



Agenda for Cabinet Wednesday, 6th May, 2026, 6.00 pm

Members of Cabinet

Councillors: P Arnott (Chair), S Hawkins, P Hayward, N Hookway, S Jackson, G Jung, D Ledger, J Loudoun (Vice-Chair), T Olive and R Jefferies

Venue: Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

Contact: Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer;
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Monday, 27 April 2026

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This meeting is being recorded for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the [East Devon District Council Youtube Channel](#)

- 1 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 10)
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Declarations of interest
Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)
- 4 Public speaking
Information on [public speaking is available online](#)
- 5 Matters of urgency
Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online
- 6 Confidential/exempt item(s)
To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There are two items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.
- 7 Minutes of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held on 17 March 2026 (Pages 11 - 13)
- 8 Minutes of Overview Committee 26 March 2026 (Pages 14 - 17)
- 9 Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 2 April 2026 (Pages 18 - 20)
- 10 Minutes of the meeting of Community Grant Panel held on 15 April 2026 (Pages 21 - 35)

- 11 Minutes of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held on 22 April 2026 (Pages 36 - 40)

Key Matters for Decision

- 12 Economic Development Strategy - Year 3 Priorities (Pages 41 - 48)
- 13 Local Government Reorganisation: Implementation Planning (Pages 49 - 56)
- 14 Playpark Renewal 2026 - Contract above £100k (Pages 57 - 59)
- 15 Crisis and Resilience Fund 2026/27 (Pages 60 - 84)

Matters for Decision

- 16 **New Towns Programme Consultation Response** (Pages 85 - 99)
- 17 **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 in the agenda is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing these items in private session (Part B).

Part B Key Matters for Decision

- 18 Clyst Meadows Country Park, Broadclyst - Purchase of Additional Land (Pages 100 - 113)
- 19 Cranbox Modular Space Delivery in Cranbrook Town Centre (Pages 114 - 118)

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

[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 1 April 2026

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.05 pm and ended at 8.16 pm

175 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting from Cabinet held on 4 March 2026 were agreed.

176 Declarations of interest

Min 183. Phear Park and The Green Car Park (Broadclyst) Resurfacing Works - Contract above £100k.

Councillor Brian Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, member of the Town Council.

Min 184. Adoption of Exmouth Placemaking Plan and Strategic Outline Business Case. Councillor Aurora Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, member of the Town Council.

Min 184. Adoption of Exmouth Placemaking Plan and Strategic Outline Business Case. Councillor Brian Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, member of the Town Council.

Min 184. Adoption of Exmouth Placemaking Plan and Strategic Outline Business Case. Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor for Exmouth and member of the Town Council.

Min 184. Adoption of Exmouth Placemaking Plan and Strategic Outline Business Case. Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, DCC Chair for HATOC.

Min 186. Wild About Seaton NLHF Grant Submission.

Councillor Paul Arnott, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor for Seaton.

Min 187. Sidmouth Jacobs Ladder Platform, seawall and slipway repairs.

Councillor Ian Barlow, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Member of Sidmouth Town Council.

Min 187. Sidmouth Jacobs Ladder Platform, seawall and slipway repairs.

Councillor Mike Goodman, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Member of Sidmouth Town Council.

Min 188. Sidmouth Connaught Gardens emergency cliff works - Standing orders Exemption.

Councillor Ian Barlow, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Member of Sidmouth Town Council.

Min 188. Sidmouth Connaught Gardens emergency cliff works - Standing orders Exemption.

Councillor Mike Goodman, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Member of Sidmouth Town Council.

177 **Public speaking**

There were no public speakers.

178 **Matters of urgency**

There were none.

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

There was one item dealt with in this way recorded at Minute 193.

180 **Minutes of Scrutiny Committee held on 5 February 2026**

Members approved the minutes and recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee held on 5 February 2026.

Minute 54 Review of the impact of the ban on use of glyphosate

1. Streetscene discontinue the use of the hot foam method of treatment and continue to use glyphosate-free alternatives and/or manual methods until the efficiency of recent trials can be established,
2. The Director of Place to consider how the integrated weed management framework can be developed and brought for consideration by the Overview Committee, including consideration of resources and the impact from other services,
3. Councillors/Town and Parishes to continue to report areas of weed growth on pavements and roadsides to Devon County Council.

181 **Minutes of Strategic Planning Committee held on 3 March 2026**

Members approved the minutes and recommendations from the Strategic Planning Committee held on 3 March 2026.

Minute 52: Cranbrook Category 4 Infrastructure Contributions

That the 'Mechanism for the allocation of category 4 infrastructure contributions' included at appendix 1, together with the assessment criteria questions at paragraph 16 for use by the council in relation to category 4 infrastructure contributions received from developments in the Cranbrook Plan Area are adopted.

182 **Towards a Delivery Vehicle for Marlcombe and Wider Growth Corridor**

The Marlcombe new community was one of twelve locations shortlisted by the New Towns Taskforce in September 2025 and was the key strategic proposal in the Local Plan review. Despite not being selected as one of the seven high priority location in the current consultation on the New Towns Draft Programme, it was vital that this community was supported by all the requisite infrastructure and services that residents would need. The report put forward proposals to both strengthen governance arrangements and put in place dedicated delivery capacity with the objective of ensuring that an exemplar development comes forward that both learns the lessons from and was integrated with the wider growth programme.

The report set out a three-stage model for strengthening governance arrangements that would ultimately culminate in the establishment of a locally led development corporation. The first stage proposes both the creation of an Interim Growth Board, that would act in an advisory capacity with an independent chair, together with the establishment of a formal joint committee with the County Council. Alongside this a shared delivery team would be formed including resources from both the County Council and Homes England.

The Director of Place made clear that despite not being identified as a priority location in the current national New Towns programme consultation, all was not lost. Marlcombe was a credible development opportunity and there had been productive conversations with MHLCG and that Homes England and the local team had continued to provide their strong support. Joe Wharton from Homes England congratulated the Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning and the Director of Place and his team for the credible proposal that had been submitted which Homes England would still be supporting. He reminded everyone that the consultation was not finished and encouraged people to respond.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Supports the proposed governance structure and formation of the shared delivery team.
2. Nominates the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to be the Council's representative on the Interim Growth Board.
3. Nominates the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to be the Council's representatives on the Joint Committee.
4. Delegates authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Governance and Portfolio Holders for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning and Council, Corporate and External Engagement to finalise the terms of reference for the Interim Growth Board and Joint Committee.
5. Delegates authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Governance and Portfolio Holders for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning and Council, Corporate and External Engagement to recruit the Chair for the Interim Growth Board.
6. Receives further reports regarding the
 - response to the New Towns Draft Programme consultation
 - establishment of a locally led development corporation as key milestones are reached.

REASON:

To ensure that effective governance and place leadership arrangements are in place to support the successful delivery of the Marlcombe new community and wider growth corridor.

183 **Phear Park and The Green Car Park (Broadclyst) Resurfacing Works - Contract above £100k**

The report requested delegated authority to award the Phear Park and The Green Car Park Resurfacing Works to a contractor after undertaking an open tender competition.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Grant delegated authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment Operations and Portfolio Holder Finance to award the contract to the preferred supplier.

REASON:

To enable the Assistant Director to award the contract to the preferred supplier following completion of the open tender competition. The delegation would allow the contract to be entered without a further cabinet paper to ensure programme targets were met.

184 **Adoption of Exmouth Placemaking Plan and Strategic Outline
Business Case**

EDDC had completed the updated Exmouth Town Centre and Seafront Placemaking Plan (EPP) and its accompanying Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) following extensive Member, stakeholder and public engagement. A six-week consultation in late 2025 generated strong support for practical improvements to the town centre, seafront and station gateway, with clear priorities emerging around wayfinding, public realm, accessibility and environmental sensitivity. Several earlier large-scale proposals were removed in response to public feedback.

The final EPP and SOBC presented a refined, deliverable and community-supported framework for guiding future investment in Exmouth. Key partners including the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group (PETS), Devon County Council and Exmouth Town Council had been asked to endorse the plan, a verbal update on this process would be provided at Cabinet.

The Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism thanked Naomi Harnett for her hard work in getting the Plan to fruition.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Adopt the Exmouth Placemaking Plan and the Strategic Outline Business Case.

REASON:

The Exmouth Placemaking Plan was a strategic document that provided a framework for future placemaking interventions and had been subject to a thorough consultation process. With the EPP now completed, adoption was required to progress key projects in Exmouth town and seafront.

185 **East Devon Local Nature Recovery Plan**

EDDC had provided detailed input into the recently adopted Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) process under the Environment Act 2021. Devon County Council was the identified 'Responsible Authority' for developing this spatial nature recovery Strategy and all of Devon's District Authorities were identified as 'Supporting Authorities' who would help with its implementation through their own Local Nature Recovery Plans.

The draft East Devon Local Nature Recovery (LNR) Plan had identified local priorities and taken full account of the data and priorities within the Devon LNRS. The actions the EDDC would need to take would flow from the East Devon LNR Plan once finalised and also be guided by the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2026 and Environment Act 2021 that targets and prioritises the most important and vulnerable habitats and species.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Agree to the public consultation of the draft East Devon Local Nature Recovery Plan.
2. Note and agree that the draft East Devon Local Nature Recovery Plan be published on the Council's website to fulfil the Council's statutory Biodiversity Reporting report duty for the period 1st September 2023 – 1st January 2026.

REASON:

This would enable EDDC to fulfil its role as a Supporting Authority as defined in the Environment Act 2021 and support the delivery of the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy. It would also enable EDDC to adopt a Local Nature Recovery Plan and Local Habitats Map that would target the improvement of the priority habitats and species identified within the Plan.

186 **Wild About Seaton NLHF Grant Submission**

Permission was sought to apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for one of its Heritage Grants to support a project entitled Wild About Seaton.

Members thanked James Chubb and his team for producing a strong plan which included engagement with stakeholders. The project was positively received and would be a huge benefit to Seaton.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Approves the application for funding to National Heritage Lottery Fund for the Wild About Seaton Project.

REASON:

This gives EDDC the most efficient opportunity to fully fund the extension of Seaton Wetlands into newly acquired land; the creation of Sheeps Marsh intertidal scheme and the provision of access and interpretive infrastructure. To create a discovery trail around the town and provide marketing support to businesses within the town to benefit from this proven tourist driver. To work with the town's museum to update its natural history collection and utilise their exhibits and information in interpretive work throughout the town.

187 **Sidmouth Jacobs Ladder Platform, seawall and slipway repairs**

The report requested delegated authority to award the Sidmouth Jacobs Ladder Platform, seawall and slipway repairs to a contractor on the Environment Agency AOMR Framework that EDDC had access to.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Grant delegated authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment Operations and Portfolio Holder Finance to award the contract to the preferred supplier.

REASON:

To enable the Assistant Director to award the contract to the preferred supplier following completion of the tender exercise. The delegation would allow the contract to be entered without a further cabinet paper, to ensure programme targets were met.

188 **Sidmouth Connaught Gardens emergency cliff works - Standing orders Exemption**

The report outlined the discovered cliff works issue, the risk of prolonged path closure and sought approval to direct award a contract to complete the design and build to secure the cliff.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Note a standing orders exemption to appoint John Grimes Associates for the contract for investigation and design of cliff repairs at Connaught gardens. Note a standing orders exemption to appoint a yet appointed contractor for the contract for delivering cliff repairs at Connaught gardens.
2. Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Operations to award the contracts.

REASON:

Running a procurement would add an additional 2 -3 months before the path could be reopened which would be during the summer months. The risk of a failure would also remain until it could be fixed.

189 **Woodbury Neighbourhood Plan - Examiner's Report**

The report provided feedback on the outcome of the independent examination of the Woodbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan. The Examiner had found that with proposed modifications the Plan met the necessary 'basic conditions' and recommended to the Council that it could go forward to referendum. In accordance with the relevant legislation, the Council must now consider its response to the Examiner's recommendations and satisfy itself that the Plan met the necessary 'basic conditions'.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

1. Agree to endorse the Examiner's recommendations on the Woodbury Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Agree a 'referendum version' of the Plan be produced (incorporating the Examiner's modifications with minor amendments for corrections where stated, as set out in Annex 1 of this report) and proceed to referendum, and that a decision notice to this effect be published.
3. Congratulate Woodbury Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 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 were accepted by the Parish Council.

190 **East Devon social media channel approach**

EDDC's communications approach was shaped by its statutory responsibilities to inform, consult, and engage with residents, partners, and businesses. The council must ensure that all publicity remains lawful, objective, cost-effective and politically neutral, while also providing transparent access to information that enables public understanding and

scrutiny of local decision-making. Social media plays a central role in delivering timely, accessible communication, particularly during emergencies and supports the council's duty to reach audiences "where they are."

The Corporate Communications team continuously monitors platform performance and sector trends to ensure channels align with both audience needs and organisational requirements.

RESOLVED that Cabinet;

Notes the content of the report

REASON:

The report recommended maintaining the existing channel strategy, increasing investment in video capability and training, and continuing to monitor analytical data and industry developments, with bi-annual reporting to Cabinet.

191 **Forward Plan**

Members noted the contents of the forward plan for key decisions for the period 1st March 2026 to 30th June 2026.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

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 page 7 Cabinet 29 October 2025 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).

193 **District Heating in the West End**

The recommendations as set out in the report were agreed.

Attendance List

Present:

Portfolio Holders

P Arnott	Leader of the Council
S Hawkins	Portfolio Holder Finance
P Hayward	Portfolio Holder Assets and Economy
N Hookway	Portfolio Holder Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
S Jackson	Portfolio Holder Communications and Democracy
G Jung	Portfolio Holder Environment - Operations
D Ledger	Portfolio Holder Sustainable Homes & Communities
J Loudoun	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder Corporate, Council & External Engagement
T Olive	Portfolio Holder Place, Infrastructure & Strategic Planning

Cabinet apologies:

R Jefferies

Portfolio Holder Environment - Nature & Climate

Also present (for some or all the meeting)

Councillor Aurora Bailey

Councillor Brian Bailey

Councillor Ian Barlow

Councillor Roy Collins

Councillor Peter Faithfull

Councillor Mike Goodman

Councillor Sophie Richards

Councillor Marianne Rixson

Also present:

Officers:

Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer

Marie Ainsworth, Place & Prosperity Officer

Tom Buxton-Smith, Engineering Projects Manager

Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Leisure

James Chubb, Countryside Team Manager

Simon Davey, Director of Finance

James Docherty, Assistant Director Governance & Legal

Will Dommett, District Ecologist

Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes

Tracy Hendren, Chief Executive

Charles Plowden, Assistant Director Countryside and Leisure

Andrew Wood, Director of Place

Chloe Woodman, Assistant Director - Communications, Digital Services and Engagement

Joe Wharton, Homes England

Sam Evans, Stride Project Management

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting of Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group held at Online on 17 March 2026****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.59 am

13 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 October 2025

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 October 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

14 Declarations of interest

Cllr A Bailey – Minute 18; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Cllr O Davey – Minute 18; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Cllr T Dumper – Minute 18; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Cllr N Hookway – Minute 18; Affects Non-Registerable Interest: Member of Exmouth Town Council and Devon County Council.

15 Public speaking

One member of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

Mrs Ann Membery raised questions regarding the future plans for the Harbour View Café, and advocated for public engagement. Mrs Membery also made suggestions concerning the use of the former Fun Park on the seafront, and an electric operated Park and ride service from the Maer Road car park.

The Chair thanked Mrs Membery for her contribution and outlined how the Placemaking Plan addresses seafront assets, fun park redevelopment and transport ideas.

16 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

17 Confidential/exempt items

There were no confidential/exempt items.

18 Adoption of Exmouth Placemaking Plan

The Corporate Lead – Major Projects and Programmes presented this report which summarised the review of the Exmouth Placemaking Plan (EPP) and minor changes made based on feedback received from the public consultation exercise, member and

officer workshops and sought an endorsement from the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group of the EPP and the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC).

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- The Corporate Lead was unable to confirm the budget spent on the Placemaking project to date having only been involved since 2024 but stated that she would provide this information outside of the meeting. It was noted that some of the expenditure had come from external sources such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Once adopted, the Placemaking Plan will have a 10 year life, offering reassurance and opportunity to local businesses, and certainty to funders. Furthermore, it will serve to protect the seafront from inappropriate development particularly following Local Government Reorganisation.
- Loss of parking, or restrictions on traffic are always controversial and some members were disappointed that the pedestrianisation of Queen's Drive had been dropped from the Placemaking Plan. It was suggested that national and local government needed to be bolder and do things that were unpopular but which may be to everybody's benefit in the long run.
- The Placemaking Plan does not make specific reference to the arts; however, the Council has adopted an East Devon Cultural Strategy which sets out the approach for the district. The Corporate Lead suggested that she could review the Placemaking Plan to consider if there was anything further that could be added concerning the arts.
- Councillors were keen that the Council delivers some tangible outcomes from the Placemaking Plan as quickly as possible and it was suggested that a signage and wayfinding strategy could be implemented as a visible, actionable project subject to the availability of funding.
- The Strategic Outline Business Case sets out an indicative cost of £50k for a signage strategy which will not only consider where the signage may go but will also consider the design of the signage and how it fits within the placemaking approach.
- It was suggested to reassess how much needs to be spent on a signage strategy and to benchmark the cost against other authorities, to ensure value for money.
- Councillors expressed disappointment that there is no mention of a long term goal to have a transport hub by the station, and emphasised the importance of transport improvements. The Council has an advocacy role to ensure that the town gets the transport it needs not only for the town centre and seafront but also linked to the rest of the town.

Following the discussion the Placemaking in Exmouth Town and Seafront Group agreed to endorse the Exmouth Placemaking Plan and Strategic Outline Business Case.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

1. That the Exmouth Placemaking Plan and Strategic Outline Business Case is adopted by East Devon District Council.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott (Vice-Chair)
A Bailey
O Davey
T Dumper
A Hall
N Hookway (Chair)
T Olive
D Conduit (Exmouth Town Council)
G Deasy (Exmouth Town Council)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Faithfull
I Barlow
M Hall
G Jung
E Wragg

Officers in attendance:

Anne Mountjoy, Growth Point Communications Officer
Louie Belfield
Marie Ainsworth, Place & Prosperity Officer
Naomi Harnett, Corporate Lead (Interim) – Major Projects & Programmes
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer
Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Leisure
Andrew Wood, Director of Place
Barry James, Interim Corporate Lead Programmes & Strategies

Also in attendance:

Lisa Bowman, Exmouth Town Clerk

Councillor apologies:

P Hayward

Chair:

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Overview Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 26 March 2026

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.40 pm

60 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January 2026

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January 2026 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

61 Declarations of interest

Minute 66. Public Toilets programme review options appraisal.
Cllr Aurora Bailey, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Minute 66. Public Toilets programme review options appraisal.
Cllr Brian Bailey, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Minute 66. Public Toilets programme review options appraisal.
Cllr Ian Barlow, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Sidmouth Town Council.

Minute 66. Public Toilets programme review options appraisal.
Cllr Tim Dumper, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Minute 66. Public Toilets programme review options appraisal.
Cllr Matt Hall, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

Minute 66. Public Toilets programme review options appraisal.
Cllr John Heath, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Beer Parish Council.

Minute 66. Public Toilets programme review options appraisal.
Cllr Dan Wilson, Affects Non-Registerable Interest, Member of Exmouth Town Council.

62 Public Speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

63 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

64 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There was one confidential/exempt item (minute 66 refers).

65 Work Programme 2025 - 2026

The Overview Committee's Work Programme 2025-2026 was received and noted.

Following review of proposal forms received, Members agreed to add the following items to the Work Programme:

- Community Action Groups Devon update; and
- Preventative maintenance of trees in high amenity use area and another policy for tree maintenance of trees in EDDC controlled social housing.

66 **Public Toilets programme review options appraisal**

The Assistant Director Place, Assets & Leisure presented this report concerning the Public Toilets Programme Review, together with a confidential options appraisal.

The report followed a Member briefing to the Overview and Scrutiny committees in July 2025, a report to Overview Committee on 30 September 2025, and recommendations from Cabinet on 4 February 2026 which included the following:

- The principle, and community benefit, of transferring council-owned public conveniences to town and parish councils with the possibility of the concurrent release of proportional amounts of residual capital funding, subject to the timely review of the existing refurbishment arrangements, and potential transfer protocols, by the Overview Committee to ensure best value for both EDDC and the lower tier authorities.

The Committee was asked to consider the options appraisal and make recommendations to Cabinet in order to inform next steps.

The Vice-Chair moved 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 in the agenda is likely to be disclosed and on balance the public interest is in discussing these items in private session (Part B). The motion was carried by a majority show of hands.

Members discussed the options appraisal and relevant considerations in detail and at length, including the following points:

- Views were expressed that transferring public toilets to Town and Parish Councils was the only option to protect them going into Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), given that they are a discretionary service.
- There was no indication that LGR would not go ahead; however, should it halt, the Finance Director explained that the spending review received recently had hit district councils hard and there were significant savings to be made. It would therefore be necessary to look at areas of discretionary spend.
- It was possible, subject to budget, to complete the Public Toilets programme and, prior to vesting day, enter into conditional contracts with Town and Parish Councils to transfer the toilets on completion of the programme. This would involve this Council needing to find millions of pounds of additional budget, and would be a Member decision.
- In the event that this Council completed the Public Toilets programme and retained the assets, the successor authority could nevertheless take the decision to close them or sell the sites for commercial development.
- If public toilets were transferred to Town and Parish Councils with a dowry then it was suggested that the Town and Parish Councils should be free to decide how the money was spent, without restriction.
- The Assistant Director explained there was an intention to include contiguous assets such as parks and open spaces in the package offered to Towns and Parish Councils, to make the proposal more attractive and with a view to protecting community assets.

