

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SOUTH HAMS DISTRICT COUNCIL HELD
AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES ON THURSDAY 24 JULY 2008**

MEMBERS

* Cllr B F Cane – Chairman

* Cllr M Stone – Vice-Chairman

* Cllr K J Baldry	* Cllr P W Hitchins
* Cllr N A Barnes	* Cllr M J Howarth
* Cllr H D Bastone	* Cllr C W Jones
* Cllr J H Baverstock	∅ Cllr L P Jones
* Cllr J I G Blackler	* Cllr R M Lawrence
* Cllr J Brazil	∅ Cllr I Longrigg
* Cllr B E Carson	∅ Cllr D W May
* Cllr R J Carter	* Cllr D M O’Callaghan
* Cllr P H Cook	* Cllr C M Pannell
∅ Cllr S E Cooper	* Cllr J T Pennington
* Cllr P Coulson	* Cllr S L Rankin
* Cllr R F Croad	* Cllr R Rowe
* Cllr G Date	* Cllr M F Saltern
* Cllr G J Fielden	* Cllr J W Squire
* Cllr R D Gilbert	* Cllr R C Steer
* Cllr F J Hawke	* Cllr R J Tucker
* Cllr J D Hawkins	∅ Cllr R J Vint
* Cllr T J Hewitt	* Cllr A Ward
* Cllr M J Hicks	* Cllr J A Westacott

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Officers in attendance:

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

Item 10 (minute 39/08 below refers): Acting Head of Property Services, Head of Landscape and Leisure, Leisure and Recreation Manager and Chief Accountant.

34/08

MINUTES

With regard to question (i) at the previous meeting (minute 26/08 refers), a Member wished to advise Council that whilst it had been stated at the meeting that a local Member had been ‘*consulted with*’ prior to the 6.30pm daily closure of the Kingsbridge Quay toilets, this was in fact incorrect and the Member had merely been *informed* of this intention.

Since the Post Office Network Change Programme had also been considered at the last meeting (minute 33/08(h) refers), a Member wished to express his grave disappointment at the recent announcement to close six post offices in the South Hams and replace an additional three outlets with an outreach service.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 26 June 2008 were confirmed unamended as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting. These were made as follows:-

Cllr G Date declared a personal interest in Item 10: 'Capital Programme' (Minute 39/08 below refers) by virtue of his Chairmanship of the South Devon Summer Tennis League and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

Cllrs R D Gilbert and M J Howarth declared personal interests in Item 10: 'Capital Programme' (Minute 39/08 below refers) by virtue of being Kingsbridge Town Council representatives for the Kingsbridge Community Centre and the town council being an active promoter of the Kingsbridge Skatepark. Both Members remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

Cllr P W Hitchins declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 10: 'Capital Programme' (Minute 39/08 below refers) by virtue of his Chairmanship of the Charitable Trust of Woolwell Community Centre and advised that he would leave the meeting should any discussion relating to this project arise and prior to the vote on the item being taken.

Cllr D M O'Callaghan declared a personal interest in Item 10: 'Capital Programme' (Minute 39/08 below refers) by virtue of her membership on the Kingsbridge Skatepark Committee and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

Cllr J Brazil declared a personal interest in Item 10: 'Capital Programme' (Minute 39/08 below refers) by virtue of his use of a proportion of his Devon County Council Locality Budget towards the Kingsbridge Community Centre project and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

36/08 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council noted a list of civic engagements attended by the Chairman.

37/08 **QUESTIONS**

It was noted that the following questions had been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8:-

From Cllr Brazil to Cllr Saltern, Executive Member for Housing

- i) *Is the naming of the proposed new development east of Plymouth as Sherford, which is the same name as a village less than 20 miles away an example of good forward planning or strategic planning?*

In response, Cllr Saltern stated that the naming of the new community was not the most critical strategic planning issue that the Council and partners faced in delivering such a complex project but he acknowledged that there were concerns in the village of Sherford about the current name of the proposal.

