

## COUNCIL

18 February 2021

### Present:-

Chair: S Barker

Vice-Chair: J Trail

Councillors H Ackland, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, S Aves, K Ball, 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 Dewhirst, A Eastman, R Edgell, R Gilbert, B Greenslade, G Gribble, 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, C Slade, M Squires, P Twiss, N Way, C Whitton, C Wright and J Yabsley

### Apologies:-

Councillors I Hall

### **338** Meeting Processes / Order Paper

The Chair of the Council and the Head of Democratic Services gave a presentation on meetings processes and etiquette.

### **339** Minutes

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020 be signed as a correct record.

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

### **340** Announcements

The Chair of the Council reported that the Council had won Petroc College's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Supported Apprenticeship Champion Award.

The Council noted there were currently four SEND supported apprentices working across service areas and completing a Business and Administration apprenticeship with Petroc College, after successfully completing their supported internships.

**341 Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

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

There was no petition received from a member of the public.

There was no question or oral representations from a Member of the public.

**343 Petitions from Members of the Council**

The Leader was presented by Councillor Chugg on behalf of local residents, with a petition containing 76 signatures seeking that Heanton Hill Lane be designated one-way, southbound/downhill, before the development Stuart Holder's Nursery (app no 64000) at the bottom of the lane was completed.

*[NB: The relevant Head of Service would be asked to respond direct to the petitioner on the issues raised, within 15 days, letting him/her know how long it would take to undertake the requested action in line with the [Council's Petition Scheme](#)]*

**344 Questions from Members of the Council**

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

- vaccines carried out in Devon, North Devon, care homes and staff and the system used to decide which people were invited to have the vaccine and the expected date by which the over 80's and those in the highest category would be vaccinated by;
- children and young people and digital services (connections, computers, access to computers and the numbers issued during the pandemic, devices for remote learning, costs of PC provision and work being done to action digital and PC access matters with Government);
- Government's latest rebuild funding programme and the lack of any schools in Devon;
- lack of response from Ministers about the Black Lives Matter movement letter following a previously agreed Council motion;
- lobbying of Government regarding domestic properties being able to switch to business rates and claiming small business exemption, Council Tax on second homes and potential revenue that could be achieved;
- financial assessments for care packages, employer's insurance and overseas policies; and
- public consultation on pesticides and the use of neonic pesticides and the impact on bees and eco-systems.

The Leader and 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](#)).*

**345 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2021/22 - 2025/26**

*All Members of the Council had been granted a dispensation to allow them to speak and vote in any debate on the setting of the Council Tax or Precept or any fees and charges arising therefrom as a consequence of simply being a resident of or a land, business or property owner in the administrative County of Devon or by being a County Council representative on a local authority company or joint venture or by being a parent or guardian of a child in a school on any matter relating to school meals and school transport, or in relation to being an approved foster parent, providing placements for the Council's Children in Care or in relation to the setting of members' allowances or as a parent or a guardian of a child in care or in receipt of statutory sick pay or a pension.*

The Council considered the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting (Minute 625 (a - t) of 12th February 2021), together with the Report of the County Treasurer on the Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2021/22 - 2025/26 (CT/21/17), including an assessment of the adequacy of reserves, a range of prudential indicators concerning the financial implications of the capital programme and an assessment that identified the risks associated with the budget strategy, together with how the risks would be managed.

The budget book contained details of the County Council's revenue and capital budgets together with associated financial and operational information. There was a requirement to prepare a Capital Strategy in line with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2017 and this was also included. The Budget Book contained:

- Revenue Budget Overview;
- Statement on the Robustness of the Budget Estimates, the Adequacy of Reserves and Affordability of the Capital Strategy;
- Capital Strategy and Programme Overview 2021/22 - 2025/26;
- Service Budgets;
- Fees & Charges;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25;
- County Fund Balance and Earmarked Reserves 2021/22;
- Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25 and Prudential Indicators 2021/22 - 2025/26;
- Capital Strategy; and
- Risk Analysis of Volatile Budgets; and Abbreviations.

