

**MINUTES of the INFORMAL MEETING of the  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,  
Held over Teams on  
WEDNESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2021**

<b>Panel Members in attendance:</b>			
* Denotes attendance		∅ Denotes apology for absence	
∅	Cllr L Austen	*	Cllr K Pringle (substituting for Cllr Jones)
*	Cllr J P Birch (Chairman)	∅	Cllr J Rose
*	Cllr M Chown	*	Cllr R Rowe (substituting for L Austen)
*	Cllr S Jackson	*	Cllr P C Smerdon (Vice Chairman)
∅	Cllr L Jones	*	Cllr B Spencer
*	Cllr J McKay	*	Cllr J Sweett
*	Cllr D M O'Callaghan	*	Cllr D Thomas
*	Cllr J T Pennington		

<b>Other Members also in attendance:</b>
Cllrs K Baldry; H Bastone; J Hawkins, T Holway; N Hopwood; J Pearce

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Minute Ref No below refers</b>	<b>Officers in attendance and participating</b>
All		Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Governance & Assurance, Director of Place & Enterprise; Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager; Head of Strategy & Projects; IT Officer; and Democratic Services Officers
Item 11	O&S.46/21	Community Digital Specialist

**O&S.39/21 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record for approval at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

**O&S.40/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting. Cllr Smerdon declared that he was the Council's representative on the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

**O&S.41/21 PUBLIC FORUM**

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

**O&S.42/21 2021/22 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME: LATEST VERSION**

The Committee reviewed the latest version of its work programme and agreed that the joint meeting with the Development Management Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022 would be held remotely as an informal meeting, with any decisions ratified at the formal Overview and Scrutiny meeting to be held during the afternoon of 13<sup>th</sup> January.

The Committee reviewed the proposed agenda for the next meeting, and agreed to the Chairman's request to include and review Mid Devon District Council's proposal to jointly undertake a scrutiny review into the planning controls and regulatory requirements associated with the bio-energy industry, including Anaerobic Digesters, within Devon.

**O&S.43/21 PRESENTATION BY DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Vice Chairman introduced Dr Kevin Bishop, the Chief Executive of Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) to the Committee. Dr Bishop then gave an informative overview of DNPA's aims, achievements, and ethos.

Following questions from the Members, the following were raised and clarified:

- The public consultation on use of the park had recently closed and the DNPA were now analysing the responses.
- The areas available for wild camping on common land would be reviewed as part of the consultation. It had been identified that there was a need to educate some recent visitors regarding the protocols of wild camping, ie people should walk in, walk out, leave no trace, and only stay a couple of days.
- DNPA were working together with Natural England to develop a future plan to ensure the protection of Wistman's Wood. Dr Bishop confirmed that rangers had been posted near the woods to educate visitors about the importance of the wood and the best ways to preserve it, ie keeping dogs on their leads, no wild fires and no moss art, but this had been heavy on DNPA's resources.
- The Authority worked closely with Commoners over grazing rights at the Park, and a new project had been set up to trial an alternative stocking calendar, which was potentially proving to be an improvement and may become the blue print for the new Environmental Land Management Scheme.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Chief Executive for his presentation.

**O&S.44/21 PRESENTATION BY CHIEF OFFICER OF SOUTH HAMS  
COMMUNITY and VOLUNTARY SERVICES**

The presentation given by the Chief Officer of South Hams Community and Voluntary Services (SHCVS) outlined the achievements of the last year, including the responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Chief Officer gave details of the new social prescribing service which had been established, helping lonely and isolated people to form first virtual contacts with others, and then meeting in person once the Covid restrictions had lifted.

The details of the National Lottery bid was shared with Members, which had resulted in a grant of £28,000 to help people return to work and to support local residents.

The new strategic plan was outlined and current issues for SHCVS highlighted: these included continuing change, increasing demand, wellbeing and mental health, recruitment, funding and fund raising, community cohesion, and digital inclusion.

The Executive Member with responsibility for Health and Wellbeing then thanked the Chief Officer and her team for their hard work and effort in supporting residents in South Hams over the last two years. He then outlined that the Council were looking at the possibility of launching a well-being grant in the new year, which would be available to all voluntary groups to apply for.

The Chairman then thanked the Chief Officer for her presentation and answering the questions raised by Members.

**O&S.45/21 TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES**

Further to the request from the Leader, at the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (Minute O&S.33/21 refers), to set up a task and finish group to look at delivery of affordable houses by other local authorities, the Members of the Committee then reviewed the proposed Terms of Reference and the proposed make-up of the Task and Finish (T&F) Group.

It was then agreed that the T&F Group would have eight Members, four from the Conservative Group and four from the Opposition, with the Group to be chaired by Cllr Peter Smerdon. The constituent Members would be proposed by the Leaders of both Groups and the Task and Finish Group would meet before the next Overview and Scrutiny meeting, due to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022, when the T&F Group would update the Committee on their target date for reporting back to the Committee.

The Committee then unanimously agreed to the above.

**O&S.47/21 BROADBAND UPDATE**

The Committee was given a verbal update from the Community Digital Specialist, during which the following points were covered:

- Monthly meeting with all key suppliers across SH
- Weekly engagement with CDS and Airband, however there were still issues with Connecting Devon and Somerset sharing information but this was being resolved.
- Digital connectivity webpages had been developed, which was the only site that brought connectivity issues all in one place
- 400 people had responded registering their need for better broadband, including 130 businesses
- 90 broadband champions, covering 56 of 85 parishes
- Two webinars for broadband champion programme had been run: the Council had run these because CDS had the largest geographical area but did not have the resources to do the webinars. South Hams District Council had moved into the gap to help local residents.
- Next steps included continuing engagement with suppliers; assist champions; policy development with the Joint Local Plan; increased transparency with CDS; ensure District prioritisation in any further Central Government.
- It was clarified that when Airband got a certain number of signups, they would repay some funding to CDS who could then reinvest and the Local Authority should get a proportionate amount ring fenced in the South Hams area.
- BT vouchers system had not been closed in April 2021, and the vouchers were now easier to attain. Established communities groups with vouchers could now apply for Outreach.
- It was confirmed that areas with a bad mobile signal could apply for a mobile booster, which would then allow access to broadband through the 4G signal.

The Chairman thanked the Officer for giving a comprehensive presentation and asked that the slides and link to the webinar be sent to Committee Members. It was requested that the officer returned in six months to give the next update.

(Meeting started at 2:00 pm and concluded at 3:48 pm)

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Chairman