

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD
AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2007**

MEMBERS

* Cllr B E Carson – Chairman

* Cllr R J Carter – Vice-Chairman

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| * Cllr N A Barnes | * Cllr J O'Connell |
| * Cllr H D Bastone | * Cllr C M Pannell |
| * Cllr J S Beer | * Cllr J T Pennington |
| * Cllr B J Boughton | * Cllr M C Ramsay |
| * Cllr J Brazil | * Cllr S L Rankin |
| * Cllr B F Cane | ∅ Cllr M A Roadknight |
| * Cllr P H Cook | * Cllr G H W Rosevear |
| * Cllr R F Croad | * Cllr G Rothwell |
| * Cllr G Date | * Cllr R Rowe |
| * Cllr B C Evans | * Cllr M F Saltern |
| * Cllr L A Facy | * Cllr J W Squire |
| * Cllr S M Fairman | * Cllr I P Steer |
| * Cllr G J Fielden | * Cllr M Stone |
| * Cllr R W Hallett | * Cllr D W S Thorning |
| * Cllr V A Harvey | * Cllr R J Tucker |
| * Cllr J D Hawkins | * Cllr A R Vale |
| * Cllr P W Hitchins | * Cllr A Ward |
| * Cllr I Longrigg | * Cllr J A Westacott |
| * Cllr D W May | * Cllr R O Yonge |

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Officers in attendance:

For all items: Chief Executive, Strategic Director (Community), Strategic Director (Operations), Strategic Director (Resources), Monitoring Officer and Member Support Services Manager;

For item 11 (see 87/06): Head of Financial Services and Head of Operations.

For Item 12 (see 88/06): Mr T Connolly, Member of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances

83/06 MINUTES

The minutes of the special meeting of the Council held on 19 January 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

84/06 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Council noted a list of the Chairman's recent engagements.

85/06 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none was made.

86/06 **PRESENTATION BY EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

Cllr Nicky Barnes, Executive Member for Access to the Council's Services

Cllr Barnes made reference to:-

- (i) her involvement in ensuring that there would be a comprehensive induction programme for new Members of Council following the May 2007 elections and continuing development opportunities and support thereafter;
- (ii) the success of the new Customer Services Unit;
- (iii) upgrading of the Council's website and the ability to view planning applications online as well as receive advice regarding planning permission;
- (iv) her responsibility on the Executive for Dartmouth and its hinterland parishes. Cllr Barnes had attended meetings of Dartmouth town council and would extend this to the parishes within the hinterland area.

Following Cllr Barnes' presentation there was an opportunity for questions when reference was made to whether Cllr Barnes' portfolio extended to access to other services such as post offices and whether she would like to respond to comments expressed by the local MP on post offices in rural areas. Cllr Barnes advised that her portfolio did not extend to other services.

87/06 **BUDGET 2007 / 2008**

Members were reminded that, as the Review of Car Parking Charges formed part of the budget proposals, this matter would be considered first.

A Review of Car Park Charges

Consideration was given to a report which summarised the results of the public consultation exercise on a revised scheme of parking charges which had been proposed by the Executive at its meeting on 12 October 2006 (minute E.53/06 refers).

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- (i) the concerns of a Member that, in his opinion, the proposed charges represented an 11% increase on the previous year and that charges did not compare favourably with a neighbouring authority. The Member also expressed disappointment that no report had been forthcoming on concessionary charges;
- (ii) a reduction in the charge for 30 minutes car parking to 20p;
- (iii) raising revenue from the travelling public, including visitors to the district which contributed to the maintenance of the car parks and public conveniences;
- (iv) income from car parks which enabled the level of council tax increase to be kept relatively low which was of greater benefit to people on fixed incomes, the elderly and young families.

