

COUNCIL

3 December 2020

Present:-

Chair: S Barker

Vice-Chair: J Trail

Councillors H Ackland, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, S Aves, K Ball, F Biederman, 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 Dewhirst, A Eastman, R Edgell, R Gilbert, B Greenslade, G Gribble, I Hall, R Hannaford, J Hart, J Hawkins, L Hellyer, J Hodgson, G Hook, R Hosking, S Hughes, T Inch, A Leadbetter, J Mathews, J McInnes, B Parsons, R Peart, P Prowse, R Radford, S Randall-Johnson, S Russell, P Sanders, A Saywell, R Scott, D Sellis, M Shaw, G Sheldon, C Slade, M Squires, P Twiss, N Way, C Whitton and J Yabsley

Apologies:-

Councillors J Berry, R Bloxham and C Wright

317 **Introduction and Meetings Processes**

The Council received a presentation on how the meeting would run, including processes and etiquette.

318 **Minutes**

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 be signed as a correct record.

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

319 **Announcements**

The Chair of the Council reported that the Council's two country parks had been presented with prestigious Green Flag Awards. Both Stover Country Park and the Grand Western Canal Country Park had been among more than 2,000 sites across the country to collect the award. Both parks had remained open throughout the pandemic lockdown and had seen an increase in visitors over the last few months.

The Council had also been presented with the Silver Award from the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme. This scheme recognised employers that supported Defence personnel and encouraged others to do the same. The Silver Award acknowledged Devon's support for former service

personnel transitioning from the Forces into career opportunities within the Council, as well as support to employees who had partners who served in the Armed Forces.

Last, a pioneering new project that supported unpaid carers had been heralded nationally and had been shortlisted for a prestigious care award at the Health Service Journal awards. It involved dedicated staff from Devon Carers (a service commissioned by the Council and NHS Devon CCG), working closely with hospital teams to identify situations where carers were involved, and where support for those carers was needed for patients to return home safely, or prevent hospital admissions. The results had shown significant improvements which was in recognition of the hard and diligent work of the Hospital Service Team.

320 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

321 Public Participation: Petitions, Questions and Representations

There was no petition or questions received from a member of the public and no oral representations made.

322 Petitions from Members of the Council

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

323 Questions from Members of the Council

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members provided written responses to 31 questions submitted by Members of the Council relating to;

- Allocations for the Emergency Active Travel Fund, sums involved and where the schemes were in the County;
- the effect of the pandemic on micro businesses across Devon and how this compared with SMEs and large employers;
- current gender balance of the Councils staff, the existing gender pay gap, the impact of a public sector pay freeze and work being done to tackle the gender pay gap at the Council;
- children or young people in the care of Devon County Council in placements outside of the Devon County Council area;
- children or young people in the care of Devon County Council in placements outside of the county of Devon;
- the furthest distance from County Hall that a child or young person had been placed in care;
- children in the Council area in receipt of Free School Meals;

- Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and waiting times for treatment after referral;
- numbers of social workers employed by the Council (head count - total number including newly qualified);
- numbers of social workers directly employed by the Council;
- numbers of social workers engaged through agency or through another employment form;
- gross salaries for social workers employed by the Council;
- salaries paid to social workers employed through an agency or personal company;
- numbers of social workers who had left the Council for 2019/20 and the financial year 2020/21;
- numbers of vacancies for social worker posts including those on the establishment but filled by an 'agency' social worker;
- school exams and guidance for GCSE, A-Level and SATs in light of the 'second wave' of Covid-19;
- clarity on the use of PPE in schools;
- ICT equipment and internet access for disadvantaged students, when schools and children might receive the ICT equipment and how many laptops had been promised and delivered;
- the number of Devon schools closed for more than 24 hours since 1st September;
- the Youngminds survey results, poor mental health and counselling services to support students and the comparison to national statistics;
- whether the Council was consulted by the Police and Crime Commissioner on plans to merge the Devon & Cornwall Force with Dorset Police and any response sent;
- the timeline for the report on the flash flooding event in Barnstaple in August and Local Member input;
- the Devon economy Report and reference to special treatment for central Barnstaple, an explanation of such measures and consultation before identifying central Barnstaple for special treatment;
- the effect of additional funding for schools on funding per pupil, Devon's place in the national league table and the Chancellors budget statement of additional funding for schools in 2021/22 and beyond;
- representations to Government for additional funding for schools to help defray the costs of making schools Covid safe and whether a reply had been received;
- the trial of longer semi-trailers (LSTs) for articulated goods vehicles and how Devon's road network and bridges would cope with such vehicles;
- community funded vehicle activated signs (VAS), the process for community groups including Parish Councils obtaining permission from the authority and installing the equipment themselves;
- availability of NHS hospital beds in the Council area at 1 January 2010 and at 31 October 2020;
- availability of NHS beds in community hospitals at 1 January 2010 and at 31 October 2020;

- numbers of community hospitals that had closed, or stopped being used for inpatient care and treatment since 1 January 2010; and
- action of the Council to lobby for an increase in the number of NHS hospital beds available in its area since 1 January 2010.

