

SOUTH HAMS EXECUTIVE



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Executive** held on **Thursday, 31st October, 2019** at **10.00 am** at the **Repton Room - Follaton House**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Pearce
Vice Chairman Cllr Bastone

Cllr Hopwood
Cllr Hawkins

Cllr Baldry

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Abbott
Cllr Birch
Cllr Chown
Cllr Holway
Cllr McKay
Cllr Rowe
Cllr Spencer
Cllr Taylor

Cllr Austen
Cllr Brazil
Cllr Hodgson
Cllr Long
Cllr Reeve
Cllr Smerdon
Cllr Sweett

Officers:

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Section 151 Officer
Director of Place & Enterprise
Head of Place Making
Joint Local Plan Team Manager
Head of Practice Environment Services
Specialist – Democratic Services

46. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 19 September 2019 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed off by the Chairman.

47. **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.

48. **Public Question Time**

It was noted that the following public questions had been received in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules, for consideration at this meeting. The responses are set out in bold.

1. From Robert Vint:

"Is this Council aware of UNISON's "Divest from Carbon" campaign that aims to "help UNISON members understand the risk climate change poses to their savings" - and also of the warnings of the Governor of the Bank of England about the financial risks of investing in fossil fuel industries?"

The Council is aware of the Unison campaign and the advice from the Governor of the Bank of England. Our emerging Action Plan includes a theme on 'Individual and Collective Action' and it is envisaged that campaigns and advice such as those detailed above will be considered as part of this theme.

Supplementary Question:

Did this Council choose to join the Devon County Council pension scheme and does it have the power to leave?

South Hams District Council is a scheduled employer within the Local Government Pension Scheme as set out in Schedule 2 Part 1 of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. Under those regulations, Schedule 3 Part 2 sets out that the appropriate administering authority for a scheduled employer is the local government area of the administering authority in which the employer is situated, in this case Devon County Council. The Council does not have a choice over the Administering Authority (Devon County Council) and the Council does not have the power to leave the Administering Authority as a scheduled employer within the Local Government Pension Scheme.

2. From Guy Chapman

"Has a date been set for reviewing the Council's Procurement Policy to reduce the carbon footprint and environmental impact of purchases?"

A sustainable procurement policy has just been drafted and will be initially reviewed by the Climate Change and Biodiversity Member Working Group with a view to adoption

by the Council in the coming months. A specific date has not yet been set.

3. From Jo Raeburn

Does SHDC support the LGA's request to the Government to create a joint national task force comprising local leaders and relevant government departments to determine funding, legislation and policy changes needed to deliver zero net carbon emissions by 2030?

Will such proposed changes be recommended in your Climate Action Plan?

The Council recognises the challenges that the Climate Change Emergency creates and that funding, legislation and policy changes will be key in tackling those challenges. Therefore, in principle, the Council supports the proposal put forward by the LGA. A key part on the emerging action plan will relate to how the Council, and its partners, can influence and lobby to secure funding and appropriate changes in legislation and policy at a national level.

Supplementary Question:

Does this Council have a record of recent changes in government funding, laws and planning policies that have undermined its powers to deliver renewable energy projects and sustainable housing?

The Council does not keep a specific record of changes. There are a broad range of factors that influence the Councils ability to deliver (or give permission and/or support to) renewable energy projects and sustainable housing. These include, for example, the overall financial settlement that the Council receives alongside specific changes to feed in tariffs and planning policy on wind turbines. The Council has to work within a legislative framework, however, the emerging Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency Action Plan is likely to include proposals to lobby Government on changes to policy/legislation to support future actions.

4. From Susie Nicholls

"The incineration of grey bin waste is a major source of local carbon emissions. What policies are being considered in the Climate Action Plan for working with residents and retailers to reduce the overall volume and carbon footprint of waste at source and to increase reuse and repair of goods? "

The emerging action plan includes a theme on 'Waste and Resources' under which a range of initiatives will be considered including reducing waste at source. In addition the theme on 'Greening the economy' will influence this

area. It is important to stress that the 'Devon Carbon Plan' being developed by the Net-zero Task force will lead on the strategic approach to waste challenges across the County. There is at present a 'call for evidence' which can be accessed through the following link <https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-carbon-plan/>.

49. **Executive Forward Plan**

Members were presented with the Executive Forward Plan setting out items on the agenda for Executive meetings for the next four months and noted its content without any comment.

