

COUNCIL

17 February 2022

Present:-

Chair: J Trail BEM

Vice-Chair: D Sellis

Councillors T Adams, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, S Aves, J Bailey, D Barnes, J Berry, J Bradford, J Brazil, J Brook, C Channon, R Chesterton, I Chubb, A Connett, D Cox, P Crabb, R Croad, A Davis, A Dewhirst, H Gent, R Gilbert, I Hall, R Hannaford, J Hart, M Hartnell, J Hawkins, L Hellyer, P Henderson, S Hughes, A Leadbetter, C Leaver, F Letch MBE, P Maskell, D McGeough, J McInnes, J Morrish, R Peart, P Prowse, R Radford, S Randall-Johnson, I Roome, L Samuel, P Sanders, A Saywell, R Scott, C Slade, M Squires, D Thomas, P Twiss, C Whitton, J Wilton-Love, M Wrigley and J Yabsley

Apologies:-

Councillors F Biederman, P Bullivant, G Gribble, J Hodgson and S Parker-Khan

76 Minutes

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 be signed as a correct record.

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

77 Announcements

The Chair of the Council reported that the Council had received an 'inspirational care' award. Representatives from Unicare Devon, the Northam Care Trust and the Devon Care Homes Collaborative presented an award to express their heartfelt thanks to the Council on behalf of providers across Devon for the support they felt that they had received throughout the year.

The Chair commented that as this was awarded by providers themselves to the DCC team was remarkable and reflected the hard work by the team with providers during COVID.

Another good news story was the 'Mind Of My Own' Apps which created fully accessible digital participation tools for children's services. The number of times children in Devon had used the apps to share their views increased by over 400% in the last quarter of 2021, demonstrating how highly Devon

valued the voice of the child. The Chair said a big well done to everyone who helped make it happen.

The Chair also wished Jennie Stephens (Chief Officer for Adult Care and Health), Dave Black (Head of Service for Planning, Transportation and Environment) in their forthcoming retirements and thanked them for their many years of service in the Council. He also paid tribute to Rob Parkhouse (Head of Service for Digital Transformation & Business Support) who had already retired from the Council.

78 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

79 Public Participation: Petitions, Questions and Representations

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

There were also no questions or oral representations from members of the public.

80 Petitions from Members of the Council

The Leader was presented by Councillor Letch, on behalf of residents of Yeoford, with a petition containing 951 signatures asking for the Council to seek funding for a feasibility study into restoration of a second platform at Yeoford Station.

A further petition was presented by Councillor Slade on behalf of the village of Halberton, supported by Halberton Parish Council, on Traffic Problems and Road safety in Halberton. The Petition contained 163 signatories.

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

81 Questions from Members of the Council

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

- the number of people in the Council area living with Down Syndrome;
- whether the Council made recommendations and representations about the current Down Syndrome Bill;
- any analysis, assessments, strategies and action plans to prepare for the cross party measure becoming law;

- whether the Council would commit to, lead and champion a new Devon Down Syndrome Charter;
- amendments to the Highway Code and steps being taken to make the roads safer for people walking, cycling and riding horses on roads in Devon;
- Rural Road Safety and costed timescale on the Vision Zero South West (VZSW) Road Safety Partnership's objective to 'reduce killed and serious injuries (on rural roads) by 50% by 2030 and, ultimately aims to cut killed and serious injuries to zero by 2040' and how it would be implemented; and
- the timescale for decisions and intended implementation for the 20mph speed limit routes being invited for proposal.

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

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

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Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26 and Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2026/27

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

(Councillors Connett and Dewhirst declared personal interests by virtue of being Members of Teignbridge District Council (and intending to refer to this in debate) and Councillor Hall by virtue of being a Member of East Devon District Council)

The Council considered the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting (Minute 113 (1-20) of 11th February 2022), together with the Report of the Director of Finance on the Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26 and Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2026/27 (DF/22/18). This included an assessment of the adequacy of reserves, a range of prudential indicators concerning the financial implications of the capital programme and an assessment that identified risks associated with the budget strategy, together with how the risks would be managed.