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

(A copy of the questions and answers are appended to the minutes and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the [webcast of this meeting](#))

324 Cabinet Member Reports

The Council received reports from the relevant Cabinet Members on specific issues upon which they had been asked to comment, as set out below:

(a) Policy, Corporate and Asset Management

Councillor Hart circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, on the option for all eligible electors in the Devon County Council area to vote entirely by post in the next set of local elections in 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Leader highlighted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Government had legislated to postpone all planned elections and referenda until 6 May 2021. Since that time, Government had confirmed there would be no further primary legislation around elections which ruled out all out postal voting, changes to polling hours and allowing by-elections or referenda to take place before 6 May 2021. The Government recognised that the polls would present new challenges and that electoral administrators would have to make changes. The Report referred to a letter from Chloe Smith MP Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution which said it was not necessary for significant changes such as imposing an all-postal vote as it was felt all-postal voting increased fraud risks and removed choice from voters.

Government had been considering a potential smaller change to legislation to support electors with absent voting, as well as considering other ways of ensuring voter participation. Government had confirmed they would consider secondary legislation to make COVID-19 related restrictions (i.e. quarantining and self-isolation) an eligibility for emergency proxy voting, as was the case in Scotland.

Due to the changing nature of the impact and response to coronavirus nationally and locally, it would be important that communication plans were flexible and could be adapted to respond to changing circumstances.

The Leader also responded in writing to the recent spending review announcements by the Chancellor and how they might impact on Devon. The Spending Review had been presented to the House of Commons on the 26th

October. Whilst Local Authorities had been anticipating a three year Spending Review, it was not a surprise that due to the economic and financial impact of the Pandemic this had been reduced to just one year. The Council's funding allocations would not be known until the week of the 14th December at the earliest, although the size of some grant funding streams might not be known until the new year.

However, the Leader outlined a number of the key messages from the Spending Review such as Core Spending Power to increase by 4% and a new Social Care grant of £300 millions nationally. The Council Tax increase that would trigger the need for a referendum was 2% and there was an option to set an Adult Social Care Precept of up to 3% as well as current Social Care grants continuing.

A public sector pay freeze had been announced, except for those earning less than £24,000 per annum and the National Living Wage would increase.

The Leader also reported on the COVID related grants, the Council Tax Income Guarantee Scheme, the New Homes Bonus scheme would continue next year and that the Fairer Funding Review, 75% Business Rate Retention and the Business Rates Reset had all been delayed.

A number of other grants had been announced, expected to be ring-fenced in the majority of cases, that authorities could bid for. These included Cyber Security modernisation, Test & Trace, Personal Protective Equipment, Rough Sleepers, Domestic Abuse, Troubled Families, School Transport Capacity, Secure Children's Homes, Social Housing Decarbonisation, Roads Maintenance & upgrades, Cycling, High Street Regeneration and Levelling up for local infrastructure.

What this meant for Devon was unclear until receipt of the Provisional Settlement.

The Leader also responded to questions on council tax and the social care precept.

(b) Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environment

Councillor Croad circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, on the current status of varroa destructor mite infections on Devon's honeybees, the work being done to combat and contain it and work with key partners, bee keepers, regulators and landscape managers.

He highlighted in the Report that Varroa destructor, a global pest of the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*), was first reported in the UK, in Devon, in 1992 and was now present in every known honey bee colony across the County. If left untreated, Varroa infection would lead to the loss of a honey bee colony within 2-3 years. Over 90% of beekeepers in the UK controlled the Varroa mite in accordance with the 'managing Varroa' guide provided by

BeeBase, which was a mechanical treatment of the colony at low numbers of infestation, swapping to chemical control with the introduction of Varroa medicines when mite populations surpassed 1,000. The Report highlighted the work of the National Beekeepers Union, training events in the South West and participant numbers in those events. There was also university led research, including the 'ReViVe' project, to better understand resistance to Varroa and winter colony losses and 'B4: Bringing Black Bees Back' project. The Cabinet Member also confirmed there was no cross contamination between domesticated and wild bee species, but when the Varroa mite was present in a hive, it increased the prevalence of deformed wing virus (DWV) in the honey bees, which then increased the chance of the virus being spread to wild bumblebee species visiting the same flowers .

He also reported, in writing, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, on the latest trends, figures, rates and convictions regarding domestic violence and sexual abuse in Devon, to include places of safety capacity, prevention work, and child centred practice and any modelling work to scope out future service pressures in light of sector drivers resulting from the pandemic, mental health and acute social issues and economic downturn.

The Cabinet Member's Report highlighted that Devon's response to domestic violence and abuse spanned many agencies and the Community Safety Strategic Assessment brought together key information to assess crime, disorder and safety issues across Devon, including both domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Assessment for 2019-20 showed a 3% increase in incidents recorded by police linked to domestic abuse in Devon (11,000 incidents, 16.8 incidents per 1,000 population) and the Crime Survey for England and Wales suggested there has been little change in the prevalence of domestic abuse in recent years. In the most recent quarter (July-September 2020) there had been a small increase in domestic abuse crimes recorded compared to the same period in the previous year, but a small decrease in the number of domestic abuse incidents.

