

## CABINET

11 September 2019

Present:-

Councillors J Hart (Chair), S Barker, R Croad, R Gilbert, S Hughes, A Leadbetter, J McInnes and B Parsons

Apologies:-

Councillors A Davis

Members attending in accordance with Standing Orders 8 and 25

Councillors H Ackland, F Biederman, A Connett, A Dewhirst, R Hannaford, R Scott and C Whitton.

\* 384

**Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2019 be signed as a correct record.

\* 385

**Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

\* 386

**Announcements**

There was no formal announcement made by the Chair at this meeting, but he reminded all present that it was 18 years to the day of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

\* 387

**Petitions**

There was no petition received from a Member of the Public or the Council.

\* 388

**Question(s) from Members of the Council**

There was no question from a Member of the Council.

**FRAMEWORK DECISION**

NIL

**KEY DECISIONS**

\* 389

**Budget Monitoring - Month 4**

(Councillors Biederman, Connett, Dewhirst, Hannaford and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/19/87) circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the Budget Monitoring position at Month 4.

This Report outlined the financial position and forecast for the Authority at Month 4 (to the end of July) of the financial year and updated Members on the Chancellor's Spending Round 2019.

The total projected overspend at Month 4 was £4.3 millions. However, this assumed the projected Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding shortfall of £15.8 millions was not dealt with in the current financial year and thus had no impact on the outturn position. It also assumed that planned contributions to reserves of £8 millions were not made this financial year. Without these two adjustments the projected overspending would be £28.1 millions.

Adult Care and Health Services were forecast to overspend by £6.7 millions, which included £982,000 of management actions yet to be delivered but which were still considered achievable.

Children's Services were forecasting an overspend of £4.8 millions. However, this figure took no account of a projected funding shortfall of £15.8 millions on SEND which was explained in sections 3.8 and 3.9 of the Report.

Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste were forecasting an underspend of £540,000 at Month 4, Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity (COPHEP) a small underspend of £6,000 and Corporate Services an overspend of £2.8 millions.

The approved capital programme for the Council was £147.2 millions which incorporated amounts brought forward from 2018/19 of £29.5 millions, and in year additions of £6.8 millions. The year-end forecast was £131.7 millions, producing forecast slippage of £15.5 millions, mainly attributable to variations and programme delays in Planning and Transportation (£9.8 millions net slippage) reflecting the complexity of the major schemes within this Service.

In relation to the Spending Round 2019 on 4th September 2019 (the devil being in the detail), the key headlines for the Council were £1.5 billion extra for social care, but it was clear that £0.5 billion of this included the discretionary power to raise up to 2% from Council Tax as a Social Care Precept. Depending on the formula, the Authority's portion could be £22-23 millions of which approximately £8 millions would come from a 2% increase in Council tax.

In relation to Schools Funding, there was £7.1 billion extra by 2022/23. Every secondary school would be allocated a minimum of £5,000 per pupil next year, and every primary school at least £3,750 per pupil increasing to £4,000 per pupil the following year. This was approximately £20 millions of additional funding for Devon's schools over the 2 years with £11.7 millions in 2020/21 and a further £9.5 millions in 2021/22.

There was also additional money for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities with the Council's share of approximately £8.6 millions. For Core Funding, there was no information other than the usual inflationary increase in Business Rates funding and a headline that no Government Department's funding would be cut next year. The Provisional Local Government Settlement was expected in December, as normal.

As a summary, sections 1 to 7 of the Report demonstrated that Education and Social Care Services for both Adults and Children were operating under huge financial strain. The need for those services was growing both in terms of cost and complexity against a background of unprecedented political uncertainty. The Council would need to show resolve and ingenuity to ensure it maintained the balance between funding services sufficiently and retaining its financial sustainability.

The matter having been debated and the options and/or alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management, equality and legal considerations and Public Health impact) set out in the County Treasurer's Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Barker, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

**RESOLVED**

(a) that the Month 4 budget monitoring forecast position be noted; and

(b) that the Spending Round 2019 be also noted.

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**Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund – Scheme for Approval, A3121 (South Hams)**

(Councillors Connett and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/19/29) relating to scheme approval for the A3121, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Report sought approval to implement the DfT Safer Roads Fund agreed road safety improvements on the A3121 following the award of £1,900,000 as part of the Department for Transport's "Safer Roads Fund" project.

In 2016, the Transport Secretary announced a £175 million fund to improve the 50 most dangerous A roads in the country. This identified two roads in Devon in that national list, one being the A3121 in the South Hams and the other the A3123 in North Devon. The A3121 connected the A379 west of Modbury to Ermington and the A38 east of Ivybridge and was 9km in length. Between 2012 and 2016, the A3121 had 31 collisions along the route, of which six were fatal or serious injuries (KSIs). A "Safer Roads Fund" bid was submitted for both the A3121 and the A3123 and the Council was subsequently awarded £1,900,000 for the A3121 and £2,200,000 for the A3123. The Report provided details and recommendations for the A3121 scheme.

The proposal was to implement up to twelve road safety improvement schemes along the 9km length of the A3121 and an overview of the schemes was shown in Appendix I. Land acquisition was necessary at six of the twelve sites and at Site 12 (Modbury Cross) and Traffic Regulation Orders would be required. All interventions and whole route performance would be subject to review after the scheme was complete.

The Cabinet Members for Highways Management advised that concerns had been raised by the Local Member and Parish Council on Kitterford Cross Junction.

As part of the grant application bid an impact assessment was carried out, available at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/saferroads/capital-schemes/>. The scheme would reduce journey times as well as localised congestion on the A3121. The assessment outlined the required earthworks and construction at Site 4 (Kitterford Cross) and Site 12 (Modbury Cross), the translocation (moving back) of hedge banks which were expected to recover fully, that discussions regarding Ecology and Landscape had taken place in order that the schemes were designed and in compliance with the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and enhanced planting would be undertaken to compensate for the loss of some trees.