The targets set for each service area had been subject to different pressures and influences.

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** that the Minutes of the Children's Scrutiny Committee, Health and Adult Care Scrutiny and Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Budget Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 relating to the annual estimates be approved.

The **MOTION** was subsequently put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

The Council noted that the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee had, at that meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021, considered and endorsed the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22, prior to determination of the budget for that year.

The Council further noted that the Council's financial plans had been drawn up with reference to the County Council's major policies and objectives, the County Council's performance framework, demographic changes occurring within the County; and consultation with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

The final Local Government financial settlement (Settlement Funding Assessment) for 2021/22 had been announced and was £103.2 millions which was the same as 2020/21. The settlement was for one year only and was based on the Spending Round 2020 (SR20). The main points of the SR20 having been set out in the [Cabinet Minutes](#).

Revenue Expenditure Detailed budgets had been produced within the Targets set by Cabinet in January 2021 and were shown on pages 39 to 89. The risks associated with the delivery of the 2021/22 budget and the mitigating action needed was detailed on pages 150 to 166.

Key Table 1 on page 9 showed the estimated level of spending on services and other items such as Capital Financing and interest on Balances. The Authority's Capital Programme was explained on pages 19 to 39. Factors that influenced the income gained from balances were set out on pages 122 to 138 which also explained the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy.

Key Table 2 set out the Council Tax Requirement, Tax Base, Council Tax by band and individual District Precepts. Pages 114 to 121 explained the Authority's strategy for its reserves and balances. Key Table 3 summarised the Authority's Reserves and Balances. The Authority's approach to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was detailed on pages 91 to 113.

The Authority had not only received Core Funding but also specific grants that related to particular activities and these were detailed in Key Table 5 on page 13 and 14, the most significant specific grant was the Dedicated Schools

Grant. For 2021/22 the Dedicated Schools Grant had increased to £589.1 millions from £539.9 millions in 2020/21.

The settlement had set the Council Tax increase that would trigger the need for a referendum at 2% for 2021/22, with social care authorities allowed a 3% social care precept. A Band D Council Tax would, if the proposed budget was approved, increase by 4.99% to £1511.28. The Council Tax requirement for the Council was £442,820,830.24.

The Council acknowledged that a Budget 2021/22 Impact Assessment had been prepared previously and taken into account by Scrutiny Committees as part of their earlier deliberations together with those specific impact assessments undertaken as part of the budget's preparation or in relation to service reviews arising therefrom: to ensure all Members had all relevant information in having regard to the responsibilities placed upon the Council to exercise its Public Sector Equality Duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 when considering the proposed budget, its impact and any mitigating action required, prior to making a decision. The preparation of Impact Assessments was necessarily a dynamic process and that individual assessments for specific proposals may necessarily have to be developed and updated with time.

The Impact Assessment had been made available to all Members of the Council for the purpose of the Scrutiny meetings, the Cabinet meeting on 14th February 2020 and this County Council meeting. The final revised version had been circulated to all Members on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that in accordance with Standing Order 30, Standing Order 14(4) be suspended to permit more than one motion or amendment to be debated at the same time.

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

The Chair then indicated that he would exercise his discretion to enable the Leaders and budget spokespersons of the political groups to speak for longer than 7 minutes, if desired.

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that Cabinet Minute 625(a to t) setting out the proposed revenue and capital budgets as detailed in Report (CT/21/17) be approved.

In commending the proposed budget to the Council, the Leader commented this was a good budget for the people of Devon. The Leader of the Council paid tribute to and expressed gratitude to the County Treasurer, her staff and all those Officers involved in the preparation, management and monitoring of budgets over previous years and recognised also the exceptionally difficult circumstances of preparing a budget for 2021/22. Group Leaders also echoed the words of the Leader in thanking the County Treasurer for their exceptional work in bringing the budget together.

