

Item	Membership Matters: Independent Chair
Update	11 June 2007
Issues for SHSP to consider	<p>It was decided at the recent SHSP meeting that an independent Chair should be sought. This would not preclude an existing member of the Partnership from being the Chair but in that event it might be necessary to invite a further representative from the same sector. Until a Chair is found, the Vice Chair is the Leader of South Hams District Council – Cllr John Tucker.</p> <p><u>General remarks:</u> The role of Chair will vary according to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ their inclination; ➤ their existing role, commitments; ➤ their organisation’s focus, expectation and capacity. <p>Ruth’s role as Chair was helped by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ access to and for lead staff within SHDC; ➤ personal capacity and PA support. <p>The key thing was email and access to staff supporting SHSP. This could easily be replicated by email access and a structured approach of no more than one or two short meetings between SHSP meetings</p> <p><u>Time commitment:</u> Best estimate is that in addition to formal meetings outlined in the job description, the meetings with support staff and/or email exchanges took less than half a day a month.</p> <p><u>Issues to consider:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the role is not filled by a paid employee of a partner or that partner/individual has not got the necessary capacity, should it be paid? • What support is needed for a Chair who does not have easy access to support and email • The Chair is elected annually but has been the same person for several years. If a the SHSP was building skills, support etc for a more independent Chair, is an annual turnover appropriate or would it be valuable to agree a period of say 3 years • How does an independent Chair work with the expectation of the White Paper that Council Leaders should take a lead role? The last SHSP meeting agreed that the Leader of the Council would be the Vice Chairman to ensure the integration of District Council and independent leadership. Exactly how this works, e.g. involvement of Leader in agenda setting, resourcing support etc. needs considering.

	<p>Some notes outlining a job description are provided, and are attached below.</p> <p>The following suggestions for Chair have been received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Whitehead – Chief Officer, CVS (Existing SHSP member). • Pete Tansey – BT (Existing SHSP member). • Representative from Natural England. • Representative from a faith organisation. We have had a request from Martyn Goss the Director at the Diocese of Exeter (CoE) to have a faith representative on the SHSP. • Isabelle Steer – Formerly a SHDC Councillor with Executive portfolio responsibility for Housing. • Vaughan Lindsay – Chief Executive, Dartington Hall Trust
<p>Action recommended</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the above suggestions. • Consider any further nominations from members. • Agree a way forward.

NOTES ON CHAIR OF SHSP

Possible roles: The necessity to change the Chair creates an opportunity for reviewing the role.

Essential:

- Chairing the SHSP Steering Group (4 to 6 per year) to keep all on board;
- Chairing/welcoming/introducing the Community Partnership Forum (twice a year);
- Agreeing the agenda of such meetings to ensure balance and that essential matters are included and peripheral matters are not;
- Linking with SHDC support staff;
- Attending the quarterly meetings of Devon Strategic Partnership and District LSP chairs in Exeter to share experience, consider matters of common interest and to improve links with the DSP;
- Attending other events which may be arranged, e.g. Devon SP Forum, to contribute to district and countywide thinking.

Desirable:

- Providing guidance to the officers supporting the partnership on direction;
- Reviewing and contributing to principal documents e.g. Community Strategy;
- Promoting the work of SHSP to public and media;
- Promoting the need for all partners to fully engage including promoting collective support (including administrative support) to the SHSP from all sectors rather than just the district council.

Person specification:

- Ability to chair a meeting inclusively, pacily and to achieve decisions;
- Commitment to and belief in partnership working;
- Commitment to and belief in community engagement;
- Able to offer direction and leadership to diverse parties;
- Breadth of understanding of the national and local agenda and the partners;
- Able to be a-political and to take a position independent of organisational priorities;
- Facilitation, negotiation and brokering skills;
- Ability to guide the support team;
- Ability to front up the Partnership in the Forum, public meetings and to the media;
- Use of email and web.

NB: Some of the roles and skills, e.g. promoting the Partnership to the media, could be fulfilled by others, but this needs understanding in advance.