

SOUTH HAMS EXECUTIVE



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Executive** held on **Wednesday, 28th June, 2023 at 4.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Brazil
Vice Chairman Cllr Thomas

Cllr Abbott
Cllr Hodgson
Cllr McKay

Cllr Birch
Cllr Hopwood
Cllr O'Callaghan

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Bonham
Cllr Long
Cllr Yardy

Cllr Hawkins
Cllr Pannell

Officers:

Chief Executive
Section 151 Officer
Director – Strategy & Governance
Director – Place & Enterprise
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Head of Housing
Head of Revenues & Benefits
Head of Environmental Health
Assistant Director – Strategy & Organisational Development
Principal Assets Officer
Principal Natural Resources & Greenspaces Officer
Senior Greenspaces & Recreation Officer

1. **Leader's Introduction**

E.1/23

In recognition of this being the first Executive meeting of this Council administration, the Leader welcomed those who were in attendance and wished to record his thanks to his fellow Executive Members for agreeing to join him on the Executive.

2. **Minutes**
E.2/23
The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 13 April 2023 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

3. **Declarations of Interest**
E.3/23
Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting.

Whilst not declaring an interest, Cllr N Hopwood informed that she would abstain from the vote on agenda item 12: *'Allocation of Section 106 Funds for Recreational Facilities at, and adjacent to, the Woolwell Centre'* (Minute E.11/23 below refers) by virtue of being the local Ward Member.

4. **Public Question Time**
E.4/23
The Leader informed that no public questions had been received in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules.

5. **Executive Forward Plan**
E.5/23
Members were presented with the most recently published version of the Executive Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Executive meetings for the next four months and duly noted its contents.

In discussion, Cllr Hodgson wished to put on record that, at the time that the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan was to be considered by the Executive, she would be declaring an interest on this item by virtue of being a Totnes Town Councillor.

6. **Setting Priorities for the New Council**
E.6/23
The Executive considered a report that set out an outline timeline for the development of a new strategy for the Council. This was to include doing more to tackle the housing crisis and taking action to respond on climate and biodiversity whilst also ensuring that core and statutory council services such as waste and recycling and planning were delivered to a high standard.

During the ensuing debate, Members welcomed the intention to fully consult, with particular reference being made to some of the measures that were to be carried out. Specifically regarding the consultation approach with town and parish councils, the Leader advised that he would be willing to hold an additional meeting with parish council representatives only, if that was their overriding wish.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the timeline and approach for the development of the next iteration of the Council's Corporate Strategy, be approved;
2. That, working with the Senior Leadership Team and the Assistant Director of Strategy throughout the Summer to refine priorities for the next four years, a new draft Corporate Strategy be ready for consideration at the next meeting of the Executive on 21 September 2023; and
3. That the intention be noted that, following the meeting on 21 September 2023, a period of consultation be undertaken to inform the final Strategy prior to adoption by Full Council.

7. **Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Panel and Support for Sustainable South Hams**

E.7/23

The Executive was presented with a report that sought approval for the creation of a new Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Group comprising of external experts. Approval was also sought for the continuation of financial support to Sustainable South Hams for its work in supporting the Council's declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the proposed £40,000 grant to be awarded to Sustainable South Hams (SSH). In support of the proposal, a number of Members highlighted the excellent work that was carried out by SSH and urged all Members to attend the Briefing on the organisation that was to be held on 29 June 2023. In addition, the importance of all local Ward Members encouraging their local parish councils and environmental groups to engage with SSH was emphasised;
- (b) the Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Panel comprising of external experts. The lead Member committed to providing progress updates on the work of this Advisory Panel as part of the standing agenda item to future Executive meetings.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That a Climate Change and Biodiversity Advisory Panel, chaired by the Executive Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity and comprising external expert representatives from the wider community be established with immediate effect;
2. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Strategy and Governance in consultation with the Executive Lead for Climate Change and Biodiversity, to set the Terms of Reference and membership of the Advisory Panel; and
3. That a grant of £40,000 from the Climate Change and Biodiversity Earmarked Reserve be awarded to Sustainable South Hams to continue their District wide work supporting the Council's declaration of a climate change and biodiversity emergency.

8. **Improving Standards in Housing**

E.8/23

The Executive considered a report that set out a commitment by the Council to support tenants of social and private sector landlords to take action against their landlords when there were unacceptable delays or challenges in remedying repairs.