The Leader thanked the Scrutiny Committee's for their hard work in scrutinising the budget proposals and added that an additional sum of money (£1.3 millions) had been put into the Budget. This included £600,000 for highways, specifically potholes and drainage works, £600,000 for District Council's to support emergency funds and crisis funding and a £100,000 fund for Town and Parish Councils to bid from for cyclical maintenance works (match funded). The Leader also said the budget had been based on a Council Tax increase of 4.99% and the levels of reserves were adequate, with no additional monies being added to them.

Additional thanks were given to those who had participated in the three budget consultation meetings as well as the parish councils attending the Leader's virtual budget roadshows.

The Leader reported that the Budget for 2021/22 included significant investment in core services to support the most vulnerable people in Devon. It was highlighted however that the Council was in unprecedented times and the Authority faced significant risk of increased demand for services, increased costs and reducing funding. On a national level, the COVID pandemic had had a devastating impact on public health, social care and the economy and the national response had cost billions of pounds. However, protecting the vulnerable was the key aim of the budget.

Members then formally moved, each duly seconded, the amendments as shown below which were subsequently the subject of one debate as agreed above.

Councillor Connett **MOVED** and Councillor Brazil **SECONDED** that Cabinet Minute (625) (a-t) (Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2021/22 - 2025/26) be amended by the addition of the following and all necessary changes be made to the detailed budgets.

### **PUTTING DEVON BACK ON THE ROAD**

Let's get Devon back to work.

The Liberal Democrats budget amendment is a positive vision for Devon, putting it back on the road and helping the County back to work.

We will invest more in fixing our roads, especially potholes and drainage while also supporting cycling and walking.

We believe a new 'Green Devon' initiative supporting the County's work to tackle climate change and protect the environment is urgently needed.

We will back business across Devon through a new economic support fund to promote and celebrate 'Made in Devon' – and launch a campaign encouraging residents and businesses to 'Buy in Devon' whenever possible.

A new investment of £750,000 in counselling and mental health support to help children and young people affected by the Lockdowns.

*Liberal Democrats budget amendment:*

- 1. Welcomes the Conservatives' U-turn on their disastrous cut of £307,000 in Devon's Highways budget.**
- 2. Liberal Democrats will invest an additional £3.4 million during 2021-22 on fixing Devon's roads to:**
  - **Fill the potholes and fix them better**
  - **Tackle legacy problems from underspending on highway drainage**
  - **Plan to bring back routine maintenance, as once carried out by Devon's length-man service, to keep blocked road drains clear**
  - **Invest in cycling and walking**
  - **Repaint missing faded white lines & junction markings**
- 3. Invest £500,000 supporting local communities who want 20mph zones and speed limits, including around their schools.**
- 4. Invest £500,000 in a new 'Green Devon' scheme supporting environmental projects such as bee corridors, wild flower meadows and verges, tree planting and helping local communities deliver their own environmental improvements.**
- 5. Backing Devon Business to save and create jobs. Creating a new £1million economic support fund promoting 'Made in Devon' and 'Bought in Devon'. Devon can lead the way.**
- 6. Mental health support for school children coping with the lasting impact of lock down. An additional £750,000 for counselling.**

***(Total invested is £6.15 million)***

We will pay for these priorities through a one-off draw down from the £64.4 million Budget Management Reserve to help Devon back on the road and back to work.

### **Other financial steps to help Devon work again**

Urgently lobby Government to:

1. End the tax dodge loop-hole of second home owners switching from Council Tax to Business Rates and then claiming 'small business' exemption, so they pay nothing at all.
2. Increase Council Tax on second homes by 100%

**Ending the 'business rate tax-dodge' and increasing Council Tax on second homes could generate in excess of £20 million to support vital and much-needed services across Devon.**

Councillor Biederman **MOVED** and Councillor Shaw **SECONDED** that Cabinet Minute (625) (a-t) (Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2024/25 and Capital Programme 2021/22 - 2025/26) be amended by the addition of the following and all necessary changes be made to the detailed budgets.

