



MINUTES FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

MONDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2025 IN THE GUILDHALL

Present: Councillors L Auletta (Chair), T Bennett, S Collinson, T Cooper, J Cummings (left at 2000hrs), J Hodgson (from 1835hrs) and M Trant.

Apologies: None.

Not Present: Cllr Smallridge.

In Attendance: Members of the public, Cllrs Beavis, Peters and Presswell, and S Halliday (Governance and Projects Manager).

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.

Cllr Auletta read out a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded.

There were no apologies.

The Committee adjourned for the following item:

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Cllr Beavis commented on the new road markings on the roundabout.

2. BOWDEN PILLARS PROJECT

To update on the proposals for the Bowden Pillars Village Project from the applicants Bowden Pillars Future.

Two representatives of the Bowden Pillars Village Project attended to set out the background of the site, and the three elements of the project that focus around multi-purpose and regenerative land use: by Devon Wildlife Trust for tree planting (75 acres); regenerative farming/horticultural businesses (35 acres); and the planned regenerative village community which has been suggested to South Hams District Council in its call for sites for the Local Plan. The proposal is for the 50 dwellings to: have a low carbon footprint; use renewable energy; be super insulated; promote car sharing/pools and EV use; 50 percent affordable housing; no second home/holiday homes; co-housing shared facilities; onsite food hub open to residents and wider community/visitor use; self-contained sewage system. The idea of tiny homes is being explored (25-45sqm) designed for single/smaller household occupancy, with 75sqm 2-bed and 95sqm 3 bed dwellings, with all occupants required to sign up to the principles of the village community. Following on from two public sessions recently held in the town, from the New Year representatives of the project will be in the Climate Hub once a fortnight to engage with the public on the scheme, as Bowden Pillars see the project as an extension to the town and hope that it will appeal to multigenerational living and a more sustainable community. Councillors asked questions on: what percentage of those expressing an interest in living on the site have a TQ9 postcode; concerns about building on a greenfield site; pressures on local infrastructure (schools, health service); transport – and

pedestrian and cyclist safety from the site into the town; disability/accessibility build in the new dwellings; opportunity for young people to learn skills during the build; where they are in the planning process; and what contributions to local infrastructure are planned.

The Chair thanked the representatives for taking the time to engage with the Town Council and it was **AGREED** that they will come back with regular updates to the Committee via the officer.

The Committee reconvened.

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it writes to the Devon Wildlife Trust to make them aware of the historic catchment meadow on the Bowden Pillars site.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of 17th November 2025 and update on any matters arising.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

To make recommendations on the following planning applications:

Note: Cllr Hodgson observes and does not vote on any applications which would potentially be discussed at a Development Management Committee meeting at South Hams District Council (SHDC).

4a. 3381/25/FUL and 3382/25/LBC – Listed Building Consent for works associated with Change of use to residential maisonette to above ground floors including demolition of rear dilapidated outbuildings at ground floor & rebuilding of new kitchenette & WC, installation of a first floor balcony and slate-hanging of rear elevation. 1 The Plains, Totnes.

Support, subject to more detailed information about the specification of the slates.

4b. 3178/25/FUL – Installation of a new garden shed, reconfiguration of existing internal layout and replacement/repositioning of some existing windows to align with new internal layout. Quarrenden, Flat 1, Weirfields, Totnes, TQ9 5JS.

Support, subject to retention of the hedge to screen the shed.

4c. 3524/25/HHO – Householder application for single storey extension to side and rear of existing bungalow and associated works. Glenroy, Weirfields, Totnes, TQ9 5JS

Support.

4d. 3450/25/HHO and 3451/25/LBC – Listed Building Consent for Internal alterations, repairs and replacement windows, roof lights and external doors and replacement flat roof finish. 5 Leechwell Lane, Totnes, TQ9 5EA.

Support, but the Committee would encourage the use of breathable materials when decorating an historic building.

4e. 3203/25/FUL – Proposed conversion of flat into 2 x flat dwellings. Brutus Centre, Unit 2-3 Flat 2, Fore Street, Totnes, TQ9 5RW.

Support in principle, but the Committee would encourage the use of acoustic and thermal insulation and renewable energy.

