

## COUNCIL

6 December 2018

### Present:-

Chair: C Chugg

Vice-Chair: R Hosking

Councillors H Ackland, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, S Aves, K Ball, S Barker, J Berry, F Biederman, R Bloxham, J Brazil, E Brennan, J Brook, C Channon, I Chubb, J Clatworthy, A Connett, P Crabb, A Davis, A Dewhurst, A Eastman, R Edgell, R Gilbert, B Greenslade, R Hannaford, J Hart, J Hawkins, L Hellyer, J Hodgson, S Hughes, T Inch, A Leadbetter, J Mathews, J McInnes, B Parsons, R Peart, P Prowse, R Radford, S Randall-Johnson, S Russell, P Sanders, A Saywell, R Scott, D Sellis, M Shaw, M Squires, J Trail, P Twiss, N Way, C Whitton, C Wright and J Yabsley

### Apologies:-

Councillors P Colthorpe, R Croad, G Gribble, I Hall, G Hook, J Hook and C Slade

## 149 Minutes

The Chairman of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October be signed as a correct record.

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

## 150 Announcements

The Chair of the Council reported on the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant Employers recognition scheme, which was particularly poignant in that 2018 marked a significant year in Devon's remembrance. The Armed Forces Covenant was 'a promise from the nation ensuring that those who were serving and / or who had served, and their families, were treated fairly. The Council would also work towards achieving the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold status.

The Leader of the Council and Lt Col Jon Penhale from 6 Rifles signed the covenant.

The Chair also reminded Members to view the exhibitions in the Ante-Chamber relating to Devon Remembers and also the Vote 100.

The Devon Remembers display focused on Food, Farming and Fishing in Devon during the First World War, a unique snapshot of the impact of the onset of the First World War on local agriculture and farms.

The Vote 100 exhibition included a Candidates photography exhibition of women who stood for election in 2017, a Polling Station, information about the 1918 vote and opportunity to debate and vote on issues of today, a timeline of women elected as Devon Councillors and MPs, and information about the suffrage campaign.

## 151 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

**152      Public Participation: Petitions, Questions and Representations**

The Leader was presented, by Mr and Mrs Naybour, with a petition containing approximately 100 signatures relating to speeding and speed limits in Grenofen.

The Leader indicated that the relevant Cabinet Member or Head of Service would be asked to respond direct to the petitioner on the issues raised, within 15 days.

There was no question from a Member of the public.

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Council received and acknowledged oral representations made by Members of the School Council from the Exeter Deaf Academy on the issues raised by the Notice of Motion on British Sign Language, later in the agenda, particularly highlighting good communication and inclusion by both the BBC and ITV for news programmes to be signed in British Sign Language.

Further oral representations were made by Anthea Simmons, Peter Sturdgess and Julian Andrews who spoke on the issues raised by the Notice of Motion in relation to Brexit, the aerospace industry and the importance of a Peoples Vote.

The Chair thanked all the public speakers for their contributions.

*[NB: The representations may be observed through the webcast of this meeting – available for 12 months after the meeting]*

**153      Petitions from Members of the Council**

There was no Petition received from a Member of the Council.

**154      Questions from Members of the Council**

(Councillor Greenslade declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of being a Member of North Devon District Council)

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members provided written responses to 10 questions submitted by Members of the Council relating to activities on County Estates Farms and tenancy agreements, staff pay scales and the living wage, drains, gullies and the policy for maintenance, school budgets and availability of additional funding, early and positive intervention in relation to children's services as preventative measures for their futures, overpayments of carer's allowances, recovery of monies and the scale of over payments in this area, resilience testing on key supplies and services for the County post Brexit, the tower block at the Barnstaple Civic Centre, breakdowns of numbers of gagging agreements / clauses over the last five years, victims of child sexual exploitation and parental rights.

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

*[NB: A copy of the questions and answers are appended to the signed minutes and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the webcast of this meeting – see Notes below]*

**155      Cabinet Member Reports**

(Councillor Greenslade declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of being a Non-Executive Director of Exeter Airport).

The Council received reports from the relevant Cabinet Members on matters of interest or service developments relating to their remits which had occurred since the previous meeting or were likely to have an impact in the future or on specific issues upon which they had been asked to comment, as set out below:

**(a)      Policy, Corporate and Asset Management**

Councillor Hart commented, as requested by Councillor Hannaford on the Business Rates Retention Pilot, including an update on bids and projects.

The Leader highlighted that the pilot, on updated estimates, estimated a financial benefit of £16.6 millions to the Council, although the authority made a contribution of £5 million to the Business Rates Risk Reserve to cover any potential collection fund deficits arising in 2019/20 with the remaining £11.6 millions be made available to service areas to submit requests for investment, using criteria such as supporting the sustainability of Social Care Services, grow or protect the Business rates base and / or result in revenue savings.

The total value of requests were £25.5 millions.

However, at the same time the Council was faced with increasing pressures in Children Services around placements and market sufficiency and a decision taken to apply the fund to support the future management of these pressures, with invest to save initiatives, for example to support Edge of Care, Crisis Care, Troubled Families, the Devon Inclusion Project and fixing the system for Children in Care Placements.

He circulated information, again as requested by Councillor Hannaford on autumn budget implications for regional military capacity, the 'Sunset for the Royal Marines' campaign, progress to secure contracts at Devonport Shipyard to decommission nuclear vessels and possible Brexit implications for the regional private sector defence industry, highlighting that the defence sector was a very important part of Devon's economy. The bases provided jobs both directly and in their civilian supply chains. Defence manufacturing was also a major employment sector and recent modelling suggested the sector accounted for up to 26,000 jobs across The Heart of South West LEP area.

Devonport Naval base directly accounted for 10% of employment in Plymouth.

The Leader made reference to the Chancellors announcement of a £1 billion uplift to the Ministry of Defence in his Autumn Budget, in addition to the £600m already allocated to the MOD for 2018/19 earlier this summer, together with approximately half of the additional £800m allocated for 2019/20, would be used to pay for Dreadnought costs running above previously budgeted levels.

The Ministry of Defence said in January 2018 that it still intended to close RMB Chivenor by 2027, but had provided few details on the exact plans or timetable.

