



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

2020 - 2021



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South Hams
District Council

Foreword from the Panel Chair

I am pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for the work undertaken between May 2020 and April 2021.

At the beginning of the municipal year, the Council faced a significant challenge as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Council was required to change its way of working and delivery of services with staff being required to work from home. The Council was required to take on additional tasks as a result of the pandemic including the administration and distribution of government COVID-19 funding to businesses and bodies requiring assistance. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel played its part in ensuring that the Council carried out its functions in an effective and efficient manner in difficult conditions as well as contributing to the Council's Recovery Plan.

This report includes a summary of the role and responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny, the work undertaken over the past year and the various outcomes. It has been a busy year for O&S Members overseeing and scrutinising the services carried out or provided by the Council. A broad range of topics was addressed and recommendations were put forward for action by the Council. The topics scrutinised and the outcomes are set out in this report.

During the year the Panel set up several Task and Finish groups to investigate and come up with recommendations in respect of selected areas of policy or service provision. These are detailed in the report and I would like to thank all those Task and Finish group members for their valuable contribution.

It was a challenging year for members and I would like to thank all of them for their commitment and the contribution they made to the meetings and also the work and support of Cllr Peter Smerdon, the Vice Chair of the Panel.

I would also like to thank the Council officers for their support and hard work in facilitating the Overview and Scrutiny process and special mention goes to Steve Mullineaux of the Senior Leadership Team and Darryl White of Democratic Services.

I hope you find the report interesting.

Cllr John Birch



Cllr John Birch

Chair of
South Hams
District Council
Overview and
Scrutiny Panel
2020-21

South Hams
District Council
Member for Totnes

Introduction

We are pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which outlines our work during the 2020–21 Municipal Year and which provides general information on the overview and scrutiny function at South Hams District Council.

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the democratic decision-making process in local councils, where Panel Members can contribute to shaping Council policy, community wellbeing and accountability. The Panel does this by: reviewing Council services and policies, community issues and key decisions and making recommendations for improvement.

The four key principles of Overview and Scrutiny are:

- Provides a ‘critical friend’ challenge to executive policy makers and decision-makers;
- Enables the voice and concerns of the public to be heard;
- Is carried out by ‘independent minded Members’ who lead and own the scrutiny role; and
- Drives improvement in public services.

The Panel Members consider these principles when selecting topics to investigate whether it is holding the Executive to account, reviewing policies, policy development or the scrutiny of external bodies.

The Council recognises the importance of the overview and scrutiny function in its governance arrangements and officer support.

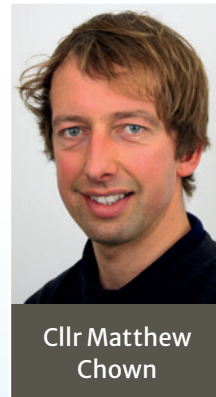
The Council’s governance arrangements specify that all 31 Members of the Council are considered to be either an Executive Member (of which there are 6); a Development Management Committee Specialist Member (of which there are 12); or an Overview and Scrutiny Panel Specialist Member (of which there are 13).

The lead officers supporting the Panel for 2020/21 were the Council’s Deputy Chief Executive; the Democratic Services Manager and the Specialist – Democratic Services.



Panel Membership

In the absence of an Annual Council meeting in May 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Panel membership for 2020/21 remained as follows:



The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the Council's political structure and it plays a vital role in improving the services that people of the District use – whether a resident, employed here or just visiting. Overview and Scrutiny does not just look at the way the Council does things, it can look at anything which affects the lives of people within the District and it allows citizens to have a greater say in Council matters.

Overview and Scrutiny allows Members to review and scrutinise decisions, look at existing practices and make recommendations to help ensure the residents of the South Hams receive excellent services. The overall aim is to ensure overview and scrutiny adds value to the Council's decision-making process and makes a positive contribution towards policy development.

