

## Agenda for Cabinet Wednesday, 2nd November, 2022, 6.00 pm

### Members of Cabinet

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

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

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Monday, 24 October 2022

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- 1 Public speaking  
Information on [public speaking is available online](#)
- 2 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 4 - 12)
- 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  
  
There are 2 late reports;  
agenda item 16 - Household Support Fund (HSF) 3 and Discretionary Fund  
agenda item 17 - Homes for Ukraine transition policy
- 6 Confidential/exempt item(s)  
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There are 3 items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.
- 7 Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 6 October 2022 (Pages 13 - 18)
- 8 Minutes of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 10 October 2022 (Pages 19 - 24)
- 9 Minutes of Housing Review Board held on 11 October 2022 (Pages 25 - 33)
- 10 Minutes of the Poverty Working Panel held on 17 October 2022 (Pages 34 - 37)

- 11 Minutes of LED Monitoring Forum held on 18 October 2022 (Pages 38 - 44)
- 12 Minutes of the Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 19 October 2022 (Pages 45 - 49)

### **Matters for Key Decision**

- 13 Devon Carbon Plan (Pages 50 - 59)

### **Matters for Decision**

- 14 **Rural England Prosperity Fund** (Pages 60 - 73)
- 15 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023-24** (Pages 74 - 85)
- 16 **Household Support Fund (HSF) 3 and Discretionary Fund** (Pages 86 - 96)
- 17 **Homes for Ukraine transition policy** (Pages 97 - 99)
- 18 **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 Key Decision**

- 19 Towards Zero Carbon Development in the West End (Pages 100 - 112)

### **Part B Matters for Decision**

- 20 Devon & Exeter Foundation NHS Trust request to lease office space in Exmouth Town Hall (Pages 113 - 117)
- 21 LED request for additional support 2022/23 (Pages 118 - 123)

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[Decision making and equalities](#)

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**EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL****Minutes of the consultative meeting of Cabinet held at Online via the Zoom app. on 5 October 2022****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 9.35 pm

**64 Public speaking**

There were no public speakers.

**65 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the consultative meeting of Cabinet held on 7 September 2022 were agreed with the understanding that Minute 50 - Former Councillor and Honorary Alderman J. Humphreys, be revised to a full/verbatim minute.

Councillor Jess Bailey asked that Minute 50 explain the point that the Chief Executive's report did not recommend an investigation as the meeting on 20 April 2022 was virtual and therefore advisory only.

**66 Declarations of interest**

Min 76. Axe Valley Project Levelling Up Fund application - Next Steps.  
Councillor Jack Rowland, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Resident and ward member for Seaton.

Min 78. Seaton Jurassic.  
Councillor Jack Rowland, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Resident and ward member for Seaton.

Min 78. Seaton Jurassic.  
Councillor Marcus Hartnell, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Has a business in Seaton.

**67 Matters of urgency**

The Chair announced that from 10 November 2022 Councillor Dan Ledger would be the Portfolio Holder Strategic Planning.

The Chair agreed for Councillor Denise Bickley to read a statement to support an environmental motion she wished to submit.

'Our natural environment has to be at the forefront of public policy, to enable humans and our planet to thrive. Under the EU, environmental protection legislation was well thought-out and far-reaching, with 3 priority areas for action:

- To protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital
- To turn the Union in to a resource-efficient, green, and competitive low-carbon economy
- To safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing.

All very sensible, it would seem.

In the UK we have a 25 Year Environment Plan, which was intended to deliver a 'Green Brexit'. This is a legally binding document, allegedly. It is again all very sensible, and was well received.

In 2018, a document still available on the Government's website pledges that 'A new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure environmental protections will not be weakened as we leave the EU.'

The then Environment Secretary Michael Gove developed the idea for the Environment Land Management Schemes (ELMS) that we have been counting on and planning towards. This encourages farmers to create space for vulnerable species as well as absorbing carbon to help the country reach its net zero targets. Pilot schemes have been hugely successful.

Fast forward to today – we have Jacob Rees-Mogg as Business Secretary, intent on cutting through 'red-tape' with his Brexit Freedoms Bill. This will result in all EU-derived laws being removed at the end of 2023 including 570 environmental regulations. No plans have been set out to retain or amend any of the regulations.

The ELMS plans also look like being scrapped and DEFRA are considering paying landowners a yearly set sum for each acre of land they own – a catastrophic mistake.

This is the biggest opportunity to fix our broken farming support system, to support nature, climate, and farmers who have invested so much already in improving their systems. Riverford farm for example, has invested money, time, and resources into this system, and it is working. They say 'This shift in agricultural land management could create a farming landscape that is part of the solution, not part of the problem, and in doing so enable farmers to become justifiably respected and appreciated not only as producers of great British food, but also as custodians of our countryside for future generations. They can't do this without a policy framework that supports this change.'

Michael Gove's policy clearly states that we are 30-40 years away from the eradication of soil fertility. We can see this on our own doorstep; ask Cllr Kemp, with the exploitation of areas that are grown for maize, to feed anaerobic digestors. These areas are seeing total topsoil plunder, dustbowl effect, and serious flooding. The Chancellor's recent 'Mini Budget' saw the launch of a new 'Growth Plan' confirming a new Planning and Infrastructure Bill which will 'reduce unnecessary burdens' to speed up the delivery of infrastructure. This includes 'the burden of environmental assessments and reforming habitats and species regulations.'

Any halt or stalling to the progress of positive environmental protection must be immediately cancelled. Every major environmental charity and experts in their field have publicly criticised this and demanded that these plans be urgently reviewed, and environmental protection is put back at the heart of public policy.'

East Devon District Council should strongly disagree with the current government's relaxing of environmental protection laws and adds our strong support to the requests from concerned groups and individuals that the environment, including protection of our biodiversity, marine and land ecosystems, farming and food security and our own health, is put at the heart of public policy.

It is requested that (under the urgent circumstances we find ourselves in):

1. EDDC's Leader, with the agreement of Cabinet, issues a public statement denouncing plans to
  - a) Remove any EU environmental protection laws and stating that we support every environmental directive from the EU being written firmly into UK law urgently.

- b) Discontinue the ELMS policy, stating that we fully support it and wish it to become enshrined in UK law and activated as soon as possible.
2. EDDC's Leader, with the agreement of Cabinet, writes to DEFRA to add our support to:
  - a) adopting the 570 pieces of EU-derived law which they have the power to retain and adopt into our law
  - b) continuing with the ELMS policy that we wholeheartedly wish to see enshrined in UK law and activated as soon as possible.
3. EDDC's Leader, with the agreement of Cabinet, contacts our MPs to strongly request they join us and back these sentiments and insist on proper debate and scrutiny to ensure that environment protection is at the heart of planning, growth and resource security, and reports back to Cabinet with their responses.

The Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment agreed with Cllr Bickley's proposal. In a statement he said;

'The Environment, Biodiversity, in fact the whole green agenda in the last few weeks seems to have been wrapped up in this new slogan from our new Prime minister as the Great Anti-growth Coalition. This council is run by a Coalition, the Democratic Alliance, a coalition of councillors that want to see East Devon thrive and economy grow! But not to the detriment of losing our wonderful countryside. I can assure you, none of us are anti-growth. In fact, just look at what we have achieved in the last 4 years, we have achieved house building at record levels to comply to the Government required quota of over 950 a year, we have started work on Cranbrook's long awaited town centre, shed blood sweat and tears on developing a new local plan, that will provide even more houses and employment, plus successes at the Science Park and employment sites at the West end. In fact, we are growing more than any other area in the South West.

This administration is also delivering on green issues too. Working with partners such as Clinton Devon on the Lower Otter or the Woodland Trust at Coombe Farm or the National Trust at Killerton new tree plantations and our award winning Clyst Valley Regional Park masterplan. We are also working on a project to provide the whole of Cranbrook with Green Energy. We are leading the way, with these fabulous green initiatives.

A lot of our new enterprises and businesses are in the green economy sector, the biggest growth area, which we support and nurture. Yes, we heavily support growth, but we put in the same amount of effort into protecting our environment, reducing our emissions, reducing our carbon footprint. Yes, you can be both green and support growth; we are already doing it here in East Devon.

I totally agree with the environmental lobby who are against the Government's proposals to turn its back on protecting this fragile landscape and diminishing biodiversity, we can grow our economy, build the housing, look after our landscape and hit our climate Change Target all at the same time.'

Cabinet unanimously supported a letter be sent to the appropriate people supporting this request which the Chief Executive would do under delegated authority.

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

There was one confidential item recorded at Minute 78 Seaton Jurassic.

69 **Minutes of Community Grant Panel held on 31 August 2022**

Members agreed to note the Minutes of Community Grant Panel held on 31 August 2022.

70 **Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2022**

Members agreed to note the Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2022.

71 **Financial Plan 2023 - 2033**

The Strategic Lead Finance presented the draft Financial Plan 2023 – 2033 for consideration. Details have been considered by the Council's Senior Management Team and the Budget Setting and Capital Allocations Panel which had helped shape the Plan now being presented to Members for recommendation to Council for adoption. He explained that the document was in a revised style to previous years with some new thinking over the approach going forward, the Plan comprised of two parts, the Medium Term Financial Plan Model and Financial Sustainability Model.

The Portfolio Holder Finance thanked Simon Davey and his team for the amount of work undertaken in getting to this position.

**RECOMMENDED to Council;**

1. To adopt the draft Financial Plan 2023 – 2033.
2. That as part of the Financial Plan a budget of £604,000 to be met from the Transformation Fund, to meet costs associated with the Financial Stability Model outlined in the report, Worksmart implications and the roll out of Microsoft Office 365.

**REASON:**

It was essential the Council considered its financial resources in advance, to allow time to make necessary amendments in its service provision to ensure balance budgets were maintained.

72 **Procurement Strategy 2022 - 2027**

The Strategic Lead Finance updated Members that the council use Devon Procurement Services for its Corporate Procurement advice and support. They provided guidance, documentation and templates for EDDC's own procurement processes and also supported directly with personnel appointed to a number of larger more complex procurement exercises.

The style and substance of the Procurement Strategy for consideration was very similar to DCC own recently adopted Strategy as it met national and local priorities and was well constructed. This had been tailored to EDDC's circumstances and fitted to its own objectives and Council Plan which were similar to both organisations. By aligning these strategies would help the Procurement Service support the council more effectively.

**RECOMMENDED that;**

Senior Officers adopt the attached Procurement Strategy 2022-2027.

**REASON:**

The Council should have an up to date Procurement Strategy in place.

## 73 **Cost of Living Crisis - EDDC Winter Pressures Plan**

The Strategic Lead Housing, Health & Environment presented his report which considered the cost of living crisis in the context of our Poverty Strategy and alongside EDDC's commitments to support vulnerable residents through what would be challenging financial times, with the cost of many essential items exceeding household incomes. A Winter Pressures Plan accompanied the report.

Discussions included the following;

- The need to get essential communications on available support out early
- The Action on Poverty grants need to drop the match funding requirement
- The importance of the Damp and Mould Policy to improve residents' homes and health
- The need to tackle the root causes of poverty
- Must target support to our most vulnerable residents
- Concerns of the possible increase of loan sharks directed at financially struggling residents
- The provision of Warm Places for residents to use to include the council's communities centres with other buildings being looked at for this purpose

The Portfolio Holder Finance thanked John Golding and his team for their fantastic work in getting this report to Cabinet.

### **RECOMMENDED that;**

Senior Officers approve

1. Adoption of the Winter Pressures Plan set out in the report and implement the actions designed to mitigate some of the factors impacting on vulnerable households and avoid them going into poverty.
2. Referral of the Plan to the Poverty Working Panel to oversee the implementation of the Plan.

### **REASON:**

To mitigate the worst effects of the increasing cost of living crisis and ensure that at risk households could access affordable food, housing, warmth and meet other basic needs.

## 74 **The Kilmington Neighbourhood Plan ('the Plan') to be formally 'made'**

The Kilmington Neighbourhood Plan had now successfully passed referendum and must be formally 'made' (adopted) by EDDC in order to form part of the development plan.

### **RECOMMENDED that;**

Senior Officers approve

1. That the Kilmington Neighbourhood Plan be 'made'.
2. Note that once made the Plan will carry full weight in the planning decision making process as part of the statutory development plan for this Neighbourhood Plan Area (the parish of Kilmington).
3. That the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and all involved in developing the Plan be congratulated on all their hard work.

### **REASON:**

The Plan received a majority 'yes' vote in the neighbourhood area referendum, as required by the Regulations, and there was no substantive reason not to make the Plan. In addition, to recognise the significant work over a number of years by Kilmington Parish Council and dedicated volunteers to prepare the Plan.

## 75 **Luppitt Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's Report**

The report provided feedback and set out proposed changes following the examination of the Luppitt Neighbourhood Plan. The independent examination of the Plan had now concluded and the final Examiner's report received. In accordance with the relevant legislation, the council must now consider its response to the Examiner's recommendations and also satisfy itself that the Plan meets the necessary 'basic conditions'.

### **RECOMMENDED that;**

Senior Officers approve

1. Endorsing the Examiner's recommendations on the Luppitt Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan).
2. A 'referendum version' of the Plan (incorporating the Examiner's modifications) proceeding to referendum and that a decision notice to this effect be published.
3. Noting the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be congratulated on their hard work.

### **REASON:**

The legislation required a decision notice to be produced at this stage in the process. The Plan was the product of significant local consultation and had been recommended to proceed to referendum by the Examiner subject to modifications which following consideration by Officers, who had liaised with the Neighbourhood Plan steering group, were considered acceptable.

## 76 **Axe Valley Project Levelling Up Fund application - Next Steps**

A Levelling Up Fund (LUF) application, consisting of a package of projects in the Axe Valley, was submitted in August. There was no fixed date for the announcement of successful bids; it was expected sometime during Autumn 2022.

### **RECOMMENDED that;**

Senior Officers approve

1. The allocation of £50,000 for project feasibility work that was approved by cabinet in November 2021 for the Cloakham Lawns project is re-allocated and used to acquire project management expertise to support the wider LUF projects in advance of the notification by Government regarding the outcome of the council's LUF funding bid.
2. That delegated authority is given to the Service Lead for Place, Assets and Commercialisation to procure the services of a project manager to advise on the next stages and delivery aspects of the LUF projects and to commence the procurement of other professional advisors that will be required for project delivery.
3. That delegated authority is given to the Service Lead for Place, Assets and Commercialisation to act upon the advice of the project manager in commencing procurement of external professional advisors and to commence progress with delivery without delay should the council be successful in the LUF bid.
4. That in the event that the council is unsuccessful with the LUF bid, a report will be submitted to cabinet setting out the options available for progressing with delivery or otherwise of the package of projects.

### **REASON:**

To enable the council to make progress with the next stages of delivery for the LUF projects in advance of the outcome of the LUF funding bid so that if successful, the council does not lose further time between the decision and the end of March next year in progressing with the project spend that is required as part of the funding agreement. This allows time for procurement processes to be progressed for the various professional advisors so that key appointments can be made in a timely manner. Should the LUF bid

be unsuccessful, the project team will be able to pause appointments to reduce the financial commitment of the council and allow time for members to consider how it wishes to move forward.

77 **Proposals to vary and discharge the Public Spaces Protection Orders 2023**

The existing Public Space Protection Orders were due for review as had reach three years in operation. Approval was sought to the proposals to vary and discharge three Public Spaces Protection Orders - Dog Control, Seashores & Promenades, and Control of Anti-Social Behaviour & the Consumption of Intoxicating Substances in Exmouth and Sidmouth.

**RECOMMENDED that;**

Senior Officers approve the variation of and to discharge the Public Spaces Protection Orders 2023 as required by the provisions within the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

**REASON:**

In order to clarify and simplify the current PSPO's and allow a targeted approach to dog control and anti-social behaviour within the district.

78 **Seaton Jurassic**

The Service Lead Place, Asset and Commercialisation updated Members on the work undertaken in 2021 and included recommendations to move the project forward.

**RECOMMENDED that;**

Senior Officers agree

1. Progressing the Heads of Terms with Seaton Tramway for the building but retaining the garden space.
2. That delegated authority be given to Service Lead – Place, Assets and Commercialisation in consultation with Strategic Lead – Finance, Strategic Lead – Governance and Licensing and Portfolio Holder for Economy & Assets, to finalise Heads of Terms and enter into all relevant documentation including legal documentation associated with the granting of a new lease and Licence to Alter for Seaton Jurassic, as well as the relevant Deeds of Variation with the Funders, agreements relating to the reinstatement and dilapidations with DWT and any Charity who wish to repurpose the exhibits they paid for as part of the original project.

**RECOMMENDED to Council that;**

3. A revenue budget of £30,000 to meet the costs of completing a lease and other associated agreements for Seaton Tramway to occupy the property is agreed.
4. A revenue budget of £50,000 to provide for the cost of the necessary removal of fittings and exhibits not required by a new operator is agreed.

**REASON:**

To progress a way forward to ensure occupation of the site.

## **Attendance List**

### **Present:**

#### **Portfolio Holders**

P Arnott	Leader
P Hayward	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Economy and Assets
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Coast, Country and Environment
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes and Communities
M Rixson	Portfolio Holder Climate Action and Emergency Response
J Rowland	Portfolio Holder Finance
J Loudoun	Portfolio Holder Council and Corporate Co-ordination
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Democracy, Transparency and Communications;
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Tourism, Sport, Leisure and Culture

### **Cabinet apologies:**

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

Councillor Mike Allen  
Councillor Megan Armstrong  
Councillor Jess Bailey  
Councillor Denise Bickley  
Councillor Fred Caygill  
Councillor Maddy Chapman  
Councillor Peter Faithfull  
Councillor Steve Gazzard  
Councillor Marcus Hartnell  
Councillor Ben Ingham  
Councillor Jamie Kemp  
Councillor Richard Lawrence  
Councillor Paul Millar  
Councillor Andrew Moulding  
Councillor Geoff Pratt  
Councillor Eleanor Rylance  
Councillor Philip Skinner  
Councillor Brenda Taylor  
Councillor Joe Whibley

#### **Also present:**

##### **Officers:**

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
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 (and Monitoring Officer)  
Alison Hayward, Project Manager Place & Prosperity  
Andrew Hopkins, Communications Consultant  
David Whelan, Anti-Social Behaviour & Community Safety Co-Ordinator  
Mark Williams, Chief Executive  
Sally Webster, Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Jayne Souter, Place & Prosperity Surveyor

Chair .....

Date: .....

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

**Scrutiny Committee 6 October 2022**

**Minute 34 Beach and river water quality**

1. For the District Council to liaise with the various local groups, Rivers Trusts, and the Environment Agency to help set up local volunteer group networks to carry out “Citizen Science monitoring” of our rivers and watercourses to provide the best possible data throughout the district.
2. For the District Council to liaise with landowners and farmers, the EA and Flood Resilience groups and other stakeholders to provide nature-based solutions.
3. To work with SWW on a strategy that will aid understanding and provide a clear direction of travel to reduce pollution and protect our beaches and clean our rivers.
4. For the District Council to request that South West Water provide real time data on their website.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held Online via the Zoom app on 6 October 2022**

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

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.59 pm

#### **27 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **28 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 were accepted.

#### **29 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **30 Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were no confidential / exempt items.

#### **32 Decisions made by Cabinet called in by Members for scrutiny in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules**

There were no decisions made by Cabinet called in for scrutiny.

#### **33 Planning for waste water, water supply and water quality**

The report by the Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management had been introduced at the previous meeting. The Service Lead provided a re-cap of the report which referred to Government policy and guidance and the role of the Council as Local Planning Authority in delivering the Government's objectives, as well as the role of South West Water. The report also referred to the work that had been commissioned on a water cycle study to inform production of the new Local Plan. The Service Lead noted that South West Water are consulted on planning applications and are good at responding. South West Water have yet to raise any substantive issues regarding development at Cranbrook.

In response to questions and concerns, the following points were made:

- South West Water does respond to planning applications, although there are no detailed explanations of their thinking or modelling.
- If the Planning Committee is minded to refuse a planning application due to concerns regarding waste water capacity, the decision must be based on evidence, obtained either from South West Water or from external consultants.
- The water cycle study will assist with decision making.

- Historic drainage systems which combine foul water and surface water drainage are contributing to the problem.
- Modern developments include sustainable drainage and attenuation systems to ensure surface water is stored on site until the storm event has passed.

The report was noted.

### 34 **Beach and river water quality**

A report on the Council's remit with regard to beach and river water quality, and private water supplies, had been circulated with the agenda papers. The Council has a duty to provide bathing water quality information to the public, specifically if short-term pollution is predicted as a result of the forecasting system or actually present, and (if appropriate) to provide information advising against bathing for a recommended number of days. Electronic signs erected by StreetScene at each site are automatically updated daily to display real-time water quality information. With regard to river water quality, the Environment Agency are primarily responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of fresh, surface and underground waters within East Devon.

Additional information, including proposals, had been submitted by Cllr Jung, Portfolio Holder for Coast, Country and Environment.

Questions and comments included the following points:

- It was noted that two of the eight bathing water sampling points were rated as 'Good' rather than 'Excellent'.
- The Council has a statutory duty to display bathing water quality information, although this only applies to the summer season, May to September.
- Concern was expressed that bathing water quality information should be available all year round due to the popularity of bathing regardless of the season.
- All year real-time data should be available on the South West Water website as currently information is only made available in response to a Freedom of Information request.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the information and proposals submitted by Cllr Jung would require officer assessment, with particular regard to resources within the Council and likely outcomes.

