

SOUTH HAMS EXECUTIVE



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Executive** held on **Thursday, 17th December, 2020** at **11.00 am** at the **Via Teams**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Pearce
Vice Chairman Cllr Bastone

Cllr Hopwood
Cllr Hawkins

Cllr Baldry

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Abbott
Cllr Birch
Cllr Foss
Cllr Holway
Cllr Long
Cllr O'Callaghan
Cllr Pennington
Cllr Smerdon
Cllr Taylor

Cllr Austen
Cllr Brazil
Cllr Hodgson
Cllr Kemp
Cllr McKay
Cllr Pannell
Cllr Pringle
Cllr Spencer

Officers:
Senior Leadership Team
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Specialist – Democratic Services

46.

Minutes

E.46/20

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 3 December 2020 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

At the invitation of the Chairman, a non-Executive Member expressed his concern that the public question raised by Mr Hore (minute E.37/20 refers) had incorrectly suggested that he had opposed the Torfield Play

Area project. In light of the extent of the concerns raised, the Member was encouraged to contact the Council's Monitoring Officer.

47. **Urgent Business**

E.47/20

The Chairman advised that she had agreed for one item of urgent business to be raised at this Committee meeting. The item related to the New Recycling Service Update and was considered urgent in light of the associated time constraints.

The Lead Member for Environment introduced the report, outlining the problems that had been experienced in the implementation of the Devon Aligned Service. It was therefore proposed that the new Aligned Service should be implemented in a staged approach instead, with new kit being delivered to households the week before the change would be implemented. In terms of the roll-out, it was intended that there would be a break during the Easter period.

During the discussion, Executive Members stated that the informal meeting that they held last week with FCC representatives had been useful. The Chief Executive updated that further conversations had been had with FCC during which they had confirmed that discussions on costs were on-going and that the organisation would remove the standard initial three month waiving of penalties and this would be for six weeks instead.

It was confirmed that FCC representatives would be attending the Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting on 14 January 2021.

It was clarified that the anticipated loss of £84,000, due to delay in implementation (recommendation 2 refers), would form part of the next claim to Central Government for reimbursement of costs incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If the report recommendations were agreed, it was confirmed that the changes to service would start in March 2021 and residents would be informed of changes to their service and when it applied to them. The Leader informed that she had asked for this information to be sent to second home owners' primary residential address as well as their second home address.

The Executive thanked all the officers involved who had worked exceptionally hard under difficult circumstances.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That FCC's proposal for a phased roll-out of the new Recycling Service from March 8th 2021 has been considered and approval be given to the proposal subject to evidence of FCC's improved performance to the agreed contracted levels;

2. That the additional costs of £84,000 that will be incurred as a result of adopting a phased approach and the mitigating actions underway to minimise the impact on the Council's budgetary position be noted; and
3. That delegated authority be given to the Executive Lead Member for Environment, in consultation with the Director of Customer Service Delivery, to conduct a review and to strengthen the performance monitoring, governance, and oversight of the partnership and contract.

48. **Declarations of Interest**

E.48/20

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.

49. **Public Question Time**

E.49/20

It was noted that five public questions had been received in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules for consideration at this meeting. These were as follows:

1. From Barbara Phillips:

In anticipation of the Council's adoption of its Climate and Biodiversity Strategy today, what measures will you now take to ensure that all the Council's policies and actions align with and are consistent with this Strategy?

2. From Caroline Snow:

In the South Hams, 33% of carbon emissions are produced by business, including farming, which also has the capacity to remove atmospheric carbon. When and how will the Council discuss with landowners, farmers and farming organisations, including the NFU, the best way to reduce emissions in this sector?

3. From John Cummings:

Will the Council consider a motion to support the Climate & Ecological Emergency Bill, now before Parliament? ceebill.uk This will legally require central government to give local councils the support they need to help keep average global warming below 1.5°C.

