

CABINET

11 October 2023

Present:-

Councillors R Croad, A Davis, R Gilbert, J Hart (Chair), S Hughes, J McInnes (Vice-Chair), L Samuel, A Saywell and P Twiss

Apologies:-

Councillors A Leadbetter

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

S Aves, F Biederman, J Brazil, R Hannaford and C Whitton (in person)

A Dewhirst and P Henderson (remote attendance)

* 391

Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* 392

Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* 393

Announcements

There was no announcement by the Chair at this meeting.

* 394

Petitions

There was no petition received from a Member of the Public or the Council.

* 395

Question(s) from Members of the Council

In accordance with the Cabinet Procedure Rules, the relevant Cabinet Members responded to 7 questions from Members of the Council on the following matters.

1. times that the Council or relevant Cabinet Member had engaged with Barclays Bank on ethical investment matters?
2. Queen Street, lessons from Totnes, support for the scheme and justification of traffic orders;
3. examples of similar traffic orders being granted in Devon town centres, in the face of levels of dissatisfaction;

4. understanding of directives issued by Government, to extend delivery of FHSF projects;
5. whether this concession removes the concern, that delay would risk the funding award;
6. copy of the most recent independent evaluation (peer review or equivalent) of highways; and
7. copy of the most recent customer satisfaction survey with highways in Devon.

[NB: A copy of the questions and answers are available on webpage for meeting]

* **396** **Question(s) from Members of the Public**

(The Chair exercised his discretion and brought forward this item of business on the agenda).

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Council had received 27 questions from members of the public on the following matters;

1. elderly residents who cannot access the internet, the social lifeline of the mobile library and how residents might be able to obtain reading material and receive social contact;
2. children's services in towns and cities, and whether children in rural areas should have services removed to benefit towns and cities;
3. public quotes regarding mobile libraries and rural communities and what had changed;
4. consideration of being a pioneer in the Southwest for using mobile library service as a multi-purpose vehicle - providing several services within it;
5. usage of Mobile Library and data used;
6. substitution of Mobile Library with Good Neighbour / Home Library Scheme and removing freedom of choice and independence;
7. Library Strategy and reference thereto;
8. Usage of the mobile libraries to provide other services in our rural areas, as done in other counties;
9. why Devon Mobile Library Service was not marketed online or on social media;
10. change of the policy of removing stops of fewer than 5 people, and adding stops to other rural areas for those who wish to use;
11. support for mobile library service from Torridge and role of community libraries;
12. alternative provision of community libraries and where support (access of broadband, volunteers, rotation of the book stock, ordering) comes from;
13. Has any consideration been given to running a hybrid-service that combines the mobile library with other services (banking, post office, pharmacy etc);
14. Grant Funding from Government for Vehicle Replacement;

15. equality impact assessment – whether sufficient to comply with its equality duty;
16. Prime Minister’s speech on the country’s education system and how this would be achieved if taking away books from disadvantaged children, students at school, home education etc;
17. Queen Street and loss of on-street parking income;
18. Kenwyn care home (Ashburton) and plans for the future of the former care home;
19. community library and levels of service (numbers, range of books and provision for those with no transport);
20. saving the mobile library;
21. range of services that mobile libraries could provide (e.g. selling stamps, hearing aid batteries, providing advice leaflets and local information);
22. concern that closure of the service in rural communities is being considered;
23. accessibility and travel and how disabled users access the library service and travel times if the Mobile Library Service closed;
24. support and contribution to the Government’s “Unleashing `Rural Opportunities” strategy (which reports a commitment to improving rural library services);
25. opportunities for enhanced social interaction and mitigations to replace these if mobile service was withdrawn;
26. accessibility issues with volunteers and / or strangers; and
27. recommendation of the recent Scrutiny Meeting, and consideration of all possible practical and economical means to maintain the mobile library service.

The Cabinet Member responded orally to one supplementary question arising from the above (question 17). A copy of the questions and answers had been sent direct to those questioners who were not present in the meeting.

The Cabinet was then advised that the matter of the mobile library, on which 25 questions had been posed, would at the appropriate time in the meeting move a motion to defer the matter to give due consideration to the matters raised by the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee.

