

# SOUTH HAMS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Minutes** of a meeting of the **South Hams Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held  
on  
**Thursday, 17th March, 2022 at 2.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present:           **Councillors:**

*Chairman* Cllr Birch  
*Vice Chairman* Cllr Smerdon

Cllr Austen	Cllr Jackson
Cllr Jones	Cllr McKay
Cllr O'Callaghan	Cllr Rose
Cllr Spencer	Cllr Taylor (as Substitute for Cllr Chown)
Cllr Thomas	

**In attendance: (in person or via Teams)**

Councillors:

Cllr Baldry	Cllr Bastone
Cllr Brazil	Cllr Chown
Cllr Hawkins	Cllr Hopwood
Cllr Pearce	Cllr Pringle
Cllr Reeve	

Officers:  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Director – Place & Enterprise  
Democratic Services Manager  
Head of Strategy & Projects  
Specialist – Leisure  
Head of Environmental Health & Licensing  
Specialist – Environmental Health  
Head of Housing  
IT Specialist  
Democratic Services Officers

58.

**Minutes**

O&S.58/21

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) held on 20 January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

59. **Declarations of Interest**

O&S.59/21

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 declared.

60. **Public Forum**

O&S.60/21

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

61. **Leisure Contract - Fusion Annual Report 2021**

O&S.61/21

The lead Executive Member for Community Wellbeing explained that the representative from Fusion was unable to attend this Committee Meeting as he was unwell and that the presentation from Fusion would be moved to the next Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 April, 2022. The Member did introduce a report to the Committee that updated on Fusion's annual report for 2021.

It was clarified that while the Council had one operator across all four leisure centres within the District, the contract was different for Totnes Leisure Centre as Tadpool hired the building and contracted direct with Fusion.

It was noted that usage of the leisure centres had continued to rise month on month, and was approaching pre Covid pandemic attendance.

Following a discussion regarding overview of the Fusion financial information, it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **CARRIED** at the subsequent vote that:

**RESOLVED**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive financial figures and a full report every six months, with a three monthly update being received from the Lead Executive Member for Leisure, to include all relevant financial matters.

The Chairman then clarified that Fusion were not seeking further financial support from the Council, but were asking to extend the payment terms for management fees which were due to the Council. The Officer confirmed that Fusion were not looking to alter the amount of the fees, nor the payment schedule timescale, but were looking to reduce earlier payments and increase later payments.

The Members of the Committee requested that they receive the complete list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were set out in Fusion's contract, and to receive this list before the Full Council meeting on 31 March 2022 when a related item would be on the agenda.

It was confirmed that a report on solar panels on Leisure Centre roofs would be presented to the Executive in the near future. Following questions from Members, it was confirmed that projects to reduce carbon emissions were being investigated, particularly as proposals

required design and feasibility studies before there was any possibility of accessing government grants. It was confirmed that, as Fusion held the leases for leisure centres, it was Fusion's choice over who provided the solar panels. Following discussions regarding the potential of the Totnes Renewable Energy Society (TRESOC) being used in Totnes, it was confirmed that this topic would be a high priority when Fusion representatives appeared at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 21 April 2022. A Member then asked about the recent price increases at the leisure centres and it was confirmed that these were accompanied by an increase in those able to apply for concessions.

It was then clarified that the four main areas for Fusion to respond to when they appeared at the next meeting were listed as: activities in surrounding rural areas; KPIs; carbon reduction/solar energy projects; and pricing.

Hearing of the report was then adjourned until the next Committee meeting.

It was then:

#### **RECOMMENDED**

That the Executive be **RECOMMENDED** to establish a Working Group to progress the much needed improvement works at Totnes Leisure Centre. The Working Group to consist of the Executive Lead for Leisure, the three local Ward Members, a representative of Tadpool, a representative of Fusion, and relevant lead officers. The first meeting to be held within four weeks of the Executive decision.

62.

#### **Better Lives for All Thematic Update: Community Wellbeing**

O&S.62/21

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

Each project, outlined in Appendix A of the attendant report, was then reviewed in turn:

CW1.1: This item was rated as 'amber', ie off track but plan in place. The officer outlined that the rating was due to the project's initial stage having been very successful as they had sought to engage with a number of potential partners, these included, but was not limited to, Devon County Council, NHS, voluntary sector, and the Police. Other statutory partners had shown a very positive wish to be involved and to ensure a joined up approach to issues of rural poverty. Therefore initial conversations were on-going, hence resulting in the amber rating. It was noted the importance of listening to communities and identifying what support the communities themselves identified.

