



**QUESTIONS TO THE
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CABINET MEMBERS
AND/OR
CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES**

Thursday 6 October 2016

**1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WESTLAKE
Re: Government Proposals on Grammar Schools**

Would the Leader of the Council give his response to the proposals that the current Government is returning to a selective system of education.

It is said that only areas that want grammar schools will get them, so does Devon want or need Grammar Schools?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

Both interventions from the opposition party leaders seem to ignore the reality. The County Council is no longer responsible for opening new schools. The Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition introduced legislation that all new schools should be academies or free schools. Therefore any new schools opened in Devon must be established by academy trusts, free school sponsors or religious organisations. We do not control the organisations which can apply to open new schools and their applications are decided by the Government through the Department of Education. So whether or not this council is in favour of grammar schools is – literally – academic.

Our aspiration is to have every child in Devon in a good or outstanding school. Presently some 93.5 per cent of children in Devon attend schools in those categories and we are working hard with all our schools to improve that figure further. I would remind both opposition party leaders that Devon already has a very successful grammar school at Colyton and many of their constituents from Devon already send their children to the grammar schools in Plymouth and Torbay.

While responding, I would like to record my thanks to all Councillors – including Councillors Westlake and Connett - for their support for this Conservative council's long-standing fair funding campaign for schools, mounted jointly with Devon's headteachers, governors and parents.

Last year this Council secured an extra £16 million pounds for Devon schools with a further £16 million more this year. We have also secured a pledge from the government to review the whole system of school funding and to introduce a national funding formula. We will be working hard over the coming months to ensure this new formula works in the best interests of all Devon's schools and pupils – no matter what type of establishment they are.

**2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST
Re: Exeter Bridge Road Highway Improvements 'You Tube' Video**

Can the Cabinet Member for Economy, Growth and Cabinet Liaison for Exeter say how much the Devon County Council video on the Exeter Bridge Road Highway improvements video on YouTube cost? Can he explain in what way Council Tax payers will benefit from this 2 minute 20 seconds video?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

Communications with Road users is an important part of our work. It is compatible with the corporate approach agreed for the "WeAreDevon" clips, and research shows that this is the way to communicate in the future. Explaining why and how we are doing works that affects people's journeys can be very effective in managing demand on our staff for information.

So, effective communication with the all users of Bridge Road is a key focus of the Project Team responsible for managing the Bridge Road scheme. Following the hugely positive public response and national recognition of the public relations exercise carried out during the construction of the South Devon Link Road, the team have employed similar techniques. The aim of the video is to provide the public with a better understanding of the scale and complexity of the scheme in an effort to explain the duration of the works and what tasks are taking place out of the immediate view of drivers.

In addition to the video the team have established a dedicated micro-site for the project that provides answers to common questions and updates on progress. The public are encouraged to subscribe to an electronic mailing list which provides updates on the works and advises of potential travel disruption.

A local production company provided the film at a cost of £1,000.

3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WESTLAKE

Re: Role of the Council in the Success Regime / Sustainable Transformation Plan.

Will the Leader of the Council give details of the County Council role in the preparation of the Devon Success Regime Sustainable Transformation Plan report.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR BARKER

The Success Regime and the Sustainability and Transform Plans (STP) are not the same things.

*Following concerns about the increasing funding issues for the system in NEW Devon CCG area it was announced in June 2015 by the NHS England Chief Executive that North, East and West (NEW) Devon CCG would be one of three CCGs in England that should be brought under the direction of the nationally titled **Success Regime**. The focus of the Success Regime which was implemented in NEW Devon in September 2015 was to deliver services for patients in a system that was struggling with financial problems and to challenge the local system to fix those problems. NHS England with NHS Improvement worked together to oversee this programme of work. The Success Regime plans have been formulated by NEW CCG and decisions are made by their Board.*

*The nationally determined **Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)** process was initiated after the Success Regime and applies across the country. In early 2016, the [NHS planning guidance 16/17 – 20/21](#) outlined a new approach to help ensure that health and care services are built around the needs of local populations, bringing health and care organisations together to develop plans about working together. To do this, every health and care system in England was required to produce a multi-year Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP), showing how local services will evolve and become sustainable over the next five years and deliver the aspirations of the [Five Year Forward View](#). The STP is I believe due to be submitted to NHS England by 21st October.*

To deliver these local population based plans, 44 STP Footprints across England were determined nationally and for the greater Devon area the STP includes both the Torbay and South Devon CCG and NEW Devon CCG areas – because CCGs have different footprints they span the three local authority areas of Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council.

