

County Council
Thursday, 18th February, 2021



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AGENDA

11. Cabinet Member Reports (Pages 1 - 20)

To consider reports from Cabinet Members.

Report of the Cabinet Member Children's Services and Schools

I will be reporting as follows for Full Council on 18 February 2021:

1. On the Devon Youth Parliament - Make Your Mark results 2020

I have also been asked to report as follows:

2. by Councillor Hannaford on the school's music grant that is administered through Babcock, including coverage, outcomes and general take up.
3. by Councillor Hannaford on the National Tutoring Programme.
4. by Councillor Hannaford on the work being done to ensure that girls and young women have proper access to sanitary products during the pandemic, especially in the context of school closures and access to educational establishments.
5. by Councillor Aves on what support Devon County Council is currently giving the nurseries who are struggling financially.
6. by Councillor Aves on what Devon County Council is doing and planning to do to support all young people who are losing out on the education they would have had if it was not for the pandemic.

Response

1. Devon Youth Parliament

Make Your Mark - 2020 Devon Highlights

"Young people have made their voices heard and now we're ready for action! We've been in post for a year now and despite interruptions from the pandemic, we've worked together to start creating change. Last year we launched the Greener Devon Campaign which we're looking forward to developing in 2021 in line with the Make Your Mark votes. All the material we have already created is fully accessible on the Devon Climate Emergency website (<https://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk/resources-for-community-groups/schools-and-youth-groups/#greener>).

Your vote is in safe hands to make change and here's to getting young peoples' voices heard!"
(Maisie, MYP North and West; and Georgia, MYP Exeter)

Introduction

This report summarises the results of the annual 'Make Your Mark' national youth consultation held in 2020. This work was led in Devon by Devon Youth Parliament, with support from the Participation Team in Children's Services (Devon County Council). Due to the Pandemic, the

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vote was held entirely online. Although the participation rate was understandably lower than in previous years; the Devon figures correspond to the national average.

Summary

3667 young people took part across Devon – a 2.8% turnout. The national turnout was 3%.

The top 3 National issues across the UK were:

1. **Free University** We should invest in the young people of today by providing free university. The alternative is that young people will suffer financial hardship and not reach their full potential. (Devolved topic)
2. **Stop Plastic Pollution** If we do not take action now, it is predicted that waste plastics will outweigh fish in our oceans by 2050. Let's reduce single-use and non-essential plastics (UK wide topic)
3. **Support Our Mental Health** More money should be given for young people's mental health. We should be offered mental health support in schools and ensure that teachers know about mental health. (Devolved topic)

The top 3 National issues across Devon were very similar but in a different order:

1. Support our Mental Health
2. Free University
3. Take Action on the Climate Emergency

The top 3 Local Issues across both the UK and Devon were:

1. Domestic Violence
2. Homelessness
3. Access to training & jobs

The National results, including a breakdown of each local authority can be found online <https://2u6szgg3e9x2hmfuy16guf8q-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2020-v2-Make-Your-Mark-Results-with-Infographics.pdf>

What next?

The 2020 Make Your Mark results will be shared with senior leaders and managers at Devon County Council, including County Councillors, and across the [Devon Children and Families Partnership](#) to inform their planning and decision making about the issues that young people tell us they identify as being a priority for Devon.

A copy will also be sent out to the 34 schools, colleges and youth groups that took part in Devon.

The three National issues selected as the National Campaigns will be worked on here in Devon & our elected MYP's will follow the BYC guidance on these campaigns.

More locally, here in Devon, our MYPs will continue with their campaigns for a 'Greener Devon'; Mental Health Support; & Transport. Our MYP's will also begin to explore further the local issues raised through this consultation and how they might be dealt with locally.

2. School's Music Grant

Despite the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Music Hub has demonstrated good engagement with schools during the 2019/2020 academic year: exceeding some national averages as shown below.

- Working with schools on School Music Education Plan: 80% (National average 72%).
- Supporting schools to deliver Whole Class Ensemble teaching: 56% (National average 43%).