(NB: A copy of the questions and answers are available on webpage for meeting and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through [livestream of the meeting](#))

* **397** **The Property Change programme**

(Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Dewhirst, Hannaford and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Director of Transformation and Business Services (BSS/23/06) on proposals for Property Management,

circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Cabinet noted that the Council (DCC) was responsible for properties with estimated annual gross running costs of circa £8 million, and a maintenance liability in excess of £20 million, excluding Schools.

A key priority of the corporate plan agreed by Cabinet on 12 July 2023 was to make the best use of building and assets and the Council's Property Strategy focused on four key principles of Reduce, Dispose, Retain, and Repurpose, aimed at transforming the corporate estate and informing the methodology for reviewing the future use of assets.

Further detail on the Strategy (Reduce, Dispose, Retain, and Repurpose) was outlined in Section 2 of the Report.

The Council owned, leased, or occupied in excess of 1,000 assets in the County which included 364 schools, 500 land assets, 64 farms and circa 300 operational buildings (including offices, children centres, libraries, youth centres, industrial estate, recycling centres, day centres, respite centres, contact centres and children's homes).

The Report set out phase one of the property strategy approach, including the disposal of four sites in Exeter, and two in Barnstaple.

- Disposal of Larkbeare House
- Disposal of Compass House
- Disposal of Ivybank
- Former Matford Offices land, Exeter
- St Georges Road Youth Centre, Barnstaple
- Disposal Pottington Industrial Unit

The Cabinet noted that in addition to the disposals set out above, the Director of Transformation and Business Services had, under delegated powers, approved to lease out office space at County Hall, and review opportunities to reduce revenue spend where the opportunity to end or break leases arose and serve notice/enact break provisions as appropriate.

The Property Change Programme contributed to four of the six priorities in the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025, as outlined below.

- Respond to the climate emergency.
- Support sustainable economic recovery.
- Improve health and wellbeing.
- Help communities be safe, connected and resilient.

It was estimated that the proposals would generate capital receipts of circa £6-10 million (depending on planning approval) and reduce revenue costs by circa £300,000 per annum. In addition, avoiding backlog maintenance investment requirements of circa £3-5 million.

The corporate and community risk registers would be reviewed to ensure all relevant risks in the Property Strategy were captured and managed.

In summary, occupancy statistics demonstrated the Council could reduce its portfolio without detriment to services which would reduce the carbon footprint, provide value for money, generate capital receipts, and reduce revenue expenditure contributing towards the financial sustainability of the authority.

An Impact Assessment had been prepared for the attention of Members and was available at - [Published Impact Assessments - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](#). This outlined that the proposals would help advance equality of opportunity for people who shared a protected characteristic as well as those who didn't, for example, providing workplaces that met service needs and were accessible, equal opportunities to training and employment, enabling people to become better connected with services and promoting a working environment conducive to the physical and mental health and wellbeing among staff.

The matter having been debated and the options and alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability and carbon impact, risk management, equality and legal considerations and alignment with the Council's Strategic Plan) set out in the Director's Report having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and

RESOLVED

(a) that the Council's Property Strategy, as set out in section 2 of the Report, be approved;

(b) that the following properties be disposed:

- Larkbeare House, Exeter
- Compass House, Exeter
- Ivybank, Exeter
- Former Matford Offices land, Exeter
- St Georges Road Youth Centre, Barnstaple
- Pottington Industrial Unit, Barnstaple

(c) that the Director of Transformation and Business Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Policy Corporate and Asset Management, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the timescales and disposal programme as set out in section 3 of the Report.

* **398** **Coroners - Merger to become a Devon Wide Service**

(Councillors Brazil, Dewhurst, Hannaford and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services (LDS/23/17) which sought approval for a business case for the merge of the coronial jurisdictions of Exeter and Greater Devon and Plymouth, Torbay and South Devon, be given to the Ministry of Justice for consultation. The Report had been circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The coroner service was an anomalous service within Local Authorities, with them being responsible for the appointment and payment of the coroner and meeting all costs of the service. This included the cost of the provision of mortuaries, pathology services, forensic testing, and inquests. However, Coroners were independent judicial post holders and not employees of the Local Authority.