We welcome and support the increase in Budgets for the Financial Year 2021/22 in all service areas, after the increased funding from Central Government this year.

We ask that Council supports us in giving residents a Council Tax Holiday this year, by not implementing the 1.99% rise proposed.

We invest £1m in Rural Cycle routes, signalling a real intent to meet our Carbon reduction plan.

We ask that £1m is also invested in a lengths person service, so that every community has someone checking and clearing more regularly drains & gullies. We see this as a spend to save initiative, but for this year, will be paid for from reserves so as not to impact on other front-line services.

We Invest £200,000 in new books for the Library Service.

Our medium-term strategy had budgeted for a public sector pay rise, which has been frozen, and our reserve levels appear sufficient at £114.5m. We would pay for the above by taking £10.54m from reserves this year but look to secure savings in subsequent years on Agency Workers and Commissioning services.

We write to all Devon MP's & Treasury Department of Government, outlining the dire level of funding in all Public Sector Areas that Devon receives against the National Average, calling on them to level us up and ask that our MP's representing Devon, vote against any measure that does not see Devon being treated fairly & equitably.



The **AMENDMENT** in the name of Councillor Biederman was then put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

(**NOTE:** In accordance with Standing Order 32(5) and any vote relating to the setting of the Council Tax or level of precept, Councillors voted as for, against or in abstention to the aforementioned Amendment as follows):

For the amendment; Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Connett, Dewhirst, Hodgson, G Hook, J Hook, Inch, Shaw, Way and Wright: (Total: 11)

Against the amendment; Councillors Ball, Berry, Bloxham, Brook, Channon, Chubb, Chugg, Clatworthy, Colthorpe, Crabb, Croad, Davis, Edgell, Gilbert, Gribble, Hart, Hawkins, Hellyer, Hosking, Hughes, Leadbetter, Mathews, McInnes, Parsons, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Randall Johnson, Russell, Sanders, Saywell, Scott, Sellis, Slade, Squires, Trail, Twiss, Yabsley: (Total: 38)

Abstained from Voting; Councillors Ackland, Asvachin, Atkinson, Aves, Greenslade, Hannaford and Whitton: (Total: 7)

The **AMENDMENT** in the name of Councillor Connett was then put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

(**NOTE:** In accordance with Standing Order 32(5) and any vote relating to the setting of the Council Tax or level of precept, Councillors voted as for, against or in abstention to the aforementioned Amendment as follows):

For the amendment; Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Connett, Dewhirst, Greenslade, Hodgson, G Hook, J Hook, Inch, Shaw, Way and Wright: (Total: 12)

Against the amendment; Councillors Ball, Berry, Bloxham, Brook, Channon, Chubb, Chugg, Clatworthy, Colthorpe, Crabb, Croad, Davis, Edgell, Gilbert, Gribble, Hart, Hawkins, Hellyer, Hosking, Hughes, Leadbetter, Mathews, McInnes, Parsons, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Randall Johnson, Russell, Sanders, Saywell, Scott, Sellis, Slade, Squires, Trail, Twiss, Yabsley: (Total: 38)

Abstained from Voting; Councillors Ackland, Asvachin, Atkinson, Aves, Hannaford, Whitton: (Total: 6)

The **MOTION** in the name of Councillor Hart was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

(**NOTE:** In accordance with Standing Order 32(5) and any vote relating to the setting of the Council Tax or level of precept, Councillors voted as for, against or in abstention to the aforementioned Motion as follows):

