

## COUNCIL

5 December 2019

### Present:-

Chair: J Mathews

Vice-Chair: M Squires

Councillors H Ackland, Y Atkinson, S Aves, S Barker, J Berry, F Biederman, R Bloxham, J Brazil, J Hook, J Brook, C Channon, I Chubb, C Chugg, J Clatworthy, P Colthorpe, A Connett, P Crabb, R Croad, A Davis, A Dewhurst, R Edgell, R Gilbert, B Greenslade, I Hall, R Hannaford, J Hart, J Hawkins, L Hellyer, J Hodgson, G Hook, R Hosking, S Hughes, T Inch, A Leadbetter, J McInnes, R Peart, P Prowse, R Radford, S Randall-Johnson, S Russell, P Sanders, A Saywell, R Scott, D Sellis, M Shaw, C Slade, J Trail, P Twiss, N Way, C Whitton and J Yabsley

### Apologies:-

Councillors M Asvachin, K Ball, A Eastman, G Gribble, B Parsons and C Wright

## 242 Minutes

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2019 be signed as a correct record.

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

## 243 Announcements

The Chair of the Council formally welcomed Councillor Greg Sheldon to his first meeting of the Council, following his election at the By-election for the Heavitree and Whipton Barton Division held on 24th October 2019.

First, the Chair congratulated Loddiswell primary school who had won a prestigious national award for sustainability. The building had been commended by Spaces, the Society for Public Architecture, Construction, Engineering and Surveying due to its zero rating for carbon emissions, even when in use. The large number of innovative and sustainable concepts in the project impressed all the judges.

Second, the Chair paid tribute to Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards Service who had been shortlisted for the 2020 LGC Awards in the 'Best Service Delivery Model' category. The joint service model was initially commissioned to deliver excellent services to protect consumers and support businesses at a time of diminishing resources, but had gone from strength to strength with Torbay Council joining in 2017 and following that merging with the Council's Economic Development team to streamline provision of both regulatory support as well as access to a wide range of general business support and grant programmes.

The LGC reported a record number of entries this year, so to be shortlisted was a remarkable achievement.

The Chair congratulated both Loddiswell School and Trading Standards for their achievements.

In addition, he paid tribute to Rachael Smaldon, one of the Council's Workforce Development Advisors, who had won the Learning Pool Rising Star Award at the Learning Pool awards (Learning Pool being the company who provided the Council's DeL platform). This award had come hot on the heels of the Council's win at the recent South West National Apprenticeship Awards, attended by Gemma Vine and Tracey Mills who had gone to the national awards in London on 27th November 2019. Whilst the Council did not win this time at the national event, there was some exceptionally stiff competition.

Hot of the press was that Devon had scooped a hoard of gold and silver awards at this year's Social Worker of the Year Awards ceremony. The Family Group Conferencing Plus team, including Lifelong Links, had taken the Gold award for Team of the Year, Children's Services. The West Devon Community Health and Social Care team took Silver for Team of the Year and the Devon Prison's Adult Social Care team also took the Silver award for the Creative and Innovative Social Work Practice category. The prestigious awards ceremony was held in London on 29 November 2019 and was organised by the Social Work Awards charity, aiming to improve public awareness and understanding of social work by showing the positive impact of social workers in the wide range of roles they undertook.

The Council also congratulated John Jackson, from Exmouth and the rest of the 4 Man Bobsleigh team. They had participated in the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia and had come 5<sup>th</sup>. However, the teams that finished both 1st and 4th, had since been disqualified meaning a bronze Olympic medal had been awarded. The team had been presented with their medal by HRH Princess Anne at the Team GB ball in London on the 21 November 2019.

#### **244 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

#### **245 Apprenticeship Offer and Ambassador Network**

The Leader of the Council introduced three of the Council's apprentices who gave a short presentation to the Council on the apprenticeship offer and ambassador network.

Ellie (Office Support Apprentice) was one of the 'Step In' apprentices who had recently joined the Council and was also a participant in the Step Forward employability programme. Marnie (Participation Worker), was a Step In (new recruit) apprentices who had progressed onto a further role within the Council and was also one of the Young Apprenticeship Ambassadors and Victoria (Careers Hub Manager) was a 'Next Steps' apprentice, doing a degree level management apprenticeship.

All presenters shared their personal experiences of the scheme and the opportunities offered by the Council.

The presentation also highlighted the number of areas in which apprentices could specialise as well as the increase in the numbers of apprentice starters since March 2017 (a rise of 194%) and the Step Forward employability programme.

The Leader and the Chair, on behalf of the Council, thanked all the presenters for their presentation, congratulating them for their hard work and efforts in helping make the scheme a success.

## **246 Public Participation: Petitions, Questions and Representations**

The Leader was presented, by Mrs Tait with a petition organised by local residents who either live or have to turn into the unclassified rural road at Yeo Vale, Littleham, Bideford.

The Petition contained approximately 120 signatures and related to the conditions of the road, the current speed limit and to request that the criterion for deciding the speed limit be reconsidered in the light of the road's characteristics.

A further Petition was presented from Mr Robin Campbell, containing approximately 100 signatures in relation to parking restrictions in Rosebarn Lane, Exeter.

In line with the Council's Petition Scheme, the relevant Cabinet Member or Head of Service would be asked to respond direct to the petitioners on the issues raised, within 15 days.

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members responded to three questions from members of the public on reading the 5G Space Appeal which was being presented to the new Government in January, the Local Government Association (LGA) Business Plan, local solutions to national problems and erosion of local power and the spotlight review on 5G and timelines for the recently issued questionnaire.

The Leader and Cabinet Members also responded orally to supplementary questions arising from the above.

There were no oral representations made by any member of the public.

*[NB: A copy of the questions and answers are appended to these minutes and are also available on the Council's Website at <http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=132&Year=0> and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the webcast of this meeting – see Notes below]*

## **247 Petitions from Members of the Council**

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

## **248 Questions from Members of the Council**

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members provided written responses to twelve questions submitted by Members of the Council relating to workforce challenges in the domiciliary care market, the Council's 'Proud to Care' campaign and innovative approaches to alleviate current issues, nurseries and schools in Devon in budget deficit, meetings with the Regional Schools Commissioner and agenda topics, integration and inclusion in schools for children with disabilities, representations to the DfE regarding Free Schools, Government support for electrification of railways in the South West and investment in the Okehampton line for economic potential and to address the climate emergency, the meaning and importance of International Women's Day (March 8th) and how the Council would mark and celebrate the day, consultation regarding school crossing patrols at Yeo Valley School and at Ashleigh Road School, progress on flood alleviation measures for Barnstaple especially in the Pilton Park area, direct rail services from Barnstaple to London, retention and recruitment of health and care workers in the County and measures to address those issues, increases in school funding and the league table in Devon of funding per pupil.

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

*[NB: See also responses to Questions referred to at Minute 246 above. 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]*

**249**      **Heart of the South West Joint Committee Governance Arrangements**

(Councillor Davis declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of being a Member of the Joint Committee, appointed by Exmoor National Park).

The Council considered the recommendations of the Cabinet from the meeting held on 9 October 2019 relating to proposals for the Constituent Authorities on the Heart of the South West (HOtSW) Joint Committee's Governance Arrangements, budgetary position for 2019/20 and financial contribution for 2020/2021.

The Leader of the Council **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the recommendations of Cabinet be approved and that Governance arrangements and budgetary position for 2019/20 relating to the Heart of the South West Joint Committee, as set out at Minute [407 \(a-c\)](#) of the Cabinet, be endorsed.

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

*(In accordance with Standing Order 32(4) Councillors Brazil, Connett, Dewhirst, G Hook, J Hook and Way asked that their abstention from the vote be recorded)*

**250**      **Climate Change: Devon County Council's Updated Energy and Carbon Strategy**

The Council considered the recommendations of the Cabinet from the meeting held on 9 October 2019 relating to proposals for an approach in setting a revised energy and carbon strategy for the Council's (DCC) operations in response to the climate emergency.

The Leader of the Council **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the recommendations of Cabinet be approved and that the revised energy and carbon strategy, as set out at Minute [408 \(a and b\)](#) of the Cabinet, be endorsed.

The motion was put to the vote and, nem con, declared **CARRIED**.

**251**      **Cabinet Member Reports**

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 was asked to comment, by Councillor Hannaford on budget cuts, potential funding gaps for future years and economic modelling and also on the regional and local work being done in these and other areas, with others, and ministries, to protect local residents, communities and businesses from a no deal Brexit.

The Leader commented that the budget situation was currently unknown, particularly with the General Election pending. The budget settlement for 2020/2021 was also not yet available. In terms of Brexit, again the General Election added to the uncertainty and whilst contingency plans were in place, much was on hold pending the outcome of the Election.

The Leader also responded to questions on the resilience of Devon and the general underfunding of Local Government.

**(b) Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environment**

Councillor Croad circulated a report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford on the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of the United Kingdom and any work undertaken to assess the viability for its roll out as well as available data on access to books for local children.

The Report highlighted that the cost of the books and the number of children in Devon meant the funding required would be in the region of £2.036m. There was a range of offers already in place including Bookstart (Libraries Unlimited), BookTrack and the national Summer Reading Challenge scheme. In addition, working with the Virtual Schools Team, a library membership card and £5 book token was sent to all children new into care in Devon. Appendix 1 to the Report gave further information on the Summer Reading Challenge and data on the number of children book issues for each library.

The Cabinet Member stated that whilst such schemes (Dolly Parton Imagination Library) had a place, there was no substitute for young people and families being engaged with their local library and gaining access to good quality and free resources.

He also responded to Councillor G Hook on the recently published study by "Climate Central" which had stated large areas of Devon would be underwater by 2050. Of note, the Cabinet Member said that the new online mapping tool (by Climate Central) showed the theoretical risk of flooding in coastal areas associated with projected future sea level rise. However, this mapping was based on ground elevation data, and did not take account of existing flood defences.

The Environment Agency had specific responsibility for such coastal (and associated main river) flooding although the Council often worked closely with them in addressing such risks, e.g. the Council's investment of £3 million in the Exeter Flood Defence Scheme. The Devon Local Flood Risk Management Strategy would be revised in 2020 and would take account of the latest climate change projection.

The Authority had an important role in working with others through the Devon Climate Emergency to highlight the risks presented by climate change, to mitigate these impacts and support adaptation to identified risks, including sea level rise.