Road safety schemes of this kind were expected to be of general benefit across the road using demographic. Cumulatively, the proposed measures offered a positive social impact by decreasing risk of injury and severity, arising from road travel. No adverse impacts were identified and road safety audits would be carried out, paying particular attention to vulnerable road users.

The Report outlined the legal considerations in terms of entering into land purchase agreements with several landowners and also the risk management considerations including the short timescale of the funding, impacts on nesting birds, work near hazards (high voltage overhead power lines, gas mains etc) and the mitigations in place. As outlined above, the proposals and considerations in relation to the A3213 would come to a future meeting.

The matter having been debated and the options and/or alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management, equality and legal considerations and Public Health impact) set out in the Head of Service's Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Hughes, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

#### **RESOLVED**

(a) that the Safer Roads Schemes on the A3121 in South Hams at a cost of no more than £1.9 million be approved, subject to a further review of a roundabout at Kitterford Cross;

(b) that any land required for the schemes be acquired by negotiation and, if necessary, by Compulsory Purchase Orders and any associated statutory orders;

(c) that any Traffic Regulations Orders necessary be advertised and, if no significant objections received, be made and sealed;

(d) that the schemes be tendered, and subject to all legal agreements being in place, be constructed; and

(e) that the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment be given delegated powers, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and relevant local Member(s), to make minor amendments to scheme details to facilitate their delivery.

[NB: The Impact Assessment referred to above may be viewed alongside Minutes of this meeting and may also be available at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/saferroads/capital-schemes/>].

#### **MATTERS REFERRED**

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#### **Notice(s) of Motion**

##### **(a) Future of the Post Office**

(Councillor Biederman declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this matter by virtue of being an employee of the Post Office and withdrew from the meeting during its consideration).

(Councillor Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 8 and Councillors Connett and Dewhurst attended in accordance with 25(2) and spoke to this item).

##### ***Council notes with concern that;***

*Britain's 11,500 post office branches are facing mounting financial pressures. It is claimed financial pressures have already forced up to 1,000 out of business. More customers are now going online to buy stamps and parcels for postage. More people are also using the web to pay bills and to use government services. Government subsidies for remote post office branches have already fallen from £415million in 2013-14 to £99million in 2017-18. Under current plans this will fall further to £50million in 2020-21 before being stopped completely. At the moment Post Office Limited, which is owned by the Government, replaces branches when they shut, but campaigners have warned that the rate of closures in the coming years will make this impossible.*

***This Council believes that:***

*Our post offices are a key asset for the community, and the expertise and experience of staff there is invaluable. The relentless franchising and closure programme of the profit-making Crown post Offices, points to a lack of vision rather than the plan for growth and innovation that is needed. Government should therefore halt these closures and bring together stakeholders, including the CWU, industry experts, and business leaders, to develop a new strategy that safeguards the future of the Post office.*

***Therefore, Council resolves;***

*To formally write to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and all our local Members of Parliament, calling on the Government to guarantee their future. We are calling for the network to be properly funded, with a full range of services over the counter for those who are not online, and better support for the development of community hub models.*

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/19/20) which referred to the numbers of Post Offices in the UK, the publication of an 'Access Criteria' in support of Government's desire to see a network of post offices accessible to people, the work of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee in examining issues such as the franchising of Post Offices, the reduction of Government subsidies, and the long-term resilience of the service, the Council's response to the Committee's consultation earlier this year

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/business-energy-and-industrial-strategy-committee/post-office-network/written/101221.html> and the work of the Council in linking with Devon Communities Together to understand the current picture in Devon and opportunities to share local good practice, experience and networks to support groups wanting to develop greater community and rural resilience.

The Cabinet considered the recommendation now before them and the actions now proposed and already undertaken and other relevant factors and;

**RESOLVED**

(i) that Council urges Government to give consideration to the opportunities for further commercial support for rural, coastal and other 'community' critical post office locations, reflecting the challenges around the franchise model in many of these locations and their centrality to local service delivery;

(ii) that Council further urges Government to give consideration to the potential to better utilise and work with the post office network on wider service delivery, beyond financial transactions, and their potential role in competitive processes around regeneration and deprivation through key socio-economic Departments (MHCLG, BEIS, DCMS, DoH etc);

(iii) that Council note the ongoing work to map community assets including Post Offices and banks to identify gaps in physical banking facilities in market towns and for populations at least six miles from their nearest post office outlet; and

(iv) that Council supports links to communities and organisations wanting to develop and sustain the Post Office network in Devon, particularly where gaps in physical banking facilities exist.

**(b) Boosting South West Rail Investment (Councillor Hannaford)**

(Councillor Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 8 and Councillors Ackland, Biederman and Connett attended in accordance with 25(2) and spoke to this item).

*Council is concerned that the **£56 billion HS2** rail scheme has little or no direct economic, social or infrastructure benefits for the South West region.*

*Council considers that the existing rail links between London, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester are already good, if not excellent, and in stark comparison to the far South West, that has dated and frail rail connections, that badly need new substantial strategic investment.*

*Council notes the recent report by the New Economics Foundation “A Rail Network For Everyone – Probing HS2 And Its Alternatives”, that includes rerouting the current HS2 funding to other regional rail improvements to improve local connectivity across the UK.*

*Council further notes other recent professional reports, representations and cross party discussions at Parliament, that have also recommended this move to invest in alternative railway investment away from HS2.*

*As part of this process Council supports that reallocation of HS2 funds for the following **local projects**;*

- ☐ *Improve connectivity to **Bristol Temple Meads** - to boost this transport hubs rail links - **£125m***
- ☐ *Rebuild **Cullompton Station** – lost since 1964, connecting the town to Exeter and Bristol, in tandem with the proposed 5,000 new homes at the garden village - **£15m***
- ☐ ***Exeter to Plymouth via Okehampton** - to improve sustainability, resilience, and green travel, in line with the ongoing substantial new housing developments - **£500m***
- ☐ ***Cross Cornwall Rail Link** – to improve links between East and West Cornwall - **£125m.***
- ☐ *Reopen the **Bodmin to Wadebridge** railway line – to convert the community line back into more active service - **£125m.***