The budget book contained details of the County Council's revenue and capital budgets together with associated financial and operational information.

The detail of the budget book included:

- Revenue Budget Overview;
- Statement on the Robustness of the Budget Estimates, the Adequacy of Reserves and Affordability of the Capital Strategy;
- Capital Programme Overview 2022/23 - 2026/27;
- Service Budgets;
- Fees & Charges;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26;
- County Fund Balance and Earmarked Reserves 2022/23;
- Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26 and Prudential Indicators 2022/23 - 2026/27;
- Capital Strategy 2022/23 - 2026/27;
- Risk Analysis of Volatile Budgets; and
- Abbreviations.

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** that the Minutes of the Children's Scrutiny Committee, Health and Adult Care Scrutiny and Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Budget Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 18th, 20th and 27th January 2022 relating to the annual estimates be approved.

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

The Council noted that the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee had, at that meeting on 27th January 2022, considered and endorsed the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23, prior to determination of the budget for that year.

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

The 2022/23 local government finance settlement was for one year only and was based on the Spending Review 2021 (SR21) funding levels. This was the first time since 2015 that, in the context of a multi-year Spending Review, the Government had only provided local authorities with a single-year settlement.

The Chancellor had announced an additional £1.6 billion per annum (2022/23 to 2024/25) for local government as part of SR21 and the majority of this amount had been included in the Core Spending Power figures. Based on the figures in the Core Spending Power amounts, there had been a net increase in funding (excluding the multiplier adjustment and Adult Social Care reform funding) of £1.5 billion.

The table on page 6 of the budget book set out the provisional settlement for Devon's Core Funding of £103.2 million. The Director of Finance, at the Cabinet meeting of 11 February had reported on the recently announced settlement and there had been no change to the core funding. However, the Public Health grant had been announced at £815,000 (an increase of 2.8%), there had been a £1,000 increase to the Better Care Fund and supporting families was £213,000 more than previously reported. Savings and income initiatives of £38.7 million had been initially required to set a balanced budget, however, since that time additional income of £8 million from the NHS to support social care had been agreed, which had reduced the need of some of the proposed savings considered by Scrutiny in January.

Detailed budgets had been produced within the Targets set by Cabinet in January 2022 which were shown on pages 40 to 87. The targets set for each service area had been subject to different pressures and influences. The table on page 6 showed the 2022/23 Budget Targets by service area.

The risks associated with the delivery of the 2022/23 budget and the mitigating action needed to try to contain that risk was detailed on pages 167 to 189.

Key Table 1 on page 8 showed the estimated level of spending on services and other items such as Capital Financing and Interest on Balances. Capital Financing Charges were dependent on the authority's Capital Programme explained on pages 19 to 37.

Factors that influenced the income gained from balances were set out on pages 121 to 154 that explained the authority's Treasury Management Strategy.

Key Table 2 set out the Council Tax Requirement, Tax Base, Council Tax by band and individual District Precepts.

Pages 114 to 120 explained the authority's strategy for its reserves and balances and Key Table 3 summarised the authority's Reserves and Balances.

The authority's approach to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was detailed on pages 89 to 113 and Key table 4 was the financial representation of the current MTFS.

The authority not only received Core Funding but also specific grants that related to particular activities and these were detailed in Key Table 5 on page 12 and 13. The most significant being the Dedicated Schools Grant.

The settlement had set the Council Tax increase that would trigger the need for a referendum at 2% for 2022/23, with social care authorities allowed a 1% social care precept. A Band D Council Tax would, if the proposed budget was

approved, increase by 2.99% to £1,556.46. The Council Tax requirement for the Council was £467,147,301.48.