From September 2020, DfE guidance permitted most music activities to resume within schools, but with extensive control measures that proved prohibitive in some cases. Working closely with Music Mark, guidance, training and supplementary risk assessment templates were developed to support schools and other stakeholders with planning.

The situation this term is quite different. Schools are making extensive use of online funded digital music technology to support home learning and an encouraging level of music activity appears to be continuing in school with vulnerable and critical worker children.

There are currently 2,077 teachers across 290 schools registered. 14,746 children and young people are using the YUMU online facility to support home learning, representing an increase of 430% over the last calendar year.

All Devon schools have fully funded access to class sets of instruments and while demand for class sets was reduced in the Autumn term, in the Spring term, most schools have opted to go ahead with their requests and around 2,800 instruments are currently on loan to schools.

3. National Tutoring Programme

The government announced £1 billion of funding to support children and young people to catch up lost time after school closure. This funding included:

- A universal £650 million catch up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time. A mainstream school will get £80 for each pupil from reception to year 11 inclusive. This means a primary school of 200 pupils would receive £16,000 while a secondary school of 1,000 pupils would receive £80,000.
- A £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help.
- The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) aims to support schools to provide a longer-term contribution to closing the attainment gap. The scheme has 2 delivery options:
- NTP Tuition Partners who provide to schools, a heavily subsidised tutoring offer from an approved list of Tuition Partners. The schools can use their catch-up funding to make up the total cost.
- Academic, trained graduates will be employed by individual schools in the most disadvantaged areas to provide intensive support to their pupils.

The National Tutoring Programme has been available since November 2020 and is expected to run for the 20/21 and 21/22 academic years. We are aware that some Devon schools have

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signed up to the National Tutoring Programme, others, due to further lockdowns, will have been unable to plan this catch up programme yet.

There is a question about the capacity of the National Tutoring Programme as some schools have reported being told by providers that they cannot meet their requests at this time.

It should be noted however that the catch-up premium funding (as described above) is provided directly to schools who use their funding in a way that suits their cohort and circumstances. They are expected to use this funding for specific activities which will help pupils catch up on missed education.

4. Access to Sanitary Products

All learners are able to access free sanitary products in their place of learning if they need them (for example if they have forgotten their products or if they cannot afford them). The scheme which is fully funded by the DfE allows schools and organisations for 16-19-year olds to order products, free of charge, from Personnel Hygiene Services Limited (PHS). Other manufacturers also continue to send free items to schools.

Outside of the school setting Devon has provided funding to community organisations who support vulnerable children and families with food and other vital supplies including hygiene/sanitary products. The Council recognises and is responding to the needs of women and girls in this context.

The Council has provided £300,000 since December to Devon Community Foundation (DCF) for this work and several of the DCC food programme applications have included hygiene/sanitary provision, as part of a wider offer, and this has been included within the 80% food/fuel allocation (of the Winter Grant).

Further, there have been 3 applications since December which had more of a focus on hygiene/sanitary products and these have been included in the 20% essential items allocation. DCF would welcome more grants to support this work and to support food-related projects <https://devoncf.com/apply/community-food-programme-2/>

In addition, the Council's direct funding through the Covid-19 Fund continues to provide vital support to people and communities. For example, week commencing 8th Feb, the Council is funding a project for community partners to get the much-needed hygiene and cleaning products to those most in need in North Devon.

The Council continues to support applications from projects and communities to support this work. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/covid-19-fund/>

5. Financial support for Nurseries

There have been various financial support offers from the Government during the COVID-19 pandemic, so we have planned our financial support over the past year alongside other funding available for Early Years settings. When the first lockdown was announced, all Early Years settings received all of the DfE funding they were expecting for the Spring term regardless of whether they were open or closed.

The settings were asked to remain open for children of critical workers and those deemed vulnerable but without the additional hours paid for by parents, this meant settings would have

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operated at a loss. In order to secure enough places, we set a new funding mechanism in place to support those providers that remained open. This ensured that provision was available to those vulnerable groups and helped ensure the sustainability of longer-term Early Years provision.

In the Autumn term, the government decided to use the previous year's census figures to ensure that all settings received the same funding as in Autumn 2019.

