

## CABINET

10 November 2021

### Present:-

Councillors R Croad, A Davis, R Gilbert, J Hart (Chair), S Hughes, A Leadbetter, J McInnes (Vice-Chair), A Saywell and P Twiss

### Members attending in accordance with Standing Orders 8 and 25

A Connett, C Whitton and M Wrigley (attended remotely)

R Hannaford (attended in person)

\* 63

### Minutes

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2021 be signed as a correct record.

\* 64

### Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

\* 65

### Announcements

There was no announcement by the Chair at this meeting.

\* 66

### Petitions

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

\* 67

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

There was no question from a Member of the Council.

68

### Devon County Council's Vision, Ambition and Priorities: Our Strategy for 2021 - 2025

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

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Chief Executive, (CEX/21/1) outlining the Council's Vision, Ambition and Priorities; the Strategy for 2021 – 2025, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Covid-19 pandemic had presented Local Government with new and unprecedented challenges and the Council had worked as part of Team Devon over the last 18 months to address widening gaps in income, health, and opportunity in the County. Against this backdrop, it was important that local public services maximised opportunities to provide the best outcomes for Devon which meant finding sustainable ways to support the health and wellbeing of everyone in Devon; strengthening the local economy; protecting and enhancing the environment; and providing value for money for the taxpayer.

Cabinet noted that over the next four years, the Council would be focussing on recovery and renewal and the priorities had therefore been developed to help Devon achieve the overall ambition to become the best place to:

- **Grow up** - a commitment to being a child friendly Devon where children / young people were safe, healthy, ambitious, and could fulfil their potential.
- **Live well** - being a fairer Devon: inclusive, compassionate, and caring, where everyone was safe, connected, and resilient.
- **Prosper** - being a greener and prosperous Devon, with opportunities to create a sustainable future for all.

The vision, ambition and priorities for the next four years were set out on the web pages <https://beta.devon.gov.uk/devoncc-plan/> and detailed the following priorities:

- respond to the climate emergency;
- be ambitious for children and young people;
- support sustainable economic recovery;
- tackle poverty and inequality;
- improve health and wellbeing; and
- help communities be safe, connected, and resilient.

For each of the priorities, the pages described the overall outcomes that would be achieved over the next four years.

The webpages also set out how the Council would be a **trusted council, an inclusive council, and an innovative council.**

Further development was needed to translate the priorities into an annual plan and progress report for each of the next four years. The annual plans would also inform the development of the Council's annual budget; its medium-term financial strategy; service planning and partnership working as part of Team Devon.

The Cabinet noted that the Council's priorities for 2021 – 2025 would have a positive impact on everyone living and working in Devon and the extent of the impact on each protected characteristic would be set out in Equality Impact Assessments for each area of work.

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

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

### **RESOLVED**

(a) that the Council's vision, ambition, and priorities for 2021 – 2025 as set out on the webpages at [Devon County Council Strategic Plan 2021-2025](https://beta.devon.gov.uk/devoncc-plan/) (<https://beta.devon.gov.uk/devoncc-plan/>) be endorsed; and

(b) that the preparation and publication of an annual Council plan and progress report also be agreed.

#### \* 69 **Budget Monitoring - Month 6**

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

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Director of Finance (Designate), (DF/21/01) outlining the Budget Monitoring Position at Month 6, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

At month 6 it was estimated that budgets would overspend by just over £7 million, a reduction of £300,000 from month 4. The Dedicated Schools Grant projected deficit, relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), was forecast to be £36 million, however, in line with the Department of Education guidance the deficit would not be dealt with this financial year but carried forward to future years.

The Government had continued to provide a number of grant funding streams this year to help support Local Authorities during the pandemic. The confirmed additional funding the Council was expected to receive directly this financial year was currently £36.6 million, in addition to the £25.6 million carried forward from 2020/21.

Adult Care and Health services were forecast to overspend by £5.2 million, a reduction of £237,000 from month 4. Children's services were forecasting an overspend of £7.3 million, an increase of £500,000 from month 4, but the figure did not include the projected deficit of £36 million on Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This was held in an adjustment account on the balance sheet. The guidance outlined in a Statutory Instrument meant that the deficit did not have a negative impact on the assessment of the Councils

financial sustainability. At the end of 2020/21 the DSG reported a cumulative deficit of £48.9 million which was carried forward and when combined with the current year forecast the deficit was expected to be £84.9 million by the end of 2021/22.

In Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste, the service was forecasting an underspend of £214,000 which was the result of additional income within the Engineering, Design Group.

Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity (COPHEP) were forecasting an underspend of £1.2 million. The transport fleet had incurred lower fuel and maintenance costs than budgeted, the County Hall travel plan remained on hold following the pandemic and a number of programmes (Communities) had faced significant delays.

Corporate Services were forecasting an underspend of £684,000 where pressures within Legal and Human Resources were being more than offset by the forecast underspends within Digital Transformation and Business support.

The approved capital programme for the Council was £217.8 million. The year-end forecast at month 6 was £191.3 million of which £26.5 million had been externally funded. Slippage was forecast at £16.7 million. The main areas of net slippage could be attributed to scheme variations and programme delays in Planning, Transportation and Environment, which reflected the complexity of the major schemes within this service area.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, presented the Spending Review on the 27<sup>th</sup> October which saw a return to a multi-year Spending Review and covered the three years from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was due in December and would also cover three years. Whilst the Spending Review provided some headline investment figures there was no indication of the formula that would be used to distribute funds to Local Authorities.

The main points from the Chancellor's Budget Statement that were relevant to Local Government were set out in paragraph 9.3 and included matters such as the council tax referendum limit, social care precept, business rates multiplier, conclusion of the review of business rates, hospitality and leisure relief, youth services funding as part of the levelling up agenda, new funding for community football pitches, support for museums and libraries and new 'pocket parks' on small areas of derelict land.

The public sector pay freeze would not continue, and the minimum wage had been increased.

In summary, the Cabinet noted the significant pressures experienced in both Adult Care and Health and Children's Services and the situation would need to be monitored closely but the ever-changing landscape continued to present service delivery challenges and financial risks.

The matter having been debated and the other relevant factors set out in the Director of Finance (Designate's) Report and/or referred to above having been considered:

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

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that the month 6 budget monitoring forecast position be noted;
- (b) that progress on the delivery of the Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan be noted; and
- (c) that the main points from the Spending Review 2021 also be noted.

\* 70 **DCC Building Decarbonisation Scheme for approval**

*(Item taken in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 with the consent of the relevant Scrutiny Committee Chair on the grounds that any delay would mean the Building Decarbonisation Scheme works may not be completed to the grant timescale, and the Council may miss out on grant funding that will support it meeting its carbon reduction targets)*

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

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/21/39) on proposals to deliver retrofit decarbonisation enhancements to four corporate estate buildings.

The Cabinet noted that the Council had secured funding from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to retrofit corporate estate buildings to deliver carbon, energy, and cost reductions. Additional "top up" funding was required from the Council in order to meet the necessary standards.

A scheme had been developed to use existing DCC capital, provisionally allocated to the Carbon Reduction Plan, as a local contribution, in order to top-up additional PSDS funds to deliver the retrofit of the Great Moor House, Abbey Rise, St Michaels and Taw View buildings to the required standard. This would exceed the Carbon Reduction Plan targets for the corporate estate as set out in the Carbon Reduction Plan by 2030. The recommendation reflected the Authority's recognition that emissions must be reduced rapidly.

The works would be carried out while the buildings were occupied and generally consisted of the installation of insulation to building fabric, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, LED lighting, building management

systems, solar panels, and air source heat pumps. There would be some anticipated disruption, but this would be mitigated as far as possible. The programme for the works was due to start in November and be completed in 2022.

Section 6 of the Report outlined the project costs in relation to each building as well as the breakdown of the PSDS grant and DCC contribution.

The Head of Service's Report contained an Impact Assessment which had been attached to the agenda for the attention of Members at the meeting which was available at [Zero Carbon Buildings - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/zero-carbon-buildings-impact-assessment). This highlighted that Climate change would affect everybody in the County, and would affect people less able to adapt the most, including those less affluent, those living with physical and mental health conditions, those living in coastal communities or areas prone to flooding and young people who would live with the effects becoming worse over their lifetimes.