### **RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET**

1. For the District Council to liaise with the various local groups, Rivers Trusts, and the Environment Agency to help set up local volunteer group networks to carry out "Citizen Science monitoring" of our rivers and watercourses to provide the best possible data throughout the district.
2. For the District Council to liaise with landowners and farmers, the EA and Flood Resilience groups and other stakeholders to provide nature-based solutions.
3. To work with SWW on a strategy that will aid understanding and provide a clear direction of travel to reduce pollution and protect our beaches and clean our rivers.
4. For the District Council to request that South West Water provide real time data on their website.

### 35 **Portfolio Holder Annual Report - Economy and Assets**

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Assets, Cllr Paul Hayward, presented his annual report.

In response to questions and comments the following points were made:

- The biggest issues facing businesses include non-domestic business rates, lack of footfall, the working population changing to better paid employment and fear and worry on the part of customers due to the economic climate.
- Work on a streamlined version of the Council's asset register is underway which would enable land and building assets to be accessed on the website. A report on progress is due to be made at the meeting of the Asset Management Forum in November.
- The Economic Development and Planning Policy Teams work closely together with regard to developing strategic planning policy. Information would be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee on 7 October 2022 regarding economic development aspects to be included in the new Local Plan.
- A wider debate on the potential tension between utilising land for food production versus green energy generation would be welcomed.
- It was noted that capacity within the Economic Development Team had increased in recent years, but that the issues with recruiting to the Employment & Skills post were symptomatic of the wider state of the labour market.

The Committee thanked the Economic Development Team for their excellent work and thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report.

## 36 **Reviewing economic development policy in rural areas - report by the Chair**

The Chair introduced his report on reviewing economic development policy in rural areas which was accompanied by a presentation.

Discussion included the following comments and points:

- The definition of what constitutes either rural or urban areas was unclear.
- The report would be better considered by the Strategic Planning Committee as part of the Local Plan process.

The Service Lead for Growth, Development and Prosperity advised that the guidance for the Rural England Prosperity Fund was clear in that the whole of East Devon was classified as a rural area, with the exception of Exmouth which has a population above 30,000. It was noted that a report on the Rural England Prosperity Fund would be going to the Cabinet meeting on 2 November 2022.

Further discussion included the following:

- Ideas in the report were welcomed and should be discussed further.
- The Council has the ability to place shape and support local businesses.
- There is already support for small business units, businesses attempting to diversify and employment land and these issues are discussed frequently in Planning Committee meetings.
- Some of the information in the report was out of date.
- There is currently no policy to support rural businesses and the debate should be about whether the Council should have a policy which brings together the work which is already being done across various areas of the Council.
- If the whole district of East Devon is deemed to be a rural area, with the exception of Exmouth, all of the Council's policies can be considered to be rural policies.

The Monitoring Officer advised that there had been no officer input to the report and that the key question was whether there is a policy gap which needed to be filled. If so, that would need to be subject to further reports which should be from officers. Alternatively, the Committee, having discussed the report, could decide that there was no gap in policy as existing policies were already addressing the issues raised by the report.

It was agreed that the report be noted, with no further action required.

37 **Quarterly performance report**

The quarterly performance plan for the first quarter of 2022/23 was noted.

38 **Forward Plan**

Two proposal forms had been submitted for consideration as follows:

1. Agricultural land – food production v energy production
1. East Devon's health strategy

With regard to the proposal form for agricultural land, discussion and comments included the following points:

- There are major concerns regarding energy and there is a need for a debate on where solar farms should be sited.
- Any discussion should include input from experts in the issues.
- Land given over to solar farms may not necessarily have been used for food production.
- All forms of renewable energy should be included in any discussion, rather than just solar.

It was agreed to add consideration of the use and provision of all forms of renewable energy across the whole district to the Forward Plan.

Regarding the proposal form for the health strategy, the Strategic Lead for Housing, Health and Environment advised that the One Devon approach is a relatively new collaboration between the NHS, local councils and the voluntary sector to provide a single joined-up health system and that this will have an impact on EDDC's public health strategy. The One Devon approach is a work in progress with the integrated care strategy due to be finalised by the beginning of December. There is a noticeable absence of reference to public and environmental health in the current approach.

The Strategic Lead also advised that the Council's public health strategy is due for review in 2023 and that the timing of any work on this review should fit well with the emerging One Devon approach.

It was noted that the proposal form refers to a recent presentation of the integrated care strategy approach which is available for Councillors.

It was agreed to add this item to the Forward Plan.

The Forward Plan was noted. It was agreed to proceed with the proposed meeting with Mid Devon District Council Scrutiny Committee regarding a joint review into the planning controls and regulatory requirements associated with the bio-energy industry with Devon, in particular anaerobic digesters.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

M Allen (Chair)

J Bailey  
A Bruce  
M Chapman  
O Davey  
J Kemp (Vice-Chair)  
D Key  
H Parr  
E Rylance  
J Whibley

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

M Armstrong  
P Arnott  
P Hayward  
N Hookway  
G Jung  
D Ledger  
J Loudoun  
D Manley  
P Millar  
A Moulding  
M Rixson  
P Skinner

**Officers in attendance:**

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
Ed Freeman, Service Lead Planning Strategy and Development Management  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Henry Gordon Lennox, Strategic Lead Governance and Licensing (and Monitoring Officer)  
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer  
Andrew Wood, Service Lead - Growth Development and Prosperity

**Councillor apologies:**

S Hawkins  
T Woodward

Chair .....

Date: .....

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

**Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 10 October 2022**

**Minute 8 Progress Update on Placemaking in Exmouth**

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That an existing budget is made available to Devon County Council to erect one additional sign directing visitors to alternative parking, and to make the offer to erect the sign ourselves. This sign to be nearby to the Queen's Drive and Sideshore car parks.
2. To improve signage within the Council's own East Devon car parks to inform members of the public of additional car parking.

**Minute 9 Proposals for the temporary uses of Queen's Drive Space for the 2023 Season**

**RECOMMENDED**

**To delegate to the Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation:**

1. To grant leases to current tenants based on their current rents and include a goodwill benefit of a reduction in their rent for the incoming season of 15% below the current market rate. If the current tenants are unable to take up the offer for 2023 season then we would market the pitches in a tender process.
2. The Events Space will be tendered to attract an operator for the season. If one cannot be appointed for the season we will then put out a tender for the 6 weeks school holidays. Out of this time, the events team will hire out the Event Space as per the events Policy, terms and conditions, and Portfolio Holder agreed prices.
3. We consider a proposal from LED for the fitness space for 2 seasons (received in 26th July 2022) ie 2023/2024 subject to Heads of Terms being agreed – noting that we would have to include a break clause (with a pre-agreed compensatory payment) should we reach a decision to bring forward a development at Queen's Drive Space.

**Minute 10 Results of Placemaking in Exmouth Consultation and Next Steps**

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That the results of the consultation are accepted and that they be used to appoint a professional team to develop a terms of reference and a plan for a Placemaking Strategy for Exmouth Town and Seafront.
2. To request a budget of £160k from Full Council to develop the Placemaking Strategy which will include a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group (formerly Exmouth Queen's Drive Delivery Group) held at Online via the Zoom app on 10 October 2022**

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.36 am

#### **5 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

#### **6 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 July 2022**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 July 2022 were noted as a true and accurate record.

#### **7 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

#### **8 Progress Update on Placemaking in Exmouth**

The Project Manager – Place & Prosperity (Exmouth) ran through the update report which summarised progress since the Group's last meeting on 19 July 2022, highlighting the following points:

- The fairground provider took up occupancy of the Queen's Drive Space on 7 July 2022 and then departed three weeks later without any notice or contact, impacting negatively on other traders due to the loss of footfall. The Events Team tried to find a replacement but the lack of lead-time proved challenging.
- A debriefing meeting was held with the Queen's Drive Space traders.
- Contact was made with Devon County Council (DCC) Highways concerning signposting for parking along Queen's Drive and the seafront. DCC had responded that there was no current budget for additional signs.
- Led by colleagues in DCC, the Levelling Up Fund bid was submitted and it is hoped the outcome will be known in November 2022.
- In conjunction with Cllr Hayward as Portfolio Holder, officers are negotiating Heads of Terms with McCarthy and Stone to enable the transfer at nil consideration of the freehold of Land to the South of Redgates, Salterton Road, Exmouth, to East Devon DC, with the opportunity to develop four commercial units as part of the Developer's Planning obligation by Unilateral Undertaking under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, subject to a satisfactory build and sign off of same.

Discussion included the following points:

- All Members had been invited to the consultation where a presentation was made concerning the Levelling Up Fund Bid and the Project Manager – Place and Prosperity, Exmouth could forward a copy of the presentation to any Members who had missed it. One Member expressed that she was keen to understand what was included, and how the current bid differs from previous iterations of the proposal.
- Members discussed various ways to move forward with improving signage to car parks in the context of the response from DCC, particularly to direct drivers to lesser used car parks e.g. Maer Road. It was noted that Highways signage was a matter for DCC and outside of the remit of EDDC, but EDDC could look to improve signage within its own car

parks. This Council could approach Devon County Council with an offer to pay for a sign on the highway.

- Some Members suggested lobbying DCC and the MP for East Devon concerning signage, and expressed frustration at the difficulties encountered with DCC.
- Members recognised that for reasons of disability, or for large families where other means of travel could be quite expensive, some people needed to use cars or other vehicles to access the town and seafront.
- It was felt that only one additional sign is needed at the Queen's Drive car park which informs drivers of other car parks they can use.

Cllr De Saram proposed, seconded by Cllr Gazzard, that the Group recommends to Cabinet that an existing budget is made available to Devon County Council to erect one additional sign directing visitors to alternative parking, and to make the offer to erect the sign ourselves. This sign to be nearby to the Queen's Drive and Sideshore car parks.

The Chair proposed a second recommendation to Cabinet to improve signage within the Council's own East Devon car parks to inform members of the public of additional car parking.

Members voted in favour of both recommendations.

#### **RECOMMENDED TO Cabinet:**

1. That an existing budget is made available to Devon County Council to erect one additional sign directing visitors to alternative parking, and to make the offer to erect the sign ourselves. This sign to be nearby to the Queen's Drive and Sideshore car parks.
2. To improve signage within the Council's own East Devon car parks to inform members of the public of additional car parking.

## **9 Proposals for the temporary uses of Queen's Drive Space for the 2023 Season**

The Project Manager Place and Prosperity (Exmouth) presented the report, highlighting the following points:

- Significant refurbishment work on the Queen's Drive Space had taken place prior to Easter 2022, supported by the ERDF Welcome Back Fund, to a value of £40k.
- Some difficulties had been encountered particularly with the fairground provider and with the lead in time of getting paperwork out to colleagues in LED to order equipment for the Fitness Space.
- A debrief meeting with traders had been constructive and traders had been enthusiastic to take up opportunities for next year.

Discussion included:

- Members discussed whether traders could open later in the evenings. It was recognised that there were reasons why some could not stay open longer, and it was difficult to predict when demand would be strong, but there were opportunities in the evenings and perhaps traders could operate on a rota basis.
- The new cycle racks were a welcome addition to Queen's Drive but there were only four, and more would be needed to meet demand.
- To attract the right operatives, the Queen's Drive Space is promoted through the Council's website, on social media and through industry bodies, and this had been quite successful to date in getting a good set of traders.

The following recommendations were approved in a vote of Members present:

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet to delegate to the Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation::**

1. To grant leases to current tenants based on their current rents and include a goodwill benefit of a reduction in their rent for the incoming season of 15% below the current market rate. If the current tenants are unable to take up the offer for 2023 season then we would market the pitches in a tender process.
2. The Events Space will be tendered to attract an operator for the season. If one cannot be appointed for the season we will then put out a tender for the 6 weeks school holidays. Out of this time, the events team will hire out the Event Space as per the events Policy, terms and conditions, and Portfolio Holder agreed prices.
3. We consider a proposal from LED for the fitness space for 2 seasons (received in 26th July 2022) ie 2023/2024 subject to Heads of Terms being agreed – noting that we would have to include a break clause (with a pre-agreed compensatory payment) should we reach a decision to bring forward a development at Queen's Drive Space.

Reason for recommendations:

- To ensure a vibrant level of activity at Queen's Drive Space.
- To allow tenants to better prepare for the season with leases in place before they take possession, and to save on the costs of protracted negotiations of previous years.
- Appointing a leisure operator to manager the fitness space.
- Hire out the events space when not occupied.
- Seeking a reliable operator for the events space for the 2023 season.

10 **Results of Placemaking in Exmouth Consultation and Next Steps**

The Project Manager Place and Prosperity (Exmouth) introduced the report which summarises the outcome of the consultation exercise to determine the key themes and characteristics for successful placemaking in Exmouth town and seafront as discussed at the workshop held with the Delivery Group on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2022. The report provides the feedback received from the consultations, online questionnaires, independently carried out face-to-face questionnaires by the South West Research Company, and proposes next steps.

Discussion included:

- Some Members commented that the dinosaur park is very popular and they would like to see it maintained and extended, perhaps using CIL money. The park is free to use and important for the community particularly in the context of the cost of living crisis, and needs to be maintained well for reasons of health and safety. Other Members recognised the appeal of the dinosaur park but noted that Members were not here to pitch for what they want on Queen's Drive, but were voting on the process. The Project Manager Place and Prosperity (Exmouth) commented that it was important to look to the whole of Exmouth at what the Council can deliver, based on evidence from the consultation and taking account of the pressures for the whole town, and it was not appropriate to look to develop areas of the area in isolation to others.
- Members felt it was important to have accessible play equipment for children and young adults, to make Exmouth a welcoming family-friendly destination for all.
- One Member commented that workshops and consultations had taken place before for over ten years, and people were losing faith. Another Member remarked that a huge amount of work had taken place over the past two years to get to a good place; Exmouth is a major town in the south west and there was a huge amount of work still to do to fulfil and deliver a proper vision for the town and seafront.
- The Finance Director would be asked to set out to Cabinet where £100k of the proposed £160k budget will come from. It was noted that £60k is available from the original £200k allocated by Members for staffing resources to support Exmouth Placemaking.

- The suggested £160k budget is based on previous work that the Project Manager Place and Prosperity (Exmouth) has done on the size and scale of this nature. There is likely to be a cocktail of ways of financing delivery of the placemaking plan.
- One Member suggested allocating a further £50k in the budget to facilitate full delivery of what is required. Another Member felt it was not appropriate to allocate additional funding, without knowing what it is for.
- Cllr Armstrong stated that she gave her apologies for the 20 June 2022 Stakeholder Consultation meeting but this was not recorded in the minutes that had been published as appendix. The Project Manager Place and Prosperity (Exmouth) stated he would make a correction to the minutes accordingly.
- The Project Manager Place and Prosperity (Exmouth) confirmed a procurement exercise would take place for the professional consultants to develop terms of reference, taking account of a range of skill sets including experience with placemaking, design and engineering, and a demonstrable track record.
- Individual traders had been identified and consulted, or invited to engage in consultation, to provide their views for development of the site at Queen's Drive. This included the tenants of the Harbour View café, the former play park, and the amusements.
- Some Members would like to see a space on Queen's Drive for Exmouth's very talented musicians and buskers.

Members of the Group accepted the results of the consultations (noting that not all the suggestions fall within East Devon District Council's statutory remit and those that do will have to be prioritised in terms of deliverability and budget availability).

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:**

1. That the results of the consultation are accepted and that they be used to appoint a professional team to develop a terms of reference and a plan for a Placemaking Strategy for Exmouth Town and Seafront.
1. To request a budget of £160k from Full Council to develop the Placemaking Strategy which will include a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

**Reason for recommendations:**

- To agree with the results of the public consultation and the next steps before a further report back to the Delivery Group and Cabinet setting out Terms of Reference for Placemaking in Exmouth in the first half of 2023.
- To progress placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront.

**Attendance List**

**Councillors present:**

P Arnott (Vice-Chair)  
M Armstrong  
O Davey  
N Hookway (Chair)  
D Ledger  
B Taylor  
J Whibley  
S Gazzard  
B De Saram  
S Gazzard (Exmouth Town Council)  
A Bailey (Exmouth Town Council)

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

M Howe  
G Jung  
E Rylance  
E Wragg

**Officers in attendance:**

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation  
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer  
Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer  
Gerry Mills, Project Manager Place & Prosperity (Exmouth)  
Caitlin Davey, Streetscene Events Officer

**Also in attendance:**

Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk, Exmouth Town Council  
Peter Gilpin, LED CEO

**Councillor apologies:**

C Wright  
J Rowland

Chair: .....

Date: .....

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

**Housing Review Board on 11 October 2022**

**Minute 27 Update on Housing Task and Finish Forum**

That approval be given for the Housing Task Force Service Lead, to complete discussions with the South West Procurement Alliance (SWPA) and ZedPods, for the purpose of procuring a contract to develop new housing on behalf of EDDC.

**Minute 29 Emergency winter housing plan**

1. That Cabinet recommends to Council the approval of a budget of £50,000 to allocate towards delivering this project and to designate as a Housing Winter Pressures Hardship Fund.
2. To give delegated authority to the Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment and the Housing Service Lead to approve the detail and criteria for the hardship fund and the grounds on which funds will be allocated to households.
3. To approve the other actions highlighted in the report that will deliver housing's contribution to the EDDC Winter Pressures Plan.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Housing Review Board held at online via Zoom on 11 October 2022**

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 1.26 pm

#### **18 Public speaking**

Co-opted tenant member of the Board Sue Saunders spoke with the backing of the Tenants Management Group in relation to the Property and Assets Complaints Policy, highlighting a number of concerns. Sue expressed particular concern that tenants' complaints were routinely being recategorised as repair requests at pre-stage 1 of the complaints procedure, a practice which she stated is inconsistent with the Ombudsman's Code and therefore unacceptable. Lack of due consideration for tenants' concerns has forced some to behave in ways which lead to them being labelled as aggressive, or persistent complainers. There are many aspects of the Property and Assets Complaints Policy that tenants distrust, and they demand that it be scrapped immediately.

Co-opted tenant member of the Board Steve Beer spoke in relation to the difficulties that many residents are likely to suffer this winter with high energy bills. Residents want to know that community centres and churches will be opening their doors to residents as warm, safe spaces for people to go to. He asked whether community centre rental fees will be waived.

Cllr Steve Gazzard asked that an update report comes to the Board in relation to voids across East Devon, with the numbers, and how Ian Williams is progressing with making the voids habitable for new tenants.

#### **19 Appointment of Vice Chair**

It was agreed that co-opted tenant Sue Saunders be appointed Vice Chair of the Housing Review Board.

#### **20 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 June 2022 were received and accepted.

#### **21 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

#### **22 Housing Review Board forward plan**

The 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.

It was agreed that the following items would be added to the forward plan:

- Creation of a Damp and Mould Policy

- Scoping report for a Retrofit Plan
- Receive the Social Resilience (Poverty) Dashboard (minute 29 refers)

It was also noted that a Void Report would be brought to the next Board meeting following Cllr Gazzard's comments in public speaking (minute 18 refers).

23 **Matters of urgency**

There were no matters of urgency.

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

There were no confidential/exempt items.

25 **Plan for Resident Involvement Strategy**

The Interim Housing Services Manager and the Vice-Chair of the Resident Involvement Management Group, Sue Saunders, co-presented the report which outlines a process to review the Resident Involvement Strategy and scopes the key issues and considerations to ensure that the Council maintains a fit for purpose approach to engaging its tenants in the management and maintenance of their homes.

The presentation included an illustration from Strata of the significance of ensuring the Strategy is communicated out in a cohesive, positive and engaging way, and the value of graphic design and visual presentations to help bring the Strategy to life.

The following points were made in discussion:

- Careful use of colours is important in making visual graphics and presentations accessible to people with visual impairments.
- The Strategy is predominantly aimed at engaging and empowering East Devon tenants and leaseholders. Residents and Community Associations are open to everyone who lives locally however, giving everyone a voice including private rental tenants.
- Part of the review will involve consulting with groups involved in the current structure as well as staff and tenants to ascertain how they are working at the moment, and what can be done better. It will also explore how not-involved tenants can feed back their views and influence the service.
- To ensure that information is widely accessible, people should be made aware that they can request hard copies of documentation, since not everyone is able to use technology.
- It was felt important to be careful with language in how people are referred to e.g. tenant, resident, customer or client. Preferences appeared to differ and it might be appropriate to canvas tenants to find out what their preferences are.

The Board noted the report, and agreed and approved the scope and methodology proposed.

26 **Self-Assessment against Ombudsman Code of Conduct - Complaints**

The Housing Service Lead introduced the report concerning self-assessment of the complaints procedure against the Housing Ombudsman's code.

The Housing Ombudsman has updated its complaints handling code taking effect from April 2022. It is a requirement for the Council to assess its approach to complaint

handling against the Complaint Handling Code annually and to report this to its governing body.

The EDDC corporate complaints team, in consultation with the Housing Service have assessed the current procedure against the new code. This report summarises the findings of the self-assessment, which confirms that the current procedure complies with the new requirements.

The self-assessment found that the EDDC complaints procedure is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman code in all but one area:

- Section 5.1 of the code relating to Stage 1 formal complaints requires landlords to respond to the complainant within 10 working days of the complaint being logged, and allows for a further 10 days in exceptional circumstances.
- Under the EDDC corporate procedure, the response time for Stage 1 and stage 2 complaints is 20 working days. This applies across all service areas of the council and the council has been advised that, where compliance in particular areas is not appropriate, an explanation of this within the self-assessment is acceptable. The Housing Ombudsman recognises that local authorities generally operate a complaints procedure which is consistent across all service areas.

The conclusion is that the current complaints policy complies with the new Housing Ombudsman Code, taking into account the aforementioned clarifications.

A broader review of how the Housing Service responds to complaints and service issues will be beginning shortly, with an initial consultation session due to take place at the Designated Tenant Complaints Panel (DTCP) meeting in September.

