

# South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy

2006-2011



## **Sustainable communities are:**

***Active, inclusive and safe.*** They are fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities

***Well run*** with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership

***Environmentally sensitive*** providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment

***Well designed and built*** featuring quality built and natural environments

***Well connected*** with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services

***Thriving*** with a flourishing and diverse local economy

***Well served*** with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all

***Fair for everyone*** including those in other communities, now and in the future

## DRAFT Foreword: *(Ruth to approve)*

*'A strategy is a plan that integrates the major goals, policies and actions of an organisation or partnership of organisations into a cohesive whole.'*

This newly established South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy is about understanding and acting upon, the unfolding and complex strategic relationships, opportunities and uncertain futures in which local service providers in the South Hams operate, rather than establishing once and for all the solutions. It is the combination of a variety of pieces of work from the very grass-roots level of parish and towns plans, to those strategies which sit at a county or regional level. It has been informed by the identification of issues that matter to you in your communities.

Like all strategies, the South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy should be viewed not as a firmly fixed plan, but as a continuing process, informing other strategies and, in turn, being informed by them.

The Action Plan sets out where the South Hams Strategic Partnership is looking to 'add value' to existing activities. It has been drawn up by Working Groups established with the support of the strategic partners during the consultation period on the first draft of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Action Plan and the efforts of the Working Groups will continue to develop and be reviewed as we work together on a 'task and finish' basis.

There is room for everyone to be involved in the delivery of improvements for the South Hams. The role of communities and individuals in contributing to the priorities of this new Sustainable Community Strategy cannot be underestimated. Whether this be through a change in your own habits; a contribution at the very local level in the town or village where you live, delivering projects identified in your local community plan; through joining in the actions or projects identified by the Working Groups of the SHSP or through the work of a particular interest group.

**Ruth Bagley**  
Chair of South Hams Strategic Partnership

# Contents

Introduction: A shared vision	2
The aim of the Sustainable Community Strategy	5
‘Shaping the future of the South Hams’ – How the new Sustainable Community Strategy has been produced	8
<b>2006 - 2011 Priority themes:</b>	
Affordable homes	17
Competitive local economy	18
Community vibrancy	19
Quality natural and built environment	20
Appendix 1 Community Involvement Policy	23
Appendix 2 ‘State of the District’ Summary	28
Appendix 3 Initial Action Plan	30

***To improve the well-being of the people of the South Hams  
in a sustainable way***



The South Hams stretches from the boundaries of Plymouth in the west to the holiday beaches of Torbay in the east and inland to the hills of Dartmoor and the district councils of West Devon and Teignbridge.

The area of some 350 square miles encompasses an abundance of rich natural beauty, countless villages, hamlets and isolated cottages, with 60 miles of magnificent coastline recognised nationally through the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Approximately 82,000 people live in the District, with two-thirds of the population living outside the larger towns of Dartmouth, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge and Totnes. The population is expected to grow to nearly 90,000 by 2010, with particular pressure from development in the western part of the District.

## **Some of the issues facing us**

Perceptions of the South Hams as an area of social and economic advantage can disguise problems for our communities such as lower than average wages, decline in some traditional industries, above average house prices compounded by a high proportion of second home ownership, social isolation and difficulty accessing services, information and transport.

The sparsely populated nature of much of the District results in services being more costly to provide and an over-reliance on private transport. Deprivation exists within areas of affluence and many small villages lack facilities such as schools, shops and post offices, resulting in significant issues of rural isolation. Many employers have trouble in recruiting and retaining essential and skilled workers due to the lack of affordable housing.

Every year, deaths continue to exceed births, yet the population continues to grow due entirely to inward migration. Although there is a net gain of population, there is a loss of young adults as many leave the area for higher education or due to the lack of job opportunities, low wages and affordable housing. The situation means that the age structure of the South Hams is weighted heavily towards older people, a trend that is predicted to increase. This will have significant implications for health and social services.

Therefore, the challenge for service providers is to address the needs of the people living and working in the South Hams, with its rurality, within the context of sometimes very different needs to our surrounding areas. Furthermore, they require strong community leadership in order to be tackled effectively.

## **Sustainable Communities**

The Government has recognised that with the rapidly changing needs of the UK population and a shortage of housing, this is a critical point in time to set national policy on the sustainability of housing and communities.

Following national consultation with service providers, the requirements for the development of sustainable communities were established:

- The determination to engage local people and businesses in the planning, design and long-term stewardship of their community;
- To ensure developments are of an appropriate size and scale, with the right layout, amenities and transport links to urban, rural and regional centres.

At a South Hams level, new portfolios of planning documents, the South Hams Local Development Framework (LDF) and for the area of the South Hams within the national park, the Dartmoor National Park Authority LDF, are being prepared. These will establish the development strategy for this district – they are the land-use documents. This new system is designed to help community priorities, in particular the provision of affordable housing and employment sites, to be progressed much more rapidly. In this way, the LDF and the Sustainable Community Strategy are intended to complement each other.

This Sustainable Community Strategy aims to ensure that communities in the South Hams continue to be desirable places to live and work, with good quality local public services and an environment to cherish. Further to this, the Sustainable Community Strategy aims to reflect the local culture that we have in the South Hams, ensuring promotion of equality and diversity.

However, not surprisingly, the Sustainable Community Strategy cannot cover everything – the range of activity of partner organisations is too wide and too detailed. It cannot meet everybody's aspirations and must be realistic. Resources are limited and some services must conform to minimum legal requirements and established targets.

Change and improvement in services, facilities, people and communities cannot happen overnight. However change and improvement is possible and the community planning process reflects the commitment to achieve the best we can with the resources available.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

Sustainable development means taking account of the future affects of our activities so that the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is not compromised. The choices we make about the products we buy and the services we use have an impact on the South Hams and beyond.

A Sustainability Appraisal of the Sustainable Community Strategy has been undertaken by the South Hams Sustainability Group. This is a process to test and improve strategies with respect to sustainable development. Recommendations and revisions made through this process have been incorporated into this final version.

*Insert nice pictures*

## **Working together**

There are many strategies, plans and partnerships in place associated with the delivery of public services in the South Hams. The aim of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to bring all these strategies together under one 'umbrella' and look for ways to tackle cross-cutting issues effecting our social, economic and environmental well-being.

### **Local Strategic Partnership**

The South Hams Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) comprises representatives from the district and county authorities, voluntary and community sectors, local businesses and a range of agencies that deliver public services at the local level. The LSP consists of a steering group of key agencies, the South Hams Strategic Partnership (SHSP), and a Community Partnership Forum of many community groups, stakeholder groups and other local, county and regional organisations.

The aim of the LSP is to drive sustainable improvements in the quality of life for everyone. A key role of the LSP is to develop a joined-up approach to effective delivery of public services. This began with the development of the first South Hams Community Strategy for 2003-06 and the associated Action Plans. Following the review of the first Community Strategy, the role of the LSP continues to evolve as we look for innovative ways to deliver identified actions meeting established and emerging community priorities.

