

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE EXECUTIVE  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON THURSDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2023**

<b>Members in attendance:</b>			
* Denotes attendance			
∅ Denotes apologies for absence			
*	Cllr V Abbott	*	Cllr N A Hopwood
*	Cllr J P Birch	*	Cllr J McKay
*	Cllr J Brazil (Chairman) (am only)	*	Cllr D M O'Callaghan
*	Cllr J M Hodgson	*	Cllr D Thomas (Vice Chairman)

**Non-Executive Members also present either in person or remotely for all or part of the meeting:**

Cllrs Allen (via Teams), Bonham, Carson (via Teams), Dennis, Dommett, Long, Nix (via Teams), Oram, Pannell (via Teams), Penfold, Presswell (via Teams) Steele (via Teams) and Taylor

**Officers in attendance and participating:**

All items		Senior Leadership Team; Monitoring Officer; Head of Democratic Services; Assistant Director – Strategy; Head of Communications; Principal Climate Change Officer; Head of Housing; Head of Economy & Place; Community Digital Connectivity Officer; Head of Revenues and Benefits; Assistant Director – Planning; Senior Strategic Planning Officer; South Devon AONB Partnership Manager; Principal Natural Resources and Greenspaces Officer and Plymouth & South Devon Freeport representative (via Teams)
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**E.31/23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 21 September 2023 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

**E.32/23 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman informed that he had agreed that one item of urgent business could be considered at this meeting that related to an exempt report (that had been circulated to Members in advance of this meeting) titled 'Woodland Creation'. This item had been deemed urgent in light of the associated time constraints and the Chairman proceeded to advise that it was his intention for this matter to be considered at the end of this agenda (Minute E.52/23 below refers).

## E.33/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting and these were recorded as follows:

With regard to agenda item 7 ('Plymouth And South Devon Freeport: Report Of Task & Finish Group' (Minute E.36/23 below refers)), Cllr J Birch advised that, in his capacity as the Council's appointed representative on the Plymouth & South Devon Freeport Board, he had been granted a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer to be able to take part in the debate and vote on all matters related to the Freeport. At the invitation of the meeting, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that this statement was correct; and

Whilst a non-Executive Member, Cllr G Pannell declared a personal interest in Item 2 ('Urgent Business: Woodland Creation' (Minute E.52/23 below refers)) by virtue of his membership of organisations referenced in the exempt report. Cllr Pannell proceeded to remain in the meeting and take part in the debate thereon.

## E.34/23 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

It was noted that the one public question had been received in accordance with the Executive Procedure Rules for consideration at this meeting.

Prior to this question being formally asked, the Chairman exercised his discretion to enable for a resident to raise a question in relation to the adherence to planning conditions. Since this question did not comply with the adopted Executive Procedure Rules, the Chairman advised that a response would be provided to the resident outside of this meeting.

At this point, the meeting was advised that the compliant public question had been received from Mr Jim Funnell and was as follows:

*"In September 2022, CPO was approved for Langage land because it was 'integral to success of the Freeport, could not be replicated anywhere else, and was policy compliant.' In the Task/Finish report this land is now optional, whilst financial projections still include Langage. What is the explanation for this discrepancy?"*

In reply, Cllr Birch (the lead Executive Member for Economic Development, Commercial Strategy and Governance) stated that:

'The land, which is the subject of the question, forms part of the Language Tax site and, in September 2022 its availability for incorporation within the tax site was in doubt. This is no longer the case and thus there is no requirement for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). The reference to policy compliant is in respect of the said land being zoned for employment purposes in the Joint Local Plan.'

Whilst the adopted Procedure Rules did not include the provision for Mr Funnell to ask a supplementary question, the Chairman exercised his discretion and permitted Mr Funnell to ask the following supplementary question:

*'The financial projections for Langage are still included whilst the land is still optional, why is that?'*

In reply, Cllr Birch committed to providing a written response to Mr Funnell on his supplementary question outside of this meeting.