Changes to the Housing Ombudsman scheme, taking effect from 1st October, include the removal of the “democratic filter” which means that, if complainants remain dissatisfied at the end of the formal complaint process, they will no longer have to refer their complaint to a designated person or wait 8 weeks before referring to the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman considers this to be a positive change which will make it easier for residents to access their service.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- 7.3 of the Ombudsman Code indicates as best practice that a member of the governing body should be appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints. It was suggested that the Board considers which member should take this role.
- It was recognised that dissatisfaction concerning complaints handling is often due to a failure to communicate effectively with complainants about what is being done and timescales. The Housing Service Lead is committed to refreshing this and building a better system going forward.
- Record keeping was also identified from maladministration complaints as an area for improvement. The Housing Service Lead stated it was on managers’ agenda to work with front line teams on record keeping and to audit and spot-check cases. Where issues with recorded keeping are identified, individual cases are raised with officers so that they can understand what was missing.
- Concerns were raised about the service that tenants were receiving from contractors Ian Williams. The Housing Service Lead stated that tenants have been listened to and an action plan is in place with a focus on improvements that need to be made with the contract.
- Details of how to complain are publicised on the website as well as via leaflets, publications, notices in community centres, and staff are also briefed. It was noted that some people would need help to write complaints to ensure their message is legible and covers the points they need to make.

That Board noted that the council have undertaken an assessment of the Corporate Complaints Procedure against the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code of practice, and that a review of the procedure for handling housing service complaints is planned with tenant involvement.

## 27 **Update on Housing Task and Finish Forum**

The Housing Task Force Service Lead's report informed the Board of the Housing Task Force's progress to date and outlined future plans for the delivery of affordable social housing across the district. The report set out progress so far and the options that were being explored:

- Recruitment – this had been a challenge, but there would soon be three members of the team in place.
- Exploring opportunities:
  - Initial focus had been on land within the Housing Revenue Account.
  - Council sites, not within the HRA were also being explored, with the potential for them to be transferred into the HRA for further housing use.
  - The Task Force had publicised the desire to acquire development sites externally with land and estate agents.
  - An informal offer had been made on a small piece of land in Axminster that could potentially facilitate a larger development in the future.
  - It was intended to complete a new review of HRA garage sites, taking into consideration the new construction methods available.
  - A spreadsheet of all opportunities was being kept. Following options appraisal and viability exercises these would either go forward on to the Development Pipeline Programme or be archived.
- Stock and estate regeneration – the stock condition survey underway would highlight areas within the portfolio that would greatly benefit from a stock regeneration programme. It was also hoped to utilise large gardens to provide additional new housing.
- Development models and methods of delivery – 3 garage sites in Honiton have been identified as having potential for redevelopment. To maximise the potential of the sites and for reasons set out in the report, the Task Force is looking at using a modular building method known as Volumetric MMC (Modern Methods of Construction). Early discussions are taking place with procurement professionals and ZedPods, a company with a proven record of carrying out meaningful community engagement throughout its developments.
- Options appraisal and financial modeller – discussions are taking place with two companies who provide specialist options appraisal and financial modelling software packages for use in social housing development. This forms a fundamental part of the Council's internal due diligence, risk management and financial monitoring for opportunities explored and/or taken through to development.
- Business as usual – the team continues to do all the tasks that transferred over to it from housing.

Discussion included the following points:

- Compulsory purchase powers for acquiring land for social housing purposes would only be considered rarely and as a last resort, and negotiations would always take place first.
- South West Procurement Alliance is a procurement framework to which the Council subscribes which helps with procurement with a range of different contracts.
- Unless classed as sheltered housing schemes, new social housing would not be exempt from Right to Buy.

### **RECOMMENDED TO Cabinet:**

- That approval be given for the Housing Task Force Service Lead, to complete discussions with the South West Procurement Alliance (SWPA) and ZedPods, for the purpose of procuring a contract to develop new housing on behalf of EDDC.

## 28 **Tenant satisfaction measures**

The Board received a report which summarised the Council's readiness to comply with the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures as proposed in the Social Housing White Paper and which had been finalised and published by the Regulator for Social Housing.

In a brief discussion it was clarified that there is strict guidance from the Regulator on how the Tenant Survey is carried out and it was not possible to alter the form of words for the statements or questions used.

Members noted the publication of the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures by the Regulator and the requirement to ensure compliance of the submission of the data required.

Members also approved a review of the structure and distribution of the Annual Report in partnership with the Tenant Involvement Management Group with a view to providing a proposed approach at a future Housing Review Board meeting that meets the standard required.

## 29 **Emergency winter housing plan**

The Housing Service Lead introduced the report which outlines the Council's plans to respond to the cost of living crisis and its commitment to support vulnerable tenants throughout the winter period. Given the dramatic increases in gas and electricity prices, and the sharp rising costs of many essential items for many, the cost of basic survival needs will exceed household income for some tenants.

The report proposed the adoption of a series of short-term measures to be implemented this winter and the creation of a Housing Winter Pressures Hardship Fund to help combat the worst impacts on vulnerable households.

Discussion included the following points:

- Members felt that in addition to community centres the district's town halls should be opened up as warm spaces for people to access this winter. Consideration would first need to be given to issues such as staffing, access arrangements and risk assessments.
- It would be helpful for residents to access face to face meetings with officers at community locations, particularly for those who are digitally excluded or in cold homes.
- A snapshot of the Social Resilience (Poverty) Dashboard can be made available for the Housing Review Board, to help inform decisions. This can be added to the forward plan.
- As well as detailing support that can be accessed, the special winter newsletter should double up as a Christmas edition. The Housing Service Lead will ensure the editorial panel are involved in its sign-off.

### **RECOMMENDATION TO Council and Cabinet:**

1. The approval of a budget of £50,000 to allocate towards delivering this project and to designate as a Housing Winter Pressures Hardship Fund.
2. To give delegated authority to the Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment and the Housing Service Lead to approve the detail and criteria for the hardship fund and the grounds on which funds will be allocated to households.
3. To approve the other actions highlighted in the report that will deliver housing's contribution to the EDDC Winter Pressures Plan.

## 30 **Finance Report**

The accountant's report provided the Housing Review Board with current year to date and draft forecast financial outturn figures for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2022/23 financial year. The report also considered the implications of any forthcoming regulatory changes.

Producing a HRA has been a statutory requirement for Councils who manage and own their housing stock for some time, and therefore a key document for the Board to influence.

The report also made reference to the recent Government launched consultation on the social housing rent cap and invited members to debate the topic in order to capture information that can be put forward as part of the consultation process.

It was noted that the HRA was in a healthy position. The original approved budget generates a surplus of £0.208m in 2022/23. This sum and any additional surplus is due to be added to the Capital Development Fund for future investment.

The most notable risks to the above outturn position, which will be kept under review, are;

- Employee costs due to the uncertainty around the 22/23 pay award and the ongoing consultant pay review.
- Income – the current high levels of income received may be at risk due to the increase in cost of living.

Inflationary pressures are also a concern and will be reviewed prior to and considered during the 23/24 budget preparation process with scenarios considered varying the four main drivers;

- Income – currently set at CPI + 1%, June being the latest release which would mean an increase of 11.1% and is likely to go higher.
- Interest Expense – currently fixed, however, refinancing will be required at the end of the year of £2.9m with interest rates rising.
- Employees Costs & Overheads – currently 28% as a proportion of income received, pay awards for 23/24 will need to consider inflationary pressures.
- Premises related costs – the remaining balance once all above assumptions are made to be reinvested into our stock

There has been very little in capital spend to date within the HRA with the acquisition of 42 Berry Close being the only material item.

The Housing Revenue Account update was noted.

The second part of the accountant's report concerned the Social Housing Rent Cap Consultation.

On the 31st August the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities released a consultation document setting out a rent cap for social housing tenants as part of measures to protect tenants from further impacts of the cost of living crisis.

Under the current policy, rent is increased in line with the consumer price index (CPI) plus 1% which would currently mean a potential increase of 11% from April 2023 onwards. The consultation suggests a rent cap is imposed that will sit at either 3%, 5% or 7% and the Government are asking for views from the sector.

It was noted that the difference between the 10.8% rise compared to other scenarios is significant on income levels:

- 3% cap is a reduction in income of £1.473m a year
- 5% cap is a reduction in income of £1.095m a year
- 7% cap is a reduction in income of £0.717m a year

It was also noted that this income is not lost in just year one but will not be in the base income year after year.

Although the increase and implications on tenants affordability to meet this increase will and should be a key consideration of the Board and the Council, the cost of maintaining the housing stock will be increasing with inflation and by not keeping pace with increase income levels will necessary result in a reduction in available resources to meet current plans to maintain and improve stock.

This Council consulted with tenants by holding a workshop on 27 September 2022. The outcome of the consultation was:

- There was no definite answer in relation to the question on the rent cap as the tenants overwhelmingly felt that there was not enough information provided to be able to make an informed decision.
- In order to take an informed decision they would require:
  - The amount of additional funding required to maintain the current level of service delivery as they understand the costs would have increased and they not wish the current service levels to deteriorate any further.
  - The impact on major / cyclical works delivery based on the levels of increase.
  - Whether any Health & Safety works are required by regulation / legislation which are non-negotiable –
  - The rent charged by other providers in Devon
  - The effect on residents claiming full and partial benefits and the numbers that would be effected.
- They felt that management of repairs and contract management could be greatly improved and this would lead to additional funding without impacting rent levels.

In discussion, a tenant member expressed concern about the affordability of rent increases for tenants during the cost of living crisis, commenting that tenants will be worried that it will lead to them having no home to live in.

### 31 **Housing KPIs Quarter 1**

The Board received and noted the Quarterly Performance Indicator report.

### 32 **Communication from Regulator of Social Housing- Regulatory context for Government announcement on draft legislative clauses**

The Board received and noted the letter of 7 April 2022 from the Regulator of Social Housing.

The Vice-Chair invited the Housing Service Lead to a meeting of the Resident Involvement Management Group to explain the letter to the Group including what it means for tenants.

**Attendance List**

**Board members present:**

Sara Clarke, Independent Community Representative  
Rob Robinson, Independent Community Representative  
Stephen Beer, Tenants  
Sue Saunders, Tenants (Vice-Chair)  
Cindy Collier, Tenant  
Councillor Brenda Taylor  
Councillor Sarah Chamberlain (Chair)

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

M Armstrong  
P Arnott  
S Gazzard  
G Jung  
D Ledger  
T McCollum  
P Millar

**Officers in attendance:**

Sophie Davies, Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager  
Jo Garfoot, Service Lead Housing Task Force  
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance  
James DeLeiburne, Senior Graphic Designer  
Amy Gilbert-Jeans, Service Lead Housing  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager  
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer  
Andi Loosemore, Rental Manager  
Yusef Masih, Interim Housing Services Manager  
Martin Millmow, Document Processing Manager  
Andrew Mitchell, Housing Solutions Manager  
Giles Salter, Solicitor

**Councillor apologies:**

Sue Dawson, Tenants  
Cat Summers, Tenant  
Councillor Helen Parr  
Councillor Geoff Pook

Chair: .....

Date: .....

**EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL****Minutes of the meeting of Poverty Working Panel held at Online via Zoom app on 17 October 2022****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.49 am

**35 Public speaking**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

**36 Declarations of interest**

Cllr P Jarvis: Minute 38; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Works for a charity with an income 40p above minimum wage, so is personally affected by the rising cost of living.

**37 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 March 2022**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 March 2022 were noted as a true and accurate record.

**38 Cost of Living Crisis - Winter Pressures Plan**

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment presented the report which considered the cost of living crisis in the context of the Council's Poverty Strategy and alongside its commitment to support vulnerable residents through the challenging financial times.

The report proposed the adoption of a series of short-term measures to be implemented this winter and to be incorporated into a Winter Pressures Plan to help combat the worst impacts on vulnerable households. This will be a dynamic Plan that can be flexed in accordance with local intelligence and information appearing on the Poverty/Resilience Dashboard. An outline of the Plan was shown in an annex to the report.

It was recognised that much of the solution to the cost of living crisis is in the power of central government who steer social policy and make decisions on welfare benefits, price caps and hardship funding; however, the Council can play a useful role in ensuring resilience in the district's voluntary and community groups, supporting at risk households and operating a safety net for the least resilient households.

The Winter Pressures Plan pulls together a series of projects that can be deployed over the next few months, building on the Council's Poverty Action Plan and drawing together the work of partners, statutory and voluntary organisations who focus on cost of living, health & wellbeing and community development.

It was recognised that some of the district's most vulnerable people are tenants of the Council, and the Interim Housing Services Manager summarised the Housing Winter Pressures Plan which had been endorsed by the Housing Review Board

Discussion included the following points:

- Members commented on the valuable work of the Rough Sleeper Navigators, and the Working Panel will receive a presentation of this work, at its next meeting.

- Disabled people are particularly vulnerable with potentially higher energy costs, and those with mobility issues can struggle to access 'warm banks'. This is a group that the Council intends to be most supportive of, and support is already being targeted through the Energy Rebate Discretionary Scheme.
- Members would like some downloadable content to be able to hand to people who ask how they can access help, and which usefully signposts them to support.
- People need to see a map of warm/social community spaces and this information will be shared through social media and more traditional media, including a winter newsletter, to try to ensure it reaches everyone.
- There is some complexity since research has shown that targeting people for support can be counterproductive due to perceived social stigma, so it is important to be careful about how people are encouraged to ask for assistance if they need it, without them feeling unnecessary shame.
- It is intended to invite local MPs to meet with the district's food groups; Members of the Working Panel are welcome to join this meeting.
- One Devon is in the process of formally integrating health and social care, and it was encouraging to note in a recent meeting of leaders that the prevention, together with equalities and access to services, is high on the agenda. EDDC is pushing to ensure that work on poverty gets a fair share of the budget.

The Working Panel noted that the Winter Pressures Plan set out in the report had been adopted. The Working Panel will oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Plan.

### 39 **Social Resilience (Poverty) Dashboard**

The Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits and the Benefits Manager delivered a presentation outlining how the data from the Social Resilience (Poverty) Dashboard is used to support the work around the Winter Pressures Plan. This included:

- Most recently helping to inform the Discretionary Council Tax (Energy) Rebate Scheme – the majority of awards were made to households where a resident is disabled and/or a carer. Awards were also targeted to energy band E-H properties where households are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction.
- Helping to inform targeted spend on the Household Support Fund 3. In line with Department for Work and Pensions guidance, Devon local authorities will be looking to award a payment to those residents who are not entitled to a cost of living payment. Also identifying households not on mains gas and who therefore do not benefit from the Energy Price Cap, some 477 of which are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction; and looking to provide targeted support to these households.
- Assisting the modelling and revision of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24.

Discussion included the following points:

- The Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits expressed confidence that 100% of the Discretionary Council Tax (Energy) Rebate Scheme funding will be deployed. Letters go out to residents encouraging them to apply and outbound calls are made when numbers were down to a level to start to engage with people over the phone. A briefing paper will be prepared for the Portfolio Holder for Finance on the outcome of the main scheme, for circulation to Members.
- It was recognised that there are a lot of good private landlords in the district covering the cost of the gas and electricity for their tenants and if the Council can lobby and tailor support under its control to assist these landlords, then it will do so.
- One Member expressed concern about funds becoming exhausted. The Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits responded that this is not currently the case but the position will be kept under review and where there is an issue, it will be brought to the attention of the Working Panel and Cabinet. She added that the Social Resilience team work creatively to support people to access funds from other sources, and the Council has its own hardship fund to draw on.

- Some Members would like to see parts of the dashboard published with data broken down by ward. The Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits stated an upgrade to the relevant IT systems needs to take place to enable a public facing dashboard to be published without sensitive or identifiable information.
- An update on the Breathing Spaces scheme will be brought to the next Working Panel meeting.

#### 40 **Review of Poverty Strategy Actions**

The Public Health Project Officer presented a progress report on the East Devon Poverty Action Plan. The Action Plan was created to support the Poverty Strategy with the intention that the actions would be delivered over a period of time, dependent upon capacity.

The Action Plan comprises 61 objectives, some of which are subdivided, and many objectives shared by more than one Service. It is structured around five objectives with the following themes:

1. Helping people on low incomes
2. Strengthening families and communities
3. Promoting an inclusive economy
4. Addressing the high cost of housing
5. Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes.

Members were asked to consider i) what the timescale and process should be for continuing to update the Action Plan - it was suggested that the Working Panel receives light-touch quarterly updates, with yearly reviews/changes; and ii) what the mechanism should be for Service Leads to request changes, corrections or updates to the Action Plan.

During a discussion it was raised that the reports indicate that a high percentage of people applying for support are disabled, but some Members would like more clarity on what help people with disabilities are receiving and the impact.

Following the discussion, Members agreed that the Working Panel should receive a quarterly update on the Poverty Strategy Actions, with light-touch reviews annually. If there any requests for changes to agreed actions from Service Leads, these should be brought back to the Working Panel for consideration.

Members expressed thanks to the Public Health Project Officer for doing this work, and to the colleagues who contributed to it.

#### 41 **Food Poverty update**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

#### **Attendance List** **Councillors present:**

M Allen  
M Armstrong  
B De Saram

P Jarvis  
D Ledger (Chair)  
M Rixson

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

P Faithfull  
I Hall  
T McCollum  
P Millar  
J Rowland  
E Rylance

**Officers in attendance:**

Sharon Church, Benefits Manager  
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment  
Andrew Hopkins, Communications Consultant  
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer  
Libby Jarrett, Service Lead Revenues and Benefits  
Yusef Masih, Interim Housing Services Manager  
Helen Wharam, Public Health Project Officer  
George Whitlock, Data Analyst

**Councillor apologies:**

S Hawkins  
T Woodward

Chair .....

Date: .....

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

**LED Monitoring Forum on 18 October 2022**

**Minute 24 Colyton ATP update**

To delegate authority to the Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation in consultation with the Strategic Lead – Finance, Strategic Lead – Governance & Licensing and the Portfolio Holder for Economy & Assets to arrange advance payment of the capital contribution of up to £140,000 prior to completion of the new lease and management agreement.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of LED Monitoring Forum held at Online via Zoom app on 18 October 2022**

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.32 pm

#### **12 Public Speaking**

The following question was read out on behalf of Miss N Ashton:

Why does Ocean – funded by council tax payers via LED – get away with not allowing people in to use their toilets and having a door guard on the door? This is not a good look.

The Ocean General Manager responded that due to the size of the operation and in response to the pandemic, Ocean had introduced a welcome post to greet guests and direct them to where they were heading or answer any questions. Ocean is a commercial operation and the toilets are for use by patrons of the building. The team make sensible decisions based on the person in front of them, allowing for disabilities, children and pregnant women, however the majority of the public are content with using public toilets which are thirty yards away from the Ocean building. He added that the costs of opening up the toilets to the wider public would run into thousands.

The Chair added that the Ocean staff do not act as door guards, and Ocean is not funded by the tax payer. Its purpose is to generate a profit for the parent charity of LED.

#### **13 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 June 2022**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 June 2022 were noted as a true and accurate record.

#### **14 Declarations of interest**

Cllr P Arnott: Minute 24: Affects Non-Registerable Interest: District ward member for Coly Valley and Colyton Parish Councillor.

Cllr A Dent: Minutes 17 – 25; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of LED Community Leisure as a service user.

Cllr P Millar: Minutes 17 – 25; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of LED Community Leisure as a service user.

#### **15 Matters of urgency**

There was one matter of urgency (minute 24 refers).

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

There was one item to be considered in private session (minute 25 refers).

#### **17 LED Facilities and Activities Update**

The LED Director of Delivery introduced the Facilities and Activities update report and invited questions.

The following points were made in discussion:

- The Big Week initiative was a success and the LED team proactively follow up with people to encourage them to join or use the facilities on a pay and play basis.
- The pool sentry system is in the process of being installed; the original business case set out anticipated cost savings annually of £15k, but savings will be higher since energy costs have increased. There will be some additional but unquantifiable cost benefits in terms of resources, with less reliance on manual intervention of physical plant.
- Another energy reduction project which uses innovative technology to reuse heat from computer servers will be installed in November, and the contractual situation is being finalised with the third party. LED will provide a space for third party servers in a secure plant room but the third party will be responsible for their hardware and data. Since LED is only housing the servers, it is understood that the third party will be responsible for insurance cover for their own assets.
- Dialogue is ongoing between LED and the EDDC Facilities Management team concerning other energy reduction projects.
- Discussions are taking place with Exeter University with a view to putting in place a high level Energy Strategy for the Council's properties and a capital budget of £50k was approved last year to appoint the consultant.
- There will be an opportunity to apply to the Rural England Prosperity Fund for energy saving technologies which could mean that swimming pools will be unreliant on gas by December 2023, with Exmouth being the only town ineligible for the fund.

## 18 **LED Community Engagement Report**

The LED Director of Delivery introduced the report which highlighted the breadth of what the Community Engagement team are trying to do.

Members noted the report and commented positively on the LED outreach work and the social value that it provides across the district.

## 19 **LED KPI Dashboard September 2022**

The Forum received and noted key details of the performance of LED Community Leisure for September 2022, including the net promotor score.

In discussion, the LED Director of Delivery remarked that in future reports to the Forum, they will look to provide a comparison of 2022 and 2019 performance data with a view to understanding how experience of the pandemic has changed people's behaviour.

## 20 **Leisure Strategy Action Plan delivery and reporting**

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure introduced the Leisure Strategy Action Plan report.

Full Council and Cabinet had formally adopted the Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy and its Action Plan, and the next stage in the process required the LED Monitoring Forum members to discuss and agree the delivery of its priorities (each action had a 1, 2 or 3 priority listing), in particular the sequencing of the 'priority 1' actions.

It was highlighted that there would be significant challenges in meeting the completion deadlines for each priority within the Action Plan. The LED Forum would need to be aware, from the key Service team areas leading the implementation of the priority actions, what the resources and realistic timelines would be in taking forward each of the priorities agreed by the Forum.

