

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SOUTH HAMS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP HELD
AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON MONDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2007**

Present: Vaughan Lindsay, Dartington Hall Trust (Chair)
Matt Bell – Devon County Council (for Roger Grainger)
Steve Brown – Devon Primary Care Trust
Adele Dawson – South Devon College
Hugh McCahill – South Hams VSF
Paul Sadler – Environment Agency
Tony Steer – Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
Pete Tansey – Business Representative
Cllr John Tucker – Leader, SHDC
Cllr Anne Ward – SHDC
Laura Whitehead – South Hams CVS

Others also present and participating (non-voting):

Amanda Harvey – SHDC (for Kay Kilgallon)
Ross Kennerley – SHDC
Alan Robinson – SHDC

Apologies: Cllr Julian Brazil – Devon County Council
Cllr Roger Croad – Devon County Council
Kay Kilgallon – SHDC
Jo Rumble – Dartmoor National Park Authority
Howard Toplis – Chief Executive, Tor Homes

1. Welcome and apologies

The newly appointed independent Chairman Vaughan Lindsay, Chief Executive of the Dartington Hall Trust, expressed his delight at being given the opportunity to chair the South Hams Strategic Partnership. The Chairman believed the group had three roles:-

- 1.) Information sharing
- 2.) Joint working
- 3.) Delivering action

The Chairman expressed the wish for future agendas to be structured around these three roles.

Each group member was requested to submit a half page update (using a template which would be provided) of their priorities and issues which would be circulated with the next agenda. Members would then have an opportunity to discuss the papers submitted at the next meeting.

The Chairman requested that each member came to the next meeting with three or four ideas that the group could focus their time on. The ideas must be in keeping with the priorities already set and should be achievable.

The list of apologies was noted.

Actions Agreed:

- Submission of a half page update from each member
- Each member to have 3 or 4 ideas for the group to focus on

2. Minutes of meeting 11 June 2007 – any matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2007 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to it being recorded that in relation to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (item 7) it be amended to read the first 'forum' meeting.

A group member questioned whether there had been any progress on the Climate Change Strategy. Officers informed members that previously it was hoped that Teignbridge District Council and South Hams District Council would make a joint appointment, however, Teignbridge District Council had undergone a management restructuring and consequently were carrying out some consultancy work in relation to climate change, on behalf of the Council.

3. Presentation by Ross Kennerley, Landscape and Recreation Manager on South Hams Public Space Strategy

Members received a presentation on the Public Space Strategy. The strategy was produced to promote the wider community use and ownership of public spaces, an aim shared with the Community Strategy. The strategy also considered what the district council should do itself and promoted partnership working with other public space owners, for example the National Trust.

To secure funding the policy needed to demonstrate what was required from the district's public spaces. The strategy had been led by the district council but had sought input from various advisors.

The Strategy had a six point action plan which was summarised as follows:-

- Increased accessibility and use of public space;
- Improved quality, public benefit and value for money;
- Partnership working and community involvement;
- Places for activity and exercise;
- Space for children and young people;
- Sustainable design and management.

Ross concluded that partners within the SHSP could work together on specific actions within the strategy for example anti-social behaviour and sustainable management. The SHSP through Environment South Hams, could take on a monitoring role for the partnership elements of the South Hams Public Space Strategy.

During discussion, a member questioned whether the strategy was 'market' led. Members were informed that the strategy was a 'bottom-up' process, with part of which being the mapping of all public spaces and consultation being sought.

Members commented that good quality design of open spaces could help with anti-social behaviour and economic investment. If an open space was not contributing to the surrounding area, then the area should be considered for some alternative use, and therefore freeing up resources to improve the quality of others.

Action Agreed:

- Environment South Hams monitor the partnership elements of the South Hams Public Space Strategy Action Plan.

4. Local Development Frameworks update – progress made by Dartmoor National Park Authority and South Hams District Council

Members were informed that work on a range of documents was progressing. The Totnes and Dartington Development Plan Document (DPD) was presenting partnership opportunities for development for example around Bridgetown and the Totnes Southern Area. It was noted that the document would be sent to all relevant organisations, with the deadline for comments being the 30 November 2007. Members were advised that it would be easier for comments to be made from individual organisations rather than the SHSP as a collective and should be submitted to the South Hams forward planning team.