Plymouth had secured the future of the amphibious ships and the type 26 frigates would be base-ported in Plymouth. The future location of the marines was uncertain, pending the modernising defence programme. Plymouth was the only site in the UK to decommission nuclear vessels and it could not be done anywhere else.

The key issues around Brexit were sovereign capability which had recently been illustrated by Barden and the announcement by the German parent company to leave as a result of Brexit. However, the Council was working with other partners in the Heart of the South West through

the Brexit Resilience and Opportunities Group to consider what impacts that Brexit might have across the local economy.

He circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Atkinson on the steps taken by the Council to support the DWP, JobCentrePlus, Devon's District Councils, Devon Citizens Advice and other organisations in providing advice and support to claimants as Universal Credit. This included steps taken to identify vulnerable claimants, those that would suffer hardship as a result of delay as well as any children affected. The Leader highlighted that examples of the Council's support were listed in the County Solicitor's Notices of Motion Report (CSO/18/25) to the Cabinet on 12 September 2018 and also that the Council was playing its part through support and coordination as the situation developed, for example liaison with the District Councils and Citizens Advice Devon to assist a smooth transition of support for new claimants from April 2019. In addition, positive partnership relationships had also been developed by County Council services whose clients were likely to be affected by Universal Credit such as Children's Centres. Whilst the likely impacts of Universal Credit were understood, it was difficult to quantify the numbers who would find it difficult to make a claim or suffer hardship as a result of receiving their benefit monthly in arrears. However, the support from the County Council would be reviewed as information emerged.

He also responded to questions on the reported difficulties with assessments, the potential to establish a poverty commission, bidding for a second business rates retention pilot and council tax support schemes.

**(b) Economy and Skills**

Councillor Gilbert circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford on the current position with Appledore Shipyard including possible closure, future business and any ongoing community and parliamentary activity. The Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills highlighted that Babcock had taken the decision to exit operations at its Appledore facility. 199 people were currently employed at the site, with a significant number of these currently on short-term redeployment to Babcock's Devonport site. Babcock outlined its intention to offer all staff members an opportunity to transfer permanently to Devonport, although details of the offer were awaited.

The Cabinet Member said there was still a concern about the implications of the closure for the Torridge area more widely.

Officers had been working closely with a broad array of local partners to prepare for next steps. This included highlighting concerns on the future of the site to Babcock and wider stakeholders, support for ensuring the optimum outcome for employees, outlining the potentially significant economic impact that Babcock closure may have on the wider economy of Torridge and, as far as practicable, indicating the Council's strong support for the retention of skilled shipbuilding and marine sector jobs in the Torridge area. The Council's Economic Development Officers were due to meet key regional partners for a working group session on 13 December 2018 and the authority had engaged with local MPs over recent weeks.

He also responded in writing to Councillor Shaw on the Council's efforts to save air services provided by Flybe, highlighting that the Council was currently working closely with partners around ongoing developments at Flybe Ltd / Exeter Airport. The airport was a crucial asset for the County, supporting employment of around 1,800 skilled individuals and contribution of around £150m of GVA to the local economy.

Partners had collectively written to the Chief Executive to express collective support for the company's activity. This included an open offer to explore additional projects linked to the company's Training Academy and discussion of potential opportunities for joint working. Whilst decisions around Flybe and its services would ultimately be for the Company and its Board, Flybe had provided significant reassurance around the health of the business and its commitment to the airport over recent weeks.

**(c) Infrastructure Development and Waste**

Councillor Davis circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Connett, on the provision of the planned all-through school at South West Exeter, including land ownership and when the school was expected to open.

The proposal was being delivered through the Governments Free School Programme, not directly by the Council, but officers were working with the Department and the school sponsor, (Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust). The Cabinet Member advised there was not a confirmed opening date as yet.

The responsibility for securing the free school site sat with a Government-owned property company called LocatEd and again Officers were working closely with them and they recently confirmed that contracts had been signed although the land was not yet in their ownership.

**(d) Highways Management**

Councillor Hughes commented, as requested by Councillor Connett, on repairs to Kingsford Lane, Holcombe Burnell, the resurfacing on the A379 at Kenton, including Exeter Hill and the use of Mamhead Road and Hill by HGVs and coaches, advising that the Neighbourhood Highway Officer had been in touch regarding the Kingsford Lane repairs.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the resurfacing of the A379 at Kenton was scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> week in March, and in the week prior to the resurfacing, drainage works would be undertaken.

With regard to Mamhead Road, the Cabinet Member said that engineers had concluded the investigations and that additional signs indicating "light vehicles only" had been erected.

He was also asked to Report on the number of recorded road traffic accidents on the roads of the new Devon area, the administrative area of the Council, in 2018 to date, fatalities resulting from these accidents, the same information for the period of 2017 and 2013 and the total length of time that the M5 in Devon, the A38, the A380, the A30, the A361 roads in Devon had been closed due to road traffic accidents during 2018 to date. In light of the volume of data requested, the Cabinet Member undertook to get a written response to Councillor Greenslade.

He also responded to questions on the role of HATOCs in relation to road safety, the first steps to implement resident parking schemes and also the road safety strategy of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

**(e) Adult Social Care and Health Services**

Councillor Leadbetter was asked to Report by Councillor Greenslade on the developments and changes that had resulted from the Cabinet decision to implement Integrated Care Management.

The Cabinet Member reported that he would write to Councillor Greenslade on the detail requested.

**156**      **Minutes**

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the Minutes of the under-mentioned meetings of Committees be approved.