#### E.35/23 **EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**

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 the contents were duly noted.

#### E.36/23 **PLYMOUTH AND SOUTH DEVON FREEPORT: REPORT OF TASK & FINISH GROUP**

The Executive considered a report that set out the recommendations of the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Task and Finish Group that had been established by the Audit and Governance Committee.

As part of his introduction, the lead Executive Member paid tribute to the excellent work that had been carried out by the Members of the Task and Finish Group. In addition, the Member advised that, at the appropriate time, it was his intention to **PROPOSE** an alternative part 2 to the report recommendation that read as follows:

*'2. That the Executive **RECOMMEND** to Council to support the 17 recommendations set out by the Task and Finish Group in Section 2 of the published agenda report and **RECOMMEND** their acceptance by Full Council.'*

During the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

- (a) A number of Members echoed the comments of the lead Member in respect of wishing to record their thanks to the extensive review that had been undertaken by the Task and Finish Group. Members felt that the detailed report had addressed each of the key issues and summarised that the review had concluded that, whilst there were significant risks associated with the Freeport initiative, these were outweighed by the extent of the economic benefits that were likely to be realised;

- (b) In the event of the report recommendations being approved at this Executive meeting, it was recognised that it would then be considered further at the Full Council meeting to be held on 14 December 2023, with all Members having the opportunity to debate (and vote) on the matter at that time;
- (c) Some Members raised their concerns over the Freeport concept that included:
- both the lack of public consultation on the initiative when original approval was given and the fact that the public consultation on the Council's draft Corporate Strategy only closed on the day of this Executive meeting (30 November 2023);
  - the relevance of the issues raised in the Public Question (and Supplementary) that had been raised by Mr Funnell earlier in this meeting (Minute E.34/23 above refers);
  - their feeling that the Council's investment in the project could be better spent towards the declared Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency and Housing Crisis;
  - the Task and Finish Group conclusion that a dedicated (i.e. just for this Council) Risk Register was currently lacking;
  - the financial challenges facing all tiers of local government; and
  - the lack of all Member access to the contractual details. In reply to the request for interested Members to be in receipt of the contractual details prior to the Council meeting on 14 December, the lead Member committed to discussing this matter with the Council's Monitoring Officer outside of this meeting.

In responding to these concerns, the lead Member attempted to counter them and expressed his deep frustrations over the content of a party political leaflet that he considered to have been, at best, misleading to the general public;

- (d) Some Members highlighted the importance of the Council now looking to the future as opposed to reflecting on what had happened to date. In addition, a number of Members expressed the view that, since the Freeport project would continue irrespective of the views of this District Council, then it was preferential to remain as a fully participating partner who was able to play an influencing and shaping role rather than being on the outside.

It was then:

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the Task and Finish Group be thanked for their considerable and in-depth work reviewing the risks and opportunities of the Freeport; and

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to:

2. support the 17 recommendations set out by the Task and Finish Group in section 2 of the published agenda report and **RECOMMEND** their acceptance by Full Council; and
3. consider the Executive's recommendations on the report at its meeting due to take place on 14 December 2023.

E.37/23

## **CORPORATE STRATEGY (THE COUNCIL PLAN) & OUTLINE DELIVERY PRIORITIES**

The Executive was presented with a report that provided an update on the progress made in the preparation of the draft Corporate Strategy ('The Council Plan') which included information on the public consultation response to date, recommendations on any amendments to the draft strategy, outline delivery plans and the next steps.

