

## NOTES OF A MEETING OF SOUTH HAMS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP HELD VIA CONFERENCE CALL, ON MONDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2008

**Present:** Vaughan Lindsay – Dartington Hall Trust (SHSP Chair)  
Steve Brown – Devon Primary Care Trust  
Jill Davies – South Hams CVS  
Hugh McCahill – South Hams VSF  
Sarah Sharpe – Devon and Cornwall Constabulary  
Alan Robinson – SHDC  
Heather Holland – Environment Agency (for Paul Sadler)  
Cllr Anne Ward – SHDC  
Adele Dawson – South Devon College  
David Shepherd – Federation of Small Businesses  
Cllr Tony Whitty – Totnes Town Council  
Cllr John Binns – Kingsbridge Town Council  
Cllr Debbie Morris – Dartmouth Town Council  
Lesley Hughes – Ivybridge Town Council

Others also present and participating (non-voting):  
Amanda Harvey – SHDC  
Kay Killgallon - SHDC

**Apologies:** Roger Grainger – Devon County Council  
Cllr Julian Brazil – Devon County Council  
Cllr Roger Croad – Devon County Council  
Pete Tansey – business representative  
Howard Toplis – Tor Homes  
Cllr John Tucker – Leader, SHDC (SHSP Vice Chair)

### 1. **Apologies and Minutes**

The list of apologies was noted and the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

As an update since the last meeting, the Chairman advised that he had not yet had an opportunity to send a response to the Boundary Committee in respect of the Local Government Review. Whilst the consultation deadline had passed, the Chairman advised that the Boundary Committee had advised him that they would accept a late response submitted from him on behalf of the Partnership.

### 2. **Project Updates**

- a) **Sustainable & Affordable Housing Demonstration Project.** The Partnership was advised that the project brief was nearly completed and would be circulated to any interested parties.
- b) **The Skills Pledge.** It was noted that the Learning and Skills Council had still to provide an update of how many South Hams businesses had taken the Pledge. This information would be circulated to Partners, once it had been provided.

It was noted that the Pledge was of great interest to the Federation of Small Businesses and the matter of awareness of this project would be followed up between their representatives.

- c) **South Devon Business Excellence Awards.** Representatives were informed that the closing date for submission of entries was Monday, 13 October 2008 and the criteria for the 8 Award Categories (which were aligned to the priorities of the Partnership) was circulated to the Partners. It was noted that an award ceremony was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 20 November 2008, with the awards due to be presented by Ben Bradshaw MP.
- d) **Community Planning & Engagement.** The Partnership was informed that the Communities In Action (CIA) project had reached a number of milestones and it was agreed that it should be signed off as completed. It was suggested that presentation on the CIA could be given to a future meeting.

In respect of monitoring and evaluating the success of the project, the Partnership was advised that Devon County Council officers were currently looking at the overall usage of the scheme.

- e) **Community Initiatives.** Project success was noted. It was also stated that a fact sheet was being produced for communities on developing safe access routes and greenways.

### 3. Information Sharing – Partner Updates

Each member was asked to provide a brief verbal update on their progress, issues and achievements from their circulated briefing papers:

#### **Devon and Cornwall Constabulary**

The news that crime had reduced by 28% in the South Hams (and was continuing to fall) was welcomed by the Partnership. In part, this was attributed to policing methods being tailored to the needs of individual communities rather than an overall unified approach.

Partners were advised that the Constabulary was beginning to make some progress in respect of combating marine crime and that the briefing paper had omitted to mention the important role of the Environment Agency in sharing intelligence.

The Partnership also appreciated the news that 200 police officers had been released from the back office to the frontline and that an additional 18 police officers were to be recruited in the area.

## **Devon County Council**

The Partnership noted the contents of the report and was informed that updates would be forthcoming imminently with regard to the Children's Trust locality arrangements.

## **Devon PCT**

Partners were informed that the Trust had now relocated to County Hall, Exeter, which it was hoped would assist in facilitating joint working.

Reference was also made to a programme being launched by the Devon Drug and Alcohol Action Team in respect of those living with alcohol related problems. The programme was currently the subject of a consultation period and further information was available on the Devon PCT website.

## **Dartmoor National Park Authority**

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

## **Environment Agency**

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

## **South Devon College**

Partners acknowledged that once completed, Phase 2 of the Vantage Point campus development would provide an enhanced level of service.

