

In discussion the following points were raised:

- (a) Whilst the challenges associated with the delivery of affordable housing continued (and were further exacerbated by the cost of living crisis), the proposed expressions of interest exercise that was set out in the published agenda report was welcomed as a potentially good way forward for these two Council owned sites. Furthermore, the ongoing commitment to dialogue with both the local Ward Members and Kingsbridge Town Council was also welcomed;
- (b) The Members of the Housing Task & Finish Group were thanked for the information that they had gathered and their hard work undertaken during the recent Review.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That to further understand the opportunities to bring forward affordable led housing schemes in Kingsbridge, the commencement of an Expressions of Interest exercise be approved; and
- 2. That the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Housing Task and Finish Group (and the recommendations set out in Section 4 of the presented agenda report) be noted

**(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINUTES E.45/22 (PARTS 2 &3) (WHICH ARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2022) WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON MONDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2022 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES)**

The Meeting concluded at 10.30 am

Signed by:

Chairman

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