

**Agenda for Cabinet  
Wednesday, 3rd February, 2021, 6.00 pm**



**Members of Cabinet**

Councillors M Armstrong, P Arnott (Chair), P Hayward (Vice-Chair), G Jung, D Ledger, M Rixson, J Rowland, J Loudoun, S Jackson and N Hookway

East Devon District Council  
Blackdown House  
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Honiton  
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**Venue:** Online via the Zoom app.

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**www.eastdevon.gov.uk**

(or group number 01395 517546)  
Tuesday, 26 January 2021

**Important - this meeting will be conducted online and recorded by Zoom only.  
Please do not attend Blackdown House.  
Members are asked to follow the [Protocol for Remote Meetings](#)**

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Public speakers are now required to register to speak – for more information please use the following link: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/have-your-say-at-meetings/all-other-virtual-public-meetings/#article-content>

- 1 Public speaking  
Information on [public speaking is available online](#)
- 2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 5 - 10)
- 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 the Press) have been excluded. There is one item which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

- 7 Forward Plan (Pages 11 - 12)
- 8 Minutes of Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2021 (Pages 13 - 16)
- 9 Minutes of Joint Overview and Scrutiny committee held on 13 & 14 January 2021 (Pages 17 - 34)
- 10 Minutes of Poverty Working Panel held on 18 January 2021 (Pages 35 - 41)
- 11 Minutes of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 20 January 2021 (Pages 42 - 49)
- 12 Minutes of Housing Revenue Board held on 21 January 2021 (Pages 50 - 60)

### **Matters for Decision**

- 13 **Supporting Economic Recovery** (Pages 61 - 70)  
The report sets out proposals to launch a Fund aimed at supporting businesses and other organisations to adapt to the post pandemic landscape and associated changes in operating conditions.
- 14 **Revenue and Capital Budgets 2021/22** (Pages 71 - 76)  
Cabinet adopted the draft Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021/22 at its meeting on 6 January 2021. A joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees reviewed those budgets on 14 January 2021 and the Housing Review Board considered the Housing Revenue Account budgets on 21 January 2021.
- 15 **Capital Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25** (Pages 77 - 78)  
The draft Capital Strategy is presented for consideration, this forms part of the annual budget setting approval process.
- 16 **Treasury Management, including the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22** (Pages 79 - 87)  
Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2020/21 – 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020. This report details the overall position and performance of the Council's investment portfolio for the first six months of 2020/21 as well as the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22.
- 17 **Programme of Meetings 2021-2022** (Page 88)

To consider the draft programme of meetings for the next civic year. This programme will be referred to the Annual Meeting of the Council. Members are asked to agree to the proposed date of Wednesday 12 May 2021 for the Annual Meeting.

This arrangement is to meet the legal requirement to hold an Annual Meeting and also such other meetings as are necessary for the conduct of the Council's business in accordance with its Constitution.

**18 Interim Devon Carbon Plan** (Pages 89 - 94)

Devon County Council have been leading work on the production of a Carbon Plan for the county. This work has been developed with a range of partners and is part of the commitment in the Climate Change Emergency Declaration. The interim Plan is out for consultation and will be finalised following a virtual Citizens Assembly process, incorporating comments from consultees.

**19 Proposed Independent Review of Council Management Structure** (Pages 95 - 100)

At the December 2020 Cabinet meeting the Leader announced that he wished to initiate an independent review of the Council Management Structure and the Chief Executive was instructed to prepare a report. Accordingly this report sets out the procurement considerations for Cabinet and Council to consider.

**20 Hayne Lane Site, Honiton** (Pages 101 - 103)

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the use of the Business Rate Pilot Reserve Fund as the council's contribution towards the costs of undertaking a masterplan exercise for a site in Honiton.

**21 Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Report** (Pages 104 - 116)

The report provides feedback and sets out proposed changes following the examination of the Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan.

**22 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public**

**The Vice Chair to move the following:**

“that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B)”.

**Part B Matters for Decision**

**23 COVID-19 Suez claim** (Pages 117 - 125)

During the pandemic response through 2020 there has been record tonnages of recycling collected at the kerbside, due to large parts of the population being at home either through lockdown or working arrangements. For the reasons set out in the report the additional costs incurred as a result of this cannot reasonably be expected to be absorbed by Suez as part of the existing contract.

[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 the meeting of Cabinet held on 20 January 2021****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.02 pm and ended at 8.16 pm

**303 Public speaking**

Jill Anderson spoke at minute 308, Business Support Grant measures.

**304 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of Cabinet held on 6 January 2021 were confirmed as a true record with one amendment to the **REASON** in minute 295. This now reads;

‘It has been accepted that Cranbrook Town Council are best placed to deliver the project and that they have appropriate resources to enable them to do so.’

**305 Declarations of interest**

Min 308. Business Support Grant measures.

Councillor Ian Hall, Personal, Chair of Cloakham Lawn Sports Club.

Min 308. Business Support Grant measures.

Councillor Paul Arnott, Personal, Had a B&B that had been in receipt of a previous grant.

Min 308. Business Support Grant measures.

Councillor Paul Hayward, Personal, Represents a charity that has claimed twice for funding and has been approached by businesses regarding ARG and LRSG applications.

Min 309. Mental Health Challenge for local authorities.

Councillor Ian Hall, Personal, Mental Health Champion for DCC and Vice-Chair for ARC a mental health charity in Axminster.

**306 Matters of urgency**

There were two late items dealt with under minutes 308 and 309.

**307 Councillor password data breach**

The Monitoring Officer presented the report that updated members and the public following the discovery and subsequent reporting of Councillor passwords being visible in November 2020. There was immediate action taken by Strata to correct the breach as well as reporting the breach to the ICO; who had recently closed the case. He stated that due to its sensitivity and technical matters that could not be discussed in public, all members had had the opportunity to attend an officer briefing earlier in the day to discuss this in more detail where lots of information had been covered. He told members that shortly after the briefing he had received confirmation that updates to the software would allow members to reset their own passwords in Issue Manager.

Discussions included the following:

- The report concentrated on fixing the breach and making good procedures

- Strata provided an excellent service
- This was a wakeup, call for more regular reviews of security procedures
- To have occasional independent audits
- Recommend multiple factor authentication

Through the Chair Cabinet wished to thank Cllr Paul Millar for bringing this crucial matter to the attention of the council.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet;**

note the content of the report and invite Strata to approach Devon Audit Partnership to maintain a regular review of internal data processes, and that EDDC approaches SWAP for a similar assessment.

**REASON:**

It was considered that the Strata Investigation Report and commentary in the report should reassure members around the concerns that had been raised.

308 **Business Support Grant measures**

Jill Anderson spoke as Chairman of Cranford Sports and Fitness Club, Exmouth. She stated the club had made an application under the ARG scheme for a grant under the special cases section back in December, just after the second lockdown and asked for consideration to be given to this application. She was acutely aware of the impact that the pandemic and resulting lockdowns had had on the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals and communities. The Club contributed an important and cost-effective role in supporting the local communities, the NHS and many other local organisations and individuals to recover from this immensely challenging pandemic.

Cranford Sports and Fitness Club was a true independent community amateur sports and fitness club that provided extensive support and facilities to worthwhile community groups and activities such as Help for Heroes, Parkinson's support groups and disabled sport to name but a few. They provided jobs in the local community having 16 employees and 20 fitness instructors. They use all local companies for all its maintenance and business support and had over 1200 members (pre pandemic) ranging in age from 6 months to nearly 90 years of age. Governance and leadership were provided by an expert volunteer pro bono Board of Directors.

Cranford Sports and Fitness Club had exhausted the support available so far. They were asking for help us to survive this period through to completion of the vaccination programme.

The Service Lead for Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and the Service Lead for Growth, Development and Prosperity presented the report which sought approval to launch further grant schemes as well as to make changes to the existing Additional Restrictions Grant policy. These were needed as a result of further period of national and local restrictions from 2 December 2020. There was an update on the various schemes the council had been running since going into national restrictions from 5 November 2020 including the grant schemes available whilst in Tier 2 and Tier 3.

Discussions included the following:

- The need for clarity on the role of the Councillor Panel in relation to the ARG scheme, for example to determine special case applications

- Local businesses cannot prosper until the whole supply chain is up and running
- Leisure facilities need to be given due weight in consideration to these grants
- Acknowledgment to how tough things were for businesses at the moment therefore it was urgent to move ahead with the East Devon Leisure Strategy
- Armed Forces personnel need the support offered by the Cranford Sports Club as well as young people with mental health issues

The Chair and Vice-Chair wished to thank Libby Jarrett, Andy Wood and their teams for dealing with and understanding all the government guidance with its complexities, and doing this additional work over the last year on behalf of the council which was very much appreciated.

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the LRS (Closed) Addendum & the CBLP Scheme policies.
2. To delegate authority to the Service Lead for Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services & Corporate Fraud & Compliance to make any technical changes to the LRS (C) Addendum and the CBLP policies.
3. To approve changes to the operation of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme as outlined in the report.
4. To delegate authority to the Service Lead for Growth, Development & Prosperity in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Finance and the S151 officer to make consequential changes to the ARG discretionary policy, in order to keep the scheme aligned with subsequent changes in government restrictions.
5. To allocate a further £925,680 under the ARG scheme to provide support to businesses impacted by local and national restrictions.
6. To delegate authority to Service Lead for Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and Corporate Fraud & Compliance in consultation with Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Finance and the S151 Officer to approve subsequent grant policies should we move back into local restrictions.
7. To encourage the constituency MPs to strenuously and vigorously lobby the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide meaningful and urgent support for those in the “excluded” group who are unable to make applications under our current grant policies; due to Central Government constraints.

**REASON:**

To ensure that a quick response to a continuously changing landscape and the government funded grant schemes were deployed in a timely manner.

309 **Mental Health Challenge for local authorities**

The Strategic Lead Housing, Health & Environment presented the report that explored the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge and considered the implications of signing up to the commitments as a way of promoting mental health awareness and maintaining good mental health for elected members, staff and communities.

The Council already had a number of programmes designed to maintain good mental health and the challenge builds on existing commitments in our Public Health Strategic Plan and our Happy, Healthy, Here programme.

Cllr Steve Gazzard wished to thank John Golding and Cllr Paul Millar for their valuable input into the report. He reminded members that as councillors they were all responsible

for the health and well-being of staff as without them the council could not function. He stated that larger workloads were also putting pressure on councillors themselves.

Cllr Tony Woodward as Member Champion for Mental Health thanked John Golding and supported the recommendations in the report.

Further discussions included the following:

- Councillors must be supportive of staff who were continuing to deliver council services, from the CEO to frontline staff
- From councillors to staff everyone was having to deal with working as well as their own personal issues brought about through the pandemic making life very difficult for many at the present time
- The issue of mental health needed to be embraced across all parties to make the best of the new officer post, Member Champion and other initiatives available
- Welfare of officers should be on the forefront of everyone's mind. Hope this initiative would help towards a mutual understanding between officers and members
- Huge stress from increased workloads and especially remote working. Recommendations need thorough risk analysis
- Councillors need to consider their wording in group emails to each other so as not to come across as insulting

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the Council adopt and sign up to the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge;
2. that the appointed Mental Health Member Champion have regard to the guidelines contained in the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge in carrying out their role;
3. a Lead Officer is identified and additional officer capacity is approved to further support staff and facilitate positive mental health for elected members;
4. the commitment is captured in the updated Council Plan and in our Public Health Strategic Plan, and
5. that the new officer act as a liaison between the council and other authorities and outside bodies concerned with mental health, as well as the new mental health officer within EDDC housing team and the Mental Health Member Champion. This is to ensure that they have the most current and up to date advice to assist members and officers with signposting should members of the public approach them for assistance.

**RECOMMENDED to Council:**

6. To approve the Lead Officer role on the basis of a 1 year fixed term post and the necessary budget of circa £50k be taken from the £700k funding provided by Government in relation to COVID.

**REASON:**

To take forward the Cabinet's request to further explore the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge and assess the implications of adopting the actions set out in the challenge.

**Attendance List**

**Present:**

**Portfolio Holders**

M Armstrong	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities
P Arnott	Leader
P Hayward	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Economy and Assets
J Bailey	Portfolio Holder Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Strategic Planning
M Rixson	Portfolio Holder Climate Action
J Rowland	Portfolio Holder Finance
J Loudoun	Portfolio Holder Policy Co-ordination and Regional Engagement
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Democracy and Transparency

**Cabinet apologies:**

**Also present (for some or all the meeting)**

Councillor Mike Allen  
Councillor Denise Bickley  
Councillor Kevin Blakey  
Councillor Susie Bond  
Councillor Colin Brown  
Councillor Fred Caygill  
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain  
Councillor Maddy Chapman  
Councillor Bruce De Saram  
Councillor Peter Faithfull  
Councillor Steve Gazzard  
Councillor Ian Hall  
Councillor Marcus Hartnell  
Councillor Nick Hookway  
Councillor Ben Ingham  
Councillor Vicky Johns  
Councillor Paul Millar  
Councillor Andrew Moulding  
Councillor Helen Parr  
Councillor Val Ranger  
Councillor Eleanor Rylance  
Councillor Philip Skinner  
Councillor Brenda Taylor  
Councillor Joe Whibley  
Councillor Tony Woodward  
Councillor Eileen Wragg  
Councillor Tom Wright  
Councillor Fabian King

**Also present:**

**Officers:**

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing  
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Robert Murray, Economic Development Manager  
Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director  
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)  
Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Andrew Wood, Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity  
Robin Barlow, Compliance and Security Manager - Strata

Chair .....

Date: .....

## EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Forward Plan of Key Decisions - For the 4 month period: 1 February 2021 to 31 May 2021

This plan contains all the Key Decisions that the Council's Cabinet expects to make during the 4-month period referred to above. The plan is rolled forward every month.

Key Decisions are defined by law as "an executive decision which is likely:–

- (a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Council's area."

In accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000, in determining the meaning of "significant" in (a) and (b) above regard shall be had to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State.

**A public notice period of 28 clear days is required when a Key Decision is to be taken by the Council's Cabinet even if the meeting is wholly or partly to be in private.**

The Cabinet may only take Key Decisions in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of the Constitution and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to information) (England) Regulations 2012. A minute of each Key Decision is published within 2 days of it having been made. This is available for public inspection on the Council's website <http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk>, and at the Council Offices, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton. The law and the Council's constitution permit urgent Key Decisions to be made without 28 clear days' notice of the proposed decisions having been published provided certain procedures are followed. A decision notice will be published for these in exactly the same way.

This plan also identifies Key Decisions which are to be considered in the private part of the meeting (Part B) and the reason why. Any written representations that a particular decision should be moved to the public part of the meeting (Part A) should be sent to the Democratic Services Team (address as above) as soon as possible. **Members of the public have the opportunity to speak on the relevant decision at the meeting in accordance with the Council's public speaking rules.**

#### **Obtaining documents**

Committee reports in respect of Key Decisions include links to the relevant background documents. If a printed copy of all or part of any report or background document is required please contact Democratic Services (address as above) or by calling 01395 517546.

<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Portfolio (Lead Officer)</b>	<b>Documents to be considered before Cabinet take decision</b>	<b>Whether other documents will be considered before decision taken [Y/N]</b>	<b>Other meetings where matter is to be debated / considered</b>	<b>Date of Cabinet meeting</b>	<b>Part A = Public meeting  Part B = private meeting [with reasons]</b>
Toilet review	Coast, Country and Environment (Andrew Hancock)		Y		March 2021	Part A
Play Strategy	Coast, Country and Environment (Andrew Hancock)		Y		May 2021	Part A

Members of the public who wish to make any representations or comments concerning any of the Key Decisions referred to in this Forward Plan may do so by writing to the Leader of the Council c/o Democratic Services (as above).

January 2021

**STRATA - JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****MONDAY, 11 JANUARY 2021**Present:

Councillors Atkinson (Chair), King, Twiss, Hookway, Sparkes, Oliver, Clarence and Nuttall

Members Attendance:

Councillors Wrigley, Dewhirst and Pearson

Apologies:

Councillor Orme

Officers in Attendance:

Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director

Paul Nicholls, Strata Board Director

Simon Davey, Strata Board Director

David Hodgson, Strata Finance Director

Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer

Christopher Morgan, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

Robin Barlow, Head of Security & Compliance

Martin Millmow, Head of Document Centres

David Sercombe, Head of Business Systems & Business Intelligence

Adrian Smith, Head of Infrastructure & Support

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020 were approved as a correct record and authorised to be signed at the earliest convenience.

In regard to the last sentence of Minute 16, it was noted the matter was included in the *Strata Business Plan 2020/21 and Beyond*, agendas item 9.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURAL RULES**

None.

**4. IT DIRECTOR'S AND MANAGER'S REPORT AUGUST TO DECEMBER 2020**

The Strata IT Director referred to the report circulated with the agenda. Resources had continued to focus on ensuring a stable IT environment during the current

Covid situation for the delivery of the service, and support to officers and Members in an exemplary manner. Demand on the service had increased significantly since Covid and resources had focused on support for agile working.

Successes included: assisting the Council produce online forms through the Firmstep platform for the Business Support Grants, enabling expedient process and payment to those in need, training sessions for staff and Members; the continued reduction of printing volumes; Strata service savings in excess of £1m to be refunded to all three authorities, and Strata staffs' annual conference being held remotely with the contribution of staffs' own money to the Alzheimer's society, Honiton Food Bank, and Children's Hospice South West charities.

In addition project work, of which there were currently 49, included the *Strata Business Plan 20/21 and Beyond* progression; Windows 10 migration, agile working, stability of Global Desktop and Global Comms platforms, renewal of both the Microsoft and VMWare licence agreements, and partnership work with Exeter University on climate change. This would assess Strata's environment so that Strata could support the three authorities in meeting their Climate Change aspirations.

Challenges included the increased demand on the service as a result of Covid, and consequently not progressing planned projects as well as expected.

RESOLVED

The report be received and noted.

## 5. **FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT NOVEMBER 2020**

The committee referred to the Strata Budget Monitoring report which detailed the financial position as at 30 November 2020.

The Company has been given a total of £6.60 million to run the IT Services in 2020/21 along with funding for various capital projects. The Company also maintained an account for additional purchases throughout the year, which was invoiced to each Council based on actual purchases made.

Key variations from the revenue and capital budgets were detailed which resulted in savings of £500,000 and a further £320,000 and £282,000 identified to assist in the current Covid situation and the significant strain for all three authorities

This had been achieved with the addition of two service desk posts to address the increased demand on the service.

RESOLVED

The report be received and noted

## 6. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RECOMMENDED** that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the

following item on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## **7. QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS UNDER PROCEDURE RULES**

Councillor Clarence asked a question which was circulated to the Committee with the answer. The question and answer which is appended was noted.

The Chair concluded that the question submitted by Councillor Clarence had provided a worthwhile scrutiny exercise into Strata's value for money efficiency and effectiveness.

*At this juncture councillors Oliver and Twiss left the meeting.*

## **8. STRATA BUSINESS PLAN 2020/21 AND BEYOND**

The IT Director referred to the draft Business Plan as circulated with the agenda, and the Committee considered the recommendations at page 3 of the Plan.

The draft Plan recognised the challenging time since Covid, both for Strata and the three authorities in adapting to the change. The authorities needed Strata to support them in an 'agile' way, the community needed to be able to access council services on line, businesses unable to operate needed access to funds, democracy needed to be carried out in a virtual world and managers needed to ensure that authority services could continue to operate using widely dispersed resources.

Strata reacted confidently to the challenge proving that it could react and deal successfully to change, and has fared better than a large number of private and public organisations. Strata had and was continuing to prove the service was stronger, more adaptable, and more flexible. Along with this the resulting realisation that the authorities were probably more dependent on IT and the value it brings than previously.

The draft Plan set out the 'vision and plan' for the next 12 months, from 1 April 2021, in order to better support the needs of the three authorities. It was developed to deliver a more 'customer focussed' approach to Strata's work, yet still delivering against the original objectives of reduced risk, reduced cost and the creation of an environment to support change.

### **RECOMMENDED**

The recommendations set out at page 3 of the *Strata Business Plan 2020/21 and Beyond* be referred to Joint Strata Executive for approval, with the exception of the two recommendations relating to governance structure. It is recommended that these need further debate by the Joint Strata Executive and the Joint Scrutiny Committee and any changes should be delayed until a more detailed review is undertaken.

The meeting started at 1600hrs and finished at 1845hrs

CLLR Y ATKINSON  
Chairman

**Recommendations for Cabinet that will resolve in an action being taken:**

**Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 13 and 14 January 2021**

**Minutes 114a – d and 120a - f Key Service Plan Objectives**

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee and the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for:

- Countryside and Leisure Service
- Environmental Health and Car Parks Service
- Housing Service
- Streetscene Service
- Finance Service
- Governance and Licensing Service
- Place, Assets and Commercialisation Service
- Organisational Development Service
- Growth, Development and Prosperity Service

be adopted as presented;

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee and the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Planning Service be adopted, subject to:

- a) Reference to both social and affordable housing;
- b) Inclusion of the recommendations from the audit on CIL and section 106.

**Minute 121 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget 2021/22**

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee and the Scrutiny Committee** that the Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 be adopted.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees held on 13 January 2021**

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 2.11 pm

#### **108 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **109 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The notes of the previous joint committees were noted.

