

**Agenda for consultative meeting of the  
Overview Committee  
Thursday, 18th November, 2021, 6.00 pm**



**Members of Overview Committee**

Councillors V Johns (Chair), D Barrow, J Bonetta (Vice-Chair), S Gazzard, I Hall, M Hartnell, B Ingham, D Manley, P Millar, A Moulding, G Pook, V Ranger and T Woodward

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

**Venue:** Online via the Zoom app

**Contact:** Susan Howl 01395 517540 email  
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(or group number 01395 517546)  
Tuesday, 9 November 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](#)**

This meeting is being recorded by EDDC for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the Council's Youtube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmNHQruge3LVl4hcgRnbwBw>

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-public-meetings/#article-content>

Between 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021 to 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the Council has delegated much of the decision making to officers. Any officer decisions arising from recommendations from this consultative meeting will be published on the webpage for this meeting in due course. All meetings held can be found via the [Browse Meetings](#) webpage.

1 Public Speaking

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

2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 7)

3 Apologies

4 Declarations of interest

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

5 Matters of urgency

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

6 Confidential/exempt item(s)

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

7 Report on East Devon Digital Connectivity (Pages 8 - 17)

8 Public toilets review

This item has been deferred to an Extraordinary meeting of the Overview Committee scheduled for Thursday 25 November at 6pm to enable more time for consideration of the report and issues outlined therein.

9 Forward Plan (Pages 18 - 26)

Proposal forms received;

1. CIL/S106 Participatory Budgeting Policy – submitted by Cllr Paul Millar
2. Review of Members Allowances – submitted by Cllr Paul Millar
3. Public Register of Senior Officer Interests – submitted by Cllr Paul Millar

[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 consultative meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees held at Online via the Zoom App on 16 September 2021****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.45 pm

**1 Public Speaking**

The Chair welcomed members of the public and Councillors to the Joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and explained that all participants were taking part remotely and the meeting was also being viewed online and recorded.

She outlined that based on the decision of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on 26<sup>th</sup> July, the Council had delegated much of its decision taking power to its Senior Officers. This is for a short period of time only and due to concerns relating to COVID risk. Consequently, the meeting is held on a consultative basis only, and the procedural rules detailed in the Council's Constitution, will continue to be adhered to.

However, where the meeting would have normally decided a matter, it will now make recommendation to a Senior Officer. The Officer will then take that recommendation into account, when making their decision.

The Chair went on to explain that since the meeting was a joint meeting between two Committees and the Chair of Scrutiny was unable to attend, she wanted to appoint a Vice Chair solely for this meeting and Cllr Pook had offered to perform this role. She invited members to confirm their support for this, and following a vote Cllr Pook was duly asked to act as Vice Chair for the meeting.

The Chair then started the meeting by doing a roll call of those present, and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

**2 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Chair asked for comments on the Minutes from the previous Overview Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Cllr Rylance wanted to offer retrospective apologies since she had not offered them for the meeting but had not been in attendance.

The Chair then invited Cllrs to vote in favour, against or abstaining recommending approval of the Minutes.

Following a vote of those present the Chair confirmed that the minutes were recommended for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION:** to approve the minutes of the last meeting following a vote of those present.

**3 Declarations of interest**

79. Draft Updated Council Plan 2021 – 2023. Councillors Vicky Johns, Dean Barrow, Alasdair Bruce, Maddy Chapman, Olly Davey, Steve Gazzard, Marcus Hartnell, Sam Hawkins, Tony McCollum, Andrew Moulding, Helen Parr, Geoff Pook, Val Ranger, Eleanor Rylance, Tony Woodward; Personal. All are Town or Parish Councillors.

4 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

5 **Confidential/exempt item(s)**

There were confidential items to be discussed.

6 **Draft Updated Council Plan 2021 - 2023**

The Chair outlined that the report in the agenda provided an updated draft of the new Council Plan for 2021-2023. It also contained the recommendation as follows;

**Recommendation:**

‘That the Overview and Scrutiny committees consider this draft of the new council Plan 2021-2023 and provide feedback on it including that of the priorities and actions before it proceeds to Cabinet and Council in October’.

She went on to remind members that they have all had an opportunity to be involved in the development of the new Plan which is intended to go to Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> October and Council on 20<sup>th</sup> October, before being published later in October.

Before inviting members to comment on the Plan, she asked the Chief Executive, Mark Williams, to provide a brief introduction.

Mark Williams referred members to page two of the Plan, which explained how the Council Plan fitted into the work of the Council overall, as an employer and service provider. This was also a slide used when he gave his welcome talk to new employees, to indicate the links between an individual’s annual objectives and Service Plans, the Council Plan and the Local Development Plan, the ‘Golden Thread’.

He then referred to page nine of the agenda papers which explained the political process for adoption of the new Plan, and page one of the Plan, which provided a more forceful articulation of future intentions through three key priorities;

- Better Homes and Communities for all
- A Greener East Devon
- A Resilient Economy

Page three of the Plan started to indicate the detailed actions which would be required to deliver the priorities. He concluded by indicating how much the Council achieved each year but that it was necessary to be aware of the financial envelope available over the next two to three years.