The appointment of the Leisure Enabler role provided the Council with an additional resource to help facilitate the delivery of the priority 1 actions identified in the report over the next 3 years. This would enable Officers to both plan their work programmes in the budget and Service Plan cycles and work with the Leisure Enabler to identify where, if necessary, additional resources were required to successfully complete the priority action.

The LED Monitoring Forum would be required to keep under review the timelines, implications for resources and staff capacity issues against the individual priority actions that would feed back into the regular cycle of Forum meetings.

The Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure set out how the Leisure Enabler role would facilitate delivery of the items set out in the Action Plan.

In discussion at length, Forum members commented that the items on the Action Plan were all high priority and a number of them should run simultaneously. They recognised that:

- Renegotiation of dual use facility agreements was critical in reducing the costs to EDDC.
- Moving forward with the Cranbrook Sports and Leisure Centre was important for the people of Cranbrook, and the facility would be low cost and net zero.
- Renegotiation of the LED contract and management fee must be done by Christmas, and it was sensible to take a one year view due to the ongoing volatility of the economy.

It was suggested that an update be brought to every Forum meeting reporting on progress with the items set out in the Action Plan, and flagging where there specific challenges.

The Forum agreed the programme of delivery for the key priorities identified in the Leisure Strategy Action Plan and the process for reporting progress on the Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy and that the Leisure Enabler role will both facilitate and provide support for the delivery of those key priorities.

Forum members expressed that it would be appropriate to issue a joint LED/EDC newsletter or press release, to let people know the direction of travel.

## 21 **Leisure Strategy enabler role**

The Strategic Lead – Housing, Health and Environment summarised the role of the Leisure Strategy Enabler, to deliver on what is an ambitious programme under the Leisure Strategy that has been adopted. Funding of £60k has been secured through the Shared Prosperity Fund to fund the post, which will be advertised once the job description has been finalised by the relevant Service Leads.

## 22 **Community Leisure UK Statement on Energy Bill Relief Scheme**

The Forum received the Community Leisure UK statement on the Energy Bill Relief Scheme, for information related to the LED Financial Update (minute 23 refers).

The statement highlighted that three main concerns had been identified with the Energy Bill Relief Scheme that need addressing urgently, including i) the cap only covering wholesale prices; ii) the cap still being significantly higher than energy payments the previous year and iii) the timeline for support not reflecting the impact for companies with fixed contracts due for renewal the moment the Scheme ends.

## 23 **LED Financial Update**

The LED CEO ran through the Financial Update report which provided a summary of the current and potential pressures faced by LED in managing the facilities including:

- The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Utility and other costs
- The cost of living crisis
- Loss of income due to disruptions to some facilities
- The particularly detrimental effect of the pandemic and the cost-of-living increase on Exmouth Pavilion.

LED's current forecast is that even if income remains as originally predicted, which is unlikely given the above, and given the increase in costs, it anticipates a substantially increased financial loss on the Council's leisure facilities, which be reviewed monthly as the situation is very volatile. The management team will liaise closely with the Strategic Lead – Finance and, between them, provide regular updates as the situation develops over the coming weeks. This will be a key consideration in the setting of the Management Fee for 2023/24.

## 24 **Colyton ATP update**

The Service Lead – Place, Assets and Commercialisation introduced the report concerning the Council's capital contribution to Colyton Grammar School's investment works to the all-weather pitch at Colyton Leisure Centre.

Earlier reports had dealt with the overall arrangements. The works to the all-weather pitch were now almost complete and the school had therefore made staged payments. Heads of Terms were still being finalised and hence delaying the stage at which payment would be made until early/mid 2023. This created cash flow issues for the school.

The current report dealt with a request by the school that the Council makes its capital contribution in advance of the new lease and management agreement being in place. If the Council was to make this up-front capital payment prior to securing the new lease and management agreement, the School had agreed that in the event that the new lease and management agreement are not completed by Dec 31st 2023 (longstop date) then the school would be liable to repay the full capital payment. The Council's Legal Services would draft the necessary documentation to secure this commitment by the school although it needs to be acknowledged that the preferred outcome would have been as originally intended, namely that the lease and management agreement be entered into before payment.

In discussion, Forum members recognised that the proposal to make the capital contribution before Heads of Terms are finalised was not without risk, but felt the risk was minimal in the circumstances.

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:**

To delegate authority to the Service Lead – Place, Assets & Commercialisation in consultation with the Strategic Lead – Finance, Strategic Lead – Governance & Licensing and the Portfolio Holder for Economy & Assets to arrange advance payment of the capital contribution of up to £140,000 prior to completion of the new lease and management agreement.

The meeting then went into private session.

## 25 **Budget Variations 2022-23**

The LED CEO presented the report concerning variations to the 2022-23 budget, outlining the financial implications of the pressures facing LED, as summarised in the Financial Update (minute 23 refers); and how these would be mitigated.

The report detailed the additional contribution that LED would require from the Council, to remain close to the budgeted year-end position. Following discussion at length, and careful consideration of the context and implications, Forum members confirmed their support for an additional contribution of £326,328 to LED.

For the Forum's next meeting, the LED CEO was asked to bring a five year medium term financial plan setting out projections and what the risks are. The Forum recognised that this would need to include some caveats, given the volatility of the economy.

With input from the LED CEO, the Strategic Lead – Finance, Service Lead – Countryside and Leisure and the Service – Place, Assets and Commercialisation were asked to prepare a scoping report for a review of Exmouth Pavilion.

### **Attendance List**

#### **Councillors present:**

P Arnott  
A Dent  
B De Saram  
N Hookway (Vice-Chair)  
G Jung  
J Loudoun  
P Millar (Chair)  
J Rowland

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

D Ledger

#### **Representatives of LED Community Leisure in attendance:**

Karen Best, Director of Finance  
Jamie Bryant, Director of Delivery  
Peter Gilpin, CEO  
Richard Purchase, Chairman of LED Board

**Also in attendance:**

Justin Moore, Ocean General Manager

**Officers in attendance:**

Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation

Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer

Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Charles Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure

Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance

John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment

**Councillor apologies:**

S Hawkins

Chair .....

Date: .....

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

**Recycling and Waste Partnership Board on 19 October 2022**

**Minute 16 Proposed changes to working times**

**RECOMMENDED:** to agree the new start time for first collections be 6am.

**Minute 18 Recycling and Waste web-site proposal**

**RECOMMENDED:**

that the delivery be built into service planning and scoped out with the communications team and Strata.

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held at online via zoom on 19 October 2022**

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

The meeting started at 2.06 pm and ended at 3.42 pm

#### **11 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous consultative meeting held on 20 July 2022 were received and noted.

#### **12 Declarations of interest**

Min 15. Joint operations and contract report.

Councillor Eleanor Rylance, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Ward member for Broadclyst which includes Hill Barton green waste treatment plant.

Min 15. Joint operations and contract report.

Councillor Geoff Jung, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Ward member for Woodbury and Lypstone which includes Greendale Business Park.

#### **13 Matters arising**

Cllr Dan Ledger had submitted a question as to whether single use vape pens currently could be recycled. He said there were made primarily of plastic with small lithium batteries and asked were these classed in the same category as small electronics. These were becoming more and more popular especially amongst younger residents. If these were able to be recycled it could be worth a targeted communications effort on trying to push this.

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager responded that currently we do take vape pens as small electricals. There was concern in the industry over the batteries which were seen by some as a fire risk. DCC was seeking some advice on this but at the moment the risk did not appear to be proven one way or the other.

#### **14 Joint operations and contract report**

The Recycling and Waste Manager and the SUEZ Contract Manager gave the Board a joint report on a contract and operational update for the period July to September 2022. During Q2 there had been a continuation of the on-going pressures of staff shortages, recruitment in a tight employment market and property growth. These difficulties continued to be dealt with in a positive manner which had enabled a good overall performance in a difficult environment.

The additional bank holiday increased the usual pressures but adjusted collections were delivered with minimal disruption due to flexibility from the crews, Supervisors and Recycling Officers and comprehensive resident communications. The summer produced some of the highest temperatures on record and crew welfare had been a prime consideration through this period. The adjustment of the start time to 6am had played a significant part in this. The weather had also an effect on performance with

green waste tonnages being lower than in previous summers which may have an effect on the overall recycling and composting rate by year end.

Overall Q2 had been another testing operational period due to a number of factors outside of anyone's control but this had been successfully navigated. In addition to the focus on day to day delivery the team has committed a large amount of time to the preparation of the mobilisation of Phase 1 of the 'Bridging Solution' to go-live in October.

The Portfolio Holder Finance thanks SUEZ for their excellent service in Seaton.

The Board noted the Joint operations and contract report.

## 15 **Performance framework**

The Board noted the performance framework which showed performance across the contract for the Board's review and information.

## 16 **Proposed changes to working times**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager and Contracts Manager SUEZ report explained that the South West of England had experienced exceptionally high temperatures over extended periods during the summers of 2021 and 2022. During these periods the contractual first collection time of 7am has been amended to 6am. This change had been made and kept in place, for the duration of the periods of high temperatures in the interests of the welfare and protection of frontline collections staff. The earlier start time allowed crews to complete the majority of their rounds in the cooler part of the day. This measure, along with an emphasis on constant hydration, had allowed collections to be maintained in periods of unusually high summer temperatures.

Resident feedback on the change had been very positive during the hot spells as the need to look after the crews was widely recognised. A very small number of noise complaints had been received.

The proposed changes were due to the effects of climate change increasing the high summer temperatures. It is proposed that from 1 January 2023 the first collection time was changed permanently to 6am as an adjustment to changing climatic conditions.

The change in first collection time would apply to recycling, waste and green waste collections. A 6am first collection was common with other teams across Devon and therefore this was another step towards convergence in working practises.

**RECOMMENDED:** that Cabinet agree the new start time for first collections be 6am.

## 17 **Phase 1 (Growth Zone) mobilisation update**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager gave a verbal update on Phase 1 (Growth Zone) mobilisation. Through the temporary Recycling Advisor on the ground feedback from residents was very positive. With the Phase 2 implementation next year the team had drawn up 'lessons learnt' in order to improve the service. Phase 2 would have less day changes and have more of a rebalance between crews and crew morale was up.

18 **Recycling and Waste web-site proposal**

The Board received a report and presentation on the potential for an improved website for recycling and waste allowing better digital communications with residents to enable to push the recycling rate higher. The Board very much supported the need for this, with the ability to display our various communications leaflets digitally and use videos to drive up participation and engagement.

The Board agreed with the need for an improved website presence and the principles set out in the report.

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that;**

the delivery be built into service planning and scoped out with the communications team and Strata.

19 **East Devon video**

Jess Prosser from SUEZ presented a video on what happens to the collected recycling once it reach the recycling depo. It was agreed that the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager would email the video to all Members.

20 **Green waste accounts**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager gave the Board a verbal update on the draft green waste accounts.

21 **Composition analysis - verbal update**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager gave the Board a verbal update on the Composition analysis. This was a county wide undertaking of composition analysis of what was thrown out in the waste stream (black bins). This was last done in 2017 and gave valuable data. It helped to target materials as the council looked ahead in its service delivery to focus on what could be additionally recycled etc. The data collected would be used in communications with residents.

**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

A Hancock, Service Lead StreetScene

**Suez present:**

N Tandy, Principal Commercial Manager  
J Gatter, Contract Manager

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

P Arnott  
P Faithfull  
D Ledger  
P Millar  
J Rowland

**Officers in attendance:**

Lou Hodges, Waste Management Officer  
Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer  
Steve Maclure, Waste Management Officer  
Lorraine Tolman, Waste Management Officer  
Steve Joyce, Waste Management Officer

**Suez representatives in attendance:**

Jess Prosser, Recycling Officer

**Board Member apologies:**

James Pike, Regional Director  
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment

Chair .....

Date: .....



Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 2 November 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

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Review date for release N/A

## Devon Carbon Plan

### Report summary:

This report presents the final version of the Devon Carbon Plan following a comprehensive research, consultation and inclusive approach to evidence gathering, and considers the process of adoption, the implications of doing so, and how we integrate the actions and commitments with our own Climate Change Strategy.

I am proposing that we fully support the ambitions and commitments in the Devon Carbon Plan.

Adoption of the Devon Carbon Plan prompts a review and updating of our own ambitions that are contained in our Climate Change Strategy and linked Action Plan.

### Climate Change

We adopted our Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan in January and February 2020, and prior to that (July 2019) we signed the Devon Climate Change Emergency Declaration.

As part of this process we committed to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2040 as a stretch target.

We have adopted an ambitious Climate Change Action Plan, and despite making good progress on a number of projects and schemes, we recognise the need to do more, think bigger, act faster and be bold and brave.

Since 2019 we have undertaken two comprehensive carbon footprint exercises under the guidance of The University of Exeter. We are showing a 22% reduction between 2018/19 (baseline year) and 2020/21. However, I suspect much of this is related to the Covid-19 pandemic before we celebrate great success in reducing our carbon footprint.

In developing our stance we always intended a review and refresh of our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan after five years and alignment with the wider Devon climate change ambitions.

In **February 2021** I reported on the **Interim Devon Carbon Plan** – I advised that Devon County Council had been leading work on the production of a Carbon Plan for the county. This work had been developed with a range of partners and was part of the commitment in the Climate Change Emergency Declaration. The interim Plan went out for consultation and was to be finalised following a virtual Citizens Assembly process, incorporating comments from consultees.

The Plan set 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 emphasised this was intended for everyone in Devon to play a part and make a contribution.

The Plan picked up on the build back better theme and the governments then recently published ten point plan for a green industrial revolution. Eight high level themes were 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.

In **January 2022** I reported to Cabinet on the Citizens Assembly - my report outlined the input into the draft Devon Carbon Plan that had been proposed through the Devon Citizens Assembly process. All signatories to the Devon Climate Emergency Declaration had been invited to consider and comment on the resolutions put forward by the Citizens or more correctly the Devon Climate Assembly prior to a further round of public consultation.

The Devon Climate Assembly was organised by Involve a charity that specialises in public consultation on social policy. A rigorous process of selecting, training and facilitating participant's debate, and producing a series of resolutions was undertaken by Involve. So we had some valuable further public input into the planning process for the Devon Carbon Plan.

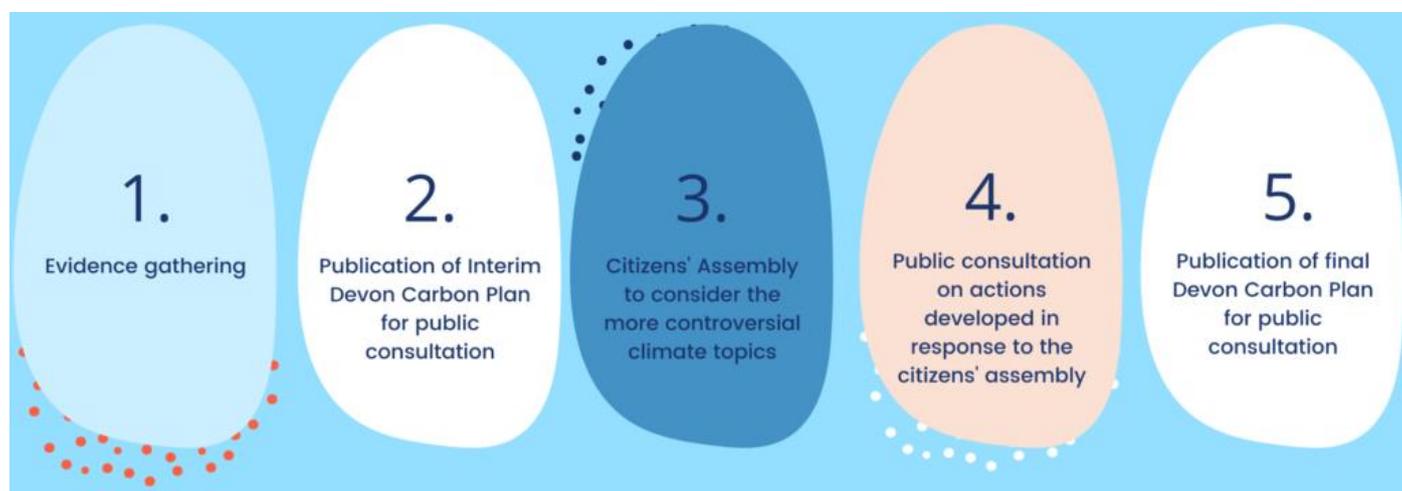
We broadly welcomed the resolutions presented by the Climate Assembly and agreed to work collectively with the Devon Climate Change Partnership to incorporate them into the revised and updated version of the Devon Carbon Plan. We also fed back our own comments.

### The Devon Carbon Plan

The Devon Carbon Plan is the roadmap for how Devon will reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (at the latest). It has been built on detailed, ongoing assessments of Devon's greenhouse gas emissions.

Broadly speaking, emissions in Devon can be divided into five key sectors: economy and resources, energy supply, food, land and sea, transport, and the built environment. The Devon Carbon Plan will outline actions for how each of these sectors can reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

Creating the Devon Carbon Plan involved five main stages. During the first stage, our [Net Zero Task Force](#) took a robust, evidence-led approach, with an open call for evidence from the public and organisations wishing to contribute. Next, after we had developed the Interim Devon Carbon Plan, we asked for public feedback during a consultation. Following the successful completion of the Citizens' Assembly, the secretariat is now planning a public consultation on the actions developed in response to the assembly's recommendations.



Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget

Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

**Recommendation:**

1. The Devon Carbon Plan is endorsed; and
2. The Council reviews and refreshes its own Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to align and show how it will contribute to delivering the Devon Carbon Plan.

**Reason for recommendation:**

To endorse the Devon Carbon Plan and work in partnership to deliver the actions and activities contained in the Plan to reduce our carbon use.

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

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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** High Impact

**Risk:** High Risk; The main risk is associated with not acting on climate change.

**Links to background information**

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In July 2019 the Council Declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency and at the same time committed to collaborating with Devon County Council, all the Devon

District Councils, Plymouth City Council and other agencies to address the Emergencies.

- 1.2 The Devon Climate Emergency Declaration was prepared by a consortium of public, private and voluntary organisations collaborating through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. It set out an ambition to tackle climate change that covers all of Devon, including those people who live, work in and visit our county, and those businesses who are based or operate here.
- 1.3 The Devon Climate Emergency Partnership was formed which includes public, private and voluntary organisations. Following an expert, evidence led process, the Devon Carbon Plan was developed, which included public consultation and a Citizens Assembly.

## **2. Devon Carbon Climate Emergency Background**

- 2.1 A range of public, private and voluntary organisations from across Devon came together on 22nd May 2019 to form the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, to declare a climate and ecological emergency and to endorse the principles of the Devon Climate Declaration.
- 2.2 These organisations have collaborated since 2019 to develop a carbon action plan for the county, the Devon Carbon Plan. It sets out an ambition to tackle climate change that covers all of Devon, including those people who live, work in and visit our county, and those businesses who are based or operate here.
- 2.3 As part of this an independent Net-Zero Task Force was formed to help inform this plan. The Net-Zero Task Force is a collection of specialists from various fields who have expertise in topics relevant to carbon reduction and are drawn from economic, environmental, health and academic organisations, and was chaired by a leading climate expert from Exeter University. Minutes of all Net Zero Task Force meetings are published online for the purposes of transparency.

## **3. Devon Carbon Plan Summary and Process**

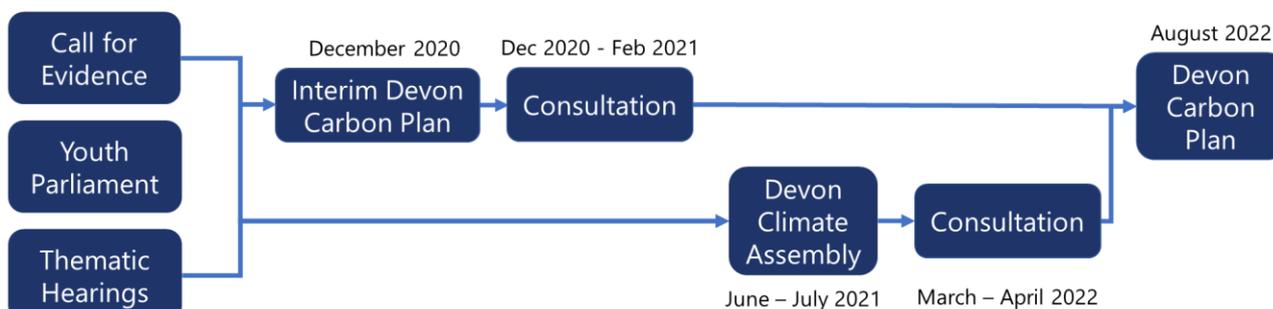
- 3.1 The Devon Carbon Plan is the roadmap for how Devon will reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (at the latest). It has been built on detailed, ongoing assessments of Devon's greenhouse gas emissions.
- 3.2 It divides action to reduce Devon's emissions into five sectors: economy and resources; energy supply; food, land and sea; transport; and the built environment.
- 3.3 Creating the Devon Carbon Plan involved five main phases;
  - During the first phase, the Net Zero Task Force took a robust, evidence-led approach, with an open call for evidence from the public and organisations wishing to contribute which received 893 submissions from the public.
  - Six Thematic Hearings (meetings) gathered expert input about barriers to reaching net-zero; and a Youth Parliament Climate Summit with 75 students from 15 primary and secondary schools across Devon was convened.
  - Next, the Interim Devon Carbon Plan was developed. The Devon Climate Emergency Partnership asked for public feedback during a consultation which received 1322 responses.

