



South Hams  
District Council

# South Hams Annual Report

2019 - 2020



[www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk)

# South Hams in Numbers

**342**

square miles

**59**

Town and Parish  
Councils

**86,221**

Population

**£8.8m**

South Hams  
District Council  
Net Budget  
2019/20

**560,000**

Annual holidays  
to the South Hams  
(one or more  
overnight stays)

**13.2%**

of South Hams  
Residents living  
in Fuel Poverty

**11**

households  
in temporary  
accommodation  
at any one time  
(average)

**10,265**  
businesses

**x 10.25**  
Average House  
Price above  
annual average  
income

**£25,104**  
average income

**8014.2**  
metric tonnes of Co<sup>2</sup>  
equivalent per year -  
District Council's  
total net carbon  
footprint

**5**  
Town  
Centres

**80.1%**  
working age  
residents in  
employment

**1.05**  
Job Density  
(meaning 1.05 jobs  
in South Hams  
per working age  
resident)

**669**  
households on the  
housing register  
(average)

**3.5m**  
annual waste  
collections

# Foreword by the Leader and Chief Executive

The financial year 2019/20 saw the Induction of a new Council following Local Elections in May 2020 with over fifty percent of our elected Members being new to the Council.

We continue to work closely with West Devon Borough Council and share a single workforce. This arrangement generates an ongoing annual saving of £3.9m for South Hams.

A key project this year has been the successful implementation of a new multi million pound contract for recycling, waste collection and street cleansing services. Our new partnership with FCC went live on 2019 and will save us around £3 million during the lifetime of the contract. It will also allow us to recycle a much wider range of items, hopefully within the next 12 months. We also declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency with work already commencing to deliver on our commitment to becoming a carbon neutral council.

We continue to play a significant active role in our region, working with other local authorities and partners through the Heart of the South West Joint Committee, with the Local Enterprise Partnership and agencies such as Homes England to improve infrastructure, facilitate economic growth and support the building of affordable housing in our area. Our Joint Local Plan, adopted in March 2019 is providing a strong framework for development control and delivering the spatial ambitions of the three Councils involved, ourselves, West Devon Borough Council and Plymouth City Council.

As we write this report, we find ourselves in quite uncharted territory. The Covid-19 pandemic begun to impact our communities as well as our own services and finances in March 2020.

The Council has adapted well in an incredibly short space of time, with our employees ending the year working from home full time and many of them undertaking new roles to support our response to the pandemic.

Work is already underway to assess the impact on the Council and the South Hams communities. While we have yet to fully understand the impact, we know that it will be long lasting and require a joined up approach with all partner agencies and neighbouring Councils working closely to support one another.