The aim of the STP is to bring together health and care to consider how working towards a single system it can deliver improved health and care based on the needs of local populations. They

are supported by six of the national health and care bodies: NHS England, NHS Improvement, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Health Education England (HEE), Public Health England (PHE) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). To facilitate the discussions in Devon an STP Programme Delivery Executive Group (PDEG) has been established, where DCC is represented by the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and there is now a Collaborative Board which the Leader attended for the first meeting but the Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health and the CEX will attend going forward. The PDEG oversees development of the plan and the working groups which have been set up to support the creation of the STP. County Council officers attend these groups from across the Council including finance, workforce development, property, social care and public health.

In addition the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Public Health teams have supported the plan development through their work on the JSNA's and the Public Health Core Offer. The Directors of Public Health have also supported the development of the prevention elements of the STP and ad-hoc requests have been made for evidence; for example, Care Closer to Home and the Audit to understand the complexity of Needs of people in a hospital setting known as the Acuity Audit.

4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WESTLAKE
Re: Dementia Friendly Communities and County

With the increasing number of Devon parishes, towns and the city of Exeter looking to become Dementia friendly Communities would the Leader consider taking action to make Devon a Dementia Friendly County?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

There are currently an estimated 20 established Dementia Friendly Communities in Devon and over the last 18 months resource from the Better Care Fund and the County Council has been invested in a Partnership Development Officer to support the development and promotion of these initiatives across the County.

The Devon Dementia Partnership, of which the County Council is a member, recognises the importance of becoming recognised as 'Dementia Friendly' at County level. The Partnership has signed up as a [Dementia Action Alliance](#), which is the nationally recognised process, and the work to create an action plan has begun. The Partnership currently has a sub-group which is offering advice, guidance and support to all District and City Councils to develop specific strategies for becoming known as 'Dementia Friendly' organisations. This includes looking at how to embed a Dementia Awareness training programme for all employees and elected members, linking in with, and proactively supporting the Dementia Friendly Community initiatives established within their areas and considering how across departments people living with dementia can be more involved in the decisions that are being made which effect them.

To become recognised as a Dementia Friendly County will require an approach that involves all stakeholders and follows a specific dementia strategy which feeds into and aligns with the current commissioning strategies and plans for the county. I would support the Health & Wellbeing and Peoples Scrutiny Committees in playing a role in the development of such a strategy.

It is also worth mentioning that the Council has recently committed to supporting carers in the workplace with practicing and promoting carer-friendly working practices, which of course includes dementia.

5. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: CAMHS Referral Times

Will the relevant Cabinet Member give an update of the progress made to provide mental health treatment to children and adolescents within the standard target of 18 weeks referral to treatment.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

Nationally, there has been a significant increase in the number and complexity of mental health issues among children over the last five years and this has been reflected locally with significant increases in the number of referrals to the CAMHS service.

Despite this great increase in demand, Virgin Care has significantly reduced the length of time children, young people and families wait for treatment, increased early help support and provided additional support where it is most needed in the community, avoiding inpatient admissions through the assertive outreach service.

In August 2016, the median wait for a child referred to the CAMHS service to begin treatment was 9 weeks while on average urgent cases began treatment within 1-2 days. In the most urgent cases treatment can start within 24 hours.

Referrals are triaged and children and young people seen by experienced mental health staff. This may lead to a referral being accepted, returned to gather more information, signposted to other local resources and, if the needs described in the referral do not meet agreed thresholds, closed to CAMHS with advice to referrer.

An initial assessment meeting called a 'choice' appointment will help determine need and guide intervention within core CAMHS or signpost to local community resources if the level of need indicates that this is appropriate.

As part of the EH4MH contract with Devon County Council, intervention such as online counselling (from Kooth) is made available.