#### **110 Declarations of interest**

Cllr B De Saram; Minutes 113 and 114; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor  
Cllr N Hookway; Minute 113 and 114; Personal Interest: Queens Drive Delivery Group Member

Cllr V Johns: Minute 113 and 114; Personal Interest: Ottery St Mary Town Councillor

Cllr M Chapman: Minute 113 and 114; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor

Cllr O Davey: Minute 113 and 114; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor

Cllr Tony McCullom: Minute 114b and 114c: Personal Interest: Works for Honiton Town Council. Where he is employed to run car parks, and Chair of Housing Review Board

Cllr E Rylance: Minute 113 and 114: Personal Interest: Broadclyst Parish Councillor

Cllr A Colman: Minute 113 and 114; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor

Cllr S Gazzard; Minute 114c; Personal Interest: Tenant of the Council; Minute 113 and 114; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor

Cllr A Moulding; Minute 114a; Personal Interest: President of Cloakham Lawns Association

Cllr I Hall; Minute 114a; Personal Interest: Chairman of Cloakham Lawns Association and Devon County Councillor

#### **111 Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

#### **112 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential items.

#### **113 Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2021-22**

The Chairman welcomed the Strategic Lead Finance to present an overview of the budget position and the basis for the Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets.

In presenting the budgets, the Strategic Lead Finance highlighted to the committees:

- Changes to the local government funding formula and the business rate retention scheme are now assumed to take place in 2022/23 due to the pandemic, but this has not yet been confirmed;

- Preparatory work in developing savings and additional income to bridge the projected deficit of £0.7m (from external factors of pay award, effect of inflation, and additional cost pressures due predominantly to homelessness, recycling and refuse staff costs, decrease in recyclable income, local plan costs) has been considered and agreed by the Budget Setting and Capital Allocations Panel, endorsed by Cabinet. The updated proposals, assuming agreement, would then provide a balanced budget without the need to reduce the level of service provided by the Council;
- The draft budget includes key areas from the Council's new Statement of Intent: Carbon reduction measures; addressing poverty; additional social housing;
- It also accommodates additional resources to address specific staffing requirements, with external funding being sought where possible;
- The draft budget assumes an increase in Council Tax by £5 a year;
- The budget balance is maintained, but with the balance at the bottom of the adopted range for the General Fund Balance.

The risks for the year ahead, which may require funding and so would fall to the General Fund Balance included:

- Implications of Covid-19 – expected loss of income or costs associated with the impact of the pandemic are considered at this stage to be mitigated with the funding provided by Government;
- Car Park Income – the budget assumes an additional income of £300k from car park revenue through the increase in parking charges. If Council decides to delay that increase, then that shortfall could be met from Balances or alternative funding for part of or up to a year; if the decision is not to increase charges at all, the risk is a considerable impact on further budget setting and more difficult than the position outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP);
- LED – The agreed subsidy of up to £1.3m is hoped will be partially met by Government funding, as is the case with in-house leisure services. The newly formed LED Monitoring Forum have considered initial indications from LED of their required increase in the Service Level payment, in order to maintain existing services going forward, but the rising cost is something that the Council cannot afford. Further work by the Forum, along with appointment of independent expert advice, will provide recommended outcomes back to Cabinet and Council;
- New proposals for the Queens Drive Open Space to be concluded and costed;
- Actions from the Poverty Panel;
- Management Review;
- Brexit – effect on the Council's main contractors.

The settlement from Government includes a new grant – Lower Tier Service Grant Allocation (LTSG). This is a one-off grant to help with services impacted, with the Council's allocation as £700k. This sum is proposed to mitigate the risk of costs arising as set out above, and other currently unknown pressures during 2021/22.

The Housing Revenue Account would be debated for recommendation by the Housing Review Board.

The Capital Programme has been considered by the Budget Setting and Capital Allocation Panel (BSCAP), including the approval by Cabinet of capital projects put forward for 2021/22 that have met the set criteria and matched in priority against the funding available.

Recommendations would go forward to Cabinet before referral to Council to agree the final budget.

The joint Committees were being asked to:

- Recommend the Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 for adoption;
- Recommend the Draft Capital Budget 2021/22 for adoption;
- Recommend the Key Service Plan objectives 2021/22 for adoption.

The Portfolio Holder Finance commented on the magnificent achievement of the Strategic Lead Finance and his team in the prudent actions taken to bring forward a balanced budget without reducing service level, in an unprecedented time.

Questions, comments and clarification included:

- Member comment on delaying the car park fee rise in order to assist the economy, impacted by the pandemic; reference was made to the Car Parking Task and Finish Forum, in that some Members felt there was additional work to be completed by that Forum and therefore no recommendation which included an increase in parking charges should go forward. Other Members supported the increase, as they felt it was modest and made a considerable impact on the balanced budget;
- Successful bid for section 106 funding for a capital project meant that money returned to the Capital Fund and therefore could other projects now receive funding? In response, Members were reminded of the set criteria and prioritisation process that the BSCAP worked through; projects could be considered throughout the year, but through this formal process;
- Could the LTSG be used to assist ailing private leisure clubs, if it could be used to support LED? In response, Members had to decide how best to use that grant against the risk costs for the Council as presented; it was more appropriate to private clubs to apply for concessionary grants from Government;
- Confirmation that the Homelessness Strategy is included in the draft budget, and that the data analyst post detailed in the report was an in-house resource to work on the mentioned "Poverty dashboard";
- Additional post need for the Recycling and Waste Team was explained in detail to the Committees;
- Savings identified in the budget relating to toilets predominantly covered the Business Rate Relief, which was announced in 2020. Cabinet would receive future reports on the toilet review, and Members were reminded of the enhanced cleaning schedule now in place for those public toilets that remained open.

A provisional recommendation to Cabinet by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees was made at this point to:

- Recommend the Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 for adoption;
- Recommend the Draft Capital Budget 2021/22 for adoption.

The Chair advised that this would be revisited after the two committees had reviewed the Service Plans in both this meeting and the following session on 14 January 2021.

## 114 **Key Service Plan Objectives 2021 - 22**

The joint committees considered individual key service plan objectives as set out in these minutes for the following services: Countryside and Leisure; Environmental Health and Car Parks; Housing; and Streetscene.

**(a) Countryside & Leisure**

The Service Lead for Countryside and Leisure provided clarification and responded to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22. He highlighted the increase in value of the nature reserves of the Council as a wellbeing resource for the public; and the commitment to moving the educational element of the service online. Events had been re-imagined to meet social distancing requirements and had proved popular.

The service were also preparing for the implications of the new Environment Act and the new duties that would come with it; although existing work by the team was already in line with the Act requirements.

The Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment praised the fantastic work of the Countryside team, who had re-invented so many elements of the service as a result of the pandemic. He felt that future “Stay-cations” would bring added pressure to the service and therefore welcomed the inclusion of an ecologist post to the Council.

Clarification and responses included:

- Assurance that changes to the Seaton Wetlands, including car park surfacing, pay points and refreshment facilities, would help deliver a better facility to meet the demand by users of the wetlands, but delivered with care to minimise any impact on the natural environment of the wetlands. The improvements would not only enhance the site, but would help bring in revenue; donations had decreased dramatically. Work will continue with ward members as changes are implemented. The Portfolio Holder Finance, who had overseen the debate on the capital project bid for wetlands enhancements, also sought to reassure that the set criteria had been met;
- Villages in Action committed to continue and will report outcomes of progress to next Arts and Culture Forum on how it can continue to operate within the social distancing rules;
- The LED Monitoring Forum had oversight of the development of a new Leisure Strategy.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Countryside and Leisure Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Countryside and Leisure Service be adopted.

**(b) Environmental Health and Car Parks**

The Service Lead for Environmental Health and Car Parks provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22. In presenting the service plan, he highlighted:

- Continued volume of work of the service;
- New work as a direct consequence of the pandemic, such as the wellbeing of the clinically extremely vulnerable in the District, the Council’s own staff wellbeing, and working with the NHS and Devon County Council on testing options and the vaccination programme;
- Fewer routine hygiene inspections, but a shift to assisting businesses to change their offer – for example, switching to a takeaway service in a safe and secure manner;

- 50% rise in neighbour complaints;
- Preparatory work on the climate emergency action plan;
- Poverty panel continued;
- The Car Park Task and Finish Forum would continue in forthcoming weeks, including consideration of a revised local parking permit for residents, and reviewing revenue from campervans.

The Portfolio Holder for Coast, Countryside and Environment gave his thanks to the team for their efforts during a difficult year, and was considering how their approach to dealing with the increase of anti-social behaviour could be reviewed to help the team cope.

Clarification and responses included:

- In working towards reducing the carbon footprint of the Council, virtual council meetings should continue;
- Additional staff resource had been put back into the Environmental Health team, within the existing budget, for the nuisance complaint workload;
- In response to a query on Council staff mental health, Members were informed of the safeguards in place, including frequent contact between managers and staff, and counselling availability;
- In response to concern about safety near electric fleet vehicles, Members were informed that the current electric vehicles in the fleet had a workaround for producing a noise to alert pedestrians; and that future leased vehicles would include an in-built tone for this purpose;
- In response to a query about the Maer Car Park, it was not envisaged as coming forward as a vaccination site, but may come online as an additional testing site. If that happens, there will be a lost revenue claim for compensation to the NHS, but it is likely that only part of the area will be used and therefore the impact on revenue may not be severe;
- There was no entitlement of the Council to receive car registration information from the DVLA to pass onto the police in respect of suspected visitors breaching the current lockdown rules;
- Local Action Groups continued to provide valuable work were possible, but due to the pandemic their momentum has lessened;
- Member appreciation of all the volunteer groups at the current time;
- Paying for car parking was changing, in that the paying by phone provider was now operational across the region, and the additional fee for using that service has been removed. The Car Parking TaFF would review the rates across the car parks in the District.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Environmental Health and Car Parks Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Environmental Health and Car Parks Service be adopted.

**(c) Housing**

The Acting Service Lead for Housing provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22. Highlights from the service plan included:

- Increase in homelessness, including an increase in families becoming homeless;
- Building confidence in tenants that the safety measures were in place for contractors to enter the property for necessary maintenance;
- How to increase housing stock;
- Strategic approach to retaining Right to Buy receipts;
- Green home grant success;
- Work of mobile support officers in helping tenants learn how to manage their income;
- Housing Safety Act implications;
- Full stock condition survey;
- Building resilience into the Homesafeguard Service.

The Portfolio Holder for Homes and Communities gave sincere thanks to the Acting Service Lead, the Strategic Lead for Housing, Health and Environment, and the Housing team, for their agility in adapting to new ways of working as well as dealing with the increase in workload.

Clarification and responses included:

- The work of mobile support officers in assisting tenants to learn how to manage their finances was intended to be for the Council's tenants only, as funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA); not for private sector tenants; if it proved successful, the service could be reviewed to expand to the private sector if funding was available;
- Homelessness costs were taken from the General Fund; some of the additional grant funding was likely to go towards the increase in cost in this sector;
- Clarification on the role of rough sleeper navigators as a form of outreach worker role. The work had been both pivotal and successful;
- Member thanks for the hard work undertaken by the Housing team.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Housing Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Housing Service be adopted.

**(d) Streetscene**

The Service Lead for Streetscene provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22. Highlights from the service plan included:

- Acknowledgement of the increased value to the public of the public realm, parks and gardens and open spaces;
- Increase in budget for recycling and waste, due to the reduced value of recycled items and a driver pay rate increase;
- Implications of the new Environment Act;
- Review of deposit return scheme;
- Early negotiation of uplift in Recycling and Waste contract due to the predicted increase in properties to collect from exceeding 72k by September 2022;
- Team adaption to continued working on front line within social distancing guidelines.

The Portfolio Holder for Coast, Countryside and Environment gave sincere thanks to the Service Lead and the Streetscene team, including the Suez team, for continuing to deliver a fantastic service in the most trying of circumstances. He warned Members that the new Environment Act would bring considerable change, in terms of impact on kerbside collections, changes to fleet vehicles, and adapting flood alleviation schemes.

Clarification and responses included:

- Measures in place to help mitigate against infection included, including crew bubbles, PPE and distancing. In response to a question, some staff absence had occurred, but plans were in place to mitigate impact where possible;
- Seasonal cleansing staff will be employed again in preparation for the expected summer demand. If exceptional demand occurs again, the staffing level will be reviewed. The impact on staff morale was acknowledged;
- There was a trial in place to review the contamination issues associated with on street recycling;
- A drafted events strategy has been prepared for consideration by Cabinet, but has been delayed due to the latest lockdown. However planning and marketing of events can still take place for when restrictions lift, and demand remains for event space; currently work is targeted towards the Queens Drive offer and reviewing concessions for fitness events on the Council's beaches;
- Detail on the public toilet review will come forward to Cabinet in due course;
- Cllr Bond gave her thanks to the Engineering Projects Manager for his work in relation to flood alleviation at Feniton, describing his "tenacity as legendary";
- Request for signage on where to place recycling material to be updated at the Council's beaches;
- Confirmation that trialling electrical vehicles would also look at the savings for maintenance as well as carbon savings to give a true comparison.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Streetscene Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Streetscene Service be adopted.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

N Hookway (Chair)  
M Allen  
K Blakey  
S Bond  
B De Saram  
S Gazzard  
I Hall  
M Hartnell  
V Johns  
F King  
V Ranger  
T Woodward  
M Chapman  
A Colman  
O Davey  
S Hawkins  
T McCollum  
H Parr  
E Rylance  
B Taylor

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

D Bickley  
A Dent  
B Ingham  
M Rixson  
I Thomas  
M Armstrong  
P Arnott  
P Faithfull  
J Bailey  
P Hayward  
S Jackson  
G Jung  
D Ledger  
K McLauchlan  
P Twiss  
P Millar  
A Moulding  
J Rowland  
E Wragg  
T Wright  
J Loudoun

**Officers in attendance:**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing  
Andrew Hancock, Service Lead StreetScene  
Andrew Ennis, Service Lead Environmental Health and Car Parks

Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management  
Jo Garfoot, Acting Housing Service Lead  
Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure  
John Symes, Finance Manager  
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor apologies:**

C Wright

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## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held at Online via the Zoom App on 14 January 2021**

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

The meeting started at 10.03 am and ended at 1.11 pm

#### **115 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **116 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were noted at the previous session on 13 January 2021.

#### **117 Declarations of interest**

Cllr A Colman; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor  
Cllr O Davey; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor  
Cllr V Johns; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Ottery St Mary Town Councillor  
Cllr E Rylance; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Broadclyst Parish Councillor; in receipt of business support grant  
Cllr K Blakey; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Cranbrook Town Councillor  
Cllr B De Saram; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor  
Cllr I Hall; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Devon County Councillor  
Cllr N Hookway; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Queens Drive Delivery Group member  
Cllr T Woodward; Minute 120 and 121; Personal Interest: Exmouth Town Councillor

#### **118 Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

#### **119 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were no confidential items.

#### **120 Key Service Plan Objectives 2021- 22**

The joint committees considered individual key service plan objectives as set out in these minutes for the following services:

- Finance
- Governance and Licensing
- Place, Assets and Commercialisation
- Organisational Development
- Growth, Development and Prosperity
- Planning

**(a) Finance**

The Strategic Lead for Finance, and the Service Lead Revenue and Benefits, provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22.

For the Finance team, work for the coming year would include:

- Continued monitoring updates to Cabinet;
- Working with services on ensuring financial procedures were in place for the significant level of homeworking, with work already undertaken on additional controls and processes for items such as invoices;
- Support to services on dealing with business rate processes;
- Improvements to procurement guidance
- 2022/23 MTFP considerations;
- Accessible financial monitoring reports, such as dashboards.

In specific reference to Revenues and Benefits, work in the past few months included:

- Multiple schemes to administer to support business, work which was expected to be ongoing for some time;
- Deploying 100% rate relief for the hospitality and leisure industry in the area;
- Operating the test and trace payment scheme, including the development of the discretionary element of the scheme. The Council had been the lead in developing policy for the Devon area;
- Covid Council Tax Hardship scheme delivery;
- Increased demand for Council Tax Reduction Scheme;
- Handling applications for the Covid Hardship Scheme;
- The Community Hub being staffed by the existing Customer Services Team.

The element of the service plan for Revenue and Benefits included:

- Covid measures, including the review of schemes;
- Rebuilding collection levels;
- Poverty agenda, including the Poverty Dashboard development;
- Business rating database development;
- Continuing to refine the online service to increase efficiency;
- Income maximisation (fraud and compliance).

Clarification and responses included:

- Commendation of the hard work and dedication of the team to react to the changing offer of multiple support schemes provided by the Government for both individuals and businesses, including the rapid reform of how applications can be made to reduce the burden for the applicant and make such funding more accessible;
- Whilst there continued to be development in online transactions to help efficiency, the service recognised the importance of lines of communication with people less able to access services online, and kept measures in place for telephone and (where possible) face to face contact;
- The Revenue and Benefits team had operated for some time as an agile team to adapt to meet demand where pinch points occurred in the work; the team were monitored closely by manager to help maintain their wellbeing;

- The financial resilience post was funded by Devon County Council; third party organisations (such as charities) support discussion would be part of the remit of the Poverty Panel in the coming months.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Finance Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Finance Service be adopted.

**(b) Governance & Licensing**

The Strategic Lead for Governance and Licensing provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22. He outlined his pride in his team in the significant achievements delivered in the past few months, including:

- Reactional elements by the Legal and Licensing teams;
- Delivery of virtual meetings, as recently reported to Cabinet with the request for additional staff resource;
- Support on taxi licensing with an emergency licensing policy.

The service plan for the coming year included:

- Revising the Cemetery Regulations;
- Review of Taxi Policy;
- Review of approach to Council meetings;
- Implementation of any decision by Council following the outcomes of the Governance Review Working Party.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery gave thanks to the Strategic Lead for his work over the past few months, describing his fantastic contribution across a number of services. She also commended his work and that of his team in enabling the Council to continue its work by facilitating virtual meetings.

Clarification and responses included:

- Current legislation still required Council meetings to be held in person once the temporary rules expired in May. A watching brief was being kept on Teignbridge District Council's implementation of hybrid meetings, that was still in the early stages of delivery. The LGA were lobbying Government for the legislative issue to be resolved, in order to permit the ability to deliver meetings online in the future. Many members commented that they would prefer to have the option of physical, hybrid or full virtual meetings in the future, to give more choice for attendance and reduce travel.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Governance and Licensing Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Governance and Licensing Service be adopted.

**(c) Place, Assets and Commercialisation**

The Service Lead for Place, Assets and Commercialisation provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22. He outlined his pride in the newly formed team, who had risen to the challenges brought in recent months. Recent work had included:

- Support to tenants, such as rent deferrals and general advice on grants and similar;
- Covid secure measures at Blackdown House, Exmouth Town Hall and other buildings for the safety of staff;
- Honiton swimming pool refurbishment planning;
- Stock condition survey continued from the previous year, now concluded;
- Reopening High Street Safely Fund;
- Progress on Queens Drive through the Delivery Group.

For the coming year, the service plan had a focus on:

- Team Devon economy recovery work, including funding opportunities;
- Using asset base to drive economic growth;
- Continued work on carbon reduction;
- Supporting the HRA and Housing TaFF in regard to the growth of housing stock;
- New asset management plan;
- Access to asset data for councillors to help inform decision making.

Clarification and responses included:

- Work was underway through the Asset Management Forum on the asset transfer policy, in that consultation with Town and Parish Councils on the procedure for transfer was due to start shortly. Work on assessment of the assets would give a clear indication of what assets could be available for transfer and would help give a clear priority list, and resources would be considered against that – clearly there was not sufficient resource to handle requests from all towns and parishes at one time;
- The importance of small business units, as many Members felt there would be an increased demand for them as the workforce changes in the aftermath of the pandemic.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Place, Assets and Commercialisation Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Place, Assets and Commercialisation Service be adopted.

**(d) Organisational Development, Transformation and Equalities**

The Chief Executive provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22.

Achievements of the service highlighted included:

- Staff welfare measures, including calls to vulnerable and shielding staff;
- IIP Platinum level award;
- Introduction of mental health first aiders for both Council staff and Strata staff.

Objectives in the coming year included:

- Focus on engagement with the public;
- Revisiting participating budgeting
- Website development
- Providing regular advice to managers and others

Clarification and responses included:

- Discussion on measures for supporting staff can be raised and scoped with the Scrutiny committee if required;
- A watching brief is kept on unitary progress at Somerset, but it was not felt appropriate to put in preparatory work in the current service plan as the prospect of development of unitary status was unlikely in the current year;
- The Transformation fund would be utilised for the work on developing the new Council plan, following the adoption of the Statement of Intent.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Organisational Development Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Organisational Development Service be adopted.

**(e) Growth, Development and Prosperity**

The Service Lead for Growth, Development and Prosperity provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22. The service team had been formed a year ago, and the elements that the service covered were explained to the Committees.

Achievements during the past year included:

- Adapting to new ways of delivery during lockdown, and working across teams to include assistance on items such as business grants and redundancy recovery;
- Increased pressure on use of green space assets.

The service plan before the Committees included:

- Moving from responsive to proactive economic recovery, and helping to realise a more resilient economic recovery overall;
- Projects to deliver large scale carbon savings;
- Adapting to post Brexit, such as changes to funding streams.

Clarification and responses included:

- Welcomed reference to skills, as many residents would be facing the need to re-skill to open up employment opportunities;
- Adapting delivery to meet the evidence of impact on groups; evidence suggested a disproportionate impact on specific sectors of business, age groups and geographical areas, that needs to be taken into account; hence the additional staff set out in the draft budget to develop the approach to tackling those areas;
- There is an existing adapt and thrive support program; as well as a number of resources available to business both at County level and nationally;

- Awareness of increased impact on rural communities, because of the disadvantages of less travel links and some areas of poor broadband, as well as changes to farming subsidies. Reference to rural communities in the service plan was welcomed;

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Growth, Development and Prosperity Service be adopted.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Growth, Development and Prosperity Service be adopted.

