

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SOUTH HAMS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP HELD
AT DARTINGTON HALL, TOTNES ON MONDAY 14 JUNE 2010**

PRESENT:

Vaughan Lindsay – Dartington Hall Trust (SHSP Chair)
Alan Robinson – South Hams District Council
Cllr Anne Ward – South Hams District Council
Jill Davies – South Hams Community and Voluntary Services
Cllr John Binns – Kingsbridge Town Council
Lesley Hughes – Ivybridge Town Council
Cllr Tony Whitty – Totnes Town Council
Tina Henry – NHS Devon
Supt Sarah Sharpe – Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Jo Rumble – Dartmoor National Park Authority
Cllr Roger Croad – Devon County Council
Paul Sadler – Environment Agency
Ali Eastland – Devon County Council (for Sonia Burgess)
Adele Dawson – South Devon College
Jo Doney – South Hams District Council (note taker)
Amanda Harvey – South Hams District Council
Kerry Booth – West Devon Borough Council

1. APOLOGIES

Howard Toplis – Tor Homes
Cllr Debbie Morris – Dartmouth Town Council
Peter Tansey – Business representative
Emma Handley – Voluntary Sector Forum representative
David Shephard – Federation of Small Businesses
Cllr John Tucker – South Hams District Council (SHSP Vice Chair)
Cllr Julian Brazil – Devon County Council

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. INFORMATION SHARING – PARTNER UPDATES

Representatives presented their update reports (as previously circulated). Partner Updates from Totnes Town Council and South Devon College were also circulated at the meeting.

- **Devon & Cornwall Constabulary** – Supt Sharpe reiterated her previous request to representatives to make their organisations aware of the Confidence Agenda and to communicate that the South Hams was a safe place to live as the fear of crime was disproportionate to the reality.
- **NHS Devon** – Representatives were informed that the Rural Health Strategy was out for consultation. A definition of a rural area was considered to be a population of less than 10,000.

- **South Hams District Council** – Representatives were informed of the progress with shared services and budget pressures facing the Council. Progress on delivering the South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plan 2009-2011 was also noted.
- **Devon County Council** – Representatives were informed that the Council's Environment Economy and Culture Scrutiny Committee had set up a task group to review lessons that could be learned from the 2008/09 and 2009/10 winters. Further, the Council was working with schools to lobby Government to review the current funding regime which currently disadvantaged Devon children to the tune of £393 per pupil.

It was raised by a representative that local schools who had applied to become academies could have a significant impact on the funding available to Local Education Authorities (LEAs).

Action: It was suggested that a letter could be sent to local MPs and Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools, on behalf of the Partnership regarding both the inequity of funding per pupil and the impact of academies on available funding to LEAs.

- **Dartmoor National Park Authority** – Representatives were informed of Development Management & Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD) consultation events.
- **Totnes Town Council** – Concerns were raised about the consequences of the withdrawal of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the associated housing targets and the anticipated reduction in HCA funding and where this left the DPD and affordable housing provision. In response, Alan Robinson stated that there was still a need for affordable housing regardless of the withdrawal of the RSS quota. Therefore, South Hams District Council would continue to progress DPD sites and it was still hoped that the area DPDs would be examined in the autumn.

Concerns were also raised about car parking spreading out of the town since the introduction of residential parking permits and in some streets it had been impossible for emergency services and refuse vehicles to gain access. It was discussed that Devon County Council (DCC) was responsible for on street parking, and that the pay and display facilities were a means to manage traffic, and not specifically a revenue raiser. It was noted that the local business community had voiced their concerns about the permits and the introduction of pay and display facilities in Fore Street, Totnes, and yet this scheme had still gone ahead. It was discussed that there had been a lack of consultation with local communities.

Action: Cllr Croad agreed to forward residents' concerns for the next meeting of the South Hams Highways and Traffic Orders Committee meeting to be held at Follaton House on 30 July 2010.

- **South Devon College** – Adele Dawson highlighted that there would be a move away from 'Train to Gain' to apprenticeships and that they were looking for apprenticeship opportunities.

4. **PRESENTATIONS:**

'TRANSITION STREETS' – TOTNES AS A LOW CARBON COMMUNITY

Fiona Ward and Ruth Robinson gave a presentation on Transition Streets, a project within the overarching Transition Town concept. A Transition Town was conceived when a group of individuals came together motivated by the shared concern of how their community could respond to the challenges of peak oil and climate change and adopt the Transition Town model. This consisted of engaging with a significant proportion of the people in their community to kick start Transition Initiatives. The objective of the initiatives was to increase the community's resilience to a future reduction in the availability of oil and gas, and additionally to reduce its local carbon emissions. Totnes was the UK's first Transition Town.