During the ensuing debate, reference was made to:

- (a) the re-titling of the Strategy. Members welcomed the fact that the Strategy would now be known as 'The Council Plan';
- (b) the levels of responses to the public consultation exercise. Whilst recognising the continual challenges of public consultation and engagement, Members nonetheless felt that the number of responses were particularly disappointing given the ten-week opportunity to respond which had included: a dedicated web page, social media campaign, residents e-bulletin and face-to-face promotion. In addition, if any Members had any innovative thoughts or ideas about how to improve future public engagement, then they were encouraged to let officers know;
- (c) the consultation feedback received in relation to greater clarity and the need for SMART targets to be set. Members supported these feedback strands and recognised that it had always been the intention for the detailed actions to form part of the Annual Delivery Plans that would underpin the Council Plan when it was re-presented to the next Executive meeting and Full Council on 15 February 2024;
- (d) the differing roles and responsibilities in a three-tier local government area. A Member referred to the consultation responses that had misunderstood the roles and responsibilities of a three-tier local government area and asked that a previously produced leaflet that set this out clearly be included with the annual billing letters received by residents early next year. In reply, the Leader confirmed his support for this suggestion and requested that it be explored.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the consultation responses (set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be noted;
2. That the updated draft Corporate Strategy (now 'The Council Plan') (as set out in Appendix B of the presented agenda report) be approved;
3. That a further meeting of each Advisory Group (and an initial meeting of the Economy Advisory Group) be held to inform the final delivery plans alongside the budget for 2024/25 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy; and
4. That a further report be brought to the next Executive meeting seeking to make a recommendation to Full Council for the adoption of The Council Plan at its meeting due to be held on 15 February 2024.

E.38/23

**DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2024-25**

The Executive was presented with a report that outlined a series of draft revenue and capital budget proposals for 2024/25.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) For the benefit of recently elected Members, it was noted that this report very much sought to kick-start the draft Budget Setting process. Also, it was proposed that all non-Executive Members would have an opportunity to give detailed formal consideration to the draft 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals at a Budget Advisory Committee meeting in January 2024 prior to further consideration at the next Executive meeting to be held on 25 January 2024;
- (b) The budgetary pressures resulting from Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation provision were highlighted. Specifically in respect of provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites, it was confirmed that officers would continue to work with their Devon County Council colleagues and that, at a point when potential site(s) could come forward, these would be fully costed prior to being formally considered by Members;

- (c) With regard to spending requirements generated from the emerging Delivery Plans that would underpin the Council Plan, it was intended that these would be considered in conjunction with both the draft Budget Proposals at the 25 January 2024 Executive meeting. This would enable for a holistic set of recommendations to be presented to the Council meeting to be held on 15 February 2024.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the forecast budget gap for 2024/25 of £146,185 (1.1% of the projected Net Budget of £13.3million) and the position for future years be noted;
2. That the Senior Leadership Team work with Executive Members to provide further options on how to close the predicted budget gap for 2024/25, for Members' consideration as part of future budget reports in early 2024 (once more detail of the Local Government Finance settlement is known);

That Council be **RECOMMENDED**:

3. to fund the one-off cost of £450,000 of the roll out of the Devon Aligned Service for kerbside waste collection on 20 November 2023, from the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve in 2023/24 (NB. further details are set out in sections 3.26 to 3.29 of the published agenda report);
4. to set up an Advisory Committee comprising of all Non-Executive Members to meet in January 2024, to consider the 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals and make recommendations to the Executive on the Budget Proposals (NB. meeting date proposed of Thursday 11 January 2024 at 1.00pm); and
5. that South Hams District Council continues to be part of the Devon Business Rates Pool for 2024/25, subject to there being no announcements within the Finance Settlement (expected to be announced in mid-December), which in the opinion of the Section 151 Officer (in consultation with the Leader of the Council), would change this recommendation.

E.39/23

### **ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) STRATEGY UPDATE**

A report was considered that recommended the adoption by Council of an updated Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy 2023-2025.