He also responded to Councillor Atkinson's request to report on Universal Credit and cuts in benefits and repaying debts and loans, the numbers in Devon and demographic profile of those affected and the impact on health and wellbeing. He reported that at August 2019, 17,335 households in Devon were in receipt of Universal Credit, representing around 25% of those in receipt of means tested benefits. Data published in The Guardian on 23/11/19 indicated that nationally (for May 2019), 1,048,000 Universal Credit claimants had a deduction of their benefit payment out of 1,759,000 claimants. The Report outlined the aims of Universal Credit and also that changes had been introduced by the Department of Work and Pensions to make advance payments more readily available in response to hardship. It also highlighted that the largest deductions made were due to overpaid tax credits.

The Cabinet Member added that detailed demographic information for Devon would be researched and the data made available to Members. Enquires would also be made with the District Councils to establish if any of the findings were related to uptake of the discretionary assistance funds or were reflected in other areas such as Food Bank referrals or rent/Council Tax arrears.

In relation to National Tree Week, responding to Councillor Atkinson on the measures the Council was taking to ensure that all of its transactions in relation to highways, rights of way, cycle paths, managing, leasing, occupying land and dealing with planning applications took account of the role that trees and hedges played in tackling the climate emergency, including environmental audits and protection measures, the Cabinet Member highlighted the many ways in which the Council was supporting the protection and planting of trees.

The Report stated how consideration was given to the protection of trees and hedges through the planning process, tree and hedge protection policies (in the National Planning Policy Framework), 'biodiversity net gain' through the Council's planning role, including new woodland areas and hedges, rather than minimising and mitigating unavoidable impacts upon these. The Report also referred to the Council's environmental review process for DCC developments as well as its role on the maintenance of the trees and the sign up to the Devon ash dieback 3/2/1 replacement principle.

Lastly, in response to Councillor Shaw, the Cabinet Member commented on the request to update the Council on any discussions with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service about the implications of proposed cuts and emergency planning issues. He highlighted that the Council formed part of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which had the statutory responsibility for coordinating the response to major incidents in Devon. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service was a Category 1 responder in its own right and, as part of the LRF, had to ensure that it was able to respond fully to any major incidents in Devon. The Cabinet Member also said that, as far as he was aware, no decisions had yet been made on the final configuration of services and, as part of the LRF, the Devon Emergency Planning Service would be engaged with any future arrangements.

**(c) Children's Services and Schools**

Councillor McInnes circulated a Report, as requested, by Councillor Hannaford on care children sexually abused or exploited while missing from homes and the work of the Council to counter any trends and any unregulated homes in Devon. This highlighted the types of provision that could be provided for young people (for under 16 a family placement or children's home and for over 16 other solutions such as supported accommodation or lodgings), the quality assurance of 16+ placements, the challenge of sufficiency and work to increase provision including a 'market development plan', a proposed block contract and the 'Fixing the System Project'. The Report also stated the numbers in supported accommodation and episodes of being missing from this (which had reduced by 60% from 534 in 17/18 to 213 in 18/19) and then the follow up processes such as a 'Return Home Interview'.

The Cabinet Member's Report also explained that young people who had experienced trauma could be at risk of exploitation and missing episodes could be a key factor. Any child considered at risk was assessed and a plan put in place. There were currently 60 young people who had these assessments at various stages of risk. Also, training had recently been provided and the Safer Devon Partnership (with Devon Children and Families Partnership) had published the Exploitation Toolkit and a Preventing Exploitation Toolkit, which ensured the risks of exploitation were recognised. A further training day for providers of supported accommodation / residential units on exploitation and missing had been set for 21st January.

He also reported on the number of children carrying weapons in schools, again requested by Councillor Hannaford, how such incidents were recorded and what was being done collectively across the educational community. The Cabinet Member highlighted that Devon was a safe place to live and the rare nature of such incidents, with fewer than five children permanently excluded from school for possession of an offensive weapon during 2018/19. However, knife crime was a shared responsibility, led by the Safer Devon Partnership (SDP), and Community Safety Partnerships led the delivery of work to tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour including knife crime. The Cabinet Member also reported on the new adolescent safety framework led by the Devon Children and Families Partnership (DCFP) and SDP as well as the Turning Corners project which has been created in response to increased gang related issues within South Devon and Torbay.

The Cabinet Member finally updated the Council on the 30 year anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This was an agreement signed by Government, along with 196 other countries that listed 42 promises made to children and young people to ensure they were all treated equally and fairly, covering all aspects of a child's life. The agreement explained how adults and Governments must work together to

make sure all children could enjoy all those 'rights' including a right to a childhood, survival and development, never suffer discrimination, have decisions made in their best interests and have a right to participate and be heard.

The Cabinet Member re-affirmed the Council's ongoing commitments to promoting and respecting the rights of children and young people as well as welcoming the proposed activities of the Council's Participation Team to co-design and co-ordinate a child rights project over the next year.

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

Councillor Leadbetter circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, on the issue of people with autism and learning disabilities and mental health units and how the Council worked with others to access and implement proposed new national training and how new improved measures would be achieved in Devon. The Cabinet Member reported that Devon had been successful in this area and was recognised by NHSE as delivering best practice for adults. Devon's Transforming Care Partnership was a multi-agency Steering Group (the Council was a part) overseeing progress to reduce the number of children and adults with a learning disability/and or autism who were placed in out of area in-patient settings.

The Council and Health worked together in a number of ways to ensure the appropriate care of children with learning disabilities and autism, for example mental health requirements and specialist commissioning, the CAMHS service, a SEND Improvement Board to plan services and improve capacity (including national training) and the TCP Steering Group.

Locally agencies had recognised the need to expand and develop services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism and were investing to improve the availability of support. In conjunction with Devon Partnership Trust, Devon had developed a 'blue light' protocol to bring together health and social care professionals to proactively support people in the community where possible and avoid hospital admissions. Across the Devon STP, a new model of support was being implemented to ensure timely access to health and care support and in Devon, there was autism awareness and training built into the workforce development plan.

**(e) Economy and Skills**

Councillor Gilbert circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Atkinson, on the Local Electricity Bill, which if made law, would make the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Local Supply.

The Cabinet Member gave the background and an overview of the Local Electricity Bill, drafted by Power for People - <https://powerforpeople.org.uk>. He added that the Council had long recognised the potential for community-scale and community-owned renewable energy and that the Council had over 20 community energy organisations collaborating through the Devon Community Energy Network - <https://www.devoncommunityenergy.org.uk/>.

The vision for many of these organisations was local people buying locally-generated renewable energy that supported the local economy, but maximising the opportunities was difficult. A community with local renewable generation could not sell the energy they generated to local people but had to sell it to a utility who subsequently sold it on to customers. Part of the Bill included a mechanism that would do this, so if enacted, would give generators of electricity the right to become local suppliers.

For Devon, this could mean that the successful community energy sector could implement new business models and grow by continuing to engage local people on local energy issues and take ownership over their energy futures and local carbon emissions.

(f) **Highways Management**

Councillor Hughes commented, as requested by Councillor Greenslade on the cost of highway maintenance caused by the recent heavy rain. The Cabinet Member said that the Council had received over 326 reports of flooding for the month, including 394 call outs. Many reports were as a result of defects and / or drainage systems failing due to sheer volume and blocked gullies, ditches, grips caused by leaf fall, debris and high water tables.

The cost to date had been in the region of £400k. Such weather had a knock-on effect to highways assets, for example retaining wall and slope stability with the prolonged severe weather being a significant factor in the landslip on the A386 near Landcross.

The Cabinet Member confirmed he was not aware of any roads still currently affected by flood water.

The Cabinet Member also responded to questions on drainage improvement near Barnstaple hospital, the Council's readiness for snow and inclement weather, school safety and CCTV data from Balls Farm Road, timeliness of advisory disabled bays and the policy for provision of grit bins.

**252** **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	-	16 October & 2 December 2019
Development Management Committee	-	16 October & 27 November 2019
Standards Committee	-	4 November 2019
Procedures Committee	-	7 November 2019
<i>(including proposed amendments to the terms of reference of the Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee, the amendments to the constitution of the Appeals Committee and associated amendments to the Constitution, set out at minutes 76 and 78).</i>		
Public Rights of Way Committee	-	12 November 2019
Audit Committee	-	14 November 2019
Investment & Pension Fund Committee	-	15 November 2019
Children's Scrutiny Committee	-	18 November 2019
Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory	-	26 November 2019
Services Scrutiny Committee	-	
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee	-	28 November 2019

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

**253** **Climate Emergency and the Inclusion of Ecological Emergency (Minute 239 - 3 October 2019)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 239 of 3 October 2019 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hodgson:

*that DCC amends the Declaration of a Climate Emergency to include an Ecological Emergency.*

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute (Minute 422(a)) of 13 November 2019:

*that Council be advised that no further action need be taken, given that agreement on this issue has already been reached through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.*

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that no further action be taken on the Notice of Motion on the basis that the issue had already been actioned through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.

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.

## **254**      **Reconsideration of Dates for Carbon Neutrality (minute 240 - 3 October 2019)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 240 of 3 October 2019 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hodgson that:

*In response to the recent Climate & ecological Emergency protests, this Council will reconsider its date for becoming carbon neutral from 2050 to a revised date of 2025.*

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 422(b) of 13 November 2019:

*that the Council ratifies the target date, recently endorsed by Cabinet, of 2030 for this authority to achieve carbon neutrality and, through its role in the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, encourages the Net-Zero Task Force to be ambitious in its drafting of the Devon Carbon Plan.*

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that Notice of Motion be amended to reflect the newly ratified target date of 2030 for the Council to achieve carbon neutrality, but would also encourage the Net-Zero Task Force to be ambitious in its drafting of the Devon Carbon Plan.