Implementing the recommendation would help grow efforts to reduce international carbon emissions and minimise these impacts on everyone and there were no equality impacts anticipated directly from the retrofit activity. The buildings would be monitored once retrofitted to understand the extent of the benefits and users' experience of using the buildings.

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

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

### **RESOLVED**

(a) that the £3.3m capital spend on the energy-efficiency retrofit of four corporate buildings be approved, made up of the Government Grant from Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme of £2.1m and the Council's Carbon Reduction Plan of £1.2m; and

(b) that the scheme for progression to construction be approved and delegated authority is given to the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport, to make minor amendments to the scheme details.

*(The Impact Assessment referred to above may be views alongside the minutes of the meeting and is also available at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/zero-carbon-buildings/>)*

\* 71

### **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment - Annual Return**

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

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Head of Education and Learning (CS/21/14) presenting the annual return on the sufficiency of accessible, affordable, high quality early years and childcare places.

It was a statutory duty for Local Authorities, set out in Section 6, of the [2006 Childcare Act](#), to secure sufficient, accessible, affordable, high quality early years and childcare places *so far as is reasonably practicable* and the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) required that a Report be prepared annually for Members on how the Local Authority was meeting their duty.

The [2020/21 Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report](#) was the eighth annual Report. Sufficiency was met through a variety of providers that included all types of schools, pre-schools, day nurseries, holiday clubs, breakfast clubs, after school clubs, childminders, etc. These provisions were within the private, voluntary, independent, and maintained sectors.

The Report encapsulated key findings from data relating to 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 and actions for the Early Years and Childcare Service for 2021/22.

The data analysis indicated that overall, there appeared to be sufficient early years and childcare provision within Devon. Although the rural/urban spread of different types of provision varied and Childcare Sufficiency Hot Spots had been identified.

The focus for next year would be regular audits of **out of school provision** to better understand what was available, carry out a **travel to work** survey with Exeter Providers to understand whether fewer children had been accessing provision on travel to work routes, monitor the **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic** on the supply of childcare including closure of providers and the demand for childcare as parents work patterns changed, promoting the services of the Early Years and Childcare Service including the unable to find childcare form to **better understand the demand** for childcare, introduce **spotlight areas** (and carry out a deep dive investigation into the supply and demand for childcare and consider other local factors and data that might have an impact), embed the new **two-year-old funding process** and monitor outcomes in registered childcare providers as **Ofsted started to reinspect** provision.

The actions arising from the Report were highlighted including that the Early Years and Childcare service would:

- continue to assess sufficiency and identify hot spots through data analysis and discussion on the supply and demand of childcare.
- support providers to open or expand businesses where appropriate.
- continue the termly survey of providers to capture data regularly.
- continue the data review of out of school provision to ensure the accuracy of the data held.
- support providers through [Early Years ONE Devon](#) to become good or outstanding.
- work with providers to build greater flexibility and affordability into their provision for parents, where provision was open all year round but did not enable parents to stretch their funding for two-, three- and four-year olds.
- promote the take up of the entitlement and hours particularly for children with special educational needs and disabilities and those living in the most disadvantaged areas of Devon.
- continue to survey parents termly to gain a greater insight into the demand for childcare.
- use data from the Council's Economy Team to help inform demand for childcare as working patterns change.
- promote the use of the '[unable to find childcare form](#)' to parents as a way of feeding back to the Council when they could not find childcare;
- promote childminding as a career, particularly in rural areas.
- work with the School Place Planning Team to establish Early Years Provision in new schools and request Section 106 for early years provision where appropriate.
- promote the take-up of the Early Years Pupil Premium to parents and providers and highlight the benefits to the child and the setting; and
- promote Free School Meals in nursery classes.

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

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

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

**RESOLVED** that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Annual Report be welcomed and endorsed and arrangements made for the Report to be published on the Council's website and social media platforms.

\* **72** **Teignbridge Highways and Traffic Orders Committee - Shaldon Road, Newton Abbot - Request for extension of 30mph speed limit**

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

At its meeting on 29 July 2021, the Teignbridge Highways and Traffic Orders Committee had considered the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/21/53) (Minute 7 referred), and had **RESOLVED** (b) that the speed limit on this stretch of Shaldon Road referred to in Report (HIW/21/53) be reduced to 30mph in view of the dangers to adults and children using this road (noting this would be referred to Cabinet as a departure from policy).

