

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SOUTH HAMS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP
HELD AT SOUTH DEVON COLLEGE ON MONDAY 8 JUNE 2009**

PRESENT:

Vaughan Lindsay – Dartington Hall Trust (SHSP Chair)
Alan Robinson – South Hams District Council
Cllr John Tucker – South Hams District Council (SHSP Vice Chair)
Cllr Anne Ward – South Hams District Council
Kate Cantwell – Devon County Council (for Roger Grainger)
Paul Sadler – Environment Agency
Jill Davies – South Hams Community and Voluntary Services
Jo Rumble – Dartmoor National Park Authority
Lesley Hughes – Ivybridge Town Council
Cllr Tony Whitty – Totnes Town Council
Tina Henry – Devon Primary Care Trust
Adele Dawson – South Devon College
David Shephard – Federation of Small Businesses
Supt Sarah Sharpe – Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Cllr John Binns – Kingsbridge Town Council
Emma Handley – Voluntary Sector Forum representative
Kay Kilgallon – South Hams District Council
Amanda Harvey – South Hams District Council

1. **APOLOGIES**

Howard Toplis – Tor Homes
Peter Tansey – Business representative
Cllr Julian Brazil – Devon County Council
Cllr Roger Croad – Devon County Council
Roger Grainger – Devon County Council
Cllr Rufus Gilbert – Kingsbridge Town Council
Cllr Debbie Morris – Dartmouth Town Council

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2009 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments which had been made following distribution of the minutes:-

Under Item Information Sharing, 'South Hams Voluntary Forum' had been amended to read 'Totnes Town Council' and;

In relation to the Discussion Items – Local Area Agreement, the following paragraph was added:-

"There was discussion about making the various targets SMARTer. While it was agreed that for a number of actions SMART targets might be difficult to establish, it was accepted that this should be an objective. It was suggested that each partner should make proposals for appropriate targets for future consideration."

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman informed Partners that the Recession Paper by Professor Ian Chaston would be carried over for consideration at the next meeting.

4. **INFORMATION SHARING - PARTNER UPDATES**

South Hams Community and Voluntary Services:

Partners were informed that from 1 April 2009, the CVS had changed its name to South Hams Community and Voluntary Services and transferred assets to a new charitable company structure.

Partners were also informed of a 'Meeting the Funding Challenge' Event – 17 June, Ivybridge, aimed at bringing funders, supporters and Voluntary Community Organisation's together for discussion and mutual learning. All SHSP Partners were welcome to attend.

The Partner for the SHCVS requested that a COMPACT update item be raised on the next SHSP Agenda.

Devon County Council:

It was noted that DCC had received a four star rating in the last round of Comprehensive Performance Assessments. The 'Weathering the Storm' event held by the Council in response to the credit crunch had been well received.

Environment Agency:

The Partner informed that a meeting had taken place with Tor Homes and Ivybridge Town Council with proposals to reinstate water power in the old mill leat to power the sheltered accommodation and thus reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Regarding Green Travel Plans, Environment South Hams would be contacting SHSP Partners for their current plans, so that the best elements could be amalgamated.

Supt Sharpe expressed her support for the Transition Town Totnes 'Garden Share' scheme as a means to increase the capacity for allotments, as the neglected gardens of elderly residents increased their susceptibility to becoming victims of crime.

Ivybridge Town Council:

Pilot One Stop Shop – The Town Council would like more focused 'joined up' work with partners to deliver this outreach facility that will contribute to the Community Vibrancy theme. This project was supported by the representative for Totnes Town Council as he informed that there was a constant request for an information office, and something that was more coherent was needed.

Kingsbridge Town Council:

Activities for Youth - Agenda 21 had held an event and had received very comprehensive feedback from local youths. A meeting would be held with Youth Groups and a report outlining priorities would be compiled. The representative would email the details of the report on request.

A new forum 'Destination Kingsbridge' had been formed whose focus would be to improve the local shopping capability to assist putting Kingsbridge Town Centre on the visitor map.

