

Parish report from your District Councillors

DECEMBER 2022

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Council has received confirmation from the Levelling-Up Department that our UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) proposals have been accepted. UKSPF is designed to put local authorities in control of the business and community support programmes delivered in their areas. The proposals are worth £1,062,367 for the South Hams.



SHDC consulted with members in South Hams to help shape its proposals and determine local priorities, taking on board members' suggestions to strengthen the agri element of the programme and to work with our community energy groups, and incorporated these into the proposal prior to submission to the Government. Through the initial member consultation, SHDC agreed a number of local priorities which align with the Corporate Strategy and the Government's Levelling-Up objectives. This has resulted in a programme of support which includes (but is not limited to):

Active and Inclusive Travel

- The development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (which sets out and prioritises interventions to improve our cycling and walking network - hopefully to attract other government investment)
- Support for the West Devon Transport Hub to enhance the active and inclusive travel infrastructure linking the new hub to the wider community and surrounding areas
- Programmes of activities to encourage people to use sustainable travel for their work and leisure activities, particularly making our tourism sites accessible through low carbon transport

Agriculture and Regenerative Farming

- Bringing R&D to our agricultural communities, turning them into a test bed for new technologies and processes so that they can lead the way in improving the national agricultural sector
- Supporting farms to transition to regenerative farming processes (which focus on improving soil quality, moving away from pesticides and fertilisers, and improving biodiversity on their sites)
- Supporting farms and food producers to get their products into local market places (mostly the food and drink sector, but also to actual markets)

Marine Economy and Decarbonisation

- Decarbonisation of the Lower Dart Ferry and Salcombe water taxis
- Studies to establish the carbon footprint of Salcombe Harbour and development of a strategy to decarbonise the site
- The delivery of innovative pilot projects to bring new technologies and processes to the marine sector

Wider Business Support and Consultancy (focused on decarbonisation)

- Support for Community Energy Groups to help them bring projects forward and access funds to support their goals
- Support for village halls to strengthen the role they play in our most rural communities
- The delivery of decarbonisation plans for businesses, which will then be used to help them access grant support
- Work with our construction sector and its supply chain to strengthen its ability to deliver decarbonised building projects
- and a range of other projects.

Some activities will begin delivery in January, but the bulk of our programme will run from April 2023 until the end of March 2025.

Plymouth and South Devon Freeport Approval

The Plymouth and South Devon Freeport was the first of eight Freeports to be given the full green light along with two others. The approval unlocks millions of pounds of grant seed funding and enables applicable businesses to join and take advantage of the Freeport status.



The Freeport will:

- Enable new employment land to be bought forward at the three sites of South Yard, Langage and Sherford
- Accelerate the formation of advanced manufacturing clusters in marine, defence and space sectors with low carbon applications at the forefront
- Leverage £250m private sector investment
- Ensure seed capital grant from Government of £25m for essential infrastructure
- Include £29m investment from local councils
- Support a new £30m Innovation Centre at Oceansgate
- Provide a major expansion plan for Princess Yachts
- Deliver over 3,500 jobs

Support for Homelessness

South Hams and West Devon Councils work with all rough sleepers across the area to ensure they have access to appropriate services should they wish to engage and work with us to enable them to access accommodation. With the weather getting colder we have now activated the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol until 1 March 2023.



We would be grateful if you could let us know of anyone sleeping rough and advise them to contact a member of the Housing team on 01803 861234. Outside of office hours, the number is 01803 867034. SHDC will arrange for an outreach worker to make contact with them. This is particularly important during periods of severe weather.

Supported Housing Improvement Programme

SHDC has been successful in our joint bid with Devon County and West Devon to the Government's Supported Housing Improvements Programme. This is exciting news for both Councils as we will receive just over £300,000 over the next three years. Together we have played an important role nationally in highlighting the current system of supported exempt accommodation and the level of public funding that ends up in the pockets of unscrupulous providers, putting profit before people. The funding will bring together a task force of specialist benefit officers, an inspection regime and county commissioners to ensure that we continue to safeguard our most vulnerable residents.