**Cllr Judy Pearce**  
Leader of the Council



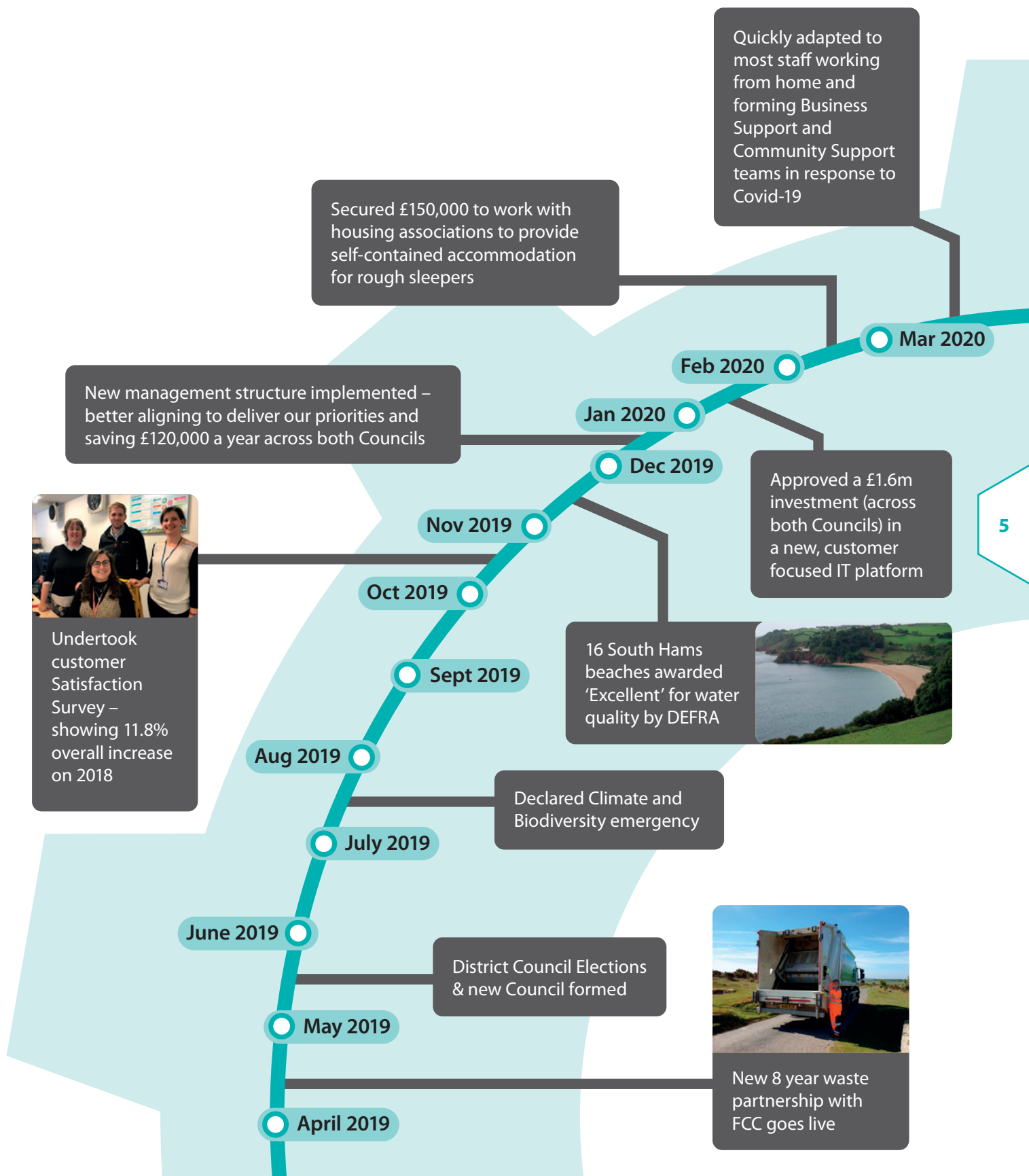
**Andy Bates**  
Chief Executive

**£3.9m**  
annual workforce  
saving

Climate and  
Biodiversity  
Emergency  
declared

**£3m**  
saved on waste  
contract

# 2019/20 Highlights



# Finance

With a reduction in funding from Central Government of around £4 million per year since 2010, the Council has had to change dramatically. The Council no longer receives any Government Grant (Revenue Support Grant) to fund its services and the Council has to be self-sufficient.

During this year, South Hams District Council has continued to lobby Central Government to get them to recognise how difficult and more costly it is to provide services over a large rural area.

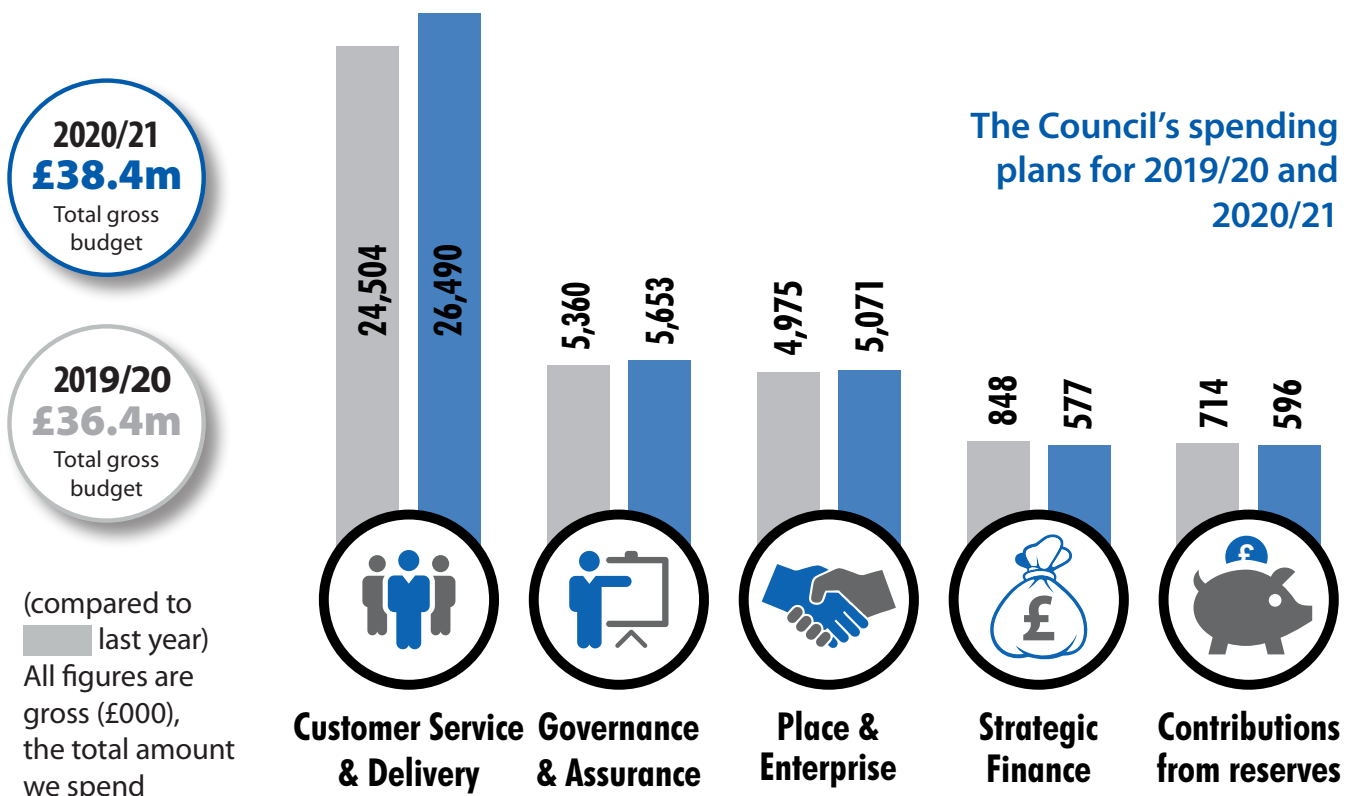
However, despite the challenges, the Council has been able to close a predicted budget gap of £500,000 for this coming year and find funds to invest in district wide issues such as housing and climate change associated actions.

