



## Agenda for Overview Committee Thursday, 28th March, 2019, 6.00 pm

### Members of Overview Committee

Councillors: G Godbeer (Chairman), I Hall (Vice-Chairman),  
M Allen, T Dumper, M Evans-Martin, P Faithfull, S Hall, D Hull,  
J Humphreys, R Longhurst, C Pepper, G Pratt and M Williamson

**Venue:** Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

**Contact:** Debbie Meakin;

01395 516543 email [dmeakin@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:dmeakin@eastdevon.gov.uk)

(or group number 01395 517546)

Tuesday, 19 March 2019

East Devon District Council  
Blackdown House  
Border Road  
Heathpark Industrial Estate  
Honiton  
EX14 1EJ

DX 48808 HONITON

Tel: 01395 516551

Fax: 01395 517507

[www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk)

1 Public Speaking

Information on [public speaking](#) is available online.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 4 - 16)

To agree the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview Committee held on the 15 November 2018; and those of the joint meeting with the Scrutiny Committee on 16 January 2019.

3 Apologies

4 Declarations of interest

Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#).

5 Matters of urgency

Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online.

6 Confidential/exempt item(s)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including press) have been excluded. There are **no** items that officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

## Matters for debate

### 7 **Digital East Devon - Firmstep presentation**

As part of the Digital Strategy, the Council will be implementing new software to provide a step change in the delivery of digital services – Firmstep. The Service Lead for Organisational Development and Transformation will give an introduction, before a demonstration of the customer experience through Firmstep is provided by Hilary Jones. Hilary will also talk through her own experience of implementation at Scarborough District Council.

### 8 **Poverty, homelessness, human rights and health and wellbeing in East Devon - scoping report** (Pages 17 - 25)

In December a motion was put to full Council - "Following the findings of both the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the UN Special Rapporteur on the impact of benefits changes and other spending cuts on people living in the UK, this Council will receive a report on the potential impacts on residents in East Devon and the need for further support from this Council, for example in supporting the roll-out of Universal Credit, homelessness prevention or for local food banks."

This report, presented to Cabinet on 6 March 2019, attempts to scope the subject and suggest themes for further investigation to provide a locally meaningful analysis of poverty and interventions that we can influence/action to alleviate the impact of poverty on individuals and communities.

**Cabinet resolved** that the themes for a localised investigation and analysis of poverty and related social welfare issues, working with Devon County Council, and report back on the findings, be agreed.

### 9 **Environmental sustainability and climate change emergency** (Pages 26 - 31)

This report, prepared for Cabinet on 3 April 2019, has been written to explore, highlight and refresh our environmental commitments and contributions towards addressing climate change.

As a council we are well placed to influence, promote and lead local initiatives to protect and enhance our environment, which is consistent with our valuing the outstanding environment theme in the Council Plan. There is logic in all local authorities working together on this agenda and the report proposes that we work with Devon County Council following their recent consideration of a climate change emergency motion.

### 10 **Overview Draft Annual Report** (Pages 32 - 33)

Draft Annual Report of the work of the committee in the current civic term, to present to Annual Council on the 25 May 2019. It is recommended that the report, subject to comments made at this meeting, and including information about this meeting, be agreed between the Chairman and Vice Chairman for submission to Annual Council on behalf of the committee.

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, any members of the public are now allowed to take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on all public meetings (including on social media). No prior notification is needed but it would be helpful if you could let the democratic services team know you plan to film or record so that any necessary arrangements can be made to provide reasonable facilities for you to report on meetings. This permission does not extend to private meetings or parts of meetings which are not open to the public. You should take all recording and photography equipment with you if a public meeting moves into a session which is not open to the public.

If you are recording the meeting, you are asked to act in a reasonable manner and not disrupt the conduct of meetings for example by using intrusive lighting, flash photography or asking people to repeat statements for the benefit of the recording. You may not make an oral commentary during the meeting. The Chairman has the power to control public recording and/or reporting so it does not disrupt the meeting.

Members of the public exercising their right to speak during Public Question Time will be recorded.

[Decision making and equalities](#)

**For a copy of this agenda in large print, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01395 517546**

**EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL****Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 15 November 2018****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.12pm.

**\*17 Public speaking**

There were no public speakers at the meeting.

**\*18 Minute confirmation**

The minutes of the Overview Committee held on the 27 September 2018, were confirmed as a true record.

**\*19 Declarations of interest**

No declarations were made at the meeting.

**20 Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan 2019 - 2029**

The Chairman welcomed the Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development, the Strategic Lead Finance, and the Portfolio Holder Finance to the meeting.

The Transformation Strategy approach has been to maintain a viable workforce, moving away from traditional approaches to budget reductions, to innovation and generation of income. The refresh of the strategy introduced two changes to the strategic themes of the approach, now including **digital by design** and **fit for purpose**. Each of the seven themes were explained to the committee, with some illustrative examples.

The transformation strategy has delivered the framework for a debate on efficiency costs and increasing income, which is now embedded in the culture of officers. It was key now to continue to deliver messages to residents on how the Council is funded in this way.

The Strategic Lead – Finance highlighted from his report the following key areas:

- The current position showed a shortfall of £1,952,088 for 2020/21. This was based on a no growth budget, with no additional requests;
- Assumption that the £5 increase in council tax will remain in place for 2019/20 with an inflation increase applied for future years;
- Business rate income has been assumed under the existing scheme of 50% retention;
- New Homes Bonus (NHB) has been maintained at a level of £1.5m. The scheme is expected to continue for 2019/20, with an estimated income of £3.6m in total, with the balance being used for capital projects.

The committee were taken through the Medium Term Financial Plan in detail, and how the innovations brought through the Transformation Strategy had helped over previous years, and continued to deliver for future years, to provide additional income and savings. There was still further work to be undertaken to deliver enough to produce a balanced budget for future years.

In discussing the MTFP and the projects set out in the Transformation Strategy Monitor, the committee raised the following issues:

- Clarification on the decrease and cease of the rate support grant – Members were reminded of the three year settlement, which ends in 2019/20;

- Concern raised by Councillor Allen on the staffing levels for economic development being reduced when there was a demand to increase those skill sets to help deliver more economic development, as well as a need to increase commercial skills as the Council looks to increase income from commercial assets. The Strategic Lead Finance confirmed that the savings identified at an operational level with posts did not affect the objectives of seeking efficiencies. The agreed additional resource to help deliver economic development previously was still retained in the draft budget for 2019/20. The Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development outlined the vacancy management process currently in place, and the work already underway in examining the workforce as a whole. Once the new Councils priorities were known after the May election, a report would come forward with recommendation on changes to the workforce for delivering those priorities;
- Care in monitoring the details of expenditure as well as the larger budgets – the Strategic Lead Finance assured the committee that all detail is scrutinised, and that full detail is published in the Budget Book on each service;
- Street trading licence income changes, now confirmed by the Chairman of Licensing and Enforcement Committee as back in place and looking to increase for future years, following a suspension of charges whilst a number of issues were resolved;
- The “Ocean” in response to a question was clarified as a separate company from the Council and therefore any loss would be the liability of LED;
- Spend for “fit for purpose” was an operational spend to cover redundancy costs that would bring about savings in future years;
- Important to implement the strategy to help protect front line services.

