

COUNCIL

7 September 2023

Present:-

Chair: P Prowse

Vice-Chair: C Slade

Councillors T Adams, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, J Bailey, J Bradford, J Brazil, J Brook, P Bullivant, C Channon, R Chesterton, I Chubb, A Connett, D Cox, P Crabb, R Croad, A Dewhirst, H Gent, G Gribble, I Hall, J Hart, M Hartnell, L Hellyer, J Hodgson, S Hughes, S Randall Johnson, S Khan, A Leadbetter, F Letch MBE, P Maskell, J McInnes, R Radford, I Roome, L Samuel, P Sanders, A Saywell, R Scott, D Sellis, D Thomas, J Trail BEM, P Twiss, C Whitton, J Wilton-Love, M Wrigley and J Yabsley

Apologies:-

Councillors D Barnes, J Berry, F Biederman, A Davis, R Gilbert, R Hannaford, J Hawkins, P Henderson, C Leaver, D McGeough, J Morrish, R Peart and M Squires

217 Minutes

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023 be signed as a correct record.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

218 Announcements

The Chair of the Council reported that the Council had been awarded the prestigious Race Equality Matters Bronze Trailblazer Status for taking significant steps to making a meaningful impact on tackling race inequality across the Council. The Bronze status recognised the work being done to develop a more inclusive culture through the Race Equality Action Plan and maintain momentum to stamp out intolerance for all kinds of racism across the organisation.

The Chair then paid tribute to Fakir Mohamed Osman, Head of the Heart of the Southwest Trading Standards, and Chair of the Council's Race Equality Staff Group, who had become a 'Fellow' of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI). This was for recognition of his work in Trading Standards locally, regionally and nationally, by going the extra mile and leading projects which had a significant impact on individuals, communities and organisations.

The Chair also congratulated the Council's two country parks (Stover and Tiverton Canal) who had once again received a Green Flag Award, which was the international quality mark for parks and green spaces. This marked the 20th consecutive year that Stover Country Park had received the award, and at the Grand Western Canal Country Park it was 15 years. The Chair highlighted that these were vital green spaces for communities, bringing people together and providing opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles.

More good wishes were sent to the Bridges team in Children's Services, for being shortlisted as finalists for the Social Worker of the Year Awards in the Team of the Year category. They had been nominated for their exemplary work with families and young people aged 11 to 18 years and would face five other finalists at the awards ceremony on 3 November 2023.

219 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

The Chair invited the Leader to make a statement regarding reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), Devon Schools and Council properties.

He highlighted the Council had been working closely with its 165 maintained schools to identify if RAAC was present in any buildings. Every five years the Council surveyed all maintained schools and other Council buildings, as well as desktop assessments and site visits. Since 2018 (when alerted to the risks of RAAC), the Council took measures to identify the presence of RAAC in schools and followed all new Department for Education (DfE) guidelines.

Following the DfE's most recent guidance, it was possible to immediately eliminate some schools from the risk of RAAC because of the time period of construction, but for other schools, there was an ongoing programme of inspection, which would be completed this month.

The Leader clarified that no RAAC had been identified in schools surveyed so far.

The Council was further assisting the DfE to ensure all academy-run schools and church schools were aware of DfE guidance.

Whilst the Government's guidance had focused on schools, the Council had been identifying if RAAC had been used in other buildings across the estate, but to date RAAC had not been identified through the course of routine assessments.

220 Public Participation: Petitions, Questions and Representations

There was no petition received from a member of the public.

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the relevant Cabinet Members responded to two questions from members of the public on the following matters.

1. Petition regarding parking by Exeter University students, staff, contractors in the upper part of Stoke Valley Road (including California Close); and
2. Banking Services in the Council and ethical investment policies.

The Cabinet Members responded orally to supplementary questions arising from the above.

The Council received and acknowledged oral representations made by Catherine Sleigh on adopting policies on the provision of plant-based foods in campaigns to combat climate change highlighting that awareness of climate needed to be included every aspect of council activities.

There were further representations from Matthew Rowbury (Chair of the Heavitree Traders Association) and Mr Joe Bolton relating to the low traffic neighbourhood (LTN) scheme in Heavitree and Whipton, Exeter.