The Chair invited Cllr Loudoun to speak as Portfolio Holder for Council & Corporate Coordination.

Cllr Loudoun thanked Mark Williams for his introduction and wise counsel, and all those members who had contributed to the development of the Plan. He thanked the Senior Management Team for their assistance in the drafting process and Jo Avery for her hard work and patience in putting the Plan together.

He wanted to point out an omission in the form of an additional, fifth point to be added on page four of the Plan under the sub-heading, 'Promoting culture and community', which should read as follows;  
'Support communities through the transfer of appropriate community assets to towns and villages, enabling local communities to own, manage and develop assets in support of community aspirations and benefits'.

The Chair invited comments from members.

Cllr Pook clarified the intention of the fifth point from the perspective of the benefit of transfers to a local community.

Cllr Davey re-iterated this point in relation to how EDDC may be able to encourage Town and Parish Councils in initiatives and improve relationships generally between them.

Cllr Hawkins referred to Cranbrook as being one of the largest towns in the District.

Cllr Rylance stated that she was very happy with the Plan and would send across her comments in relation to minor corrections required.

The Chair invited members of the Overview Committee, to vote in favour, against or to abstain from recommending approval of the recommendation, with the inclusion of the additional point under the heading 'Promoting culture and community' and any minor corrections to be advised and made outside the meeting.

Following a vote of those present, the Chair confirmed that the recommendation was passed for approval by members of the Overview Committee.

**Recommendation:**

That the Overview and Scrutiny committees have considered this draft of the new council Plan 2021-2023 and provided feedback on it including that of the priorities and actions before it proceeds to Cabinet and Council in October.

The Chair then invited members of the Scrutiny Committee, to vote in favour, against or to abstain from recommending approval of the recommendation, with the inclusion of the additional point under the heading 'Promoting culture and community' and any minor corrections to be advised and made outside the meeting.

Following a vote of those present, the Chair confirmed that the recommendation was passed for approval by members of the Scrutiny Committee.

**Recommendation:**

That the Overview and Scrutiny committees have considered this draft of the new council Plan 2021-2023 and provided feedback on it including that of the priorities and actions before it proceeds to Cabinet and Council in October.

The Chair thanked everyone who had participated in or been watching the meeting online, and closed the meeting at 6.45pm.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

V Johns (Chair)  
D Barrow  
S Gazzard  
M Hartnell  
A Moulding  
G Pook  
V Ranger  
T Woodward  
A Bruce  
M Chapman  
O Davey  
S Hawkins  
T McCollum  
H Parr  
E Rylance

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

M Armstrong  
P Arnott  
D Bickley  
P Hayward  
N Hookway  
S Jackson  
G Jung  
J Loudoun  
M Rixson  
J Rowland  
B Taylor

**Officers in attendance:**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)  
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer  
Jo Avery, Management Information Officer  
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

**Councillor apologies:**

I Hall  
B Ingham  
D Manley  
P Millar  
M Allen  
C Gardner  
T Wright

Chairman .....

Date: .....



Report to: Overview Committee

Date of Meeting: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## East Devon Digital Connectivity

### Report summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the current status of different initiatives to improve digital connectivity in East Devon. Specifically the report will:

- Provide an update on the roll-out of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme since a new delivery contract was awarded at the end of 2020
- Provide an update on the latest developments by Jurassic Fibre
- Present a case study of an ultra-fast broadband connection supplied to a new residential and commercial development in East Devon (Winslade Park at Clyst St. Mary)
- Highlight an alternative way to connect hard to reach rural areas through the Starlink satellite internet service piloted in East Devon (KOR Communications case study)

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

That members note the contents of this update report on Digital Connectivity in East Devon.

### Reason for recommendation:

To ensure members remain informed about current and planned improvements to digital connectivity in East Devon.

**Officer:** Geri Panteva, Senior Economic Development Officer, [gpanteva@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:gpanteva@eastdevon.gov.uk) , 01395 571750

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets

- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk

**Links to background information:**

[CDS East Devon Local Authority Brief issued 27-03-18](#)

[CDS East Devon Local Authority Brief issued 23-12-20](#)

**Link to [Statement of Intent](#)**

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better Homes and Communities for all
- Greener East Devon
- A resilient Economy
- Services that matter

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## Report in full

### 1. Background and Context

1.1 We are emerging from a period of unprecedented economic change. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every aspect of our economy and society. It has challenged established working models and practices. Prompted by periods of national restrictions, working from home has become a new norm, and it is expected to have long-lasting impact on how businesses approach their operational models going forward.

1.2 These changes highlight further the importance of a reliable and fast digital and broadband infrastructure and associated connectivity.

1.3 Set in a predominantly rural environment, East Devon has its challenges in delivering such infrastructure, but at the same time it is seeing one of the most significant private investments in digital infrastructure delivered by Jurassic Fibre and is benefitting from the largest public funded super-fast broadband programme in the country – [Connecting Devon and Somerset](#) (CDS).