Part of the role of the LSP is to represent the South Hams and to influence other strategic planning. By working with other providers in a clear and coordinated way, the LSP will be able to secure resources and improvements for the South Hams.

The partners involved are committed to working together where necessary in order to address the needs and priorities identified in this Sustainable Community Strategy. Particular attention will be given to addressing the following key challenges. How do we:

- Overcome issues associated with rural isolation and ensure that people are not disadvantaged because of where they live;
- Enhance prosperity, regenerate communities and provide community involvement opportunities for all;
- Meet the needs of young people for affordable housing, knowledge and skills, appropriate employment, advice and other facilities;
- Meet the housing and support needs of older people in the District;
- Help the South Hams be a safe and healthy place to live, work and visit;
- Maintain and enhance the high quality natural and built environment;
- Promote responsible use of limited natural resources and adapt to the future consequences of climate change.

## Community Planning

Within the agreed approach to community-based planning, the LSP is encouraging individual communities, either alone or with neighbours, to develop their own views on their community's specific priorities. Whilst the results of these very local exercises are likely to be most relevant to the particular community itself, some are likely to require action through the Sustainable Community Strategy or even at the county level.

One of the key principles of community-based planning is that of active community participation. Parish and town councils are well placed to help community voices to be heard, and support project delivery at the local level. The Community Involvement Policy at Appendix 1 sets out how the LSP intends to increase community participation in decision-making and the development of services.

In developing the new South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy, the LSP undertook to review all the existing community based plans, and use this information to feed into both the Sustainable Community Strategy preparation and the LDF preparation.

A number of issues raised through community planning will be referred to in other strategies. Crime reduction, for example, will be one of the central themes of the Safer South Hams Strategy. It is not the intention simply to duplicate all the issues in this strategy, although there is a need to ensure they are integrated and complementary. To avoid duplication, two 'strategy-tests' need to be satisfied before the issue is included in the Sustainable Community Strategy. These are:

1. Is it a strategic issue of relevance across the District or should it more appropriately be dealt with at the parish, market town or county level?
2. Does it require a partnership approach? If so, is there an existing strategy or partnership that could address the issue instead and can the LSP add value to the existing work?

### **Did you know?**

The towns of Dartmouth, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge, Salcombe and Totnes have all produced Community Action Plans which also incorporate the views of the hinterland settlements.

32 parishes in the South Hams have completed a community appraisal or parish plan.

The Devon-wide Community Strategy, delivered through the Devon Strategic Partnership, takes account of all the district community strategies.

**Market Town Community Action Plan themes:** (not in priority order)

<b>Dartmouth and District</b>	<b>Ivybridge Area</b>	<b>Kingsbridge and Salcombe Area</b>	<b>Totnes and District</b>
Affordable housing	Active Ivybridge	Affordable housing	Access to services
Cultural activities	Community life	Economy and jobs	Affordable housing
Commercial centre regeneration	Library and Resource Centre	Environment	Civic Hall and Market Square regeneration
Economic and business development	Town Centre regeneration	Health and social issues	Economy and tourism
Education and training	Transport needs	Re-development of Kingsbridge Quay	Environment
Health facilities	Youth issues	Sport	Heritage, culture and arts
Natural environment		Transport	Traffic management
Safety and security		Youth	Youth facilities
Sport and leisure			
Traffic management and access			

**Youth Consultation themes:** (in priority order) *Insert picture of speed-dating event*

<b>Youth Consultation</b>
Cost of public transport to education / work / leisure
Access to quality jobs
Community involvement opportunities
A clean environment
Access to health advice and services

## **How the new South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy has been produced**

During the spring and summer of 2005, the review of the first Community Strategy began. The LSP were able to 'sign-off' the specific tasks in 2 of the 4 Action Plans: 'Accessible Services' and 'Supporting Active and Caring Communities' as having been completed, whilst 'Affordable Housing' and 'Employment and Skills' were recognised as being on-going areas of work.

There then followed the promotion for a range of consultation activities, called 'Shaping the future of the South Hams', to review community priorities. Publicity materials were sent out to town and parish councils, village hall contacts, over 450 community groups including contacts for over 60 'hard-to-reach' groups. With the support of community newsletters, libraries, tourist information centres, leisure centres, doctors, dentists, health centres, police stations and schools, the news of the opportunity to take part was spread far-and-wide.

Advertisement space was bought in local newspapers; media releases were issued which resulted in numerous newspaper articles and local radio interviews. South Hams District Council's website hosted 'warm-up' and main feature articles in the weeks running up to events. A virtual tour of the consultation road show also ran on the website during the consultation period.

The activities were promoted through network groups such as the South Hams Sustainability Group and South Hams Voluntary Sector Forum. These, together with two launch events at Ivybridge Town Council and South Hams District Council HQ at Follaton House, were used to encourage participation through 'word-of-mouth'.

### **Quotes from consultation**

*'Delighted to have the opportunity to contribute.'*

*'Very informative, well set out. Fully enjoyed my time and feel that I have helped.'*

*'This is a good way for the community to look at issues that affect them and have the opportunity to air views.'*

*'We need more of these!'*

*Insert pictures from events*

## Establishing the new Sustainable Community Strategy themes

The first events, 'Laying foundations for the future', were themed workshops for partners and stakeholders to establish issues, opportunities and key priorities. Using the themes regularly appearing in community-based planning documents and other strategies, participants were asked to establish where improvements could bring the most benefit to our economy, community and environment.

There then followed a series of community events around the district to establish community priorities, through a questionnaire and other tools. Whilst reviewing the first Community Strategy, the opportunity was taken to consult on a range of other strategy documents; the Local Development Framework (LDF), Prosperity Strategy, Tourism Strategy and Public Space Strategy - all of which 'nest' beneath the Community Strategy. A road show was taken to Malborough Village Hall, between Kingsbridge and Salcombe; Totnes Civic Hall; South Dartmoor Leisure Centre in Ivybridge and Townstal Community Hall in Dartmouth.

A range of follow-up consultations were undertaken at existing activities including the Farmers Markets in each of the 4 main towns and 2 of the district's main shows, the Yealmpton Show and Totnes Agricultural Show. 52 face-to-face interviews were undertaken with the under 35s, as previous experience has shown that this age group appears to be less well represented in consultation activities.

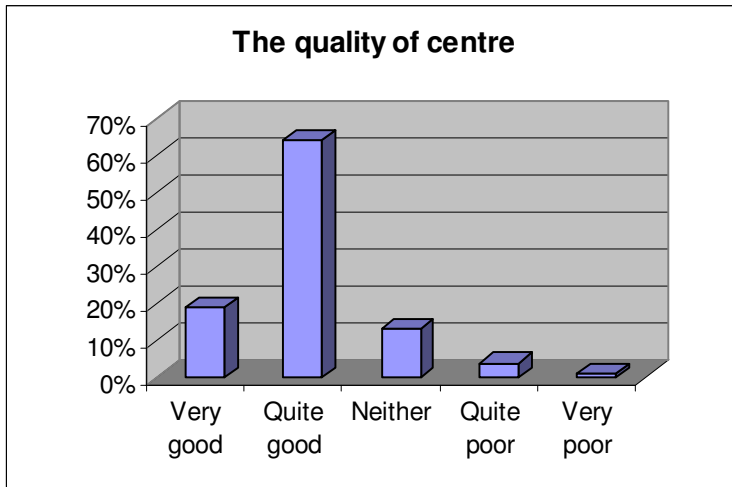
A youth 'political speed-dating' consultation event encouraged participation by young people (under 18s) from across the district. This was hosted at the new Ivybridge Youth Centre in October, to coincide with Local Democracy Week. It gave the opportunity for young people to discuss with elected representatives a range of issues that matter to them.