RESOLVED

That:-

- (i) the representations made in respect of the 2007 Order be noted and the revised scheme, as shown in the report presented to the Council, confirmed, subject to not implementing the changes to permits issued to businesses but reviewing the arrangements and reporting back to Members at a later stage;
- (ii) officers be instructed to confirm the Order accordingly and to publicise the confirmation in accordance with statutory requirements, with the Order to come into effect on 25 March 2007.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.5 a recorded vote was requested. The result was as follows:-

Those in favour of the motion (26):	Cllrs N A Barnes, H D Bastone, B F Cane, B E Carson, R J Carter, P H Cook, R F Croad, L A Facy, G J Fielden, R W Hallett, J D Hawkins, P W Hitchins, I Longrigg, D W May, J O'Connell, J T Pennington, S L Rankin, G H W Rosevear, G Rothwell, R Rowe, M F Saltern, I P Steer, M Stone, R J Tucker, A R Vale and R O Yonge
Those against the motion (6):	J Brazil, G Date, C M Pannell, M C Ramsay, D W S Thorning and A Ward
Abstentions (6):	Cllrs J S Beer, B J Boughton, S M Fairman, V A Harvey, J W Squire and J A Westacott
NB: Cllr B C Evans was not present during the debate and vote on this matter	

B Budget Proposals 2007 / 2008

A report was considered which set out the Executive's formal proposals for the budget 2007 / 2008 as had been agreed at its meeting on 25 January 2007 (E.99/06 refers).

The 7 recommendations, as set out on yellow pages 3 and 4 of the report (as presented to the meeting), were **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**. The Leader of Council was invited to introduce the item and respond to questions.

In his introduction, the Leader made particular reference to:-

- (i) the process for setting the draft budget, which involved early discussions with managers, consultation with town and parish councils and the involvement of all Members through discussion at Policy Development Groups and Scrutiny;
- (ii) the difficulty in identifying savings year on year. Despite this, over £1m savings had been made in the last 3 years. The transfer of the management of the Council's leisure centres to Tone Leisure had helped to make savings in the current year as well as enhancing the service provided to residents and visitors;
- (iii) the concessionary fares scheme operating within the county, which was not fully funded by the government and meant that an additional £130,000 had to be funded by participating authorities;
- (iv) the need to increase the budget in certain areas to improve service delivery, notably the housing and legal services;
- (v) the importance of the Council's investment income, which had achieved returns above the market average;
- (vi) the government's grant for 2007 / 2008 not covering the Council's inflationary costs. Consequently an increase in council tax amounting to £4.68 per week for a Band D property was proposed, which would still be the third lowest in Devon and Cornwall.

Members were then invited to ask the Leader of the Council questions on yellow pages 4 to 6 and the draft budget proposals.

Reference was made to the proposal not to make a contribution of £5,000 to the South Devon Rural Transport Partnership. In response, Members were advised that the Council made a number of contributions to transport projects within the district, including shopmobility, ring and ride and the concessionary fares scheme. There were concerns that the request for a contribution had increased from £500 3 years ago to £5,000 and that this was disproportionate with the level of funding requested from other authorities.

Members wished to thank all those who had contributed to the budget

process.

RESOLVED

That:-

1. the following sums be included in the overall budget:

	£
Provision for inflation	473, 000
External interest receivable	1, 170, 000
Reversal of Capital and Pension (FRS17) Charges	2, 097, 600
Collection Fund Surplus	70, 000
Net contributions to Reserves (Appropriations)	1, 310, 750

Bids:

- Provision for recurring items financed from the council tax	38, 000
- Provision for items financed from reserves (consequently there is no impact on the council tax)	253, 300
- Existing bids approved in previous years	20, 550

Options to close the budget gap	436, 000
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2. the level of reserves as set out within Section 4 of the report presented to the Council and the assessment of their adequacy and the robustness of budget estimates, be noted (Section 7);
3. the vehicle replacement programme to be funded from the Vehicles and Plant Renewals Reserve, as set out in Appendix J, be approved. That the Head of Operations and Head of Finance be authorised to vary the programme (in terms of year of replacement / vehicle type / purchase cost) according to the demands of the service, but within the overall approved capital budget over the period of the programme;
4. under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Prudential Indicators and the limits set out within Appendix K of the report be noted and approved;
5. That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2007/08 set out in Appendix L of the report be adopted;

6. the Council will set its total net expenditure for 2007 / 2008 at £10,067, 200;
7. the minimum level of the General Reserve balance be maintained at least to the equivalent of 25% of the net revenue budget (currently this is equivalent to a balance of at least £2.5m).

