

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SOUTH HAMS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP HELD
AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON MONDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Present: Ruth Bagley – Chief Executive, SHDC (Chair)
Penny Amraoui – Environment Agency
Cllr Roger Croad – Devon County Council
Ian Curtis – Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
Adele Dawson – South Devon College
Roger Grainger – Devon County Council
Hugh McCahill – South Hams VSF
Alan Tibbenham – South Hams and West Devon PCT
Howard Toplis – Chief Executive, Tor Homes
Laura Whitehead – South Hams CVS
Cllr Richard Yonge – Leader, SHDC

Others also present and participating (non-voting):

Cllr Ann Ward – South Hams District Council
Cllr Mike Saltern – South Hams District Council
Alan Robinson – South Hams District Council
Kay Dawson – South Hams District Council

Apologies: Cllr Julian Brazil – Devon County Council
Cllr Cathie Pannell – South Hams District Council
Steve Brown – South Hams and West Devon PCT
Pete Tansey – Business Representative

1. Minutes of meeting 18 July 2006 – any matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

Under matters arising, the following points were highlighted:-

- Funding streams for youth activity. The Group were reminded to continue to investigate possible avenues for funding;
- Climate Change. The Group were informed that SHDC had prepared a draft Climate Change Strategy, with a report having been presented to the Council's Environment Policy Development Group on 14 September 2006.

2. Adoption of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2006 – 2011

The Group received a presentation from Kay Dawson, SHDC's Community Development Officer, which summarised the strategy. A paper was also tabled to the Group which set out issues for consideration. The paper identified the following inclusions within the final draft:-

- (a) an overview of the issues and needs raised through community involvement activities;
- (b) the priority theme areas and key areas for action;
- (c) how the strategy will be delivered, measured and progress reported;
- (d) Community Involvement Policy;
- (e) 'State of the District' summary;
- (f) Initial Action Plan.

During discussion on the strategy, the following points were made:-

- i. Concerns over the apparent influx of older people into the district in contrast to the out-flux of younger people;
- ii. a number of minor textual changes which were noted and agreed;
- iii. a query regarding the need for targets in the 'State of the District' summary, to which it was noted that it would be difficult to obtain tangible targets;
- iv. concerns over how partners could demonstrate achievements collectively, especially in light of the lack of funding opportunities available.

ACTIONS AGREED

To adopt the South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy 2006 – 2011 and its associated Action Plan, subject to suggested amendments, and therefore:-

- seek adoption from individual partner organisations;
- commitment from the partners to use the aims and objectives to guide future service provision;
- commit to the ethos of the Community Involvement Policy;
- commit to taking collective action to deliver the Action Plan;
- commit to feedback progress on the Action Plan to the Community Partnership Forum, other partners and the wider community.

3. Progress on the Community Strategy themes

a) Affordable Housing

Member's attention was drawn to the minutes of the Affordable Housing Working Group meeting held on 5 September 2006, the outcome of which was summarised in the working groups report.

A Member noted the possibility of acquiring Preventative Technology Grants which could assist people to stay in their homes for a longer period. It was noted that the working group would be addressing the issue of vulnerable groups at a future meeting.

ACTIONS AGREED

- to note progress to date;
- to inform partner agency management teams of actions and secure commitment to ensure actions are progressed.

b) Competitive Local Economy

In discussion of the circulated report, it was suggested that partner organisations should promote the 'Buy Local' message with staff and customers / clients through innovative use of existing communication mechanisms. Highlighted from the minutes of the Procurement Working Group meeting held on 6 September 2006, it was noted that Annette Williams (DCC), Mike Cozens (SHDC) and Adele Dawson (South Devon College) were to meet to discuss possibilities of training for local businesses to improve their opportunities to use the Devon Procurement Portal.

From an SHDC perspective, it was noted that Riverford Farm delivered vegetable boxes direct to the Council offices for Officers. It was felt that local purchasing was valuable not only from an economic perspective but also in addressing Climate Change as it reduces Road Miles.