## 6 key aspects of living in the South Hams

Aspect	Very good (%)	Quite good (%)	Overall (%)
Quality of life	45	51	96
State of the coast and countryside	44	51	95
State of towns and villages	15	68	83
Safety in our community	15	60	75
Health in our community	13	61	74
Transport	2	21	23

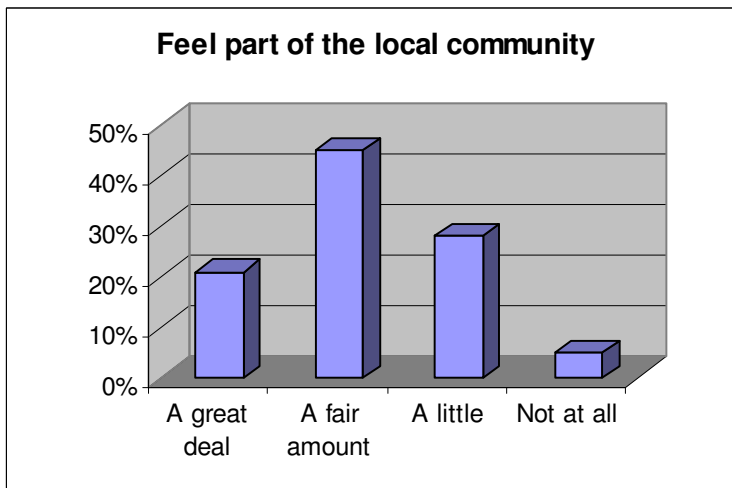
As can be seen from the table above, South Hams rates well for the general quality of life and the natural beauty of the area, reasonably well for aspects of quality of life that need 'services'. Transport issues stand out as a problem area. However, it should be noted that this aspect covers many issues including public transport, congestion, parking, speeding traffic and more besides.

**How would you rate the quality of your main centre?**



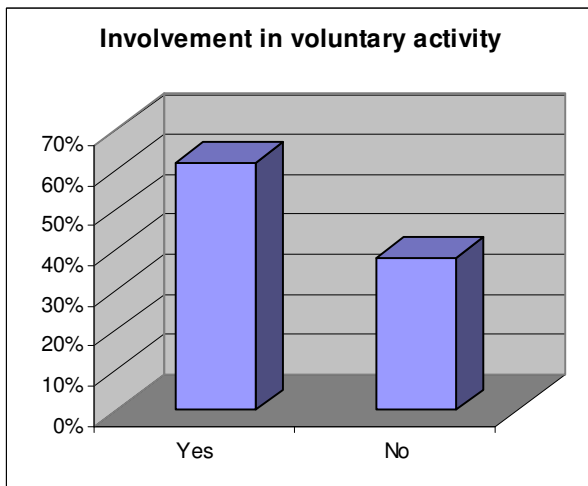
The majority (83%) rated their 'main centre' as 'good' to some extent. Of the towns in the South Hams, South Brent and Totnes are the two towns rated highest for their quality, both having 29% rate quality as 'very good', compared to Ivybridge where only 8% rated the quality as 'very good'.

**To what extent do you feel part of the community?**



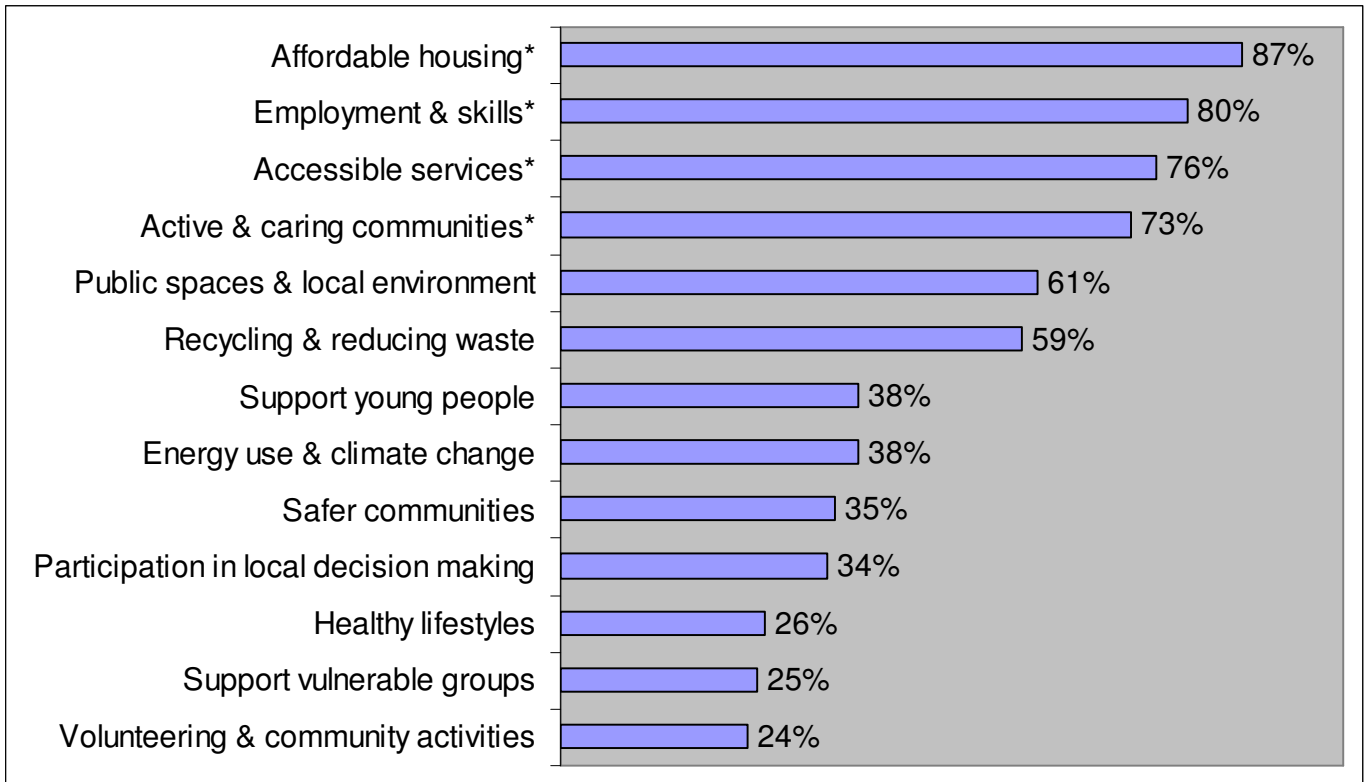
People under 25 were four times more likely to say that they do not feel part of the community at all and twice as likely to say they only feel part of the community 'a little'.