Within Devon there were two coronial jurisdictions (Exeter and Greater Devon, with Devon County Council as lead authority and the other Plymouth, Torbay and South Devon with Plymouth City Council as lead authority).

The Chief Coroner had published guidance to local authorities on how to organise the coroner service (see Annex 1 – Chief Coroner’s Guidance Note 14 - Merger of Coroners Areas), the guidance adding that it was the Chief Coroner’s view that the number of coroner areas should be reduced in order to create sensibly sized coroner areas and Schedule 2 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 gave the Lord Chancellor power to make orders altering coroner areas. To date all mergers had been made by agreement.

On the retirement of the Senior Coroner for Plymouth on the 31 March 2023 Devon had been asked by the Ministry of Justice to consider the merging of these two jurisdictions to become one Devon Coroners Service. Inquests would continue to be held in current locations and would not be centralised.

To merge coroner areas the local authority had to apply to the Lord Chancellor with a business case for the merger and before doing so it should consult with the Chief Coroner. The Chief Coroner and the Ministry of Justice had seen the draft business case and were content to proceed to formal application.

Having one Senior Coroner for Devon and the centralisation of the support function would provide robust and appropriate support for the work of the coroner's office and offer economies of scale of operations and a chance to introduce standard working practices and levels of service and resilience throughout Devon.

The next step was to pass a case to the Ministry of Justice who would carry out a consultation with all those interested parties such as mortuaries, pathologists, police, ambulance, funeral directors, registration.

A merger of the areas would require detailed assessment and joint proposal by Torbay, Plymouth and Devon County Council, consultation with the Chief Coroner and the Ministry of Justice, and a detailed draft business case which had been developed.

The Chief Coroner and the Ministry of Justice were supportive of the merger discussions and the Senior Coroner and Devon and Cornwall Police were in favour of the proposed merger.

The financial considerations were outlined in section 6 of the Report, but in a merged Devon coronial service, DCC would be the lead authority and would recharge Plymouth and Torbay for coronial work undertaken for those areas.

A service level agreement would be drafted to cover the merger of the services and would be signed by all authorities before the proposed merger took effect.

In summary, it was felt by the Senior Coroner, and the three local authority leads involved that the merge of the service to a Devon Coroners Service would bring benefits of resilience, efficiency and opportunities to modernise, in order to provide a better, more consistent service to the bereaved families of Devon.

An Impact Assessment has also been prepared for the attention of Members and is attached and available on the web at - [Published Impact Assessments - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](#). In summary, this highlighted that the external impact of the move to one area was small, but with good timely communication prior to, during and after any merger took place there should be no change in the way the public used the service.

The matter having been debated and the options and alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability and carbon impact, risk management, equality and legal considerations and alignment with the Council's Strategic Plan) set out in the Director's Report having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Saywell, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

RESOLVED that the business case for the merge of the coronial jurisdictions of Exeter and Greater Devon and Plymouth, Torbay and South Devon, is given to the Ministry of Justice for consultation more widely.

* 399 **Transport Capital Programme 2023/24 and 2024/25: Update and Proposed Allocation**

(Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Dewhirst, Hannaford and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/66) which gave an update on the capital programme covering the current financial year and sought approval for a two-year transport capital programme covering the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 (excluding maintenance). The Report had been circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Transport Capital Programme set out the short-term priority for investment in transport infrastructure, building on long-term commitments as detailed in adopted strategies such as Local Plans, the Local Transport Plan, the Cycling and Multi-Use Trail Network Strategy, and the Transport Infrastructure Plan.

The Report outlined the Council's position with regard the Climate Emergency, the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) settlement from Government, which for 2023/24 was £3.628 million plus £0.874 million brought forward from 2022/23, Existing Government and Other Body Funding Schemes (such as Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), Large Local Majors (LLM) Fund, Major Road Network (MRN) Fund, Levelling up, Freeport, Bus Service Improvement Plan and many others), the impact of inflation and the development of a new Local Transport Plan to 2040.