The Cabinet had considered this referral on 8 September 2021 and the Cabinet Member for Highway Management had commented that the Council's speed limit policy was based on the Department for Transport guidance and the speed limit of 40mph in the area was consistent with the approved speed limit policy. However, he added it would be helpful to virtually visit the site and the Cabinet therefore **RESOLVED** that the matter be deferred pending a virtual site visit to meet the Local Member and officers including the Road Safety Team.

The virtual site visit took place on 4 November 2021 and comprised of local Member, Councillor Bradford, neighbouring Member, Councillor Dewhirst, along with HATOC Chair, Councillor Wrigley, and the Cabinet Member for Highway Management, Councillor Hughes. Elected Members were joined by representatives of the Traffic Management Team, Neighbourhood Highways Team, Road Safety Team, Head of Service and Police representative.

The group reviewed data relating to speed and recorded injury collisions and based on data, the view of officers was that the speed limit on the section of highway was correctly set and was a good example of a well functioning 40mph limit.

Members made clear that there remained concerns over driver behaviour and the safety of movements into and out of junctions on the section.

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

- (a) that the speed limit remains at 40mph;
- (b) that a review of visibility is undertaken from each of the junctions in this section and vegetation cutting undertaken where required;
- (c) that a review of signing and road markings is undertaken and any changes or renewals identified is undertaken;
- (d) that the situation be kept under review; and
- (e) that the local Member explores setting up a specific Community Speed Watch group for the Shaldon Road area.

**73**      **Notice(s) of Motion**

*(Councillor Hart declared a personal interest in this matter (a and b) by virtue of being in the holiday home business. Councillor McInnes declared a personal interest in this matter (a and b) by virtue of holding a share in a rental property. Councillor Gilbert declared a personal interest in this matter (a and b) by virtue of being owner and landlord of various local affordable properties. Councillor Connett declared a personal interest in this matter (a and b) by virtue of being the owner of a rental property and Councillor Wrigley by virtue of being the portfolio holder for housing at Teignbridge District Council)*

**(a) Supporting Devon Residents into Homes of Their Own (Councillor Connett)**

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

Devon County Council calls on the 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. To re-extend the notice period given to tenants to 6 months
3. Maintain the Local Housing Allowances at Covid-levels (plus cost-of-living increases) to support families into homes

and that the County Council will:

1. Work with Devon's District, City and Borough councils to establish a 'housing taskforce' working across the county to tackle the flight to Air BnB and holiday rentals
2. Support the provision of urgently needed rented housing on County owned land

**Council welcomes the research undertaken by property agents Colliers and published in August 2021, which confirms:**

Local authorities are losing out on millions of pounds of council tax income because the Government's business rates system is still giving many holiday home and second home owners the opportunity to avoid paying the tax, provided they make their properties available to rent. This situation has been made even worse by the pandemic.

Colliers estimates the total loss to local authorities from business rates relief for holiday lets in England and Wales alone is currently around **£110 million a year** - a significant sum that could certainly help bridge the gap in local authority finances, now suffering because of the pandemic.

Property owners who make their properties available to rent as holiday lets for 140 days of the year can claim they are a small business and as such can elect to pay business rates instead of council tax.

However, as small businesses they can claim for relief on 100% of the business rates payable if their properties have a rateable value of less than £12,000. Those properties with a rateable value between £12,000 and £15,000 are also entitled to a relief on a sliding scale in line with the Government's business rates relief policy.

Colliers has analysed the rating lists for the South West of England (Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset) where 9,600 new properties, claiming 100% business rates relief have entered the list in the last four years- an 82 % increase since the start of the 2017 Ratings List.

According to Colliers' estimates this flip from the council tax to the business rates list is costing the local councils an extra £16 million a year in council tax income. The South West now has 21,312 properties in the rating list that are eligible for 100% business rates relief and

Colliers has estimated that if these properties at least paid council tax the local councils would benefit by £35.5 million a year!

**Council also notes that the Office for National Statistics has reported:**

The number of households living in the private rented sector in the UK increased from 2.8 million in 2007 to 4.5 million in 2017, an increase of 1.7 million (63%).

Over this period, the number of owner occupier households remained broadly consistent at 17.7 million households.