Appeals Committee	-	8 October, 5 November and 3 December 2018
Procedures Committee	-	7 November 2018
Audit Committee	-	8 November 2018
Standards Committee	-	12 November 2018
Public Rights of Way Committee	-	15 November 2018
Investment & Pension Fund Committee	-	16 November 2018
Development Management Committee	-	28 November 2018
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny	-	22 November 2018
Children's Scrutiny	-	26 November 2018
Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny	-	27 November 2018

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

**157**      **Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police Merger (Minute 147 of 4th October 2018)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 147 of 4 October 2018 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Atkinson that:

*Since 2015, Devon & Cornwall Police and Dorset Police (DC&D) have been working together through a 'Strategic Alliance'. Operational police departments such as Operations, Roads Policing and Prevention as well as 17 other business areas are already operating across the three counties with a further 11 departments currently going through changes which will see them aligned.*

*The Chief Constables of DC&D Police recently announced their intention to explore a voluntary merger of the two forces. There are no recent examples of successful voluntary mergers of police forces.*

*Work is now underway to develop a business case for the merger for submission to the Home Office in October 2018, with a decision expected in January 2019.*

- *The PCC commenced a public engagement programme across the three counties in August which ended on 28th August, the full business case was not be shared with stakeholders or the PCP before the end of this consultation.*
- *It is understood that at a PCP meeting on 5th October some of the business case may be shared with the PCP before its submission to the Home Office.*
- *DCC had not formally been consulted and this has not been discussed at DCC cabinet or Scrutiny Committee*

*The proposed merger will impact funding and on Council Tax across Devon A much higher proportion of Devon and Cornwall's total funding (61.5%) comes from government. Only 53% of Dorset's funding comes from government and a higher proportion comes from the police precept element.*

*Overall, government funding is more per head for Devon and Cornwall (£103) than Dorset (£85). This would fall to £97.6 per head for a combined force.*

*Having received minimal information regarding the financial impact or benefits of the potential merger, it is difficult to know whether current levels of funding, alongside the*

*substantial reserves held by both forces, would prove sufficient to underwrite any additional costs arising from the merger of the force areas. This is particularly relevant in attempting to understand how the additional 430 police officers or staff would be funded as a result of the merger. At the moment, tax payers in Dorset in an average Band D property pay around £18 a year more for their policing than householders in Devon and Cornwall. Legally, the levels of police precept for both areas must be harmonised for the merger to take place. Will Dorset rates be harmonised down to the Devon and Cornwall level? This seems to have been ruled out. Another proposal is that the rate for Devon and Cornwall will be increased to the Dorset level to fund extra police officers. The estimated increase would mean an extra payment of £1-3 per month (£18 per year) for average Band D residents in Devon and Cornwall.*

*This motion proposes that:*

- The Council writes to the PCC to request that the full business case is sent to DCC for its comments before any proposal is submitted to the Home Secretary;*
- That the Council opposes the merger on information it currently has available to it that it will mean an increase of £18 per year council tax for average Band D residents in Devon and Cornwall and writes to the PCC and if appropriate the Home secretary with its views;*
- Council censures the PCC in relation to her consultation on the merger as the stakeholder consultation was carried out while important local authority stakeholders were in summer recess and without the business case being made available to stakeholders so that the no meaningful consultation could take place.*

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet (the amendment) as set out in Minute 255(a) of 14 November 2018:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and in light of the position of the Police and Crime Commissioner that she was minded not to support the submission of the proposed full business case to the Home Office and therefore the proposal to create a new force incorporating Cornwall, Devon and Dorset would not progress, that no further action should be taken on the Notice of Motion.

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

## **158      Children's Bed Poverty (Minute 148 of 4th October 2018)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 148 of 4 October 2018 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hannaford that,

*More children are living in poverty than at any other time in the past ten years, with 4.1 million children across the UK living below the breadline.*

*Shockingly it's thought that there are over 400,000 children in the UK who do not have a bed of their own.*

*Without somewhere to rest their head, bedtime routines become difficult, stress levels rise, and getting a good night's sleep is often near to impossible.*

*Furthermore, educational performance deteriorates and safeguarding risks rise.*

*Over the last five years, Dreams Beds has provided Buttle UK with nearly 10,000 children's beds to donate to those families in desperate need — more than ever before. With the number of beds that they supplied during those five years rising by 77 per cent.*

*We applaud the work of this charity, and businesses, social enterprises, church groups, and others across the country in trying to tackle this national scandal.*

*As Corporate Parents with a duty of care to all of Devon's children, we resolve that the Council formally writes to The Rt Hon. James Brokenshire MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and our local members of Parliament, to highlight this issue and call for serious consideration to be given for a national grants scheme that allows those in need to apply for help and assistance, to put an end to children's bed poverty.*

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 255(b) of 12 November 2018:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that Notice of Motion be accepted and the Council make representations to James Brokenshire MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, copying the same to local Devon MPs, raising the issue of bed poverty, endorsing the work of the Buttle Trust and seeking support for a national scheme that would enable families to get the support they need.

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

## 159 **Devon County Council and Fracking**

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

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

Councillor Hodgson then **MOVED** and Councillor Biederman **SECONDED**

*I am aware that South Devon has little if any shale reserves that could attract potential fracking exploration or would be economically viable to extract. However, as part of a national support to prevent controversial planning matters being able to avoid public consultation and protest and also to support a permanent ban on fracking in the UK, I am also requesting this motion regarding permitted development rights which has now been allowed for Fracking planning applications. This means that applications can by-pass the usual public consultation and objection processes and publicly represented decision making bodies such as council planning committees. France, Ireland, Bulgaria, Germany, Victoria, in NSW Australia, four provinces in Canada New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Quebec have all banned fracking and Germany has placed an indefinite moratorium, Netherlands has placed a temporary moratorium on fracking. This also supports this Council's agreement in principle to support initiatives that will prevent or mitigate climate change.*

- 1. Will write to the Secretary of State to object to applications for fracking having permitted development rights such that applicants can avoid the usual planning system.*
- 2. Supports a national ban on fracking in the UK on public safety and climate change grounds.*

In accordance with Standing Order 6(6) the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Cabinet for consideration.



**160**      **British Sign Language**

Councillor Dewhirst **MOVED** and Councillor Connett **SECONDED**;

*This Council passionately believes that good communication lies at the heart of a civilised society and furthermore believes that inclusion is a vital part of a fair society.*

*To that end this Council realises that there is a large number of British Sign Language (BSL) users in Devon and so offers Deaf people an on-line interpretation service to enable people whose first language is BSL to communicate and interact with our Council.*

*The BBC offer in-vision BSL interpretations of some popular and topical programmes however it is not provided for the local and live news services. They do however offer the option for subtitles to be used for their programmes for Deaf people or people with limited hearing. Sadly, Deaf people find this service less than helpful and often very confusing - try watching the news with the sound off and just subtitles. ITV offer no services for Deaf people. Many Deaf people in Devon wish to keep up with the news in our County and wish that the BBC and ITV offered a similar interpretation service to our Council. This currently happens in America and most western countries.*

*In a spirit of inclusion this Council resolves to ask the BBC and ITV to start a process of full inclusion by asking the Chief Executive to write to the Director General of the BBC to ask for Spotlight South West to be signed in BSL and to the Managing Director of ITV Westcountry to ask for West Country News to be signed in BSL.*

In accordance with Standing Order 6(6) the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Cabinet for consideration.

