

County Council
Thursday 7th September 2023



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DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

To: Members of Devon County Council

County Hall
Exeter
EX2 4QD

30 August 2023

Your attendance is requested at the Meeting of the Devon County Council to be held at County Hall, Exeter on Thursday, 7th September, 2023 at 2.15 pm.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'D' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Chief Executive

[A period of quiet reflection will be offered by the Reverend Malcolm Carter – former prison chaplain at HM Prison Liverpool (formerly known as Walton Gaol), at **2.10pm**, prior to the commencement of the meeting. All Members are welcome to attend].

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023.

3. Announcements

4. Items Requiring Urgent Attention

5. Public Participation: Petitions, Questions and Representations

Petitions, Questions or Representations from Members of the public in line with the Council's Petitions and Public Participation Schemes.

6. **Petitions from Members of the Council**

7. **Questions from Members of the Council**

Answers to questions from Members of the Council pursuant to Standing Order 17.

FRAMEWORK DECISION

8. **People First Strategy** (Pages 1 - 20)

To Council is asked to receive and approve the People First Strategy, as recommended by the Cabinet (14 June 2023) (Minute 339 refers and replicated below).

RESOLVED

(a) that the new People First Strategy for Devon County Council (DCC) be recommended to the Council for approval; and

(b) 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.

Electoral Divisions(s): All Divisions

9. **The Council's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025 and Corporate Plan for the next twelve months** (Pages 21 - 60)

To receive and approve the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025 and Corporate Plan for the next twelve months, as recommended by the Cabinet 12 July 2023) (Minute 356 refers). The recommendation is replicated below and 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 is attached.

(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’.

Also attached for Members information is a progress report on the same, as outlined at recommendation (b).

Electoral Divisions(s): All Divisions

OTHER MATTERS

10. Cabinet Member Reports

To consider reports from Cabinet Members.

11. Minutes

To receive and adopt and / or approve the Minutes of the under mentioned Committees

- (a) Appeals Committee - 5 June 2023 (Pages 61 - 62)
- (b) Appeals Committee - 10 July 2023 (Pages 63 - 64)
- (c) Investment and Pension Fund Committee - 16 June 2023 (Pages 65 - 72)
- (d) Audit Committee - 20 June 2023 (Pages 73 - 76)
- (e) Public Rights of Way Committee - 13 July 2023 (Pages 77 - 80)
- (f) Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee - 13 July 2023 (Pages 81 - 82)

The Council will be asked to approve minute 78 relating to the appointment of Solveig Wright as the Deputy Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (Commissioning).

- (g) Children's Scrutiny Committee - 6 June 2023 (Pages 83 - 88)
- (h) Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee - 13th June 2023 (Pages 89 - 94)
- (i) Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee - 27 July 2023 (Pages 95 - 100)
- (j) Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee - 22 June 2023 (Pages 101 - 106)

NOTICES OF MOTION

12. Debate not Hate (Minute 212 of 25 May 2023)

To receive and consider the recommendations of the Cabinet (Minute 362(a)) as an amendment to the following Notice of Motion submitted previously to the Council by Councillor Hannaford and referred thereto in accordance with Standing Order 8(2), namely:

‘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 councilors 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’.

Having had regard to the aforementioned, any factual briefing/position statement on the matter set out in Report (LDS/23/7) and other suggestions or alternatives considered at that meeting the Cabinet subsequently **resolved**:

that the County Council:

(i) 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;

(ii) 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;

(iii) works with the Police to establish a link whereby advice and support can be sought and develop a procedure document to accompany this; and

(iv) 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.

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

To receive and consider the recommendations of the Cabinet (Minute 362(b)) as an amendment to the following Notice of Motion submitted previously to the Council by Councillor Hannaford and referred thereto in accordance with Standing Order 8(2), namely:

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.

Having had regard to the aforementioned, any factual briefing/position statement on the matter set out in Report (LDS/23/7) and other suggestions or alternatives considered at that meeting the Cabinet subsequently **resolved**:

- (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.

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

To receive and consider the recommendations of the Cabinet (Minute 362(c)) as an amendment to the following Notice of Motion submitted previously to the Council by Councillor Hannaford and referred thereto in accordance with Standing Order 8(2), namely:

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.

Having had regard to the aforementioned, any factual briefing/position statement on the matter set out in Report (LDS/23/7) and other suggestions or alternatives considered at that meeting the Cabinet subsequently **resolved**:

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.

15. Governance Review and Council Consultations (Minute 215 of 25 May 2023)

To receive and consider the recommendations of the Cabinet (Minute 362(d)) as an amendment to the following Notice of Motion submitted previously to the Council by Councillor Atkinson and referred thereto in accordance with Standing Order 8(2), namely:

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.

Having had regard to the aforementioned, any factual briefing/position statement on the matter set out in Report (LDS/23/7) and other suggestions or alternatives considered at that meeting the Cabinet subsequently **resolved**:

Council is recommended to

(a) note that a Special Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee has been 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 the Special Cabinet meeting on 23 August, where three of the 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.

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

To receive and consider the recommendations of the Cabinet (Minute 362(e)) as an amendment to the following Notice of Motion submitted previously to the Council by Councillor Hodgson and referred thereto in accordance with Standing Order 8(2), namely:

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.

Having had regard to the aforementioned, any factual briefing/position statement on the matter set out in Report (LDS/23/7) and other suggestions or alternatives considered at that meeting the Cabinet subsequently **resolved**:

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.

17. Call to Protect Ticket Offices Across Devon

Councillor Connett to move:

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.

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Declarations of Interest for Members of the Council

It is to be noted that Members of the Council must declare any interest they may have in any item to be considered at this meeting, prior to any discussion taking place on that item.

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Induction Loop available



Cabinet
14 June 2023

Approval of new People Strategy for Devon County Council Report of the Director of People & Culture

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

That the Cabinet be asked to:

- (a) approve the new People Strategy for Devon County Council (DCC); and
- (b) delegate authority for minor amendments to the Director of People & Culture in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Organisational Development, Workforce & Digital Transformation.

2) Background

Recent issues highlighted from the Race Equality Audit (2021) coupled with other behavioural related concerns identified in Children's Services over the last year, through a high number of operational related HR matters, has driven the need to refocus on activities in relation to our staff and the organisation's culture. This started with the appointment of a new Director of People & Culture and marks a shift towards us being more values based, purpose driven, and people centred in our work.

A key priority for this role to lead on, and one of our current corporate priorities is the delivery of a new People Strategy, which will outline how we will ensure that we have the appropriately skilled and talented people we need to deliver services to our communities and ensure that our Council is fit for the future. Further to this, we want all staff to understand and embody our values of care and kindness, along with our responsibility to strive for better outcomes and good value for the people of Devon.

It is critical that we also focus on the quality of our relationships and engagement with key stakeholders and partners to ensure that working together our strong values and collective approach ensure the best outcomes for the people of Devon.

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3) Main Body

The Strategy has been designed based around a focus on the 6 key themes of:

1. Voice
2. Recruitment
3. Wellbeing
4. Belonging
5. Learning
6. Reward

The 6 themes were shaped by feedback from previous staff surveys, findings from the Race Equality Audit, benchmarking against other organisations, research of the recruitment market, themes identified through 'Exit Interviews' with staff leaving DCC and feedback from staff reference groups. The themes have then been consulted on over the past 3 months, outlined in Section 5 below. The activities undertaken in relation to each theme will directly impact upon the culture and performance of our workforce.

As part of the strategy, we have actively sought to highlight our collective role as corporate parents and our responsibility to our children in care and care leavers. As a result, each theme has a commitment in relation to this.

The Strategy outlines our aims for each theme, coupled with statements of intent around the outcomes we are seeking to achieve. The feedback is also being used to shape an Action Plan to support the delivery of this over the next 2 years. The Action Plan will be brought back to a further Cabinet in September for review, and progress against it will be regularly reported to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

4) Options / Alternatives

There is no formal Workforce or People Strategy in place. Currently strategic and operational workforce activity is undertaken in a more ad hoc and often reactive way. It is an option to continue with this approach; however, a more joined up approach would make best use of resources, avoiding duplication and outline a more holistic and proactive way to address the issues raised. It also provides greater clarity over progress and reporting arrangements. A more integrated People Strategy will also enable staff to see the impact of all of the factors within it on the performance and culture of the workforce.

5) Consultations / Representations / Technical Data

We have designed the strategy collaboratively, with Senior Leadership Team engaging with staff, Trades Unions and elected Members throughout its development, to gain their views about what matters from their perspective. The draft strategy has been shared at different stages of its development to seek feedback and further comments to form it. The feedback has shaped the Strategy and is currently being used to design the supporting Action Plan to deliver this.

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The following methods of consultation were used to inform the themes, aims and desired outcomes of the People Strategy:

- Staff engagement survey in November 2022 which received 1857 responses, the themes from this are shared here: [What you told us in our Autumn 2022 People Survey - news \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)
- Feedback from staff following Senior Leadership Teams virtual briefing sessions held on 14 March & 2 May 2023 [Catch up on our May Microsoft Teams Sessions with our senior leaders - news \(devon.gov.uk\)](#). Following the second briefing, 46 responses received to this survey.
- External survey and analysis undertaken by our external recruitment agency, ThirtyThree, to understand the ways of working people find most appealing; the perceptions associated with County Councils as employers and why someone may or may not want to work for a County Council. This survey had 2005 respondents working in the private sector.
- Regular consultation has taken place with Senior Officers across all parts of DCC over the past 3 months and members of the corporate Equality team.
- HR senior leadership team and key stakeholders, including Trades Unions, have been consulted and provided detailed feedback.
- Multiple visits to DCC offices by the Senior Leadership Team to engage, in person, with staff and gain a greater insight into the key factors that are important for them about working for DCC
- Session with care leavers and senior officers to understand their perspectives
- Exit interview data has been reviewed from those leaving DCC to understand their reasons
- Engagement with over 30 cross-party elected Members who attended the Member engagement day on 12 May 2023 and provided feedback
- Race Equality Audit [Race Equality Audit 2021 \(Anti-racism at Devon County Council\) - tasks and guides](#)
- Benchmarking and review of Workforce and People Strategies from other organisations across the public sector.

6) Strategic Plan

The Council adopted its “Best Place” Strategic Plan at its meeting on 2 December 2021. The Plan – <https://www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan/> - sets out the Council’s vision, ambition, and overall priorities for 2021 to 2025. The delivery of the People Strategy will be one of the areas of focus for the next 12 months, and successful implementation will enable staff to be best placed to deliver the outcomes in the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan is currently being reviewed and will come to a future Cabinet meeting for approval. The delivery of the People Strategy is one of the priorities being considered to focus on, and successful implementation of it will enable our staff to be best placed to deliver the outcomes within the Strategic Plan.

Agenda Item 8.

The People Strategy explicitly highlights our collective role as corporate parents and our responsibility to our care leavers. There is a clear indication of our commitment to this in each theme of the strategy.

7) Financial Considerations

The feedback from all of the engagement listed in Section 5 is currently being used to outline a range of activities that will enable delivery of this strategy. The costs of the strategy itself is contained within existing budgets from the HR Service in relation to redirecting activities around HR Strategy, Performance, Learning & Development, and Recruitment Strategy. The Action Plan which will support delivery of the strategy is currently being drafted and any additional costs attached to any of the themes will be costed and recommendations made to Cabinet in September about whether they are progressed.

8) Legal Considerations

Employment Law has been considered and impacts are reflected as part of developing this strategy. However, there will be further multiple Employment Law based considerations in relation to the detail of delivery of this strategy. Therefore, the lawful implications and consequences of the themes of the Action Plan will be considered and taken into account as part of its development.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

The Strategy itself has no specific sustainability impacts; however, depending on the activities that will be recommended for the Action Plan, there may be impacts, for example in relation to staff travel or office accommodation, and the subsequent effect on the environment, that will need to be considered. Therefore, in the same way that Financial and Legal considerations will be reviewed, and recommendations made in relation to the themes in the strategy, this will also be undertaken in relation to Environmental Impacts.

10) Equality Considerations

Equality matters are a focus of each theme within the Strategy and the area of 'Belonging' will predominantly centre around delivery of actions in relation to DCC's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion agenda. The strategy has been developed in liaison with DCC's Equality Team. As with the other considerations within this report, the Action Plan detailing the delivery of each theme, will require full Equality Impacts Assessments.

11) Risk Management Considerations

This Strategy will impact on two risks already cited on DCC's Risk Register. These include:

- Recruitment & Retention in relation to ensuring DCC is able to attract and retain the right staff in a highly competitive current market.
- Industrial Relations Climate with regards to any changes to current Terms & Conditions or environment having an impact on staff delivery of services, such as through Industrial Action.

The implications of each risk have been taken into account and mitigated where possible through the existing DCC Risk Register.

Financial sustainability will need to be considered as the Action Plan is developed and will be considered by Cabinet in September as part of the overall review of it. The current financial climate may restrict the ability to deliver some of the desired actions and have an impact on cultural transformation for the wider organisation.

In addition to these risks, there is the potential for legal challenge in relation to not addressing some of the cultural issues raised, such as those raised through the Race Equality Audit or behaviours within some services.

12) Summary / Conclusions / Reasons for Recommendations

Adopting a People Strategy will provide a more effective and joined up approach to address workforce related issues.

This would enable better use of existing resources, avoiding duplication and outline a more holistic and proactive way to address the issues raised. It also provides greater clarity over progress and reporting arrangements. Issues raised in the Race Equality Audit and other behavioural issues raised are more likely to be addressed than by dealing with approaches in a siloed way.

Director - Maria Chakraborty, Director of People & Culture
Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Organisational Development, Workforce & Digital Transformation:
Councillor Andrew Saywell

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper
Date
File Reference

Contact for enquiries:

Name: Maria Chakraborty, Director of People & Culture
Telephone: 01392 380535
Address: County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon

'People First'

Our People Strategy

**Empowering our people to
make a difference**

2023 - 2025

Introduction

This is an exciting time to be part of Devon County Council as we launch our ambitious Strategy that puts 'People First'.

I know that our people are a fantastic asset to our Council. How we care for, support and develop each other will be key to our success.

Our renewed focus on People and Culture, marks a shift towards us being more values based, purpose driven, and people centred in our work.

We want all our people and those who work with us to understand and embody our values of care and kindness, along with our responsibility to strive for better outcomes and good value for the people of Devon.

Our People Strategy outlines how we will continue to get and keep the skilled and talented people we need to deliver for Devon and ensure that our Council is fit for the future.

Your feedback has shaped the themes within the Strategy and how we can all work together to make our Council a great place to work for everyone.

Finally, the Strategy includes our collective role as corporate parents and our responsibility to our care leavers as part of a child friendly Devon.

Thank you for all that you do every day for the people of Devon.

Donna Manson, Chief Executive



Our People

We are committed to putting people and relationships at the heart of everything we do. We aim to unlock the potential in every individual and to collectively support teams and service areas to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Devon.

People We are ambitious for our people and will empower and enable them to use their skills and knowledge to shape Devon County Council's future. Through feedback and engagement with our staff, potential candidates and Elected Members to develop this strategy, we have identified **six key themes** that will impact on our Performance and Culture.



Our 'People First' Approach

Underpinning our People First approach are our [Core Principles and Behaviours](#) and [Restorative Practice](#), designed to give us a shared understanding of how we will approach our work and interact with others and develop productive and trusted relationships.

We will collectively focus on creating conditions to support us to feel safe to learn by doing, testing and reflecting. We will be seeking and creating clarity for ourselves and others, and sharing what we are thinking and why, through honest and productive conversations.

Through this approach we will create a culture that supports and enables high performance, helping us to become a trusted, inclusive and innovative council.



Generous



Curious



Committed



Inspiring



Respectful



Authentic

Our Underpinning Culture Commitments



Working together as one council to deliver 'People First'



Making informed decisions using evidence, data and intelligence



Always upholding an inclusive and fair approach



Behaving restoratively by default



Supporting our role as corporate parents



Celebrating achievements



Aligning our People Strategy to our organisational priorities



Benchmarking and learning from other organisations



Core Principles and Behaviours are woven into the fabric of everything we do

Performance and Culture

Our Behaviour's Framework is integrated within all performance activities that an employee will experience throughout their time working for us. Within this consistent framework, employees and managers can discuss performance, agree support and development needs, and understand how to do the work that will deliver our organisational priorities. Where necessary, it is also the framework on which more formal workforce related activities will be based.