Having reflected on a number of presentations that had been received from external representatives during 2020/21, the Panel felt that a series of improvements should be made to its existing working practices. These were summarised as follows:

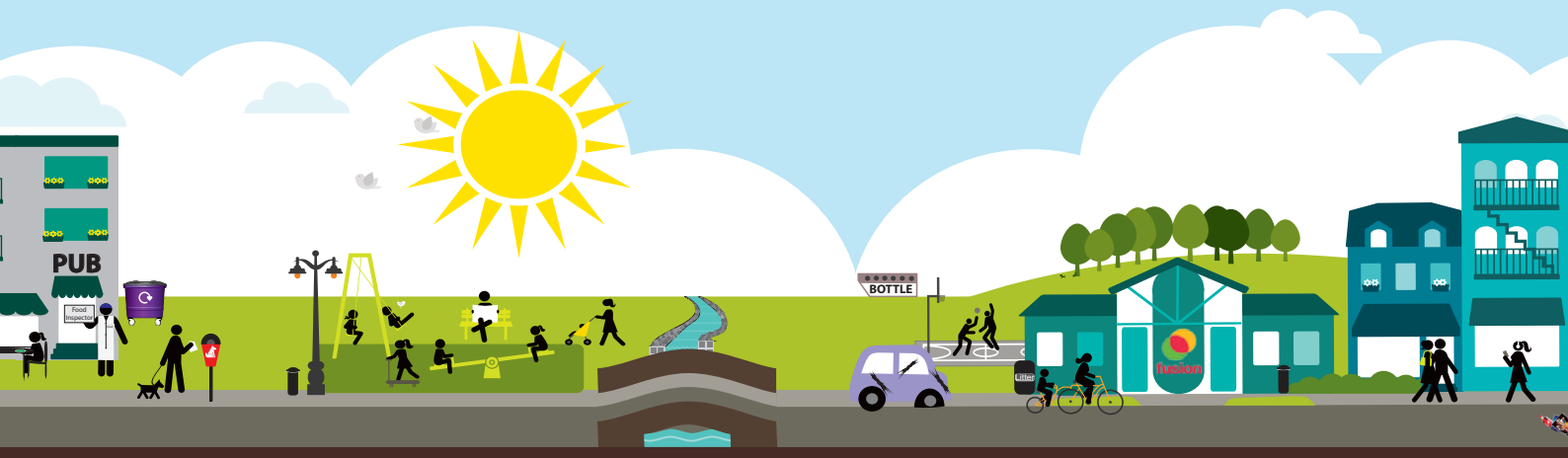
- That a properly scheduled and structured annual work programme be approved (thereby ensuring that agendas were not unduly long);
- That advanced questions be invited from Members with these being dealt with during the representative(s) presentation;
- That presentations (and any further Member Questions) be time limited;

- That the Calendar of Meetings for 2021/22 (and thereafter) be drafted to ensure that a Panel meeting is not held on the afternoon of the annual O+S / Development Management Committee Budget Meeting; and
- That any presentation slides / reports from external representatives be included with the published agenda at least five clear working days before the meeting.

A detailed review of the Council Constitution was launched in 2020/21 (that culminated in an updated Constitution being adopted by the Council in July 2021 – which notably included some revisions to the working relationship between the Panel and the Executive).

The detailed updated terms of reference and procedure rules for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel can be found at: Part 2 – Article 5; Part 3 – Delegation Scheme; and Chapter 3 – Meeting Procedure Rules. The Council Constitution can be accessed via the following link:

www.southhams.gov.uk/article/3689/Our-Constitution



Agenda Items – Corporate Strategy

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel met formally on six separate occasions during the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

In addition, the Panel met jointly with the Development Management Committee on three separate occasions to consider: the Council's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Draft Recovery and Renewal Plan; the draft amended Budget for 2020/21; the draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals and Fees and Charges for 2020/21.

In considering its work programme, the Panel gave great emphasis to the Council's emerging Corporate Strategy ('Better Lives for All') and the six emerging strategic themes, which are shown opposite.