**(f) Planning**

The Service Lead for Planning provided clarification and response to questions from Councillors in relation to the service plan for the service for 2021/22. He highlighted significant changes in working methods undertaken this year in order for the service to continue to function during lockdown, including the change from a paper heavy process to paperless overnight. Despite the pandemic, planning application numbers had increased, and there was a significant increase for the Land Charges team following the changes to stamp duty.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning gave this thanks to the Service Lead and his team for their work in difficult circumstances. He felt that the service plan presented to the Committees struck the right balance for the year ahead. He also thanked Councillor Susie Bond for her briefing to him when he took on the role of Portfolio Holder.

Looking forward to the service plan for the coming year, key areas of work included:

- the new Local Plan, with the start of the consultation process beginning the following week;
- Addressing climate change;
- Coastal erosion and flooding;
- Implications of new Environment Act;
- Diversity of types of housing;
- Supporting economic recovery;
- Audit recommendations on CIL and section 106.

Clarification and responses included:

- Preparatory work underway for the new Environmental Act, but the detail still unknown; the Ecologist post would cut across several services, including Planning;
- Acknowledgement of the risk to the local plan when planning legislation changes but there was no response to the White Paper as yet; therefore it was deemed more of a risk to delay the local plan to wait for those changes. Strategic Planning Committee would monitor any updates on the proposed changes to the legislation
- Issues and Options consultation and the call for sites were undertaken simultaneously for efficiency;

- Amend the service plan to make a clear distinction between the delivery of affordable housing, and social housing, particularly due to the Council's appetite to prioritise on social housing delivery;
- Review on the urban extension for Axminster had been delayed and it was hoped this would come before the Strategic Planning Committee in the spring.
- Landscaping conditions could only be imposed by the Council up to five years; Tree preservation orders and conservation areas gave longer protection, but legislation limits what the Council can take action on in relation to landscaping areas in developments.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Planning Service be adopted, subject to:

- a) Reference to both social and affordable housing;
- b) Inclusion of the recommendations from the audit on CIL and section 106.

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Service Plan 2021/22 for the Planning Service be adopted, subject to:

- a) Reference to both social and affordable housing;
- b) Inclusion of the recommendations from the audit on CIL and section 106

## 121 **Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2021-22**

The committees had agreed a provisional recommendation to Cabinet, subject to discussion on the service plans taking place.

At the conclusion of the debate of the service plans, as no substantive changes had been recommended that required an amendment to the draft Revenue or Capital budget presented, the committees recommended as follows:

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Overview Committee** that the Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 be adopted;

**Recommended to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Committee** that the Draft Capital Budget 2021/22 be adopted.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Councillors present:**

C Brown (Chair)  
N Hookway (Vice-Chair)  
M Chapman  
A Colman  
O Davey  
S Hawkins  
V Johns  
F King

T McCollum  
H Parr  
V Ranger (Vice-Chairman)  
E Rylance  
B Taylor  
M Allen  
K Blakey  
S Bond  
B De Saram  
I Hall  
M Hartnell  
T Woodward

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

P Arnott  
J Bailey  
D Ledger  
P Hayward  
S Jackson  
G Jung  
A Dent  
P Faithfull  
M Rixson  
A Moulding  
S Chamberlain  
E Wragg

**Officers in attendance:**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing  
Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management  
Andrew Wood, Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity  
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits  
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor apologies:**

C Wright  
S Gazzard

Chairman .....

Date: .....

**Recommendations for Cabinet that will resolve in an action being taken:  
Poverty Working Panel 18 January 2021**

**Minute 28 Update on support measures**

That a contingency of £100,000.00 be allocated to the Council's Hardship Fund after April 2021 to be reduced by any additional funding coming forward from Devon County Council in the same timeframe.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Poverty Working Panel held online via the Zoom app on 18 January 2021**

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

The meeting started at 11.00 am and ended at 2.15 pm

#### **22 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **23 Declarations of interest**

Minute 27. Paper from Cllr Mike Allen.

Councillor Mike Allen, Personal, Member helps with a food bank at a local Church.

#### **24 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 December 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2020 were approved as a correct record.

#### **25 Paper from Andy Wood regarding outstanding queries**

At the previous meeting two queries were raised regarding whether the Council had employees on zero hours contracts and what evidence existed around in-work poverty. The paper from Andy Wood addressed both queries and was noted.

#### **26 Presentation by Lee Tozer - Partnership Manager for Devon and Cornwall - Department for Work & Pensions**

A presentation was given by Lee Tozer, Partnership Manager for Devon and Cornwall, Department for Work & Pensions, which included the following points:

- Statistics relating to the Universal Credit caseload for East Devon (also available on [www.Stat-Xplore.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.Stat-Xplore.dwp.gov.uk)) showing age, the breakdown by lower super output area and household data
- The response of Job Centre Plus to the pandemic lockdown
- Partnership working to support members of the public and benefit claimants
- The Job Centre Plus offer, highlighting the role of work coaches supporting people moving back into work
- Job finding support which provided a swift intervention for people who had been out of work for less than 13 weeks with the intention of getting them back into work as soon as possible
- The Kickstart Scheme which offered a six month work placement for 18 to 24 year olds and which had seen interest from a significant number of local employers
- Sector-based Work Academy Programme
- Flexible Support Fund which can be used to purchase support and provision to help overcome barriers to employment
- The response to redundancy including advice on benefits, pensions and skills training to help with moving into another job

The discussion included the following points:

- Job Centres have been re-opened since the first Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, with appropriate safeguards in place. Limited opening is in place during the current lockdown
- Certain sectors have seen a reduction in the number of job vacancies with these being off-set by an increase in other sectors
- With regard to a breakdown by gender of the data for households with no children, any information available would be circulated after the meeting
- The pandemic appears to be disproportionately affecting younger people with more help with employment aimed at younger age groups
- The New Enterprise Allowance Programme exists to help people set up their own business
- The Troubled Families Programme works with families with children who have contact with a number of support agencies and require a collective solution to multiple difficulties
- Universal Credit supports the employed and the self-employed on an equal basis and is dependent on earnings / income and is not differentiated by the type of employment
- Work Coaches support people of any age to get into work, including older age groups to transition to different employment sectors
- DWP was currently recruiting more Work Coaches to manage the increasing demand

The Chair thanked Mr Tozer for his presentation.

## 27 **Paper from Cllr Mike Allen**

The Chair agreed to re-order the agenda and consider Cllr Allen's paper at this point in the meeting.

Cllr Allen advised that the paper was intended to bring in items which had been proposed or discussed previously across a range of Council meetings and new ideas from other sources which could be considered.

The Chair thanked Cllr Allen for his paper and confirmed that the Panel would consider those items which the Council could implement within its remit.

John Golding advised that the draft Action Plan would continue to be refined until the Panel was satisfied that all points had been considered and included where appropriate.

## 28 **Update on support measures by Libby Jarrett - Service Lead - Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and Corporate Fraud**

Libby Jarrett gave a presentation which covered four key areas for supporting low income households:

- Test and Trace Support Scheme
- Council Tax Reduction
- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF)
- Covid Hardship Fund

The following points were noted:

- The Test and Trace Support Scheme comprised the main scheme and a discretionary scheme to support people on low incomes with a fixed £500 award while they were self-isolating. The scheme will run until the end of March 2021
- Council Tax Reduction caseload continued to rise resulting in increased cost to the Council
- The introduction of the Firmstep software provided more data on Council Tax Reduction claims with more detailed analysis now possible
- In addition to existing hardship funds, DCC/DEFRA funding had provided emergency support by way of a Covid-19 Hardship Fund. There was discussion as to how long this funding would continue and whether the Panel should make representations to ensure that sufficient funds were available for the next financial year
- A Financial Resilience Officer was to be appointed to support the service
- Interventions would be focussed on areas of particular need, rather than specific locations being prioritised per se
- The Benefits Manager, Sharon Church, advised that the DEFRA funding had not only been used to provide emergency support, but also to help with identifying underlying issues and longer term needs of those in hardship and to assist people to maximise their income and minimise their expenditure
- Examples of partnership working were provided, for example, with Citizens Advice and local schools and case studies illustrated the Council's on-going work to support residents, often with complex needs involving finance, health and housing. Future monitoring and review would provide information as to how successful the Council's interventions were in the longer term

The Chair thanked Libby Jarrett and her team for their hard work administering the various Government initiatives during the Covid-19 pandemic, often at short notice.

Cllr King proposed that a recommendation be made to Cabinet that a contingency of £100,000.00 be allocated to the Council's Hardship Fund after April 2021 to be reduced by any additional funding coming forward from Devon County Council in the same timeframe. This was seconded by Cllr Millar and was agreed.

**RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET:**

That a contingency of £100,000.00 be allocated to the Council's Hardship Fund after April 2021 to be reduced by any additional funding coming forward from Devon County Council in the same timeframe.

29 **Updated Draft Poverty Strategy Action Plan - John Golding - Strategic Lead - Housing, Health & Environment**

An updated copy of the draft Poverty Strategy Action Plan had been circulated with the agenda. John Golding advised the Panel that the draft Action Plan would be refined as the work of the Panel progressed. The Panel were reminded of the approach being adopted with a draft Action Plan on the agenda several meetings ago to be developed by the Panel and colleagues as we consider in detail each of the five high level objectives at these meetings.

The second draft of the Action Plan came to the last meeting with input from Andy Wood (objective 3 resulting in 9 actions), and this version on the agenda includes input from Libby Jarrett (objective 1 translating into 22 actions).

Service Leads have been invited to adapt and change the initial draft Action Plan and ensure that actions align with the high level objectives, and are deliverable within their Service areas.

Over the next two meetings we intend to have input from Housing in March (objective 2 and 4), preceded by Public Health in February (objective 5), by which time we should have a final version.

We will also be inviting our Community Development Workers and our Community Engagement & Funding Officer to input on the area of the Action Plan covering community and voluntary groups.

Once we have our actions the intention is to sit this alongside a narrative, which together becomes the Poverty Strategy.

We have just been through a service planning process and there are many cross references to poverty in Service Plans with commitments and actions that will also become part of this Action Plan.

The actions are mostly extensions of what we are currently doing or new initiatives and interventions within our sphere of influence.

It is proposed that we keep refining the Action Plan until we are satisfied that we have something that is achievable, deliverable, and will make a positive difference.

The draft Action Plan in its current form was noted.

### 30 **Poverty Dashboard of Key Performance Indicators - John Golding**

John Golding introduced the draft Poverty Dashboard of Key Performance Indicators which would allow for close monitoring of the Poverty Strategy's effectiveness once adopted. The Poverty Dashboard could be available on the Council's website, or to Panel members. It was recognised that poverty is multi-dimensional and no single measure or metric is sufficient to provide a comprehensive picture of poverty in the district.

In order to track poverty effectively we need to see a variety of indicators and the best way of seeing these is in the form of a dashboard.

The Devon County Council website has some useful income, earnings and economic data. They also have useful deprivation, health equalities and other data in the form of a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The Panel considered several examples of dashboards and concluded that we need to identify the measures that we want to track and produce a bespoke poverty dashboard relevant to us.

Our dashboard probably needs to include income; unemployment; welfare benefit recipients; homelessness; health equalities; community and voluntary group activity etc. This creation will require someone to set up the dashboard and significant IT input from Strata colleagues to pull the data across from various reliable sources.

The dashboard will probably be built up over a period of time and refined until it is what we want to monitor the effectiveness of our Poverty Strategy.

Cllr Millar requested that the minutes record the Panel's thanks to John Golding for producing a very good document.

In response to a question, John Golding advised that the Dashboard would include headline measures which could be supplemented with more detailed data sets providing information on, for example, homelessness, receipt of benefits and income.

There was general agreement that the approach taken was correct and that work on the Dashboard should continue as discussed.

31 **Poverty: Review of Council activities - Helen Wharam - Public Health Project Officer**

Helen Wharam presented the Poverty Review of Council Activities 2019-2020. This covers the year before the coronavirus pandemic. The Review period pre-dates the Poverty Strategy and provides a benchmark demonstrating some of the activities by council services to mitigate poverty during that period.

Once Service Plans for the next Council year were approved, they could form the basis for a further review of activities.

John Golding thanked Helen for her work which illustrated the core support which was already in place to assist those residents experiencing poverty.

32 **Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 11am and would include a presentation both from Citizens' Advice and from Helen Wharam, Public Health Project Officer. Members were invited to email any questions or issues regarding Citizens' Advice to either the Chair or Democratic Services Officers in advance of the meeting.

Future meetings will be as already agreed on the 15<sup>th</sup> March with a presentation by Jo Garfoot, the Acting Housing Service Lead and on 12<sup>th</sup> April when we should have a final draft of the Poverty Strategy.

As it seemed likely that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic would continue well into the year, the Panel agreed to continue to meet monthly for the first half of the year and then bi-monthly as required.

**Attendance List**  
**Councillors present:**  
M Allen  
M Armstrong (Chair)  
M Chapman

B De Saram  
P Jarvis  
F King  
P Millar  
M Rixson

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

P Arnott  
P Faithfull  
S Gazzard  
P Hayward  
D Ledger  
K McLauchlan  
A Moulding  
J Rowland  
E Rylance  
E Wragg

**Officers in attendance:**

Sharon Church, Benefits Manager  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Jo Garfoot, Acting Housing Service Lead  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager  
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer  
Helen Wharam, Public Health Project Officer  
Andrew Wood, Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity

**Councillor apologies:**

S Hawkins

Chair .....

Date: .....

**Recommendations for Cabinet that will resolve in an action being taken:  
Recycling and Waste Partnership Board 20 January 2021**

**Minute 56 Developer charges**

for the reasons set out in the report Cabinet approve the developer container charging scheme is no longer pursued, with no further budget projections being made.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held at online via the Zoom app on 20 January 2021**

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.55 am

#### **47 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board meeting held on 21 October 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

#### **48 Declarations of interest**

Councillor Geoff Jung, Personal, his district ward included the Greendale depot site and he subscribed to the green waste service..

#### **49 Questions to the Board**

There were no questions submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting.

#### **50 Joint operational and contract quarterly report**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager gave the Board a joint report on a contract review and operational update for the period October to December 2020. The two major operational features of the quarter were the bedding in of round changes implemented in September and the preparations for the peak Christmas and New Year recycling period. There was a focus on troubleshooting during the six week bedding in process as there was disruption to collections as both crews and residents adjusted in the early part of the quarter. The latter part of the quarter focussed on communications and participation preparations for the Christmas period.

The SUEZ Contract Manager outlined the safety statistics for the quarter and explained a Riddor accident.

It was noted that missed collections and customer complaints were high at the peak of the route changes, but this had now decreased to within the thresholds of the contract performance framework targets. Missed collections had been higher than usual throughout the year due to high staff turnover and then the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. Officers were confident that many of the issues had been addressed and performance would increase.

The amount of tonnages being collected remained high and material values had been stable for the final quarter of the year. The Partnership sold £531,388 and 7857 tonnes of recycled materials in 2020, a reduction in £100,000 from 2019 where it sold 5775 tonnes. This highlighted the volatile nature of the market.

There continued to be wider involvement in the sector as other local authorities continued to request to learn from the experience gained in East Devon. EDDC had also been asked to contribute to the WRAP/DEFRA workshops for planning the implementation of the Resources and Waste Strategy.

The partnership team were congratulated on the wider sector involvement and for their efforts during the pandemic and Christmas period.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the joint operational and contract quarterly report.

## 51 **Monthly operational statistics**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager presented the monthly operational statistics to the Board and explained that this detailed suite of statistics were used by the teams to review monthly performance and identify changes in trends, with necessary adjustments being made.

Some of the figures highlighted were over 4000 tonnes of total waste flow being collected over several months, demonstrating the effect of the pandemic, whilst still maintaining a high recycling rate. Over 600 tonnes of food waste per month was regularly collected. Over 500 tonnes of cardboard was collected in December 2020. The figures illustrated that the price of materials was volatile and predictions were difficult to make.

Performance was measured against property growth. Almost 6 million collections had been made in 2020, with only 7871 missed over the year.

It was noted that the SUEZ staff sickness was target was 3%, however the average rate across the year was 8%, rising at 12% at times due to the pandemic. With staff sickness high there had been a heavy reliance on agency staff.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the monthly operational statistics.

## 52 **Performance framework/penalty calculator**

The Board noted the penalty calculator/performance tracker figures and the importance of tracking these to monitor the performance of the contract, even during a pandemic. The Board also noted that as a force majeure event had been called (during the pandemic) that no financial penalties should be levied on Suez, and in any case the partnership and contract required EDDC and SUEZ to work together to solve problems in priority to contractual penalties and this would continue to be the approach.

In response to a question about missed container deliveries the SUEZ Contract Manager explained that the business continuity plan allowed services to be suspended due to priority. Container deliveries had been suspended in order to redeploy resources and maintain waste and recycling collections. Also more containers were being requested as people were creating more recycling as they stayed at home under lockdown rules.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the performance framework figures and acknowledge the importance of not invoking the penalty calculator.

## 53 **Green waste accounts**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager thanked the Accountant and the Streetscene Budget and Equipment Monitoring Officer for compiling the accounts and

explained them to the Board. It was noted that there had been a year on year growth in terms of customers and income. The income recognised at the end of quarter 3 was £380,186 and profit was £88,945.

There had been a six week suspension period to the service due to the first lockdown of the Covid 19 pandemic. Rather than rebating customers for this period the subscription dates had been moved forward. It did not appear that the short season of last year had negatively impacted sales at all. He reported that at the start of January 2021 the green waste service had 14,500 customers. So far in January over 100 bins had been sold, which was a similar rate to January 2020. Overall sales month on month appeared very similar to the previous year. All indications were that there was still a reasonable demand for the service. Further marketing would take place in March.

The Service Lead – Streetscene advised the Board that the business plan target for the green waste service, for the end of 2021/22, was 15,000 customers and a profit of £170,000.

In response to a question about take up of the service by town, the officers replied that although they had not done any analysis on this it would be possible to map and the Chair agreed that this would be useful information to have.

There was localised targeted marketing, including new builds, and the service was usually marketed before the bank holidays. For the past two financial years a green waste service advert had been included on the annual council tax reminder envelope, however this was not possible in the forthcoming year due to the need to prioritise Covid-19 communications and promoting postal voting for May elections.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the report including the service targets for the year ahead and the marketing engagements that were in place.

#### 54 **Raising our game in 2021: Resident behaviour/participation & crew behaviour improvement**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager's report demonstrated how the partnership team had improved its performance year on year since 2016/17. One of the key factors in this progress had been the focus on behaviour change/improvement for residents and operational crews, and the interaction between these two groups of people.

He warned that the pandemic had affected everything and the partnership team was unlikely to continue its trend of performance improvement for 2020/2021. Understandably, behaviours had been affected. Successive lockdowns had changed resident consumer behaviour and this was reflected not only in changes to total waste flow but crucially in the composition of the recycling stream. Equally, workload pressures had effected crew behaviours as they had striven to cope with the sheer volumes of material, change in recycling composition and often with reduced staffing levels due to self-isolation and with additional health and safety measures. The focus for 2021/22 would be on a return to the trend of continuous improvement by putting in place programmes that would help remove any complacency in behaviours that may have crept in whilst working under pandemic conditions.

Crew practises and behaviours had a significant effect on how residents viewed and participated in using the recycling and waste service. SUEZ had a structured programme of crew training and it was hoped to get back to this and 'raise the game'

during post pandemic recovery. SUEZ crew training at present was heavily focused on health and safety, but behaviours training would be added in during the year and ways to improve training would be considered by SUEZ. EDDC requested that mobilisation style training, including crew best practice, be delivered to all crews as soon as possible.

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager agreed to work on a structured training programme for all crew members and report on this to the next Board meeting. It was hoped that if a 'best practice' training plan was put in place then this could be of added value to the wider SUEZ group.

It was noted that in terms of resident behaviour, there was a continuous focus on food waste and officers would not be relenting on this. The recycling team had incorporated a number of projects into the 2021 plan to improve resident understanding and participation for all recycling. A new resident recycling guide would be created, with an all household door drop planned for September 2021.

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment recognised that there were opportunities to improve communal recycling facilities for tenants in EDDC housing stock in order to encourage EDDC tenants to recycle more and to a higher quality. This had been built into the budget for 2021. It was suggested that outside of the Board meeting a focus group of members and officers discuss the issues surrounding communal recycling facilities for flats and council housing stock, as well as increasing engagement.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that SUEZ put in place a structured best practice training programme for all existing collection crews and run it periodically to pick up staff turn-over and that progress on this be reported back to the next Board meeting.
2. that the EDDC Recycling Team produce a best practice guide using real life photographic examples of best practice/problems to aid the training programme.
3. that an improvement sub group of officers and members be established to consider how to increase engagement and improve facilities for houses of multiple occupation.

**55 Covid 19 costs claim**

The Service Lead – Streetscene advised the Board that a report would be taken to Cabinet in February 2021 to consider SUEZ's over budget claim incurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic response through 2020 there had been record tonnages of recycling collected at the kerbside, due to large parts of the population being at home either through lockdown or working arrangements. During the same time period, shopping habits changed, shifting to online and click and collect. This has had the effect of broadly doubling collections tonnages for card, with a sustained 10% increase in material tonnages across the board. At the same time there had been staffing issues which compounded the collection strain; through isolation for suspected Covid symptoms to shielding to distancing of crews and crew bubbles to ensure operations are Covid secure.