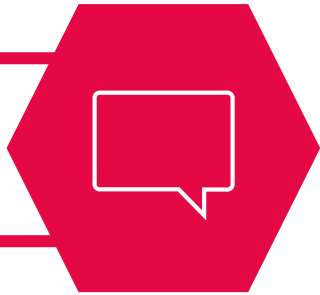
By integrating our Core Principles and Behaviours in everything that we do across the organisation, we will create a culture of high performance and accountability - creating an environment where we can create clarity, hold honest and productive conversations with one another and learn together.



Our six themes



Voice



Our Aim: To create an effective ongoing dialogue between leaders and the wider workforce, to engage, listen to and gain clarity about what is important to them. We will feedback on what we have heard and deliver actions.

We will do this by:

- Having clear, inspiring, and regular messaging about what is happening within the organisation and what the key priorities are
- Listening to our workforce using a variety of different methods to engage with, listen to and respond to their views. This includes supporting our staff diversity networks
- Improving the collection, analysis, and reporting of qualitative and quantitative workforce data to make informed decisions

Our Commitment to Children in care and Care Leavers: We will listen to the needs of our children in care and care leavers. As corporate parents we will engage with them in the most appropriate way and ensure they feel heard.

Recruitment



We will do this by:

- Sharing what it is like to work for Devon and the impact this can have on the community and environment around us
- Using a variety of recruitment approaches, which will be responsive, inclusive and enhance the candidate experience. Recruiting the best people into the organisation to deliver our services
- Recruiting to our Core Principles and Behaviours
- Taking action to address specific recruitment challenges
- Completing a bi-annual cycle of Workforce Planning to identify current and future workforce needs

Our Aim: To attract and retain an agile and flexible workforce with the knowledge, experience, and behaviours to make Devon the Best Place to live and work, to achieve our organisational priorities.

Our Commitment to Children in care and Care Leavers: We will support our children in care and care leavers to achieve their potential. As corporate parents we will work together to identify and support what pathway is right for them in their adult life.

Wellbeing



We will do this by:

- Prioritising the health, safety, and wellbeing of our workforce, creating the conditions for them to be safe and well
- Empowering our workforce to make informed decisions about what works for them and their teams
- Ensuring we meet our statutory obligations in respect of health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce. This will include achieving the standards set out in our ongoing national accreditation frameworks
- Exploring what additional national frameworks could enhance our approach and offer to our workforce

Our Aim: Providing a safe, stable and sustainable working environment with wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

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Our Commitment to Children in care and Care Leavers: We will prioritise the wellbeing of our children in care and care leavers. As corporate parents we will strive to keep them safe, healthy and well.

Belonging



Our Aim: To have an inclusive culture that celebrates diversity, where everyone can feel safe, well and able to be themselves. To grow and retain a workforce that feels it belongs and is supported to thrive.

We will do this by:

- Taking action to address imbalances and inequalities identified within the organisation
- Reviewing and updating our policies and practices to include the lived experience of our diverse workforce
- Engaging with our workforce to understand what is important to them to thrive, belong and feel safe at work
- Providing a working environment that meets the needs of the workforce and improves job satisfaction

Our Commitment to Children in care and Care Leavers: We will support our children in care and care leavers to feel valued and part of our community. This includes a commitment to listen, engage and support our foster carers to build a sense of belonging.

Learning



We will do this by:

- Developing our workforce and our Elected Members, to fulfil their potential and deliver organisational priorities
- Having a holistic approach to learning that is tailored to support the individual
- Upskilling our workforce to be flexible and able to respond to changing organisational priorities
- Developing career pathways and progression opportunities, including early careers, professional and leadership pathways, utilising apprenticeship opportunities
- Having governance in place to enable us to measure the impact of learning activity and drive continuous improvement

Our Aim: To be an organisation that learns and is committed to developing its workforce through a variety of opportunities.

Our Commitment to Children in care and Care Leavers: We will develop a range of learning opportunities for our children in care and care leavers, giving them options and pathways that best suit their future aspirations.

Reward



Our Aim: Offer a reward package that is flexible, equitable, and transparent to provide benefits to our workforce, by connecting them to what they value.

We will do this by:

- Developing a 'one council' approach to reward and celebrating achievements
- Having an approach to pay and reward that is fit for purpose, equitable, transparent and allows us to recruit and retain a high performing workforce
- Modernising our Terms and Conditions and policies to ensure they are fit for purpose, provides best value and are equitable and transparent
- Having a flexible approach to work ensuring policy and process are aligned and support the priorities of the organisation
- Providing a total reward package that is more than just pay and connects staff to what they value

Our Commitment to Children in care and Care Leavers: In our roles as corporate parents, we will celebrate the achievements of our children in care and care leavers

Monitoring and Data

Evaluation of the impact of the People Strategy is critical to understanding how we are performing as an organisation and the experiences of our people. Reviewing our data to analyse trends and impact of activities will be a key part of knowing if the People Strategy is delivering against our aims for each strategy theme and the achievement of our organisational priorities. We will do this by gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. Key performance measures will be reviewed each year, and if necessary adjusted to reflect any change to DCC priorities or external factors. Some of these measures include:

- Monitor and Review of:
 - Progress against the delivery plan, through a dynamic and interactive dashboard
 - HR data and making yearly comparisons
 - HR operational cases holistically to identify themes
 - Usage of Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme support
- Feedback through the cross-organisational staff reference groups, focus groups and listening to the voice of our employees
- Report progress to Senior Leadership Team on a six monthly basis
- Evaluation of events and activities

CEX/23/1
Cabinet
12 July 2023

The Council's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025 and corporate plan for the next twelve months

Joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Transformation & Business Services, Director of People & Culture, Director of Legal & Democratic Services, and Director of Finance & Public Value.

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- (a) Reaffirms its commitment to, and support for, the "Best Place" Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025.
- (b) Agrees 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) Agrees the six areas of focus for the corporate plan for the next 12 months aligned to the risks set out in section 4 of this report:
 - 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) Agrees the most significant risks facing the Council and the approach to managing them as described in section 4 below and invites regular reports to future meetings on the management of those risks.
- (e) Notes 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'.

1 The "Best Place" Strategic Plan 2021-2025

The Council adopted its "Best Place" Strategic Plan at its meeting on 2 December 2021 (minute 64 refers). That Plan – <https://www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan/> - sets out the Council's vision, ambition, and overall priorities for 2021 to 2025.

The Plan's ambition is to help Devon to become the best place to:

- **Grow up** - a commitment to being a child friendly Devon where children / young people were safe, healthy, ambitious, and could fulfil their potential.

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- **Live well** - being a fairer Devon: inclusive, compassionate, and caring, where everyone was safe, connected, and resilient.
- **Prosper** - being a greener and prosperous Devon, with opportunities to create a sustainable future for all.

The Plan's priorities are to:

- Respond to the climate emergency.
- Be ambitious for children and young people.
- Support sustainable economic recovery.
- Tackle poverty and inequality.
- Improve health and wellbeing.
- Help communities be safe, connected, and resilient.

For each of the priorities, the web pages describe the outcomes that will be achieved over the period 2021-2025. The Plan's summary is included below as appendix 1.

The Plan also explains how, over the period to 2025, the Council itself will:

- Transform, develop and improve children's services.
- Respond to demographic pressures and future workforce challenges.
- Embrace the positive benefits of a diverse workforce and create an environment that is inclusive and safe for all staff.
- Make best use of data and intelligence to help inform what we do and understand its impact on the people of Devon.
- Transform the way we work to make us more resilient and adaptable and help reduce our carbon footprint.
- Invest in digital solutions to help us work more effectively and make us more responsive.
- Enable greater financial resilience and improve financial planning.
- Increase discipline and rigour around decision making.

2 Progressing the "Best Place" Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025

Working towards the Strategic Plan's "Best Place" priorities for the period to 2025 remains vitally important to the people and communities of Devon.

All of the Council's services have a part to play in achieving the Plan's priorities. Other public service providers – particularly district, town and parish councils; the National Health Service and the Devon & Cornwall Police – also have a significant role in helping to realise the Plan's aspirations. In addition, the plethora of voluntary and community organisations, and social enterprises are integral to making Devon the best place to grown up, live well and prosper.

It is proposed that a progress report on the Plan is prepared for consideration by the Council at its meeting on 7 September 2023.

3 Corporate plan for the next twelve months

This is a time of significant change and opportunity for English local government as a whole. The year ahead will be a critical period for this Council as it needs to tackle some

long-standing problems and challenges. It is proposed that the six areas of focus described below are agreed as the corporate plan for the next 12 months in order to:

- Improve the current arrangements for decision-making and governance.
- Achieve, as far as possible, financial sustainability.
- Support and empower staff to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Devon.

3.1 Governance and performance review

At its meeting on 25 May 2023, the Council resolved to establish a cross-party member working group to undertake a governance review to ensure that the Council's processes, decision-making arrangements and procedures are fit for purpose. The work encompassed by the review will include:

- Committee structure.
- Decision making and financial thresholds.
- Communications with, and support for, members.
- Contract procedure rules.
- Council procedure rules.
- Financial regulations.
- Scheme of delegation.
- Modernisation of the Council chamber.
- DCC membership of external boards, partnerships and committees.

The complete governance review programme, which will take place over the next twelve months is available as part of the report to the 25 April 2023 report to Procedures Committee -

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s45362/Governance%20Review%20Final.pdf>

3.2 Value for money and financial sustainability

The Council has a general statutory duty of Best Value to "to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy defines "value for money" as encompassing:

- Economy - 'Spending less'.
- Efficiency - 'Spending well'.
- Effectiveness - 'Spending wisely'.
- Equity - 'Spending fairly'.

The Council's revenue budget for 2024/25 and beyond will have to accommodate continuing price rises and increases in the need for critical services across integrated adult social care and children's social care. The impacts of those price rises and demand pressures were included in the 2023/24 budget. Looking ahead to 2024/25 and subsequent years, ensuring that the Council remains financial sustainability will continue to be an ongoing challenge and our highest priority.

The approach taken to setting to 2024/25 budget and strengthening the medium-term financial strategy will therefore be to achieve better value for money within the financial envelope so as to avoid, as far as possible, the need to make annual reductions or cuts in services. This approach will require some radical changes over the next twelve months:

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- **Staffing** – the total number of full-time equivalent staff employed in 2017/18 was 3,845 and the figure for 2023/24 is 5,277. There is a need to reduce staffing costs over the next twelve months in order to make significant savings. There will be more opportunities for staff to use their skills, train to re-skill to create an agile workforce, responsive to areas of priority. The employment of people to roles on an interim, agency and consultancy basis currently imposes significant additional costs. The number of interims, agency staff and consultants will need to be substantially reduced to a level comparable with similar county area local authorities.
- **Contract management** – the council has about 330 contracts with a wide variety of suppliers and providers. Opportunities will be taken to cease contracts where services are no longer needed or can be secured in a more effective way and where termination costs can be avoided. All contracts are being reviewed, managed and monitored to secure the best possible value for money.
- **Efficiency of services** –enabling people to use and access services digitally improves value for money. The work to make more services available in ways that best suit customers' needs will continue and develop as part of the Council's transformation of customer engagement. Using technical and digital solutions to connect service areas and will reduce failure demand, ease pressures on services and offer more choice to service users. The performance of services will be benchmarked with those of comparable local authorities to ensure that the council is learning from good practice elsewhere. Compliance with some policies and processes within some service areas is inconsistent. There will be a rigorous approach to ensuring that processes are adhered to.
- **Income generation and full cost recovery** – there are potential opportunities for the council to generate more income through commercial activities and fees/charges. For projects and activities are externally funded, eg through grants, that the council recovers all the costs of administering, delivering and running the project. The costs-effectiveness of income collection will be reviewed.
- **Use of assets and buildings** – the use of office spaces, including County Hall, is being reviewed to assess the needs of the organisation and ensure that spaces are suitable for different ways of working. It is anticipated that this will lead to a reduced requirement for office space and lower running costs. The estate review will create opportunities both to generate income and increase community benefits.

3.3 People strategy

The People First strategy was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 14 June 2023. Members will recall that its aim is to put “people and relationships at the heart of everything we do. We aim to unlock the potential in every individual and to collectively support teams and service areas to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Devon. We are ambitious for our people and will empower and enable them to use their skills and knowledge to shape Devon County Council's future”.

Through this strategy the Council's workforce will be able to address the Council's priorities, so that Devon is the best place to live and work. The strategy is structured around the six key themes of: voice, resourcing, wellbeing, belonging, learning and reward.

In addition to the People First strategy, the council's agreed principles and behaviours create a shared understanding across the organisation about what is expected from staff

and their interactions. The “core principles and behaviours” are included below as appendix 2, they provide a framework for staff and members in terms of:

- Working with everyone in Devon.
- Working with each other.
- Our expectations for ourselves and each other.

3.4 Replacement of key systems (FINEST and CareFirst)

The council's existing finance system, called FINEST, is, in accordance with Cabinet's decision in June 2022, being replaced. The new system will simplify financial management, improve access to financial information, enable better budget management, and ensure consistency. The adult social care case management system (CareFirst) is also due to be replaced and it is anticipated that a contract will be awarded by within the next nine months. The new system will start to come online in 2025 and be complete by 2026. Both of these projects are very complex, and the significant risks associated with them will require careful oversight and management.

3.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Council is committed to challenging inequality and celebrating diversity. Equality, diversity and inclusion is a priority for the Council and this was made evident by the Race Audit in 2021. In February 2023, the Cabinet approved the setting up of an Equality Commission to drive improvement through a refreshed equality action plan and provide political direction and accountability. The Commission will promote the advancement of equality and challenge discrimination in all its forms. The Commission reports to the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive and is supported by the Director for Legal and Democratic Services and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team. The Commission will be in place over the period to April 2025.

3.6 Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Devolution Deal

The Government has agreed to conclude a devolution deal covering Devon, Plymouth and Torbay this year. The deal will, subject to consultation, see the establishment of a Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Combined County Authority. It will not require a directly-elected Mayor nor costly reorganisation of existing councils. Devon's District Councils will have representation on the CCA as will representatives from the business and education sectors. The CCA will have new powers and additional funding from Government to tackle priorities such housing, public transport, jobs, training and skills. Functions and resources of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership will be folded into the CCA.

4. Risks

4.1 Background to risk management

Risk management focuses on understanding and evaluating opportunities and threats and making informed decisions about how these are to be managed in order to maximise the efficiency of services in preventing, responding and dealing with risk and opportunity. The authority has a well-established process for identifying and assessing risks.

Internal audit helps provide independent assurance that risks are known, understood and addressed, and that systems and procedures are sound, effective and free (as far as can

Agenda Item 9.

be) from waste, error or fraud. The Council's "Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan 2023/24" identifies the key corporate and service risks and areas identified as of greatest audit need.

4.2 The most significant risks to the council and its services

The most significant risks identified in the Council's risk register include:

- Successful cyber-attack.
- Failure to prepare a robust budget.
- Failure to deliver priority services as a result of significantly reduced finances.
- Failure to adhere to the statutory SEND code of practice: 0-25 years.

The Audit Committee, which meets quarterly, has responsibility for monitoring the authority's risk management systems. Devon Audit Partnership continues to support and facilitate the development of the council's risk management framework and processes. It is suggested that Cabinet invites regular reports to enable it to maintain an overview of changes in risks and overall risk profile for the council.

In addition, there are four areas that Cabinet may wish to focus on in its consideration of risks: children's social care services, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), highway maintenance, and integrated care & system leadership.

4.2.1 Children's social care services

The January 2020 Ofsted inspection of children's social care services found serious failures in the services provided to children and young people in Devon. The authority continues to work with the commissioner appointed by the DfE and partners to improve services that children, young people and families need. The Improvement Board, which comprises members and officers together with representatives from the Department for Education, schools, the NHS and police oversees the implementation of the "Devon Children's Services Improvement Plan April 2023 - March 2024" which focuses on:

- Change
- Leadership
- Engagement
- Workforce

Ofsted carries out regular monitoring visits to review the quality and impact of services. Its 22 May 2023 summary of its April 2023 stated that:

- The quality of social work practice across Devon remains inconsistent. Most children in care experience delays in securing permanent homes.
- New performance management arrangements, more routine oversight of permanence options and a more open learning culture have resulted in some positive changes and an increased sense of urgency in achieving progress.
- Corporate and political leaders have added weight to the improvement programme financially and by strengthening their own governance arrangements. Crucially, they are engaging partners outside the county council to support the improvement plan, including neighbouring local authorities.