- One Member suggested that adding contiguous assets would make the proposals more complicated and expensive and could scare Towns and Parish Councils who would not want the cost of maintaining parks and gardens.
- Another Member expressed that including contiguous assets would be helpful to Towns and Parish Councils, suggesting that Beer Parish Council would want Jubilee Gardens and hardstanding.
- This Council needed to understand and provide detailed costings to Town and Parish Councils before negotiations could commence, and this work required resource across services including Streetscene, Legal, HR, Finance and Place.
- It was suggested to have joint working groups between the district and parish and town councils, which could help both tiers of councils to make decisions in a better way and help to spread an understanding of how the transfers could work.
- The Assistant Director stated that he would check if the Council was in contract with the payment provider to continue charging for the 4 pay-to-use sites.
- Members considered the role Overview Committee was to have in the Public Toilets Programme moving forward, and indicated that the Committee would like to be appraised with the transfer protocols in order to have oversight of them.
- The Assistant Director was asked to also confirm at a later date which sites had been disposed of, so that Overview Committee could consider the remaining sites.

Following the discussion, Members agreed by a majority show of hands, to support the recommendation that public toilets be transferred to Town and Parish Councils in current condition and with a dowry reflecting appropriate share of remaining approved capital budget.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

A Bailey
B Bailey
B Collins
R Collins
T Dumper (Vice-Chair)
A Hall (Chair)
M Hall
J Heath
Y Levine
D Mackinder
D Wilson

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

I Barlow
M Goodman

Officers in attendance:

Tim Child, Assistant Director Place, Assets & Leisure
Simon Davey, Director of Finance
James Docherty, Assistant Director Governance & Legal
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer

Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Councillor apologies:

K Bloxham

P Fernley

Chair:

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting of Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 2 April 2026****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.38 pm

57 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 February 2026 were agreed and signed as a true record.

58 Declarations of interest

There were none.

59 Public speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak.

60 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

61 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

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

There were none.

63 UKSPF evaluation update report

The Economic Development Manager presented this report which gave an overview of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) funded activity for 2024/25 and the key recommendations emerging from the Year 3 evaluation work.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- Members thanked officers for their work with the UKSPF funded activities and were disappointed that local growth funding was ending in East Devon from 2026/27;
- There had been a focus on using the funding to help disadvantaged groups; for example, ensuring a good leisure offer for young adults with busy working lives and parenting responsibilities;
- Organisations which received grant funding to decarbonise were provided with professional support and advice to carry out carbon assessments before and after the decarbonisation initiative, to accurately measure the savings in carbon emissions;
- EDDC passed funding through to Devon County Council to set up employment hubs but records were not available for the numbers of people sustaining employment, as there was no funding beyond year 1 to measure this.

The Scrutiny Committee i) noted the progress made on the actions identified in the January 2025 UKSPF Evaluation Report and; ii) noted the UKSPF evaluation undertaken for the 2024/25 financial year along with the challenges identified and recommendation for future project management process.

64 **Community Safety Partnership update report**

The Assistant Director – Environmental Health presented this report which outlined the activity of the East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership during 2025 and related community safety activity within East Devon District Council.

Discussion and clarification included the following points:

- In a correction to the reported figures, it was clarified that 45 Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) were issued during 2025/26;
- CPWs formed part of the enforcement powers to deal with antisocial behaviour and whilst they carried no legal weighting on their own, they were a necessary part of the escalation process prior to issuing a Community Protection Notice (CPN);
- The aforementioned enforcement powers were a relatively new area of work for the council and there had been challenges and ongoing learnings for officers, particularly around the wording of notices and a need to explore alternative means of dispute resolution;
- Members would like to see data presented in graph form, in order to identify the trajectory, and trends;
- Street marshals as part of the Hotspot Policing project had been well received in Exmouth and officers were considering how the service could continue going forward given that funding from The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner had reduced significantly from £30,769 for 2025/26 to approximately £9,000 for 2026/27;
- The Community Safety Partnership recognised that in addition to dealing with antisocial behaviour, it was necessary to explore preventative measures and improved provision of youth services. The Assistant Director indicated there was potential for interventions through a public health approach, and outlined examples of collaboration with Exmouth Community College and officers at Devon County Council;
- Examples were offered of how some towns had intervened to engage children and young people in clubs, sports and activities;
- The district's six Community Safety Groups were now operating with a mix of District and Town Council organised meetings. They were a forum for local communities to discuss antisocial behaviour problems in their area at an early stage and to understand relevant work being done in their locality.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the activity that had been taken with regards to Community Safety Activity for 2025.

65 **Scoping report - planning enforcement**

The Committee considered a scoping report concerning planning enforcement.

Following discussion at length, Members agreed that instead of a formal report to the Scrutiny Committee, the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management would:

1. Deliver a presentation in a Councillor briefing, and separately to Town and Parish Councils, outlining how the enforcement process works and setting out some high level statistics; and
2. Prepare an article for the Councillors' Newsletter outlining how the enforcement process works and with a hyperlink to the published Enforcement Plan.

This would serve the purpose of educating Councillors who in turn could explain to concerned residents how the planning enforcement process worked and why there were limitations.

66 **Work programme**

The committee considered and agreed the work programme.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

I Barlow
B Collins
O Davey
M Goodman (Chair)
D Mackinder (Vice-Chair)
J Whibley

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

C Brown
R Collins
T Olive

Officers in attendance:

Matthew Blythe, Assistant Director Environmental Health
Sarah James, Democratic Services Officer
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Tom Winters, Interim Economic Development Manager
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Services
Melanie Wellman, Director of Governance (Monitoring Officer)

Councillor apologies:

K Blakey
J Brown
A Bruce
P Fernley
A Hall
M Hall
Y Levine

Chairman

Date:

**Minutes of the meeting of Community Grant Panel held at Tale Room,
Blackdown House, Honiton on 15 April 2026**

Recommendation to Cabinet

Minute 16 - Community Grant Funding Awards 2025/26 (report attached)

To make the following change to the Community Grant Fund policy:
That applications which meet the policy criteria, but Members are unable to approve due to funding limits, can be rolled over to the next grant window.

Report to: Community Grant Panel



Date of Meeting 30 March 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Community Grant Funding Awards for 2025/26

Report summary:

East Devon District Council's Community Grant Fund has £102,000 of funding available for the 2025/26 financial year to help financially support voluntary groups, charities, social enterprises and community buildings.

This report details the applications made to the fund and those which meet the criteria set out within the Community Grant policy, for the Community Grant Panel to make decisions on which applications will receive grant funding.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That the Community Grant Panel

1. Approve the 22 applications with a total spend of £30,046 for the Small Community Grants element of the Community Grant scheme and
2. Consider the applications for the Community Building element of the fund and make decisions on whether applicants should receive the grant funding.

Reason for recommendation:

As per The Community Grant Fund Policy, Members of the Community Grant Panel (CGP) will approve officer's decisions on the small community grant element and determine applications from the community buildings element made to the Community Grant Fund.

Officer: Sharon Church, Benefit and Financial Resilience Manager,
Sharon.church@eastdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information Click here to enter links to background information; appendices online; and previous reports. These must link to an electronic document. Do not include any confidential or exempt information.

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
- Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- Resilient economy that supports local business
- Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

1. Background

- 1.1 East Devon District Council's Community Grant Fund is available to voluntary sector groups and community buildings such as village halls. The policy was agreed by Cabinet on 29 October 2025.
- 1.2 In total £204,000 has been made available for the financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27. £102,000 is available for the financial year 2025/26.
- 1.3 Funding has been further split between the Small Community Grants available for small voluntary groups and Community buildings within rural areas. A maximum of £51,000 has been made available for Community buildings within rural areas for each financial year to ensure there is enough funding available for small community projects.
- 1.4 Funding available for Small Community Grants is between £300 and £1,500 with £500 to £10,000 available for Community Buildings.
- 1.4 Under East Devon District Council's Community Grant Policy, Officers will score and decide applications for the small community grant element of the fund for Members to approve. Officers will also score and present applications for community buildings to Members of the CGP to decide which applications will receive grant funding.

2. Applications

- 2.1 The grant window for the financial year 2025/26 was set for 19 January 2026 to 27 February 2026.

- 2.2 A total of 68 applications were received during the grant window. Of these applications 24 were received for Community Grant Buildings and 44 for Small Community Grants.
- 2.3 Applications have been received from across a good range of the East Devon district.
- 2.4 Applications for both the small community grants and Community Buildings have been scored against the criteria set out within the Community Grant Policy.
- 2.5 As per section 6 of the policy, applications that have not passed the scoring criteria are not included within this report.

3. Small Community Grants

- 3.1 There are 21 Small Community Grant applications that have passed the scoring criteria and are being recommended to receive an award with a total spend of £29,546.00.
- 3.2 Appendix A sets out the details of the organisations scored as meeting the criteria to receive an award from the Small Community Grant Fund.
- 3.3 The total amount to be awarded under the Small Community Grant element is £30,046.
- 3.4 There are 4 applications with a total combined spend of £5,783.40 where supporting evidence was not supplied and therefore these applications have not been recommended for an award. It is worth noting that if these applications were to provide the required evidence and thereby meet the criteria, the total grant funding paid for small community grants would rise to £35,829.40. Members may therefore wish officers to request the remaining evidence and finalise scoring of these applications before the 3 April 2026. These applications would then be scored and agreed for payment as per section 6.7 of the policy where the Chair, as Portfolio Holder for Finance will retain delegated authority to make decisions on applications for grants below £3,000 to allow for expediency.
- 3.5 Appendix A provides the breakdown of recommended awards for the Small Community Grants. The 4 applications mentioned in 3.4 above have been included under a separate heading if Members agree to allow extra time for the information to be provided.

4. Community Buildings

- 4.1 There are 13 Community building applications which meet the criteria set out in the policy however the total spend of these projects is £72,717.68. As this spend exceeds the £51,000 limit set out in the policy applications have been noted where works appear more critical if Members wish to take this into account in their decision making.
- 4.2 Appendix B sets out the details of the organisations scored as meeting the criteria to receive an award from the Community Building element of the fund.
- 4.3 Officer's observations are

- There are 5 applications for village halls, (Dunkeswell, Escot, Aylesbeare, Umborne and Netherton club – Farway) that require more substantial works totalling £50,000. All of these applications have already got funding from other sources in place, including receiving grants from other charities. This would leave a balance of £1,000 which could be carried forward to the next funding round.
- The remaining 6 applications have a combined total of £22,717.68.

4.4 As this is the first round of funding since 2023 it is likely that we will have received more applications than normal for community buildings. Members could consider carrying forward some of these applications for the next funding round. For example, one approach could be to prioritise in this round the applications where more substantial repairs are required and carry forward the remaining cases. If Members are minded to do this then a further recommendation will need to be added to the report.

4.5 Supporting documentation to assist Members in making their decision is under the attached appendices C – M.

5. Summary

5.1 Subject to any further governance and due diligence checks payments will be issued to all successful applicants as soon as contracts have been agreed, ensuring that funding gets to the voluntary groups and organisations and projects can be delivered as soon as possible.

5.2 Subject to applications from the small community grant element being approved and the full amount of £51,000 being awarded under the community building element of the fund, the total amount of grants awarded for the financial year 2025/26 will be £81,046. This could rise to £86,829 if Members agree to allow extra time for information to be provided for the four applications mentioned in section 3.4.

5.3 As per the policy any unspent funds can be rolled over to the 2026/27 financial year.

5.4 A new grant window will be set for the financial year 2026/27 once grant contracts and payments for the financial year 2025/26 have been issued to successful applicants.

5.5 As funding will be available for the whole of 2026/27, we will look to open the grant window for a longer period than the period allowed in financial year 2025/26 or open two shorter application windows.

Financial implications:

The financial implications are covered within the report

Legal implications:

The legal implications are covered within the report

Appendix A: Small Community Grants Funding

Group	Nos	Reason for funding	Area	Age	Funding Awarded
Action East Devon	15	Mental Health support services - offers a lot of support including 1-2-1 support can go further than what the NHS are able to provide locally.	Axminster and surrounding areas	5-18	£1,500
Axewoods Co-Op	150	Providing free woodland management to local farmers, charities, landowners and organisations. Addressing local fuel poverty through the East Devon Log Bank, an initiative to make dry, seasoned logs free to local people in fuel poverty and those in need of immediate help. Referrals from local agencies including EDDC, food banks, churches and informal networks to promote the Log Bank and distribute logs.	East Devon	All	£1,395
Bright Bridge Enabling SW CIC	12	Providing free individually tailored mental health support with a fully holistic approach for children and young people on the autistic spectrum. Sessions will be dependent on needs and in variety of settings including out in the community. Working with social workers and other professionals to make sure outcomes are the best and most appropriate for each child, currently a waiting list for service.	Exmouth Area	5-25	£1,500
Budleigh Salterton Information Centre	300	New 'Love Budleigh' membership scheme liaising with Seachange to organise activities to bring people together especially over the weekend when Seachange activities are not available. Aiming to work with local businesses, organisations and others to arrange outings for members to get together to enjoy activities, such as local drama performances, nights out at local restaurants and introductions to local clubs and societies. Will offer group activities in a safe space and encourage people to join in, helping to reduce social isolation, loneliness and improve mental health within the Budleigh community.	Budleigh Salterton	All	£1,320
Clyst St George and Ebford Parish Hall	50	Indoor table tennis sessions for Clyst St George and Ebford to extend current village events (community breakfasts, coffee	Clyst St George and Ebford	All	£700

		morning, quiz nights, fetes, Christmas parties etc) allowing the sport to be played throughout the year, enabling all community members to have access to a healthy activity regardless of weather.			
Devon Dig and Donate CIC	5000	provision of fresh produce to donate to food banks and community organisations supporting vulnerable people and those experiencing food poverty within East Devon and the surrounding local communities. Equipping and empowering the community with the skills needed to be able to grow, harvest and use fresh produce developing resilience to food justice challenges	East Devon	All	£1,499
Devon Healing Horsemanship	12	Equine-assisted mental health sessions with operational delivery taking place within East Devon District at established Sheldon site. Evidence-based model shows measurable improvements across key areas of resilience and engagement. Independent evaluation of The Horse Course framework shows that over 80% of participants improve across eight core psycho-social skills, and 77% increase engagement with education, training or work following intervention. Equine assisted mental health sessions, support caregivers of individuals experiencing emotional, or mental health difficulties.	Charity based in Cullompton but delivered from Sheldon covers the whole of East Devon	5-64	£1,500
Discover Your Doorstep CIC	20	Inclusive, gently challenging weekly outdoor group helping residents develop personally and socially especially those vulnerable to isolation and mental health challenges. Sessions led by a former GP with outdoor qualifications, managing the space safely for vulnerable people to be comfortable to try new things and grow. Referrals received from local charities and primary care.	Exmouth and surrounding areas	26 - 64	£1,500
East Devon All Stars	150,000	Fully inclusive majorette troupe carrying out carnival and public performances, specifically focussing on providing a positive mental health support environment with the aim to offer a 'powerful holistic way for children and adults to express	Seaton and surrounding areas	All	£1,500

		emotions and feelings through the medium of pom pom and baton twirl dancing'.			
Emma Molony Wallpaper	150	Community printmaking project for women and young children from resettled families (Afghan, Ukrainian and Syrian) and other women and children in Cranbrook, exploring the stories of the town, landscape and residents. Delivery of sessions supported by Thelma Hulbert Gallery, developing their 2022 work in the town exploring some of the archaeological finds like the Archer's Brace.	Cranbrook	All	£950
Exmouth Bosom Buddies CIC	300	New community sling library for families in Exmouth and the surrounding area to try and borrow carriers before purchasing, improving comfort, confidence, bonding and mobility while also promoting environmental sustainability through reuse. Will provide low-cost access to a range of baby carriers alongside evidence-based guidance and fitting support. helping to reduce barriers including cost, limited local provision and uncertainty around safe use.	Exmouth Area	All ages to 64	£1,482
Happi Beats	200	Provide more frequent and ongoing Taiko Drumming experiences sessions for residents with Parkinson's disease and Dementia to provide	East Devon villages	26+	£1,200
Honiton Carers Support Group	40	Craft sessions for unpaid carers helping to address isolation, depression and loneliness, bringing people together through craft and music.	Honiton, Ottery, Combe Raleigh, Collaton Raleigh, Offwell, Feniton, Sidmouth & Pinhoe	18-65+	£1,500
Inspiring Connections SW CIC	2000	Providing Christmas hampers and utility assistance for families across East Devon (Operation Rudolph)	Across East Devon	All	£1,500
Little Green Change	250	Delivering second hand books distributed to primary-aged school children across East Devon Supported by schools in East Devon who are keen to take part in project.	Axminster, Seaton, Kilmington and Honiton.	5-18	£1,499.95

Make Lunch partnered with All Saints Church	40	Working closely with three local schools through Transforming Lives for Good (TLG) partnership. Providing year-long coaching for children and resources for the Make Lunch programme. Warm inclusive space for families to gather, share a free nutritious meal and build supportive relationships reducing isolation and loneliness. Food and structured play, crafts and shared activities also provided encouraging positive parent-child interactions with volunteers modelling health engagement and building parental confidence. Also provide free lunches and additional food to take home during school holidays.	Sidmouth and surrounding areas	All	£800
North Devon Deaf Children's Society	50	Charity supporting deaf children. Currently families have to travel to North Devon so funding would allow free activities and events to be provided (including printed BSL resources for families to learn new vocabulary, food and drink) exclusively in East Devon with a BSL Interpreter or Communication support provided as necessary.	Across East Devon	All	£1,500
Ottery Help Scheme	15	Seated exercise group in Whimble to support older residents helping to reduce overall wellbeing, physical health, social isolation and additional challenges faced by those living in rural communities. Club already in place in Ottery St Mary with waiting list.	Whimble	26 - 64, 65+	£1,500
Seaton & District Hospital League of Friends	800	funding towards a carers circle group providing support skills developments for unpaid carers	Seaton District	All	£1,500
Sidmouth Coastal Community Hub CIC	2500	free community coastal celebration festival in May 2026 focusing on the marine and natural environment. The theme aims to raise awareness of the environmental challenges to our coastal location through the festival and its participatory activities, talks, dance, music, food, recycling, creativity.	Sidmouth and surrounding areas	All	£1,500
The Devon Centre of Birth	50	Small-scale pilot programme of free, community-based pregnancy and postnatal support sessions, filling gap in accessible, non-clinical spaces through formal,	Exmouth Area	18-64	£1,200

		peer-led support to complement statutory care. Project to work alongside local birth and postnatal professional and community organisations signposting into existing local services and support networks.			
Wellbeing Workshops Devon	30	Psychoeducational wellbeing workshops delivered in collaboration with Seachange and Open Door, providing participants with a practical toolkit of strategies and skills to support management and maintaining wellbeing throughout life.	Exmouth, Budleigh Salterton	24 - 64, 65+	£1,500
				Total	£30,045.95

Applications awaiting Evidence					
Group	Nos	Reasons for funding	Area	Age	Funding Requested
Net Ninjas Badminton Club	60	Badminton Club wanting to provide taster sessions in educational settings, making a more accessible sport especially for neurodivergent children who find traditional sport settings overwhelming.	Broadclyst Westclyst	0-18	£1,400
Restore Axe Valley CIC	100	Working with an NHS partner to promote healthy eating to prevent cancer with young people helping to choose food to prepare and serve. The group is also a place to share information with young people helping them to access help when needed and giving skills to stay safe in different areas of life. Provision of a 1-2-1 support worker to off load worries and anxieties	Seaton and surrounding areas	5-18	£1,500
Seachange Devon	220	Seachange's Connected Communities: Building Bonds – Beating Loneliness, brings together a range of inclusive social, wellbeing, & peer-support activities designed to reduce loneliness, improve mental & physical health, & strengthen community connections. 8 Eg, Diabetic Support, Men's Support, Chess, Bereavement, Befriending	Budleigh Salterton	18-65+	£1,383.40
Twin Tigers Community Partnership	30 residents	Project offering a 'managed safe space' for young people to work on physical and mental health in a setting free from judgement or negative peer pressure.	Honiton and surrounding rural areas	All	£1,500

		Provide physical training and life skills for young people, learning martial arts, learning conflict resolution, self-control and patience. Referrals received from schools, social care and police.			
				Total	£5,783.40
			Grand total		£35,829.35

Appendix B: Community Buildings Funding

Appendix	Building	Reasons for Funding	Total Amount of Funding Required	Amount of Funding Requested from EDDC	Difference in funding in place	Nos residents or groups benefiting
C 13-34	Dunkeswell Village Hall	Roof tiles in need of significant repair as leaking requiring removal and replacement. Would also like to insulate to reduce heating bills. Attached toilet block also in need of works to insulate to reduce damp caused by lack of appropriate insulation.	£21,053	£10,000	Yes	120
D 35-63	Netherton Club - Farway Village Hall	Significant Repairs to skittle Alley and Ladies toilets required	£15,371	£10,000	Yes	2020
E 64-80	Escot Village Hall	Repairs to external render to remedy damp and mould, due to water penetrating and disintegrating integrity of the interior walls that are starting to crumble. Replace rotten fire doors	£14,121	£10,000	Yes	40
F 81-107	Northleigh Parish Hall	Decorating works to temporarily resolve black mould on ceiling	£2,290.49	£2,000	Yes	100
G 108-135	1 st Beer Scout Group	Replacing existing worn and heavily soiled carpet flooring in scout hut, with new wipe-clean, hard wearing non-slip flooring. Originally lower quote which has now increased.	£5,849.56	£4,428.17	Yes	9
H 136 -169	Offwell Recreation Ground and Village Hall	Repairs to sprung floor, sanding, and resealing, including painting of badminton and pickle ball court on flooring to allow for indoor sports.	£3,875	£2,712	Yes	20
I 170-194	Aylesbeare Village Hall	Upgrading heating system as currently heated through 4 ageing storage heaters and 2 old infrared heaters. Flooring to be	£74,000	£10,000	Yes	900

		replaces as part of the project.				
J 195-235	Umborne Village Hall	Roof Connection between kitchen and main hall with ramp access for those with reduced mobility and to complete interior fittings, e.g new efficient wiring, lighting and kitchen equipment.	£26,735.04	£10,000	Yes, Norman Family Charitable Trust and Community Funds raised	200
K 236-251	Musbury Village Hall	Replacement front door as one side is faulty so cannot be fully opened	£1,816	£1,816	Not required	750
L 252-270	Gittisham Parish Hall	Insulated fire-retardant stage curtains and hanging rail	£2,835.81	£2,835.81	Not Required	3000
M 271-291	Awliscombe Parish Hall	Works to bar area and darts playing set up for social events.	£2,720.50	£2,720.50	Not Required	400

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Community Grant Panel held at Tale Room, Blackdown House, Honiton on 15 April 2026

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 5.30 pm and ended at 5.42 pm

11 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 March 2026

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

12 Declarations of Interest

None.