*And the national scheme to **build cycle paths next to motorways and A roads**, to create **7,600 miles** of new routes to boost cycling - **£1.82bn.***

*Council resolves to make formal representations to the **Parliamentary Transport Committee, the Secretary of State for Transport, the Chancellor, the Prime Minister and all local Members of Parliament** to support this reallocation of strategic infrastructure investment, and work with other key regional partners to move matters forward.*

Members considered the Officer’s factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/19/20) which referred to the Peninsula Rail Task Force’s (PRTF) publication ‘Closing the Gap’: a strategic rail blueprint for a more resilient, reliable and better-connected railway in the South West with improved comfort and capacity, the commitment of the Council (with other Authorities) to speak with one voice on strategic rail matters, the engagement with Network Rail, Train Operating Companies and the Department for Transport making significant progress against the 20-year plan, and the GWR franchise commitments for improved journey times and enhanced services. Whilst the Council could not question the case or need for infrastructure such as HS2, with a new Secretary of State for Transport and Rail Minister it was now opportune to set out its prioritised list of strategic rail asks.

The Cabinet considered the recommendation now before them and the actions now proposed and already undertaken and;

**RESOLVED**

(i) that with a new Secretary of State for Transport and a new Rail Minister in post, the PRTF be asked to reemphasise its prioritised list of strategic rail asks as set out in 'Closing the Gap'; and

(ii) that Council remains focused on its own ambitions for rail and lobbying our Peninsula MPs through forums such as the all-party parliamentary groups or via direct correspondence with Ministers that has proven successful in the past; and continuing this positive engagement with Government is the most effective way to secure rail improvements for the South West and realising our true economic potential.

**(c) Appledore Shipyard Renationalisation (Councillor Hannaford)**

(Councillor Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 8 and Councillors Biederman, Connett and Dewhirst attended in accordance with 25(2) and spoke to this item).

*Council notes that Appledore Shipyard has a long and proud history of building and repairing vessels, and general engineering work since its founding in 1855.*

*Council is gravely concerned that despite having a highly skilled, dedicated and innovative local work force the shipyard remains closed.*

*Council reflects that this area of Devon has high levels of child poverty, poor infrastructure and very high rates of rural poverty generally, all of which require more public investment and intervention.*

*Council calls on the Government to renationalise Appledore Shipyard and fully integrate the site and its operations into the Ministry of Defence, to secure its long term future, ensure that defence capacity and resilience are maintained and provide employment and prosperity to the local community and the wider county of Devon.*

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/19/20) which referred to the current economic situation in Torridge and the work of the Council and others (including Trades Unions, Torridge District Council, South West Business Council and Jobcentre Plus) to prepare for the next steps around the site. The Council had 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. There was a working group who had been in regular contact with the owner of the site who wished, if practically possible to maintain employment, preferably with links to the marine and maritime sectors. The Council had also engaged with local MPs and was keen to ensure a long-term solution for Appledore and would continue to work with partners to ensure that the prospects for investment (to restore highly skilled marine focused employment) reached a satisfactory outcome.

The Cabinet considered the recommendation before them and the actions now proposed and already undertaken and other relevant factors and;

**RESOLVED**

(i) that Council note Appledore Shipyard has a long and proud history of building and repairing vessels, and general engineering work since its founding in 1855;

(ii) that Council is concerned that despite having a highly skilled, dedicated and innovative local work force the shipyard remains closed and is working with partners and Government to look into ways of securing new relevant employment opportunities at the site;

(iii) that Council reflects that this area of Devon has high levels of child poverty, poor infrastructure and very high rates of rural poverty generally, all of which require more investment; and

(iv) that Council continues to work with a range of partners including business, Trades Unions and the Government to ensure a satisfactory outcome which secures new investment into Appledore shipyard, creating highly skilled employment locally.

**(d) Veterans Pledge (Councillor Scott)**

(Councillor Scott attended in accordance with Standing Order 8 and Councillors Biederman, Connett and Hannaford attended in accordance with 25(2) and spoke to this item).

*This Council supports and urges the Government and new Prime Minister to implement the Veterans Pledge and legislate to:*

*1) create an Office of Veterans Affairs within the Cabinet Office, with a Cabinet level Minister, to ensure world-class care and support for former Armed Forces personnel;*

*2) enshrine the Military Covenant into law, so that no veteran or their family should ever face any disadvantage because of their service for this country; and*

*3) end vexatious investigations into historical allegations against our troops - including in Northern Ireland - to be passed before the next General Election.*

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/19/20) which referred to the Council's signing of the Armed Forces Community Covenant, the evolving of the Devon Armed Forces (Community) Covenant Partnership and the signing of the Armed Forces Employer Covenant in 2018. It was noted that the Council was working towards achieving Silver Defence Employer Recognition Scheme status. The briefing note also referred to the activity at Government level including the appointment of a Cabinet Minister representing Veterans, the work of the new Office for Veterans' Affairs and the consultation on proposed legislation on prosecutions <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/legal-protections-for-armed-forcespersonnel-and-veterans-serving-in-operations-outside-the-united-kingdom>.

The Cabinet considered the recommendations before them and the actions now proposed and already undertaken and other relevant factors and;

**RESOLVED**

(i) that Council submits a response to the public consultation on legal protections for Armed Forces Personnel and Veterans;

(ii) that Council notes the current position regarding enshrining the Covenant in Law (Armed Forces Act 2011); and

(iii) that Council notes the creation of the Office for Veterans Affairs.

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**North Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee - Cedars Junction Trial (Minute \*66)**

(Councillors Biederman and Connett attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet noted that at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June, the North Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee received a presentation from the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment on the outcome of the trial at the Cedars Roundabout using temporary traffic



lights and other measures. The Head of Service advised that any proposed improvements to the Junction would involve road widening which would be costly and should be prioritised against proposals within a wider transport strategy.

