

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SOUTH HAMS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP HELD
AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON MONDAY, 12 MARCH 2007**

Present: Ruth Bagley – Chief Executive, SHDC (Chair)
Matt Bell – Devon County Council (for Roger Grainger)
Steve Brown – South Hams and West Devon PCT
Hugh McCahill – South Hams VSF
Paul Sadler – Environment Agency
Tony Steer – Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
Pete Tansey – Business Representative
Laura Whitehead – South Hams CVS
Cllr Richard Yonge – Leader, SHDC

Others also present and participating (non-voting):

Kay Dawson – South Hams District Council
Carl Farrell - Groundwork
Mary Ridgeway – Devon Strategic Housing Group
Alan Robinson – South Hams District Council

Apologies: Cllr Julian Brazil – Devon County Council
Cllr Roger Croad – Devon County Council
Adele Dawson – South Devon College
Roger Grainger – Devon County Council
Howard Toplis – Chief Executive, Tor Homes
Cllr Ann Ward – South Hams District Council

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting two new members; Pete Tansey the Business Sector Representative and Paul Sadler from the Environment Agency.

2. Minutes of meeting 5 December 2006 – any matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Presentation by Carl Farrell, Senior Business Advisor, Groundwork – ‘The benefits for organisations in improving their environmental management systems’

The Partnership received a presentation on the benefits for organisations in improving their environmental management systems. In beginning to look at environmental management systems Carl defined what was meant by the environment highlighting how human activities impact on the environment, i.e. global warming, ozone depletion, reduction of bio-diversity, population increase and economic growth. Environmental Management Systems made good business sense and benefits were highlighted as follows:-

- increased revenues through reduced costs;
- consolidated market position;
- raised barriers for competitors;
- opened up new markets;
- fostered better relationships;
- better control of environmental liabilities;
- reduced liabilities passed through to customers;
- reduced regulatory burden;
- environment considered in strategy;
- business excellence – increase investment appeal.

Typical activities of Environmental Management included issues such as pollution prevention and risk management, waste control and minimisation, reducing resource consumption and training and awareness raising.

Environmental Management Systems (EMS) had a number of international standards to adhere to such as the ISO14001 which established a standard approach and terminology. Achieving ISO14001 certification involved a six phased approach. Phase one was highlighted as gaining and maintaining a commitment and establishing a baseline assessment.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was a tool for estimating the environmental consequences of decisions which could be incorporated into the planning process. SEA did not make the decision's, it provided information for the decision-maker to allow them to better consider the environmental consequences of their plans and programmes. SEA actions were to baseline, consult, integrate findings into the plan and then finally monitor.

In conclusion, Carl summarised as follows:-

- plan actions;
- set up an environmental focus group;
- put it into action;
- work in partnership;
- think about a fresh pair of eyes looking at your activities;
- share best practices;
- do not re-invent the wheel;
- measure and manage;
- seek third party verification.

During discussion on the presentation, reference was made to the potential for businesses to exploit the environmental issues especially in the process for gaining potential funding, the increasing awareness amongst businesses of the EMS and the savings which could be made. Furthermore, it was felt that the organisations in the partnership should promote the EMS not only within their own organisations but also to other businesses.

4. **Terms of Reference of the Group and nominations for Chair/Vice-Chair**

The Partnership considered the draft Terms of Reference for the SHSP. In doing so it was suggested that a further housing sector representative be voted onto the partnership. However, it was felt that currently one representative was sufficient and that the Tor Homes rep should send a substitute representative in the event that he/she was unable to attend.

In relation to how Local strategic Partnerships (LSPs) fed into the Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP), it was noted that currently the link was unclear. However the DSP was evolving into a more coherent body especially in light of the development of the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The DSP should share issues with district LSP's but not enforce them. It was **AGREED** that the issue of how the DSP and the LSP linked would be readdressed in 9 months. Laura Whitehead, the CVS representative, informed that she was currently doing a mapping exercise on all partnerships in Devon and would be grateful if organisations could forward any relevant information.

In conclusion, Members **AGREED** the new Terms of Reference.

In relation to the nomination for chair and vice chair, Ruth Bagley informed the Partnership that she would be leaving the Council at the end of May 2007 and therefore this would be her last meeting as chairman. Ruth noted that the government's white paper had suggested that the chairman of LSP's be the Leader of Council. However, Councillors at South Hams did not wish to infer ownership through the position of chairman. A suggested way forward, assuming no one around the table wanted to nominate themselves as chairman, was to secure an independent chairman. This would ensure the LSP had an objective chair which gave the Partners equal footing. It was therefore **AGREED** that a job description for the chairman be drawn up in order for it to be discussed at the next meeting.

In terms of the Vice-Chairman, it was **AGREED** that the Leader of Council be appointed.

5. **Progress Update on Actions Agreed**

Consideration was given to a paper which detailed actions agreed at previous meetings. There were 14 actions which were yet to be confirmed, of which the following points were highlighted:-

- a) providing examples of successful 'green initiative' within partner organisations. It was noted that examples had been submitted from the Police, Environment Agency and the District Council's Green Team. Alan Robinson noted that he would circulate the Council's draft Climate Change Action Plan for comments;
- b) making use of the webpage. It had been noted that the current webpage was not easily accessible and required improved links for navigation to and around the website. **ACTION** – Kay Dawson and Laura Whitehead;

- c) the importance of transport for young people was emphasised as an action in need of progression;
- d) the importance of partners adopting the District's new Sustainable Community Strategy 2006-2011;
- e) the need to progress social inclusion actions, particularly the audit of partner activities. Alan Robinson agreed to circulate the Social Inclusion documentation.