13 Public Speaking

None.

14 Matters of Urgency

None.

15 Confidential or exempt items

None.

16 Community Grant Funding Awards 2025/26

Following adjournment of the meeting held on the 30 March 2026, the Panel considered an update on the report from the Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager on funding for the following remaining applications.

Building	Total Amount of Funding Required	Amount of Funding Requested from EDDC	Difference in funding in place	Panel decision
Northleigh Parish Hall	£2,290.49	£2,000	Yes	Defer for further information
1 st Beer Scout Group	£5,849.56	£4,428.17	Yes	Defer for further information
Offwell Recreation Ground and Village Hall	£3,875	£2,712	Yes	Defer for further information
Musbury Village Hall	£1,816	£1,816	Not required	Defer for further information
Gittisham Parish Hall	£2,835.81	£2,835.81	Not	Defer for

			Required	further information
Awliscombe Parish Hall	£2,720.50	£2,720.50	Not Required	Defer for further information

The Panel were in support of the community buildings applications but the total number of applications meant that the fund was over-subscribed. The Panel were also aware of the increase in costs for materials and works over time, and how delaying a decision by a long period may adversely affect the applicants.

Members of the Panel debated recommending a change to the policy that permits applications that would normally be awarded but can't be due to the funding limits in place for the Community buildings, to be rolled over to the next funding window without having to reapply. Members also agreed that clear, positive communication should be sent to the six applicants to provide reassurance. Accordingly, the following recommendation was agreed, set out below:

Recommendation to Cabinet:

To make the following change to the Community Grant Fund policy

- Applications that meet the policy criteria, but Members are unable to approve due to funding limits, can be rolled over to the next grant window.

Subject to Cabinet approving the above recommendation the 6 Community building fund applications deferred for a decision will be carried forward to the next grant window.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

- S Hawkins (Chair)
- J Bailey
- S Hughes
- J Loudoun
- H Parr
- S Jackson
- S Smith

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

Officers in attendance:

- Sharon Church, Benefits Manager
- Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer

Chair

Date:

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**Minutes of the meeting of Recycling and Waste Partnership Board held at Online via Teams on 22 April 2026****Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 10.55 am

60 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2026 were agreed as a true record.

61 Declarations of interest

There were no declaration of interest.

62 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

The Chair welcomed James Carpenter, Managing Director of East Devon Environmental Services to the meeting and James introduced himself to the Board.

63 Joint operations and contract report

The Recycling and Waste Service Manager and the SUEZ Regional Manager gave the Board a joint contract and operational update for the final quarter of 2025 – 26. Quarter 4 began with the usual focus on the Christmas catch-up period, with January dedicated to managing the increased volumes generated over the festive season. This was delivered effectively, with crews maintaining strong performance and ensuring collections were completed as scheduled. In addition there were incidents involving an unexploded bomb in Exmouth and localised flooding. These were a real live test of business continuity and service coped well.

Overall performance had been excellent, with the service remaining stable and well-managed, balancing day to day delivery with on-going project work and future planning. Quarter 4 recycling rates were yet to be validated. Household numbers steadily increased and were now around 75,800, demonstrating a low percentage of missed collections. It was noted that the performance threshold figures needed to adjust due to the increase in households and that these would be changed for the new contract. There had been a slight increase in complaints but these were indicative of the time of year.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had published the 2024/25 annual results for local authority collected waste management in England. These statistics provided an insight into national and local performance against key waste and recycling indicators. East Devon's recycling and composting rate was 60.1%. Although this represented no change from 2023/24 East Devon had moved from 6th to 4th position nationally. Achieving and maintaining a recycling rate of 60% was a significant achievement accomplished only by a small number of authorities. This reflected the both the success of the service delivery and the continued engagement of local residents. In terms of residual household waste East Devon continued to retain 1st position nationally for the lowest kilogram of residual waste per household. It was noted that a number of

local authorities regularly asked for advice from EDDC and that Mid Devon District Council had replicated the service.

The Board agreed that East Devon's performance in 2024/25 reflected another year of strong partnership between the Council, SUEZ and local residents. Continued investment in public engagement, service delivery, and innovation in waste collection would be key to sustaining and improving this performance.

A significant amount of focus had been directed towards the LATCo transition. The operational team continued to progress key service developments, including preparatory work for the rollout of the green waste narrow access collection service.

Recruitment across the contract remained steady, with overall staffing numbers maintained. Support from agency staff continued where required, with ongoing progress in converting suitable individuals into permanent SUEZ employees. Within the EDDC Recycling Team the vacant Operations and Projects Officer role had been recruited to, and EDDC had appointed the new Environmental Services Contract Manager, with a start date of 13 July 2026.

The SUEZ Regional Manager reported that sickness management continued to be positive, with 1% sickness over the last 4 months. This was a testament to the processes in place and the positive engagement of Edenserv and EDDC in the TUPE process. It demonstrated that the workforce were engaged and did not feel unsettled by the change of contract.

Vigiminutes were now embedded into the SUEZ safety culture and were being carried out on a more frequent basis. 'Safety in Mind' conversations were focussed on quality rather than quantity. Monthly mobile plant evaluations and manager safety visits continued, with the last one focussed on Zone Access Control, which resulted in all the safe working procedures being reviewed and updated in the materials recycling facility (MRF).

Maintenance continued to play a key role in keeping the materials recycling facility MRF fully operational and managing the overall waste flows into the site.

More near miss reporting was encouraged. It was noted that road traffic accidents were high in January but had reduced month on month since. Contributing factors were dark morning and evenings and weather conditions such as ice and flooding.

Material prices remained in line with expectations. It was noted that cardboard, plastics, aluminium and steel was sold through the SUEZ trading team. Glass, paper and textiles were sold through Devon County Council contracts. Concern was expressed that some material prices had reduced and the potential impact this would have on the overall budget. The Assistant Director – Streetscene replied that the reduction in material prices provided a budget pressure compared to the forecasted budget and that ELT and the accountants were aware of this, as well as the middle east conflict and rising fuel costs. Reporting would come forward on this.

Leases on Unit 45 had been signed and completed and work was underway to make it fully operational. This would provide significant improvement in available depot space, supporting more efficient site operations and future planning.

The Chair requested that two years of comparison recycling rate figures and other operational performance figures be provided at the next Board meeting to enable members to analyse trends.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked officers for their report and thanked the partnership for all its reactive work during the Exmouth bomb incident and the flooding.

RESOLVED: that two years of comparison recycling rate figures and other operational performance figures be provided at the next Board meeting to enable members to analyse trends.

64 **Performance framework**

The Board noted the performance report which showed performance across the contract. It highlighted eight parts of the contract that officers focused on and allowed officers to look for areas of improvement and put plans in place if necessary. The Recycling and Waste Service Manager highlighted the overall good performance and reported that the contract had never invoked a penalty.

Although it was hoped that residents would not notice a change in contract it was acknowledged that bumps along the way were to be expected. The performance framework had previously been suspended during the SUEZ mobilisation period and the covid pandemic and it was suggested that this could be considered during the Edenserv mobilisation.

The report was noted.

65 **Green waste accounts**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager presented the draft green waste accounts to the Board and thanked the accountant for producing them.

It was noted that the service was doing well and that the draft year end figures indicated that income recognised in 2025/26 was £1,219,332. This was £90,000 above the projected figure. Expenses were £638,036 and the profit for the year was £581,269.

The Board noted that the price of the green waste subscription had increased by 16% from 1 April 2026. Customers were informed of the price increase in their renewal notification. Officers were monitoring the trend of renewals, but at present there did not appear to be a reduction in subscribers. There were currently 21,000 green waste service customers with 23,000 bins. In response for a request for information the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager agreed to email out the rate of green waste service subscriptions.

The green waste accounts were noted.

66 **Green waste narrow access collection update**

The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager updated the Board on green waste narrow access collections. Simpler Recycling changes had introduced the requirement for local authorities to offer narrow access green waste collections from 1 April 2026. The Recycling and Waste Contract Manager advised that a vehicle had been procured and liveried with the green waste 'clipping brilliant' marketing and that 4000 households

would be eligible for the service. The team had an expression of interest list and had begun to move some customers on existing rounds to provide a better service/easier access for crews. New customers could currently sign up to the service through the Customer Service Centre. Strata were working on updating the website to allow customers to subscribe to the service themselves. Once this website change had been made marketing of the green waste narrow access service would commence to increase customers.

The update was noted.

67 **SUEZ demobilisation updates**

The Assistant Director - Streetscene gave the Board an update on the SUEZ demobilisation. There was a full project management framework operating for the LATCo project which included weekly and monthly meetings, with update reports going to ELT and the LATCo Shareholder Committee. The Shareholder Committee was working in the oversight capacity of the LATCo project.

The Recycling and Waste Partnership Board were reminded that its role remained in the governance structure and would continue to provide cross party review of service delivery, operational performance & key performance indicator (KPI) monitoring of the service provider and working on improvement projects such as the Nappicycle trial.

The Assistant Director – Streetscene thanked Suez for the superb service they had provided and welcomed the Managing Director of Edenserv. Suez had continued to be good partners, working in an open, supportive and collegiate manner. They had advised on demobilisation actions and shared mobilisation plans from other contracts to assist with Edenserv's mobilisation planning.

The demobilisation side was well understood & Suez had provided all information that had been requested, across a range of areas such as systems, assets and suppliers. They were assisting with Environment Agency licence compliance data and other operational matters that would need to come across to Edenserv. Work was also being undertaken on legal arrangements for the end date of the contract with SUEZ.

The Edenserv Managing Director had taken over the lead on the TUPE process for Edenserv, which was progressing well. He reported that he was pleased to be working with SUEZ and that staff were the key to the success of the service. It was noted that there was still much to do and risks remained but were being mitigated. The expectation was that the service was safe and legal at day one and that residents would not notice any change in service.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked all involved with the demobilisation process and gave particular thanks to SUEZ. Through excellent partnership working SUEZ had played an extraordinary part in East Devon's success. On behalf of SUEZ the Regional Manager thanked the Partnership Board and East Devon District Council and reiterated the importance of working in partnership.

The update was noted.

Attendance List

Board Members:

Councillors present:

G Jung (Chair)
M Rixson
M Goodman

Officers present:

A Hancock, Assistant Director StreetScene
L Hodges, Recycling & Waste - Service Manager

Suez present:

M Canning

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Faithfull
E Rylance

Officers in attendance:

James Carpenter, Managing Director, EdenServ
Alethea Thompson, Democratic Services Officer

Suez representatives in attendance:

Board Member apologies:

John Wrigley
Vincent Masseri
Councillor Paula Fernley
Councillor Todd Olive
Councillor Richard Jefferies

Chair

Date:

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 6 May 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Economic Development Strategy - Year 3 Priorities

Report summary:

Good progress has been made against the Economic Development Strategy's (EDS) five policy areas since the last update to Cabinet in April 2025. The Strategy made a clear commitment to keeping track of progress and reviewing the policy priorities on an annual basis. Officers have undertaken this review and proposed changes to the EDS priorities for the third year of the Strategy. This includes an indicative work programme which factors in the loss of local growth funding, refocusing the team's efforts towards town centres and a renewed focus on commercial development. The report also provides an update on the current composition of the Economic Development team as we adjust to the new funding landscape.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

1. That Cabinet notes the progress made in the latest six-month of the 2024-29 Economic Development Strategy.
2. That Cabinet endorse the proposed amendments to the EDS priorities for the third year of the Strategy (see Appendix 2) and note the indicative workplan for Jul25-Jul26 (see Appendix 3).

Reason for recommendation:

The Economic Development Strategy committed officers to producing an 'annual report' to measure the progress made against each of the policy priorities. The purpose of this is to keep members aware and engaged. Tracking and, where necessary, updating policy priorities ensures that the EDS remains relevant and avoids becoming outdated.

Officer: Tom Winters, Economic Development Manager, tom.winters@eastdevon.gov.uk 01395 571528

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning

Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Medium Impact

No additional equalities implications have been observed following the [equality impact assessment](#) published for the Economic Development Strategy in June 2024.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; There are no significant risks associated with the report recommendations.

Links to background information: [Economic Development Strategy \(2024-2029\)](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
 - Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
 - Resilient economy that supports local business
 - Financially secure and improving quality of services
-

Background

- 1.1 Cabinet endorsed the council's [Economic Development Strategy](#) (EDS) on 10 July 2024. The EDS commits officers to providing an annual report with a RAG (red, amber or green) rating for each priority area along with a brief update on how each priority is being actioned. The EDS also allows for priorities to be "amended, removed or replaced with an alternative option" to ensure the strategy remains relevant and up to date.
- 1.2 A [report](#) on the first six months of progress on the EDS was presented to Cabinet on 30 April 2025. This report serves as an update on the previous twelve-month period.
- 1.3 The EDS Progress Tracker (see [here](#)) has been updated to track progress against the priorities every six months. The current tracker version applies to the period from July 2025 to January 2026 (see [Progress Tracker 3](#)). The next 6-month update will be published for July 2026.
- 1.4 The tracker shows the majority of priorities are proceeding well, with no 'red' indicators, 6 identified as 'amber' and 23 marked as 'green'. Good progress is expected for all 6 amber priorities, with commercial development and town centres being two primary focuses for Year 3 of the Strategy, as outlined in the next section of this report.
- 1.5 Members should note that since the previous update to Cabinet, government has confirmed that East Devon will no longer be in receipt of local growth funding post March 2026. This had previously been allocated through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) since late 2022. The council's Economic Development Manager gave an all-member briefing on 31 July 2025, outlining the implications of this funding loss on the EDS and other corporate strategies. [\(Councillor briefing slides\)](#)

Priorities

- 1.6 The EDS priorities provide a strategic justification for both specific pre-identified projects and to help guide and shape new project opportunities which emerge within the five year period. Appendix 1 shows the priorities for the previous year, mapping out each of the five EDS policy areas, along with proposed amendments, additions and postponements for 2026/27. Appendix

2 shows specific projects and activities to deliver against those updated priorities for the year ahead.

- 1.7 The majority of activity planned for the 2026/27 period relates to previous commitments and activities already underway and endorsed by Cabinet. Economic development activity for the remaining three years of the Strategy needs to address the following three key requirements, including:
- To adapt to the loss of local growth funding (UKSPF & REPF) from 2026/27 onwards whilst being prepared to respond effectively to any new central funding opportunities and devolved powers.
 - To ensure better alignment with the government's growth mission and drive to improve pride in place.
 - To respond to the council's financial challenges by maximising income generation, protecting existing income and making reasonable savings.
- 1.8 To adapt to this new reality, many of the EDS priorities have had to be amended. For example, without local growth funding, we are unable to run future rounds of major grant schemes, such as the [Carbon Action Fund](#) or [Innovation and Resilience Fund](#). Priorities have therefore been amended to reflect our role as 'enabler' rather than 'funder'.
- 1.9 It is being proposed that officer time and resource previously focussed on activity linked to UKSPF now be allocated to what can be called 'traditional' or 'conventional' economic development work. This includes being more active in the commercial property market and engaging more actively with our town centres. This refocusing, and the new work stemming from it, will be in addition to those EDS priorities not impacted by the loss of central funding, which will continue as normal.

Commercial Development

- 1.10 The Workspace Policy in the EDS commits the council to taking a more active approach in helping to address the market failure in the provision of workspace across the district.
- 1.11 One of the original EDS priorities was to relaunch a Commercial Property Register to better link businesses to available workspace. However, after further research, officers have concluded that an alternative approach might better help address these issues.
- 1.12 One of the main issues identified is that the lack of available leasehold and freehold commercial property is leading to fewer enquiries to commercial agents, as there is less to enquire about. This is problematic when land-owners are debating whether to develop land allocated for employment uses, who require evidence of demand which agents may not be able to provide. This leads to a situation where demand is high, but with no clear channel for this demand to be communicated to landowners and developers.
- 1.13 There is a role for council in this space, by seeking to capture evidence of demand which commercial agents might not otherwise be privy to. By providing this match-making service, we can help give landowners the confidence to develop, enabling further commercial development. In addition to the economic benefit, further development will result in additional business rates income to the council, helping to close the financial gap set by the Fair Funding Review.

Town Centres

- 1.14 The council's Economic Development team has traditionally not engaged in town centre activity to a significant degree. This is not typical, with economic development teams at other

councils usually playing a larger role in bringing together key town centre partners and supporting regeneration and placemaking efforts.

- 1.15 The EDS Social Policy sets out a case for supporting our high streets and regenerating our town centres, focusing on sustainable retail and an attractive social offer. It is being proposed that a new Town Centre Officer Group (TCOG) be formed. This will bring together officers from across the council to gather data on the health of town centres and to identify achievable projects which do not require large sums of local growth funding.
- 1.16 In addition to data gathering and project management, the TCOG will also act as a sounding-board for how new devolved powers could be utilised. Examples include the government's announcement on High Street Rental Auctions, and on new powers to limit the number of certain uses on high streets.
- 1.17 With the Economic Development team playing a more active role in this area, we can start to work more closely with town councils, helping to share best practice at a local level. This will also help prepare us for Local Government Reorganisation, ensuring East Devon towns remain supported after being integrated into a larger unitary authority geography.

Staff Resource

- 1.18 Since the end of the Covid pandemic, the Economic Development team has consisted of four officers:
- Economic Development Manager
 - Senior Economic Development Officer
 - Senior Economic Development Officer – Prosperity and Investment (currently unfilled)
 - Economy Projects Assistant (fixed term contract ending 31 March 2026)
- 1.19 The EPA role was recruited to assist with the deployment of the UKSPF, with a fixed term contract running concurrently with the fund. The (currently unfilled) SEDO role was responsible for the programme management of the UKSPF, which took up around 50% of their time alongside other core responsibilities.
- 1.20 To ensure that the team is properly resourced to deliver the remainder of the EDS, the team composition will be reduced from four to three officers. This will include retaining the existing Economic Development Manager and Senior Economic Development Officer posts, but cutting the unfilled Senior Economic Development Officer role and replacing it with a more junior position.
- 1.21 A leaner team will ensure that we are able to balance delivery against the EDS whilst maintaining a level of agility to respond to new challenges and opportunities. This approach will also result in a reasonable financial saving, helping to address wider budgetary challenges.

Indicative Annual Budget

- 1.22 There is no request for additional internal funding. The majority of projects, programmes and activities planned for 2026/27 either have no budgetary requirement or can be covered by internal economic development budgets. Projects utilising external funds have already been agreed by Cabinet.
- 1.23 The table below shows an indicative budget plan for the two internal economic development budgets, the Business Support budget and Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI)

budget. A new Sustainable Tourism budget was approved by Council on 25 February 2026 to continue activity previously funded through the UKSPF, which is also shown below.

Table 2: Indicative Internal Budget Plan 2026/27

Activity/Project Name	Cost	Budget
Business Support Programme	£70,000	Business Support
Sustainable Tourism Programme	£30,000	Tourism
Ottery Gate to Plate	£5,000	LABGI
Total	£105,000	

1.24 The economic development budgets allow for flexibility within the financial year, enabling us to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

1.25 Excluding the £105,000 shown above, all other projects and activities in the 2026/27 EDS Workplan (see Appendix 2) have already been assigned budgets previously endorsed by Cabinet. For example, the £25,000 allocated by Cabinet last year for the StartSmart programme has not yet been fully spent, and so this has been rolled over into the 2026/27 financial year.

Appendices

- 1 EDS Priorities Jul26-Jul27
 - 2 EDS Indicative Workplan Jul26-Jul27
-

Financial implications:

The programme and resources requirements outlined in this report are within existing funds and approved budgets.

Legal implications:

There are no substantive legal issues to be added to this report.