The proposed Transport Capital Programme was detailed in Appendix 1. It included a range of schemes across the County covering different transport modes. During its development, consideration had been given to the cost, deliverability and availability of external match funding of individual schemes to ensure the programme represented value for money overall.

It further outlined potential funding sources in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 such as the Peninsula Transport Sub-National Transport Body, Active Travel Fund 5, Levelling Up Fund and A382 Major Road Network.

Transport was a key mechanism to deliver the Council's Strategic Plan priorities and actions, with many cross-cutting themes evident in the transport capital programme. The programme sought to prioritise active and sustainable

travel investment across the county, whilst also supporting economic growth through the delivery of major schemes. The table in section 6 summarised how the proposals would impact achievement of relevant Strategic Plan actions according to a seven-point scale.

The Cabinet noted that detailed individual Impact Assessments would be carried out on schemes where required and included with Cabinet and HATOC reports.

The matter having been debated and the options and alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability and carbon impact, risk management, equality and legal considerations and alignment with the Council's Strategic Plan) set out in the Director's Report having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Davis, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hughes, and

RESOLVED

(a) that the budgets to the Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block (LTP ITB) schemes in 2023/24 and 2024/25 as included in Appendix 1 be allocated, noting the level of overprogramming planned;

(b) that the increase of the 2023/24 capital programme by £3.102 million, with £2.240 million funded from other external grants, £0.308 million from developer contributions and £0.554 million from external contributions, be approved. The schemes are listed in Appendix 1; and

(c) that the increase to the 2024/25 capital programme by £1.220 million with £0.518 million funded from other external grants, £0.084 million from external contributions and £0.618 million from developer contributions, be approved. The schemes are listed in Appendix 1; and

(d) that the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Highway Management be given delegated authority to make amendments to the Integrated Block allocations.

* 400

Bus Service Improvement Plan: Tranche 1 Capital Schemes

(Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Hannaford, Henderson and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/68) on Capital Schemes (Tranche 1) of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

In 2021, the UK Government published its National Bus Strategy, which provided a pathway to help bus services improve following the COVID19 pandemic. This required local transport authorities to form Enhanced Partnerships with bus operating companies, and to publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The Council's BSIP was developed and subsequently approved by Cabinet on 13 October 2021, and an Enhanced Partnership formed.

In 2022, the Council was allocated £14.1 million BSIP funding by the Department for Transport, which is split into capital (£8.8 million) and revenue (£5.3 million). This funding was for a three-year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25 with all schemes subject to final approval from the Department for Transport. As the revenue funding was significantly less than that requested, a second revision of the BSIP was developed, with the plan split into Individual Scheme Delivery of what was deliverable now with current funding, and future aspirations for bus services, should additional funding become available.

The Report sought approval to construct two of the capital schemes listed under the Individual Scheme Delivery section of the revised BSIP, both of which were bus priority measures, with the aim of achieving better bus journey times. These were the Bideford/Barnstaple Western Bus Corridor, and the Exeter Northern Corridor: New North Road to City Centre Bus Gate.

The Bideford/Barnstaple Western Bus Corridor scheme improved bus priority on the 3.4km bus corridor between Bickington and Roundswell on the western edge of the town, and the bus station in the town centre. This would include the construction of a new bus lane and the construction of a footway. The scheme would achieve approximately a 1 minute journey time saving, which represented a 6% reduction along this corridor. Figure 1 showed the Roundswell Scheme Location.

The Exeter Northern Corridor: New North Road to city centre bus gate scheme sought to provide a more direct route to the city centre for countywide bus services approaching on the northern corridor between Cowley Bridge roundabout and the Bus Station. The bus gate would provide a more direct route to the city centre, and subsequently the bus station, whilst enabling stops closer to the city centre. It was estimated the intervention would achieve a time saving of approximately 2.5 minutes per bus, which represented a 17% reduction in bus journey times along this corridor. Figure 2 showed the Exeter Scheme Location and Figure 3 the New North Road Route Diversion.