There had been a steady increase in referrals and requests for specialist support for victims of domestic abuse in Devon in recent years, and a sharp increase since the Spring COVID-19 lockdown, with the Splitz Support Service seeing a 60% increase in calls in April 2020 compared to April 2019. An increase in the complexity of cases had also intensified the pressure. The Council responded by allocating an additional £250k of funding. There had also been a substantial increase in the number of professionals seeking advice on how to support families experiencing domestic abuse.

Two thirds of cases receiving specialist domestic abuse support included children and the needs of children as witnesses and victims of domestic abuse were being addressed in a number of ways, as outlined the Report.

The Council had also allocated £150k of COVID-19 emergency funding to strengthen the ability of the multi-agency Early Help locality teams to provide direct support to families experiencing domestic abuse where appropriate.

Several initiatives were also under way to prevent domestic abuse by identifying and intervening early and reducing repeat victimisation and perpetration.

The availability of safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children was affected by a severe shortage of affordable accommodation of all kinds. District Councils could provide temporary accommodation in some situations and fixed term Government funding had enabled the creation of three dedicated Places of Safety (2-bedroom flats) and two further sites were being discussed.

The Council noted that the Domestic Abuse Bill currently before Parliament would introduce a new duty to provide domestic abuse support for victims and their children who were living in safe accommodation.

The Cabinet Member then provided an update on the roll out of the scheme to support vulnerable children and families in Devon, including free school meals. Throughout the COVID-19 response, the Council had worked and provided significant investment in alleviating the impacts of financial hardship on the most vulnerable. The Council also welcomed the funding for the Winter Grant Fund which equated to £2.042m and increased funding from April 2021 to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme and an uplift in Early Start Vouchers to £4.25.

The Council was also seeking to develop a comprehensive and timely response and create sustainability and some legacy from the funding. As such, there were three key areas of investment.

1. to align funding and arrangements with the Council's previous £1.7M investment in hardship funding to District Councils to provide vital support to families impacted by economic pressures;
2. the Council had commissioned the Devon Community Foundation to facilitate a rapid piece of work to develop a series of Food Networks across Devon, with an ambition to develop or align to, at least one network per District area, before Christmas. In the longer term it was hoped these networks would continue to develop to support the Council in its wider ambitions around food, particularly in relation to sustainability, local production, good nutrition and health, and food security; and
3. the commitment of the Council to provide a universal offer to those families currently relying on term time food within schools. The Council would make available a voucher for each of the 15,000 children eligible and accessing free school meals across Devon which would equate to an allocation of £30 per child over the Christmas holidays. In addition, the Council would provide a

basic food box facility should families be unable to utilise a voucher and required urgent support.

In addition, the Council would make a significant number of vouchers or equivalent available to Early Help Teams, Children's Centres, Food Networks and District Councils to ensure that vulnerable families, who may fall outside eligibility for free school meals, were supported over the coming weeks.

The next reported matter was an update on COVID-19 including vaccinations, secondary school infections, infection rates, extended or additional lockdowns and the potential repercussions of a Christmas relaxation of restrictions.

Rates across Devon had increased steadily since October 2020, although recent data showed some early signs of overall rates reducing. The data published on the 23rd November suggested the rate of infections for Devon and England was 110.5 and 251.5 respectively per 100,000 population.

The position in Care Homes was 91 known situations, which equated to around 180 confirmed cases. This was being managed through Adult Social Care with support from Public Health Devon and PHE.

In terms of schools the Report provided a graph showing the weekly rate of positive cases in school aged children in Devon as well as detail of the attendance figures which showed Devon continued to have a higher percentage of pupils attending school than the national figures across all categories.

As of the 23rd November, there were 54 schools (17 Secondary, 37 primary) with positive cases with staff, pupils, year groups or bubbles self-isolating and approximately 2231 (1251 secondary; 980 primary) pupil absences, due to positive COVID-19 cases, in Devon.

The Report gave detail in the testing capacity for people with COVID-19 symptoms. Positivity rates were currently 5% for the South West and 10% for England and some testing of asymptomatic people had commenced in Devon.

The Government had signed agreements with seven separate vaccine developers, including Pfizer/BioNTech (40 million doses), Moderna (5million doses) and Oxford/AstraZeneca (100 million doses) and detailed planning was underway in Devon for a COVID-19 mass vaccination. Whilst detail was still awaited, it was anticipated that frontline health and social care staff, care home residents and staff, and people aged over 80 would be first in line.

The Report outlined the new Tier System which placed Devon in Tier 2 (high) and how the Government had made the decision and the Christmas coronavirus restrictions between 23rd and 27th December, allowing three households to form a Christmas bubble.

He finally reported on the National Audit Office (NAO) Report, as requested by Councillor Atkinson, which examined the effectiveness of the

Government's support for buses, and the extent to which enablers were in place for local authorities and operators to realise the long-term, sustained improvement that the Department for Transport (DfT) now intended.

Bus services had been declining across England for 70 years, with only a few local authorities bucking the trend. However, Government recognised that affordable bus services had public value, and funded around 24% of bus operators' revenue income.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the DfT had come together with local authorities and operators, intervening rapidly to target the weakest areas and keep buses running.

The Report made a number of recommendations but for Devon there were no immediate implications and the details of the Government's strategy for buses together with any long-term funding intentions were awaited (expected early in the New Year). Current efforts were focussed on sustaining the bus network during and in the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Until recently, Devon was one of the authority areas bucking the trend of decline in bus patronage which was attributed to successful joint, informal partnership working with the major commercial bus company (Stagecoach) as well as other small operators and the Cabinet Members report highlighted some of the achievements.