The report also provided details of new measures contained in the Social Housing Bill, setting out how the Council was already working towards simplifying the process for tenants to make complaints regarding their housing conditions and how the Council would deal with those complaints.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The importance of providing feedback, ongoing monitoring, keeping Members fully informed and good communications on the Council website were particularly recognised;
- (b) In reply to a question, officers committed to providing an update to Members on the progress of the Renters Reform Bill 2023 through the House of Commons and House of Lords;
- (c) The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee stated his intention for Livewest representative(s) to be invited to attend a Committee meeting early in the 2023-24 Municipal Year. As a general point, Members felt it to be important when external partners were invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Members to be in receipt of a pre-briefing from lead officers;
- (d) Members were of the view that the overriding purpose of this report was to set out a statement of intent and to demonstrate to tenants that the Council would do all it could to support them.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That an enhanced approach to improving Social and Private Sector Housing standards in South Hams, be approved; and
2. That annual performance reports on the investigations of housing standards complaints be brought to a future Executive meeting.

9. **Cost of Living Crisis: Plans for Household Support Fund 2023 to 2024 and Council Tax Support Fund Allocation**

E.9/23

A report was considered that sought approval for the implementation of a range of support measures to assist residents who were experiencing extreme hardship during the current Cost of Living crisis.

During debate, particular reference was made to:

- (a) the ability for officers to provide support to retired blue light workers. In response to the request, it was agreed that officers would consider this point further and, if appropriate, would report back to a future Executive meeting;
- (b) targeting the hardest to reach vulnerable groups. Officers highlighted that they had built very good relationships with the Community and Voluntary sector and it was also noted that local Ward Members had a key role to play in promoting the availability of supporting measures to their known vulnerable residents.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Head of Revenues and Benefits be instructed to:

- a) take immediate steps to progress support payments of £150 to single income households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction, and not receiving passported benefits, on 1 July 2023, with a further payment of up to £250 being made in December 2023.
- b) take immediate steps to progress support payments of £150 to residents with caring responsibilities i.e. those receiving Council Tax Reduction and Carers Allowance and/or a council tax carers disregard on 1 July 2023, with a further payment of up to £250 being made in December 2023.
- c) take immediate steps to progress support payments of £150 to residents receiving War Disablement Pension on 1 July 2023, with a further payment of up to £250 being made in December 2023.
- d) work with Armed Forces' charities and other affiliated organisations to identify other veterans the Council wishes to support.
- e) release the balance of funding in three tranches for an open application process, to cover the periods July to September 2023, October to December 2023 and January to March 2024; and
- f) use the balance of the Council Tax Support Fund allocation to top-up the Exceptional Hardship Fund.

10. **Dartmouth Health Hub - Off-Street Parking Order Amendment**

E.10/23

Members considered a report which sought approval for a series of amendments to the South Hams District Council (Off-Street Parking Places)(Variation No.1) Order 2022.

In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:

- (a) the wish of the lead Member to **PROPOSE** an additional recommendation as follows:

'3. That the Off Street Parking Order be subject to further reviews in six and twelve months' time.'

This additional recommendation was subsequently **SECONDED** and therefore became part of the substantive motion;

(b) the views of the local Ward Members. The local Ward Members expressed a number of concerns over the proposals that were summarised as follows:

- the proposed eight free one hour parking bays were insufficient and should be increased to 20;
- a vehicle registration approach to parking should be implemented;
- the assumptions applied did not stand up to scrutiny and contained inconsistencies;
- there was significant seasonal variations across the car parks in the vicinity; and
- the risk of appointments overrunning and the consequent anxiety placed on patients was unfair.

(c) an amendment to the motion was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** as follows:

*'That **sixteen** free one hour only parking bays be introduced within the car park.'*

In support of the amendment, some Members felt that this would be a good example of the Executive listening to the consultation responses received and the concerns expressed by the local Ward Members. Other Members stated their opposition to the amendment for three main reasons:

- the amendment had not been properly costed and it was not good practice to take such decisions without the financial implications being fully understood;
- the Health Hub had been developed at great cost to the Council and it was therefore appropriate for the local authority to attempt to recoup some of its financial outlay on the project; and
- reviews were proposed to be carried out in six and twelve months' time and the Executive would be in a more informed position at those points to amend the Order (if deemed appropriate).

When put to the vote, the amendment was declared (by virtue of the Chairman's Casting Vote) **LOST**.