A fourth representation was received from Mr Neil Martin who commented on expectations from elected representatives and standards from stakeholders and how they may be applied in a good working relationships, with reference to experiences in Heavitree.

The fifth representation was from Angela Martin on the democratic processes that led to the LTN in the Heavitree and Whipton area.

The next 4 representations were from a number of care leavers who wished to speak on the motion, later on the agenda relating to treating Care Experience as if it were a protected characteristic. Jemeillia Murfin, Kane Wilton, Luke Carter and Katie Smaldon all spoke in support of the motion and shared their personal experiences with the Council.

The Chair thanked all the public and care leavers for their participation and input at the meeting.

(NB: A copy of the questions and answers are appended to these minutes and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the [livestream of this meeting](#))

221 Petitions from Members of the Council

The Leader was presented by Councillor Hodgson with a petition containing in the region of 800 signatures in support of the '20 is Plenty' campaign and motion.

[NB: The relevant Director / Head of Service would be asked to respond direct on the issues raised, within 15 days, in line with the [Council's Petition Scheme](#).

222 Questions from Members of the Council

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members and a Committee Chair provided written responses to sixteen questions submitted by Members of the Council relating to the following matters:

1. DCC's banking service and any investment in fossil fuels?
2. additional cost-of-living support (if any) is being offered to Devon schools, pupils, and staff?
3. actions to track the lasting impact of the covid pandemic on pupil attainment?
4. actions to tackle persistent and severe absences across the Council area, particularly in secondary schools?
5. impact of Government's unfunded pay deal for Devon schools, focussing on the tensions between balancing budgets and maintaining levels of support staffing?
6. demand for free school meals in Devon schools and whether this has changed in the past three years?
7. current level of demand for free school meals in Devon and whether schools were able to meet demand?
8. progress with repairing the low bank and verge on Ide Lane (formerly the C50), close to Dunsford Road junction?
9. 2022-3 Quality Accounts (Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust) and when Members of the relevant Scrutiny Committee were given a copy of the accounts?
10. repair of Metcombe Road following floods of 9th May 2023?
11. Government funding for pothole repairs and allocation thereof, with overall figures and by County division?
12. applications for funding to the new Government Department for Active Travel to enable wide implementation of the Active Travel scoping and prioritising of routes by District Councils?
13. 20's Plenty; can the criteria be added to DCC's criteria for scoring applications for 20mph speed limits?
14. income opportunities for a better receipt for materials brought to the Waste Recycling and how often are they reviewed?
15. consideration of bringing highways repairs and maintenance back in house?

16. Consultation on South Devon Freeport and associated 45km Customs Free zone?

The Leader, relevant Cabinet Members and a Committee Chair also responded orally, as appropriate, to any supplementary questions arising therefrom.

(A copy of the questions and answers are linked to the agenda for the meeting and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the [livestream of the meeting](#))

223 **People First Strategy**

The Council considered the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 14 June 2023 relating to the adoption by the County Council of the proposed people First Strategy.

The Leader of the Council **MOVED** and Councillor Saywell **SECONDED** that the recommendations of the Cabinet be approved and that the People First Strategy, as set out at Minute 339, of that Committee be approved and that the Director of People & Culture be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Strategy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Organisational Development, Workforce & Digital Transformation.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

224 **The Council's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025 and Corporate Plan for the next twelve months**

The Council considered the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 12 July 2023 relating to the adoption by the County Council of the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025 and Corporate Plan for the next twelve months. They further considered the Joint Report of the Chief Executive, Director of Transformation and Business Services, Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Director of People and Culture and Director of Finance and Public Value and noted the progress report on the same, as outlined at recommendation (b).

The Leader of the Council **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the recommendations of the Cabinet be approved and that the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025 and Corporate Plan for the next twelve months as set out at Minute 356 (replicated below) of the Cabinet be adopted.

