

Welcomes

Those present were welcomed to the meeting by Laura Whitehead, the Chief Officer of South Hams CVS and member of the South Hams Strategic Partnership (SHSP).

1. Progress on project themes

At the last Community Partnership Forum in June 2005 the Action Plans for **Accessible Services** and **Active and Caring Communities** were 'signed off' having been completed. Progress on the 2 remaining Action Plans is as follows:

Affordable housing

South Hams District Council (SHDC) has been using its Beacon Status for 'Affordable Housing' to promote the progress being made by partners in the district, advocate on behalf of communities facing issues around affordability of housing and share best practice with others.

2nd homes Council Tax money has been used to bring on housing schemes at: East Allington, Kingsbridge, Brixton. Further schemes are proposed at Totnes, Salcombe, Chillington, Strete. These will require partnership working with Devon County Council to ensure the continued use of 2nd homes Council Tax.

Progress continues to be made with the production of the Local Development Framework (LDF) which will be used to identify the sites for affordable housing across the district. Progress also continues to be made across the Partnership with the design and planning of facilities, including affordable homes at Sherford new community.

Employment and Skills

SHDC has been using its Beacon Status for 'Sustainable Tourism' to promote best practice to other local authorities, raise awareness within the business sector and beyond, and encourage businesses to incorporate environmental good practice into their core activities.

New employment units have been built at Totnes and Dartmouth. The 3 units at Babbage Court, Totnes are built to high environmental standards (BREEM). Second and third phases of units are planned at Admiral Court, Dartmouth.

Making use of a range of external funding streams for economic development projects, for example:

- Using and sign-posting partners and stakeholders to relevant Devon Renaissance funding streams, including grants for the re-use of redundant buildings for employment use;
- Funding of start-up business units at Ivybridge.

Developing a revised Prosperity Strategy for the district, under the umbrella of the Community Strategy. Proposed themes include:

- Raise awareness of economic development across the partners;
- Improve the economic infrastructure of the district;
- Advance projects that attract external funding;
- Improve communications.

2. Up-date on the Community Strategy review

by Kay Dawson, Community Development Officer, SHDC

The range of consultation events over Summer / Autumn 2005 were summarised and the results presented.

A range of consultation activities 'Shaping the future of the South Hams', were delivered in order to review community priorities. Publicity materials were sent out to town and parish councils, village hall contacts and over 450 community groups including contacts for over 60 'hard-to-reach' groups. With the support of community newsletters, libraries, tourist information centres, leisure centres, doctors, dentists, health centres, police stations and schools, the opportunity to take part was spread far-and-wide.

Advertisement space was used in local newspapers; media releases were issued which resulted in numerous newspaper articles and local radio interviews. South Hams District Council website ran 'warm-up' and main feature articles in the weeks running up to events. A virtual tour of the consultation road show also ran on the website during the consultation period.

The activities were promoted through network groups such as the South Hams Sustainability Group and South Hams Voluntary Sector Forum. These, together with two launch events at Ivybridge Town Council and South Hams District Council HQ at Follaton House, were used to encourage participation through 'word-of-mouth'.

The first events, 'Laying foundations for the future', were themed workshops for partners and stakeholders to establish issues, opportunities and key priorities. Using the themes regularly appearing in community-based planning documents and other strategies, participants were asked to establish where improvements could bring the most benefit to our Economy, Community and Environment.

Then followed a series of community events around the district to establish community needs and aspirations. Whilst reviewing the first Community Strategy, the opportunity was taken to consult on a range of other strategy documents; the LDF, Prosperity Strategy, Tourism Strategy and Public Space Strategy - all of which 'nest' beneath the Community Strategy. A road show was taken to Malborough Village Hall, between Kingsbridge and Salcombe; Totnes Civic Hall; South Dartmoor Leisure Centre in Ivybridge and Townstal Community Hall in Dartmouth.