Devon & Cornwall Constabulary

Partners were asked to lend their support to the Constabulary's promotional work to build 'confidence and reassurance' in the community by displaying posters with a joint force and SHDC commitment statement. The Force's top performance target for this year would be measuring how satisfied the community were in the way the Police and Local Authority dealt with crime and anti social behaviour in their area. Partners were asked to contact Amanda Harvey (SHDC) to request posters to display.

Supt Sharpe also highlighted the impact the lack of affordable housing for key workers was having on their ability to recruit Officers and fill their growth posts. Typically they were finding that once Officers had completed their rural posting they migrated back to the urban areas of Torbay and Plymouth, which resulted in a lack of continuity with Officers.

It was agreed that the Community Development Officer would try and facilitate a meeting between the Police, Ministry of Defence and SHDC regarding investigating the possibilities of utilising underused MOD properties for Police accommodation.

South Hams District Council:

Partners were informed that the Enquiry By Design Workshops, led by the Prince's Foundation, were well underway and that information explaining the process was available on the internet www.southhams.gov.uk. They were further informed that SHDC had produced a booklet 'Your guide to help in difficult times' that was also available on the website. Several Partners, including the PCT, Police and CVS, were joining in with SHDC Outreach activities as a pilot to provide more joined up outreach surgeries in the future. Lastly, it was noted that the Townstal Community Partnership report was now available for Partners to review and interested parties should contact Amanda Harvey (SHDC) for a copy.

Tor Homes:

Partners were informed that Tor Homes had entered into a contract with Taylor Wimpey at Carrollsland, ~~Staddiscombe~~ to deliver 48 affordable housing units (24 to rent and 24 to buy). 16 Units had already been handed over, and it was anticipated that the remaining units would be handed over by the end of the year. Construction work on three houses and one bungalow had commenced in March 2009 on the Ivybridge Library Site and a planning application had been submitted to develop 19 houses/flats in the first phase redevelopment

Deleted: Staddiscombe

of Culverdale, Totnes which it was hoped would commence in July 2009. To support its objective to become a more environmentally friendly organisation, Tor Homes had been working with staff and residents and on 8 May 2009 tenants were invited to attend a Green Tenants Group Meeting to raise awareness and encourage green living for social housing residents.

South Hams Voluntary Sector Forum:

The CVS updated the Forum on issues for Voluntary Groups, such as the Charity Commission, CRB changes and funding opportunities. Many Forum members represented caring groups and all spoke of the lack of transport for patients and their families who lived in rural areas to the main local hospitals – Derriford and Torbay. Some of the groups had also experienced problems in finding funding for particular projects during the economic downturn. The setting up of Complex Care Teams had identified the need for voluntary sector organisations to meet in order to support the needs of many people living in rural areas. The SHVSF wanted to raise these issues within the SHSP to ensure that the statutory authorities did not shift responsibilities to the voluntary sector without the appropriate funding packages in place.

It was asked how Partners could assist the SHVSF to meet their objectives. In response, the representative advised that the primary area for assistance was reporting issues.

Another Partner informed that Devon Warm Zones were trying to launch their schemes in conjunction with the voluntary sector and that perhaps West Country Energy Action could be invited to make a presentation to the Partnership at a future meeting.

South Devon College:

Partners were advised that the Principal, Heather Maxwell OBE, was leaving. The Phase 2 campus expansion project was experiencing delays due to LSC budget overspend, though it was hoped this would be resolved in due course, and work was underway for over 250 apprenticeship enrolments in September were being planned for. However, this was a challenging target and the focus was on creating apprenticeship opportunities within the public sector.

Devon Primary Care Trust

A key element of delivery in the partnership context was the prevention and early intervention agenda, the Health and Well Being Group would be greatly assisting in the co-ordination of this work. An example of local action would include the falls prevention programme. A Community Services Commissioning Strategy was currently being developed to address community needs, projected needs, future capacity and affordable proposals for community hospitals and services.

Totnes Town Council

The Town Council had coordinated community involvement, through local groups, in preparation for the workshop with the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment and had progressed well with meetings and efforts to inform and consult the community about site proposals.