A public consultation for each of the scheme proposals has been undertaken and the methodology, responses and results were outlined in full at section 5 of the Report.

The BSIP schemes were well aligned with a range of the Strategic Plan priorities by improving the efficiency and attractiveness of bus travel,

encouraging increased patronage and therefore more sustainable lifestyles. The table in section 6 summarised how each of the proposals would impact the relevant Strategic Plan actions according to a seven-point scale.

The BSIP funding was ringfenced for schemes identified within the BSIP. The current estimate for the Roundswell scheme was £525,000 and Government had allocated £380,000 for the Roundswell scheme and the remainder of funding would come from Section 106 developer contributions already secured from local developments.

The overall cost of the New North Road to City Centre Bus Gate scheme was estimated to be £400,000. The BSIP grant allocated £300,000 for this scheme, with the remainder coming from LTP grant as a local match contribution.

The delivery of public transport interventions was an essential part of driving down transport emissions and the Carbon Plan identified that reducing the need to travel and shifting to sustainable transport options were the most important ways to tackle transport emissions.

Two Impact Assessments had been prepared for the attention of Members at the meeting and were available as follows –

- [Bus Services Improvement Plan Scheme Roundswell Bus Lane - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Bus Service Improvement Scheme - New North Road Exeter - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

It was noted in the Impact Assessment for the BSIP that greater proportions of trips were made by bus for those identifying as 'Black' or mixed ethnicities. This indicated the potential to advance equality of opportunities for these groups by enabling faster, and more direct travel to employment, services, and leisure facilities. Additionally, greater proportions of trips made by young people (aged 17-20), elderly people (ages 75+), people with reduced mobility and females were made by bus than the general population, all of which would see an advancement in equality of opportunities as a result of these schemes.

The Cabinet noted that the proposals had been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action had been taken to safeguard the Council's position. As part of the delivery of the schemes, project risk registers had been maintained. They further noted that approval of the recommendations would enable the construction of an initial tranche of BSIP capital schemes, creating improved bus priority measures along busy corridors in Exeter and Barnstaple.

The Cabinet Members commented that the Devon Bus Service Improvement Plan represented a great opportunity to deliver improvements for people to use public transport and made the most of the highway network for all users.

They welcomed the plans and would work with colleagues to ensure successful implementation of the schemes.

The matter having been debated and the options and alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability and carbon impact, risk management, equality and legal considerations and alignment with the Council's Strategic Plan) set out in the Director's Report having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Davis, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hughes, and

RESOLVED

(a) that the advertising of the traffic regulation orders necessary for the schemes in this report and to make and seal the orders subject to the requirements of the legislation and the council's procedures, be approved;

(b) that subject to the resolution of the traffic regulation orders, the construction of the bus lane scheme in Roundswell, as shown in Appendix 1, at an estimated cost of £525,000 be approved;

(c) that subject to the resolution of the traffic regulation orders, the construction of the New North Road Bus Gate in Exeter City Centre, as shown in Appendix 2, at an estimated cost of £400,000, be approved; and

(d) that the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport and the relevant Local Members, to approve minor changes to the schemes.

* **401** **Devon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans**

(Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Dewhirst and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/69) which presented three Devon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The full plans were attached to the agenda as;

Appendix I – Heart of Teignbridge LCWIP

Appendix II - Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam LCWIP

Appendix III – Exeter LCWIP

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) were a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements at the local level. The framework was set out in the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, which formed an important part of Government's strategy to increase the number of active travel trips. LCWIPs were also an important tool in realising the Government's Gear Change vision which expected local authorities to deliver high quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure. LCWIPs were therefore an important aspect of making cases for future active travel funding, whether through external grants or in negotiations with developers.

The Council had completed three LCWIPs: Heart of Teignbridge (HoT), Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam (BBN), and Exeter which covered the three key urban areas identified in the existing Cycling and Multi-Use Trail Network Strategy and they sought to outline the future walking and cycling infrastructure priorities over the next 10 to 20 years.

The LCWIP's set out walking and cycling proposals in the respective geographies, the schemes being considered the most strategically important, building upon existing established active travel networks and with greatest potential to attract developer funding.