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

## **255**      **LGBT+ Inclusive Relationship and Sex Education**

Councillor Hannaford **MOVED** and Councillor Aves **SECONDED**

*This Council notes that LGBT+ inclusive relationships and sex education is crucial to the development of young LGBT+ people, and in creating a more tolerant, caring and open society.*

*Council notes with concern that the current climate for LGBT+ people in the UK means that that nearly half - including 64 per cent of trans pupils - are bullied for being LGBT+ in Britain's schools.*

*Council notes that the repeal of Section 28 was a pivotal moment for LGBT+ rights, and that the UK must never move backwards on LGBT+ rights by stopping LGBT+ inclusive education in schools.*

*Council notes that people of all faiths and none are LGBT+ and it is vital that all children receive comprehensive and inclusive age appropriate relationships and sex education.*

*Council welcomes the introduction of statutory Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), which all primary and secondary schools in England respectively will be required to teach from September 2020.*

*Council affirms unequivocally its support for compulsory LGBT+ inclusive Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education in all state funded primary and secondary schools.*

*Council commits to ensuring that schools are delivering RSE in line with new Government guidance.*

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

**256**      **Care Leavers Council Tax Exemption**

Councillor Hannaford **MOVED** and Councillor Whitton **SECONDED**

***This Council notes that:***

- 1. Last year 780 young people (aged 16 or over) left the care of Devon County Council and began the difficult transition out of care and into adulthood.*
- 2. A 2016 report by The Children's Society found that when care leavers move into independent accommodation they begin to manage their own budget fully for the first time. The report showed that care leavers can find this extremely challenging and with no family to support them and insufficient financial education, are falling into debt and financial difficulty.*
- 3. Research from The Centre for Social Justice found that over half (57%) of young people leaving care have difficulty managing their money and avoiding debt when leaving care.*
- 4. The local authority has statutory corporate parenting responsibilities towards young people who have left care up until the age of 25.*
- 5. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 places corporate parenting responsibilities on district councils for the first time, requiring them to have regard to children in care and care leavers when carrying out their functions.*

***This Council believes that:***

- 1. To ensure that the transition from care to adult life is as smooth as possible, and to mitigate the chances of care leavers falling into debt as they begin to manage their own finances, they should be exempt from paying council tax until they are 25.*
- 2. Care leavers are a particularly vulnerable group for council tax debt.*

***This Council, therefore, resolves:***

- 1. To use the county council's convening powers and expertise in corporate parenting to work with all council tax collecting authorities to exempt all care leavers in the county from council tax up to the age of 25, sharing any arising costs proportionately.*

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

**257**      **Artificial Light Pollution**

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

*This County Council is concerned by scientific findings showing that artificial light pollution is a major factor in the decline of insect populations, and resolves to review the appropriateness of all external lighting for which the Council is responsible in the light of this concern, in conjunction with its Climate Emergency planning.*

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

**258**      **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service - Consultation and Options for Change**

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

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

*This County Council notes that the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service have carried out a public consultation on 7 options for change, all of which include the closure of fire stations at Appledore, Ashburton, Budleigh Salterton, Colyton, Kingston, Porlock, Topsham and Woolacombe, as well as the removal of engines from other stations, and that, while a potential overall improvement in safety has been claimed as a result of these options, all are likely to result in increased risk for the substantial proportion of Devon's population who live near the affected stations.*

*This County Council notes that divisional members representing affected stations who are not members of the Fire and Rescue Authority, while having had the opportunity to submit written representations to the consultation, would not normally be able under the Authority's Standing Orders to address the Authority's decision-making meeting, This Council therefore requests the Authority to provide an opportunity, Standing Orders notwithstanding, for any affected members who wish so to speak.*

*This County Council also regrets the failure of the Fire and Rescue Service to consult directly with the Council as a partner Category 1 responder organisation in the provision of emergency services under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and notes that detailed discussion of the impact on civil contingencies such as flooding was not provided in the consultation. The Council therefore resolves to communicate its concern to the Service about this aspect of the consultation.*

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 Connett and Dewhirst asked that their vote in supporting that the Motion be debated at the meeting be recorded)*

**259**     **Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health and the 'Every Mind Matters' Campaign**

Councillor Scott **MOVED** and Councillor Hall **SECONDED** that:

*DCC to sign the Prevention Concordat for better mental health.*

*Recognises and commits to support The Every Mind Matters campaign.*

*Supports the mental health of all DCC employees and contractors, this is key to providing first class services and leadership in Devon.*

*Understands the need to prevent mental health problems and promote good mental health through the lived experience of people who have suffered mental health problems.*

*(further information at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevention-concordat-for-better-mental-health-consensus-statement/prevention-concordat-for-better-mental-health>)*

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

[NOTES:

*Prayers were offered prior to the commencement of the meeting, to those who wished to attend, by Councillor Ackland, a lay preacher from the Exeter Synagogue.*

*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 5.08 pm



## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Thursday 5 December 2019

**1. QUESTION FROM MR C KAY**  
**Re: 5G Space Appeal**

Could councillors over the Christmas break have a look at the 5G Space Appeal ([www.5gspaceappeal.org](http://www.5gspaceappeal.org)) that scientists and academics have signed from over 187 countries as this is being presented to the new Government in January?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*I will read it and would encourage my colleagues to do the same.*

**2. QUESTION FROM MS T WELLS**  
**Re: Local Government Association and the erosion of local powers**

According to the website: "The Local Government Association (LGA) Business Plan for 2019-2022 sets out how the LGA will continue to support & be an advocate for Councils in the next 3 years. The core membership of 339 Councils in England includes District & County. The LGA works on behalf of Councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government & they aim to influence & set the political agenda on the issues that matter to councils, so are able to deliver local solutions to national problems".

Have DCC already discussed & or debated with fellow members of the LGA concerns regarding the erosion of local power for the County Council of Devon (& other councils) by national government & the negation of Councils' concern regarding the communities that they serve?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*Devon County Council is a member of the Local Government Association which works, on a cross-party basis, to fight Local Government's corner. As Leader of Devon County Council and Chair of South West Councils, I have regular discussions with Members of other local authorities in the County and across the region about the issues and challenges facing councils. Through its membership of the LGA and County Councils Network, I continue to make the case for:*

- Fair and sustainable funding which enables all councils to plan and deliver effective local public services for the people and communities they serve;*
- A vibrant local democracy;*
- Sustainable funding and better integration with health services to enable councils to continue to give everyone an equal chance to lead long, happy and health lives.*
- The devolution of more power and resources to local areas, and;*
- The urgent action needed to combat climate change and its impacts and to deliver zero net carbon by 2030.*

**3. QUESTION FROM MS R AUGENTHALER**  
**Re: Scrutiny Spotlight Review on 5G**

I would like to express my gratitude to all the councillors at Devon County Council who took part in deciding to do a spotlight review on 5G.

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Thank you for being the first county in the UK to do so and for leading by example.  
Thank you for hearing our concerns that we have expressed during the recent months.  
I request that the current time frame to fill in the questionnaire "seeking views on 5G" which is part of the spotlight review is extended until after Christmas,  
to provide people with more time to find out about the opportunity of filling in the questionnaire and voicing their opinions and concerns.

People are very busy and 3 weeks to find out about the existence of the questionnaire and to fill it in is a very short period of time. A window of 6 weeks is a lot more realistic.  
What is your response please?

## **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*Whilst it is a matter for Scrutiny to conduct its own work programme, I am nonetheless informed that the Scrutiny spotlight review have indeed extended the deadline of the survey. It was launched on the 19th November, and was due to conclude on the 9th December, but will now be extended to the 30th December, thus running for approximately six weeks. To date, approximately five hundred people have completed the survey and both the Scrutiny Committee, and I would encourage anyone who is interested to fill out the survey which is available on the Council's website.*



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

Thursday 5 December 2019

**1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ACKLAND  
Re: Domiciliary Care Market**

We all recognise there are workforce challenges in the domiciliary care market. The DCC 'Proud to Care' campaign is not able to entice enough new carers into the market. DCC has taken back the responsibility for the management of personal care referrals in the area that includes Exeter. There are vulnerable people in the city who are not receiving their entitlement due to the shortage of professional care workers. It is clear, therefore, that new, different and innovative approaches are necessary to alleviate this problem. Could the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care inform members about plans being put in place to improve this situation?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER**

*The adult social care workforce in Devon is short of around 100 front line care workers and recruitment and retention is challenging, particularly in Exeter given some of the highest levels of employment in Europe. Despite this, the significant majority of people assessed as eligible for personal care receive the care they need in a timely way. For the small proportion of people the Council is unable to source personal care for at home immediately, there are a number of alternative arrangements that ensure they are receiving safe and timely care.*

*Skills for Care estimates that in Devon there was a turnover rate of 34% in 2017-18 with many of those leaving the sector. As we look to improve retention rates we continue to work with independent care providers helping them to offer a wide range of incentives to aid recruitment and retention including provision of vehicles, free accommodation and child care. The Council is also working to develop a better skill mix across the health and care workforce, the new role of Nursing Associates is an example of this.*

*Education continues to be a priority area, including through the work of Proud to Care. The Council work with schools, colleges and national agencies to develop vocational apprenticeships and encourage careers in health and care.*

**2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR AVES  
Re: School budget deficits**

Last year the DfE announced in July 2018 that 1 in 5 nurseries were in budget deficit and 1 in 10 schools. How many of our nurseries and schools in Devon are in budget deficit this year?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

*The Council can only supply data for its maintained schools. This is for balances at 31st March 2019.*

*Of the 2 maintained nursery schools, 1 is in deficit.*

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*Of 179 maintained schools, 17 are in deficit.*

**3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR AVES**  
**Re: Regional Schools Commissioner meetings**

At the last Full Council, you announced you will be meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner regularly, on what date will that first meeting be and what is on the agenda?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

*The first meeting won't take place until new year because of purdah and it will focus on quality of schools and academies and the sharing of any concerns or good practice.*

**4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR AVES**  
**Re: Inclusion in Schools**

With inclusion in schools being the best way to integrate children with disabilities into their community what are you doing in Devon to make sure more is done to realise this important aim in all our mainstream nurseries and schools, despite the lack of funding from government?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

*The [SEND strategy](#) sets out the Local Area's strategic vision and actions to support children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities. The support services commissioned by DCC, through Babcock LDP, deliver advice and support to schools that ensures inclusive practice is promoted and that good practice is shared. The graduated response provides a toolkit to support schools in delivering this.*

*An example of coordinated support is the Multi-Sensory Impairment service which aligns school support, assessment and provision for individuals across school and home.*

*A new '[no need to exclude](#)' toolkit is also helping to promote inclusion and reduce exclusions for all children including those with special educational needs. Part of this work also focussed on supporting children with medical conditions to attend school. The continual review of the Fair Access Admissions Policy, developed with schools, aims to reduce the amount of time children are out of education and encourages swift admissions to schools.*

*The [SEND review of special educational needs](#) provision sets out how we will deliver school places and ensure mainstream schools are best able to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Over the past 3 years 180 additional places have been created in our maintained special schools and a new special school (funded by DCC) opened in Tiverton this September. A new special free school will open in Newton Abbot in September 2020. In addition to this a business case has been put forward to the Council to provide up to 300 additional places over the next 4 years. Funding is also allocated annually to support physical accessibility to school buildings.*