Action: Response forms should be submitted to the South Hams Forward Planning Team by 30 November 2007.

5. Quality of life in the South Hams – Sounding Board Survey results and ‘State of the District’ summary

Members considered a report of the Sounding Board Survey, the survey tried to get a sense of how people felt about living in the area. The Council wanted to gauge whether it was addressing the issues of its residents and whether any action was needed.

The data showed that traffic congestion, affordable housing and anti-social behaviour were major areas of concern. It was previously thought that it was the fear of anti-social behaviour that was the cause of concern, however, it appeared that people were becoming less tolerant of low grade anti-social behaviour. Encouragingly, people considered they had influence over decisions which perhaps was an indication of organisations being more open to public feedback. The results also showed that the number of businesses that were VAT registered had dropped, with the suggestion that it might be the first sign of a possible economic downturn in the South Hams.

During discussion, members suggested that the drop in VAT registered businesses could be partly attributed to the Government raising the VAT threshold. Members were informed that Devon Renaissance had undertaken a survey of three and a half thousand businesses in Devon and found that a huge number of businesses were not expanding because they

were happy in their current form. The survey could be found at www.ruraldevon.org.

A member commented that the findings on anti-social behaviour supported the findings of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Members were also informed that the funding for the anti-social behaviour posts were only in place until March 2008 and urged the partner organisations to lobby for a continuation of funding.

Action: Tony Steer to send contact details to Amanda Harvey for circulation to members, to enable them to lobby for funding continuation.

A member queried whether there were questions relating to climate change and energy use within the Sounding Board Survey. In response, officers advised that they would clarify to the member after the meeting.

A member concluded that the Sounding Board Survey was an impressive document which presented a useful set of data.

6. Progress on the Sustainable Community Strategy Themes

a) Affordable Housing

Devon County Council was embarking on an initiative to review its assets within the South Hams. There were ongoing discussions regarding the mapping of assets in the Totnes Bridgetown area and if mutually acceptable, the findings would be considered within the Totnes DPD.

The Community Land Trust projects were progressing and there was a possible link with a Devon wide project which was developing structures to support CLT activity.

During discussion, the Chairman asked whether there were specific projects that the group could try and influence. In response, officers concluded that the group could start to work with their respective asset managers to identify land that could be used to meet the objectives of the Community Strategy, particularly in the Totnes and Dartmouth areas which are priority areas for LDF work.

A member questioned whether the affordable housing situation was getting worse. Officers commented that need was rising but aligning land availability and obtaining funds for affordable housing was becoming more difficult with authorities having to work with the Housing Corporation who now had stricter criteria for accessing national funds.

b) Competitive Local Economy

Prior to discussion of the Procurement Improvement Programme, a member expressed their disappointment at the closure of Dairy Crest, Totnes expressing the belief that the Government had a very urban business development focus.

There was a drive to help enable local suppliers to compete in the e-procurement market. Although due to competition laws, local corporate bodies were unable to actively promote buying locally. However South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council did encourage their own staff to buy local products and use local services wherever possible.

A member voiced that Enterprise week would be an ideal opportunity to promote the e-procurement approach.

Actions Agreed:

- Pete Tansey and Michael Cozens to engage partners (including Laura Whitehead and Adele Dawson in organising supplier adoption seminars;
- Pete Tansey to provide a briefing paper on his meeting with Ben Bradshaw (on how local economies work) to Amanda Harvey for circulation to members.

c) Environment South Hams

The working group had developed further its community support package and had captured the latest environmental project progress from the 22 Parishes that were contacted regarding their parish plans. Three common project ideas had been identified that warranted a systematic approach. These were the setting up of allotments, creating footpaths and composting. Those engaged with the project were conscious of not raising expectations of the parishes.

Members proceeded to discuss whether a presentation from Ian Bateman of Devon County Councils Carbon Management Programme would be of benefit, it was felt amongst the group that Ian's expertise would be better utilised for specific issues.