- The more controversial climate topics and action areas were set aside to be deliberated through a representative Citizens Assembly which was organised and chaired by a third party in the summer of 2021.
- Following the successful completion of the Citizens' Assembly, a further public consultation took place on the actions developed in response to the assembly's recommendations in spring 2022.

3.4 A visual representation of the process is shown below:

#### 4. Citizens Assembly Summary and Background

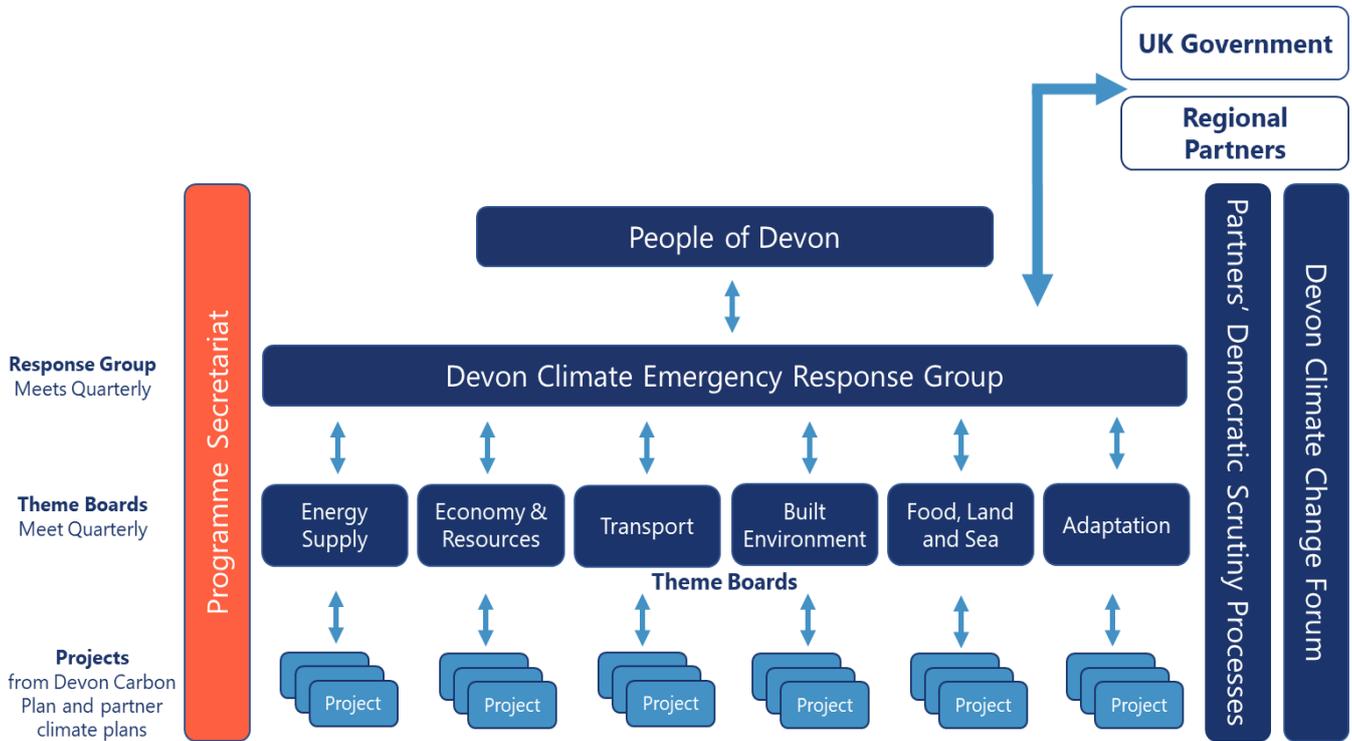
Oct 2019 – Jan 2020



- 4.1 Through the initial consultations on the Interim Devon Carbon Plan, communities identified some challenges which required further discussion. These were transport, wind energy and building retrofit, which prior public consultation said needed further discussion.
- 4.2 A citizens' assembly was put together to put the views of the general public at the centre of Devon's action on climate change. A representative sample of 70 Devon citizens, including young people over the age of 16, were invited to take part in the Devon Climate Assembly.
- 4.3 The Sortition Foundation recruited assembly members using a process known as a 'civic lottery.' This is recognised internationally as the gold standard method for recruiting citizens' assembly members.
- 4.4 Recruitment began with inviting people from across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay to apply. 14,000 letters inviting people to register their interest in taking part were sent to randomly selected households.
- 4.5 This method of recruitment does typically tend to attract more expressions of interest from people from professional backgrounds and with higher levels of education. To help address this skewing, the Index of Multiple Deprivation was used to identify postcode areas with higher levels of deprivation and proportionately more addresses were selected in these areas.
- 4.6 Any person aged 16 or over living in a household that received an invitation were able to register their interest in participating by telephone or online. Respondents then completed a form asking a number of questions that helped us select members so that the whole assembly was demographically representative of Devon.

- 4.7 The Devon Climate Assembly produced 14 Resolutions across the three categories. Each resolution is attended by specific conditions, which can be found in appendix 2, the Devon Climate Assembly Report.
- 5. Endorsement and Impact upon the Council**
- 5.1 The Devon Carbon Plan has followed a robust science led process involving thematic experts as well as including public consultation and a representative Citizens Assembly.
- 5.2 The Devon Carbon Plan action tables include columns which indicates who an action is most relevant to. Very rarely is an action relevant to a single organisation. The Devon Carbon Plan is a County carbon plan for all, where collaboration and working together is at the core of the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership.
- 5.3 The Devon Carbon Plan does not propose to supersede existing democratic scrutiny processes, it instead is an evidence led plan which forms a roadmap for how Devon can achieve net-zero carbon by 2050 at the latest, with an interim target of 50% reduction by 2030 below 2010 levels, and how each partner organisation can help to achieve this.
- 5.4 The Plan outlines how everyone in Devon can work together to reduce our emissions to net-zero. It highlights the barriers that need to be overcome, the resources required (whether they are existing or required) and where collaboration with national government is needed to do so.
- 5.5 Many of the actions have a degree of flexibility in their language, such as 'where possible', 'explore', 'investigate'. This is not there to downplay the critical nature of reducing carbon emissions, rather setting out key areas of focus for each partner organisation to contribute to the 2050 net-zero target.
- 5.6 Now would be an ideal opportunity to revise this Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to more closely align with the Devon Carbon Plan and to set out our own areas of focus.
- 6. Devon Carbon Plan Governance Arrangements**
- 6.1 Day-to-day implementation of projects will be managed by the organisation leading or contributing to each individual project. i.e., it is down to organisations to lead on their chosen priorities.
- 6.2 It is expected that partner organisation's formal democratic scrutiny processes and climate change working groups will continue to provide challenge to the implementation and to the execution of individual projects their organisations may be leading.
- 6.3 Devon Climate Change Forum will be established to provide independent, impartial, expert oversight and advice on behalf of the people of Devon to all tiers of the governance structure. People will be invited to apply, rather than selecting participants from a known pool of people. This will help bring robustness to the processes by avoiding an 'echo chamber' and introduce a layer of balance to the process. An analogue for this is the Climate Change Committee who provide independent and impartial advice to the UK government on its responsibilities under the Climate Change Act.

6.4 A Governance Structure is illustrated below.



## 7. East Devon Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

- 7.1 Our own Climate Change Strategy predated the publication of the Interim Devon Carbon Plan as it was an ambition of this Council to establish a framework for achieving net zero soon after our declaration of a climate emergency.
- 7.2 After two years since adoption, the Council has made progress on some of the actions in the action plan, and some actions have been investigated and deemed unlikely to be achievable in the short to medium term. The existing Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is also not consciously aligned with the Devon Carbon Plan themes and contains actions that have been developed in collaboration, which could be strengthened in our own Action Plan.
- 7.3 It is proposed that the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is revised and aligned with the Devon Carbon Plan, with the action plan itself streamlined to defined areas of focus for a shorter two year period (we currently review every five years), upon which another review will take place. This will ensure our focus is directed to those areas where we can have the greatest influence whilst also being able to reflect and respond to changes in national and local contexts.

## **8. Proposed Way Forward**

- 8.1 Since declaring a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency, the global outlook remains poor with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) publishing its Sixth Assessment Report showing that the vast majority of future scenarios show temperatures are on track to reach well above 1.5 degrees (over the limit set by the 2015 Paris Agreement), but it also highlights that some of the risks associated with Climate Change can still be prevented or lessened (such as the July 2022 heatwaves and wildfires across UK and Europe) with prompt action. The cost of action still outweighs the cost of inaction.
- 8.2 The latest science from the IPCC and the UK Governments Climate Change Committee as well as real world extreme weather events have demonstrated how critical joined up action is at reducing the very worst of future climate change scenarios. The Devon Carbon Plan is a landmark piece of work for the County to help realise and achieve our aims of becoming net-zero by 2050 at the latest.
- 8.3 It is recommended that the Council endorses the Devon Carbon Plan and in doing so, it commences a review of our own Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to align with the Devon Carbon Plan, and set out areas of focus for this Council for the next two years.

### **Financial implications:**

There is no direct budget request in the recommendation of the report. Any actions that cannot be afforded out of existing budgets will need to be presented back to Cabinet and Council for consideration.

### **Legal implications:**

Adopting a revised Climate Change Strategy will be a matter for Full Council as it forms part of the Policy Framework, otherwise these are matters that Cabinet can agree. There are no other legal implications requiring comment.

## **Appendix 1 Devon Carbon Plan**

Devon Carbon Plan [Devon Carbon Plan – Quick Reads – Devon Climate Emergency](#)

## **Appendix 2 Devon Climate Assembly Report**

<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/devon-climate-assembly/devon-climate-assembly-report/>

# THE INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN

## IN 8 POINTS



### **Fossil fuels no longer an energy source.**

- We use more renewable energy
- Communities are active in energy issues
- We walk, cycle & use electric vehicles



### **Energy consumption is minimal.**

- We drive less, we are active & healthy
- Services are local, reducing travel needs
- All buildings are more efficient



### **Community action for a net-zero Devon.**

- We think innovatively
- Communities share ideas of net-zero
- Citizens are at the centre of change



### **Carbon captured from fuels burnt.**

- Only used for unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions
- Devon pilots carbon capture & storage projects e.g. catching smoke from industrial chimneys



# THE INTERIM DEVON CARBON PLAN

## IN 8 POINTS



### **Escaping greenhouse gas emissions are minimised.**

- Reduce escaping gases from sewage works, landfill & electrical equipment



### **Develop a resilient local economy.**

- A circular, just, regenerative economy
- Reskill workers e.g. in renewable energy
- We spend money locally



### **Resources are used more circularly.**

- We consume fewer materials
- Reduce household & commercial waste
- We reuse, repair & recycle more



### **Maximise natural carbon storage.**

- Adapt to climate impacts e.g. flood controls
- Trees planted & habitats restored
- We enjoy healthy, locally sourced foods





Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 2 November 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Rural England Prosperity Fund - Investment Plan

### Report summary:

Cabinet considered a report on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 detailing our Investment Plan to deliver the District's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) allocation of £1,796,363 through a series of projects over a three year period.

As we await approval of our submitted SPF Investment Plan, the Government have now launched a new £110m Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), replacing EU funding previously delivered through the LEADER and Growth Programme initiatives.

Through the REPF, East Devon District Council has the opportunity to secure an additional financial allocation of up to £854,298 to be distributed as capital spend in the form of grants for business or community purposes. This allocation is regarded as a 'top-up' to East Devon's SPF allocation, taking total funding to £2,650,661.

In order to access this top-up, we are required to develop and submit an 'Addendum' to our existing UKSPF Investment Plan. This must be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 with approvals of REPF Addendums expected in January 2023 and payments expected in April 2023. Funds must then be spent between April 2023 and March 2025 (years 2 and 3 of the UKSPF delivery window).

The purpose of this report is to outline our recommended REPF Addendum approach already endorsed by both our Member Panel and Local Partnership Group, and to seek Cabinet approval for the proposed Addendum submission detailed in Appendix A.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendations:

That Cabinet;

- Approves the proposed REPF Addendum to our SPF Investment Plan contained at Appendix A
- Gives delegated authority to the Service Lead for Growth, Development & Prosperity in consultation with the Strategic Lead for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Assets to make any final changes to the REPF Addendum and to submit this by the 30<sup>th</sup> November deadline

## Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the Council submits a suitable Addendum to secure our REPF financial allocation of up to £854,298 and ensure delivery of the business and community interventions described in this report between April 2023 and March 2025.

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Officer: Robert Murray, Economic Development Manager, tel 01395 517514  
[rmurray@eastevon.gov.uk](mailto:rmurray@eastevon.gov.uk)

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

The Rural England Prosperity Fund is intended to support the key objectives of the Levelling Up White Paper.

**Climate change** High Impact. The REPF Addendum approach includes interventions designed to support the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and the transition to a zero carbon economy.

**Risk:** Medium Risk; This report highlights the need to approve EDDC's Rural England Prosperity Fund Addendum which must then be submitted to Government by the 30<sup>th</sup> November. Subject to endorsement by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), there will be an ongoing need for robust programme management to ensure that the substantial grant fund interventions contained in the Addendum are delivered.

## Links to background information

Report to Cabinet 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus](#)  
[UK Shared Prosperity Fund: prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)  
[Levelling Up White Paper \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Report to Cabinet 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022: [UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Investment Plan](#)  
[Rural England Prosperity Fund: prospectus](#)

## Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

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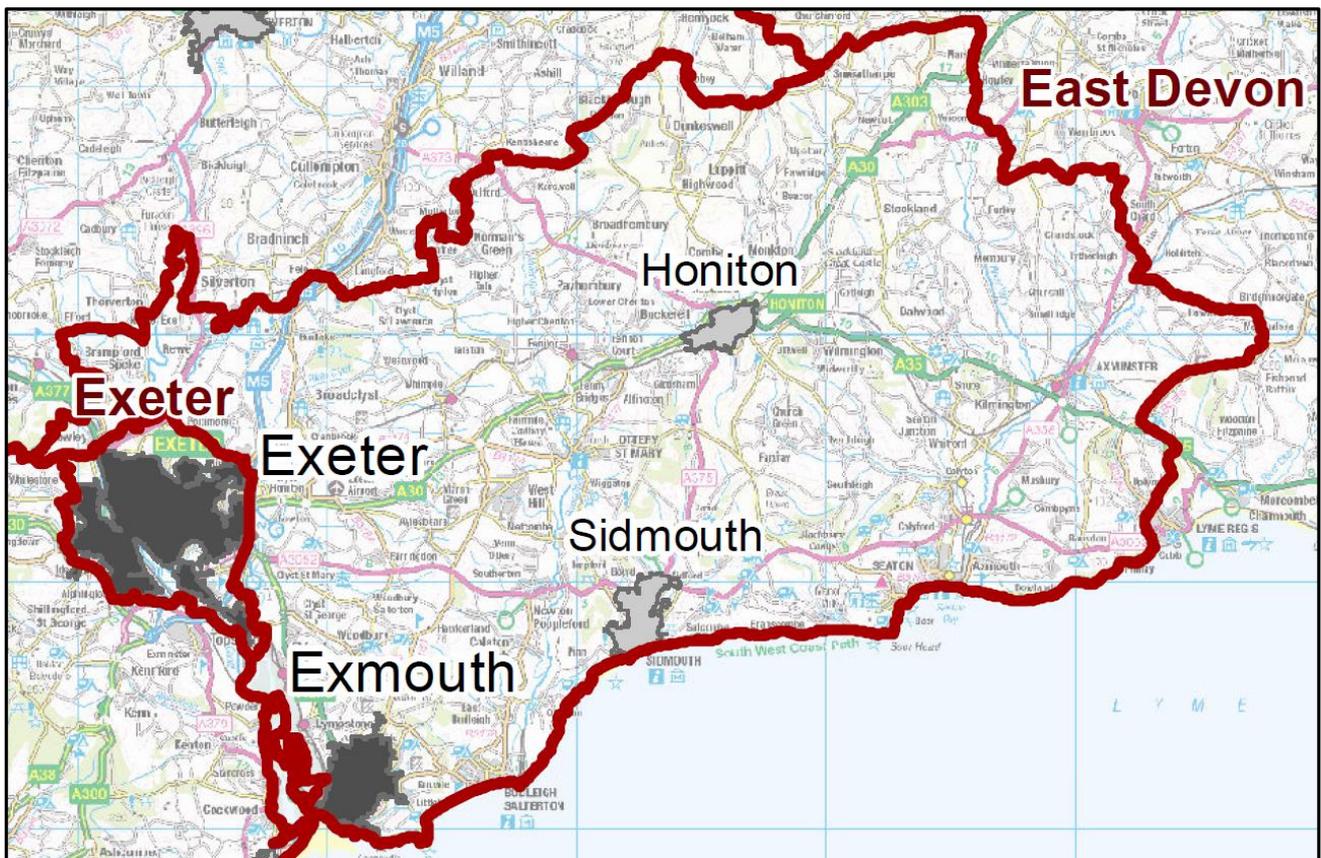
## 1 Background and Context

1.1 As of the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, with the announcement of a new £110m Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and [published prospectus](#), every local authority area in England

with a significant rural population has been allocated a share of this fund for a two year period between 2023 and 2025.

1.2 The purpose of this REPF scheme is to support activities which address particular challenges rural communities face such as lower productivity, poorer connectivity and access to key services. The Fund is also described as the replacement to the EU Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) which was delivered through the LEADER and Growth Programme initiatives.

1.3 Rural areas are defined as towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000; and market or 'hub towns' with populations of up to 30,000 that serve their surrounding rural areas as centres of employment and in providing services. For East Devon, this means only Exmouth is exempt in terms of where REPF can be spent.



1.4 Defra have made it clear the REPF is integrated into the UKSPF and is complementary to funding used to support rural areas under the UKSPF. The REPF objectives sit within the UKSPF investment priorities for 1) Supporting Local Business, and 2) Community and Place. They also relate to two of the Levelling Up White Paper Missions: Mission 1 Living standards; and Mission 9 Pride in place.

1.5 Specifically, the REPF provides small scale capital funding to:

- support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams
- support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy

1.6 **East Devon District Council has the opportunity to secure a financial allocation of up to £854,298**, a sum determined by weighted factors reflecting the [priorities of the fund](#). This allocation is described as a rural top-up to East Devon's £1,796,363 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation, taking total funding to £2,650,661. The top-up allocation must be distributed in the form of grants for business or community purposes, and can only be used to fund capital costs (no revenue spend is permitted).

1.7 In order to access this top-up, we are required to submit an 'Addendum' to our UKSPF Investment Plan which must be submitted by 30 November 2022. Once submitted, government are expecting to approve RPF Addendums in January 2023, with payments to local authorities expected in April 2023. Funds must be spent between April 2023 and March 2025 (years 2 and 3 of the UKSPF delivery window). Any underspend must be returned to the government.

1.8 The purpose of this report is to outline our recommended REPF Addendum approach already endorsed by both our Member Panel and Local Partnership Group, and to seek Cabinet approval for the proposed Addendum submission detailed in Appendix A.

## 2 Consultation and Engagement

2.1 Government guidance sets out the expectation that local priority projects (interventions) are identified in consultation with local stakeholders. Defra has also provided a list of [eligible interventions](#) which can be delivered using REPF funds. It is noted that funding can be used to top-up existing eligible UKSPF interventions, where funding is directly targeted towards rural outcomes and outputs.

2.2 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, an update and consultation session took place with the Local Partnership Group (LPG) comprising local stakeholders and businesses from a range of sectors who supported development of our UKSPF Investment Plan. The purpose of the session was to run through and seek feedback on various project proposal and the group's input has helped to shape the proposals outlined in this paper.

2.3 The feedback provided by the LPG included ensuring sufficient farms representation through the business grants element and a specific concern that the value of rural work hubs and co-working spaces is recognised and prioritised. We have confirmed that our proposed approach would mean grant contributions towards delivery of rural work hubs could be supported under the proposed business grants scheme, especially where this involves farm diversification. By ensuring our proposed schemes are as flexible as possible, we can 1) allow for a range of rural economy projects to be supported, whilst 2) giving the best chance of full spend of our REPF allocation in any given financial year, avoiding any underspend having to be returned to Defra.

2.4 This consultation was followed by a meeting of our SPF Programme Management Panel (PMP) on the 4<sup>th</sup> October. This Panel is comprised of a cross-party group of members reporting to Cabinet and having oversight of the deployment of both our SPF and, by extension, the top up Rural England Prosperity Funding.

2.5 A recommended proposal was put to the Panel detailing a combination of interventions which can be included within East Devon's REPF Addendum. We have tried

to ensure that the proposed interventions do not duplicate [other schemes](#) managed by Defra.

2.6 At the conclusion of this Panel meeting, the recommended Addendum proposal set out in the following section of this report was unanimously endorsed by Members.

### 3 Recommended Proposal

3.1 Under this scenario, the REPF is evenly split between the two themes of the fund: communities and businesses. Both schemes would be funded with an allocation of £427,149 for the two year period. Defra has specified that 25% of our allocation will be distributed to EDDC for Year 2 delivery (2023/4) and 75% for Year 3 (2024/5).

3.2 Rather than establishing two entirely new grant funding schemes, our recommendation is to create new 'pathways' within two existing UKSPF schemes due to commence in Year 1 (the current financial year).

3.3 This proposal would involve merging the UKSPF Net Zero Innovation Fund with a new REPF funded rural innovation grant scheme. This merged scheme would be referred to as the Innovation and Resilience Fund 2.

3.4 The recommended proposal would also involve merging the grant element of the UKSPF Sustainable Tourism Fund with a new REPF funded grant scheme for local community, cultural and leisure buildings. This merged scheme would be referred to as the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Fund. The 2 overarching projects along with the relevant SPF and REPF grant pathways comprising them are set out below (REPF grant sums highlighted).