4.2.2 Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Significant improvement is needed in the provision of appropriate support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The SEND Improvement Plan, which is being monitored by the Department for Education, sets out how delivery will be improved and spending brought under control so that the existing financial deficit will be eradicated over an agreed period with DfE financial support. A critical element of that work involves supporting SEND teams and working with schools, academies and the NHS to reduce costly independent sector placements by ensuring there is appropriate local provision for children with special needs in their schools and communities to meet their needs and restore confidence with their parents and carers.

4.2.3 Highway maintenance and management

The highway network is the most valuable physical asset that the council manages and maintains. The council takes a risk-based approach to the management of highway maintenance, including setting policy and strategy, establishment of inspection and condition assessment regimes, determining priorities and programmes, procuring the service and the management of all associated data and information. The council recognises that due to the current level of investment into highway assets, the decline of some roads is unavoidable. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan and its associated annexes set out the agreed maintenance strategies ranging from “improved condition” through to “safety only”.

4.2.4 Integrated care and system leadership

Responsibility for a range of services for adults and children is shared between the Council and the NHS. The Devon system needs to make significant improvements in reducing waiting times for care and achieve its budget plans. It is making difficult decisions, including fundamentally restructuring and NHS Devon is reducing in size. The work requires detailed joint planning and risk management across the system and delivery of system-wide strategic schemes. It will be vital that work is done collaboratively by building trusted relationships. With the system under great pressure, there is a risk that organisations retrench to an inward focus and that risks decisions being made that simply pass costs and workload to another part of the system or leaves people who depend on services stuck in a circular loop trying to find support. Working together and building good relationships within and across organisations is core to improving services.

5. Directorate/service area plans and ‘People First’ Strategy

The Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025 coupled with the six corporate plan areas of focus, risks and People Strategy will together provide the basis of updated Directorate/service area plans that will be developed over the next three months. Each Directorate/service area plan will be a short document which will cover:

- Vision.
- Priorities.
- Areas of focus.

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- Deliverables, outcomes and targets

Legal Considerations

The Strategic Plan and strategy specify how the council will prioritise delivery of its functions and encompasses the council's range of statutory powers and duties. The proposed priorities and activities are capable of being carried out lawfully and it will be for officers to ensure that this is the case.

The Council's Best Value Duty and the requirement set out in the Local Government Act 1999 to "secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness must be adhered to. Poor decision making leads to potential challenge.

The development of a Strategic Plan, together with its delivery and subsequent monitoring will contribute to the way in which the best value duty can be fulfilled. Monitoring reports to members and actions arising from those reports will help to demonstrate that the council has undertaken activity to satisfy the statutory duty.

The plan has the potential to impact people who have a protected characteristic for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, the activities that contribute to achieving the plan will be equality assessed in accordance with the council's procedures and where necessary consultation will occur to gain a proper understanding of the impact. If necessary this will be undertaken whilst decisions relating to the activities are still at a formative stage.

The Council has specific Public sector Equality Duties in relation to equalities legislation and these will be addressed and adhered to.

The Council will adhere to its responsibilities in respect of consultation and follow current employment law legislation in relation to the People Strategy.

Impact Considerations

Where relevant, in coming to a decision the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage. Climate emergency as one of the priorities in the Strategic Plan underlines the council's commitment to addressing climate change and

to becoming carbon neutral as an organisation. The council's priorities for 2021 – 2025 will have a positive impact on everyone living and working in Devon. The extent of the impact on each protected characteristic are set out in Equality Impact Assessments for each area of work. The exact nature of the anticipated impact will be assessed as part of future plans and on a case-by-case basis.

Name: Director of Transformation and Business Services

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Members for: Policy, Corporate and Asset Management (Leader of the Council); Finance; Organisational Development, Workforce & Digital Transformation.

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper: Nil

Date

File Reference

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Appendix 1

Devon County Council Plan 2021-2025

Best place

Recovering from the pandemic, and building on the resilience of local people and communities to create a fairer, healthier and more caring place, and grasping the opportunity to create a greener and more prosperous and inclusive future for all

The best place to...

grow up

We are committed to being a child friendly Devon where all children and young people are safe, healthy, ambitious, and can fulfil their potential

live well

We are committed to being a fairer Devon: inclusive, compassionate and caring, where everyone is safe, connected and resilient

prosper together

We are committed to being a greener and more prosperous Devon, with opportunities to create a sustainable future for all

Our priorities

Be ambitious for child and young people



Respond to the climate emergency



Tackling poverty and inequality



Support sustainable economic recovery



Improve health and wellbeing



Help communities be safe, connected and resilient



How we will work...

with each other, our partners, citizens and communities:

We are committed to being:

a trusted council...

that leads and collaborates well, makes good decisions, uses resources effectively and is financially resilient

an inclusive council...

that is intolerant to prejudice and discrimination, invests in, develops and nurtures our workforce, and hears the voices of all our communities

an innovative council...

that listens and learns, uses data well and transforms the way we work in order to improve our services to the people of Devon

Appendix 2



Oct 2021

“Best Place”

Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025

Progress Report - September 2023

The Council approved the “Best Place Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025” in December 2021. The Plan has six overall priorities:

- Making Devon greener.
- Making a children friendly Devon.
- Supporting recovery and growth.
- Tackling poverty and inequality.
- Improving health and wellbeing.
- Supporting people and communities.

The Plan also describes the authority’s commitment to being a trusted, inclusive and innovative Council.

This report provides some examples of progress to date towards the priorities and commitments in the Strategic Plan.

The “Best Place Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025” is available on the Council’s website at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan/>

Priority: Making Devon greener

Responding to the climate emergency

We will continue to work with partners and people in Devon to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the county to net zero.

Best Place Strategic Plan commitment	Progress to date
<p>Support a green recovery from COVID-19 which means we will support a low carbon economy and rebuild in a way that is sustainable for the future and reduces climate risks.</p>	<p>Covid-19 had a significant impact on the Devon economy, its businesses, communities and workforce. Devon’s economy shrank by almost 10% in 2020: roughly in line with the UK average. Since the pandemic, the global economy has been uncertain but economic activity in Devon is slowly recovering to the pre-covid rate.</p> <p>The Council’s support for economic recovery, includes skills and workforce development, infrastructure investments, regulatory services, business support and working with partners on the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay devolution deal. External funding includes the Community Renewal Fund, Future Farm Resilience Fund, Multiply and One Public Estate and partnership support for the Plymouth & South Devon Freeport.</p> <p>Of particular note are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The £750k Green Innovation Fund that funded six projects. The projects covered a range of areas including a zero-emission heating system, a service to support business with reducing their energy usage and costs, and assistance for farmers to transition to regenerative and wildlife-friendly agricultural models. Combined, the projects are expected to save around 100,000 tonnes of carbon over the next ten years.• The £300k Community Energy Fund supported six projects to create new energy companies, deliver additional training places,

	<p>and engage communities in the energy transition to generate more renewable energy and make homes warmer and healthier.</p> <p>Adults over 19 who want to advance their skills into higher paid employment are benefiting from free Train4Tomorrow Skills Bootcamps. The training lasts for 16 weeks and guarantees the learner an interview with a local employer upon completion. Specialisms covered include Devon’s fastest-growing sectors such as regenerative farming, digital marketing, electrical vehicle maintenance, data analytics, green construction and software development.</p> <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/navigation/economy-and-enterprise/</p>
<p>Ensure resources are used more efficiently by waste reduction, re-use and recycling.</p>	<p>Devon is one of the highest performing waste disposal authorities in England achieving a recycling rate of 55.1% in 2021/22 and, retaining its position as second highest performing county local authority. The Council continues to lead the behavioural change work under the banner of RecycleDevon. Campaigns have included Get Composting, Metal Matters, and food and plastic waste reduction and recycling.</p> <p>The Authority has supported Exeter City Council to roll out food waste recycling in the city.</p> <p>Community Action Groups (CAG) Devon, funded by Devon County Council, supports community groups in Mid-Devon and Teignbridge with establishing share sheds, surplus food larders, swap shops and community composting, amongst others. It provides free insurance, guidance, training and opportunities for networking and skills sharing.</p> <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/waste-management-strategy-for-devon/</p>

<p>Prioritise sustainable travel and transport with more opportunities for cycling and walking.</p>	<p>£2.1m of Active Travel grant funding is being used on projects in Exeter, Newton Abbot, North Devon and Torridge that will enable and encourage more people to walk and cycle. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans have been completed for the Heart of Teignbridge (covering Newton Abbot, Kingsteignton and Kingskerswell) and Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam, and Exeter. Over the last 17 years more than 100,000 children have participated in Bikeability cycle training.</p> <p>Okehampton and Marsh Barton railway stations have been opened.</p> <p>Heavitree low traffic neighbourhood is being piloted.</p> <p>Further information https://www.traveldevon.info/cycle/cycle-training/ https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/funding-awarded-to-support-walking-and-cycling-routes/</p>
<p>Help people adapt to climate change by providing helpful resources and guidance.</p>	<p>The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaptation Strategy helps everyone understand risks that communities might face and how to respond to climate change. The Council responded to the consultation on the draft strategy in July 2023. The climate emergency was featured on the Devon County Council stand at the County Show.</p> <p>Devon County Council has been successful in securing funding as part of the national Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme. The project focusses on rapidly responding catchments in a predominantly rural area, and seeks to identify a range of replicable low-cost resilience actions that can be delivered and funded by local authorities or/and local communities of different sizes/settings where traditional flood defences are shown not to be appropriate or cost beneficial.</p> <p>Through its statutory role as the Sustainable Drainage Systems Approval body, Devon County Council provides advice and guidance to developers and district authorities on the flood risk implications of major planning</p>

	<p>applications.</p> <p>Further information https://www.climate-resilient-dcios.org.uk/#adaptation-strategy https://www.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/flood-and-coastal-resilience-innovation-programme-fcrip/</p>
<p>Help wildlife and landscapes to recover.</p>	<p>Devon County Council facilitates the Devon Local Nature Partnership. The Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy is being prepared for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. The LNP Conference hosted a conference in June 2023 that focused on the development of the Strategy. As part of this, a Nature Recovery Network will map and join-up important places for wildlife that are currently isolated and allow us to identify areas where wildlife is abundant or scarce, and crucially where nature needs to be put back.</p> <p>More than 16,500 trees were planted in the winter of 2022/23 through the Emergency Tree Fund initiative, granted by The Woodland Trust. Devon County Council has delivered 150 free tree packs, each containing 45 native broadleaved whips, to landowners who applied. A further 9,820 trees were planted on the County Farms Estate.</p> <p>Through engagement with planning teams in district authorities, specialists at Devon County Council provide ecological and landscape support and advice on major planning applications.</p> <p>Further information https://www.devonlnp.org.uk/our-work/local-nature-recovery-strategy/</p>
<p>Take opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of homes and buildings to reduce their carbon footprint and reduce costs.</p>	<p>Under the banner of 'Energy Saving Devon', the Authority is leading a countywide programme of retrofit activity in partnership with District Councils, including the coordination of Home Upgrade Grants to address carbon reduction and fuel poverty, supported by the establishment of a new dedicated call centre advice service.</p>

	<p>Decarbonise Devon has been launched by EPConnect with support from the Authority's Green Innovation Fund. The project aims to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to get their energy reduction plans off the ground by identifying which measures are appropriate for each individual business and ensuring high standards of installation work. As of July 2023, the project is looking for further funding.</p> <p>Further information https://www.energysavingdevon.org.uk</p>
<p>Encourage sustainable lifestyles by engagement, awareness-raising and supporting low carbon initiatives.</p>	<p>The Authority facilitates the Devon Climate Emergency project which has strong social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIN. It also has a monthly e-newsletter. Total following, including the newsletter is 10,000, and growing every month.</p> <p>The project has attended local environment events as well as 'pop up' engagement activity, such as in the Forum at Exeter University.</p> <p>Community Action Groups (CAG) Devon, funded by Devon County Council, supports community groups in Mid-Devon and Teignbridge with establishing share sheds, surplus food larders, swap shops and community composting, amongst others. It provides free insurance, guidance, training and opportunities for networking and skills sharing.</p> <p>The Authority supports the Devon Community Energy Network of community energy organisations that assists with the delivery of the Energy Saving Devon initiative and engage local people on energy issues.</p> <p>The Council continues to lead the waste and recycling behavioural change work under the banner of RecycleDevon, including the offer of workshops in schools and tours of the Exeter Waste Recycling facility.</p> <p>ActiveDevon promotes people adopting healthier lifestyles by being more</p>

	<p>active – including active travel. Every year it joins forces with the Devon Local Nature Partnership to promote Naturally Healthy May – getting outdoors in nature to be active.</p>
<p>Support the transition to low emission vehicles whilst realising that this shift may not be achievable for large parts of rural Devon.</p>	<p>Partnerships with district councils and Torbay and Plymouth to install the first of 160 charging sockets across 38 public car parks across Devon to the value of £1.4m public finance. A further £9m from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fund is being spent on electric vehicle charging from 2023.</p> <p>Innovations in on-street rapid charging through the Rapid Charging Devon project. Whilst this provided substantial learning points for future projects, this has made us a leader in the availability of the technology.</p>
<p>Continue to reduce carbon emissions across all our services including the use of innovative low carbon materials in our highways, low-energy streetlighting and supporting remote working and other practical measures to address climate change.</p>	<p>The Council’s corporate Environmental Performance programme implements the Environmental Policy. Quarterly updates cover buildings, renewable energy, street lighting, transport, procurement procedures, waste and resources, ash dieback action plan, and carbon offsetting. The annual Carbon Footprint report describes the greenhouse gas emissions produced by Devon County Council’s activity.</p> <p>The Council is trialling innovations to decarbonise highway infrastructure through the £3.7m Live Labs project.</p> <p>Measures have included retrofitting nine buildings with energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technology; solar panels on highways depots; integrating 18 electric vehicles into the vehicle fleet; and part-night operation, LED upgrade and dimming of street lighting.</p> <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/our-environmental-performance/environmental-performance-progress https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/our-environmental-performance/environmental-performance-progress/carbon-footprint</p>

Priority: Making a child friendly devon

Being ambitious for children and young people

We want every child in Devon to have the best outcomes, to live an independent and healthy life and to achieve their full potential.