The Committee had resolved that Cabinet be requested to:

(a) progress a scheme at Cedars Junction as a matter of priority in view of the success of the experimental trial and identified benefits to mitigate current heavy congestion and poor air quality; and

(b) review the wider transport strategy for the Barnstaple area, in conjunction with the proposed improvements at the Cedars Junction.

The Leader of the Council commented that in light of the trial, officers would include the scheme in pipeline of medium to long-term schemes that would support Local Plan growth aspirations. The current programme of schemes was such that there were limited resources in the current programme which had been agreed by Cabinet at the beginning of the year.

The recommendation by the HATOC would be taken into consideration when setting next year's programme.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and

#### **RESOLVED**

(a) that the scheme proposed for Cedars junction not be progressed as a priority in advance of other committed transport infrastructure; and

(b) that the scheme be included in a future pipeline of projects.

#### **OTHER MATTERS**

\* 393

#### **Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report: Endorsement of Annual Report**

(Councillors Biederman, Connett, Dewhirst and Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Head of Education and Learning (CS/19/22) presenting the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Cabinet noted the statutory duty to secure sufficient early years and childcare places which was met through a variety of providers that included all types of schools, pre-schools, day nurseries, holiday clubs, breakfast clubs, after school clubs, childminders etc. These provisions were within the private, voluntary, independent and maintained sectors. The Local Authority had to take into account what was "reasonably practicable" when assessing what sufficient childcare meant.

The Early Education and Childcare: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, set out that the Authority should report annually to elected Members on how they were meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare.

The Head of Service's Report contained both the full report and executive summary. The Annual Report for 2018/19 encapsulated key findings from data relating to 2018/19 (1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019) and actions for the Early Years and Childcare Service for 2019/20.

The data indicated that overall there was sufficient early years and childcare provision within Devon, although the rural/urban spread of different types of provision varied and [Childcare Sufficiency Hot Spots](#) identified.

There continued to be increased and improved communication with providers through social media platforms. The number of subscribers to the [Early Years Weekly Digest](#), number of likes of the Early Years and Childcare [Facebook Page](#), the number of followers to the Early Years and Childcare Service [Twitter page](#) and the number of connections to the [LinkedIn Showcase](#) had all increased.

The Report then highlighted the actions arising and what the Early Years and Childcare service would do in response. This included continuing to assess sufficiency and identify hot spots, address the issues in hot spot areas, carry out actions identified from the annual survey of providers 2019, survey parents, carry out an annual survey of providers, continue to promote the take up of funded two-, three- and four-year-old places to parents, promote the take-up of the extended entitlement to 1140 hours of funded childcare for eligible three- and four-year-olds, monitor take up, promote the stretched offer to working parents to help with spreading the cost of childcare, promoting the take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium, monitor openings, closures and expansions and finalise the Early Years Infrastructure Plan.

To continue to ensure the duty was met in 2019/20 the main areas of focus would be ensuring sufficient places for 2-year olds and marketing and promotion of this entitlement, ensuring sufficient places for the increase of the early years entitlement to 1140 hours a year for 3 and 4-year olds of working families, raising the quality of funded places— specifically those judged as 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' by Ofsted, meeting the need for early years and childcare places where there were new housing developments and ensuring sufficient early years and childcare provision for children with disabilities and special education needs.

The actions arising from the Childcare Sufficiency Report contributed to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Report considered accessibility and affordability of childcare for all families and included consideration of disabled children, families on low incomes and parents working irregular hours. The actions identified for the coming year were a continuation of the ongoing work of the Early Years and Childcare service in promoting equality of opportunity for all families through provision of accessible, affordable, childcare.

The matter having been debated and the options and/or alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management, equality and legal considerations and Public Health impact) set out in the Head of Service's Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor McInnes, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hart, and

## **RESOLVED**

(a) that the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report be welcomed and endorsed and arrangements be made for the report (and supporting documentation) be published on the Council's website.

## **STANDING ITEMS**

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### **Question(s) from Members of the Public**

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members responded to 19 questions from members of the public on presentations to Council on 5G under public participation rules, documentation relating to 5G as a health and environmental hazard, independent research on stopping 5G on earth and in space, halting the roll out of 5G in Devon, zero carbon emissions and target dates, 5G and ICT Roadmap (both current and future), carbon neutrality dates, reductions in commuting and increasing public transport use, woodland tree planting schemes, planned immediate actions for carbon

reductions, target dates for carbon neutrality, RegenSW and their representation on the DCERG, insurance position and 5G illnesses, on shore wind farms and National Contracts for Difference (CfD) schemes, communications regarding a climate emergency, urban street lighting and future technology, justification for the rollout of 5G technology, pension funds and fossil fuel companies and the role of Scrutiny Committees in scrutinising 5G.

The Leader and Cabinet Members also responded orally to supplementary questions arising from the above and a copy of the questions would be sent to those who were not present at the meeting.

*[NB: A copy of the questions and answers are appended to these minutes and are also available on the Council's Website at <http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcc/committee/minigifs.html> and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the webcast of this meeting – see Notes below]*

\* **395**      **Minutes**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following and any recommendations to Cabinet therein be approved:

Devon Audit Partnership – 8 July 2019

\* **396**      **Delegated Action/Urgent Matters**

The Registers of Decisions taken by Members under the urgency provisions or delegated powers were available for inspection at the meeting in line with the Council's Constitution and Regulation 13 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012; a summary of decisions taken since the last meeting had been published with the Agenda for this meeting. Decisions taken by Officers under any express authorisation of the Cabinet or other Committee or under any general authorisation within the Council's Scheme of Delegation set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution may be viewed at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/democracy/officer-decisions/>.

\* **397**      **Forward Plan**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet reviewed the Forward Plan and determined those items of business to be defined as key and framework decisions and included in the Plan from the date of this meeting onwards reflecting the requirements of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (at <http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPIId=133&RD=0>).

