

SOUTH HAMS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held
on
Thursday, 29th September, 2022 at 2.00 pm at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Thomas
Vice Chairman Cllr Smerdon

Cllr Austen	Cllr Birch
Cllr Chown	Cllr Foss (as Substitute)
Cllr Jackson	Cllr Jones
Cllr Long (as Substitute)	Cllr McKay
Cllr Reeve (as Substitute)	Cllr Rose
Cllr Taylor	

In attendance:
Councillors:

Cllr Baldry	Cllr Bastone
Cllr Hawkins	Cllr Pearce
Cllr Pringle	

Officers:
Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Place & Enterprise (via Teams)
Economic Development Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Head of Strategy, Corporate Projects & Partnerships (via Teams)
Community Digital Specialist (via Teams)

20. **Minutes**
O&S.20/22
The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) held on 21 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

21. **Declarations of Interest**
O&S.21/22
Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, but there were none made.

22.

Public Forum

O&S.22/22

In accordance with the Public Forum Procedure Rules, the Chairman informed that no questions had been received for consideration.

23.

Built & Natural Environment Thematic Update

O&S.23/22

Following the Council's adoption of the Better Lives for All Strategy in September 2021, the Committee was provided with an update on the Built and Natural Environment strand of the Better Lives for All Strategy.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) The Build projects in Salcombe were slightly behind schedule but the completion date was expected to be before the end of the year with the Business Units currently being out to Tender. Whilst not in a position to predict the tendering process, the local wish (and demand) for these Units to be secured by businesses connected to the marine industry was recognised;
- (b) With regard to Action BN1.1 (Supporting the Delivery of Neighbourhood Plans), it was confirmed that the Council was doing all it could to resolve the issue with the wish to modify the Salcombe Neighbourhood Plan, however the delay lies with the Planning Inspector. In response to a further question regarding whether the Committee could be advised of the Towns/Parishes that had not yet or were not intending to develop Neighbourhood Plans, it was confirmed that developing such plans was a matter for each Town or Parish Council (T&PC) to decide upon. As a result, the Council was always happy to encourage and facilitate the creation of Neighbourhood Plans, but could not insist that a T&PC develop one;
- (c) In respect of Action BN1.2 (Facilitate Urban Tree Planting), officers advised that the Tree Planting Plan extended into the 2023/24 Year and that officers would be asked to liaise with local Ward Members about potential planting sites in their Wards;
- (d) Referencing Action BN1.5 (Commission Work Leading to Delivery of Priority Cycle Routes and a Twenty Year Vision for the Cycle Network in the South Hams), officers informed that the Tender exercise to select the Consultants to produce the report to identify and prioritise potential cycle routes in the district would be circulated by January 2023 with a view to receiving the final report in mid 2023. This exercise was to be funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies. It was further confirmed that the consultation exercise with the public, Town and Parish Councils and with other parties, such as the Dartmoor National Park, would be fundamental to the report and the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

In response to a question about whether or not the LCWIP work would continue should the Council's latest bid to the Government for investment not be successful, it was confirmed that Devon County Council could still undertake a high level exercise which would likely result in a lower level of local engagement, but that it would still be a matter for this Council to decide whether it wished to make the funding available for the exercise as part of its Better Lives for All Corporate Strategy;

- (e) On the matter of Action BN1.6 (Work to Facilitate the Delivery of Broadband Connectivity Where it is Needed – Supporting Digital Infrastructure for the Future), it was noted that contracts to install Fibre Broadband within the District were not held with the Council but were national contracts and as such it was almost impossible to gather information from the suppliers about their installation plans but that the Council was doing its utmost to facilitate the work and inform local residents about the progress of the installation. A Member highlighted that the text of this Action within the Thematic Update document might imply that the Council had responsibility for, or control over, the Fibre installation programme and suggested that making a revision to the wording would help to clarify the Council's position. It was agreed that the text would be amended for the next iteration of this Delivery Plan.

In addition, since a number of local authorities in the County were experiencing similar problems, the suggestion was made that the item be added to the agenda of the forthcoming Devon Districts Forum meeting, which was attended by the Leader of Council, following which any affected Councils could approach Devon County Council with a joint request for improved engagement with the both the installation providers and Connecting Devon and Somerset. The Committee subsequently expressed its support for this course of action.

In concluding the item it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED**, and at the subsequent vote, **AGREED** that the Recommendation be amended to take account of the actions that the Leader of Council and Assistant Director for Strategy and Projects had committed to undertaking during the debate.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress made against the Better Lives for All thematic delivery plan for Built & Natural Environment and request that the Leader of Council and Assistant Director for Strategy and Projects take into account and action the comments raised during the debate.

24. Performance Management Report

O&S.24/22

Members were advised that, in error, the published agenda report did not adequately reflect performance nor provide sufficiently detailed information to merit being considered at this meeting and as such it was agreed that this item should be deferred to the next Committee meeting (to be held on 3 November 2022) for further consideration.

25. Task and Finish Group Updates:

O&S.25/22

(a) Electric Vehicle Charging

In advance of the forthcoming inaugural meeting of the Electric Vehicle Charging Task and Finish Group, Members commented on the value of a recent Webinar on the subject which had provided useful anecdotal experience from other local

authorities across the country and which provided helpful suggestions on what aspects of the topic the Task and Finish Group should examine.

26. **2021/22 Committee Work Programme: Latest Version**

O&S.26/22

(a) Formal Request from Cllr Birch

Cllr Birch outlined the reasons for his request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee examine the Council's recently closed Ivybridge Regeneration Project, but added that, in view of the fact that this item was being considered at the forthcoming meeting of the Audit and Governance (A&G) Committee, he would recommend that a decision not be taken as to if or when this item would be added to the O&S Committee Work Programme until after the A&G Committee had concluded its work.

The remaining matters on the draft annual work programme for the 2022/23 year were reviewed and the amendments to the scheduling of issues approved by the Committee.

The Meeting concluded at 2.55 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