The new town guide had been distributed and the website had been launched and was now on line. In an effort to boost town trade, the Town Council had worked with the Chamber of Commerce to facilitate street drama and promote a cycle race as part of an ongoing programme of events.

Positive work had also been undertaken with SHDC regarding the updating of Borough Park and other play areas within the town. This had led to a redesigning of the tennis courts to include a full size MUGA (Multi Use Games Area).

Dartmoor National Park Authority:

Partners were informed that the Authority was in the process of preparing a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to look at the suitability, availability and achievability for housing on a range of sites across the National Park. This would be an important input into the preparation of the Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD).

In addition to the adoption of a Core Strategy DPD, the authority now intended to produce a Development Management and Delivery DPD. The two strategies would set out the comprehensive framework needed to advise and guide development in Dartmoor National Park in the period to 2026. Feedback from Partners was requested during the preparation process on issues and topics that may need to be included. A public consultation document would be published in 2010 to be followed by submission to the Secretary of State and independent examination.

5. SHSP TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Partnership was advised that the revised Terms of Reference (ToR) essentially remained the same, with the same mission, aims and responsibilities. The ToR laid out the role of Steering Group members, the Community Partnership Forum and Delivery Groups. The revised ToR also formalised the leadership role of South Hams District Council. The main change that had been suggested was that the Independent Chair serve a term of three years, rather than the current one year, to give more continuity. This amendment was welcomed by the Partnership.

The matter of whether the SHSP should have a dedicated website to support it, other than within the SHDC website was discussed, but it was agreed that it would require more time, effort and resources to keep it fit for purpose than was available.

The issue of conference call meetings was raised, but the Chairman restated the results of the recent SHSP self assessment survey (Minutes Section 3, 8 December 2008 refer) that had ascertained that conference call meetings had been 'less well received' by the representatives of the Partnership.

The ToR were then signed off.

6. **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

Alan Robinson advised that the Draft Action Plan had been distributed, although no further comments had been received and that Champions and /or Project Leaders were still needed for the following projects:

- Partners to give local businesses the opportunity to provide them with goods and services.
- Partners to promote local buying amongst employees and service users.
- Investigate the potential for local work hubs.

It was suggested that future meetings of the SHSP be structured to align with the four Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) themes, to enable more focused attention on the progress of activities and to assist representatives to make connections with the actions. This was agreed by the Partnership, but as the meetings were quarterly it was requested that the remaining three themes, and their associated actions, also be referred to at each meeting but with less time allocated. It was suggested and agreed that the 'Competitive Local Economy' be the first theme to focus on in detail in light of the economic downturn and future revision of SHDC's Prosperity Strategy. It was also agreed that Michael Cozens (SHDC Economic Development Officer) be invited to the next SHSP meeting to update the Partnership on actions relating to the economic theme of the SCS action plan.

With regard to Champions, it was asked what the role would require. In response, it was explained that this would depend on the project, and that it might involve work specifically within their individual organisation e.g. promoting projects through their staff newsletters and internal websites or it may involve work promoting a project across organisations.

It was raised that the SHSP should promote itself more within the community to enhance understanding. In response the Community Development Assistant suggested emailing the Community Partnership Forum members with news of SHSP achievements. However, some representatives urged caution in attributing significant outcomes to the SHSP at this stage as the Partnership had not progressed enough. It was felt that the SHSP was currently operating primarily as an information sharing group and its role needed to develop to facilitate and drive cooperative working to achieve outcomes, but not to undertake delivery itself as this would be more effectively undertaken within the various delivery teams. In response, one representative felt that the SHSP should not limit its ambitions and should aim to be more

than just an information sharing group. In reply, it was stated that the value of information sharing should not be underestimated in achieving improved joint working and referred to the mission, remit and aims statement on page one of the Partnership Agreement (ToR) notably:

- To identify opportunities where working together across service and organisational boundaries has the potential to deliver greater benefit for the people of South Hams;
- To improve strategic co-ordination and communication between agencies and organisations serving and supporting the people of the South Hams.