(a) that the commitment to, and support for, the "Best Place" Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 is reaffirmed;

(b) that a Report on progress to date with the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 be prepared for consideration by the Council at its meeting on 7 September 2023;

(c) that the six areas of focus for the Corporate Plan for the next 12 months aligned to the risks set out in section 4 of the Report, be agreed:

- I. Governance and performance review.
- II. Value for money and financial sustainability.
- III. People strategy.
- IV. Replacement systems (FINEST and CareFirst).
- V. Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- VI. Devon, Plymouth and Torbay devolution deal.

(d) that the most significant risks facing the Council and the approach to managing them, as described in section 4, be agreed and further invite regular reports to future meetings on the management of those risks; and

(e) to further note that Directorate/service area plans will be developed over the next three months linked to the: Strategic Plan 2021-2025, areas of focus, key risks and People Strategy – ‘People First’.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

225 **Devon County Council to Treat Care Experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic (Minute 213 of 25 May 2023)**

The Chair exercised his discretion under Standing Order 11(2) to vary the order of business and bring agenda item 13 forward.

Pursuant to County Council Minute 213 of 25 May 2023 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hannaford that:

Devon County Council recognises:

- Every elected member and employee of this Council is a corporate parent to the children and care leavers in our care.
- We are all responsible for providing the best possible care, safeguarding and outcomes for the children who are looked after by us.
- That Councils have a duty to put the needs of vulnerable people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration.

Devon County Council notes:

- A UCL study which showed 70% of care experienced people die early. Over 50% of people who are in custody up to the age of 21 have been in care (Become Charity) and a quarter of the homeless

population is care experienced (The Independent Review of Children's Social Care).

- The Government commissioned an independent national review of children's social care, chaired by Josh Macalister, and one recommendation was to look at making care experience an additional protected characteristic; another was that all public bodies become corporate parents.

Devon County Council believes:

- Our children in care and those who have left care have the right to expect everything from a corporate parent that would be expected from a good and responsible parent. This includes how families continue their support, care, and ambition for their children after they leave home and gain independence including through employment opportunities.
- This authority has already taken important steps to support our care experienced children and care leavers better, but we can always do more.
- That we cannot wait until the government decides which recommendations to implement and therefore, here in the Devon County Council area of responsibility, we should act to be the best corporate parents we can be.
- That when making any decisions in relation to our policies or formulating our Corporate Plan that we should recognise care experienced people as a vulnerable group who face discrimination.
- That whilst we cannot change national legislation, we can use our powers to ensure that the Council consider care experienced people as part of its decision making to seek to prevent discrimination and improve life chances, in doing this. This will mean that we treat people with care experience the same as those with a protected characteristic.

Devon County Council therefore resolves:

1. That the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer ensure that all council making decision documentation has in it appropriate sections to allow for the impact upon 'care experienced people' to be considered in decision making, where relevant.
2. Officers consider how information might be captured and reported upon on these matters in a similar way to that of the Public Sector Equality Duty Annual report.
3. Any publication of information relating to people who share a Protected Characteristic also includes 'care experienced people'
4. To proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people of all ages when developing new Council policies and plans and, where possible, those where the Council produces them in partnership with others.

5. To request that the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, explore with the Director of HR how the Council could seek to guarantee all care experienced persons an interview where they meet the essential criteria of the post applied for.
6. That the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools writes to all public bodies represented in the Devon County Council area of responsibility ,the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses to make them aware of this motion and, where possible and within available resources, offer training on corporate parenting and issues facing care experienced people and to work with our partners and our care experienced population to understand what corporate parenting means for them.
7. That the Leader of the Council, writes to Devon's MPs making them aware of this motion and asking them to press government to amend the law to include Care Experienced persons as a Protected Characteristic and for the extension of Corporate Parenting to all public bodies, following the recommendations of the Macalister Report.
8. That the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, and Section 151 Officer attend a Corporate Parenting forum meeting to report on the actions taken because of this motion on notice.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 362(b) of 12 July 2023:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and

(a) that Council recognises that care experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination;

(b) that it recognises that Councils have a duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration;

(c) that future decision, services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic;

(d) that in the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty the Council includes care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment; and

(e) that this Council will treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic.