**Have you been involved in any voluntary activity that benefits your community?**



People over 55 were far more likely to say they had been involved in voluntary activities, with people under 35 being far less likely, particularly those under 25. When asked why not, people under 35 were far more likely to indicate that they were 'unaware of local opportunities', whilst people over 65 were much more likely to state 'ill-health' as the reason. Research shows that involvement in community activities has far reaching impacts beyond the initial projects on the ground, including improve cross generation understanding, increased civic pride and improved well-being.

When presented with the range of issues across the South Hams, most respondents thought all four of the original Community Strategy priority themes were important. There appear to be three distinct levels of support regarding the introduction of any new themes into the new Sustainable Community Strategy.



\* South Hams Community Strategy 2003 – 2006 Priority themes

In deciding the priority themes for the new South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy, it has been essential to take into account:

- Priorities and issues contained in local community plans and appraisals
- The outcomes of the various community consultation activities;
- The remit of the LSP 'to identify areas where working together across service and organisational boundaries has the potential to deliver greater benefit for the people of the South Hams';
- New government guidance on preparing Sustainable Community Strategies.

## **‘Affordable housing’ and ‘Employment and skills’**

It is clear that issues around ‘Affordable housing’ and ‘Employment and skills’ remain key community concerns. The LSP recognises that these two areas in particular, will require both ‘task and finish’ projects and long-term efforts. Specific actions must also be linked to the LDF, Housing and Prosperity Strategies, and to other partners’ strategies, for example:

- Supporting People Strategy - meeting the needs of older people and vulnerable young people;
- Skills Strategy for Devon & Cornwall; and the
- Environment Agency’s – ‘Promoting a greener business world’.

Specific projects during the life of this new Sustainable Community Strategy will include the strategic partners identifying assets - land and buildings - which may potentially be used as sites for affordable homes when no longer needed for their current use. The strategic partners are also looking at their purchasing procedures, and hope to identify areas where, within legal constraints, local and/or joint procurement can bring benefits to the South Hams economy.

**We all need to get involved in finding appropriate sites for new homes.**

*Insert affordable housing pictures*

**We all need to support our local shops and businesses; buying locally saves resources and keeps money circulating in our local area.**

*Insert Farmers Market picture and/or High Street pictures*

### **‘Accessible services’**

Transport opportunities also remain a key issue, particularly for young people. The Action Plan for this priority in the first Community Strategy focused on need assessment of key groups, in particular young people and those with disabilities. It also looked at access to services in the context of key community venues.

The South Devon Rural Transport Partnership undertook some valuable research that showed that a range of transport opportunities do exist; it was often access to the information about these opportunities that needed improvement. Specific projects during the life of this new Sustainable Community Strategy are likely to include a South Hams Shopmobility scheme, Wheels to Work scheme and additional transport information booklets.

It is not the intention of the new Sustainable Community Strategy to duplicate the work of the Devon Local Transport Plan - ‘Devon on the move’ 2006 -2011. This document can be found at [www.devon.gov.uk/transport](http://www.devon.gov.uk/transport) and is looking to address amongst things congestion, public transport, road safety issues and accessibility for those living on the coastal fringe of the district.

The LDF will play a major role in determining where homes and workspace can be provided in communities to minimise the use of private car use and maximise the potential use of public transport, promoting a move to sustainable communities.

**We all need to think about why and when we use our cars, and the alternatives available to us.**

*Insert community transport pictures*

### **‘Active and caring communities’**

The Action Plan linked to ‘Active and caring communities’ in the first Community Strategy concentrated around supporting the community-based planning process, providing training opportunities and exploring the use of community enterprises.

Good progress has been made with producing community plans, but there are still some communities which are yet to get involved in the process. Community-based planning groups now need support with technical advice, securing funding and, where appropriate, partnership building in order to take their projects forward. This support will come in many shapes and forms, from the various agencies involved in delivering services, to the voluntary and community sector itself. Networking already takes place to exchange ideas and good practice.

### **New theme: 'Community Vibrancy'**

It is proposed that a new theme 'Community vibrancy' can expand upon these two original themes, and explore ways we can work together to encourage greater involvement in community activities, including social enterprise and volunteering, especially by young people and where it contributes to healthier lifestyles for all.

**We all need to think about the contribution we can make to our communities, in order to make them happier and healthier places to live, work and play.**

### **New theme: 'Quality natural and built environment'**

The fact that we all agree that the quality of the South Hams environment is good, does not mean that we can afford to be complacent. Indeed, the consultation results show that 'Enhance and protect our public spaces and local environment' was the most popular response for a new priority theme.

The quality of the South Hams environment has far reaching impacts on the economy, in particular agricultural, marine and tourism industries, our health, our social and cultural well-being. Within this new theme, the LSP recognises the important role it has to play in limiting the future impact of and adapting to climate change and whilst promoting the responsible use of natural resources.

**We all need to think about the products we buy and the services we use, and the impacts these have on the South Hams and beyond.**

*Insert community / countryside pictures?*

## **The new priority theme areas**

The new South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy has a series of aims across 4 priority theme areas, which the LSP will work towards over the next 5 years. The theme areas are:

- Affordable homes
- Competitive local economy
- Community vibrancy
- Quality built and natural environment

## **Cross cutting themes**

However, the 4 priority theme areas above are not independent of one another. There are important links and opportunities to be realised between the themes and between the work of the agencies traditionally allied to one theme rather than another. Therefore 2 cross-cutting themes have been introduced, where the LSP is particularly looking to add value. These are:

- Social Inclusion – enabling access to services and facilities
- Climate Change – addressing the causes and impacts across the South Hams

While there is an impressive level of enthusiasm for achieving the aims of the strategy (outlined below) it is recognised that the timescale for significant improvement in some areas will be longer than others.