During debate, the following points were raised:

- (a) When questioned, officers confirmed their willingness to look at the scope for installing EV charging points at community centres and parish halls. In such instances, Members felt that such arrangements would only work if the Council was able to work in partnership with local parish councils and/or village hall committees;
- (b) Whilst recognising the cost differentials, Members advised that there was now greater demand for rapid charging points and there was a consequent risk (and budget implication) that parking spaces containing 'ordinary' charging points were being left unused.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt the South Hams District Council Electric Vehicle Strategy 2023-2025 (as set out at Appendix B of the published agenda report); and
2. That officers be authorised to enter into a collaboration agreement with the Devon County Council Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Scheme for the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and to enter into a lease with the appointed supplier for a 20-year period.

E.40/23

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY UPDATE**

Members considered a report which provided an update on a range of actions currently in progress to assist the Council with delivery against its Climate Change and Biodiversity commitments. The report also contained proposals to support community energy initiatives.

In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:

- a) an amendment being tabled to the meeting. By way of an amendment, an additional recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** as follows:

*'2. That, at the end of twelve months, the success of this Fund be formally reviewed by Members before any decision is taken to extend it.'*

In introducing her amendment, the Member wished to stress that she was in no way suggesting that Members could not be trusted to spend their monies appropriately nor was she wishing to create an additional onerous task on already busy officers. However, the purpose of the amendment was to enable for best practice and good ideas to be shared amongst the wider membership.



In reply to a request, it was agreed that officers would produce a summary document setting out projects that had been previously supported via the previously established Member Climate Change Fund. It was stated that this document would be particularly useful for recently elected Members.

When put to the vote, the amendment was declared **CARRIED**;

- b) the ability to generate income through Climate Change and Biodiversity initiatives. As a general point, the lead Executive Member highlighted that there were income generation opportunities for the Council that were directly attributed to Climate Change and Biodiversity initiatives;
- c) the work of the Bioregional Learning Centre. Some Members described the excellent work being conducted by the Centre and encouraged all Members to attempt to attend their exhibitions and events in the local community.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That £62,000 per year be allocated to establish a new Members 'Green Fund' to support community-based climate and biodiversity projects for 2023/24 and 2024/25. (NB. this is to be funded from the Climate Change and Biodiversity Earmarked Reserve);
2. That, at the end of twelve months, the success of this Fund be formally reviewed by Members before any decision is taken to extend it;
3. That it be noted that the Bioregional Learning Centre has been commissioned as a partner to conduct learning and capacity building for local climate adaptation; and
4. That the Audit and Governance Committee be requested to review the merits of awarding Yealm Community Energy a grant in the order of £100,000 to further the Council's strategic ambitions around climate change and biodiversity.

## **E.41/23 HOUSING POLICY UPDATE**

A report was considered that provided an update on a range of initiatives being considered by the Council to help address the current Housing crisis.

The lead Executive Member introduced the report and, in so doing, stated that funding associated with the proposed 'South Hams Housing Offer' was not without risk.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:-

- (a) Officers and the lead Member were thanked for the great progress that was being made towards the delivery of affordable housing provision;
- (b) A Member hoped that a mechanism could be found to ensure that public monies could be protected in the event of a Community Land Trust (CLT) ultimately being unsuccessful. For clarity, the lead Member confirmed that the proposed Housing Offer would extend to providing support to those existing CLTs.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the 'South Hams Housing Offer' be launched to communities to support affordable housing delivery;
2. That an initial budget of £100,000 per year be agreed to fund the South Hams Housing Offer, to be financed from the funding identified from the review of the Capital Programme and the review of Earmarked Reserves (Council Minute 30/23 refers);
3. That the Housing Management policies (as set out at Appendix A to the presented agenda report) be agreed and that authority be delegated to the Head of Housing to make any necessary minor amendments;
4. That the Housing Management policies be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if major changes are required; and
5. That the update and progress on the two Council-owned sites in Kingsbridge be noted.