The Vice Chairman welcomed the approach of the Transformation Strategy, in looking to continue to improve efficiencies of the Council, including increasing the skills matrix of staff so that they had the flexibility to meet demands as they changed over coming years.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Leads for their clarity on explaining the financial pressures on the authority.

**RECOMMENDED to Council:**

**To approve the Transformation Strategy and Financial Plan 2019 – 2029 and note the Overview Committee’s specific support for the Transformation Strategy looking to protect the delivery of front line services.**

**RESOLVED:**

**To receive an update at a future meeting with an outline of plans for delivering a “fit for purpose” structure for the Council.**

## **21 Digital Strategy**

The Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development presented the draft Digital Strategy for debate by the committee. Many elements set out in the Strategy were already in place or underway – the strategy sought to define a clear intention of digital by design.

Attention was drawn specifically to:

- The increasing number of transactions online and continued demand for such transactions to not only be available, but simple and straightforward to use;

- Changing the platform used to enable each customer to log into their own portal and choose to transact with the Council across a whole range of services;
- Improvements to the East Devon mobile app;
- Applying the GDS government principles to all transactions – for example delivering a service that works as effectively as applying for car road tax or passport renewal;
- Improvements to technology does not detract from the human interaction that is still required and continues to be provided across services.

During debate, the committee raised issues including:

- Concern that vulnerable, elderly and the blind or partially sighted could be disadvantaged by the increasing demand to transact online. In response, the committee were reminded that all services were acutely aware of the need to continue to serve customers in the way that suited the customer. A Member gave an example of undertaking a transaction online with the help of a customer service advisor at Exmouth Town Hall;
- Investigate the process used by East Anglia in transacting permitted development applications online;
- In response to a question, the committee were informed of the work of the web editors across the services and the use of clear guidelines to ensure uniformity of message and style. The communications team also oversee the content as a whole to ensure that the site is relevant and clear to understand;
- Most searches were undertaken by the public from a search engine such as Google rather than drilling down through the site itself.

The Vice Chairman commented that the continued improvement to online transactions empowered the public to help themselves during their busy lives. He also welcomed that the need for human interaction was still, and will continue to be, available to those who needed it.

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:**

**That the Digital Strategy be recommended to Council for approval, for reason of continuing to improve how customers transact with the Council, whilst maintaining the availability of human interaction for vulnerable groups and other sectors of the community that require help.**

**RESOLVED**

**That the Overview Committee receive an update on progress of implementation at a future meeting.**

**\*22 Viewpoint Survey**

The Portfolio Holder Corporate for Corporate Services presented the findings from the latest Viewpoint Survey. The committee watched a short video on the key messages from the findings. The Portfolio Holder felt that using more visual means of communicating key messages was much more effective, and could be shared across multiple media platforms. This method of communication could be utilised for a number of issues, including the Council Plan.

The media format provided a means of informing and educating the public in a digestible way.

Comments from the committee included:

- The video shown could be refined further to include infographics and made shorter, in order to increase the number of people who would watch it;
- The format could be applied to other areas of the council, such as promoting what services are available to local businesses to aid them. The Communications Team had already assisted with the production of a business magazine;
- Messages communicated to the public must also acknowledge that not all the Council's customers are satisfied, and what actions are being taken to try to resolve those issues;
- The format would be applied to the next Council Plan, which will be drafted after the next election in May. An example of good practice of communicating a Council Plan could be found on the website of South Norfolk Council;
- The software used to create the video is available online. A suggestion was made that such software could be utilised locally for communicating neighbourhood plan key messages.

**RESOLVED**

**that the Overview Committee endorses the format of communicating the results of the Viewpoint Survey and asks that comments made are taken into account as the format is developed and refined.**

**\*23 Overview Forward Plan**

The Chairman outlined forthcoming work for the committee. Requests were made to timetable in work on business development, specifically small businesses in food who want to expand, and the impact of Brexit on their ability to export.

**Attendance list**

**Councillors Present:**

Graham Godbeer (Chairman)  
Ian Hall  
Mark Williamson  
Peter Faithfull  
Mike Allen  
Mark Evans Martin  
Steve Hall  
Rob Longhurst  
Tim Dumper  
Geoff Pratt

**Councillors Also Present:**

Dean Barrow  
Alan Dent  
Brian Bailey

**Officers**

Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor Apologies:**

Douglas Hull  
Andrew Moulding  
Jill Elson  
Pauline Stott

Chairman .....

Date.....

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 16 January 2019**

#### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 9.00am and ended at 1.09pm.

#### **1 Public speaking**

There were no public speakers at the meeting.

#### **2 Declarations of interest**

Cllr Ian Hall; minute 3; Personal interest: Chairman of Cloakham Lawn Sports Centre and Devon County Councillor

Cllr Stuart Hughes; minute 3; Personal interest: Member of South West Regional Flood Defence Committee and Devon County Councillor

Cllr Graham Godbeer; minute 3; Personal interest: Member of East Devon AONB

Cllr Jill Elson; minute 3; Personal interest: Exmouth Community Transport Group

Cllr Roger Giles; minute 3; Personal interest: Member of Plastic Free Ottery

#### **3 Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2019/20**

The Chairman welcomed the Strategic Lead Finance to open the meeting with an overview of the budget position in the context of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the main factors influencing this and future budgets.

The draft budget assumed an increase in Council Tax of £5 per year, and the implications of reducing that were explained in terms of an increasing deficit. The draft budget had an overall position of a £156k funding gap, which was acceptable at this stage but Members were reminded to be aware of it in considering any recommendations on the budget to Cabinet.

No cuts in service were proposed in this budgets, but there was a clear increase in demand for some services. Members were reminded that there was regular monitoring by the Cabinet to keep track through the year of any variances in planned budget or service delivery.

Discussion on the covering report from Members included:

- The Transformation Strategy was already agreed by Council and continued to be updated as projects progressed. Work continued in exploring efficiencies and income generation;
- A request had been submitted from Cranbrook Town Council for funding a Deputy Town Clerk but had not been included in the draft budget. In response, the local Ward Member made her objection to any impact on frontline services, which she felt would happen if that request was not supported. The committees did not make any specific recommendation about the request;
- The draft capital budget surplus shown would be offset by the underfunded position in the current year.

#### **Planning service plan**

The Scrutiny Committee had made some recommendations to the Service Lead for Planning in relation to the existing service plan, at their meeting in November. The Service Lead confirmed that he had amended the draft service plan accordingly, with more

emphasis on Section 106 work and adding a performance measure on tree preservation related work.

Clarification and debate covered:

- Reference to regard to neighbourhood plans welcomed;
- The council cannot insist that house builders must use its building control service to check on quality. Recommendations have been made about building control standards and required qualifications for working in that field, but a change in legislation to ensure this is required;
- Lack of overage monitoring in the plan; in response Members were informed that the Strategic Planning Committee were due to review the charging schedule, and a policy review to drive down the number of cases with overage;
- Lack of liaison with Economic Development and SMART objectives; in response, Members were told that there were measures for delivery both through the service plan and the Local Plan.

### **Regeneration and Economy service plan**

The Portfolio Holder for Economy spoke about the forward thinking service plan, commenting that it took some resource to deliver, but that delivery outcomes were being achieved from the existing plan, and this would continue.