**5. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR AVES**  
**Re: Free School provision**

Are you going to write to the DfE to ask for there not to be an increase in the number of Free Schools, which are not locally accountable, but to allow Local Authorities to be able to open new maintained schools in places the Local Authorities know they are needed?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

*Devon works closely with all schools within the County, National Government Departments and OFSTED to ensure there are clear lines of accountability, no matter the schools designation, as*

*the Local Authority retains responsibility for every learner. Devon has worked closely with partners to bring a number of free schools forward to support the statutory responsibilities of the Local Authority, for example in Kingsteignton, West Clyst and Newton Abbot.*

*The previous Government policy was for all new schools to be Free schools, either through a direct bid to Government or through a presumption process run by the Local Authority. The Local Authority will need to consider the national education policy after the general election on 12 December 2019 before making any direct representation.*

**6. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ATKINSON**  
**Re: Electrification of Railways in the South West**

As it is claimed there has been continuing positive engagement with Government in relation to Railways, why is it that the Government has failed to support electrification of railways in the South West beyond Bristol and failed to invest in the improvement to the Okehampton line and to link it up with Bere Alston, thereby seriously affecting our ability to reach our true economic potential increase or productivity and address the climate emergency but is prepared to invest vast sums in other regions?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

*The electrification programme costs have tripled and many parts of the Country are set to miss out, not just the South West. I met with the Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris on 23rd October to express our concerns that the Peninsula rail network is currently entirely powered by diesel and that we want to be at the forefront of change, having declared a climate emergency. Specifically, I made the case for discrete electrification of the South Devon banks (between Plymouth and Newton Abbot) and to explore options for non-fossil fuel solutions for rail services in the future.*

*Regarding Okehampton, the Government tasked GWR with investigating how to reintroduce regular weekday services and we await the outcome of this work. The Rail Minister is due to meet with Councillor Ball to discuss this further.*

*We continue to support proposals for Tavistock to Bere Alston and considerable work has been undertaken. However, technical challenges have resulted in significant cost escalation, which has resulted in the deliverability and affordability of a heavy rail solution being questioned. The importance of a sustainable transport link connecting Tavistock to the national rail services at Bere Alston is recognised and remains an important aspect of enabling growth in Tavistock. Technology is rapidly changing and alternative solutions are in development elsewhere. Incorporating some of these onto the traffic-free historic rail alignment could offer a cost-effective solution which achieves similar outcomes for those living in Tavistock and travelling to Plymouth.*

*It is pleasing to see the funding commitment and progress being made on the 1st phase of the mainline between Teignmouth and Dawlish in difficult conditions.*

**7. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ATKINSON**  
**Re: International Women's Day**

What is the meaning and importance of International Women's Day (March 8th) and how will Devon County Council mark and celebrate that day?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR PARSONS**

*International Women's Day takes place on March 8 each year and is a celebration of the achievements of women. The day also raises awareness of the need for gender equality. International Women's Day has different themes each year.*

*There are many international and national events around equality and diversity including Purple Tuesday for disability, International Men's Day, Black History Month, LGBT History Month and we*

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*will aim to acknowledge these key dates through social media, where possible. For events with annual themes, we will see what theme is running for that year and decide how to get involved.*

*From time to time we may broaden activity to an event or exhibition. For example, last year we celebrated Vote100, the centenary of the first women gaining a right to vote by welcoming the Suffrage Flag to County Hall, running an exhibition, conference and youth takeover. The Corporate Equality Officer is currently developing plans to celebrate Black History Month in 2020.*

**8. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE**  
**Re: School Crossing Patrols**

At the last Council I successfully intervened to stop Officers going ahead with deleting school crossing patrols at Yeo Valley School and at Ashleigh Rd School as there had been no consultation carried out. Cllr Hughes promised consultation would take place but so far I have seen no sign of consultation happening. Can Cllr Hughes say whether consultation as started or if not when will this take place?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

*The Council are continuing to monitor the recruitment of school crossing patrols. Recruitment continues to be difficult and time consuming. With regard to Councillor Greenslade's concerns we have suspended the deletion of the school crossing patrols for Yeo Valley School and Ashleigh Rd School and will endeavour to recruit.*

**9. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE**  
**Re: Barnstaple and Taw Estuary flood risk areas**

I have recently seen a flood risk map for 2050 which shows a large part of Barnstaple and the Taw Estuary as flood risk areas. Some time ago I asked the Portfolio Holder about progress with further flood alleviation measures for Barnstaple especially in the Pilton Park area. There did not appear to be any concrete steps in hand. Can the Portfolio Holder give me any hope of progress being made?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

*The flood risk mapping for 2050 that you refer to is likely to be the online interactive mapping of projected risk from future sea level rise and coastal flooding recently published by Climate Central [available at <https://coastal.climatecentral.org/> - viewable only using Chrome, Firefox or Safari web browsers]. Whilst based on the latest projections, the areas shown to be at future risk broadly coincide with those already illustrated by the Environment Agency's pre-existing flood maps.*

*In terms of the further flood alleviation measures for the Pilton Park area, these relate to an Environment Agency led project, where the current plan is to start work on the business case in 2023/24, with construction anticipated in 2025. On this basis, the present situation is no different from when I last reported on this issue in April this year. Defra's currently approved programme of flood and coastal risk investment runs through till 2021, with Barnstaple being on the next six-year programme (2021-2027). The business case preparation phase will include stakeholder and public consultation, and the gaining of planning permission. No significant progress in the planning for this scheme should be expected prior to these programmed dates.*

*The Environment Agency is also starting work this year (i.e. a two to three year project) on the Taw Torridge flood model covering the entire estuary, including Barnstaple. This will be used in the design of any upcoming schemes and will take account of the latest available projections for climate change, including anticipated sea level rise.*

**10. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE**  
**Re: Rail Services from Barnstaple to London**

At the last County Council Meeting I tried to add to a list of rail improvements that DCC was putting forward so that this included direct rail services from Barnstaple to London. This was dismissed by the Leader as its inclusion would mean every town would want the same.

I really am surprised by the Leaders stance and nearly every Northern Devon County Councillor supported him as there was a notice of motion previously agreed by the County Council to support direct rail services from Barnstaple to London and because nearly every largish towns in Devon already have a direct London rail service. Example towns between Plymouth and Axminster are all able to connect direct to London. The three larger towns not benefitting from direct rail connection to London being Barnstaple, Exmouth and Okehampton.

Does the Leaders stance indicate that he does not support direct rail services from Barnstaple to London as previously supported by the full County Council?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART**

*The option to extend the existing Waterloo to Exeter rail services along the Tarka line is not currently possible due to significant single line constraints, which would create unacceptable reliability issues for the entire route. The County Council is actively working with the rail industry and other parties to secure improvements on the West of England mainline including a new passing loop near Cranbrook, which would enable a much more reliable route. Once these improvements have been delivered, which may not be for 10 years, there is an opportunity to review the situation, including specifying what rolling stock may be required on the route. Parallel to this, the Williams Review is considering a revised structure for the rail industry and the way services are delivered so we will need to see what reforms will follow and how this impacts on our Devon Metro aspirations.*

**11. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE**  
**Re: Recruitment of Health and Care Workers**

I attended the recent Health Scrutiny meeting to speak on the item dealing with the difficulty of retention and recruitment of health and care workers in the county. I did so because I felt the written report attached to the agenda did not show any sense of urgency over a clearly documented problem being made worse by the fallout from Brexit and the reduction in EU citizens coming to the UK to work.

I don't think the debate at the Scrutiny Committee did anything to allay my concern at an apparent lack of urgency in addressing this growing problem.

What therefore is the Portfolio Holder going to do to increase a proactive response from DCC to address this serious problem.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER**

*Devon County Council is aware of the recruitment and retention challenges in adult social care and a great amount of working is currently taking place and has been for some time. Proud to Care Devon continues to run targeted campaigns, and has done since 2017, encouraging recruitment to and retention of the caring workforce; our learning was shared with the Department*

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*of Health and Social Care for its national recruitment campaign. As part of the Devon STP we have bid for Health Education England funding for Proud to Care to run two further campaigns in Spring 2020 and also to host a number of joint health and social care recruitment events in Devon to attract people to jobs and careers in the health and social care sector.*

*Proud to Care engages with schools and colleges to encourage training and education opportunities such as health and care apprenticeships. There are now over 280 Proud to Care Ambassadors who have spread the message at 156 events across Devon.*

*The Devon STP has just submitted a £3.5 million bid to the European Social Fund for a variety of work to support our endeavours on recruitment and retention, this through helping people achieve qualifications and enabling career progression into registered roles such as Nursing Associates, Registered Nurses, Allied Health Professions, Registered Managers and Social Workers.*

*Our Business Relations Team lead our relationships and support of Devon's independent care providers, the quality of which is consistently better than all comparator groups as rated by the CQC.*

*We have been in constant contact with providers throughout our Brexit preparation including supporting their preparedness. Councillors will recall that DCC proactively waived the fee associated with applying for EU settled status ahead of that eventually becoming national policy.*

**12. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE  
Re: Devon Pupil Funding**

On an election visit to Chulmleigh School the Education Secretary announced that Devon pupils would receive a 6.46 pc increase in funding I believe for next year.