For the Motion; Councillors Ackland, Asvachin, Aves, Ball, Berry, Bloxham, Brook, Channon, Chubb, Chugg, Clatworthy, Colthorpe, Crabb, Croad, Davis, Edgell, Gilbert, Gribble, Hannaford, Hart, Hawkins, Hellyer, Hosking, Hughes, Leadbetter, Mathews, McInnes, Parsons, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Randall Johnson, Russell, Sanders, Saywell, Scott, Sellis, Slade, Squires, Trail, Twiss, Whitton and Yabsley: (Total: 43)

Against the Motion; Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Connett, Dewhirst, Hodgson, G Hook, J Hook, Shaw, Way and Wright: (Total: 10)

Abstained from Voting; Councillors Atkinson, Greenslade and Inch: (Total: 3)

**346**      **Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022**

The Council considered the recommendations of the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee held on 20 January 2021 relating to the adoption by the County Council of the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22.

The Leader of the Council **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the recommendations of the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee be approved and that the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 (and consequential changes to the Council's Constitution) as set out at Minute 82 of that Committee be endorsed and the Constitution amended accordingly.

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

**347**      **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 on specific issues upon which they had been asked to comment, as set out below:

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

Councillor McInnes circulated a Report (as published on the web) outlining the results of the 'Make Your Mark' youth consultation which took place during the autumn term (2020). The work had been led by the Devon Youth Parliament, with support from the Participation Team in Children's Services. 3,667 young people from across Devon had taken part in the consultation to register their voice in voting for national and local priorities. The Youth Parliament would be leading efforts to effect change over the coming year on the priorities.

The Report also covered, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, the schools music grant, including coverage, outcomes and general take up, the national tutoring programme and on work being done to ensure that girls and young women had access to sanitary products during the pandemic, especially in the context of school closures and access to educational establishments.

The Report finally outlined the support that the Council was giving to nurseries who were struggling financially and also the planning and help to young people who had lost out on their education due to the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member also responded to questions from the 'virtual' floor on plans for children returning to school.

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

Councillor Croad circulated a Report (as published on the web), as requested by Councillor Hannaford on work being done locally to ensure the vaccine confidence campaign was accessible to people with disabilities, learning disabilities, special needs and those who do not have English as their first language.

The Cabinet Member said that NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group had undertaken a significant piece of engagement with people who had learning disabilities and also people from BAME communities to understand how best to support the uptake of the vaccine with these groups. The Report gave a number of examples of some of the things the NHS were doing locally to support inclusivity of the vaccination programme.

He responded, also to Councillor Hannaford on changes to disabled benefit claimants being moved to Universal Credit, the numbers affected in the Council area and work being done with clients to inform and ensure they were not losing financial support.

The Cabinet Member's Report, in response to Councillor Hannaford, highlighted mental health issues among farmers and the work being done with tenant farmers, the Farm Safety Foundation, National Farmers Union, charities and the wider agricultural community to raise awareness, understanding and promote more help and support on this matter.

Also included in the Report, in response to Councillor Wright, was an update on the 10 point green action plan previously agreed at Council in July 2019 and the take up by communities and activity relating to the wildflower verge project.

**(c) Economy and Skills**

Councillor Gilbert circulated a Report (as published on the web), as requested by Councillor Hannaford on the effects of the new EU trade deal on Devon's fishing industry. The Report covered the Brexit and Transition context, fisheries terms of engagement, imports and exports, SPS compliance, VAT, Export Health Certificates (EHC), groupage loads, catch certificates, RoO, Commodity codes, C88fForms and NCTS system, ports of export, funding support, subsidy control (State Aid), sustainable fish stock management and potential economic impacts.

**(d) Organisational Development and Digital Transformation**

Councillor Parsons circulated a Report (as published on the web), as requested by Councillor Hannaford, on the current national campaign to automatically exempt those with non-changing or deteriorating disabilities and health conditions from the current blue badge rules, including the numbers of blue badge holders in the Council area who were affected.

**348**      **Minutes**

In accordance with Standing Order 13(2), the Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the Minutes of the undermentioned meetings of Committees be endorsed.