The Panel has consequently received a number of reports (and made a number of recommendations) which are linked to these emerging themes. Whilst it is acknowledged that a number of these reports cut across a number of these themes, for the purpose of this Annual Report, they are aligned to the theme that is considered the most relevant.



Adapting & mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity

An environment where people and nature thrive together



Protecting, conserving & enhancing our built and natural environment

Planning for our future, celebrating our past



Stimulating a thriving economy

A district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and space for business to grow



Improving homes

Better homes enabling better lives for all



Strengthening community wellbeing

Strong and prosperous communities where residents live healthy lives and are empowered to make a positive impact



Delivering quality Council services

Delivering quality services to our residents and communities

Improving homes

Better homes enabling better lives for all



Item	Issue
Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	<p>The Panel considered and recommended that the Executive adopt the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan for 2020/21. In addition, the Panel also formally thanked the Housing Team for the production of an excellent report and for all of their hard work.</p> <p>The recommendation to adopt the Action Plan was subsequently approved by the Executive.</p>
Housing Strategy – Progress Update	<p>Having considered a progress update, the Panel recommended to the Executive that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the progress made on the Housing Strategy be noted; 2. the 'better homes, better lives' strapline be supported; 3. it be noted that the Panel has requested that the results of the consultation exercise be reported back to a future Panel meeting; 4. the proposed way forward be endorsed and that all Members continue to contribute to this key policy development.
Livewest	<p>The Chief Executive of Livewest was invited to a Panel meeting to provide a presentation that focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A brief history of the organisation; ● Development activity within the organisation; and ● The Customer Services ethos of the organisation. <p>In addition to Members having submitted 18 questions in advance, a wide range of other questions were raised at the meeting, and areas that were covered included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Livewest commitment to de-carbonisation; ● customer satisfaction; ● the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic; and ● supporting residents.
Housing Strategy 2021–2026 'Better Homes, Better Lives' – Consultation Responses	<p>The Panel was presented with a report that summarised the public and partner consultation responses to the Council's draft Housing Strategy for 2021–2026.</p> <p>In recognising the proposed amendments following the consultation exercise, the Panel concluded by recommending that the draft Housing Strategy be adopted by the Council. The Council ultimately adopted the Strategy at its meeting held on 25 March 2021.</p>

Stimulating a thriving economy

A district that attracts high quality employment opportunities and space for business to grow



Item	Issue
Connecting Devon and Somerset	<p>The lead Devon County Council Officer and Cabinet Member attended a meeting of the Panel to provide an update presentation on the work of Connecting Devon and Somerset's broadband project.</p> <p>Having received the presentation and raised a number of questions, the Panel resolved that:</p> <p><i>'it welcome the proposed broadband provision and the appointment of a Broadband Community Support officer, who, four months after his/her appointment, will report to the Panel on the progress in respect of the following responsibilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>liaising and supporting communities;</i> ● <i>identifying additional finding streams for individual projects;</i> ● <i>proactively working with Connecting Devon and Somerset to identify areas and communities that could benefit from a scheme; and</i> ● <i>ensuring that the community (individuals and businesses) maximise the potential benefit of the new broadband infrastructure.'</i>
Motorhome Strategy	<p>Prior to being presented to the Executive, the Committee received an update on the proposed Strategy to use Council car parks for overnight stays for Motorhomes. The Committee acknowledged the potential economic benefits that would be generated through the adoption of such a Strategy.</p>

Adapting & mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity

An environment where people and nature thrive together



Item	Issue
Electric Charging Points in Council Car Parks	<p>The Panel received an update on the projects that were in progress to increase the provision of Electric Charging Points in Council Car Parks. In so doing, the importance of Points being installed as soon as was practically possible was reiterated by Members.</p>