## **Measuring progress**

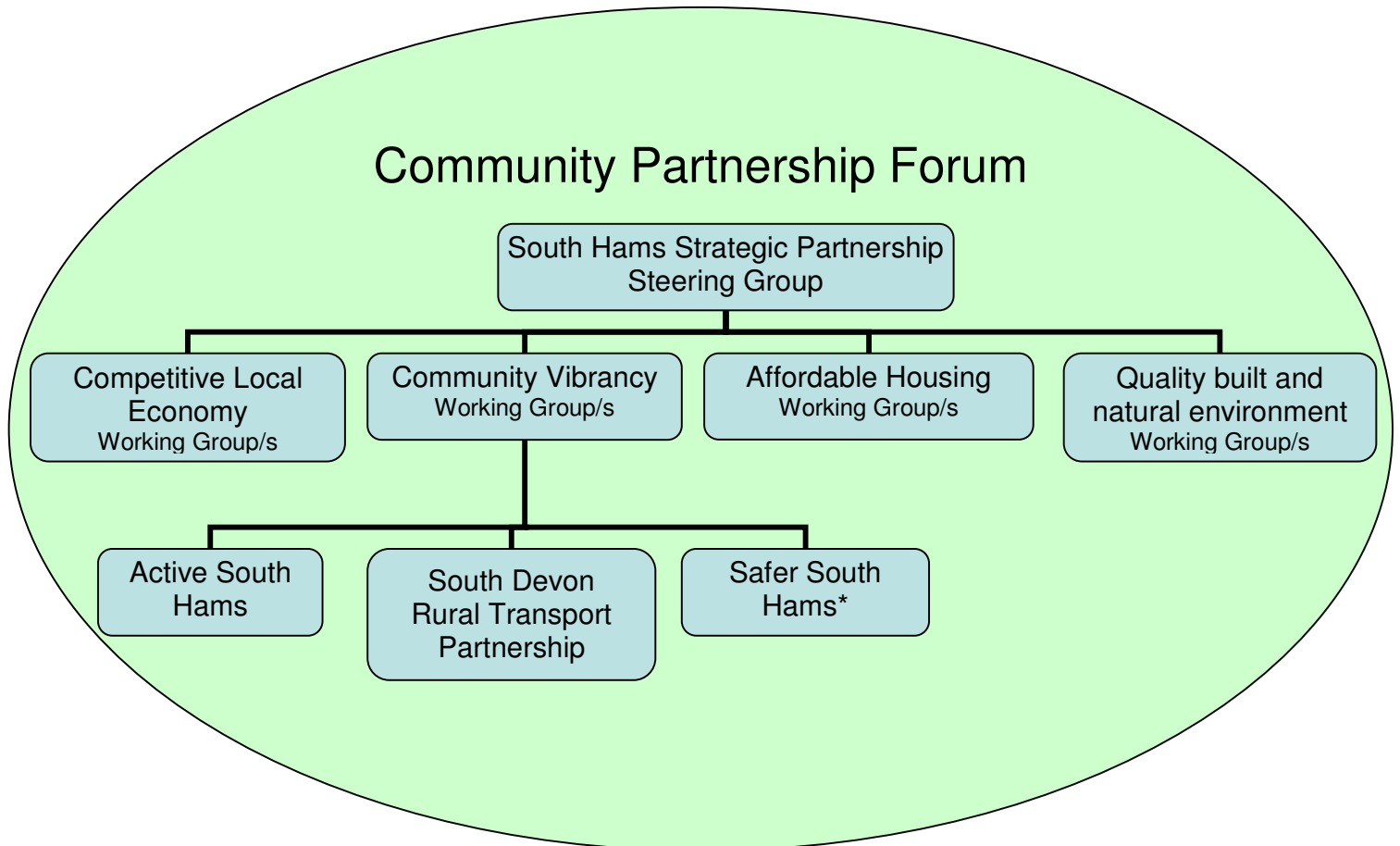
The progress of the Sustainable Community Strategy will be measured by how it is improving the quality of life across the South Hams. A set of Quality of Life indicators has been developed that measure a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues. Using these indicators, the LSP will be able to measure improvement over time. A 'State of the District' summary can be found at Appendix 2 for a current measure of quality of life in the South Hams.

As the partnership approach strengthens year on year and projects are completed on a 'task and finish' basis, the Action Plans and the supporting aims and priorities will need to be reviewed on a periodic basis.

The Action Plan at the Appendix 3 gives an indication of the SHSP priority projects over the next 1-3 years.

## Delivering the Strategy

The SHSP is establishing or supporting Working Groups reflecting the themes within this new Sustainable Community Strategy. These working groups will oversee the delivery of specific activities in the Action Plans and work towards improved links between the community-based planning groups and the community strategy priorities.



\* Currently part of the pilot 3 district 'South Devon & Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership'

The Sustainable Community Strategy is seeking to contribute to the viability of communities in the South Hams through the provision of affordable and well-designed housing that meets the needs of local people.

House prices in the South Hams have risen sharply in recently years. With the combination of lower than average wages and one of the highest percentages of second home ownership in the country, this has resulted in affordable housing remaining the most pressing community priority.

It is the elderly population which is growing fastest, so it is likely they will need housing close to other facilities and have homes designed to meet particular needs. It is also important to ensure the housing stock is kept in good repair, investment is maintained to minimise 'unfit' housing, and attention is given to addressing fuel poverty through innovative new design and refitting.

Despite the obvious housing difficulties faced by many residents, there is the understandable concern that building new houses could spoil the countryside that both local people value and visitors enjoy. However, some development is essential to keep communities balanced and overly restricting development can impact on the social and economic fabric of towns and villages. The LDF, in its role as a delivery tool, requires that at least 50% of all new housing should be on previously developed land, including the conversion of existing buildings. However, in many small communities, additional housing provision is likely to require some green field development.

The LSP recognises that good quality, appropriately located, affordable housing has a significant impact on the health and vitality of the community. The South Hams LDF is proposing the challenging target of 66% of housing on newly proposed rural green field sites be affordable. Of this, 33% to be social rented, 33% intermediate affordable (shared ownership or similar) and the remaining 33% open market. The Dartmoor National Park Authority LDF will also be setting challenging targets for the provision of affordable housing for local needs, with the focus on the re-use of previously developed land, where it does not harm historic, cultural heritage or biodiversity qualities.

By working together, partners aim to:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing for local people across the district to create balanced, viable communities;
- Assist a wide range of vulnerable residents to be able to live independently and ensure that housing, care and support is provided as a seamless service;
- Incorporate 'Secure by Design' issues into new developments and therefore reduce the amount or fear of crime as a result;
- Ensure that new housing follows sustainable design codes e.g. Eco-Homes, thereby limiting contribution to climate change, is relevant to the character of the area and minimises adverse impact on the local landscape and ecology.

The Sustainable Community Strategy is seeking to support sustainable local businesses and employment opportunities, promote the continued use of external funding streams, and address issues surrounding rural poverty, low wages, natural resource protection and environmental pollution.

The South Hams diverse economic base of micro-businesses operates in a heavily protected natural and built environment. This presents particular challenges relating to the ability to respond to external influences and promote sustainable economic growth. Average earnings in South Hams are well below the national average whilst average house prices are significantly higher than average; this presents problems of affordability for the district's workforce.

The demand for business premises is concentrated on the A38 corridor, the Plymouth and Torbay fringes, and the Totnes area. The supply of local development land and premises is limited. Where demand is not met, businesses are obliged to consider locations outside the district. This loss of investment and business growth negatively affects the district's economy.

The challenges facing the district are to achieve sustainable growth in a way that encourages indigenous businesses, promotes private investment, provides opportunities for those residents unable to travel any great distance, and reduces the reliance on private car use e.g. new live/work spaces. Opportunities exist for innovative and new businesses to develop around new technologies, the re-use of waste materials, and also community-led business approaches such as social enterprises and development trusts.