The Council acknowledged that a Budget 2022/23 Impact Assessment had been prepared previously and taken into account by Scrutiny Committees as part of their earlier deliberations together with those specific impact assessments undertaken as part of the budget's preparation or in relation to service reviews arising therefrom: to ensure all Members had all relevant information in having regard to the responsibilities placed upon the Council to exercise its Public Sector Equality Duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 when considering the proposed budget, its impact and any mitigating action required, prior to making a decision. The preparation of Impact Assessments was necessarily a dynamic process and that individual assessments for specific proposals may necessarily have to be developed and updated with time.

The Impact Assessment had been made available to all Members of the Council for the purpose of the Scrutiny meetings, the Cabinet meeting on 11th February 2021 and this County Council meeting. The final revised version had been circulated to all Members on 14 January 2022 and was available at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published/budget-impact-assessments/>

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

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

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

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor Twiss **SECONDED** that Cabinet Minute 113 (1-20) setting out the proposed revenue and capital budgets as detailed in Report (DF/22/18) be approved.

In commending the proposed budget to the Council, the Leader commented on the pressures and inflation in both Adult's and Children's Services which meant increased expenditure and therefore savings having to be made in the region of £30m. The budget had increased by 10.5% in adults and 10.8% in Children's. The Leader highlighted the joint partnership work of Team Devon and all that had been achieved as well as residents and communities and the roles they had played in supporting each other through very difficult times. He furthermore paid tribute to care staff who had worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member for Finance explained the detail of the budget and thanked the Scrutiny Committee's for their hard work in scrutinising the budget proposals and added that an additional £1m would be invested in

Highways for drains, safety defects and cyclic maintenance. The Council would not be seeking to save £329,000 from community grant schemes and it wasn't planned to charge an admin and processing fee for disabled parking bay markings, although this had to remain in the budget book in order to present a balanced budget.

He covered the SEND deficit, reserves, staffing numbers, long term debt and the capital programme and that the budget had been approved by the Section 151 officer.

Both the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance paid tribute to and expressed gratitude to the Director of Finance, her staff and all those Officers involved in the preparation, management and monitoring of budgets over previous years and recognised also the exceptionally difficult circumstances of preparing a budget for 2022/23. Group Leaders also echoed the words of the Leader in thanking the Director of Finance for their exceptional work in bringing the budget together.

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

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

Cabinet Minute (113) (1-20) (Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26 and Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2026/27) be amended by the addition of the following and all necessary changes be made to the detailed budgets.

1. AXE THE TAX

Council Tax is a regressive tax which takes little account of ability to pay and is increasingly aggressive as a cause of poverty.

Council Tax places an unfair burden on the people of Devon who are already short-changed by Government.

Residents of Westminster in London pay £827.56 this year for a Band D property.

By comparison, for Devon County Council alone, the Band D Council Tax, is £1,511.28 – rising to over £2,000 when adding the Police, Fire, and local council services.

Council also notes the problems caused through high numbers of second and holiday homes. Devon County Council calls for Government to change Regulations so that Planning Permission is needed to convert from a domestic residence to holiday or second home use.

The time has come to AXE the TAX and replace it with a nationally fair and affordable scheme, including the ability to charge extra for second homes.

Devon County Council recognises the gross unfairness of the Council Tax and calls on Government to urgently replace it with a fair system to fund local services.

2. Note the burdens carried in Devon:

- SEND deficit budget estimated at £88.1m
- Highways budget cuts totally £500m nationally
- Challenges of Social Care Provision

3. Liberal Democrats budget amendment:

- a. **Additional funding of £3.6m for ‘care and safety’ of pavements, cycle lanes and roads, including potholes and white-lining.**
- b. **An additional £400,000 provided to support 20mph limits and zones for communities which want them**
- c. **£1m for Public Health Service mental health support in 2022/23**
- d. **Launch a new £1m County-Wide fund to encourage and support local ‘green’ initiatives that enhance communities and contribute towards tackling climate change**
- e. **Scrap the £100,000 charge for Disabled Parking bays**
- f. **Restore the £120,000 to be cut from the Councillors’ Locality Budget which provides support to very local organisations, community groups and events.**

(Total invested is £6.22 million)

We will pay for these priorities by:

Cutting the council’s pay budget by £4m to provide £3.6m to fund better and safer pavements, cycle lanes and roads, including remarking white lines and fixing more potholes and an extra £400,000 for 20mph zones and limits for local communities which want them. Savings to be achieved through improved vacancy management and, if necessary, voluntary redundancy.