Delivering quality Council services

Delivering quality services to our residents and communities



Item	Issue
<p>Waste Service Update: Presentation and Briefing Note</p>	<p>The waste service was a prevalent subject matter for the Panel during 2020/21.</p> <p>At its first formal meeting for 2020/21, the Panel received a presentation that provided an update on the proposed revisions to the Waste and Recycling Service.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Panel thanked the lead officers for their presentation and supporting Briefing Note that outlined the delay to the Waste and Recycling Service.</p> <p>At its meeting held on 14 January 2021, FCC Environment (the Council's Waste Contractor) representatives were in attendance to present a report that provided Members with background information on the performance of the organisation in implementing the round review and the impact on the future service change. Following a lengthy debate, the Panel RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The FCC Environment representatives be thanked for their informative presentation; 2. In respect of the new recycling service (being introduced in March 2021), the Panel request that FCC Environment demonstrate that they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a robust deliverable plan that will deliver the new service with the absolute minimum disruption to residents; • have sufficient management and supervision on the contract; • ensure sufficient staff training and commitment; • have appropriate contingency in place; and • have appropriate IT systems in place that are fit for purpose; and 3. FCC representatives provide a progress report back to the Panel in six months' time.
<p>ICT Update and Future IT Project</p>	<p>The Panel considered and noted the contents of a report that provided an overview of work that had been completed in the IT service area during 2019/20 and highlighted proposed improvements to be implemented during 2020/21.</p> <p>At a later meeting, the Panel also considered a report on the Future IT Project and noted its progress and the evaluation of risks.</p> <p>At the request of the Committee Chairman, an urgent item was raised at a meeting that related to IT problems that had been experienced by Members during the migration from Skype to Teams. In so doing, the Head of IT apologised for the error and responded to a number of Member questions.</p>

Item	Issue
Formation of a Wholly Owned Company – Verbal Update	<p>The Panel wished to keep a watching brief on the progress of the Wholly Owned Company and received a verbal update at its October meeting.</p>
Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2020	<p>The Committee reviewed the Ombudsman Annual Letter for 2020 and noted the steps that had been taken to ensure that the Council continued to address complaints fairly and in line with best practice.</p>
Revenue Budget Proposals for 2021/22	<p>The joint meeting of the Panel and Development Management Committee considered the Revenue Budget Proposals for 2021/22 and recommended to the Council (via the Executive) that support be given to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the proposed increase in Council Tax for 2021/22 of £5 (Band D of £175.42 for 2021/22 – an increase of 10 pence per week or £5 per year – equating to a 2.93% increase); 2. the allocation of £500,000 for funding for the Recovery and Renewal Plan and a further £322,274 funding for the Climate Change Action Plan, to be funded by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • withdrawing the contribution to the Planning Earmarked Reserve in 2021–22 of £50,000; • utilising £200,000 of New Homes Bonus funding from 2021–22 (instead of using £200,000 of New Homes Bonus funding for the 2021–22 Capital Programme); • using £450,000 of funding from the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve; and • using £122,274 of the remaining unallocated New Homes Bonus monies for 2021–22; 3. the financial pressures amounting to £668,761; 4. the net contributions to/from Earmarked Reserves amounting to £364,600 (as set out in Appendix D of the presented agenda report), including the proposed use of £746,000 of New Homes Bonus funding to fund the 2021/22 Revenue Budget; 5. the proposed savings of £122,191 for 2021/22; 6. the proposed funding levels (as set out in section 5 of the presented agenda report) and, in addition, a further £3,000 be added to the Partnership Funding Budget, to enable a £10,000 contribution to the South Hams CVS in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Item	Issue
Fees and Charges 2021/22	<p>The Panel considered the setting of Fees and Charges for 2021/22 and recommended to the Council (via the Executive) that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the proposed fees and charges set out for Parks, Open Spaces and Outdoor Sports be maintained at the current levels with no proposed increases; 2. the proposed Environmental Health Charges be maintained at the current levels with no proposed increases; 3. the proposed unchanged Fees and Charges for Planning Applications and Enforcement be approved; 4. the proposed fees and charges for Street Naming for 2021/22 be approved; 5. the proposed Section 106 Monitoring fees for 2021/22 be approved; 6. delegated authority be given to the Director of Place and Enterprise, in consultation with the lead Executive Member, to set the Dartmouth Lower Ferry Fees in order to take account of market conditions, including competitor charges; 7. the proposed changes to Boat Storage Charges be approved; 8. delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the lead Executive Member, to set the Local Land Charges as appropriate to ensure cost recovery; and 9. delegated authority be given to the relevant Head of Practice, in consultation with the relevant lead Executive Member, to adjust Fees and Charges within their service area by inflation at suitable periodic intervals, with reports being presented to the Executive as appropriate.

