

SOUTH HAMS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held
on
Thursday, 16th March, 2023 at 2.00 pm at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Thomas
Vice Chairman Cllr Smerdon

Cllr Austen	Cllr Birch
Cllr Chown	Cllr Jackson
Cllr Jones	Cllr McKay
Cllr Rose	Cllr Rowe
Cllr Spencer	Cllr Sweett
Cllr Taylor	

In attendance:

Councillors:	Cllr Hopwood
Cllr Baldry (via Teams);	Cllr Pearce
Cllr Brown	Cllr Pringle (via Teams)
Cllr Hawkins	
Cllr Holway	

Officers:
Director – Customer Service & Delivery
Director – Place & Enterprise]
Director – Strategy & Governance
Assistant Director – Strategy & Organisational Development (via Teams)
Head of Environmental Health & Licensing
Senior Section 106 Officer (via Teams)
Community Digital Connectivity Officer
Democratic Services Specialist

43.

Minutes

O&S.43/22

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 January 2023 were confirmed as a correct record. One Member highlighted Minute O&S.39/22 – Better Lives for All – Climate Change Thematic Update – Action AM1.4. A request was made to officers to provide clarity on allocation of funding and timescales.

Officers reported that this was working progress and would provide an update on progress at a future meeting.

44. **Declarations of Interest**

O&S.44/22

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

45. **Public Forum**

O&S.45/22

In accordance with the Public Forum Procedure Rules, the Chairman informed that no questions had been received for consideration.

46. **Better Lives for All Thematic Update: Communities**

O&S.46/22

The lead Executive Member for Communities introduced the report and invited Members' questions on the contents of the Communities Thematic Update.

In the ensuing debate, particular reference was made to:

- Action CW1.1 (Work with partners to pilot new approaches to tackling rural poverty in an area identified as in the most deprived areas of South Hams). It was reported that the pilot project focused on South Brent and the learning and actions identified would be rolled across other areas in the district;
- Action CW1.2 (Delivery of Dartmouth Integrated Health Hub). Action on track.
- Action CW1.3 (Support more people to live independently for as long as they choose through efficient delivery of housing related grant schemes). Members raised that there was no indication on the number of applications received and it was reported it was very rare to refuse an application. It was further reported they work in partnership with housing associations and qualified officers undertake the assessments within the home;
- Action CW1.4 (Increase active participation in sport and leisure activities). It was reported that Government funding of £63m for leisure centres of which £40m allocated for the decarbonisation of swimming pools. A bid would be submitted, however there was a need to be realistic about what this money would achieve. One Member felt concerned about Fusion's position and that a fuller picture was not included within the report. A request was made for Members to receive an officer's report on Fusion's state of play and financial position ahead of the meeting in April in order for the Committee to fully scrutinise Fusion.

The Chair then proposed and was seconded to remove 'green on track' and leave as blank. The next report to Committee to include an officer report on Fusion. One member then raised concerns on scrutinising this type of report during Purdah. The Chair relayed that they would take full advice from the Monitoring Officer on reports for the April meeting. A further request was made for the quarterly Fusion updates to be circulated to all Members.

- Action CW1.5 (Delivery of projects to enhance outdoor public spaces). It was reported that each project was kept under constant review and money would be spent as soon as possible.
- Action CW1.6 (Work with the voluntary sector to plan how we can better work better together in the future). Action on track.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the progress in the delivery of the Better Lives for All 'Communities' Thematic Delivery Plan be noted, and;
2. Action CW1.4 (Increase active participation in sport and leisure activities) – remove green and leave blank. The Committee to receive an Officer's report on Fusion and all Members to receive the quarterly Fusion updates.

47.

Six-monthly Update - Broadband

O&S.47/22

The Committee was presented with an update report, which included:

- On-going work with three suppliers; Airband, Openreach and Wildanet;
- Airband were behind schedule;
- Openreach were the preferred provider for residents;
- Wildanet a smaller company and building entirely underground;
- Project Gigabit have provided more public money into areas that have been missed;
- Individuals can apply for funding which has been increased;
- Potential further money though the LEP;
- Remote areas would look at alternatives such as satellites.

In discussion, it was reported that Wildanet and Airband have public contracts and the local authority cannot stop where and when they work. We can however, provide an update on whether these providers are on track to deliver broadband services.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Digital Connectivity update was noted and for an update report on whether providers were on track to deliver broadband services.

48.

Customer Access Strategy & Contact Centre Update

O&S.48/22

The lead Executive Member for Customer Service Delivery introduced the report and invited Members' questions on the contents of the Communities Thematic Update.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- The customer survey was reviewed annually and changes made following customer feedback. It was important to involve customers in this process;

- The reception area would be reconfigured with new signage to enable easier access for customers;
- Staff were fully trained and supported within the Contact Centre.

Thanks were given to Jim Davis.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the approach and actions to implement the Customer Access Strategy (as set out in section 3 of the published agenda report) be noted; and
2. That the actions taken to improve the Contact Centre performance (as set out in section 4 and detailed in Appendix A of the published agenda report) be noted

49.

Task and Finish Group Updates

O&S.49/22

(a) Consultation and Engagement Strategy – verbal update

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group provided a verbal update on the work in supporting the Review and suggested a date for the Group to meet and conclude their findings.

The Committee felt that the date suggested would not give sufficient time for the Group to report back on recommendations. Some Members felt that the task and finish had become ‘political’ while others thought not and that the review should come to a conclusion. It was then put forward that the review should be delayed for the new administration to undertake as it was felt that a further meeting would not be sufficient.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMEND** that the Consultation and Engagement Strategy Task and Finish Group be reconvened by the new Council administration.

50.

O&S Annual Work Programme - Latest Version

O&S.50/22

The Committee agreed the following items to be scheduled for the next meeting in April:

- Council Delivery against Corporate Theme: Council Services
- Bi-Annual Fusion Report

Consultation and Engagement Strategy Task and Finish deferred and to be looked at by the new administration.

Members requested clarification from the Monitoring Officer on reports being taken at the April meeting. It was also requested that the Monitoring Officer be in attendance at the meeting and at the Chair's Brief. The Chair then raised if part of the Fusion report needed to be discussed under Part II then they would be within the rules of purdah.

The Meeting concluded at 3.48 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