**161**      **Devon's Housing Need**

Councillor Shaw **MOVED** and Councillor Biederman **SECONDED**

*Devon County Council welcomes the reports published by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (Devon branch), 'Devon Housing Needs Evidence' and 'A Review of Government Housing Policy and Its Impact on Devon' and the extensive research from which they result. Noting that the reports conclude that Devon's real housing needs are substantially less than currently assumed, Council asks Cabinet to commission a full evaluation of the implications of these reports for both the Council's policies and relevant joint ventures including the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.*

In accordance with Standing Order 6(6) the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Cabinet for consideration.

**162**      **Brexit Referendum and Economic Impacts**

Councillor Shaw **MOVED** and Councillor Biederman **SECONDED** that in accordance with Standing Order 6(6), the following Notice of Motion be considered at this meeting.

Councillor Brennan then **MOVED** and Councillor Hannaford **SECONDED** that, in accordance with Standing Order 32, the vote on debating the motion at the meeting shall be by a roll call vote.

The Motion for the roll call vote was put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

The Motion to debate the Notice of Motion at the Council meeting was put to the vote and also declared **LOST**.

Councillor Shaw then **MOVED** and Councillor Biederman **SECONDED** that:

*While welcoming the Devon Councils' support for Flybe, this County Council expresses its alarm that Brexit has contributed to the airline's crisis and that it has been followed by the announcement of the closure of the Schaeffler factory in Plymouth.*

*In view of (a) this accelerating harm to Devon's economy, which also threatens our agricultural, health, university and small business sectors and living standards, and (b) polling evidence which suggests that a majority of Devon voters and Devon districts now oppose Brexit, Council calls on the Government to organise a referendum in which voters are offered the choice of accepting the deal which the Government has negotiated or remaining in the European Union.*

In accordance with Standing Order 6(6) the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Cabinet for consideration.

*(In accordance with Standing Order 32(4) Councillors Ackland, Atkinson, Asvachin, Aves, Brazil, Brennan, Connett, Dewhirst, Hannaford, Hodgson, Shaw, Way and Whitton asked that their vote in support of debating the Notice of Motion at the meeting be recorded).*

#### **163      Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Biederman **MOVED** and Councillor Shaw **SECONDED** that:

*This County Council welcomes the fact that the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee has now met, but believes that for effective scrutiny to take place:*

- (1) two of the Council's four places on the Committee should be made available to opposition groups from next May;*
- (2) there should be an opportunity for the Non-Aligned Group to be represented from time to time;*
- (3) an opportunity for public participation should be provided;*
- (4) proceedings should be webcast.*

In accordance with Standing Order 6(6) the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Procedures Committee for consideration.

#### **164      Fair and Adequate Funding to Local Authorities**

Councillor Atkinson **MOVED** and Councillor Aves **SECONDED** that:

*Philip Alston, the UN's special rapporteur has found that Local government in the UK has been "gutted" by government policies reflecting the "dismantling of the social safety net". He finds that since the onset of austerity, cuts to local government funding have transferred service costs to users who are "least able to pay" and local authorities are "even struggling with the basic services they are statutorily obligated to provide" such that the "overall social safety net is being systematically dismantled" as local authorities, especially in England, which perform vital roles in providing a real social safety net have been gutted by a series of government policies.*

*The UN official referenced the National Audit Office's finding that local government has incurred a 49% cuts in funding since 2011-2018 (but 75% cut in revenue funding to fund services in Devon County Council ) community and youth centres have been shrunk and underfunded, public spaces and buildings including parks and recreation centres have been sold off and 14 million people – one fifth of the population – live in poverty, and noted that Institute for Fiscal Studies calculations predict a 7% rise in*

*child poverty between 2015 and 2022. He also says that despite these factors, Alston claimed ministers were in "a state of denial" about UK poverty. Other areas in which social security have been undermined include cuts to legal aid and benefit reductions.*

*This Council agrees with the rapporteur's findings and urges the government to introduce fair and adequate funding to local authorities to meet local people's needs in Devon.*

In accordance with Standing Order 6(6) the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Cabinet for consideration.

## 165 **Devon and Cornwall Police Funding**

Councillor Atkinson **MOVED** and Councillor Hannaford **SECONDED** that:

*The government has been more interested in terrorism and high-end threats but less focused on local crimes and policing. Steep budget reductions and a widening mission for the police has forced Devon and Cornwall Police to make the difficult decision to cut budgets for local policing. Austerity cuts in other public services have also impacted on the police who are often the service of last resort for people with mental health conditions.*

*The National Audit Office report castigated the government's handling of the police. The NAO assesses the government did not fully understand the actual impact of these cuts on police forces such that policing is at the tipping point.*

*This Council calls on the government and local MPs to ensure that the anticipated review of police funding agrees a fair funding formula for police forces that ensures an increase in funding for Devon and Cornwall Police which does not pass funding increases on through council tax beyond the current permitted up to 2% annual increase in the police precept.*

In accordance with Standing Order 6(6) the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Cabinet for consideration.

## 166 **Declare a Climate Emergency**

Councillor Hodgson **MOVED** and Councillor Shaw **SECONDED** that in accordance with Standing Order 6(6), the following Notice of Motion be considered at this meeting

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

Councillor Hodgson then **MOVED** and Councillor Shaw **SECONDED** that:

*Full Council notes:*

*Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have already increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO2 levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm). This far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity;*

*In order to reduce the chance of runaway Global Warming and limit the effects of Climate Breakdown, it is imperative that we as a species reduce our CO2eq (carbon equivalent) emissions from their current 6.5 tonnes per person per year to less than 2 tonnes as soon as possible ;*

*Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, infrastructure, etc., to make low carbon living easier and the new norm;*

*Carbon emissions result from both production and consumption;*

*Devon County Council has already shown foresight and leadership when it comes to addressing the issue of climate change when back in 2004 we signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change and has since recognised this in its strategy for responding to the Climate Change Act 2008 which underpins its strategies, actions plans, public statements and advice to businesses, residents and parish councils;*