The Cabinet noted that all three Plans had been endorsed by the relevant Highways and Traffic Orders Committees.

The Heart of Teignbridge LCWIP (Appendix I) set out walking and cycling proposals along five key corridors, strategically identified as missing gaps in existing plans for active travel intervention, being Newton Abbot Town Centre, Kingsteignton, Buckland and Milber, Wolborough and Kingskerswell and Torbay. There were additional proposals within the NA1 Houghton Barton and NA3 Wolborough strategic site allocations.

The BBN LCWIP (Appendix II) set out four walking and six cycling proposals in Barnstaple, Bideford, and Northam. A summary of the proposals was outlined in full but related to Alexandra Street (Barnstaple), Barbican Road and Queen Street (Barnstaple), Yelland to Barnstaple, Roundswell to Pilton (Barnstaple), Whiddon Valley to Barnstaple and Landkey to Barnstaple.

The core focus of the Exeter LCWIP (Appendix III) was within the administrative boundary of the city, setting out 20 cycling routes and 5 city-centre walking routes strategically identified as 'missing gaps' in the existing walking and cycling network. The cycling routes were E1 – Exeter St David's Station to Topsham, E3 – City Centre to Cranbrook, E4 – Exeter University to Science Park, E5 – Stoke Hill to St Thomas, E6 – 'Nurses Way' Stoke Hill to Marsh Barton Station and Industrial Estate, E7 – Exeter St David's Station to Exeter Quay, E8 – Wonford to Sowton Industrial Estate, E9 – Topsham/Newcourt to City Centre via Wonford and St Leonards, E10 – Pynes Hill Business Park to Sowton Industrial Estate and Exeter Business Park, E12 – Beacon Heath to Marsh Barton Station and Industrial Estate, E13 – Clyst St

Mary to Topsham via Clyst Road, E14 – Marsh Barton Station to city centre via Water Lane development and Exeter Quay, E15 – South West Exeter development to Exe Bridges, E16 – South West Exeter development to River Exe via Alphington and St Thomas, E17 – Ide to Marsh Barton and Industrial Estate, E18 – Exwick Heights to Exeter St David's Station, E19 – Cowley Bridges to Exeter St David's Station, E20 – Exeter St David's Station to South Street via Iron Bridge, E21 – Exeter St David's Station to city centre via Queen Street and E22 – Newtown to Water Lane development via St Leonards.

The walking routes were W1 – Exeter Quay/Haven Banks to City Centre via South Street, W2 – Exe Bridges, Fore Street, High Street, Sidwell Street and St Annes Roundabout, W3 – Exeter St David's to City Centre via Queen Street, W4 – Barnfield Road to Princesshay and W5 – New North Road and Longbrook Street to Paris Street.

Details of all the consultations (public, stakeholder engagement, questionnaires, webinar events, online etc) and outcomes were detailed in full at section 5 of the Report.

The LCWIP documents aligned with the vision and priorities set out in Devon County Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 in a number of ways, for example, responding to the climate emergency, being ambitious for children and young people, supporting sustainable economic recovery, tackling poverty and inequality, improving health and wellbeing and helping communities be safe, connected and resilient.

Cabinet noted that the approval of an LCWIP did not result in any financial commitment but development of the pipeline of active travel schemes would continue to use Local Transport Plan funding. Future commitment of funding towards development or delivery of active travel schemes would require further approvals (e.g. transport capital programme or scheme specific reports).

Impact Assessments had been prepared for each which had been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and was available on the Council's website,

- Heart of Teignbridge LCWIP Impact Assessment: [Teignbridge Local Cycling and Walking Plan - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/teignbridge-local-cycling-and-walking-plan-impact-assessment)
- Barnstaple, Bideford and Northam LCWIP Impact Assessment: [Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/barnstaple-with-bideford-and-northam-local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-impact-assessment)
- Exeter LCWIP Impact Assessment: [Exeter Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/exeter-local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-impact-assessment)

The Impact Assessments highlighted that, overall, the LCWIPs would benefit all residents by improving walking and cycling links to employment, education and services. The proposed infrastructure would cater for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages, abilities, and confidence levels. It could also enable certain

individuals to travel independently by removing transport-related barriers to key destinations.