**KEY DECISION**

\* **398**      **A382 Corridor Improvements - Phase 1**

(Councillors Connett, Dewhirst, Hannaford and Whitton attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Joint Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, and Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste on Phase 1 of the A382 Corridor Improvements (PTE/19/29), circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Report sought approval to enable a contract to be awarded and to proceed with construction of Phase 1 of the A382 Corridor Improvement scheme from Drumbridges to Newton Abbot. Phase 1 was between Forches Cross and Whitehill Cross on the edge of

Newton Abbot and the scheme would improve access to Newton Abbot and the A38 by improving the A382 corridor which connected them.

The A382 was a key route but the existing road was of a low standard with poor alignment, high traffic flows, a poor safety record and no facilities for pedestrians or cyclists. In addition, Teignbridge District Council's adopted Local Plan set out proposed residential and employment developments in the area between 2013 and 2033 which would result in significant traffic growth along the A382 corridor.

The proposal for Phase 1 was the realignment and widening of the A382 to 10 metres between Forches Cross and Whitehill Cross, a new roundabout at Ringslade Road and a shared pedestrian and cycle path along the A382 to provide additional capacity and improved journey times and reliability, improve safety and provide a high-quality facility for sustainable modes of transport from new developments in the future.

The estimated scheme cost of Phase 1 of the A382 Corridor Improvements was £13.05 million and the Report outlined the funding sources for the scheme.

The Report included details of the Environmental Impact Assessment which had been undertaken as part of the planning application, including issues such as biodiversity impacts, landscape, hedgerows and trees, grassland and all the mitigations planned.

The noise assessment considered the impacts of annoyance and disturbance associated with changes in the road traffic noise in terms of numbers of properties affected and mitigation measures of low noise road surface and acoustic fencing. The water environment impacts had also been assessed.

The Cabinet noted that the scheme would lead to positive social impacts, by benefitting all road users including bus users through improved journey time reliability and pedestrians and cyclists through the introduction of new facilities. The scheme would improve access to and from Newton Abbot resulting in a cost saving for new and existing residents. Economic, social and environmental wellbeing would be improved through better access to employment, education and recreational destinations. There was also an estimated saving in annual greenhouse gas emissions from road traffic in the wider geographic area of over 190 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in the first year after opening, and over 21,400 tonnes over 60 years, compared to the without scheme scenario. The Report also highlighted how the scheme would lead to an improvement in climate change resilience.

The Head of Service's Report also incorporated an Impact Assessment for the attention of Members at this meeting (available at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/a382>). This highlighted that the scheme would have a positive impact on pedestrians and cyclists with the provision of a new shared pedestrian/cycle path to enable sustainable travel in the future. In economic terms the scheme would facilitate travel and development which would have a beneficial impact upon the local economy. In summary, the scheme was expected to have a neutral impact on biodiversity; a slight adverse impact on landscape; neutral impact on historic environment; neutral impact on noise and air quality; positive impact on water environment; positive social impact; neutral impact on greenhouse gases; and a positive impact on climate change resilience and, therefore, no unmanageable impacts had been identified.

A monitoring and evaluation plan had been produced as part of the Business Case for the scheme which would review the impact of the scheme 1 year and 5 years after opening.

The matter having been debated and the options and/or alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management, equality and legal considerations and Public Health impact) set out in the Chief Officer's and Head of Service's Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

it was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hughes, and

**RESOLVED** that subject to land acquisition:

(a) the Phase 1 scheme layout as shown on drawing B11029/136 (attached to the Report at Appendix 2) be approved for construction;

(b) that the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, be given delegated authority to award the construction contract for Phase 1 of the A382 Corridor Improvement Scheme subject to the overall scheme cost being within a cost envelope of £13.05 million;

(c) the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and Local Members, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the scheme design.

*[NB: The Impact Assessment referred to above may be viewed alongside Minutes of this meeting and may also be available <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/a382>].*

\* **399      Exclusion of the Press & Public**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and

**RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act namely the financial or business affairs of persons tendering for the provision of council goods or services and of the County Council, in both cases, and in accordance with Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, by virtue of the fact that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

\* **400      A382 Corridor Improvements - Phase 1 Financial Considerations**

*(The item was considered by the Cabinet in accordance with the Cabinet Procedure Rules and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 with the consent of the relevant Scrutiny Chair.*

(Councillors Connett and Hannaford attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Joint Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, and Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste on the Financial Considerations for Phase 1 of the A382 Corridor Improvements (PTE/19/30), circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Report sought approval to proceed with awarding the construction contract for Phase 1 of the A382 corridor Improvement scheme. The details of the scheme were outlined in Cabinet Report (PTE/19/30), under agenda item 16.

The matter having been debated and the options and/or alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management, equality and legal considerations and Public Health impact) set out in the Chief Officer's and Head of Service's Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor Hughes and

**RESOLVED** that the construction contract for Phase 1 of the A382 Corridor Improvement Scheme be awarded in line with the recommendation outlined in the Report, subject to the completion of due diligence.

**NOTES:**

1. *These Minutes should be read in association with any Reports or documents referred to therein, for a complete record.*
2. *Notice of the decisions taken by the Cabinet will be sent by email to all Members of the Council within 2 working days of their being made and will, in the case of key decisions, come into force 5 working days after that date unless 'called-in' or referred back in line with the provisions of the Council's Constitution.*
3. *The Minutes of the Cabinet are published on the County Council's website.*
4. *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>*

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.47 pm



## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC Wednesday 11 September 2019

### 1. QUESTION FROM GABRIELE SIMONS (IN ATTENDANCE) Re: Presentation to Council on 5G

Considering the known health implications of 5G, I would like to request permission for a 20-30 minute (max.) presentation at the Council's October meeting.

Is Council prepared to receive vital information on behalf of this and future generations?

#### REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

*The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public and supports such engagement, in line with the Council's public participation scheme. Members of the public can ask a question of the Leader or relevant Cabinet Member at meetings of the Cabinet and Council or make a representation of up to 3 minutes at meetings of the full Council. At Council, there is a maximum 30-minute time allocation for public participation, which includes oral representations and questions. Part of the reason for this is so the Council has sufficient time to attend to its other business. It is therefore not possible to allow one person the full 30-minute allocation, to the disadvantage of other members of the public who may wish to speak to or ask a question of the Council on matters affecting the County.*

*All Councillor contact details are available on the Council's website. Members of the public can use this mechanism to disseminate any vital and in-depth information to Councillors for their consideration relating to the health implications of 5G. These would of course be considered by Councillors before any debate. The Council will always willingly receive vital information on any matter.*

### 2. QUESTION FROM TERE WELLS (MRS) (IN ATTENDANCE) Re: 5G: Health and Environmental Hazard Documentation

If the responsibility to Halt 5G, or the increased risk of harm by ANY non-ionising radiation frequencies across Devon is beyond that of DCC (& respective Local Councils), then who are the said Councils responsible to for this risk of potential harm?

At what point & when does the responsibility of Due Diligence & Duty of Care pass back to the higher governing body or overruling party/authority? Will that higher authority release/exempt DCC from their responsibility of Due Diligence & Duty of Care that they (DCC) are unable to apply regarding this risk?

I would also appreciate your looking at this evidence below alongside the Public questions on that day relating to the very real concerns of Devon residents.

<https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PublicDocs/Democracy/EXdK0x1zASpFpV4Y5IRpO1IBzfOxoXWHL0mMAI296aniEA?e=oaxCgg>

#### REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD



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*Devon County Council has no statutory health protection responsibility for potential effects of 5G. The responsibility for determining the level of risk associated with 5G and monitoring evidence relating to this and other mobile technologies sits with Public Health England.*

*I also confirm that I will consider this evidence and encourage my colleagues to do the same.*

**3. QUESTION FROM LISA GOUDIE (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Independent Research on Stop 5G**

Could you consider looking at the independent research on Stop 5G on Earth and in Space.

More than 10,000 peer-reviewed scientific studies demonstrate harm to human health from RF radiation. The effects are detrimental to public health.

This is beyond research to what ICNRP and PHE are providing.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Public health information on the health effects of 5G is provided nationally by Public Health England and any additional evidence is reviewed regularly by their specialist advisers. We also review any significant information available on the impact of non-ionising radiation.*

**4. QUESTION FROM CHARLIE KAY (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Halting 5G in Exeter**

How can DCC help us to stop the roll out of 5G in Devon?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*DCC will keep its public website updated with information provided by Public Health England, the statutory agency responsible for specialist public health advice. Devon County Council will ensure District Councils, as Planning Authorities, are aware of this information (Devon County Council is not itself a Planning Authority).*

**5. QUESTION FROM GEORGIE GOLDEN (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Zero Carbon Target Dates**

In February this council bravely and democratically voted to reject the adoption of what is called "zero carbon emissions" target of 2030, opting instead for a 2050 target. However, I notice that the target now seems to be 2030. Therefore, my question is when and how was this council's democratic decision overturned?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*In declaring a Climate Emergency in February this year, this Authority noted that it had no mandate to set a specific target for the achievement of carbon neutrality for Devon as a whole. Instead, it resolved to facilitate stronger Devon-wide action through collaboration at a strategic, community and individual level. It was on this basis that Devon County Council convened the establishment of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to provide the strategic coordination of a collective response to the Devon Climate Emergency and achieve the reduction of carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest. This Group has recently appointed a Net Zero Task Force to produce an evidence-led Devon Carbon Plan, including consideration of the earliest, credible date that should be set for net-zero emissions. Options*



*drawn up by the Task Force will be tested and refined at a series of citizens' assembly meetings and the draft Plan will be subject to full public consultation.*

*Further detail relating to the Devon Climate Emergency and the work of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group is available online at:*

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/devon-climate-emergency>

**6. QUESTION FROM RHIANNON AUGENTHALER (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: 5G and ICT Roadmap**

During the Council meeting on 25th July, one of the responses from Councillor Croad said that 'as a County Council we have no current plans to make use of 5G in our "ICT" roadmap to 2020'. Looking at the ICT roadmap it is clear that you will be using technology (the internet of things, artificial intelligence and chatbots) that is supported by 5G and harmful wireless technology.

Therefore, what are DCCs plans beyond 2020 with regard to the internet of things, artificial intelligence and chatbots?

With the roadmap referring to partnership working and other enterprises being encouraged to innovate and run services that would have traditionally been delivered by the council, Does the Council retain overall authority in decision making in what these companies are putting on our streets and does the Council have any authority to remove any infrastructure in the future that is harmful?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR PARSONS**

*The Council's technology roadmap beyond 2020 is in the very early stages of development, but there is little doubt that the Council will be interested in developing services based upon Internet of Things (IoT) systems where such systems can offer improvements in the services provided to citizens. Use of Artificial Intelligence and chatbot services in order to improve service efficiency and enhance interactions with citizens will be considered and deployed where appropriate. These services will be deployed using the most appropriate technology, which may be broadband, 3/4G wireless or other new communication technologies including LoraWAN. They are unlikely to use 5G networks as the roadmap from the major service providers does not envisage sufficient 5G coverage across Devon until after the end of the next Council Digital and Technology roadmap.*

*The Council will not deploy services based on technology infrastructure that the UK Government has advised represents a significant risk to public health. Where such a risk is identified in relation to existing technology infrastructure, the Council will decommission affected services.*

**7. QUESTION FROM DAVID ROCHESTER (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Carbon Neutrality Dates**

Will Devon County Council follow the lead of East Devon District Council and adopt the principles set out in the EDDC resolution shown below which has now been adopted.

RESOLVED;

1. To sign up to and endorse the Devon Climate Change Emergency Declaration, but, rather than the Devon-wide target of carbon neutrality by 2050, adopt a target of 2040, and commit to bringing the target of 2040 forward whenever new circumstances arise which make an earlier date viable and achievable.

2. To embed tackling the Climate Emergency as a key strategic priority of all parts of East Devon District Council, and reflect this as a priority in the new Council Plan and future updates of Services Plans and relevant corporate policies.

