

SOUTH HAMS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Overview and Scrutiny Panel** held on **Thursday, 14th January, 2021 at 2.00 pm Via Teams**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Birch
Vice Chairman Cllr Smerdon

Cllr Pennington
Cllr Chown
Cllr McKay
Cllr Reeve
Cllr Sweett

Cllr Austen
Cllr Jackson
Cllr O'Callaghan
Cllr Spencer
Cllr Thomas

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Abbott
Cllr Bastone
Cllr Hodgson
Cllr Kemp
Cllr Pannell
Cllr Rowe

Cllr Baldry
Cllr Brazil
Cllr Hopwood
Cllr Long
Cllr Pearce
Cllr Taylor

Officers:

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Deputy Monitoring Officer
Head of Housing, Revenues & Benefits
Head of Practice - Commissioning & Contracts
Democratic Services Manager

28.

Minutes

O&S.28/20

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 19 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. **Declarations of Interest**

O&S.29/20

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting. These were recorded as follows:

Cllrs K Kemp and J Sweett both declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Item 8: 'Livewest' (Minute O&S.32/20 below refers) by virtue of being tenants with Livewest. As tenants of the organisation, it was recognised that both Members would have particular knowledge on the organisation. As a result, the Deputy Monitoring Officer proceeded to grant them both a Dispensation to enable them to remain in the meeting and take part in the debate on this agenda item.

30. **Public Forum**

O&S.30/20

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

31. **Executive Forward Plan**

O&S.31/20

The Panel was presented with the most recently published Executive Forward Plan.

In accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Chairman asked for an explanation as to why there had been seemingly little progress on the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Council Car Parks.

The lead Executive Member proceeded to inform that a supplier had now been selected and the next stage was to agree leases for the appropriate car parking bays. As part of the phased programme, the Member confirmed that phase 1 would result in Charging Points being installed in car parks in Totnes, Kingsbridge, Dartmouth, Ivybridge and Salcombe. Upon the completion of Phase 1, it was then intended that Phase 2 would lead to the installation of further provision in Kingsbridge, Totnes and Modbury.

The lead Member also stated that he did not wish to see any loss in car parking income as a consequence of Electric Vehicle Charging Points being installed. In expanding upon this point, the Member was also opposed to Charging Points being installed in prime locations within Council Car Parks.

Finally, the lead Member confirmed that reports would be included on the Executive Forward Plan at the appropriate time(s).

In addition, a question had also been submitted that sought clarification as to why the Executive Forward Plan did not reflect the recent Council resolution (Minute 28/20 refers) whereby the Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was to be reviewed six-monthly by both the Executive and the Panel. In reply, the Leader informed that the

next published Executive Forward Plan would include reference to this agenda item being considered in June 2021 (i.e. six months following the approval of the Council resolution).

32.

Livewest

O&S.32/20

At the invitation of the Panel, Mr Paul Crawford (Chief Executive of Livewest) was in attendance to provide a presentation that focused on:

- A brief history of the organisation;
- Development activity within the organisation; and
- The Customer Services ethos of the organisation.

Furthermore, Members had been invited to submit their questions in advance to Mr Crawford and 18 had been received and these were also responded to as part of the presentation.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was also made to:-

- (a) copies of the presentation being delivered by Mr Crawford. A number of Members thanked Mr Crawford for delivering such an informative presentation and it was agreed that it would be circulated to all Members after this Panel meeting;
- (b) supporting residents to access their shopping / medication needs. In light of the presentation referring to the linkages between Livewest and local Community Groups in supporting residents to access their shopping / medication needs, it was agreed that Mr Crawford would provide more information on this point outside of the meeting;
- (c) the Livewest commitment to de-carbonisation. The Panel expressed its support for the obvious commitment being demonstrated by Livewest towards de-carbonisation;
- (d) customer satisfaction. Mr Crawford confirmed that customer satisfaction was captured in a number of ways and informal resident feedback was obtained on a rolling monthly basis;
- (e) staff salaries. When questioned on the increase in staff salaries, Mr Crawford advised that these were reflective of the results of a recent reward and harmonisation exercise and had been benchmarked against comparable organisations;
- (f) the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. When questioned, Mr Crawford advised that the Pandemic had proven to be hugely challenging to Livewest. Despite these challenges, Mr Crawford paid tribute to both Livewest staff (who had been exceptional in such difficult circumstances) and their customers (who had been very supportive);
- (g) contacting Livewest. In response to some specific questions, Mr Crawford highlighted the contact details at the end of his presentation and encouraged Members to contact their respective local housing officers.

In conclusion and, on behalf of the Panel, the Chairman proceeded to thank Mr Crawford for both his informative presentation and detailed responses to Member questions.

33. **Waste Contract Performance**

O&S.33/20

A report was considered that provided the Panel with background information on the performance of FCC Environment (the Council's Waste Contractor) in implementing the round review and the impact on the future service change.

At this point, the Chairman introduced Mr Mark Barnfield (Head of Municipal Collections and Streetscene, FCC Environment) and Mr Brian Ashby (Area Manager, FCC Environment) who provided a presentation on:

- a review of Contract Performance; and
- an analysis and lessons learnt from round changes.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) It was agreed that a Briefing Note would be provided to Members that set out information around the potential penalty clauses (and sanctions) contained within the Waste Contract;
- (b) Members were of the view that lessons could be learnt by FCC in relation to their corporate communications and messaging. In accepting the point, the FCC representatives committed to raising this point with their Communications colleagues;
- (c) The representatives acknowledged that it may be the perception of some members of staff that local knowledge was not being fully utilised. Furthermore, some Members made the point that a number of crews felt that they were not being listened to by their managers
- (d) The representatives advised that they shared the deep frustrations of Members over the issue of repeat missed collection failures;
- (e) In response to a Member wishing to ask a number of detailed questions, the lead Executive Member agreed to facilitate a meeting with the FCC representatives in the upcoming weeks.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the FCC Environment representatives be thanked for their informative presentation;
2. That, in respect of the new recycling service (being introduced in March 2021), the Panel request that FCC Environment demonstrate that they:
 - Have a robust deliverable plan that will deliver the new service with the absolute minimum disruption to residents;
 - Have sufficient management and supervision on the contract;
 - Ensure sufficient staff training and commitment;

- Have appropriate contingency in place; and
 - Have appropriate IT systems in place that are fit for purpose; and
3. That FCC Environment representatives provide a progress report back to the Panel in six months' time.

34. **Annual O+S Work Programme**

O&S.34/20

During consideration of the latest version of the Panel's Annual Work Programme, it was agreed that a meeting would be held between lead officers and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel with a view to populating the agenda for the meeting to be held on 1 April 2021.

The Meeting concluded at 4.30 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