EDS Priorities Jul26-Jul27

Policy	2025/26 Priority	2026/27 Priority	Amendment	2026/27 Activity
Industrial	Invest and support projects linked to 'clean growth' including clean energy, green finance, sustainable transport and innovations in the circular economy.	Support projects and initiatives linked to 'clean growth' including clean energy, green finance, sustainable transport and innovations in the circular economy.	'Invest' removed to reflect loss of local growth funding.	To be provided through inward investment and planning response services.
	Invest and support projects linked to new digital and data innovations, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and drone technology.	Support projects and initiatives linked to new digital and data innovations, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and drone technology.	'Invest' removed to reflect loss of local growth funding.	To be provided through inward investment and planning response services.
	Support the development of the Future Flight Innovation Zone (FFIZ) centred on Exeter Airport.	Support the development of the Future Flight Innovation Zone (FFIZ) centred on Exeter Airport.	None	Continued support for FFIZ project.
	Invest and support projects to promote East Devon's renowned food and drink sector, including events and exploring specialist workplace provision.	Invest and support projects to promote East Devon's renowned food and drink sector, including events and exploring specialist workplace provision.	None	Explore Gate to Plate event for Ottery St Mary and support promotion of Cranbrook G2P. Continued support for Taste East Devon.
	Invest and support projects linked to East Devon's Tourism Strategy to promote improved quality, collaboration, sustainability and accessibility across the sector.	Invest and support projects linked to East Devon's Tourism Strategy to promote improved quality, collaboration, sustainability and accessibility across the sector.	None	Projects to be delivered using the council's new £30k annual tourism budget.
	Invest and support projects linked to local farm businesses, including support to diversify.	Support projects and initiatives linked to local farm businesses, including support to diversify	'Invest' removed to reflect loss of local growth funding.	To be provided through professional support, planning response services and continued participation on the Farming in Protected Landscapes panel.
Workspace	Lead the delivery of the Enterprise Zone (EZ) programme by investing in the delivery and effective marketing of new commercial space.	Lead the delivery of the Enterprise Zone (EZ) programme by investing in the delivery and effective marketing of new commercial space.	None	Continued delivery of the EZ programme.
	Explore the viability of developing small start-up units on vacant Council-owned land.	Explore the viability of developing small start-up units on vacant Council-owned land.	None	Progress to continue on site viability, with other sites to be disposed of to enable delivery.
	Support the viability of employment allocations by exploring the use of Local Development Orders and working with partners to ensure their development.	Support the viability of employment allocations by exploring the use of Local Development Orders and working with partners to ensure their development.	None	Skypark and Science Park LDOs to be completed.
	Ensure employment and skills plans (ESPs) are produced for larger residential and commercial developments.	Ensure employment and skills plans (ESPs) are produced for larger residential and commercial developments.	None	An ESP support service to be launched through Building Greater Exeter following preparatory work.
	Maintain an online platform to help inform growing businesses about available workspace and link them with relevant commercial agents.	Provide a support service linking up land owners, developers and commercial agents to businesses seeking to grow.	Focus on direct support rather than an online platform.	Support service to be established, backed up by data on supply and demand of commercial premises.
	Invest and support small scale projects to enable underused or undeveloped space to generate new employment opportunities.	N/A	Removed to reflect loss of local growth funding.	Proposals will continue to be monitored through the planning process.
Environmental	Provide training and specialist one to one support for organisations seeking to decarbonise, reduce waste and become more resource efficient.	Ensure that East Devon businesses and community organisations can access free and professional sustainability and decarbonisation support services.	Focus on ensuring a service is available rather than directly providing it.	Explore integrating this into wider business support provision or having a standalone 'on-demand' delivery model.
	Explore funding opportunities to provide decarbonisation grant funding to those organisations in most need.	Explore funding opportunities to provide decarbonisation grant funding to those organisations in most need.	None	Explore funding opportunities through Great British Energy.

	Support the reskilling and upskilling of residents into retrofitting and other careers linked to clean growth.	N/A	Removed to reflect loss of local growth funding.	Exeter College and DCC will continue to deliver skills courses without UKSPF funding.
	Ensure that large scale employment development is coupled with sustainable travel options.	Ensure that large scale employment development is coupled with sustainable travel options.	None	Continue delivery of the Mosshayne to Cranbrook cyclepath and continue viability assessments for additional projects.
	Provide retrofitting grants to households in poverty who cannot access support from other schemes.	Provide retrofitting grants to households in poverty who cannot access support from other schemes.	None	Exeter Community Energy will deliver this through the Action on Poverty Fund.
	Support projects which seek to directly link climate action and nature recovery with our local culture and tourism offer.	Support projects which seek to directly link climate action and nature recovery with our local culture and tourism offer.	None	Projects to be delivered using the council's new £30k annual tourism budget and £37.5k annual culture budget.
	N/A	Explore projects to help decarbonise the East Devon Business Centre, to help lower running costs and increase tenancies.	New priority	Business cases to be developed and put to Green Team.
Social	Develop proposals to support high streets and regenerate town centres, focusing on sustainable retail and an attractive social offer.	Explore projects to support high streets and regenerate town centres, focusing on sustainable retail and an attractive social offer.	Focus on projects rather than proposals.	New Town Centre Officer Group (TCOG) to be formed to gather data and identify projects.
	Lead on the delivery of town centres for our new communities to improve pride in place.	Lead on the delivery of town centres for our new communities to improve pride in place.	None	Continued delivery of Cranbox initiative.
	Fund cultural and leisure projects targeted to improve the lifestyle offer for young adults and promote the existing offer more widely	Fund cultural projects targeted to improve the lifestyle offer for young adults and promote the existing offer more widely.	Leisure removed to reflect loss of local growth funding.	Projects to be delivered using the council's new £37.5k annual culture budget.
	Help coordinate employment support for economically inactive residents of all ages, including specialist support for those with disabilities.	N/A	Removed to reflect loss of local growth funding.	DCC will continue to fund the Honiton Employment Hub without UKSPF funding.
	Develop a new business support programme for young entrepreneurs, including voluntary and mentorship for those at or near retirement	Continue to deliver the StartSmart programme, linking entrepreneurs with mentors, professional start-up support, small grants and workspace.	Wording amended to reflect the scope of StartSmart.	Continued delivery of the StartSmart programme.
	Promote succession plan options for business owners nearing retirement which promote resilience and innovation.	Promote succession plan options for business owners nearing retirement which promote resilience and innovation.	None	Continued promotion of the Employee Ownership Transition Fund.
Resource	Produce a Customer Charter committing the Council to providing quality public services to local businesses which offer value for money	Produce a Customer Charter committing the Council to providing quality public services to local businesses which offer value for money.	None	Continued development of the Customer Charter, ensuring this is applicable to businesses.
	To ensure a responsive and efficient planning service for businesses and commercial developers.	To ensure a responsive and efficient planning service for businesses and commercial developers.	None	Continue to deliver.
	Continue to provide an agile and approachable inward investment service to land high-value, aspirational employers.	Continue to provide an agile and approachable inward investment service to land high-value, aspirational employers.	None	Continue to deliver.
	Establish regular briefing sessions to keep local businesses up to speed on changes and updates from the council.	Establish regular briefing sessions to keep local businesses up to speed on changes and updates from the council.	None	Briefing sessions to remain focussed on LGR.
	Ensure that East Devon businesses and start-ups can access free and professional business support services.	Ensure that East Devon businesses and start-ups can access free and professional business support services.	None	A new business support service will be established to succeed Prosper.

EDS Indicative Workplan Jul26-Jul27

Activity	Type	Policy Priorities	Cost	Budget	Resource	Officer
Continue to fund retrofitting grants to households in poverty.	Contract management	Environmental (P4)	£129,913	Action on Poverty (internal)	Low	Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager
Continue to fund a professional business support service, including for start-up and farm businesses.	Contract management	Resource (P5), Environmental (P1)	£70,000	Business Support (internal)	Medium	Economy Projects Officer
Explore a Gate to Plate event for Ottery in 2027 and continue promoting the Cranbrook Gate to Plate event for Sept26.	Contract management	Industrial (P5)	£5,000	LABGI	Medium	Senior Economic Development Officer
Continue to bring forward stalled employment sites through the Employment Delivery Project Team.	Programme	Workspace (P2, P3)	Unknown	PWLB	High	Corporate Lead - Major Projects & Programmes
Delivery of a new internally funded Culture Programme, including the Creative East Devon Fund grant scheme.	Programme	Social (P3), Environmental (P5)	£37,500	Culture (internal)	High	Cultural Producer
Continued delivery of the Enterprise Zone programme	Programme	Workspace (P1)	Unknown	EZ funding	High	Project Manager (PAC)
Continue to establish Local Development Orders for Sky Park and the Science Park.	Programme	Workspace (P3)	Unknown	None	High	Project Manager (PAC)
Continue feasibility work and projects stemming from the Exmouth Placemaking initiative.	Programme	Social (P1)	Unknown	Exmouth Placemaking (internal)	High	Project Manager Place & Prosperity
Delivery of a new internally funded Sustainable Tourism Programme, including continuation of the East Devon Tourism Network.	Programme	Industrial (P4, P5), Environmental (P5)	£30,000	Tourism (internal)	High	Senior Economic Development Officer
Continue delivery of the StartSmart Programme for entrepreneurs, including the mentoring scheme and small grant fund.	Programme	Social (P4), Resource (P5)	£25,000	Business Support (internal)	Medium	Economy Projects Officer
Continue promoting the Employee Ownership Transition Fund to increase take-up of employee ownership succession plans.	Project	Social (P5)	£5,000	Business Support (internal)	Low	Economic Development Manager
Establish a support service linking up land owners, developers and commercial agents to businesses seeking to grow.	Project	Workspace (P5)	N/A	None	High	Economic Development Manager
Finalise a Customer Charter which is applicable to businesses as well as residents.	Project	Resource (P1)	N/A	None	Low	Economy Projects Officer
Continue delivery of the Cranbox development.	Project	Social (P2)	£1,950,742	Devolution funding	High	Project Manager (PAC)
Continue briefing sessions for local businesses on local government reorganisation.	Project	Resource (P4)	N/A	None	Medium	Senior Economic Development Officer
Work with Exeter College to establish an Employment and Skills Plan support service through Building Greater Exeter.	Project (NEW)	Workspace (P5)	N/A	None	Low	Economic Development Manager
Deliver decarbonisation projects for the East Devon Business Centre.	Project (NEW)	Environmental (P6)	Unknown	Green Team (internal)	Medium	Economy Projects Officer
Establish a Town Centre Officer Group (TCOG) to gather data and identify small scale projects.	Project (NEW)	Social (P1)	N/A	None	Medium	Senior Economic Development Officer
Continue to provide planning application responses for proposals with economic development implications.	Service	Workspace (P4)	N/A	None	Low	Economic Development Manager
Continue to provide an agile and approachable inward investment service, with a focus on Industrial Strategy sectors.	Service	Resource (P3), Industrial (P1, P2)	N/A	None	Medium	Economic Development Manager and Senior Economic Development Officer

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting 6 May 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



Local Government Reorganisation: Implementation Planning

Report summary:

This report updates Cabinet on implementation planning for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the move away from the current two-tier county/district arrangements. Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper (December 2024), Devon councils submitted proposals for unitary local government (November 2025) and subsequently responded to MHCLG's consultation on the five structural options (March 2026). A Secretary of State decision is expected in respect of the preferred option during July 2026.

To enable implementation to proceed based on this decision, Parliament will be asked to approve a Structural Changes Order (SCO). The SCO must set key legal foundations including a vesting day, creation of unitary areas and councils, abolition and winding-up of predecessor authorities, transitional vehicles and arrangements for future elections. Current Councils will be invited to submit views on the SCO.

The report explains the role of a Section 24 Direction, which is likely shortly after an SCO comes into force. This will restrict significant transactions without consent, including land disposals over £100,000, capital contracts over £1 million, revenue contracts over £100,000, and major reserve decisions. Consent is typically delegated to the Shadow Executive/new council arrangements, often supported by general consents to enable business as usual.

Transition is planned through to vesting day in April 2028, with phases culminating in inaugural elections (May 2027) and operation of a Shadow Council. Preparatory work is currently being progressed on an "options-agnostic" basis, focusing on consistent data collection and housekeeping activities, while building internal capacity and participating in joint governance forums. Key themes include financial probity, service continuity, transparency/equalities duties, staff welfare, and managing high risk and uncertainty. A further report will follow once the Secretary of State's decision is known. This will also consider the impact on planned major projects and programmes.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet;

- Note the current position in relation to proposals for Local Government Reorganisation
- Delegates continuing authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Council, Corporate and External Engagement to provide input to the development of the Structural Change Order in conjunction with the other District and Borough Councils and to make such arrangements that are necessary so as to support successful transition through to Vesting Day
- Receives a further report once the Secretary of State's decision is known

Reasons for recommendations:

To ensure that Cabinet is aware of the current position in relation to Local Government Reorganisation.

To support implementation planning and a successful transition to future Council structures.

Officer: Andy Wood, Director of Place, email andy.wood@eatdevon.gov.uk

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: High Risk; Local Government Reorganisation is a complex process the outcome of which goes to the heart of future public service delivery.

Links to background information <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-reorganisation-implementation-guidance> [The Surrey \(Structural Changes\) Order 2026 LGR Toolkit | Local Government Association](#) [Financial decisions before local government reorganisation - GOV.UK](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
 - Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
 - Resilient economy that supports local business
 - Financially secure and improving quality of services
-

1. Background and Context

1.1 Proposals to replace the current two tier system of District and County Councils were initially set out in the English Devolution White Paper published in December 2024. In the intervening period a number of key stages have been completed including responses to the Secretary of State's invitation to submit proposals for a single tier of unitary government in Devon being submitted (November 2025). Most recently this Council has responded to the MHCLG consultation on the five potential options for future local government structures. This is the penultimate stage before a final decision is made with regard to the preferred model which will then proceed to implementation.

2. Decision to Implement (or Reject)

2.1 Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Secretary of State holds significant power to reshape local government. Once proposals are submitted and a statutory consultation is held, the Secretary of State has three primary paths:

- **Implement as submitted:** If a proposal meets the criteria perfectly.
- **Implement with modifications:** The Secretary of State can "tweak" the plan. For instance, they might adjust the proposed boundaries or change which specific councils are included in a new unitary area.
- **Reject the proposal:** If the Secretary of State decides the plan doesn't offer enough financial stability or doesn't reflect local identity, they can choose to do nothing, leaving the existing "two-tier" (County and District) system in place.

2.2 A decision regarding local government reorganisation in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay is now expected in July of this year.

3. Structural Changes Order

3.1 If the Secretary of State decides to move forward, they make a final legal decision by laying a Structural Changes Order (SCO) before Parliament. As a minimum, the SCO needs to establish the following;

- Establish a vesting date
- Establish unitary areas
- Establish councils for the unitary areas
- Abolish existing district and county areas
- Dissolve and wind up the abolished councils from vesting day
- Amend the terms of office of existing councillors
- Create transition vehicles:
 - Either a Joint Committee and Shadow Authority for new councils
 - Or an Implementation Executive and Preparing Council for continuing councils
 - Provide for sub-committees and for officers drawn from all relevant areas to implement changes
- Create the main transition/implementation function
- Set out future electoral arrangement

3.2 Devon Councils will shortly be invited to submit SCO proposals. Where possible, MHCLG will encourage working collaboratively to support a single SCO response. The SCO is expected to be published around six months after the decision is made.

4. Section 24 Notice

4.1 A Section 24 Notice (more formally a Section 24 Direction) is a powerful legal "brake" used by the Secretary of State during local government reorganisation to prevent outgoing councils from depleting their finances before they are abolished. It is issued under Section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Section 24 Notice is intended to ensure the new council inherit a stable financial position. It is likely to be issued within a month of the Structural Change Order and come in to force at the same time as the Shadow Authorities come in to being.

4.2 Once a Direction is in place, the affected councils (the "predecessor" authorities) cannot do the following without written consent:

- **Land Disposal:** Selling or transferring land if the value exceeds £100,000.
- **Capital Contracts:** Entering into new capital projects (like building works) worth more than £1,000,000.
- **Revenue Contracts:** Entering into non-capital contracts (like service agreements) worth more than £100,000 if the contract extends beyond "Vesting Day" (the date the new council starts).

- **Financial Reserves:** Making certain significant changes to how they calculate or use their financial reserves.
- 4.3 The Secretary of State usually delegates the power of consent to a specific body or person to ensure that the process is not delayed in Whitehall. This is typically:
- The Shadow Executive of the new council.
 - The Section 151 Officer of the lead council in the transition.
- 4.4 To keep the councils running smoothly, the consent holder often issues a General Consent alongside the restriction. This allows the councils to keep doing business as usual (like paying staff or emergency repairs) while still requiring they ask for Specific Consent for major new projects or land sales.
- 4.5 Even before the SCO formally comes in to affect the Council has, as a minimum, a moral duty to ensure the best use of public funds. This is particularly important consideration for the Council given the number of transformational projects and programmes that are currently being progressed. Government guidance is clear in its expectations that the Local Plan will continue to be progressed. But other projects and programmes will, to a greater or lesser degree, be influenced by the outcome of the LGR process in terms of the chosen option. This particularly relates to whether the District is effectively divided in to two which will necessarily impact key initiatives, specifically those where services are delivered across the District. Furthermore careful consideration will need to be given to how major investments, such as in relation to the planned Cranbrook Health and Wellbeing Hub, are handled in the period between the decision being known and the Shadow Authority coming in to being. This is considered further in the assessment section of this report.

5. Transitional Arrangements

- 5.1 There are expected to be four main stages in the lead up to Vesting Day and the new Councils going live in April 2028. These are as follows;
- Between now and the date that the Secretary of State's decision is known – likely July 2026
 - Between this decision and the Structural Change Order coming in to force – likely through to January 2027
 - Between the Structural Change Order and the Shadow Authority coming in to being – local elections will be held in May 2027
 - The Shadow Authority and vesting day for the new Authority(s) – in April 2028
- 5.2 At present the preparatory work for LGR is being progressed on an options agnostic basis, focusing particularly on collecting key data across the eleven authorities on a consistent basis. This spans a number of areas, from the register of contracts to establishment size and associated HR records. A particular area of focus is therefore on housekeeping activities to ensure that data records are both up to date and accurate.
- 5.3 Once the decision is known the work will evolve to focus more explicitly on implementation. MHCLG have recently produced implementation guidance (see background links) to help guide this activity. This identifies two main transitional periods as follows;
- First Transition Period: Begins when the Structural Changes Order is made and ends on the day of the inaugural elections for the new council.
 - Second Transition Period: Begins after the inaugural elections and ends on Vesting Day (typically April 1st of the following year), when the old councils are abolished.
- 5.4 The Council is currently engaged in a number of forums to support initial implementation planning. This includes both in relation to developing the Reimagining Devon (4-5-1) proposals with the other District and Borough Councils and more widely across all eleven authorities and includes both officer and member groups. Overall the transition is

characterised by moving from loose collaboration to formal governance structures. Alongside this it is expected that a single Implementation Team is formed to enable clear programme management and accountability through to vesting day.

6. Implementation Bodies

6.1 To manage the change, the guidance defines two types of temporary governance structures:

1. Joint Committee (First Period)

Before elections take place, a Joint Committee is formed. This has the following ingredients;

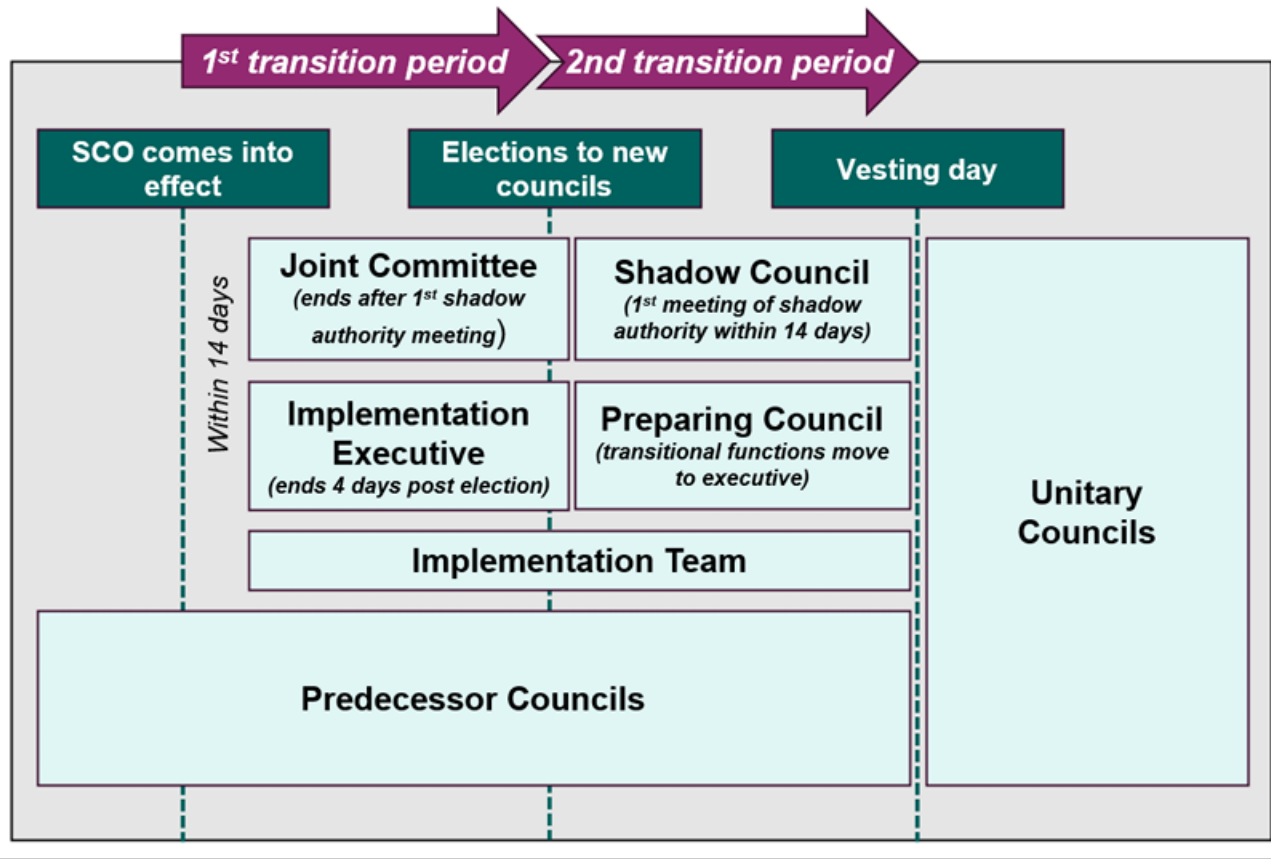
- **Composition:** Members from the existing county, unitary and district councils.
- **Role:** Setting the Implementation Plan, managing the budget for the transition, and preparing job profiles for statutory officers (Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer, and Monitoring Officer).
- **Alternative:** In some cases, a Preparing Council model is used, where one existing council takes the lead via an Implementation Executive. This would be relevant if the chose option is a single large Devon unitary council.