### 2. Government Policy

2.1 Building Digital UK (BDUK), part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) is responsible for ensuring that every UK home and business can access fast and reliable digital connectivity.

2.2 The National policy of superfast connectivity which delivers speeds of 30 Mbps is now shifting towards gigabit capability of 1000Mbps. The Government has set itself a [target](#) of a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage for the UK by 2025.

DCMS have embarked on a [Full Fibre Broadband Strategy](#), to overbuild the Superfast capability already deployed. This strategy is required to ensure that Broadband infrastructure can support the ever increasing bandwidth demand from users.

2.3 The Government is investing £5 billion to ensure that everyone will have the same access to gigabit-capable broadband, launching a new [Project Gigabit programme](#) and subsidising roll-out of gigabit-capable broadband in the most difficult to reach 20% of UK. This is to be a central government procured programme to deliver Full fibre to the final 20% of properties.

2.4 In March 2021 the Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) published an [open call for evidence](#) on improving broadband for “Very Hard to Reach Premises” (VHTRPs) in the UK.

2.5 Feedback pointed to an increasing need for Government and wider public sector investment in digital connectivity in rural areas and that the VHTRAs are at risk of being left behind without it. Gigabit solutions are needed to remove the digital divide and support the levelling up agenda.

2.6 A mix of large contractual delivery, in parallel with support for community solutions through voucher schemes, is needed to tackle the challenges of delivering broadband to the most rural communities.

### **3. Public funded CDS programme background and update**

3.1 The Government launched their strategy ‘[Britain’s Superfast Broadband Future](#)’ at the end of 2010, outlining their ambition to dramatically increase superfast broadband access across the UK. The strategy, managed by the Government’s Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) included considerable funding to help local authorities deliver broadband into areas that were not covered under a declared commercial programme.

3.2 The Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) programme was set up in 2013 under the Government’s Superfast Broadband Programme to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the commercial market has failed to invest. Whilst the ambition for the programme was to achieve close to 100% superfast coverage, it was acknowledged and expected that there would be a small percentage of premises across the CDS area which would not be covered by commercial plans or the main phases of the CDS programme.

3.3 The first phase of the superfast broadband programme was delivered by BT between January 2013 and March 2017. The majority of the Phase 1 delivery was achieved through fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) technology, with a small number of harder to reach homes and businesses benefitting from fibre to the premises (FTTP).

3.4 The CDS programme has tracked Superfast coverage since its inception in 2013. Commercially, BT as the only significant operator at that time, delivered to 31,200 of the 72,500 premises in East Devon district. This is a percentage of 43.5%, whereas the national average of Superfast delivered commercially at that time was 67%. This was the base position of the BDUK programme and it set a target to increase coverage from 67% to 90% by 2015. CDS placed a contract with BT Group to deliver superfast broadband to an additional 30,000 premises and this was rolled out incrementally across the period and completed in early 2017. This achievement doubled the percentage of East Devon premises covered to 85%.

3.5 In 2014 the Government announced a superfast broadband extension programme, providing funding on a matched funded basis with the aim of achieving 95% superfast coverage nationally by the end of 2017.

3.6 The CDS Phase 2 procurement signed off six FTTP contracts. The East Devon contract was awarded to Gigaclear. Due to poor performance these contracts were cancelled by CDS.

3.7 In 2020 CDS commenced a procurement process that led to the appointment of Airband by year end. The Open Market Review process for this resulted in the superfast coverage in East Devon being identified at 88.5%, an increase of 3.5% due to commercial build activity. On completion of the CDS contract, which will deliver Gigabit capable services, the superfast delivery in East Devon is estimated to reach over 97%.

3.8 As mentioned in section 2.3 the Government has announced a £5bn investment plan to deliver nationwide gigabit coverage by 2025. The first tranche of this has been set aside within this Parliament, and Government are running a series of central procurements to roll out gigabit solutions. The new CDS contracts will support this objective. CDS is currently in the third tranche of areas to go forward under Project Gigabit and is in discussion with Government to prepare for this and to make a case to go more quickly. Market appetite and capacity are clear constraints on moving this forward, nationally and locally, and several of the areas announced earlier by Government have moved back in the planned sequencing. Given that CDS is now delivering full fibre technologies under all its live contracts, conversations are also underway with Government about adding to these as part of Project Gigabit as a faster way to extend gigabit capable networks in Devon and Somerset.

3.9 The CDS Team to manage these contracts is headed by Keri Denton, Service Lead for Devon County Council (DCC) Economy as Programme Director. Its personnel are drawn from DCC and Somerset County Council (SCC), and they have Technical Assurance and Contract Management support from two private companies, re-procured through an open tender recently.

3.10 The programme governance is based on a collaborative approach led by the CDS Programme Board who meet quarterly ensuring that the programme is delivered in accordance with the [Local Broadband Plan](#). The board includes cabinet members and chief executives from the Devon and Somerset Councils, CDS officers, representatives from the other authorities and central government's BDUK team.

3.11 Airband is now contracted to deliver full fibre broadband to homes and businesses in earmarked areas of Devon and Somerset and require the construction of an estimated 2,419 miles of fibre network.