Drawing down £1million from the Public Health Reserve to fund better mental health.

Funding the £1m local 'green' and climate change initiatives through the council's existing reserves of £1.4m for this purpose

Funding the £100,000 'admin' cost of new Disabled Parking Bays and the £120,000 reinstatement for the Locality Budgets from savings made from the £9.6million spent on agency and temporary staff.

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

Cabinet Minute (113) (1-20) (Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26 and Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2026/27) be amended by the addition of the following and all necessary changes be made to the detailed budgets.

- a. maintain £120,000 to support the retention of the £10,000 per elected member Locality Funding to ensure that local members can fulfil their local leadership roles.
- b. support **£750,000** to ensure that our **local voluntary and community sector** is sufficiently resilient and robust **post pandemic** and during the **cost of living crisis**.
- c. support **£100,000** to develop and enhance community resilience around **older people and loneliness**.
- d. support **£750,000** to provide a **mental health training programme** for teachers, teaching assistants, among many others, to address the child and young peoples mental health crisis in Devon.
- e. invest **£50,000** to develop a **Child Friendly Devon Strategy**.
- f. allocate **£100,000** to **Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence prevention work**, with a specific focus on **supporting children and young people**.
- g. invest **£100,000** into **Youth Work** to promote and secure more community led projects, activities and initiatives across Devon.
- h. allocate **£500,000** for **public health protection work**.
- i. invest **£400,000** over two years to enhance and increase **Devon's biodiversity** working with charities and local communities.
- j. Invest **£70,000** to provide extra capacity in the **Traffic Regulation Order Team** for two years to help clear the current backlog of outstanding work for local members.
- k. allocate **£600,000** over three years into movable a **Vehicle Activated Signage (VAS) Bank**, to reduce speeding, that all elected members can access.
- l. allocate **£400,000** to develop and roll out more community led **20mph road schemes**.
- m. allocate **£900,000** to fund **sustainable transport capital projects** within Exeter and its travel to work area, with particular emphasis on improving bus journeys, including park and ride sites, to further reduce commuter car journeys, pollution and congestion.

- n. invest **3 million** into the **highway maintenance capital backlog** for local roads, flood prevention work and address general drainage issues.
- o. invest **2 million capital funding** to further develop Devon's **safe cycle routes**.
- p. invest **£400,000** over four years into capital expenditure for better pavements and dropped kerbs, with special regard to those with mobility issues, visual impairments, and other disabilities.
- q. invest **7 million** into developing affordable **Key Worker Housing** in response to **Devon's Housing Crisis** working with District Councils, and other key stakeholders, including the NHS. This is in recognition that Devon County Council must show strong leadership and upfront investment now, to effectively deal with the immediate shortage of key workers across our county.

Items (a) to (l) is funded from the Council's Budget Management Reserve.

Item (m) and (p) to be funded by long term internal borrowing within the Councils capital programme.

Item (q) to be funded by strategic long term internal borrowing over the lifetime of the assets, with lease income coming back into the county council.

Councillor Gent **MOVED** and Councillor Bailey **SECONDED** that

Cabinet Minute (113) (1-20) (Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26 and Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2026/27) be amended by the addition of the following and all necessary changes be made to the detailed budgets.