Families are provided with contact information should the difficulties worsen and invited to contact the Single Point of Access (SPA) hub for further advice and support.

The incomplete pathway for CAMHS at the end of August was 80%. Incomplete pathways are an NHS measure, used to describe the end of month waiting list. It looks at the total waiting list and reports the percentage of children and young people waiting under 18 weeks. This measure replaced the traditional referral to treatment measure which looked at those treated in the month.

As shown below, the overall waiting list overall been decreasing, along with the numbers waiting over 18 weeks. We expect fluctuations in the incomplete pathway percentage which correspond with incoming referrals, however in 2015/16 the incomplete pathway was between 67% – 77%. In 2016/17 to date, the incomplete pathway has been between 80% - 87%.

	<i>Incomplete pathway %</i>
<i>Apr-16</i>	<i>80.5%</i>
<i>May-16</i>	<i>87.7%</i>
<i>Jun-16</i>	<i>86.9%</i>
<i>Jul-16</i>	<i>83.7%</i>
<i>Aug-16</i>	<i>80.1%</i>

*Nationally the median waiting time for a routine CAMHS appointment is 26 weeks[i]. [ii]
median waiting time for a routine CAMHS appointment is 26 weeks[iii]. [iv]*

6. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT Re: Waiting times for CAHMS Treatment

Will the Cabinet Member please confirm as at 26 September 2016 the number of children and young people waiting more than 18 weeks for mental health treatment and what the longest wait is.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

There were 134 children and young people waiting over 18 weeks in September, with the longest wait recorded as 64 weeks for a group session. Group sessions require a certain number of children, young people and/or their families before they can be effectively run, and so children and young people and/or their families are asked to wait for these criteria to be met. Families have the contact details of their CAMHS clinician to contact should any urgent assistance be required. The group with the longest wait is next due to run in November.

Our correspondence to families following referral screening currently has links to approved websites and self-help information. We are also informing them how they can contact us should they be concerned about risk. In addition we are exploring the use of SMS texting to engage with YP whilst they are waiting.

If the referral suggests that there may be risk issues that appear not to be urgent, CAMHS staff make contact with families to formulate a plan and if necessary, to change the referral priority from routine to urgent.

CAMHS primary mental health staff attend DAF meetings to support children and families into CAMHS if a referral is required. We also run telephone choices following periods of increased referrals to minimise waits.

^[1] <http://www.nhsconfed.org/resources/2016/04/camhs-state-of-the-nation-report-by-centreforum-released>

^[1] NHS Benchmarking Network, 2015 - CAMHS Benchmarking Report 2015 (<http://www.nhsbenchmarking.nhs.uk/projects/network-projects.php#10>)

7. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Milbury Farm Exminster

Will the Cabinet Member please confirm what discussions have been held with the developers of Milbury Farm estate in Exminster with regard to providing the long-promised bus shelter which was a planning condition.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

The bus shelter was required to be delivered within the Milbury Farm site. The original proposal was for a bus service to enter the estate via a new bus lane and exit via the main estate road. The bus shelter was to be used by passengers of this service. However, as a consequence of design changes by the developer and various discussions with the local member and Parish Council the use of the bus lane was dropped and consequently the bus does not enter the site. Officers have worked with the Parish Council and developers to try to deliver the shelter off site on the existing bus route. However the view of the developers is that the Section 106 planning requirement was specifically for a shelter within the site and that the position now proposed falls outside of that definition. On this basis they have declined providing the shelter. Officers had argued that as highway works extended beyond the site a wider definition should be used. Unfortunately the specific wording of the S106 agreement does not permit this.

8. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Mamhead Road and Heavy Vehicles

Will the Cabinet member please advise what action Devon County Council will take to stop or discourage Heavy Good Vehicles and Public Service Vehicles, including school transport coaches from using the narrow and winding Mamhead Road between the A380 and the A379 at Starcross.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

I've asked officers in the Transport Co-ordination service and in Highways to review what is happening on this road.

As a result of a number of complaints about schools buses arriving late at Dawlish Community School, there were discussions with the school transport contractor and a proposal to change the arrangements for the buses was implemented.