Development Management Committee	-	2 December 2020
Appeals Committee	-	7 December 2020 & 1 February 2021
Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Office Conduct Committee	-	20 January 2021
Procedures Committee	-	2 February 2021

*(including Minute 101 endorsing the freezing of Members Allowances and Minute 102 and the associated amendments to Part 5(c) of the Constitution (Financial Regulations))*

Children's Scrutiny (ordinary meeting)	-	25 January 2021
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny (ordinary meeting)	-	26 January 2021
Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny (ordinary meeting)	-	28 January 2021

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

**349**      **Armed Forces (Minute 331 of 3 December 2020)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 331 of 3 December 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Asvachin that:

'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'

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 615(a) of 13 January 2021:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that Notice of Motion be welcomed and the following actions be approved.

That Council

(a) notes the work to date of Officers and the Council's Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) Lead Member in terms of their involvement in and contribution to the Consultation about the forthcoming legislation to enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in Law and that Officers and the Council's AFC lead Member continue to work with "Forces Connect South West" (consortium of SW Councils) on matters concerning AFC including Commonwealth Veterans;

(b) welcomes this impending legislation and will act upon its requirements as soon as has become enshrined in law;

(c) recognises the situation regarding Commonwealth Veterans and therefore asks the Leader to write to Kevin Foster MP (Minister for Immigration) and Johnny Mercer MP (Minister of State for Veteran Affairs) asking that Commonwealth members of the Armed Forces be given adequate guidance on the steps required to obtain legal immigration status in Britain ahead of leaving their Service, in particular,

(i) that a longer period for application for leave to stay (12 - 18 months rather than currently the case where this must happen before or immediately upon leaving service);

(ii) during this period, they have the same rights that they had when in Service, e.g. register with GP, find work, apply for assistance from Local Authorities. (i.e. Housing); and

(iii) that the process of immigration in these cases is sped up with fair and affordable administrative charges.

(d) continues to implement and apply policies that support former Armed Forces personnel and reservists as well as understanding the issues that veterans, reservist and their family members face and continue to work towards 'Gold' status in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, with improving the provisions of career based and personal support even more; and

(e) ask the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee to consider the issues in more depth, building on its previous task group work relating to the Armed Forces Covenant

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.

**350 Loneliness and Isolation (Minute 332 of 3 December 2020)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 332 of 3 December 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Connett that:

‘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.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 615(b) of 13 January 2021:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that Council support and promote the actions outlined in [Devon's Charter to End Loneliness](#)'.

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.

### **351 Children's Social Workers (Minute 333 of 3 December 2020)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 333 of 3 December 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Brazil that:

'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'.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 615 (c) of 13 January 2021:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that Council support the recent Cabinet proposals to improve the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers in Devon.

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.

**352**      **Rural Proofing (Minute 334 of 3 December 2020)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 334 of 3 December 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Atkinson that:

'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 councils 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; and



- Agrees to write to the Government and MPs across the SW and the LEP in response to this motion’.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 615(d) of 13 January 2021:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet’s advice be accepted and that the Council

(a) await the publication of the Government report and when this is issued, review accordingly and provide a Devon County Council response, using the Notice of Motion to help guide that response, seeking input from partner organisations and evidence where relevant, highlighting the rural opportunities and challenges across a number of service areas;

(b) note the issues previously identified by the Council that require addressing in relation to rural proofing; and

(c) to follow up, as appropriate, on any matters arising.

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.

**353** **Climate Change and Fossil Fuel Projects (Minute 335 of 3 December 2020)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 335 of 3 December 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Atkinson that:

‘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’.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 615(e) of 13 January 2021:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet’s advice be accepted and that Council take the following action in response to the Notice of Motion.

(a) whilst supporting the objectives of facilitating international trade and assisting viable UK export businesses, this Council shares the concern highlighted by the Notice of Motion about the environmental consequences of UK trade finance support directed towards the fossil fuel sector; and therefore

(b) calls on Government to accelerate the change in policy and approach through UK Export Finance to achieve consistency with the international commitment to tackle climate change as well as the UK’s own net zero carbon target and the recently published Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

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.