A member expressed the view that the SHSP should be leading the climate change agenda and felt that people were informed and aware of climate change but struggled to link the issue to their own lives.

d) Community Vibrancy

I. South Devon Rural Transport Partnership

The Shopmobility project had been unsuccessful at securing lottery funding, the reasons were thought to be due to several other bids for similar projects and the lottery scheme being over-subscribed. The steering group had decided to offer knowledge, skills and support to any voluntary or community sector group that wished to take the project forward.

The Devon Wheels to Work project was up and running in the South Hams having secured funding through Devon Renaissance and South Hams District Council. The partnership was asked to promote the

project through any in-house magazines/newsletters.

Action: Amanda Harvey to circulate promotional information to members to enable them to publicise the scheme.

The research for the Devon Rural Carers Project had been completed. It focused on the needs of rural carers and how to improve the support given to them. The research findings would be used to develop projects including the establishment of support groups, training to enable carers to return to work and promoting rural community transport.

II. Community planning

The Communities in Action database prototype was due to undergo testing. The database had two parts, information about the community plans and the actions detailed in those plans. The database would provide access to information and plans that would ordinarily be in hard copy.

During discussion, members considered the database would be a useful tool for flagging up generic issues across all parishes allowing for a collective approach to be undertaken. The database would also encourage the sharing of information and avoid possible replication.

Action: Matt and Laura to compose a note of support for the use of the database which would be circulated to members.

III. Volunteering

The South Hams Volunteer Centre had been working with referrals from the Job Centre. In some cases this had involved securing placements for people who had complex needs.

Action Agreed

- Howard Owen would like to conduct a presentation to members on the progress of the volunteer centre project at the next meeting.

IV. Active South Hams

Active South Hams was the first Physical Activity and Community Sports Network in Devon to adopt terms of reference and develop its own action plan. A healthy walks festival was planned for October 2007 which aimed to support healthy walks and physical activity.

The partnership was asked for its support to investigate whether the South Hams could be the host for the Devon Youth Games in 2008.

V. Awareness Raising

It was noted that the next Community Partnership Forum was to be

held on Tuesday 2 October 2007 and had a healthy communities theme with several presentations being made. The following Community Partnership Forum would be in April 2008 with the economy being the proposed theme and Ivybridge the possible location.

Action: Members to contact Amanda Harvey with any news items for the forthcoming CPF (by 1 October 2007) or with any articles suitable for the SHSP Winter 2007 Newsletter (by 7 December 2007).

7. Updates

Action: It was agreed that partner and agency updates would be moved to the beginning of the agenda for the next meeting.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

The three Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships across South Devon had been involved in a pilot project which saw the three partnerships merged together. A decision was now pending on whether the partnerships were to remain permanently merged. Feedback would be provided at the next meeting detailing the benefits of a merger and the possible learning for the SHSP of such an approach.

PCT Agenda

The latter part of the re-organisation was currently being undertaken and the majority of posts had now been filled.

Devon Compact

Three Codes of Good Practice were being developed on Community Groups, Partnership Working and Consultation and Involvement. The Compact awareness event raised further opportunities for development.

Children's Trust

It appeared that none of the local strategic partnerships were effectively engaged with the County wide Children's Trust. Alan Robinson and Nick Payne, from West Devon Borough Council, would be attending future meetings and would feedback the key issues. It was also noted that the Children and Young Peoples plan was currently in the process of a refresh and would be subject to future consultation.

Devon Strategic Partnership

Action: Amanda Harvey to circulate an organisational structure chart of the Devon Strategic Partnership to members.

8. Possible Future Agenda Items

- Presentation by the MCTi Town Chairs representative on recent

progress;

9. Proposed dates of future meetings

The Chairman felt that the venue for the partnership should vary between the partner agencies from meeting to meeting. Therefore it was agreed that the venue for the next meeting would be South Devon College.

- 3 December 2007 at **2 pm**
- 25 February 2008 at **2 pm**
- 12 May 2008 at **2 pm**
- 21 July 2008 at **2 pm**

(meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 5.15 pm)