The report recommended that the over budget claim be approved, subject to legal advice being sought to confirm the assessment of the contractual position, as well as a contingency budget in relation to potential future budget claims by SUEZ in the 2020/21 financial year. If approved, delegated authority would also be given to the Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment/Service Lead – StreetScene to approve future monthly Covid cost claims from Suez and other recycling & waste contract cost variations up to a

limit of 10% over the contractual base payment amount in consultation with the Strategic Lead – Finance and Portfolio Holder – Coast, Country and Environment.

If Cabinet approved the recommendations they would need full Council agreement as it was a new cost, not budgeted for. The decision would be reported back to the Board for information.

It was hoped that the additional contract costs could be covered by a Government grant which was held for over contract costs.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the verbal update on the SUEZ Covid-19 costs claim.

## 56 **Developer charges**

The report of the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager explained that EDDC spent around £149,000 per year on recycling and waste containers, with a significant proportion of these being provided to new houses on occupation. In April 2019 the council decided to recover the cost of the provision of new containers to new properties from housing developers as part of an overall 'commercialisation' programme. However, the charges had no basis in law and were therefore unenforceable.

Budget provision was made in 2019/20 and 2020/21 for an income stream from the charges based on a projected response from developers, but this was not met, resulting a budget shortfall at year end. No budget allocations had been made for 2021/22 to prevent the build-up of unpaid invoices in the finance system whilst the future of the scheme was decided.

The response to the charging scheme by developers was varied. Most developers realised that it was not an enforceable charge but some chose to pay on a voluntary basis. Many, particularly the volume house builders, challenged the charge and had not met the invoices, with some requesting credit notes. Developers were still notified of the scheme as information was included in the planning application pack and the recycling and waste developer guide, although no charges had been levied since July 2020.

Members of the Board considered options, including:

- The charging scheme is not reinstated and is wound up with no further budget projections made.
- Developers are charged as before in the knowledge that payment rates were likely to be very low with any budget projections reflecting this.
- Developers are charged in the first instance but informed that if they do not meet the charges they would be passed to the house occupier ie the resident
- Residents of new properties are charged direct for the provision of recycling and waste containers.

The Board agreed that the developer container charging scheme was worth exploring at the time, but that it had not delivered the levels of income anticipated. The scheme was not legally enforceable and developers were aware of this. The financial system could be reconciled to clear the unpaid invoices.

RECOMMENDED: that for the reasons set out in the report that Cabinet approve that the developer container charging scheme is no longer pursued, with no further budget projections being made.

57 **Contract tipping point 3 negotiation**

The Service Lead – Streetscene reported that a new monthly working group had been convened with SUEZ to establish baseline tonnages (pandemic effect and property growth) and that once the baseline had been established negotiations on the contract tipping point would begin.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the update on the contract tipping point 3 negotiation.

58 **Government's Waste and Resources Strategy consultation**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager informed the Board that the Environment Bill had had its second reading. There had been a lot of commentary around the Waste and Resources Strategy amongst the industry, which was now waiting for the second consultation. This was expected in March 2021. It was noted that the partnership had been invited to take part in an implementation group with DEFRA.

The SUEZ Principal Commercial Manager reported that SUEZ would be taking part in lobbying the Government. There was a lot of speculation at the moment and it was hard to say with any degree of certainty, but he felt that East Devon was at a good starting point position.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the update on the Government's Waste and Resources Strategy consultation.

**Attendance List**

**Board Members:**

**Councillors present:**

G Jung (Chair)

D Bickley

E Rylance (Vice-Chair)

T Wright

M Rixson

**Officers present:**

G Bourton, Recycling and Waste Contract Manager

J Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment

A Hancock, Service Lead StreetScene

**Suez present:**

N Tandy, Principal Commercial Manager

H Mcleman, Contract Manager

**Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

P Faithfull

P Arnott

D Ledger

**Officers in attendance:**

Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer  
Lou Hodges, Waste and Recycling Officer  
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

**Suez representatives in attendance:**

Stuart Jellings

**Board Member apologies:**

James Pike, Regional Director South West SUEZ

Chairman .....

Date: .....

**Recommendations for Cabinet that will resolve in an action being taken:  
Housing Review Board 21 January 2021**

**Minute 91 Housing Service Plan 2021/22**

that Cabinet approve the Housing Service Plan for 2021/22.

**Minute 92 Housing Revenue Account budget**

that Cabinet recommend the draft revenue capital estimates in the draft Housing Revenue Account to Council.

**Minute 96 Social Housing White Paper**

that Cabinet approve:

1. the Housing Service start to make preparations for the forthcoming legislation and ensure that its policies and procedures were up to date in respect of tenant safety and tenant involvement,
2. the Housing Service improve its complaints handling processes to improve tenant satisfaction,
3. the Housing Service revisit its systems thinking purposes to ensure it focuses on what matters to tenants and reduce failure demand, and
4. the Housing Service work with tenant representatives to embrace the sentiments and contents of the White Paper.

**Minute 97 Your Home Your Wellbeing research report**

that Cabinet approve:

1. Where appropriate evidence is used from the research to support housing's decision making and service planning.
2. All teams within housing have access to the advice and expertise of the mental health specialist for supporting East Devon tenants.
3. There is better understanding of the housing needs of those on the Devon Home Choice register and they are supported on their housing journey.
4. The Council continues to invest in our homes and neighbourhoods and ensure repairs and the programme works done to our properties are of a high standard.
5. The Housing Service supports universal credit claimants by helping them to maintain their tenancies and offer budgetary and financial advice where necessary.
6. The Council continue to work with others to provide more housing opportunities and choices for people living in East Devon.
7. The study be used on a wider scale to promote the research with the Council's partners nationally to promote the value of social housing.

**Minute 101 Purchase of 51 St Andrews Road, Exmouth**

that Cabinet note that pursuant to the delegated authority approved by the Board, Cabinet and Council in January/February 2020 as set out in the body of the report to purchase properties from Right to Buy receipts, the Strategic Lead has approved the purchase of the freehold interest of 51 St Andrews Road (subject to certificate of lawfulness) in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder and the HRB Chair.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Housing Review Board held at online via the Zoom app. on 21 January 2021**

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

The meeting started at 2.30 pm and ended at 5.00 pm

#### **85 Public speaking**

There were no matters raised by the public.

The Chair advised the Board that it was proposed that the start time of the HRB meetings would change to 10am from the start of the new civic year.

The Housing Solutions Manager informed the Board that one of the tenants many would have known, Marcus Masterson, had sadly passed away recently. Marcus had been a key member of the Homelessness Strategy Review group over the last few years, passing on his views and opinions in respect of plans for tackling homelessness. His contributions, from a former service user perspective, had been greatly appreciated and helped to shape the strategy. Along with Cllr Megan Armstrong, who had known Marcus for several years, officers wished for their appreciation of the contribution that Marcus had made to the service over the years to be acknowledged.

#### **86 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Housing Review Board meeting held on 17 September 2020 were confirmed as a true record.

#### **87 Declarations of interest**

Cat Summers, Personal, housing tenant.

Cindy Collier, Personal, housing tenant.

Councillor Ian Hall, Personal, mother is a tenant and a Homesafeguard customer and he is a Devon County Councillor.

Councillor Steve Gazzard, Personal, housing tenant.

Peter Sullivan, Personal, housing tenant and vice chair trustees of Sidmouth Consolidated Charities.

#### **88 Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

#### **89 Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There was one confidential/exempt item.

#### **90 Housing Review Board forward plan**

The Acting Housing Service Lead presented the forward plan and advised members that the forward plan acted as a reminder of agenda items to come forward to future meetings. Members were reminded that they could add further issues to the next forward plan by informing either herself or the Democratic Services Officer. During the meeting the following items were added to the forward plan:

- Green Homes Grant update
- Housing strategy
- Stock condition survey
- Compliance

RESOLVED: that the forward plan be noted and updated.

## 91 **Housing Service Plan 2021/22**

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment presented the draft Service Plan for the Housing Service covering the period 2021-2022, for consideration by the Board.

The Service Plan was a working document produced annually by all EDDC services and set out the key achievements over the past year and the forthcoming issues to be faced by the service. It linked closely with the Council Plan and the aim of the process was to produce a work plan for the coming year with a realistic view of the challenges and risks ahead. Producing a Service Plan presented a good opportunity to look back and reflect and also the ability to forward plan. Performance should be monitored constantly against the 'live' document. The Service Plan was coordinated annually with budget planning.

This year the plan reflected some of the service interruptions due to the pandemic and the move of the Private Sector Housing team to the Environmental Health and Car Parks Service. The plan also considered service challenges and pressures over the next three years, including climate change implications, tenant safety measures, the implications of the Social Housing White Paper, and the ambitions to increase the supply of social housing.

A range of service improvements were identified through a number of SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound). The plan linked closely with the Housing Strategy and was designed to complement a number of other housing plans and policies as part of how the Council managed its own housing stock, managed homelessness, and the services it delivered. There was also a strong link with the Council's Public Health Strategic Plan to ensure more people were helped to be and stay healthy, ensure self-care and community resilience and integrate and improve support for people in their own homes.

Headlines from the Housing Service Plan were:

- A focus on delivering our housing purpose(s).
- A commitment to tackle homelessness.
- Recognition of poverty as a significant factor in people's lives.
- Revision of the HRA Business plan with updated stock condition data.
- A focus on new development opportunities with the need to review the current acquisition programme.
- Emphasis on the importance of compliance and keeping tenants safe in their homes.
- A focus on mental health and how we are addressing the challenges this is presenting us as a landlord.

- Embedding the Integrated Asset Management Contract.
- Mapping the future of Home Safeguard with a realistic view of risks ahead including digital switchover, refresh of the marketing strategy, relocating the service, review of the staffing rota.
- An emphasis on evidencing value for money with the need to scrutinise some areas to satisfy ourselves that we are achieving what matters most to the customer, in line with our systems thinking purpose.
- Acting on the climate change agenda and building towards a carbon neutral council.

The service planning day was a virtual event and involved input from senior managers, the Portfolio Holder and Chair of the Board, on the day to day challenges of the job, ideas for service improvement, and the needs of the customers. The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment acknowledged that ordinarily there would be greater tenant involvement in the service planning process, but due to service pressures and focussing on the pandemic the process had been curtailed. The Service Plan would be presented to the tenant groups over the next few months and cascade to housing staff through team meetings and service briefings. The Board's input into the Service Plan was welcomed and gave tenants an additional opportunity to comment, before it was finalised and reported to Cabinet.

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment commented that despite the pressures over the previous year the housing teams and contractors had responded incredibly well and were doing a fantastic job.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve the Housing Service Plan for 2021/22.

## 92 **Housing Revenue Account budget**

Consideration was given to the Housing Accountant's report which presented the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22. At the same time as preparing the draft budget, draft Service Plans had been prepared and aligned, and linked back to the Council Plan.

Recommendations from the Board would be presented to Cabinet on 3 February 2021, when members would finalise budget proposals to be recommended to Council.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was underpinned and influenced by the business plan. The Strategic Lead – Finance explained that this plan needed to be refreshed, but this had been delayed by other work commitments. The updated plan needed to:

- Undertake a full conditions survey to inform future programme costs.
- Consider the implication of the new maintenance contract.
- Reflect additional work on asset management planning and compliance requirements.
- Consider the end of rent reductions.
- Consider the implication of Universal Credit.
- Reconsider the debt level and use of Right to Buy Receipts linked to future development ambitions, and
- Consider the implications of the climate change action plan.

This work was progressing for inclusion in the 2022/23 budget. The draft 2021/22 budget continued to invest in and maintain existing properties at a similar level. It also

provided an acceptable surplus which would need to be prioritised between competing demands:

- the purchase programme to counteract the impact of continuing Right to Buy (RTB) sales and the development ambitions to significantly add to the Council's stock/social housing. This was a key priority in the statement of intent.
- to ensure new compliance requirements were met.
- to implement the carbon reduction actions.

The Strategic Lead – Finance explained that the budget assumed a rental income of £17.8 million. The budget had been prepared to maintain council homes to a high standard with a comprehensive planned programme of expenditure, adaptations and routine repairs and an overview of expenditure items was contained in the report. The draft HRA budget currently showed a surplus of £0.985 million. It was proposed that this be held for the purpose of additional housing and climate change measures. Reports on priority and proposed actions to be considered would be reported to the HRB through 2021/22.

The HRA balance was maintained within the adopted range of £2.1m and £3.1m, being projected to be retained £3.1m level at the end of 2021/22. There was an additional £1.6m being held in the HRA debt volatility fund which remained unchanged.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet recommend the draft revenue capital estimates in the draft Housing Revenue Account to Council.

### 93 **Right to Buy spending 20/21**

The Acting Housing Service Lead's report provided the Housing Review Board with an update on right to buy spending for 2020/21 and raised awareness of the challenges faced due to Covid-19. The report contained information on the amount of receipts spent or committed to spend in the financial year and the amount that could be returned to Government. In response to concerns raised by local authorities on spend and the impact of Covid-19 on the housing and building market the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government granted a temporary relaxation on the deadlines for spending right to buy receipts, however it would not be long enough for all the receipts to be spent. Officers would continue to look for suitable properties to buy on the open market, but given resourcing issues and the demands put on the housing market industry with the stamp duty holiday ending, it was unlikely that the end of March deadline would be met. This would be the first time the Council would have to pay back any receipts since entering into the agreement with the Secretary of State in 2012.

During 2020/21 19 properties would be purchased at a spend of around £3.06m. This however resulted in a shortfall of spending and EDDC would be required to pay back approximately £844,000 in receipts and £121,000 in interest on the returned amount.

The Board acknowledged that whilst it was disappointing that receipts would have to be returned, the year's spend requirements was always going to be a challenge and that was before Covid-19. Investment in staffing and a different strategy for spending receipts was needed to ensure the Council was best placed to spend the receipts and provide the much needed replacement affordable housing for its stock.

This would also ensure that EDDC was getting the right type of properties that would meet its climate change agenda.

Members expressed concern at Government policy which allowed tenants greater discounts when purchasing Council properties, whilst imposing constraints on local

authorities around spending the Right to Buy receipts. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities reassured the Board that she would continue lobbying the Government about the Right to Buy scheme and had requested a meeting with the MPs.

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the contents of the report and the spend information.

#### 94 **Review of the furniture project**

The Housing Solutions Manager's report summarised progress made to date on the review of the furniture and household item recycling service known as the 'furniture project' or the 'magic garages'. The report gave a brief history of the inception of the service and highlighted that it was currently unsustainable to continue delivering the service in its current format. Four options for the service had been developed and these were presented in the report and outlined in the meeting:

1. Keep the service in-house, funded through HRA budgets.
2. End the service and utilise existing alternatives.
3. End the service and replace it with a voucher scheme.
4. Limit the service to furniture/items acquired through void clearance of Council stock.

The report also highlighted the benefits of the current service in relation to the Council's broader strategic aims. The importance of PAT testing for electrical goods and ensuring current furniture fire regulations were being met was raised during discussion.

RESOLVED:

1. that option one, to keep the service in-house, funded through HRA budgets should be further evaluated.
2. that a further report on option one be brought back to the Board to review progress in six months time.

#### 95 **Integrated Asset Management Contract update and analysis of housing complaints**

The Housing Review Board considered a detailed report of the Property and Asset Manager which updated members on progress made over the last year, during the Covid-19 pandemic, and gave an annual review of the Council's partnership with Ian Williams Ltd.

The contract with Ian Williams commenced in July 2019 and there had been many challenges along the way. Consultants Echlon had recently carried out the first detailed review of the contract and their report was currently being reviewed in detail. Generally the review looked at how the contract was progressing, areas that needed attention and areas that were working well. Officers were currently reviewing the recommendations in the report and working with Ian Williams to agree and implement the recommended changes and improvements. Overall the contract was going well.

The Covid-19 pandemic had impacted the contract, with co-location of staff being put on hold, whilst staff worked from home. Ian Williams were fully staffed at management level but the operative's numbers fluctuated. The recruitment of multi-skilled operatives in East Devon had proved difficult, which had impacted on their ability to complete a range

of jobs on one visit. There were a number of vacancies in the Property and Asset team and recruitment was underway to fill the roles and address the understaffing issue.

Following challenges incurred due to Covid-19, the contract had now returned to a relative state of normality, with compliance across all areas. The Property & Asset Manager answered details questions in relation to compliance and it was suggested that compliance be added to the forward plan with future compliance reports being brought to the Board.

It was noted that void costs could vary significantly from month to month depending on the condition of the properties returned.

The report explained in detail complaints and how these were being reviewed and addressed. A complaint management programme had been developed. All complaints were actively monitored and to date all had been remedied at or before stage one of the Council's complaint process.

Customer satisfaction surveys had fallen off the radar during Covid-19, but efforts were now re-focused on gathering information in this area, with the questionnaire being revised. The Property and Asset Manager outlined the steps being taken to improve on gaining customer satisfaction.

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the update report on the integrated asset management contract.

## 96 **Social Housing White Paper**

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment's report summarised the recently published White Paper on Social Housing. The contents of the White Paper were likely to be translated into legislation and would signal a significant change in the governance of social housing. The proposals recognised the importance of social housing and the need to prioritise tenant safety, involvement, satisfaction, complaint handling and good housing management. Much of the detail contained in the White Paper was centred on customer regulation, in effect a social housing charter, and would recreate a stronger regulatory regime providing the Regulator of Social Housing with more powers.

There were seven chapters in the White Paper:

1. Addressed the catalyst behind the need for change – the Grenfell Tower fire.
2. To know how your landlord is performing.
3. To have complaints dealt with promptly.
4. To be treated with respect backed by a strong regulator.
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord.
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.
7. To be supported to take your first step to ownership.

The Housing Service Lead explained the White Paper to the Board in greater detail and advised that the Board would continue to receive reports on progress.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve:

1. that the Housing Service start to make preparations for the forthcoming legislation and ensure that its policies and procedures were up to date in respect of tenant safety and tenant involvement.

2. that the Housing Service improve its complaints handling processes to improve tenant satisfaction.
3. that the Housing Service revisit its systems thinking purposes to ensure it focuses on what matters to tenants and reduce failure demand.
4. that the Housing Service work with tenant representatives to embrace the sentiments and contents of the White Paper.

## 97 **Your Home Your Wellbeing research report**

The Information and Analysis Officer's report presented the results and conclusions of a three year research partnership between East Devon District Council's (EDDC) housing department, the University of Birmingham's Research Centre on Household Assets and Saving Management (CHASM), and LiveWest.

The objective of the partnership was to build a richer understanding of people's experience of their home and the relationship between their home, landlord and wellbeing. Over 3,500 social tenants, private renters (those on the Devon Home Choice housing register) and those in shared ownership responded to the survey. 58 respondents were also interviewed, some of whom were contacted over all three years of the study.

The key findings were that:

- Having a good home mattered to overall life satisfaction and happiness.
- Social housing had a positive impact on all aspects of wellbeing. It helped to reduce levels of anxiety, particularly for those facing mental health challenges.
- Respondents who did not feel safe or who felt they had no control in their home were more likely to report lower levels of life-satisfaction and were more likely to be anxious. Respondents who felt that they had privacy and control in their homes were more likely to report being happy.
- Satisfaction with the local area in which a home was situated was associated with higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction, and with lower levels of anxiety.
- Half of all of those who were surveyed reported that they are struggling to make ends meet. Those struggling to make ends meet were more likely to be anxious and less likely to be happy or satisfied with their life.
- Respondents were likely to report that they experienced poor mental health if they were less than 65 years old, living alone, living with non-dependent children or felt like their home affected their wellbeing in a negative way.
- Universal Credit was not working well for everyone and, in particular, it had a negative impact on the wellbeing of claimants with mental health challenges.

The report emphasised that what the Council did as a social landlord really made a difference to the lives of its tenants from ensuring stock was maintained to a high level, to the additional support services provided to tenants as a social landlord.

The report also supported the growing national consensus that something needed to be 'done' about housing for many people living in East Devon. It was well documented that there was not just a shortage of housing across all tenures but for many people they were living in unsuitable and unaffordable homes and with few options for how to improve their housing situation. The result for many people was housing insecurity and financial struggle, with resultant negative impacts on wellbeing.

The Information and Analysis Officer was thanked for her involvement in the fantastic piece of work. She advised the Board that she could provide members with ward level information if the requested it.

RECOMMENDED: that Cabinet approve that:

1. Where appropriate evidence is used from the research to support housing's decision making and service planning.
2. All teams within housing have access to the advice and expertise of the mental health specialist for supporting East Devon tenants.
3. There is better understanding of the housing needs of those on the Devon Home Choice register and they are supported on their housing journey.
4. The Council continues to invest in our homes and neighbourhoods and ensure repairs and the programme works done to our properties are of a high standard.
5. The Housing Service supports universal credit claimants by helping them to maintain their tenancies and offer budgetary and financial advice where necessary.
6. The Council continue to work with others to provide more housing opportunities and choices for people living in East Devon.
7. The study be used on a wider scale to promote the research with the Council's partners nationally to promote the value of social housing.

98 **Covid-19 performance monitoring report**

The Housing Review Board was presented with the December week 2 Covid-19 report, which had been monitoring different areas of the service since March 2020, and had been included for the Board's information. The Acting Housing Service Lead explained that this information was used weekly by the housing management team to monitor performance.

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the performance of the Housing Service.

99 **Quarter 2 Housing performance indicator report**

The Housing Review Board was presented with the Housing Service performance indicator report for quarter 2 2020/21, with details of selected indicators measuring performance across the Housing Service.

RESOLVED: that the Housing Review Board note the performance of the Housing Service.

100 **Exclusion of press and public**

RESOLVED: that under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, of the description set out on the agenda, is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing this item in private session (Part B).