Currently, Devon Early Years has a small amount of sustainability funding available and some remaining pandemic funding. Support is available from the Early Years & Childcare Advisor Team for any setting that has financial concerns. They can assist them with their business model, signpost them to any Government financial support and assess whether short-term sustainability funding may be required.

We are aware of the challenges of Early Years providers and Out of School Childcare settings and continue to review the budgets we have available to us to support those settings

6. Support for young people's education

The DfE has provided funding directly to every school to support children to minimise learning gaps that have developed during lockdown. This can be used for a variety of approaches to ensure the impact of lockdown is reduced for all pupils.

The council has supported all schools by providing advice on how to access the funding available and the ways in which it may be used. Additionally, a Catch-Up Premium Conference delivered by Babcock LDP focused on how to identify areas for development in a child's learning and provided appropriate strategies to improve the quality of teaching in all classrooms.

Curriculum Advisors are currently working with schools to develop a county wide system of sharing pupils learning and any gaps in order to support transition between primary and secondary school. This will ensure secondary teachers have the consistent information to support catch up work regardless of which school the child moves from.

In order to be able to access the support available, children need to be able to attend school and while most children are keen to return to school others are more anxious. The council has therefore focused on supporting all children to return to school and this has included working directly with families to help reduce anxiety, especially for those children with an Education Health and Care Plan or where there may be other medically vulnerable members of the family.

Training sessions have also been made available to school staff on developing strategies for managing children's emotions and behaviours and to help them support and understand feelings of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem.

Specifically, for Children in Care we have:

- Put in place additional support to engage children in care who display anxiety-based school avoidance or mental health issues.
- Ensured all Personal Education Plan meetings are attended by the Virtual School with the focus on progress and maintaining high quality learning. Individual catch up plans are agreed at these meetings where needed e.g. Virtual School providing tutoring, school providing 1-1 sessions outside of lesson provision and school to offer additional support to children to avoid school anxiety on return.
- Informed all schools of the offer of SPACE youth work for young people to gain support.

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- Relunched the Plymouth Marjon University Trainee Teacher Scheme with all Devon secondary schools. This scheme provides children in care with face to face or online tutoring in key subjects at no cost to the school.
- Invested with Babcock Educational Psychology Service to provide more spaces on the Re Engage Programme for any anxiety-based return to school issues.
- 73% of our children in care are attending school so gaps in learning are being addressed well in small class environments with high levels of staff support. Additional tutoring has also been put in place for some pupils who are not able to attend school.

James McInnes

Cabinet Member

Children's Services and Schools

**Report of the Cabinet Member for
Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services**

Introduction

I have been asked to report to Council by Members as follows:

1. by Councillor Hannaford on the work being done locally to ensure the vaccine confidence campaign is accessible to people with disabilities, learning disabilities, special needs, and those who do not have English as their first language
2. by Councillor Hannaford on the changes to DWP for disabled people:

A two-year ban on severely disabled benefit claimants being moved to Universal Credit has now been lifted. Charities have raised fears for 500,000 disabled people as this a major change to benefit rules. This means people on the old-style benefits can now choose to move to the new UC if they want to. But some will also be moved without choosing to if they have a “change of circumstances”, like moving house or a relationship. Charities say some people may end up worse off in the change - despite ministers insisting the majority will benefit. SDP claimants who move to UC get monthly transition payments of £120, £285 or £405 - but these will be eroded over time. They will be chipped away if a claimant is awarded a new or larger element of any part of their UC, apart from childcare. That suggests many will find it impossible to be certain how much money they will receive into the future.

In January 2019 ministers blocked SDP claimants from moving to Universal Credit after two men who were switched over and lost out launched a High Court challenge. This block was called the ‘SDP gateway’. Since then the government have introduced transition payments, but campaigners say this system does not go far enough. Scope say EDPs are swallowed up in the new system without dedicated transition payments.

Do we know how many people in the DCC area are potentially affected by these changes? What work is being done with our clients to inform them and ensure that they are not losing vital financial support ?