Buses now operate out of Dawlish rather than Marsh Barton. The contractor has chosen the route best suited to improving journey reliability and is using the Mamhead road as a result.

As Councillor Connett will know, the Mamhead Road is also used by a number of Heavy Goods Vehicles that are accessing businesses in the immediate area.

Officers advise that if an HGV restriction on use of the route was introduced there would need to be an exemption to allow access to businesses, which would limit the impact of any such proposal.

Also, the police are normally opposed to HGV restrictions unless there are clear environmental or safety reasons for implementation, as they are difficult to enforce. So, no HGV restriction is currently proposed.

However, the school transport team intend to review the school bus contractor's choice of route taking account of the recent complaints and considering the impact on Mamhead Road and on school journeys.

As the school transport bus was previously based at Marsh Barton, the option to revert to this will be part of the review.

9. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Traffic Speed and Flow at Powderham

Will the Cabinet Member please set out what arrangements are being made to manage traffic speed, traffic flow and parking at Powderham, following the opening of the Turf to Powderham section of then Exe Estuary trail and beyond to Dawlish.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

It is proposed to consult on a number of options to reduce the impact of traffic and parking on those living in the area and improving conditions for cyclists. Budget has been allocated to do this.

Negotiations on land compensation issues related to the cycle route scheme are ongoing, and advice is to await the resolution of these issues before consulting on the options for traffic and parking in the community, as you have been previously briefed.

10. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Highways and Traffic Management in Starcross

Will the Cabinet Member please set out how Starcross Parish Council is being engaged with regard to highways issues in the village, including the A379 and managing traffic at the well-known pinch point of Courtenay Pillars.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

As the local Member will be aware, officers have been in correspondence in recent months with the Parish Council Chairman regarding traffic issues on the A379 through the village. The Chairman has suggested an on-site meeting between the Parish Council's Highways Sub Committee and County Council officers to consider specific traffic issues, a date for which is to be agreed.

11. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Hire of Meetings Rooms

Since the start of the 2016-17 financial year, how much money has Devon County Council spent on the hire of external meeting rooms, whether in hotels, community buildings or other facilities?

What was the expenditure in 2015-16.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CLATWORTHY

£199,985 has been spent to date in the current year on room hire and £398,321 was spent during 2015/16. Both figures exclude expenditure by schools.

12. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Bridge Road Progress and Opening Times

Will the Cabinet Member advise on progress with regard to the Bridge Road improvement scheme and whether the road will be fully open to traffic in May 2017 as planned.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

The contractor is currently making good progress.

At the moment, piles continue to be installed for the foundation to the retaining wall adjacent to the main line railway and specialist sub-contractors have started work on the realignment of the swing bridge over the canal.

The traffic management layout change that occurred in August, moving the running lanes from the east side to the west side of Bridge Road, has allowed work to continue to the flood relief structure and allowed the start of the cantilever walk way which is being attached to the listed Countess Wear bridge. The new bridge is being fabricated off site.

The most recent programme from the main contractor indicates that the road will be reopened to the public in May, as originally planned.

13. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: Roundfield Park and Ride Scheme (Alphington)

Since the withdrawal of the Roundfield park and ride scheme (Alphington/Ide) what work has the county council or its contractors undertaken to progress the project?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

The planning application was withdrawn to allow more time to consider and address some of the concerns raised by respondents to the application. No formal work has taken place at this stage, other than reviewing the comments received and officers have been considering what work might be required for a future submission. There are currently no timescales for resubmitting a planning application as there are other higher priority projects that the County Council are currently progressing.

14. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BIEDERMAN
Re: Oakwell in Bickington

Can the Cabinet Member advise what is happening with Oakwell in Bickington.

Is it going to be sold?

It has been suggested that it would make an excellent warden controlled living accommodation with a health & wellbeing hub attached to it?

This was closed down around 18months ago and I feel it could be a real asset to the Community. It is a crying shame it sits empty.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR BARKER

Oakwell was declared formally surplus to the Councils requirements in July 2015. Prior to being offered for sale the Councils Care Home provider network were informed of the intention to dispose of the site and were able to express an interest using the site for social care provision but no proposals were put forward.