Clarification and debate covered:

- Boosting resilience of the local economy was already in place, with a range of business support from East Devon in concert with its EHOD partners, joint working with the Property and Estates team, and in the number of businesses supported through funded advice services;
- Queens Drive redevelopment had already received some national attention, and it was hoped that, in response to a question, that international prominence could come in due course as other elements are completed, such as the watersports centre and the Michelin star chef restaurant;
- Establish clear evidence of need before developing case for workspace for local micro and SME businesses. Members were informed that this was undertaken as part of the project development process, often through surveying local businesses of their need, but could be clearly stated in the service plan;
- Lack of SMART targets in the service plan or reference to Brexit implications, and no objectives for inward investment. In response, the Chairman and Vice Chairman agreed to address the SMART objective issue with the Strategic Lead Organisational Development and Transformation outside of the meeting, to feed into future service plans;
- Lack of numerical data about how many workspace units are planned for delivery, so difficult to monitor if delivery on track;
- No mention of rural proofing in current plan.

### **Property and Estates service plan**

The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management informed Members of his involvement in the service plan, explaining that it covered not only the day to day work of the service in managing the current assets, but also commercial investment, and building accurate data on assets to enable efficient corporate management. The plan was proactive in working to generate money from the council's assets, as well as how those assets can be increased.

Clarification and debate covered:

- Any projects in the plan that required work for a long period, such as a year of work, should be broken down with milestones, in order for more effective monitoring to be undertaken;
- Building condition including such matter as damp and mould as well as health and safety and repair issues are picked up through the survey of each asset and addressed as necessary.

### **Growth Point Team service plan**

Clarification and debate covered:

- Key facilities in Cranbrook objective required, where possible, a more detailed breakdown of those facilities and the timeline for delivery. In response, Members were informed that those facilities being brought forward were determined by the Cranbrook DPD, but agreed that some cross-referencing could be done to provide more detail;
- Further clarity was required on the targets with regard to the Delivery and Investment Team proposal and when additional inward investment resource would be in place.
- The objective on raising the profile of the area did not contain a measureable target. In response, Members were informed that there was a degree of measurability in the number of communications and award applications.

### **Streetscene service plan**

The Portfolio Holder and Deputy Portfolio Holder for Environment advised Members of their close involvement with officers throughout the year, which helped form the service plan. The continued to work on efficiencies whilst still maintaining frontline services.

Clarification and debate covered:

- “Principles of provision” for public toilets was explained as the principles of what the council should provide. The public toilet review was due to re-start this financial year and consultation and reports on this process would come forward, including these principles as part of the review process;
- Recycled plastics go to Cheshire for processing into a product that is sold onto the manufacturing industry;
- Performance is tracked by the service, which viewed alongside the Viewpoint Survey show good levels of satisfaction, but there is an increase in demand which the service are struggling to keep up with. Members were reminded that controlling weeds on highways was the responsibility of the County Council;
- Income from the Strand big screen was based on calculations of the business case to give a realistic figure;
- There was no potential, in response to a question, in offering recycling of waste oil to domestic properties because of the impurities level being higher than for commercial waste; however residents could still put waste oil in their food recycling waste

### **Environmental Health and Car Parks service plan**

Clarification and debate covered:

- Need to increase staffing levels of community engagement officers in order to help alleviate other related issues that fell to both the Council and others. Work under the Community Safety banner was proving successful, but a request was made to explore if the number of such staff could be increased. This issue would be flagged to the Overview Committee and there was agreement to prepare a business case on

need for future years, bearing in mind the impact on the other partners involved in community safety;

- No reference to Brexit in the plan, in particular relating to animal welfare and food. In response, Members were informed that leaving the European Union had been identified as a corporate risk. This issue would be flagged to the Overview Committee;
- Increases in car park charges would adversely impact on local businesses who were already struggling with footfall levels. In response, Members were informed that it was a difficult balance to both increase income to pay for providing council services, against what customers were willing to pay to park. The service plan had set out that this was a review, including consultation, not a decision. The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management echoed this approach of balancing between maximising the asset with what the community require;
- Remove the working “to ensure fairness and” in the same objective as it was not needed or relevant to the objective;
- The issue of loneliness as a challenge to public health was raised; Members were informed that the Scrutiny Committee had this issue on their work plan.

### **Governance and Licensing service plan**

Clarification and debate covered:

- The Council was required to have a Sex Establishment Venue Policy in case any such application is made;
- Work with local schools for promote local democracy will continue, with an aspiration to increase it subject to school involvement.

### **Organisational Development and Transformation service plan**

Clarification and debate covered:

- Changes to the Investor in People standards meant that a new standard of “platinum” had been added, of which only two councils had successfully obtained to date;
- 2019 had been launched as a “green year” by the Government, and the Strategic Management Team had decided to widen this out to consider for all aspects of the Council, not just the new Council Plan;
- Regular reporting is made in performance monitoring reports on short and medium term absence of staff, and is handled well by management.

### **Finance service plan**

Clarification and debate covered:

- A report on a Retail Relief Scheme would be presented to Cabinet in February on the adoption of a local scheme in order to release specific measure to assist struggling high streets;
- Public Toilet Rate Relief requires primary legislation to permit billing authorities to award themselves rate relief, which would be an advantage to this authority because of the number of public toilets it maintains; however this legislation was not expected until 2020 at the earliest. Work on this would be linked to the ongoing public toilet review being undertaken by Streetscene;
- Request for an amendment to the timescale for the delivery of actions to deliver savings under the Transformation Strategy, such as completed by September 2019;

### **Countryside and Arts service plan**

Clarification and debate covered:

- The two AONB business plans had been through extensive consultation and expected to go before Cabinet in February;
- There was ongoing work between the Countryside and Planning teams in regard to works to trees in improving efficiencies, as had been previously discussed extensively by the Scrutiny Committee; any change to delegated procedures would have to be agreed by Council through amendments to the constitution;
- A “sports strategy” was explained as being covered by the Playing Pitches Strategy. This was limited in delivery by the need for land in some areas. An update of the strategy would be considered by the Chairman of the Overview Committee following advice on remit and in consultation with the Strategic Planning Committee;

### **Housing service plan**

The Chairman reminded the committees that the Housing Review Board would be examining this service plan, but welcomed any comments from Members on the general fund aspects of the plan.

Clarification and debate covered:

- Recent motion to Council (on findings on extreme poverty) had been taken into account in the preparation of the service plan. The Strategic Lead Housing Health and Environment explained to Members that the biggest threat in the risk register was the ability of tenants to access universal credit. A report on this issue had been drafted, and may well involve a wider Devon group to assist with the considerable analysis that would be required;
- Comments from Members in appreciation of Housing and Council Tax staff in assisting the public with completing universal credit applications;
- No reference to climate change work in the service plan. In response, Members were advised that there is a corporate approach to this issue and there were some references in some of the service plans; actions the Council could take on this issue would also form a thread through the new Council Plan.