3. by Councillor Hannaford on Farming Faces Mental Health Crisis:

This year, the Farm Safety Foundation’s annual Mind Your Head week (10-14 February) raised awareness of the link between poor mental health and farm safety. Mental health issues among farmers are of increasing concern. Some 84% of farmers under 40 believe mental

health is the biggest danger facing the industry – up from 81% in 2018, according to the Farm Safety Foundation. Farming continues to have the poorest safety record of any UK occupation – and 85% of young farmers believe mental health is linked to the overall safety of farms. Using official figures the report said that there were 83 suicides in 2018 among people working in agriculture and the related trades in England and Wales. Threats to mental health included “smiling depression”, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), loneliness, rural isolation and mental health particularly in younger farmers.

The farming industry faces many critical stress factors, which were placing increasing pressures on workers and putting them at greater risk of mental ill health, it said. These include extended amounts of time working in isolation, a blurring between work and home life, and financial uncertainty from changing consumer habits, the pandemic, economic downturn, climate crisis, and new EU trade rules.

Total income in the UK from farming fell by £971m between 2017 and 2018, and 42% of UK farmers would have made a loss between 2014 and 2017 without direct payments. The foundation added it is vital to build a culture within agriculture that explicitly recognises how the job can effect on the wellbeing of farmers and their families.

Can the cabinet member please report to council what work we are doing with our tenant farmers, and generally how can we work with the Farm Safety Foundation, the National Farmers Union, charities and the wider agricultural community to raise awareness, understanding and promote more help and support on these important issues.

4. by Councillor Wright on progress on the actions resulting from the 10-point green action plan.
5. by Councillor Wright on the take up by communities and activity relating to the wildflower verge project, launched last year.

Response

1. Vaccine Confidence Programme

NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group have undertaken a significant piece of engagement with people who have learning disabilities and also people from our BAME communities to understand how we can support uptake of the vaccine with these groups.

The feedback has been shared nationally with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and will be informing a national approach to reaching vulnerable and hard to reach groups.

An example of some of the things that the NHS are doing locally to support inclusivity of the vaccination programme include:

- Ensuring the dissemination of the nationally produced Easy Read information leaflet about the vaccine
- Launching a campaign to encourage everyone, particularly those from vulnerable and or hard to reach groups are registered with a GP practice – working with local partners (Hikmat and Living Options) to ensure this reaches our most vulnerable communities
- A specific vaccinations inequalities group as been developed, lead by the Devon Public Health Team, to ensure vulnerable groups are supported to receive the vaccine
- Based on the engagement findings, the CCG plan to develop some case study videos of people who have learning disabilities that can be used as part of the uptake campaign with these groups
- The CCG are also working with the NHSE/I regional team on developing videos in different languages to support our BAME communities

2. Changes to DWP for disabled people

Severe Disability Premium (SDP) is an extra amount that is included in some means-tested benefits to help with the cost of disability. It does not have a directly equivalent allowance in Universal Credit.

SDP recipients will only need to make a Universal Credit claim if they have a relevant change of circumstances, in the same way as other claimants on legacy benefits. They will remain on legacy benefits until either they have such a change of circumstances or are moved to Universal Credit as part of “managed migration”.

People moving to Universal Credit may be able to get ‘transitional protection’ as an extra payment to help with the move.

The Department of Work and Pensions cannot quantify how many people in the DCC area are potentially affected by this change.

The County Council is not involved in the administration of these benefits and does not offer financial advice, although this is available through commissioned services including the Citizens Advice Bureau.

3. Farming Faces Mental Health Crisis

Devon, Somerset & Torbay Trading Standards have been working closely with partners to highlight the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the farming community. The work stems from an increasing number of trading standards investigations where the mental health of the farmer is a prime concern and often a contributory factor.

On more than one occasion, officers have responded to animal health & welfare incidents and reported concerns involving the mental health and welfare of the farmer. This has led to sensitive conversations with family members, making referrals to local GP surgeries, working with Adult Social Services teams and charities such as the Farm Community Network (FCN). Providing farmers with support and valuable signposting to support services aims to improve compliance, help the farmer and overall, the business.