### **354 Public Sector Pay (Minute 336 of 3 December 2020)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 336 of 3 December 2020 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Atkinson that:

‘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 M.P's to ask it to not implement this'.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 615(f) of 13 January 2021:

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

(a) recognises and is very appreciative of the work of the Local Government workforce in response to the Pandemic and also believes it is important to try to maintain pay parity across the public sector and with the NHS;

(b) notes there are specialist areas within the Local Government workforce where professional shortages significantly impact on service delivery, such as teachers, social workers, engineers and solicitors and a decline in the pay and conditions of the public sector workforce will not help with recruitment and retention and the perceived value society puts on the local government; and

(c) through the Leader of the Council, will write to Devon MP's to request they encourage proposals which support pay parity, to ensure that the Public Sector is held in equal value and doesn't fall behind the NHS.

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.

**355** **The British Horse Society - Dead Slow Campaign (Minute 337 of 3 December 2020)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 337 of 3 December 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 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](https://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](https://horseincidents.org.uk).

Furthermore, as Devons 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'.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 615(g) of 13 January 2021:

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

- (a) work with local communities, through partnerships with other agencies, and on-line to support the BHS in urging drivers to be very careful when passing horses on the road, and for them to adhere to its Dead Slow campaign messages;
- (b) join with the BHS to encourage all riders and horse owners to report their incidents to the charity at [horseincidents.org.uk](http://horseincidents.org.uk);
- (c) undertake a study of the detailed data from the BHS of the reported equestrian incidents within the county; and
- (d) use the results of the study to identify any problem areas and patterns for signing intervention to improve driver awareness and to target education.

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.

### **356**      **Election Voting System**

Councillor Shaw **MOVED** and Councillor Hodgson **SECONDED**

This County Council regrets that under the current first-past-the-post system for electing councillors:

1. A large proportion and usually the majority of the votes cast do not help to elect a councillor, meaning that many voters see their votes wasted over many successive elections.
2. This situation discourages participation in the electoral process since many people see no point in voting.
3. A party is able to gain an overwhelming majority on the Council despite receiving only a minority of the votes across the county, reducing voters' faith in the fairness of elections.

In this light, this Council welcomes the new legislation agreed by the Welsh Assembly to allow councils to choose to change their voting system to the proportional Single Transferable Vote system, which is already used for local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland. This Council calls on the Government to introduce similar legislation for England so that we can make a choice of the best system for the people of Devon.

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

**357**      **Elections - Campaigning**

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

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

Councillor Shaw then **MOVED** and Councillor Wright **SECONDED**

This County Council regrets the Government's decision to continue with elections in May as planned, despite the difficulties of organising this safely for voters or polling staff, while banning leafleting and canvassing and failing to make postal voting easier.

In order to ensure the safe and equitable running of the elections, this Council calls on the Government to facilitate (1) online registration for postal voting, and (2) a free postal delivery of leaflets for each council election candidate.

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

**358**      **Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill**

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

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

Councillor Hodgson then **MOVED** and Councillor Wright **SECONDED**

'In line with our formal declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency, and our commitment to actions to change behaviour to address the causes of this situation and mitigate the impacts, this Council supports the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill proposed

by a coalition of scientists, academics and lawyers with the aim of bringing the UK's climate policy into one with evolving scientific evidence. This proposed Bill is also supported by 96 cross-party members of parliament. Nationally we need a strong legislative framework that embeds the Government's targets in law, enabling us as supportive players, to plan and develop our future trajectories, to fit in with those targets.

**Council therefore resolves to:**

- i. Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill
- ii. Inform the local media of this decision;
- iii. Write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill; and
- iv. Write to the [CEE Bill Alliance](http://www.cee-bill.org.uk), the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support ([campaign@ceebill.uk](mailto:campaign@ceebill.uk)).