Cllr Saltern understood the importance of the historic name of the community near Kingsbridge, but pointed out that the name Sherford for the new community was also based on local association. The proposal was centred on the valley to the east of the existing built-up areas in Plymouth and was known locally as Sherford Valley. The development was focused on three farms at West, East and Higher Sherford, East Sherford Cross and Sherford Road, West Sherford Cottages and Sherford Kilns. As Members would appreciate, there was a local and historic logic to the new community's name which was firmly rooted in the area.

Cllr Saltern believed that any current confusion about the name would be overcome in the near future when the anticipated development at Sherford started on site and the difference in scale of the two Sherfords within our district became more apparent. As an example, Cllr Saltern was aware that one of the concerns was that the emergency and local delivery services could mistake the location if Sherford was referred to. Once the development started it would be allocated postcodes and 'area' telephone numbers. Furthermore, there would be a fundamental difference in scale between a new community equivalent to the size of Ivybridge, compared to a rural village in the heart of the South Hams.

In view of the strength of local concerns, the Council had however raised the issues referred to with a number of key interested parties including Government Office South West, Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council, Highways Agency, South West Regional Development Agency, Environment Agency and the applicants. The conclusion was that the concerns raised were understood, and that the name of the community could be reviewed in due course. However at this stage of discussions about the principles of the proposal, changing the name at this point in time would lead to confusion because Sherford was named in many strategic plans and documents. Changing the name at this stage would also require investment in terms of re-branding the new community, and had the potential to cause confusion for communities at the western end of the South Hams and within Plymouth. The consensus was that Sherford was useful as a current 'working title' for the scheme but that agencies would be prepared to consider a different name in future if major problems occurred for Sherford Village.

In conclusion, Cllr Saltern questioned whether as a new town, and relating it to Newton Ferrers and Newton Abbot, the Council should consider re-naming the proposed new development as: Newton Sherford.

In response, Cllr Brazil welcomed the response and felt that the 'Newton Sherford' suggestion could help to allay the concerns of Sherford Village.

From Cllr Brazil to Cllr Hewitt, Executive Member for a Clean Environment

ii) Following the new traffic calming and speed restrictions at Follaton House car park, when can the residents of Kingsbridge expect similar action at the Quay car park?

In response, Cllr Hewitt stated that traffic calming was introduced at Follaton House car park as a direct response to concerns that significant amounts of traffic and pedestrians coming to visit either Follaton House or the Arboretum were sharing the vehicular areas and visibility was often restricted by the amount of parking taking place. While most car drivers respected the need to travel slowly through the site, there were examples where some drivers were travelling at faster speeds than was ideal.

Speed bumps were considered effective where there was insufficient room to circumnavigate the obstacle, as was the case at Follaton House. However, at the Quay, the car park was so designed that any speed bumps placed in the main vehicle access route could be bypassed by driving through empty parking spaces, thereby creating chicanes. As a result, this could provide a further challenge to those who wish to misuse the car parks and drive at speed and were not therefore considered to be a good idea at the Quay car park.

In asking a supplementary question, Cllr Brazil queried whether there would ever be speed restriction or traffic calming measures at the Quay car park. In response, Cllr Hewitt advised that the matter was currently under review, and should the problem continue to escalate, a traffic review would be undertaken on the car park.

From Cllr Brazil to Cllr Tucker, Leader of Council

iii) As a result of the latest report from the Boundary Committee does the transfer of £17 million (from the sale of our housing stock) into the pension fund represent good value for money for the taxpayers of the South Hams?

In response, Cllr Tucker stated that he had answered similar questions on a number of occasions and he was sure that Cllr Brazil was aware that the Council did not just transfer £17 million into the pension fund. The Council had had to repay a debt to the pension fund. The option was to pay off the debt in one go, or spread the repayment of the debt over a number of years. By paying off the debt in one go, the Council was able to finance the debt repayment from capital rather than revenue.