- In East Devon 6,086 homes/businesses will receive full fibre connection by Airband under the new contract. At this stage it is too soon to say which premises will be connected
- Delivery will be in phases between 2021 and 2024 with anticipated completion by September 2024
- Construction of first link for the new network in Devon due to start in September 2021
- 92 East Devon premises will get full fibre by Openreach under the CDS Fibre Extension Programme

3.12 Airband have put together a programme of surveys in East Devon during Summer 2021 as a first step towards building new networks. Surveying has started in the East Devon areas of:

- Budleigh Salterton to Ottery St Mary
- Sidmouth, Gittisham, Colyton
- Axminster

3.13 During the period January to April 2021 Airband secured sub-contractors, established governance processes, communication plans, quality plans, business systems and reporting structure to ensure the programme keeps to the agreed delivery plan. It also undertook an open market review to confirm earmarked areas still require public subsidy and establish the geography of the new networks to be established.

3.14 Airband are under contract with CDS to provide FTTP to selected premises (by CDS) who have poor broadband connectivity, but Airband do not choose these premises and there is no obligation from those selected premises to connect to the network. These premises are classed as “In Contract” with CDS.

3.15 Many other premises along the fibre route and within close proximity may also be able to access the network once completed and subject to survey. These premises are classed as “Out of Contract” and in most cases will be able to connect to the fibre network as well.

3.16 The order by which work starts in each individual area is determined by the most economical and effective way in which the programme can be delivered. Wherever possible, current infrastructure within the area will be used to minimise disruption and inconvenience. Airband has created 60 individual community projects for these contracts which will form the basis for communication with parishes as the build progresses.

3.17 Airband have recently updated their [website](#) to include a list of the community areas covered by the new contracts and anticipated completion date. Airband is developing an online premise level checker for communities covered by all CDS contracts, new and pre-existing, which is expected to be published later this autumn. Table 1.1 below shows forecast completion date for areas within East Devon under the new contract.

Cluster Number	Cluster Name	Forecast Completion Date
13	Axminster	Q1 2022
10	Budleigh Salterton to Ottery St Mary	Q2 2022
11	Sidmouth, Gittisham, Colyton	Q3 2022
14	Rousdon to East Lyme	Q3 2022
12	Wilmington	Q3 2023
9	Stockland	Q3 2023
5	M5 to Uptontery	Q1 2024
8	M5 to Payhembury	Q2 2024

Table 1.1 Timetable of anticipated completion dates for Airband’s contract in East Devon

3.17 Those areas and properties that are not covered under the current CDS project are encouraged by Airband’s Community Engagement Team to consider using the [BDUK Gigabit Voucher scheme](#) and submit a “[Suggest a Project](#)” to a Demand Led Project team for consideration. There is ongoing communication with the project managers and teams to discuss extending fibre routes to encompass other properties just outside the project area.

3.18 In June 2021 Airband’s community engagement programme in East Devon included a number of Parish Council meetings covering East Budleigh, Aylesbeare and Membury.

Parish Council meetings booked for late Summer 2021 include Newton Poppleford, Axmouth, Gittisham, Colyton and Beer.

They have 845 registers of interests to connect to fibre throughout the project plan so far.

Community engagement on wayleave issues is proving effective in reducing delay and roll out of project clusters.

There is lots of engagement and interest via email and phone calls from residents within East Devon. The community engagement team were in attendance at the Devon County Show in

early July 2021 and received high number of enquiries and questions from East Devon residents.

3.19 All Parish Councils have or will be shortly contacted to arrange a meeting and given an overview and formal presentation of the CDS project within their area from the community engagement team. Monthly newsletters go out to all parishes with regular updates on the CDS/Airband project within that area.

#### **4. Private investment in broadband infrastructure - Jurassic Fibre update**

4.1 Completely separate to the publicly subsidised CDS programme, East Devon is benefitting from an entirely private sector investment which is further developing our district's fibre broadband infrastructure and bringing additional connectivity options to thousands of local residents and businesses.

4.2 Founded in 2018, [Jurassic Fibre](#) was created to address the digital inequality experienced by communities in the South West. The Exeter and East Devon-based company is utilising a £250m investment from Fern Trading, advised by Octopus Energy, to build its own ultrafast fibre broadband network across Devon, Somerset and Dorset. Its goal is to provide full fibre connectivity to over 350,000 properties over the coming years.

4.3 Jurassic Fibre is continuing to deploy at pace across East Devon. Service is now live in Exmouth and Honiton and the network is being expanded along the southern coast towards the Dorset border. The company has [announced](#) their plans for coverage in Sidmouth and the surrounding villages of Sidbury, Weston, Salcombe Regis and Branscombe.

4.4 Their network now covers over 50k residential and commercial premises across Devon, Dorset and Somerset and are connecting around 10k premises per month at present.

4.5 They have established an 'on demand' programme which is identifying areas close by to their network which can be picked up very quickly. Examples include Aylesbeare which was built in under 6 months, and Gittisham is expected to launch by the autumn.

Jurassic Fibre is registered for the DCMS Voucher Programme, however to date the company have found that they can provide superfast broadband coverage on a commercial basis without the need for vouchers in areas expected to use them.