The NAO's fifth recommendation on funding was supported and should include reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG).

However, the Devon network was strong and well run but it was unlikely to emerge without changes and in this context the support from Government needed to be as clear, consistent and long-term as the NAO report advocated.

The Cabinet Member also responded to questions from the floor on research in America regarding the varroa destructor, testing of university students, peninsular transport vision, future of transport consultation, food vouchers, community models of food networking and specific numbers in relation to domestic violence incidents.

(c) Children's Services and Schools

Councillor McInnes commented, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, on the ongoing additional costs to Devon's schools from the COVID-19 pandemic and the work being done to secure additional funding.

The Cabinet Member thanked Devon's headteachers, teachers and school and college staff who had risen to the challenge of educating children throughout the pandemic, in terms of helping children catch up, making schools as safe as possible, juggling with cases of Covid in both staff and children, organising bubbles and reorganising timetables etc.

He highlighted that in the last academic year, schools had been offered extra financial help from the Government to compensate for the extra costs of COVID-19 and that support had not been repeated in this academic year, therefore he had written to the Education Secretary calling for better compensation for schools for COVID-19 costs, which was attached as an appendix to the Report as well as a letter written by him as Chair of the f40 Group.

Finally, the Cabinet Member had met with officials responsible for finance at the DfE as well as the Head of Education and Learning raising the issue in regular meetings with the DfE regional directorate, therefore a significant amount of lobbying activity to Devon's Schools.

(d) Adult Social Care and Health Services

Councillor Leadbetter circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford on the progress and outcomes of the new care home testing pilot scheme in Devon and then also on the need for extra care housing particularly for the West of Exeter.

The Care Home Testing Pilot Scheme was a small-scale pilot involving eight care homes in Devon, the aim of which was to examine the role of how the testing of visitors, alongside other existing infection prevention/control measures, maximised safety. It would run for four weeks from 16 November to 13 December 2020 and the testing would use a combination of new rapid-results tests (Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) tests) as well as the tests already in use (existing PCR swab testing).

Feedback from homes had been mainly positive, reporting that the process was simple to follow and meaningful contact whilst wearing full PPE was appreciated. 30 visitors had been tested as of 20th November with one visitor testing positive. The DHSC would evaluate the pilot and review all of the training and guidance which would lead a phased rolling out of the visitor testing to care homes in the first two weeks of December, ensuring all homes had this in place in time for Christmas.

In relation to Extra Care Housing, the Council's Commissioning Strategy was approved by Cabinet in 2010. The current needs assessment aligned to the strategic planning period up to 2033 which informed Local Plans and was used to inform work with housing/planning authority partners to identify suitable sites. Edwards Court in Exeter was due to complete in April 2021 and there was a currently a joint tendering for a housing and care operator for the scheme as a whole, with the City Council, which would provide 53 flats, leaving a forecast unmet need of a further 252 flats by 2033. It had been highlighted they should be distributed across the city, with at least one scheme west of the Exe. Opportunities were being explored for a further ECH scheme of approx. 80 units on a site close to Morrison's supermarket and regarding the west of the Exe, work was ongoing to look for a suitable site/opportunity.

The Cabinet Member, as requested by Councillor Connett, provided a briefing on the work being undertaken to support Carers and Young Carers across Devon since March 2020 and over the coming months to the end of March 2021. The Council noted that Devon Carers was in contact with and providing support to 22,704 adult carers of adults.

The impact of the pandemic on carers was significant and, although the actual numbers of new carers was not yet known, estimates were that numbers had increased significantly.

The Report outlined the support offered to carers, for example, work to identify as many carers as possible, carers passport, free PPE, the Devon Carers website and helpdesk, early delivery of a service in the hospitals to support carers, enhanced the availability of small Breaks payments, new small payments COVID-19 grants scheme for carers, ICT equipment to enable carers to stay in touch and prioritised other improvements considered likely to be urgently needed such as online Peer Support.

The Council was working with Devon Carers and the Carer Ambassadors to review the Carers' Offer and an action plan of priority areas focussing on Personal wellbeing, Promoting the independence of the cared-for person, breaks and Changes in care.

In terms of young carers, there had been an increase from January 2020 in the number of young carers being supported (1,663 as at the end of September 2020) and an increase in the number of 1st assessments the service had undertaken for young carers. The Service Provider had a 'triage' process in place to help determine the priority for assessment.

The Report gave a table showing the data and numbers for young carers Getting Advice, Getting Help, Getting More Help, Awaiting Assessment and 1st assessment complete, Young carers known to the service supported through CIN assessment and Young carers known to the service also supported through child protection.

Whilst many of the service functions had moved to a virtual delivery, the service had targeted face to face services for some young carers where needed.