Best Place Strategic Plan commitment	Progress to date
<p>Ensure children and young people have the best possible start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing.</p>	<p>A project is underway to improve services so that better support is provided to young people in Children’s Services to transition to adulthood.</p> <p>The Best start in Life Board brings together all elements of planning for early years to ensure there is a coordinated approach. This is feeding into the ambition to move towards a family hubs model.</p> <p>The Early Years Partnership Board has been established to review the observations of the Early Years Health Needs Assessment to develop and implement a Shared Early Years Strategy. The purpose of the Early Years Partnership Board is to ensure that strategy, service development and commissioning activity is approached jointly to deliver the best possible early education, health and wellbeing outcomes for children five and under and their families in Devon. The Board has representation from across the early years system.</p> <p>The Devon Public Health Nursing Service was rated ‘Good’ by CQC in Nov 2022 (report published Jan 2023).</p>
<p>Promote high standards in all schools and help to address any areas of weakness.</p>	<p>Standards in schools are monitored by the Devon Education Forum through a performance framework covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Exclusions • Elective home education • Children missing education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative provision • Ofsted outcomes
Continue to close the attainment gap for vulnerable groups and ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes.	Strengthen inclusion in mainstream schools by inviting expressions of interest from suitable maintained schools and academies to develop resource bases or (in alliance with your local special school) satellite classes.
Make sure there are more apprenticeships and better access to employment and learning, including digital skills.	<p>The Council's "Next Step" apprenticeship programme gives members of staff the opportunity to complete apprenticeship qualifications as part of their career development.</p> <p>Procurements opportunities list linking with Care Experienced children's aspirations stated in pathway plans.</p>
Improve children and young people's mental health including strengthening support for those at risk of emotional or mental health problems.	<p>The Devon Schools Wellbeing Partnership website will go live for the start of the new academic year. The website will provide a universal health and wellbeing digital resource to support schools in creating an environment where pupils and staff can thrive. One of the core topics of the programme is emotional health and wellbeing, along with others of food, being active, PSHE, staff wellbeing, and health protection.</p> <p>Mental Health in Schools Support Package: We have commissioned Devon Inclusion Service to provide supervision to staff in schools, where a Mental Health Support Team are not in place, to build capacity of school staff, and to support their own wellbeing and those of their students.</p> <p>Qwell is a free, anonymous, digital mental health and wellbeing service aimed at adults aged 18+. Qwell has been commissioned via a partnership of NHS and Plymouth, Torbay and DCC Public Health Teams. The online service offers peer-to-peer support via moderated discussion forums and self-help through reading or submitting content. Qwell also gives people the opportunity to access online counselling from qualified counsellors who are available from midday to 10pm every week day and from 6pm to 10pm at weekends.</p>

	<p>Connect 5 training is part of our core Public Mental Health training offer. It is free for the wider communities and organisations across the DCC footprint to attend. Connect 5 training aims to improve population mental wellbeing by changing the way we have conversations about mental health & wellbeing. It is open to a wide range of non-specialist staff, volunteers and others supporting their community who work with, or have contact with, people at risk of poor mental wellbeing. We are also exploring the potential to offer the Children & Young People version of Connect 5 locally as well.</p> <p>Reviewing the section 75 with CAMHs to ensure this covers the full pathway of options for children and young people social, emotional and mental health needs. Exploring this spanning from edge of care, through children in care, to care experiences children and young people</p>
<p>Understand and support children and young people where their mental health is suffering including strengthening support for those at risk of emotional or mental health problems.</p>	<p>Community Suicide Awareness, and Emotional Resilience training are free to attend across the DCC footprint (as well as Torbay and Plymouth and are funded through NHSE Third Wave Suicide Prevention monies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Suicide awareness – understanding myths, stigma and barriers and how we can challenge these, as well as prevention of suicide and the importance of compassion • Emotional resilience – this self-care course increases participants ability to cope with emotional distress, or stressful life events by knowing more about wellbeing, emotions, and how to build our resilience <p>Grant funding via our Public Mental Health and Suicide Prevention workstreams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities: Local Action for Suicide Prevention (CLASP) funding – grants allocated will directly contribute towards the aim of reducing the number of preventable deaths across the county in line with the Devon-wide Suicide Prevention Strategic Statement, and the DCC Suicide Prevention Statement and Action Plan, and previous grants have been awarded to those working with CYP.

	<p>Grant funding for future allocations is being agreed at present, and criteria to be determined - we are exploring having a round of funding specifically targeting projects working with CYP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Supporters funding – for initiatives that promote the wellbeing and resilience of staff and volunteers, who provide support and services for others. We are exploring having a round of funding specifically targeting projects working with CYP. <p>DCC Suicide Prevention Statement & Action Plan 2023/24 includes a focus on children and young people, with actions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the development of a PostVention resource for education settings – for use when there is a (suspected) suicide that impacts an education setting. • Contribute to the Devon Schools Wellbeing Partnership – online resource for schools to access information, good practice and signposting on range of health and wellbeing topics. • Scope out need for Young People Connect 5 training offer and implement if agreed. • Continue to promote suicide prevention, emotional resilience and Connect 5 training to workforces supporting CYP. • Utilise suicide prevention grant funding to support CYP targeted initiatives – CLASP funding (Communities: local action for suicide prevention). • Utilise ‘support the supporters’ grant funding to support initiatives for those caring for CYP. • Ensure links to DCC suicide prevention web pages to and from relevant CYP websites.
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Priority: Supporting recovery and growth

Investing in Devon's economic recovery

Supporting the county's hardest-hit sectors is paramount if Devon's economy is to recover successfully.

Best Place Strategic Plan commitment	Progress to date
Support training providers and employers to increase the number of traineeships and apprenticeships for young people and for people to upskill to reflect changes in employment opportunities.	Average of 24,000 young people engaged with over the course of a year, with around 3,000 provided with 1-2-1 support around choices and vocational opportunities. Specific support has been added over the last two years to assist 250 young people from the most vulnerable backgrounds to access apprenticeship / higher education provision, including wraparound support to apply for vocational pathways through our colleges / universities. Work is also ongoing internally around specific activity linked to corporate parenting.
Work with at risk sectors to widen skills and support business development.	Work on at risk sectors across the authority has tended to focus upon two core aspects; joint working with skills partners around the development of the Local Skill Improvement Plan, the statutory skills plans for the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay area; and provision of the Skills Bootcamp programme, the Government's primary skills support for fast track training into high demand employment areas. Over the past three years, the Authority has benefitted from over £10m of funding from the Bootcamp programme, supporting over 6,000 Level 3 qualifications across key sectors including skills for health, engineering, digital roles and net zero occupations.
Develop the Skills Hub to promote information and support around careers, employability, upskilling and reskilling.	Work ongoing around the development of the employment and skills hub approach, with the Youth Hub / Exeter Works providing an initial pilot approach. Providing a physical hub for a range of shared and partner services, and working in conjunction with the areas' shared Skills Launchpad digital resources, the hub provided support to over 300 young people and adults in the 6 months to July 2023, with around 75% being assisted into work and learning. More widely, the Launchpad website provided signposting and advice to over 5,000 individuals in the same period.
Promote Devon nationally and internationally to attract new inward investment.	<p>Working as a joint partner in the Plymouth and South Devon Freeport to land high quality marine, defence and low carbon focused long-term business leads at a range of sites (includes Langage and Sherford area in the South Hams).</p> <p>Holding events for potential supply chain businesses focused on the offshore renewables sector in the Bristol Channel, jointly with North Devon and Torridge Councils and HotSW LEP.</p>

	<p>Maintaining an ongoing relationship with the UK Government Department for Business and Trade (DBT), as a key investment channel into the County.</p> <p>Working jointly with regional and local partners to drive live inward investment enquiries in the Sustainable Aviation, Net Zero (including energy) and Agritech sectors, including working with Government to develop sector propositions.</p> <p>Ongoing handling of live inward investment enquiries into Devon – DCC, plus jointly with District Councils.</p>
<p>Secure investment in transport infrastructure to stimulate economic growth, improve accessibility, increase travel choices and improve road safety.</p> <p>Maintain and, where necessary, improve our highway network and improve sustainable transport options to help generate and sustain economic growth, improve air quality and provide better places for people to live.</p>	<p>Recent and current transport infrastructure schemes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queen Street and Iron Bridge enhancement scheme, Exeter • Magdalen Road, enhancement scheme, Exeter • Tiverton urban extension Phase 1 • North Devon link road • A382 Drumbridges – Newton Abbot corridor • Houghton Barton Link • A39 Heywood road roundabout • SW Exeter Infrastructure <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/traffic-information/transport-planning/</p>
<p>Deliver £500 million Council capital investment programme over five years.</p>	<p>The capital programme of investment across Devon is supported by external capital grants, contributions from developers and maintained schools and income from the sale of surplus assets. Investment schemes in the last two years include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Okehampton Special School • North Devon Enterprise Centre Phase 2 • Marsh Barton railway station • Rock Park bridge, Barnstaple • Long Lane scheme, nr Exeter Airport

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinhoe Station interchange on the Exeter to Waterloo railway • Houghton Barton Link Road, Newton Abbot • North Devon Link Road • Bideford library • County Farms Estate enhancements • DCC ICT replacement and renewal programme <p>Further information https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s45660/Outturn%20Report%20-%202022-23.pdf https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/b14037/Revenue%20and%20Capital%20Outturn%202021-2022%2008th-Jun-2022%2010.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=9</p>
<p>Ensure financial resilience of the Council in the face of growing demand, tightening funding and an increasingly complex and unpredictable financial environment.</p>	<p>The Council avoided a significant overspend in 2022/23 through an organisational-wide response that resulted in a rigorous in-year savings programme. Since October 2022, an eight-point financial sustainability plan has been in place covering and travel, training, venue hire, catering and building maintenance. There have also been restrictions on recruitment and the appointment interim, consultants, agency and temporary staff.</p> <p>A recruitment approval process on all posts, except for apprenticeships including those for looked after children and care leavers, was introduced in August 2023.</p> <p>Further information https://inside.devon.gov.uk/news/working-together-to-save-council-money/ https://inside.devon.gov.uk/news/working-well-together-for-a-financially-sustainable-council-introducing-our-new-recruitment-approval-process/</p>

Priority: Tackling poverty and inequality

Tackle poverty and inequality

We will continue to work with local support networks and communities to support people that are experiencing hardship.

Strategic Plan commitment	Progress date
<p>Develop local support networks to reduce food and fuel poverty and support people that are experiencing hardship.</p>	<p>Since 2021, Team Devon County, District and voluntary & community sector partners have worked together to deploy just over £25m from the Household Support Funds (Government funded). They have identified and supported households struggling financially to meet their immediate essential needs such as food, energy, water and other essential items.</p> <p>In addition, DCC continues to support the work of Citizens Advice Devon, which has achieved the following for Devon residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £17,325,460 – Income gains through assessment and benefit checks • £ 2,679,684 – Debt rescheduling and write-offs <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/cost-of-living/cost-of-living/benefits-money-and-debt/household-support-fund-hsf4-devons-approach/</p>
<p>Promote services that increase resilience, self-reliance and independence.</p>	<p>The “Annual Report for Adult Social Care in Devon for 2022” provides a comprehensive picture of the performance of services for adults showing the progress made in many areas.</p> <p>There remain workforce recruitment and retention pressures resourcing the assessment of people's needs and arranging and providing for them the care and support they require.</p> <p>Recent reforms to adult social care include the introduction of the</p>

	<p>assessment of local authority adult social care functions by the Care Quality Commission. (Reforms relating to relating to charging are currently paused.)</p> <p>In preparation for this the council commissioned the Local Government Association to conduct a Peer Review and we are now acting on its findings.</p> <p>Further information https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=44402 https://www.devon.gov.uk/promoting-independence/ https://www.devon.gov.uk/lga-peer-challenge/</p>
<p>Prioritise the delivery of our domestic violence and abuse strategy.</p>	<p>In 2021 the Council took on new responsibilities under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, to deliver domestic abuse support to victims of abuse and their children who are in safe accommodation after fleeing abuse. As required by the new Act, the Council carried out a needs assessment and published a new strategy to deliver the responsibilities using new government funding. The Council formed a new Local Partnership Board to guide and support the delivery of the strategy. The Council has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensured the continuing sustainability of a domestic abuse refuge and enabled the development of new types of family support. - Funded and further developed support and accommodation for highly vulnerable women with complex needs experiencing domestic and sexual abuse. This has enabled “Brave Spaces” a new collaborative support project in Northern Devon and Exeter. - Designed, introduced and funded a new therapeutic intervention service to address the trauma caused by domestic abuse and help those abused to take steps to recovery. <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/dsva/document/strategy-for-delivering-domestic-abuse-support-in-safe-accommodation/</p>
<p>Promote community cohesion including reduction of hate crime by improving awareness and response.</p>	<p>The Council is collaborating with Libraries Unlimited to create a network of inclusive work clubs across Devon. The Refugee Employment and Enterprise project website will include a portal where refugees can share</p>

	<p>their CVs directly with local employers.</p> <p>The Council has provided funding and support for the Exeter Respect festival and other community events that celebrate diversity and challenge inequality and prejudice. A directory of organisations representing ethnically diverse communities has been produced.</p> <p>The Council has facilitated the set-up of free, volunteer-led English classes by recruiting volunteers and by providing advice, resources and funding. Officers work closely with other partners, particularly Devon and Cornwall Police to identify, respond and mitigate key risks around extremism.</p> <p>The Council has supported the Homes for Ukraine Scheme as part of a Team Devon approach, including safeguarding checks and sponsor recruitment.</p> <p>Devon supported over 250 people evacuated from Afghanistan placed by the Home Office in bridging hotels as part of Operation Warm Welcome. Both of Devon’s bridging hotels closed during August 2023. The Council has worked with families and with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure good outcomes for all involved.</p> <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/refugees-in-devon/</p>
Develop a coordinated approach to address child poverty.	<p>The percentage of children (under 16s) in absolute low-income families in Devon is 13.6% (2021/22 data). This is statistically better than the England average of 15.3%. No comparisons can be made to the previous reporting year due to changes to the indicator’s definition. Most Devon districts are statistically better compared to the England average; no districts are statistically similar; North Devon (16.3%) and Torridge (18.0%) are statistically worse.</p> <p>The “Healthy and Happy Communities: Devon’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 25” highlights the inequalities in child poverty neighbourhood level in Devon. With the highest level being in Forches (Barnstaple) (33.3%) and the lowest Teignmouth Road (Dawlish) 1.1%.</p>
Consider the findings of the Race Equality Audit and implement its	Devon County Council is taking steps to become an organisation which

recommendations.

enables its ethnically diverse staff to feel safe, included and welcomed. The Race Equality Audit Action Plan includes a progress report that is regularly updated. In July 2023 the Council was given Bronze Trailblazer status by Race Equality Matters for its work on anti-racism.

Further information

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/equality/our-commitment/anti-racism-framework>

Priority: Improve health and wellbeing

Improving health and wellbeing

We will continue to work with partners to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

Strategic Plan commitment	Progress and outcomes to date
<p>Continue to deliver the COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan and tackling the longer-term impacts of COVID-19.</p>	<p>Outbreak management planning brought Team Devon councils and voluntary/community organisations together to protect communities and support the successful roll-out of vaccines. Public Health Devon would step up local outbreak management planning should there be another pandemic.</p> <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/</p>
<p>Build a sustainable care system for Devon through the “Lovecare” programme including an economic assessment of the value of social care and health, the case for greater government investment in adult social care, and promoting value and esteem in the workforce through discussions between system leaders and care workers.</p>	<p>Over 26,000 people work in adult social care in Devon, all but a few hundred of them in the independent and voluntary sector. A comprehensive workforce development offer has been established working with the Provider Engagement Network and countywide bodies such as the Devon Care Homes Collaborative and Devon Integrated Social Care Alliance. The proportion of the adult social care workforce with a relevant qualification has increased from 46% to 51% in 2022, many acquired on the job.</p> <p>The feedback from the July 2023 Local Government Association Peer Challenge of Adult Social Care highlighted that having grown the care provider workforce through overseas recruitment, there is a recognised need to consolidate to ensure that the market remains sustainable and high quality.</p> <p>Further information https://www.proudtocaredevon.org.uk/</p>

<p>Recognise the importance of carers in Devon and supporting them to manage their caring role and look after their own health and wellbeing enabling young carers to learn and develop alongside their caring role.</p>	<p>An estimated 130,000 provide unpaid care in Devon, many of whom suffer physical ill health or feel lonely or socially isolated. The May 2023 “Caring Well” strategy for adult carer of adults identifies priority areas and actions. The priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling carers to take the breaks they need and the person they care for to have a positive experience. • Promoting ways of providing replacement care, test and spread innovative and complementary services meeting need informally. • Seeking effective means to tackle carer isolation and improve their quality of life. <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/promoting-independence/caring-well/</p>
<p>Give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling to increase their physical activity.</p>	<p>The Council is the accountable body for Active Devon whose “Devon Moving Together” strategy seeks to reduce inequalities and make movement a positive part of people’s lives.</p> <p>Further information https://www.activedevon.org/</p>
<p>Improve mental health by improving access to mental health and wellbeing services and strengthening support for young people at risk of emotional or mental health problems.</p>	<p>Children and Family Health Devon provides children’s health services across Devon: an NHS providers alliance led by Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust.</p>

Priority: Supporting people and communities

Helping communities to be safe, connected and resilient

We will continue to work with partners to support strong, resilient and safe communities.