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that he believes this to be correct and if so where does this leave Devon pupils in the league table of funding per pupil?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR McINNES**

*The provisional settlement for Devon shows the authority receiving an increase to the Schools Block equivalent to 4.86% per pupil in 2020-21. This means that Devon sits 128 out of 149 in the league table of funding per pupil.*

## **Report of the Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services**

### **Introduction**

I have been asked to report to Council by Members as follows:

- 1. by Councillor Hannaford on Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, United Kingdom, scheme; and data on access to books for local children**

#### *“Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, United Kingdom*

*Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library of the United Kingdom is a free book gifting organisation devoted to inspiring a love of reading in the hearts of children everywhere.*

*Each month, enrolled children receive a high quality, age appropriate book in the post, free of charge. Children receive books from birth to age five.*

*In December of 2007, Dolly Parton travelled to the UK to launch her charity project.*

*The Imagination Library’s coverage in the UK includes England, Northern Ireland and Scotland.*

*Book selections in the UK include popular characters such as Peppa Pig and beloved authors and illustrators including Lynley Dodd.*

*Additionally, the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) assists in the conversion of select titles to braille and audio books for children in the United Kingdom who are blind or partially sighted.*

#### *How It Works*

*Each month, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library mails a high quality, age appropriate book to all registered children, addressed to them, at no cost to the child’s family. Countless parents have shared how excited their child is when their new book arrives each month. Many groups and individuals work hard behind the scenes to make that special moment possible for each child.*

*The Imagination Library provides the infrastructure of the core program including managing the secure central database for the Book Order System and coordinating book selections and wholesale purchasing. It also incurs the cost of the program’s administrative expenses and coordinates the monthly mailings.*

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## Local Champions

*The Imagination Library partners with Local Champions who help bring the program to cities, towns and communities around the world.*

*Local Champions can be businesses, school districts, small or large organizations, or simply individuals who share in the mission and purpose of the Imagination Library.*

*Local Champions are responsible for enrolling children who live within the geographical area they offered the program in.*

*They promote their local programs online and at events.*

*While the Imagination Library negotiates wholesale pricing for the books, Local Champions are responsible for securing funds to cover that cost.*

*Books are 100% free to enrolled children because their Local Champion has secured funds to cover the cost of the books and the shipping fees.*

*Can the Cabinet Member please report if we can work with Devon Libraries Unlimited, schools, and other key partners to assess if we can roll out this scheme, in some specific areas, or on a county wide basis to help support local children, especially those living in rural areas without direct access to libraries as these materials are posted out directly, or indeed areas of deprivation and need.*

*Could the report also include any data that we have regarding general access to books for local children , encompassing the estimated number of children being brought up in households where there are no books available at all.”*

## **2. by Councillor Gordon Hook on a response to a study by “Climate Central” as follows:**

*“A recently published study by "Climate Central" an independent organisation of scientists and others who research climate change and its impact on residents, states that large areas of Devon will be underwater by 2050, just 30 years away. We are having to prepare for and cope with the problems right now. The report suggests that large parts of Newton Abbot town centre will be adversely affected, as will Westward Ho; Braunton; Topsham; Exmouth and Exeter amongst many other areas. These listed are just a few of the places expected to be significantly impacted as climate change grows.*

*Will the Cabinet Member make a clear and full statement indicating what the administration is doing proactively in response to these studies findings which will give reassurance to those residents whose homes and places of work are predicted to be underwater?”*

**3. by Councillor Atkinson on cuts to Universal Credit and the impact on health and wellbeing, as follows:**

*Freedom of Information requests have revealed that more than a million households or 60% of people in receipt of Universal Credit in May had their benefits cut to repay debts and loans. The figures exclude deductions for fraud and sanctions. Almost a third of all people on UC are having more than a fifth of their payment cut. UC claimants who are having their benefits deducted to repay debts and loans owe an average of £903. Please advise of what the numbers are here in Devon the demographic and profile of those affected and whether this is likely to be having a serious impact on people's health and wellbeing, as well as their housing situation here and what measures can be taken to alleviate this.*

**4. by Councillor Atkinson on what current steps the Council takes to secure environmental audits and protect trees and hedges, as follows:**

*"As last week was National Tree Week and everyone is talking about trees please will the Cabinet member for the environment report on the measures the Council is taking to ensure that all of its transactions in relation to highways, rights of way, cycle paths, managing, leasing, occupying land and dealing with planning applications takes account of the crucial role trees and hedges play in tackling the climate emergency, by drawing down carbon and locking it up in their wood as well as capturing pollutants that are key contributors of air pollution that cause respiratory problems and deaths. Please report on what current steps the Council takes to secure environmental audits and protect trees and hedges in relation to the above and what the Council can do to better protect them."*

**5. by Councillor Shaw on Emergency Planning with DSFRS, as follows:**

*"I would like the Cabinet member responsible for Emergency Planning to report on any discussions the Council has had, or proposes to have, with the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service about the implications of its proposed cuts in fire stations and engines on the ability to respond to flooding and other emergency"*

## **Reports**

Taking the requests for reports in order:

**1. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library**

### **The Dolly Parton scheme**

The cost of the book per child per month is £2.05, an annual cost of £24.60 per year. Based on 2018 figures there are approximately 138,000 children in Devon aged 0-16. The funding required for the Dolly Parton book scheme assuming a 60% (avg. registrations in the scheme) take up would be £2.036m. Funding is arranged via local champions and would vary area to area around the county.

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There are currently a range of offers to children in Devon supported through our contract with Libraries Unlimited working in partnership with other organisations and schools.

- **Bookstart** – Libraries Unlimited, working in partnership with BookTrust and Devon Registrars, gifts a free book and a library membership card to all new babies registered in Devon. A further free book is gifted to all 3-year-olds in the county via early years settings in partnership with DCC's Early Years & Childcare Team. The Bookstart Outreach Coordinator works closely with Children's Centres to facilitate Bookstart Corner sessions to build confidence and skills in parents that are struggling to help their children develop early literacy skills, with a focus on geographical areas of deprivation.
- **BookTrack** – this is the year-round reading challenge for children aged 6-12. Children are challenged to read 100 books, collecting rewards along their reading journey. More recently there has been a successful bid for some extra funding to update this scheme and therefore, during 2020, children, families, teachers and library staff will be consulted to develop a new scheme to encourage reading for pleasure for this age group.
- **Summer Reading Challenge** – this national scheme is run in all of libraries through the school summer holidays. In Summer 2019 more than 12700 children across Devon took part, reading up to 6 books during the holidays and therefore maintaining their reading levels for the start of the autumn term.
- **Children in Care** – working in partnership with the Virtual Schools Team, we send a library membership card and a £5 book token to all children new into care in Devon

More detailed information regarding the Summer Reading Challenge and data on the number of children book issues for each library is attached in Appendix 1. This new data will provide the local intelligence needed to strengthen the libraries offer to children and young people across the county and our commissioners will work with Libraries Unlimited to continue building on the good relationships with schools in particular to support access to books and e-resources.

Whilst the Dolly Parton Imagination Library scheme and others like it have a place there is no substitute for young people and families being engaged with their local library and gaining access to good quality and free resources. A discussion with members would be welcomed to develop ideas for further funding of resources that further increase the reach and impact of Devon's Libraries.

## 2. Response to a study by "Climate Central"

A new online mapping tool published by Climate Central [at <https://coastal.climatecentral.org/> - viewable only using Chrome, Firefox or Safari web browsers] shows the theoretical risk of flooding in coastal areas associated with projected future sea level rise. This mapping is based on ground elevation data, but

does not take account of existing flood defences. In this way, it is very similar to the Environment Agency's own published flood risk maps, which show many low lying areas around Devon as having the potential for inundation by flood water (e.g. the areas of Marsh Barton and St. Thomas in Exeter). So, whilst having clear value in illustrating those areas theoretically at risk from rising sea level, it doesn't enable the people of Devon to realistically predict the actual likelihood of future flooding in these low lying areas. This will be dependent upon the maintenance of existing flood defences or their extension and upgrading to provide the necessary standard of protection to deal with this future risk.

The body with the specific responsibility for such coastal (and associated main river) flooding is the Environment Agency. On this basis, it is their role to anticipate and plan for such risk, rather than it being the responsibility of Devon County Council. Having said that, we often work closely in partnership with the Environment Agency in addressing such risks, an example of this being the DCC investment of £3 million in the Exeter Flood Defence Scheme. Also, in our role as Lead Local Flood Authority, we will be revising and updating the Devon Local Flood Risk Management Strategy next year. This will take account of the latest climate change projection and accord with the new national flood risk management strategy. DCC representation on the South West Flood and Coastal Committee will ensure our involvement in decisions taken about funding allocated through the Local Levy to local flood and coastal protection schemes.

This Authority also has an important role in working with others through the Devon Climate Emergency to highlight the huge risks presented by climate change, to mitigate these impacts and support adaptation to identified risks, including sea level rise. This will be done through our close engagement with processes being coordinated through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group.

### **3. Cuts to Universal Credit and the impact on health and wellbeing**

At August 2019, 17,335 households in Devon were in receipt of Universal Credit, representing around 25% of those in receipt of means tested benefits. This number is increasing as new claims are made and by "natural migration", where a change in circumstances triggers transfer of an existing claim to Universal Credit.

Data sourced under the Freedom of Information Act and published in The Guardian on 23/11/19 indicated that nationally in May 2019, 1,048,000 Universal Credit claimants had a deduction of their benefit payment out of 1,759,000 claimants who received any universal credit payment that month.

The Government's aim for Universal Credit is that it mirrors the world of work, with payments being made in arrears rather than in advance. In response to reports of hardship, changes were introduced by the Department of Work and Pensions to make advance payments more readily available. New claimants can now opt to have their first payment paid in advance, repaid via deduction from ongoing payments over a period of up to 12 months. The latest available data indicates that nationally around 48% of new claimants opt for an advance, with the most frequently paid value of advance between £150.01 and £200.00. The Government has also

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introduced another measure to mitigate the impact of the initial five-week wait for a Universal Credit payment. Additional payments of two weeks of Housing Benefit, known as a “run-on”, are already available to claimants who migrate naturally.

Deductions from Universal Credit are also made to recover overpayments of other benefits. The largest deductions are due to overpaid tax credits, incurred when claimants earned more than expected under the tax credit system resulting in overpaid benefit.

This information yields useful insight into the operation of the benefit system but does not necessarily support the conclusion that only 40% of universal credit claimants get their full entitlement, as deductions are a means to balance out the delivery of correct entitlement over time.

Application of sanctions does result in actual reduction of Universal Credit entitlement. At May 2019, 64% of Universal Claimants were subject to conditionality. Conditionality requirements depend on individual circumstances and may include work focused interviews, work preparation, or full availability for work. 2.4% of this group were subject to a sanction in May 2019, with most sanctions being applied due to failure to attend work interview without good reason. Around half of these sanctions were applied for a period of four weeks or less. Nationally the group most frequently subject to sanction is the 20 – 24 age group.

Detailed demographic information for Devon will be researched and data can be made available to members should they wish to see it. Enquires will also be made with Devon’s district councils to establish if any of these findings are related to uptake of the discretionary assistance funds that they hold or are reflected in other areas such as Food Bank referrals or rent/Council Tax arrears.

#### **4. Current steps the Council takes to secure environmental audits and protect trees and hedges**

There are many ways in which this Council is supporting the protection and planting of trees.