*(At this point (1.05pm), the meeting was adjourned and was reconvened at 1.30pm, with Cllr Thomas chairing the remainder of the meeting).*

#### **E.42/23 INVESTING IN OUR LOCAL ECONOMY**

The Executive considered a report that provided an update on the projects that had so far benefitted from the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Funds

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) The importance of supporting Active Travel initiatives was noted. Also, dual-hatted Members emphasised the importance of them continuing to lobby Devon County Council with regard to the need to improve district wide bus services. Officers also informed that discussions were taking place with colleagues at Plymouth City Council and it was intended that a suite of options would be presented back to Members to increase e-bike provision and capability for residents living in the western part of the South Hams;
- (b) In respect of the cascade of information, a Member highlighted the recent communications campaign that had begun and felt it would have been helpful for Members to have been made aware of the key messages prior to this campaign being started.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That an all Member Briefing session be arranged at the earliest opportunity so that Members can further explore the work being delivered through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme;
2. That the work of the UKSPF programme be disseminated and promoted to the local communities; and
3. That the Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant Policies be supported.

E.43/23

### **WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES – OUR FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Members considered a report that set out how the Council intended to support community development across the South Hams.

In discussion, reference was made to:

- (a) the cross-cutting nature of community development and engagement. Members were of the view that the published agenda report represented a good starting point in what was an important subject area that was linked to every service area of the Council;

- (b) the lack of emphasis being given to investing in communities. The point was made that Members were increasingly being approached for funding support by their local communities and the need to invest had been given very little reference in the proposals. In accepting the point, officers gave an assurance that one of the key next steps that they would be working on would be developing the Capacity Building area of this project. Nonetheless, the lead Executive Member also stressed that, as a Council, Members would soon need to determine how much funding they wished to allocate towards community investment;
- (c) widespread support was expressed over the aim to improve Youth Engagement initiatives;
- (d) the proposal relating to Community Action Awards. Members welcomed this proposal and were given assurances of the intention for a similar scheme to be rolled out for local businesses;
- (e) the proposed re-allocation of locality service resource. Officers confirmed that the proposed re-allocation of duties would not have any impact upon the excellent work that was undertaken by the Council's Mobile Locality Officers.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Community Development Framework (as set out in Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be endorsed;
2. That the establishment of a new Community Development Team be endorsed; and
3. That a cost pressure of £15,000 be added to the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 onwards.

#### **E.44/23 CAR PARKING CHARGES – UPDATE**

The Executive was presented with a report that provided an update on the Council's car parking charges.

During debate, particular reference was made to:

- (a) an amendment to part 2 of the recommendation. Given the current unknowns regarding the ability (or not) to implement a two-tier pricing structure for Council car parks, an amendment was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** as follows:

*'That, **in principle**, a charge to car parking tariffs be implemented at such time as it can be done under a two-tier pricing structure that reduces the burden of the change for local residents.'*

When put to the vote, the amendment was declared **CARRIED**;

- (b) any impact on the existing parking permits scheme. When questioned, officers confirmed that there were no proposed changes to the existing parking permits scheme;
- (c) the principal behind a two-tier pricing structure. Whilst car parking charges had remained fixed since 2021, it was now considered appropriate to revisit them and, if possible to implement, the intention of the two-tier system would be for resident charges to be at a lower level than the equivalent charges for visitors. A number of Members stated their support for what they considered to be a fairer system of charging;
- (d) the decision-making process. Officers confirmed that any proposed increases in car parking charges would require the ultimate determination of Full Council.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That car parking charges be held at their current level, as set in 2021; and
2. That, in principle, a change to car parking tariffs be implemented at such time as it can be done under a two-tier pricing structure that reduces the burden of the change for local residents.