4f. 3546/25/LBC – Replace slate-hanging on south elevation. 51 Fore Street, Totnes, TQ9 5NJ.

Support, subject to the Heritage Officer being content that suitable coloured slate and specification is used.

4g. 2887/25/FUL - Change of use to mixed use & alterations to shopfront to allow access to proposed first floor maisonette, internal refurbishment & rear access stair & garden space. 12 High Street, Totnes, TQ9 5SB.

Support, subject to exterior drawings in application reference 3145/25/LBC being used.

5. TOTNES CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

To consider the South Hams District Council pre-consultation draft Totnes Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and make any recommendation to Full Council.

The Committee discussed the pre-consultation draft which is an improvement on the earlier drafts but the Committee felt that some of its earlier comments have not been incorporated. It was **AGREED** that there is information that they would wish to see included and therefore the draft is not yet in a position to take to Full Council. It was **AGREED** that the Officer will circulate the draft comments by email for Committee agreement.

The Committee has the following comments on the draft:

- That more of the historic context detail and images used in the extant Conservation Area Appraisal is incorporated.
- Key views need to include the following: from Totnes Bridge down river; Borough Park in all directions (particularly towards the Castle, and east to the Bourton Valley).
- Limited detail on the three proposed new areas and lack of images to support the recommendations.
- Images - concern about the quality of some of the images (shadowing for example) and sizing; and lack of medieval doorways and buildings.
- P14 – Rotherfold and reference to ‘Little Totnes’ – the sentence is confusing, is it both areas or one?
- What is the consultation process for the proposed extension areas (for example, do the residents get contacted direct)?
- Typos which will be identified and submitted to the officer at South Hams District Council separately.
- It will send the updated OSSRW greenways map to the South Hams District Council officer.
- Wish to see reference to the 2018 South Hams District Council Landscape Character Assessment included in the plan [this is already referenced in the appendix to the plan].

Cllr Cummings left the meeting during this item.

The Committee voted to extend the meeting by 15 minutes at 8.15pm.

6. TORBAY LOCAL PLAN 2025-45 – REGULATION 18 DRAFT PLAN CONSULTATION

To consider the Torbay Local Plan 2025-45 Regulation 18 Draft Plan Consultation and make any recommendation to Full Council [Deadline for comments 26th January 2026].

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that it responds to the Torbay Local Plan 2025-45 Regulation 18 Draft Plan Consultation with the following comments:

- Policy TA2. No reference is made about the impact of traffic and congestion caused by vehicles coming out of Torbay through adjoining settlements. Whilst the route northwards towards Newton Abbot and Exeter has had significant investment to improve capacity, this is not the case with the southern route towards Plymouth. The impact on Totnes is already

substantial with junctions beyond capacity during rush hours. Altered driver behaviour results in vehicles increasingly taking routes through the town to avoid congestion on the A385. Investment in this route is required to mitigate these effects and to improve economic outcomes for Torbay.

- Page 173 paragraph 6.7 – there is no mention of improvements beyond the Torbay boundary, but the impact of traffic will extend beyond the bay area.
- Acknowledge that Torbay is an employment hub for the area.
- Torbay has important wildlife corridors that link to the River Dart and Totnes which the plan should be mindful of retaining to best preserve biodiversity in the region.
- Would refer you to the 2018 South Hams District Council Landscape Character Assessment and the importance of green spaces between communities on the outer regions of the bay area.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next meeting of the Planning Committee – Monday 19th January 2026 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.

Noted.

*The Committee **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

8. TOTNES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

To consider the brief and quote for a health check of the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan and make a recommendation to Full Council (commercial).

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that:

- a. The Council proceeds with the commissioning of the health check; and
- b. A named consultant is used (Intelligent Plans and Examinations) rather than going to tender and as such seeks Full Council approval for this appointment as a provider of a specialist service and as an agreed exemption to Financial Regulations.
- c. As well as the health check, advice on these specific questions is included: principle residence policy; licencing of holiday rental properties; feed in of potential site allocations from South Hams District Council Local Plan; and extension of the national landscape area up the River Dart to include Totnes (proposed to Buckfastleigh).
- d. The Landscape Character Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan are provided to be viewed alongside the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Sara Halliday
Governance and Projects Manager
December 2025