The LSP recognises that improvements across a range of issues are driven by greater levels of education and skills, and is seeking to ensure that a co-ordinated approach and improved understanding of needs delivers improvements among users and providers of education.

By working together, partners aim to:

- Create the conditions for new and innovative businesses to develop, such as access to start-up units and support to social enterprises;
- Encourage business practices that protect the environment, and promote the benefits for local business in managing their environmental impact, such as supporting the take-up of 'Green Tourism', local purchasing initiatives and the improved use of technology, thereby limiting contribution to climate change;
- Remove barriers to employment, such as improving transport options to work for young people and the provision of childcare;
- Develop links between employers and learning providers in order to increase availability of, and access to, higher level and vocational skills.

The Sustainable Community Strategy is seeking to improve access to local services, and to ensure that communities develop in such a way that people are proud of where they live and want to help others.

In an extensive district such as the South Hams, the availability of public transport is vital for ensuring that people have access to services, work and facilities, as well as being able to socialise and take part in the community. There is also a range of other voluntary and community sector based transport opportunities providing innovative and viable alternatives to the private car, such as community buses, voluntary car schemes and community car clubs.

The aim for the LSP is to enable all people to have access to a healthy lifestyle, including sport and leisure, culture and arts opportunities. The challenge the LSP faces is how to deliver, in a coordinated and effective way, choices for healthy lifestyles.

The LSP recognises that if the district is to develop in the way the community desires, it is important that there is effective communication between all sections of the community and service providers. It is important to increase active citizenship and build on the sense of pride in our communities. The LSP believes that social inclusion and community cohesion are essential for a vibrant community.

The LSP also recognises that the district will be facing challenges around the development of a new community at Sherford during the lifetime of this strategy. Significant progress had been made to date on developing the Master Plan for this community but it remains important for a range of agencies to continue to work together, to ensure that they realise the potential of a truly sustainable community.

By working together, partners aim to:

- Increase physical and electronic access to key services and advice, including health and housing issues, transport options and travel information, for all groups in society, particularly in isolated areas;
- Provide opportunities for, and encourage, walking, cycling, and other outdoor leisure and recreation, to increase levels of physical activity and improve health;
- Develop ways to engage effectively with all sections of our communities about concerns and successes, ensuring a regular two-way flow of information;
- Support opportunities for increasing community activity and volunteering in our communities, particularly amongst young people.

The Sustainable Community Strategy is seeking to ensure that the environment of the South Hams continues to make it a haven for wildlife, a highly desirable place to live, work and enjoy, and a key driver behind income sources for our businesses.

The LSP recognises that we need to manage our natural assets in a sustainable way. The issues of the natural environment focus on the condition of the land, soil, air and water in the district, which in turn affect bio-diversity – ‘our wealth of wildlife’. It is essential that the distribution and location of all new homes and employment sites are consistent with principles of sustainable development. This approach offers us the opportunity to embed the ethos of sustainable living within new and established communities.

Public spaces, everything from town parks, gardens and allotments to civic squares and play areas, offer a range of opportunities for communities to relax, exercise, take part in organised activities or just enjoy informal recreation. The LSP recognises that there are wider benefits around community involvement in the use and ownership of public spaces that include the ability to attract external funding to support a range of activities benefiting local communities.

The South Hams has a strong local identity generated by the unique buildings, structures and settlements. The LSP recognises that this built environment is valuable, not only to our heritage and culture, but also for tourism and economic prosperity.

The South Hams does not currently have any household waste disposal facilities in the district and, therefore, all waste is transported to facilities in adjacent districts. Not only is this costly in terms of money and carbon emissions, but it is also becoming increasingly difficult as facilities are losing capacity for accepting waste. However, the average amount of waste from each household continues to rise. This is a huge challenge.

Energy use also continues to rise across all sectors, household, commercial and industry – and the consequent carbon emissions have been shown to be related to climate change.

By working together, partners aim to:

- Promote the protection of and, wherever possible, enhance landscape and biodiversity, through sensitive land-use policy and practice;
- Encourage wider community use and ownership of public spaces, in particular where it contributes to healthy lifestyles and a reduction in the amount or fear of crime;
- Support activities seeking to enhance the distinctive built environment, especially where it contributes to economic and cultural well-being;
- Promote sustainable lifestyles to those living, working and visiting the South Hams, encouraging the efficient use of natural resources and thereby limit the South Hams contribution to climate change.

## **Key players**

This Sustainable Community Strategy has been produced by a partnership of organisations and agencies called the South Hams Local Strategic Partnership. With an inclusive approach to participation, the membership of the LSP is not fixed, with new partners becoming involved as the agenda for action develops. Therefore, the membership list below is not exhaustive, but gives a good indication of the wide range of organisations and agencies actively engaged in developing the South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **South Hams Strategic Partnership (Steering Group)**

The SHSP is a small group that seeks to co-ordinate the work of many of the multi-agency partnerships that exist in the South Hams and takes the lead in facilitating the projects that deliver the aims of this Sustainable Community Strategy. By working together in a clear and coordinated way, the SHSP will be able to secure resources and improvements for the South Hams. This role will continue to evolve as we look for innovative ways to deliver identified actions meeting established and emerging community priorities. Members of the current Steering Group includes:

South Hams District Council  
Devon County Council  
South Hams and West Devon Primary Care Trust  
Devon and Cornwall Police  
South Hams Council for Voluntary Service  
Business Sector representative: BT  
Skills Sector representative: South Devon College  
Housing Sector representative: Tor Homes  
Community Sector representative: Voluntary Sector Forum member  
Environment Sector representative: Environment Agency

### **Community Partnership Forum Members**

The wider Community Partnership Forum (CPF) brings together different agencies and organisations that support local communities and people across the South Hams. It meets twice a year and has representatives from over 200 public, private, community and voluntary organisations.

## Links with other strategies

As the LSP develops and organisations influence their own business plans and corporate aims, it is envisaged that plans for managing particular aspects or issues will be developed jointly. However, there are plans and strategies that already exist that will, in time, support or become integral to the South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy. These include:

South Hams Local Development Framework	Town and Parish Plans
Dartmoor National Park Authority LDF	Community Involvement Policy
Regional Spatial Strategy	Housing Strategy
Devon Community Strategy	Prosperity Strategy
Devon County Waste Local Plan	Public Space Strategy
Devon Local Transport Plan	Tourism Strategy
Safer South Hams Community Safety Strategy	Social Inclusion Strategy
'Creating a better place' (Environment Agency)	Climate Change Strategy
Skills Strategy for Devon & Cornwall	Local Health Delivery Plans
Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) Management Plan	Supporting People Strategy
South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan	Devon Children & Young People's Plan

## Appendix 1

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT POLICY: HELPING COMMUNITIES HELP THEMSELVES

#### Purpose and Definition

1. South Hams Strategic Partnership is committed to all its communities and wishes to work towards increasing their social, economic and environmental well-being in line with its vision and priorities. This policy statement describes how the Partnership's overall vision and priorities influence its working with its communities.
2. The purpose of this policy is to increase community participation in:
  - decision-making which reflects local people's priorities;
  - the development of services that aim to match people's needs, improve wellbeing and support communities.
3. What people perceive as their 'community' depends on a range of circumstances, including the geography of the area, the make-up of local community, senses of identity and belonging. People regard different areas as their community for certain issues, needs or services, thus 'community' is self-defining by the people who live and work in them.
4. For the purpose of this policy, community is defined as:
  - people in a geographical area – e.g. a district, a town and surrounding hinterland, a town or parish, a neighbourhood or street, etc.
  - people sharing a common interest or situation – e.g. conservation, health, pollution, youth issues, recycling, arts & heritage, business development, users of particular services, disability action, socially excluded, voluntary sector partnership, etc.