However, households owned outright increased from 7.9 million to 9.4 million while households buying with a mortgage fell from 9.8 million to 8.3 million.

The number of social rented households decreased by 200,000 households to 4.5 million.

Younger households are more likely to rent privately, with those in the 25 to 34 years age group representing the largest group.

Households in the 45 to 54 years age group saw the biggest percentage increase from 11% in 2007 to 16% in 2017, an estimated increase of 384,000 households.

**Council welcomed the protection for tenants but is concerned about a rise in evictions**

Due to Government action during the Covid pandemic, thousands of private sector tenants were protected from homelessness by the national ban on evictions.

However, that protective shield was removed on 31 May this year and, in addition, the notice period that a landlord must give a tenant was cut from six to four months

Citizens Advice said there's been a **17 per cent increase in people with issues about being evicted from their private rented accommodation**, comparing the first four months of this year with the same period a year ago.

It said there's also been a **36 per cent increase in the number of people seeking help with all types of problems in the rental sector.**

**Private rented homes are like Hens teeth...**

In Devon, we are seeing a dramatic shift in the availability of private rented homes.

In North Devon, the Reach Plc news organisation, reported on 8 August that there are 2000 residents looking for social housing on Devon HomeChoice but only 20 residential properties available for rent via Rightmove. In Teignbridge, there are 1000 applicants on the Devon HomeChoice register, a search of Rightmove on 9 August showed 5 rental properties available in Newton Abbot, 7 in Dawlish, 1 in Teignmouth, 1 in Ide, 1 in Bovey Tracey, 2 in Chudleigh and 1 each in Ashburton and Buckfastleigh with none in Exminster. In East Devon, there were 22 rental properties displayed on Rightmove. Anecdotal evidence from other districts suggests this pattern of high demand and very low supply is repeated across Devon.

And this is an extract from an online search on 09 August 2021 for Air BnB properties for let in Devon

[500+ Devon Holiday Cottages | House and Apartment ... - Airbnb](https://www.airbnb.co.uk)  
<https://www.airbnb.co.uk> > United Kingdom > England

Find the perfect self-catered holiday cottage for your trip to **Devon**. **Houses** with a kitchen and **apartments** with free parking await you on **Airbnb**.

The Guardian of February 2020 reported....

**Out-of-control' dominance of rentals in some communities depriving locals of homes, critics say**

- **The Devon village changed by Airbnb**

In England, the area with the highest rate of Airbnb lets was [Woolacombe](#), Georgeham and Croyde, in Devon, with 23 listings for every 100 properties.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/feb/20/revealed-the-areas-in-the-uk-with-one-airbnb-for-every-four-homes>

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/15) which referred to this Notice of Motion and the one outlined at (b) below which described how the two motions highlighted the unprecedented shortage of affordable housing and the multiple pressures on the availability of private sector housing. Tackling the complex and difficult problems outlined would require action by Government, Devon's local authorities, house builders, landlords, housing associations and many others. The briefing note highlighted that the proposed Council priorities for 2021-2025 included working with Team Devon to tackle homelessness and improve the availability of affordable housing in Devon and also doing whatever was possible to make it easier for key workers and people on low incomes to find affordable homes.

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

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

**RESOLVED**

(a) that the County Council assess the potential for it to offer accommodation to new social and key workers to attract them to work for Devon County Council;

(b) that the County Council, as a member of Team Devon (Leaders and Chief Executives), propose to Team Devon that a Devon strategic housing taskforce be established to help draw together the work of existing pan-Devon housing partnerships and focus on tackling homelessness and improving the availability of affordable housing in Devon; and

(c) that the County Council, as a member of Team Devon (Leaders and Chief Executives), proposes to Team Devon that it write to Devon Members of Parliament asking them to support changes to legislation and policy to address the housing problems in Devon described in the Notices of Motion. Team Devon's letter to MPs should propose strengthening the criteria on how a property becomes liable for Business Rates instead of Council Tax. Owners of these properties should have to show that they are commercially letting the property and not just declaring them available for rent.

**(b) Devons Housing Crisis (Councillor Hannaford)**

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

Council notes with concern that Devon is in the grips of a serious housing crisis. Second home sales are soaring, private landlords are switching to holiday letting in huge numbers, significantly fewer homes are available to buy or rent, and both renters and buyers are being priced out of the county in an unprecedented way.