Cost-of-Living - Community Grants Deadline

South Hams are launching two funds to enable communities to respond locally as part of our Cost-of-Living Response plan. The deadline for the community grants is 16 December. These are the two grants which are part of our Cost-of-Living Response Plan:

Grant Fund 1 - A total of £25,000 available for schemes directly responding to cost of living - operating of hubs, provision of warm meals to vulnerable residents etc. Grants can be up to a maximum of £1,000.

Grant Fund 2 - A total of £25,000 available for schemes that will support wider Health and Wellbeing - both physical and mental. We will look favourably on applications trying something a little different and so, grants can apply for up to £2,500 from this fund.

You can find out more at: www.southhams.gov.uk/winter-fund

Support for households

Slow cookers, cookbooks, electric blankets: - just some of the ways SHDC will distribute some of the £187,000 of government funding allocated to them by Devon County Council. This latest fund must be used to support households in the most need and particularly those who may not be eligible for other support available. South Hams will focus on supporting those who may be just above income thresholds, meaning they do not qualify for other support. This funding has to be spent by March 2023, and we wanted to devise ways to help families. We didn't just want to provide the funds, but by providing things like slow cookers and electric blankets we can help the residents save money and reduce their costs for a longer period of time. The Excess will be spent in the following ways:

- Making payments of £650 to working age households receiving council tax reduction and not receiving council tax support in December 2022.
- Making payments of £300 to households receiving council tax disabled band reduction on 1 December 2022. This will be able to support 234 households who are likely to have additional energy costs due to disabilities.
- Providing funding of £10,000 to help partners provide slow cookers and cookbooks, electric blankets, and sleeping bags to individuals and households identified as being in need.
- Using the remainder of the funding to offer an open application process to provide support to other households in financial need.

South Hams District Council says that the key to distributing this money is to get it out to those most in need and that it has a proven track record in this area.

Motorhomes pilot successful



A 12-month pilot scheme allowing self-contained motorhomes to stay at nominated South Hams' car parks has been permanently adopted. The pilot scheme, which began in June 2021, trialled five sites for self-contained motorhomes in the following car parks:

- Longmarsh Car Park, Totnes
- Leonards Road Car Park, Ivybridge
- Poundwell Meadow Car Park, Modbury
- Park & Ride Car Park, Dartmouth
- Cattlemarket Car Park, Kingsbridge

Having reviewed the pilot, it has been agreed to permanently allow overnight sleeping for a two-night consecutive stop with no return within 48 hours within these car parks. The scheme is restricted to motorhomes with on-board facilities including a toilet. The stays will continue to be charged at an overnight rate.

Bullet Points

- The Council has been given a clean bill of health by external auditors, Grant Thornton LLP, who intend to issue an unqualified opinion on the Council's Accounts. The Council's clean audit means it will be one of the first few Councils in Devon to have its Annual Accounts and Audit ready to be signed off. Grant Thornton made specific reference to the high quality of the work and accounting records by the Council's finance team.
- The waste and recycling service in the South Hams continues to see a significant improvement in performance since the service successfully came back in-house on 3 October. The Council is now completing all collection rounds as currently scheduled and reduced the number of reported missed collections by around 75%. The move is likely to result in the council incurring additional costs of several million pounds in the next few years as a consequence of the mutual termination of the contract with FCC. A major review of all collection rounds is currently taking place, the plan being to move all residents currently on recycling bags to the new boxes by next Spring.
- Around 3000 residents have already signed up for the brown bin collection service. The new service, at a cost of £49 per bin, starts in March. Residents have until 22nd January to sign up. Go on the SHDC website or call 01803 861234
- Residents unable to gain information from the council online or via smartphone, or who need extra support, can now request a home visit. Your District Councillors can request this. We just need the person's name, address and phone number.