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3. To seek out and engage with regional and national stakeholders, including MPs, Extinction Rebellion, academics, Citizens' Action groups, the UK Climate Change Committee, the UK Youth Climate Coalition, the Government, and global organisations, for as long as the Declaration is in force within the District.

4. To publicise the dangers posed by the Climate Emergency to the district and the planet through the council's social media and print media presence, with reference to robust academic findings by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the UK Climate Change Committee, and other institutions.

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

*Devon County Council has adopted and is working to the principles set out in the Devon Climate Declaration agreed through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. Whilst this Group is working collectively to achieve net zero carbon emissions across Devon by 2050 at the latest, this does not represent its target; instead, this will be established through the work of the newly established Net Zero Task Force through its production of an evidence-based Devon Carbon Plan. Prior to that, in line with the Declaration, this Authority has committed to review its internal plans to reduce its carbon emissions, which will be considered by this Cabinet over the coming few months; this will require further action across all relevant Service areas.*

*In relation to engagement with others, a clear process for this has been agreed through the production of the Devon Carbon Plan. To help facilitate this, Devon County Council has committed funding to the staging of a Citizens' Assembly, the detailed approach to which is currently being considered in partnership with the University of Exeter.*

*This Authority's approach to publicising climate change is evident from its published Climate Change Strategy and its ongoing media activity, available via the County Council's web site.*

## 8. QUESTION FROM ELLA DANGERFIELD (NOT IN ATTENDANCE) Re: Reductions in Commuting and Increasing Public Transport Use

As transportation accounts for over 40% of carbon emissions in Devon, can DCC advise what plans are in hand to reduce commuting and increase the use of public transport?

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

*Devon County Council continues to maintain support for public transport in contrast to many other parts of the country. In 2019/20 it is financially supporting the public and community transport network to the value of approximately £6.0 million per annum. This supports around 20% of the total bus network in the County. This is on top of the £9.3million budget fulfilling our statutory duty to provide the National Bus Pass.*

*Public Transport is an important way for many people to get to work wherever possible our aim has been to maintain the existing network and make use of available developer funding and other external sources to improve services around new developments. We aim thereby to encourage the public transport habit early on with new developments.*

*We will continue to work closely with the rail sector with more improvements to train services in Devon planned towards the end of this year.*

*For trips where public transport is more difficult the aim is to increase opportunities for Park & Ride, with larger sites on main arterial roads and smaller local ones on other roads, which can provide opportunities for lower carbon onward travel.*

*Within the main urban areas the aim is to further develop the pedestrian/cycle routes.*

*Community groups, residents and employers can help by passing on sustainable and active travel advice. For employers, a range of information is available and our biggest bus company is willing to discuss discount fare schemes. Similarly, schools can encourage families to use their car less and in particular encourage active travel options for their pupils which have wider health benefits.*

**9. QUESTION FROM HELENA WHITTEN (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**  
**Re: Woodland Tree Planting Scheme**

Cornwall County Council have launched a mass woodland tree planting scheme to cover 20,000 acres, in order to help tackle the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. They say that trees will be planted "on our streets, in our hedgerows and through the creation of new woodlands and forested areas."

Can Devon County Council commit to a similar scheme, with land being made available immediately, in order for woodland to reach maturity (and therefore to have developed maximum properties as a carbon sink) before the Council's 2050 deadline for net zero carbon?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Devon County Council is currently reviewing its internal plans to reduce carbon emissions and other ways in which it might improve its environmental performance, including support for biodiversity. These processes will include consideration of ways to support new tree planting within Devon, the detail of which will be made available through action plans which will be made public through the County Council's web site.*

**10. QUESTION FROM FLORENCE JACKMAN (IN ATTENDANCE)**  
**Re: Immediate Actions for Carbon Reductions**

What steps will DCC take to make reductions in County wide carbon emissions which can be implemented immediately in 2019, prior to a full action plan being put in place?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*A list of the projects which Devon County Council is already pursuing to reduce its carbon emissions and implement its Climate Change Strategy is available on its web site at:*

*<https://www.devon.gov.uk/energyandclimatechange/strategy/climate-change-strategy/reducing-emissions>*

*In line with the Devon Climate Emergency Declaration, the Authority is reviewing its current carbon strategy. A more ambitious target to reduce emissions and ways in which to achieve this will be considered by this Cabinet later this year.*

**11. QUESTION FROM ROBERT VINT (ATTENDANCE TBC)**  
**Re: Target Dates for Carbon Neutrality**

DCC and DCERG currently have a target date of 2050 for Carbon Neutrality - but Exeter, Plymouth, Torbay, Teignbridge DC and Mid Devon DC, 19 Towns and 9 parishes so far are aiming for 2030 or earlier. Will this Cabinet and the Council help ensure that DCERG commits to developing a plan that will accord with the ambitions of these authorities and enable and assist them in achieving their earlier target dates?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Whilst the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group is currently working to achieve net zero carbon emissions across Devon by 2050 at the latest, this does not represent a specific target. Instead, this target will be established through the work of the newly established Net Zero Task Force through its production of an evidence-based Devon Carbon Plan. Devon County*

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*Council is currently reviewing its own carbon strategy and Cabinet will consider a revised target for carbon emissions and ways to implement this at a forthcoming meeting.*

**12. QUESTION FROM GEORGE CURRY (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: RegenSW representation on the DCERG**

RegenSW represents all the renewable energy and community energy businesses in Devon but is not currently a member of DCERG. Instead, businesses are represented by the LEP - an organisation whose sole remit is to promote economic growth, a remit which could be in conflict with the actions required to reduce climate change. Can DCC confirm that RegenSW will be invited to join DCERG?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*The Devon Climate Emergency Response Group (DCERG) is a strategic-level coordination body. The Net-Zero Task Force (NZTF) that reports to the DCERG, is a group of specialists representing various aspects of societal changes necessary to decarbonise in Devon, which has been tasked with developing the Devon Carbon Plan. Kerry Hayes, part of the Regen team, sits on the NZTF. Additionally, Patrick Devine-Wright who chairs the NZTF is a non-Executive Director of Exeter Community Energy, and a further member of the Task Force, Ian Hutchcroft, is Chair of Plymouth Energy Community. The challenges and opportunities surrounding the decarbonisation of energy are well represented on the NZTF.*

**13. QUESTION FROM KATHERINE ARMITAGE (IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: Insurance and 5G Illnesses**

Have DCC noted that any future illness, debilitating adverse effects to themselves, their staff & the public are completely uninsurable by any agency or underwriter for the effects from EMF's/RW's? Microwave Radiation of all levels.