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

**359 Beach Breaks, Mental Health and Support of Initiatives**

Councillor Biederman **MOVED** and Councillor Wright **SECONDED**

'This Council recognises that many children in Devon have never been to the Beach or because of financial limitations on families can often find it beyond their means.

Visiting a beach can have fantastic health benefits for young people and their family, particularly their mental health, as well as connecting them with our beautiful environment, if communities are better connected to our natural environment, they will be more inclined to preserve it for future generations.

Pensioners can access the beaches with their free bus pass, we believe this should also be available to our young people.

So this Council commits to work with our travel partners to provide vouchers to families on low incomes for free travel to the beach at weekends and/or during school holiday periods.

Cabinet are asked to provide a budget to support this, from the public health budget.

We also lobby Government for more Public Health Funding to help support these type of initiatives'.

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

**360 Sustainable future funding for Local Welfare Assistance**

Councillor Atkinson **MOVED** and Councillor Hannaford **SECONDED**

**This Council notes that:**

1. Until 2013, emergency financial assistance was principally provided by central Government through the Discretionary Social Fund.
2. From 2013, the Government implemented wholesale reform of the Discretionary Social Fund. Some parts were kept, however, the government abolished Crisis Loans (other than Alignment Payments) and Community Care Grants.
3. Responsibility for emergency financial assistance was devolved to the local level and funding transferred to local authorities in England on a non-ring-fenced basis, with the intention that they establish their own Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) Schemes to support local people facing a crisis.
4. The Government then decided that from 2015/16 onwards there would be no separate LWA funding stream. Instead, it would become part of the general Revenue Support Grant that central government provides to councils to support their spending on any local services.
5. In the intervening years, with reduced overall funding for councils, a lack of guidance from central government, and the absence of a statutory requirement for local authorities to deliver emergency financial assistance, local authorities faced difficult decisions about funding and maintaining LWA schemes. In many areas local welfare provision was either significantly reduced or closed completely.
6. In 2020/21, in response to significant levels of need during the COVID-19 pandemic, Government provided additional funding to local authorities to deliver emergency financial assistance. £63million was provided through the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for food and essential items, whilst a further £170million was provided through the COVID Winter Support Scheme.

**This Council believes that:**

1. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impacts, we can expect there to be significant ongoing need for emergency financial assistance, with many families in this country at some time facing a 'financial crisis' point – a financial problem which puts the immediate health and wellbeing of family members at risk.
2. If properly resourced, local authorities are uniquely placed to support residents facing financial crisis, with LWA schemes central to that support. Local schemes can be underpinned by the existing knowledge that councils have of need in their communities, alongside the relationships they hold with local voluntary and community sector partners.



3. Whilst local authorities have other mechanisms such as Discretionary Housing Payments and Local Council Tax Support Schemes to support low income households, Covid-19 has demonstrated how important it is for Councils to have the capacity to deliver timely and discretionary emergency support to households reaching crisis point.
4. Central Government should therefore provide sustainable, long-term funding for local welfare assistance- to give councils the confidence and certainty that they need to develop an effective local welfare offer.

**This Council, therefore, resolves:**

1. To [establish/maintain] a Local Welfare Assistance Scheme to support residents facing financial crisis.
2. To campaign for a new funding allocation for councils from central government to provide Local Welfare Assistance schemes to be made available at the next comprehensive spending review and protected in real terms over the following years.
3. To write to the Chancellor, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to request that they make such a funding allocation available to local authorities.

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

**361 Use of Neonicotinoids**

Councillor Wright **MOVED** and Councillor Hodgson **SECONDED**

This Council regrets the Government's u-turn on using neonicotinoids, banned under EU law, and which have proved to be damaging to our vital bee population, other insects and birds and water courses.

This Council calls on the Government to urgently reverse its decision.

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 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 6.43 pm