This had resulted in a significant benefit to our council tax payers because it had reduced the amount of council tax they have had to pay. The Council had been saving around £600,000 per year of additional interest that it would have had to pay. This was the difference between the amount we could have earned by investing the money ourselves and the amount we have saved in annual contributions to the pension fund.

What this meant every year in council tax terms was an average saving of £16 or 12% per property. If we had not made these savings, the Council would have been capped by the Government or have had to make savage cuts in its public services.

The question was framed around the assumption that the latest report from the Boundary Committee would be implemented and would result in the demise of South Hams District Council. Cllr Tucker believed there was no certainty that this would happen.

In the event that South Hams District Council should be abolished, Cllr Brazil asked a supplementary question regarding whether the £17 million would be transferred into the pension fund of a new authority. In response, Cllr Tucker confirmed that this would be the case.

From Cllr Baldry to Cllr Tucker, Leader of Council

iv) How much overtime cost was approved by the operations department management to clear the backlog of work arising from the strike by our staff on 16 and 17 July?

In response, Cllr Tucker stated that there had been no operations team staff on strike and consequently no overtime costs had been incurred as a direct result of strike action taken by our staff. However, due to action taken by staff at an adjacent authority, this Council's teams were unable to dispose of waste at our normal landfill site and were therefore required to travel a greater distance to two other locations, namely Tor Quarry and Heathfield. This necessitated overtime payments amounting to £122.

From Cllr Baldry to Cllr Tucker, Leader of Council

v) Although not directly involved in the NJC negotiations, what representations to the LGA Human Resources Panel on ways to settle the dispute with Unison on pay have been made by SHDC?

In response, Cllr Tucker stated that such matters were resolved nationally by negotiation between Trade Unions and the LGA Human Resources Panel. As such this Council, in line with most other local authorities, did not have a seat at the table. There was however, an annual South West consultation which took place in November each year, at which most authorities suggested a pay rise bearing in mind the level of inflation.

In past disputes, the national employers had consulted individual authorities at a time when they considered it appropriate. If this happened, Cllr Tucker was happy for all Members to be informed.

Cllr Baldry asked a supplementary question enquiring whether the Leader felt the Council should make representations, especially when bearing in mind that employees faced a cut in their standard of living. In response, Cllr Tucker confirmed that he was always happy to make representations on behalf of the Council.

38/08

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

It was noted that two motions had been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.1.

a) By Cllrs Bastone and Saltern

“South Hams District Council expresses its extreme concerns at the rocketing petrol and diesel prices which are forcing individuals to pay sky-high prices at the pumps and forcing public services and industry to finance escalating costs.

Council notes that without UK taxes petrol would be currently 41.2p a litre and diesel 48.8p a litre.

Council further notes that the Energy Trends and Prices statistics, produced by the Department for Business, Industry and Regulatory Reform reveals that the UK's taxation of petrol is the third highest out of all EU member states.

It is clear that the UK treasury is netting substantially increasing Fuel Duty and VAT revenues as a direct result of the increasing fuel prices.

In light of all of the above South Hams District Council calls on the current Labour Westminster Government to act decisively to protect the interests of families, public services and industry by immediately cutting fuel duty.

In addition the Council calls for the appointment of a Fuel Duty Regulator to ensure increasing revenues from VAT are used to reduce Fuel Duty and keep the price per litre of petrol and diesel under control.”

Having been **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**, the proposer of the motion made reference to the direct link between increasing fuel prices and the consequent increase in VAT revenues gained, which was of further financial benefit to the Government.