The preferred composition of the Joint Committees will be one of the questions posed by MHCLG in relation to expected engagement to help development the SCO. Work is already underway with the other District and Borough Councils to help frame a response to this and other related questions which is reflected in the second recommendation in this report.

2. Shadow Council (Second Period)

After the inaugural elections, the newly elected councillors form a Shadow Council.

- **Status:** A temporary legal entity that exists alongside the outgoing councils.
- **Role:** It adopts the final budget, sets council tax levels for the new area, and appoints the permanent senior leadership team.
- **Vesting Day:** On this date, the Shadow Council becomes the "New Council," and the predecessor councils cease to exist.



7. Key Requirements for Councils

7.1 The guidance emphasises several must-do actions for authorities during the transition as follows:

- **Duty to Cooperate:** Existing councils are legally required to cooperate, share data, and release staff to the Implementation Team."
- **Financial Due Diligence:** The Joint Committee must gather robust financial information to ensure the Shadow Council can set a balanced budget immediately upon election.
- **Continuity of Service:** A primary focus is sustaining business as usual activity. Local services like waste collection and social care must remain unaffected by the administrative merger.
- **Transparency:** All implementation bodies are expected to operate with a presumption in favour of openness, accountability, and compliance with Public Sector Equality Duties.

8. Implementation Costs

8.1 The LGR process will necessarily incur significant implementation costs. All of business cases across the five options highlight that these costs will be recouped within a three year period from the new unitary Councils coming in to operation through ongoing cost savings.

8.2 Initial implementation costs incurred before Vesting Day will need to be funded by the constituent authorities. The government's expectation is that the formula for securing proportional contributions is agreed locally. Given that these initial costs could exceed £30m overall the Council's contribution will be a significant and will need to be factored in to the MTFs and the setting of a balanced budget for 2027/28.

9. Assessment

- 9.1 This report sets out the next stages of the Local Government Reorganisation process following the completion of the consultation exercise on the five submitted proposals. It can be seen that this process necessarily ramps up and becomes more formal, both in terms of governance structures and the need to establish a shared implantation team. There are key themes around financial probity, ensuring a safe and legal transition, democratic integrity, and staff welfare.
- 9.2 Preparation for LGR will become an increasingly significant workstream as we move forward. At present the focus is on housekeeping activity to ensure that the data hub can be populated. An internal team within the Council is being formed to ensure that all LGR related activity can be progressed in a timely manner. This includes undertaking initial scenario planning to better understand the potential impact of the different options. This is alongside externally focused activity to ensure that the Council works collaboratively as part of wider programme management activity. This includes representation on a Lead Officer Group, a Stage 1 Programme Board and a Leaders Forum in conjunction with the other ten local authorities in Devon.
- 9.3 LGR in Devon is being preceded by decision in relation to five areas that form part of the Devolution Priority Programme (Surrey, Hampshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk). Whilst the government has emphasised that these decisions do not set a precedent for latter decision, they are potentially instructive in terms of the associated thinking. This includes a trend towards a greater number of smaller authorities that are significantly below the guideline population size of 500k people and a sharper focus on the role of urban areas as economic drivers.
- 9.4 Alongside wider implementation planning, it will be important to ensure that more strategic and transformational projects and programmes are accompanied by a clear audit trail in terms of decision making in the context of LGR. Directorate Plans were considered at beginning of the year. These deliberately now cover a two period to be coterminous with LGR timeframes. Hence they set the key priority workstreams, including transformational projects and programmes, that will need to be delivered during this period.
- 9.5 Scenario planning is now underway to understand the relationship between the main LGR options and the progression of these workstreams in terms of key decision making points. Whilst the Council's position is to support the Reimagining Devon (4-5-1) proposals it is important to be cognoscente of other potential outcomes. In particular the greater Exeter unitary proposals would sub-divide the District and would be more disruptive to implement. This could particularly impact current District wide procurement activity for example. The associated analysis and assessment will be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.
- 9.6 It is important to stress that, in terms of timescales, there is no indication from central government of any slippage beyond the stated vesting date of April 2028. This has to remain the foundation for planning assumptions moving forward. This includes associated requirements to set a balanced budget including taking account of initial implementation costs. Nevertheless it is also prudent to be mindful of the potential impact of delays. This includes the potential for wider legal challenge. While the Secretary of State has broad discretion, their decisions must be rational and follow the statutory process. There may be arguments that the Secretary of State failed to take account of key evidence for example. If there were a successful challenge this would likely impact the overall timetable. This

would raise wider challenges, not least in terms of the Council's financial position if a budget needed to be set for 2028/29.

9.7 Finally the wider impact of the complexity and current uncertainty in relation to LGR needs to be recognised. This can be unsettling for both members and staff. Alongside managing the transitional process, the Council's focus has to remain on ensuring the ongoing delivery of high quality services. In order to help prepare staff to both understand and embrace the challenges that lie ahead, an initial workshop has been undertaken with an independent facilitator who was recommended by the LGA and who has practical experience of LGR. It is now planned to run equivalent sessions for members and wider staff. This is alongside ensuring regular communications with staff, members and Towns and Parish Councils.

10. Conclusion

10.1 Whilst vesting day for the new unitary authority(s) is just under two years away, the LGR process is now becoming more real. Implementation planning is becoming an increasingly significant and growing workstream. This report sets out the key considerations as we move through the transitional period. The overarching principle is to end well as a predecessor authority whilst ensuring the new council is set up for success. A further report will be forthcoming once the Secretary of State's decision is known including an assessment of any immediate and practical implications arising from this.

Financial implications:

The report has significant future financial implications, however at this stage this is an update on process and highlights areas for consideration, the report does not make any recommendations affecting the Council's finances at this point. Implications are raised relating to the LGR business cases implementation costs and the likely need that part of these costs may fall to exiting authorities, the degree and requirement of this have not been determined or agreed.

Legal implications:

The legal issues are dealt with in the body of the report.



Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting 6 May 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Playpark Renewal 2026 – Contract above £100k

Report summary:

This report is to seek delegated authority to award the 2026 Playpark Renewals contract to a supplier successfully procured via the EDDC electronic procurement service, of value over £100k

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Cabinet grant delegated authority to the Assistant Director of StreetScene in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment Operations and Portfolio Holder Finance to award the contract to the preferred supplier.

Reason for recommendation:

To enable the Assistant Director to award the contract to the preferred supplier following completion of the tender exercise. The delegation will allow the contract to be entered without a further cabinet paper, to ensure programme targets are met.

Officer: Tom Buxton-Smith tbuxton-smith@eastdevon.gov.uk 01395 571630

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; .

Links to background information

[Link to Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
- Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- Resilient economy that supports local business
- Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

1. **Contract with a contractor (yet to be appointed) will exceed £100k.**
 - 1.2. A competitive tender has been live via our electronic portal since February and the deadline for submissions is Friday 24th April 2026. We will evaluate the submissions and identify the preferred supplier in late April/early May
 - 1.3. The play renewal contract has been tendered with an estimated value of £514k
 - 1.4. The play renewal contract is for 2 sites listed below.
 - 1.4.1. Higher Brook Meadow, Sidford
 - 1.4.2. Phear Park, Exmouth (Playpark, and new Pump Track)
 - 1.5. We are tendering as a single package to offer economies of scale.
 - 1.6. We expect the play park renewal works to be on site in summer/autumn 2026. We will engage with local ward members and parish/town councils on the exact dates of installation.
 - 1.7. Funding for all sites has been agreed and approved by previous BSCAP, Overview+Scrutiny, Full Council meetings and Exmouth TC S106/CiL working party.
 - 1.8. All our playparks are inspected regularly, and we have an ongoing replacement programme across the district. Below is a table of most of our play parks and their predicted residual life before replacement. Pending future funding, further playparks will be replaced when they reach end of life.
 - 1.9. It is worth noting the play parks listed below are managed by Streetscene under our General Fund. EDDC does also manage several other play parks under the housing revenue account. These are funded separately and not included in the list below.

Site Name	Site Address	Site Life Expectancy
S03 - Phear Park	centre of public open space, Exmouth	Part of current contract
S15 - Thomas Close	opposite 15 Thomas Close, Exmouth	Funding for 26/27 agreed - Delivery 27/28
S07 - Durham Close	next to 14 Durham Close, Exmouth	<2
S12 - Ivydale	opposite 66 Ivydale, Exmouth	<2
S37 - Lynch Close Play Amenity/Area	12 Lynch Close, Axminster	Funding in place subject to legal investigation
S46 - Norman Crescent	prior to no. 49, Budliegh Salterton	Funding in place subject to legal investigation
S11 - St Malo	opposite 5 St Malo, Exmouth	Funding for 26/27 agreed - Delivery 27/28
S13 - Lady Byron	16 Brittany Road, Exmouth	2-5
S16 - Whitman Close	adjacent to no. 44, Exmouth	2-5
S18 - Keats Close	next to 1 Keats Close, Exmouth	2-5
S28 - Woodman's Park	opposite 4 Crosscut Way, Honiton	2-5
S30 - Heron Road	opposite 37 Heron Road, Honiton	2-5
S33 - Upland Chase	10 Uplands Chase, Honiton	2-5
S36 - Bonners Glen	5 Bonners Glen, Axminster	2-5
S60 - Queens Drive	Exmouth seafront	2-5

S01 - Imperial Recreation Ground	behind Camperdown Terrace Car Park	6-7
S08 - Truro Drive	opposite 1 Norwich Close, Exmouth	6-7
S20 - Davey's Playing Field	footpath next to 39 Millers Way, Honiton	10+
S51 - Winters Lane	opposite Penor, Winters Lane, Ottery St Mary	6-7
S09 - Liverton Copse	next to 24 Ashfield Close, Exmouth	15+
S10 - Redgates	turning head at Hadrians Way, Exmouth	15+
S21 - Jerrad Close	opposite 36 Jerrard Crescent, Honiton	15+
S24 - Glenn Farm	opposite 4 Glenn Farm Crescent, Honiton	15+
S25 - Old Elm Road	22 Cherry Tree Close, Honiton	15+
S27 - St Mark's Road	opposite 16 St Marks Road, Honiton	15+
S29 - Pale Gate Close	next to 36 Pale Gate Close, Honiton	15+
S31 - Butts Close	46 Butts Close, Honiton	15+
S35 - Dove Close	opposite 5 Dove Close, Honiton	15+
S38 - North Street	4 Gospel Hall Cottage, Axminster	15+
S39 - Foxhill	access on left of 51 Foxhill, Axminster	15+
S40 - Seafield Gardens	opposite 8 Seafield Road, Seaton	15+
S41 - Seaton Skateboard Park	rear of Harbour Road car pak, Seaton	15+
S42 - Meadway	67 Meadway, Seaton	15+
S43 - Lime Kiln - Play Area	rear of Lime Kiln car park, Budleigh Salterton	15+
S45 - Greenway Lane	21 Greenhaven, Budleigh Salterton	15+
S48 - Stowford Rise	below 7 Andrews Close, Sidmouth	15+
S49 - Manstone Recreation Ground	opposite 11 Manstone Avenue, Sidmouth	15+
S54 - The Crescent	opposite 3 Midway, Littleham	15+
S56 - Sidford Recreation Ground	near 1 Dyers Meadow, Sidford	15+
S57 - Jubilee	below Bay View Guest House, Beer	15+
S17 - Betjeman Drive	next to no. 14, Exmouth	15+
S23 - Allhallows Skateboard Park	Sports Centre Car Park, Honiton	15+
S52 - MUGA	opposite 17 Eliot Close, Ottery St Mary	15+
S55 - The Crescent MUGA	opposite 3 Midway, Littleham	15+
S04 - Phear Park Skateboard Park	centre of public open space, Exmouth	20+
S44 - Lime Kiln - Skatepark	west side of Lime Kiln car park, Budleigh Salterton	20+

- 1.10. Delegated authority is sought for the Assistant Director (in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder) to award the contract to the supplier that provides best value.

Financial implications:

Budget approval has previously been given by Council for these schemes.

Legal implications:

The contract must be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.



Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 6 May 2026

Heading/Title: Crisis and Resilience Fund 2026/27

Cabinet Member(s): Finance Portfolio Holder

Director/Assistant Director: Assistant Director – Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services

Author and Directorate: Sharon Church, Benefits and Financial Resilience Manager

Contact Details Sharon.church@eastdevon.gov.uk

Key decision No

If a Key Decision has it appeared on Forward Plan

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

1. Background

Background to the Fund

- 1.1 The Crisis and Resilience Funding (CaRF) is new funding made available by the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP).
- 1.2 In the 2025 Autumn statement, the government confirmed that the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) would cease, and a new CaRF would be made available from the 01 April 2026. The guidance for the CaRF was published on 13 January 2026.
- 1.3 Annual funding of £8.4m is being made available to Devon County Council (DCC) for the next three years covering the period 01 April 2026 to 31 March 2029.

- 1.4 As per previous HSF schemes DCC are continuing to work with neighbouring district and city councils as part of a Devon District Council approach in delivering CaRF.
- 1.5 The DWP provided guidance on 13 January 2026 confirming that the primary objective of this new fund is to both provide a safety net for those on low incomes who encounter a financial shock, and to invest in building local financial resilience to enable individuals and communities to better deal with crisis in the long-term, thereby reducing crisis need.
- 1.6 Devon County Council agreed their CaRF Devon District approach on 11 March 2026, a link to that report is included in section 22.2 and 22.3.

Crisis and Resilience Fund Requirements

- 1.7 The funding is available to:
 - support low-income households who encounter a financial shock (*a sudden, unexpected expense or drop in income*)
 - prevent individuals from entering crisis by providing timely support and
 - support activity that builds resilience, both financial and non-financial, for individuals and across the community, via a range of wrap-around support services.
- 1.8 The new funding has an emphasis on the provision of effective crisis support through Crisis and Housing Payments, that prevents the occurrence or escalation of individual's crises and should be delivered through a person-centred needs-based approach.
- 1.9 The CaRF is a cash first approach, however cash includes payments made by BACS and available systems where cash can be collected on presentation of a code such as Post Office vouchers, rather than physical cash. As part of our previous HSF targeted support schemes, we already used both BACS and the Post Office to make payments, therefore this means of payment will continue to be in place.
- 1.10 For the first two years of the Housing Payment component authorities are expected to consider aligning crisis and housing payment administration to streamline delivery. This is an area that is to some extent already underway as the Financial Resilience team were delivering both DHP and HSF.
- 1.11 There will be an emphasis on working with the voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE) in delivering the CaRF.
- 1.12 Outcomes showing how delivery of the fund is being achieved will be required by the DWP through returns. These returns will require

evidencing how individuals are being supported to reach financial resilience, removing the need for future crisis support.

Funding available

- 1.13 DCC have provided EDDC total funding of £983,339 for 2026/27 to deliver to low-income households. This funding includes a 10% administration fee for the Crisis Payment and Heating Oil Support components.
- 1.14 Funding is split into the three different areas
- Crisis Payments Component of £525,621
 - Heating Oil Support component of £207,846
 - Resilience Services Component of £249,872
- 1.15 The table below sets out the split of what elements the funding is to be allocated towards.

Component	Amount
Crisis Payment	£477,837
Crisis Payment Admin Fee	£47,784
Heating Oil Support	£188,951
Heating Oil Admin Fee	£18,895
Resilience Services	£249,872
Total	£983,339

- 1.16 In addition to the above components there will also be a Housing payment component. Funding for this area will continue to be received directly by EDDC for financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28. Our funding of £149,650 for 2026/27 continues to be the same as the DHP funding for financial year 2025/26.
- 1.17 For the financial year 2028/29 funding for the housing cost component will be received by the new unitary authority.

Heating Oil Funding

- 1.18 On 16 March 2026 the government announced a further £50million of funding for households who need support to help with the rising cost of heating oil. £188,951 (included in the table under 1.15) has been made available to EDDC for the financial year 2026/27.
- 1.19 This extra funding is part of the crisis payment strand of CaRF and as such criteria set out in the DWP guidance, and the Devon District Council Approach will apply.
- 1.20 Using available data sets, we will be working to identify households who are on a low-income with heating oil and will contact them directly to offer them to apply for financial support. These applications will be dealt with in line with the CaRF criteria set out in the policy such as a

financial assessment. Those households we do not already know about will be able to apply for financial assistance from this fund through our open-application process.

- 1.21 It is worth noting that supplying support for these households is something that EDDC have been providing when administering the HSF. This has meant our processes are already well established.

Proposed approach

- 1.22 Due to the anti-poverty strategy work that EDDC have already been doing in relation to building financial resilience as part of delivering the previous Household Support Fund, East Devon has already got established working practices with dedicated financial resilience officers and supporting staff in position to deliver the CaRF funding. We will continue to build on this work to ensure we can scale up the support we already provide to residents.
- 1.23 We were also chosen by the DWP as one of the 10 Local Authorities across England and Wales to undertake research into how HSF was delivered locally to help inform the government's CaRF scheme. As such, much of the guidance that has been produced by the DWP is already in place and well established at EDDC.
- 1.24 Due to the requirement to provide resilience outcomes for those receiving support from the CaRF, targeted support will need to be delivered in a different way to previous HSF schemes. As a result of this DCC will no longer be providing holiday vouchers for households who are entitled to free school meals, and we will also need to deliver support in a more intensive way than under previous HSF schemes, where previously we were able to allocate the majority of the funding through targeted support. Although we are in a strong position we will need to scale up and increase our staffing resource to support this work utilising the funding that has been provided.
- 1.25 Further work will be required to develop the community funding element at scale, however we already have good partnerships in place with organisations such as Citizens Advice East Devon, Exeter Community Energy Advice, Foodbanks, and will continue to develop new partnerships that will help to develop the community funding strand and wrap around services for residents helping to build resilience. Any funding provided under CaRF will be conditional on delivering the required outcomes in accordance with the DWP guidance and the Devon District approach which includes evidence for management information returns.
- 1.26 Devon Communities Together continue to deliver our Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise support. As part of our anti-poverty strategy work, we are continuing to understand the needs of our communities and will ensure we continue to work closely with DCT and the wider community, especially in rural areas where needs may be

different or more hidden. The fund will provide further opportunities to develop and strengthen collaborative working with communities to deliver financial resilience for households in their areas, helping lift more residents out of crisis.

- 1.27 The Financial Resilience Team also deliver the Community Grant Fund for EDDC and work closely with DCT and the voluntary sector in delivering this grant. The new CaRF provides an ideal opportunity to better connect both areas of this work allowing Members to further help make a positive impact on their communities.
- 1.28 Collaborative working will continue with DCC and neighbouring authorities through the Devon Districts approach and over the next few years we will continue to align processes with our neighbouring authorities in preparation for Local Government Reorganisation.

Summary

- 1.29 Whilst we are in a good position to deliver the funding, we now need to focus on developing the policy to allow us to build on the work already undertaken to date, which is why we are seeking delegated authority.
- 1.30 The new CaRF policy will continue build upon the work we have already undertaken to date and align with the Devon Districts approach of test and learn.
- 1.31 Whilst the policy is being developed, we will be making use of our cost-of-living hardship funds to ensure that we are able to continue to support households in financial difficulty. This will include support for those low-income households struggling to afford Heating Oil making sure no households are negatively affected.

2. Recommendations/Decision

- 2.1 That Cabinet give delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service to design, implement and update a policy for the Crisis and Resilience Fund, that aligns with the Devon District Council Approach and DWP guidance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Homes and Communities.

3. Reasons for Recommendations/Decision

- 3.1 As this is a new fund the recommendation is being made to avoid any further delay in delivery of the scheme.
- 3.2 Taking this agile approach will also allow us to adapt our approach when required through the learning with the voluntary sector, enabling us to achieve the best possible outcomes for our residents.

4. Options

- 4.1 Assistant Director to have delegated authority to design, implement and update a policy for the CaRF.- Recommended
- 4.2 Cabinet to agree new policy – not recommended due to delays involved
- 4.3 Not to deliver the CaRF scheme – not recommended as we have a requirement to deliver the Housing Payment element of the fund.

5. Relevance to Council Plan/priorities

Set out how report links to the Council Plan/priorities:

- A supported and engaged community that has the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure
- A sustainable environment that is moving towards carbon neutrality and which promotes ecological recovery.
- A vibrant and resilient economy that supports local business, provides local jobs and leads to a reduction in poverty and inequality.
- A well-managed, financially secure and continuously improving council that delivers quality services

Indicate how the recommendations/decision contributes to the delivery of the Council Plan and its priorities

6. Financial Comments/Implications

- 6.1 The scheme costs including the need for additional staff resources will be met from external funding.

7. Legal Comments/Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific legal considerations arising directly from the recommendations within this report. Implementation of the CaRF will, however, require the Council and its delivery partners to continue operating within the government guidance and existing legal framework governing the lawful administration of public funds, data protection duties, and partnership governance arrangements. In progressing CaRF activity, the Council must also ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 when exercising its functions.

8. Risk Implications

Please complete the risk table – further guidance available on the [Intranet](#)

- 8.1 If work is not undertaken, we will be unable to deliver the CaRF funding in line with government expectations and within expected timeframes. This will have a financial impact on low-income households particularly those who are reliant on heating oil, potentially leaving them unable to heat their homes or afford other essentials due to the increase in heating oil costs.
- 8.2 The risks associated with this work are low as the policy will be designed in-line with the DWP issued CaRF guidance and the Devon District approach agreed by DCC Members.