101 **Purchase of 51 St Andrews Road, Exmouth**

The Acting Housing Service Lead's report sought authority to proceed with the purchase of 51 St Andrews Road, Exmouth subject to approval of the Certificate of Lawfulness, using Right to Buy receipts. The report recommended that the purchase of the seven units of accommodation would be a beneficial addition to the current Council property portfolio and that flexibility should be exercised with rent level to help with affordability for tenants if required.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet note that pursuant to the delegated authority approved by the Board, Cabinet and Council in January/February 2020 as set out in the body of the report to purchase properties from Right to Buy receipts, the Strategic Lead has approved the purchase of the freehold interest of 51 St Andrews Road (subject to certificate of lawfulness) in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder and the HRB Chair.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Board members present:**

Councillor Tony McCollum (Chair)  
Peter Sullivan, Tenant (Vice-Chair)  
Cat Summers, Tenant  
Councillor Ian Hall  
Councillor Helen Parr  
Cindy Collier, Tenant  
Councillor Brenda Taylor  
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain

#### **Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)**

M Armstrong  
P Faithfull  
S Gazzard  
G Jung  
D Ledger  
P Millar

#### **Officers in attendance:**

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer  
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer  
Jo Garfoot, Acting Housing Service Lead  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Graham Baker, Senior Technical Officer Asset Management  
Sue Bewes, Housing Services Manager  
Natalie Brown, Information and Analysis Officer (Housing)  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Service Lead Housing  
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor  
Andi Loosemoore, Rental Manager  
Giles Salter, Solicitor

#### **Councillor apologies:**

Christine Drew, Independent Community Representative  
Christine Morrison, Tenant

Chairman .....

Date: .....

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting 3 February 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## Supporting Economic Recovery

### Report summary:

Cabinet has received a series of reports to date on the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has included endorsing the Team Devon Business and Economic Recovery Prospectus, addressing resource constraints and deploying grant schemes principally designed to compensate businesses for trade lost through periods of local and national restrictions. As we near what will hopefully be the end of the worst of these periods, this report considers how the Council can transition from tactical response to supporting and sustaining long term recovery. The overall objective is to support the development of a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy.

The report sets out proposals to launch a Fund aimed at supporting businesses and other organisations to adapt to the post pandemic landscape and associated changes in operating conditions. As well as utilising £1m of Additional Restriction Grant monies, it puts forward a recommendation to allocate £1m from the Business Rate Pilot reserve to bolster the amount of funding available and ensure that support can be provided beyond March 2022. The report also highlights the importance of developing a credible pipeline of projects so as to be able to successfully access external funding streams including the Shared Prosperity Fund.

### Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet;

- Consider the proposed Adaptation, Innovation and Resilience Fund and publish the draft prospectus for consultation for a 4 week period
- Give delegated authority to the Service Lead (Growth, Development and Prosperity) in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance to such changes to the prospectus that may be required and to launch an initial call for applications
- Agrees that prior to the Service Lead (Growth, Development and Prosperity) taking a decision under the scheme that there is consultation with a group of members comprising the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holders for Finance and Corporate Services & Covid-19 Response and Recovery and two Conservative members, one of the Independent members and one Cranbrook Voice member to be nominated by the respective Groups
- Recommend to Council that £1m from the Business Rate Pilot reserve is utilised in conjunction with monies from the Additional Restrictions Grant to support the deployment of the Fund
- Notes the importance of having a credible pipeline of projects in order to successfully access forthcoming external funding streams

### Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the Council can play a leading role in supporting economic recovery and the development of a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy.

Officer: Andrew Wood, Service Lead (Growth, Development & Prosperity), Tel 01395 571743, [adwood@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:adwood@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

Climate Action

- Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Financial implications:**

The financial implications are identified in the report and the proposed allocation of funds and reserves is in accordance Government guidance and Council’s determination of the use of the Business Rates Retention Reserve.

**Legal implications:**

What is proposed is permissible from a legal standpoint. It is for Members to decide whether they are content with the approach advocated. There are no other implications requiring comment.

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** High Impact

An important focus of the proposed Adaptation, Innovation and Resilience Fund will be to support a green economic recovery and the transition to a low carbon economy.

**Risk:** Low Risk

**Links to background information** [Team Devon Covid-19 Economy and Business Recovery Prospectus](#)

[DCC Cabinet Paper on Economic Recovery Programme \(item 10\)](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Local Restrictions Support Grant - guidance for local authorities](#)

[Covid-19 Economic Response and Recovery Report, Cabinet October 2020 Item 11](#)

[Covid-19 Economic Response and Recovery Resources Report, Cabinet 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Item 17](#)

[Business Grant Support Measure, Cabinet 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021, Item 7](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

**1. Background and context**

1.1 Over the course of the last 6 months Cabinet has considered a series of reports regarding the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. These have highlighted the profound effects that are already been experienced in the District, including business failures and large scale redundancies, and the expectation looking forward that there will be further rises in unemployment, more business closures and ongoing challenges for the local economy. The evidence highlights that these impacts will be felt disproportionately by some age/income groups, places and sectors. Residents and businesses in the District therefore face a period of unprecedented economic change and the road to recovery will be both bumpy and prolonged.

1.2 The reports have considered a range of issues including;

- Endorsing the Team Devon Business and Economic Recovery Prospectus
- Addressing capacity constraints
- Agreeing the framework for deploying funds made by available by government to compensate for the impact on trade during periods of local and national restrictions

As we near what will hopefully be the end of the worst of these periods, this report considers how the Council can transition from tactical response to supporting and sustaining long term recovery.

## 2. Adaptation, Innovation and Resilience Fund

2.1 The Council received an award of £2,925,680 in November 2020 through the Additional Restrictions Grant and a further sum of circa £1.5m is expected to be confirmed shortly. These funds are to be used before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The government's [Additional Restrictions Grant: Guidance for Local Authorities](#) document provides details of potential beneficiaries of this scheme. It is intended to support businesses that have had their trade affected by the restrictions. This includes:

- closed businesses that don't pay business rates
- businesses that have not been required to close, but are still severely impacted

Each local authority has the discretion to establish business grant schemes or other business support as best fits their area.

2.3 The November 2020 Cabinet meeting resolved to divide the initial award as follows;

- £1m towards a discretionary grant scheme to be deployed in line with an agreed policy
- £1m towards strategic economic recovery projects and priorities - initial thinking is that this could take the form of a grant scheme to support business adaptation, resilience and innovation
- £925,680 to be held in reserve

An initial call for applications from businesses impacted by the second national lockdown ran during December 2020. A subsequent Cabinet report in January extended this support through the subsequent periods of both local and national restrictions.

2.4 These grant schemes have provided essential compensation for businesses for periods when their trade is affected by local and national restrictions. As we start to ease out of these periods it is important for the Council to also transition to considering how it can best support and sustain recovery and help to develop a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy.

2.5 It is proposed to utilise the £1m of ARG monies which have predicated toward strategic economic recovery projects and priorities to establish an Adaptation, Innovation and Resilience Fund to which businesses and other organisations such as social enterprises can apply. A draft prospectus is contained at Appendix A. This includes setting out objectives, priorities and eligibility criteria as well as detailing the application and decision making processes.

2.6 The prospectus follows the key themes in the Team Devon prospectus namely people, place and business. Crucially it does not seek to set a prescriptive set of rules as to the types of project that will be eligible. This is to allow a wide range of ideas to come forward. Two different avenues for applications are identified – for individual business and organisations and for collaborative proposals, for example place based proposals or those that relate to specific sectors of the economy such as tourism.

2.7 It is a recommendation of this report that Cabinet consider the draft prospectus and that targeted consultation is undertaken prior to finalising it and launching the Fund. This could include local Chambers of Commerce or other business groups for example. This is in addition to

considering the work that has already been completed, for example the business survey undertaken as part of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.

2.8 Subject to finalising the prospectus and confirming the wider position regarding Covid-19 related restrictions, it is expected that the Fund could be launched in April. This would allow a significant period of just under 12 months for applications to come forward to drawdown funds made available under the ARG. The impact of the pandemic is though expected to be long lasting and concerted support and investment will be required to sustain recovery and achieve wider objectives such as a green industrial revolution. In recognition of this it is also a recommendation of this report that Cabinet recommend to Council that £1m is made available from the Business Rate Retention Pilot reserve to augment the ARG funds. This will also allow projects and initiatives to be supported beyond March 2022.

2.9 Finally in terms of decision making it is proposed that no decisions will be made in relation to the Fund until consultation has first been undertaken with a Panel of Councillors. Again this forms the basis for a specific recommendation in the report and is a continuation of the approach adopted in relation to the Additional Restrictions Grant.

### **3. Pipeline of Projects**

3.1 The beginning of 2021 has heralded two key economic development challenges – supporting recovery from the pandemic and adapting to life outside of the European Union. The November 2020 national Spending Review included a commitment to launch a £4bn Levelling Up Fund that will invest in local infrastructure and which will support economic recovery. The Spending Review also includes an initial £220m of investment in 2021/22 to help local areas prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This is the successor to European structural funds.

3.2 It is clearly important that we maximise our chances of successfully accessing these funds. This is a concern shared by the Local Enterprise Partnership who have asked the County Council to help prepare a prioritised pipeline of projects. A proposed template for this is contained at Appendix 2. It can be seen that this covers a wide variety of themes from transport and town centres to carbon reduction and culture.

3.3 Work is underway to populate this template in anticipation of there being a report being taken to the LEP Board meeting in April. Projects will need to continue to be moved forward to an investment ready condition so as to maximise the chances of successfully accessing the funding streams. In turn this will be a further important ingredient in supporting recovery and the LEP is itself moving forward with the publication of a 'Build Back Better' prospectus.

### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 The monies received through the ARG have played an important role to date in supporting businesses that have had their trade impacted by periods of local and national restrictions. There is now an opportunity to consider how to support recovery and the development of a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy. The proposed Adaptation, Innovation and Resilience Fund is intended to support both individual businesses/organisations and wider collaborative initiatives in this respect. Dedicating additional funds to this from the Business Rate Retention Pilot reserve will help to maximise its impact over time.

# Resilience, adaptation and innovation fund for East Devon businesses

Updated 13 January 2021



Brief summary TBA. Ovid molorestis ma verio maio illaborepro consed que corum dolorum rerovidio bla nulliqu iatquias est fugitec uptatibus et unt, alitae corum a velenia verum quatur, cusam ipsam sequiam fugit volorro vidunt exerum laborem andae.

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## Foreword



**Councillor Paul Hayward**  
Deputy Leader of the Council and  
Portfolio Holder Economy and  
Assets

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Honiton's Gate to Plate event showcasing local producers and suppliers

## Introduction

**From farming and food and drink to IT security and supercomputers, East Devon has a diverse economy. But there is no aspect of this that has not been impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. From the largest business to the self-employed, everyone has felt the implications of the multiple periods of restrictions.**

Evidence shows that particular sectors, places and people groups have been disproportionately impacted. This includes key sectors in the district such as tourism and hospitality. Trends such as towards online retailing have accelerated rapidly with implications for our retailers and high streets. The unemployment rate tripled during 2020 with above average rises for 16- to 24-year-olds and the over 50s.



Our stunning Jurassic coastline

The council has been responsible for deploying a range of government grant schemes to businesses over the course of last year and the first part of 2021. These have related to defined periods of restrictions, both locally and national, and have been designed to compensate for reductions in trade.

Now as we start to emerge from the worst effects of the pandemic we need to transition from short term support to promoting long term recovery whilst also addressing long standing challenges in terms of supporting the development of a low carbon economy and ensuring that all our residents can access a decent, well paid job.





East Devon has many local food and drinks producers

The Resilience, Adaptation and Innovation Fund is the first step towards achieving this objective and supporting a more resilient economy. We recognise that there is no single or simple answer to how best to achieve this. The council has worked as part of the 'Team Devon' approach and has endorsed the Business and Economic Recovery Prospectus. This sets out specific themes around people, place and business.

This document sets out how funds (initial value TBA) that have been made available by both the government and the council can be accessed. It does not seek to set out a prescriptive set of rules, rather to create a framework through proposals and applications can come forward. This includes from both individual businesses and organisations and wider collaborations.



Tourism and hospitality are important sectors in East Devon

## Objectives

The objectives of the fund are to:

- Support economic recovery across all sectors, places and communities in the district with a particular emphasis on specific priorities
- Ensure that residents can access employment opportunities, both through promoting new and safeguarding existing employment opportunities
- Enable businesses to adapt to changing operating conditions and working practices including through bringing forward innovative solutions
- Support a green economic recovery
- Promote the achievement of a resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy

## Priority areas

The following are priorities for support:

### Business

- Retail
- Hospitality and leisure and associated supply chain
- Tourism
- Events industry
- Cultural venues and services including independent cinemas, theatres, concert venues, museums and heritage centres, galleries, performance-led venues, performance production/exhibition and festival production
- Aviation/aerospace
- International visitor services – for example, language schools
- Social enterprises

## Place

- High streets
- Places that have scored highly on Devon County Council's vulnerability index: Axminster, Exmouth and Honiton

## People

- 16- to 24-year-olds
- Over 50s

## Structure

The fund is in two parts:

- Grants of up to £50,000 to individual business and organisation
- Grants of up to £150,000 towards collaborative proposals – for example, to support specific sectors, places or communities

Awards level table content TBA

## Eligibility

The Fund is open to any business, charity or social enterprise which is located in East Devon.

This prospectus has been informed by the outcome of business surveys – for example, relating to the high street. But we accept that do not have all the answers as to how best to support economic recovery and we do not want to set out a prescriptive set of requirements that stop good ideas or stifle innovation. Rather we want to create a framework through which proposals and applications can come forward and be considered for funding.

In this spirit the following are some examples of the types of projects that could be supported:

- Adaptions to business premises to ensure that they can operate safely – for example, by utilising outdoor space
- Establishing an online/digital presence
- Initiatives to promote and market specific sectors (for example, tourism) or to access new markets
- Events to show case the cultural offer of the district
- Business diversification – for example, to bring forward a new product or offer
- Promotion of local sourcing
- Initiatives to support high streets
- Training initiatives to help people in to work or to develop new skills
- Investments that support energy efficiency and carbon savings



Digital innovation and clean growth in the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone

A call for applications will run from TBA to TBA through an online form.

There will be an opportunity to learn more about the application process and the fund itself through on line events scheduled as follows:

Dates TBA

## Assessment criteria

Applications will be considered against the following criteria:

- Safeguarding of existing employment
- New employment opportunities created

- New employment opportunities created
- Evidence of impact on trading from the pandemic
- Value for money
- Options considered
- Training opportunities created
- Risk management
- Sustainability
- Carbon savings

### Decision making

Applications will be considered by a panel of councillors.

### Exclusions

The following exclusions apply:

- Businesses and organisations based outside of East Devon
- Businesses that were not trading as of 1 March and were in administration, insolvent or subject to striking-off notice
- Businesses that have already received the maximum level of support available

### Policy

A full policy is available at [link TBA](#).



## Get the latest with our business newsletter

Please sign up to [our East Devon business email newsletter](#) to receive the latest updates.



[East Devon District Council homepage](#)

### East Devon – an outstanding place

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Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting 3 February 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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## **Revenue and Capital Budgets 2021/22**

### **Report summary:**

Cabinet adopted draft Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2021/22 at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021. A joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees reviewed those budgets on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and the Housing Review Board considered the Housing Revenue Account budgets on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

Recommendations from those meetings are detailed in this report and the minutes are contained on the agenda. It is now for Cabinet to consider comments and recommendations and to make their recommendations to Council.

As part of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities the Council is required to set prudential indicators as part of its budget setting process, these indicators are detailed in the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 – Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy and are included on the Cabinet agenda. They reflect the proposals and details in this report.

Alongside the Treasury Management Strategy sits the Capital Strategy which is also contained on this agenda for adoption.

### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended:

1. To propose the Net Revenue General Fund Budget of £15.763m for 2021/22.
2. That expenditure at this stage is approved against the budget allocated of £1.316m from additional one off Government Funding (Covid-19 grant £616k and Lower Tier Service Grant £700k);
  - a) Contingency Hardship Fund £100k
  - b) Mental Health Officer/Resources £50k

With other allocations against this budget to be made with Council approval.

3. A Council Tax increase is approved of £5 a year giving a Band D council tax of £151.78 a year for 2021/22.
4. That the surplus identified on the Council Tax Collection Fund of £366,940 is allocated as outlined in 3.3 of the report;
  - a) £189,189 is set aside in a reserve to meet the known collection fund deficit in future years,
  - b) £177,751 is used to increase the General Fund Balance, bringing it more comfortably within the adopted range.
5. That the Housing Revenue Account Estimates with a net surplus of £0.985m is approved.
6. That the Net Capital Budget totalling £7.965m for 2021/22 is approved.

**Reason for recommendation:**

There is a requirement for the Council to set a balanced budget for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account and to levy a Council Tax for 2021/22.

Officer: Simon Davey – Strategic Lead Finance (s151/CFO) [sdavey@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:sdavey@eastdevon.gov.uk)

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Policy Co-ordination and Regional Engagement
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Financial implications:**

As detailed in the report

**Legal implications:**

The requirements for budget setting and council tax are set out in statute and regulations which the finance team take account of in the preparation of the report. The duties of the Council's Section 151 Officer include the requirement to make recommendations to ensure that the Council maintains an adequate level of reserves, when considered alongside the risks the Council faces and the general economic outlook

## **Equalities impact Low Impact**

Equality impact was considered by budget managers with finance officers during the budget preparation stage with consideration given to any budget variation which could result in any service changes being assessed as high, medium, or low in terms of equality impact. Due to the fact that no high or medium impacts were identified it is deemed that a full impact assessment is not necessary for implications in the budget proposals.

## **Climate change High Impact**

The budget approval gives the Council the resources necessary to undertake its business which will significantly contribute to the carbon footprint of the Council. There are budgets proposed to address this issue and fund actions for 2021/22 which reduce the Council's Carbon emissions.

## **Risk: Low Risk**

Risks have been considered in preparing the budgets and the financial implications have been assessed at the point of preparation. Various budget assumptions have been made including the treatment of inflation and interest rates; estimates on the level and timing of capital receipts; the treatment of demand led pressures; the treatment of planned efficiency savings/productivity gains; levels of income; financial risks inherent in any new arrangements; capital developments; the availability of funds to deal with major contingencies and the need for any provisions. In each of these areas the Council's financial standing, management and track record have been considered in order to prepare robust budget proposals.

Other specific areas of risk were highlighted in the budget report to Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

## **Links to background information**

[6 January 2021 Cabinet Report item 291](#)

## **Council Plan:**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## **1. Introduction.**

- 1.1 The Cabinet adopted draft revenue and capital budgets on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021.
- 1.2 The budgets, associated service implications and Service Plans were then considered by:
  - A joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 14<sup>th</sup> January.
  - The Housing Review Board considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January.
  - Comment were also invited from the business community to the Council's draft budget proposals.

1.3 This report follows on from the draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2021/22 report presented to Cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> January; this gave significant narrative on the budget proposals including the details presented in the budget book. For reference:

- The budget report can be found here, [Budget Report and background papers to Cabinet 6 January 2021](#) (item 291).
- the draft budget book here, [Draft Revenue & Capital Budgets 2021/22](#) and
- the Service Plans here, [Draft Service Plans 2021/22](#)

## 2. Update and Summary of recommendations to Cabinet.

2.1 The minutes of the joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 14<sup>th</sup> January and the Housing Review Board meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> January are contained on this agenda. The draft budget for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme were recommended by these Committees as those adopted by Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> January with no amendments.

2.2 Members will recall the Cabinet report on 6<sup>th</sup> January identified where additional costs were likely to come forward either before the date of the Council setting the budget but after Cabinet adopting the draft budget. Also the likelihood of additional costs being approved by Council subsequent to the budget being set. It was agreed in the draft budget that additional **one off Government funding** announced in the Provisional Finance settlement would be held in a budget to offset such proposals. The funding came from a Covid 19 Grant (£616k) to cover cost implication that may continue into 2021/22 and a Lower Tier Service Grant Allocation (£700k). These are both unringfenced grants and to be held as a budget sum totalling £1.316m for Council to approve expenditure against with a running balance to be presented for members to consider priority of spend.

2.3 Specific requests have come forward for Cabinet to recommend to Council to be allocated against this budget sum with associated minutes contained on this agenda:

- The Poverty Panel have requested a contingency budget of £100k to allow funds in 2021/22 to support our residents with essential emergency aid, as discussed at the Panel meeting. This is a contingency as Government funding may become available to either directly fund the necessary support for us provide direct or for us to sign post residents to appropriate support. External funding will be utilised first before this funding is called upon.
- Cabinet at its last meeting recommend the inclusion of £50k in the 2021/22 General Fund Budget for resources/direct staff appointment on a one year basis (then to be reviewed) to support members and officers with mental health. This is included in this report to formalise the request in next year's budget.

2.4 As highlighted in the draft budget report there will be other request coming forward to be allocated against this budget with immediate areas likely to be the support for LED in 2021/22 and implication of Queen's Drive delivery above the current budget allocation.

- 2.5 Members will also recall the draft budget contains £300k additional income derived from car park tariff increases for prime car parks. As stated if this is not approved by Council (same meeting as the budget is considered) then a further report will be required back to Cabinet to determine how this lost income can be replaced in the budgets for 2021/22 as the underlying budget will be unbalanced and will cause further difficulty in balancing the future budgets where a deficit is already estimated.