#### SHSP Vision and Priorities

5. The South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy, under-pinned by extensive and continuous consultation with agencies and stakeholders across the private, public, voluntary and community sectors, has established an overall vision to:

**Improve the well-being of the people of the South Hams in a sustainable way,**  
through 4 key priority themes:

- affordable housing;
- competitive local economy;
- community vibrancy
- quality built and natural environment.

## Essential requirements of Community Involvement

6. Before embarking upon any involvement exercise, the following basic essentials need to be satisfied to ensure that the activity is relevant to local people and is performed in a manner that will aid the decision making process:
- there must be a real opportunity for people to influence and change decisions and services, unless the explicit purpose is purely information sharing, in order to avoid raising false expectations;
  - there must be adequate resources, both for the involvement activities and for any outcomes;
  - partners should coordinate activities to avoid duplication and ‘consultation fatigue’;
  - communities need to be involved sooner rather than later;
  - those who take part must be as representative as possible of the communities the involvement is targeting;
  - the process must be conducted openly and honestly;
  - the views expressed by communities must be taken into account when decisions are made, along with all other relevant considerations;
  - those decisions must be communicated back to the people who took part in the process.
7. Working together, service providers will provide the opportunity for community involvement through a range of activities. These activities will vary depending on the type of engagement needed, as highlighted in the ‘Ladder of Participation’ below.

Ladder of participation	↑		Illustrative examples:	
	Highest	<p><b>Enabling</b> communities to participate and achieve their goals in a sustainable way.</p>	<p>Provision of advice, support, funding, training and other capacity building.</p>	
		<p><b>Involving</b> local people, groups and partners in actions to improve quality of life.</p>	<p>Community-based planning activities in towns and parishes; supporting networks.</p>	
		<p><b>Consulting</b> communities before important decisions affecting them are made.</p>	<p>Sounding board questionnaires and satisfaction surveys; discussion groups and forums.</p>	
Lowest	↓	<p><b>Informing</b> communities about the service provider’s activities and encouraging support.</p>	<p>Partners &amp; partnership newsletters and websites; media releases; performance plans.</p>	

## **Aims of Community Involvement**

8. In support of its responsibility to prepare a community strategy for promoting and improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development, the South Hams Strategic Partnership will:
  - work with and support communities to help define their needs and priorities and assist in the development and/or review of community-based plans to improve quality of life;
  - encourage communities to be self-sufficient, with local ownership of ideas and outcomes, and where appropriate, encourage organisations and groups to work together to achieve locally agreed common aims;
  - pay full regard to these community-based plans when reviewing its overall priorities and its assets, developing policy and allocating its capital and revenue budgets;
  - endeavour to involve communities in developing, implementing and reviewing strategies;
  - contribute towards the promotion and maintenance of a vibrant, safe and prosperous place for people to live, work and play.
  
9. By working with its communities and other organisations, the South Hams Strategic Partnership will:
  - support the development of community regeneration, including through the provision of advice, support and potentially funding where the project is in line with partners priorities and resources allow;
  - promote equality of opportunity, act to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good community relations;
  - improve the public's understanding, support and involvement in the partners and partnership activities.

## Working as a Partnership

10. The achievement of sustainable development and sustainable communities cannot be delivered by any one partner in isolation. Rather it is dependent on all partners, service providers, stakeholders and communities working together and taking account of the affects of their activities so that the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is not compromised.
11. South Hams Strategic Partnership is committed to local autonomy and wishes decision-making on matters affecting people's quality of life to take place at the most local or appropriate level. One of the key principles of community-based planning is that of active community participation. Town and parish councils are well placed to help community voices to be heard, and support project delivery at the local level.
12. In order to effectively respond to community needs and priorities, the South Hams Strategic Partnership:
  - **recognises its leadership role** as the 'partnership of partnerships' and the vital importance of working with other agencies, organisations and the community itself – this is to make best use of overall resources, harness knowledge and skills, fill gaps and avoid duplication of activity;
  - **respects the contribution which others can make** – e.g. Town and Parish Councils, schools and colleges, local businesses, the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS); and is a signatory of The Compact for Devon;
  - will **consult its partners** to assess who is best placed to provide assistance when it is required;
  - will encourage key organisations and stakeholders in local communities to **work together** to avoid an undue reliance on individual agencies;
  - when considering whether it can provide support for a particular project, will consider the extent to which it accords with the **partnership priorities**; and when it is unable to offer support for a particular project, make clear the reasons why;
  - will take on an **advocacy role** on behalf of the South Hams communities as a whole, at county, regional and national level, when appropriate.

## **Delivery**

13. The South Hams Strategic Partnership will work to implement the Community Involvement Policy in order to provide for:
  - decision-making which reflects local people's priorities;
  - the development of services that aim to match people's needs, improve wellbeing and support communities.
  
14. The Community Involvement Policy is practically implemented and/or guides the following strategies and plans:
  - South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy 2006 – 2011
  - Local Development Frameworks (the land use planning documents)
  - Community-based plans (for towns and parishes)
  - Devon Community Strategy
  - Safer South Hams: Community Safety Strategy
  - Active South Hams Action Plan
  - Other local health delivery plans
  - South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan
  - Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) Management Plan
  - Devon Supporting People Strategy
  - Devon Children & Young People's Plan
  - Devon Local Transport Plan
  - Skills Strategy for Devon & Cornwall
  - Environment Agency's – 'Promoting a greener business world'

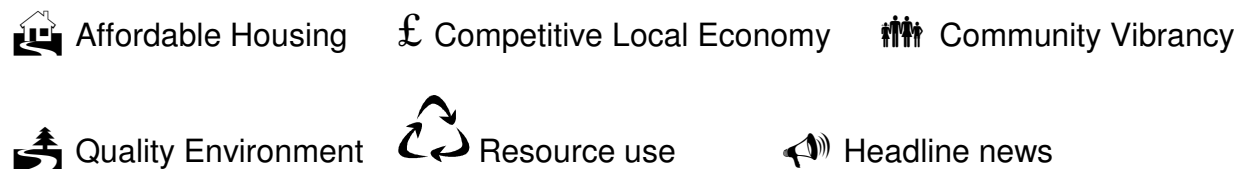
## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

15. Activities for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of community involvement should include:
  - Those undertaking specific community involvement activities should 'design in' monitoring methods at the planning stage, and evaluate effectiveness of the specific involvement activity;
  - The effectiveness of this policy and the adequacy of the support given to local community planning groups should be subject to on-going monitoring by the South Hams Strategic Partnership. The 'Bridging Guide', community planning database and partners joint community planning responses will be amongst some of the tools used of achieve this.