The post pandemic far South West property boom has especially compounded decades of systemic under investment in social and affordable housing, that has prevented local councils, housing associations, alms houses and charities from investing in more much needed homes for local people and families.

We know that across Devon we have thousands on the Devon Home Choice waiting lists, with thousands more not eligible to apply, and thousands more in often poor quality private rental stock. Home ownership is now only a distant dream for so many.

People who've lived here for generations are being pushed further away by property prices that they simply cannot afford.

Furthermore, we also risk our communities becoming unsustainable, we have a county wide recruitment and retention problem across all sectors, including at Devon County Council.

Council therefore resolves to;

- Set up a high level action group to look at using Devon County Council resources to provide some key worker accommodation for our own staff such as adult and children's social workers.
- That Devon County Council use its convening powers to host and coordinate a county wide Devon Housing Forum with all key partners to develop a range of effective local and grassroots solutions to help solve Devon's housing crisis, including key workers such as nurses, care workers, teachers, hospitality and retail sector and those serving in the blue light services.
- Work with all our local Members of Parliament to ensure that new Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government fully understands the collective housing challenges that we urgently face in Devon, and to secure the necessary powers and resources through the Devon Devolution Deal to make significant and lasting progress to provide people in Devon with somewhere affordable, safe and secure to call home.

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/15) which referred to the same issues as described at (a) above.

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

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

**RESOLVED** that it is recommended:

(a) that the County Council assess the potential for it to offer accommodation to new social and key workers to attract them to work for Devon County Council;

(b) that the County Council, as a member of Team Devon (Leaders and Chief Executives), propose to Team Devon that a Devon strategic housing taskforce be established to help draw together the work of existing pan-Devon housing partnerships and focus on tackling homelessness and improving the availability of affordable housing in Devon; and

(c) that the County Council, as a member of Team Devon (Leaders and Chief Executives), proposes to Team Devon that it write to Devon Members of Parliament asking them to support changes to legislation and policy to address the housing problems in Devon described in the Notices of Motion. Team Devon's letter to MPs should propose strengthening the criteria on how a property becomes liable for Business Rates instead of Council Tax. Owners of these properties should have to show that they are commercially letting the property and not just declaring them available for rent.

### **(c) School Uniform Costs (Councillor Hannaford)**

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

Thousands of parents across Devon were again forced to pay over the odds for [school uniforms](#) this academic year.

The Government failed to issue legally binding guidance obliging schools to ensure that their specified clothing is reasonably priced in time for the start of the new term.

Under a new law passed by Parliament in April, schools will be required follow statutory guidance on uniform costs, forcing them to keep prices down.

It was widely understood that this guidance would be in place in time for the start of the 2021/2022 academic year

In addition to encouraging schools to consider making second-hand uniforms available, the guidance will also instruct them to look into allowing parents to kit out their children in cheaper high-street alternatives and to also demonstrate that they obtained the best value for money possible from their suppliers.

Parents with children in state schools spend on average **£315 per year for each primary school child** and **£337 per year on uniform for each secondary school child**, according to [research from The Children's Society](#).

This is more than three times what parents think is a reasonable cost for primary (£85) and secondary (£105) uniform.

The new law, introduced as a Private Members' Bill by Labour MP Mike Amesbury, that had widespread cross party support, could save hard-pressed parents [hundreds of pounds](#) over the course of their children's academic careers.

Council therefore resolves to formally write to all Members of Parliament in the Devon County Council area, clearly raising all the ongoing issues and concerns around the rising cost of school uniforms, to urge them to actively support the implementation of these changes at the earliest opportunity.

Furthermore with cuts to universal credit, increasing fuel and heating costs, and rising inflation, we need to support our families now by making school uniforms more affordable in Devon as we cannot wait for government decisions.

Council therefore also resolves to write to all our schools this term to ask them to urgently reconsider their uniform policies, and check that parents and families have the option of buying school clothing that is less expensive. In line with previous Department of Education guidance to local authorities, governors and schools for setting school uniform policy.