### **3. Council Tax Collection Fund – new regulations**

- 3.1 To help local authorities with the impact of Covid19 on their Council Tax Collection Fund new regulations have been introduced. This requires phasing over 3 years of any 'exceptional balance' when billing authorities estimate their collection fund surplus and deficits for 2021/22. In setting the 2020/21 council tax base assumptions were made on the level of the Council Tax income that could be raised, this has been negatively affected for most authorities by the pandemic (less growth and additional council tax support being granted), thereby creating a deficit in the collection fund. Under normal circumstances this loss on the collection fund would have to be made good in the following year. In recognition of the pandemic this exceptional deficit is required to be spread over 3 years, with only a third of the loss being accounted for in 2021/22. The remaining deficit then being recovered in the following two years.
- 3.2 As billing authority this calculation is our responsibility and effects the major preceptors (Devon County, Police and Fire). We have held a health balance on the collection fund to mitigate the position of declaring a deficit in any particular year; a deficit reduces the income derived from Council Tax requiring a reduction in the General Fund budget to meet the deficit for the year. By holding a surplus on the collection fund this meets this fluctuation rather than the General Fund. However the new regulations and associated calculation requiring the spreading of the deficit also expect any surplus held on the fund to be distributed to all preceptors in the defined proportion.
- 3.3 For our element the surplus to be distributed in 2021/22 will be £366,940, however the deficit that will need to be made good from Council Tax Income in the following years is £189,189. It is therefore recommended that of the additional income £189,189 is set aside to offset the savings required in later years. The balance of £177,751 to be added to the General Fund Balance bring it more comfortably within the adopted range rather than currently at the bottom of the range (adopted range being £3m to £3.8m).

### **4. Council's Balances and Reserves**

- 4.1 Details are contained in the draft Revenue and Capital Budgets 2021/22 report presented to Cabinet on the 6<sup>th</sup> January.

### **5. The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities**

- 5.1 The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities gives the requirement to report on a series of prudential indicators, which are designed to support and record local decision making. These indicators are required to be part of the Council's budget setting process and show the overall effect on various financing and borrowing strategies that the Council plans to adopt over the next three financial years. These indicators will be monitored and reported and when necessary updated to reflect any changes in policy.

- 5.2 This Council's prudential indicators are contained in the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 – Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy included on the agenda and reflect the proposals and details in this report.
- 5.3 Alongside the Treasury Management Strategy sits a requirement under the Prudential Code for the Council to adopt a Capital Strategy, this is also contained on this agenda for Members consideration.

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 3 February 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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## Capital Strategy 2021/22 – 2024/25

### Report summary:

Appended is a draft Capital Strategy for Cabinet to consider and if content recommend to Council for adoption, this forms part of the annual budget setting approval process.

The document draws together various adopted strategies and agreed process of the Council that govern how the Council manages capital expenditure and investment decisions. The Capital Strategy brings these areas together in one overarching document.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code requires local authorities to produce a capital strategy to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are taken in line with desired outcomes and take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability. This Council's practices meet these outcomes and it's useful to set these out in one place to demonstrate this.

The Capital Strategy is a key document, it provides a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the delivery of desired outcomes. It also provides an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It includes an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure.

### Recommendation:

That Cabinet recommend to Council the adoption of the Capital Strategy 2021/22 – 2024/25

### Reason for recommendation:

In order to comply with good practice there is a requirement for the Council to have in place an adopted Capital Strategy.

Officer: John Symes, Finance Manager, [jsymes@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:jsymes@eastdevon.gov.uk), 01395 517413

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action
- Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Democracy and Transparency

- Economy and Assets
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Financial implications:**

Contained within the report.

**Legal implications:**

Other than to note that it is a requirement for the Council to adopt a Capital Strategy there are no specific legal implications arising.

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information** [Capital Strategy 2021/22 – 2024/25](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
  - Outstanding Homes and Communities
  - Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
  - Outstanding Council and Council Services
-

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 3 February 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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## **Treasury Management, including the Strategy 21/22 – Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy**

### **Report summary:**

- 1. Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2020/21 – 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 –**  
This report details the overall position and performance of the Council's investment portfolio for the first six months of 2020/21.
- 2. Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 – Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy** - The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) produces a Code of Practice for treasury management for Public Services. One of the main recommendations of this code is the requirement for an annual Treasury Management Strategy to be formally adopted by the Council. There is also a requirement to set prudential indicators relating to all treasury activities that the authority will undertake in the forthcoming financial year.

### **Recommendation:**

- 1. Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2020/21 – 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 -**  
Cabinet is requested to review and note the investment values and performance for the period to 30 September 2020.
- 2. Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 – Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy** - Cabinet is requested to recommend that:
  - a. Council adopts this Treasury Management Strategy including the Prudential Indicators for 2021/22;
  - b. Council approves the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement;
  - c. Council approves the creditworthiness criteria and updated list of counterparties.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

The Council is required to produce a half-yearly review of its treasury management activities and performance and to formally adopt a Treasury Management Strategy and set prudential indicators before the beginning of the new financial year.

Officer: Janet Reeves – Accountant. [jreeves@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:jreeves@eastdevon.gov.uk) .01404 515616, Extension 2033

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Policy Co-ordination and Regional Engagement
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Financial implications:**

Contained within the report.

**Legal implications:**

As indicated in the accompanying report, the Treasury Management Strategy must be prepared in line with the statutory framework and related guidance and the finance team has confirmed that this has been done. Otherwise there are no legal implications requiring comment.

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

The Council would fail to comply with CIPFA recommended “best practice” for treasury management.

**Links to background information:**

[Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021-22](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

**East Devon District Council**  
**Mid-Year Treasury Management Review**  
2020/21

# 1. Background

## 1.1 Capital Strategy

In December 2017, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. As from 2020/21, all local authorities have been required to prepare a Capital Strategy that is to provide the following: -

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services;
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed;
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

## 1.2 Treasury management

The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer-term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

“The management of the local authority’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

## 2. Introduction

This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2017).

The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement that sets out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management activities.
2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices that set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the full council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement - including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy - for the year ahead, a Mid-year Review Report and an Annual Report, (stewardship report), covering activities during the previous year.
4. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.
5. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Council the delegated body is the Cabinet:

This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- An economic update for the 2020/21 financial year;
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2020/21;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2020/21;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2020/21;

## Recommendations

**Cabinet is asked to recommend the following to the full Council:**

- **To note the report, the treasury activity, investment values and performance for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.**

## 3. Economics and interest rates

### 3.1 Economics update

See the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy) 2021/22 for the latest economic update.

### 3.2 Interest rate forecasts

See the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy) 2021/22 for the latest interest rate forecasts.

## 4. Investment Portfolio 2020/21

In accordance with the Code, it is the Council's priority to ensure security of capital and liquidity, and to obtain an appropriate level of return that is consistent with the Council's risk appetite.

As shown by the interest rate forecasts referred to in 3.2 above, it is now impossible to earn the level of interest rates commonly seen in previous decades, as all investment rates are barely above zero now that Bank Rate is at 0.10%, while some entities, including more recently the UK Government's Debt Management Account Deposit Facility, (DMADF), are offering negative rates of return in some shorter time periods. Given this risk environment and the fact that increases in Bank Rate are unlikely to occur before the end of the current forecast horizon of 31 March 2023, investment returns are expected to remain low.

### 4.1 Negative investment rates

While the Bank of England has said that it is unlikely to introduce a negative Bank Rate, at least in the next 6-12 months, some deposit accounts are already offering negative rates for shorter periods. As part of the response to the pandemic and lockdown, the Bank and the Government have provided financial markets and businesses with plentiful access to credit, either directly or through commercial banks. In addition, the Government has provided large sums of grants to local authorities to help deal with the Covid crisis; this has caused some local authorities to have sudden large increases in investment balances searching for an investment home, some of which was only very short term until those sums were able to be passed on.

As for money market funds, (MMFs), yields have continued to drift lower. Some managers have suggested that they might resort to trimming fee levels to ensure that net yields for investors remain in positive territory where possible and practical. Investor cash flow uncertainty, and the need to maintain liquidity in these unprecedented times, has meant there is a glut of money swilling around at the very short end of the market. This has seen a number of market operators, now including the DMADF, offer nil or negative rates for very short-term maturities. This is not universal, and MMFs are still offering a marginally positive return, as are a number of financial institutions.

Inter-local authority lending and borrowing rates have also declined, due to the surge in the levels of cash seeking a short-term home at a time when many local authorities are probably having difficulties over accurately forecasting when disbursements of funds received will occur or when further large receipts will be received from the Government.

### 4.2 Creditworthiness.

Although the credit rating agencies changed their outlook on many UK banks from stable to negative outlook during the quarter ended 30 June 2020, due to upcoming risks to banks' earnings and asset quality during the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, the majority of ratings were affirmed, due to the continuing strong credit profiles of UK banks. However, during Q1 and Q2 2020, banks made provisions for *expected* credit losses and the rating changes reflected these provisions. As we move into the next quarters ahead, more information will emerge on *actual* levels of credit losses. (Quarterly performance is normally announced in the second half of the month following the end of the quarter.) This has the potential to cause rating agencies to revisit their initial rating adjustments earlier in the current year. These adjustments could be negative or positive, although it should also be borne in mind that UK banks went into this pandemic with strong balance sheets. Indeed, the Financial Policy Committee (FPC) report on 6 August revised down their expected credit

losses for the banking sector to “somewhat less than £80bn”. They stated that in their assessment, “banks have buffers of capital more than sufficient to absorb the losses that are likely to arise under the MPC’s central projection”. The FPC stated that for real stress in the sector, the economic output would need to be twice as bad as the MPC’s projection, with unemployment rising to above 15%.

All three rating agencies have reviewed banks around the world with similar results in many countries of most banks being placed on negative watch, but with a small number of actual downgrades.

#### 4.3 Investment Counterparty criteria

In general, the current investment counterparty criteria selection approved in the TMSS is meeting the requirement of the treasury management function; however, one of the four money market funds that the Council has been using, Amundi, decided to close in October 2020. One or two new money market accounts may be opened to replace this, particularly as the volume of cash for investment has increased during the Covid 19 pandemic. It is requested that the time limit for investing in Building Societies is extended from 6 months to 9 months.

#### 4.4 Internal Investments

The Council held £31.75m of internally managed investments as at 30 September 2020, (£19.5m at 31 March 2020) and the investment portfolio yield for the first 6 months of the year was 0.135% net, after fees were deducted, against a benchmark, (7 Day LIBID), of -0.06 %. *A full list of internal and external investments held as at 30 September 2020 is included in the Appendix at section 7.*

#### 4.5 External Investments

The Council held £30.039m of externally managed investments as at 30 September 2020, (£29.604m at 31 March 2020), divided between two fund managers. The distribution yield for the first 6 months of the year was 0.62% net, after fees were deducted, against a benchmark, (7 Day LIBID), of -0.06%. *A full list of internal and external investments held as at 30 September 2020 is in the Appendix at section 7.*

The Strategic Lead Finance confirms that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the first 6 months of 2020/21.

#### 4.6 Return on Investments compared to Budget

The Council’s budgeted investment return for the first six months of 2020/21 for the above internal and externally managed investments and the actual performance was as follows:

	<b>6 months to 30.9.20 Budget</b>	<b>6 months to 30.9.20 Actual</b>	<b>Performance above or (below) budget</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Net Return from Internal Investments	81,870	38,923	(42,947)
Net Return from External Investments (cash funds)	79,565	95,869	16,304
Net Return External Investments (property funds)	152,000	0	(152,000)
	<b>313,435</b>	<b>134,792</b>	<b>(178,643)</b>

When setting the budget prior to the beginning of the year, the Council had planned to switch part of the money held in external treasury investments, from cash funds to property funds. In so doing, the intention was to increase yield whilst maintaining appropriate levels of security and liquidity.

However, due to the unfolding pandemic crisis, the Council did not proceed with moving part of its external investments into property funds. The hitherto mentioned effect on interest rates had a detrimental effect on the return from all our usual forms of treasury investment, although as we had not carried out the planned

disinvestment from our external cash fund investments, more interest was received than expected from this source because of the higher principal amount held.

#### 4.7 Approved limits

Officers can confirm that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the period ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

## 5. Borrowing

### 5.1 External Borrowing

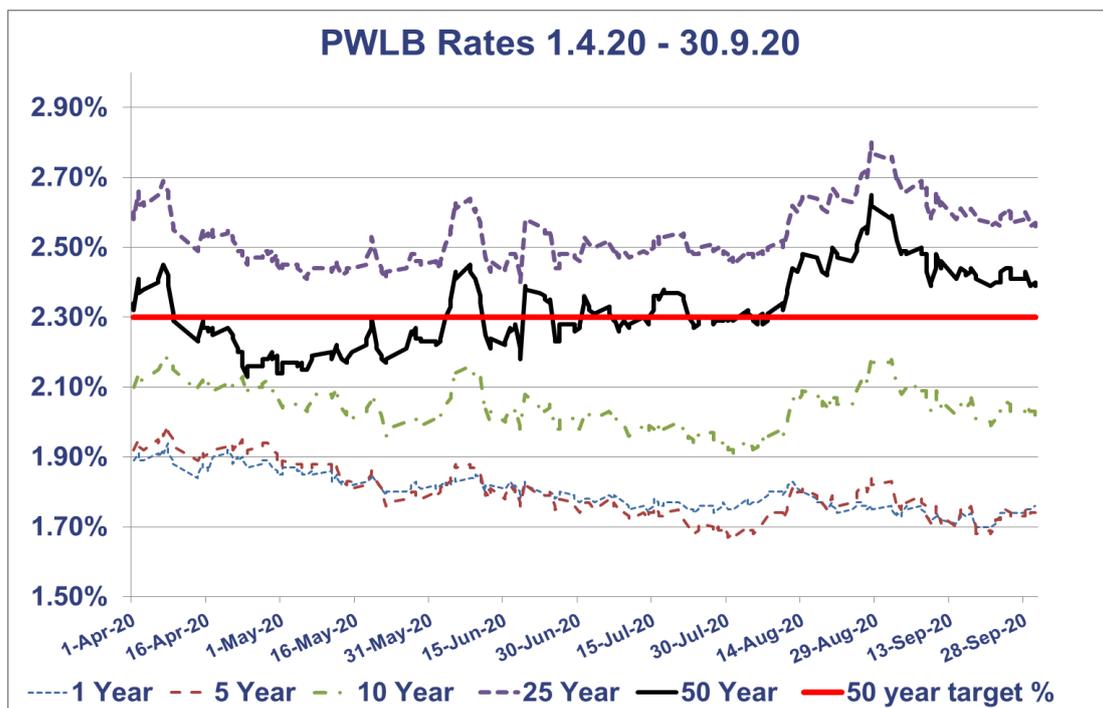
The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) denotes the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive, the Council may borrow from the PWLB or the market, (external borrowing) or from internal balances on a temporary basis, (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. Details on the current and projected CFR may be found in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy) 2020/21.

The total amount of external (PWLB) debt outstanding at 30 September 2020 was £90,746m, of which £84,670m related to the HRA, £3.427m related to Non-HRA and £2.649m related to borrowings to provide loans to third parties. There was no borrowing to finance commercial investment.

No external borrowing has been undertaken during this financial year, so far. It is anticipated that further external borrowing may take place by the end of the financial year for specific items in the Capital Programme. However, either timings are not certain, depend on decisions of the Council or have been financed temporarily in the meantime from internal resources. In addition, further external borrowing may take place to re-finance an HRA self-finance loan that is due to mature at the end of the financial year.

### 5.2 PWLB Rates

The Public Works Loan Board (**PWLB**) is a statutory body operating within the United Kingdom Debt Management Office. PWLB's function is to lend money from the National Loans Fund to local authorities, and to collect the repayments. The graph and table below show the movement in PWLB certainty rates for the first six months of the year to date.



	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Low	1.70%	1.67%	1.91%	2.40%	2.13%
Date	18/09/2020	30/07/2020	31/07/2020	18/06/2020	24/04/2020
High	1.94%	1.99%	2.19%	2.80%	2.65%
Date	08/04/2020	08/04/2020	08/04/2020	28/08/2020	28/08/2020
Average	1.80%	1.80%	2.04%	2.54%	2.33%

## 6. Debt Rescheduling

No debt rescheduling has been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

## 7. Appendix

### List of investments held at as at 30 September 2020

Fund	£000
<b>External investments</b>	
	15,527,791
Payden and Rygel	
Royal London Asset Management	14,511,367
<b>Internal investments</b>	
<b>Banks</b>	
Bank of Scotland - Call Account	2,000,000
Lloyds Bank plc - Fixed Rate Deposit	1,000,000
<b>Money Market Funds</b>	
Amundi	3,000,000
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	3,000,000
Goldman Sachs	3,000,000
Morgan Stanley	3,000,000
<b>Fixed Rate Deposits – Building Societies</b>	
National Counties Building Society	2,000,000
Newcastle Building Society	2,000,000
Nottingham Building Society	2,000,000
Principality Building Society	1,700,000
Progressive Building Society	2,000,000
West Bromwich Building Society	3,000,000
<b>Fixed Rate Deposits – Other Local Authorities</b>	
Thurrock Borough Council	3,000,000
<b>Fixed Rate Deposits – Debt Management Office of UK Government</b>	1,050,000
	<u>61,789,158</u>

# List of meetings post Annual Council 2021- 2022

Unless otherwise indicated meetings will normally be held online via the Zoom App. Meetings in orange are not open to the public and the public can be asked to leave other meetings on specified grounds.

		2021										2022				
Meeting	Day	Time	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	
Annual Council	Wed	6.00pm	12												11	
Council	Wed	6.00pm			21			20		8		23		20		
Cabinet	Wed	6.00pm		9	14		8	6	3	1	5	2	2 30		4	
Scrutiny Committee	Thu	6.00pm		3	8		9	7	4	2		3	3	7		
Overview & Scrutiny Committees joint budget meeting	Wed	9.00am									12					
Overview Committee	Thu	6.00pm	20	17	22		16	14	11		20		24			
Strategic Planning Committee (TBC)	Tue	2.00pm	25	22	20		7	5	9	14	11	8	8	5	3	
Planning Committee	Wed	10.00am		9	7	4	1 29	27	24	15	19	16	16	13		
Audit & Governance Committee	Thu	2.30pm			29		23		18		20		17			
Housing Review Board	Thu	2.30pm		10			16		25		13		24			
Licensing & Enforcement Committee	Wed	10.00am			21		22		17			16		13		
Standards Committee	Tue	10.00am			6			12			18			12		
Asset Management Forum	Tue	9.30am		8			8 Weds			7			8			
STRATA Joint Executive Committee		4.00pm		22 Tues			29 Weds				19 Weds					
STRATA Joint Scrutiny Committee		4.00pm		2 Weds			21 Tues				6 Thurs					
Budget Setting and Capital Allocations Panel	Thurs	9.30am		10			9			2			10			
South East Devon Habitat Regulations Executive Committee	Thu	2.00pm			29			28			27					
Exmouth Queens Dve Delivery Group	Tues	10.00am		1	13		7	19	30		25		8			
Poverty Working Panel -Work to be completed by May 2021	Mon	11.00am	10	14	19		20		22							
LED Monitoring Forum TBA																
Housing Task & Finish Forum TBA	Wed	10.00am	12	23	4											
Exeter Airport Consultative Committee	Wed	10.00am	12		14		8			8						
Recycling & Waste Partnership Board	Wed	10.00am			14			13			12			27		
Sidmouth & East Beach BMP Advisory Group TBA																
Arts & Culture Forum	Wed	10.00am						20				23				

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting 3 February 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



## **Interim Devon Carbon Plan**

### **Report summary:**

Devon County Council have been leading work on the production of a Carbon Plan for the county. This work has been developed with a range of partners and is part of the commitment in the Climate Change Emergency Declaration. The interim Plan is out for consultation and will be finalised following a virtual Citizens Assembly process, incorporating comments from consultees.

The Plan sets out a roadmap for becoming net-zero carbon by 2050 at the latest, with an interim target for a 50% reduction by 2030, below 2010 levels. The Plan emphasises this is intended for everyone in Devon to play a part and make a contribution.

The Plan picks up on the build back better theme and the governments recently published ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. Eight high level objectives have been proposed:

1. Fossil fuels phased out as an energy source
2. Minimise energy consumption
3. Engaged communities acting for resilience and a net-zero carbon Devon
4. Carbon captured and stored from the burning of fuels
5. Minimise fugitive greenhouse gas emissions
6. Resilient local economies with access to green finance
7. A circular use of resources
8. Maximise carbon storage in marine and terrestrial environments

The Plan is supported by a wide range of partners and is underpinned with expertise, good data, enthusiasm and commitment.

### **Recommendation:**

That we feed our comments on the Interim Devon Carbon Plan back as part of the consultation process, and invite a further report on the updated Plan.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

To enable the Council as a partner organisation to comment and influence the development of the Carbon Plan for Devon that aspires to a net-zero position by 2050 at the latest.

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

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

Climate Action

Coast, Country and Environment

Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery

- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Policy Co-ordination and Regional Engagement
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

### **Financial implications:**

Although there is no direct financial implications from the recommendation of this report there will be links to the Council's own Strategy and actions but these will have to come forward as separate reports and recommendations if there are direct financial implications.

### **Legal implications:**

The report does not raise any specific legal implications requiring comment.

### **Equalities impact Medium Impact**

**Climate change** High Impact – a positive impact will be achieved if the actions in the plan are delivered.

**Risk:** Medium Risk; This represents a commitment for the Council and the risks are around not supporting the thrust of the report on addressing climate change and the consequences.

