

# SOUTH HAMS COUNCIL



## Minutes of a meeting of the South Hams Council held on Thursday, 13th April, 2023 at 11.30 am at the Council Chamber - Follaton House

Present:            **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Austen  
**Vice Chairman** Cllr Taylor

Cllr Abbott	Cllr Baldry
Cllr Bastone	Cllr Birch
Cllr Brazil	Cllr Brown
Cllr Hawkins	Cllr Hodgson
Cllr Holway	Cllr Hopwood
Cllr Jones	Cllr Long
Cllr McKay	Cllr O'Callaghan
Cllr Pearce	Cllr Pringle
Cllr Reeve	Cllr Rowe
Cllr Smerdon	Cllr Spencer
Cllr Sweett	

### **In attendance:**

Officers:  
Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Section 151 Officer  
Monitoring Officer  
Democratic Services Manager  
Assistant Director – Waste & Operations  
Principal Project Manager

### 83.            **Declarations of Interest**

83/22

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

### 84.            **Waste and Recycling Services Update**

84/22

Members considered a report that provided an update on the progress and performance of the waste service since it returned to Council control on 3 October 2022.

In introducing the report, the lead Executive Member once again apologised to both local residents for the previous bad service suffered and the wider membership for the many complaints that they had received from their constituents. The lead Member proceeded to emphasise that service performance had been significantly improved since returning in-house and this was attributed to the work of lead officers who were subsequently thanked. Finally, the lead Member recognised that the service now needed to look forward and focus its efforts on making further service improvements that would be supplemented by approval of the recommendations contained within the published agenda report.

Upon the conclusion of the lead Executive Member introduction, some questions of clarity were asked with regard to:

- the costings (including one-off set up and transitional costs) and financial implications set out in the published agenda report;
- the most up to date monthly performance information; and
- the latest position in respect of staff contract signing.

In the ensuing debate (once each of the recommendations had been **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**), particular reference was made to:

- (a) staff morale and recruitment. A number of Members recognised the vast improvements in staff morale amongst the operatives since responsibility for the service had been returned in-house. Furthermore, whilst there remained some recruitment challenges, these were by no means on the same scale as had been experienced by the external contractor;
- (b) the proposal for all residents to be in receipt of the Devon Aligned Service. It was recognised that residents would welcome the transition to the Devon Aligned Service and the consequent Climate Change benefits were also recognised;
- (c) the tireless work of the lead Executive Member and lead officers. In recognition of the volume of work that had been undertaken to reach this point, a number of Members wished to formally put on record their specific thanks to the lead Member, lead officers and the service operatives;
- (d) the need to focus on the future of the waste and recycling service. Members echoed the comments of the lead Member and emphasised the importance of the Council now concentrating its collective efforts on looking forward to the future of the service rather than reflecting on recent history. In so doing, some Members made the point that, given the number of idiosyncrasies (e.g. access issues) across the South Hams, there was a need for service flexibility to be built-in because one single solution would not suit every household.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That the Vehicle and Plant Earmarked Reserve and the one-off implementation budget be utilised to purchase end of life fleet replacements and the fleet required for the roll out of the remaining

properties onto the Devon Aligned Service (DAS) in October 2023, which is anticipated to cost £2.16 million;

- (b) That internal borrowing of up to £0.5 million be used to fund the improvements to the Torr Depot, with the associated revenue costs of £35,000 per annum for 25 years (the life of the asset) being financed by efficiencies and savings delivered by the service;
- (c) That £180,000 be allocated from the Revenue Grants Earmarked Reserve to fund additional project management capacity; and
- (d) That the setting of fees and charges for the waste and recycling service be delegated to the Director for Customer Service and Delivery, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the lead Executive Member for waste and recycling and the Section 151 Officer.

85. **Chairman's Concluding Comments**

85/22

As this was to be the final meeting of the Council before the Local Elections took place in May 2023, the Chairman thanked all Members and Officers for their commitment and dedication throughout the Council term. He wished those standing for re-election every success at the ballot box and those who had opted to not re-stand, every happiness in their future pursuits.

In response, a Member thanked the Chairman for his service and, on behalf of all Members, the way that he had chaired the Council meetings during his year as Chairman. He went on to acknowledge the contribution of Cllr Baldry, Lead Executive Member for Environment for his service to the Council, and specifically his stewardship of the resolution of the Waste and Recycling Service issues experienced during recent years. He further acknowledged Cllr Pearce, who as Leader had navigated the Council through unprecedented times, with hard work, enthusiasm, courage, drive and a determination to deliver the best services possible to local residents.

The Meeting concluded at 12.10 pm

Signed by:

Chairman

---