Their on-demand programme is progressing well and steering the network at design stage into areas where they see demand i.e. by people registering their interest via their website.

4.6 They are currently working with Exeter College to design a programme addressing current skill shortages within the digital connectivity industry. They are discussing proposals for apprenticeships starting in the autumn term, with summer boot camps for skills building and selection. A significant recruitment demand in their Sales and Construction teams is driving this opportunity. Skills areas will focus on:

- Civil engineering
- Construction
- Fibre Networks
- Planning
- Sales and Marketing
- IT and Technology
- Support

Work experience will be provided with both Jurassic Fibre and their subcontractors.

4.7 Jurassic Fibre offer a range of residential and business packages, starting at £25 per month for the basic package of 30Mbps to to an enterprise-grade package providing 10Gbps. All packages are flexible 1-month contracts which allow customers to increase and decrease

their speed / package as they need. They have installed their first 10gb Business Link to Winslade Park in March 2021 (details in the case study in Section 5).

## **5. Winslade Park case study**

5.1 Jurassic Fibre has installed its first 10Gbps connection at Winslade Park in Clyst St. Mary. Winslade Park is a £80 million private investment in a lifestyle-led development offering new ways of working and living combining commercial, residential, wellbeing and entertainment opportunities. It is the largest development of its kind in the South West.

5.2 The business park, which currently hosts around 2,500 workers, was connected to Jurassic Fibre's cutting-edge network in March 2021.

5.3 With a 10Gbps connection from Jurassic Fibre, businesses will benefit from faster and more reliable connectivity, with access to a local customer support team based in Exeter.

5.4 Jurassic Fibre has future-proofed the network of the site to allow new buildings to be installed in line with expansion plans.

5.5 The ultrafast service will support the customers of Winslade Park in improving efficiency and productivity, not just through faster and more reliable speeds, but through enhanced security and customer service.

5.6 The connection will cover the whole estate to encourage use of the grounds for outdoor meetings and personal working.

The residential homes on the estate will also benefit from this ultra-fast connectivity, facilitating those who want to efficiently work from home.

## **6. Starlink satellite internet service case study**

6.1 East Devon covers predominantly rural areas and businesses in remote locations are commonly experience unreliable or poor digital connections. The inconsistency of broadband and mobile internet coverage is a key barrier for their productivity and growth, as highlighted in the [South West Rural Productivity Commission: Key Findings and Recommendations: Key Findings and Recommendations 2017](#).

6.2 This case study is an example of a technological solution in a rural area where broadband connectivity is unavailable.

6.3 KOR Communications, based in Broadclyst, took part in trial of [Starlink satellite internet service](#) to deliver faster broadband speeds to their office.

6.4 This case study examines their experience with the service as another opportunity to access fast broadband in a rural environment for the business community in East Devon.

6.5 As a business based in a rural area, KOR Communications have been struggling with a poor, copper-wire broadband connection for the last few years. It was expected that Openreach would provide a FTTP connection to their office by October 2021 as part of the roll out of the public network in the area, but at the end of 2020 they announced that this stretch of the operation was now cancelled due to insufficient funds to complete the project. The solution they offered to this business was a leased line for £325 + VAT a month.

6.6 Like most companies, their staff have been working from home during the pandemic and due to poor broadband, the team has struggled to access their server using a VPN connection which has affected their productivity.

6.7 Not wanting to commit to the leased line, and with no FTTP installation on the horizon, KOR decided to explore the potential of Elon Musk's Starlink service which was launched in the UK in early 2021. This is a high speed broadband service delivered via satellites orbiting the Earth and received by a satellite dish.

6.8 Companies can sign up for the service via the Starlink website and it requires a purchase of a satellite dish at a cost of just under £500 shipped from California. An app helps users install the equipment. Once in place and operational, the app allows users to run speed tests and monitor usage and dropouts.

6.9 Based on KOR's experience, dropouts are minimal and the download speeds are usually around 80 to 120Mb. Starlink has announced speeds will double by Summer 2021.

6.10 The monthly service fee is £89, which is comparable to an FTTP connection of a similar speed where it's available. There is no contract and subscribers can cancel the service at any time.

6.11 According to KOR Communications experience, this service is an ideal solution for companies or homes which require a high speed broadband connection but will not receive an FTTP connection in the near future.

## **7. Mobile connectivity**

7.1 Investment in mobile phone infrastructure comes predominantly from the private sector as much more areas are commercially viable compared to broadband investment.

As more people access Internet via their mobile phones, access to sufficient mobile internet is today a key factor in the development of the local economy.

7.2 The majority of improvements to mobile phone connectivity (voice and data) in Devon is expected to be delivered by commercial providers. Devon County Council are exploring the range of potential options for using public subsidy to improve mobile phone coverage across the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP) area.

7.3 The [Connecting Devon and Somerset Mobile Boost Scheme](#) has been designed to help small businesses and households who currently have poor indoor mobile coverage. The programme aims to upgrade indoor 4G coverage within businesses and homes in order to improve connectivity and the ability to make voice calls. The programme will focus on small business connections and will target those premises which have no adequate 4G indoor coverage from any operator or only one operator.