### **Links to background information**

<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/interimcarbonplan/>

### **Link to Council Plan:**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Interim Devon Carbon Plan is out for consultation. Initiated and led by Devon County Council the Plan is the product of multi-agency input, a series of thematic hearings and expert input. It is a Plan with the lofty ambition of decarbonising the county so goes beyond our organisation Climate Change Strategy and requires widespread commitment from all.
- 1.2 The draft Plan is comprehensive and I have reproduced a summary document in **annex 1**. The full version of the Plan can be found on the website:  
[https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/interimcarbonplan/?cat\\_id=2572](https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/interimcarbonplan/?cat_id=2572)
- 1.3 In May 2019, the Devon Climate Emergency partnership formed to declare and respond to the climate and ecological emergency in Devon, including Plymouth and Torbay. Our members include public bodies representing the people of Devon, private sector interests, environmental organisations and academic institutions.
- 1.4 The partnership remains committed to taking a lead in the response to climate change, through our collective action, innovation and influence. We are, therefore, delighted to introduce the consultation draft of the Interim Devon Carbon Plan, produced at our invitation by the Net-Zero Task Force, who have generously volunteered their time and expertise. This Plan shows how we can deliver collectively on our ambition for a net-zero Devon.

- 1.5 The transformational change outlined through this ambitious document will be challenging, but it also highlights many new opportunities for Devon. The Plan requires investments, but the return on investment is clear for the climate, the environment and the health of Devon's citizens, as well as for the many economic opportunities it presents.
- 1.6 Collaboration has been essential to the development of the Plan, with the input of much expertise by Devon's citizens in the Thematic Hearings and in response to the Public Call for Evidence, from which the Plan has taken shape. The ongoing information sharing and collaboration of the partner organisations has also been valuable in informing the Plan. There is recognition of the cross-cutting themes involved in climate change
- 1.7 The continued and widening engagement of Devon's citizens with the Plan and its implementation is vital. Support is needed at all levels of society, as is recognition of its key message: that neither technology nor behaviour change alone is enough, both are needed. Our organisations and infrastructure must be transformed to enable and support citizens and employees to adopt net-zero carbon behaviours and lifestyles. The recent months are testament to our ability to change, when we make changes together.
- 1.8 The Plan puts Devon in a good position to realise the opportunities signposted by the Government's recently announced, 'Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution'. It is well aligned with the Interim Devon Carbon Plan, which goes further and into more detail.
- 1.9 The statement preceding the consultation says that:

Addressing the climate and ecological emergency is an opportunity to create a fairer, healthier, more resilient and more prosperous society. Those most affected by climate change need more of a say in how we respond, and our actions to mitigate climate change must be aligned with goals for public health improvement, green growth and the reduction of social vulnerability.

Encouraging everyone to be more active by walking and cycling; improving air quality through the electrification of vehicles; insulating our homes to make them warmer; and eating more balanced diets will all improve public health and reduce pressures on the NHS.

There is considerable potential for the transition to clean technologies to create new jobs and skills requirements, improve our national energy security and increase economic prosperity – nationally and locally in Devon. Retrofitting energy efficiency measures into existing housing will reduce fuel poverty and illnesses associated with cold homes and subsequently provide enhanced opportunities for work and study.

Enhancing the ability of habitats along our coast, in our countryside and in our villages, towns and cities to store carbon offers tremendous opportunities to reverse the decline of biodiversity and restore the benefits healthy ecosystems provide. These include reduced flood risk, improved water and air quality, nutritious food, timber and fuel, and accessible greenspace.

The Devon Climate Emergency project aims to create a resilient net-zero carbon Devon – where people and nature thrive.

## **2. The Interim Carbon Plan**

- 2.1 The Plan has been formatted to show the challenge alongside a local context, explores cross-cutting themes, considers economies and resources, energy supply, the built environment, transport, food, land & sea, the actions required and key outcome being sought. The full Plan

contains 363 pages of detail supported by good evidence and understanding of the opportunities, constraints and challenges.

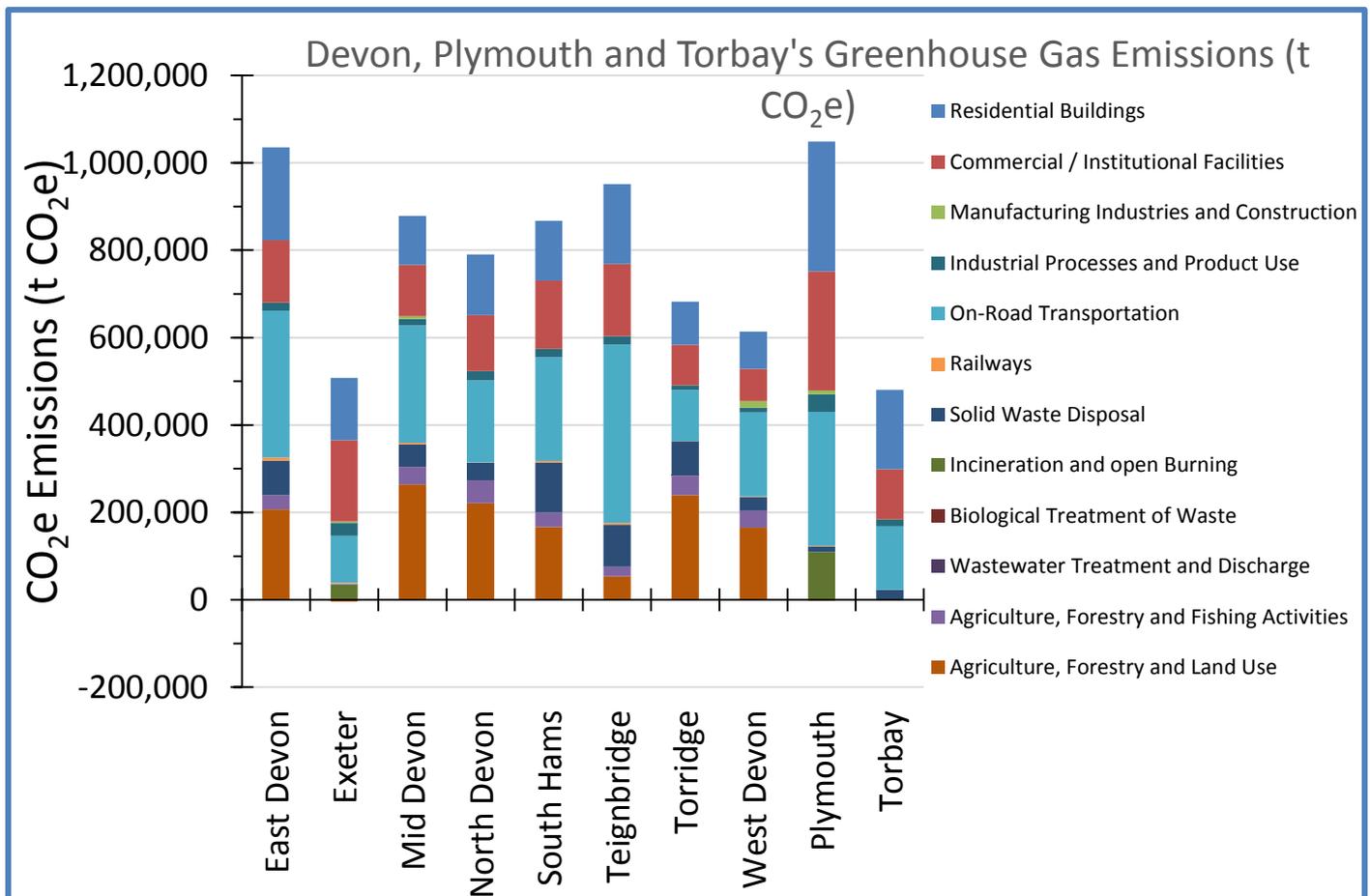
2.2 The Plan has been built around eight objectives:

- Fossil fuels phased out as an energy source;
- Minimise energy consumption;
- Engaged communities acting for resilience and a net-zero carbon Devon;
- Carbon captured and stored from the burning of fuels;
- Minimise fugitive greenhouse gas emissions;
- Resilient local economies and access to green finance;
- A circular use of resources;
- Maximise carbon storage in marine and terrestrial environments.

2.3 The Plan recognises that further analysis is required and costing as many of the resources have not been identified at this point.

2.4 The consultation runs for ten weeks and concludes on 15<sup>th</sup> February. It recognises that the Citizens Assembly has been delayed due to the pandemic and the proposals for a virtual arrangement, meaning that the Plan will not be finalised until after this consideration.

2.5 The 2018 Devon carbon footprint is shown in the graphic below. This has been produced by the University of Exeter and depicts the scale of the challenge.



3. Comments on the Interim Plan

- 3.1 I am broadly content with the draft Interim Devon Carbon Plan and have already had the opportunity to input into this iteration of the interim draft. This is an impressive piece of work and a great starting point to deliver an ambitious programme of activities designed to reduce the carbon footprint of the entire county. It recognises that transformational change is required and a wide range of technological and behaviour changes are required to achieve the goal. It makes a compelling and convincing case for the need for change.
- 3.2 The actions need to be identified in sufficient detail to provide confidence in the Plan actually delivering its ambitions. There is a lack of detail that must be included in the final version. Accepting that the Plan will be further developed following the Citizens Assembly process, it would be good to see estimates of the level of reduction/impact that each of the themes have on the overall carbon footprint.
- 3.3 There could be more detail on the challenge around changes required to farming practice and agriculture.
- 3.4 More could be said on the contribution we must make as individuals with lifestyle changes and how tourists and visitors to Devon need to support the Plans objectives.
- 3.5 The Plan has not been costed and relies heavily on government support and developing technologies. The Plan recognises this and clearly states that this is the case. I like the references to what needs to happen and key outcomes. There are nice graphics and the presentation is professional and easy to read.
- 3.6 Greater emphasis on the role of planning and development management, with a stronger position around refusing development applications that do not meet the aspirations of the Plan. It is important that our ambitions for a zero carbon west end are reflected in the Plan and replicated in other developments across the county.
- 3.7 The Portfolio Holder for Climate Action would also like to see a website like the Leeds By Example site and for us to include a visible dashboard of key performance indicators that demonstrate progress towards the various targets and actions being adopted. We have admired the Leeds website for some time and would like to create something similar at a County or district level.

<https://www.leedsbyexample.co.uk/>

Transport improvements will require huge investment and support from national government, which is why there is limited detail in the Plan. We need to liaise with other district councils and partners to lobby for this, as on our own we will have zero influence. We should also liaise with other District Councils to lobby government to subsidise public transport (currently only in London). Similarly, we need to influence national government to kick-start building energy efficient housing. We all know this, and the government policy regarding retrofitting will not tackle the problem.

- 3.8 Assistant Portfolio Holder comments are that the Plan doesn't go far enough and has no detail. For example transport, it talks about improved public transport and travelling less, but how is this going to be achieved without massive infrastructure investment? Also about food and diet, it just feels wishy washy and could have been produced a year ago, not after consultations and conversations with experts. It needs hard hitting information about what we as consumers could do better to help. A feeling of everybody's in it together and doing their bit could be inspiring, especially in these Covid-19 times. There is a suggestion that the Don't let Devon go to waste campaign needs a rebrand as I think the impact is minimal now - we are all used to it. It needs to be far more hard hitting. We can't have much impact on buildings while we still let planners get away with concrete boxes, and don't plan infrastructure properly to allow new developments to be connected to public transport routes.

- 3.9 I would like to see more prominence of the Doughnut Economic Model. I know that County colleagues are exploring this and impressed with how it sits so well with climate change thinking and decision making.
- 3.10 We will have further opportunities to influence the Devon Carbon Plan as it develops. It will require a significant commitment from us and builds on our organisational Climate Change Strategy, going beyond our existing commitments to decarbonise our own activities and those of our partners and contractors. We will continue to work as a key partner within the governance structure proposed and contribute towards the work of refining, monitoring and refreshing the Plan. The roadmap approach will inevitably involve some delays and likely a diversion or two along the way.
- 3.11 We can review our own Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan once the Devon Plan is published to ensure that they are aligned and complimentary.

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 3 February 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



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## Proposed Independent Review of Council Management Structure

### Report summary:

At the December 2020 Cabinet meeting the Leader announced that he wished to initiate an independent review of the Council Management Structure and the Chief Executive was instructed to prepare a report. Accordingly this report sets out the procurement considerations for Cabinet and Council to consider.

### Recommendation:

1. The contents of this report are noted and endorsed
2. That a request is made to Council for a budget of circa £25k to be allocated to this project
3. That a politically balanced member working group be established to oversee and input into this project. That is it also be noted that the working group will include representatives from the Devon Procurement Service, DCC HR Services and Unison.
4. That the CEO take all necessary steps to progress this project in consultation with the working group

### Reason for recommendation:

To take forward the Leader's request

Officer: Mark R. Williams CEO

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Policy Co-ordination and Regional Engagement
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

## **Financial implications:**

The direct financial implications are outlined in the report with a budget request of £25k.

The Council has over recent years considered its management structures and establishment in line with its Transformation Strategy under the theme of “Fit for Purpose”. This has achieved savings to meet the deficits identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan and has been reflective of organisation changes in work demand and required expertise. Members need to consider future budget gaps identified in 2022/23 onwards and any review needs to consider affordability in this context.

## **Legal implications:**

As the report highlights, it is necessary to follow a procurement process to ensure our legal obligations are complied with. In addition the Council should ensure that there is appropriate consideration given to human resource matters and therein employment advice is taken to ensure the Council complies with its policies and wider legal obligations. Otherwise there are no other specific legal implications requiring comment

**Equalities impact** Medium Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Medium Risk;

## **Links to background information**

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## **Report in full**

### **1. Scope of work**

In carrying out this proposal, the Council will need to invite independent advice and scrutiny to ensure EDDC’s Management Team roles, responsibilities and structure are fit for the future. The review will be supported by an independent advisory organisation with expertise in administering District Council Services in line with best practice.

The scope of the work will need to be defined by members. Determining the scope of work is a key part of commissioning independent advisors, as it directly influences the service provider to be selected, the quality of advice, the relevance and clarity of the outcomes and the cost of commission.

Day rates for advisory services are typically in the region of £400 to £1,000 per day, dependent on seniority of role and the fee rates of the particular provider appointed. While advisors typically work to their firm’s set fee scale, consultancy can be competed for by going to market with a defined budget and clear scope.

Competition can be generated by requiring providers to fulfil the scope of work in line with the budget, and by determining the total number of days required to fulfil the client brief. This ensures the Council's requirements are met in line with cost and quality requirements. Providers would bid on the basis of how many days it will take them to meet the client brief, and what tasks they will do to fulfil it. It would also rely upon the availability of resources to engage with the providers once appointed.

The brief will need to involve advice and scrutiny of the Council's management structure to ensure its fitness for the future to deliver its District Council functions. The scope should recognise the legal requirements of 3 statutory posts, consider the current operating circumstances, opportunities and challenges in managing the District Council at the current time and into the future. In particular, best practice (consistent with processes the Council has already established) would require:

- Scope of work to be informed by engagement with a member working group
- Scope of work and objectives to be signed off by Cabinet & Council
- Independent advisors to be procured through competitive process based on agreed criteria, objectives and outcomes to ensure alignment with what the Council is seeking to achieve.

## **2. Procuring independent advisors**

I have discussed this matter with the Council's procurement advisors and they have advised that whilst there are many independent advisors who could carry out this work, it is critical the service provider brings expertise with this type of requirement, provides external scrutiny, objectivity and independence, and brings a thorough appreciation of District Council operations and knowledge of best practice in this environment.

Furthermore, a transparent competitive process would help the Council to:

- i) Ensure the task and deliverables are clearly defined, and objectively measurable with clear outcomes and deliverables, and
- ii) Appoint the best placed provider with the relevant skill, clear proposals and capacity to achieve the brief as per the required timescales and budget. It would also call upon Council resource to support the review.

Devon Procurement Services (DPS) offer two recommended options in the appointment process (it is proposed that the respective benefits of each are assessed by the recommended member working party):

### **Route to market options:**

1. Procure an advisory organisation via a Central Professional Services Framework using a Mini-competition process;

Or:

2. For work between £10,000 up to £100,000, invite at least three organisations to submit written formal quotations submitted by a specified date and time and based on a written specification and evaluation criteria.

### **Option one: Mini competition against a national Framework Agreement**

DPS have identified Framework Agreement 664 managed by ESPO (a Central Buying Organisation for Government Services). ESPO Framework 664 comprises a wide range of pre-qualified independent consultancy service providers very familiar with Local Government best practice. Service providers are prequalified due to their specialism and expertise in a Local Government setting including their track record, experience and technical and professional ability.

ESPO Framework 664 Lot one is for Business Services and comprises 26 pre-qualified providers for Government advisory services, each of whom being skilled in Local Government services. Alternatively ESPO Framework 664 Lot 10 is for Strategic Projects. Lot 1 can be accessed via either Direct Award (lowest Price) or mini competition, whereas Lot 10 can only be accessed via mini competition.

ESPO Framework 664 Lot one is for Business Services and comprises 26 providers for specialist advice regarding:

- Organisational design and policy
- Strategy development
- Business transformation and change management
- Improvement programmes

ESPO Framework 664 Lot ten is for Strategic Projects and comprises 21 providers. This Lot is primarily for organisational review and redesign.

### **Framework pricing**

Day rates have already been competed by ESPO, and range between £150 to £1,500 per day. The factors which most influence the overall cost are the scope of the brief, and the seniority of the individual advisors appointed to the project.

### **Option two: Request for Formal Quotation amongst identified providers**

This option is the 'traditional' process of identifying appropriate market providers, and running a competitive process in line with EDDC Financial Regulations to appoint the appropriate provider. This option may take slightly longer to develop the quotation documents (due to not using a Framework Agreement), but the evaluation may be quicker due to managing down the number of tender returns to a smaller number of providers. There is more opportunity for providers to be based locally, as EDDC can select which providers to invite to bid.

For either option, it is envisaged that the majority of the work would take place remotely / digitally in the current circumstances.

### **Indicative Timetable and key actions:**

#### **1. Define scope of work / specification**

Including objectives, deliverables, performance measures, timescales and budget.

Identify any specific tasks required such as consultation with '*x number of individuals*'

Consider how Officers, Members and other stakeholders can engage.

**2. Agree route to market** (propose either Framework, or Invitation to Tender)

If the former - Sign User Agreement and prepare mini competition;

If the latter – write Invitation to Tender / Request for Quotation.

Identify potential providers to bid, and enquire as to availability.

**3. Undertake competitive process**

Contact providers to ensure capability, availability, skill and strategic fit.

Issue competition documents including scope of work, evaluation, performance criteria;

Manage competitive process

Seek imaginative and creative approaches for the Council to consider, including cost proposals, timeframe and methodology to deliver scope of works. Define deliverables.

Evaluate bids – including interviewing shortlisted bidders.

Ensure satisfaction with expertise of District Council operating environment and best practice;

Take up references and award contract once recommendation approved.

**4. Award and mobilisation**

Confirm contract award details, notices and manage feedback to unsuccessful bidders.

Mobilise contract and set work in motion, including diarise key personnel.

**Indicative Timetable based on Framework mini competition;** Managing own Request for Quotation likely to take slightly longer. However some tasks can normally take place concurrently.

<b>Task:</b>	<b>Timeframe (some tasks are concurrent)</b>
<b>EDDC review and sign User Agreement</b>	<b>1 day</b>
<b>Define scope of work and deliverables</b>	<b>3 days</b>
<b>Formal approval of the brief</b>	<b>2 days</b>
<b>(subject to delegation)</b>	
<b>Contact providers to Express their Interest</b>	<b>4 days</b>
<b>Write Request for Quotation (RfQ):</b>	<b>4 days</b>
<b>Sign off Request for Quotation prior to issue</b>	<b>1 day</b>
<b>RfQ with bidders for completion</b>	<b>15 – 20 days</b>
<b>Download responses &amp; evaluate bids</b>	<b>10 days</b>
<b>Shortlisting</b>	<b>2 days</b>
<b>Arrange presentations and diarise</b>	<b>3 days</b>
<b>Finalise and collate evaluations</b>	<b>1 day</b>
<b>Contract award recommendation report</b>	<b>1 day</b>
<b>Decision and consider award recommendations</b>	<b>2 days</b>
<b>Contract award &amp; mobilise</b>	<b>1 day</b>

**Total:**

**Indicative estimate 40 working days  
(on basis some tasks to be undertaken  
concurrently)**

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 3 February 2020

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

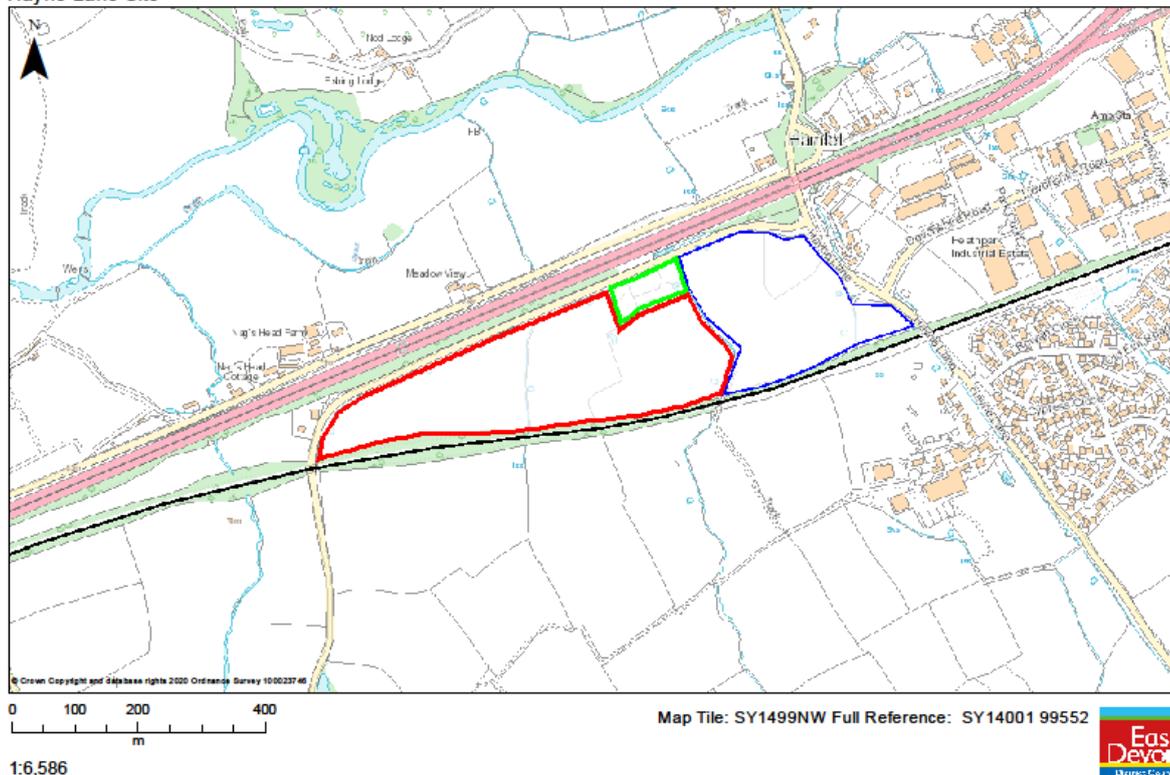
## Hayne Lane Site, Honiton

### Report summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the use of the Business Rate Pilot Reserve Fund as the council's contribution towards the costs of undertaking a masterplan exercise for a site in Honiton. The site concerned is identified in the Local Plan under Strategy 23, as employment land 042. It offers an economic development opportunity and the council is proposing to commission a masterplan jointly with the neighbouring landowner. The costs of the masterplan will be met equally by the landowners.