Activity/ plant/ materials etc	List significant hazards	People at risk	Assessment of Risk			Existing controls e.g. Safety procedures	What further action Is required to control/mitigate the risk?
			*Impa ct 1-4	*Likeli hood 1-4	Risk Score		

Not deploying funding to household in need within expected time frames	Vulnerable residents not being able to afford essentials such as food, heating. Having to return funding to the DWP	Low-income Households Vulnerable residents such as children, disabled, Pension age	3	3	7	Policy will be designed and implemented to ensure we are able to deploy funding to households.
Not being able to support the voluntary sector through the community resilience funding	As above. Voluntary services are key in helping to achieve financial resilience for both residents and the communities they live in	Voluntary groups set up to help low-income household. Low-income households	2	3	5	Policy will be designed to ensure we are able to help support community groups that are key to helping delivering resilience services and support to vulnerable residents

*Impact – Major = 4 Serious = 3 Significant = 2 Minor = 1

*Likelihood – Very Likely = 4 Likely = 3 Unlikely = 2 Remote = 1

9. Equality Implications (Public Sector Equality Duty)

9.1 This relevance assessment aims to analyse gathered information for potential relevance to equality. If a Full Equality Impact Assessment is required ([Equality analysis impact assessment form](#)), include it as an appendix. At the minimum, the following table must be completed.

Scope (<i>Provide an overview, including objectives and desired outcomes</i>)	A full EIA will be completed as part of the policy design.
Evidence gathered and engagement (<i>List stakeholders consulted and relevant processes, policies, and data sources</i>)	
Relevance assessment findings (<i>If relevant to equality, undertake a full EIA or If no relevance to equality, explain why with supporting information</i>)	A full EIA is required: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, this assessment has demonstrated relevance to equality with regard to: Please check relevant boxes

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and maternity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Sex <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage or Civil Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief <input type="checkbox"/> Armed Forces <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other, e.g. carers, care leavers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc. If no, explain why:
Relevance ranking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High – Very relevant to protected characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Medium – Somewhat relevant to protected characteristics <input type="checkbox"/> Low – Not relevant to protected characteristics
Key findings and impacts	A full EIA will be carried out as part of the policy design however from previous HSF EIAs we are aware that the above noted protected groups will be impacted by the policy.
Conclusion drawn (<i>i.e No major changes needed; EIA found no negative impact or adjust policy/process to remove identified barriers</i>)	
Actions (<i>Proposed actions to mitigate negative impacts on identified groups</i>)	
Signed off by	

10. HR and Workforce Implications

10.1 Workforce implications. The change in the DWP requirements for administering the CaRF will result in a significant increase in the amount of work being carried out by the Financial Resilience Team. This will be due to the requirement to provide resilience outcomes for residents receiving funding and these outcomes needing to be reported to the DWP.

10.2 The resilience funding component of £249,832 can be used to help with staffing costs of in-house teams providing a resilience service. Extra staffing for the team will be explored alongside community funding opportunities, we are looking to recruit two additional financial resilience officers. Administration funding attached to each component of the funding is already being utilised for existing staff.

11. Community Safety Implications (Crime and Disorder)

11.1 N/A

12. Climate Change Implications

12.1 N/A

13. Health & Safety and Health & Wellbeing Implications

13.1 There are not any health and safety implications. Any funding that is considered for voluntary organisations to help deliver resilience services will undergo due diligence checks as part of governance requirements.

13.2 There are health and well-being implications as the Crisis and Resilience Fund is for low-income households to be able to afford essentials such as food and energy costs. Without the funding reaching these households there is a strong possibility that households will not be able to afford essentials due to the current cost of living, which could result in poor health and affect the well-being of residents overall.

14. Procurement and Social Value implications

14.1 The CaRF is available to support vulnerable households who are experiencing a financial shock by providing crisis support. When accessing crisis support residents will also be provided with wrap around support helping them to build financial resilience thereby reducing dependency and repeat need.

14.2 Wrap around support will be person-centred needs-based approach designed to support the individual and their household and will link in with community services and assets, such as voluntary groups and organisations, e.g Citizens Advice East Devon.

14.3 Improved information, advice and service access through collaborative working will help support communities become more connected and reducing the need for residents to repeat often difficult circumstances more than once, resulting in quicker and easier access to support.

15. Land and Buildings (non-housing)/Asset Management Implications

15.1 N/A.

16. Overview and Scrutiny Committees Comments/Recommendations

16.1 N/A

17. Digital and Data

17.1 The Crisis and Resilience fund is applied for using an on-line application form. This form is already in use and staff support those households to complete applications where residents may be digitally excluded. We are not suggesting any changes to applications or our current processes at this time.

17.2 Whilst we already have some of the DWP required outcomes being reported on, there is some further work that needs to be completed to

allow automation of the remaining outcomes. This work is already being developed with Strata.

18. Consultation and Engagement

- 18.1 This is government funding scheme that needs to be delivered. As part of delivery, we work with other neighbouring local authorities including Devon County Council to design and implement a Devon wide framework.
- 18.2 It is also worth noting that whilst consultation and engagement is not required we do work and liaise with the voluntary sector including Citizens Advice East Devon and Devon Communities Together as part of our VCSE and anti-poverty work. Information from other organisations and agencies has therefore been considered albeit indirectly.

19. Communications

- 19.1 We are happy to undertake a Members' session once the policy has been developed and Officer's decision published if Members so wish.
- 19.2 Wider comms will be issued once the scheme is ready to be delivered to notify residents of the support available.

20. Next Steps

- 20.1 If Cabinet agree to giving delegated authority the Crisis and Resilience Fund policy will be developed and implemented.
- 20.2 As part of the fund going live a media campaign will be in place. This will be discussed with the comms team.
- 20.3 Monitoring of the delivery of the fund will be in place to both ensure outcomes are being achieved and provided to the DWP and to ensure that collaborative working continues to develop to provide the best outcomes for communities.

21. Appendices

- 21.1 Appendix 1 – Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF) Scheme: The Devon District Council Approach.

22. Background Papers

- 22.1 [Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for local authorities in England \(1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029\) - GOV.UK](#)
- 22.2 [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 11th March, 2026, 10.30 am - Democracy in Devon](#)
- 22.3 [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 11/03/2026 10:30](#)

Proposed Report Sign Off process

Please make sure you have obtained the relevant sign off and the date completed before submitting your report to Democratic Services.

	Officer Name	Date requested	Date Completed
Legal & Governance	Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer		Required
Finance	Section 151 Officer or Deputy S151 Officer		Required
Communications	communications@eastdevon.gov.uk		N/A at time of writing report
Digital and Data	digital@eastdevon.gov.uk		N/A
Engagement	engagement@eastdevon.gov.uk		N/A
HR	HR Lead		N/A
Chief Executive	Chief Executive		N/A
Director	Relevant Director		Required
Assistant Director(s)	Relevant Assistant Director(s)	24/04/2026	24/04/2026
Cabinet Lead Member(s)	Relevant Lead Member (s)		Required
Executive Leadership Team	ELT	Insert date approved by ELT	Required
Strategic Leadership Team	SLT		N/A

Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF) Scheme: The Devon District Council Approach

Summary

This document outlines Devon District Council's approach to the implementation of the Government's Crisis and Resilience Fund (CaRF), a new three-year, £8.4m annual Government-funded DWP programme. It replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF) and aims to provide crisis support for low-income households and build financial resilience across Devon

Background

The cost-of-living crisis continues to affect many people across Devon, with households still facing high prices despite a recent slowdown in inflation. Although costs are rising more slowly, they remain elevated while wages stay largely stagnant. Research from the Trussell Trust indicates that millions ([14 million adults are going without food](#)) of adults are unable to afford enough food, and energy debt has grown significantly over recent years. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation warns that low-income families in the UK are heading toward a record decline in living standards (Independent: [the worst fall in living standards](#)) by the next general election.

The new CaRF:

- replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF), funded via the DWP.
- is a three-year funded programme, operating 2026/27 to 2028/29.
- in Devon equates to an annual £8.4m Government funded scheme (5.6% less than the previous £8.9m HSF7, which itself was reduced by 11.87% from previous £10.1m HSF6).
- guidance requires CaRF to be implemented from 1 April 2026,

An overall delivery plan for Devon needs to be produced by July 2026 and sent to DWP, and comprehensive Management Information (MI) returns are required at regular intervals throughout the funding period.

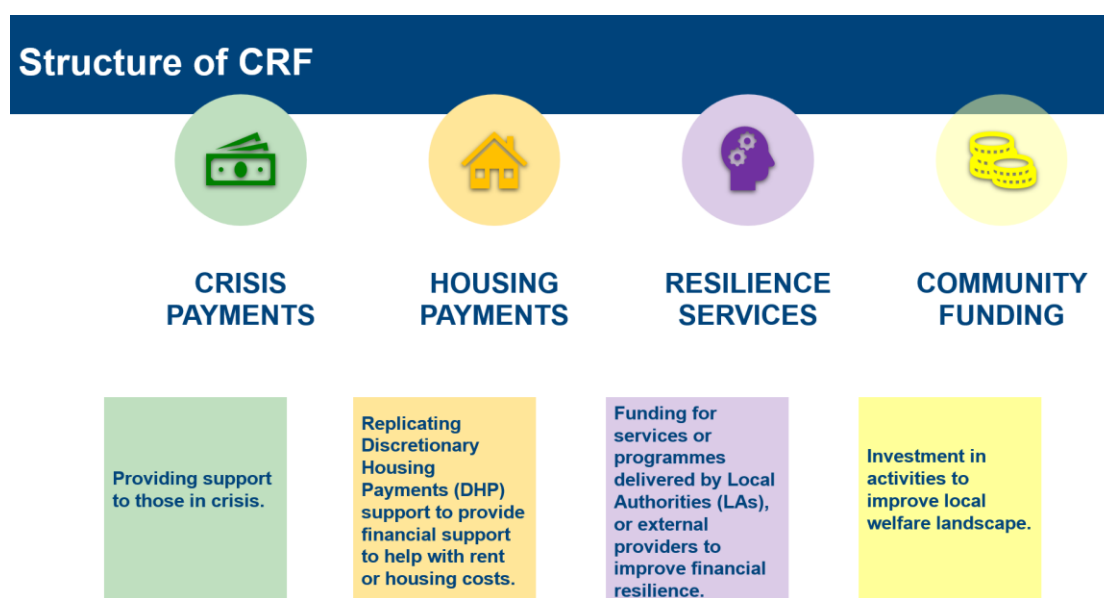
As CaRF is a finite fund, District Councils will plan spend over the period to ensure the fund lasts until 31st March 2029.

This approach covers the DCC administrative area of Devon. Torbay Council and/or Plymouth City Council will have their own approaches to implementing the CaRF.

The funding has been made available to Devon District Councils to:

- **support low-income households** who encounter a **financial shock** (*a sudden, unexpected expense or drop in income*)
- **prevent individuals from entering crisis** by providing timely support and
- **support activity that builds resilience**, both financial and non-financial, for individuals and across the community, via a range of wrap-around support services.

There are four key elements to CaRF:



DWP Guidance outlines the specific purposes and rules around allocation: [Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for local authorities in England \(1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029\) - GOV.UK](#)

District Council role

District Councils will deliver against the three main outcomes of CaRF when implementing their schemes:

Outcome 1: Provision of effective crisis support (Crisis and Housing Payments).

Delivering effective crisis support is intended to prevent the occurrence or escalation of individuals' crises. By offering timely, needs-based assistance to those with low incomes facing financial shocks, the Districts can reduce the risk of crisis need. This includes the provision of financial support towards housing needs to those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs.

The District CaRF scheme provides financial crisis support to those low income households experiencing **a financial shock**; as opposed to offering across the board blanket support initiatives to low income households as was the case under the Household Support schemes, e.g. such as but not limited to Free School Meal holiday vouchers for low income households eligible for term-time Free School Meals.

Included in this Outcome, the CaRF provides specified funding for housing support, which replaces the current Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) administered by District Councils. The latter will continue to administer the Housing Support element of CaRF for 2026-27 and 2027-28, merging with the rest of the CaRF in 2028-29.

Housing Payments

In addition to the funding provided by Devon County Council, districts will receive funding directly from Department for Work and Pensions to deliver the Housing Payments strand of CaRF. Details of these schemes can also be found on the district council websites. Authorities are expected to consider the other elements of CaRF when dealing with applications for Housing Payments. Where an award of Housing Payments cannot be made, entitlement to a Crisis Payment and referral for Resilience Services should still be considered.

Outcome 2: Improving Individuals' financial resilience (Resilience Services).

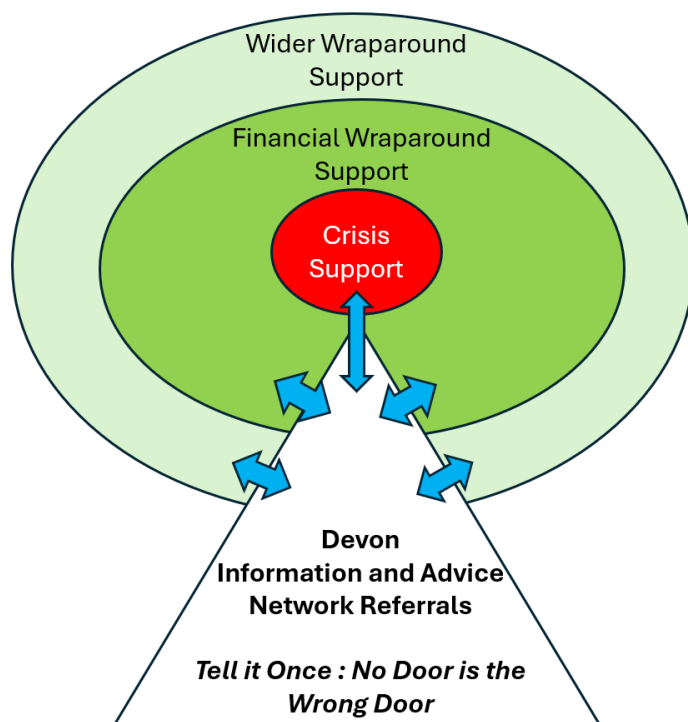
By strengthening financial resilience among individuals, Districts empower citizens to better manage financial shocks and reduce the occurrence, recurrence and escalation of crises.

Local wraparound financial resilience services need to be provided responsibly by accredited, competent, qualified resources. A District may provide this in-house using appropriate staff / resources to do so, or they may work with qualified and competent local partners from other sectors, such as the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. This could include Citizens Advice, CHAT, Encompass and other suitably qualified service providers available in each District.

Outcome 3: Bolstering the local-level support landscape (Community Funding).

Through a CaRF Review and Refine Partnership Board, Districts will work with partners, such as Devon County and VCSE partners, to develop a joined-up, local and visible Devon Information & Advice Network (DIAN). The aim is to co-produce, develop and implement the DIAN specification, in partnership with other Districts and VCSE representatives, with an easily recognisable county network brand and style.

Unlocking CaRF - A Clear Offer , Easily Accessible & Navigable



DIAN plays a central role in the CaRF approach to strengthening financial resilience. By reinforcing local networks within communities, DIAN helps ensure that individuals have access to a broad and well-coordinated range of Resilience Services. This local coordination supports the development of clear referral pathways between these services and crisis support. As a result, people seeking crisis assistance can be directed confidently toward services that will help them build longer term financial stability. This will improve the information and advice landscape for those seeking assistance; creating an information network where **no door is the wrong door** to providing the help and resilience support households require; with a **'Tell it once'** ethos, so people don't have to repeatedly explain their situation. This will help to prevent crisis arising through early intervention and

coordinated range of Resilience Services. This local coordination supports the development of clear referral pathways between these services and crisis support.

A Review and Refine Partnership Approach: Ongoing Implementation of CaRF

The timeline for the initial launch of Year 1 of CaRF by April 2026, remains incredibly ambitious and tight, so a Review and Refine approach to implementation of CaRF will be required. Such a **review and refine** approach will incorporate a suite of **Test, Learn and Grow** (pilot) initiatives. This will:

- ensure the much needed but initial financial crisis and wraparound support offers are implemented at pace; as near to 1 April 2026 as possible
- inform the ongoing implementation and effectiveness of CaRF over the three-year programme; such as the development of the **Devon Information & Advice Network**.
- ensure ongoing connectivity to other related initiatives, such as but not limited to **rural and poverty proofing of the CaRF**, the **Work, Skills and Sector (WSS)** programme, which is supporting younger people no longer in education, employment and/or training (NEETs), the wider **Connect to Work (C2W)**, the **Holiday & Activity Food programme (HAF)**, and the early intervention and prevention aspirations of both **Public Health** and the **Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP)** and its **Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INT)**; so maximising impact and outcome realisation over the life of the CaRF programme

From April 2026, there is a need for this partnership approach to review and refine the CaRF programme regularly, via a CaRF Review and Refine Partnership Board; with the Director of Public Health chairing the Board initially until partnership governance arrangements can be developed and implemented fully

District CaRF Scheme

Each District Council will provide support under the Crisis and Resilience Fund to:

- **support low-income households** who encounter a **financial shock** (*a sudden, unexpected expense or drop in income*)
- **prevent individuals from entering crisis** by providing timely support and
- **support activity that builds resilience**, both financial and non-financial, for individuals and across the community, via a range of wrap-around support services.

Communicating and Accessing the District Support

The Crisis Support and Resilience service offered by the District will be published on the District's web site, with an associated local communication plan developed to ensure regular awareness raising of the local support being offered. Communication includes via DCC, District and local partners' websites and communication channels. Where appropriate, further direct, timely and specific communication to individual households concerned will then follow.

Each District will have a Cost of Living web page covering the CaRF on its website, for residents to find out more about the CaRF support on offer in their local area.

- [East Devon](#)
- [Exeter](#)

- [Mid Devon](#)
- [North Devon](#)
- [South Hams](#)
- [Teignbridge](#)
- [Torridge](#)
- [West Devon](#)

Each District will ensure that the support on offer remains accessible to everyone who may require it. This includes people who have a disability (including learning disability), impairment, terminal illness, sensory loss, mental health difficulty, are affected by digital exclusion or illiteracy, transport barriers or are vulnerable due to their current circumstances. Services should be easy to find and access so that individuals can gain support quickly and easily. Therefore, Districts should provide:

- services that are easy to reach and low effort to access. Application windows should not be time-limited, as this may disadvantage certain groups
- flexible services that enable a person-centred approach
- information and intuitive processes that are simple to access and use
- information in a range of accessible formats such as, Braille, Easy Read and large print
- alternative ways to access and apply for support, including offline access for people who are digitally excluded

NB: It is mandatory for Districts to reference that the CaRF grant is funded by the UK Government in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases. This includes use of logos as per the [Funded by UK Government Branding Manual](#) provided to all Authorities. This requirement extends to other public bodies delivering the scheme on behalf of the Authority.

Crisis Payments

All Districts will be provided with a funding allocation based on the universal credit uptake in their respective areas, enabling each of them to provide crisis payment support to their eligible local households. Broad eligibility will be applied, with a person-centred, needs and evidence-based approach applied in the assessment and award of any payments to households.

When Districts (or their partners working on their behalf) provide financial crisis support to low-income households experiencing a financial shock, a Cash first approach will be applied, with vouchers and goods in-kind available as alternatives.

Note: Cash first is not physical cash only, and can include other payments such as bank transfers, Post Office, ATM, Paypoint and food/energy cash redeemable vouchers.

Devon District Councils will offer support throughout the duration of the scheme with at least two application routes for households. The details of the District support will be finalised via the respective elected Council's governance and decision-making procedures; ensuring open, transparent and informed local decision-making in this regard.

Eligibility

Prospective eligible households (the applicant / recipient) must:

1. be 16 years or over; and

2. Live in a Devon district/city council area (as their main residence); and
3. Express and/or evidence that they are on a low income and facing an unexpected financial shock and need financial crisis support and/or that financial resilience (wraparound) support would be beneficial
4. Be identified from existing data sets and/or via an application process (held by the District council), as meeting this eligibility criteria

To establish the facts before making a decision to grant an award to an applicant, questions will be asked, need identified and/or evidence sought from the applicant and assessed.

“Low income” for this CaRF scheme will be household income at or below the level that would give eligibility to the relevant means tested benefit as may apply. An income that is not significantly above this level can be considered where there are exceptional circumstances that justify considering this as low income in a particular case. This could include where a customer has unavoidably high essential costs such as visiting a child receiving treatment in a hospital out of the area.

Devon Care Leavers

Individuals who have been in the care of Devon are recognised by Devon County as potentially facing discrimination and may be receiving other support from the District such as Council Tax Relief or Housing Payments. They will be included as a priority group for receiving support from the CaRF scheme. Where known to the District Council, they will be informed proactively about the support and assistance available to them. Districts will capture the number of Care Leavers receiving support under their CaRF offer and provide this to Devon County at the same time as Management Information returns are provided.

Application Process

The District Council’s support offer and process will be defined and communicated clearly on its (and its respective CaRF partner’s) websites. Districts may contact a potential household recipient to proactively promote the availability of support; basing such marketing of the offer on local data and intelligence indicating that the household may be more susceptible to suffering a financial crisis. An application can be made by a household member or their appointee, carer, advocate or a third party acting on the household’s behalf. Direct referrals from trusted third-party partners will be encouraged to avoid unnecessary duplication.

At least **two or more routes** for households to apply and seek financial help, advice and support will be provided. To manage expectations, Districts or their delegated delivery partners will communicate at the point of application the expected application processing time; how long it is likely to take to consider and assess the application for eligibility of a crisis payment award.