In summary, the LCWIPs were ambitious plans for transformative walking and cycling interventions in Devon, which aligned with several of the Strategic Plan priorities. It would enable the Council to be in a strong strategic position to secure future funding and ensured it delivered active travel schemes in locations that delivered maximum impact.

However, publication of the recent Government 'Plan for Drivers' policy paper meant this could have implications for the schemes and proposals of the LCWIP's, therefore it was **MOVED** by Councillor Hughes, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

RESOLVED

(a) that officers be asked to review the three Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure plans at Appendices I, II, and III against the policy paper Plan for Drivers; and

(b) that the outcome of that review be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

* 402 **Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

(Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Hannaford and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/70) relating to the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Environment Act 2021 provided the UK's new framework of environmental protection which included a requirement for the production of LNRS documents which would cover the whole of England with the purpose of setting out the approach to nature recovery and supporting the delivery of national environmental targets and local environmental priorities.

The Council had been advised by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) of its appointment as the authority responsible for preparing a Devon LNRS under section 105 of the Environment Act, the Secretary of State's letter being attached as Appendix 1 to the Report.

This Report outlined the expectations of the role, the process to be followed in the production of the Devon LNRS and the resources available by Government to support this.

In line with earlier guidance from Defra, a significant amount of advance work had been undertaken in preparation for the development of a Devon LNRS, including extensive communication with partners. A governance structure involving supporting authorities and the Devon LNP was being established and initial mapping of nature recovery priorities across Devon had been developed. A brief explanatory video had been produced, which was available via You Tube at: <https://youtu.be/Ttfs9B-goal?si=yV2p2X62PR17HAVW>

There was no mandatory timetable for the preparation of the initial LNRS; however, the Defra expectation was for completion within a 12 to 18 month period. The Report set out an indicative timetable for this work in Devon, with final publication being June 2024, after engagement of specialists, workshops, agreement of priorities and consultation.

The preparation of the Devon LNRS aligned very closely to the priority set out in the Council's Strategic Plan 2021-25 to **respond to the climate emergency**. The most direct and obvious intent, under the expressed theme of 'making Devon greener', was to help wildlife and landscapes recover. There was also a clear government expectation that the LNRSs should strongly highlight how nature recovery would support wider social and economic priorities. So, it would be important for the Devon LNRS to set out how it would contribute to the Strategic Plan priorities to **support sustainable economic recovery** by prompting opportunities for green growth and to **improve health and wellbeing** by re-connecting people with nature.

Devon had been allocated £388,000 over a two-year period, provided as a Section 31 grant to DCC. The funding would be used to cover the dedicated staffing and contractor input needed to support the preparation of the Devon LNRS, along with all other costs incurred through stakeholder engagement and through its publication.

The decision sought from Cabinet at this early stage did not have any specific implications for equality issues. Consideration would be given to equality issues in developing the detailed content of LNRS, with the required Impact Assessment produced prior to its future intended adoption by DCC.

In summary, the Cabinet noted that approval of the recommendations would facilitate the development of a new approach to nature recovery and associated environmental priorities across Devon. If approved, the Council would take on the lead role in the preparation of the Devon LNRS in collaboration with supporting authorities and all other relevant stakeholders. The funding would enable the appointment of dedicated staffing and specialist input required to progress the preparation and publication of the Devon LNRS on behalf of all relevant parties.

The matter having been debated and the options and alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability and carbon impact, risk management, equality and legal considerations and alignment with the Council's Strategic Plan) set out in the Director's Report having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Davis, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

RESOLVED

(a) that the County Council's appointment as responsible authority for the preparation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the Devon LNRS area, including Plymouth and Torbay, be confirmed.

(b) that officers be mandated to establish appropriate governance and operational arrangements to enable the preparation, publication and future review and republication of the Devon LNRS through engagement with the defined supporting authorities, a wide range of stakeholders and neighbouring authorities; and

(c) that the expenditure of the new burdens funding allocated by central government for this purpose be approved.