### **Draft Revenue Budget 2019/20**

Members looked at the draft Revenue budget detail within the estimates. Clarification was sought on some elements set out within the estimates, including:

- Estimate for transport costs under the Corporate Services had a significant variance to reflect the reimbursement agreement for relocation to new offices;
- Employment costs reduction for Economic Development due to the removal of a previously required post was challenged as a poor decision in light of the increasing workload for that service. A proposal was put to add this back into the budget at a minimum to bring back this post to the service, although the Committees were told that this post covered administration and mainly related to the Business Centre and not the direct Economic Development function;
- Variance in supplies and services under Corporate Buildings was explained as a transfer of costs relating to staff rather than an increase;
- Increase in premise costs for Streetscene was to cover necessary work under health and safety requirements;
- About a £100k increase on both Cleansing and Parks & Gardens budgets were queried. In both cases 50% of the increase was due to the governments pay award with the other 50% due to an increase in the corporate services recharge. This was explained in full as **Parks & Pleasure Grounds** employment costs have risen by £112,000. This is due to a rise of £57,000 in employment costs, ie salary rises but

also an internal corporate recharge of £55,000. This £55,000 is made up of £33,000 office accommodation recharge and £20,000 Strata PC Support; **Cleansing** employment costs are similar in that there is a rise of £52,000 in salary rises and £48,000 office accommodation / strata recharge

- The increase in burial income forecast was due to some increase in charges and the Council undertaking physical burials in house rather than contracting out;
- Customer receipts forecast for parks and pleasure grounds had been revised to a more conservative level following levels in the current year;
- Increase in depreciation level under the Housing Revenue Account would be referred to the Housing Review Board to consider under their remit.

### **Draft Capital Budget 2019/20**

Members looked at the Capital Programme detail within the estimates. The programme was formulated by the Capital Strategy and Allocation Group, who had assessed each project through a scoring matrix before deciding to add to the programme.

Clarification was sought on some elements of the programme, including

- Projects highlighted in yellow were projects agreed in principle, but required further decision from Cabinet or Council once detailed costings and timescale were confirmed;
- The description for refurbishment of toilets at the Magnolia Centre covered two locations – the bus station and at the London Inn car park;
- Section 106 schemes, This income was “net off” but would be set out in the final budget book published once the budget was agreed.

The Chairman thanked the officers involved in preparing the service plans presented to the Committees.

### **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:**

1. To recommend to Council that the Council Tax for 2019/20 be increased by £5 a year;
2. To recommend to Council that the Draft Service Plans for 2019/20 be adopted with addition of:
  - a. The Planning Service Plan includes overage monitoring;
  - b. The Regeneration and Economic Service Plan ensures that business development opportunities are based on clear evidence of need; and includes developing a strategy for commercial unit delivery;
  - c. The Growth Point Team Service Plan includes more detail on the delivery of Cranbrook key facilities with timescales; and plans for inward investment;
  - d. The Environmental Health and Car Parks Service Plan includes a business case to consider extra resource to increase community engagement;
  - e. The Governance and Licensing Service Plan to specify what the local democracy activities currently are and what further activities could be undertaken;
  - f. The Finance Service Plan to make it clear that the Transformation Strategy to be completed by September 2019;
  - g. The Countryside Service Plan to revise the wording around ‘inactive’ in the second objective;
  - h. Any amendments to make objectives more SMART following a review by Strategic Lead – Organisational Development and Transformation together with the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees
  - i. Review all service plans to include reference to Brexit as required.

3. To recommend to Council that the Draft Revenue Budget for 2019/20 be adopted;  
and
4. To recommend to Council that the Draft Capital Budget for 2019/20 be adopted.

**OVERVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:**

1. To recommend to Council that the Council Tax for 2019/20 be increased by £5 a year;
2. To recommend to Council that the Draft Service Plans for 2019/20 be adopted with addition of:
  - a. The Planning Service Plan includes overage monitoring;
  - b. The Regeneration and Economic Service Plan ensures that business development opportunities are based on clear evidence of need; and includes developing a strategy for commercial unit delivery;
  - c. The Growth Point Team Service Plan includes more detail on the delivery of Cranbrook key facilities with timescales; and plans for inward investment;
  - d. The Environmental Health and Car Parks Service Plan includes a business case to consider extra resource to increase community engagement;
  - e. The Governance and Licensing Service Plan to specify what the local democracy activities currently are and what further activities could be undertaken;
  - f. The Finance Service Plan to make it clear that the Transformation Strategy to be completed by September 2019;
  - g. The Countryside Service Plan to revise the wording around 'inactive' in the second objective;
  - h. Any amendments to make objectives more SMART following a review by Strategic Lead – Organisational Development and Transformation together with the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
  - i. Review all service plans to include reference to Brexit as required.
3. To recommend to Council that the Draft Revenue Budget for 2019/20 be adopted and include an additional £25k for staffing for Economic Development;
4. To recommend to Council that the Draft Capital Budget for 2019/20 be adopted.

**Attendance list**

**Councillors Present:**

Roger Giles (Chairman)  
Graham Godbeer (Vice Chairman)  
Rob Longhurst  
Peter Faithfull  
Geoff Pratt  
Cherry Nicholas  
Ian Hall  
Brian Bailey  
Bruce de Saram  
Stuart Hughes  
Marianne Rixson  
Cathy Gardner  
Eileen Wragg  
Mike Allen  
Eleanor Rylance

**Councillors Also Present:**

Dean Barrow  
Ben Ingham  
Susie Bond  
Ian Thomas  
Andrew Moulding  
Geoff Pook  
Tom Wright  
John Dyson  
Marcus Hartnell  
Phil Skinner  
Geoff Jung  
Jill Elson

**Officers**

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing  
Karen Jenkins, Strategic Lead Transformation and Organisational Development  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks  
Andrew Hancock, Service Lead Streetscene  
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits  
Tim Child, Senior Manager Property and Estates  
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Service Lead Housing  
Charlie Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure  
Andy Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director  
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor Apologies:**

Steve Hall  
Douglas Hull  
Tim Dumper  
Simon Grundy  
Val Ranger  
John Humphreys  
Alan Dent  
Phil Twiss  
Steve Gazzard  
Brenda Taylor  
Darryl Nicholas  
Maddy Chapman  
Pauline Stott

Chairman ..... Date.....



**Report to:** **Cabinet**

**Date of Meeting:** 6 March 2019

**Public Document:** Yes

**Exemption:** None

**Review date for release** None

**Agenda item:** **15**

**Subject:** **Scoping report on poverty, homelessness, human rights and health & wellbeing in East Devon.**

**Purpose of report:** In December a motion was put to full Council - "Following the findings of both the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the UN Special Rapporteur on the impact of benefits changes and other spending cuts on people living in the UK, this Council will receive a report on the potential impacts on residents in East Devon and the need for further support from this Council, for example in supporting the roll-out of Universal Credit, homelessness prevention or for local food banks."

This report attempts to scope the subject and suggest themes for further investigation to provide a locally meaningful analysis of poverty and interventions that we can influence/action to alleviate the impact of poverty on individuals and communities. It is recognised that the implications highlighted are as a result of national social welfare policy decisions where we have limited influence. The report also proposes that we work with Devon County Council who are also investigating the issues and share our concerns.

**Recommendation:** **To agree the themes for a localised investigation and analysis of poverty and related social welfare issues, working with Devon County Council, and report back on the findings.**

**Reason for recommendation:** To consider the impacts of poverty and related welfare issues locally following changes to national policy relating to welfare reform and homelessness, and the actions we can take to alleviate the effects of poverty on individuals and communities in East Devon.

**Officer:** John Golding Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment.

**Financial implications:** There are no direct financial implications as a consequence of this report in relation to recommendations made.

**Legal implications:** At this stage there are no direct legal implications requiring comment.

**Equalities impact:** High – the report highlights issues of inadequate equality and impact assessments on national policy.

