

CABINET

13 January 2021

Present:-

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

Members attending in accordance with Standing Orders 8 and 25

M Asvachin, F Biederman, J Brazil, A Connett, A Dewhirst, B Greenslade and
R Hannaford

* 606

Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2020 be signed as a correct record.

* 607

Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* 608

Announcements

(Councillors Biederman, Connett and Hannaford attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The Chair announced that there was no update on the current position with Elections and whether they would take place in May, notwithstanding recent press articles and representation from the County Councils Network.

Both the Chief Executive and County Solicitor reported that preparatory work had started for the Elections and some costs had been incurred by Local Authorities to date.

Both the Cabinet and those attending under Standing Orders stated that if changes to Election dates were likely, then an announcement from Government was required sooner rather than later.

* 609

Petitions

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

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

In accordance with the Cabinet Procedure Rules, the relevant Cabinet Member responded to one question from a Member of the Council relating to the conversion to LED streetlamps in Ipplepen and Abbotskerswell and the maintenance of good communications with local residents.

The Cabinet Member responded orally to the supplementary question arising from the above.

[NB: A copy of the questions and answers are available on webpage for meeting and any supplementary questions and answers may be observed through the webcast of this meeting – see Notes below]

* **611** **Update on Target Budget and Local Government Settlement**

(Councillors Biederman, Connett, Dewhirst, Greenslade and Hannaford attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/21/1) giving an update on the target budget following the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. The Report had been 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.

Cabinet noted that at the December meeting of Cabinet, Revenue Spending Targets for 2021/22 had been set that represented an overall increase of £28.4 millions or 5.2% (noting that the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement had not yet been announced).

The Secretary of State for the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (on 17th December 2020) had made a statement to Parliament on the Provisional Settlement for 2021/22.

The 2021/22 Local Government Finance Settlement was for one year only and based on the Spending Round 2020 (SR20). The main aspects of this were;

- that the council tax referendum limit was 2% for local authorities with social care authorities allowed a 3% social care precept;
- the business rates multiplier had been frozen for 2021/22 resulting in the three elements of the Business Rates Retention system (Baseline Need, NNDR Baseline and Tariff/Top Up amounts) remaining at 2020/21 levels;
- the Revenue Support Grant had increased by 0.55%;

- there had been an increase to the Social Care Support Grant of £300 millions nationally and no change to the Improved Better Care Fund Grant;
- Rural Services Delivery Grant – there had been an increase of £4 millions nationally, from £81 millions in 2020/21, to £85 millions in 2021/22; with the methodology for distribution remaining unchanged from 2020/21;
- COVID-19 Funding – in the SR20, £2.2 billions of funding had been announced to support local government in 2021/22, alongside support for local tax income and the spreading of deficits.

Whilst there were a number of Government Grants yet to be announced the Provisional Settlement for the County Council was as follows:

£000

Revenue Support Grant	549
Business Rates Central Government Top Up	80,654
New Homes Bonus	2,486
Rural Services Delivery Grant	7,823
Social Care Support Grant SR20	3,149
Social Care Support Grant SR19	20,160
Improved Better Care Fund	28,270
Covid-19 Funding	14,823
Council Tax Support Grant	6,358

Notwithstanding the targets set by Cabinet in December (Revenue Spending Targets of just over £571 millions), much had happened, including a new variant of the Coronavirus and another national lockdown which had led to a review of those Targets.

The proposed changes were:

- reducing the planned savings by £3.7 millions across Adult Care and Health, Children’s Services and Highways, Infrastructure and Waste;
- an additional Investment of £302,000 in Legal Services to support Children’s Services and Risk Management to support the whole organisation; and
- an additional £3.3 millions to fund the cost of the 2.2% increase in the National Living Wage.

In summary, the proposed Budget Targets had increased by just under £7.3 millions to nearly £578.5 millions, an increase of 6.6% on the 2020/21 Budget.

The table below set out the revised Budget Targets for 2021/22.