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/15) which referred to the Department for Education advice on school uniform, the Royal Assent of the Education (Guidance about Costs of School Uniforms) Act 2021 which instructed schools to keep prices for school uniform down as well as a number of other supporting measures, yet the Statutory guidance to accompany the Act had not been released.

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

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and **RESOLVED** that Council support the issues as raised and outlined in the Notice of Motion and accordingly;

(a) writes to Devon MPs; and

(b) that schools be reminded of the impending statutory guidance and ask that they take a proactive approach.

**(d) Bovine Tuberculosis, Badgers and Vaccination (Councillor Bradford)**

The badger cull is an attack on a native mammal without precedent in any country, in modern times.

As such – we shouldn't – and can't - stand by and watch from the sidelines. It is our wildlife, our natural heritage that is being decimated for no good reason at all.

I therefore propose that Council

1. recognises the impact of Bovine Tuberculosis on cattle, wildlife, and the farming community in the County
2. endorses good bio-security in the rural environment to reduce the risk of transmission of Bovine Tuberculosis;
3. confirms that this Council will not support the culling of badgers on Council land and will seek to amend its new leases accordingly. Any essential variation of such a lease clause will be subject to a formal request in writing and subsequent consent;
4. endorses vaccination as an important part of any long-term approach to reducing the general prevalence of the disease, risk to cattle or wildlife and its impact in Devon and resolves to support badger vaccination programmes, particularly in those areas most at risk of the spread of Bovine Tuberculosis, and to commit in principle to support them financially with Council and other resources.

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/15) which referred to the Godfray review, the Government response to this Review (March 2020) which set out three top priorities for the next phase of the bTB Strategy (deployable cattle vaccine, supported badger vaccination and surveillance and improving diagnostic testing), the consultation that was launched in January 2021 (proposed changes to aspects of bTB policy in keeping with the priorities), the County Farms Estate and requirements of tenants and the work of trading standards with Bovine TB

information and support for farmers including advice and guidance in relation to bio-security measures.

The Cabinet considered the recommendation now before them and the actions now proposed:

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

**RESOLVED** that Council be recommended to:

- (a) recognise the impact of Bovine Tuberculosis on cattle, wildlife, and the farming community in the County;
- (b) endorse good bio-security in the rural environment to reduce the risk of transmission of Bovine Tuberculosis through the continued promotion and dissemination of DCCs TB information packs for farmers;
- (c) endorse vaccination as an important part of any long-term approach to reducing the general prevalence of the disease, risk to cattle or wildlife and its impact in Devon; and
- (d) continue to assess the implications of the government's evolving strategy in relation to bovine TB and the resultant impact on the County Farms Estate.

\* **74**      **Speed Policy and Management Progress Report**

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

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/21/68) summarising the progress made over the last twelve months on the review of DCC Speed Policy and Management following the Scrutiny Committee Speed Task Group (SCTG) report (June 2019).

The Newton Abbot scheme had been in progress since September 2019 and was currently undergoing public engagement and consultation. The Working Group had proposed a comprehensive scheme covering the built-up area of the town including the town centre and some main roads, extending it beyond the original brief which had been to restrict it to residential areas.

The pilot scheme was intended to test whether introducing a default 20 mph Speed Limit (20SPL) would bring increased gains in road safety (reducing the number and severity of collisions), increased active travel and benefits to public health, reduced congestion and emissions and increased sense of public safety.

The scheme was a major project involving officers from the Traffic Orders and Policy Team, Road Safety, Communications Group, Data Collection, Public Health and Transportation as well as regular input from the Town Council, District Council, Fire Service and Police as well as external consultants.

Several working groups had been formed to manage data collection, the public consultation and design works and these met every two weeks, for example vehicle speed and type, turning movements and air quality.

It was expected that a final design for the Newton Abbot 20 would be developed ready for Advert before the end of the Calendar year with implementation of the scheme, subject to consultation, anticipated in spring 2022.

Whilst there had been delays in the data survey (impacts of Covid-19 and its effects on traffic) the scheme had already produced some benefits including knowledge and experience gained during the public engagement, data collection and design stages would help improve these stages and process for future schemes.

The update Report highlighted that the SCTG recommended to review the SCARF process to reflect changes made to the Road Safety Strategy and Speed Limits Policy, ensuring local communities had a meaningful and transparent say on proposed local schemes.

