

# SOUTH HAMS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Minutes** of a meeting of the **South Hams Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held  
on  
**Thursday, 5th October, 2023 at 2.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present:           **Councillors:**

***Chairman*** Cllr Hawkins  
***Vice Chairman*** Cllr Cooper

Cllr Dennis  
Cllr Dommett  
Cllr Penfold  
Cllr Yardy (as Substitute)

Cllr Edie  
Cllr Presswell

Cllr Dewynter

## **In attendance:**

Councillors:

Cllr Birch  
Cllr Steele ( via Teams )

Officers:

Director - Governance & Assurance  
Principal Housing Officer  
Senior Democratic Services Support Officer

7.           **Minutes**  
O&S.07/23  
The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record
  
8.           **Declarations of Interest**  
O&S.08/23  
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.

9. **Public Forum**

O&S.09/23

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

10. **Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation**

O&S.10/23

Lead Executive Member for Housing, Environmental Health and Licensing reported on the shortfall in affordable housing and the increase in rent for rental properties. It was further reported that preventing homelessness was a statutory duty and need for temporary accommodation was rising and this was in line with national trends. SHDC owns 8 properties and looking to increase this to 11 properties.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- The 8 properties owned by SHDC comprise of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom properties in across the district.
- They looked at the cohort and areas with the highest housing need when looking for suitable properties. Historically in Dartmouth properties were used the least.
- When people present as homeless and have health issues, they would inform the local GP to provide additional support. With regard to the individual in Dartmouth would have to investigate.
- The KPI on % of cases where homelessness was prevented meant avoid accepting the homelessness in some other way, such as mediating with landlord or remain with family. The national average was 40% and the remaining 37% of people not able to fix the problem before they left their existing address.
- We aim to prevent or relieve homelessness.
- That it was very usual for people to stay in temporary accommodation for over year, however the length of time was starting to increase.
- If a family made homeless, they would work with the family to achieve the best outcomes and undertake an assessment of their needs and the offer of accommodation has to be reasonable.
- There had been in an increase in the number of nights people in temporary accommodation and this pressure was increasing but was dealt with efficiently and promptly. They also have a social lettings enterprise who manage properties through SHDC and offer lower rents.
- They report on Government returns and the real focus was to stop people from becoming homeless and this was increasingly difficult to stop and the KPI was a good indicator for success rates.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

The Committee noted the update on Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation.

11. **Task and Finish Group Updates**

O&S.11/23

The Chair reported that that the following task and finish groups would be convened, and membership sought via the Leaders of each of the political groups:

- SW Water - To establish SHDC's statutory powers and how they could be implemented and SW Water's capacity to service drains and homes adequately on new housing developments.
- Fusion – to identify any issues to be addressed prior to the February meeting.
- Planning Enforcement – request from the Executive.

12. **O&S Annual Work Programme**

O&S.12/23

The Committee agreed the following item to be added to the work programme:

- Executive Forward Plan as a standing agenda item.

The Committee also requested:

- An informal meeting to be set up on KPIs before next meeting in December.
- A list of outside bodies funded by SHDC.

The Meeting concluded at 3.15 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