The amendment in the name of Councillor Hart was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** and subsequently thereafter also **CARRIED** as the substantive motion.

226 Cabinet Member Reports

The Council received reports from the relevant Cabinet Members on specific issues upon which they had been asked to comment, as set out below:

(a) Highway Management

Councillor Hughes circulated a report on the current consultation on Moving Traffic Offences and the Council's intention to impose fines and highways repairs made or planned to Kingsford Lane, off the B3212 at Farrant's Hill, both items requested by Councillor Connett.

The follow up matters Councillor Connett wished to raise would be taken outside of the meeting.

(b) Finance

Councillor Twiss circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Bailey on Devon residents share of 'levelling up' funding and whether Devon residents (including children) receive per capita fair funding overall from Government.

He further responded to questions on funding generally in the South West and how Devon fared, fairer funding for Devon school children and various funding stream that could be bid for.

227 Minutes

In accordance with Standing Order 13(2), the Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the Minutes of the undermentioned meetings of Committees be endorsed.

Appeals Committee	-	5 June and 10 July 2023
Investment and Pension Fund	-	16 June 2023
Audit Committee	-	20 June 2023
Public Rights of Way Committee	-	13 July 2023
Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Office Conduct Committee	-	13 July 2023

(and approval of minute 78 and the appointment of Solveig Wright to the post of Deputy Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (Commissioning))

Children's Scrutiny	-	6 June 2023
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny	-	13 June and 27 July 2023

Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory - 22 June 2023
Services Scrutiny

The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

228 **Debate not Hate (Minute 212 of 25 May 2023)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 212 of 25 May 2023 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hannaford that:

‘The intimidation and abuse of Councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; preventing elected Members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election, and undermining public life in democratic processes.

Devon County Council notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact on local democracy, and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure Councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.

Devon County Council therefore commits to challenge the normalisation of abuse against Councillors and officers and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does. Devon County Council further agrees to sign up to the [LGA’s Debate Not Hate campaign](#). The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support those in public life facing abuse and intimidation.

In addition, this Council resolves to

- Write to the local Members of Parliament to ask them to support the campaign.
- Write to the Government to ask them to work with the LGA to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of politicians at every level.
- Ensure that Devon County Council has a clear reporting mechanism which Councillors can use to monitor and record incidents of harassment and abuse of Councillors and officers.
- Regularly review the support available to Councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and councilor safety.

- Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of Councillors and their families and discuss the need to take a preventative approach that accounts for the specific risks that Councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, like MP's.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of Councillors and officers'.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 362(a) of 12 July 2023:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that the County Council:

- (a) recognises the actions already taken in support of the 'debate not hate' agenda and endorses a zero tolerance approach to abuse of both staff and Councillors;
- (b) continues to develop tools and give advice that supports Councillors in relation to safety issues and tackling inappropriate behaviour, including encouraging Elected Members to use the reporting mechanism in place;
- (c) works with the Police to establish a link whereby advice and support can be sought and develop a procedure document to accompany this; and
- (d) write to Devon MP's, copying in the LGA, outlining the Council's support for the campaign and encouraging them to promote this agenda to Government and support any actions that seek to address the abuse and intimidation of those in public life.

The amendment in the name of Councillor Hart was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** and subsequently thereafter also **CARRIED** as the substantive motion.

229 Teachers Pay - Investing in our Childrens Futures (Minute 214 of 25 May 2023)

Pursuant to County Council Minute 214 of 25 May 2025 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hannaford that:

Council notes that:

Members of the National Education Union (NEU) have voted in overwhelming numbers to take strike action for a fully funded, above-inflation pay rise.

Teachers across England have been offered a 5 per cent pay rise, which represents a 7 per cent real terms cut to their pay when compared to the very high rates of inflation.

One in four teachers leave the profession within two years of qualification: a third within five. Nearly one third of the teachers who qualified in the last decade are no longer teaching.

Children are losing out because there are not enough teachers. One in eight maths lessons is taught by a teacher not qualified in the subject.

The Government missed its target for recruitment of new secondary school teachers by 41 per cent this year and by 11 per cent for primary school teachers.