**E.45/23 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT: TASK AND FINISH GROUP REVIEW**

Members considered a report that provided the recommendations of the Planning Enforcement Task and Finish Group

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) Especially in light of the tight time constraints assigned for the review, Members extended their thanks to their colleagues who had served on the Task and Finish Group for completing such an excellent piece of work. In the event that the Executive approved the report recommendations, it was then intended that the draft Enforcement Plan would be subject to design work and a final proof check before being published and circulated to all Members and town and parish councils;
- (b) An amendment to recommendation part 3 was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** as follows:

- ‘3. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning *and the Chair of the Task and Finish Group*, to update the draft Enforcement Plan (as set out in Appendix A of the presented agenda report), to include relevant powers introduced by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.’

When put to the vote, the amendment was declared **CARRIED**;

- (c) Officers advised that, whilst the new planning system had only recently gone live, work was ongoing to explore how it could be best exploited to ensure that Members were kept informed of cases within their local Wards. In particular, a plea was made for Members to be able to see the current stage of the process for each Enforcement case and the importance of all Members being fully engaged in the enforcement process was emphasised;
- (d) It was noted that an additional range of Enforcement related powers had been introduced via the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2003. Regardless of the range of powers available, officers reiterated that the Council was always required to take a proportionate approach to enforcement action;
- (e) Whilst often a cause of great concern, Members acknowledged that time delays in enforcement cases were often attributed to legal constraints.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Task and Finish Group be thanked for their considerable and in-depth work reviewing and developing the new approach to planning enforcement;
2. That the recommendations set out by the Task and Finish Group in section 2 of the presented agenda report be noted; and
3. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, to update the draft Enforcement Plan (as set out in Appendix A of the presented agenda report), to include relevant powers introduced by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023.

E.46/23

**SOUTH DEVON AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
(NATIONAL LANDSCAPE) PARTNERSHIP**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on key aligned projects being delivered by the South Devon AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) (now the National Landscape Partnership). The report also contained recommendations regarding the funding position for the Council as a core funding partner and host organisation.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:

- (a) the recruitment challenges in employing an additional planning resource to join the AONB. Whilst previous recruitment attempts had proven to be unsuccessful, officers had worked closely with neighbouring colleagues in re-advertising the role and it was hoped that this would lead to a more successful outcome in the upcoming months;
- (b) the service provided by the AONB Unit. A number of Members stressed that the AONB Unit provided a fantastic resource for the Council and the published report highlighted just how many different roles the team were involved in;
- (c) financial contributions from the Council to the AONB Unit. Since the Unit received a core grant allocation from the Council of £20,700 per annum and would be required to pay rent on an office space wherever it was located, a Member felt it to be slightly disingenuous for the published agenda report to state that *'as such, SHDC does not in real financial terms contribute to the core costs of the AONB'*.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the scope of core and project work being undertaken by the South Devon AONB Partnership and the alignment with Council priorities be noted;
2. That an update report on these programmes be considered by the Executive in a further six months' time;
3. That the underwriting of the Life on the Edge project, to maximum financial value of £96,000, (£18,000 per year over 5 years) against the £4.2m project programme be approved; and
4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Place and Enterprise to review and amend the hosting agreement to reflect this principle and agree the partnership status of the AONB for a further 5 years in order to provide surety of funding.

**E.47/23 Q3 AND Q4 WRITE-OFF REPORT 2022/23**

A report was considered that informed Members of the proposal to write-off a series of debts with a value of more than £5,000 for the period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

In discussion, a Member felt that the proposed write-offs were comparatively high when reviewed against previous reporting periods. When responding, officers agreed that the figures were comparatively high and, since the main reason for write-off was insolvency, this did suggest that the impact of the cost of living crisis was being realised.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That, in accordance with Financial Regulations, it be noted that the Section 151 Officer has authorised the write-off of individual debts totalling £152,139.70 (as detailed in paragraph 3 of the presented agenda report); and
2. That the write-off of the individual debts totalling £83,564.08 (as shown in Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be approved.