The Report finally outlined the additional activity in response to COVID Lockdown restrictions such as the introduction of young carer ID cards, getting more help (increased involvement with Early Help/ Multi-Agency support), weekly 'check ins' with as many of the most vulnerable young carers as possible, enhancement of transition support and continued multi-agency working.

that Council be asked to;

(a) note the update Report around the current legislation, the Council's Virtual Meetings and Audio-Visual capabilities and Member meetings which permit remote attendance;

(b) welcome more flexibility in Local Government in the future which could pave the way for more people standing for Election and a more diverse Council of the future;

(c) in light of (b) and the benefits achieved over the last few months, write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting a permanent change to the Legislation to support more flexible working practices in the future for Local Democracy.

(d) ask officers to consider the most effective medium for holding a meeting in the future, supporting and encouraging remote meetings when it is appropriate to do so;

(e) support those Members who wish to attend future meetings remotely, with relevant training and provision of necessary equipment; and

(f) ask Procedures, at the appropriate time, to undertake a further review of any legislative changes surrounding remote meetings and make any necessary changes to the Constitution and working practices.

Councillor Barker **MOVED** and Councillor Hart **SECONDED** that the Procedures recommendation be accepted and that the content of the Notice of Motion be endorsed.

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

327 Food Justice (Minute 313 of 1 October 2020)

Pursuant to County Council Minute 313 of 1 October 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Aves that:

This Council notes:

That Trussell Trust research shows three million children in the UK are at risk of hunger during the school holidays.

The Trussell Trust anticipates that ending furlough in October would trigger a rise in foodbank use of at least 61%.

Foodbank use has already dramatically increased. The Independent Food Aid Network recorded a 59% increase in demand for emergency food support between February and March 2020.

The Covid-19 emergency has exposed major health inequalities across the country with children and families suffering disproportionately.

Between March and August 2020 there has already been a 115% increase in Universal Credit claimants nationally and in Devon even greater, 165% for all claimants and 173% for 16-24 year olds.

That Government has committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which have an international and domestic commitment to ending hunger by 2030.

That Government has asked Henry Dimbleby to lead on producing a National Food Strategy.

This Council believes:

No one in the UK should go hungry, not least children.

Food justice is about taking action on the causes of hunger such as affordability and availability of good nutritious food. That the stopping of furlough payments will lead to further unemployment and more food poverty as a result.

Local councils, schools and communities play a key role in supporting those that are experiencing food poverty during the Covid-19 pandemic and that should be recognised.

The Council resolves to:

1. Nominate an existing cabinet member to take on responsibility for Food Justice.
2. Commit to setting up a food partnership to work with district councils and other partners to develop a Food Action Plan.
3. Re-double its efforts to increase Free School Meal sign ups to ensure that all those who are entitled to them or need them, receive them.
4. Encourage Scrutiny to look at the extent of food poverty – map it and understand what is going on across the County.
5. Write in association with Devon MPs, to encourage Government to:
 - a) commit to legislate the existing commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals to end hunger by 2030;
 - b) commit funding in the next spending review for the five Sustain policies to protect children's health and increase access to nutritious food that is culturally appropriate, because the National Food Strategy will take a year to be adopted;
 - c) support our local food production and suppliers, our farming and fishing industries in Devon, to protect workers jobs so that our food supplies are sustained throughout the pandemic and any shortages or delays experienced during the EU Brexit;
 - d) increase Universal Credit so people can buy enough food;
 - e) immediately act to help those most affected.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 581a of 11 November 2020 that Council:

- (a) ask the Leader to nominate an existing Cabinet Member to take on responsibility for Food Insecurity.
- (b) support the creation of a working group within Devon County Council (DCC) to develop further understanding of the Council's role around food supply, resilience and insecurity. This will include, but is not limited to:
 - (i) considering the development of a Devon Food Partnership using the Sustainable Food Places approach to strengthen food resilience in the county; and

(ii) the development of a food resilience strategy for Devon County Council

(c) encourage Scrutiny to look at the extent of food insecurity in Devon.

(d) continue to work with Devon MPs to encourage Government to:

- (i) Support our local economy, including agriculture.
- (ii) Ensure resilience of our food supply chains.
- (iii) Support food-based initiatives that reduce health inequalities and food insecurity.

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted.

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.

328 Devon Economy and Recovery (Minute 314 of 1 October 2020)

Pursuant to County Council Minute 314 of 1 October 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Atkinson that:

The strength of the UK and Devon economy and GDP depends in the major part on the recovery of the service sectors as we are principally a service led economy. Though we also have manufacturing and production industries nationally and in Devon. It is acknowledged that our economy has contracted as a result of the pandemic and the impending Exit from the EU.

The EU has set up a £750bn Euro coronavirus pandemic recovery fund and long-term spending plans to provide grants to kick start Europe's recovery from the pandemic particularly investing in green industry and infrastructure and to target resources to recovery, resilience and transformation.

To date only £20 million of new funding to help small and medium sized businesses across England to get back on track after the pandemic has been announced by the government and this means access only to grants of between £1,000 - £5,000 for new equipment and technology and specialist advice. No funding has been allocated to the Shared Prosperity Fund to replace the loss of EU Structural Funds after Brexit.