*Unfortunately, our current plans and actions are not enough. The world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degrees Celsius limit before 2050;*

*The IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, published last month, describes the enormous harm that a 2 degrees Celsius rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5 degrees Celsius, and told us that limiting Global Warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities;*

*Local Authorities around the world are responding by declaring a 'Climate Emergency' and committing resources to address this emergency.*

*Full Council believes that:*

*All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and local governments that recognize this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Devon and the UK that counties commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible;*

*Local Authorities are uniquely placed to lead the world in reducing carbon emissions;*

*The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority; and,*

*Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide).*

*Full Council calls on the Leader to:*

- 1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency';*
- 2. Pledge to make the county of Devon carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1,2,3);*
- 3. Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;*
- 4. Work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius;*
- 5. Continue to work with partners across the county and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;*
- 6. Report to Full Council within six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency.*

In accordance with Standing Order 6(6) the Notice of Motion was referred, without discussion, to the Cabinet for consideration.

*(In accordance with Standing Order 32(4) Councillors Ackland, Asvachin, Atkinson, Aves, Brennan, Dewhirst, Hannaford, Hodgson, Shaw and Whitton asked that their vote for the Motion to be debated at the Council meeting be recorded).*

[NOTES:

*Prayers were offered prior to the commencement of the meeting, to those who wished to attend, by Rev Grandey.*

*The Minutes of this meeting and of any Committee referred to above (together with minutes of the Council's Cabinet, Health & Wellbeing Board and Pension Board which while not part of the formal Agenda of this meeting are available on the County Council's Website.*

*Minutes should be read in association with any Reports or documents referred to therein, for a complete record.  
A recording of the webcast of this meeting will also be available to view for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting, at <http://www.devoncc.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>]*

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.27 pm





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

Thursday 6 December 2018

**1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HOOK  
Re: County Estates Farms**

In the recent past, Council has rejected requests for the prevention of certain activities on County Estates Farms (e.g. the prohibition of the use of neonicotinoids and badger culling) on the grounds that tenancy agreements once signed, cannot be amended.

It may be the case that retrospective agreements cannot be looked into. However, surely any new such tenancy agreement could include new regulations? Have tenancy agreements not changed over the years?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*Devon County Council (DCC) update lease agreements to accommodate changes in legislation or regulation and tenancy agreements have changed periodically where legislation or regulation necessitate a change (neonicotinoids and badger culling which have previously been discussed were not regulatory changes). DCC, as landlord do not feel that it is appropriate to impose restrictions on some of its tenants which prevent them from participating in otherwise lawful activities.*

*The request to ban Neonicotinoids on the Estate will shortly be overtaken by the impending ban on their use by the EU. As a legislative change, DCC tenants, along with all other farmers will have to comply with the law and the lease contains general clauses requiring the tenant to comply with Acts of Parliament.*

*DCC would not wish to impose a blanket badger culling ban in the absence of any form of proven alternative means of tackling the reservoir of Tb in both cattle and wildlife, or legislative requirements preventing a cull, which could lead to a serious financial impact on tenant's farm businesses.*

**2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ASVACHIN  
Re: Living Wage**

I would like to know if we, as a Council, are paying all of our staff, at least the Living Wage? This includes staff who are not directly employed by us, but also those who work for companies who we contract out to. If we are not, then why not, and when do we plan to achieve this?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR PARSONS**

*There is a legal requirement to pay the National Living/National Minimum Wage, as follows:*

- *Employees aged 25 and over receive the National Living Wage*
- *Employees of school leaving age (24 and under) receive the National Minimum Wage*

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*The National Living Wage hourly rate is currently £7.83 and will rise to £8.21 in April 2019. The National Minimum Wage hourly rate increases according to age so from April 2019 it will be £3.90 for apprentices up to a maximum of £7.70 per hour for those aged 21 to 24 inclusive.*

*The Living Wage Foundation is an organisation who recommend a 'voluntary' 'Living Wage' of an hourly rate currently set at £8.75 outside London and this will rise to £9 per hour outside London from April 2019. Adopting the 'voluntary' Living Wage as proposed by the Living Wage Foundation is not a legislative requirement, and individual organisations will wish to review whether to adopt this rate of pay or not.*

*Devon County Council's current lowest hourly pay rate is well above the National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage and applies to all corporate employees and school support staff regardless of age including apprentices. It is currently £8.50 per hour and will rise to £9 per hour with effect from April 2019, thus matching the 'voluntary' Living Wage from April 2019.*

*Terms and conditions of contracts DCC enters into with companies delivering services on behalf of the Council are required to comply with all relevant legislation including the national living wage/Minimum wage. Regular checks are carried out to ensure compliance.*

### **3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE Re: Drains & Gullies**

The recent rains have confirmed how many blocked drains we have, and no more than seen in the highway network in my division. Would the Cabinet Member for Highways agree that a three-year cycle of emptying drains in many roads is false economy? Is it not time to review this policy?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*The current policy is that urban gullies that do not lie on the winter service gritting routes are cleaned and checked a minimum of once every three years. The policy also allows for this frequency to be reduced where there are gullies that are known to fill up more quickly.*

*I would suggest you contact your Neighbourhood Officer to discuss further.*

*In the future we hope to move to a programme that is based on need. The systems in place currently require operatives to record exactly when gullies are emptied and feedback the condition of the gully at the same time. Future analysis of this data will then highlight problem areas and enable more effective deployment of resources.*

### **4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE Re: School Budgets and Additional Funding**

There are not many schools blessed with ten acres of green space especially in this city. The Junior school within my division is one such school but is surrounded by mature hedges of considerable size inter-dispersed with a vast number of mature trees most of which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders. Given that when it comes to school funding allocation it features very near the bottom of the list of schools within the County, can the Cabinet Member reveal whether any additional funding is available from another source when the Council Highway Authority receives complaints about the volume of vegetation overgrowth occurring over one of its public maintained highways?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**



*Money for maintenance, including this kind of grounds maintenance is part of the funds that are delegated to schools. The school is responsible for ensuring that they deploy the resource effectively to cover all of their responsibilities.*