The key way in which consideration is given to the protection of trees and hedges linked to new development is through the planning process. For this authority, this planning process addresses ‘county matter’ applications – those relating to minerals and waste – as well as for the County Council’s own developments. Such applications can be large and complex (e.g. a new quarry or road) and may have potential implications for large numbers of trees. Decisions are made in accordance with tree and hedge protection policies in the National Planning Policy Framework and development plan documents. In advance of it becoming a mandatory requirement, DCC is already seeking to achieve ‘biodiversity net gain’ through its planning role, including the creation of new woodland areas and hedges, rather than just minimising and mitigating unavoidable impacts upon these.

Beyond the formal requirements of town and country planning, DCC has also put in place an environmental review process to ensure that appropriate consideration is

given to the full environmental implications of any DCC developments. This process is based around a series of environmental checklists and guidance notes, one element of which focusses specifically on tree issues. A streamlined version of this checklist is also used to assess highway maintenance activities through our Term Maintenance Contractor.

Another important role for this authority is the maintenance of the trees for which it has specific responsibility, particularly on the county highway network on the corporate estate. Whilst the primary focus of such work is to ensure public safety through essential tree maintenance, our Tree Safety Policy acknowledges the environmental significance of trees and the need to avoid their unnecessary removal. An issue of particular concern at present is the huge threat presented by the tree disease - ash dieback; this expected to result in the loss of around 90% of all of our native ash trees. This authority has signed up to the Devon ash dieback 3/2/1 replacement principle, through which three new trees will be planted for each mature ash it has to fell; two for a semi-mature tree lost; and a one-for-one replacement for any young trees removed.

In relation to the Climate Emergency, this authority is helping to facilitate a countywide process to produce a Devon Carbon Plan and address adaptation to the anticipated impacts of climate change. Tree planting will, inevitably, have a significant part to play in such action. To that end, DCC is already working with partners to promote new tree planting, including the recent launch of two free tree schemes.

## **5. Emergency Planning with DSFRS**

Devon County Council forms part of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which has the statutory responsibility for coordinating the response to major incidents in Devon. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is a Category 1 responder in its own right and, as part of the LRF, must ensure that it is able to respond fully to an major incidents in Devon. I understand that no decisions have yet been made on the final configuration of services and, as part of the LRF, the Devon Emergency Planning Service will be engaged with any future arrangements.

### **Councillor Roger Croad**

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services

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## Appendix 1

The Reading Agency and Libraries Present

# **SPACE CHASE**

Summer Reading Challenge 2019

### In Devon Libraries...

- **12,703** children took part in the Challenge (11,162 in 2018)
- **7,811** children completed the Challenge (6,661 in 2018)
- **268,677** library items were borrowed by children during July, August and September

### Key Facts

- Participation is up by **14%** (our target was 5%)
- Completion rate is **61.5%** (our target was 60%)
- **44%** of participants were boys
- Children in Devon borrowed **3.8%** more items than last year
- **1,366** children became new library members in order to take part
- Devon Libraries hosted **405** events attended by **9,563** children
- **169** young volunteers helped to deliver the Challenge across 41 libraries
- Young volunteers gave **1861** volunteer hours over the summer
- Library staff visited **197** primary schools to promote the Challenge (160 last year)
- The Summer Reading Challenge resources used in Devon cost £10,390 which equates to **£0.83** per participating child

### Feedback

*“Reading lots of books was fun. When I ran out of books I read whatever I could find”  
Helena aged 9, Honiton*

*“The Summer Reading Challenge is what first engaged my daughter with reading a few years ago and she has now read hundreds of books. We can now see my son getting excited about reading in the same way. Thank you!” Parent, Ivybridge*

*“My daughter spent less time playing games on her phone, it was great to see her with her head in a book. It also gave me a chance to get back into reading, so it became a family affair” Parent, Dawlish*

### Overview

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of all the library staff in our Devon Libraries, the Summer Reading Challenge has been very successful this year. We also acknowledge the valuable contribution made by Friends Groups who have helped to fund and organise events and additional prizes.

A breakdown of participation by library, with comparisons to last year, is attached at the end of this report. Feedback from participants, parents & carers, and library staff has shown that this year's 'Space' theme was very popular and appealed to both genders.

Social media, particularly Facebook and twitter, proved to be a very effective promotion tool for events and for the Challenge generally.

The increased engagement with schools in the build-up to the Challenge may have helped to boost participation and we plan to build on this further next year.

This year libraries were encouraged to identify a specific hard to reach group of children to target for promotion, such as Children in Care or Home-Schooled Children. This enabled us to start monitoring participation from these groups and gives us something to build on for next year.

## Participation by library

	2019 starters	2018 starters	% change	2019 completers	2018 completers	Completion rate
Appledore	89	78	14.00%	63	47	71.00%
Ashburton	48	78	-38.00%	28	48	58.00%
Axminster	143	174	-18.00%	68	98	47.50%
Bampton	25	33	-24.00%	21	15	84.00%
Barnstaple	911	728	25.00%	606	368	66.50%
Bideford	405	398	2.00%	242	210	60.00%
Bovey Tracey	145	119	22.00%	91	73	63.00%
Braunton	217	156	39.00%	141	98	65.00%
Buckfastleigh	335	281	19.00%	248	143	74.00%
Budleigh Salterton	326	161	102.00%	173	104	53.00%
Chagford	58	49	18.00%	39	30	67.00%
Chudleigh	111	124	-10.00%	63	74	57.00%
Chulmleigh	22	24	-8.00%	15	14	68.00%
Clyst Vale	12	0	N/A	6	0	50.00%
Colyton	34	37	-8.00%	25	24	73.50%
Combe Martin	64	59	8.00%	41	38	64.00%
Crediton	389	345	13.00%	255	201	65.50%
Cullompton	387	387	0.00%	246	208	63.50%
Dawlish	127	188	-32.00%	73	101	57.50%
Dartmouth	169	142	19.00%	113	93	67.00%
Exeter	1232	1083	14.00%	649	565	53.00%
Exmouth	849	760	12.00%	584	529	69.00%
Holsworthy	199	147	35.00%	100	100	50.00%
Honiton	285	246	16.00%	178	181	62.50%

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Ilfracombe	364	326	12.00%	224	224	61.50%
Ivybridge	411	293	40.00%	294	170	71.50%
Kingsbridge	338	284	19.00%	173	161	51.00%
Kingskerswell	41	53	-23.00%	14	31	34.00%
kingsteignton	151	129	17.00%	115	89	76.00%
Lynton	47	31	52.00%	15	20	32.00%
Moretonhampstead	83	78	6.00%	53	62	64.00%
Newton Abbot	512	385	33.00%	247	189	48.00%
Northam	162	206	-21.00%	100	113	62.00%
Okehampton	382	315	21.00%	258	192	67.50%
Ottery St Mary	250	205	22.00%	148	122	59.00%
Pinhoe	132	61	116.00%	54	31	41.00%
Princetown	41	23	78.00%	19	16	46.00%
Salcombe	29	37	-22.00%	14	13	48.00%
Seaton	189	167	13.00%	137	99	72.50%
Sidmouth	223	210	6.00%	138	103	62.00%
South Molton	218	248	-12.00%	124	136	57.00%
St Thomas	360	357	1.00%	224	248	62.00%
Stoke Fleming	12	5	140.00%	9	5	75.00%
Tavistock	448	423	6.00%	274	254	61.00%
Teignmouth	324	278	17.00%	205	197	63.00%
Tiverton	646	605	7.00%	418	408	65.00%
Topsham	146	122	20.00%	96	71	66.00%
Torrington	265	236	12.00%	160	170	60.00%
Totnes	241	205	18.00%	158	130	65.50%
Uffculme	44	28	57.00%	21	18	48.00%
Ivybridge Mobile	6	4	50.00%	2	2	33.00%
Teignmouth Mobile	10	3	233.00%	9	1	90.00%
Tiverton Mobile	13	12	8.00%	11	5	85.00%
Torrington Mobile	33	36	-8.00%	29	25	88.00%
<b>Devon Totals</b>	<b>12703</b>	<b>11162</b>	<b>14.00%</b>	<b>7811</b>	<b>6667</b>	<b>61.50%</b>

## Children's borrowing July to September

Library	2018	2019	% change
~Ivybridge Mobile	127	128	0.79%
~Teignbridge Mobile	339	223	-34.22%
~Tiverton Mobile	560	764	36.43%
~Torrington Mobile	623	691	10.91%

Appledore	1277	1439	12.69%
Ashburton	1393	1651	18.52%
Axminster	3642	3288	-9.72%
Bampton	370	293	-20.81%
Barnstaple	16226	16880	4.03%
Bideford	5765	6944	20.45%
Bovey Tracey	2614	3193	22.15%
Braunton	4054	4196	3.50%

Buckfastleigh	1780	1741	-2.19%
Budleigh Salterton	3277	3732	13.88%
Chagford	1017	1107	8.85%
Chudleigh	2748	2537	-7.68%
Chulmleigh	38	14	-63.16%
Clyst Vale	98	191	94.90%
Colyton	753	569	-24.44%
Combe Martin	809	1009	24.72%
Crediton	8673	8937	3.04%
Cullompton	7780	7743	-0.48%
Dartmouth	3075	3286	6.86%
Dawlish	3818	3171	-16.95%
Exeter	46912	45085	-3.89%
Exmouth	13840	14831	7.16%
Holsworthy	2433	2590	6.45%
Honiton	6420	6776	5.55%
Ilfracombe	3885	4268	9.86%
Ivybridge	8910	9696	8.82%
Kingsbridge	4892	5248	7.28%
Kingskerswell	1033	794	-23.14%
Kingsteignton	3027	3054	0.89%
Lynton	500	364	-27.20%
Moretonhampstead	1125	1090	-3.11%
Newton Abbot	13249	14487	9.34%
Northam	3298	2878	-12.73%
Okehampton	7200	8338	15.81%
Ottery St Mary	5226	6289	20.34%
Pinhoe	1735	2215	27.67%
Princetown	458	419	-8.52%

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Salcombe	386	401	3.89%
Seaton	3149	3321	5.46%
Sidmouth	5076	5481	7.98%
South Molton	3887	3813	-1.90%
St Thomas	7327	6643	-9.34%
Stoke Fleming	181	175	-3.31%
Tavistock	9236	10014	8.42%
Teignmouth	5539	6181	11.59%
Tiverton	11845	11955	0.93%
Topsham	3481	3444	-1.06%
Torrington	4273	5006	17.15%
Totnes	8932	9379	5.00%
Uffculme	753	715	-5.05%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>259,064</b>	<b>288,677</b>	<b>3.78%</b>