We have continued to make a significant investment in community housing projects. That means across four schemes we have progressed creating 55 new homes in the South Hams.

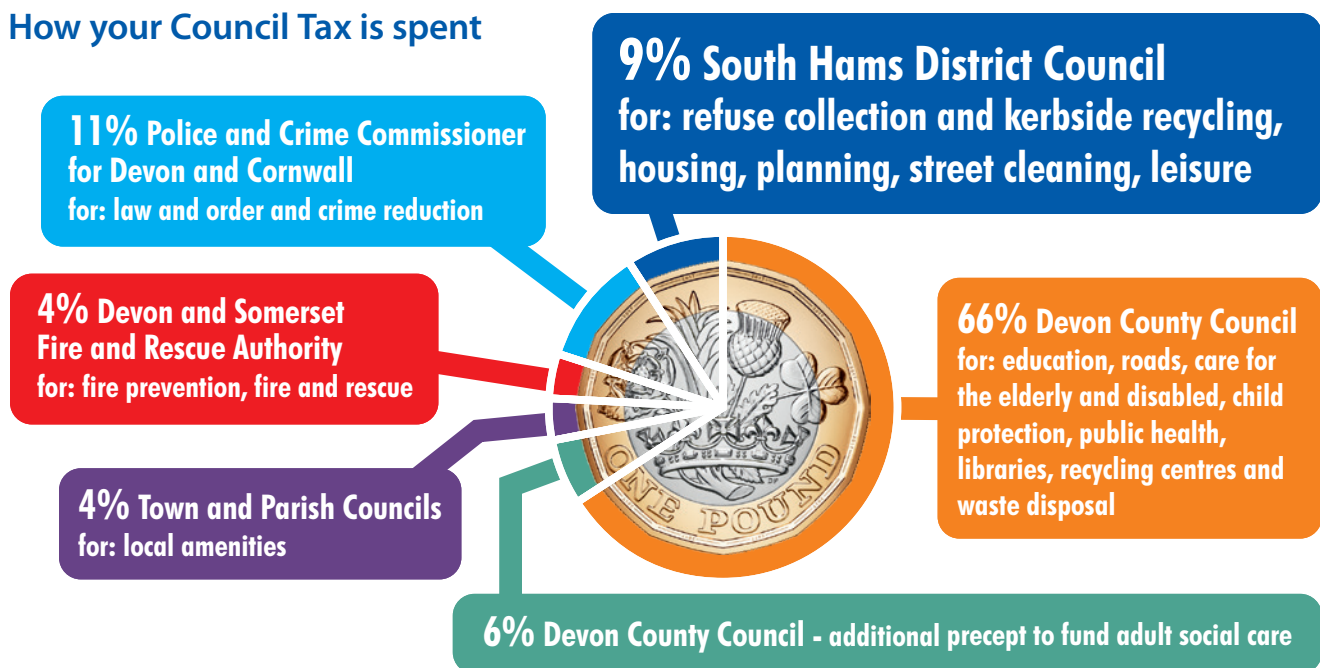
Our play park replacement scheme will now see new equipment in parks in Ivybridge, Kingsbridge, Woolwell and Salcombe.

During 2019/20, we approved £750,000 over 5 years to enable us to upgrade the Council's IT systems. We shall be installing a great new solution that provides excellent value for money and greatly improve and facilitate customer interaction with us.

We have also supported our aim to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030 by managing to allocate £400,000 to help tackle climate change and biodiversity loss within the District.



## How your Council Tax is spent



All of this has been made possible thanks to careful financial management including the shared service with West Devon Borough Council, whereby the Councils share the cost of a single workforce which has saved us £3.9m a year.

This year we have entered in to a joint waste and recycling partnership with West Devon Borough Council and FCC Environmental which went live on 1st April 2019. Over the lifetime of this contract we should save £3.2m along with making Improvements to the service and aligning it with the rest of Devon.

In the coming year's budget, we have put £300,000 aside for projects and issues relating to coastal erosion and £1.1 million for Disabled Facilities Grants, to enable less able residents to live independently within their own home.

In February 2020, the Council set a balanced budget for the 2020/21 financial year, however since setting the budget, our income has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Options will be presented to Members with a view to approving an amended budget for 2020/21 at the end of September.

The following two pages show all of the services that we deliver for the 9 pence in every pound that South Hams retains from the Council Tax bill to fund its service.

# What your Council Tax money goes towards and who is responsible

- South Hams District Council
- Town and Parish Council
- Devon County Council (DCC)
- Police and Crime Commissioner

## South Hams District Council

Below is a street scene showing the key services provided by South Hams District Council.