Project	Pathway	Fund	Y1 Cost	Y2 Cost	Y3 Cost	Total Cost
<b>Culture, Leisure and Tourism Fund (CLTF)</b>	Sustainable Tourism	UKSPF	£24,553	£27,500	£0	£52,053
	Rural Culture & Leisure	<b>REPF</b>	N/A	<b>£106,787</b>	<b>£320,362</b>	<b>£427,149</b>
	TOTAL		£24,553	£134,287	£320,362	£479,202
<b>Innovation and Resilience Fund 2 (IRF2)</b>	Net Zero Innovation	UKSPF	£24,554	£55,000	£130,000	£209,554
	Rural Innovation	<b>REPF</b>	N/A	<b>£106,787</b>	<b>£320,362</b>	<b>£427,149</b>
	TOTAL		£24,554	£161,787	£450,362	£636,703

3.5 **Rural Culture and Leisure:** This pathway of the new **CLTF** scheme would provide capital grant funding for green and accessible infrastructure for local community

organisations with a cultural or leisure focus, including charities, CICs, social enterprises, voluntary organisations, local authorities, education providers and other public sector bodies based locally. The CLTF would include grants for community buildings to fund EV charging points, solar panels, heat pumps, improved wheelchair access (beyond statutory requirements), etc.

The purpose of the scheme would be to help to strengthen our social fabric and foster a sense of local pride and belonging through investment in infrastructure for vital community spaces, thereby enhancing their resilience and pathway to net zero. Efforts will be made to ensure that the scheme does not conflict with the upcoming [Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund](#).

**3.6 Rural Innovation:** This pathway of the new **IRF2** scheme would provide capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas, based largely on the first iteration of EDDC's Innovation and Resilience Fund from 2021-2022.

The purpose of the scheme would be to increase private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities, through targeted support for SMEs to undertake innovation, diversification or adopt productivity enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques. Farmer-owned businesses will be eligible for funding for diversification purposes, although we must ensure this scheme does not duplicate activities which can be funded through the [Farming Investment Fund](#).

3.7 We have explored all alternative options for REPF delivery under the eligible interventions for the business and community themes. Many of these interventions have already been included within our UKSPF Investment Plan, including projects focused on the visitor economy, active travel and volunteering initiatives. It is our firm belief that additional separate grant projects will present a more fragmented and confusing support landscape for potential applicants, will require additional officer resource currently focused on core UKSPF delivery, and will increase the likelihood of grant programme underspend and associated fund recovery by Government – something we have successfully avoided to date.

3.3 The recommended Addendum approach described here and articulated within our draft Addendum at Appendix A provides the required rural additionally within existing UKSPF schemes and limits the need for significant additional officer programme delivery resource.

## 4 Conclusion

4.1 We have presented a recommended approach for our REPF Addendum with a clear rationale. Instead of establishing two entirely new grant funding schemes, risking confusion for applicants, duplication of effort for officers and potential underspend, existing UKSPF grant funds will sit alongside a new REPF funded rural innovation grant scheme and a new REPF funded grant scheme for local community, cultural and leisure buildings.

4.2 We hope the approach will ensure full spend of our REPF allocation in a way which is 1) consistent with the interventions set out within the REPF Prospectus; 2) aligned with existing grant projects already included within our submitted UK SPF Investment Plan, so as

to simplify the grants offer and application process for applicants; and 3) less onerous for officers to deliver, making use of existing materials and resources.

4.3 The Addendum approach has been endorsed through consultation with our diverse Local Partnership Group and representative SPF Programme Management Panel who will continue to have oversight of REPF delivery alongside SPF projects.

4.4 Endorsement is now sought for the resulting REPF Addendum presented in Appendix A. This will enable the Rural England Prosperity Fund Addendum to be submitted to Government ahead of the 30<sup>th</sup> November deadline.

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### **Financial implications:**

The report relates to the proposed spend plan of specific Government Funding, there is no request for additional budget relating to EDDC own resources.

### **Legal implications:**

What is proposed is within the power of Cabinet and it is for Cabinet to determine whether the REPF Addendum (to form part of the SPF Investment Plan) meets the expectations of the Council. Otherwise, there are no legal implications requiring comment.

## Appendix A: EDDC Rural England Prosperity Fund – Addendum (as at 21.10.22)

<b>Select your area</b>	
<b>Your area</b>	East Devon
<b>Name of person submitting REPF information</b>	Andrew Wood
<b>Alternative contact name and email</b>	Tom Winters <a href="mailto:twinters@eastdevon.gov.uk">twinters@eastdevon.gov.uk</a>
<b>SRO contact details</b>	Andrew Wood <a href="mailto:adwood@eastdevon.gov.uk">adwood@eastdevon.gov.uk</a>
<b>UKSPF Investment Plan reference number</b>	ANON-QPA8-9PZP-D

<b>Local context</b>
<p><b>You have already submitted your UKSPF investment plan. Here, we would like you to provide any additional information about specific rural challenges, market failures, and opportunities for rural businesses or rural communities in your area that you would like us to consider.</b></p> <p>As all of East Devon is classed as rural apart from Exmouth, all of the challenges, opportunities and market failures outlined in our UKSPF Investment Plan are equally applicable to this Addendum. For our deeply rural areas, there are additional factors to consider.</p> <p><b>Productivity Gap</b></p> <p>Challenge 4 of our UKSPF Investment Plan outlines the productivity gap between East Devon and the rest of the UK. Although we do not have access to data at a lower level, a 2017 investigation into rural productivity in the South West of England found that “rural productivity (GVA/workforce job) is 8% lower than urban productivity in the four [South West] LEP areas and 10% lower than the average for rural areas in England.” This study found that lower productivity is likely due to the prevalence of smaller scale businesses in typically lower value sectors such as tourism and agriculture. Growth for rural business can often be more difficult due to the increased distance to markets/clients in urban areas. Attracting the right skilled workers is also more challenging, with less affordable housing for employees, poorer quality transport and broadband infrastructure also holding back many rural businesses. Newcastle University’s Centre for Rural Economy has highlighted how rural businesses in the South West are more likely to struggle obtaining finance compared to urban businesses. Due to the competitive advantages held by urban businesses over rural businesses, there is a case for providing additional support to rural businesses seeking to innovate or adapt to changing market conditions in becoming more productive.</p> <p><b>Future of Farming</b></p> <p>In addition to the productivity issues facing small rural businesses, those businesses in the agricultural sector are facing particularly unique challenges. A study commissioned by the Great South West Partnership found that Devon farms are more at risk from the changing subsidy landscape. The study also confirms that farms in Devon tend to have more ‘small’, ‘very small’ and ‘intermediate’ farms when compared England as a whole. Due to the smaller nature of our farms, many will struggle to adapt their business as they may not have the necessary funds to invest in diversification. ONS data shows that 70% of East Devon agricultural land is grassland used to maintain livestock, compared to 48% of English agricultural</p>

land as a whole. This demonstrates East Devon’s reliance on livestock farming. The Great South West study confirms that “small livestock farms have higher labour costs, smaller revenue and more reliant on support payments; BPS reductions will hit hard and early in the transition” (p29). To mitigate against this risk, farms are encouraged to diversify their business, to identify alternative income streams within their farm-holding which sit outside of their agricultural operations.

**Tackling Climate Change**

Challenge 4 of our UKSPF Investment Plan sets out the challenge to reach Net Zero locally by at least 2050. Whereas many private sector businesses and public bodies are actively budgeting for net zero infrastructure, this process is much more challenging for smaller rural community organisations. Many of East Devon’s smaller rural community organisations do not have the necessary financial reserves or projected income to effectively transition to net zero. East Devon’s £2.1m Innovation and Resilience Fund (mentioned in Opportunity 3 of the Investment Plan) witnessed a large number of applications from community organisations to procure solar PV, air source heat pumps, EV charging, etc. Although these bids were not eligible for IRF funding, this process did demonstrate that demand for this required support still exists, with minimal alternative funding sources for this type of investment. The REPF can be used to assist these organisations in reaching local carbon targets, thereby supporting the longevity of these essential community assets.

Rural finance evidence, [What’s Holding Rural Businesses Back? \(2017\)](#).

Farming data, *Assessing the impact of Agricultural Transition in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Dorset and Somerset: Research to inform future planning (2022)*: <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/GSW-agricultural-transition-report.pdf>

Rural productivity data, *The SW Rural Productivity Commission Key Findings and Recommendations (2017)*: <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/HotSW-14332-A4-Overview-report-digital-doc-FINAL.pdf>

<b>Interventions – rural business</b>	
<b>Please choose the interventions you wish to use under the rural business investment priority. Select as many options as you wish from the menu. The list of interventions can be viewed here.</b>	
<b>2023-2024 interventions:</b>	1.1
<b>2024-2025 interventions:</b>	1.1
<b>Please explain how the interventions selected will address local rural business challenges, market failures, and opportunities (max 300 words)</b>	
We aim to create a rural innovation fund to provide capital grant funding for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. The purpose of the scheme is to increase private sector investment in growth-enhancing activities, through targeted support for businesses to undertake specific innovation, diversification and/or adaptation based activity. These will help to increase productivity, with energy efficient, low carbon technologies and techniques given particular preference. This scheme will directly address East Devon’s productivity	

gap, increasing high-GVA economic activity in our rural areas. This scheme also complements our Net Zero Innovation Fund proposed within our UKSPF Investment Plan.

This intervention will also support farms seeking to deliver changes with diversify their income through non-agricultural based revenue streams. Following a series of targeted strategies, endorsed by local stakeholders and members, we are particularly keen to support cultural, leisure and tourism focussed diversifications, in line with Opportunities 1 and 5 in our Investment Plan. This initiative will therefore help to provide financial support for local farm businesses with a specific and sustainable project, supporting farms as they transition to an alternative rural payment mechanism. We will ensure this scheme does not duplicate activities which can be funded through the Farming Investment Fund or East Devon’s Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

To ensure the rural innovation fund is successful in unlocking private sector investment, all grant funding will require a commitment to match-fund the requested amount by at least 50%. Our ambition is for the scheme to fund at least 20 rural micro and small businesses, each adopting new technologies or processes within the firm and unlocking demonstrable productivity improvements. The scheme will encourage job creation where possible, although increasing productivity will be the primary aim of the fund, in an attempt to help close East Devon’s productivity gap.

**Please rank the interventions selected in order of expected value added**

1.1

**Interventions – rural communities**

**Please choose the interventions you wish to use under the rural communities investment priority. Select as many options as you wish from the menu.**

<b>2023-2024 interventions:</b>	2.2
<b>2024-2025 interventions:</b>	2.2

**Please explain how the interventions selected will address local rural business challenges, market failures, and opportunities (max 300 words)**

We aim to create a rural leisure and tourism fund to provide capital grant funding for low carbon and accessibility focussed projects for local community organisations with a cultural or leisure focus. This will include rural charities, CICs, social enterprises, voluntary organisations, local authorities, education providers and other public sector bodies based locally. We are particularly keen to support cultural and leisure focussed organisations, in line with Opportunity 1 in our Investment Plan. The scheme will include grants for community buildings to fund EV charging points, solar panels, heat pumps, improved wheelchair access (beyond statutory requirements), etc.

The purpose of the scheme would be to help to strengthen our social fabric and foster a sense of local pride and belonging through investment in infrastructure for vital community spaces, thereby enhancing their resilience and pathway to net zero. The social and community focus of many rural East Devon charities, CICs, social enterprises, service providers and organisations means that income beyond their operational costs is used to benefit rural residents and service beneficiaries.

The cash reserves of many valuable local community organisations with fixed premises are simply not sufficient to fund the installation of solar PV, heat pumps and insulation measures required to reach their net zero targets by 2050. The proposed fund is a targeted opportunity to address this challenge. We will ensure this scheme does not duplicate activities which will be funded through the upcoming Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund.

Although applicants may not be specifically required to match-fund grant funds awarded, those applicants who are able to offer a proportion of match-funding will be scored more favourably in our assessment process. For larger purchases, where funds are required in addition to the maximum grant award (to be locally determined), the applicant will need to match-fund the difference to ensure project delivery is achievable. Our ambition is for the scheme to fund at least at least 20 community organisations, with each recipient increasing the perception and number of users of their facilities. The scheme will encourage projects to improve accessibility where possible, although increasing the take-up of net zero infrastructure will be the primary aim of the fund in an attempt to help achieve East Devon's net zero target.

**Please rank the interventions selected in order of expected value added**

2.2

**Interventions outcomes**

**Please select what outcomes the interventions selected in the rural business investment priority are expected to achieve**

At least 20 businesses adopting new technologies or processes to the firm.  
 At least 20 businesses with improved productivity.  
 At least 20 businesses experiencing growth.

**Please select what outcomes the interventions selected in the rural communities investment priority are expected to achieve**

At least 20 community organisations with improved perception of facilities or amenities.  
 At least 20 community organisations with increased users of facilities or amenities.

**Delivery**

**Please set out the indicative spend profile of your REPF allocation, additional to that of your UKSPF investment plan. Please detail the indicative budgets at investment priority level and at intervention level, for the 2 years of the fund, including if REPF money will be used to complement UKSPF funded projects. (300 words max)**

East Devon's REPF allocation of £854,298 will be split evenly between the rural business and rural communities investment themes. £427,149 will be allocated for intervention 1.1 and a further £427,149 for intervention 2.2 for the two years.

As confirmed by Defra, our total allocation will be split 25:75 between years 1 and 2. As a result, £106,787 will be spent on each of the two interventions in year 1,

totalling £213,574, with £320,362 spent on each of the two interventions in year 2, totalling £640,724.

Please be aware that a 25:75 split of our total allocation leads to figures with decimal numbers. To ensure our totals match, we have rounded our year 1 allocation down to £213,574 and rounded up our year 2 allocation to £640,724, thereby equalling our total allocation of £854,298.

Our REPF allocation will be used to complement two existing UKSPF funded schemes. Our REPF intervention 1.1 will be merged with our UKSPF intervention E29 to create one larger grant scheme with a 'net zero innovation' pathway (UKSPF funded) and 'rural innovation' (REPF funded) pathway. Our REPF intervention 2.2 will be merged with the grant element our UKSPF intervention E17 to create one larger grant scheme with a 'sustainable tourism' pathway (UKSPF funded) and 'rural culture and leisure' (REPF funded) pathway. By merging together multiple grant schemes we can minimise the need for additional development time whilst creating a more straightforward and accessible funding (and application) landscape for local businesses and community organisations.

**Please set out how you intend to select projects to support, detailing including how you will ensure they deliver value for money, including additionality. Please also set out how you will determine that projects cannot be funded by private finance. (500 words max)**

To distribute REPF funding, we will develop a comprehensive grant application process. We have a strong history of developing effective grant programmes to deliver value and additionality. We focus on providing relevant guidance, policy, assessment and reporting underpinned by due diligence and democratic decision making. The approach has been recently endorsed at audit.

The approach we will take with REPF will be based on similar schemes managed by EDDC, such as our 2021-22 £2.1m Innovation and Resilience Fund (IRF). Our ability to effectively manage this scheme and unlock significant additional private investment was recently acknowledged and commended by the FSB, when our IRF scheme won the South West 'Future Ready' award at the 2022 FSB National Local Government Awards.

We will publish a separate policy document for all UKSPF and REPF grant schemes for applicants to review. This document will build on relevant DLUHC and DEFRA guidance, setting out types of eligible project including those which will score more highly compared to others. Grant applications will be marked against a scoring matrix approved by a panel of EDDC councillors, who will also have the final say on each grant awarded. Each grant award will be conditional on the applicant signing a legally binding funding agreement to ensure that applicants use their funding in the intended manner. Grant recipients who fail to use their grant in the agreed manner will be subject to grant reclamation. We have this process in place for the IRF, and such is the robust assessment of applications, we have yet to experience issues for any of the 51 projects supported.

The need to achieve value for money will be embedded within the scoring matrix. Grants will be awarded in order of those who have scored the highest, with the scoring being primarily determined by the number of outputs and outcomes the applicant aims to deliver. A minimal match-funding threshold of 50% will be set for the rural business grants (intervention 1.1), with additional voluntary match-funding increasing the applicant's score. We will explore the appropriateness of mandatory

match-funding for the rural communities grants (intervention 2.2), with voluntary match-funding increasing the application score.

Each applicant will be asked to outline why the project detailed within their application cannot be funded entirely by the applicant or funded via conventional sources of financing. For larger grant requests we will request financial information, such as balance sheets and financial statements, to confirm their financial situation. This financial status review will factor into the scoring process, with applications rejected outright where they cannot clearly demonstrate the financial need for grant funding.

Our analysis of the local funding landscape suggests that there are no similar schemes offering this type of grant support to local rural businesses and community organisations. As a result, we do not anticipate any duplication of efforts regarding other funding sources. The REPF funded schemes proposed in this addendum will therefore provide additionality, help to address local challenges regarding rural productivity and embrace opportunities relating to our net zero targets.

**Have you identified opportunities to work with other places on specific interventions and/or projects for the rural business interventions?**

<b>Intervention(s) you intend to collaborate on:</b>	None
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<b>Place(s) you intend to collaborate with:</b>	None
-------------------------------------------------	------

**Have you identified opportunities to work with other places on specific interventions and/or projects for the rural communities interventions?**

<b>Intervention(s) you intend to collaborate on:</b>	None
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<b>Place(s) you intend to collaborate with:</b>	None
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**Engagement**

**Further to your UKSPF Investment Plan engagement, have you engaged or consulted with rural stakeholders, or expanded your UKSPF local partnership group, to inform the information you have submitted above? If yes, please give details. You should also use this section to tell us about planned future engagement with rural stakeholders.**

In early October 2022, we reconvened our Local Partnership Group to engage and consult our local stakeholders. Those stakeholders with a sole focus on Exmouth were still invited, although they were informed that Exmouth is the only part of East Devon ineligible for REPF funding. We also arranged a separate session with our regional NFU representative to ensure that our proposed interventions matched local demand from farms and other businesses in the agricultural sector.

The LPG and NFU have provided a good level of input and guidance and are supportive of the resulting interventions contained in this Addendum. Contributions included two members of the LPG expressing a desire for work hub projects to be eligible for funding through the proposed rural business grant scheme. We will ensure that this is accommodated when a policy document for this scheme is drafted in the coming weeks. The NFU representative expressed a desire for additional funding for farm diversification projects. We will ensure that such projects are accommodated within our proposed rural business grant scheme. A

<p>representative of Devon Communities Together confirmed the need for rural village halls to be supported with project funding. We will ensure that these types of organisations are eligible for funding within our proposed rural communities grant scheme.</p> <p>Lastly, following our local stakeholder engagement, a final set of proposals were presented to our Programme Management Panel of East Devon District Council councillors. This meeting accepted the input provided by the local and rural stakeholders and concluded with a unanimous approval of the final set of interventions listed within this Addendum.</p> <p>We intend to hold bi-annual meetings with our Local Partnership Group, now augmented to include stronger rural representation, to update them on the progress of delivering the REPF and UKSPF interventions with the eventual aim to begin discussions for any future REPF or UKSPF rounds post-2024/25.</p>
<p><b>Are there aspects of your plans to use your REPF allocation that are not supported by rural stakeholders and the rural community? If yes, please provide more detail.</b></p>
<p>No</p>
<p><b>Are there MPs who are not supportive of your investment plan? If yes, please list which MPs are not supportive and outline their reasons why.</b></p>
<p>No</p>

<p><b>Confirmation of approval</b></p>	
<p>Please provide the names of who has approved the submission of the additional information</p>	
<p>Chief Executive:</p>	
<p>Elected leader:</p>	
<p>Section 151 officer:</p>	

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 2 November 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2023/24

### Report summary:

This report is seeking your approval to carry out consultation on proposed changes to our Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age. The reasons why we are proposing changes are set out in this report and will lead to a number of our low income households in receipt of council tax reduction seeing increases in the amount of relief that will lift them out of paying Council Tax altogether. Following consultation we will present a report to Cabinet with the recommended final scheme to be adopted by Council. This work supports the Council's poverty strategy as by reducing the council tax burden for those on the lowest incomes it will help to build financial resilience a key aim of our poverty strategy.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No Policy Framework Yes  No 

### Recommendation:

1. That Cabinet agrees to the proposed draft scheme and carry out public consultation on it.
2. Following public consultation, any changes to our scheme will be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 4 January 2023 with a view to obtaining a recommendation to Council.

### Reason for recommendation:

Each financial year the Council is required by law to decide, whether to revise its scheme or to replace it with another scheme. We made significant changes to our scheme for 2020/21 where we moved to an income banded scheme and also increased maximum support from 80% to 85%. For the past two financial years we have not made changes to our scheme due to the impact of Covid and not being able to properly assess how the changes made had affected residents' finances. We committed to undertake a full review during this year so that we would have time to consult on any proposed changes before proposing the 2023/24 scheme to Members. As we have identified some changes to our scheme we need to agree the draft scheme in order to consult on it.

Officer: Libby Jarrett, Service Lead – Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Customer Services, Fraud & Compliance. [Ljarrett@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Ljarrett@eastdevon.gov.uk) 01395 517450

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

At this stage we are only looking to consult on proposed changes to our scheme for 2023/24. The changes will be advantageous for those on low incomes and/ or with protected characteristics. Members will then have the opportunity to consider the outcome of the consultation together with consideration of the equality impact assessment before agreeing the final scheme which we aim to present to Cabinet on 4 January 2023 which will then need to be adopted by Full Council.