**Report of the Cabinet Member**  
**Children's Services and Schools**

I have been asked to report as follows for Full Council on 5 December 2019:

1. By Councillor Hannaford on:

*Last year nationally more than 60 young people were sexually abused or exploited after going missing from unregulated homes. Recent information requests also indicate that missing episodes have doubled in the past three years in England and Wales.*

*The charity Missing People said the government must "urgently" address the lack of quality placements. The Department for Education said councils had a duty to make sure accommodation for these children was suitable. Children over the age of 16, often in care or formerly so, are increasingly being placed in unregulated homes in England and Wales. Known as semi-independent or supported accommodation, they offer support but not care to residents.*

*Other indicators are that vulnerable teenagers in unregulated homes can face 'organised abuse' while living in such accommodation. The figures that can be compared from 85 councils suggest missing episodes have increased from 4,656 times in 2015/6 to 10,074 in 2018/9. In the same period, councils found that 63 young people were sexually abused or exploited while missing from unregulated homes. Around one in six missing episodes in 2019 featured children already recognised as being at risk from child sexual exploitation. It's also estimated that police forces spent at least £50m last year in looking for children in care who have gone missing from their accommodation.*

*Can the Cabinet Member please inform council on what the situation in Devon is regarding these matters and what work is being done collectively to counter these trends? Specifically do we even know how many unregulated homes that we have in the Devon?*

2. By Councillor Hannaford on:

*Nationally the number of children carrying weapons in schools has risen steeply. Incidents are now being recorded in Devon's schools.*

*Do we know how many children have been caught carrying weapons in Devon's schools in recent years?*

*What is being done collectively across the wider educational community in Devon to deal with this serious issue?*

*Scotland halted the rise in youth knife crime by giving young people more help and support with education, youth work, training, mental health, employment and housing.*

*Can this joined up multi-agency approach be used in Devon?*

*Does he agree that every secondary school should hold knife crime workshops to teach young people about the dangers of carrying weapons?*

*As part of a robust education campaign that it would be important young people should hear from relatives of knife-crime victims?*

*That pupils should be proactively taught about the dangers of social media on these issues, and given advice on how to tackle peer pressure in and around schools?*

*That there should be a dedicated police officer for every secondary school in Devon to help raise awareness over issues such as county lines , gangs , exploitation , drug dealing etc , and be a direct point of contact for school staff , pupils and families on this and other issues?*

3. To update on:

*The 30 year anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

## **Response**

### **1. Care children sexually abused or exploited while missing from homes**

#### Types of provision

Children who are looked after can be placed in a variety of settings. Where a young person, under 16 has significant needs that cannot be met within a family-based type of placement, they will be placed in a children's home. Children's homes are regulated and inspected by Ofsted. For more details see Introduction to Children's Homes.

When a child is over 16 there are more options available. 'Supported accommodation' or 'supported lodgings' are used where young people no longer wish to be in a foster placement, or their needs are such they would not be met in a family-based placement. Many young people aged 16 and over want to move towards independence. Supported accommodation provides young people aged 16 + with a safe, healthy and nurturing environment with some individual care.

There are also types of supported accommodation where there may be a small number of young people living together but in their own individual small units with on-site staff and support. Many Local Authorities including Devon County Council, provide these placements.

These 16+ placements are not regulated by Ofsted.

#### Quality Assurance of 16+ Placements

External Provision for 16 + is commissioned and overseen by the Children's Commissioning Service.

The commissioning service has worked proactively and extensively with providers since 2018, both to identify the placements and to improve their quality. A Quality Assurance Framework was developed to support this requirement, and providers all received a quality assurance assessment, prior to being awarded a place on the framework. Arrangements for placements outside of this framework will receive a quality assessment and the expectations of providers are aligned to those set out within the overall Quality Assurance Framework.

Unregulated placements are not illegal or inappropriate providing that they are used correctly. They should only be for young people who are aged 16 years and over and should only be used for the purposes of support, not intensive care for those children where a residential place would be more appropriate.

Sufficiency of both residential and 16 plus placements is a national and local challenge.

The Childrens Commissioning Service is working to increase provision within both sectors launching a new contract this year for providers of 16+ provision. For sufficiency of residential beds, they have a 'market development plan' which over the last 3 years has increased the number of beds within Devon from 67 to 103. This work is ongoing as although this is a good outcome, these beds are not owned by DCC and can be used by any Local Authority in the country. There is a proposed 'Block Contract' to secure the use of 10 beds with providers which if agreed, is expected to be in place for the summer of 2020. Additionally, the 'Fixing the System Project' is looking specifically at young people who are placed at distance and working with providers to return these young people to Devon (where it is appropriate to do so).

The specific number of these types of provision operating within the Local Authority boundary is more complex, as the provisions do not require planning permission nor are they required to inform the local authority. At the time of writing there are 103 of these types of provisions. The vast majority are on our Framework with only 11 known to be not part of this agreement. The 'placements team' who find placements for DCC children use the placements on the framework. If, in an exceptional circumstance, a provision is not on the framework, perhaps due to being new, or no other placement being available, additional visits are completed by the Social Work Team and commissioning undertake a quality assurance visit.

#### Numbers of Children in Supported Accommodation and episodes of being missing.

There were 81 young people placed in supported accommodation during 2018/19 of whom 33 were placed out of the County. The improvements both in the quality and the scrutiny on these placements has evidenced a significant reduction in the number of missing episodes. The number of missing episodes for those children in 16 + provision reduced by 60% from 534 in 17/18 to 213 in 18/19. All children who go missing within Devon County Council who are looked after are offered a Return Home Interview.\* This allows the young person to talk about the reasons they went missing and any concerns. If a child from another Local Authority goes missing from a placement within the County the REACH team will track the Return Home interview and escalate through the child's Local Authority if it is not done. They oversaw 218 children from other Local Authorities in the last financial year.

Young people who have experienced trauma and looked after or receive a service from Childrens Social Work may also be at risk of exploitation. In 2018/19 the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse including those in placements was initiated. Devon is taking part in this and have returned that no DCC children were abused. To ascertain if any children were exploited is far more challenging to specifically pinpoint. Missing is a key indicator of children at risk of being exploited. (see recent scrutiny masterclass). Any child considered at risk of exploitation is assessed and a plan put in place. Exploitation can be challenging to spot and needs constant vigilance within all services and in communities.

In the last year training has been provided for staff on exploitation with a dedicated SharePoint resource site. The Safer Devon Partnership in conjunction with the Devon Children and Families Partnership published the Exploitation Toolkit for professionals and members of the public see Preventing Exploitation Toolkit. Taxi drivers, train staff and hoteliers have also been trained and this is ongoing with regular communications and events.

This ensures that the risks of exploitation are recognised. There are currently 60 young people who have these assessments at various stages of risk. Work with the youth intervention officers within the Police and the Community Safety Partnerships has supported the identification of young people who may be at risk of exploitation. The partnerships have done targeted work in areas where there are high numbers of residential

homes and supported living placements. This included Newton Abbott and Exeter. Where a need is identified such as recently with a provision providing support to young women, Space (Youth Service) have swiftly put in place a project providing individual support and are looking at wider learning which will feed back into the Exploitation Sub Group.

A training day for providers of supported accommodation and residential units on exploitation and missing had been set for 21st January. This is being facilitated by Children's Services, Commissioning and the Police to support good practice in identifying exploitation and understanding the reasons young people go missing.

*\* Children who are not Looked After Children are also offered Return Home Interviews, either by their allocated worker (if they are already open to children's social care) or by the REACH team (if they are not).*

## **2. Knife Crime in Devon schools**

*1. Nationally the number of children carrying weapons in schools has risen steeply. Incidents are now being recorded in Devon's schools. Do we know how many children have been caught carrying weapons in Devon's schools in recent years?*

Devon is a very safe place to live and it is important that we don't overstate risk and thereby inadvertently risk normalising what is rare behaviour.

Fewer than five children have been permanently excluded from school for possession of an offensive weapon during the academic year 2018/19. The legal definition of an offensive weapon is any article made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him, or by some other person. However, the weapons have sometimes been found in a school bag rather than a child being physically in possession of the weapon.

*2. What is being done collectively across the wider educational community in Devon to deal with this serious issue?*

Knife crime is a shared responsibility, led by the Safer Devon Partnership (SDP). Community Safety Partnerships in each area lead the delivery of work to tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour including knife crime. Anti-social behaviour groups in the community safety partnerships work with the youth intervention officers from the police.

In 2018, the Devon Children and Families Partnership (DCFP) and SDP began to develop a framework for multi-agency coordination of the risks to young people from outside their family (extra-familial/contextual risks), in recognition of the emerging county-wide and national indicators of concern.

This new adolescent safety framework has just been launched. The key changes in practice include:

- a single and holistic approach to assessment of individual children, peer groups, neighbourhood, location or person/people of concern that guides the assessor to the correct pathway/action through the identification of vulnerabilities, behaviours, environment, relevant concerns, indicators as well as protective factors.
- a model of working at the individual level through Safer Me and Safer Me Plus meetings designed to ensure a strong focus on contextual risks, maximise the participation of the young person and focus on the primacy of collaboration with them to cultivate safety.

- peer Group, Neighbourhood (Location) and School Context conferences which provide a mechanism to coordinate intervention where the context within which young people operate provides the greatest influence over safety/ risk. These are not forums for individual case planning.
- a single coordination hub through the MASH, which ensures timely individual safeguarding, provides threshold stability, maps and analyses received information and ensures connectivity between key forums and the sharing of information for safeguarding, operational and strategic purposes across the county.
- The model for the ASF is recognised best practice and is supported by an evidence base in what is an emerging area of practice nationally.

*3. As part of a robust education campaign that it would be important young people should hear from relatives of knife-crime victims?*

The Turning Corners project was created in response to increased gang related issues within South Devon and Torbay and was established to identify, divert and safeguard young people who are at risk of Criminal Exploitation. The Turning Corners Project is funded until April 2021 and works with young people who are at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation outside of the home or at risk of, or currently engaging in violence/disorder outside of the home. Interventions also take the form of further referrals.

*4. Scotland halted the rise in youth knife crime by giving young people more help and support with education, youth work, training, mental health, employment and housing. Can this joined up multi-agency approach be used in Devon?*

Scotland adopted a Public Health approach in response to what was a very serious and entrenched problem with violence.