NDDC was advised of the property as were other public bodies and other departments within DCC. As there were no expressions of interest after allowing an appropriate time the property subsequently marketed for sale on the open market by formal tender. An offer was accepted on the property in November 2015 just 4 months after being declared surplus, however, earlier this year the purchaser withdrew from the sale.

A new offer has subsequently been accepted which is subject to contract and is conditional on the grant of planning permission, the property is therefore sold subject to contract.

15. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST
Re: Hate Crime Statement

Does the Leader believe that the County Council's Statement on Hate Crime now has "pride of place on our website"? Does he believe it can be easily found?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

There are many things the Council does that I am proud of, but there is sadly not enough room on the home page of our website to refer to them all.

However, The Council has since 2012, promoted the Devon Joint Declaration for Equality, and encouraged organisations in Devon to sign up. This Declaration sets out a vision for the area and recognises the importance of equality and diversity and aims to bring organisations together around some common goals. It defines what an equal society could look like and the benefits to individuals, communities, businesses and public services and is a direct link from the equalities front page <https://new.devon.gov.uk/equality/> so I do not think it is difficult to find.

Of course, the minutes highlighting the Councils recent Pledge are also easily found.

I can also advise that the Police are looking to launch a Pledge on addressing Hate Crime so it would seem sensible, in the spirit of joined up working, protecting communities and not duplicating precious resources, to promote both initiatives at the same time.

16. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE
Re: Unpaid Penalty Charge Notices

Pursuant to my question a year ago, Can the Cabinet Member update the Council on progress taken by this Council to deal with persistent offenders who do not pay lawfully issued tickets. It is acknowledged that this usually applies to those who chose not to register their vehicles or are marked 'in trade' with the DVLA. Out of curiosity, just how much was uncollected for the financial year April 2015 -2016

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Parking fee evasion is a national problem. We continue to investigate opportunities to deal with persistent evaders, including those that do not register vehicles properly with the DVLA. It is felt that we have now exhausted discussion with DVLA, and are investigating other approaches potentially including the removal of vehicles associated with evaders.

For the 2015/16 financial year, out of a total of 65,008 penalty charge notices issued, 749 cases were returned by the DVLA without address details. Whilst this only equates to 1% (1.15%) of cases, the potential value of these cases is £47,075.00, and we do take the matter seriously.

17. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Councillors Home Addresses

In April 2015, Devon County Council advised that all councillors must provide their home addresses which would be published as legally required.

Will the Leader of the Council explain why Newton Abbot North Conservative member Eve Barisic, who moved to Roscoff, France, several years ago still does not have her homes address published but uses Devon County Hall as her UK address on the council website.

What steps did the Leader of the Council take to ensure compliance by Councillor Barisic?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

I understand that Councillor Connett has already been advised that the Members home address was published in 2015/2016 yearbook, alongside a correspondence address which we would do for any Member if requested, but as a result of an error in updating the website earlier this year that was incorrectly omitted. It is there now. Officers reinstated it as soon as it was drawn to their attention.

18. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VINT
Re: Healthcare Changes and the Role of the Council

Department of Health guidance on Local Authority Health Scrutiny (June 2014) states that "In considering substantial reconfiguration proposals health scrutiny needs to recognise the resource envelope within which the NHS operates and should therefore take into account the effect of the proposals on sustainability of services, as well as on their quality and safety". In taking into account the 'Resource Envelope' within which our CCGs operate, does the Council, in the present economic situation, have any means of guaranteeing that changes made to healthcare, as proposed in the Success Regime and the Sustainability and Transformation Plans, will be reviewed and amended to ensure that the safety and accessibility of services is sustained? If this assurance cannot be provided, can the Council confirm that it will take this matter to the Secretary of State for Health on the basis that the present service is the best that the CCG can offer within the Resource Envelope and that therefore this Resource Envelope is inadequate and has to be improved?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR BARKER

As Councillor Vint has identified this is an issue for scrutiny. The consultation arrangements involving both NEW Devon and Torbay and South Devon CCG's have been to Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee as have any subsequent decisions. The closure of Torrington Hospital was referred to the Secretary of State for Health who referred the matter to an Independent Review Body as normal process. I believe that organisation has now responded to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. NEW Devon CCG area was one of three CCGs included in the National Success Regime due to budget pressures and its ability to contain current services within the resource envelope it received.