*When a hedge is clearly very overgrown and limiting pedestrian access to the footway, the County Council will encourage the school to cut the hedge, but can serve a notice if the school does not comply. I am not aware of other funding, outside of parental contributions, the school could access to supplement the maintenance resource that is already included in their budget.*

**5. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE**  
**Re: Funding Cuts**

The Council cut funding to Home Start in 2011 and at that time we had 43 children's centres which we were assured would be able to offer assistance to such groups that the likes of Home Start catered for. A recent national newspaper report confirmed that no less than 30 authorities in England have their Children's Services in special measures. There are enough reports floating around that state early intervention is key to preventing children from slipping into youth offending, social services and court spiral. Can the Cabinet Member reaffirm that the Authority is focussed on positive intervention to aid vulnerable children who may end up costing the Authority more by not investing in the prevention process in the first place?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

*Various Home Start schemes across the county remain, funded through voluntary sector grants. Children's Centres, Health Visitors and other Early Help services are focussed on early intervention, in order to avoid statutory intervention.*

*The Council has had to make extremely difficult decisions about priorities, in the context of very significant reductions in funding; it remains focused on positive intervention to aid vulnerable children, with investment very purposefully targeted. It should be noted that the rates of activity in higher end statutory services in Devon, continue to be below the level of national and statistical neighbour comparators, suggesting that the Council's aim to prevent escalation is proving effective.*

**6. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ACKLAND**  
**Re: Carers Allowances**

The DWP estimates that it overpays £160 million in Carer's Allowance on an annual basis and is now looking to recover that money. The Work and Pensions Committee is holding a one-off evidence session with Carers UK to explore why the levels of over payments in Carer's Allowance is so high. Given our commitment to unpaid carers across the health and social care system would it be possible to identify and, if so, support any Devon carers affected by this? The Committee believes that many carers could have to repay hundreds to thousands of pounds.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER**

*Our Carers' support service, "Devon Carers" will be ready to respond to carers who contact them in relation to any demand for repayment, provide online information and signposting, answer calls and talk to carers affected by any final decision by the Government to recover overpayments. Devon Carers will direct carers to sources of expert advice on their personal financial position.*

*We are maintaining close liaison with our local DWP partners so that when they have an estimate of the numbers of carers in Devon likely to be affected we can assist Devon Carers to prepare to respond to the likely demand.*

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*We are in discussion with Citizens Advice locally and if the recovery goes ahead we will monitor demand on them for initial advice and any additional support required where a carer may need support in working out how to make repayments, or how to challenge a demand for repayment if the carer believes it is based on erroneous basic information and it appears they have a reasonable prospect of success.*

*Our approach will also include making best use of nationally available information and support services, such as the expert information provided by Carers UK.*

**7. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE**  
**Re: Resilience Testing post Brexit**

A recent press reporting revealed that Cornwall County Council are carrying out resilience Testing on key supplies and services for the county post Brexit.

Does Devon County Council intend to do likewise assuming no work as already been done?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*The County Council set up a corporate group some 18 months ago to consider the potential impacts from BREXIT for the County Council's services, including workforce planning. In addition to this internal group the Council has engaged with the Heart of the South West BREXIT Resilience and Opportunities Group to consider the risks and opportunities for the local economy, and this is chaired by the County Council's Chief Executive. Part of the work of the group has included liaison and engagement with Cornwall County Council and their partners. With no clarity on the eventual position for exiting the EU both groups have considered at a high level the possible impacts and outcomes. Part of the focus for the internal group has also been to consider the 105 Technical Papers provided by Government, again these papers have been limited in detail making it difficult to provide proper consideration of associated impacts on supplies and services. The papers do not provide any assessment on the cumulative impacts of scenarios, the known risks and nor do they set out what Government expects from Local Government.*

*The Local Resilience Forum is tasked with contingency planning for major incidents and events. The County Council is an active and fully engaged member of the Local Resilience Forum as part of discharging its Emergency Planning remit. This Forum is considering key impacts from exiting the EU and is developing contingency planning. The Council will continue to develop plans working through this forum*

*The Leadership team are considering the work from the above three groups on 14th January and will consider what further plans and preparation is required.*

**8. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE**  
**Re: Barnstaple Civic Centre**

Can the portfolio holder update me on the situation with the tower block at the Barnstaple Civic Centre. Residents frequently ask me about this issue.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*It is hoped to be in a position to market the site early in the New Year once agreements with North Devon Council to acquire the freehold of the site have been completed.*

**9. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BIEDERMAN**  
**Re: Council Gagging Clauses**

Following a FOI request by the Press to this council, I was staggered to learn we have paid out nearly £2million in Gagging Clauses to employees. Can you provide a breakdown of these over the last five years and what they were for?

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR PARSONS

*Devon is a large employer with over 4,300 staff, plus a further 8,000 staff in maintained schools for whom the Council provides an HR service.*

*145 settlement agreements were made in the last 5 years. The average number per year is 29 and the average cost of these settlements is £393,000 a year or £13,500 per case.*

*The total cost of settlement agreements over this period was £1.965m which represents less than 0.13% of the total salary cost during the same period (£1.535bn).*

*Settlement agreements are not “gagging clauses” and do not prevent employees from exposing unacceptable behaviour, whistleblowing, reporting a crime, talking to a regulator or disclosing information as require by law.*

*The settlement process is a recognised and lawful practice that can provide a cost-effective way to resolve unreconcilable employment disputes which could otherwise lead to more time-consuming and expensive legal processes. They can also be used to expediate the early release of a school employee so that they can be replaced more quickly to minimise disruption to teaching and learning for schools.*

***Over half (75) of the 145 agreements made in the past five years relate to schools.***

*A business case has to be prepared for each settlement agreement and the likely financial impact of both a settlement and no settlement is considered carefully as part of this. When negotiating settlement agreements any compensation payment will take into account the amount/cost of the notice period that a member of staff would be entitled to. For the majority of staff this will be 3 month's notice. All expenditure on settlement agreements is subject to external financial audit.*

## 10. **QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST** **Re: Victims of Child Sexual Exploitation and Parental Rights**

In the light of the Rotherham rapist, Arshid Hussain, being told he could have a visit from his son, a child in care, fathered by the rape of a teenager; could the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools confirm that no Devon child fathered in this way has been or will be compelled to meet their biological father?

