



# Draft Annual Report 2020/21

**South Hams District Council**

# Introduction

It has been an incredibly difficult year for us all. Many businesses have had to close for a significant part of the year, Individuals have seen their livelihoods impacted and some of us have lost loved ones to the global pandemic.

If we are to find a positive in all of this, it has been the tremendous community spirit which has seen residents of South Hams coming together to ensure that support has been provided where it is needed.

As a District Council we too have played an important role in delivering vital lifelines to our communities, with some £71m of government business grants awarded, emergency welfare support schemes launched and Councillors taking a lead role in bringing community groups together to ensure that all residents were supported.

While the pandemic required us to refocus officer effort to deliver these new support schemes, we have made really good progress in other areas including coming up with plans for how we can contribute to tackling the Climate and Biodiversity emergency and realigning our localities service to provide an enhanced on street presence, particularly during our peak visitor times.

We have also progressed with a number of projects including our plans for investing in Ivybridge, a scheme to support jobs in Salcombe and the development of a new Corporate Strategy which will set our future direction.

We know that the impacts of the pandemic have yet to be fully realised, but we are confident that we remain well placed to best support our residents and businesses.

Councillor Judy Pearce  
Leader of the Council

Andy Bates  
Chief Executive

# 2020/21 In Numbers

**£9m**

Investment in making Ivybridge a social and retail destination

**630**

Covid Compliance Officer visits across South Hams and West Devon

Homes supported to access energy efficiency measures

**500**

**101**

Community Groups supported to raise over £25,000 through our Seamoor Community Lotto

Funding to enable groups in Stoke Gabriel to enhance community facilities and access

**£81k**

**£43k**

Member community grants awarded to local projects

Residents properties adapted to support their needs, enabling them to remain in their own homes

**127**

**£71.7m**

Government Business Grants issued

**5,850**

Residents supported with debt, housing and employment advice through our partnership with Citizens Advice South Hams

**15**

Benches donated to Bayards Cove

**31**

Councillor computers repurposed to enable home education

**£598k**

Funding allocated to support our key Town and Coastal areas to recover from Covid-19

A number of recent changes to Government funding means the Council no longer receives any Government Grant (Revenue Support Grant). It therefore has to be self-sufficient to fund all of its service. The Council has committed to protecting frontline services where possible.

Of every £1 in council tax paid, only 8pence in every £1 goes to South Hams District Council to pay for the services provided by the District Council. Therefore £175.42 of your overall council tax bill goes to South Hams District Council for a Band D household.