In echoing this point, the seconder of the motion also highlighted the particular importance of this issue in rural areas, with both residents and businesses feeling the effects financially. By simply suspending the proposed Autumn 2p fuel tax increase, the seconder felt that the Government was not dealing with the immediate issue. Should the Government scrap this 2p increase, it would lose approximately £550 million in revenue, yet it had already received an approximate £1.45 billion in additional revenue since the price of oil had increased. Therefore, the seconder felt there to be immediate scope to cut fuel tax by 5p, as the longer the status quo prevailed, the greater the levels of additional revenue obtained by the Government.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) the comparative low wages in the South Hams. A Member advised that the issue was further exacerbated by South Hams wages being, on average, only 70% of the national equivalent. The Member felt that the Government could realise alternative financial savings by cutting the current number of quango's, which he felt to be pointless and which cost in excess of £100 billion per year;
- (b) the view that the motion could have been strengthened. Whilst supporting the motion, some Members felt that it did not provide a long-term solution, especially when considering recent reports that the cost of oil could reach \$200 per barrel, which would negate the effect of this motion. In addition, and in light of the reality that low cost oil was no more, another Member felt that the motion could have made reference to the need for investment in public transport and improved efficiency of cars;
- (c) housing fuel poverty. A Member felt it important that the impact of rising oil prices on housing fuel poverty for many residents should also not be forgotten.

In his concluding comments, the proposer of the motion stated that the intention of the motion was to highlight the fact that for every litre of fuel sold, the Government obtained both fuel duty and additional VAT revenue. Whenever fuel prices increased, the VAT income generated also increased. By appointing a fuel regulator, it was hoped that a fair fuel stabiliser could ultimately be implemented to address this unfair situation.

It was then:

RESOLVED

South Hams District Council expresses its extreme concerns at the rocketing petrol and diesel prices which are forcing individuals to pay sky-high prices at the pumps and forcing public services and industry to finance escalating costs.

Council notes that without UK taxes petrol would be currently 41.2p a litre and diesel 48.8p a litre.

Council further notes that the Energy Trends and Prices statistics, produced by the Department for Business, Industry and Regulatory Reform reveals that the UK's taxation of petrol is the third highest out of all EU member states.

It is clear that the UK treasury is netting substantially increasing Fuel Duty and VAT revenues as a direct result of the increasing fuel prices.

In light of all of the above South Hams District Council calls on the current Labour Westminster Government to act decisively to protect the interests of families, public services and industry by immediately cutting fuel duty.

In addition the Council calls for the appointment of a Fuel Duty Regulator to ensure increasing revenues from VAT are used to reduce Fuel Duty and keep the price per litre of petrol and diesel under control.

b) By Cllrs Brazil and Cllr O'Callaghan

"Following the decision to close the public loos early at the Quay in Kingsbridge, this Council now requires full consultation with elected members before any such action takes place with any public loos in the district. This consultation can start with the Kingsbridge loos which should be closed at a time that is more convenient to the local residents and the many visitors to the area."

Having been **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**, the proposer of the motion made reference to his belief that decisions relating to public conveniences were being taken without proper Member involvement. The Member proceeded to cite the example whereby the decision was taken to close the public conveniences on the Quay in Kingsbridge without any consultation being undertaken with the local Member.

With regard to the Quay in Kingsbridge example, the seconder of the motion felt that such decisions created a poor public impression, which had resulted in the majority of residents and tourists suffering due to the behaviour of a small minority. The seconder also considered it unfortunate that as local Member, she was not consulted on the intention to reduce the opening hours of the public conveniences. Furthermore, the seconder had not been made aware of the proposal to use the public conveniences of a local public house as an alternative facility, which in itself had created concerns including: access for the disabled and child use. With proper consultation, the seconder felt that such issues could have been addressed.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) a proposed amendment to the motion. Having been **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**, the following amended motion was tabled to the meeting:

'Following the decision to alter the closing time of the public toilets at the Quay in Kingsbridge, this Council now requires full consultation with elected Ward Members before any similar action takes place with any public toilets in the district. This will not detract from appointed officers taking immediate short term action related to duty of care, or health and safety, or a specific request from the Constabulary.'