This Council will write to the government and request it:

- to ensure that there are no new austerity measures like those introduced in 2010 after the banking crisis;

- to set up a similar well-funded fund proportionate to the size of this country to provide grants to support Britain and Devon's economic recovery resilience and transformation;
- to make grants available out of the fund to invest in and support: -
 - Devon's local food and drink production and suppliers, our farming and fishing industries in Devon, so as to protect jobs so that our food supplies are sustained throughout the pandemic and any shortages or delays experienced during the exit from the EU;
 - Devon's service sectors such as retail hospitality tourism education health human services information technology finance arts and culture;
 - Devon's shipbuilding and engineering and environmental science sectors
 - Devon's Green economy and sustainable energy production and transport systems and to support local industry to achieve net zero carbon climate change targets set by the Paris Agreement
 - Devon's blue economy - its marine environment which is aiming to become more sustainable; and,
 - New infrastructure to support sustainable green and blue growth

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 581b of 11 November 2020:

(a) that Council be recommended to take no further action at this time, given that the concerns and issues have already been raised with Government by the Council working with Team Devon including a request for funding; and

(b) to note that the Council has also approved a £6m package of investment, for consideration as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process which would support the actions as set out in the notice of motion.

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that in light of the issues having already been raised with Government and the recent approval of a £6m package of investment, no further action be taken on the Notice of Motion.

The Leader made a commitment to report further to the Council on the Government's response and in the new year update Members on the implementation of the Recovery Plan and any support Devon would get from the spending review or other Government funding to support its recovery.

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.

329 Great South West Initiative (Minute 315 of 1 October 2020)

Pursuant to County Council Minute 315 of 1 October 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Atkinson that:

Since the abolition of the Regional Development Agency and the establishment of local LEPS economic development in the region has become fragmented. Control of public funds for economic development rest with central government on a piecemeal basis.

At the recent AGM of the Heart of the South West LEP the chair lamented that there has been no rural productivity deal for the South West and that the South West does not garner the level of support we need from the Government. He cited that attempts to deal with this by establishing the Great South West with its prospectus had failed to get the support of government.

The Council agrees to write to the government to ask it to support the Great South West Initiative and in particular:

- Give formal recognition and
- Provide an identified Minister to link into Government.
- Provide at the very least £2million requested over three years to move forward at pace and enable it to develop full business cases across the range of topics covered in its prospectus though arguably now more is required sooner to support the recovery of the economy after the impact of the pandemic
- Support an enhanced export and investment hub.
- Recognition to a Great South West Tourism Zone; and an
- Agreement to create a rural productivity deal.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute of 581c of 11 November 2020:

that Council be recommended to make no further representation at this time, whilst we await a response and outcome to the recent letter sent on this matter and a meeting with the Minister for Local Government has taken place.

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that that no further action be taken on the Notice of Motion, given the Council was awaiting a response and outcome to a recent letter sent on the matter.

The Leader said that a copy of the letter would be shared with Members once received.

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.

330 **The Protection of UK Jobs and Businesses (Minute 316 of 1 October 2020)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 316 of 1 October 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hannaford that:

Council Notes With Concern

The South West region has seen some of the highest employee furlough rates in the country during the first part of the Covid-19 pandemic. Figures show that under the Government's Job Retention Scheme, 808,900 people in the region were furloughed, with take-up in the South-West of 32.1%, being the second highest for any region in England after the West Midlands.

Retail has been the sector hardest hit by mass redundancies since the pandemic began, with manufacturing, tourism, hospitality and aviation also being badly affected.

Tens of thousands of job losses have been announced, and more mass redundancies are expected in these sectors, yet they will not receive any tailored support when the Government's jobs-retention scheme is scheduled to finish at the end of October. Our country is facing an unprecedented jobs crisis. The Office for Budget Responsibility predicts that, by the end of this year, nearly one in eight of the UK's workforce will be unemployed.

The Government's current plan to end furlough outright is oversimplistic and will only exacerbate the problem - it puts millions of jobs at risk. Regions such as the South West, are as a direct result at risk of suffering from deepening inequality. Britain already has the worst regional inequalities in Europe, and without targeted action now, these are likely to get even worse.

Council Supports

The work of the Treasury select committee, that has called on the Government to "carefully consider" targeted extensions to its coronavirus job retention scheme, that is due to end for all sectors. The new 'Challenges of Recovery' report from the cross-party group of MPs, concludes that although the retention scheme "cannot persist indefinitely" the Chancellor should consider further support measures.

Commenting on the new publication, Treasury select committee chair Mel Stride MP said: “Our second report of the inquiry focuses on emerging challenges as lockdown measures are lifted. One such challenge is to target assistance effectively at those businesses and individuals who need it. The Chancellor should carefully consider targeted extensions to the coronavirus job retention scheme and explain his conclusions.”

The new report is the second by the committee on the economic impacts of Covid-19. The first identified gaps in the Government’s financial schemes that left at least one million people unsupported. The proposals set out in the earlier June report were ignored, which led the Treasury select committee to accuse the Government of “turning its back on those who are suffering”.

The newly released report also says the Government should extend reforms to Universal Credit past their one-year cut-off, support small businesses struggling with debt and define “levelling up”.

Although the Prime Minister claims to have made reducing regional inequalities a central aim of his administration, the committee accuses his ‘levelling up’ promise of being merely an “empty slogan”.