7.4 The programme allows businesses and households to apply for a voucher of up to £1200 towards the cost of one of a number of mobile signal booster options from a registered scheme supplier. The value of the voucher will be dependent on the type of technology most suitable for the premises in question. Businesses and residents will be required to make a contribution which, depending on the option chosen, will range from £200 for installation to a monthly fee for a SIM card (averaging circa £30 per month).

## **8. Importance of digital connectivity and opportunities for EDDC to support it**

8.1 Reliable and fast broadband connectivity is vital for enabling economic growth, supporting business performance and our communities.

8.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has further underlined the vital importance of good digital connectivity to economic and social well-being of rural areas, especially where lower average

wages and poor social mobility are already observed. Communities, households and business without access to sufficient broadband are clearly disadvantaged.

8.3 Delivery of gigabit connectivity is essential in supporting our economic recovery plan, and along with skills shortages, is a key issue constraining businesses from being able to bounce back, support young people in their learning, and deliver on our low carbon ambitions.

8.4 Fast, reliable digital connectivity is an essential means of breaking down the barriers of isolation, strengthening community resilience and improving the lives of people in these communities. Digital connectivity has the potential to alleviate social isolation especially in rural areas.

8.5 With public service delivery being digital by default and the impact of the Covid pandemic where work, school and everyday essential were predominantly accessed digitally, local authorities need to play their role in making sure that no one is left behind because of inability to afford access broadband/digital connectivity.

8.6 During the third period of national restrictions in January 2021 a [UK-wide study conducted by the Citizens Advice](#) determined that more than one in six people are struggling to afford broadband. Not having access or not being able to afford access to broadband is a significant barrier for many households.

8.7 EDDC's Anti-Poverty Strategy identifies that digital exclusion is one of the issues impacting on residents in poverty in East Devon. People on low incomes are less likely to be able to afford internet access. Some cases seen by the Council's Financial Resilience Team have identified that Social Housing is being built without landlines connected and tenants are unable to afford the connection charge (standard connection charge is normally £140). This is a significant amount for low income households who will also have other upfront costs such as: carpets, white goods, etc. As a result tenants are having to rely on mobile contracts or pay as you go top up as they cannot access broadband deals. Some of this group are unable to pass credit checks for the cheaper mobile contracts and are therefore unable to access the cheaper tariffs available. A further number cannot afford to top up mobiles so are unable to access the support required by services who need them to engage either online or over the phone. This also makes it difficult or impossible to apply for Universal Credit and other benefits, access cheaper utility deals, apply for jobs, access public services or sign up for improving skills courses making it harder to break the poverty cycle.

8.8 As highlighted by Economic Development in their presentation to the Poverty panel 'Update on the labour market' on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021, there are clearly many highly skilled jobs that now include the ability to work from home and although that can remove the travel barrier, without good access to broadband people on low incomes will still potentially be excluded from accessing those jobs.

8.9 Promoting an inclusive economy, by raising skills and improving access to a range of employment opportunities for people on low incomes is one of the objectives of EDDC's Anti-Poverty Strategy. Tackling the digital divide through investment in both digital infrastructure and skills is one of the instruments to achieve this objective.

8.10 East Devon District Council can support further digital connectivity improvements in the district by liaising with delivery partners and operators in the area and supporting the community engagement of their programmes.

8.11 While we have limited scope to influence delivery, we can work collaborative with companies and programmes providing public and private investment in broadband and digital connectivity to support their efforts to cover most of East Devon's area.

8.12 The Growth, Development and Prosperity Service has been commissioning business support programmes for East Devon businesses through the last few years aimed at enhancing productivity, business adaptation and resilience. A significant part of the training programmes addressed digital skills, capabilities and technological solutions ensuring that businesses and organisations in East Devon can take advantage of the rollout of superfast broadband and stimulating demand for the broadband coverage.

8.13 The Council can also consider adopting an approach where broadband infrastructure and planning conditions ensure that new homes have access to broadband from day one recognising superfast broadband as the fifth utility.

8.14 In summary, East Devon is seeing good progress in both public and private programmes of investment in digital connectivity. While EDDC's scope to influence these programmes is limited, we can make best use of our policy frameworks and partnerships to ensure businesses and communities within East Devon are able to prosper within a world-class digital infrastructure.

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**Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implications connected to the recommendation of this report.

**Legal implications:**

The report does not raise any legal implications requiring comment.

## Proposal form for items for consideration by Overview Committee



Submitted by: Cllr Paul Millar

Date submitted: 30/09/2021

Item for Consideration: CIL/S106 Participatory Budgeting Policy

Expected outcome (i.e. new policy, new action, new partnership, improve the performance of other public bodies or of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas):

New CIL/S106 policy, new partnership with Town/Parish Councils

Priority for matter to be considered (please tick):

High (up to 3 months)	X
Medium (3 to 6 months)	
Low (over 9 months)	

Basis on which priority has been set:

The suggested item should be included in future programme(s) because: (please tick as appropriate)

a) It is a district level function over which the district has some control	X
b) It is a new policy area or service area of activity to be developed and introduced	
c) It is a policy area which has been required for some time and is due for development	
d) It is a major proposal for change	X
e) It is an issue raised via complaints received	X
f) It is an area of public concern	X
g) It would be of benefit to residents of the district	X

Which of the Council's objectives does the issue address?:

All

Is there a deadline for the Council to make a decision? (If so, when and why?): No, but as soon as possible.