Those with a terminal illness who are seeking crisis and financial wraparound help and support will have their application fast tracked and treated as a priority, with the Government’s Guidance on Special Rules for End of Life and the associated information from SR1 Form being applied and considered with other associated data available to the District, e.g. such as DWP welfare data, Council Tax relief and Housing Payment data

Purpose of award

Crisis Payments are made to meet occasional or short-term needs arising from a financial shock. They cannot provide an alternative source of regular income. Awards can be made to prevent or alleviate harm to the applicant or their household through a lack of access to essential goods or services. This could include food, shelter, utilities and essential items.

Support with housing costs will normally be considered first through the District's Housing Payments scheme. Where a Housing Payment award cannot be made, customers will still be considered for support through a Crisis Payment or Resilience Service.

Award levels and restrictions

There is no maximum award level under CaRF, as it is a discretionary fund determined on a case-by-case basis according to evidenced need. Some districts may have a 2-step process in place (decision and sign off) involving a front-line assessor and manager; where an award is over an agreed amount.

Awards are made in a variety of methods, adopting a person-centred approach and having regard to CaRF's cash-first principle. Award methods could include cash via BACS payment, pre-paid cards, vouchers, provision of items or cashable vouchers depending on need and existing local arrangements/processes.

Where a homeowner is having difficulty with their mortgage payments, they should contact their lender as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances as lenders will have a set procedure to assist. Households in crisis with mortgage arrears could still receive support from the CaRF, either through Crisis Payments or access to Resilience Services.

District Councils will also seek to either sign-post applicants to other sources of help and support or help them apply to these other sources for help, especially in relation to advice: the Help to Claim scheme which supports those making a claim to Universal Credit (UC), Citizens Advice Devon and CHAT (Mid-Devon) to name a few.

Repeat Awards

Support will be provided based on evidence of need. Repeat awards will not usually be considered for the same crisis or where a customer has not taken steps recommended following earlier application/s. Further work and referrals to other agencies will be discussed with the recipient and repeat awards may be conditional on having further financial resilience (wraparound) support (such as being referred to Citizens Advice Devon and undertaking a full financial assessment and/or benefits check) to help the applicant move to a more sustainable financial footing.

Resilience Services

All Districts will be provided with a funding allocation based on the universal credit uptake in their respective areas, enabling each of them to provide resilience services (often known as wraparound support services) to those benefitting from it.

Awards of Crisis Payments or Housing Payments should, wherever appropriate, be linked to Resilience Services to improve customers' ability to cope with future events. Where a District provides wraparound financial resilience services to an applicant, either directly or through a third-party organisation, the support offer will need to realise one or more of the following **outcomes**:

- Increased savings
- Reduction in priority debt
- Reduced need for emergency food parcels
- Reduced experiences of material deprivation
- Maximising individual's income
- Decreased repeat crisis support applications
- Increased quality and accessible advice

Resilience services will not be restricted to those who receive crisis payments or a housing payment.

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

All Districts will apply the guidance in relation NRPF, as documented within the DWP CaRF Guidance.

Fraud

Failure by the prospective recipient to disclose a material fact or to make a false application or provide false information will be treated as a fraudulent act. Where fraud has been detected the recipient/applicant will be refused any further assistance and where appropriate, the district/city council may prosecute them.

Application assessment principles and award payment timescales

In providing **support** to:

- **support low-income households** who encounter a **financial shock** (*a sudden, unexpected expense or drop in income*)
- **prevent individuals from entering crisis** by providing timely support and
- **activity that builds resilience**, both financial and non-financial, for individuals and across the community, via a range of wrap-around support services.

A broad eligibility, with a person-centred, needs and evidence-based approach will be applied in the assessment and award of any payments to an applicant.

A Cash first approach, with vouchers and goods in-kind available as alternatives.

Further information may be requested by a District (or partners working on its behalf) to enable an accurate assessment of an application.

As part of the assessment, relevant information and data will be considered such as:

- The prospective recipient's financial circumstances and those of their household members
- The unexpected financial shock being faced
- The prospective recipient's access to other forms of financial support
- The circumstances and reasons associated with the case
- Preventative measures taken by the prospective recipient and their household members
- The potential impact of making or not making the award
- The budgetary situation of the fund

A declaration will be agreed by the recipient which will allow the District Council to share information with third parties to help prevent fraud and/or to make an onward referral to other agencies that may be able to offer further help and assistance. Records will be kept on each case received for the duration of the scheme.

Districts aim to deliver Crisis Payments within 48 hours (unless a payment in-kind is required) from the point where an application has been assessed and deemed successful; with all the required information being received to support the application.

District should consider out-of-hours operating procedures for supporting individuals who need support outside of working hours and communicating such that is available locally.

Data

For any direct and targeted CaRF work, such as promoting the District CaRF support offer, each District will use appropriate and accessible datasets, which are compliant with data protection requirements, to proactively identify vulnerable and in-need households; promoting the District offer with them. Such households may include but not be limited to households of pensionable age, disabled people, carers, single working age households, and households with other relevant characteristics.

- The types of information required to determine eligibility may vary between district/city councils according to local processes – but any request for supporting evidence will be reasonable and proportionate according to the merits of the case.
- For the purposes of this scheme District/City councils will only collect data relevant to a household's application.
- Data will be held on the relevant district/city council's digital platform and will be protected using up-to-date technical and organisational security measures
- Data will be used to
 - Determine eligibility for the CaRF help and support
 - Make contact about decisions or updates related to the prospective recipient and/or application; including follow-up contact with those receiving advice and/or support in order to gauge ongoing resilience and/or the need for further support
 - Issue the related support payment to a nominated Bank or Building Society account where appropriate
 - Conduct market research with those who have applied and/or re-applied to the District Council for Crisis and/or Resilience support, in order to further review, inform and make improvements to the District CaRF scheme and approach. Such research may include but not be limited to pre- and post-crisis support and/or advice surveys, follow-up surveys after an application has closed (e.g. 6 month after), developing anonymised client case studies and journeys as well as ongoing performance monitoring.
- Data may be shared with both internal and external organisations for the purposes of validating any applications. Information will be cross matched with other data held by the council and third-party agencies e.g. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) for verification purposes.
- Data may be shared within the organisation to support efforts to redirect an applicant to other support that may be available.
- Data may also be shared within the organisation or with other Government agencies in order to prevent and/or detect potentially fraudulent activity. Subject to a legal gateway, information may also be shared for the prevention of fraud and criminal activity with (list not exhaustive):
 - The police
 - Immigration service, absconder services and/or UK Border Agency

- Health and social care organisations
- Other local authorities, audit and public agencies
- Personal data will not be kept longer than necessary (according to each District's retention schedule)

Monitoring and Reporting

District councils are required to complete the standard Management Information (MI) reporting template provided by DWP to record the amount provided or paid to vulnerable households and /or the cost of providing wrap-around support under the remit of CaRF. The County Council will make one MI return on behalf of Devon in accordance with the specified dates set out by the DWP.

In addition to the numerical DWP MI data return requirements (using the DWP MI Template provided), Districts will:

1. capture the number of Care Leavers receiving support under CaRF and provide this to Devon County (DCC); at the same time as final MI returns are provided.
2. develop outcome measurements (data processes, practice and methodologies) to capture and evidence the impact of their CaRF scheme on the realisation of the relevant DWP outcomes. The DWP outcomes follows:
 - Increased savings
 - Reduction in priority debt
 - Reduced need for emergency food parcels
 - Reduced experiences of material deprivation
 - Maximising individual's income
 - Decreased repeat crisis support applications
 - Increased quality and accessible advice

In doing so, Districts will take into into account the following :

- **Definition:** Net recurring increase in household disposable income attributable to the District intervention (benefit uptake, debt write-offs that reduce mandatory repayments, tariff changes, etc.).
- **Attribution rule:** Count only where:
 - (a) a CaRF-funded activity directly enabled the gain (e.g., benefits check/claim completion, appeal support), and
 - (b) evidence is retained to demonstrate the link with the CaRF offer (award letter, UC statement, council tax reduction notice, supplier confirmation, etc.).
- **Calculation:**
 - **Monthly income gain** × 12 = **Annualized income gain** (cap annualization where awards are time-limited and less than a year).
 - Track **one-off lump-sum gains** separately (e.g., backdated awards).

- **Safeguards:**
 - Avoid double-counting where a client receives multiple supports (i.e. crisis payment and resilience services).
 - **Aggregate data and provide summary findings on outcome realisation in the DWP MI narrative field sections of the MI reporting template:** e.g. “Across Q1 of 2026, 78 households achieved verified income gains; totalling £35k in one-off gains, and £110k annualized respectively, and 50 households with reduced priority debt; £50k in one-off reductions and £300k annualized respectively.
3. over the life of the CaRF programme, cooperate with other CaRF partners (such as VCSE and Devon County) as part of the CaRF Review and Refine Partnership Board, to share their outcome measurement practice and processes; reviewing, refining and developing the methodologies to further improve the evidencing of impact of CaRF on the DWP outcomes. An initial rudimentary data capture sheet, for the purpose of evidencing some of the DWP outcomes is shown for initial District consideration and further development(**Appendix A**).

Funding model

Allocations of funds from DCC to Districts will be in advance and is on the condition that accurate management information is submitted according to the timetable (outlined below) and the DWP Guidance is followed:

MI Return	Reporting period: from	Reporting period: to	Deadline
April 2026	April 2026	April 2026	11/05/26
May 2026	April 2026	May 2026	12/06/26
Interim 1 – June 2026	April 2026	June 2026	13/07/26
July 2026	April 2026	July 2026	12/08/26
August 2026	April 2026	August 2026	11/09/26
Interim 2 – September 2026	April 2026	September 2026	12/10/26
October 2026	April 2026	October 2026	11/11/26
November 2026	April 2026	November 2026	11/12/26
Interim 3 – December 2026	April 2026	December 2026	11/01/27
January 2027	April 2026	January 2027	12/02/27

February 2027	April 2026	February 2027	11/03/27
Final Year 1 Return – March 2027	April 2026	March 2027	12/04/27

The Fund and its deployment (MI returns) will be monitored on a monthly basis to ensure spend allocations are on track for the year.

Complaints and Ongoing Policy Review

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the District’s decision relating to their application, the District will publish, make available and operate a complaints procedure for the applicant to use. Any aggregated complaints data will be used by the District to review and refine its CaRF support offer; likewise this learning (aggregated non-personal data) will be fed into the Review and Refine CaRF Partnership Board.

The CaRF has been established to respond rapidly to economic vulnerability and financial hardship over the period. It is therefore not possible to accurately forecast spend. The funding available will be subject to ongoing monthly review, to inform any potential changes to support that might be needed for the remainder of the funding period.

The initial year of CaRF will run until 31 March 2027 and Districts will budget spend per month to ensure the fund does not close earlier. In order to maximise the support provided to all residents, District councils will always seek to support residents to access other forms of support where they feel this is more appropriate to support their needs, such as but not limited to applying for Pension Credit, Council Tax Relief or Free School Meals.

Appendix A –Evidencing of Impact on CaRF Outcomes (2 pages)

Name	NINO	Application Received Date	Application Closed Date	CRF Year/Quarter for Current Application	Is It An Initial (I) or Repeat (R) Application	Previous Application - Date Closed	Time Between Current Application Received and Closed	Client Re-presenting within 12 months (<365 days)	Current Application Follow-Up Due in Months
Mr Jones	NP123456D	26/02/26	28/02/26	2026/Q1	I	22/02/25	-2	-371	27/08/26
Mrs Smith	NP456789Z	26/02/26	28/02/26	2026/Q1	R	20/02/25	-2	-373	27/08/26
COUNT OF ENTRIES	COUNT OF ENTRIES				COUNT FOR EACH				

WRAPAROUND ACTIVITY OUTCOMES									
DEMOGRAPHIC DETAIL		MAXIMISED INCOME			REDUCTION IN PRIORITY DEBT			RESCHEDULED DEBT	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO EVIDENCE WRAPAROUND OUTCOMES
CaRF Award Demographic Types - Table 17b - children (enter C), pensioners (enter P), disabled (enter D), other (Enter O)	CaRF Award Demographic Types - Table 17b - Benefit (enter 1) /Non-Benefit Recipient (enter 0)	Outcome - One-Off Maximise Income (£)	Outcome - Monthly Maximised Income (£)	Outcome - Annualised Maximise Income (£)	Outcome - One-off Reduction in Priority Debt (£ value)	Outcome - monthly Reduction in Priority Debt (£ value)	Outcome - Annualised Reduction in Priority Debt (£ value)	Value of Re-scheduled Debt (£)	Free Text Narrative Listing the benefits, debt and other initiatives which have led to these outcomes
P	1	£1,000	£50	£600	£600	£50	£600	£2,000	Benefit A backdated, then provided monthly thereafter. Council Tax relief applied, back dated and reduced C/Tax monthly thereafter
C	0	£500	£25	£300	£400	33.33	£400	£400	Benefit B backdated, then provided monthly thereafter. Council Tax relief applied, back dated and reduced C/Tax monthly thereafter
COUNT FOR EACH	COUNT FOR EACH	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD CONCERNED	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD CONCERNED	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD CONCERNED	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD CONCERNED	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD CONCERNED	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD CONCERNED	TOTAL FOR THE PERIOD CONCERNED	BLANK

OTHER OUTCOMES			
REDUCED MATERIAL DEPRIVATION	FOOD PARCEL DEMAND	CRISIS PAYMENT NEED	HOUSING PAYMENT NEED
Ability to afford essentials - Y/N	Reduced Emergency Food parcels - Y/N/NA	Decreased Need for Crisis Payments	Decreased Need for Housing Payments
Y	NA	Y	Y
Y	NA	Y	Y
COUNT OF Y AND N AND NA	COUNT OF Y AND N AND NA	COUNT OF Y AND N AND NA	COUNT OF Y AND N AND NA



Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting 6 May 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

New Towns Programme Consultation Response

Report summary:

This report seeks to summarise the government consultation on the New Towns Programme. The proposals do not include Marlcombe within the shortlisted sites and this is a topic covered extensively in the proposed responses including the weight that seems to have been given to a high level Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that has been carried out for the programme. This report presents brief responses to the questions raised by the consultation on behalf of East Devon District Council for Members to consider for submission as the Council's response to the consultation.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Members note the content of the consultation and agree the responses to each consultation question included in this report for submission as the Council's response.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that members are aware of the consultation and have the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Services; e-mail – ed.freeman@eastdevon.gov.uk Tel: 01395 517519

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-towns-draft-programme>

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
 - Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
 - Resilient economy that supports local business
 - Financially secure and improving quality of services
-

Background

At Cabinet on the 1st April Members received a report setting out proposals for the governance and resourcing of the delivery of Marlcombe. It was noted that Marlcombe had not been selected as one of the seven high priority locations in the governments recently launched consultation. Members showed a commitment to contesting the proposed high priority locations and agreed to receive a further report setting out a response to the consultation. This report seeks to summarise the consultation materials and sets out proposed responses to the consultation questions contained therein.

Introduction

Upon taking office, the government established the New Towns Taskforce to guide the commitment to building new towns. The Taskforce's September 2025 report recommended 12 sites for at least 10,000 homes each, with a focus on infrastructure-first development, strong delivery vehicles, and clear placemaking principles including sustainability and community engagement. An initial government response was published alongside the report. This has now been followed by a fuller government response, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to evaluate environmental impacts. For the SEA, input is sought on local environmental constraints, cumulative effects, and mitigation strategies. Section 2 of the consultation outlines the programme's need, objectives, locations, support, and planning policy. Following consultation and assessments, the government aims to adopt the programme later this year, confirming locations and masterplans.

New Towns Programme

The Case for New Towns

The proposed New Towns programme aims to address England's housing shortages and promote economic growth on the basis that large-scale developments (>10,000 homes) enable efficient land use, integrated infrastructure, and affordable housing not possible on smaller sites and can therefore have good placemaking outcomes through comprehensive planning, funding, and risk management. The government assert that the programme will drive national growth, create sustainable communities, and strategically benefit regions across England.

Programme objectives

The New Towns Programme's main goals are:

- 1. Scale:** Each new town will provide at least 10,000 homes, with potential for expansion.

2. Economic growth: Sites will be chosen to boost national productivity and affordability, supporting areas facing housing shortages, attracting investment, and facilitating transport improvements.

3. Spread: Locations will be distributed geographically throughout England.

4. Deliverability: Projects must demonstrate robust funding, leadership, governance, and infrastructure provision, overcoming barriers to delivery.

5. Placemaking: Developments will align with placemaking principles, offer timely infrastructure, high amenities, inclusiveness, and meet Net Zero standards.

New Town locations

The selection of potential new town locations has been informed by analysis of their environmental impacts. The SEA is being undertaken to assess the likely significant environmental effects of the programme as a whole and of each location, including consideration and assessment of reasonable alternatives.

The SEA Environmental Report provides an assessment of the likely environmental impacts of the programme (including locations and the draft planning policy) against 11 SEA objectives:

- air quality
- biodiversity, flora and fauna
- climate change
- flood risk
- health and wellbeing
- historic environment
- landscape and townscape
- land use, geology and soils
- materials and waste
- population
- water resources

The assessments have been undertaken at programme level, so assumptions informing environmental assessment have been applied broadly across all locations. Once the programme has been adopted, proposals for new town locations will be subject to more detailed, site-level environmental assessment. Appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations will be undertaken where required.

Consultees have been invited to review the SEA Environmental Report (ER) and provide feedback on its content, including whether there is any additional relevant environmental information pertaining to the locations, alternatives identified, and mitigations to be considered. No final decisions will be made on either the locations or delivery until completion of the SEA and the conclusion of any necessary Habitats Regulations Assessments.

Assessment of Locations

The SEA process requires government to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed locations and to consider and assess any reasonable alternative ways to achieve the programme objectives. Following the publication of the New Towns Taskforce report in September 2025,

MHCLG has considered the 12 locations recommended by the Taskforce, other locations that were submitted as part of the New Towns Taskforce Call for Evidence, and locations that the Department or Homes England were aware of.

Following this assessment, the government has determined that thirteen locations are capable of meeting the objectives, based on the information available to MHCLG at the point of the assessment. While some of the potential locations appeared initially to meet some of the programme objectives, the locations taken forward as part of the SEA process were those that could demonstrably meet Objective 1 (Scale), Objective 2 (Economic Growth) and Objective 4 (Deliverability). This includes all 12 locations shortlisted by the Taskforce, as well as one additional reasonable alternative which was also identified through further consideration to be capable of meeting these objectives.

The SEA process has assessed the following 12 New Towns Taskforce recommended locations as potential sites for new towns:

- **Adlington, Cheshire East:** Standalone settlement of 14,000–20,000 homes serving Greater Manchester and Cheshire's industries.
- **South Gloucestershire** (Brabazon and West Innovation Arc): Corridor development with up to 40,000 homes in a high-productivity area focused on tech and research.
- **Crews Hill and Chase Park, Enfield:** Expanded development of up to 21,000 homes addressing London's housing needs with landscape-led planning.
- **Heyford Park, Cherwell:** Redevelopment of former airbase for over 13,000 homes, connecting Oxford and supporting clean technology.
- **Leeds, South Bank:** Delivery of ~20,000 homes to boost economic prospects and benefit from £2.1bn local transport funding.
- **Manchester Victoria North:** Inner-city densification for at least 15,000 homes, supporting industry growth and attracting skilled workers.
- **Marlcombe, East Devon:** Standalone settlement of 10,000–14,000 homes bolstering the Exeter & East Devon Enterprise Zone.
- **Milton Keynes:** 'Renewed Town' with ~40,000 homes, revitalizing the city centre, expanding north and east, and improving transport.
- **Plymouth:** Densified development of 10,000–14,000 homes, capitalising on naval investment and evolving the city.
- **Tempsford:** New settlement with over 40,000 homes, leveraging East West Rail for better connectivity in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor.
- **Thamesmead, Greenwich:** Riverside development with up to 15,000 homes and improved transport access via Docklands Light Railway.
- **Wychavon Town (Worcestershire Parkway):** Expansion delivering 10,000–15,000 homes around the train station with sustainable development.

Additionally, the government identified and has assessed:

- **South Barking, East London:** Urban regeneration of multiple sites for over 48,000 new homes to support London's economic growth.

SEA Environmental Report findings

Large-scale housing development has both positive and negative environmental impacts. The SEA Environmental Report, especially its pre-mitigation assessment of proposed new town locations, reflects these typical outcomes. Overall, the New Towns Programme is expected to deliver broad societal benefits and support housing and economic growth, particularly once proper mitigation strategies are implemented.

The report highlights a substantial positive effect on population from the programme due to job creation and economic expansion. However, air quality and health and wellbeing may decline in the short and medium term during construction, but improve over time with sustainability initiatives and new amenities. There is a minor negative impact on climate change, which can be addressed through sustainability measures. While development affects biodiversity, flora, and fauna, statutory requirements for biodiversity net gain will promote nature recovery. Alignment with NPPF ensures protection and opportunities for broader environmental benefits.

Some proposed sites risk significant negative impacts to the historic environment due to heritage assets, though integration and mitigation are possible, supporting placemaking and community identity.

Proposed mitigation and enhancement measures

The report suggests ways to reduce negative effects and enhance positives, such as strengthening placemaking, stakeholder engagement, integrating wider strategies, and setting higher Biodiversity Net Gain targets. Mitigation at local and plan levels will rely on comprehensive masterplanning and design codes, including protecting key natural sites, providing infrastructure, applying design principles, implementing targeted strategies, and engaging early with statutory bodies and communities.

Proposed New Town locations

Based on the SEA reports the government propose to advance seven locations in the New Towns Programme: Tempsford, Crews Hill and Chase Park (Enfield), Leeds South Bank, Manchester Victoria North, Thamesmead (Greenwich), Brabazon and the West Innovation Arc (South Gloucestershire), and Milton Keynes.