Strategic Plan commitment	Progress and outcomes to date
Continue to support our vibrant community and voluntary sector.	<p>The Growing Communities Fund, launched July 2022, has been supporting local communities; especially through the cost-of-living crisis. More than £530,000 has been awarded to 300 different local projects. Grant awards are typically between £500-£1k (Max.£3k) to support proactive, effective, measurable, and sustainable actions to enable individuals and communities to tackle local issues, such as reducing food and fuel inequalities, building self-reliance and esteem, reducing loneliness & isolation, community connections and resilience, and improving the environment, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Further Information https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/growing-communities-fund</p>
Work with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations on shared plans and aspirations around recovery.	<p>Grant funding of £40,000 has assisted the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Assembly.• A new Community Support Plan (originally used under Covid response) to assist VCSE mobilisation in future emergencies.• A cross sector Food Insecurity specialist prototype hub.• Community Led Wellbeing Development specialist prototype hub, focusing on reducing health inequalities.• <p>DCC also continues to support the work of the Devon Association of Local Councils as well as the community development work of Devon Communities Together.</p>

Tackle social isolation, particularly among older, younger and disabled people, and those with a long-term illness.	In 2022 the Council was awarded funding from the Department for Transport's "Tackling Loneliness with Transport" scheme. A series of partners delivered a program of innovative transport schemes targeting young people aged 16-24 and the over 55's who are most at risk of loneliness, including people living in rural areas, or those with physical or mental health problems.
Enable a range of transport options, including public transport to improve access to services and jobs and to tackle social isolation	<p>The Government £2 fare cap scheme was launched in January 2023. The scheme, which runs to October 2023, supports bus operators to implement a £2 cap on eligible single tickets for adults.</p> <p>The Dartmoor Line from Okehampton to Exeter reopened in November 2021 following more than £40m of Government investment through the "Restoring your Railway" initiative. There were over 250,000 journeys during the first year of operation.</p> <p>The Marsh Barton railway station in Exeter was opened in July 2023.</p> <p>Further information https://www.traveldevon.info/</p>
Work with communities to enable them to come together to tackle shared challenges to connect, and to celebrate culture and diversity.	See above under "tackling poverty and inequality".
Do whatever we can to make it easier for key workers and people on low incomes to find affordable homes.	<p>In December 2021 the Council declared a housing crisis and resolved to assess the potential for it to offer accommodation to new social and key workers to attract them to work for Devon County Council.</p> <p>The Devon Housing Task Force is focussing on tackling homelessness and improving the availability of affordable housing in Devon.</p>
Work with Team Devon to tackle homelessness and improve the availability of affordable housing in Devon.	<p>The University of Exeter and Devon's 11 Local Authorities have established the Devon Housing Commission to make the case for a change in social and housing policy. The Commission has invited anyone with an interest submit evidence about housing issues and solutions.</p> <p>The Devon Housing Task Force, currently chaired by the Leader of West Devon Borough Council, is tackling the supply and demand side issues contributing to the Devon housing crisis in the social, affordable and</p>

	<p>private housing markets and considering the potential solutions.</p> <p>The Council provides financial support to organisations helping people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Contracts with providers run to the end of March 2024. The Council and the eight district councils are working together to agree a way forward that ensures ongoing homelessness support across the county.</p> <p>Further information https://www.exeter.ac.uk/business/southwestregion/devonhousing/</p>
<p>Engage directly with people in meaningful ways and encourage participation in decisions that affect them.</p>	<p>The “Have Your Say” webpages provide information about current and past consultations on: adult social care, children & families, democracy & transparency, economy & enterprise, education & schools, environment, health & wellbeing, libraries & heritage, planning & development, public rights of way, traffic regulation orders, transport & roads, and waste & recycling.</p> <p>The Provider Engagement Network enable providers of adult health and social care services to engage with Devon County Council and the NHS in Devon.</p> <p>The Devon Children in Care Council, “Stand Up Speak Up”, gives children in care a voice for opinions and ideas on the services they experience.</p> <p>The Parent Carer Forum is an independent organisation of parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.</p> <p>Champions for Change is a group of children and young people with special educational needs.</p> <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/ https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/adult-social-care-and-health-engagement/ https://www.devon.gov.uk/providerengagementnetwork/ https://www.standupspeakup.org.uk/ https://www.parentcarerforumdevon.org/</p>

How we will work

We are committed to being an effective, efficient and adaptable council that serves local people well.

Strategic Plan commitment	Progress date
<p>Transform, develop and improve our children’s services.</p>	<p>The Devon Improvement Partnership Board was established by the Department for Education in 2020 in response to an Inadequate rating from Ofsted for Children’s Social Care Services. The role of the Board is to direct, prioritise, measure and hold accountability for the Improvement Plan and the Devon improvement journey.</p> <p>In March 2023, the Board agreed to reset its focus and approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify and create shared understanding of the role and purpose of the Board, particularly with new system leaders and Board members. • Create the condition for Board meetings to focus on key outcomes and associated actions. • Create partnership priorities, outcomes and actions to become part of the Devon Children’s Services Improvement Plan. <p>The strategic Improvement Plan incorporates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services Action Plan • DCC Corporate Services Action Plan • Partnership Action Plan. <p>The Improvement Plan sets out priority outcome areas for Children’s Services, at a strategic and operational level, namely: Change, Leadership, Engagement and Workforce.</p>
<p>Respond to demographic pressures and future workforce challenges.</p>	<p>A structured approach to strategic workforce planning has been completed with several service areas to date and the remainder will be completed within the next 12 months. The purpose of workforce planning is to identify the future workforce challenges both at service area and organisation level to be able to respond in a proactive and robust way. The creation of the HR workforce dashboard which is now live in a first iteration will help Directors and their senior leaders to monitor the demographic changes within their workforce to make</p>

	<p>informed decisions and interventions.</p> <p>With the number of people aged 85 or over projected to grow by a third over the next decade and those with life limiting illnesses or conditions by a quarter our 'Promoting Independence' Vision and 'Living Well', 'Ageing Well' and 'Caring Well' strategies outline how we can only meet people's needs and ensure a workforce sufficient to meet them by promoting people's independence, working with them to find solutions at home in their communities wherever possible and making better use of short-term interventions and new technologies in doing so.</p>
<p>Embrace the positive benefits of a diverse workforce and create an environment that is inclusive and safe for all staff.</p>	<p>Having accurate data relating to the diversity of the workforce is a key requirement to understand how we can best develop, support and create a safe environment for staff to thrive. The Belonging theme within the people strategy identifies actions we will take to improve the disclosure rates for employee sensitive data to better understand the make up of our workforce. By having greater disclosure we can then tailor support and opportunities be ensure DCC is an inclusive place to work.</p> <p>Within DCC there are already a range of staff networks that provide safe space to share experiences and provide support. There are plans underway to extend the range of staff networks to create greater opportunities for staff to meet those with similar lived experience. There are additional actions within the people strategy to ensure when HR policies are reviewed the lived experience of the workforce are incorporated into policies to ensure they reflect the needs of the workforce.</p> <p>Our Principal Social Workers and Principal Occupational Therapist are leading an Unleashing Potential programme that links workforce development and practice improvement to our equalities work.</p>
<p>Make best use of data and intelligence to help inform what we do and understand its impact on the people of Devon.</p>	<p>The creation and implementation of the HR dashboard is a key development in making workforce data available in real time and on a desk top self service basis. The ongoing development of this to include engagement survey and exit interview intelligence is an example of how we are incorporating workforce data to help inform decision making.</p> <p>Smarter Devon is helping the Council to be an evidence-led authority, ensuring that data and information is used to make intelligence-based decisions. Recent projects include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caseload management – Adult Social Care • Streamlining Reporting – Children’s Social Care • Trading Up Reporting Standards • School Attendance Reporting • Measuring Up – National Child Measurement Programme <p>The Devon Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Report monitors progress against the priorities identified in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</p> <p>Further information https://www.devon.gov.uk/smarterdevon/how-we-work/case-studies/ https://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna/health-and-wellbeing-outcomes-report/</p>
Transform the way we work to make us more resilient and adaptable and helps reduce our carbon footprint.	See above
Invest in digital solutions to help us work more effectively and make us more responsive.	<p>Within the people and culture service area the creation of a digital platform to host a new “People hub” has created a more effective and interactive approach to providing key information and guidance for employees and managers. This covers the entire lifecycle of the employee from recruitment through to retirement. Key decisions that are made by SLT can be considered and delivered into guidance and actions for managers to make use of within a shorter timeframe.</p> <p>The HR dashboard is a significant digital solution that has been delivered to support the availability of key workforce data to senior leaders. Not only does this mean real time data is now at their fingertips, it also reduces the need to submit a request and wait for a HR analyst to receive that request and deliver the report. This has been a significant efficiency and will in the future mean that we can be more responsive.</p> <p>The replacement of the care management system (CareFirst) and finance management system (FINEST) is underway.</p>
Increase discipline and rigour around decision making.	<p>The Council’s governance is being reviewed. The first phase of work has focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member engagement • Standardised reports and checklist • Delegated member and officer decisions

- Public participation
- Local member protocol

Further information

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s45362/Governance%20Review%20Final.pdf>

APPEALS COMMITTEE

5 June 2023

Present:-

Councillors J Hawkins (Chair), P Henderson, P Sanders, C Slade and C Whitton

70 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* **71** **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual relating to their financial affairs 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.

* **72** **Budget Monitoring**

(An item taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded)

The Committee received the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport on the financial impact of the Committee's decisions for the current financial year.

* **73** **Deferred Appeals**

(An item taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public are excluded)

The Committee noted the following appeals determined under urgency procedures following Members' route walks arising from the last meeting:-

ST227)	Burlescombe area to Uffculme School	Route available
ST228)		(appeal refused).

Agenda Item 11.(a)

2

APPEALS COMMITTEE

5/06/23

* 74 School Transport Appeals

(An item taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded)

The Committee considered reports from the Director of Children and Young People's Futures on appeals and written and verbal submissions from appellants who attended as follows:-

ST226	Appledore - Bideford College	Appellant and Local County Councillor
ST230	Tedburn St Mary – Exeter West Exe	Appellant
ST229	Abbotskerswell - Coombeshead Academy pickup point	Appellant

RESOLVED:-

(a) that the following appeal(s) be refused:-

ST230 Tedburn St Mary - Exeter West Exe; and

(b) that the following appeal(s) be deferred for members' route inspection:-

ST226 Appledore - Bideford College

ST229 Abbotskerswell - Coombeshead Academy pickup point.

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 9.45 am and finished at 12.50 pm

APPEALS COMMITTEE

10 July 2023

Present:-

Councillors J Hawkins (Chair), P Henderson, P Sanders, C Slade and C Whitton

* **75** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* **76** **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual relating to their financial affairs 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.

* **77** **Budget Monitoring**

(An item taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded)

The Committee received the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport on the financial impact of the Committee's decisions for the current financial year.

* **78** **Deferred Appeals**

(An item taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public are excluded)

The Committee noted the following appeals determined under urgency procedures following Members' route walks arising from the last meeting:-

ST226 Appledore - Bideford College - route available, appeal refused; and

ST229 Abbotskerswell - Coombeshead Academy pickup point - route available, appeal refused.

Agenda Item 11.(b)

2

APPEALS COMMITTEE

10/07/23

* 79 School Transport Appeals

(An item taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded)

(Councillor Henderson declared a non pecuniary interest in the last case ST233 and withdrew from the meeting).

The Committee considered reports from the Director of Children and Young People's Futures on appeals and written and verbal submissions from appellants who attended as follows:-

ST235	Ogwell - S Devon College	Appellant
ST231	Appledore - Bideford College	Appellant and Local County Councillor
ST232	Tiverton - Dawlish, Orchard Manor	Appellant
ST234	Exmouth - Exeter, St Lukes	Appellant
ST233	S Molton - Barnstaple, The Park	Heard in absence

RESOLVED:-

(a) that the following appeal(s) be allowed:-

ST232 Tiverton - Dawlish, Orchard Manor;

(b) that the following appeal(s) be refused:-

ST235 Ogwell - S Devon College;

ST231 Appledore - Bideford College;

ST234 Exmouth - Exeter, St Lukes; and

ST233 S Molton - Barnstaple, The Park.

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 9.45 am and finished at 12.35 pm

INVESTMENT AND PENSION FUND COMMITTEE

16 June 2023

Present:-Devon County Council

Councillors P Bullivant (Chair), Y Atkinson, H Gent, G Gribble, M Hartnell,

Unitary Councils

Councillor M Brook

Union and Retired Members

R Franceschini and M Daniell (remote)

Apologies:-

Councillor J Morrish, Councillor R Bloxham and L Parker-Delaz-Ajete

* 114

Announcements

(a) The Chair welcomed Mr R Hodgins who was attending the meeting in his capacity as a co-opted Member of the Standards Committee to monitor compliance with the Council's ethical and governance framework.

(b) The Chair welcomed Councillor M Brook (representing Torbay Council, Unitary Council) to his first meeting of this Committee.

* 115

Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 March 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* 116

Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* 117

Devon Pension Board

The Committee noted the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 18 April 2023.

- arising on Minute *108 the Head of Peninsula Pensions confirmed that staff vacancies had been filled; and
- arising on Minute *103: F2 investment strategy and sufficient returns, Officers confirmed that mitigations included stable contribution rates in

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INVESTMENT AND PENSION FUND COMMITTEE

16/06/23

line with the Actuarial advice, alignment of investments in accordance with the Investment Strategy over the long-term, and continued monitoring by Officers and this Committee.

* 118 Brunel Oversight Board

The Committee noted the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 9 March 2023.

Arising on Minute 8 Members discussed the impact of the excess savings in China's economy as a result of their lockdowns.

* 119 Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/58) on the Internal Audit for the Pension Fund Review of 2022/23. The Annual Report (at Appendix 1) indicated that overall, and based on work performed during 2022/23, Internal Audit could provide reasonable assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Fund's internal control environment. This was based on a total of 7 audits. Further information relating to these were provided in the Annual Report.

Members' discussion points with the Head of the Devon Audit Partnership and Director of Finance and Public Value included:

- Cyber Security: in relation to the finding of '*limited assurance*', this was also referenced and focussed in the Audit log presented to the Pension Board, and this would also be the subject to a session at a Members' training event on 6 July. The Director confirmed that this finding was common across the Council as reported to the Council's Audit Committee and the Council's Senior Leadership Team was fully cognisant.

The Committee noted the Internal Audit Report for 2022/23.

* 120 Investment Management Report

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/59) on the Fund value and asset allocation, performance against the benchmark, funding level, budget forecast 2022/23, cash management, and voting and engagement activity.

The Fund value at 31 March 2023 stood at £5,312.8 million, an increase of around £185 million over the quarter but a decrease of £100m since 31st March 2022.

Members' discussion points with Officers included:

- despite the decrease in the value of the Fund in 2022/23, the Fund's performance was in the top quartile within the LGPF Universe; and

- issues in regard to Ethical, Social, Governance (ESG) and engagement.

The Committee noted the Investment Management Report and compliance with the 2022-23 Treasury Management Strategy.

(**N.B.** subsequent to the meeting, the Head of Investments circulated Brunel's 2023 Responsible Investment and Stewardship Outcomes Report: [2023 Responsible Investment and Stewardship Outcomes Report \(brunelpensionpartnership.org\)](#); and in regard to Amazon and industrial relations/union recognition {raised during the meeting}, the case study (page 51 of the report) outlined the engagement conducted by LGIM (Legal and General Investment Management) on behalf of Brunel; and as stated in page 77 of the Report, Brunel was a member of HM Treasury's Transition Plan Taskforce and would therefore be fully involved in the work of the Taskforce).

* **121** **Climate Change and Carbon Footprint**

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/60) on climate change policy, the Carbon footprint at 31 December 2022, and reserves exposure. The report reviewed the Fund's policies on climate change in the light of revised policy by Brunel and new regulatory requirements.

The Fund's current climate change policy was to achieve net zero investment portfolios by 2050 and the latest sets of targets were detailed in the Report.

These targets were still considered appropriate and were aligned with the trajectory set out in the Paris Agreement. However, in line with the revised Brunel climate change policy it was considered that these should be enhanced by further targets and metrics. These were included in a proposed revised policy set out at Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Report also provided the Committee the opportunity to discuss whether to reduce fossil fuel reserves exposure further by moving the UK and World Developed passive allocations across to the Global Paris Aligned Benchmark (PAB) passive fund. The PAB funds included a range of exclusions related to fossil fuels and also enforced a 7% annual reduction in carbon emissions, with a phasing in of scope 3 emissions into the data. This move would also reduce the overall carbon footprint.

Members' discussion points with Officers included:

- the recent positive relative performance of the World Developed Paris Aligned Benchmark Fund;
- any proposed transfer of equities to the Paris Fund would be discussed with Brunel;
- the broad nature and wide-ranging companies included in the Paris Aligned Fund; and confirmation by the Committee's Independent Advisor

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INVESTMENT AND PENSION FUND COMMITTEE

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that the proposed move was not contradictory to the Committee's fiduciary duty and consistent with overall strategy; and

- the level of investment in private equities and consideration of Ethical, Social and Governance (ESG) issues on which Brunel would be asked to provide further information, for report to this Committee.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor P Bullivant, **SECONDED** by Councillor Y Atkinson and

RESOLVED

(a) that the revised climate change policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report for inclusion in the Investment Strategy Statement, be approved;

(b) that the current progress against the targets to reduce the Fund's carbon footprint, be noted;

(c) that the allocation to passive equities be consolidated in the World Developed Paris Aligned Benchmark Fund, subject to (i) the currency hedging strategy in place being applied to the Paris Aligned Benchmark Fund, and (ii) the timing of transfers being delegated to Officers.