'We welcome the budget and especially the investment in Children's Services & Adult Care & Health, we hope this investment will bring positive outcomes for all coming into contact with service. The £18m savings target built into the Adult Health & Care Budget, does concern us and what the impact on our most vulnerable residents will be.

We believe that if we are going to get more people walking and cycling we need to improve road safety, especially near local amenities like Schools, Parks, Shops, workplaces & other public buildings.

So, we propose that the £100,000 budget proposed in the capital program, for the installation of 20mph schemes is increased to £500,000 to enable more schemes to be included and sent out for consultation. £100,000 is simply too little and estimates are that it will only deliver 6-7 schemes across the county.

This will be funded from our reserves, as once in, it will be there for good with little resource needed.

We believe that the introduction of a £200 charge for disability parking bays are scrapped, it is unfair that only those with the means can get one put in.

We believe that reducing locality budgets by £2,000 a year will have a severe negative impact on our communities, as they try to recover from the impacts of Covid.

So, we propose that they are kept but that any unspent monies at the end of each year is not rolled forward unless there is already an identified project that is being saved for. The £100,000 - £120,000 needed for this to be found by reducing the Organisational Development Budget by £100,000, it is our opinion that managers in each service area can challenge, innovate & improve their service area and don't need others to do it'.

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

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

For the amendment; Councillors Adams, Asvachin, Atkinson, Aves, Bailey, Barnes, Bradford, Brazil, Connett, Cox, Dewhurst, Gent, Hannaford, Leavers, Letch, Roome, Thomas, Whitton and Wrigley: (Total: 19)

Against the amendment; Councillors Berry, Brook, Channon, Chesterton, Chubb, Crabb, Croad, Davis, Gilbert, Hall, Hart, Hartnell, Hawkins, Hellyer, Henderson, Hughes, Leadbetter, Maskell, McGeough, McInnes, Morrish, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Randall-Johnson, Samuel, Sanders, Saywell, Scott, Sellis, Slade, Squires, Twiss, Wilton-Love and Yabsley: (Total: 35)

Abstained from Voting; (Total: 0)

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

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

For the amendment; Councillors Adams, Asvachin, Atkinson, Aves, Bailey, Barnes, Bradford, Brazil, Connett, Cox, Dewhurst, Gent, Hannaford, Leavers, Letch, Roome, Thomas, Whitton and Wrigley: (Total: 19)

Against the amendment; Councillors Berry, Brook, Channon, Chesterton, Chubb, Crabb, Croad, Davis, Gilbert, Hall, Hart, Hartnell, Hawkins, Hellyer, Henderson, Hughes, Leadbetter, Maskell, McGeough, McInnes, Morrish, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Randall-Johnson, Samuel, Sanders, Saywell, Scott, Sellis, Slade, Squires, Twiss, Wilton-Love and Yabsley: (Total: 35)

Abstained from Voting: (Total: 0)

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

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

*For the amendment; Councillors: Councillors Bailey, Bradford, Brazil, Connett, Cox, Dewhurst, Gent, Leavers, Letch, Roome, Thomas and Wrigley
(Total: 12)*

Against the amendment; Councillors Adams, Asvachin, Atkinson, Aves, Barnes, Berry, Brook, Channon, Chesterton, Chubb, Crabb, Croad, Davis, Gilbert, Hall, Hannaford, Hart, Hartnell, Hawkins, Hellyer, Henderson, Hughes, Leadbetter, Maskell, McGeough, McInnes, Morrish, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Randall-Johnson, Samuel, Sanders, Saywell, Scott, Sellis, Slade, Squires, Twiss, Whitton, Wilton-Love and Yabsley: (Total: 42)

Abstained from Voting; (Total: 0)

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

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

For the Motion; Councillors Berry, Brook, Channon, Chesterton, Chubb, Crabb, Croad, Davis, Gilbert, Hall, Hart, Hartnell, Hawkins, Hellyer, Henderson, Hughes, Leadbetter, Maskell, McGeough, McInnes, Morrish, Peart, Prowse, Radford, Randall-Johnson, Samuel, Sanders, Saywell, Scott, Sellis, Slade, Squires, Twiss, Wilton-Love and Yabsley: (Total: 35)

Against the Motion; Councillors Bailey, Bradford, Brazil, Connett, Cox, Dewhurst, Gent, Leavers, Letch, Roome, Thomas and Wrigley: (Total: 12)

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

83 **Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023**

The Council considered the recommendations of the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee held on 19 January 2022 relating to the adoption by the County Council of the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23.