## ‘State of the District’ Summary

### Using a selection of local quality of life indicators

## Key to symbols:



Information provided through the Audit Commission or South Hams District Council local surveys.  
 Some ‘baseline’ data relates to 2003/04, others to 2004/05 due to differences in collection / analysis methods.  
 Where a trend is available from previous information collected, this is shown by ↑ ↓ ⇄.

Ref	Quality of Life description	‘Baseline’	2006	2007	2008
	Number of affordable dwellings completed.	134 ↑			
	a) Average house price b) Average wage House price to wage ratio	a) £248,982 b) £16,952 15:1			
£	The percentage of the working-age population that is in employment.	78.1% ↓			
£	a) The total number of VAT registered businesses in the area at the end of the year; b) The percentage change in the number of VAT registered businesses.	a) 3955 ↓ b) 0.1% ↓			
£	The percentage of residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years, job prospects have got better or stayed the same.	61.2% ↑			

Ref	Quality of Life description	'Baseline'	2006	2007	2008
	The percentage of people surveyed who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area.	21.9%			
	The percentage of residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years, community activities have got better or stayed the same.	94.1% ↑			
	The percentage of residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years: a) public transport has got better or stayed the same; and b) the level of traffic congestion has got better or stayed the same.	a) 75.5% ↑ b) 36.4% ↑			
	The percentage of people surveyed who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.	63.7%			
	The percentage of residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years, parks and open spaces have got better or stayed the same.	93.4% ↑			
	The percentage of river length assessed as: a) good biological quality; and b) good chemical quality.	a) 85.6% ↓ b) 98.7 ↓			
	a) Kg of household waste per head collected; b) the proportion recycled; and c) the proportion composted.	a) 408.2 ↓ b) 20.5% ↑ c) 5%			
	Average annual domestic consumption of: a) gas; and b) electricity (kWh).	a) 17618 ↑ b) 5504 ↓			
	Daily domestic water use (per capita consumption, litres).	160			
	The percentage of the population over 60 who live in households that are income deprived.	10.5%			
	The percentage of children that live in families that are income deprived.	12.1%			
	Election turnout.	44.7% ↑ (European)			

Additional indicators to show the benefit of partnership working:

Amount of funding levered into the district through partnership delivery of the action plan.  
Efficiencies made through partnership delivery of the action plan.

## Appendix 3

### Initial Action Plan 2006 - 2008

The implementation of this action plan is dependent on wide ownership in the voluntary and community sector, public and private sector and on the identified resources being maintained.

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Output/Outcome Achieved</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	Identify appropriate land to bring forward for housing development targeted at local people/essential workers.	Analysis of SHSP partners assets.	SHDC	Working Group time	Sept 2006	Sept 2007	
		Development of, and sign-up to protocol.	Devon Strategic Housing Group	Working Group time	Sept 2006	Sept 2007	
	Raise awareness of Affordable Housing issues and opportunities.	Joint lobbying of county, regional and national bodies relating to district's problems and possible solutions.	SHDC	Officer time	Sept 2006	On-going activity	
		Use of SHSP partners websites and newsletters.	SHSP	LSP Support Officer time and partners communication methods	Sept 2006	On-going activity	

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Output/Outcome Achieved</b>
<b>Competitive Local Economy</b>	Create the conditions for new and innovative businesses to develop.	Support Local Development Framework processes	SHDC DNPA	Officer time	Sept 2006	On-going activity	
		Support appropriate community-based planning groups projects.	SHSP	LSP Support Officer time and community planning database.	Sept 2006	On-going activity	
	Encourage business practices that protect the natural environment.	Promote findings of 'Greening Employment Sites' study.	SHDC	Officer time	Sept 2006	March 2007	
		SHSP partners to investigate joint / local procurement activities.	SHDC	Working Group time	Sept 2006	March 2007	
		SHSP to promote local buying amongst employees.	SHSP	LSP Support Officer time and partners communication methods	Sept 2006	On-going activity	

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Output/Outcome Achieved</b>
<b>Community Vibrancy</b>	Increase access to key services and information particularly in isolated areas and to key groups.	Support a range of community-led rural transport projects	SDRTP	Officer time Volunteer time  External funding	Sept 2006	March 2008	
		Encourage community-based planning groups to form joined-up transport projects.	Towns Forum	Officer time Volunteer time  External funding	Sept 2006	March 2008	
	Provide opportunities for, and encourage, physical activity and improved health.	SHSP partners to provide consistent and timely health-related messages to employees, and the public.	Active South Hams	Working Group time and partners communication methods	Sept 2006	March 2008	
		SHSP partners to offer workplace opportunities for physical activity, smoking cessation, quality meals, stress reduction.	SHSP	Officer time	Sept 2006	On-going activity	
		Promote healthy exercise initiatives, such as Health Walks.	Active South Hams	Working Group time  External funding	Sept 2006	March 2007	

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Output/Outcome Achieved</b>
<b>Community Vibrancy cont</b>	Engage effectively with all sections of the community, ensuring regular two-way flow of information	Encouraging participation by those parishes not yet covered by community-based planning activities.	Parishes / communities to take lead.	Officer time Community Planning toolkits External funding	Sept 2006	On-going activity	
		Review results of all new community-based planning activity.	SHSP	LSP Support Officer time	Sept 2006	On-going activity	
		Development of community planning database.	'LSP chairs'	LSP Support Officer time External funding	Jan 2007	Dec 2008	
		Support a range of networking activities, including 'refreshing' the CPF.	SHSP	LSP Support Officer time.	Sept 2006	On-going activity	
		SHSP website and newsletter.	SHSP	LSP Support Officer time.	Sept 2006	On-going activity	
	Support opportunities for increasing community activity and volunteering.	SHSP partners to encourage employee volunteering opportunities.	SHSP / CVS	Officer time and partners communication methods	Jan 2007	March 2008	

<b>Strategic Objective</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Output/Outcome Achieved</b>
<b>Quality Environment</b>	Protect and, wherever possible, enhance landscape and biodiversity.	Review community-based planning inside and outside of DNPA / AONB areas with view to identifying potential community-led environmental projects.	Environment South Hams	Officer time  Community planning database  External funding	Sept 2006	March 2008	
	Promote sustainable lifestyles to those living, working and visiting the South Hams, encouraging the efficient use of natural resources.	Support World Environment Day and similar public awareness raising events.	SHSP	Officer time and partners communication methods  SHSG / volunteer time.	Sept 2006	On-going	
		SHSP partners to sign-up to Devon Climate Change Declaration and demonstrate action.	Partners own actions to show leadership.	Officer time	Sept 2006	On-going	
		Offer advice and support to ensure sustainability is embedded in this Action Plan.	SHSG	Volunteer time.	Sept 2006	On-going	

A spare page I cant get rid of!