	2020/21 Adjusted Budget* £000	Inflation & Pressures £000	Savings & Additional Income £000	2021/22 Base Budget £000	Net Change	
					£000	%
Adult Care & Health	260,757	26,235	(4,557)	282,435	21,678	8.3%
Children's Services	146,869	13,787	(2,389)	158,267	11,398	7.8%
Communities, Public Health, Environment & Prosperity	39,792	1,039	(958)	39,873	81	0.2%
Corporate Services	37,566	4,436	(1,615)	40,387	2,821	7.5%
Highways, Infrastructure Development & Waste	57,827	1,804	(2,111)	57,520	(307)	(0.5%)
	542,811	47,301	(11,630)	578,482	35,671	6.6%

* Adjusted for permanent virements

The matter having been debated and the other relevant factors considered it was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and

RESOLVED

(a) that the Provisional Settlement, as set out in paragraph 2, be noted; and

(b) that the increased Revenue Spending Targets for 2021/22, as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the Report be approved.

* **612 Budget Monitoring - Month 8**

(Councillors Biederman, Brazil, Connett, Dewhirst, Greenslade and Hannaford attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the County Treasurer (CT/21/2) on the budget monitoring position at month 8, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Cabinet noted that at month 8 it was estimated that budgets would overspend by £1.9millions, a reduction of £823,000 from the month 6 forecast of £2.7 millions. However, the Dedicated Schools Grant projected deficit, relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), was forecast to be £30.4 millions, an increase of £2.6 millions since month 6. In line with Department of Education guidance this deficit would not be dealt with in the current financial year but carried to future years.

Adult Care and Health services were forecast to overspend by £2.4 millions, an increase of £100,000 from month 6. Children's Services were forecasting an overspending of £3.5 millions, not including the projected deficit of £30.4 millions on Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). In line with Government guidance the SEND deficit was held on the balance sheet as a negative reserve.

Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste were forecasting a breakeven position as was the case in month 6. Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity (COPHEP) were projecting an underspend of just under £1.7 millions.

The approved capital programme was £195.3 millions. The year-end forecast was £164.3 millions, producing forecast slippage of £31.0 millions, mainly attributable to variations and programme delays in Highways, Planning and Transportation (£24.2 millions net slippage) which reflected the complexity of the major schemes.

Corporate debt stood at £3.4 millions, being just over 2% of the annual value of invoices, against the annual target of 1.9%. The balance of debt owed would continue to be pursued with the use of legal action where appropriate.

The Report also outlined that Government had put in place a number of grant funding streams to help support Local Authorities during the pandemic. The confirmed additional funding the Council expected to receive directly was £80.5 millions. There were 13 different pandemic related grants with a confirmed value of £80.5 millions, of which £77.9 millions had been received and £53.7 millions spent.

A summary table of all the funds was attached at appendix 1, but a summary of each grant was:

- Local Authority Covid Support Grant - £43.5 millions;
- Adoption Support Fund - £ 217,097;
- Bus Services Support Grant - £1.2 millions;
- Infection Control Fund-Tranche 1 £10.5 millions and Tranche 2 £9.2 millions;
- Emergency Active Travel Fund - Tranche 1 £316,426 and Tranche 2 £1.3 millions;
- Test and Trace Local Action Plan - £2.6 millions;
- Emergency hardship Fund - £757,020;
- Additional Home to school Transport - £1.7 millions;
- Travel Demand Management - £100,000;
- Wellbeing for Education Return Fund - £128,139;
- Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Support Fund - £473,000;
- Winter Scheme - £2.04 millions;
- Contain Outbreak Management Fund (1) - £6.4 millions;
- Contain Outbreak Management Fund (2) - Further funding was expected to be provided.

At the start of the pandemic, Government confirmed that part of the £1.3 billions of funding made available to the NHS was intended to support costs incurred by local authorities in the support of hospital discharge, and out of hospital activity. Working with Devon CCG, the Council had received reimbursement for tranche 1 costs of £11.6 millions and was awaiting

confirmation and reimbursement from NHS England of further tranche 1 costs of £6.2 millions and tranche 2 costs of £2.5 millions.

The Cabinet noted the level of uncertainty and pressures being faced by the public sector this year were unprecedented. Whilst the projected forecast of breakeven was welcomed, there remained significant far-reaching risks associated with the impact of the pandemic.

The matter having been debated and the other relevant factors set out in the County Treasurer's Report having been considered, it was **MOVED** by Councillor Hart, **SECONDED** by Councillor McInnes, and

RESOLVED

(a) that budget monitoring forecast position at month 8 be noted; and

(b) that the Pandemic funding update also be noted.