Concern was aired with regard to those organisations which had national procurement plans such as the NHS and the Police. In response it was felt that although this could not be altered, research shows that national contracts are often sub-contracted back down at a local level, (refer to notes of meeting on 6 September); and there were still significant opportunities to encourage staff to buy locally.

ACTIONS AGREED

- to note progress to date;
- to inform partner agency management teams of actions and secure commitment to ensure actions are progressed.

c) Community Vibrancy

A report was previously circulated to the Group summarising the initial key project areas of this priority theme, which will be delivered by a variety of existing Working Groups.

ACTION AGREED

Partners to consider how best they can engage with the project areas identified.

i. Active South Hams

During discussion the Group identified the importance of working together to utilise land assets for improved wider community physical activity / sport. A Member noted that school playing fields were prime land, especially during the holidays and weekends. It was perceived that teachers / school governors were reluctant to allow these to be used on the grounds of Health and Safety Regulations. It was queried as to who had control over whether playing fields could be used and what onus would be on them if an accident occurred. It was noted that the school agenda was changing with the remit to become 'extended schools'.

ACTIONS AGREED

- to note progress to date;
- that Active South Hams arrange for scoping exercise to identify opportunities for joint working on leisure, recreation and youth facilities and activities;
- RG to provide contacts to progress the future use of school land.

ii. South Devon Rural Transport Partnership

SDRTP had been a working group of the Community Strategy since its inception. Specific projects developed / supported include South Hams Shopmobility and South Hams Community Buses. The recent Totnes Transport Information Leaflet was noted as a success and it was felt that such an initiative would be useful in all towns, as it highlighted not only public transport opportunities, but community transport, free buses, contact details and more besides. Funding for the SDRTP ends in March 2007.

ACTION AGREED

- SHSP to consider ways that they could support any funding applications that are made to enable the work to continue.

iii. Volunteering

Following the launch of the new Volunteer Centre, there were future plans to offer rural outreach surgeries to encourage potential volunteers to come forward. Following a query regarding responsibility for the Health and Safety of volunteers it was noted that community groups hosting volunteers will be support to have policies in place. Devon Compact had developed a 'Code of Practice for Volunteering'. Members wanting a copy should contact the CVS.

ACTIONS AGREED

- to note the progress to date;
- to recognise the potential contribution the Volunteer Centre may bring to the local economy;
- to consider how partners can encourage projects, such as establishing employee volunteering schemes.

d) Environment

The working group met on the 30 August 06 and a report previously circulated to the group summarised the outcomes of this meeting. It was agreed that other organisations should be invited to join the group to: provide an overview of existing projects, look at priorities, identify the potential for 'adding value' and key future projects to support through external fund-raising.

It was also suggested that an approach be made to Dartmoor National Park Association to invite a representative to sit on the SHSP. This was discussed under item 7: Update on SHSP Membership.

ACTION AGREED

- To note progress to date.

4. Social Inclusion Strategy (Draft)

Attention was drawn to the summary of the draft Social Inclusion Strategy as circulated with the agenda. It was noted that social inclusion was a national priority and not an issue SHDC can progress in isolation. Improved understanding is required together with identifying the cross-cutting nature of the issues. The summary recommended the following action for the SHSP:

- To consider developing a strategic approach to securing social inclusion across the District;
- To consider undertaking an audit of existing and proposed social inclusion activities to facilitate consideration by LSP partners of potential future opportunities for cross agency working (see appendix A to the circulated Social Inclusion Strategy as an example of an audit);
- To consider developing a LSP action plan to improve social inclusion in partnership (see circulated draft action plan as an example);
- To discuss how this strategic issue could be taken forward.