Whether there is a better way of delivering services is something that both CCGs are considering together with the wider Devon Local Authorities. The National programme of Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP) is intended to support this.

The local STP has not yet been finalised and I understand is expected to be submitted to NHS England on 21st October. I don't think there is a way of providing a guarantee as suggested but there is also no way of providing a guarantee that current services can be maintained or that they are the best that can be provided unless changes are made. The STP is intended to bring Health and Care services together to show how plans to work together to deliver jointly commissioned and jointly provided services is the best opportunity to provide sustainable services.

An important part of this is developing community involvement in early intervention and support within communities. Fewer people will need personal support packages if there is good local community support.

Councillor Vint is right to highlight the importance of Scrutiny in looking at the STP. On 11th August, I hosted a meeting to which scrutiny chairs and vice chairs were invited, in the morning it was DCC scrutiny and in the afternoon it was the relevant officers and scrutiny chairs from all the authorities in Devon. They had a presentation on the STP by Ruth Carnell, Angela Pedder and Laura Nicholas from the NHS. Following the presentation I invited the scrutiny members to consider forming a joint scrutiny board specifically for the STP as it covers all three Local Authorities in its footprint. They agreed to do this.

19. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VINT Re: HOTSW and Economic Development Consultation

When drafting the economic development elements of the Heart Of The South West Devolution Prospectus how were the primary employment, housing and social needs of the region identified, and how were residents and small businesses consulted to help identify these needs?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

On the 19th September 2016, I gave a presentation at a Member Development Session on Devolution which is available on the Councils website at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/how-the-council-works/devolution/>

The presentation is clear in setting out the next steps for the partnership. In respect of further engagement with key stakeholders in the development of our joint economic priorities; this will be undertaken through the development of a Productivity Plan. This plan will replace the current Single Economic Plan developed by the Local Enterprise Partnership and is an opportunity for all local authority partners and stakeholders to fully engage in developing proposals that will deliver greater prosperity across the Heart of the South West. The Partnership is starting work on this in Autumn and will be engaging with groups through to Spring. Members will have the opportunity to consider the draft Productivity Plan before final approval.

This presentation also set out a timetable for formal public and stakeholder consultation starting in the early New Year on the creation of a Combined Authority and a draft deal with Government. At this meeting I did, however, emphasise that this timetable is subject to Government formally engaging with the Partnership. I can confirm that the Partnership is not actively engaged in formal negotiations with Government and therefore this timeline will be amended. The Partnership is clear that it will only go to formal public consultation when it has an offer from Government for the public and stakeholders to consider. I will, of course, continue to keep Members updated on progress with Devolution.

20. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VINT
Re: HOTSW and Consultation Processes

In light of the motion approved by this Council on the 10th December 2015 that the HOTSW Devolution Deal be subject to a period of public consultation, when and how will residents and small businesses be consulted on the economic development elements of the Prospectus?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

I would refer Councillor Vint to my earlier answer at question 19

21. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VINT
Re: Superfast Broadband Coverage

The Government is supporting investment to provide superfast broadband coverage to 90% of the UK by early 2016 and 95% by December 2017. By when does the Council expect these two targets to be achieved for Devon and how will any delays be minimised?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

Over 263,000 homes and businesses in Devon and Somerset now have access to superfast broadband thanks to phase 1 of the publicly-funded Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme. The combined investment by the County Council, its local authority and LEP partners, together with the investment by the Government is making a real difference to communities and the local economy. In total, over 320,000 homes and businesses will have better broadband, some 278,000 with superfast access, when phase 1 is complete. CDS is on track to achieve that target on time and on budget by the end of December, 2016, as agreed with Government. None of these homes and businesses are covered by commercial providers and would not have been connected without this vital publicly-funded intervention.

The Government's wider 90% target, approximately 924,000 premises in total, is ultimately dependent on the speed of roll-out in areas designated by companies for commercial investment and therefore not eligible for public-subsidy. Access to superfast broadband is critical to business survival and increasingly an essential service in our homes. The commercial sector has a vital role to play alongside the publicly-funded programme in ensuring our region benefits from greatly enhanced broadband access, CDS is therefore seeking an assurance from BT that its roll-out will achieve the Government's target on time.