* 403 **Referral from Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee, 28 September 2023 - Call-In of Cabinet Decision – Mobile Library Service (Minute *359 of 12 July 2023)**

(Councillors Biederman, Dewhirst and Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item welcoming the deferral of the matter, pending a more detailed consideration).

In accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Chair of the Corporate, Infrastructure and regulatory Services Committee (Councillor Dewhirst) invoked the call-in procedure in relation to the decision of the Cabinet (Minute *359 of the 12 July 2023) in relation to the Mobile Library Service in Devon.

The call-in and the associated grounds were considered at the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee on 28 September 2023 ((Minute 124 referred). The Committee subsequently **RESOLVED** *that the Committee recommends that Cabinet:*

(a) Reconsiders the decision to decommission the mobile library vehicles and looks again at continuing to provide the mobile library service.

(b) Gets precise figures on leasing vehicles to review opportunities to continue to provide a cost effective service.

(c) Looks into opportunities to reduce cost of delivery including commercial sponsorship opportunities on vehicles, crowdfunding and or support from Parish Councils and community groups.

(d) Develops alternative library provision before taking the decision to remove services.

And reports findings back to this Committee.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes and

RESOLVED that the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee be thanked for its consideration of this matter and its recommendation and given the short timescale between the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and this Cabinet, and the matters raised, Cabinet will consider the issues in more detail and determine the matter at its next meeting.

* **404** **Minutes**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the following be endorsed and any recommendations to Cabinet therein be approved:

Farms Estate Committee – 12 September 2023.

* **405** **Delegated Action/Urgent Matters**

The [Registers of Decisions taken by Members under the urgency provisions or delegated powers](#) were available for inspection, in line with the Council's Constitution and Regulation 13 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. [Decisions taken by Officers](#) under any express authorisation of the Cabinet or other Committee or under any general authorisation within the Council's Scheme of Delegation set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

* **406** **Forward Plan**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet reviewed the [Forward Plan](#) and determined those items of business to be defined as key and framework decisions and included in the Plan from the date of this meeting onwards reflecting the requirements of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

* 407 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes and

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act namely the financial or business affairs of persons tendering for the provision of council goods or services and of the County Council, in both cases, and in accordance with Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

* 408 **Developing a Family Hubs Model in Devon and Contract Award Arrangements**

(Councillors Aves, Biederman, Dewhirst, Hannaford and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Deputy Director of Children's Health and Wellbeing (Interim) & Deputy Director of Children's Services and Head of Social Care, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Report outlined the background of commissioning the delivery of Children Centre services, what the current contract to families delivered and proposals for a direction of travel towards a family hubs model in Devon.

The Cabinet noted that the proposals had been presented to a Standing Overview Group of the Children's Scrutiny Committee in September 2023 and the Report outlined the feedback received.

The Report further outlined the ambition of a family hub model, outlined in appendix 5.

Engagement activities to inform the commissioning approach summarised in sections 3 and 4 of the Report were outlined in section 5, with Appendix 3 summarising examples of engagement activities.

Cabinet noted that an impact assessment would be carried out on the equality considerations to inform service specification.

The matter having been debated and the options and alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability and carbon impact, risk management, equality and legal considerations and alignment with the Council's Strategic Plan) set out in the Deputy Director's Report having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Samuel, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

RESOLVED

(a) That recommendation (a) as outlined in the Report relating to the direct award of a new 12-month contract from the 1st of April 2024 be agreed, noting that the new contract would have a budget of c.£4.837m (including £1.5m from Public Health) and would focus on prevention and early intervention; on reducing inequalities; and on engaging with communities and helping to build, shape and strengthen local services that reflect and respond to local need;

(b) that the proposals that the new and developing Family Hubs model be funded as set out in the overarching strategy described in section 7, be endorsed; and

(c) that the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools, be given delegated authority to negotiate and approve the details of the contract, delivery plan and conditions for the 12-month contract award being recommended.

NOTES:

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

* **DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 10.32 am and finished at 1.15 pm