[www.southhams.gov.uk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk)

## Devon County Council

Here are some of the Devon County Council services which are often mistaken with the services provided by South Hams.

[www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk)

## Town and Parish Council

To find out services from your Town and Parish Council, contact your local clerk ...

[www.southhams.gov.uk/contactyourparishclerk](http://www.southhams.gov.uk/contactyourparishclerk)

## Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue

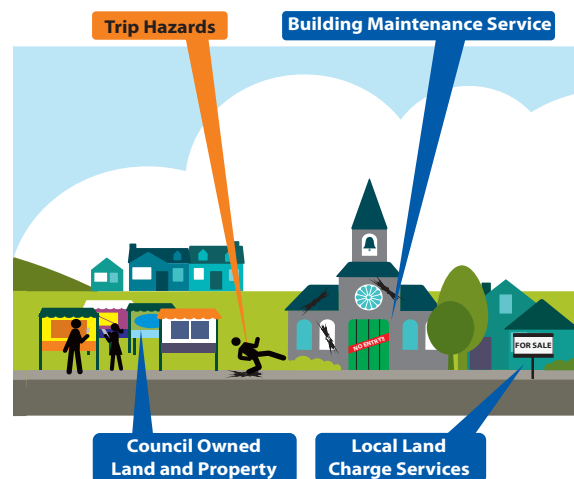
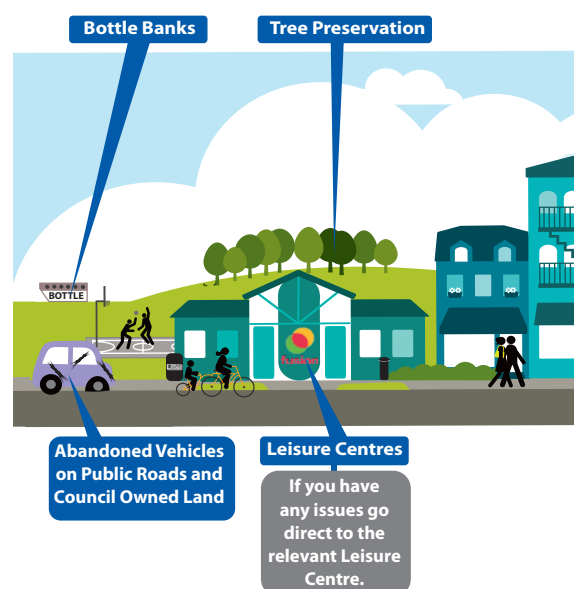
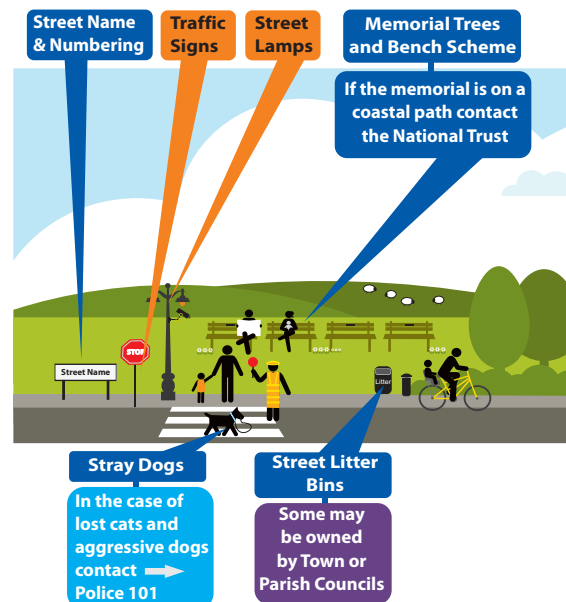
Services provided by DSFR can be found at...

[www.dsfr.gov.uk](http://www.dsfr.gov.uk)