During discussion on these actions, the following points were made:

- a. SHDC's audit of existing social inclusion activity within the Council. On completing the audit, it was interesting to note how much the Council had been doing in relation to promoting social inclusion;
- b. the importance of raising awareness of diversity issues;

- c. the representative for the Police noted that information was available for social inclusion in rural areas.
- d. it was noted that housing organisations had a lot of experience with social inclusion;
- e. the importance of including in the strategy why the strategy was essential;
- f. baseline profiles for Devon towns as developed by DCC. The profiles provide a statistical overview, based on a series of facts and figures, of what life was like in each "Devon town" area. The profiles contained a baseline of information and were intended to provide the basis for further discussion and development within the County Council and with partners. The promotion of standards in relation to social inclusion was noted in relation to these profiles. The profiles can be viewed by going to the following webpage -
<http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/democracymunities/neighbourhoods-villages/devontownprofiles.htm>

In conclusion, the Group **agreed** to progress the actions as noted above and each partner was to put forward a contact name from their organisation who could begin to develop an audit of social inclusion activity in their organisation.

5. Local Area Agreement Follow-up Item

The Group received a presentation, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. An initial piece of work had been completed to identify where the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities and initial Action Plans correlated with the LAA outcomes.

During discussion on the presentation and the initial action plan, concern was noted over whether government would use LAA's to force authorities to follow national targets. In response, it was noted that it was anticipated that the LAA would eventually lead to local needs being addressed. Furthermore, it was an opportunity for district and county to work in collaboration with the possibility of accessing more funding streams.

One Member raised concerns that whilst resources may be targeted at deprived communities identified across Devon, it was essential to ensure a 'core minimum' service was offered elsewhere to ensure that other areas do not deteriorate.

6. Devon Compact up-date

It was noted that the Devon Compact was currently in its last stages of adoption. Three codes of best practice had been developed (Equality and Diversity, Funding and Procurement, and Volunteering) for use by any interested organisation. Further information on the Compact could be found at the following web-address: <http://www.dacvs.org.uk/devoncompact.htm>

7. Up-date on SHSP Membership

The PCT's position on the LSP was to be clarified following the implementation of the changes to the PCT structure. It was therefore agreed to readdress this issue once the restructuring had taken place.

With regard to a second environment sector representative, following discussion it was **agreed** that various organisations including Dartmoor National Park Authority be approached to ascertain if they would be willing to join.

- AR and KD to progress.

With regard to engaging with Town and Parish Councils, attention was drawn to the minutes of a meeting between Town and Parish Clerk representatives and the Community Development Officer held on 13 September 2006, as circulated with the agenda. In discussion of the suggestions as presented in the minutes, the Group **agreed** with improving the format/attendance at Community Partnership Forum and encourage town and parish involvement in working group activities where appropriate.

With regard to the new merged South Devon and Dartmoor Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), it was noted that this new partnership was initially to be piloted for a year. It was noted that a number of LSP Members also sat on the CDRP. It was **agreed** that to maintain a link and information flow, an update on the work of the CDRP would be on future agendas of SHSP.

8. Migrant Workers up-date

The Group addressed a letter, as circulated with the agenda, entitled International (Migrant) Workers in the South West sent to the Chief Executive of the South West Regional Assembly from SHDC's Economic Development Officer. The letter was divided into the following sub headings:-

- Impact on local South Hams services;
- Evidence of mistreatment or exploration in the South Hams;
- Estimation of numbers of Migrant Workers in the South Hams;
- Research on Migrant Workers (published or underway);
- Specific support provided to Migrant Workers in the South Hams;

- Work on Migrant Workers being undertaken through South Hams Strategic Partners sub-groups;
- Appropriate contact.

During discussion it was noted that in order to gain detailed information and statistics there could be considerable financial implications, although, the information would be very useful when developing service plans, especially in terms of housing, education and health. The Group was informed of a **Migrant Workers Conference** scheduled for **10 November 2006** in **Taunton**. It was suggested that a representative from each organisation should attend.

9. Possible Future Agenda Items

- Progress in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Devon Compact up-date
- CDRP up-date

10. Future meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to take place on **Tuesday 5 December 2006 at 5pm.**

(meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 5.20 pm)