Last year, the service made mental health in farming a priority area and set out a project with the aim of raising awareness of mental health illness and signposting rural business communities to support services.

The project has been delivered in two distinct strands;

- 1) Raising awareness and building greater business engagement through the 'Trading Standards Farming Partnership' (membership of which includes the NFU, APHA and a variety of farming commercial interests such as market livestock operators), the Farming Community Network and Public Health.

This was achieved from hosting two live webinar events (a third webinar is due later this month) Featuring speakers from FCN, Young Farmers, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and an NHS GP. Each organisation focussed on the importance of mental health and wellbeing, highlighting what help is available and where to get support. This project task aimed at helping rural businesses by highlighting the stigma surrounding mental health and publicising the support and guidance available. Webinars were recorded and placed on Youtube the following week.

<https://youtu.be/pUtmx9cqYOE>
https://youtu.be/S_ZzsoW-13A

As an aside, officers have also been providing mental health signposting information as part of the Bovine TB Advice Pack from last year's project. The pack includes important information about the charity organisation, FCN and important signposting to mental health and other support services. Approximately 200 advice packs have been distributed so far.

- 1) Twelve Trading Standards Officers also received mental health 'first aid' training to improve the direct support they can offer rural businesses. The training was delivered by MHFA England (Mental Health First Aid), and equipped officers with the skills and confidence they need to help business owners during the course of their work and also support their own personal wellbeing.

The universal offers (including to DCC Farm tenants) have been widely advertised including press releases and promotion on local radio. Overall, attendance levels at the webinars have been extremely pleasing.

Specifically in relation to DCC Farm tenants on the County Farms estate, farm safety awareness, including mental health issues, has been promoted amongst Devon County Farms Estate tenants through the Farms Estate newsletter, in particular

promoting farm safety week and making tenants aware of the Farm Safety Foundation Charity www.yellowwellies.org. The land agents have a good working relationship with the Farming Community Network and have signposted some tenants to the Charity to seek help and support.

In more recent times, all tenants that have been directly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic were contacted by the land agents to talk and listen and identify help and support they may need. The land agent team kept in regular contact with the worst affected tenants and have provided signposting to tenants for guidance, support and grant or loan schemes available at the time.

4. 10-point green action plan

The Environment pages of the Devon County Council website give a regular update on the Environmental Performance of the Council.

[Environmental performance progress - Environment \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

The highlight report tracks the progress by way of a Red, Amber, Green rating every 3 months. It is currently up to date to the end of January 2021.

5. Wild Flower Verge Policy

There have been ongoing enquiries from parish councils and volunteer groups in managing their road verges for wildlife. Over the last year a number of online meetings with local councils have taken place.

We are currently working with over 30 parishes across Devon who are either going to manage verges directly using volunteers or hire a contractor to manage on their behalf.

Under the umbrella of the Devon Local Nature Partnership we are currently working with partners (including the Devon Association of Local Councils) to set up an ecological support network for parish and town councils and for other community wildlife groups. Promotion of the wildflower verge project will be part of this work.

Councillor Roger Croad

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services

Report of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

Introduction

I have been asked to report as follows for Full Council on 18 February 2021:

1. By Councillor Hannaford as follows:

Can the cabinet member please report to council on the effects of the new EU trade deal on Devon's fishing industry?

Response

Brexit and Transition context

The UK left the EU at the end of 2019, with the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December 2020. A new EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement (TCA) with the EU has come in to force in 2021. It provides for free trade in goods and limited mutual market access in services, as well as for cooperation mechanisms in a range of policy areas, transitional provisions about EU access to UK fisheries, and UK participation in some EU programmes. Under the agreement, the EU and UK agreed to the exclusion of Agriculture and Fishing from state aid rules, they also agreed a binding dispute settlement system.

This agreement helps to mitigate any additional economic impacts that were envisaged under a no-deal scenario, where a further 2% fall in GDP nationally was forecast (and 2% fall in GVA at the Devon level).