Combined Response to Questions 1 – 3:

As set out in detail in the report to Council later today, the Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy sets out the background and context and the Action Plan sets out how the Council will, initially, approach achieving its declared aims. The report also clearly states that the Action plan will be continually evolving. In order to work towards the aims, it is recognised that consideration will need to be given to the impacts on climate change and biodiversity of both existing policies and proposed actions. This assessment will be

undertaken through implementation of the Action Plan. In a similar way, and specifically through development of the Devon Carbon Plan and its associated Action Plan, the Council and its partners will work closely with the Agricultural Sector to secure carbon reductions in this key area. The Strategy, and covering report, recognises the need for the Council to work with partners locally, regionally and nationally to meet the complex challenges that we all face but also recognises where the Council can have the most influence and where other partners are better placed to take the lead. In terms of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, the Council supports the high level principles but will need to properly assess the contents and implications of the Bill further before making an informed decision in this regard.

4. From Peter Scott:

How will SHDC ensure that there will be enough skilled workforce to deliver the Green Homes scheme locally and ensure the necessary retraining is done, given the current national failure on this? Does SHDC take retrofitting seriously, given the immense task ahead?

Response:

The Council fully recognises the benefits and importance of retrofitting and improving the energy efficiency of existing housing stock and has been active in this area for a number of years now improving thousands of properties during this time. It is also recognised that the nature of the housing stock in the area and the national demand for qualified installers increases the size of the challenge that we face as a community. The Council is actively working with Community Energy Groups and other partners to develop local supply chains and will be working with partners through ongoing Economic Recovery Plans to identify skills shortages and opportunities in this area.

5. From Angie Greenham:

(Ref. the Draft Housing Strategy and 'utilising modern energy efficient methods of construction')

What contractual commitments, memoranda of understanding or other written or verbal undertakings have been entered into, if any, with manufacturer(s) of modular housing and, if so, on what basis and by what process was a manufacturer selected and when were these agreements reached?

Response:

We are very interested in modular technology, recognising the quality of build and speed of construction benefits. We have visited multiple manufacturers factories and spoken with others, including Ideal Modular, Premier Modular, Hexxhome and Caledonian. However, at the current time, we

have no contracts or undertakings with any manufacturers. Should we wish to enter into any contracts in the future we would do so in accordance with procurement regulations and policies.

50. **Month 7 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021 (to the end of October 2020)**

E.50/20

Members were represented with the Month Seven Revenue Budget Monitoring Report setting out a projected underspend of £69,000 (0.7% of budget). Successful lobbying by the Council, other Local Authorities, MPs, and other bodies, had resulted in £1.12 million being granted to the Council by Central Government.

During discussions, it was noted that there was a Chancellor's statement to be made in the afternoon. The Leader gave thanks to the Section 151 Officer and her Finance Team for all their hard work and congratulations on keeping the Council's finances in such good order.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the significant forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2020/21 financial year and the overall projected underspend of £69,000 (0.7% of the total Budget £9.41 million) be noted;
2. That the loss of income streams already experienced by the Council in April 2020 to October 2020 of £1.475 million in total (as shown in Section 6 of the presented agenda report) be noted; and
3. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to transfer £100,000 into a COVID Earmarked Reserve, to protect against future COVID losses in 2021-22 (as set out in Section 1.8 of the attendant report).

51. **Draft Revenue Budget Proposals for 2021-22**

E.51/20

The Executive was presented with a report that outlined the draft revenue budget proposals for 2021/22. The recent Government spending review announcement had largely confirmed suppositions made previously, with further information due to be announced by Central Government this afternoon. Any changes resulting from this announcement would be incorporated into the next draft revenue budget proposal to be brought to the Executive meeting on 28 January 2021. The New Homes Bonus Scheme had been extended for another year into 2021/22. It was confirmed that the staff annual pay award negotiations were not within the Council's control.

Following a question from a non-Executive Member, it was confirmed that support for voluntary organisations within the South Hams area would be reviewed and therefore the amount in the proposal could potentially change on the next revision of this report.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the forecast budget gap for 2021/22 of £75,871 (0.8% of the predicted Net Budget of £9.6 million) and the position for future years be noted;
2. That the current options identified and timescales for closing the budget gap in 2021/22 and future years, to achieve long term financial sustainability be noted;
3. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the Council continue to be part of the Devon Business Rates Pool for 2021/22, subject to there being no announcements within the Finance Settlement (expected to be announced in the week commencing 14 December), which in the opinion of the S151 Officer (in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the lead Executive Member for Finance), would change this recommendation.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF E.50/20 PART 3 AND E.51/20 PART 3 WHICH WERE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2021, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON THURSDAY, 31 DECEMBER 2020 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 18).

The Meeting concluded at 12.15 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