* 122

Actuarial and Consultancy Contracts

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/61) on the proposed use of national frameworks to undertake a joint procurement exercise for actuarial services with the Somerset Pension Fund and a separate procurement process for investment consultancy.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor P Bullivant and **SECONDED** by Councillor Y Atkinson, and

RESOLVED

(a) that a joint procurement exercise with the Somerset Pension Fund to secure a new contract for Actuarial Services, using the National LGPS Framework, be approved; and

(b) that a procurement exercise for Investment Consultancy Services, using the National LGPS Framework, be approved.

(c) that the appointment process and final decisions for both contracts be delegated to the Director of Finance and Public Value in consultation with the Chair.

* 123

Employer Changes

The Committee noted Employer changes not previously reported to the Committee as set out below:

(a) New admitted bodies - The following application for admitted body status had been approved: DCC Cleaning won the tender for St Peters School Plymouth Cleaning contract, commencing 1 September 2022

(b) New academy conversions and changes:

- On 6 September 2022, Launceston College MAT changed name to Athena Learning Trust.
- On 1 October 2022, Berry Pomeroy Parochial C of E Primary converted to an Academy and joined the Academy of Chartered Excellence.
- On 1 October 2022, St Sidwells C of E Primary School and nursery became an academy and joined St Christophers C of E (Primary) MAT.
- On 1 November 2022, Furzesham Primary School and Nursery became an academy and joined the Thinking Schools Academy Trust.

(c) Cessations:

- On 10 August 2022, Red One Limited ceased following the last member leaving. They were a subsidiary of Devon & Somerset Fire and had a passthrough in place. All assets and liabilities remained with Devon & Somerset Fire.
- On 3 October 2022, FCC Ltd ceased membership with staff returning to South Hams District Council.

* **124** **Dates of Future Meetings**

15 September 2023, 24 November; and 1 March 2024 (followed by the annual consultation meeting at 2:15 pm) all at 10.30 am.

Dates and other details available here: [Browse meetings - Investment and Pension Fund Committee - Democracy in Devon](#)

* **125** **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, information relating to the financial or business affairs of an individual other than the County Council 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.

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INVESTMENT AND PENSION FUND COMMITTEE

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* **126** **Local Impact Investment**

(An item taken under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded).

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/62) on proposed allocations to a Local Impact Investment portfolio and individual investments options. These options aligned with the fiduciary duty to provide the returns required to meet the funding strategy.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor P Bullivant and **SECONDED** by Councillor M Brook, and

RESOLVED

(a) that a 3% target allocation to a Local Impact Portfolio, be approved; and

(b) that the investments, as detailed in the Report, in Local Impact Funds (totalling £140m), be approved, subject to further due diligence.

* **127** **Brunel Pension Partnership - Reserved Matters Requests**

(An item taken under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded).

The Committee noted the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/63) on the action taken by the Director of Finance and Public Value.

This related to a revised remuneration policy and people strategy, which following consultation with Partners had been made a 'reserved matter' which required approval of 80% of the Partners.

* **128** **Litigation and Class Actions**

(An item taken under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded).

The Committee noted the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/33) on the outcome and progress of outstanding legal cases (including class actions) where losses may have been incurred and where the Fund had sought to recover losses to the extent possible, subject to consideration of the risks and costs involved, in accordance with the Committee's fiduciary duty.

In future, the Devon Fund was less likely to be directly involved in making claims on new cases as it no longer directly owned individual company shares, which were now owned by Brunel. It would be Brunel's decision whether to pursue any losses as they deemed appropriate. Only cases that

related to losses incurred prior to the transition of mandates to Brunel would be directly claimable by the Fund.

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 10.30 am and finished at 12.15 pm

AUDIT COMMITTEE

20 June 2023

Present:-

Councillors R Scott (Chair), M Hartnell (Vice-Chair), F Biederman,
R Chesterton and C Whitton

Apologies:-

Councillors I Roome

* 70

Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* 71

Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

* 72

Publication of Statement of Accounts 2022/23

The Committee noted the report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/57) on the publication of the 2022/23 accounts and the audit status of the Statements of Accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The external auditors had yet to issue audit opinions on the Authority's Statements of Accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 and, at the previous Committee meeting on 28 February 2023, there were no issues raised by the auditors that suggested that audit opinions could not be issued.

As a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Government had extended the date by which local authorities should publish their draft accounts from 31 May to 31 July. This year was therefore the first year since the pandemic that the regulation date has been brought forward to 31 May, two months earlier than the past two years.

Despite technical accounting challenges outlined in the report, the Authority expected to publish its Statement of Accounts 2022/23 by the end of June.

Officers reported that next year it was the expectation to publish the Statement of Accounts by the end of May.

* 73

External Audit Update

The external auditors, Grant Thornton, provided a verbal update as follows:

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

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- The time it had taken to complete audits had increased considerably over the last two years, due in part to a number of factors, including the Covid-19 pandemic, updated Government legislation and available resource.
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities were working together with the Financial Reporting Council to try and clear the national audit backlogs, and it was confirmed that the Committee would be kept updated on this.
- Although the 2020/21 audit was well progressed, one of the key barriers to sign off was in relation to ongoing discussions with the Council around agreed audit fees for that audit. It was important to get an agreed resolution on the fees position before they could issue an audit opinion.
- As to the 2021/22 audit, once the national issue regarding the results of the triennial valuation of the Pension Fund had been resolved, an audit opinion could be issued.
- The Value for Money (VFM) report for 2020/21 had yet to be finalised pending management comments, which the Head Accountant confirmed would be forthcoming very shortly. Grant Thornton clarified that the VFM work did not impact the issue of an opinion under the new Code requirements.

In response to the above, the Head Accountant confirmed to Grant Thornton that it was the Director of Finance and Public Value's decision to formally dispute the element of the audit fees in relation to remote working.

Members expressed their surprise and disappointment and wished to have issues resolved and for the Authority to receive unqualified audit opinions for 2020/21 and 2021/22 as soon as possible. There was a preference that the external auditors worked on site if this avoided additional fees. Members also noted that there could be a reputational risk to the Council of having open historic accounts while waiting for audit opinions.

* 74

Internal Audit End of Year Report for 2022/23

The Committee reviewed and considered the report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/65) which provided the end of year opinion of the Council's Internal Audit Service (Devon Audit Partnership) and described the progress against the internal audit plans for 2022/23 that were approved by the Audit Committee in February 2022 and as subsequently revised.

Overall, the Head of Internal Audit was able to issue an opinion of Reasonable Assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control framework within the County Council.

Points of particular highlight in the report included:

- A number of reviews had not been undertaken in Children's and Young People's Futures last year due to a lack of engagement within the service, but the situation had now improved for 2023/24.

- As to the limited assurance within Digital Transformation and Business Support, an agreed action plan had now been implemented which would be followed up in 2023/24.

Responses to Members' questions included:

- Service engagement had improved for 2023/24 following senior leadership changes, coupled with regular audit slots at senior leadership team meetings.

* **75** **Risk Management Update**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Finance and Public Value on the Risk Management Annual Report for 2022/23, which set out the changes to risk management during 2022/23 and confirmed the role of the Audit Committee as per the Council's Risk Management Policy. It further summarised the existing risk position and links to visual reporting via Power BI.

Discussion included the importance of updating the risk wording to allow easier understanding of risks, as highlighted in the report; and also risk tolerances.

The Committee endorsed the report.

* **76** **Counter Fraud End of Year Report and Update 2022/23**

The Committee noted the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/67) on the Counter Fraud End of Year Report and Update 2022/23, which detailed work undertaken and work ongoing in order to mitigate the challenges posed by fraudulent activity for the Council.

Of highlight in the report was that the team continued to support colleagues specifically looking at the risks linked to cyber enabled frauds that could affect the most vulnerable members of society who were more at risk of falling victim to fraudsters.

The West of England Fraud Group had now been revived, which involved Councils across the region looking at fraud, risk and audit issues which affected everyone. Resilience and overall assurance were improved by sharing awareness and knowledge.

The Council continued to show that it was committed to improving its assurance position in respect of its fight against fraud.

* **77** **Future Meetings**

Next meeting: 25 September 2023

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

20/06/23

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 2.15 pm and finished at 3.28 pm

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE

13 July 2023

Present:-

Councillors L Hellyer (Chair), R Chesterton (Vice-Chair), J Bradford, I Chubb, D Sellis, D Thomas

Apologies:-

Councillors J Brook and M Squires

* 61

Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* 62

Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

The Chair informed the Committee that there was a request to defer agenda item 6 as representatives were unable to attend due to a family bereavement.

There was also a request to defer agenda item 7 to enable further assessments to take place including possible impact on part of the lane.

It was agreed to defer both items until the next meeting in November.

* 63

Devon Countryside Access Forum

The Committee received the draft minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2023.

The minutes were noted.

* 64

Parish Review: Definitive Map Review - Parishes of East Budleigh with Bicton

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/46) which examined one proposal that arose as a result of the Definitive Map Review in the parishes of East Budleigh with Bicton. This was for a footpath claim for a path between Russel Drive and Oak Hill end of the Oakhill private estate road between points A-B-C on the plan CET/PROW/23/34.

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Members were informed that from assessment of the user evidence, in conjunction with the lack of any historical evidence, it was considered that there is insufficient evidence to support the claim that this route is a public footpath.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hellyer, **SECONDED** by Councillor Thomas and

RESOLVED that

(a) no Modification Order be made in respect of Proposal 1.

* **65** **Parish Review: Definitive Map Review - Parish of Parracombe - Part 3**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

* **66** **Parish Review: Definitive Map Review - Parish of Washfield - Part 2**

This item was deferred until the next meeting.

* **67** **Parish Review: Definitive Map Review - Parish of Newton Poppleford & Harpford - Part 2**

Mr R Swan, the applicant for Proposal 3, attended the meeting under the Council's Public Participation scheme and spoke in favour of recommendation.

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/49) on a proposal arising from the Definitive Map Review in the parish of Newton Poppleford & Harpford. This was the second report and examined a claimed footpath between High Street and School Lane in Newton Poppleford.

The Report stated from the assessment of the evidence, in conjunction with other historical evidence and all evidence available, it was considered sufficient to support the claim that public rights subsist on the balance of probabilities on the northern part of the proposal route between the car park and The Green.

There was further discussion regarding the full-length of the proposed route with claims that this was well used.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Chesterton, **SECONDED** by Councillor Chubb

and **RESOLVED**

- (a) that a Modification Order be made in respect of part of proposal 3 as shown between points E and G on the plan CCET/PROW/23/33; and
- (b) that prior to making the Order, the Council negotiates with the landowners with a view to extending the proposal to Point F on the plan

CCET/PROW/22/86, and subject to these negotiations being successful, delegate authority to the Chair of the Committee to determine the proposal.

* **68** **Public Inquiry, Informal Hearing and Written Representation Decisions; Directions and High Court Appeals**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/50) which outlined decisions received from the Secretary of State since the last meeting of the Committee.

Members noted the report.

* **69** **Public Path Diversion and Definitive Map Modification Orders**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/51) on Public Path Diversion and Definitive Map Modification Orders that had been confirmed as unopposed under delegated powers.

Members noted the report.

* **70** **Dates of Future Meetings**

Dates of future meetings were noted as:

23 November 2023 and 7 March 2024

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 2.15 pm and finished at 2.45 pm

APPOINTMENTS, REMUNERATION AND CHIEF OFFICER CONDUCT COMMITTEE

13 July 2023

Present:-

Councillors J McInnes (Chair), C Whitton, A Saywell, F Letch MBE and A Leadbetter

* 75 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May be signed as a correct record.

* 76 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* 77 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Saywell, **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitton, and

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act namely relating to any individual and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 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.

* 78 **Deputy Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (Commissioning)**

The Committee had, earlier in the day, interviewed for the post of Deputy Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (Commissioning) of Devon County Council with a view to making a recommendation upon an appropriate appointment to the County Council on 7 September 2023.

The process had been undertaken in line with the terms of reference of the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee, the Pay Policy Statement and the Chief Officer Employment Procedure Rules (set out at Part 6 of the Constitution).

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The interviews having been completed and the suitability of the candidate for the post having been fully discussed and all relevant factors having been considered, such as the high level and breadth of experience and responsibility required for this role and the Committee then being of the view that the press and public need no longer be excluded from the meeting for final determination of its recommendation to the County Council:

RESOLVED that the press and public be now re-admitted to the meeting.

It was further **MOVED** by Councillor Letch, **SECONDED** by Councillor Saywell, and

RESOLVED that the Council be recommended to appoint Solveig Wright to the post of Deputy Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (Commissioning) of Devon County Council on grade L3, commencing at the earliest opportunity on a mutually convenient date, in line with the provisions of the Council's existing approved Pay Policy Statement.

NOTES:

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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 10.00 am and finished at 12.11 pm

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

6 June 2023

Present:-

Councillors S Aves (Chair), P Sanders (Vice-Chair), T Adams, J Bradford, J Brazil, I Hall, L Hellyer (remote), F Letch MBE, L Samuel and M Squires

Apologies:-

Councillors P Bullivant, C Channon, G Gribble, P Maskell and J Wilton-Love

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors J Hart and A Leadbetter

* 90 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

* 91 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* 92 **Chair's Announcements**

(a) The Chair welcomed Mrs Ruth Saltmarsh who was attending the meeting in her capacity as Co-opted member of the Council's Standards Committee to observe and monitor compliance with the Council's ethical governance framework.

(b) Ms Claire Platt, the Church of England Co-opted representative, had tendered her resignation from the Committee, and thanks were extended to Ms Platt for her time on the Committee and the contributions she made. The Diocese would advise a replacement in due course.

* 93 **Public Participation**

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Committee received and acknowledged oral representations made by Nicola Cardwell Brewin, Elaine Davis-Kimble, Caroline Bolingbroke and Astrid Harding on a matter to be considered by the Committee that day, namely the SEND Improvement Plan. In short, their respective representations covered:

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- Concerns there had been no improvement in the EHCP process one year on from the last Joint Local Area SEND Inspection.
- Concern about the recent SEND survey produced by PCFD and explaining the concept for a survey to be produced by Devon SEND Parents and Carers for Change.
- Commenting on the EHCP Hub; and communication in regard to SEND.
- A range of 'lived testimony' statements from parents and carers of children with SEND living in Devon.

The Chair responded, thanking each for their attendance and presentations which would be taken into account by the Committee during its subsequent deliberations.

* 94 Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Committee was updated as to the Work Programme and it was agreed to add the following item(s):

- Exeter University post pandemic research
- Young Carers

Members noted that Children's Services currently had limited capacity due to dealing with priority matters.

* 95 Election of Commissioning Liaison Member

In line with the recommendations of the 'Scrutiny in a Commissioning Council' Task Group Report, the Committee was asked to select a Commissioning Liaison Member, whose role was to work closely with the relevant Cabinet Members and Chief Officers/Heads of Service, developing a fuller understanding of commissioning processes, and to provide a link between Cabinet and Scrutiny on commissioning and commissioned services.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Aves, **SECONDED** by Councillor Samuel and

RESOLVED that Councillor Sanders be re-appointed as the Commissioning Liaison Member for the Children's Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

* 96 SEND Improvement Plan - Progress on Task Group Recommendations

(Councillor Leadbetter attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee.)

The Committee received a presentation on the SEND Task Group Recommendations: Linked to the SEND Improvement Plan. The Improvement Plan had been considered by the Committee at its last meeting.

The presentation highlighted:

- Staff caseloads to be reduced to the average of our demographic neighbours, and no more than 200 per officer.
- There were currently 8,412 learners with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). 16 permanent vacancies had been successfully recruited to, starting in September. There was currently an interim team working on the backlog of annual reviews.
- Approximately 200 requests for assessment were received each month, so the number of EHCPs was growing and would continue to do so.
- A more streamlined template for the EHCP, going back to basics, which would be piloted later in the year.
- Various training was being rolled out across the team including subject specific training regarding EHCPs and annual reviews.
- The service structure would be reviewed and the direction of travel was to have one team, with good practice to align around schools rather than postcodes.
- The EHCP Hub was being looked at to see how it could be made more user friendly.
- HR were working with the service to ensure good practice in recruitment and retention.
- Emphasis on the importance of working with the Commissioner and national partners on the issue of the safety valve debt which was linked to SEND improvement.