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

*When the Local Authority applies to the Court for an Order in respect of a child, it has a duty to contact any person who has parental responsibility for the child. There is also a duty to contact putative parents of the child, to ascertain their intentions. This is a legal duty, undertaken under the jurisdiction of the Courts to ensure that all due processes are carried out, so that effective and timely planning can be made for the child. In these circumstances the safety and wellbeing of the child and the mother are the paramount consideration.*

*Any contact between a parent and child, must be in the child's best interests. It is difficult to see any circumstances where it would be in a child's best interest to compel contact with a person who raped the mother as a stranger. However, social workers regularly have situations where the rapist is the mother's ex- partner and father of mother's other children. In those circumstances, appropriate consideration would be given to the children's contact with their father. A risk assessment would be undertaken to assess the risk he poses to any of the children and to the mother.*



## **Report of the Cabinet Member** **Policy, Corporate and Asset Management**

### **1. Introduction**

I have been asked to report by Members as follows:

By Councillor Hannaford on *'Regional Military Capacity including an update the autumn budget implications for regional military capacity, sunset for the Royal Marines campaign, progress to secure contracts at Devonport Shipyard to decommission nuclear vessels and possible Brexit implications for the regional private sector defence industry.'*

and

By Councillor Atkinson on *'Further to the resolution adopted at the last Council meeting will the Cabinet Member report on the steps the Council has taken to support the DWP, JobCentrePlus, Devon's District Councils, Devon Citizens Advice and many other organisations such as foodbanks in providing advice and support to claimants as Universal Credit is rolled out in Devon in particular:*

- *what information has been given to help identify claimants who are most vulnerable and least able to be able to make the claim on line stating the anticipated number if possible of claimants in this position in Devon.*
- *what steps have been made to help identify claimants who will suffer hardship as a result of the 5 week delay in payments when they switch from current benefits to Universal Credit or claim universal credit when their circumstances change.*
- *the number of children likely to be affected by the 5 week delay in payments*

### **2. Regional Military Capacity**

The defence sector is a very important part of Devon's economy. Devon county plays host to a number of operational bases of the armed forces, including most notably the Royal Marines at Chivenor, Lympstone and Bickleigh. Many more units are hosted within the City of Plymouth, including the naval base at Devonport and further Royal Marine bases. These bases provide jobs both directly and in their civilian supply chains. Defence manufacturing is also one of Devon's major employment sectors and includes activities as disparate as shipbuilding and the manufacture of highly specialised components of missile systems. Recent modelling suggests that the defence manufacturing sector accounts for up to 26,000 jobs across The Heart of South West LEP area.

Devonport Naval base directly accounts for 10% of employment in Plymouth. There are 370 businesses in the supply chain, of which 190 are actually located outside of the City boundaries.

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The Chancellors recent announcement of a £1 billion uplift to the Ministry of Defence in his Autumn Budget, in addition to the £600m already allocated to the MOD for 2018/19 earlier this summer, together with around half of the additional £800m allocated for 2019/20, will be used to pay for Dreadnought costs running above previously budgeted levels. Overall, therefore, more than half of the extra £1.8 billion has been for unbudgeted Dreadnought costs. While the remaining £600m for 2019/20 can be used flexibly, the chancellor's statement emphasised the need for investments in cyber capabilities and anti-submarine warfare. It is hoped that some of this money will be directed to the capital infrastructure needed at HMNB Devonport to welcome and maintain these submarines and the forthcoming Type 26s.

Babcock's recent announcement about Appledore shipyard was extremely disappointing. The Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills has provided a detailed written report on the actions the Council is taking in support of the site.

The Ministry of Defence confirmed in January 2018 that it still intends to close RMB Chivenor by 2027, but has provided few details on exactly what its plans are or what timetable it is working to. Devon County Council and North Devon Council have asked the government's One Public Estate programme to help broker further engagement with the Ministry of Defence.

Plymouth have secured the future of the amphibious ships and the type 26 frigates will be base-ported in Plymouth. They are awaiting the announcement of the type 31's and Babcock have partnered with Thales and two partners both of which have a substantial footprint in Plymouth and Devon/Somerset. The future location of the marines is still uncertain. Plymouth are still awaiting the modernising defence programme. Whilst they have been successful there are still areas that need lobbying.

Plymouth is the only site in the UK to decommission nuclear vessels, it cannot be done anywhere else. Babcock are already under pressure to deliver the decommissioning programme with existing infrastructure.

More broadly, Devon County Council is in contact with the leadership at Plymouth City Council on the subject of defence capability in the region and looking at how we can work together to support the sector.

There are 376 businesses in the Devonport Naval base supply chain of which 170 are in Plymouth and the other 200 are in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. Plymouth are currently working on a defence sector deal. The key issues around Brexit are sovereign capability which has recently been illustrated by Barden and the announcement by the German parent company to leave as a result of Brexit.

The Council is working with other partners in the Heart of the South West through the Brexit Resilience and Opportunities Group to consider what impacts that Brexit might have across the local economy.

## 3. Universal Credit

Council has previously enquired about the extra provision that Devon County Council has made to support people affected by the roll out of Universal Credit in Devon. This support is provided by a variety of means including partnership working, commissioning arrangements, grants, staff training and information provision. Examples of the Council's support were listed in the County Solicitor's Notices of Motion report CSO/18/25 to the Cabinet on 12 September 2018.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for the introduction and management of Universal Credit. DWP works closely, both nationally and locally, with local authorities, Citizens Advice, credit unions, registered social landlords and relevant registered charities which provide Universal Support.

Universal Support enables those partners to assist Universal Credit claimants with managing their claim or award of Universal Credit including accessing and using online services, and managing their financial affairs. The Department of Work and Pensions has entered into a partnership with Citizens Advice. DWP will provide £39 million from April 2019 to Citizens Advice to provide support to Universal Credit claimants.

The direct impacts of Universal Credit on local authorities are experienced in Devon primarily by the eight District Councils. The County Council is playing its part through support and coordination as the situation develops. An example of this is liaison with the District Councils and Citizens Advice Devon to assist a smooth transition of support for new claimants from April 2019. This work supplements ongoing work with the District Councils to support and promote their Council Tax Support scheme and fund the administration of their Extreme Hardship Funds.