**Risk:** High – the impact of welfare policy changes are set out in the report and the consequences are severe on those groups highlighted.

**Links to background information:** None

**Link to Council Plan:** Outstanding communities and economy.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 This is a scoping report looking at concerns in relation to the links between Universal Credit, poverty, homelessness and poor health and wellbeing and how this is impacting on a significant proportion of the population. The issues were highlighted at a Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019 where the following motion was agreed:  
  
“Following the findings of both the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the UN Special Rapporteur on the impact of benefits changes and other spending cuts on people living in the UK, this Council will receive a report on the potential impacts on residents in East Devon and the need for further support from this Council, for example in supporting the roll-out of Universal Credit, homelessness prevention or for local food banks.”
- 1.2 In November last year Special Rapporteur for the United Nations Professor Philip Alston reported on extreme poverty and human rights. The comprehensive report considered the impacts of Brexit; Universal Credit; the Digital Welfare State; local authority cuts; and a range of other factors on increasing levels of poverty.
- 1.3 Also in November the Equality and Human Rights Commission published a report titled - The cumulative impact on living standards of public spending changes. This report concluded that public spending changes took place against a background of a clear and overarching UK Government commitment to deficit reduction. Cuts in spending on services, alongside reductions in benefits and tax credit spending were a key component of the deficit reduction strategy. The authors are critical of the Governments impact assessments and adherence to the public sector equality duty.
- 1.4 I would suggest that the topic area is vast and requires investigation and careful analysis, so I have suggested we produce this scoping report to obtain agreement on our lines of enquiry, and to ensure that the report is meaningful locally. This report refers to recent reports highlighting the concerns raised at a national level, and the areas for investigation and analysis that will be relevant to the local situation. I also want to highlight the links between poverty and health & wellbeing.
- 1.5 There have been recent signals that Government are prepared to review Universal Credit rollout and perhaps pause in the light of compelling evidence that the new system is causing problems and not achieving the original objectives set out.

## **2. Evidence base and scale of the problem nationally**

- 2.1 In November 2018 a statement was published on a visit to the UK by Professor Philip Alston, **United Nations** Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.
- 2.2 The report is highly critical of government policy in relation to Universal Credit, digital welfare state, changes to legal aid and local authority cuts. It is also critical of the theory that employment is the cure all for poverty and illustrates how the hardest hit are women, children, people with disabilities, pensioners, and asylum seekers and migrants.
- 2.3 The report indicates that 14 million people in the UK, a fifth of the population, live in poverty. This is occurring in the UK, the world’s fifth largest economy, areas of immense wealth, and its capital the centre of global finance. The author describes this a unjust and contrary to British values.
- 2.4 Poverty has been defined differently, but a widely accepted definition is people/households living below 60% of the nation’s median income level. Relative poverty generally means

that a person can't afford an 'ordinary living pattern'— in other words they are excluded from the activities and opportunities that the average person enjoys. A household is in relative poverty (also called relative low income) if its income is below 60% of the median household income.

- 2.5 The UN report concludes that poverty is a political choice with much of the blame attributed to Universal Credit. It suggests that local authorities be given funds to tackle poverty, and welfare reform is reviewed. The final paragraph of the report says as the country moves towards Brexit, the Government should adopt policies designed to ensure that the brunt of the resulting economic burden is not borne by its most vulnerable citizens.
- 2.6 Also in November 2018 the **Equality and Human Rights Commission** published a study titled - The cumulative impact on living standards of public spending changes. This demonstrated that the public spending changes have been taking place against a background of deficit reduction with the impact affecting protected and disadvantaged groups. It also concluded that impact assessments have been inadequate and pay insufficient regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 2.7 In December 2018 the **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** (JRF) published their annual report examining the nature and scale of poverty in this country titled – UK Poverty 2018. The research findings headlines indicated that more than one in five of our UK population (22%) are in poverty. 14.3 million people, of these 8.2 million are working-age adults, 4.1 million are children and 1.9 million are pensioners. Eight million people live in poverty in families where at least one person is in work. There has been a significant rise in poverty in the last five years.
- 2.8 The research concludes that the UK has shown that we can use policy to achieve significant falls in poverty among the groups of people most at risk, pensioners and children, through a combination of rising employment, tax credits and help with housing costs. These trends are now in reverse. Our strong employment record has been unable to counterbalance cuts in recent years to families' financial support and the impacts of high housing costs and poor quality jobs with little scope for progression.
- 2.9 Nearly half of children in lone-parent families in the UK live in poverty compared with one in four children in couple families.
- 2.10 JRF suggest that as a society we can chose to reduce the amount of people who are swept into poverty by reducing housing costs for renters, strengthening support offered by our social security system and opening opportunities for better paid employment.
- 2.11 There is now a growing body of evidence to indicate that social/welfare policy is exacerbating poverty in this country with the consequences impacting on homelessness, mental illness and health & wellbeing.

### **3 Local issues and relevant policies**

- 3.1 Whilst recognising that we have a voice to lobby for change to national policies we also have opportunities to influence local outcomes. As a local authority some of our services are geared towards supporting individuals and communities that are disadvantaged. We are uniquely placed to identify deprivation and disadvantage and act within the powers we have available to deliver our priority of outstanding communities.

- 3.2 In East Devon some 18% of children were identified as being in poverty (after housing costs) by the End Child Poverty 2014 Child Poverty Map of the UK.
- 3.3 **Universal Credit** is being rolled out in East Devon. The new system is being rolled out in stages and being administered by the Department of Work and Pensions. The original idea behind Universal Credit of combining six different benefits (Child Tax Credit; Housing Benefit; Income Support; income based Job Seekers Allowance; income related Employment Support Allowance; and Working Tax Credit) into one and making work pay were sound, but the rollout and means of accessing funds have proven controversial. It is paid monthly. Further details are on GOV.UK website <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>
- 3.4 The Universal Credit pilot areas have reported the new system causing hardship due to delays in payment, reduced payments, leading to rent arrears, greater use of foodbanks, hunger (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee report January 2019) and a range of other social/welfare impacts.
- 3.5 We are aware of **Food Banks** in our main towns and several we helped set up with start-up funding. We have sporadic contact and it would be useful to know more about their activity and issues they are facing to see how any intervention from us might assist.
- 3.6 We have seen **homelessness** rise in recent years with an increasing number of homeless applicants struggling with financial and/or mental health problems. Our updated Homelessness Strategy sets out the latest position in the district and the measures we are operating to tackle homelessness locally. This is often one of the consequences of people living in poverty where they are living in poor housing or worst still lose their home because they are unable to afford the housing costs.
- 3.7 Our stance on maintaining affordable housing as a Council priority is justified whilst we are experiencing such high levels of housing need with the most acute housing need manifesting itself in homelessness. We have long recognised the need for a 'decent home for all' and the need for good quality subsidised housing let at affordable rents has never been greater, and we try to match our ambitions (set out in the **Housing Strategy and Local Plan**) with this need.
- 3.8 Our recently adopted **Public Health Strategic Plan 2019-2023** recognises the important link between poverty and health & wellbeing. Planning for healthy communities and individuals as well as addressing health inequalities requires sufficient household resources to secure good quality housing, employment, education, diet, transport and healthy lifestyle choices to achieve wellbeing. Our Public health priorities are all about preventing ill health and we know that poverty leads to health inequalities and poorer health, so addressing poverty can lead to improved health of the population.
- 3.7 Our **Corporate Debt Strategy** attempts to assist people in prioritising their debts to the Council. While we have a legal duty to recover sums due to the council, our policy aims to ensure that collection is both fair and cost effective, and that our approach across the different recovery teams will be professional, uniform and timely. We recognise that preventing debt is essential and therefore we will always:
- Have skilled and trained staff at first point of contact to ensure customers have immediate access to high quality advice.
  - Aim to distinguish effectively between debtors who cannot pay and those who will not pay.
  - Develop a culture of payment by encouraging anyone in financial difficulty to contact us promptly to discuss their circumstances.