Questions and discussion points with Members and Officers included:

- The Service was working hard to drive forward the Plan at a greater pace, but it was recognised that progress would take time.
- The capacity of the health system in carrying out assessments around e.g. autism, which remained a national issue. An NHS presentation had been given to the Improvement Board to address these challenges, which Officers undertook to circulate to the Committee.
- A governance review around Children's Services was developing and was seen as imperative going forward.
- There was a large backlog of education psychology assessments which were needed for EHCPS and although there was a national shortage of educational psychologists, a number had been recruited.

* 97

Ofsted Monitoring Visit Letter

(Councillor Leadbetter attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee.)

The Committee received the Ofsted letter, which summarised the findings of the monitoring visit to Devon Children's Services on 18 and 19 April 2023. This had been the fifth monitoring visit since the local authority had been judged inadequate in January 2020.

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Areas covered by the visit were of the progress made in the quality and impact of services for children in care, with a particular focus on the following areas of concern identified at the last inspection:

- Permanence planning for children
- The quality and timeliness of life-story work
- The assessment of children looked after placed with parents
- Strategic oversight and grip on areas for improvement and oversight by senior leaders, including case audits and supervision.

The letter detailed the headline findings and evaluation of progress, noting positive areas of progress and areas that still required improvement.

Questions and discussion points with Members and Officers included:

- The timely permanency planning for children in care remained a concern and area of improvement and, although the Corporate Parenting Strategic Partnership Board had significantly improved, there remained wider partnership work to do.
- Important to note that there was a permanent Director of Children's Services starting in September and a Deputy Director of Social Care starting in mid-July to continue the improvement journey, working closely with the Commissioner in managing the transition.
- Officers commented that there were no quick wins or easy fixes but were focused on ensuring the wellbeing of staff and ensuring good, consistent practice across the service.

The Committee noted the progress being made.

* 98 **Children's Services Improvement Plan**

The Committee received the Devon Children's Services Improvement Plan April 2023 – March 2024.

The Devon Improvement Partnership Board was established by the Department for Education in 2020 in response to an Inadequate rating from Ofsted for Children's Social Care Services. The role of the Board was to direct, prioritise, measure and hold accountability for the Improvement Plan and the Devon improvement journey.

In March 2023, the Board agreed to reset its focus and approach to:

- Clarify and create shared understanding of the role and purpose of the Board, particularly with new system leaders and Board members.
- Create the condition for Board meetings to focus on key outcomes and associated actions.

- Create partnership priorities, outcomes and actions to become part of the Devon Children's Services Improvement Plan.

As part of this reset, the strategic Improvement Plan had been updated to incorporate:

- Children's Services Action Plan
- DCC Corporate Services Action Plan
- Partnership Action Plan.

The Improvement Plan set out priority outcome areas for Children's Services, at a strategic and operational level, namely: Change, Leadership, Engagement and Workforce.

Questions raised and discussion with Members and Officers included:

- The challenges of progressing the Improvement Plan, such as being focussed on key elements around staffing, where there was a large number of agency workers and how permanent workers could be secured.
- Confidence that Devon Children's Services, under its new leadership, would have the resources and capacity to achieve the required improvements. However, staffing was critical especially in North Devon due to lack of accommodation and District partners had oversight of this.
- That the Council were supporting the post pandemic research work currently being undertaken by Exeter University - schools were dealing with a lot of post pandemic children but lacked resources, staffing and funding.
- How workforce challenges and the high reliance on agency social workers would impact improved outcomes, the offer from the Social Work Academy on growing own staff; and looking at mentoring for children in care.
- How the Committee could provide additional support to improve progress by inviting partner colleagues to attend Scrutiny, and to focus on good practice and learning from that to develop confidence.

RESOLVED that the Improvement Plan be added to the Work Programme so progress could be monitored.

* 99 **Sufficiency Initiatives for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People**

The Committee considered the report and presentation given by the Head of Children's Health and Wellbeing on Sufficiency Initiatives for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People (presentation attached).

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The Council had recently secured funding following the submission of two successful bids to the Department of Education (DFE) for the following initiatives:

- The DFE Children's Home Capital Programme – the Council had been awarded capital funding of £733,354 to develop Welland Children's Home and a new children's home at The Link Centre to create five new 52-week placements for complex needs children in care.
- The DFE Staying Close Programme – the Council had secured a grant of £1,147,106 in May 2023, to be used over the next two years to pilot supported accommodation for care experienced young people.

The Committee were asked to consider and comment on the sufficiency initiatives and to review the next steps for each project, as outlined in the report.

Discussion followed with Members and Officers including the greater role that could be played by the Council and District partners, which was being taken forward by the Team Devon agenda.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Sanders, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hall and

RESOLVED that the Committee welcomes the sufficiency initiatives outlined in the report and recommends the programme to Cabinet when it considers the report in July.

* 100

Children's Standing Overview Group

The Committee received the report from the Children's Scrutiny Committee Standing Overview Group held on 18 April 2023.

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 1.16 pm

HEALTH AND ADULT CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 June 2023

Present:-

Councillors S Randall Johnson (Chair), Y Atkinson, J Bailey, R Chesterton, D Cox, I Hall, L Hellyer, P Maskell, R Peart, D Sellis, R Scott, C Whitton and M Wrigley (Vice-Chair)

Councillor P Crabb (remote, non-voting).

Apologies:-

Councillor J Yabsley

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors S Aves and J McInnes

* 107

Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* 108

Items Requiring Urgent Attention

No item was raised as a matter of urgency.

* 109

Public Participation

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Committee received and acknowledged representations from Geralyn Arthurs in regard to the Teignmouth Community Hospital (Minute *110 refers) on the case for its retention and referral to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care; and

(i) Richard Jones, (ii) Peter Stephenson, (iii) Si Johns, (iv) Councillor M Pearce; and (v) Alison Fewins, in regard to the Homelessness 18+ Contract (Integrated Adult Social Care Consultations) (Minute *111 refers) on the consultation process, the level of engagement with service users, impact of the proposed grant reduction and the need for its retention; and

(vi) Sonia Gould; (vii) Anna Fors; and (viii) Councillor Terry Elliott in regard to the North Devon Link Centres (Integrated Adult Social Care Consultations) (Minute *111 refers) on the consultation process, the level of engagement with

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service users, the impact of the proposals and the need for retention of current services.

The Chair thanked the Speakers and indicated that their views would be taken into account when the items were considered.

* 110 **Teignmouth Community Hospital Task Group**

(Councillors D Cox and M Wrigley declared a personal interest by virtue of their membership of Teignbridge District Council, the local planning authority).

The Committee considered the Report of the Task Group which covered its membership and scope, the formal process and steps for making a referral to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the history of consideration of this issue from August 2020, the previous Spotlight Review, the perspective from the League of Friends of Teignmouth Community Hospital; and concerns of the Task Group today and its conclusions and proposed next steps which included a list of questions (in Appendix 1 of the Report) for NHS Devon.

Members' discussion points with the Director of Commissioning Primary, Community and Mental Health Care (NHS Devon), and the Head of Scrutiny (DCC) included:

- confirmation that NHS Devon would respond in writing to the questions raised by the Task Group within 28 days following formal written notification and to any other questions Scrutiny may wish to raise in this matter;
- confirmation from NHS Devon that funding for the new Health and Wellbeing Hub in Teignmouth was secured and not dependent on the sale of the hospital site and the NHS was committed to its delivery; and that a planning application for the Hub was being considered by the District Council this same day (subsequently, notification of approval was reported to this Committee);
- the need for detailed 'social value' impact assessments including the impact on GP services for example, which could be included in the questions raised by the Task Group; and
- the referral process and the requirement for an evidence based alternative proposal in discussion with NHS Devon prior to any proposed referral.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor M Wrigley, **SECONDED** by Councillor S Randall Johnson and

RESOLVED that NHS Devon be asked to respond to the questions detailed in Appendix 1 of the Report following which the Task Group would then conduct further information gathering activities, including speaking to local people with a view that the Task Group would conclude its investigation in time for the September 2023 meeting of this Committee.

* 111 **Update on the Integrated Adult Social Care consultations on service changes in response to the 2023-24 Council agreed Budget**

(Councillor M Wrigley declared a personal interest by virtue of his membership of the Teignbridge District Council's Executive in so far as this item related to the Homeless 18+ Prevention Fund).

(Councillor J McInnes attended in accordance with 25 (1) and spoke to this item with the consent of the Committee and referred to the consultation exercise and acknowledged the Speakers' concerns and confirmed that decisions would be made by Cabinet).

(Councillor S Aves attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 (2) and spoke in regard to the potential impact for vulnerable young people (0 -25 years), including care leavers and people in supported accommodation and impact on other agencies for example and posed 6 questions (which would be passed to the Director and Cabinet Member).

The Committee considered the Report from the Chief Officer of Integrated Adult Social Care (Devon County Council) (ACH/23/174) on the processes across initially 6 service areas, 3 of which had been halted for re-evaluation.

The Report including impact assessments (which had been provided for Members for each consultation based on proposals as they currently stood) how the consultation had been delivered; and a summary of the consultation feedback in regard to (i) North Devon Link Services, (ii) 18+ Homeless Prevention Contribution and Contract Fund; and (iii) Wellbeing Exeter.

As a result of the feedback recommendations were currently being developed for presentation to the Cabinet on 12 July 2023.

The Director of Legal Services and Democratic Operations reported on the paused consultations to allow additional time for further consideration and matters arising from the consultations would be considered by Officers and Members.

Members' discussion points with the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care Officers, the cabinet Member and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services included:

- the provision of suitable alternatives should be in place if reductions in grants or services were approved;
- concern about the consultation arrangements in regard to the Link Centres and discharged service users and the impact of the pandemic on numbers and resulting effect on data analysis;
- concerns about the lack of information on consultation feedback, the adequacy of the Impact Assessments, the wider costs to partner

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- agencies; the impact on health inequalities across vulnerable communities; the need to focus on prevention, and the adequacy of the consultation arrangements;
- no service options for consideration by this Committee for recommendation to Cabinet; and the need for consideration of proposals by Scrutiny in open Committee; and
 - reference to wider governance considerations.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor R Scott and **SECONDED** by Councillor M Wrigley and

RESOLVED that a special meeting of this Committee be arranged (date to be confirmed) to consider policy issues, and options and service proposals (with reference to any governance issues, the consultation feedback, impact assessment) prior to determination by Cabinet.

* 112 Health Inequalities Overview (Public Health)

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Public Health, Communities and Prosperity on an overview of health inequalities, the importance of the wider determinants of health, inequalities in England and in Devon, and local actions to reduce these. The Report recognised there were multiple causes and addressing health inequalities required actions through the life-course and across agencies and communities.

Members' discussion points with the Director, and Public Health Consultant, and Specialist; and the Chief Medical Officer (NHS Devon) included:

- detailed data analysis on life expectancy trends according to gender and across socio-economic groups, vulnerable groups and geography;
- the impact of any proposed wealth tax;
- a proposal for restrictions on smoking within social housing and private rentals;
- vaping as an alternative for tobacco smokers and concerns about its wider use, particularly by younger people;
- the input of Public Health in the planning process; and work with local planning and housing authorities and other agencies;
- the impact of increasing obesity rates in primary school children, younger people and the general population and the role of Public Health; and
- close and developing working relations with NHS Devon and other partners through the Integrated Care System and development of joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies.

The Committee noted the Report to inform and support the County Council and the wider systems approach to health inequalities and that the themes outlined would be considered as part of the Committee's future work

programme, recognising that the causes of health inequalities were multi-faceted and required a range of actions both in the short term and over time.

* 113 **Health and Care General Update**

(Councillor J McInnes attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 (1) and spoke to this item with the consent of the Committee and referred to the new Care Quality Assurance framework and LGA Peer Challenge from 19 to 21 July 2023 and Masterclass on 15 June for all Members).

The Committee considered the Joint report from the Council and NHS Devon (ACH/23/174) on the latest news from the Devon Health and Care system.

This included updates on the NHS Devon performance covering Urgent and Emergency Care and Elective for February 2023; CQC assurance of Adult Social Care duties; Integrated Adult Social Care 2022-23 budget update as of March 2023; Devon Integrated Care Board financial position as of February 2023; delays to implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards, the Hewitt Review, CQC report published on services at the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS FoundationTrust, update on digital strategy; and on a lead research nurse global nursing award.

Members' discussion points with the Chief Medical Officer (NHS Devon) and the Director of Integrated Health and Care included:

- the performance of the new provider for the NHS 111 service and current demand and workforce capacity issues;
- the improving performance in Elective Care although the waiting list remained substantial, and the positive impact of the Exeter Nightingale services;
- relating to percentage of beds occupied by patients who were medically ready for discharge, whilst current performance was improving this remained a high priority for NHS Devon with the County Council and the Integrated Care System;
- the role of work force leads across the ICS to promote training/flexibility and retention, particularly across the specialities;
- request for further information in future reports on Mental Health (workloads and treatments), Dentistry across the County (with reference to the lack of services in the localities), and the position of the Dawlish MIU (on which information would be provided for the Vice Chair);
- the work of community pharmacies across the public and private sectors to reduce GP workloads for example, and the ability of newly pharmacists to prescribe and work to promote top-up training for current pharmacists to enable further prescribing; and
- the number of 'never events' at the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the CQC report on its short notice inspection.

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The Chair requested further information in future reports as outlined above and thanked the Officers for their report and commended the successes evident at the Nightingale.

* 114 **Commissioning Liaison Member**

In line with the recommendations of the Scrutiny in a Commissioning Council.pdf (devon.gov.uk) Task Group Report, the Committee was requested to select a Commissioning Liaison Member, whose role would be to work closely with the relevant Cabinet Members and Director/Heads of Service, developing a fuller understanding of commissioning processes, and provide a link between Cabinet and Scrutiny on commissioning and commissioned services.

The Scrutiny Officer would canvass Members in regard to the vacancy.

* 115 **Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Committee noted the current Work Programme subject to inclusion of topics which arose from the meeting. This included the Teignmouth Community Hospital Task Group and agreement to a special meeting of the Committee to consider Integrated Adult Social Care service proposals.

[NB: The Scrutiny Work Programme was available on the Council's website at: Scrutiny Work Programme]

* 116 **Information Previously Circulated**

Information previously circulated for Members, since the last meeting, relating to topical developments which have been or are currently being considered by this Scrutiny Committee:

a summary of planned communications for Easter 2023 from NHS Devon to provide some assurance on the proactive steps they are taking ahead of the long Easter weekend and junior doctor strikes.

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 1.40 pm

HEALTH AND ADULT CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 July 2023

Present:-

Councillors S Randall Johnson (Chair), J Bailey, R Chesterton, D Cox, I Hall, L Hellyer, P Maskell, R Peart, D Sellis, C Whitton, M Wrigley (Vice-Chair), J Yabsley and C Hodson (representing Devon District Councils)

Councillors P Crabb and R Scott (remote attendance).

Apologies:-

Councillor Y Atkinson

Member attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillor J McInnes

* 117 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

No item was raised as a matter of urgency.

* 118 **Public Participation**

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Committee received and acknowledged oral representations from (i) Daniel Martins, (ii) Si Johns; (iii) Peter Stephenson; (iv) Rebecca Harrison; (v) Councillor Terry Elliott (remote), (vi) Councillor Martin Pearce (vii), and (viii) Gareth Sorsby, in regard to the Homelessness 18+ Contract (Integrated Adult Social Care Consultations) (Minute *119 refers). All Speakers were in objection to any proposed reduction in the grant and referred to the consultation process and response with a clear view that no reductions should be made, accuracy of some content within the report, statutory duties, the limited sum involved relative to the overall Integrated Adult Social Care budget, the impact of the proposed grant reduction and the need for its retention; and reference to full and comprehensive Impact Assessments.

The Chair thanked the Speakers and indicated that their views would be taken into account when the item was considered.