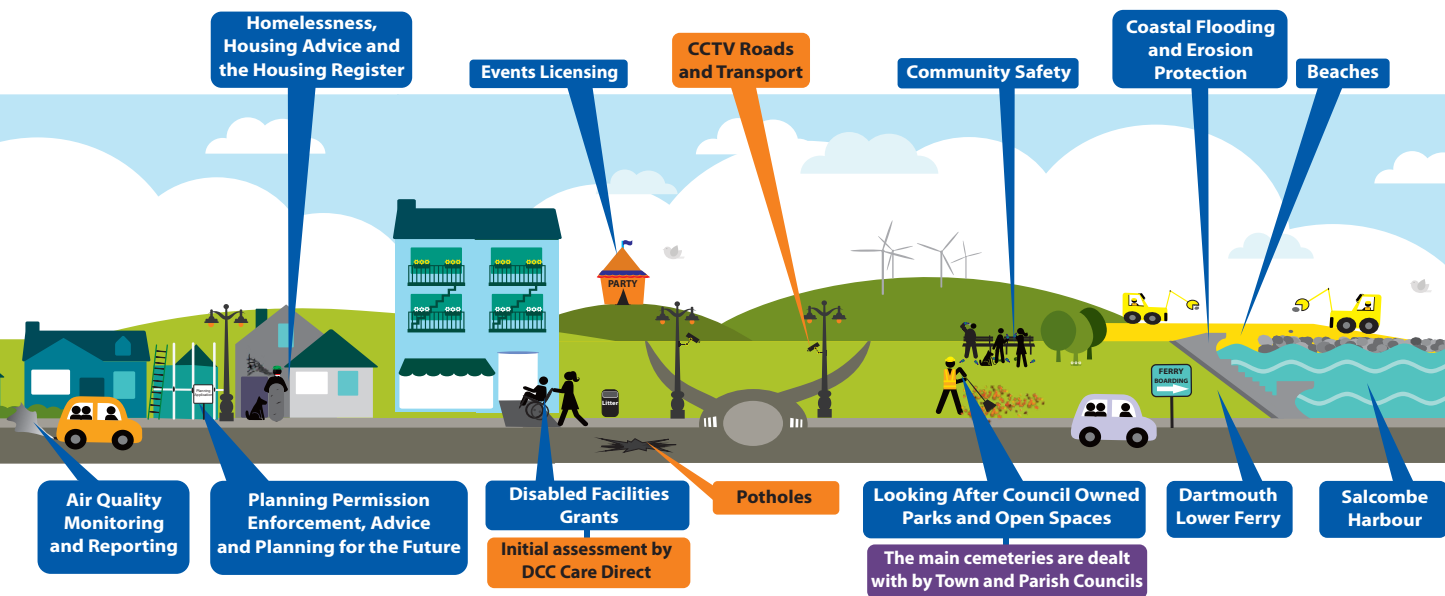
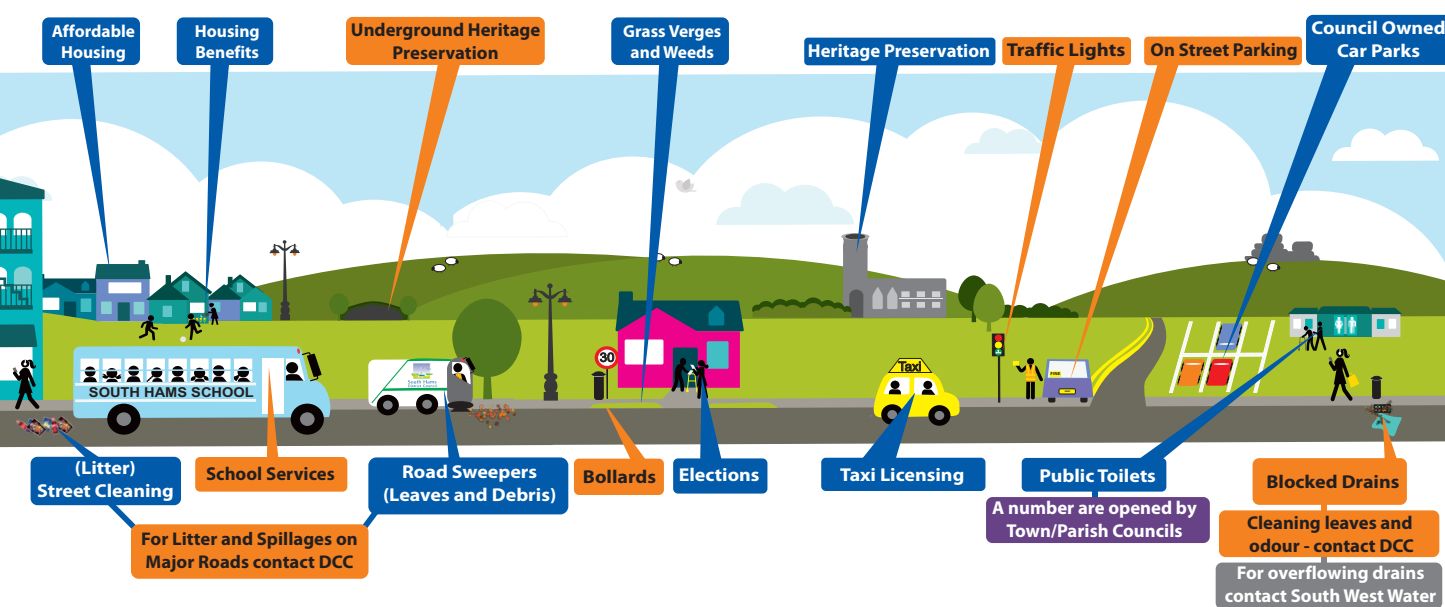
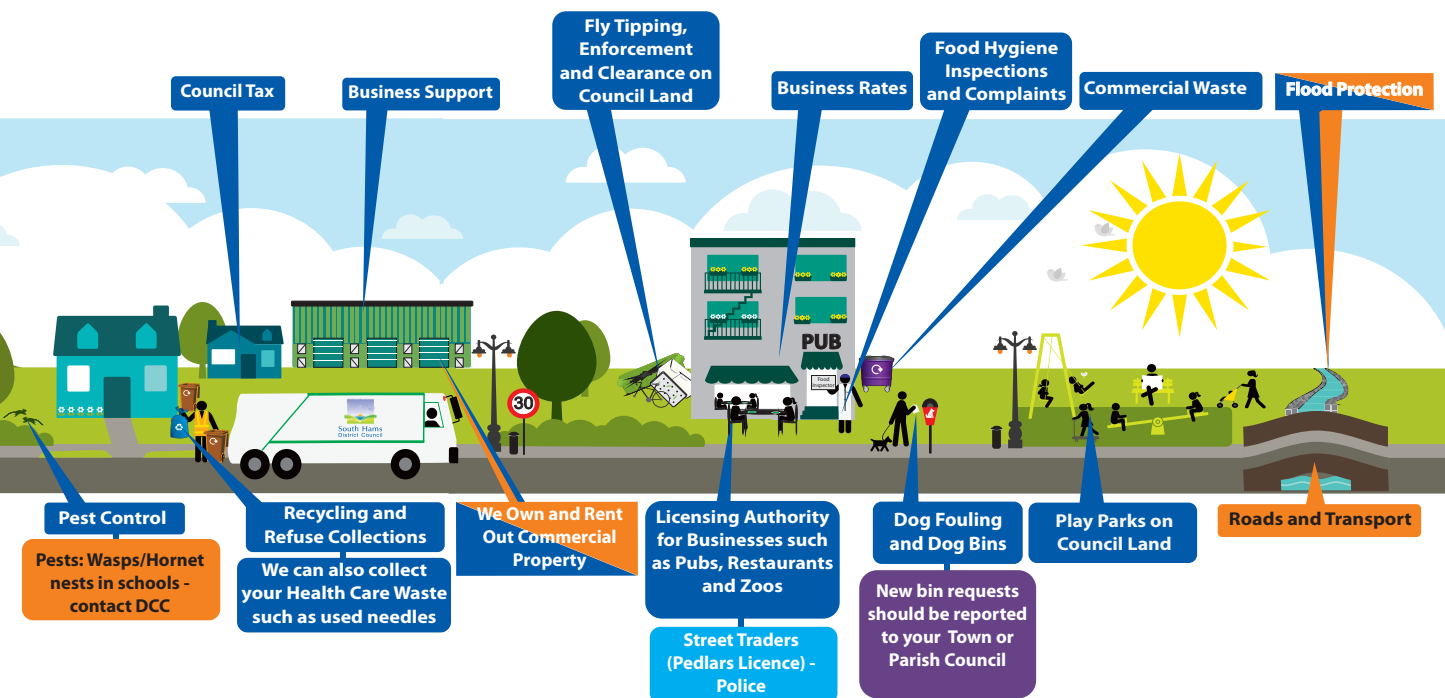
## Police and Crime Commissioner