50. **Budget Update report for 2020/21 onwards**

Members were presented with a report that set out the current forecasted budget gap for 2020/21, and the further gap for 2021/22, and then the next five years. Changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy since it was approved in September 2019 were set out within the report.

The Leader introduced the report. One Member noted that the timetable for setting the budget may be affected by the Parliamentary Election. The Leader encouraged all Members to attend the forthcoming 2020/21 budget workshop on 7 November, 2019.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. The forecast budget gap for 2020/21 of £0.25m and the position for future years be noted;
2. The current options identified and timescales for closing the budget gap in 2020/21, and in future years, to achieve long term financial sustainability, be noted; and
3. The results of the consultation exercise with Town and Parish Councils on the Council Tax Support Grant (set out in presented Appendix C) be considered, and Council be **RECOMMENDED** to withdraw the Council Tax Support Grant from Town and Parish Councils with effect from 1 April 2020 by 50% per annum over the next two years as part of the budget process, in order to allow time for Town and Parish Councils to plan for the reduction in their budget setting processes.

51. **Plymouth and South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document**

The Executive was presented with a report that sought approval to publish the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) for public consultation. The purpose of the SPD was to add further detail and guidance to the policies in the adopted Joint Local Plan (JLP). The SPD

would be a material consideration when making decisions on planning applications in the JLP area.

The Leader introduced the report and explained that the Documents would be published for a six week consultation. Some Members expressed disappointment that a further session had not taken place to allow the membership the opportunity to discuss the Documents with officers. Members also commented that it would have been helpful to have a list of the proposed changes that had been made to the Documents following the Joint Workshop session held on 23 September, 2019. The Leader responded that a schedule of changes had been circulated and requested that it was circulated to all Members again. The Leader also advised that the Documents were being published for consultation and Members were able to respond to the consultation.

One Member was disappointed that the Council had accepted the Ministerial Statement that related to levels at which affordable housing, or a contribution to it, was required. The Leader and the JLP Team Manager both responded that the Inspector would not have accepted the Plan otherwise, and the importance of getting a Plan in place as soon as possible was emphasised.

A Member asked for assurance that responses to the consultation would be taken seriously. Finally, another Member, whilst admitting he had not read all of the Documents, was impressed with the content of what he had read.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. Publication for consultation purposes, of the Plymouth and South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document and its two companion documents, the Developer Contribution Evidence Base and the Traditional Farm Buildings: Their adaptation and re-use (Barn Guide), be approved; and
2. Authority be delegated to the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Leader to make presentational and minor amendments to the SPD for consultation.

52. **Statement of Community Involvement**

Members were presented with a report that sought approval to consult on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Approval had been granted by Plymouth City Council, and approval would also be sought from West Devon Borough Council. The purpose of the SCI was to establish protocol, process and objectives associated with consultations on planning matters. It met a statutory requirement of the Planning Regulations 2019.

The Leader introduced the report and set out the background, and advised Members that the document would be a key document for Members and for Town and Parish Councils.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. Publication of the Statement of Community Involvement, for consultation purposes, be approved; and
2. Authority be delegated to the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Leader to make presentational and minor amendments to the SPD prior to consultation.

53. **Car Parking permits**

Members were presented with a report that recommended that the current parking permits issued by the Council were the subject of an in-depth and comprehensive review, with resulting recommendations being made to a future meeting of the Executive. The report further sought approval to cease the sale of permits for a temporary period, pending the outcome of the review.

The Lead Member for Environment introduced the report. All Members were encouraged to respond to the consultation.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the sale of all new parking permits be ceased with immediate effect, pending a complete review of permits across the District.

54. **Langage Update Report**

Members were presented with a report that reviewed the progress in refining the Council's service offering and suggested desired outcomes under each of the Council's six corporate themes, namely: Efficient and Effective Council, Communities, Enterprise, Environment and Home and Wellbeing.

The Deputy Leader introduced the report. Members were supportive of the proposals. One Member asked that the units retain an element of flexibility to ensure they could be adapted to support a range of businesses.

It was then:

RESOLVED that:

1. the recent positive progress towards Langage Energy Park becoming a thriving enterprise be noted; and

2. Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the use of up to £200,000 to fund the cost of extending the lease of the starter units from 21 years to 125 years, funded from the Business Rate Reserve.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF E.50/19 (3) AND E.54/19 (2), WHICH WERE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2019, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2019 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).

The Meeting concluded at 11.00 am

Signed by:

Chairman