* 119 **18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract, and Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund**

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In regard to the 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contract the following Councillors declared a personal interest: Councillors M Wrigley (by virtue as Leader of Teignbridge District Council), C Whitton (by virtue as a past voluntary fund raiser for the YMCA), D Cox (by virtue as a Member of Teignbridge District Council and Trustee of a local foodbank and homeless charity), J Bailey (by virtue as a Member of East Devon District Council), P Maskell (by virtue as a Member of North Devon District Council) and C Hodson (by virtue as Deputy Leader of Torridge District Council and Lead for Housing and Homelessness); D Sellis (by virtue as a Member of West Devon Borough Council) and I Hall (by virtue of as a Member of the Eastern Local Care Partnership).

(Councillor J McInnes attended in accordance with 25 (1) and spoke to this item with the consent of the Committee and referred to the budgetary context and the limited options available; his role today in listening to all views; and acknowledgment of the Speakers' concerns).

(a) Covering paper for reports on Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract, and Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund

The Committee received and noted the Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care (ACH/23/176) on the consultations that had concluded. These consultations were (i) Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract; and (ii) Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund.

Draft reports (for the Cabinet meeting on 23 August) on Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract and the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund on the background, consultation responses and options in detail were subject to consideration by this Committee.

The consultations in regard North Devon Link Services proposals had been extended to allow consultees additional time in which to respond to further requested detail.

Three other consultations relating to (i) Proposals for Learning Disability day centres; (ii) Proposals for Learning Disability respite centres; and (iii) Proposals for changes to Carers Services had been halted pending development of a new approach in these areas which involved re-evaluating the proposals and undertaking additional engagement in identifying next steps, following which further updates would be provided.

(b) Proposal for the future of the Integrated Adult Social Care 18+ Homelessness Prevention Contribution and Contract; and

(c) Proposal for the future Council contribution to the Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund

The Committee considered the reports of the Director Integrated Adult Social Care (ACH/23/177) and (ACH/23/178). Report (ACH/23/177) detailed the proposal and five available options in regard to the Homelessness Grant. The Report included context which included financial sustainability and the overarching development of the savings strategy, funding for District and City Councils with statutory responsibilities for preventing and relieving homelessness; and the annual cost (£1,454,478.48) of the discretionary grant met through the Adult Social Care budget to support hours for people to help prevent homelessness and promote recovery. The Report also referred to the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and award of grants from Government to Local Housing Authorities (LHAs), additional funding for the Right Sleeper Initiative to LHAs, and the Government Strategy '[Ending Rough Sleeping for Good](#)'

Report (ACH/23/178) related to a proposal to withdraw discretionary funding for Wellbeing Exeter. The funding was primarily used to support social prescribing that connected people to opportunities to support their broader and less complex needs than set out in adult social care legislation. The Report covered context including financial suitability considerations, continued working in partnership with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) and the Exeter City Council; and the development of the Wellbeing Exeter, options and alternatives, the consultation exercise launched in March 2023 and feedback it had received, and reference to the Council's Strategic Plan and summary.

The Members had also received written representations from Councillor Y Atkinson and from the YMCA.

Members' discussion points with the Chief Executive, Director of Integrated Adult Social Care; Head of Integrated Adult Social Care Commissioning; and Director of Legal and Democratic Services included:

- the current Impact Assessment (available at this Committee) was a live document and would be updated for Cabinet to reflect the outcome of ongoing discussion and collaboration with District/City/Borough Councils and other parties noting the inter-dependencies of the statutory and other non-statutory agencies involved across local authority boundaries; and the need for analysis within the IA to the wider costs and impacts of the proposed cuts for housing authorities and other agencies;
- outline of current and ongoing discussions and meetings with all District/City/Borough Councils (second tier housing authorities) at Chief Executive level involving senior Member and Officer housing and commissioning leads and the complexities involved across the diverse areas in the County; and the need for a place - based approach; and including discussion through the developing Local Care Partnerships;

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- the need for a 'One Devon' approach and available mechanisms and assistance for the homeless community via, for example, the Devon Home Choice [Devon home page](#) | [Devon home choice](#);
- the need for clarity, accuracy and appropriate use of terminology within committee/cabinet reports in terms of, for example, the available resources from central government for upper and second tier authorities and their differing purpose in relation to rough sleepers, widespread and increasing and chronic homelessness across all Districts, and support for vulnerable young people and supported housing;
- the relatively small sums involved within the context of the overall Integrated Adult Social Care budget (noting that other significant consultations and proposals which totalled circa. £30m (referred to at (a) above) had been paused;
- sufficiency planning by the County Council for younger people and care leavers and prevention work with, for example, Early Years, and MASH provision;
- need for 'Best Value' in commissioning (noting that Directors of Finance nationally were developing a clear definition of the term); and
- the need for additional time for partners if any proposed reduction in grants was to be made in order to allow them to prepare and make alternative arrangements.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor S Randall Johnson, **SECONDED** by Councillor R Peart that

Cabinet be recommended to agree to maintain the Council's 18+ homelessness prevention contribution as per option 4 in section 4 of the Cabinet report and the contribution to Wellbeing Exeter PF; and funding would be tapered in 24/25 financial budget by 50% and withdrawn entirely in 25/26 and subject to the following:

(a) consider encouraging District's/City Authorities to pool their funds within a potential wider 'One Devon approach forum' this would encourage and enable District/City Councils to work differently as current arrangements are not enabling more creative solutions to prevent homelessness. It be aligned to the Government 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good strategy' to ensure both strategic thinking and prevention remain paramount at both the county and district level;

(b) work as 'One Devon' to deliver temporary 'living pods' or explore other methods of delivering temporary accommodation on both land and waterways;

(c) Combined District Housing Review Boards would be best placed to work with NHS/Police/Social Care/Devon County/Fire Authorities to establish 'root causes' of homelessness and to foremost prevent homelessness;

(d) Team Devon to formulate a county wide housing plan to deal with homelessness and put prevention at the forefront of planning development for housing; and

(e) Team Devon/One Devon to agree a holistic Devon wide approach to addressing homelessness outside of statutory responsibility; and engage fully as partners in addressing the issue outside of Care Act eligible needs and prevention as the core responsibility of all councils in addressing the issue of homelessness.

Councillor J Bailey then **MOVED** an **AMENDMENT, SECONDED** by Councillor M Wrigley:

that no reductions in the grants (both 18+ Homelessness and Wellbeing Exeter Partnership Fund) be made in the current financial (2023/24) and the next financial year (2024/25) (and the remaining Motion detailed above (a - e) to stand).

The **AMENDMENT** was put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

Councillor I Hall **MOVED** an **AMENDMENT, SECONDED** by Councillor R Chesterton:

that funding be maintained in the current financial year (2023/24) and that the position be reviewed at Scrutiny and Cabinet by the year end (and the remaining a - e above motion to stand).

The **AMENDMENT** was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** and thereafter as the substantive motion, outlined below for clarity:

RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended that funding be maintained in the current financial year (2023/24) and that the position be reviewed at Scrutiny and Cabinet by the year end and subject to the following:

(a) consider encouraging District's/City Authorities to pool their funds within a potential wider 'One Devon approach forum' this would encourage and enable District/City Councils to work differently as current arrangements are not enabling more creative solutions to prevent homelessness. It be aligned to the Government 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good strategy' to ensure both strategic thinking and prevention remain paramount at both the county and district level;

(b) work as 'One Devon' to deliver temporary 'living pods' or explore other methods of delivering temporary accommodation on both land and waterways;

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(c) Combined District Housing Review Boards would be best placed to work with NHS/Police/Social Care/Devon County/Fire Authorities to establish 'root causes' of homelessness and to foremost prevent homelessness;

(d) Team Devon to formulate a county wide housing plan to deal with homelessness and put prevention at the forefront of planning development for housing; and

(e) Team Devon/One Devon to agree a holistic Devon wide approach to addressing homelessness outside of statutory responsibility; and engage fully as partners in addressing the issue outside of Care Act eligible needs and prevention as the core responsibility of all councils in addressing the issue of homelessness.

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

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.45 pm

CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 June 2023

Present:-

Councillors A Dewhirst (Chair), P Bullivant (Vice-Chair), M Asvachin, J Brook, R Chesterton, P Crabb, J Hodgson, C Slade, R Radford, I Roome, M Squires and J Trail BEM

Apologies:-

Councillors R Hannaford and J Wilton-Love

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors Y Atkinson and R Croad

* 111 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 be signed as a correct record.

* 112 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

* 113 **Public Participation**

There were no oral representations from Members of the Public.

* 114 **Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Head of Scrutiny updated the Committee as to the work programme and reported that following the Masterclass held on 26 May the Programme had been updated based on performance and risk data.

Members asked that the following be added for consideration:

(a) a policy on land use, noting that land could be allocated for crop growth for 'anaerobic digestion' as a power source or for food production; and

(b) customer service and engagement Task Group.

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The work programme was available at: [Democracy websites - Scrutiny Work Programme late June 2023.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

* 115 **Progress Update: Race Equality Action Plan**

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services on progress of the Race Equality Action Plan, following on from the first progress report presented in November 2022.

The report outlined the progress of the plan and referred to completed action in regard to strengthening resources, governance and accountability, creating a safe and inclusive working environment shaping organisational change, building better understanding through data and insight, and the proposed next steps.

Members' discussion points with the Chief Executive, Director of Legal and Democratic Services; and the Director of People Director of People & Culture included:

- the Senior Leadership Team's commitment to an inclusive and diverse culture to increase motivation, trust and confidence, improved recruitment and retention, and to help all staff feel valued and respected, increasing innovation and creativity, and to service improvements and better community outcomes;
- staff communication and initiatives to improve engagement through staff briefings for example as well as surveys and to encourage open feedback, for effective challenge with appropriate actions;
- the need for clear metrics and benchmarking including meaningful qualitative as well as quantitative data and information (with case studies as appropriate) and to include recruitment and retention data, grievance and disciplinary matters/outcomes and Occupational Therapy referrals for example; and the need for current budget information on costs and future revenue implications;
- the development of a dashboard to measure impact and outcomes as part of the next steps;
- confirmation of additional recruitment within the Equalities Team reporting to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services;
- the wider equality agenda across the organisation;
- a Member's concern about a national independent provider of children's care and education services with which the Council might have contractual relations in regard to their alleged recruitment practices and working/living conditions for its ethnic minority employees;
- the work of the County Council's cross party Equality Commission (on which further information would be provided in future reports) to promote the advancement of equality and challenge discrimination in all its forms in the organisation (their role and membership details etc were available at [Equality Commission - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(devon.gov.uk\)](#);

- the development of the prayer and contemplation facilities including Wudu (*or Wudhu, cleansing ritual or ablution that was an important part of purity and cleanliness in Islam before performing worship*) arrangements; and disability access facilities at County hall (including the Committee rooms);
- the overall objective and commitment to the organisational culture change that was intolerant to racism and discrimination against all people with protected characteristics.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor J Brook; **SECONDED** by Councillor A Dewhirst and

RESOLVED

- (a) that the achievements and support and the planned next steps to further advance race equality and commitment to a 'zero tolerance' approach to racism be acknowledged and supported;
- (b) that the achievements and the next steps in relation to wider Equality Agenda and the Equality Commission work be acknowledged and supported;
- (c) that updates in relation to the work of the Equality Commission be received on a six monthly basis; and
- (d) that Officers be requested to provide tangible demonstration of change resulting from the equality action plan for the November committee to include emergent understanding on cultural support for kindness and care.

* 116

Treasury Management Stewardship Annual Report 2022/23

The Committee considered the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DF/23/68) on the outturn position, performance and key matters arising from the Council's Treasury and Debt Management activities during the 2022/23 financial year.

The Report outlined the Minimum Revenue Positions, the borrowing at outturn, analysis of long term debt, investments at outturn, prudential indicators and a 2023/24 update.

Members discussion points with the Investment Manager and the Chief Executive included:

- Plymouth and South Devon Freeport: proposed review by South Hams District Council on the project which may have implications for the County Council; and to date no call on external borrowing had been made;
- continuous review by the Treasury Team of interest rates in regard to future borrowing limits;

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- the level of PWLB, LOBO and market debt regarding the £3m difference between Council's borrowing level and the figure in the accounts (on which more information would be provided to Members);
- the growing deficit on Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and the continued actions/outcomes locally which would be evidenced to assist discussion at national level to mitigate the potential impacts on borrowing levels with additional Government support; and
- the commendable and prudential work of the Treasury Management Team in optimising borrowing and investment and maintaining cash-flow requirements.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor J Brook and **SECONDED** by Councillor A Dewhirst and

RESOLVED that the Report and the overall 2022/23 Treasury Management outturn position be commended to the Cabinet.

* 117 **Locality Budget Annual Report 2022/23**

(Councillor R Croad and Y Atkinson attended (remotely) in accordance with Standing Order 25 and spoke with the consent of the Committee).

The Committee considered the Joint Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value, and Head of Communities (SC/23/3) on a summary of locality budget allocations approved by Members for audit and monitoring purposes.

Each Member of the County Council was allocated a Locality Budget of £8,000 for 2022/23. The Locality Budget was used by Members to respond to local needs, within electoral divisions, by supporting projects or activities that benefited the people and communities they represented. These grants must be used in accordance with operating principles in Part 3 of Section 5 of the Council's Constitution. This statement (Appendix 1 to the Report) summarised expenditure in 2022/23 by each of the 60 Councillors.

Members' discussion points with the Head of Communities included:

- opportunity for local Members to pool budgets for projects across a locality (for example, in Exmouth);
- the commendable advice and support from the Member Support Officer and the Communities Team for any proposed project to accord with the constitutional rules and regulations which included the requirement for in-year spend;
- the current allocation of £5,000 a significant reduction from £8,000 in 2022/23;
- the level of underspend in 2022/23 and desire by Members to include up to date online information of each Member's current expenditure; and
- confirmation that Cabinet had determined that the underspend from 2022/23 would be carried forward.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor J Brook, **SECONDED** by Councillor C Slade and

(a) that the Report be commended to Cabinet and Councillor colleagues be urged to spend their locality budgets in full to support their communities; and

(b) that an online spreadsheet on individual Member expenditure be published on the public County Council website.

* 118 **Domestic Violence Champion**

(Councillor Y Atkinson attended (remotely) and spoke in accordance with Standing Order 25).

Councillor Atkinson as the former Committee Champion on Domestic Violence reported on her role and work as the Champion and referred to:

- the current County Council strategy following the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and establishment of a Local Partnership Board and the programme of work mapped against the strategic framework objectives;
- the statutory duties of the County Council to assess the need and create a strategy for domestic abuse support for all victims (and their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of the area;
- the establishment of Domestic Sexual Violence Abuse (DSVA) Champions DSVA champions meetings and action plan;
- work with the Police and Criminal Justice system vital in helping tackle DSVA and the Peninsula Crime Plan;
- the Domestic Abuse Commissioner Report which highlighted the lack of safe accommodation and sanctuary provision to enable people to remain safe in their own home for domestic abuse victims and their families
- a webinar by the Fawcett Society around parenting against online misogyny, an issue which many individuals working with young people are facing and a basic County Council resource for teachers and other professionals to help them engage with young people in conversations about online misogyny; and that Safer Devon Partnership was in the process of developing a Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme to roll-out across Devon schools; and
- on ongoing work: support given to staff who are the victims of Domestic Abuse and the work of the [Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#): (EIDA) which shared best practice reports and information; and reports from The Domestic Abuse Conference 2023 on Thursday 29th June and Women's Aid Conference on 12th and 13th July 2023 and to continue scrutinising the implementation of the Strategy.

The Chair thanked Councillor Atkinson for her detailed report.

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The Chair asked that a Masterclass be arranged (to include view of the video 'Voice of the Child'.

The Head of Scrutiny would canvass Members about the Champion role.

* 119 **Commissioning Liaison Member**

The Committee was requested to select a Commissioning Liaison Member, whose role will be to work closely with the relevant Cabinet Members and Director/Heads of Service, developing a fuller understanding of commissioning processes, and provide a link between Cabinet and Scrutiny on commissioning and commissioned services.

Councillor Crabb referred to the need for additional support and agreed to continue in this role.

* 120 **Items Previously Circulated**

The Committee noted information previously circulated for Members, since the last meeting, relating to topical developments which have been or are currently being considered by this Scrutiny Committee:

(a) RISK Register with key risks for this Committee available at: [Risk Registers - Democracy in Devon](#); and

(b) Highways Performance Dashboard – as received before each Committee

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

The Meeting started at 10.40 am and finished at 12.45 pm