The Chair Mel Stride MP added: “The key will be assisting those businesses who, with additional support, can come through the crisis as sustainable enterprises, rather than focusing on those that will unfortunately just not be viable in the changed post-crisis economy. As the committee has said throughout the crisis, the Chancellor must continue to show flexibility in his approach. We hope that the Treasury’s unwillingness to implement the recommendations from our first report is not a sign of how it will respond to this one.”

Council Believes That

We need a financial support system that specifically targets industries worst hit by the pandemic, seeks greater economic protections for any areas under local lockdown restrictions, and ensures incomes for people who are forced to self-isolate. Without targeted support viable businesses will fail and employment will be lost. This will extinguish any hopes of a quick economic recovery from the deep economic recession that we are facing.

Our region and the whole country is now facing a social and economic toxic shock through the threat of mass unemployment in tandem with an international health crisis from a second wave of the pandemic.

Council Resolves

To formally write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and all our local Members of Parliament as a matter of urgency to call again on the Government, in the strongest possible terms, to not implement its damaging blanket approach to indiscriminately sever and totally withdraw the current furlough scheme. Which fails to consider the circumstances of different regions, such as the South West, and the most effected sectors, with the deep impact on the communities that have a proud history in these industries. Therefore to urge the Government to do right by our local communities and businesses and see them through the crisis by targeting support, extra relief for lockdown areas, extend the eviction ban, adequate support for self isolators, and not pull the life raft away while the storm is still raging, to save jobs, and to potentially save lives.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 581d of 11 November 2020:

(a) that Council be recommended, in light of recent announcements and amendments to the package of support offered to areas facing restrictions, that no letter be sent at this time; and

(b) that Council continue to monitor the economic impacts facing the Devon economy and consider the ongoing economic consequences from additional restrictions and measures that could potentially be applied to Devon and its neighbours.

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that in light of the package of support offered to areas facing restrictions and that the Council would continue to monitor the economic impacts facing the Devon economy no further action be taken on the Notice of Motion at this time.

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.

331 **Armed Forces**

Councillor Asvachin **MOVED** and Councillor Aves **SECONDED**

“We call upon the council to make their armed forces champions and lead officers aware of the difficulties experienced by commonwealth veterans and ensure that those who are currently experiencing problems, whether financial or immigration difficulties, are not disadvantaged whilst their applications are ongoing.

We also call upon the leader of the council to write to the Prime Minister, Kevin Forster the Minister of State for Immigration, and Johnny Mercer the Minister of State for Veterans Affairs, outlining this Councils support for all Commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years being granted automatic and free of charge right to remain in the UK and that any veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically given British Citizenship.

Further, we call upon the Leader of the Council to write to our Devon MPs, on behalf of this council, to ask that they continue to press the government for a change in the legislation that affects those that have served diligently and honourably for this Country”

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

332 **Loneliness and Isolation**

Councillor Connett **MOVED** and Councillor Way **SECONDED**

This Council notes that loneliness and isolation are a public health issue that must be tackled at a local, as well as at a national level. It is estimated one in ten people of pensionable age living in the Devon County Council area are likely to be classed as lonely or severely lonely. And that the Covid 19 pandemic will have increased the chronic nature of this loneliness.

This Council believes:

1. Loneliness increases the risk of heart disease and puts people at greater risk of blood clots.
2. Being chronically lonely is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
3. Loneliness makes people more likely to drink more alcohol, eat more and exercise less.
4. Raising awareness of the health impact of loneliness is important because it affects older people’s mortality and morbidity.
5. Councillors and the authority as a whole can play a key leadership role in ensuring Devon is an area in which people maintain and forge social connections.

6. The Health and Wellbeing Board must play a central role in mapping local services and supporting local interventions to help reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Devon County Council will work at three levels to address loneliness:

One to one:

1. Improve information and advice on existing services and activities that reduce loneliness and isolation. Make sure this information is available both off and online.
2. Launch a local campaign to raise awareness of the health effects of loneliness and isolation amongst target risk groups.

Neighbourhood:

3. Set up a pilot scheme in a selected Division to map local assets for, and barriers to, keeping connected in older age. Involve local businesses, police officers and voluntary organisations in the project.
4. Involve older people, including those experiencing or at risk of loneliness, in mapping local assets, determining responses, and co-producing solutions.
5. Support the voluntary and community sector to build referral partnerships with frontline healthcare staff, fire services and social workers.

Strategic:

6. To take an active interest and role in ensuring the public health problem of social isolation in Devon is recognised and assessed.
7. To regularly measure loneliness and mapping need through Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and/or lifestyle surveys. Use this to monitor impact of interventions.
8. To ensure addressing loneliness and isolation is part of any 'ageing well' or 'mental health' or other relevant priority in the Health and Wellbeing Board's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
9. Protect subsidies for public transport for over-60s, and improve accessibility to public and community transport.
10. Agree a plan, in conjunction with the Health and Wellbeing Board's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to take action to prevent and reduce loneliness.

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

333 **Children's Social Workers**

Councillor Brazil **MOVED** and Councillor Connett **SECONDED**

Once again Devon's Children's Social Care Services has failed its OFSTED inspection. DCC continues to fail some of the most vulnerable, the very people we should be doing our utmost to support and protect. Cornwall Children's Social Care Services is rated excellent. In comparison Devon's children's social workers have worse terms and conditions of employment including training and career progression. Not surprisingly Devon has a high turnover of social workers and employs a higher number temporary (and more expensive) agency staff.