There has been a fall of 23 per cent in trainee teacher recruitment in 2022 compared with the year before.

Teachers are leaving the profession because of a mix of excessive workload and poor pay. A teacher who started working in 2010 and made normal progress up the pay scale has lost over £64,000 in real terms.

Teachers in England top the OECD league table for working time outside lessons. In addition to their teaching timetable, primary teachers spend nearly 32 hours and secondary teachers nearly 33 hours working in addition to their teaching every week. This means working weeks of 55-60 hours are commonplace in staff rooms all over the nation.

Secondary class sizes are at their highest for 40 years. Primary class sizes are now at their highest for 22 years.

According to a survey sent out by the Department for Education (DfE) to all schools and trusts in England in May 2022 regarding gas and electricity contracts, the average quote given on renewal for gas has

increased from £0.03 per kWh to £0.09 kWh for gas; and from £0.16 per kWh to £0.32 per kWh for electricity. These substantial cost increases are placing significant pressure on school budgets.

This Council also notes that:

Our teachers do not want to go on strike – they want to be in properly resourced classrooms with enough support staff, teaching and supporting our amazing children and young people in the way they deserve.

Teachers in Devon are doing their best for our children.

However, the proportion of reception age children achieving a good level of development, the proportion of Y1 children achieving expected level in phonics; and KS2 children achieving expected standard in reading, writing and maths are all ongoing concerns.

In recent years there have been substantial ongoing increases in the numbers of children in Devon requiring additional support in school due to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), or significant anxiety and mental health difficulties which act as a barrier to accessing their education.

Staff and budgets can only stretch so far. Looking at the entire picture, is not difficult to see that faced with escalating running costs and unfunded pay rises heads will have no choice but to make cuts in areas which directly impact children such as additional support for those with SEND and other needs.

These growing cost pressures are borne out by projections for Devon County Council which show that without making compensatory cuts primary schools maintained by the local authority will struggle to balance their budgets in 2023/24, if no further funding is forthcoming.

It is short-sighted for the Government to expect schools to make savings which impact on children when it simply creates system pressures elsewhere such as increased demand for EHCPs and places at specialist schools and alternative provision.

This Council resolves:

To support the campaign for the Westminster Government to provide a fully funded, above-inflation pay rises for all teachers and support staff.

To write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor to call for a fully funded, above-inflation pay rise.

To resist the Government's ongoing cuts to school budgets and call for more funding to be invested in education.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 362(c) of 12 July 2023:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted, and that Notice of Motion be amended to read as follows;

that the Council continues its positive work with the F40 national campaign and its ongoing engagement with Government to ensure:

Equitable funding is provided by central Government to all Devon schools to allow them to maintain and deliver a high-quality education, to enable them to safeguard all children and young people, and meet the full cost of any pay awards to support the recruitment and retention of a strong and dedicated school workforce in the County.

Councillor Whitton **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the word 'equitable' be removed from the motion. The Leader accepted the suggested change, as below.

that the Council continues its positive work with the F40 national campaign and its ongoing engagement with Government to ensure:

funding is provided by central Government to all Devon schools to allow them to maintain and deliver a high-quality education, to enable them to safeguard all children and young people, and meet the full cost of any pay awards to support the recruitment and retention of a strong and dedicated school workforce in the County.

The revised amendment in the name of Councillor Hart was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** and subsequently thereafter also **CARRIED** as the substantive motion.

230 **Governance Review and Council Consultations (Minute 215 of 25 May 2023)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 215 of 25 May 2025 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Atkinson that:

It is noted that the council intends to review its consultations procedures as part of its governance review. This council notes that in response to the threat of a judicial review challenge by Mencap the consultation on the closure of the respite care facilities for disabled adults has been withdrawn. Other recent consultations also appear to be similarly flawed as not being genuine consultations as they were

issued after a decision to make the cuts had already been made. These had not been made clear at the budget preparation and scrutiny and the budget cut had therefore not been scrutinised by the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee. These are