(NOTE. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.7 (*Right to Require Individual Vote to be Recorded*), Cllr N Hopwood asked that her vote to abstain on the amendment be formally recorded).

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the following amendments to the South Hams District Council (Off-Street Parking Places)(Variation No.1) Order 2022, be approved:-
 - i. a new car park be named as Dartmouth Health Hub Car Park and incorporated into the Order
 - ii. pay and display charges at the Dartmouth Health Hub Car Park be introduced in accordance with Appendix A of the presented report

- iii. the pay & display charges in Dartmouth Park & Ride Car Park be amended in accordance with Appendix B of the presented report
 - iv. a Dartmouth Health Hub Car Park Reserved Parking Permit be introduced for Health Hub staff use only
 - v. eight free one hour only parking bays be introduced within the car park
2. That the variation to the Off Street Parking Order be approved to reflect amended recommendations as above for introduction as soon as the order is complete; and
 3. That the Off Street Parking Order be subject to further reviews in six and twelve months' time.

11. Allocation of Section 106 funds for recreational facilities at, and adjacent to, the Woolwell Centre

E.11/23

The Executive was presented with a report that sought approval for the allocation of S106 funds towards a new pump track adjacent to the Woolwell Centre, improvements to outdoor play facilities adjacent to the Woolwell Centre; and a new covered seating area on the western side of the Woolwell Centre, to serve the adjacent recreational facilities.

In discussion, the local Ward Member provided an explanation on each of the three projects and, in support of the proposals being approved, informed that each would be subject to further consultation with the local community.

It was then:

RESOLVED

- 1) That the allocation of £80,000 of S106 funds towards a pump track adjacent to the Woolwell Centre, be approved;
- 2) That the allocation of £30,000 of S106 funds towards future improvements to outdoor play facilities adjacent to the Woolwell Centre, be approved;
- 3) That the allocation of £51,100.34 of S106 funds towards a covered seating area on the western side of the Woolwell Centre, to serve the adjacent recreational facilities, be approved;
- 4) That £161,100.34 be allocated from the S106 funds held by the Council for the mitigation of the impact of the "Land off Pinewood Drive" development, specifically for open space, sport and recreation improvements;
- 5) That in each case, the agreement of the specific details of projects be delegated to the relevant Officer in consultation with the Ward Member, Portfolio Holder and Parish Council; and
- 6) That any substitution of alternative projects be delegated to the relevant Officer in consultation with the Ward Member, Portfolio Holder and Parish Council.

12. **Appointments to the Salcombe Harbour Board; Re-establishment of the Waste Working Group; and Establishment of Executive Advisory Groups**

E.12/23

Members considered a report that sought approval for appointments to the Salcombe Harbour Board, the re-establishment of the Waste Working Group and the Establishment of three Executive Advisory Groups

In discussion, Members considered the establishment of the Executive Advisory Groups and made particular reference to:

- the need for nominated Members to have the expertise, interest and time availability. In expanding upon the point, officers informed that, due to the timescales associated with the development of the Corporate Strategy, Advisory Group meetings would be convened at very short notice (i.e. before mid-July);
- Cllrs Abbott and Thomas jointly leading on the proposed Community Development Executive Advisory Group;
- the wish for nominees to be made up of non-Executive Members only, with other Executive Members being able to attend in an observational capacity.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That Cllrs Bonham, Dennis, Long and McKay be appointed to serve on the Salcombe Harbour Board for the four year period from 2023/24 to 2026/27;
2. That Cllr Long be appointed to the role of Salcombe Harbour Board Chairman for the four year period from 2023/24 to 2026/27;
3. That Kate Allen be appointed as a Salcombe Harbour Board Co-Opted Member for the three year period from 2023/24 to 2025/26;
4. That in the event of a further ad-hoc vacancy arising, Mark Alexander be automatically appointed as a Salcombe Harbour Board Co-Opted Member, with delegated authority being given to the Director of Place and Enterprise and the Head of Democratic Services to fix the term of office in that eventuality;
5. That the Waste Working Group be re-established in accordance with the draft Terms of Reference at Appendix A of the presented report; and
6. That three Executive Advisory Groups (Climate Change & Biodiversity; Community Development; and Housing) be established in accordance with the draft Terms of Reference at Appendix B of the presented report.

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON FRIDAY, 7 JULY 2023 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES)

The Meeting concluded at 5.50 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