* **613** **Marsh Barton Rail Station**

(Councillors Biederman, Connett, Dewhirst and Hannaford attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/21/1) on Marsh Barton Rail Station, circulated prior to the meeting in accordance with regulation 7(4) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Report sought final Scheme approval for the construction of Marsh Barton Station, which formed part of the Devon Metro rail network. The Scheme would boost sustainable access to one of the region's largest employment areas and deliver improved walking and cycling links to the Riverside Valley Park for leisure and onward commuting to RD&E, County Hall and the City Centre.

Whilst Cabinet had previously approved the plans for Marsh Barton (July 2015), since then several problems had been encountered, including significant changes to Network Rail design standards and specifications for numerous components of the scheme.

The proposal was to site the station immediately to the south of Clapperbrook Lane and adjacent to the Energy from Waste Plant. The station would be served by the existing local train service between Exmouth, Exeter, Newton Abbot and Torbay (including stops between those stations). The station layout was attached at Appendix 2 of the Report. The key changes from the previous

proposal related to the ramps and access between the two platforms. The redesign included the ramps and a new bridge constructed parallel to Clapperbrook Lane and the Report outlined the benefit of this approach.

A business case had been submitted for the scheme in order to secure Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal funding which showed a 'very high' value for money category.

The Station had been supported through the Exeter City Council and Teignbridge District Council Local Plan consultation processes and had been formally consulted upon through the planning application process, with broad support for the proposals.

The Scheme was estimated to cost £16.0m and would be funded by a variety of sources as detailed in the table contained within the Report. £5m was expected to be spent by the 31st March 2021, with an estimated £9m profiled in 2021/22 and £2m in 2022/23. The funding package included the DfT New Stations Fund allocation and at the time of writing the Report, the DfT had not made a final decision on the allocation of the New Stations Fund.

An Impact Assessment had been attached for the attention of Members at the meeting and could be found on the [impact assessment website](#). This showed no unmanageable impacts had been anticipated.

Work to construct the Station could have short-term negative consequences for residents living in the immediate vicinity, as noise could be generated, and the loss of some trees could impact the filtering of noise and odours from the industrial estate. However mitigating measures would be put in place.

The new Station and enhanced pedestrian / cycle bridge would support mode shift and deliver carbon savings through replacing medium length distance car journeys, particularly from the Teignbridge towns to Marsh Barton and would encourage increased local walking and cycling trips through improved quality and safety of cycle connections into the Riverside Valley / Exe Estuary multi-use trail.

The Cabinet noted that the Rail Station Scheme was an important infrastructure project that would boost sustainable travel choices. It delivered a safer pedestrian and cycle link across the railway to promote healthier, active lifestyles for short to medium distance journeys and the Scheme fitted well with the Council's climate emergency commitment.

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) as 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 Marsh Barton Station scheme as shown in Appendix 2 of the Report for construction at an estimated cost of £16.0m be approved, subject to funding being in place; and

(b) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste, to make minor amendments to the scheme design.

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

* **614** **Household Waste Recycling Centres: Van Permit Scheme**

(Councillors Biederman, Dewhirst and Hannaford attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The Cabinet considered the Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste (HIW/21/1) outlining proposals for a Van Permit Scheme at Household Waste Recycling Centres, the Report being 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 Council's Household Waste Recycling Centre Improvement Strategy had been approved by Cabinet on 11th November 2020 (Report HIW/20/38) and an aspect of that Strategy was the implementation of a Household Waste Recycling Centre Van Permit system to help reduce the potential of trade waste abuse at sites.

The Report provided the details of the scheme and outlined that whilst users of vans could access HWRCs to dispose/recycle their waste (subject to certain vehicle and vehicle size restrictions), there had been concern that abuse of the system by commercial firms and businesses to dispose of their waste at public expense remained an issue.

The proposal was that van permits would only be issued to vans registered to individual residents and not to vehicles registered to companies and / or businesses. The system required Devon residents who had a privately registered [registered to an individual] panel van (both large and small van size) to register with the Council if they wished to use that van at a HWRC.

Once registered, 12 permits for a rolling calendar year would be issued. The system would be based on 'QR' codes or similar with permits being scanned on access to each HWRC. There would be no charge for issuing the permits.