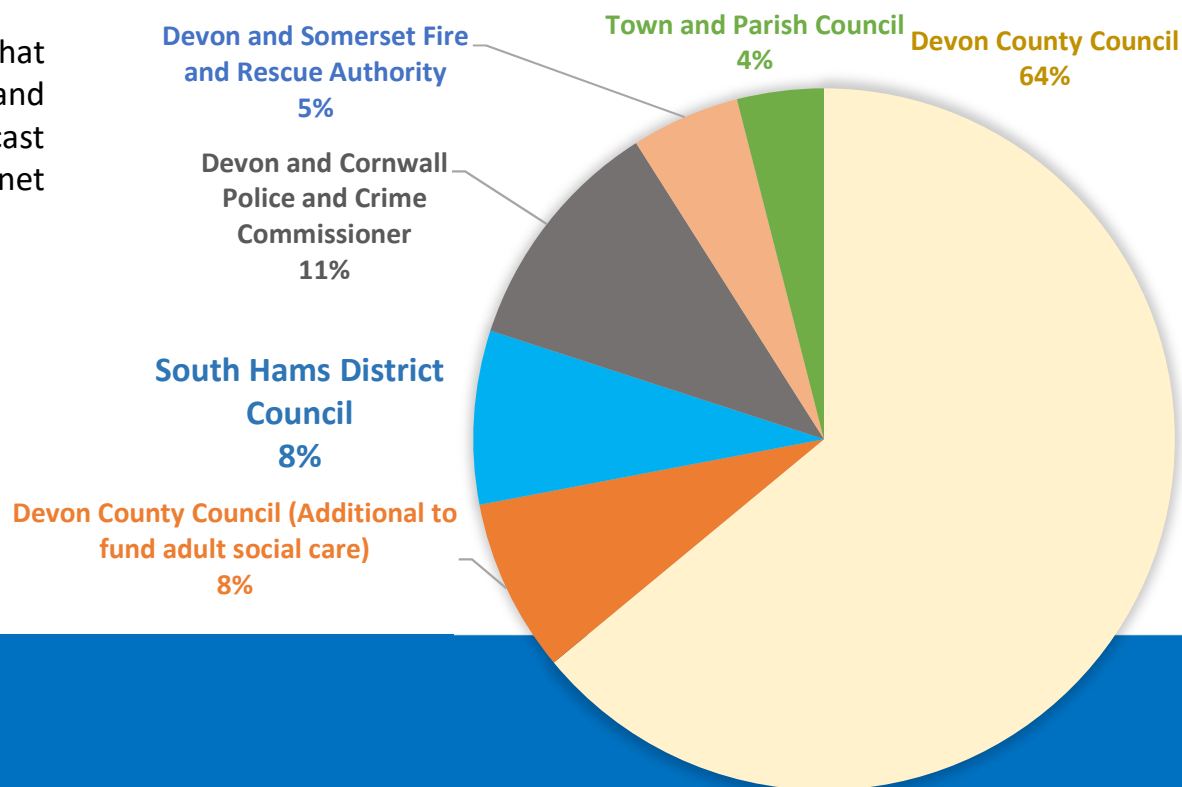
This contribution pays for services such as local planning, housing, environmental health, waste collection and recycling, street cleansing, providing recreational facilities, tourism and economic development. As well as being responsible for collecting the Council Tax, South Hams District Council also collects Business Rates and administers housing benefits.

At the point of preparing this report we are pleased to say that due to prudent financial management of our budgets, and additional support from Central Government, our latest forecast is for a small surplus of £96,000 against the Council's total net Budget of over £9 million is predicted.

### **Looking Ahead**

South Hams District Council plans to spend £38.6million (gross) on providing services for 2021/22. A total of £31.9million of this amount comes from the income we receive from grants, fees and charges. Therefore the amount of council tax we need to collect is £6.7 million.

### **Where your Council Tax went 2020/21**



# **Our Finances**

# Supporting South Hams Residents

In a year that has been challenging for all residents of South Hams, the Council has focused much of its resource on ensuring that both existing and new support schemes have been implemented to respond to residents needs.

Action	20/21 Update
Covid-19 response	During 2020/21 we took steps to ensure our residents were supported throughout the pandemic, we increased our Money Advice offering from 3 days to 5 days, launched an emergency welfare fund to support individuals that found themselves without money for essentials and delivered food parcels to vulnerable residents that were required to shield but couldn't access food and essential supplies.
Homes Strategy – Better Homes, Better Lives	During the year we developed and adopted a five year strategy setting out how we'll ensure all of our residents have access to safe and warm homes. A total of 192 residents participated in the public consultation and helped inform the strategy.
Disabled Facilities Grants	In the last 12 months we've enabled 127 residents to live in their homes more safely by adapting their property to meet their needs.
A warmer and more energy efficient home	During the year we've enabled 500 households to access energy efficient measures for their homes in addition to awarding grants to 31 of the least energy efficient properties for installing first time central heating

# Supporting the Economy

This year has been incredibly challenging for many of our business, most of which were required to close as part of the national effort to stop the spread of Covid-19. The Council has acted quickly to ensure that vital lifelines have been made available to businesses across the District.