7. PLACE SURVEY

The results of the Place Survey, which had replaced the General Satisfaction Survey, were discussed. 1,400 responses had been received, out of a potential 3,000 that had been circulated. 94.1% of the respondents were very or fairly satisfied with the local area as a place to live, (potentially in the top national quartile), 44% felt well informed about how to get involved with local decision making, though only 34% felt that they could influence decisions affecting the local area to any degree. The issues noted by respondents as being of high importance in achieving a good quality of life and in need of most improvement were:

- Affordable decent housing
- Public Transport
- Activities for teenagers
- Wage levels and cost of living
- The level of traffic congestion
- Job Prospects
- Road and Pavement repairs
- Clean Streets
- Shopping Facilities
- The level of crime

As the national figures had not yet been released it was not possible to benchmark the results. Also, the results would soon be further broken down to ward level providing sharper information for organisations to make informed judgements which could inform future versions of the Community Strategy action plan. The Chairman stated that for the time being the results of the Place Survey affirmed the key issues and asserted that there was value in waiting for the national results. In the interim, he invited the Partnership to take the time to digest the results to determine what the real implications were.

It was noted that the perception of crime was often higher in rural areas than the reality merited and therefore providing reassurance would be a major challenge.

8. **HEALTH AND WELL BEING PARTNERSHIP – SOUTH DEVON AND DARTMOOR**

The PCT Representative informed Partners that the Health and Well Being Partnership (HWBP) was currently expanding its membership, finalising its Terms of Reference and developing an action plan. The Partnership was predominantly a strategic one, ensuring that resources were focussed on both specific local and shared priorities. The HWBP would report to the SHSP. The flow chart illustrating how the HWBP was linked up to other partnership implementation groups was discussed.

It was suggested that the HWBP be a standing item on the SHSP agenda to assist in formalising the link.

9. **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT – SOUTH HAMS PROPOSALS**

Partners were reminded that at the Community Partnership Forum held in Ivybridge in February, a number of proposals had been put forward which were then further short-listed to those that had received 10 votes or more. The short-listed proposals had been ranked in terms of their order of importance to the people of South Hams by the South Hams Citizens Panel. The finalised proposals would be taken to the Executive to approve (determined by what resources were available to progress them), and these would have to be submitted by the 31 July 2009. A decision on which of the proposals to implement would be made by the Secretary of State. Currently, there were no details about how long the decision process would take.

The top two proposals identified to date had been safeguarding Post Offices and enabling second home council tax to be spent in the local community from which it was collected.

Some concern was raised by a Partner that more technical proposals were being superseded by other proposals that had received less votes because they were easier to understand, and that to overcome this he suggested a weighting be applied to proposals to acknowledge those that had received more votes (e.g. the Community Asset Transfer proposal).

Another Partner expressed concern that the process was arbitrary and that there had been little opportunity to discuss and think around the issues proposed.

It was acknowledged by the Partnership that there had been little time to develop a more inclusive approach and the way forward was appropriate in terms of the time and resources available.

10. **PRESENTATION ON APPRENTICESHIPS – Paul Champion, South Devon College Apprenticeships Manager**

Paul Champion gave a presentation to Partners that gave them an overview of the National Apprenticeships Scheme aimed at 16-24 year olds. The scheme enabled young people to gain both practical expertise, and on completion, gain a suite of qualifications relevant to their chosen career. There were two levels, level 2, equivalent to five GCSE's grade A to C and level 3, equivalent to two A Levels. Currently 90% of the apprenticeships being offered by employers were from the private sector and the purpose of the presentation was to encourage partners from the public sector to evaluate any upcoming vacancies.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Partner from South Devon College invited all Partners to an Annual Skills Summit that would be held at the college on the 2 July 2009 at 3.45 pm. The Shadow Minister for Skills would be in attendance and they hoped the event would be well attended.

12. **DATES OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 14 September 2009 – Dartington Hall (Dukes Room)

Monday 14 December 2009 – Kingsbridge Town Hall