Protecting, conserving & enhancing our built and natural environment

Planning for our future, celebrating our past



Action	18/19 Progress
Planning and Planning Enforcement Improvement Plan	<p>The Panel noted that officers had been asked to carry out a service review and put together an improvement plan for both Planning and Planning Enforcement services.</p> <p>Members welcomed this recommended approach and looked forward to the Plan being developed.</p>

Strengthening community wellbeing

Strong and prosperous communities where residents live healthy lives and are empowered to make a positive impact



Item	Issue
Gypsy and Traveller Update and Options	<p>The Committee received a verbal update from the lead Member and officer on Gypsy and Traveller and concluded by endorsing that a strategy of engagement with Devon County Council and Registered Provider partners to work towards identifying and managing a Gypsy and Traveller site in the South Hams.</p> <p>This recommendation was ultimately approved by the Executive.</p>
Community Safety Partnership (CSP) – Annual Report	<p>In line with statutory requirements, the Panel considered its annual update from the CSP and raised a number of issues that were to be taken forward. In their concluding comments, Panel Members resolved that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the contents of the Annual Report be welcomed and the Community Safety Partnership representatives be congratulated on obtaining the £900,000 funding towards the Turning Corners Programme; 2. an all Member Workshop be convened with Community Safety Partnership representatives early in 2021; and 3. once finalised, the Local Delivery Plan be circulated to all Members.
Safeguarding Policy	<p>The Panel considered a report that sought to provide an opportunity to annually scrutinise and review Safeguarding practices and procedures.</p> <p>The Panel then RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. it continue to formally review safeguarding on an annual basis; and 2. the Executive be RECOMMENDED to adopt the revised Safeguarding Policy (as outlined at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) and that a safeguarding related training package for all staff and Members be mandatory to complete.
Sustainable Community Locality Fund Update	<p>The Panel reviewed the effectiveness of the Sustainable Community Locality Fund and resolved that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the update on the Council's Sustainable Community Locality Fund be noted and the planned actions contained in the presented agenda report be adopted; and 2. the Executive be RECOMMENDED that each Member receives a further £500 in recognition of the need and the importance of the Localities Fund and the difference it can achieve. The £15,500 necessary for the 2021/22 to be funded from the New Homes Bonus Reserve. <p><i>(When considering the recommendation, the Executive did not accept it and the Fund has been retained at £2,000 per Member for the 2021/22 Financial Year).</i></p>

Item	Issue
Localities & Communities Task and Finish Group	<p>The Panel established a Task and Finish Group that completed its Review in November 2020 and RECOMMENDED that the Executive consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing a seven day-a-week Locality Service for the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easter or 1 April (whichever is the earliest) to 30 September; and ● October half-term school holiday week; 2. Creating a single point of contact for local Ward Members with increased on-site officer visibility and problem solving capacity within each Locality; and 3. Implementing a new Locality Team Structure to support parts 1 and 2 (above) which will ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clearly defined roles that support the delivery of scheduled tasks and the work of Community Groups, developing Service Level Agreements where necessary; and ● Improved office based and field support for mobile office. <p>The Executive considered the proposals as part of the 2021/22 Budget Setting process which culminated in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. four additional seasonal posts being approved to operate from 1 April until 30 September (inclusive) each year; 2. an additional £25,000 being built into the establishment base budget each year to meet the additional costs; and 3. the new structure and approach be noted with the new service being implemented from 1 April 2021.
Consultation and Engagement Task and Finish Group	<p>During 2020/21, the Panel also established a Task and Finish Group that was charged with developing a draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>The Group completed its review and, subject to inclusion of some minor revisions, the Council proceeded to adopt the Strategy at its meeting on 17 December 2020.</p>
Leisure Contract – Fusion Annual Report 2020	<p>When presenting the Annual Report to the Panel meeting held on 25 February 2021, Fusion representatives made significant reference to the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the leisure industry.</p> <p>Once all Member questions had been addressed, the Panel proceeded to note the contents of the Annual Report for 2020 and the proposals for 2021.</p>
Outside Bodies Task and Finish Group	<p>Following a Question on Notice being presented to Full Council, the request was made for the Panel to consider the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to review the feedback process for Members sitting on Outside Bodies and the benefit to Council of these positions.</p> <p>The Panel subsequently approved this request and the Group concluded its review in a timely manner with the Panel endorsing each of the recommendations generated to come into effect from the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2021.</p>