Members are requested to provide information on the following:-

What do you wish to achieve from the review?:

Revised CIL/S106 decision-making process

Are the desired outcomes likely to be achievable?:

Yes

Will it change/increase efficiency and cost effectiveness?:

Potentially, but more relevant is democracy and transparency.

**Additional information** – an explanatory sentence or paragraph to be provided below to support each box which has been ticked:

**It is a district level function over which the district has some control**

"East Devon District Council is the organisation that is legally accountable for Section 106 monies on play, open spaces and sports being spent, and being spent correctly."

'Participatory Budgeting' Guide - <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/community-engagement/participatory-budgeting/guide-for-town-and-parish-councils/how-can-we-access-play-open-space-and-sports-money/#article-content>

**It is a major proposal for change**

I am proposing that East Devon District Council and Ward Members assume greater control of arranging consultations and deciding which play parks, and projects, ought to go out to consultation.

Currently decisions are devolved to Town and Parish Councils, many if not all of which meet behind closed doors when designing, debating and deciding projects for allocations of CIL/S106 spend. Only EDDC officers are able to attend these meetings.

Ward Members at EDDC, the authority legally accountable for S106 monies, have very little if no say unless they are on the town/parish council and the relevant 'Steering Group'. This is neither transparent nor democratic.

I am proposing that there still be a role for representatives of Town/Parish Councils and Councillors in steering groups but that these be partnership groups between the District and Town/Parish Councils.

**It is an area raised via complaints received / it is an area of public concern**

While I was Portfolio Holder for Democracy & Transparency, a local resident got in touch with me to complain about the process with Exmouth Town Council, with meetings held behind closed doors and an attempt made by one Town/Parish Councillor to remove a project.

Clearly one of the issues here was the meeting being held privately, but it did lead me to the 'Guide to Town and Parishes' which states that they are not aware of any other local authority in the country that allows the towns/parish councils to make the decisions on how this funding is spent.

The fact that East Devon District Council is the only Council in the country pursuing this policy is a potential concern. Therefore I wish for it to be reviewed, with more of an emphasis on Ward Member involvements in each town/parish, and meetings in public.

CIL/S106 is a very important area for residents as the cuts to local government means many open spaces are rife for investment. Therefore, it is crucial to my mind that decision-making even prior to public

consultation is taken in meetings which are open to the public (so that the exclusion of unsuitable projects is transparently decided).

### **It would benefit the residents of the District**

Transparency leads to better decision-making. For residents interested in the process which gets us to consultations, public meetings would be helpful to them, but this may be too much of a burden on Democratic Services.

However, a review of the processes would no doubt be a potentially good thing, even if it results in just an increased role for EDDC Ward Members in closed 'Steering Group' meetings (which should in my view be a partnership between EDDC and Town/Parish Councils before decisions / public votes are undertaken).

Here is an example of a review undertaken by another authority (although I am not suggesting we set up a task group to do this - however, a report to the next Overview Committee would be welcome - <https://democracy.brent.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=21616>

Please can you return the completed form to Democratic Services via email to [democraticservices@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eastdevon.gov.uk).

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### MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS

It is clearly open for the Committee to consider the policy approach to the spending of CIL / S106 receipts and whether there may wish to be a review / revised policy approach.

Date: 4 October 2021

# Proposal form for items for consideration by Overview Committee



Submitted by: Cllr Paul Millar

Date submitted: 30/09/2021

Item for Consideration: Review of Members Allowances

Expected outcome (i.e. new policy, new action, new partnership, improve the performance of other public bodies or of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas):

Recommendation to Cabinet onto whether an Independent Remuneration Panel ought to be called.

Priority for matter to be considered (please tick):

High (up to 3 months)	X
Medium (3 to 6 months)	
Low (over 9 months)	

Basis on which priority has been set:

The suggested item should be included in future programme(s) because: (please tick as appropriate)

a) It is a district level function over which the district has some control	X
b) It is a new policy area or service area of activity to be developed and introduced	
c) It is a policy area which has been required for some time and is due for development	X
d) It is a major proposal for change	X
e) It is an issue raised via complaints received	
f) It is an area of public concern	
g) It would be of benefit to residents of the district	X

Which of the Council's objectives does the issue address?:

Outstanding Council and Council Services

Is there a deadline for the Council to make a decision? (If so, when and why?): Any review would need to be started soon to happen before the next round of elections.

Members are requested to provide information on the following:-

What do you wish to achieve from the review?:

A review of Members' Allowances

Are the desired outcomes likely to be achievable?:

Yes

Will it change/increase efficiency and cost effectiveness?:

While it would lead to an annual cost increase, arguably it would actually be cost-effective in leading to wiser decision-making by, and a better calibre and age diversity of, Councillors, able to better balance work with their public role.