**E.48/23 TOTNES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Executive considered a report that sought approval for the making (adoption) of the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) Congratulations were extended to every individual who had been involved in the incredibly time consuming process of reaching this point;
- (b) A Member highlighted the particularly low turnout of Neighbourhood Plan Referendums in the market towns of the South Hams and questioned whether town clerks were incorrectly advising their town councillors that they were subject to pre-election ('purdah') constraints. The Member asked if this point could be followed up with clerks outside of this meeting;
- (c) Since a number of adopted Neighbourhood Plans were soon to be required to be subject to review, officers were tasked with considering how they could best support local Groups in this process.



It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the Totnes Neighbourhood Development Plan be made (adopted).

**E.49/23 SOUTH MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN MODIFICATION**

Consideration was given to a report that contained proposals to modify the South Milton Neighbourhood Plan.

In discussion, the benefits of a lead officer being based full-time in the South Hams area were highlighted and the officer support that had been provided to South Milton Parish Councillors had been both invaluable and very well received.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Examiner's report for the South Milton Neighbourhood Plan Modification (as set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be received and noted;
2. That each of the recommendations made by the Examiner's report and the reasons for them has been considered;
3. That the South Milton Neighbourhood Plan as proposed to be modified meets the Basic Conditions and is compatible with the Convention Rights, subject to the amendments recommended by the Examiner;
4. That the South Milton Neighbourhood Plan modifications be made (adopted) as recommended by the Examiner (as set out in the full plan and attached at Appendix B of the presented agenda report); and
5. That the Assistant Director Planning be authorised to publish the Decision Statement (as set out at Appendix C of the presented agenda report).

**E.50/23 REPORTS OF OTHER BODIES**

That the minutes and recommendations of the undermentioned bodies be received and approved subject to any amendments listed below:-

**(a) Salcombe Harbour Board Meeting – 18 September 2023**

## **SH.10/23 2024/25 BUDGET**

### **RESOLVED**

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that:

1. the proposed 2024/25 Budget (as set out within the agenda report presented to the Board meeting) be approved, with it being noted that the detailed means of closing the Budget deficit (identified as being £77,000) will be considered by the Board at its next meeting (to be held on 13 November 2023); and
2. £150,000 be transferred from the Harbour's General (Revenue Account) Reserve to the Renewals Reserve as part of closing the 2023/24 Accounts, with this funding being earmarked to support the cost of replacing the moorings barge.

## **(b) Salcombe Harbour Board Meeting – 13 November 2023**

### **SH.22/23 FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25**

#### **RESOLVED**

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the proposed fees and charges (as set out at Appendix 1 of the agenda report presented to the Board meeting) be approved for implementation from 1 April 2024 in order to meet the 2024/25 Budget gap of £77,000.

## **E.51/23 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

### **RESOLVED**

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.

## **E.52/23 URGENT BUSINESS: EXEMPT REPORT-WOODLAND CREATION**

As highlighted earlier in the meeting (Minute 32/23 above refers), consideration was given to an exempt (and urgent) report that provided an update on opportunities in connection with delivery against the Council's emerging Corporate Plan, with regard to net zero and the declared Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency.

In debate, since the Leader of Council was no longer in attendance, it was felt appropriate for part 4 of the report recommendation to be deferred at this time.

Members proceeded to express their support for the proposals that were contained within parts 1, 2 and 3 of the report recommendations and it was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That land be acquired (as set out in exempt Appendices B and C of the published exempt agenda report) for woodland creation through the Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest programme;
2. That the proposed expenditure (as set out in Section 6.2 of the published exempt agenda report) be financed from the resources released from the review of the Capital Programme (Council Minute 30/23 refers); and
3. That a long lease be granted in accordance with Section 1.7 of the presented exempt agenda report.

(Meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 4.15 pm)

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Chairman

***(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINUTES E.36/23 (Parts 2 & 3), E.38/23 (Parts c to e), E.39/23 (Part 1) AND E.50/23 (Parts (a)1& 2 and (b)) WHICH ARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2023, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2023 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES)***