Item	Issue
Section 106 Agreement Monitoring Update Report	<p>Panel Members received an update on Section 106 Agreement Monitoring and proceeded to note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current position on Section 106 funding; 2. The current processes in place for monitoring and administering Section 106 Agreements and funding; 3. That a report will be brought to an Executive meeting in the summer detailing progress against the individual projects funded by section 106 monies; 4. That in the report to the Executive, it be requested that the following be addressed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The setting up of a register of S106 agreements that is accessible to all Members; ii. The availability of S106 agreements to Members other than by reference to the planning application website; iii. The register and/or list of S106 agreements be formatted on a ward-by-ward basis; iv. A six monthly report to Members on the position/status of the S106 agreements relating to their wards; v. The extent of the monitoring in respect of S106 agreements in those cases where developments have been completed some while back; and vi. The need to conduct an audit upon the completion of a development to ensure that the developer has complied with all its S106 obligations

Agenda Items – Public Forum

In line with its openness and transparency agenda, the Council has adopted provision for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to set aside 15 minutes at the start of each meeting to enable members of the public to raise issues and/or questions in line with its Procedure Rules.

During 2020/21, the Panel was presented with one question/issue for consideration that focused on the following issue:

- ◆ Negotiations with Baker Estates over a Planning Performance Agreement. In reply, the questioner was informed that the question was founded upon a number of misconceptions, with the principal one being that the Council had failed to comply with planning law and a court order.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic was the most significant issue considered by the Panel during 2020/21. From the uncharted territory of remote meetings to consideration of an amended Budget for 2020/21, the Pandemic dominated the Panel's Work Programme.

Pandemic related issues considered by the Panel included:

The Council's Response to the Pandemic:

At a joint meeting with Members of the Development Management Committee, the Panel considered in great detail the Council's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The meeting recognised the unprecedented challenges that had been faced by the Council and its residents and businesses and recommended to the Executive to:

1. Note and endorse the Council's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic to date and thank and congratulate the Parish and Town Councils and other Community Groups for their response and actions to the COVID-19 Pandemic; and
2. Request that Officers develop a Recovery and Renewal Plan in line with the framework and objectives as outlined in Appendix 1 of the presented agenda report;

This recommendation was subsequently approved by the Executive.

The Draft Recovery and Renewal Plan:

Jointly with the Development Management Committee Members, the Panel paid detailed consideration to the Council's draft Recovery and Renewal Plan which it was accepted would form the basis of a new Council Corporate Strategy. Particular issues that were raised included:

- The important role that is played by local Members within their local communities. The importance of the Plan utilising the local knowledge and expertise of all Members was emphasised;
- The need to exploit the benefits from the increased ability of individuals to be able to work from home and the number of visitors holidaying in the South Hams would bring;
- The wish to explore the creation of a 'Brand South Hams';
- The importance of supporting communities to lead on initiatives to increase local resilience;
- The importance of the Climate Change and Biodiversity agenda being an underpinning issue throughout every aspect of the draft Plan;
- The need to re-design the Council Constitution to ensure that it was a more reader friendly document was recognised;

During its considerations, the Joint Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee continued to RECOMMEND to the Executive to:

1. Note the Council's continuing response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic;
2. Note the outputs of the Member Workshops;
3. Note progress on the development of the Recovery and Renewal Action Plan ('the Plan'); and
4. Take into account the conclusions of the Joint meeting on the Plan;

Amended 2020/21 Draft Budget Proposals

Such had been the impact of the Pandemic that a Joint Meeting of the Panel and Development Management Committee considered a report that sought to recommend a series of options in order to produce an amended Revenue Budget for 2020/21.