In the immediate period after 31 December, port operations seem to be working more smoothly at Channel ports after the Covid-19 disruption from 23 December. There is however some initial disruption to some goods heading to Northern Ireland and the continent as a result of new paperwork and local reports of difficulties exporting some fish and shellfish due to delays in animal health regulations being implemented.

Fisheries terms of engagement

About 2/3rds of UK fish production is exported to the EU, while a significant proportion of domestically consumed fish comes from non-EU countries such as Norway and Iceland. This is in part due to differing demand for species between countries i.e. high demand for cod in the UK.

Prior to the Brexit Agreement, the economic value of fisheries in UK waters for EU vessels represented £565m a year. The UK caught £98 million a year of landings in the EU's exclusive economic zone.

During 2020 and in 2021 to date, demand for fish has fluctuated significantly and is generally down due to the pandemic impacts on closed fish and chip shops and restaurants, both in the UK and in other countries. As and when full re-openings take place demand is likely to change and potentially increase.

The UK has now left the EU Common fisheries policy. During a transition period of 5½ years from 2021, EU fishing quotas in UK waters will gradually be reduced to 75% of their pre-Brexit levels. After this transition period the shares of fish the parties are allowed to catch in each other's waters will then be negotiated on an annual basis. The largest change in quotas is for Sprats where the UK share increases from 52% to 84% in the English Channel, for other species of fish the quota shares remain largely the same between 2020 and 2025.

Imports and exports

UK fisheries products now face customs and SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) health checks upon EU entry. Post Brexit Custom checks have since January 2021 been holding up seafood exports, as entire trailers need to be checked, rather than samples according to the Scottish Seafood Association. In addition, multiple technical issues such as bar codes not being recognised by border control as well as IT issues have prevented loads leaving French ports in teething troubles of the new system.

SPS compliance

It has emerged since the UK fully left the EU and the Brexit Transition period that third countries, such as the UK, have to purify their shellfish catch domestically before it is sanctioned for export, despite no change to UK standards, or water quality subsequent to 31st December 2020. The process adds significant costs and delays, with some British businesses impacted warning that this will cause issues of viability.

The depuration process for bivalves varies by sea quality areas. At present any bivalves from sea quality C can't be exported at all. Bivalves from sea quality B can't be exported as there are no agreed criteria for this process yet, to enable an EHC to be signed. Bivalves from sea quality A can be exported.

Devon and UK partners are at present conducting lab tests for E. coli and salmonella in bivalves after depuration from sea quality B to get agreement on standards required to obtain an EHC for export that will be acceptable to EU SPS checks.

Recent UK press reports indicate that initial DEFRA advice stated that this temporary trade barrier would come to an end in April, however, current indications from the EU are that the ban on exporting un-purified shellfish will now continue indefinitely. The UK Government has stated that there is no legal barrier to the trade continuing after Brexit on animal or public health grounds, and that the UK is asking the EU to abide by its existing regulations and not seek to change them. It has said that previously the EU had been clear that this is trade that could continue, and all that was required was to design the right export health certificate. It is raising these issues to try to resolve them with the EU.

Other issues and changes raised with Devon County Council, many of which involve additional paperwork, bureaucracy and/or teething issues and which are being flagged with Government for resolution where relevant, include:

VAT

All exporters have to have their own Vat agent in each EU country exported to. This was known at the start of January. Agents differ in cost. Even if there is unlikely to be VAT involved in an export, a zero return has to be completed.

Export Health Certificates (EHC)

The requirement for an EHC that is compliant with EU sanitary regulations - this includes sea quality, production methods, factory registration, vessels inspections, and Rules of Origin (RoO). These EHCs can have more than one species on each, but each customer has to have their own EHC.

Groupage loads

Some of these are causing potential problems. e.g. DFDS Seaways has its own clearance system but requires EHCs, invoices, catch certificates and in some cases the individual's VAT agent details. Any mistakes made on one consignment within a truck of 50 consignments will cause huge problems at the U.K. border and the EU border. There have been lots of problems thus far and DFDS are only running three services per week to the Boulogne Sur Mer hub.