The Police had also reviewed Speed Watch to address organisational and logistical issues which had hindered implementation of new schemes. Additional resources had been made available and there was a welcome increase in schemes across Devon.

The ongoing adoption and implementation of Vision Zero had created an opportunity to take forward some of the SCTG recommendations and the Newton Abbot pilot scheme continued towards implementation and would inform a large part of future policy. Work would continue to develop initiatives for local communities to help themselves, including the production of a local speed management toolkit. The ongoing work with the police and neighbouring authorities would be continued with more joint initiatives, potentially through Vision Zero as well as other subgroups already established.

The matter having been debated, also noting that the financial, legal, environmental, equality, risk management and public health considerations would be taken into account when the speed limit policy was revised,

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

**RESOLVED** the contents of the Report be noted, including that a framework for prioritising 20mph projects would be presented to the Cabinet meeting on 8th December.

\* 75 **Question(s) from Members of the Public**

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the relevant Cabinet Member responded to two questions from members of the public on the following issues:

\* RFR (Radio Frequency Radiation) as an issue affecting natural diversity and conservation and the steps of the Council to monitor the local ecological environment in terms of net zero policy and rollout of 5G and risk assessments of plans; and

\* energy consumption of 5G and how this had been factored into the Council's plans for emissions and Committee responsibility for assessing emissions, carbon and consumption of 4G, 5G and similar technologies;

A copy of the questions and answers would be sent direct to both questioners who were not present in the meeting.

*(NB: A copy of the questions and answers are available on webpage for meeting)*

\* 76 **Minutes**

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

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

Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee - 14 October 2021

\* 77 **Delegated Action/Urgent Matters**

The [Registers of Decisions taken by Members under the urgency provisions or delegated powers](#) were available for inspection, in line with the Council's Constitution and Regulation 13 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. [Decisions taken by Officers](#) under any express authorisation of the Cabinet or other Committee or under any general authorisation within the Council's Scheme of Delegation set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

\* **78**      **Forward Plan**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet reviewed the [Forward Plan](#) and determined those items of business to be defined as key and framework decisions and included in the Plan from the date of this meeting onwards reflecting the requirements of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

\* **79**      **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

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

**RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act namely, the financial and business affairs of the current provider of the services, and the Council disclosure of which is likely to inhibit the free and frank provision of advice and exchange of views for the purpose of deliberation or the effective conduct of public affairs.

\* **80**      **Highway Term Service Contract - Consideration of Extension**

*(An item taken under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded, no representations having been received to such consideration under Regulation 5(5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012).*

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

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/21/69) which considered proposals for the potential extension of the Devon Highways Maintenance Term Service Contract (Contract) for a period of 3 years to March 2027.

Consideration was also given to the changes that might be required to the operating structure of Devon Highways and contractual changes as well as identifying the potential benefits and opportunities for service delivery.

The Cabinet noted that the Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee on 23 September considered the Report of the Spotlight Review and had RESOLVED that the following recommendations be endorsed and commended to the Cabinet, with a progress report to Committee in six months' time (a) Extend the highways maintenance contract held with Milestone Infrastructure, taking advantage of the full option to extend by three years; (b) As part of the extension review the contract Service

Information to meet the changing needs of the organisation and the population of Devon; and (c) Communicate successes and measurables in Highways through the Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee and in briefings for Councillors to share with Town and Parish Councillors as well as with members of the public.

As part of the original Cabinet recommendation to award the Contract, an Impact Assessment was prepared and circulated and was still available on the Council's website at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/highways-maintenance-contract-2016>

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

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

#### **RESOLVED**

(a) that the Devon Highways Maintenance Term Service Contract held with Milestone Infrastructure be extended by three years to 31 March 2027 (the maximum permitted extension under the contract); and

(b) that the negotiation of the extension and any changes to the contract be delegated to the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste and the County Solicitor in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Highway Management.

*(NB: The Impact Assessment referred to above may be viewed alongside Minutes of this meeting and may also be available on the [Impact Assessment Webpages](#))*

#### **NOTES:**

1. *Minutes should always be read in association with any Reports for a complete record.*
2. *If the meeting has been webcast, it will be available to view on the [webcasting site](#) for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting*

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

The Meeting started at 10.30 am and finished at 12.38 pm