CDS is continuing to work hard to deliver improved broadband access. The CDS voucher scheme has been live for 6 months and allows anyone with a broadband speed of less than 2Mbps to apply for a voucher of £500 towards the cost of a new broadband connection. To date over 2,000 vouchers have been issued and BDUK have confirmed that this is the most successful scheme of its kind in the country. A procurement exercise is underway to appoint a provider for phase 2 of the CDS programme which aims to increase the availability of superfast broadband (at 30Mbps and above) to tens of thousands more homes and businesses. The deadline for submitting full applications is 21st October 2016. CDS aims to conclude tender evaluations by 14th November and award the contract(s) in December 2016. This process will determine the target coverage and timescale for the publicly-funded roll out in the second phase. It will contribute to the Government's 95% target, but as with phase 1 achieving that target will also depend on commercial provision.

22. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR VINT
Re: Highways Maintenance Contract

Now that the Cabinet has agreed that the Highways Term Maintenance Contract be awarded as a monopoly to a single company covering the entire County for a 7-10 year period, how will the Council assure residents and town / parish councils that individual maintenance projects are not being overpriced and how will the Council respond if other companies can demonstrate that they can deliver individual maintenance projects for a lower cost?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

Councillor Vint will recall that Cabinet agreed the future delivery model for highway maintenance at its meeting in May 2015. In doing so, it considered the view of Place Scrutiny of which I believe Councillor Vint is a member.

Councillor Vint's description of the new Term Maintenance Contract as a monopoly is incorrect.

Cabinet agreed that the service delivery model for highways maintenance should be a medium sized Term Maintenance Contract, supported by other discrete contracts. This provides a flexible solution that ensures the Term Maintenance Contract can provide a core service to deal with routine, reactive and emergency work and that there is competition for other work where this is in the interest of obtaining best value.

The duration of the Term Maintenance Contract reflects the period of contract required to keep costs, particularly plant and equipment costs, down. The contract award decision is based on achieving the best value outcome for the residents of Devon. Management of the contract will focus on a continuous improvement.

Place Scrutiny will be helping to develop a set of performance indicators at its meeting on 13th October. These will be used to measure performance in managing the highway asset, so Councillor Vint has an opportunity to translate his question into some meaningful indicators, so the Scrutiny can monitor the performance of the highway service in delivering best value through its highway maintenance activity.

The Council can assure its residents that the Term Contract procurement process follows national best practice and is informed by feedback on the current contract from elected Members and residents over recent years.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Thursday 6 October 2016

1. QUESTION FROM MRS ANNE WARDMAN

Re: Scrutiny of the Success Regime and Sustainability and Transformation Plan

Isn't it time all councils put a vote of no confidence in the NEW Devon CCG?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

The Success Regime was imposed by NHS England on three areas across the country and the health system covering North East and West Devon (NEW) was one of those three to be included in the national scheme. It required the system to demonstrate how the escalating costs can be contained and reduced to meet the resources allocated to them. Their plans and actions are overseen at a National level by NHS England and Monitor who keep an eye on NHS costs. NHS England have powers to intervene if the plans are not likely to deliver the outcome required. This Council has a Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny committee that is monitoring the consultations and proposals and they have the power to refer any decision which changes a service to the Secretary of State for Health. They recently referred the decision to close hospital beds in Torrington and the Secretary of State referred the matter to an Independent Review Body as is normal process. I believe that organisation has now reported on its findings and responded to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) is not just an issue for NEW Devon CCG, it is a National Scheme which requires 44 plans across England to be submitted to NHS England. The plan has to show how both health and care organisations will work together to deliver services over the next five years. In Devon the plan covers three local authorities, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay as well as the two CCGs NEW Devon and Torbay and South Devon. In Devon the STP is overseen by a board on which all the Health providers and commissioners are represented as well as representatives of the three local authorities.

The County Council's Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee has the power to refer decisions to the Secretary of State and consider the actions of the CCG's.