The Cabinet noted that it was only privately registered panel vans that needed to register, not cars, cycles/motorcycles, pickups, fully fitted campervans and a number of other vehicles, as outlined in the Report.

Vans registered to businesses/companies/organisations were not eligible for a permit and would be excluded from accessing the HWRCs as well as those vehicles registered to addresses outside of the Council's administrative area.

The Van Permit system would be piloted at a site prior to roll out so that any minor changes could be made if necessary.

The Scheme sought to limit the amount of commercial waste delivered to HWRC facilities by commercial firms, businesses and traders. The sites were provided free of charge for household waste deposited by residents and commercial waste should be deposited at commercial waste sites with the appropriate charges paid.

An Impact Assessment was attached for the attention of Members at the meeting and could be found on the [impact assessment website](#) and as the policy applied to all Devon residents, no unmanageable consequences had been envisaged. The Scheme further supported the Environment Agency's 'right waste, right place' campaign which sought to ensure that waste types were correctly identified/classified and dealt with at appropriately licenced/permitted facilities.

The matter having been debated and the options and/or alternatives and other relevant factors (e.g. financial, sustainability (including carbon impact), risk management and legal considerations) set out in the Chief Officer'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 Household Waste Recycling Centre Van Permit system be approved; and

b) that delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development and Waste to make further minor amendments, as may be required.

(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](#)).

615 **Notice(s) of Motion**

(a) Armed Forces (Councillor Asvachin)

(Councillor Asvachin attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 8 and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The original Motion outlined below:

‘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’

Members considered the Officer’s factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/1) which referred to the role of the Armed Forces Covenant and its main principles, the facilitation of the multi-agency (Civilian/Military) partnership of signatories to the Devon and Torbay Armed Forces Community Covenant, the [Veterans Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#), the work of the Forces Connect South West Consortium, the Devon Forces Family Website and the Council’s involvement with the Government Consultation regarding forthcoming legislation to enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in Law. The Briefing Note also outlined the additional work of the Council (as an employer) to support staff who were veterans, reservists or close family members who were serving and the achievement of the Employers Recognition Silver Award in the Autumn of 2020 which recognised organisations who pledged, demonstrated and advocated their support for the Defence community.

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

RESOLVED 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 and find work;
 - (iii) apply for assistance from Local Authorities. (i.e. Housing); and
 - (iv) 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.

(b) Loneliness and Isolation (Councillor Connett)

(Councillor Dewhirst attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The original Motion outlined below:

'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.

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/1) which summarised the current evidence around loneliness in Devon and the UK, including the detrimental impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on loneliness and mental wellbeing referencing the 'Covid-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveillance Report' and 'Build Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot Review' both of which were summarised in the Report. It also reflected on the impacts on services as well as Age UK data on the risk of loneliness by Devon neighbourhood

The Devon Health and Wellbeing Board had identified loneliness as a priority across partners in Devon, with a specific sub-priority on reducing loneliness in all age groups. Specific activities had included the Devon Charter to End Loneliness.

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

RESOLVED that the Council be recommended to support and promote the actions outlined in [Devon's Charter to End Loneliness](#).

(c) Children's Social Workers (Councillor Brazil)

(Councillor Brazil attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 8 and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The original Motion outlined below:

'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'.

Members considered the Officer's factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/1) which referred to the recent recruitment and retention strategy to address the current difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified social workers. It also referred to the analysis of a staff survey on retention and the issues raised (comparable annual leave, career pathway, recruitment and retention payments, achievement recognition, flexible working arrangements etc) which were being implemented as part of the new approach.

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

RESOLVED that Council be asked to support the recent Cabinet proposals to improve the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers in Devon.

(d) Rural Proofing Process (Councillor Atkinson)

(Councillor Hannaford attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The original Motion outlined below:

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

Members considered the Officer’s factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/1) which referred to the anticipated Government Report into rural proofing (the date for release was yet to be announced), to ensure that Government departments gave real consideration to the impact of policies in rural areas. The briefing note highlighted a number of issues previously identified by the Council regarding rural proofing.

The Council intended to provide comment to Government on the Report and would refer to the Motion to help guide that response as well as revisiting the identified issues in terms of new input, information and evidence using additional information from partner organisations.