88/06

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Members considered a report of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances which had reviewed the existing Scheme of Members' Allowances and made recommendations for adoption of a revised Scheme in 2007 / 2008.

Mr Terry Connolly, an Independent Panel member, joined the meeting to respond to any questions.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- (i) the use of the allowance scheme to encourage younger people to stand for election. Members were advised that the Panel was not aware of any research undertaken which evidenced this and were minded to think that other issues, notably the role of the political parties, were a contributory factor. It was noted that the Political Structures Working Group would be considering issues such as meeting start times and fears of the attitude of potential Members' employers which might deter younger people from standing;
- (ii) retaining the electronic allowance at £350 per annum. A Member requested that the cost of call-out charges for repairs to home personal computers be considered by the Panel when it next met. Members were advised that, in retaining the electronic allowance at this level, the Panel was implying that the Council ought to consider issuing standard IT equipment to its Members.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances presented at Appendix A of the report presented to the Council be agreed and that the revised Scheme of Members Allowances, as shown at Appendix C, be adopted from 1 April 2007.

89/06

REPORTS OF BODIES**RESOLVED**

That the minutes and recommendations of the undermentioned bodies be received and approved subject to any amendments listed below:-

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|-----|----------------------------------------|------------------|
| (a) | Devon Building
Control Partnership | 29 November 2006 |
| (b) | Prosperity Policy
Development Group | 12 December 2006 |
| (c) | Prosperity Policy
Development Group | 9 January 2007 |
| (d) | Development Control
Committee | 13 December 2006 |
| (e) | Development Control
Committee | 17 January 2007 |
| (f) | Salcombe Harbour Board | 18 December 2006 |

SH.27/06 – Normandy Pontoon**RESOLVED**

That standing orders relating to contracts be suspended in respect of the awarding of a contract for urgent repairs to the Normandy pontoon piles and that work be carried out by the contractor for the proposed residents' pontoon (SH.30/06 refers)

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|-----|-----------------------------------------|------------------|
| (g) | Scrutiny | 18 December 2006 |
| (h) | Scrutiny | 18 January 2007 |
| (i) | Environment Policy
Development Group | 19 December 2006 |
| (j) | Environment Policy
Development Group | 9 January 2007 |
| (k) | Standards Committee | 3 January 2007 |
| (l) | Personnel Panel | 4 January 2007 |
| (m) | Executive | 4 January 2007 |
| (n) | Executive | 25 January 2007 |

E.100/06 – Reports of Other Bodies: (a) Environment Policy Development Group – 9 January 2007: EPDG.11/06 – Totnes Conservation Character Appraisals and Management Plan

RESOLVED

That:-

1. the amended draft Totnes Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted, subject to the inclusion of any comments as recorded in the minutes of that meeting and following consultation with the local residents;
2. in the future, Conservation Area Character Appraisals be approved for consultation and adopted under delegated authority by the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the relevant Ward Members and the appropriate Executive Member;
3. in the future, Conservation Area Management Plans be approved for consultation and adopted under delegated authority by the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the relevant Ward Members and the appropriate Executive Member;
4. in the future, any proposals to change the boundaries of a Conservation Area be consulted upon with local residents, the local Member(s) and the local town or parish council.

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| (o) | Community Policy Development Group | 11 January 2007 |
| (p) | Community Policy Development Group | 18 January 2007 |

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.40 pm).

Chairman