Action	2020/21
Providing government business grants	The Council acted quickly, using its new IT platform to develop application processes for businesses to claim much needed grants. A total of £71.7m in grants was awarded throughout the year. An incredible effort by the team!
Covid safety advice and Support to businesses	The challenges of Covid required many businesses to adapt in order to offer a safe customer experience. To enhance our existing environmental health team, we appointed Covid-19 Compliance Officers to offer businesses and towns safety advice and support. Since they joined us in November, 630 visits to businesses have been undertaken.
Agreed a £9m investment in Ivybridge	This year we formally agreed a £9m investment in Ivybridge with the aim of making it a retail and social destination.
Business Support and Advice	Through our partnership with Business Information Point, we have provided over 50 hours 1-to-1 support to 31 businesses. Support for the businesses has focused on advice to deal with the covid-19 pandemic, financial, marketing and business development support
Approved a £598,000 package of support for our key towns	To support our key towns as they reopen and begin to recover from Covid-19 impacts, we agreed a package of support including additional cleaning and officer presence on streets and in key coastal locations in recognition of the anticipated volumes of visitors, a package of town centre marketing and enhancements to facilities in our towns
Redevelopments in Salcombe	We've approved major redevelopment plans in Salcombe that will help the town to remain a sustainable and viable coastal community for years to come through developing of five new commercial units that will support local jobs along with a new workshop that will ensure the Harbour Authority can continue to deliver first class customer service

# Enhancing our Communities

Action	2020/21
Support to community schemes	Our Members each have a locality fund of £2,000 a year which enables them to support local community initiatives. During 2020/21, 78 schemes were awarded a total of £43,800. The total cost of these community schemes was in excess of £379,000
Adopted a Climate and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan	During 2020/21 the Council adopted a Climate and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan which sets out specific actions that the Council and our communities can take to respond to the emergency. This has been backed by a £400,000 budget allocation which includes crowdfunding and grants schemes to enable our communities to implement projects supporting our net zero ambitions
Community Safety	Through our participation in the Community Safety Partnership we have:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assisted schools to get funding for Run, Hide, Tell Campaign</li><li>- Worked closely with Police in Totnes and Kingsbridge to address risk of exploitation of vulnerable members of the community</li><li>- Worked with Wave Academy at Dartington to commission a Motiv8 scheme of mentoring to twelve children over a three month period</li></ul>
Seamoor Lotto	Our community lottery, now in it's 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, is enabling 101 charity and community groups across South Hams and West Devon to raise over £25,000 a year.
Improving community facilities	We've supported a wide number of schemes across South Hams during the year including £81k towards sport and leisure groups in Stoke Gabriel to improve access, revamping Salcombe's Courtenay Park, beginning to redesign Woodlands Park in Ivybridge and donating 15 Benches to Bayards Cove

# Service Delivery and Governance

Throughout the year, we're really pleased that the significant majority of our services continued to be delivering in addition to the new services we implemented to respond to the pandemic. Our office staff all transitioned brilliantly to working from home full time and our frontline staff adopted new safety measures to ensure they could continue to support our residents and communities.

Action	2020/21
Maintaining services	<p>We took the decision in March that all office staff should work from home. This meant that we were able to continue to provide our services to our residents uninterrupted. Our staff have been able to work from home for many years and so this was a smooth transition.</p> <p>Our employees were supported through the transition to homeworking, including providing advice and guidance on maintaining health and wellbeing, and holding regular staff briefings online. We also continued to recruit staff with our recruitment process shifting to an online interview process.</p>
Revising our budget	<p>Covid had a significant impact on our finances with some of our key income sources being impacted through the national lockdowns. As a result, in September, we developed and agreed a revised budget for the year which mean that we haven't had to make cuts to our core services. Fortunately additional funding has since been provided by Government to contribute to some of the financial losses we suffered.</p>
Continuing to develop our priorities	<p>We have made great progress in pushing ahead with our priorities having adopted a number of strategies focusing on Housing, Climate and Biodiversity Strategy and Consultation and Engagement. The focus for the coming year will be on delivering against the action plans for these.</p>
Democracy Online	<p>The Council quickly took steps to implement remote meetings of its committees. All 31 Members of the Council were able to participate in the democratic process and our residents were able to watch meetings online. A total of 43 formal committee meetings were held over the year.</p>
Enhancing the Democratic Decision Making Process	<p>During the year we commenced a review of the democratic decision making process including frequency and timing of meetings, public participation in committee meetings and review of Member working groups.</p>