- 3.8 We will recognise the following key principles common to all types of debt:
- The difference between priority and non-priority debts
  - To promote a professional, consistent and timely approach to recovery action
  - To maximise income by using the most appropriate and effective methods of debt recovery
  - To work with customers at the earliest stage to encourage debt prevention
  - To aim to clear annual charges within the year they are raised
  - To ensure that debts are recovered in accordance with legislation
  - To treat individuals fairly and consistently, in accordance with Human Rights, Data Protection and equalities legislation.
- 3.9 Our **Exeter and Heart of Devon shared Economic Strategy 2017-20** is a partnership strategy aimed at securing high quality jobs for the region, raising skills and ensuring that employment is well paid. Whilst the strategy does not consider poverty in any detail there is a clear ambition for well-paid employment. The region does experience high levels of employment but much of this is lower paid employment, seasonal work and it will be interesting to consider how effective we have been in delivering our strategic ambitions.
- 3.10 Our **Local Futures** dataset can be interrogated to provide us with up to date data on income, employment and living costs. This together with Office for National Statistics (ONS) data will support the build-up of an up to date local picture.
- 3.11 In Housing we have been undertaking a longitudinal study of tenants and housing register applicants titled **Your Home: Your Wellbeing**. This study with Birmingham University and LiveWest is revealing that those living in affordable, secure housing have improved wellbeing, sense of security and less anxious with fewer money problems than those in the private rented sector and seeking social housing.

#### **4 Scoping for further local investigation**

- 4.1 I suggest that our investigation into poverty is coordinated with the work that DCC are undertaking, and we consider a number of key themes – welfare benefits; homelessness; food banks; the local economy; and the health & wellbeing of individuals and communities. Terms of Reference have been produced by our officers working with DCC and these are set out in **annex 1**. We feel that the work of the Devon Strategic Partnership Welfare Task Group covers the issues raised in the Council motion. The Policy Team at DCC are able to devote some time and resource to the study.
- 4.2 There are many areas where poverty has an impact that are largely outside of our control or influence and I suggest that our joint analysis focuses on where our services are impacted or are supporting families and individuals in poverty.
- 4.3 We should consider how we can alleviate poverty locally by administering any available discretionary funding, bidding for resources, adapting service delivery, enabling the third sector to contribute and building community resilience and self-help.
- 4.4 We might also review our Council priorities as part of our investigations prior to the refresh of the Council Plan, and without prejudging the outcomes, I anticipate we will be confirming affordable housing, health & wellbeing, the local economy and welfare support as ongoing ambitions to support our residents.

- 4.5 Furthermore, to put these considerations into context, we recognise that we live in a relatively affluent area when compared to many parts of the country, and there are number of interventions and contributions that our communities can make that alleviate the worst effects of poverty. Food banks are a good example of community action. We do have areas of deprivation that are often masked by our relative affluence, so targeted interventions would be the answer. We could identify opportunities and stimulate further examples of community resilience as part of our scoping exercise.
- 4.6 To complete a comprehensive piece of work will require officer time from several different Services. It will involve research, analysis and interpretation, alongside some creative thinking. I suggest that the Service Leads for Revenues & Benefits, Housing take the lead on working with DCC and report back on the findings.

# Devon Strategic Partnership Welfare Task Group

## Draft Terms of Reference January 2019

### Background

A number of reforms have been introduced following the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Several national reports have revealed that these changes are having detrimental effects, with the poorest people and places being disproportionately affected. Particularly significant are two 2018 reports:

- The report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018) on the [Cumulative impact of tax and welfare reforms](#). This revealed that the largest negative impacts of changes to taxes, benefits, tax credits and UC will be felt by those with lower incomes. The poorest 20% will lose, on average, approximately 10% of net income, with the changes having a disproportionately negative impact on several protected groups, including disabled people, certain ethnic minorities, and women.
- The [Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom](#), by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. The Special Rapporteur's report documented the growth of poverty in the UK, with 14 million people, a fifth of the population, living in poverty. The implementation of Universal Credit was identified as a cause of hardship, with detrimental effects on many claimants' mental health, finances, and work prospects.

Universal Credit, the most significant reform, is now being rolled out in Devon with a potential total of 109,000 claimants by 2023. Universal Credit aims to bring positive changes including stronger work incentives, increased employment support and an easier transition into work. However it is recognised that the delivery of this new benefit is causing hardship. Many vulnerable customers are finding the transition to Universal Credit difficult and have a wide range of support needs. As the roll out continues, we need to understand the local picture and how best to adapt our priorities and provision to alleviate the detrimental effects.

The Task group has been established initially to focus on East Devon and Exeter, to understand:

- the impacts of welfare reform at local level,
- the actions we can take to alleviate the effects of poverty on individuals and communities.

### Objectives:

To develop a good understanding of the implications of Universal Credit and other associated reforms for communities and public services, initially for East Devon and Exeter. The aim will be to widen this out to the other Local Authority areas in Devon. The task group will do this by:

1. Developing an assessment covering the following impacts on people of working age:
  - i. Poverty analysis (in particular how Universal Credit affects people across different housing tenures),
  - ii. Employment and earnings (including employment rates, income levels, numbers of people in work, in/out of work poverty)
  - iii. Homelessness (including increases in homelessness and the causes)

- iv. Debt and financial vulnerability (including reliance on foodbanks, payday loans, rent and Council Tax arrears, general indebtedness and budgeting abilities).
- v. Health & Wellbeing (including mental and physical health and health inequalities).
- vi. Social (including crime and anti-social behaviour).

2. Modelling the future extent of these impacts,
3. Mapping existing policies and means of support available to welfare claimants,
4. Using this analysis to inform policy or operational changes that may be needed and make recommendations on how we can help to alleviate the impacts.

Breaking this analysis down to geographic areas that best reflect the makeup of each Authority.

## Membership:

Represented on the Task Group will be:

- Citizens Advice Devon
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Devon County Council
- East Devon Council
- Exeter City Council
- Devon Voluntary and Community Sector
- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Public Health

With other organisations engaged as necessary.

## Governance

- The Task Group has been established under the umbrella of the Devon Strategic Partnership. The DSP brings together public, private and voluntary and community sector organisations, to address issues that require a multi sector approach. The Task Group will report progress to the Annual DSP Conference.
- The Task Group's main link will be with the Devon Benefits and Revenues Officer Group. The Task Group will report progress to DBROG each month. DBROG will guide the work of the task group and DBROG members will implement Task Group recommendations within their own organisations as necessary.

## Timeline

February 2019:	First meeting of task group to agree Terms of Reference, determine datasets and assign roles and responsibilities,
April 2019:	Completed analysis of data,
May 2019:	Completed map of policies and provisions,
June 2019:	Completed analysis and outcomes with suggested recommendations.