The remaining 6 locations are stated to have great potential and will be provided with targeted support to ensure they can progress. The proposals in Plymouth are highlighted as particularly strong due to the opportunity to bolster the UK's defence and security and ensure that housing isn't a barrier to this further growth.

Marlcombe is identified as one of these 'reasonable alternatives' with the consultation stating:

Marlcombe

Marlcombe presents an opportunity to enhance the ambition and improve the quality of a development that, although likely to come forward anyway, will otherwise progress more slowly and with limited capacity to deliver an 'infrastructure first' approach.

As a greenfield site, the impacts on landscape and land use, including light pollution and increased flood risk, would require mitigation.

It is close to Exeter, a growing city that benefits from strong growth along the M5 corridor, but is unlikely to have the same impact on national economic growth compared with other sites".

Government Offer

The government proposes support for new towns through funding, expertise, and policy measures tailored to each location's needs. Funding options may include grants, loans, and equity investment for masterplans, technical studies, business cases, and governance. Funds are intended for land remediation, acquisition, infrastructure, and placemaking. The government will

advise on delivery vehicles and centralise programme governance via the New Towns Unit (NTU). Planning policies and a Place Review Panel will ensure design standards and support delivery.

New Towns Planning Policy

A New Towns Planning Policy seeks to clarify how new town proposals, will be handled— superseding current interim guidance and requiring Environmental Impact Assessments for site developments. If Marlcombe is not one of the formal New Towns then these policies will not apply.

Plan-Making and Decision-Making

Draft policy establishes expectations for masterplanning, infrastructure, and placemaking principles, supporting new towns in plan-making. It emphasises comprehensive town-wide frameworks and design codes, discouraging fragmented development. Social and economic benefits are prioritised, providing grounds for exceptions in Green Belt locations.

Local Housing Need

New town housing must align with local and strategic housing targets. Where Development Corporations manage plans, alternative methods for calculating housing need may apply, ensuring authorities are not disadvantaged.

Land Value

Land value assessments will consider the scale of infrastructure and placemaking required. Land assembly starts with voluntary negotiation but may use compulsory purchase powers if needed. Any increase in land value from planning or infrastructure investments can be reinvested in affordable housing and essential services.

Placemaking

Placemaking is key to the programme, guided by ten principles and a minimum target of 40% affordable housing, half for social rent. Standards will be set during planning, and the government offer includes tools for promoting quality placemaking.

Environmental Impacts

The proposed Planning Policy aims for positive environmental outcomes, advocating low-carbon, climate-resilient communities and enhancing biodiversity. It also promotes efficient density, balanced communities, robust social infrastructure, sustainable transport, and active engagement.

The main consultation questions are set out below with proposed draft responses on behalf of East Devon District Council (Questions 1-6 relate to general details about the respondent and so have not been reproduced here):

Assessment of locations

Question 7

Thinking about the 13 locations listed, which locations do you believe have positive features that could help achieve the objectives of the New Towns programme?

What do you believe are the positive features of the location(s) you have selected?

EDDC response (location selection): EDDC considers that Marlcombe (East Devon) has positive features that strongly support the programme objectives, including the ability to deliver at scale and to do so in an infrastructure-first, place-led way.

- **Scale and deliverability:** capacity for a standalone settlement of c.10,000 homes, and an additional 4,000 homes at Cranbrook all delivered through comprehensive masterplanning rather than piecemeal expansion.
- **Economic growth alignment:** proximity to Exeter and the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone / growth corridor, with potential to support a stronger and more productive local economy and improved affordability.
- **Strategic accessibility:** location between the A30 and A3052, enabling a planned approach to strategic movement and the opportunity to embed high-quality public transport and active travel networks from the outset.
- **Placemaking opportunity:** ability to set a town-wide framework for community infrastructure, town/district centres, open space and green-blue infrastructure early, supporting self-containment and healthy living.
- **Capacity for mitigation-by-design:** the masterplan-led approach allows environmental effects to be avoided and mitigated through the structure of development (buffers, green-blue networks, and careful access/location decisions).

Marlcombe is at an advanced stage of planning through inclusion in a Reg 19 draft Local Plan to be submitted for an examination later this year and with discussions on-going with landholders and developers to commence development in 2030. When considered with the Cranbrook expansion areas which also form part of the proposal, this is a unique opportunity to deliver a significant uplift in homes in this parliament that the other proposals cannot achieve.

Question 8

Do you think any of the 13 locations listed face barriers which could hold back delivery of the New Towns Programme objectives?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered yes, please tell us what you believe the barriers to delivery in the location(s) you have selected are.

EDDC response: Yes — EDDC considers that all locations face barriers that could hold back programme objectives unless they are addressed through early, coordinated intervention.

- **Infrastructure funding and sequencing:** the viability and pace of delivery is strongly dependent on upfront investment in strategic transport, utilities, education/health and green/blue infrastructure.
- **Land assembly and value capture:** without tools to assemble land early and capture uplift, delivery risks becoming fragmented, slower, and less able to fund the infrastructure and affordable housing required.
- **Environmental constraints:** greenfield locations can have significant impacts on biodiversity, landscape and heritage assets unless there is strong and enforceable mitigation-by-design, evidence-led buffers, and long-term management arrangements.
- **Cross-boundary infrastructure dependencies:** strategic transport and service provision can involve multiple agencies and geographies, requiring clear governance and joint delivery mechanisms.

- **Capacity and capability:** local authorities require sustained skills and resources (planning, delivery, commercial, legal, programme management) to design and implement complex, long-term programmes.

EDDC is in a unique position of already having a clear ask of government to support infrastructure funding and timely delivery including bolstering capacity and governance arrangements that would introduce an interim delivery vehicle and a transition through to a locally led development corporation. We have strong relationships with land holders and current opportunities for land assembly and value capture to help deliver programme objectives. There is an established masterplan and evidence base for Marlcombe which addresses and mitigates environmental constraints. We are working closely with multiple agencies to unlock cross boundary infrastructure issues such as transport and water infrastructure needs.

Question 9

Do you think the SEA report has identified the main environmental issues relevant to the 13 locations?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered no, please expand here.

EDDC response: Yes, broadly — EDDC considers that the SEA identifies the main categories of likely effects and constraints relevant at programme level (including biodiversity, landscape, historic environment, air quality, water resources and flood risk). However, as the SEA itself recognises, outcomes depend heavily on location-specific masterplanning, avoidance and mitigation, and the delivery model.

The report however looks at a broad location that far exceeds the area shown in the New Towns Taskforce report. It is also far larger than the area shown as an allocation in the Draft East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042. This has significantly impacted the assessment drawing in additional environmental constraints and issues that need not have been considered and would not be impacted as suggested in the assessment.

Question 10

Is there any additional environmental information about these locations that the SEA should take into account?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered yes, please tell us what additional information the SEA should take into account

EDDC response: Yes —EDDC recommends that the SEA and subsequent due-diligence work draw on the most recent local evidence prepared through plan-making and masterplanning, particularly for locations with an advanced evidence base (such as Marlcombe).

- **Masterplan option testing:** comparative appraisal of alternative access strategies, settlement structure, green-blue networks and phasing, to demonstrate how significant effects can be avoided rather than only mitigated.
- **Locally-derived constraints and opportunity mapping:** up-to-date habitat and ecological networks, heritage setting sensitivity, and landscape sensitivity studies where undertaken.

- **Water resources and wastewater capacity evidence:** including water cycle and drainage strategies where available.
- **Strategic transport evidence:** including modelling outputs, mitigation concepts and public transport strategies, given the relationship between transport, air quality, carbon and health outcomes.
- **Long-term stewardship proposals:** where emerging, evidence about governance for green infrastructure, habitat management, and community assets (because delivery and monitoring depend on it).

The scope of the work means that the SEA has sought to consider each site based on a common level of information however the proposals for Marlcombe are far more advanced than many, if not all, of the other proposals. This is particularly highlighted in the mitigations identified in the SEA which are high level and uncertain whereas in the case of Marlcombe these mitigations are in most cases fully understood and have been designed into our masterplan. As a result, we can give a much greater level of assurance that these issues can be adequately mitigated than the SEA indicates. As a result, the site would score much higher in any SEA that takes account of the full information that is available.

Aside from this there are inaccuracies in the information considered in the SEA in relation to Marlcombe. The SEA:

- assumes a much higher build out rate than is planned
- assumes that agricultural land grading is not available when this information is available for most of the site (see post-1988 Agricultural Land Classification).
- overestimates the extent of flood zone areas due to the consideration being based on a broad location rather than the actual proposed site
- Includes comments about a loss of existing employment land and a loss of identity of Cranbrook which are simply not true.

We therefore raise significant concerns about the accuracy of the information used, the assessment and the conclusions reached.

Question 11

Do you have any suggestions for practical mitigation measures to address effects identified in the SEA report?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered yes, please set out the practical mitigation measures here.

EDDC response: Yes — EDDC supports mitigation that is embedded into the delivery model (requirements, funding and governance), and not left solely to later project-stage negotiation.

- **Avoidance-led masterplanning:** require an early constraints-and-opportunities plan and demonstrate avoidance of the most sensitive habitats, heritage settings and landscape receptors before moving to mitigation.
- **Green-blue infrastructure first:** secure the green-blue network early (including multifunctional open space, SuDS corridors and buffers), with clear standards for width, connectivity and long-term management.
- **Enhanced BNG ambition:** use higher BNG targets than the statutory minimum where necessary to address location-specific risks and to secure strategic-scale nature recovery; specify delivery rules (on-site priority, additionality, and governance).

- **Transport decarbonisation package:** commit to early high-quality public transport, bus priority where needed, active travel networks, demand management and a phasing strategy that avoids car-dependent early occupations.
- **Construction controls:** require robust construction environmental management (air quality, noise, dust, water quality and waste) and monitoring, with clear enforcement mechanisms.
- **Water efficiency and resilience:** set ambitious water efficiency standards, integrated drainage strategies, and measures to address flood risk and climate resilience.
- **Long-term monitoring and adaptive management:** define indicators, responsibilities and funding for monitoring, with triggers for corrective action if outcomes are not being achieved.

These mitigation measures are all built into the policy framework for Marlcombe as set out in the East Devon Local Plan 2020 – 2042 and associated evidence in the form of the masterplan and transport vision statements for Marlcombe which set out specific mitigations to address these issues and show how they will be delivered.

Question 12

Do you have any other feedback on the SEA report, including the issues and effects identified therein?

EDDC response: EDDC understands the need for the SEA’s programme-level approach and its recognition of uncertainty at this stage. However, EDDC emphasises that programme-level ‘pre-mitigation’ significant adverse findings should not be interpreted as fixed outcomes for locations that are being progressed through comprehensive masterplanning. The programme should therefore place strong weight on: (i) the quality of the delivery vehicle, (ii) enforceable infrastructure-first phasing, and (iii) the demonstrable ability to avoid impacts through design choices, not only mitigate them. The advanced stage of work on Marlcombe should give the government assurance that environmental impacts can be mitigated, however unfortunately the additional work that has been undertaken for Marlcombe has not been taken into account. This has made the assessment inaccurate and skewed the assessment of Marlcombe as an option.

The SEA of Marlcombe states that approximately 17% of the broad location is within Flood Zone 2 and 13% is in Flood Zone 3, resulting in a significant negative effect. However, as noted above, the broad location for Marlcombe is far larger than the area shown in the New Towns Taskforce report (and significantly larger than the Draft Local Plan allocation). This larger area contains land with flood risk, which is important because increased flood risk is cited as a reason for rejecting Marlcombe (SEA report, table 2-2). There may be other negative effects that are incorrectly highlighted as a result of the broad location being too large. Therefore, the SEA report should be updated to assess the correct broad location as shown in the New Towns Taskforce report.

Proposed New Town locations

Question 13

Do you think the 7 locations proposed for the new towns programme are the ones most likely to meet the programme’s objectives?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If no, please set out why you think the proposed locations do not meet our objectives.

EDDC is concerned that excluding Marlcombe from the main programme risks underutilising a place that has strong potential to deliver (i) a large quantum of homes, (ii) an infrastructure-first

approach, and (iii) economic growth aligned to a functional economic area, with a well-established local plan and masterplanning evidence base. The programme should retain locations where the evidence demonstrates they can meet objectives—particularly on deliverability and placemaking—and where timely government intervention could materially improve outcomes and pace of delivery. Many of the selected 7 locations cannot provide the same level of assurance that Marlcombe can in this regard.

There is also considered to be significant detriment to the success of the programme and its credibility through the inclusion of a number of proposals which do not meet any reasonable definition of a 'new town' and are in fact urban regeneration or urban extension sites. Marlcombe is accepted as a credible and deliverable proposal and one of few that is a genuine standalone new town in accordance with the original intentions of the programme and so should have been prioritised.

Government offer

Question 14

Do you agree with the overall government offer for proposed new town locations?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered no, is there any additional support you think should be offered?

EDDC response: Yes, in principle — EDDC supports a package combining funding, expertise, policy support and delivery capability. However, for the offer to be effective it should be clearer, earlier, and more certain—particularly for locations that are not in the initial 'priority 7' but could be accelerated to deliver an infrastructure-first outcome.

- **Upfront infrastructure funding:** a clear route to early capital (grants/loans/equity) for strategic transport, utilities, education and health infrastructure, aligned to an agreed phasing plan.
- **Capacity support:** multi-year funding for local authority programme capacity (planning, delivery, commercial, legal, procurement and community engagement) to avoid reliance on short-term bids.
- **Land assembly and value capture tools:** stronger and clearer mechanisms to acquire and assemble land early and capture uplift for reinvestment in infrastructure and affordable housing.
- **Clarity on delivery vehicles:** guidance and support to establish the most appropriate delivery vehicle (including development corporation options) with governance that secures public interest and long-term stewardship.
- **Support for 'next wave' locations:** a published pathway (criteria, timetable, support package) for locations not in the initial priority set, so that investment and capacity are not lost.

Clarity is however urgently needed not just on these broad types of support but the actual offer for each location.

Question 15

Do you think there are any additional interventions that government should consider to ensure design and placemaking quality in new towns?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered yes, please set out the additional interventions government should consider.

EDDC response: Yes — EDDC supports additional interventions to make high-quality placemaking more consistent across locations.

- **Quality gates linked to funding:** make access to government funding conditional on meeting clear quality and infrastructure-first milestones (e.g., town-wide framework and phasing plan adopted; design code in place; stewardship plan agreed).
- **Mandatory independent design review:** require design review at key stages (vision/masterplan, code, major reserved matters), with published recommendations and a clear 'response to review' process.
- **Town-wide design coding expectation:** require a comprehensive design code and pattern book covering movement, public realm, typologies, green-blue infrastructure, and climate resilience, tailored to local character.
- **Stewardship and management standards:** require early establishment of stewardship arrangements for green infrastructure and community assets, with long-term funding mechanisms.
- **Clear expectations for social infrastructure:** require an agreed 'infrastructure and services schedule' (education, health, community, sport) with delivery triggers tied to occupations.

New Towns planning policy

Question 16

How clear do you find the proposed planning policy?

If you answered unclear, which elements are unclear and how would you suggest changing them?

EDDC response: Mostly clear — the intent and direction of travel is clear, particularly the emphasis on comprehensive masterplanning, infrastructure-first delivery and high-quality placemaking. To aid implementation, EDDC suggests additional clarity in the following areas.

- **Status and relationship to local plans:** confirm how the policy will apply where a local plan is at an advanced stage and already allocates a new community (including transitional arrangements).
- **Decision-making expectations:** clarify how the policy interacts with existing national policy tests, including how 'substantial weight' should be evidenced and balanced at plan and application stages.
- **Minimum content for town-wide frameworks:** specify what must be included (movement strategy, utilities, education/health, GI network, centres strategy, stewardship, phasing and viability/value capture approach).

Question 17

Do you think establishing the placemaking principles in the proposed planning policy is an effective way to implement the placemaking ambition of the programme?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered no, how do you think the placemaking principles should be implemented?

EDDC response: Yes — establishing placemaking principles in policy is an effective baseline and provides a shared set of expectations for all parties. EDDC emphasises that the principles should be backed by delivery mechanisms (funding, governance and quality gates) to ensure they translate into outcomes.

Question 18

Do you think the proposed planning policy provides sufficient flexibility to new town locations to meet the placemaking principles?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered no, what other measures could create a flexible approach to the placemaking principles?

EDDC response: Yes, broadly — provided that flexibility is focused on *how* principles are met rather than *whether* they are met. EDDC supports allowing locations to tailor approaches to character, constraints and delivery models, while maintaining consistent minimum expectations for infrastructure-first phasing, active travel/public transport, green-blue networks, and long-term stewardship.

Question 19

Is establishing a 40% target for affordable housing an effective way of delivering an ambitious number of affordable homes?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered no, what changes to the target are needed?

EDDC response: No — EDDC supports an ambitious affordable housing target for new towns, including the stated ambition that a significant proportion is social rent, as this is essential to tackling affordability and creating balanced communities. Delivery will, however, depend on land value capture, infrastructure funding and robust phasing so that affordability is not traded off against early viability pressures. These costs will mean that 40% affordable housing will not be viable without significant grant funding. Such grant funding will currently only be provided where it would provide uplift on planning policy requirements. A high policy requirement is therefore likely to limit the ability of sites to access grant and lead to lower levels of affordable housing overall. There is a clear need to either balance the policy requirement to enable access to traditional grant funding or have a separate programme of grant funding for affordable housing in new towns which enables delivery of the 40% target.

Question 20

Is the proposed planning policy on giving substantial weight in decision making to the social and economic benefits of new towns clear?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered no, please provide your reasons.

EDDC response: Mostly — EDDC agrees in principle, but recommends clarifying how decision-makers should evidence and apply 'substantial weight' in practice (e.g., through identified housing need, affordability metrics, infrastructure provision, jobs/skills outcomes, and long-term fiscal benefits), and how this interacts with avoidance-first environmental policy expectations. It is not clear how the substantial weight to be given to social and economic benefits should be balanced with environmental impacts particularly those impacting on protected species and habitats.

Question 21

Do you agree with the government's approach to decision making policy on the Green Belt?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered no, what further change to plan-making or decision-making policy are needed?

EDDC response: Not applicable to East Devon's circumstances (no Green Belt within East Devon District).

Question 22

Do you think the proposed planning policy is sufficient for the purposes of safeguarding land for development as new towns.

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered no, how could the policy go further?

EDDC response: No — It is not clear how 'identified New Town areas' should be interpreted. It is strongly recommended that a definition should be included which means that this term refers to all 13 sites identified in the New Towns Taskforce report and considered through the EIA regardless of whether they are taken forward as part of the programme. All of these credible and deliverable New Towns need the protection that the safeguarding provisions provide whether part of the final programme or not. It is only through such protection that you can ensure that the new towns programme as a whole is successful and delivers to its objectives.

Question 23

Do you think any additional planning policies are needed to support the delivery of the programme objectives?

(Yes/No/Not sure)

If you answered yes, please provide details.

EDDC response: Yes — EDDC recommends additional policy detail (or supporting guidance) in a small number of areas to improve deliverability and outcomes:

- **Infrastructure-first phasing policy:** clearer requirements for aligning occupations to the delivery of public transport, schools/health provision and town centre/amenity delivery.
- **Stewardship policy expectation:** requirements for long-term governance and funding of green infrastructure, community assets and public realm.
- **Value capture and viability transparency:** expectations for open-book viability at key stages and a clear approach to capturing uplift for reinvestment in infrastructure and affordable housing.
- **Climate resilience and net zero delivery:** minimum standards for operational carbon, heat decarbonisation, and adaptation (cooling, shading, water stress) embedded in codes and delivery agreements.

Question 24

Do you have any views on the potential impacts of the New Towns Draft Programme on people or groups with protected characteristics?

EDDC response: New towns can have both positive and negative impacts depending on delivery. EDDC considers that, if well-planned, the programme can deliver substantial equalities benefits through:

- **Affordable housing and tenure mix** (including social rent) to address barriers faced by lower-income households and younger people.
- **Accessible environments** (step-free routes, inclusive public realm, accessible public transport) benefitting disabled people and older residents.
- **Access to services** (health, education, community facilities) and local employment, reducing inequalities linked to transport poverty.
- **Safety and inclusion by design** (well-overlooked streets, lighting, inclusive play and recreation).

EDDC also notes the importance of mitigating risks such as: displacement effects on local housing markets, unequal access to early-phase facilities, and digital exclusion in engagement processes. The programme should therefore require inclusive engagement, equalities impact assessment at key stages, and monitoring of distributional outcomes over time.

Final question

Question 25

Is there anything else you would like to tell us that you think is relevant to this consultation but has not been covered in previous questions?

EDDC response: EDDC welcomes the ambition to deliver a new generation of well-designed, infrastructure-first new towns. EDDC asks that the final programme:

- **Retains a clear pathway for additional locations** beyond the initial priority set, where evidence demonstrates strong deliverability and placemaking potential.
- **Recognises the value of advanced plan-making and masterplanning work** already undertaken by local authorities and ensures the programme complements (rather than destabilises) sound local plan processes.
- **Provides certainty on delivery roles and governance** across tiers of local government and infrastructure providers, including education and transport authorities.
- **Focuses on early action** (land assembly, infrastructure funding and quality gates) so that 'infrastructure-first' is achieved in practice and not only in ambition.

EDDC remains keen to work closely with Government, Homes England and partner authorities to progress Marlcombe as a high-quality new community and to support the broader objectives of the programme.

Financial implications:

The report does not raise or request any additional funding requirements at this stage. There are implications but these will come forward in future reports for Cabinet and Council to consider.

Legal implications:

There are no direct legal implications identified within the report. (DH/002545-23/04/2026)

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