Despite extensive publicity, the College was frustrated that there was minimal awareness amongst Partners with regard to the Devon & Cornwall Business Council event for employers on 3 October 2008 to encourage local business to undertake training.

The need for employers to be more willing to take on apprentices was highlighted to the Partnership.

Some progression had also been made on the establishment of a South Devon Skills and Employment Board and any interested Partners were encouraged to contact the College.

## **Tor Homes**

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

## **South Hams CVS & Volunteer Centre**

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

## **South Hams Voluntary Sector Forum**

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

## **South Hams District Council**

The South Hams Intermediate Rent Enterprise (SHIRE) pilot programme had worked well and the Council was looking at an expansion of the scheme.

It was noted that the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document had been found to be 'sound' by the Inspector and had recently been adopted by Council.

In light of the current economic climate, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) had recently written to the Prime Minister requesting that the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) be automatically applied to all small businesses. Partners were advised that approximately only 45% of small businesses actually reclaimed their entitlement and the FSB was also requesting that those small businesses who had not claimed, should automatically be in receipt.

## **Ivybridge Town Council / Ivybridge Regeneration Group**

The Partnership noted the contents of the report and it was stated that through pro-active dialogue with shop owners, the Group was hoping to ensure that many currently vacant shops were re-opened.

### **4. Local Area Agreement (LAA) Update**

The Partnership considered a report which set out delivery plans in advance of the New Sustainable Community Action Plan Workshop, which was to be held at the next Partnership meeting on 8 December 2008.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the LAA concept. Whilst in principle the Partners commended the LAA concept, issues such as additional bureaucracy and processes, and a lack of detail were felt to be matters of concern at this early stage;
- (b) the importance of how partners grasped opportunities. In the likelihood that the LAA would not involve the allocation of additional monies, Partners acknowledged that the wish to deliver specific outcomes was likely to present significant challenges;
- (c) the 38 priority actions for the LAA. The Partnership was advised that of these 38 actions, 16 had been identified as most closely linked with the South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy. In reality, the view was expressed by a Partner that the SHSP should focus upon only 5 or 6 projects.

**Action:** For all partners to consider the identified 16 LAA priority actions in relation to the Partnership's joined-up working remit, for the purposes of developing a new action plan at the next meeting.

## 5. Local Government Review Update & Implications for SHSP

The Strategic Director (Community) provided the Partnership with a brief update and made particular reference to:-

- the formal consultation period having recently expired on 26 September 2008. The Boundary Committee was now due to consider all representations received and make its final recommendations to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2008. Following this, there was to be a further month long consultation period before the Secretary of State was anticipated to make her final judgement during mid-February 2009;
- disappointment that halfway through the consultation process, it was stated that retention of the Status Quo could now be given consideration, despite all previous indications being that this was not an option; and
- the Council's response to the proposals focusing on concerns regarding the process of the Review. In addition to the Status Quo matter (as detailed above), concerns were also raised over the late receipt of the financial information and the speed of the process.

The Chairman advised that he was intending to produce a response on behalf of the Partnership. Prior to asking Partners for the viewpoint of their respective organisations, it was his understanding that there were 3 recurring themes arising. These were:-

- (a) a recognition of the administrative benefits of a Unitary Devon;
- (b) it being unclear how these proposals would benefit the South Hams, especially when considering the differentials between the northern and southern areas of the county; and
- (c) the need to ensure an effective and appropriate level of local government in the county.

At this point, a number of Partners reported the views of their organisations. Whilst Ivybridge Town Council viewed the Unitary Devon proposal as an opportunity to improve community empowerment, the overriding majority of Partners felt the proposals were unnecessary and felt the current system of local government in the area was working well.

**Action:** Vaughan Lindsay to take into account the comments of the Partnership and draft a response to the Boundary Committee on its behalf.

## 6. Possible Future Agenda Items

- 8 December 2008 meeting – **Agreed:** that the meeting be a two item agenda only:
  1. SHSP Engagement in the LDF Process;
  2. South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy – New Action Plan Workshop (to align with the LAA).

- Community Partnership Forum – March 2009 meeting.

## **7. Proposed dates of future meetings**

- 8 December 2008 at 2 pm – Cary Room, Follaton House;
- 9 March 2009 – Conference Call;
- 8 June 2009 – South Devon College;
- 14 September 2009 – Conference Call (now confirmed); and
- 14 December 2009 – date and venue to be confirmed.

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.55 pm)