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

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to:

- (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.

(e) Climate Change and Fossil Fuel Projects (Councillor Atkinson)

(Councillor Hannaford attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The original Motion outlined below:

‘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.
- 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’.

Members considered the Officer’s factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/1) which referred to UK Export Finance (the operating name of the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD)) and its role in helping UK companies access export finance as well as the investigation by Newsnight, in conjunction with Uearthed that UKEF had helped to finance oil and gas projects. An earlier investigation by the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee highlighted the environmental implications of financing provided through UKEF and its apparent conflict with the UK’s international development and climate change targets. The Government responded to each of the 13 recommendations made by the Committee. The issues raised in the motion and reports mentioned above demonstrated the need to look beyond the climate implications of the UK’s carbon emissions but to also address those internationally which were supported either by UK finance or, were serving UK-based consumption of resources and services. Whilst it was a complex issue, it was one which needed to be tackled to achieve reductions in carbon emissions.

The Cabinet then considered the recommendation now before them and the actions now proposed and already undertaken and any other relevant factors (e.g. environmental and public health).

RESOLVED that Council be recommended as follows:

- (a) Whilst supporting the objectives of facilitating international trade and assisting viable UK export businesses, 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
- (b) Call 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.

(f) Public Sector Pay (Councillor Atkinson)

(Councillor Asvachin attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The original Motion outlined below:

‘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’.

Members considered the Officer’s factual briefing note on the matter (CSO/21/1) which referred to how local government annual pay increases were negotiated and determined. Principal authorities would be consulted to establish an Employers’ position on pay once the Trade Unions’ pay claim had been submitted, anticipated to be early in the New Year.

The Briefing Note also reflected on the Local Government Association response to the Spending Review which highlighted issues such as the affordability of pay increases and that Government could not impose a pay freeze in local government unless it used a legislative route to do so. The LGA would be seeking clarity on which groups of local authority employed staff, if any, were covered by the announced pay increase for health staff including nurses.

Pay for teaching staff was set by a pay review body following a remit set by the Government. However, teachers had been a key part of the community response during the pandemic, ensuring schools remained open, therefore any pay freeze could exacerbate existing recruitment and retention challenges.

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

RESOLVED 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.

(g) The British Horse Society - Dead Slow Campaign (Councillor Hannaford)

(Councillor Hannaford attended remotely in accordance with Standing Order 8 and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and spoke to this item).

The original Motion outlined below:

'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](http://bhs.org.uk/dead_slow), consists of four key behavioral change messages to drivers in relation to horses and riders:

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

Council Resolves:

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

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

Furthermore, as 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'.

Members considered the Officer's factual Briefing Note on the matter (CSO/21/1) which referred to the Department for Transport collision records (STATS19) for Devon (recorded by Devon & Cornwall Police) which identified any personal injury collision recorded on the highway which included collisions involving ridden horses / horse drawn carriages and any collisions where an animal (except ridden horse) was recorded as a carriageway hazard in a collision.

Data provided by the BHS (Between 28/02/2019 to 29/02/2020) identified 54 reported horse incidents on roads across the three Devon local highway authority areas, although there was a total of 104 incidents in Devon, which included loose ponies recorded as injured or killed on Dartmoor.

It was clear that the collision data recorded by Police forces did not represent the full picture of incidents involving horses that occurred on the roads. An independent study published in 2020 looked in detail at the issues of equestrian safety on UK roads. This identified that the Devon Council area had the seventh highest horse collision rate per 100,000 population. The study concluded that drivers needed to understand horse perception limitations, flight behaviours, and horse rider signals and recommended that collision frequency and severity could be reduced with education-based initiatives and equally, equestrian riders needing to be skilled in communicating correctly with their horses and in approaching drivers.

The BHS as a charity offered a range of resources, education and training opportunities and was proactive in promoting road safety and the Council could support this through the road safety team.

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

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to;

- (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;
- (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.

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

There was no question from a Member of the public.

* **617** **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:

Farms Estate Committee – 7 December 2020
Farms Estate (Interviewing) Committee – 14 December 2020
Farms Estate (Interviewing) Committee – 21 December 2020

* **618** **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.

* **619** **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.

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 12.13 pm