For services provided by the Police use the Ask Ned function...

[www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/askned](http://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/askned)







# Achievements 2019/20



## Strong and Empowered Communities

South Hams is characterized by many unique Towns and Villages spread out over a large rural area with a vast coastline. Working closely with these individual communities will be key to their future strength and resilience.

Action	19/20 Progress
Agreed 3 year funding to partner agencies	A three year funding arrangement with partner organisations was agreed, rather than agreeing it annually. This will provide those organisation providing vital frontline support to our communities with medium term certainty over their finances.
Support to community schemes	Our Members each have a locality fund which support local community initiatives. During 2019/20, grant payments of £40,000 were made supporting 107 community activities including planting trees, social hubs, sustainable transport plans and many more.
Community Lottery	Enabled community groups to raise £25,000 for specific causes through the Seamoor Lotto. <a href="http://www.seamoorlotto.co.uk">www.seamoorlotto.co.uk</a>
Covid-19 Community Response	In March, the Council acted quickly to establish a Community Response Team to assist community groups and residents with responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. 35 employees we quickly re-tasked to providing frontline support, working closely to support the work of our Members.  The Council has worked closely with voluntary sector and partner organisations, developing a support website and dedicated telephone support line offering emergency food and welfare grants, signposting to mental health support amongst many other support functions.
Neighbourhood Plans	During the year we supported four neighbourhood plan referendums for Brixton, South Milton, Salcombe and Stoke Fleming.



**1878**

Play Park Inspections undertaken



**80**

Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations supported through our partnership with South Devon CVS



**£25,000**

raised for good causes through the Seamoor Lotto



## Efficient and Effective Council

Residents and businesses cannot choose which Council provides their services. They pay their Council Tax or Business Rates and receive the service provided. Therefore, we have a duty to **provide** our customers the best value for their money and to do that we need to make sure our services are as efficient and effective as they can possibly be.