The Devon Adolescent Safety Framework, and the Turning Corners project share many of the features incorporated in the Scottish model.

### **3. United Nations Rights of the Child**

I would also like to update the Council on the 30 year anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This agreement is signed by the Government, along with 196 other countries that lists 42 promises (also called Articles) made to children and young people to ensure that they are all treated equally and fairly. These promises cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to which children are entitled.

The agreement also explains how adults and Governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights, meaning that every child has a right to a childhood, every child should survive and develop, never suffer discrimination, have decisions made in their best interests and have a right to participate and be heard.

As Cabinet Member, I recognise the importance of the UNCRC and would like to re-affirm the Council's ongoing commitments to promoting and respecting the rights of children and young people.

I also welcome the proposed activities of the Council's Participation Team who will co-design and co-ordinate a child rights project over the next year, which will discuss and

promote children's rights, culminating in an art project or digital that will be displayed upon completion. The work will seek to reach and engage children and young people across Devon, including those who have identified additional needs or vulnerabilities, and will work with partner agencies in its delivery.

**James McInnes**

Cabinet Member

Children's Services and Schools

## **Report of the Cabinet Member Adult Social Care and Health Services**

### **Introduction**

#### **1. I have been asked to report by Cllr Hannaford as follows for Full Council on 5 December 2019:**

A report into the care of a teenager with autism has highlighted a number of failings into her care and made a "comprehensive list of improvements required to support children like Beth". The report was commissioned by Health Secretary Matt Hancock after Beth's case caused a public outcry.

*"The disgraceful practice of locking up autistic people and people with learning disabilities in mental health units was exposed in 2011 following the Winterbourne abuse scandal. Over the next 12 months every patient with autism or a learning disability in a mental health hospital will have their case reviewed.*

*The government will commit, as part of the review, to providing each patient with a date for discharge or if suitable a clear explanation of why and a plan to move them closer towards being ready for discharge into the community. This announcement builds on recent statistics which show that there has already been a 22% decrease of inpatient numbers since March 2015. The government has also committed to a further reduction of up to 400 inpatients to discharged by the end of March 2020.*

*For the patients that are in long-term segregation, an independent panel, chaired by Baroness Shelia Hollins, will be established to oversee their case reviews to further improve their care and support them to be discharged back to the community as quickly as possible. The panel will include independent experts who will monitor, challenge and advise on the progress of case reviews of those in the most restrictive settings, with the aim of supporting more people to be discharged. The panel will expect a clear plan towards a discharge date or an explanation for how providers are making progress towards discharging the individual.*

*The government has also confirmed that every NHS and social care worker will receive mandatory training relevant to their role. The new training is backed by £1.4 million of government funding and will focus on understanding learning disability and autism, legislation and rights and making reasonable adjustments such as using different communications methods for autistic people with sensory sensitives."*

Can the Cabinet Member please confirm with Council, how many residents in the Devon County Council area are affected by these issues, how we will be working with others to access and implement this new training and advocacy

regime, and also ensure that these improved measures will be achieved in Devon and local clients placed out of area.

## **Response**

In 2015, the Government and NHS England (NHSE) launched Transforming Care to improve health and care services so that people with autism and/or a learning disability can live, with the right support, in the community and close to home.

At a national level, progress has not been good enough and the Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, has ordered the Care Quality Commission to conduct an in-depth review.

As part of the review, the Government will commit to providing each patient with a date for discharge, or where this is not appropriate, a clear explanation of why and a plan to move them closer towards being ready for discharge into the community.

### The Transforming Care Partnership in Devon

Devon has been very successful in this area and is recognised by NHSE as delivering best practice for adults. The performance of Devon for Community Treatment Reviews is good: 90% for adults with CCG support (10% have not given consent) and 100% for adults who are NHSE supported.

Devon's Transforming Care Partnership is a multi-agency Steering Group (Devon County Council is a part) overseeing progress to reduce the number of children and adults with a learning disability/and or autism who are placed in out of area in-patient settings.

As of 31st October 2019, there were 20 people in the Devon County Council area who are living in in-patient settings outside of Devon. This includes:

- 8 people in specialist adult in-patient settings commissioned by the CCG;
- 6 adults in secure settings commissioned nationally by NHSE; and
- 6 children.

The Council and the Health work together in a number of ways to ensure the appropriate care of children with learning disabilities and autism. This includes support for families when children are at home, the offer of community based and residential short breaks and longer-term care where appropriate. The Council quality assure all of this provision with the support of health colleagues.

Children who require inpatient care, to meet their mental health needs, are placed in a Tier 4 provision by Specialist Commissioning NHS England, who are also responsible for quality assurance of this provision. There are currently six children with autism placed in Tier 4 provision from Devon. Local CAMHS services are part of the clinical team who support the admission and

discharge plan for any child placed. If the child is Looked After then Social Care also have lead professional responsibility throughout the placement and visits continue including co-ordinating the multi-agency plan for the move on to residential or fostering provision when a child well enough to be discharged from hospital.

The Council and Health have been working together through the SEND Improvement Board to plan services locally and to improve the capacity and capability of the local services and the workforce to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities, autism and challenging behaviour. This will include the roll out of the national training.

The TCP Steering Group has a tracker group which meets fortnightly to monitor and drive progress for this cohort of people. This work includes identifying and developing local community-based support and training for staff to support people with behaviour that challenges to be as independent as possible and part of their local community.

Locally agencies have recognised the need to expand and develop services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism and are investing to improve the availability of support. One of the key outcomes for this investment is to reduce the number of people going into specialist out of area hospital placements.

Devon, in conjunction with Devon Partnership Trust, has developed a 'blue light' protocol which brings together a group of health and social care professionals to proactively support people in the community where possible, and avoid a hospital admission.

Across the Devon STP, a new model of support is being implemented to ensure that people with autism have timely access to health and care support to meet their needs. The aim of this work is to prevent and/or reduce the escalation of people's needs and the number of hospital admissions. This work also includes increasing awareness of autism amongst non-specialist staff across agencies through training, learning materials and information available on the CCG and DCC website.

In Devon, we have built autism awareness and associated training into our workforce development plan and this is currently being rolled out to all frontline staff. We are also jointly developing a positive behaviour support network to improve the quality of health and care support received by people with learning disabilities and/or autism. We are monitoring the impact of this.

**Councillor Andrew Leadbetter**  
**Cabinet Member**  
**Adult Social Care and Health Services**



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

### **Local Electricity Bill**

#### **1. Introduction**

I have been asked to report by Councillor Atkinson as follows:

*Will the Cabinet Member for economy report on whether the Council would support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 115 MPs, and which, if made law, would make the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Local Supply; as part of measures to tackle the climate emergency and how this would affect potential operators and the supply of green electricity in Devon.*

#### **2. Background and Overview**

The Local Electricity Bill has been drafted by an organisation called Power for People - <https://powerforpeople.org.uk/>. Power for People is a not-for-profit organisation, campaigning for the UK to rapidly transition to 100% clean energy and for local communities to benefit from this great transition. Much of this report uses words from the Power for People website to explain the Local Electricity Bill.

Devon County Council has long recognised the potential for community-scale and community-owned renewable energy to help raise awareness of local energy issues and enable communities to work together to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and decarbonise Devon – directly supporting the current climate emergency. Supported by Devon County Council since 2011, Devon now has over 20 community energy organisations collaborating through the Devon Community Energy Network - <https://www.devoncommunityenergy.org.uk/>. Community energy organisations have installed over 12MW of renewable energy, invested £14m, created 33 full-time jobs and avoided over 6,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

The vision for many of these organisations is local people buying locally-generated renewable energy that supports the local economy, jobs and environment. But maximising this opportunity is very difficult.

#### **3. The Problem**

If you want to buy your electricity from local renewable sources, such as the local school and the church that has solar panels on their roofs, you cannot. We all buy our electricity from a utility company that sources it from anything connected to the National Grid, be it a field of solar panels in Wiltshire or a gas fired power station in Yorkshire.

Putting it the other way around – a community with local renewable generation, e.g. housing estates with solar panels or a hydro plant in the local river – cannot sell the energy they generate to local people but must sell it to a utility who sell it on to customers.

This is happening because becoming a supplier of energy to customers requires engaging with highly complex industry codes and network agreements that result in set-up costs of millions of pounds. Running costs are also enormous because regulations require companies supplying energy to customers to contribute to the national and regional energy grid networks.

#### **4. The Solution**

The costs and complexity of being able to sell locally generated energy to local people needs to be made proportionate to the size of the community energy companies' operation. It would then be financially viable for current and potential renewable generators to set up as local energy suppliers, selling their energy to local people.

Power for People have drafted the Local Electricity Bill which lays out a mechanism that will do this. If enacted by Parliament, it would give generators of electricity the right to become local suppliers, i.e. sell their energy to local people. It gives the task of setting up this right to OFGEM, the energy market regulator. Critically, it requires that OFGEM ensures that this right means that local suppliers face set-up and running costs and complexity proportionate to the scale of their operation.

#### **5. What would this mean for Devon?**

The Local Electricity Bill would allow the successful community energy sector in Devon to implement new business models and grow by continuing to engage local people on local energy issues and take ownership over their energy futures and local carbon emissions.

Commercial renewable energy operators would also be likely to benefit although some commentators are requesting that the Bill could be improved by adding a detailed requirement on OFGEM to involve allow not-for-profit companies to become local energy suppliers.

**Councillor Rufus Gilbert**

Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

## **Report of the Cabinet Member for Highway Management**

### **1. Introduction**

I have been asked to report to Council by Councillor Greenslade as follows:

***on the cost of highway maintenance caused by the recent heavy rain and whether there are still roads affected by floods.***

### **2. Response**

As of 25 November, the Council received over 326 public reports of flooding for the month, including reacting to 394 call outs, at least a third of which appeared to be due to standing water/flooding. Many of the reports appeared to be as a result of defects and / or drainage systems failing due to sheer volume and blocked gullies, ditches, grips etc caused by leaf fall, debris and high water tables.

The increased volume of defects and reactive responses alone have cost in the region of £400k to date and this would continue to increase. Events such as this had a knock-on effect to highways assets affecting retaining wall and slope stability, for example the prolonged severe weather had been a significant factor in the landslide on the A386 near Landcross.

As of today's date, I am not aware that there are any roads still affected by flood water.

**Councillor Stuart Hughes**

Cabinet Member for Highway Management