Following discussions, it was requested that Ward Members were involved at the earliest opportunity. It was noted that this was an ambitious and daunting project, and that the Council would not be able to resolve all issues, but a framework would ultimately be put in place to encourage community/partnership working. This would be run as a pilot project initially.

It was then:

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **WELCOMED** this initiative but **NOTED** it was ambitious and the importance of local Ward Members being involved at the earliest opportunity was recognised.

CW1.2: Following the update on this action, the Executive Lead Member updated that Dartmouth Town Council was exploring the possibility of building key worker properties on the site of the old hospital to ensure that the new Health Hub had sufficient staffing resources.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** this action.

CW1.3: It was confirmed that Members would like to receive qualitative histories of Disabled Facilities Grants at this juncture of future reports. The budget allocation from Devon County Council for 2021/22 was £1,196,498.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** this action and thanked the officers for achieving a good performance alongside the astute negotiations, and that the Committee would welcome examples of good practice to be included in subsequent updates.

CW1.4: This item had been covered above (minute O&S.61/21 refers).

CW1.5: Officers wished to clarify what information Members of the Committee would like to receive in future updates. It was reiterated that monies available through Section 106 agreements was reported regularly to the Executive and local Ward Members were reminded to review this to see what monies were available to be used, and consult with the local Parish/Town Council to see where the monies could be best spent. It was reiterated that South Hams District Council were the administrators of the money but Parish and Town Councils were able to pull down the S106 monies.

It was proposed that, in respect of CW1.5, there be a report to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the proposed measures to be taken to bring about a considerable reduction in the Section 106 monies totalling £3,016,285 in respect of the open space, sport, and recreation report, dated 31 December 2021.

This was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**, but declared **LOST** when put to the vote, however, it was agreed to consider this as a potential agenda item for the next meeting. The Chair and the Vice Chair would agree the agenda for the next meeting, to be held on 21 April 2022, as there were already many significant items on the proposed agenda.

CW1.6: The officer asked for clarification on what should be reported against this item in subsequent reports. It was noted that there were many good initiatives which could be reported on, including good news stories where initiatives are working well. Ward Members were to be included as early as possible.

It was confirmed that funding had been identified for this year, but it was within the power of Members whether subsequent funding was identified.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **WELCOMED** the progress that had been made and requested examples of the benefits of the scheme, and that there be Ward Member involvement.

One Member highlighted that he felt 'Better Lives for All' did not apply consistently across the whole area as smaller communities were often overlooked. He cited an example of applications for the 'My Place' campaign, which used funding from the European Regional Development Fund. The supporting documentation for funding applications stated that Towns and Parish Councils should be contacted to see if they wished to apply, but it had only been the main towns in the area which had been approached. The Member felt that the smaller areas were systemically penalised

It was then:

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Executive be **RECOMMENDED** to **NOTE** that 'Better Lives for All' was not applying to the smaller communities in the South Hams and that it should ensure that these communities were better represented by the actions in the strategy.

63.

**Task and Finish Group Updates:**

O&S.63/21

**a) Housing**

Following the completion of the work of the Housing Task and Finish Group (T&FG), the Chairman of the Housing T&FG updated the Committee on the parameters that had shaped the Group's work and then outlined the recommendations that were brought forward from the T&FG.

It was then:

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Executive be **RECOMMENDED** that:

1. Officers explore the formation of a Strategic Partnership with a Housing Association (or Housing Associations) and other partners to deliver affordable rented housing through schemes similar to those mentioned at discussion point 1 of the attendant report "Affordable Rural Housing – Final Recommendations", with such partnership(s) to include the location of suitable sites within the district; and

2. Officers explore the setting up of a Community Land Trust modelled on the Cornwall Community Land Trust; including the possibility of working with other Devon local authorities in its formation; and
3. The list of exemplar schemes be submitted to officers and that these be used to identify best practice for sites in the South Hams.

64.

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

O&S.64/21

It was noted that:

- The Adjourned fusion report would be presented to the next Committee meeting;
- S106 monies review would be given further consideration;
- Connecting Devon and Somerset, together with Airband, and Broadband officer should be invited to attend the next Committee meeting
- The Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman to work with officers to review the 22 April 2022 meeting agenda so that it could fit with the time available.
- A strongly worded letter to be sent to the Ambulance Service to ask why there had been no response to the invitation to come before a democratically elected body to explain why South Hams had one of the worst response times in the area.

The Meeting concluded at 4.32 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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