Action	19/20 Progress
Improved the efficiency of our IT systems	This year we have made investments in our IT system, by implementing a new benefits platform that enables users to sign in to an account to see the progress of their benefits claims. We have also committed to investing £1.5m in improving our other customer facing IT systems by replacing our current technology with new state of the art platforms. The new system will enable us to be much more responsive to customer needs and ensure a better overall customer experience. This will be a significant project to be delivered in 2020/21.
Positive progress on our Customer Improvement programme	In 2018 we joined the Institute of Customer Service and undertook our first Customer Satisfaction benchmarking. Following the results, we started a programme of improvements to improve our customer experience. This year we undertook a follow up survey which showed a real improvement including an 11.8% improvement in our 'Getting it right first time' score. This is a real achievement at a time when across all sectors, the average customer satisfaction levels are decreasing. Our benchmarking score is now 4.1 times higher than the national local council average.  Calls to our contact centre reduced by 14,110 on last year , along with a reduction in our online contact. We see this as a positive indication that we're getting more right first time.
Elections & Member Induction	In May 2019 we held District Council as well as Town and Parish Council elections followed by the General Election in December. It was an incredibly busy year for the elections team. District Councillors undertook a comprehensive Induction programme with over 40 hours of induction and training offered to each Councillor.
New Waste and Recycling Contract	The new Waste and Recycling contract went live in April 2019 which has already seen an improvement in the number of missed collections.



Action	19/20 Progress
Restructure of Management team	It is important that the Council remains efficient in deployment of its staff. A recommendation of the Peer Challenge in 2018 was that we should look to realign our management team to support our future priorities better. As a result, the Senior and Extended Leadership Teams and management functions of the Council were restructured with the new teams in place for January 2020. This not only enables us to focus on our priorities, but has also reduced our management costs by £120,000 across the two Councils (£60,000 for South Hams).



annual saving  
by working with  
West Devon  
Borough Council



**22,719**  
visitors to  
Follaton House  
reception



**104,386**  
calls handled by  
our call centre (down  
14,110 on last year)



**9.8 days**  
faster than the national  
target processing  
Housing Benefit claims



**11.8%**  
Improvement in our  
'Delivering Right First  
Time' services



## Enterprise and Economy

The Council collaborates with businesses and communities to support a thriving economy that enhances wellbeing for all residents

Action	19/20 Progress
Investing in the South Hams	To support regeneration and the economic activity of the District, this year the council invested in 12,575 square foot of retail space in Dartmouth. The primary driver is to support the economy by ensuring that valuable assets remain in use. As an ancillary benefit, this scheme will also generate an annual income of around £60,000 which will contribute to the cost of running Council services.
Supporting our businesses	Through our partnership with Business Information Point, we have provided 60.5 hours 1-to-1 support to 20 businesses (4 of which were looking to set up new businesses in South Hams).  Workshops and a Small Business Day were also delivered during the year and attended by 11 small businesses.
Supporting our town centres	In January we commenced a public consultation to understand public opinion on a development to support Ivybridge Town Centre. Around 2,000 responses were received through post and online, with 69% of respondents in support of developing a supermarket on Council land in order to encourage people in to the town centre.  We have also commenced work on developing a proposal to develop Council land within Kingsbridge. Public consultation of this will be undertaken during 2020.
South Devon Coastal LAG	£109,600 was awarded in the last 12 months to 12 projects which are expecting to create 12.0 FTE jobs.  Projects include introducing cutting edge new technology, helping farmers get new equipment, building new workspace and community facilities and expanding food and drink businesses.  To date, 28 FTE jobs have been created in the South Hams through this fund.  As a positive endorsement of the schemes success so far, additional funding of £72k has been awarded by DEFRA to extend the programme during 2019-2020.
Greater Dartmoor LEAF	£48,500 was awarded in last 12 months to a project that will see the development and modernisation of a farm.  Since the commencement of the LEAF scheme, 16 new FTE jobs have been created in the South Hams through this fund.  Additional funding of £153k has been awarded by Defra to extend the programme during 2019-2020.



**£158,000**

funding awarded to businesses through the Coastal LAG and Greater Dartmoor LEAF



## Environment

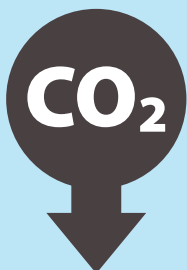
From protecting what we can see in our immediate environment; our countryside, our coast and its habitat, to reducing our impact on the world. South Hams and its communities have an important role to play.

Action	19/20 Progress
New Waste and Recycling Contract	In April 2019, our new partnership with FCC for recycling, waste and street cleansing services went live. This contract will allow us to improve the environmental impact of the District by enabling our residents to increase what they can recycle as well as saving us around £3m over the lifetime of the contract.
Fusion Leisure reduced CO2 output	Our Leisure partners, Fusion Leisure, have implemented a range of energy saving measures which has reduced the CO2 emissions from the centres by 58 tonnes compared to 2018.
Net-zero Carbon emissions by 2030	The Council have agreed an ambitious plan to support its aim to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 and to help the whole District reach net-zero carbon by 2050. In addition, the Council has set aside £400,000 of funding to implement projects to help achieve its aim.
Excellent Water Quality	16 of South Hams 17 beaches were rated as having 'Excellent' water quality by DEFRA.
Electric charging points for car parks	Working with other Devon Councils (who have collectively secured a £817,712 grant) we have commenced a project to install electric charging points in key car parks in Totnes, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge, Dartmouth and Salcombe.
Launched an Electric Car Scheme for our staff	We have already taken massive steps in reducing the Councils carbon footprint by enabling our staff to work from home (which saves approximately one million miles a year) but during 2019 we've gone further and launched a scheme which enables our staff to lease electric vehicles through salary sacrifice – 6 staff have already signed up to the scheme.