As a matter of urgency DCC will commit to improving the terms and conditions of employment and invest in the support of these social workers.

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

334 **Rural Proofing**

Councillor Atkinson **MOVED** and Councillor Ackland **SECONDED**

Given the Government's failure to fair fund rural Devon's schools, economy, health services, police and local government and to recognise the Great South West's Industrial strategy, this council considers the Government needs comprehensively to rethink and reform the rural proofing process across Government, to ensure that relevant policies and legislation are attuned to the needs of rural communities and rural economies like Devon.

This Council considers a reformed approach to rural proofing should be introduced and take into account the following:

- A rural assessment should take place at the start of the policy process, including engagement with rural stakeholders, and be treated as integral, rather than as an adjunct to urban-focused policy. No legislation should be brought forward without an accompanying rural assessment statement;
- The impact of new policies on rural areas should be systematically and consistently monitored as they are implemented. This would include an update on the performance of rural proofing across government in the Government's annual report on the implementation of the rural strategy;
- All relevant public bodies including government, Devon County Council and the HoSW LEP should be required to rural proof, monitor and report annually on the rural impacts of relevant policies.

- The Government should put in place the appropriate structures to facilitate a more robust rural proofing regime.
- Agrees to write to the Government and MPs across the South West and the LEP in response to this motion.

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

335 **Climate Change and Fossil Fuel Projects**

Councillor Atkinson **MOVED** and Councillor Hodgson **SECONDED**

The UK export finance (UKEF) has used £3.5bn of public funds to support polluting projects since the government signed up to the Paris climate agreement and has directed £6bn of public money into fossil fuel projects around the world in the last decade.

It is considering requests for financial support for seven projects involving fossil fuels that may be agreed in 2021 and has received a further 10 applications for trade finance support in the sector.

Britain must lead by example by urgently aligning our stated net zero priorities at home with our practices abroad in view of our COP presidency next year. The government's seeming willingness to pump billions of pounds of UK public money into overseas oil and gas demonstrates a reckless and inconsistent approach to climate action.

Devon County Council calls on the government to:

- end all financing for new foreign fossil fuel projects immediately or risk undermining its own commitment to tackling the global climate crisis; and,
- change the mandate of its credit agency, UK export finance (UKEF), to stop offering billions of pounds in financial support to companies that bid for work on fossil fuel projects overseas despite a pledge to be carbon neutral at home.

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

336 **Public Sector Pay**

Councillor Atkinson **MOVED** and Councillor Asvachin **SECONDED**

Research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed that public sector pay is 1.5% lower than in 2010 after inflation, and among the lowest levels relative to private sector earnings in decades.

Devon County Council:

- deplores the Governments renewed squeeze or pay freeze on public sector pay and should not be attacking public sector workers who have done much to support the emergency response to the coronavirus pandemic;
- considers this will seriously affect morale and services at DCC;
- will exacerbate difficulties with hiring workers and retaining existing employees; and,
- agrees to write to the Government to and local MPs to ask it to not implement this.

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

337 The British Horse Society - Dead Slow Campaign

Councillor Hannaford **MOVED** and Councillor Hodgson **SECONDED**

Council notes with concern that:

Numbers of road collisions involving horses in the South West are higher than anywhere else in the country, according to the latest figures.

New statistics released by the British Horse Society (BHS) show that 203 incidents were reported to the charity during 2019-20, down slightly from 239 in 2018-19.

Devon reported over half of the overall total with 104 incidents, one human fatality and 33 horse fatalities, also making it the county with the highest equine fatality rate in the UK.

The BHS has collated incident statistics to tie in with Road Safety Week (November 16-22) run by Brake, the road safety charity, to understand the rate of incidents involving horses on UK roads.

Of the 1,037 incidents reported nationally, 80 horses have died and 136 have been injured.

Furthermore, the BHS reveals that 81% of them occurred due to vehicles passing by too closely and close to half (43%) of riders were subject to road rage or abuse. It adds that 40% of incidents occurred because a vehicle passed by too quickly.

Overall, since November 2010, 4,774 road incidents have been reported to the BHS, 44 people have lost their lives and 1,220 have

been injured, and 395 horses have been killed, with another 1,080 injured.

Council supports:

The Dead Slow campaign that can be visited at the website bhs.org.uk/dead_slow, consists of four key behavioral change messages to drivers in relation to horses and riders:

- Slow down to a maximum of 15mph;
- Be patient – I won't sound my horn or rev my engine;
- Pass the horse wide and slow (if safe to do so), at least a car's width if possible;
- Drive slowly away.

Council Resolves:

With the documented increase in speeding incidents we support the charity in urging drivers to be very careful when passing horses on the road, and for them to adhere to its Dead Slow campaign messages.

We join with the BHS to encourage all riders and horse owners to report their incidents to the charity at horseincidents.org.uk.

Furthermore as Devon's highways authority we will aim to work with horse owners & riders, local communities, District, Town and Parish Councils, charities and others to wherever possible promote this campaign, in tandem with other measures such as better signage, to achieve behavioral change and secure better equine safety for all.

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

[NOTES:

The Minutes of this meeting and of any Committee referred to above 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 5.58 pm