## Areas covered

Initially:

- East Devon District Council
- Exeter City Council

Once the initial analysis is established, to be extended to:

- Mid Devon District Council
- North Devon District Council
- Plymouth City Council
- South Hams District Council
- Teignbridge District Council
- Torbay Council
- Torridge District Council
- West Devon Borough Council



**Report to:** **Cabinet**  
**Date of Meeting:** 3 April 2019  
**Public Document:** Yes  
**Exemption:** None

**Review date for release** None

**Subject:** **Environmental sustainability and climate change emergency.**

**Purpose of report:** This report has been written to explore, highlight and refresh our environmental commitments and contributions towards addressing climate change.

As a council we are well placed to influence, promote and lead local initiatives to protect and enhance our environment, which is consistent with our valuing the outstanding environment theme in the Council Plan. There is logic in all local authorities working together on this agenda and the report proposes that we work with Devon County Council following their recent consideration of a climate change emergency motion.

Devon County Council's Cabinet has recommended that the authority declare a 'climate emergency' and forge ahead with a county-wide partnership to ensure that Devon is carbon neutral by 2050.

The notice of motion follows the latest warnings from the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the devastation a 2°C rise in global temperatures could cause.

The DCC Cabinet's recommendation to Full Council that the authority declare the emergency was made at Devon County Council's Cabinet meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Special Report from the IPCC, published late last year, also identifies the global benefits of limiting warming to 1.5°C by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Consequently, DCC have said that they will be working with strategic partners across the county to ensure the county doing what it can to meet the IPCC carbon reduction recommendations.

**Recommendation:** **That we work with Devon County Council on a shared climate change programme, and signal our commitment to tackling climate change in areas where we can affect positive and meaningful change in our activities, and those of our partners, communities and residents.**

**Reason for recommendation:** To ensure that this Council states its position and contributes towards tackling climate change where we can make a positive impact. There is an opportunity to work in collaboration with Devon County Council and others to ensure we are coordinated and have the greatest impact.

<b>Officer:</b>	John Golding – Strategic Lead Housing, Health & Environment.
<b>Financial implications:</b>	To be completed by Finance.
<b>Legal implications:</b>	To be completed by Legal.
<b>Equalities impact:</b>	Medium Impact
<b>Risk:</b>	High Risk There is a high risk globally if we do nothing to try and combat the impacts of climate change.
<b>Links to background information:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>
<b>Link to Council Plan:</b>	Delivering and sustaining an outstanding environment.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In this report I am suggesting that we review our commitments towards protecting our environment and identify a series of commitments that we will work towards (in partnership) aimed at reducing climate change, promoting environmental sustainability, and minimising the damaging impact of our occupancy of the planet.
- 1.2 I have tried to take global issues and make them relevant to interventions and actions that we as a small district council can do to affect positive change locally. This is consistent with the old Think Globally: Act Locally message that remains relevant today.
- 1.3 We have significant influence as a community leader and organisation committed to protecting and enhancing our outstanding environment. We have numerous environmental commitments contained in our Council Plan (**annex 1**) and Service Plans that demonstrate our environmental credentials. However, we cannot be complacent and I am suggesting that we review our ambitions and challenge ourselves to higher aspirations and influence to protect our outstanding environment.
- 1.4 This report proposes that we work with other local authorities to provide greater weight and impact against climate change. Specifically, Devon County Council and other Devon districts, where joint action can bring about positive change. It is clear from the scientific evidence that radical change is required to manage the impact of climate change.
- 1.5 A useful resource in preparing this paper has been the LGA campaign called Climate Local. Although a few years old now the content remains relevant to local authority work in this field.
- 1.6 There are many environmental issues where we can influence behaviour, and others where we can through direct intervention, regulation and enabling change in the way individuals and communities act. As an example, the district heating scheme at Cranbrook has been innovative, and the work on the Greater Exeter Strategic Partnership (GESP) will influence reduced carbon emissions from new developments. The low carbon evidence base has been published [www.gesp.org.uk/evidence](http://www.gesp.org.uk/evidence).
- 1.7 At the end of 2018 the Government published an ambitious Waste and Resources paper which recognised the need to act in a meaningful way to change our use of natural resources and waste production. The paper links with the Government's Environment Plan published earlier in 2018.

## **2. The recent DCC Climate Change motion**

- 2.1 DCC have stated in a recent motion to their Cabinet that - Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO2 levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;
- 2.2 In order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO2eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible;
- 2.3 Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm;
- 2.4 Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;
- 2.5 Devon County Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of climate change when back in 2004 we signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and has since recognised this in its strategy for responding to the Climate Change Act 2008 which underpins its strategies, actions plans, public statements and advice to businesses, residents and parish councils;
- 2.6 Unfortunately, our current plans and actions are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degrees Celsius limit before 2050;
- 2.7 The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, published last month, describes the enormous harm that a 2 degrees Celsius rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5 degrees Celsius, and told us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities;
- 2.8 Local Authorities around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.
- 2.9 The motion asked the Council to agree the following:
  1. All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local governments that recognize this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Devon and the UK that counties commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;
  2. Local Authorities are uniquely placed to lead the world in reducing carbon emissions;
  3. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority; and,
  4. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide).
- 2.10 I am sure that there is much we empathise with in this motion.

### **3. Officer advice to DCC Cabinet**

- 3.1 As part of the Cabinet report DCC officers advised - The 15th Special Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights the projected global effects of a 1.5°C warmer world, for example: 20-30% of all species will be at risk of extinction; 90% of tropical coral reefs will be lost; cereal yields will reduce; and droughts become more common. For the UK, average, annual precipitation is projected to increase by 10%.
- 3.2 The Special Report also identifies the global benefits of limiting warming to 1.5°C instead of 2°C: 50% fewer species will be at risk of major contraction in their geographic range; 10.4 million fewer people will be displaced due to sea level rise; 420 million fewer people will be exposed to extreme heatwaves; the chance of sea-ice-free Arctic summers will reduce to 1 in 100, instead of 1 in 10: and a shift in the geographic range of malaria only occurs above 1.5°C. The increase in average, annual rainfall over the UK is halved.
- 3.3 Global energy demand continues to rise, and the increase in 2017 was predominantly met by new gas installations, followed by investment in renewables mainly in China and the USA. Due to the continued reliance on fossil fuels, global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions also rose in 2017, following a plateau between 2013 and 2016.
- 3.4 The IPCC recommend reducing global GHG emissions by 45% by 2030 in comparison to 2010 levels, reaching net-zero by 2050. The required scale of change to energy, industrial and infrastructure systems that need to take place to achieve this have no historic precedent. The UK Committee on Climate Change, the independent advisory body that monitors the implementation of the Climate Change Act, has been asked by government to recommend a revised target for the UK. This is expected in March 2019.
- 3.5 DCC's GHG emissions have reduced by 36% since 2012/13. DCC's Corporate Energy Policy targets are under review by the Environmental Performance Board to set more stretching, but realistic, goals. DCC also reviewed its Climate Change Strategy in 2018, which commits the authority to support the UK to meet its carbon targets by prioritising GHG reduction from its own activities, areas of influence and by encouraging others to do the same.
- 3.6 Achieving further significant cuts will require collective action - DCC cannot mandate or achieve this by itself. Becoming carbon neutral by 2030, just 12 years' time, does not appear to be feasible; a recent analysis shows that this would require the implementation of all current national policy measures in full and the development of substantial new policy at all levels of government where there are currently gaps. A 45% reduction by the same date, as recommended by the IPCC, should be the absolute backstop.
- 3.7 Collaborative discussions are already occurring within Devon to encourage more activity at strategic, community and individual levels. DCC could use its position to facilitate these further.
- 3.8 This presents an opportunity for us to work with DCC to define how, what and where we can contribute towards the climate change challenge.