Catch certificates

These are at present coming through reasonably well. However, the fishing industry is operating at approximately 15% of normal because of weather, time of year, Covid and the obvious hurdles of additional excess paperwork not being fully understood.

RoO

Not all fishing vessels are currently registered. e.g. in Cornwall the sailboat oyster fishery on the Fal. There is no way yet to get a catch certificate for this fishery, as the industry is still trying to establish the criteria required for port health and EHCs to be able to sign an EHC. There are others but this one is major.

Commodity codes

This does not appear to be standardised as some commodity codes either do not exist or apply to two or more different species and procedures. E.g. live winkles can't be exported as there is no criteria for RoO - different rocks in different sea areas of collection. There are lab tests going on now to establish a record of E. coli and salmonella in this species. The continuing problems are that the commodity code for live Winkles (gastropod) is the same as for scallops (bivalve molluscs).

C88 Forms and NCTS system

We are having problems with some companies being able to find customs agents that can fill in C88 forms, or understand the urgency of fresh fish or live shellfish exports.

NCTS is the New Computerised Transit System - a system of electronic declaration and processing that traders must use to submit Union Transit (UT) and Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR) declarations electronically. This is still being misunderstood by some customs agents and the advice to some companies has been wrong. The system currently sometimes has difficulties handling large volumes of declarations.

Ports of export

Diminished status of Plymouth/Roscoff as a route for bivalves, plus the increased costs involved in paperwork increases and the distance travelled now via Portsmouth or

Dover. Plymouth/Roscoff services have been suspended until the end of March 2021 due to the pandemic.

Funding support

Funds announced so far include:

- The Seafood Disruption Support Scheme was launched in January 2021 for seafood exporters across the UK (focused on small and medium sized businesses) of £23 million. This is to support businesses which have been most adversely affected by the COVID pandemic and the challenges of adjusting to new requirements for exporting. It opened for applications of up to £100,000 per business on 10th Feb 2021 and remains open until 28th Feb 2021. Devon County Council has been promoting this scheme through its partner organisations, including the Growth Hub.
- There will be a new UK fishery grant scheme worth £100m, which replaces the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), which in many ways was resource heavy in administering. Further detail is to be announced. Indications are that the scheme will be designed, in part, to help rebuild Britain's fishing fleet, enabling it to take on new quotas as they are relinquished by the EU. It will also be used to boost the processing industry to ensure that there is the capacity to land the extra catch. Devon County Council will work alongside local and regional partners to respond to any consultations, as and when these emerge and lobby where and when appropriate for the fund to benefit the local fishing industry.

Subsidy control (State Aid)

EU State aid rules prohibit member states providing state aid (subsidies) in a way which distorts competition in the EU internal market. The new UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) ensures that provisions on a level playing field in terms of competition and state aid continue to be applied with a mechanism for resolving disputes. As part of the agreement Agriculture and Fishing have been excluded from State Aid Rules.

Providers of aid in the UK are expected to undertake their own "detailed case by case" consideration of whether their proposed measures will breach the provisions of the three sets of international obligations (TCA, WTO terms and NI protocol). Government department BEIS is developing a new 'transparency database' for recording any subsidies provided.

Companies in the EU can challenge state aid awarded to UK rivals in Britain's national courts if it breaks common principles set out in the trade deal and vice versa. The UK also agreed to set up an independent state-aid authority, although the deal does not require subsidies to be reviewed before they are granted. Either side would also be able to unilaterally impose tariffs to counter the effect of trade-distorting subsidies, although the other party could then call for accelerated arbitration.

The UK subsidy control framework has yet to be determined. The UK's new subsidy control mechanism, which is replacing EU state aid is currently being consulted on by the UK Government and Devon County Council will be responding to this and is gathering the views of the County's fishing community.

There is the potential for more generous subsidies to UK businesses, including fishing, but still within internationally recognised regulations. Should agriculture and fisheries be excluded from subsidy control rules it may have some potential to disadvantage an area

like Devon if the EU continues to have higher levels of subsidies for these sectors going forwards. Devon County Council will make the case for equitable treatment for the fisheries sector alongside other industries domestically and also for a regime that ensures the local fishing industry remains competitive with its EU counterparts.