6. Progress on the Community Strategy themes

a) Environment South Hams

A working group report was considered which identified three key progress updates; community environmental project advisory support package of which the on-line community planning database was highlighted, promotion of environmental good practice through the World Environmental Day Campaign and good practice advice the working group could share with the Partnership.

The Partnership was satisfied with the progress made and under actions recommended a Member commented on the idea of "leave days" for staff in order that they were able to work on environmental projects as part of World Environment Day. Furthermore, it was noted that 'Green Messages' should be placed on partner websites to flag up issues and suggestions.

In relation to good practice, the following points were made:-

1. centralising departmental waste bins in order that staff consider where their rubbish is going, i.e. recycling bins;
2. the use of audio conferencing to cut the use of car emissions;
3. the use of Climate Change Action Plan to address issues identified through Carbon foot-printing.

b) Competitive Local Economy

In discussion on the circulated paper, attention was drawn to the provision of five new light industrial units at Dartmouth and the 'greening' of industrial estates.

ACTIONS AGREED

To receive a progress report on the following two projects:-

- creating conditions for new and innovative businesses to develop;
- encouraging small business practices that protect the natural environment: Greening Totnes Employment Industrial Estate.

c) Community Vibrancy

i. South Devon Rural Transport Partnership

As summarised in the working group report, it was noted that the three year project was unable to continue as it stood and had therefore come to an end. However, it was highlighted that the South Hams Shopmobility project had become a separate entity and would be on going.

ACTION AGREED

- That a small group (Roger Grainger, Kay Dawson, Matthew Bell and Lynn Thornton (Devon Rural Transport Partnership)) were to review the outstanding project areas on behalf of SHSP and explore potential sources of ongoing support/facilitation capacity.

ii. South Hams Rural Volunteer Centre and CVS

Laura informed the Partnership that the Volunteer Centre project had been progressing well and was trying to match volunteers with groups. Rural volunteering was being addressed with parish councils being approached to look at community issues in the village. Employee volunteering was also to be addressed.

iii. Active South Hams

Highlighted from the report was the Healthy Walks initiative. The outcome had been successful but funding had become an issue in need of addressing. It was requested that further details on the level of funding needed be brought to a future meeting.

It was also noted that the Leisure Youth Nights had received positive feedback.

ACTION AGREED

- The ongoing review of funding for projects.

iv. Community Planning

The notes of the recent MCTi Town Chairs meeting were circulated, with updates on key projects in each of the 4 towns. It was noted that there had been an improved relationship with the town and parish councils and these community based planning groups.

Matt Bell also wished to thank the Partnership for its financial contribution towards the Community Planning Database system which was on track for implementation by September / October 2007.

ACTIONS AGREED

- Partners to review progress made by community planning groups and identify if / where they could link to the SHSP / working group activities.

v. Awareness Raising

During discussion on the circulated paper, Members attention was drawn to the issues for the SHSP to consider. In relation to partner venues to host the next Community Partnership Forum, it was noted that none had suitable meeting rooms large enough to accommodate the CPF.

ACTION AGREED

- To forward any suitable articles for the summer 2007 newsletter to Kay Dawson by the end of May 2007.

d) Affordable Housing

During discussion of the circulated paper, the following points were highlighted:-

- the inspector's report in relation to the Sherford Area Action Plan which it was anticipated would be received by May / June 2007;
- the Tor Homes' partnership with Devon and Cornwall Housing Association;
- work to be undertaken through the LAA, specifically noting key workers;
- addressing sustainability criteria to gain consistency across Devon especially in terms of which villages satisfy the sustainable housing criteria.

7. Updates

a) Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

The newly formed partnership had now met on a number of occasions and progress was being made, especially in terms of management systems and budgets. However, there was concern in relation to the over-centralisation of funding by the SDP.

b) PCT situation

The Partnership was informed that there was now a top tier structure in place although a number of vacancies were yet to be filled.

c) Devon Compact

Progress was being made in relation to the Compact as was signified during the successful Devon Compact event held prior to the meeting. At the event, attended by 40 staff from SHSP partners, issues such as outcomes and recording successes were discussed.

d) Impact of Olympic 2012 funding

A letter of concern regarding the loss of local grassroots level lottery funding in the South West due to the 2012 London Olympics had been sent to DCMS. In response a letter had been received which indicated a reluctance to alter this position.

8. Possible Future Agenda Items

- Standard update items;
- Election of the Chairman;
- Sharing contact information exchange;
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health White paper themes;
- Invite the Volunteer Centre Coordinator to address the impact on the project on South Hams communities.

9. Next meeting

Members confirmed the following meeting dates and times:-

- 11 June 2007 at **2pm**;
- 17 September 2007 at **2pm**;
- 3 December 2007 at **2pm**.

10. Vote of thanks

The Partnership wished to extend its thanks to Ruth for all her work on the SHSP and wished her all the best for the future.

(meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.50 pm)