Declared Aim to be Carbon Neutral by 2030



**17,560 Tonnes** of household recycling collected



**58 Tonnes** reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> from Leisure Centres compared to 2018



**1065** Fly Tips Investigated



**1 Million** Road miles saved last year by staff working from home



## Homes

The South Hams can be viewed as an area of conflicting housing need: large properties set in stunning scenery owned by wealthy people seeking a quiet life in the country, or second home owners, and struggling market towns where the average worker cannot afford to buy, or rent, a decent property.

Action	19/20 Progress
Homelessness prevention	During 19/20, we supported 348 households, preventing them from becoming homeless.
Disabled Facilities Grants	In the last 12 months we have completed 104 Disabled Facilities Grants which enable people to continue to live more independently in their own homes.
Rough Sleeper support	<p>In 2019 the Council adopted a Rough Sleeper Strategy as part of its overall Homelessness Strategy with the aim to reduce the number of people sleeping rough by 50% by the end of 2022.</p> <p>Working with West Devon Borough Council and Teignbridge District Council, we have secured £150,000 to work in partnership to continue the work of three outreach workers to help rough sleepers. This work has developed accommodation strategies and support plans for vulnerable residents as well as sharing best practice.</p>
Affordable Housing	<p>This year South Hams District Council began working in close partnership with a number of local community housing schemes around the District to deliver a mix of affordable, rented and discounted purchase, sustainable homes.</p> <p>£1.88 million of funding is being used by the Council to bring forward, through the planning process, high quality affordable homes for local people. The homes are in South Brent, St Anne's Chapel, Brixton, Dartmouth and Kingsbridge, with other projects in the pipeline.</p> <p>All of the homes will be built using innovative energy saving techniques which will be kind to the environment and to the pocket. All of the housing schemes will also include electric car charging points as standard.</p>



**99%**  
Collection rate on  
Seamoor Lettings Rental



**348**  
Households  
prevented from  
becoming  
homeless



**104**  
Disabled Facilities Grants  
Awarded enabling people  
to stay in their own homes



## Wellbeing

The Council has an important role to play in the health and wellbeing of our communities. Many factors affect the health and wellbeing of residents beyond just healthcare.

Action	19/20 Progress
Dementia Friendly Council	The Council this year agreed that it will work towards being a Dementia Friendly Council, recognising that around 25% of the South Hams community are aged 65+ and dementia risk increases with age.
Investing in Leisure	In partnership with our Leisure partner, Fusion, a £5.9m investment in Ivybridge Leisure Centre was completed which includes a new six lane swimming pool with retractable roof and sun deck, new changing facilities and steam room and sauna along with a number of upgrades to the other facilities. Improvement works have also been undertaken at all other Leisure centres in the District.  During 19/20 we saw a 22% increase in Leisure Centre Membership which is really encouraging sign that the investment is paying off!
Community Safety Partnership Schemes	Through our partnership with the Community Safety Partnership we have delivered a number of community safety activities including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Outreach and diversionary activities in Totnes and Dartmouth.</li> <li>● Worked with Ivybridge Street pastors and the Town Council to solve local issues.</li> <li>● Provided parent support through the Turning Corners programme – identifying and diverting vulnerable young people away from youth gang culture.</li> </ul>
Play Park upgrades	In 2019/20 we agreed to set aside £140,000 for upgrading play areas across the South Hams, designing and delivering attractive, imaginative and low maintenance new play spaces at eight sites. This will commence in 2020/21.
Employee wellbeing	This year we have reviewed our management structures to ensure we continue to improve the support provided to employees. Regular team meetings and all staff briefings have been held throughout the year and we're pleased to have launched schemes to enable employees to purchase additional annual leave and take career breaks.



Food Safety Inspections undertaken (up from 489 in 2018/19)



Increase in Leisure Centre Membership



**£140,000** for upgrading play areas



# Next Steps 2020-21

In June 2020, we welcomed our new Chief Executive, Andy Bates. Andy will be the Chief Executive for both South Hams District Council and our shared services partner West Devon Borough Council.

During 2020/21 we have a number of exciting projects to deliver including;

- Implementing a new, modern IT system to improve how our customers interact with us, both online and over the phone.
- Starting to deliver on our climate and biodiversity commitment of becoming a carbon neutral council by 2030, supported by a new Climate Change officer.
- Delivering our play park refurbishment scheme for parks in Totnes, Ermington & Frogmore

## Covid-19 Impact

The Covid-19 pandemic will have long lasting impacts on the council, our communities, residents and businesses and we have yet to see the full impact.

As we write this report (June 2020) we are very much focusing on how we continue to provide support where it's needed but also how we, as a Council, adapt and recover.

There is a real opportunity for us to shape our work and strategy based on what we've learnt from adapting to the pandemic.

Our employees are continuing to provide our services with all our support functions being delivered from home and our frontline services adapting to new social distancing rules.

In September 2020, Council will be asked to consider a recovery plan and an in-year revised budget to ensure that the Council can continue to deliver key services.



**South Hams  
District Council**

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or 01803 861368