Sustainable fish stock management

From 01 Jan 2021, the UK has banned all electric pulse fishing in its exclusive economic zone, though not its exclusive waters. Pulse fishing is used by trawlers mainly aimed at flatfish like Dover sole in the English Channel and North Sea. The EU previously agreed to allow member states to ban pulse fishing from mid-2021 with a transition period. This was mainly aimed at Dutch trawlers which use the practice and also to improve fisheries environment sustainability, but indications are that for some member states this date is being pushed back.

Bylaws published in February for consultation by the Marine Management Organisation will prohibit vessels from bottom trawling, which involves dragging weighted nets along the seabed in several key Marine protect Areas around the British coast. These include the Dogger Bank and the South Dorset Marine Protected Area, which is close to areas used by many South Devon based trawlers. The sites are already designated as protected areas, but in reality, they are not patrolled - and they're over-fished. Bottom trawlers typically seek scallops, sandeels, sole, plaice, cod, and crab. The UK government has also proposed to partially stop bottom trawling at two other theoretically protected sites – one off the coast of Land's End and the other off Lincolnshire.

Potential economic impacts

There are potential economic impacts and also opportunities for Devon from the current Trade friction and changes to the fishing quota and catch regimes. We are as yet unable to ascertain the scale of impact upon the sector and whether impacts are temporary, or likely to be longer lasting, including any potential future uptick in UK demand and changes in trends towards the consumption of different species. Most importantly it is, however, apparent that the fishing and fish processing sectors in the UK and EU have been seriously impacted by the effects of the Covid pandemic and associated lockdowns upon the restaurant, hotel and catering trade and knock-on demand for fish. It is as yet difficult to unpack the impacts upon the sector from post-Brexit trade friction and the very far reaching drop-off in demand due to the pandemic.

Councillor Rufus Gilbert
Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

Report of the Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Digital Transformation

1. Introduction

I have been asked to report to Council by Councillor Hannaford as follows:

- on the current national campaign to automatically exempt those with non-changing or deteriorating disabilities and health conditions from the current blue badge rules. These require applicants to renew their permits every three years. It highlights the widespread experience of stress from unnecessary form filing, and the ensuing wait for approval of the application, although there has been no actual change in their original circumstances or indeed a worsening.

Specifically, do we know how many of our blue badge holders in the Devon County Council area have non changing or deteriorating circumstances?

Could we seek permission to consider a pilot to assess the effectiveness of such a change?

2. Blue Badge Holders

The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for the legislation that sets out the framework for the Blue Badge Scheme.

The regulations currently in force state that badges must be issued for a maximum three-year period to allow local authorities to confirm their continued eligibility (for example that they remain in receipt of qualifying benefits, and/or their mobility has not improved).

The DfT acknowledges that where a badge holder has a permanent disability, which will not change (for example, where there has been a loss of limbs), the need for reassessment should not be necessary but also acknowledges in the Scheme guidance that the application for a badge provides a valuable opportunity for the local authority to ensure that the applicant's personal details, are up to date (name and address for example), that the information on the badge remains legible and that an up-to-date photograph is obtained.

The DfT is prioritising the development of digital services to make the process of applying for badges easier and as part of this work, in June 2019 a new enhancement was introduced to enable local authorities to identify a badge holder as 'not for reassessment' when applying for a badge. At present the applicant will still be required to reapply for the purpose of confirming their

personal details and to provide an up-to-date photograph where relevant but they will not be subject to complete a full application/assessment process.

At 1st February 2021 40,872 individuals held badges issued by Devon County Council and of these 14,541 were issued under Automatic eligibility (with no reassessment).

With the introduction of the 'not for reassessment' flag which has already been introduced and implemented, the work between the DfT and local authorities to streamline and digitise the application process continues. Devon County Council has also developed digital improvements to the application process thereby making routine applications via the digital route very quick.

Considering the “not for reassessment flag” and the on-going digital developments both locally and nationally to improve the process for all, it is not considered that a specific pilot as suggested is required.

Councillor Barry Parsons
Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Digital Transformation