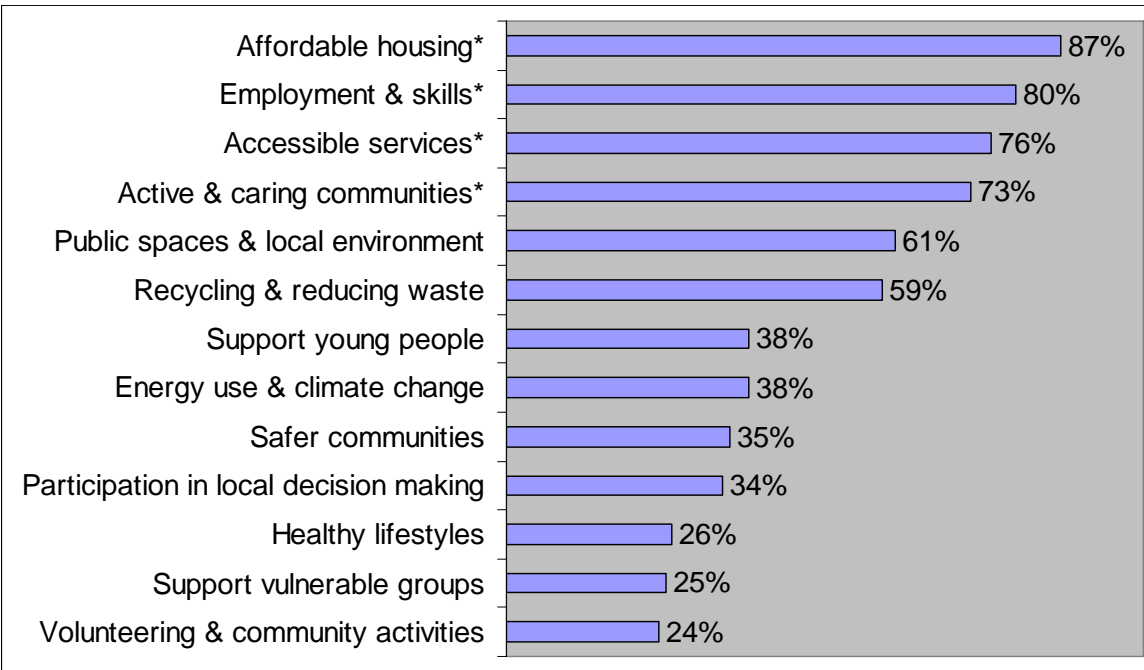
A range of follow-up consultations were undertaken at existing activities including the Farmers Market's in each of the 4 main towns and 2 of the district's main shows, the Yealmpton Show and Totnes Agricultural Show. 52 face-to-face interviews were undertaken with the under 35's, as previous experience has shown that this age group appears to be less well represented in consultation activities.

A youth consultation event encouraged participation by young people (under 18's) from across the district. This was hosted at the new Ivybridge Youth Centre in October, to coincide with Local Democracy Week.

Among the range of tools used to gather information, a questionnaire helped capture local people's views across a broad range of topics. A total of 822 completed questionnaires were returned and analysed.

Aspect	Very good (%)	Quite good (%)	Overall (%)
Quality of life	45	51	96
State of the coast & countryside	44	51	95
State of towns and villages	15	68	83
Safety in our community	15	60	75
Health in our community	13	61	74
Transport opportunities	2	21	23

When presented with the range of issues across the South Hams, most respondents thought all four of the original Community Strategy themes should remain. There appear to be three distinct levels of support regarding the introduction of any new themes into the new Sustainable Community Strategy.



* South Hams Community Strategy 2003 – 2006 Priority themes

In deciding the priority themes for the new South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy, it has been essential to take into account:

- The outcomes of the various community consultation activities;
- The remit of the LSP 'to identify areas where working together across service and organisational boundaries has the potential to deliver greater benefit for the people of the South Hams';
- New government guidance on preparing Sustainable Community Strategies.

The new South Hams Sustainable Community Strategy has a series of aims across 4 proposed priority theme areas, which the LSP will work towards over the next 5 years. The proposed theme areas are:

1. Affordable homes
2. Competitive local economy
3. Community vibrancy
4. Quality built and natural environment

However, the 4 priority theme areas above do not stand independently of one another. There are important links and opportunities to be realised between the themes and between the work of the agencies traditionally allied to one theme rather than another. Therefore 3 cross-cutting themes are proposed, where the LSP is particularly looking to add value, and are proposed as:

- Sustainable development
- Healthy living
- Access to services

While there is an impressive level of enthusiasm for achieving these aims, the timescale for significant improvement in some areas will be longer than others.

Detailed and resourced Action Plans will be developed as the next stage in the Sustainable Community Strategy. As the partnership approach strengthens year on year and projects are completed on a 'task and finish' basis, the Action Plans and the supporting aims and priorities will need to be reviewed on a periodic basis.