### **Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low Risk;

**Links to background information** [Agenda for Cabinet 8 January 2020](#)

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

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

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## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) was introduced from 1 April 2013. It is a means tested reduction/discount for council tax payers who are on low incomes. It replaced the previous national Council Tax Benefit Scheme.
- 1.2 For working age applicants the scheme is determined by local policy and for pension age applicants it is a national scheme subject to prescribed legislation.
- 1.3 Each year the Council is required to review and agree the working age scheme by 11 March of the preceding financial year. Any changes to our scheme are subject to consultation.
- 1.4 We have not made any changes to our scheme for the past two years. Significant changes to our working age scheme were introduced from 2020/21 where the Council increased maximum support from 80% to 85% but also moved to an income banded scheme in order to simplify the previous scheme and to better align with Universal Credit. The reasons why we moved to a banded scheme and increased support can be found in the Cabinet report to Members at their [meeting on 8 January 2020](#).
- 1.5 We committed to carry out a full review of our CTR working age scheme this year (Service plan objective and action within the Poverty plan) in order to be able to properly assess the impact of our current scheme on low income households, whether we are striking the right balance in the percentage of council tax support being provided across the four income bands, the actual income band levels for the different household groups and the affordability of the council tax by assessing arrears levels. As part of this review we can draw on data from our Social Resilience (Poverty) Dashboard where we can identify whether there are any demographic groups, especially those with protected characteristics who are presenting to us for financial help through our emergency discretionary funds.

1.6 As part of this review we have also considered what changes other authorities are planning to make to their schemes in order to ensure that our scheme doesn't disadvantage low income residents living in East Devon because others in neighbouring authorities are providing more generous levels of support than we are. Up until now Teignbridge was the only Devon authority providing 100% support for those in Band 1 with their other bands set at 75%, 50% & 25%. The rest of Devon was either providing similar levels of support to ourselves or less. Appendix 1 shows what the current position is across Devon and if Councils are proposing to make changes to their schemes for 2023/24 including whether they are planning to increase support.

## 2.0 Caseload (including scheme costs)

2.1 The make-up of our caseload is as follows:

Caseload	April 2020	November 2020	April 2021	October 2021	April 2022	July 2022
Working Age	3,387	4,189	4,920	4,733	4,613	4,566
Pension Age	3,389	3,778	3,775	3,686	3,658	3,637
Total	6,776	7,967	8,695	8,419	8,271	8,203

- Overall seen a 21% increase in our caseload from April 2020 compared to July 2022.
- Our working age caseload has seen the biggest rise of 35% from April 2020 to July 2022.

2.2 Current CTR costs split between working age and pension age:

As at July 2022	£
Working age	4,532,303.16
Pension age	4,664,644.92
Total	9,196,948.08

- Even though we have nearly 1,000 less pension age claims the scheme costs are still higher for pension age because this is a prescribed scheme which provides for 100% support whereas for working age our local scheme is capped at 85% (pre 2020 was capped at 80%).

2.3 Our working age scheme has four income bands – 85%, 80%, 55% and 25% and entitlement is based on different levels of income to reflect household make up:

	Passported	Single no children	Couple no children	1 child	2 child +
Group 1 - 85%	No limit	£0.00 -£80.00	£0.00 -£80.00	£0.00-£160.00	£0.00 - £235.00
Group 2 - 80%	N/A	£80.01-£160.00	£80.01 - £160.00	£160.01-£235.00	£235.01 - £310.00
Group 3 - 55%	N/A	£160.01-£235.00	£160.01-£235.00	£235.01-£310.00	£310.01 - £385.00
Group 4 - 25%	N/A	£235.01 - £+310	£235.01-£310.00	£310.01-£385.00	£385.01 - £460.00

2.4 The following table provides the caseload distribution by the four discount bands:

	Passported	Single No Children	Couple No Children	1 Child	2 Child +	Totals
<b>Group 1 – 85%</b>	1250	370	18	173	324	<b>2135</b>
<b>Group 2 – 80%</b>	N/A	546	60	266	294	<b>1166</b>
<b>Group 3 – 55%</b>	N/A	159	63	307	329	<b>858</b>
<b>Group 4 – 25%</b>	N/A	90	18	127	172	<b>407</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>1119</b>	<b>4566</b>

2.5 Table showing caseload breakdown by different categories comparing October 21 to July 2022:

Band	Households with Children			Disability Benefit			Employed			Carer		
	Oct -21	Jul- 22	% Diff	Oct- 21	Jul- 22	% Diff	Oct- 21	Jul- 22	% Diff	Oct -21	Jul- 22	% Diff
<b>Band 1 85%</b>	816	783	-4.0%	1252	809	-35.4%	77	127	+64%	280	374	33.6%
<b>Band 2 80%</b>	623	560	-10.0%	272	614	125.7%	559	503	-10.0%	62	117	88.7%
<b>Band 3 55%</b>	611	634	3.8%	271	228	-15.9%	638	697	+9.2%	60	110	83.3%
<b>Band 4 25%</b>	253	299	18.1%	73	112	53.4%	343	358	+4.3	31	45	45.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2303</b>	<b>2276</b>	<b>-1.1%</b>	<b>1868</b>	<b>1763</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>1617</b>	<b>1685</b>	<b>+4.3%</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>49.2%</b>

Note: Households can be in more than one group.

2.6 The following table shows the cases in arrears based on current scheme:

	Passported	Single No Children	Couple No Children	1 Child	2 Child +	Totals	% of arrears
Group 1 – 85%	156	85	5	36	88	<b>370</b>	<b>41%</b>
Group 2 – 80%	N/A	119	11	74	91	<b>295</b>	<b>33%</b>
Group 3 – 55%	N/A	20	10	65	67	<b>162</b>	<b>18%</b>
Group 4 – 25%	N/A	15	1	27	33	<b>76</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>19.7%</b>
<b>% of arrears</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>32%</b>		

Note: Arrears figures as at July 2022 and relates to those that owed against previous years.

- Highest groups in arrears are in the top band but this is also where we have the highest proportion of our caseload.
- Overall 20% of our working age CTR claimants are in arrears with their council tax. Comparing this to our pension age CTR (where they receive up to 100% support) only 1.4% of claimants are in arrears with their Council Tax. For non CTR households the percentage of households in arrears is 3.6%.
- Compared to last financial year (October 2021 to July 2022) we have seen the number of working age households in arrears increase from 735 to 903 despite our caseload reducing by 3.5%.

2.7 As Members will recognise the current economic climate facing low income households is extremely tough with many needing or becoming reliant on access to emergency funds to help with essential bills. However, even prior to this the level of benefits and wages over the past decade have not kept pace with inflation and for a number of years benefits were frozen. Alongside this Council tax has continued to rise which has meant that year on year incomes have been squeezed which disproportionately impacts low income working age households. It is therefore highly probable that we are unlikely to recover all of these arrears and those that we do recover will take longer to be repaid as well as a proportion having to be written off.

### 3.0 Drivers for Change – Summary

3.1 We committed to carrying out a full review this year –action within the poverty plan & service plan objective and the key considerations we have looked at are:

- Ensuring we are striking the right balance in the amount of support being provided and that our bandwidths are set at the right level to prevent unintended consequences.
- Taking account of the affordability of our scheme by drawing on council tax arrears data, patterns and themes from our Social Resilience (Poverty) Dashboard which tracks those accessing emergency funds.
- Other factors – meets our equalities duties, taking account of external economic influences that are impacting our low income households, keeping our scheme

aligned with other neighbouring authorities so our low income households are not being disadvantaged due to their postcode, etc.

#### 4.0 Proposed changes to our working age scheme for 2023/24

4.1 Taking into account paragraph 3.1 we are proposing the following 4 changes to our scheme:

- Increase Band 1 support from 85% to 100% - residents who fall in this band have the lowest income levels and by increasing support will lift them out of paying Council Tax altogether.
- Having fully reviewed the income band levels we have recognised that as well as allowing for increases due to inflation (so it doesn't result in residents dropping bands as benefits and wages increase) we have also needed to increase the bandwidth for couples as the levels are currently the same as those for single people, and therefore weren't fully aligned with the applicable amounts that are used within means tested benefits.
- Introduce a 16 hour minimum income floor which will mirror the equivalent in Universal Credit for self-employed, this will benefit those households that are unable to work more hours such as those with caring responsibilities, etc as we will calculate their entitlement based on this lower earnings threshold.
- Introduce a maximum of 12 months backdating for new claims as currently we have no limit which creates difficulties for residents being able to provide the information and evidence needed to support applications. Instead we will consider backdates beyond this period via our council tax hardship fund.

4.2 The following table set out our proposed income bands for 2023-24:

	Passported	Single No Children	Couple No Children	1 Child	2 Child +
<b>Group 1 – 100%</b>	No Limit	£0.00 - £90.00	£0.00 - £130.00	£0.00 - £200.00	£0.00 - £270.00
<b>Group 2 – 80%</b>	N/A	£90.01 - £160.00	£130.01 - £200.00	£200.01 - £275.00	£270.01 - £345.00
<b>Group 3 – 55%</b>	N/A	£160.01 - £235.00	£200.01 - £265.00	£275.01 - £340.00	£345.01 - £410.00
<b>Group 4 – 25%</b>	N/A	£235.01 - £310.00	£265.01 - £330.00	£340.01 - £405.00	£410.01 - £475.00

- The equivalent table for our current scheme is shown in paragraph 2.3.

4.3 The caseload distribution of our proposed scheme is as follows:

	Passported	Single No Children	Couple No Children	1 Child	2 Child +	Totals
<b>Group 1 – 100%</b>	1250	402	63	279	429	<b>2423</b>
<b>Group 2 – 80%</b>	N/A	514	47	351	352	<b>1264</b>
<b>Group 3 – 55%</b>	N/A	159	42	189	233	<b>623</b>
<b>Group 4 – 25%</b>	N/A	90	7	54	105	<b>256</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>1119</b>	<b>4566</b>

4.4 The following three tables illustrates the movement in how current claimants will gain under the proposed scheme for making these changes:

4.5

	Claims	% of cases
No Change	1606	35%
Gain	2960	65%
Loss	0	0%

4.6 The groups that gain:

	Passported	Single No Children	Couple No Children	1 Child	2 Child +	Total
Gain	1250	402	106	543	659	2960
Loss	0	0	0	0	0	0

4.7 The movement in bands:

From	To	Cases	% movement	Household with Children	Disabled	Employed	Carer
25%	55%	151	5%	140	43	131	16
25%	80%	1	0%	0	0	1	0
55%	80%	385	13%	352	105	304	63
55%	100%	0	0%	0	0	0	0
80%	100%	288	10%	211	99	149	68
85%	100%	2135	72%	783	809	127	374
<b>Totals</b>		<b>2960</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1486</b>	<b>1056</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>521</b>

- Increasing the top band from 85% to 100% is where most households will benefit.
- 2,423 households (53% of our caseload) will be lifted out of paying Council Tax
- The movement within the other bands are due to the changes we're proposing to the bandwidths.
- Largest group to benefit is those households with children where 1486 out of a 2276 will have less council tax to pay and 994 (44% of caseload with children) will come out of paying council tax altogether.

- Second largest group is disabled household where out of 1763, 1056 will have less council tax to pay, 908 (52% of our disabled cases) will come out of paying council tax altogether.
- Disabled households are identified from our Social Resilience (Poverty) Dashboard as the biggest group presenting for emergency support and these changes will help to provide financial support to those in need.

4.8 Savings against current annual council tax (income that can be used elsewhere):

Saving Bracket	Claims	% of Claims
Less than £50 per year	0	0%
£50 - £100 per year	4	0%
£100 - £150 per year	70	2%
£150 - £200 per year	1169	39%
£200 - £250 per year	740	25%
£250 - £300 per year	311	11%
£300 - £350 per year	263	9%
£350 - £400 per year	144	5%
£400 - £450 per year	107	4%
£450 - £500 per year	81	3%
Over £500 per year	71	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2960</b>	

- Majority of the claimants that will benefit (98%) will see annual savings from £150- £500 per year.

## 5.0 Financial Implications for increasing support – Impact on Tax Base

5.1 As we are proposing to increase the amount of CTR then this in turn increases the scheme costs which are set out below:

Current scheme costs for working age (see table para 2.2)	Draft scheme costs	Increase
£4,532,303.16	£5,255,162.32	£722,859.16

Note: Costs calculated based on current caseload and 2022/23 council tax charges

5.2 As CTR is funded through the Council Tax Base, the costs are shared in proportion with the amount preceptors receive. The proportions are as follows:

Preceptor	%
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Devon County Council	73%
Police & Crime Commissioner for Devon & Cornwall	12%
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority	4%
East Devon District Council	7%
Town/Parish Councils	4%

5.3 This means that if were to increase the amount of funding to CTR it would cost East Devon 7% of the increase in costs which would equate to **£50,600**. East Devon has currently set aside a sum of £44K to its budget for additional costs to CTR. Obviously if the Council was to increase funding this would reduce the overall tax base meaning preceptors receive less funding which will impact on their budgets. However, what is really important to note is that unless we collect the council tax due from these low income households we end up writing it off and this ultimately has the same effect on budgets. We therefore need to ensure that we provide the right level of funding upfront in order to avoid the build-up of what will become uncollectable debts.

5.4 There could well be resistance from other preceptors from increasing the funding to CTR customers because of the impact on the tax base in order to provide essential local services and the lateness of these proposed changes when budget setting will already be underway. Ideally this review was due to start earlier this financial year but due to the additional government schemes we've been given this year (Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme, Household Support Fund, Homes for Ukraine, Omicron Grant scheme and the Covid Additional Relief Fund) along with recruitment issues it has meant that this work has been delayed until now.

5.5 For these reasons preceptors will not have budgeted for increases there could well be issues raised. Any changes to our scheme do require public consultation as well as consulting first with the major preceptors. However, what is worth noting is that we are not the only Devon authority that is proposing to increase support to 100% as is the case with all of the Somerset authorities. Alongside this from April 2024 (assuming the Bill becomes law) and Council approves to use their discretion then we will be able to raise the amount of Council Tax for Second Home owners which will more than offset this increase in charge going forward.

## 6.0 Timetable for Scheme approval

Subject to approving the draft scheme we will then:

- Consult with the major preceptors
- Carry out a six week public consultation (approximately late October/beginning November to December)
- Following public consultation, we will consult with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and two Portfolio Holders (Finance, Sustainable Homes & Communities). This will enable these Members to carry out a more detailed review in order to decide on the recommended final scheme, to be presented to Cabinet.
- Cabinet meeting 4 January 2023
- Final scheme to be adopted by Full Council on 22 February 2023.

6.1 Due to the incredible tight timelines between now and Cabinet meeting in January there is a risk that we may not have sufficient time to meet these dates which we need to do in order to

implement the changes to the scheme for annual billing which preparation and testing commences late January.

## **7.0 Other options considered**

7.1 To not change our scheme – Although we have started this review later than we had originally planned we were extremely mindful of the commitments we had already made in carrying out a full review. Through the ongoing work we are doing in supporting our residents who are financially struggling and the demand for emergency help we felt we needed to review and propose these changes rather than retain our current scheme as the proposed change will bring about real long term positive help in lifting our lowest income households out of paying Council Tax.

## **8.0 Other Considerations**

8.1 The Government is planning to bring in legislation (part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill for England) that will provide local authorities the discretion to double the Council Tax charge on second homes from 1 April 2024. We currently have 2,661 second homes registered under Council Tax and should the Council want to implement this then based on these figures it will create in the region of approximately £5.65 million per year (calculated on current year's charge) additional Council Tax income. For East Devon this equates £395,619. The reason for highlighting this is that increasing our CTR scheme costs will be a consideration for Members on the affordability of this with other budgetary pressures. A report will be brought to Members before 31 March 2023 (as there will be a 12 months' notice period before being able to implement this change) so that Members can consider whether they would want to use their discretion to raise the Council Tax charge on second homes from 1 April 2024.

### **Financial implications:**

The financial details and implications are covered in the report.

### **Legal implications:**

Some of the legal position is detailed in the report. Given that this is recommending going out to consultation there are no specific legal implications to note at this stage. Where consultation is carried out, it needs to be carried out properly and genuine consideration given to the responses. The further report to Cabinet in January will comment on this and the legal position more generally.

Devon District	Current Scheme (Maximum support )	Changes being proposed for 2023/24
East Devon DC	Banded scheme – 4 bands 85%, 80%, 55% & 25%	Increase top band to 100% and changes to the bandwidths
Exeter CC	Maximum support 80% based on means test linked to the former Benefit scheme (pre 2013).	Not proposing to make any changes but likely for 2024/25.
Mid Devon CC	Banded scheme -4 bands 85%, 65%, 45% & 25%	Currently out to consultation on increasing maximum reduction to 100% for lowest band, removal of UC HE element, inflation increases to bands, any increase from welfare provision to be disregarded.
North Devon DC	Banded scheme 5 bands – 80%, 64%, 48%, 32% & 16%	Currently out to consultation on increasing bands to:  100%, 80%, 60%, 40% & 20%. Also proposing to introduce disregards for emergency increases in welfare and certain crisis payments.
South Hams DC	Banded scheme 4 bands 85%, 80%, 50% & 25%.	Uplifting the income within the bands by 20%  Remove all earnings disregards and apply one standard earnings disregard of £25  Adjust Minimum income floor for those in receipt of carers allowance, PIP and DLA to 16 hours.
Teignbridge DC	Banded scheme 4 bands 100%,75%,50% & 25%	Not proposing any changes at this stage for 2023/24
Torrige DC	Maximum support 75% based on means test linked to the former national Benefit scheme (pre 2013)	Currently out to consultation. Proposals are to move to a grid scheme but still looking to retain a 75% maximum discount.
West Devon BC	Banded scheme 4 bands 85%, 80%, 50% & 25%.	Uplifting the income within the bands by 20%  Remove all earnings disregards and apply one standard earnings disregard of £25  Adjust Minimum income floor for those in receipt of carers allowance, PIP and DLA to 16 hours.
Devon Unitary Authorities		
Plymouth City Council	Banded scheme – 4 bands 80%, 60%,40% & 20%	Not responded at time of producing report

Torbay Council	Maximum support 70% based on means test linked to the former national Benefit scheme (pre 2013)	No changes
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Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 2 November 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Household Support Fund (HSF) 3 and Discretionary Fund

### Report summary:

Due to concerns being raised by Members over the pressure on household's bills for our residents this winter we agreed that we would bring this late report to Cabinet on the Household Support Fund 3 which covers the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The HSF is money provided by the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) to Devon County Council who have allocated us a proportion of their fund to help low income households in our district. We have been working as part of Team Devon to align spend as closely as possible with other districts, whilst also having consideration of the Council's poverty strategy by helping those on the lowest incomes build financial resilience, which is a key aim of our poverty strategy.

This report sets out the proposal for our approach for utilising this fund to ensure support is directed to those most in need.

In addition, this report provides an update on what was approved following the motion at Council on 19 October 2022 where it was agreed that "Council requests officers to investigate creating an additional discretionary energy support fund based on evidence from the poverty dashboard data. This will look at taking into account existing funds, how this additional fund could be financed from the level of grants and also explore the systems and staff resources required to design and administer the scheme. The report will be presented at a Poverty panel meeting for consideration and potential recommendations".

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

Cabinet:

1. Adopt the Devon Framework agreement
2. Approve the approach for targeted support and for the remaining funding to be used under an open application basis as outlined under section 5 of the report.
3. Delegate authority to the Service Lead for Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Customer Services, Fraud & Compliance, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder to finalise the HSF Hardship policy document in line with this report and if necessary to make subsequent changes in order to ensure all funding is spent before the 31 March 2023

## Reason for recommendation:

Since October 2021 the Council has been receiving funding from the DWP to help low income households provide extra financial support to those most in need. A further sum of money has been allocated to us for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 to help support those low income households who are going to struggle to afford essentials due to the current cost of living crisis and rising energy costs. Our proposals for a proportion of our allocation have been based on the recommendations contained within the DWP's guidance as well as aligning with the other Devon authorities. A further proportion has been targeted to support residents who we have identified from our social resilience (poverty) dashboard as likely to need further support. The remainder of our budget will be used to help other households who we have not been able to identify as needing further support in line with our anti-poverty strategy. Once these funds are exhausted we will utilise our existing hardship fund to support vulnerable households.

Officer: Libby Jarrett, Service Lead – Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Customer Services, Fraud & Compliance. [ljarrett@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:ljarrett@eastdevon.gov.uk) 01395 517450

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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** High Impact

Equalities Impact [assessment](#) has been carried out for our proposed scheme due to having high relevance to those with protected characteristics and the outcome has been assessed as 1.

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** Low risk

**Links to background information** [Household Support Fund \(1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023\): final guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)  
Devon funding [agreement](#)

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

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
  - A greener East Devon
  - A resilient economy
- 

## 1.0 Background

1.1 An extension to the HSF for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 was announced by the government on 26 May 2022, with the final guidance on how the fund should be used issued on 30 September 2022.

- 1.2 Previous HSF ran from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 and 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.
- 1.3 Each separate HSF has had conditions for spend attached to them. For the first fund a third of the allocation had to be paid to households with children. The second fund had to have a third allocated to households with children and another third to households with pension age residents.
- 1.4 Each of the lower tier districts in Devon have worked with Devon County Council (DCC) on a Team Devon approach to help distribute the funds allocated under a joint framework. This has allowed each authority to ensure that local needs are taken into account whilst residents across Devon are mostly treated in the same way.
- 1.5 Since the Covid pandemic began in 2021 we have been working on developing the Social Resilience (poverty) dashboard. Through the administration of previous HSF and prior Covid Hardship funds we have continued to record data on those households who have applied for and been given a discretionary award. We now have data from November 2021 available which has allowed us to analyse and better understand what the need in the district is and to be in a position where we can target support to those most in financial need.
- 1.6 We also have a Financial Resilience Team whose aims are to help residents reach financial resilience. This is done through maximising income, minimising expenditure and working with partners to help resolve the root causes of hardship. Discretionary funds, including the HSF are available to the team to help support residents during this time. Alongside this they will also encourage and signpost or refer residents to access hardship funds that other organisations/companies have in place. This means that East Devon residents are able to benefit from increased financial help. As well as providing emergency financial support the team combine this support to achieve long term outcomes.
- 1.7 Since February 2022 the government have provided a number of financial measures/schemes to help with rising energy costs that will provide support up until the end of March 2023. Due to the number of different schemes and the different eligibility criteria in relation to these I have included a summary of these which is shown under appendix 1.