In proposing his amendment, the proposer stated that:

- there was currently no formal approach to Member consultation on such matters;
- the approach for short term immediate closure (lasting a week or more to repair damage) would be an operational decision and would need to happen rapidly to respond to a significant incident. The proposer felt that such incidents should be delegated to senior officers, with the Ward Member(s) and the appropriate Executive Member advised of the decision, the reasoning and the expected duration of the repair;
- his recommended approach for short term closures or reductions in opening hours (for a duration of less than one week) involved such matters being actioned by officers as part of ongoing repair and maintenance works. Therefore, the proposer did not feel it necessary to liaise with Members on such occasions;
- should officers conclude that the scale of vandalism or anti-social behaviour required either a long term reduction in hours of opening or permanent closure, they would advise the local Member(s). If the local Member(s) agreed with the officer recommendations, they would be implemented. If the local Member(s) did not agree with the officer recommendation, the proposer suggested that the final decision be delegated to the Head of Property Services, in consultation with the lead Executive Member, whilst taking into account the views of the local Member(s). In the event that there was a disagreement between the Head of Property Services and the lead Executive Member, the recommendation would be referred to the Executive for a decision.

In conclusion, the proposer of the amendment hoped that these suggested processes would help to address Member concerns in the future.

In welcoming these comments, the proposer and seconder of the original motion were happy to support the amendment.

- (b) locking public conveniences. Whilst it was appreciated that some members of the public had responsibility for locking public conveniences overnight, a Member advised that in such areas as the Kingsbridge Quay, this was not an ideal situation as the Council had a duty of care to key holders. As a potential solution, the local Member for Yealmpton advised that public conveniences in the village, which were now operated by Yealmpton Parish Council, had an automatic locking and unlocking system;

- (c) advising of a closure. A Member felt it would be beneficial that when closed for any length of time, an explanatory notice should be attached to the public conveniences.

It was then:

RESOLVED

Following the decision to alter the closing time of the public toilets at the Quay in Kingsbridge, this Council now requires full consultation with elected Ward Members before any similar action takes place with any public toilets in the district. This will not detract from appointed officers taking immediate short term action related to duty of care, or health and safety, or a specific request from the Constabulary.

39/08

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report which advised Members of the proposed capital programme for 2008/09 and 2009/10, taking into account the priorities approved in the current Asset Strategy and the emerging proposals for capital investment.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) A number of Members made detailed reference to specific outlined projects within their wards. The particular projects which were highlighted were: Glanville's Mill, Ivybridge; Dart Units, Steamer Quay Road, Totnes; Borough Park, Totnes; Wembury Tennis Courts; Changing Room Replacement and Memorial Hall Works, Modbury; Ford Leat, Dartmouth; the Outdoor Swimming Pool at South Dartmoor Leisure Centre, Ivybridge; and the Jubilee Pier and Break Water, Salcombe;
- (b) With such a large programme, it was noted that there was a risk that certain projects could slip from the prescribed timetable. Therefore, it was felt important to ensure regular monitoring reports be presented to the Executive for consideration. Furthermore, there was potential in the programme that in instances where projects had slipped, alternative schemes could be advanced;
- (c) In welcoming the significant investment arising from the programme, the importance of progressing it rapidly was stressed;
- (d) Some Members expressed concern that they had been unaware of the intention for project works in their wards to be undertaken. In refuting this claim, other Members advised that the programme had been considered and developed, often on more than one occasion, by the Public Spaces Working Group, Community Policy Development Group and the Executive. At these meetings, all Members had the opportunity to attend and partake in the discussion.

RESOLVED

That:-

1. the Capital Programme be approved, subject to satisfactory completion of appraisals for each project, to include an assessment of affordability in terms of the impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and demonstration of value for money, and in the case of the Council's investment in community projects, the submission and approval of a robust business case;
2. the methods of delivery for the Programme (as outlined in the presented report) be approved;
3. delegated authority be given to the Council's Strategic Management Team to deliver the Capital Programme, including the procurement of appropriately skilled resources, to support delivery within the required timeframe, in consultation with the Leader and the appropriate Executive Member;
4. the Strategic Management Team report progress made on the Programme to the Executive at least four times per annum; and
5. the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy be updated to reflect this Capital Programme.