The Joint Meeting had concluded by recommending that the Executive RECOMMEND to Council that:

1. ten options totalling £1,313,000 (as summarised below) be approved in order to produce an Amended Revenue Budget for 2020/21:
 - use the third tranche of COVID-19 funding received from Central Government (£121,000);
 - use the New Burdens Government Grant funding received for the administration of the Business Rates Grants (£170,000);
 - utilise the 2019-20 Statement of Accounts underspend (£112,000);

- use funding from the Strategic Change Transformation Programme (T18) Earmarked Reserve (£30,000);
 - cease the 2020/21 annual contribution towards building up a budget for future years for the Follaton Roof and Follaton Lift (£80,000);
 - use funding from Unearmarked Reserves (£200,000);
 - use funding from the Economic Regeneration (Business Rates Pilot Gain) Earmarked Reserve (£127,000);
 - cease the Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) contribution for the R&M Earmarked Reserve (£80,000);
 - use funding from the Business Rates Retention Reserve (£343,000); and
 - cease making a contribution to the Planning Earmarked Reserve in 2020/21 (£50,000);
2. Unearmarked Reserves be replenished through a range of measures to be agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
 3. it be noted that the future capacity of Reserves may have to be called upon to meet any future financial challenges and/or additional requirements; and
 4. the funding within the Business Rates Retention Fund be earmarked for employment land opportunities.

These recommendations were ultimately approved by Full Council at its meeting held on 24 September 2020.

Standards Update and Governance Matters

In accordance with the Council Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel is responsible for monitoring complaints (including Ombudsman complaints and those against Members alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct) and for the standards responsibilities under the Localism Act.

As part of these responsibilities, the Panel has considered during 2020/21:

Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2020

The Panel reviewed the Ombudsman Annual Letter for 2020 and noted the steps that had been taken to ensure that the Council continued to address complaints fairly and in line with best practice.

Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct

The Panel considered a report that presented a draft revised Model Code of Members' Conduct that had been developed by the LGA. Having considered the draft, the Panel proceeded to recommend to Council that the revised Code should be adopted. This recommendation was subsequently approved by Full Council.

Annual Report

The Panel received an update on the number of standards complaints that had been received by the Council, which stood at 21 for 2020/21 and noted the contents of the report and endorsed the need for training session(s) to be delivered on promoting high standards of behaviour during 2021/22. In addition, the Panel also asked that the Monitoring Officer take action in respect of:

- Ensuring that Members update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter and publish it in an accessible format;
- Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or the parish council as a whole; and
- Senior officers meeting regularly with political group leaders to discuss standards issues.

The 2021-22 Work Programme

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel has the ability to set its own annual work programme and it is acknowledged that sufficient flexibility is built in to enable for items to be included at short notice.

However, at the time of preparing this Annual Report, the following substantive agenda items have already been rolled over to the 2021/22 Work Programme:

- Community Safety Partnership – Annual Report;
- Safeguarding – Annual Report;
- Draft Budget Proposals and Fees and Charges 2022/23 (joint meetings with the Development Management Committee);
- Annual O+S Report for 2020/21;
- FCC (Environment) Representative(s) to attend;
- Broadband and Connecting Devon and Somerset representatives;
- Fusion Leisure – Annual Report;
- Dartmoor National Park Authority Chief Executive to attend;
- Chief Officer: South Hams Citizens Advice to attend;
- Review of Localities Service;
- Council Delivery against each of the Thematic Delivery Plans; and
- Ombudsman Annual Letter.