The SHSP is looking to establish/support working groups reflecting the themes emerging from the new Sustainable Community Strategy. These working groups would oversee the delivery of specific actions in the Action Plans and work towards improved links between the community based planning groups and the community strategy priorities.

3. Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP) up-date

by Ruth Bagley, Chair of SHSP

DSP was set up four years ago with the aim of building consensus around Community Strategy themes of county wide importance. The first two / three years has involved gaining an understanding of the issues and has resulted in a Benefits Take-up Campaign and work being done on renewable energy. The last year has been spent reviewing the composition and constitution of the Partnership in order to establish how it can best deliver the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Devon. The LAA has four themes: 'Safer and Stronger Communities', 'Healthier Living' (older people), 'Young People' and 'Economy'.

DSP has carried out work on equalities through its 'Common Ground' project to target resources to the most socio-economically deprived communities. The SHSP recently responded to Common Ground proposals for project delivery, highlighting the fact that the Index of Multiple Deprivation (the criteria they use to administer funding and support) does not show the true extent of rural deprivation in the district and therefore deprived communities in the South Hams lose out.

DSP aims to add value to the Affordable Housing theme and is currently producing a leaflet and website to raise the profile of this county wide issue. A website is being prepared by the Devon Housing Group and is due to go live by July, the domain name will be www.dshg.org.uk.

Ruth highlighted that instabilities in organisations can cause partnerships to struggle, but the DSP is now moving from consensus building to delivery mode.

4. SHSP up-date, incorporating the feedback from the CPF workshop in June 2005.

Membership of SHSP

Review of the range of Partnership members has been undertaken and invitations to new members were accepted from the Learning & Skills Council and Business Link as these areas were previously under-represented and emerged as key themes in the new Community Strategy. SHSP reconfirmed its commitment to 'Working Together'.

The 'Who can help us?' information sheet has been up-dated, giving named contacts across the agencies represented on SHSP and how they can help. Copies are available from the Community Development Team at SHDC.

Discussions around the SHSP table have also included: The role of the Chair and the 'Leaders of Action'; and looking at establishing working groups / networks to take the lead role in delivering/supporting delivery of the new Action Plans associated with the Community Strategy, thereby improving accountability, accessibility to the process, information and monitoring. This all has resource issues.

Perception of the Partnership

The CPF had concerns that both SHSP and CPF were too SHDC focused. Following these comments, there has been a review of attendance by SHDC officers at these meetings; and move towards focused information relevant to the whole Partnership, not just an individual members agenda.

Improving communications

A new logo for the SHSP has been designed and is now in use – see above.

Work is moving forward on a SHSP website, currently being hosted by SHDC, but which links to partners websites. (www.southhams.gov.uk – then follow the path: [residents/community/south hams strategic partnership](#)). There is the potential to include a range of information on this site, such as your suggestions of e-bulletins / diary of events / project up-dates / contacts. The need to promote the 2 way flow of information is recognised but we need your help to make that happen. Again, there is a resource issue for the Partnership.

SHSP released its first ever media release upon signing of the Compact for Devon!

5. Workshop activity: Community Speed-dating

There then followed an activity whereby attendees were given the opportunity to speed interview each other. Chairs were formed into two concentric circles:

Outside circle: Strategic bodies / agency reps
Community leaders
Partnership reps

Inside circle: Community group representatives

Introduce yourself to your potential partner you will then have 5 minutes to discuss with your partner issues / ideas around:

- Helping service providers **better understand** your communities identified needs
- Ask the service provider how they can **meet** your communities identified needs
- Were better **joined up working across service providers** / boundaries could help your community
- **Advise from service provider** on where your two agencies can work better or understand each others needs
- A topic you feel is important

After 5 minutes, **we will move you on**. Inside circle remain seated, the outside circle should move clockwise to the next partner.

Following this activity, the attendees were asked for feedback which raised interesting comments around:

- Funding for projects
- Community involvement in writing the Community Strategy
- Access to transport
- Access to youth facilities
- New links made between partners
- Encourage better attendance at CPF meetings.

Attendees were asked to suggest time frame and agenda items for the next CPF meeting. It was agreed the next CPF be held in September, and that the opportunity for an 'Open Forum' session be explored, whereby groups / partners / stakeholders could book a 5-minute slot in advance to up-date others on their progress.

Next meeting: Proposed 3rd / 4th week of September
Location: Proposed Ivybridge.