40/08

DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR UNITARY LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DEVON

Consideration was given to a report which briefly summarised the draft proposal for unitary local government in Devon published by the Boundary Committee on 7 July 2008.

In introducing the item, the Leader expressed his belief that the Rural South Devon and Dartmoor Concept had merit and expressed his disappointment that it did not feature as a preferred option for unitary local government in Devon.

The Strategic Director (Community) proceeded to provide the Council with a presentation, which suggested five options for the Council to consider. These options were:

- React to the Boundary Committee's report by responding to the consultation questions;
- Actively oppose the Boundary Committee's draft proposal and/or their alternative proposal;
- Continue to promote the Rural South Devon and Dartmoor Unitary Concept;

- Consider the impact on South Hams of other concepts which have been rejected by the Boundary Committee; and
- Promote the retention of an enhanced two-tier system i.e. Integrated Devon, in parallel with the response to the Boundary Committee process.

During discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- a) disquiet at the content of the Boundary Committee's draft proposals publication. Members highlighted inaccuracies and flaws in the publication and felt these to be unacceptable. For example, the population statistics used in the publication related to 2001 and did not take into account the proposed new communities at Cranbrook and Sherford.
- b) the plea to ensure all representations were presented to the Boundary Committee well in advance of the public consultation deadline of 26 September 2008. In making this plea, a Member questioned whether equal weighting would be given to all comments submitted and felt that the Council should get its comments to the Boundary Committee well before the deadline. In response, officers advised that it was extremely unlikely that the financial case would be prepared well in advance of the deadline and it was felt that these costings should be in place before any response was submitted;
- c) the lack of any recommended boundary changes to Plymouth City and Torbay Councils. Whilst critical of the publication, a number of Members did take some comfort in that there were no proposed boundary changes to Plymouth City and Torbay Councils. In contrast, a local Member did advise that in the Stoke Gabriel parish, a number of residents had expressed the view that they would prefer to be within an extended Torbay Council than a Unitary Devon equivalent;
- d) the quoted £30 million cost of reforming local government in Devon. Some Members felt that this sum, which would be supplemented by Council Taxpayers, constituted a needless change. Moreover, and in light of the current economic pressures, this cost would be an additional burden to the long suffering Council Taxpayers. Rather than undergoing such a reform, several Members stated their support for enhanced two-tier working with the County Council and progressing the current shared services agenda, as the appropriate solution for long term governance in Devon;
- e) the future of the South Devon and Dartmoor Concept. It was noted that should the Council wish to further progress this concept, there would be extensive resource implications in preparing a business case. In light of this and the pressure on other parts of the county to provide the Boundary Committee with financial information in a very short timescale, Members concluded that the Council would not be able to accommodate the proposal. As a consequence, Members believed that there was no merit in progressing this concept any further;

- f) the status of the proposed Community Boards. In disputing the claim that Community Boards would be simply 'talking shops', a Member who supported the Unitary Devon concept felt that they would be sounding boards which, if operating effectively, could improve local services. The Leader advised that it was currently difficult to provide town and parish councils and residents with guidance and clarity on the Community Boards because the Council itself did not know their exact purpose;
- g) support for the Unitary Devon concept. A couple of Members stated their support for the concept and in particular made reference to the County Council being responsible for 85% of the total budgetary expenditure in Devon. Consequently, the Members highlighted the additional expenditure which would incur from dividing services such as highways, education and social services. The Members felt that the alternative option of an Exeter and Exmouth Unitary Council was wholly inappropriate and hoped that the Council's submission to the Boundary Committee would make reference to this viewpoint;
- h) the purpose of the consultation process. Due to the apparent vagueness and flaws of the publication, a Member questioned whether the Boundary Committee had already reached its conclusions and therefore queried whether the consultation process was a meaningless exercise;
- i) the inevitable equalisation of Council Tax. A Member referred to the Council as having one of the lowest levels of Council Tax in Devon and felt it inevitable that to ensure equalisation throughout the county, Council Taxpayers in the South Hams would incur further increases;
- j) the differences between town and parish councils. A Member commented that the Boundary Committee did not appear to appreciate the distinct differences between town and parish councils and that parish councils did not wish to be related to their nearest town councils;
- k) the need to make strong representations to the Secretary of State in January 2009. In assuming that the Boundary Committee's final advice on 31 December 2008 would be that the preferred option was for a Unitary Devon concept, some Members stressed the need for the Council to fiercely oppose this recommendation, based upon factors including: size, cost and locality of the proposals.