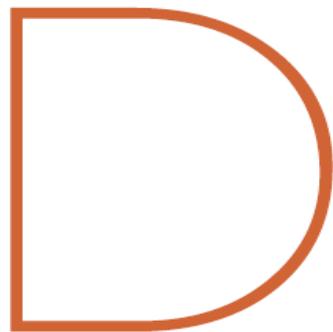
### **4. A way forward**

- 4.1 This is a huge subject matter and one where we must act now, and act decisively and collectively. The latest evidence indicates that radical action is required and not just further tinkering or shallow commitments, but action that has a genuine positive impact on climate change. This will require meaningful commitments and a significant change in lifestyles.

- 4.2 Our to be updated Council Plan needs to reflect our renewed commitments and demonstrate to our residents, partners and communities that we mean to make changes that may be unpopular with some, but necessary for the benefit of future generations.
- 4.3 Whilst we have the willingness to do something more meaningful we don't have the expertise in what is a complex and scientific work stream where specialist advice is required to ensure that our interventions are having the impact necessary. So I am suggesting that we should work collaboratively. DCC are working with the University of Exeter and others who can draw in the necessary experts to ensure that any plans we adopt have the impact we are seeking.
- 4.4 I propose indicating to DCC that we support their concerns around climate change and want to work with them to combat the worst effects of global warming, sea rise and environmental pollution.



## PRIORITY THREE



# Delivering and promoting our outstanding environment

Agenda page 31

### ✓ Outcomes

As well as delivering our day-to-day services, our focus is on achieving the following successful outcomes:

- Protection and enhancement of our natural and built environment.
- Abundant leisure opportunities and quality open spaces.
- Controlling pollution of the air, land and water via education and appropriate enforcement of environmental legislation.
- Further reductions in the waste that East Devon produces.

### 📅 Actions

Over the life of this Council Plan we will take the following actions to deliver these outcomes successfully:

- Enter into a new innovative recycling and waste collection contract extending the options for recycling and reducing waste that is incinerated or sent to landfill.
- Use the consultation feedback from the trials to roll out this recycling and waste service across the district.
- Adopt a Green Space Strategy, the purpose of which is to value and help protect our natural environment.
- Progress the actions and priorities set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy to deliver sufficient and flexible, good quality playing pitches.

### 📅 Day-to-day

Services which support East Devon's environment include:

- Keeping our streets and countryside clean and attractive by dealing with litter, graffiti, dog fouling and fly tipping and taking action against those who break the rules.
- Collecting your residual waste and recycling and helping you to recycle more.
- Maintain our parks and gardens to a high standard, and ensure that the features and activities encourage users to enjoy the facilities.
- Supporting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Jurassic Coast partnerships to realise the environmental assets of our district.
- A countryside team that engages volunteers and local communities in managing our local nature reserves to help our wildlife flourish.
- Working to help promote East Devon's outstanding natural environment as a destination for nature based tourism and providing income for the local economy and local jobs.
- Working with our partners for the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Jurassic Coast to help promote East Devon's outstanding natural environment as a destination for nature based tourism and providing income for the local economy and providing local jobs.
- Valuing, protecting and managing our tree stock through education, advice and enforcement.
- Maintaining our wide range of assets (from play areas to bridges and beaches) in good condition.
- Working with our partners to support the management of flood risk and progress identified schemes that reduce the risk.
- Maintaining a programme of inspection of potentially polluting businesses and investigate complaints, concerns and polluting incidents reported to us.
- Providing property search information to ensure potential purchasers have all the necessary environmental and other official details made available to them.

## Draft Annual Report of the Overview Committee 2018/19

1. The Committee started their civic year in discussing the case for an Events Strategy, and a new post of Business Development and Events Officer. The proposal had come forward as part of the Transformation Strategy to deliver increased income generation, with delivery of a clear purpose, direction and ambition of maximising the potential of some of the Council's assets. The committee discussed the required skills set of such a post, and welcomed the evolving change in approach of how the Council views its assets, balancing income generation with community need.

The committee recommended to Cabinet to approve the Events Strategy and to recruit the post, as well as referral back to the Strategic Management Team to discuss where in the Council such a post would sit.

As means of update, an events consultant has been appointed to work with the Council during 2019 on planning a programme of event for Queen's Drive Space in Exmouth, and the Gate to Plate event in Honiton on a three-day week basis.

2. The committee received a thorough presentation from Tony Norton, Head of the Centre for Energy and the Environment, College of Engineering, Mathematics and Physical Sciences at the University of Exeter. Mr Norton presented the report prepared by Andy Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director, alongside some slides of the data presented in the report relating to the deployment of renewable energy.

Slides were shared with the committee relating to the progress report to parliament, showing how the policy deficit on delivery of renewable energy set out how current national policy, and the regular amendment or replacement of policies, would not deliver what was required to meet the government target. This policy deficit had been taken into account as part of the evidence base for the GESP process.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy spoke about the changes already in place but voiced that there was a clear need for further work on how the Council can contribute towards the goals of the GESP and look at own practices. He proposed that a step forward could be that he held a think tank on the topic, with an open invitation to any Members interested in the subject to contribute. The Chairman agreed this as a way forward, asking the Portfolio Holder to provide a report back to the committee on the findings of the think tank, so that the committee continued to debate the issue and make proposals to the Cabinet in due course.

The committee awaits a report back on this topic.

The committee welcomed the opportunity to debate principles of the Commercial Property Investment Framework back in September 2018. Work by officers and the Asset Management Forum had produced a framework that was set to deliver £450K

additional net rental income per annum by 2020/21 through circa £20,000,000 investment. Aside from income, additional benefits would come from regeneration, business rates income, New Homes Bonus, employment, prosperity and the unlocking and accelerating delivery of sites. The Framework had been drawn up to provide a clear, costed, risk managed and structured programme of investment, using rigorous criteria and with the appropriate decision making capabilities to respond to market opportunities in and agile but safe manner.

The committee debated the principles of the framework and resolved to support those principles. The framework was considered by Cabinet in February and subsequently approved by Council with an availability of up to £20K through existing resources or Public Works Load Board funding.

3. The committee had received a draft submission to The House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities, which covered a number of specific examples as evidence. The discussion was taken into account by the Deputy Chief Executive in finalising the submission that was considered by Cabinet before being submitted.
4. The committee considered the latest version of the Transformation Strategy and the Financial Plan for 2019 – 2020, with specific support for the Transformation Strategy to look to protect the delivery of front line services. Both documents were subsequently agreed at Council.
5. The Digital Strategy was also considered by the committee, with debate covering the benefits to the community with the continuing improvements to service delivery, but also mindful that human interaction was still, and would continue to be, available to those who needed it. The strategy was recommended to Cabinet and subsequently adopted by Council.
6. The results of the Viewpoint Survey were shared with the committee, and some feedback was given on how the format could be further improved in communicating the results of that survey.