Positive partnership relationships have also been developed by County Council services whose clients are likely to be affected by Universal Credit such as Children's Centres. Children's Centres have been made aware of the Universal Credit roll out and how they can help those families who are experiencing problems. Relationships have been developed with the Department of Work and Pensions Partnership Manager, so that any particular difficulties may be quickly resolved. DCC managers are members of the DWP Vulnerable Customer Network, where impacts on vulnerable clients are discussed and addressed.

Whilst the likely impacts of Universal Credit are understood, it is difficult to quantify the numbers who will find it difficult to make a claim or suffer hardship as a result of receiving their benefit monthly in arrears. A large part of the roll out will be "managed migration" from existing benefits, scheduled for 2020 to 2013. These customers will be notified up to 6 months before they are due to transfer so they can be fully prepared for the change. Where it is evident that a customer is vulnerable and will struggle with the online process, arrangements are in hand to signpost them to Job Centre Plus to support them through the process. DCC support will be reviewed as information emerges.

**Councillor John Hart**

Cabinet Member for Policy, Corporate and Asset Management





## **Report of the Cabinet Member Economy and Skills**

### **1. Introduction**

I have been asked to report by Members as follows:

By Councillor Hannaford, for *'an update on Appledore Shipyard, including information on possible closure, future business, and ongoing community and parliamentary activity'*.

and

By Councillor Shaw, about *'The Council's efforts to save the air services provided by Flybe from Exeter Airport'*

### **2. Appledore Shipyard**

As Members will be aware, Babcock International announced on 21 November that it had taken the difficult decision to exit operations at its Appledore facility in Devon, with the intention to end its current site lease in March 2019. The announcement marked the end of a 12-year occupancy by Babcock.

With regards to employment, we understand that 199 people are currently employed at the Babcock site in Appledore, with a significant number of these currently on short-term redeployment to Babcock's Devonport site. As part of their closure announcement, Babcock outlined its intention to offer all staff members an opportunity to transfer permanently to their Devonport facilities, though we are awaiting the details of this offer at the meeting of the 13 December.

Whilst this position is clearly welcome, both ourselves, wider stakeholders and partners remain concerned about the implications of the closure for the Torridge area more widely, and the fate of the shipyard itself. This includes both a loss of activity in terms of local GVA and related business rates and other incomes.

Since the announcement of the proposed closure therefore, officers have been working closely with a broad array of local partners, including Torridge District Council, South West Business Council and Jobcentre Plus, to prepare for next steps around the site. This has included highlighting our concerns regarding the future of the site to Babcock and wider stakeholders; setting out our support for ensuring the optimum outcome for employees and apprentices at Babcock / Appledore; and outlining the potentially significant economic impact that Babcock closure may have on the wider economy of Torridge. As far as practicable, the Council has indicated its strong support for the retention of skilled shipbuilding and marine sector jobs in the Torridge area, in particular any opportunity to sustain related apprentice and training activity.

As part of this approach, Devon County Council Economic Development Officers are due to meet key regional partners for a working group session regarding the Shipyard scheduled on 13 December. This group will include representatives from Babcock International and Torridge District Council, as well as a wider array of public and private sector stakeholders. We expect to learn more at this meeting regarding Babcock's future intentions as the lessee of Appledore shipyard.

In addition to direct engagement, the authority has also engaged with local MPs on this matter over recent weeks, including Geoffrey Cox – the local Member, and Peter Heaton-Jones, the Member for the neighbouring constituency of North Devon, offering the County Council's full support.

Both MPs have actively engaged with Government over the future of Yard and have held meetings with Babcock International's Chief Executive and with representatives of the shipyard workers. Mr Cox has also met with the Defence Secretary who (as reported in the press) offered to bring forward a £60m package of work for Babcock at Devonport to help provide additional work for the Appledore workers. Unfortunately, no assurances were received from Babcock that it would keep the yard open. It is understood that further efforts have also been made to try to find an alternative owner for the yard.

### **3) Flybe / Airport**

Devon County Council is currently working closely with partners around ongoing developments at Flybe Ltd / Exeter Airport.

As Members will be aware, the airport is a crucial asset for the County, supporting the employment of around 1,800 skilled individuals; contributing around £150m of GVA to our local economy; and acting as a critical transportation and investment hub for the wider South West. As such, ensuring the airport's ongoing health and sustainability is an economic and development priority for the local area.

In light of this, and following press coverage of potential challenges emerging for Flybe / options around a future sale, partners collectively wrote to Christine Ourmieres-Widener (Flybe Chief Executive) on 31 October to express our collective support for the company's activity. This included an open offer to explore additional projects linked to the company's Training Academy, and a shared determination to pursue surface access enhancements to the Airport itself. This offer has since been followed up by initial meetings with Flybe, Rigby Group, Exeter City Council, East Devon Council, Exeter College and Exeter University to discuss potential opportunities for joint working, with work currently in progress.

Alongside exploration of partnership opportunities, the Council is also supportive of wider activity being undertaken by Flybe and Exeter Airport with Government. This includes a recent visit by Baroness Sugg, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Transport, at which a range of topics and opportunities were discussed.

Devon County Council and its partners are however aware that decisions around Flybe and its services will ultimately be a matter for the Company and its Board. For its part, Flybe has provided significant reassurance around the health of the business and its commitment to the airport over recent weeks, including clearly setting out its rationale for exploring potential sale as one option for preserving local capacity. Partners have welcomed this approach to date, but recognise the need to remain closely engaged with Flybe and the Airport over the next period

to ensure. whatever the outcome, it is in the best interest of our shared community.

**Councillor Rufus Gilbert**

Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills



**Report of the Cabinet Member**  
**Infrastructure Development & Waste**

**Introduction**

I have been asked by Councillor Connett to report on:

*An update on the provision of the planned all-through school at South West Exeter, including an indication of whether the land for it has been secured and is in the county council's ownership and when the school is expected to open.*

**Response**

The South West Exeter School proposal is being delivered through the Governments Free School Programme, not directly by Devon County Council. Officers are however working closely with the Department and the school sponsor, the Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust, however to date there is not a confirmed opening date.

The responsibility for securing the free school site sits with a Government-owned property company called LocatEd, again Officers are working closely with them and they have recently confirmed that contracts have been signed but the land is not yet in their ownership.

**Councillor Andrea Davis**  
**Cabinet Member**  
**Infrastructure Development & Waste**