Transition Streets was awarded a grant of £625,000 for an initiative whereby at least six residents registered as a group and commenced energy efficiency measures within their homes, which then made them eligible for such assistance as subsidised solar-PV systems. To date, 18 groups of neighbours had engaged with the project across Totnes and Dartington, from a diverse range of income groups and building types. The project also included solar-PV panels and loft insulation for the Civic Hall in Totnes.

It was suggested that closer links with colleges should be established as the installation of renewables such as solar-PV was currently a specialist area and would necessitate that apprentices would now need training for the skills required for the future. There would also be a requirement for upskilling existing workers to meet the needs of this growing area.

The Partnership was informed that a survey of 300 residents had shown that 57% of them were aware of the Transition Town Totnes project and felt it was important to them, and a third had actively engaged in it.

Cllr Tony Whitty wished to thank both Fiona and Ruth for this tremendous project and for the time and effort they had expended on raising the profile and credibility of the Transition brand, thereby demonstrating an excellent example of what a community could achieve for itself.

'QUALITY ENVIRONMENT' SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME, ENVIRONMENT SOUTH HAMS AND DEVON FUTURES UPDATE

Paul Sadler gave a presentation on the environment theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy and how it connects with the work of Devon Futures, a sub group of the Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP).

He highlighted that green infrastructure was a key part of the theme and was at the forefront of current thinking. It was about integrating natural pathways with manmade connections which had numerous benefits, including encouraging healthy lifestyles by creating safe pathways for walking and cycling.

Devon Futures had been formed to consider future trends and their potential impact on Devon. At a conference held by the Group, some young people were invited to attend and give their views. They responded by highlighting that they would be living with whatever decisions and actions were taken now and the very clear message they gave the group was 'think before you do anything' and for community leaders and decision makers to be thoroughly informed about issues before they took action.

Some of these future trends were the impact of climate change e.g. rising sea levels, heat waves and more frequent flooding, but also an increasingly ageing population where for many areas by 2020 those aged 50 to 85 would be the dominant group but with less carer support available. A picture of a 'perfect storm' was emerging, that of increased demand for food, energy and water from growing global populations at a time when energy supplies such as oil and gas might diminish with potentially more blackouts in the UK due to the national grid failing to meet demand. The demand for food and water could also outstrip supply and future populations would be grappling with these issues whilst at the same time trying to adapt to the impact of climate change.

5. **PROPOSED MERGER OF SOUTH HAMS AND WEST DEVON'S LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (LSPs)**

Alan Robinson emphasised to representatives that as a result of budgetary pressures and rapid policy changes introduced by the coalition government, current priorities would have to be reviewed. He noted that the DSP was being reviewed and it was proposed that South Hams and West Devon LSPs be merged due to the commonality of many of their strategic priorities. However, the challenge of such a merger would be to retain an overarching strategic focus, but not at the expense of losing the current connection with the respective local communities. If this proposal was supported in principle, then it was envisaged that a new action plan for a joint Sustainable Community Strategy would be prepared for March/April 2011.

Alan then sought feedback from representatives regarding this proposal with a view to having a discussion at the meeting on 13 September 2010 on the governance aspect and how Partners would assist with priority setting for the newly merged LSP:

Some of the views expressed were:

- issues of retaining accountability;
- the geographical distance;
- that it would be very important to get the representation on the LSP right;
- concern at potential loss of local connectivity;
- concern that town councils would be marginalised in the merger;
- concern at how communities would feed into priorities;
- the opportunity presented to form local sub groups;
- concern that the 'local' element of the LSP would be lost and that there would be little strategic differentiation from the new LSP and the Devon LSP; and
- acknowledgement that there would be some efficiency savings.

Alan emphasised that the Partnership had to be smarter about disseminating information on the website and that the new Partnership could benefit from local delivery groups. It was discussed that lessons could be learned from other partnerships that had merged and that an 'away day' could be scheduled to discuss all the above issues.

6. SOUTH HAMS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 – 2011

Alan Robinson stated that the draft housing strategy was an interim strategy prior to a joint strategy being formulated with West Devon Borough Council. He stated that partners were welcome to input into the strategy, though the two councils would be consulting more actively for the Joint Strategy.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (All at 2.00 pm)

Monday 13 September – The Watermark, Ivybridge

Monday 13 December – Dartmoor National Park Offices, Parke, Bovey Tracey

ACTIONS ARISING LIST

Letter	Re Inequity of educational funding for Devon pupils - Letter to be written to local MPs and Nick Gibb on behalf of SHSP	Ali Eastland / Amanda Harvey/DCC Representative
Concerns	Cllr Croad to relay concern of Totnes residents re permits and Pay and Display facilities in the Town at the South Hams Highways and Traffic Orders Committee meeting at Follaton House on 30 July 2010	Cllr R Croad
Future Agenda Item	Governance and Priorities for a Merged LSP	Alan Robinson / Amanda Harvey