

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SOUTH HAMS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP  
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE ON MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**PRESENT:**

Vaughan Lindsay – Dartington Hall Trust (SHSP Chair)  
Alan Robinson – South Hams District Council  
Cllr Anne Ward – South Hams District Council  
Kate Cantwell – Devon County Council (for Roger Grainger)  
Steve Maddison – Environment Agency (for Paul Sadler)  
Howard Toplis – Tor Homes  
Jill Davies – South Hams Community and Voluntary Services  
Jo Rumble – Dartmoor National Park Authority  
Lesley Hughes – Ivybridge Town Council  
Cllr Tony Mead – Totnes Town Council (for Cllr Tony Whitty)  
Tina Henry – Devon Primary Care Trust  
Supt Sarah Sharpe – Devon & Cornwall Constabulary  
Emma Handley – Voluntary Sector Forum representative  
Mick McGing – Kingsbridge Town Council (for Cllr John Binns)  
Amanda Harvey – South Hams District Council  
Jo Doney – South Hams District Council (note taker)  
Michael Cozens – South Hams District Council  
Liz Abel - Devon Renaissance  
Cllr John Baverstock – South Hams District Council  
Cllr Trevor Pennington – Devon County Council / South Hams District Council

**1. APOLOGIES**

Adele Dawson – South Devon College  
David Shephard – Federation of Small Businesses  
Peter Tansey – Business representative  
Cllr John Tucker – South Hams District Council (SHSP Vice Chair)  
Cllr Jonathan Hawkins – Devon County Council  
Cllr Roger Croad – Devon County Council  
Cllr Debbie Morris – Dartmouth Town Council

**2. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2009 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendments that had been made following distribution of the minutes.

**3. INFORMATION SHARING - PARTNER UPDATES**

Representatives presented their update reports (as previously circulated). Partner Updates from Devon PCT (including the South Devon and Dartmoor Health and Well-being Partnership) and Devon & Cornwall Constabulary were circulated at the meeting.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

### **4. DEVON RENAISSANCE BUSINESS SURVEY 2009**

Liz Abell, Managing Director of Devon Renaissance (DR) gave a presentation to the representatives of the results of their Business Survey 2009, with particular reference to the findings in the South Hams. The survey had been undertaken from November 2008 to January 2009 across the seven rural districts in Devon and approximately 3,000 responses had been received. To summarise, some of the issues raised in the survey were a need for business advice, difficulties in obtaining finance, a shortage of ICT skills (e.g. to develop online sales or develop integration with suppliers), poor road access and weak marketing skills (e.g. in terms of knowledge of business competitors).. The Partnership noted that South Hams District Council (SHDC) was rated best in Devon for providing information and advice to businesses. The full report on the results of the survey was available on the DR website ([www.ruraldevon.org](http://www.ruraldevon.org)).

### **5. COMPETITIVE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Michael Cozens, Economic Development Officer (SHDC) gave a presentation to the representatives regarding the Joint Economic Development Action Plan 2009-2011 developed with West Devon Borough Council. A Joint Prosperity Action Plan had been proposed and approved at the SHDC Prosperity Policy Development Group meeting in August 2009 (minute PPDG.06/09 refers). The key themes of the Action Plan were:

- Infrastructure – e.g. workspace, connectivity, and destination facilities
- Support for Businesses, Employees and Sectors – e.g. support for employees facing redundancy;
- Community Engagement and Regeneration – e.g. through Town Councils and Chambers of Trade, Business Clubs etc; and
- Strategic Intelligence and Influence – e.g. inform policy & strategy development at regional and sub-regional level, keep up-to-date evidence, statistical data, respond to national and sub-regional consultations of economic / social significance..

The Officer also informed representatives about the 'Check your Broadband Speed' Pilot Project (<http://www.devonbbsurvey.com/>) which, as well as providing accurate information for the user, also mapped the date, time, and postcode against the speed achieved. The broadband speed survey was part of a project that would generate essential evidence about connectivity across Devon, especially identifying those areas where speeds were poor or non-existent. The greater the number of 'hits' the website received, the more statistically valid the stored data would be. The Officer emphasised to those present that it would greatly assist the project if their staff were made aware of the exercise and, if prepared to do so, run the test (which only took a couple of minutes) at home.

Following the presentation, a representative emphasised the lack of access to highways, which was vital to business and stated that integrated transport was very important. In response, it was discussed that the development of Hub Working could be a partial solution to the lack of road access.

The Officer was asked about the potential of the Green Economy, seen as the new growth area e.g. in construction, managing waste and new technologies. In reply, the Officer advised that Devon County Council and SWRDA had identified green industries and environmental technology as a priority sector. It was further asked about the development of opportunities for skilled engineers / installers in green technology. The Officer advised that the main focus would be to get sectors to work together collectively.

#### **6. OPEN DISCUSSION – INCLUDING ‘BACKING YOUNG BRITAIN IN THE SOUTH HAMS’**

Cllr Baverstock (SHDC) made an appeal to representatives to consider taking on NEETs (18 – 24 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training) for work experience for four to eight weeks with an assessment at the end of the period. This would enhance their CVs and potentially assist them in obtaining employment. They could then be notified regarding any vacancies and perhaps guaranteed an interview. This idea had received a positive initial response from Jobcentre Plus and potentially could be rolled out nationally. The terms for the scheme were being considered to ensure that the young people taking part did not lose entitlement to benefits. Representatives who felt they could assist with this initiative were asked to contact Amanda Harvey (SHDC) or Cllr Baverstock.

Representatives were asked what other actions the Partnership could take to improve the current economic climate. In response, it was discussed that access to funding was disappearing rapidly and that there was a particular lack of access to micro-credit (e.g. £2,000-£5,000). It was suggested that engagement with Credit Unions be facilitated.

Free Car Parking was raised again as an issue to support town centres which were losing out to supermarkets and other large retail outlets (e.g. Endsleigh which had free car parking).

#### **7. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FORUM PLANS**

The Partnership was advised that the Forum would meet this autumn to discuss the priority theme area ‘Competitive Local Economy’. The Partnership supported the proposal for this Forum to be held jointly with West Devon, potentially in Woolwell in November 2009. A commitment was requested from the Partnership to attend.

#### **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The theme for the next meeting on Monday 14 December at 2.00pm would be ‘**Community Vibrancy**’. The meeting would be held at Kingsbridge Town Council Chambers, Quay House, Ilbert Road, Kingsbridge, TQ7 1DZ.