## **2.0 Gaps in government support schemes/ groups of concern**

- 2.1 By setting out and reviewing the government support schemes we have been able to consider households that may have fallen through the gaps or where the level of support may still not be sufficient. These are as follows:
- Pensioners not in receipt of Pension Credit but in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB) will only receive £300 pensioner Cost Of Living (COL) payment in their winter fuel payment so would miss out on £650.
  - Working Age households on Council Tax Reduction (CTR)/HB not in receipt of Tax Credits, Universal Credit (UC), Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) income based (IB), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Income Related (IR) and Income Support (IS)
  - Working age households on new style JSA or ESA and not in receipt of UC.
  - Old style JSA and ESA contributions based (C) on low incomes.
- 2.2 In addition to those claiming certain benefits who miss out on the £650 COL payment there are also those households who aren't on main gas or electric for heating their homes. These properties where they are heated through alternative means such as Heating oil and LPG will only be eligible to apply for £100 on their electricity bill or via an alternative fund (still to be announced). When you consider the Energy Price Cap Guarantee for this winter will provide on average savings of £700 for a typical household this doesn't appear comparable.

2.3 Alongside the above there will also be households who haven't claimed means tested benefits but nevertheless would be entitled and therefore miss out on the £650 COL payment. We are unable to identify these residents (who may fall into the 'hidden poverty' group) from our records because they haven't approached us for help, for instance it is recognised that there are many pensioners who do not claim their benefit entitlements. There are also residents who have incomes that are just above the eligible thresholds for means tested benefits or are just above the pension credit thresholds and will therefore struggle with the rising costs of household bills, including energy costs this winter.

2.4 It is also recognised that disabled households are twice as likely to be struggling with the cost of living crisis\*. This is also reflected in our dashboard with households with a disabled resident living in the property being the highest group (along with carers) presenting for emergency help. We have previously targeted support to disabled households and those with caring responsibilities via our Discretionary Council Tax Rebate Scheme.

\*[September: Disabled households and cost of living crisis | News and features | University of Bristol](#)

2.5 Finally, residents who are being supported in their homes for end of life care can experience their energy consumption doubling and how to afford energy costs can be a real concern for these low income families.

### **3.0 Government guidance for Household Support Fund**

3.1 Guidance issued by the DWP on 30 September 2022 has confirmed that the scheme can be used to help ease pressure on households with low incomes and to support those in need over the winter of 2022/23. [Household Support Fund \(1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023\): final guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

3.2 Support can be provided for the following:

- Energy and water.
- Essentials linked to energy and water.
- Wider essentials.
- Housing costs in exceptional cases of genuine emergency, where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.

3.3 Funding cannot be used to provide advice services including debt advice or to cover mortgage costs.

3.4 The government's expectation is that the fund should be used to support households in the most need. Primarily the fund is to support low income families however it is not only limited to those who are in receipt of welfare benefits. The guidance advises that authorities have the flexibility to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and should use a range of data to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households.

3.5 The guidance also makes clear that there are some low income households that are on means tested benefits that have not been included in the COL Payment and therefore these should be considered for support via our HSF such as those on Housing Benefit or those that have claimed after the qualifying eligibility dates.

3.6 It is also noted that authorities should prioritise supporting households with the costs of energy support that can have a sustainable impact on energy costs and are particularly encouraged to provide items such as insulation of hot water tanks, fitting draft excluders, replacing inefficient lightbulbs or white goods.

3.7 Consideration should also be given to provide support to disabled people who the DWP note may in particular be facing challenges due to the disproportionate impact of rising costs due to their individual needs.

#### **4.0 Devon County Councils proposals on allocation of the HSF**

4.1 DCC has been awarded funding of £5,064,876 for HSF to cover the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

4.2 The HSF must be spent or committed by 31 March 2023 and cannot be held over for future use.

4.3 As the fund is finite once the money has been spent the fund will close. This therefore may be earlier than 31 March 2023.

4.4 As with previous HSF an amount of £15 per child per week of the school holidays will be allocated to those who qualify for free school meals. Vouchers will be automatically distributed to eligible households before the October half-term (1 week), the Christmas holiday (2 weeks), February half term (1 week), and the Easter holiday (2 weeks).

4.5 Citizens Advice Devon Energy Relief scheme for pre-payment and credit meters will allow those using pre-payment meters to apply for funds to top up meters. The scheme will run until 31 March 2022 or until funds are exhausted.

4.6 Early Help will also be allocated an amount to distribute for families on low incomes to provide support with food and utility costs. Access to these funds will be by referrals via professionals working with the families.

4.7 DCC are also currently working with Cosy Devon on providing practical remedies to help households lower energy usage over the winter. Further details will be available once agreed.

4.8 Remaining allocation will be distributed amongst the lower tier districts in line with the Devon framework agreed by districts. All districts have agreed that they will use appropriate and accessible datasets to proactively identify vulnerable and in need households to offer a one-off financial award including those who were not eligible for a payment through the government's COL financial support.

4.9 For East Devon the proposed budget allocation by DCC for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 is £323,033.00. The Devon funding [agreement](#) and the Devon framework approach for the HSF hardship fund is available [here](#).

#### **5.0 Proposals for East Devon's policy (including predicted costs)**

5.1 Reflecting the government guidance and the Team Devon agreed framework our approach is in two parts

- Direct and targeted funding for those we have identified as eligible for financial support
- An open application based service

##### Part 1 – Targeted Support

5.2 The DWP have given recommendations that we should be targeting those on Housing Benefit (HB) as they had been excluded from the COL payment where they are not on one of the other

eligible benefits. As HB is a DWP benefit we are proposing that they are paid at the same amount as the COL £650 payment.

- 5.3 There are also households that are on contribution based ESA /JSA who are also on low incomes and therefore should also be treated in the same way as priority group 1
- 5.4 We are also proposing those working age residents on CTR would be entitled to a one-off payment of £200.00. Current figures suggest that there are a total of 137 households. The reason we aren't including pension age residents is because they have been catered for by government under the COL payment scheme and these households will receive an extra £300 on top of the winter fuel payment (see appendix 1 for details).

Priority group	Group	Number of cases	One off payment	Total cost
1	Not received a COL payment & on HB only (and not claiming CTR)	110	£650	£71,500
2	Not received a COL but claiming Council Tax Reduction and on ESA/JSA contribution based, etc.	62	£650	£40,300
3	Council Tax Reduction Working Age not in receipt of COL or included in priority 1 & 2 above	137	£200	£27,400
1-3	Sub total	309		£139,200

Priority group 1 - HB cases

- 42 disabled resident in household
- 4 children in household
- 62 pension age and 48 working age

Priority group 2 & 3 CTR cases

- 78 disabled resident in household
- 19 children in household
- 199 working age households

5.5 As highlighted under para 2.2 there are also those properties who aren't able to heat their homes through main gas or electric due to a number of our rural areas not having a mains gas supply. This means that those households aren't able to benefit from the same level of protection that the government have provided for under the Energy Price Guarantee scheme. This was an issue last winter for a number of our residents who couldn't afford to purchase a tank of oil. We are therefore proposing that those claiming CTR or HB will be targeted for £200 per household.

5.6 In addition we are aware that there are a group of residents living in accommodation that is likely to cost more due to poor conditions. These properties are those that have Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings of F and G. There are 3,793 properties in East Devon in bands F & G where we have details of the EPC rating for the property, however not everyone living in one of these properties is on a low income. We have identified those on a low income by cross referencing against our CTR and HB records. Of these, 285 households identified we are proposing awarding them an extra payment of £100.

5.7 Numbers and cost of providing support for those not on mains gas/electric for their heating or in poorly EPC rated properties:

Priority group	Group	Households	Amount of award per household	Total
4	Not on mains gas or electric and in receipt of CTR/HB	276	£200.00	£55,200
5	Residents in receipt of CTR/HB living in EPC rated F & G	285	£100.00	£28,500
<b>4&amp;5</b>	<b>Sub total</b>	<b>561</b>		<b>£83,700</b>

#### Priority group 4

- 97 disabled resident in household
- 88 households with children
- 121 pension age and 155 working age

#### Priority group 5

- 88 disabled resident in household
- 68 households with children
- 119 pension age and 164 working age

#### 5.8 Estimated cost of providing targeted funding:

Total Funding (allocated to East Devon)	£323,033
Targeted Support- priority groups 1-5	£222,900
Remaining Balance	£100,133

Note: From experience we know that not all households that have been identified for targeted support will want to claim this payment and therefore it is likely that the remaining balance could be higher than this figure.

5.9 Ideally we would like to have identified those households who have missed out for the COL payment because they weren't in receipt of the eligible benefits on the qualifying dates but have since become entitled or have only received one of the two payments. These are difficult to identify from our records due to the way the data is held within the systems and also how information is passed across from DWP therefore we have not been able to determine these residents affected at present. Our aim is to deal with these via the application process. Our plan is to proactively engage to proactively engage those we can identify to highlight that they could apply.

#### Part 2 – Application process

5.10 The estimated costs of providing this targeted support will mean that we will have approximately £100K for our residents who have not been targeted for support to apply for financial assistance via our application process. For those that have received £650 COL payment or via our targeted help we would only provide further support in exceptional circumstances.

5.11 The application process will enable us to provide support to other households and as we recognise that there will be residents that we've not been able to identify or cater for via the targeted approach it is really important to have funds available.

### **6.0 Timescales for delivering support**

6.1 To be able to deliver on this policy we will need to identify and write to all those who can apply for a payment.

6.2 As per the DWP's guidance authorities should take reasonable steps to protect against fraud and error as well as allow the opportunity for residents to opt out of receiving a payment. We are also aware from administering previous HSF and energy rebate schemes that residents may choose to have their funds in different ways due to personal circumstances. For example some residents may already be in an overdraft and therefore may wish to not have an award paid into their bank account and would prefer a post office voucher whilst others will be happy to receive a BACS payment.

6.3 To address all of the above we need to design and implement a simple application form that residents can complete to confirm they wish to receive their payment and state how they wish that to be made. Writing to residents and setting up forms will require input from Strata services. Due to the above considerations and subject to members approving the policy we will aim to be providing targeted payments to resident no later than the end of 2022.

## **7.0 Summary of Household Support Fund**

7.1 Our proposed scheme aims to strike the right balance between providing targeted support to those most in need and reflecting the government guidance whilst retaining just under a third of the funding to ensure we can support those households we're unable to identify in being able to access emergency support.

7.2 Ideally we would have liked to have provided further support under this scheme however the level of HSF does not permit this due to the need to retain a proportion of the funding for 'open applications. However, as Members have requested officers to explore creating an additional discretionary fund this provides the potential for further opportunities on this.

## **8.0 Update on creating an additional discretionary fund**

8.1 As highlighted in the report summary section it was agreed that we would explore:

- creating an additional discretionary energy support fund
- how this fund could be financed
- resources and systems needed to design and administer the scheme

8.2 Although it was approved for this to be presented to the Poverty panel I thought it would be useful to highlight this within this report due to the synergies of the two schemes and the importance of linking the two together so that we are not duplicating support. This will mean that we are able to better support those most in need alongside providing more sustainable outcomes.

8.3 In terms of how this scheme could be financed, Members may recall that we already have in existence a Financial Hardship Fund. This fund was initially created as a result of Covid and is now available to support residents who are struggling to afford essentials. Details of all our Discretionary schemes was presented in a report to Cabinet at their 5 January 2022 meeting. [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 5th January, 2022, 6.00 pm - East Devon](#). As part of that meeting it was also recommended to utilise a grant fund from government of £151,878 to be transferred to this fund. As highlighted in that report we prioritise spend from the Household Support Fund first due to this being time limited before drawing on the Financial Hardship Fund. The current balance of this fund is £257K

8.4 As we already have £257K available to support households I would propose that we utilise this fund to provide the additional support to households struggling with rising energy costs.

8.5 If Members are in agreement with this principle then we can look to update this policy to better align with the HSF to address where there are still potential gaps in support but also consideration on how we can utilise some of this funding to support vulnerable households

with more energy efficient measures which will provide pay back to the resident in helping to reduce energy bills which is a key aim of our poverty strategy.

8.6 Once we are clearer on the best approach for this fund we will be able to consider the staffing resources, administrative process that will be needed for this.

Appendix 1

## Government Support – Support with Energy Costs

Since February 2022 the government have announced a number of support packages to help residents with rising energy costs and these are summarised below:

No	Scheme	Amount
Announced 3 February 2022		
1	Council Tax Energy Rebate – Main & Discretionary Scheme <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-council-tax-rebate-2022-23-billing-authority-guidance">The council tax rebate 2022-23 – billing authority guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>	
1a	Main scheme (government criteria based scheme) Residents living in Council Tax Bands A-D. Eligibility based on living at the address on 1 April 2022. Administered by local authorities. In East Devon we paid out £6,998,500 to 46,659 households Scheme closed on 30 September.	One off amount of £150.00. (Non means tested but linked to your council tax band)
1b	Discretionary Scheme – we were allocated an amount of £269,850 to provide extra support with energy costs. Scheme closes 30 November 2022 and any unspent funds will need to be repaid to government. Scheme approved by Cabinet. <a href="#">Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 4th May, 2022, 6.00 pm - East Devon</a> Our local scheme is in two parts – targeted support and special cases to be considered on a case by case basis. Targeted support was directed at those on low incomes who were not eligible under the main scheme and alongside this to provide an additional top-up payment to disabled households and households with carers.	Two levels of payments £40 or £150 (Based on eligibility to certain qualifying benefits or council tax discounts).
Announced 26 May 2022		
2	Energy Bills Support Scheme <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount">Getting the Energy Bills Support Scheme discount - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>	
	Provides a £400* non-repayable discount to households with a domestic electricity connection in England, Scotland and Wales to help with their energy bills over winter 2022 to 2023. Discount will be applied:	One off £400 discount off your electricity bill.

	<p>£66 in October and November £67 in December, January, February, &amp; March</p> <p>*This replaced the £200 repayable discount that was previously announced in February 2022.</p>	Non means tested
3	<b>Cost of Living Support – providing 3 different levels of targeted support and extending the Household Support Fund</b>	
3a	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support-factsheet">Cost of living support factsheet: 26 May 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>	
	<p>£650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for those on means tested benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Credit</li> <li>• income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA)</li> <li>• income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)</li> <li>• Income Support</li> <li>• Pension Credit</li> <li>• Child Tax Credit</li> <li>• Working Tax Credit</li> </ul> <p><u>Qualifying period and amounts – no award if qualifying period nil UC award</u> £326 for qualifying period 26.04.2022 – 25.05.2022 £324 for qualifying period 26.08.2022 to 25.09.2022 Tax Credit has annual award of £26 or above</p>	£650 one off payment which is means tested
3b	<p><b>b) £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment</b></p> <p>For those receiving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance Allowance</li> <li>• Constant Attendance Allowance</li> <li>• Disability Living Allowance for adults</li> <li>• Disability Living Allowance for children</li> <li>• Personal Independence Payment</li> <li>• Armed Forces Independence Payment</li> <li>• War Pension Mobility Supplement</li> </ul> <p>Must have received payment for one of these qualifying benefits as of 25.05.2022 to get the payment.</p>	£150
3c	<p><b>c). One off £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment</b></p> <p>Pensioner households will receive an extra £300 this year to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter.</p> <p>All pensioners who receive the Winter Fuel Payment (between £200-£300) will receive an extra £300 this year to help them cover the rising cost of energy this winter.</p>	£300
3d	<b>£500m increase and extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF)</b>	No fixed amount but local policy to be agreed.

	<p>The HSF helps those in most need with payments towards the rising cost of food, energy and water bills. Funding is provided to upper tier councils.</p> <p>As part of Team Devon framework, East Devon receives a proportion of that funding in order to operate our own HSF scheme.</p>	
Updated October 2022		
4	<p><b>Energy Price Guarantee</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/factsheets/energy-bills-support-factsheet">Energy bills support factsheet - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p>	
a)	<p>The Energy Price Guarantee will reduce the unit cost of electricity and gas (those on main gas and electric) so that a typical household will save around £700 this Winter, based on what energy prices would have been under the current price cap.</p> <p>Scheme will be in place from – 1October 2022 to 31 March 2023.</p>	<p>Typical household will save £700 this winter – reducing bills by roughly a third.</p>
b)	<p><b>If not using main gas for your heating</b></p> <p>The Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) will provide a one-off £100 payment to UK households that use alternative fuels for heating, such as heating oil or LPG.</p>	<p>One off £100 payment who use alternative fuels for heating.</p>

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### **Financial implications:**

The proposed scheme and support being recommended in this report is to be funded from Government funding passed from the County Council to EDDC and sums already committed and budgeted for by this Council to support its resident. There is no additional request for funding other than already approved.

### **Legal implications:**

It is within the power of the Council to use the funding for the purpose specified. Otherwise, there are no specific legal implications requiring comment.



Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 2 November 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

## Homes for Ukraine transition policy

### Report summary:

This report seeks member's endorsement of the Homes for Ukraine Private Rented Sector (PRS) transition policy. The policy has been developed by Team Devon and was agreed by the Leaders and Chief Officers of all Devon local authorities at their meeting on the 5/10/2022.

The policy provides an additional top up payment for Homes for Ukraine hosts. It also sets out the general principles that will be followed in relation to re-matching guests with new hosts, what to do where host/guest relations breakdown, and support for a guest's transition to the Private Rented Sector.

### Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### Recommendation:

Cabinet:

- (1) Adopt the Homes for Ukraine Private Rented Sector transition policy as attached to this report, and
- (2) Approve the additional flat rate top-up thank you payment of £150 per host per month for 12 months, and
- (3) Approve the Private Rented Sector transition proposals as shown in the attached report with the final decision on any payments (and the amount to be paid) to be delegated to the Service Lead – Housing, and Strategic Lead Finance; and
- (4) Agree that this scheme be delivered within the finances provided by the UK Government

### Reason for recommendation:

To provide Cabinet with the Homes for Ukraine Private Rented Sector transition policy proposed by Team Devon, to highlight the parts in the report which are the discretion of the authority to set and to ensure by adoption of this policy that Ukrainian guests are continued to be welcomed and settled in this area and that host families are supported until a longer term exit strategy is developed by the UK Government.

Officer: **Andrew Hopkins, Communications Consultant**

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:** Medium Risk; There is an assumption that these new proposals will be funded by the government grant to support Ukrainian guests. We are seeking a flexible arrangement to allow for the increase in guests and/or host offers. A flexible approach will also allow us to address any changes required as a result of changes to government guidance.

**Links to background information**

[Report to Cabinet \(minute 54\) – Wednesday 7 September 2022](#)  
[Team Devon PRS Transition Policy](#)

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

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

**Homes for Ukraine PRS scheme transition policy**

The Homes for Ukraine scheme has been in operation since April, the UK Government subsequently tasked local councils to facilitate the housing of Ukrainian guests. EDDC has assembled a team of officers to make sure this happens and has commissioned Citizen’s Advice East Devon (CAED) to provide wraparound support and a re-matching service.

Hosts sign up to a 6-month hosting agreement and as these hosting agreements start to expire there was a concern Ukrainian guests could end up homeless. Due to a shortage of social housing in the county this policy has been developed to try and avoid this worst case scenario.

The main premises of the PRS transition policy is to keep Ukrainian guests in properties with a host, either their existing host or re-matching them with a new host or transitioning guests to the private rented sector.

It is proposed due to the cost of living crisis that the thank-you payment for hosts (Currently £350) is topped up by £150 to become £500 per month backdated to all claims from 1 November 2022.

The Private Rented Sector transition policy will create the following:

- Guest grants in terms of a deposit for a suitable private rented home, rent in advance, a top-up to cover any initial rent shortfall, to cover rent if there is a delay in benefits being processed or other relevant tenancy set-up costs such as moving and furniture.
- Landlord incentive grant to encourage properties to be let to Ukrainian guests
- Cover legal expenses if a landlord needs to repossess a property subject to the claim being validate by the EDDC Housing Options Team
- Rent assurance in case of any non-payment of rent
- If temporary accommodation has to be used any excesses costs of this temporary accommodation will be reimbursed from the funds provided by the UK Government for this scheme

We propose assessing these requests on a case by case basis having regard to the costs involved and suitability of the accommodation.

We will only operate the scheme for as long as we have assurance on funding being made available to meet our costs from central government via Devon County Council. We have undertaken some financial modelling of costs based on the numbers and size of households being accommodated in East Devon, and believe that we can operate the Thank You Payment top up and access to the private rented sector within the budget allocated.

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### **Financial implications:**

It has been agreed that EDDC will receive from Devon County Council £6,300 per Ukrainian guest out of the £10,500 to be paid to them by Government. Currently EDDC payment is estimated to be in the order of £1.8m. From existing commitments including our own associated costs there currently remain an uncommitted balance of around £0.8m in order to implement this policy. Although this is seen at this stage as sufficient to meet the costs of these proposals the uncommitted sum is constantly changing and it is very difficult particularly with the private rented sector costs to estimate as they will depend on individual cases as they occur. The overarching financial principle of the scheme is that it will be funded from available government funding, if in monitoring the actual expenditure is estimated to be greater than the available funding we will approach Devon County Council for additional funds from what they are holding from Government, if this is not possible we will then have to stop making payments under the scheme.

### **Legal implications:**

It is within the power of the Council to use the funding for the purposes specified. Otherwise, there are no specific legal implications requiring comment.

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

Document is Restricted

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