- The wellbeing Exeter Cessation of contribution
- Homelessness18 + prevention: cessation of contribution
- A cut in the day care service at the Nicholls Centre Exeter from a 5 day a week service to a 3 day a week service (plus closures of similar day care centres elsewhere in the county)
- Closure of the respite facility at either Pine Parks in Honiton or the Nicholls Centre in Exeter
- The reduction in the grant to Devon Carers.
- Closure of North Devon Link Mental Health and Wellbeing Service in Barnstaple Bideford and Ilfracombe

This council therefore agrees to withdraw these consultations and to take no further steps to proceed with the planned cuts until after the governance review of its consultation procedures has taken place.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 362(d) of 12 July 2023:

Councillor Hart duly **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that an amended version of the Cabinet's advice (to reflect the cancellation of the Cabinet meeting previously scheduled for the 23 August 2023) be accepted and that Council

(a) note that a Special Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee was arranged on the 27 July to ensure Member Scrutiny and input into the process, as requested by the Motion, the outcome of which will inform future Cabinet meetings, when consultation outcomes are due for consideration;

(b) note, that in relation to day care and respite services, no decisions have been made and both matters will come to a future Cabinet meeting later in the financial year; and

(c) ensure that the Governance review incorporates a review of consultation processes as a separate workstream.

The amendment in the name of Councillor Hart was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** and subsequently thereafter also **CARRIED** as the substantive motion.

231 Devon 20's Plenty (Minute 216 of 25 May 2023)

Pursuant to County Council Minute 216 of 25 May relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hodgson that:

In light of the support for the 'Devon 20's Plenty' campaign, this Council will support the implementation of 20 mph zones where the local Parish Council has passed the 20's Plenty motion.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 362(e) of 12 July 2023:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that;

the Council will work with communities that wish to see a new 20mph speed limit introduced, where it will be beneficial to road safety and sustainable travel, either via the "expressions of interest" process or where communities wish to self-fund their own speed limit.

The amendment in the name of Councillor Hart was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** and subsequently thereafter also **CARRIED** as the substantive motion.

232 Call to Protect Ticket Offices Across Devon

Councillor Connett **MOVED** and Councillor Wrigley **SECONDED** that in accordance with Standing Order 6(6), the Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Connett be considered at this meeting.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

Councillor Connett then **MOVED** and Councillor Wrigley **SECONDED**

Council notes with concern the announcement by the Rail Delivery Group that train companies are pressing ahead with plans to close up to 1000 rail ticket offices across England over the next 3 years.

Council believes that ticket offices provide a vital service to residents in Devon. Having a clearly sign-posted place in the station for people with ticket enquiries provides certainty and confidence for customers who may struggle to otherwise locate station staff.

Not all residents are able to use station ticket machines or have the means to book a ticket in advance. Complicated journeys involving connections are likely to require human assistance to ensure customers purchase the most appropriate and cheapest tickets, and do not incur penalties or pay more than necessary for their journey.

Council is concerned the closure of ticket offices will disproportionately affect elderly and disabled residents in Devon – as well as those with poor literacy and IT skills.

Council notes the statistics from Age UK that 3 million elderly people in the UK do not have access to the internet, and statistics from the Royal National Institute for Blind People that only 3% of those with partial or full sight loss feel able to use ticket machines.

Council is also concerned about the possible implications for current station staff and the concerns that have been raised over possible staff redundancies – given that there will be no regulations for minimum staffing levels at stations and on platforms.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to Mark Harper MP Secretary of State for Transport, and the Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, expressing Council's opposition to the possible closure of staffed rail ticket offices – and in particular the offices across the Devon County Council area
- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the rail operator(s) running local ticket offices in Devon expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket office in the County Council area.
- Refer this issue to Scrutiny with the recommendation that representatives from the relevant rail operator(s) are invited to attend a Scrutiny Meeting at the earliest possible point to discuss future plans for ticket offices and staffing in Devon.

The motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

[NOTES:

The Minutes of this meeting and of any Committee referred to above are available on the County Council's Website.

Minutes should be read in association with any Reports or documents referred to therein, for a complete record.

A recording of the webcast of this meeting will also be available to view for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting, at <http://www.devoncc.public-tv/core/portal/home>

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 5.35 pm