

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**  
**Wednesday 12 July 2023**

**1. QUESTION FROM SI JOHNS (YMCA) (ATTENDING IN PERSON)**  
**Re: Homelessness Grant**

You have said throughout this process that “no decisions have been made” and that you were “awaiting the outcome of the Public Consultation”. Given that the Public have quite clearly said that the cuts should not go ahead. Indicated by not a single person agreeing with the proposal, and nearly 1000 people (pretty much everyone else) saying that they do not want the proposed cuts to go ahead. Devon has clearly spoken; you have the result of the public consultation; are you going to listen to the voice of Devon as you stated you were, or are you going to ignore the overwhelming result of Devon through this Consultation?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

The consultation process enabled us to listen to people’s views and gave us the opportunities to hear concerns and have conversations on mitigations. This has ensured we are talking to the right people to help manage any change that might take place, and we have updated our impact assessment accordingly.

Like all local authorities we have a range of duties to be cognisant including a Best Value Duty; the requirement is 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.”

This is what the proposals sought to achieve, and the consultations gave the public the ability to comment. Comments are given due regard before final proposals are developed and presented to Cabinet for decision. Any proposals will ensure that people with eligible needs as defined within the Care Act will continue to have their eligible needs met and met in ways that are improved from a best value perspective, this may include being delivered by others rather than by DCC.

A consultation is not a vote for or against a specific course of action. The result of the consultation will be the decision taken by Cabinet on the 23 August.

## 2. QUESTION FROM MR PEARCE (ATTENDING IN PERSON)

**Re: Increased expenditure resulting from cuts.**

Many national agencies and experts have stated, and given evidence, that the proposals you are making, far from saving money will actually cost Devon County Council, and others, much more. These have included Homeless Link, Shelter, Crisis, The Big Issue and the National Housing Federation. Whilst I acknowledge that some of these costs will be borne by other bodies - have you budgeted for this massive increase in adult social care, policing, sanitation, accident and emergency provision and mental health services? If so, where because we can't see that level of increase in the budget? Have you had discussions with the other bodies that will inevitably face increased expenditure as a result of the proposed cuts to allow them to prepare and budget appropriately, if not, when will these discussions take place?

### REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

Discussions have taken place across the system with relevant bodies throughout the duration of the consultation process, and we took steps to ensure that partners and local system organisations could respond to the consultation.

Although IASC is required to find £30.5M of savings in 2023-24, we have had a net budget increase of £27.3M which equates to an 8.8% uplift to deliver services to support adults with eligible care needs across Devon.

DCC does not receive any funding from Government for homelessness prevention and most other County Councils do not fund this provision. Devon's District Councils receive funding from central government through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (£2.6M and £2.7M in 2023-24 and 2024-25 respectively) and the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding (awarded a total of £7.1M for 2022-25).

We will continue to work with partners to bring additional funding to Devon. This includes the national Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme and the Supported Housing Improvement Programme

Consultation related documentation specifically included numbers of individuals that may have adult social care eligibility; we have identified pathways for assessing this eligibility pending any Cabinet decisions in August.

In adult social care we do not see eligibility as a financial burden. Through our vision and strategies, we have set out our approach to how we will support people, in the first instance in a strength based and short-term way that promotes their independence and if possible without the need for commissioned and on-going statutory funded services.

**3. QUESTION FROM MR SORSBY (ATTENDING IN PERSON)  
Re: Objectives of Devon's Join Health / Wellbeing Strategy**

Devon's joint health and wellbeing strategy, Happy and healthy communities: – details one of its objectives is to improve housing conditions, reduce homelessness, and increase supply of appropriate housing

The same strategy outlines 2 of its principles as;

1. Prioritise prevention and early intervention across the health, care and wellbeing system

2. Recognise and support the growing contribution and needs of voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to improving health and wellbeing, and the role of the public in the continuing development of services

The 2023-2028 Living Well In Devon strategy states that Young people in need of housing support have a lack of viable housing options to support their needs and that Young people often want to live with people their own age. It also states that Good quality supported housing is vital. It provides a safe, stable and supportive place to live and opens up opportunities for people to live the independent life that is right for them.

How do you believe these parts of Devon's strategies and priorities are reflected in this consultation to cease a prevention contract and what effect do you believe it will have particularly on young people's supported housing options moving forward?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

The Council is committed to prevention and improving population health in Devon. We demonstrate this in many ways and through the work of a number of our areas including the Communities Team, Public Health, Children's Services and Integrated Adults Social Care, working in partnerships with those who have statutory duties and related government funding toward homelessness. We are also a key member of Team Devon and contribute to the Housing Taskforce.

When our partners are aware of individuals who are accessing their services or provision who have likely eligible social care needs, we encourage them to make referrals into adult social care we deliver our statutory duty to meet eligible care needs in a strength-based way that is preventative, promotes their independence and connects people to their community.

**4. QUESTION FROM ROSEMARY WHITBREAD (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**  
**Re: Queen St - Proposals for Changes in Parking and Traffic Flow**

Why haven't the Teignbridge Councillors organised public meetings to allow people to question them about these proposals and where do they think people are going to park? Do they accept that this will be detrimental for businesses?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

In partnership with Teignbridge District Council, there has been significant public and stakeholder consultation at every stage of the development of the project, including two public consultations, a stakeholder consultation and a statutory Traffic Regulation Order consultation. As part of the Spring 2022 consultation, several online events were organised, also accessible by phone, where members of the public and businesses could speak directly to the project team. Separately, businesses were offered one-to-one meetings with the project team.

Approximately 45% of the on-street parking will remain under the proposals and on-street parking dedicated for disabled people will be increased. There are alternative off-street parking facilities nearby at Cricketfield Road car park, approximately 2 minutes' walk away. The impacts on businesses has been considered throughout the development of the scheme with additional loading bays provided following feedback. The footway widening, greening and seating which form part of the proposals aims to make Queen Street a more accessible and attractive environment and encourage longer dwell time and spend in the town centre. For such a transformational town centre scheme, there were very few representations on the proposals from businesses on Queen Street, which also included support for the changes. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme is also planned to evidence the impact of the scheme and enable ongoing discussions with local businesses.