The Leader of the Council **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the recommendations of the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee be approved and that the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 (and consequential changes to the Council's Constitution) as set out at Minute 16 of that Committee be endorsed and the Constitution amended accordingly.

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

84 **Cabinet Member Reports**

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

(a) **Policy, Corporate and Asset Management**

Councillor Hart circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, of the Government's 'Levelling Up' White Paper and the progress of the Devon Devolution Deal. The Leader outlined the aims, objectives and ambitions for Devon of the deal, which was one of nine to start formal negotiations to agree a new 'County Deal'. The pan-Devon area would be a Level 2 area where a County Deal could devolve powers such as control of appropriate local transport functions, ability to introduce bus franchising, the ability to provide input into Local Skills Improvement Plans, and Homes England compulsory purchase powers.

The next step were talks with Ministers and officials over the coming weeks to move ahead as quickly as possible and the Leader committed to keeping Members up to date with progress.

The Report also gave a summarised version of the recent Race Audit report, action points and how the programme of works would move forward. The Leader said that making Devon a fairer and more equal county was one of the six priorities in the [Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025](#) which was recently adopted. He also said more work was required to ensure Black, Asian and other Ethnically Diverse staff felt included and were able to express their needs and experiences safely. The proposed 2022/23 budget included provision for additional investment in equality, diversity and inclusion. The Leader said all Members would be invited to participate in a discussion and Scrutiny Committees would also have an important part to play in oversight of progress.

The Report finally explained the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Landscape Recovery Scheme, as part of the Government's Agricultural Transition Plan (2021 to 2024). This was a move away from direct subsidy payments and Defra was planning to open applications for Landscape Recovery pilot projects in at two rounds over the next two years. The Report commented that through the Councils role on the Devon Local Nature Partnership (DLNP) it was supporting organisations to apply and work together to submit applications and provide signposting and information to support their applications. Also, the County Farms had the opportunity to collaborate with potential lead partners (larger landowners across the County).

The Farms estate (dispersed across the County) did not have the areas of land eligible for the scheme to be a lead partner in the bid but could engage with other stakeholders through the DLNP forum to consider inclusion in the overall bid.

(b) Public Health, Communities and Equality

Councillor Croad circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford on the current Afghan Refugee Resettlement Scheme, highlighting that the Council, alongside key partners, continued to oversee and support two temporary bridging hotels within the County (Exmouth and Exeter). This included the establishment of a multi-disciplinary team to oversee both hotels which allowed for effective collaboration to meet the presenting needs of families, for example GP registration, access to public health nursing and the ambition to establish a Women's Health Clinic. Transitions into education had gone well, adults had been engaged with local ESOL provision and there were good links with Job Centre Plus.

Both DCC and Devon's District Councils continued to seek appropriate and affordable housing to meet local pledges towards the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

Last, he was asked to update on the use of Coronavirus vaccines in Devon, including the number of vaccines available during the last six months, the number of vaccines administered per month during the last six months and the number of vaccines that not administered for any reason per month and what happened to them. The Cabinet Member reported verbally that all of the data requested was held externally and not readily available to the Council. However, this would be shared once received.