**Additional information** – an explanatory sentence or paragraph to be provided below to support each box which has been ticked:

**It is a district level function over which the district has some control**

East Devon District Councillors are paid from East Devon District Council's budget.

**It is a policy area which has been required for some time and is due for development**

East Devon District Council's allowances are among the lowest in Devon. The vast majority of Councils regularly review their allowance scheme. There are regular increases in the allowances of County Councillors and Exeter City Councillors for example. Ours has been frozen for ten years. In addition, the new administration has created a number of new roles, and important Committees, since the new pandemic - work which is unfairly unremunerated, such as Assistant Portfolio Holders (who are remunerated at every Council they exist at other than EDDC), and the LED Monitoring Forum which meets regularly and is performing an extremely important role. The pandemic has transformed the work in some areas.

**It is a major proposal for change**

Depending on the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel, it could if accepted lead to an ongoing increased financial cost to the Council. It could also increase the number, diversity and calibre of candidates who run in elections, which would lead to a reduction in costs over time. Three Councillors were elected unopposed last time.

**It would benefit the residents of the District**

Councillors who are more reflective in age and occupation within their community - who are better able to balance work and Council life - will be able to be more active in, and more healthily able to make, wiser decisions for the residents of the District. Currently many of the younger Councillors on low pay struggle to balance things. Members of the public who know how hard the younger Councillors work would, from conversations I've had, support a modest rise. Ultimately, whatever an Independent Remuneration Panel decides, Council has the choice to set the level beneath what has been recommended.

Please can you return the completed form to Democratic Services via email to [democraticservices@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eastdevon.gov.uk).

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MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS

No comment required.

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

# Proposal form for items for consideration by Overview Committee



Submitted by: Cllr Paul Millar

Date submitted: 30/09/2021

Item for Consideration: Public Register of Senior Officer Interests

Expected outcome (i.e. new policy, new action, new partnership, improve the performance of other public bodies or of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas):

New policy, increase the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objective of greater democracy and transparency.

Priority for matter to be considered (please tick):

High (up to 3 months)	X
Medium (3 to 6 months)	
Low (over 9 months)	

Basis on which priority has been set:

The suggested item should be included in future programme(s) because: (please tick as appropriate)

a) It is a district level function over which the district has some control	X
b) It is a new policy area or service area of activity to be developed and introduced	
c) It is a policy area which has been required for some time and is due for development	
d) It is a major proposal for change	X
e) It is an issue raised via complaints received	
f) It is an area of public concern	X
g) It would be of benefit to residents of the district	X

Which of the Council's objectives does the issue address?:

Outstanding Council and Council Services

Is there a deadline for the Council to make a decision? (If so, when and why?): No, but as soon as possible would further increase public and Councillor confidence in officers that serve the Council.

Members are requested to provide information on the following:-

What do you wish to achieve from the review?:

A public register of senior officer interests

Are the desired outcomes likely to be achievable?:

Yes

Will it change/increase efficiency and cost effectiveness?:

These are not relevant - it would be a benefit to the organisation's corporate governance and transparency.

**Additional information** – an explanatory sentence or paragraph to be provided below to support each box which has been ticked:

**It is a district level function over which the district has some control**

East Devon District Council officers are accountable to the Council as a whole, including Councillors and residents of the District.

**It is a major proposal for change**

It is not for me to comment on whether this new page on the website would signify a major proposal for change. It would increase work for Democratic Services in terms of inputting adapted versions of forms which are already onto the Council website for senior officers. Many Councils published a Register for Senior Officer Interests, e.g. <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/4365/Register-of-Senior-Officers-Interests>

**It is an area of public concern**

At the last Standards Working Group meeting, Cllr Ingham suggested that officers had attended corporate events and potentially accepted gifts and hospitality. I have also been told of a senior officer attending cricket matches with a senior Councillor of the former administration, which if true ought to be prevented in future to avoid any suggestion of a conflict of interest. In my view, this is something that would concern a reasonable member of the public, and a process for declaring such interests and have these available would be very beneficial. At Councils, senior officers have a large amount of delegated authority to take major decisions affecting the District - this includes spending up to £20 million from the Commercial Investment Fund.

**It would benefit the residents of the District**

It may lead to reassurance among some members of the public who prior to my election had a very negative view of certain senior officers. This affected the way I viewed officers.

Please can you return the completed form to Democratic Services via email to [democraticservices@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eastdevon.gov.uk).

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**MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS**

It is a legal requirement for member's Register of Interests to be made publicly available. There is no such obligation in relation to employees of any level. All officers complete a register of interest that it is held by the Council. Consideration will need to be given to what level of officer the disclosure would affect and in

that regard the legal position and human rights / data protection considerations. If there was a recommendation to require this in relation to current officers, as opposed to in the future, it has the potential to affect the terms and conditions of employment and therefore it will need to involve discussion with the Union. Members should consider that this is appropriately a matter for the Standards Committee and / or Personnel Committee to be involved in given the foregoing.

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021