RESOLVED

That the Council:-

- a) has no confidence in the Boundary Committee's draft proposals;

- b) express its disappointment that the South Devon and Dartmoor concept has been dismissed by the Boundary Committee without adequate reason and identifies that at this stage, it has serious concerns about the following issues, namely:
- future delivery arrangements for district based services that meet the needs of the communities and public of the South Hams;
 - the nature and role of the proposed Community Boards;
 - the representation of parishes on the Community Boards and the means of selection of such parishes;
 - the position of the Chair of the Community Board versus the Mayor of the Town Council and/or Chairman of the Parish Council;
 - the nature, geography, role and relationship with existing unitaries that the Spatial Board serving the South Hams will have;
 - whether a Planning Sub-Committee of the Spatial Board would be fit for purpose in dealing with democratic engagement in the development control function;
 - vesting the budgetary and strategic decision making for a county of 750,000 residents in an Executive of no more than 10 Members and the democratic deficit that will result;
 - the basis on which the financial case is being calculated and the assumptions which support it especially around the cost of transition, the size of the workforce and the manner of service delivery and access to services;
 - the possible detrimental effect on services in the South Hams if the priority is to raise service levels in the areas of the county currently receiving lower levels of performance;
 - the democratic deficit from currently approximately 1 Member to 2,000 residents to approximately 1 Member to 7,500 residents and the lack of local community involvement entailed;
- c) establish a Local Government Review Member Working Group to steer the ongoing work associated with responding to the Boundary Committee's recommendation and authority be given to Group Leaders to apply the substitution rule;
- d) delegate authority to the Group to consider and submit a response to the Boundary Committee by 26 September 2008;
- e) request that the Local Government Review Member

Working Group report back to Council at its meeting on 25 September 2008 with the outcome of this process.

41/08

REPORTS OF BODIES

RESOLVED

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

- (a) Development Control Committee 25 June 2008
- (b) Environment Policy Development Group 3 July 2008
- (c) Salcombe Harbour Board 7 July 2008

SH.18/08: Structure of Harbour Dues

RESOLVED

That the Harbour Dues structure be modified, in accordance with paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report, as presented to the Board.

- (d) Personnel Panel 9 July 2008

PP.10/08: Head of Improvement – Verbal Report

The Chairman of the Panel confirmed that members of staff who were leaving the employ of the Council were given exit interviews.

The Chairman of the Panel also wished to congratulate the Chief Executive on the improved levels of communication throughout the Council and felt that through ongoing work to address the identified shortcomings in the survey, it was hoped for much improved results next year.

- (e) Executive 10 July 2008

E.19/08: Public Question Time

Whilst given assurances that improvements had been made in grass cutting, the local Member for Yealmpton advised that his area was currently still four weeks in arrears. The Member also expressed his dismay that at the western area of the district, officers advised that they were concentrating their resources on the Ivybridge area and therefore rural areas were being neglected. In response, officers agreed to pursue this matter and report back to the Member in due course.

E.26/08: Review of Local Development Framework Programme

The Leader of Council highlighted the recent announcement that the Council had received a Housing and Planning Delivery Grant award which had been capped at £1million. The most significant element of this grant was awarded for plan-making based on the LDF Core Strategy and Sherford Area Action Plan. The Leader wished to extend his congratulations to everyone involved in this achievement.

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.45 pm).

Chairman