The council owns the site to the west of Hayne Lane, Gittisham, close to the Heathpark Industrial Estate, as outlined in blue on the plan below. Adjoining the site is land owned by Combe Estates shown in red. The 2 sites are allocated in the existing Local Plan for employment use and are considered suitable for B1, B2 and B8 uses.

Hayne Lane Site



The council and Combe Estates have an opportunity to bring forward an economic development opportunity on this site. As a first stage, the council and Combe Estates would like to jointly commission a masterplan to consider the feasibility of undertaking a commercial development on the site; what opportunities are suitable for the site and what constraints need to be overcome.

The masterplan work will include commissioning a number of surveys and studies to identify relevant site issues and provide evidence for the proposed uses. Consideration will be given to uses that will support the council's agenda to tackle climate change. It will include a report on the viability of the development and the implications for the respective land owners.

It is envisaged that the Masterplan will be an important material consideration when determining any future planning applications for the site, and should enable any future developers to easily show compliance with Local Plan Strategy 23, Development at Honiton. Proposals for development should be consistent with the strategy which is to make provision for additional employment land through site allocation and will inform how a particular application would fit into the wider picture for the site. The work with the community and other stakeholders will also ensure that the scheme has their support as much as possible and that the site is viable and deliverable in the round, and at each stage of development.

The council will manage a tender selection process to procure a suitable external professional advisor who will lead on the masterplan exercise and appoint sub-consultants as necessary to complete specific reports and studies to support the exercise. The council's contribution towards these costs is not expected to exceed £20,000.

A briefing paper on this opportunity has previously been provided to the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Assets and to the local ward members for Feniton and Honiton. A Project Group will be established with the Portfolio Holder and these members in order to share information and views on the project as it progresses.

### **Recommendation:**

That Cabinet approves

1. That the Business Rates Pool Reserve Fund is utilised to provide 50% of the funding for the commissioning of a masterplan study for the Hayne Lane site in Honiton.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Service Lead for Place Assets & Commercialisation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Assets and the Strategic Lead for Finance to agree to additional funding towards the cost of the masterplan, if required, so that the total contribution would be up to £40,000.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

To enable the council to explore the development opportunities for this Local Plan employment site in Honiton which could deliver economic growth for the town.

Officer: Alison Hayward, 01395 571738, [ahayward@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:ahayward@eastdevon.gov.uk)

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance

- Policy Co-ordination and Regional Engagement
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

**Financial implications:**

The financial details are contained within the report.

**Legal implications:**

Use of the fund for these purposes is permissible. Officers will need to ensure compliance with contract standing orders and further advice can be given on this as required. Otherwise there are no other legal implications requiring comment.

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information**

Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 3 February 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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## **Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Report**

### **Report summary:**

The purpose of the report is to provide feedback and set out proposed changes following the examination of the Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan. The independent examination of the Plan has now concluded and the final Examiner's report received. In accordance with the relevant legislation, the District Council must now consider its response to the Examiner's recommendations and also satisfy itself that the Plan meets the necessary 'basic conditions'. If the recommendation to accept the Examiner's recommendations in full is accepted, a decision notice will be published accordingly. This will confirm that the Plan can go forward for public vote in a local referendum as the penultimate stage in the plan-making process. An updated (Referendum Version) of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be published. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the referendum will be delayed until at least 6 May 2021. However, the publishing of the decision notice itself will give the Plan 'significant weight' in the determination of planning applications in the Farringdon parish area.

### **Recommendation:**

- 1. That Members endorse the Examiner's recommendations on the Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan).**
- 2. That Members agree that a 'referendum version' of the Plan (incorporating the Examiner's modifications) should proceed to referendum and a decision notice to this effect be published.**
- 3. That Members congratulate all involved, particularly the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, on their hard work in developing this Neighbourhood Plan.**

### **Reason for recommendation:**

The legislation requires a decision notice to be produced at this stage in the process. The Plan is the product of extensive local consultation and has been recommended to proceed to referendum by the Examiner subject to modifications which are accepted by the Parish Council.

Officer: Angela King, Neighbourhood Planning Officer. Email: [aking@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:aking@eastdevon.gov.uk) Phone: (01395) 571740

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action
- Corporate Services and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

### **Financial implications:**

Central Government funding is available for Neighbourhood plans. This income covers not only examination fees but also all other associated costs such as employment and all other supplies and services. Any residual funds are placed into an earmarked reserve and utilised to cover funding gaps in subsequent years.

### **Legal implications:**

As the report identifies, it is a formal requirement for the Council to consider the Examiner's recommendations and satisfy itself that the proposed plan, as modified, meets the prescribed 'Basic Conditions'. The purpose of the report is to satisfy this formal requirement. At this time, following the end of the transition period, the Regulations and NPPG in relation to the Basic Conditions have not been updated to reflect Great Britain's exit from the European Union therefore the Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed against the prevailing legislation. Assuming Members agree the proposed recommendations then the Council is obliged to publish a notice to this effect, pursuant to the applicable Regulations, and Recommendation 2 covers this aspect. The report also identifies that the District Council is responsible for organising the referendum and requires a resolution to progress this, at such time as the Council is permitted to arrange such referendums under Government Covid 19 guidance. At this stage there are no other legal observations arising.

### **Equalities impact Low Impact**

Neighbourhood Planning is designed to be inclusive and extensive consultation is a fundamental requirement. The Neighbourhood Plan has gone through wide consultation with the community and has been advertised in a variety of formats to increase accessibility. All electors are invited to vote in the referendum.

### **Climate change Low Impact**

**Risk:** Medium Risk; There is a risk that the Neighbourhood Plan could fail the referendum if a majority of the community vote against it, but it has been subject to extensive consultation

**Links to background information** [The Localism Act](#); [Plain English Guide to the Localism Act](#); [National Planning Policy Framework \(2019\)](#); [Neighbourhood Planning Regulations](#); ; [Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#); [East Devon Neighbourhood Planning webpages](#).

### **Link to [Council Plan](#):**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

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## Report in full

### The Examination

- 1.1 The Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan has now been examined and, subject to modifications, it has been recommended that it proceed to referendum. The Examiner, David Hogger, was selected by East Devon District Council in consultation with Farringdon Parish Council.
- 1.2 The examination was undertaken on the basis of considering the written material which forms the Plan, its appendices and accompanying statements as well as representations received in response to the formal consultations. The Examiner did not consider it necessary to hold a public meeting. The [Plan \(as submitted for examination\)](#) and the [Examiner's report](#) are available to on our website.
- 1.3 The legislation, reflected in the Council's [Neighbourhood Planning Protocol](#), requires the Policy Team to notify Members of the findings and recommendations of the Examiner and how the Council proposes to respond to the recommendations. The agreed response will then be published as a decision notice.
- 1.4 The Examiner has recommended 16 textual modifications to the Plan. These are shown in Annex 1. The reasons for each of the amendments is also explained in full in the Examiner's report. The examiner concluded that the Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan, "has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements", including the "Basic Conditions and other legal requirements" and recommends that, "the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum".

### Response to the Examiner's Recommendations

- 1.5 Under paragraph 12 of the Town and Country Planning Act it is for the Local Planning Authority (EDDC) to consider the recommendations made in the Examiner's report and the reasons for them and decide what action to take in response to each recommendation.
- 1.6 The District Council must also be satisfied that the Neighbourhood Plan:
  - i. meets the necessary 'Basic Conditions' by;
    - having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
    - contributing to the achievement of sustainable development;
    - being in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan for the area;
    - not breaching, and being compatible with European Union obligations
  - ii. is compatible with the European Convention of Human Rights, and;
  - iii. complies with the provisions under section 38A and 38B of the Planning And Compulsory Purchase Act,

(or that the draft Neighbourhood Plan would do so if modifications were made to it, whether or not recommended by the Examiner, before a referendum is held.)

- 1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan regulations go on to state that if

a) the Local Planning Authority propose to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the Examiner, and  
b) the reason for the difference is (wholly or partly) as a result of new evidence or a new fact or a different view taken by the authority as to a particular fact, then, the authority must notify prescribed persons of their proposed decision (and reason for it) and invite representations.

- 1.8 The legislation, which is reflected in our protocol, requires the Council to consider and respond to the Examiner's report. Officer assessment is that with the incorporation of the amendments suggested by the Examiner, the Council can be satisfied that the Plan meets the legal requirements. There are not considered to be any grounds to reject the findings of the report.
- 1.9 Members are therefore asked to agree to accept the recommendations of the Examiner's report and agree that a notice to this effect be published.

### **Next Steps**

- 1.10 A revised version of the Plan (known as the 'Referendum Version'), incorporating the recommended changes, will be made available to view on the [Farringdon page](#) of the East Devon District Council website, together with the Decision Notice.
- 1.11 The District Council will be responsible for arranging a referendum where all electors within the Parish of Farringdon will be invited to vote on whether the Neighbourhood Plan should be used to make planning decisions in the Parish. If more than 50% of those who vote say 'yes', the Neighbourhood Plan will be made and will form part of the Development Plan for East Devon, where it will carry full weight in the planning decision making process.
- 1.12 It should be noted that due to the Coronavirus Act 2020 and the Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 made in response to the coronavirus crisis, the referendum will not currently be able to take place until at least 6 May 2021. However, in recognition of the hard work undertaken in communities like Farringdon to progress plans to such an advanced stage, updated Government guidance has clarified that where the local planning authority has issued a decision statement detailing its intention to send a neighbourhood plan to referendum, that plan can be given significant weight as a material consideration in decision-making on planning applications. If accepted, this will be the effect therefore of the recommendation of this report.

## Annex 1: Examiner’s Proposed Modifications

The following sets out the modifications proposed by the Examiner, taken from the Examiner’s Report. A full schedule of the Plan policies pre-modification is provided in Annex 2 for reference.

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page number/ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 6	Insert a new paragraph (after paragraph 3.6) regarding the East Devon Local Plan Review to read:  <b>“It should be noted that EDDC are embarking on a review of the adopted EDLP. It is envisaged that a draft Plan could be submitted for examination by March 2023 and adopted by February 2024.”</b>
PM2	Page 7	Up-date National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reference from 2018 to 2019
PM3	Page 15 Policy Farr1	In clause b and d, delete the caveat ‘where / wherever possible’.
PM4	Page 15 Policy Farr1	In the last sentence, replace “unacceptable” with <b>“significant”</b> .
PM5	Page 15 Paragraph 7.12	Replace “community” with <b>“public”</b>
PM6	Page 17 Policy Farr2	Delete “Wherever relevant” from the last sentence of the policy.
PM7	Page 18 Policy Farr3 D	Add the following reference to clause D of the policy:  <b>“(see the Glossary for a definition of tree sizes).”</b>
PM8	Page 22 Policy Farr4	Modify clause c) to replace “reflects and enhances” with “respects”, to read:  Of a design which <b>respects</b> the character and appearance of the existing building.
PM9	Page 23 Policy Farr5	In the first sentence (below criteria k) delete the duplicate of the phrase, “shall be strongly supported.”
PM10	Page 27 Policy Farr6	Modify clause d) to read, by adding “on the living conditions of”, to read:

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page number/ other reference	Modification
		<p>d) Not have an adverse effect on <b>the living conditions</b> of its neighbours;</p> <p>Modify clause e) by deleting “reduce parking provision”, to read:</p> <p>e) not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the transport network or parking provision;</p>
PM11	Page 29 Policy Farr8	<p>To clarify that this policy does not apply to Crealy Park and to add reference to the glossary, modify the introductory sentence to read:</p> <p><b>“With the exception of Crealy Park (which is addressed in East Devon Local Plan policies E19 and E20), proposals for the development and expansion of tourism related businesses (see Glossary for definition of such businesses) will be supported providing that...”</b></p> <p>Modify clause a) of the policy to delete “(not included Crealy Park)” and clarify the meaning of existing use, to read,</p> <p>a) the scale of development is small and proportionate to <b>the</b> existing activity (<b>where there is one</b>); and the locality;</p>
PM12	Page 29 Paragraph 9.19	Replace “facilitate” with “ <b>support</b> ”.
PM13	Page 31 Policy Farr10	<p>Delete “and” at the end of clause a)</p> <p>Add two additional criteria, as follows:</p> <p><b>c) there is no significant visual harm; and</b></p> <p><b>d) an appropriate level of parking provision is provided.</b></p>
PM14	Page 32 Policy Farr11	<p>Modify clause c) to read:</p> <p>c) the local <b>road</b> network;</p>
PM15	Page 35 Policy Farr12	<p>Delete the ‘s’ on strengthens and modify the second part of the policy to read:</p> <p><b>“and strengthen links with the wider transport and public rights of way networks, will be supported.”</b></p>

<b>Proposed modification number (PM)</b>	<b>Page number/ other reference</b>	<b>Modification</b>
PM16	Page 36 Glossary	<p>Include two further definitions of Tree Sizes and Tourism Related Business:</p> <p><b>Tree Sizes – small tree &lt;10m; medium tree 10m – 15m; and large tree 15m-25m+.</b></p> <p><b>Tourism Related Business – a business that offers sustainable accommodation or recreation space to visitors to the area, for example those who wish to enjoy the countryside and natural environment of the locality.</b></p> <p>Replace Footnote 27 with a weblink to the February 2019 NPPF.</p> <p><a href="http://www.gov.uk">National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p>

## **Annex 2: Farringdon Neighbourhood Plan – Examination Version Policy Extract**

The following provides a schedule of the Plan policies as submitted for examination, prior to incorporation of the Examiners Proposed Modifications.

### **Policy Farr 1: Safeguarding the Natural Environment**

Development proposals should:

- a) avoid development on local wildlife sites, and habitats of principal importance, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, and appropriate mitigation measures provided;
- b) protect and, where possible, enhance the network of habitats, species, sites of importance and wildlife corridors;
- c) minimise impacts on biodiversity; and
- d) whenever possible, deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or which would create unacceptable harm to, wildlife sites and other areas of ecological or geological significance, will not be supported.

### **Policy Farr 2: Retaining Rural Character**

New development should be compatible with, and where possible enhance, the character of the surrounding area and respect the natural assets and rural nature of the Parish. Wherever relevant, development should maintain the tranquillity and dark skies of the Parish.

**Policy Farr 3: Protecting Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows**

- A. Development proposals should avoid the loss of or damage to trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute positively to the character, biodiversity and amenity of the area.
- B. Development proposals which could result in loss or damage to aged or veteran trees will not be supported.
- C. New development within the proximity of existing mature trees will be expected to have a tree protection plan in place before any development commences, prepared in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012. This will detail tree protection strategies to be employed during construction. An arboricultural method statement will also be required to cover any proposed works to trees or other works within their root protection areas.
- D. Where it is unavoidable, development proposals must provide for appropriate replacement planting on the site, or as close as possible to it, together with a management plan for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. Such replacement planting should use appropriate native species with an expected mature size similar to those removed and be in the ratio of three trees for the loss of a large tree, two for a medium sized tree and one for a small tree.
- E. The areas of woodland delineated on Map 4 are regarded as important natural features. Any development proposals that would result in the loss, damage or deterioration of these areas will be resisted.

**Policy Farr 4: Extensions to Existing Dwellings**

Proposed extensions and/or alterations to dwellings beyond what is allowed by way of permitted development rights should be:

- a) appropriate in scale and massing to the existing building;
- b) constructed of complementary materials; and
- c) of a design which reflects and enhances the character and appearance of the existing building.

New roofs should be pitched unless this is out of character with the existing building.

Extensions and/or alterations to dwellings should not have an adverse impact on the character of the building, its surroundings or local amenity.

Opportunities should be encouraged to integrate bee bricks, bat and bird boxes in a suitable position within the development.

### **Policy Farr 5: Self-build and Custom-Built Dwellings**

In order to meet the need for additional housing identified in the Farringdon Housing Needs Assessment (2020,) up to 12 new homes in the neighbourhood area will be supported. Each new dwelling must comply with all of the following criteria:

- a) it is self-built,
- b) the new dwelling, including access and outside space, will be located within the curtilage of an existing dwellinghouse (and limited to one dwelling),
- c) it is single storey,
- d) has a maximum 100m<sup>2</sup> gross internal area (as defined by RICS),
- e) does not exceed three bedrooms; and
- f) meets accessible and adaptable standards set out in the Building Regulations and, ideally, is also suitable for wheelchair users.

The development should:

- g) be of a high quality that respects the setting of heritage assets and the rural character of Farringdon;
- h) form a harmonious relationship with the existing dwelling and any neighbouring properties;
- i) make adequate provision for private amenity space and off-street parking for both the existing and additional dwelling;
- j) ensure that access arrangements do not detract from the host dwelling or neighbouring properties in terms of appearance, noise or fumes; and
- k) include boundary treatments that reflects those prevailing in the area.

Development proposals which are carbon neutral, or as near to carbon neutral as is reasonably possible, shall be strongly supported.

The development should not lead to the overdevelopment of a site nor the unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbouring properties.

Permitted development rights will be withdrawn to ensure reasonable controls exist over future extension and modification of dwellings in the interests of protecting the character of the area and to ensure the size of the dwelling is controlled.

### **Policy Farr 6: Existing Business & Commercial Areas**

Business and commercial development or redevelopment for business and commercial uses on the sites listed below (and delineated on Map 5) will be supported, provided it is in keeping with those uses and business activity already on the site and does not lead to the outward expansion of the site.

- Hill Barton Business Park
- Waldrons Farm Business Area
- The Drive

All business/commercial development should:

- a) respect the character of its surroundings by way of its scale and design;
- b) not harm the surrounding landscape;
- c) not adversely affect any listed building, heritage asset or setting;
- d) not have an adverse effect on its neighbours;
- e) not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the transport network and or reduce parking provision;
- f) safeguard residential amenity and road safety;
- g) promote access on foot, by bicycle, or by public transport;
- h) mitigate any adverse effects of noise, air pollution and light pollution; and
- i) ensure there is no increase in flood risk.

### **Policy Farr 7: Home-Based Businesses**

Where planning consent is required, small-scale, home-based businesses will be supported provided it can be demonstrated that:

- a) residential amenity and the character of the location will not be unacceptably harmed by virtue of noise and disturbance, smell, traffic generation, health and safety impacts, scale, design, appearance or nature of operations;
- b) the operation of the business activity can be contained within the existing curtilage of the premises; and
- c) the operation of the business activity does not require substantial external modification of the premises.

### **Policy Farr 8: Tourism Development**

Proposals for the development and expansion of tourism-related businesses will be supported providing that:

- a) the scale of development is small and proportionate to existing activity (not including Crealy Park), and the locality;
- b) the potential impact on neighbouring uses is acceptable;
- c) they do not have an adverse impact on the surrounding local environment and the rural character of the area, and, where necessary, are suitably mitigated by appropriate setting, design, and landscaping works; and
- d) traffic, access and highway issues are satisfactorily addressed.

### **Policy Farr 9: Super-Fast Communication Infrastructure**

1. Development to provide a super-fast communication infrastructure to serve the Parish will be supported where it is sensitively sited and sympathetically designed.
2. Whenever practicable, new residential, educational, and business premises development will be required to make adequate provision for the latest high-speed broadband and other communication networks including provision of suitable ducting to accommodate FTTP [Fibre to the Premise] broadband.

### **Policy Farr 10: Existing Community Facilities**

Proposals which seek to improve or extend existing local community facilities and assets, or provide for appropriate shared use, will be supported where:

- a) there is a demonstrable need for them; and
- b) there is no significant adverse impact upon nearby residents and uses.

**Policy Farr 11: Community Facilities & Services**

Proposals for additional community services and facilities within the core area of the village, indicated on Map 7, will be supported provided they would not have significant harmful impacts on:

- a) the amenities of surrounding residents and other uses;
- b) the surrounding local environment, listed buildings and the rural character of the area; and
- c) the local transport network

**Policy Farr 12: Walking & Cycling Routes**

Development proposals to improve accessibility and extend local footpaths, bridleways and cycle-paths and strengthen links with the wider transport networks will be supported.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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