If there are no concerns regarding Health & Safety on ANY level to any person then why is there no insurance available?

Given that the above are uninsurable, where do the Public Health & Safety guidelines stand for DCC members, staff & the general public?

What evidence of proof to public Health & Safety was provided & by which INDEPENDENT scientific medical body provided the evidence?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Devon County Council has no statutory health protection responsibility for potential effects of 5G. This is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive.*

*Public health information on the health effects of 5G is provided nationally by Public Health England and any additional evidence is reviewed regularly by their specialist advisers.*

*The Council is aware there is no cover on its own insurance policy for illnesses caused by 5G but, any such claim would need to be made against the network provider, not the Council.*

**14. QUESTION FROM GODFREY WHITEHOUSE (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)**

**Re: On Shore Wind Farms and National Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme**

The Government Committee on Climate Change has called for giving the go-ahead to onshore wind. Onshore wind is the cheapest form of renewable energy in the UK. Will DCC do everything in its power to encourage and promote new onshore wind installations in Devon including lobbying the Government to allow onshore wind to take part in the national Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme?

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

*The Net-Zero Task Force will be reviewing the range of transformational changes necessary across society to decarbonise Devon most effectively, including how and where our electricity is generated, the barriers that will need to be overcome and the opportunities available. Activity to lobby organisations that are key to unblocking barriers and seizing opportunities, including government, with a collective voice from Devon will form part of the Devon Carbon Plan.*

## 15. QUESTION FROM ANNE BENTHAM (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

### Re: Communication Regarding Climate Emergency

I am concerned that we have been in a declared climate and ecological emergency situation for several months and I have not received any direct and informative communication from DCC to tell me this. What immediate action is DCC taking to ensure that the facts are disseminated directly to the wider public (to reach all the county's citizens) so that everyone becomes fully aware that we are in an emergency situation and that systemic and structural changes will be required to mitigate and adapt to the reality of that emergency?

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

*Devon County Council is just one of the organisations working collectively via the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to address the Devon-wide climate emergency. In addition to the information available on the Devon Climate Emergency web pages, news releases have been issued regularly since February 2019 by Devon County Council (via its online Devon News Centre) and the other partners on the Response Group; many have been published by news outlets and all have been posted on social media platforms. Furthermore, features have appeared on television and radio news programmes and updates have been provided to town and parish councils. A communications plan will be developed by the Climate Emergency Project Manager once they are in post.*

## 16. QUESTION FROM JONATHAN BURNS (NOT IN ATTENDANCE)

### Re: Urban Street Lighting and Future Technology

Why are upgrading revisions to the urban street lighting of Devon being carried out which will, with minimal further upgrading, enable the future incorporation of wireless spectrum broadcast?

A response to this question must be contextualized by the understanding that I, as a public citizen of Devon, I have a reasonable fear of harm to my health from the proliferation of this future technology, which has had no prior safety testing carried out upon it to establish whether, or not it is safe to roll out to the public domain.

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

*The primary purpose of the Street Lighting Upgrade is to reduce energy consumption and maintain a safe and effective asset for the future. In parts of the county (principally Exeter) communication networks are already being used to control lighting and due to obsolescence need also to be upgraded. The current options available for this upgrade do not use 5G technology, and are already in wide use across the country.*

## 17. QUESTION FROM STEWART JOHNSTON (IN ATTENDANCE)

### Re: Justification for the Rollout of 5G Technology

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Bearing in mind what Environment Minister Céline Fremault (CDH) told Bruzz. "The people of Brussels are not guinea pigs whose health I can sell at a profit. We cannot leave anything to doubt," she added: "I cannot welcome such technology if the radiation standards, which must protect the citizen, are not respected, 5G or not." Also, bearing in mind that plans for a pilot project to provide high-speed 5G wireless internet in Brussels have been halted due to fears for the health of citizens, according to reports.  
<https://www.brusselstimes.com/brussels/55052/radiation-concerns-halt-brussels-5g-for-now/>

How can Devon County Councillors justify the roll out of 5G in Devon, which has been shown to particularly effect children who are more vulnerable to microwave technology due to their developing brains and which a report from Devon resident Barrie Trower has shown to have an impact on human fertility (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLVibPtNrVo&t=2412s>) which will in turn have an adverse effect on future generations?

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

*Public health information on the health effects of 5G in England is provided by Public Health England and any additional evidence is reviewed regularly by their specialist advisers.*

### 18. QUESTION FROM PETER SCOTT (NOT IN ATTENDANCE) Re: Pension Fund and Fossil Fuel Companies

Can DCC advise what proportion of their pension fund is invested in companies associated with fossil fuel production and what steps are they taking to divest such investments?

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

*Any issues relating to the Pension Fund are a matter for the Investment and Pension Fund Committee and do not fall within the remit of the Cabinet.*

*However, I will arrange for the Chair of the Investment and Pension Fund Committee to send a written response to your question.*

### 19. QUESTION FROM PIPPA HARVEY (IN ATTENDANCE) Re: Scrutiny of 5G

Please could DCC set up a scrutiny meeting to focus on the dangers of 5G

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

*The Cabinet does not direct or influence what the Council's Scrutiny Committees considers and / or reviews. The Work Programme of the Scrutiny Committees is a matter for them and they consider their upcoming work programme at their respective meetings.*