(c) Children's Services and Schools

Councillor Leadbetter commented, as requested by Councillor Letch on Elective Home Education in view of the move towards a central register of home educated children, including DCC's register, figures, quality assurance on their education checked, monitoring of physical and mental wellbeing and

records of academic attainment. The Cabinet Member highlighted there was currently no legislation to require parents who had chosen to Electively Home Educate to register their child with the Local Authority, however, there was a statutory requirement for schools to notify the Local Authority when a child was removed from their school roll. The Report gave the figures for EHE children for the past 5 years, including the gender split as well as whether they were of primary or secondary school ages. It was also noted there had been a significant increase in EHE case numbers in October 2020 and that the Council commissioned Babcock LDP to provide an EHE Service, including designated EHE Advisers who provided support to home educating families and assessed the suitability of the EHE provision.

The Report also highlighted progress being made to deal with the backlog in processing EHCP requests, including timescales and prioritisation of the waiting list and how the Council proposed to meet the need to increase the number of Educational Psychologists. The Cabinet Member highlighted the recently appointed new Deputy and SEND Strategic Director had started to create a backlog team of experienced virtual interims to oversee the outstanding annual reviews. The Waiting List was also prioritised according to statutory guidance. He added there was both a national and local shortage of Educational Psychologists (EPs) but listed a number of current actions to improve timeliness as well as steps to mitigate the impact of the delays on children and schools.

(d) Economic Recovery and Skills

Councillor Gilbert circulated a Report as requested by Councillor Hannaford on the decision to appoint administrators at Midas and the anticipated job losses, and effect on local contractors, subcontractors, manufacturers and supply chains and work with education and training providers to support young people. Also, confirming that the Council had no contractual liabilities with Midas in relation to any SCF contracts nor any current live projects. The Cabinet Member commented that further developments continued to occur, which the Council was continuing to monitor. An Employment Support Session for Midas colleagues and those affected in the supply chain had been arranged for 17 February.

The Report also highlighted the new banking system which helped small towns cope with the closure of High Street bank branches being pioneered in Brixham (a banking 'hub' run by the Post Office). The Cabinet Member was asked what work could be done by the Council, working with other key partners to help develop new Post Office Banking Hubs across Devon. He reported that the Council recognised the need for the County's people, businesses and organisations to be able to physically access banking facilities and cash. He further reported on the Council's response to an evidence request on an inquiry into the Postal Network by the UK Government's Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee which provided evidence on a range of post office roles and opportunities across Devon as well as the

Banking function that could be provided and enhanced through the Post Office Network and examples of this. The Council continued to be supportive of the role that Post-Offices and especially co-located banking facilities had for communities and businesses and would welcome the provision of further Banking Hubs, should the pilot in places such as Brixham prove to be successful.

He agreed to speak with Councillor Connett outside of the meeting in relation to a local issue.

(e) Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Councillor Davis commented, as requested by Councillor Whitton on the Council's plans to support and improve bus services across the County should the bid for funding under the Bus Improvement Plan be unsuccessful. The Cabinet Member highlighted that the Department for Transport had been reviewing 79 plans received and was now prioritising the proposals for funding, the outcome for Devon was expected by the end of February. She also expressed her concern at the ending of the Bus Recovery Grant and had written to both the Secretary of State for Transport and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport to ask that they consider continuing this funding for at least a further 6 months to give time for further recovery in passenger numbers.

The long-term aim was to improve the public transport network to provide a sustainable transport solution, but in the short term needing to ensure as much of the existing network was retained if Government funding was not forthcoming.

(f) Highway Management

Councillor Hughes circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Connett on the arrangements for community-requested street closures for events to mark and celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. 6 weeks' notice was required for events planned on the public highway and a temporary traffic restriction to close the road would be required for which there was no charge to close a minor road for these events. The application form was available online [Application for The Big Lunch/National Celebration](#)

He further reported on progress on delivering the A379 highway and pedestrian improvements at Starcross, highlighting that the traffic orders were advertised in the Autumn and had since been approved to progress. The trial footway widening was planned for the Spring, with permanent elements of the scheme to be tied in with the resurfacing of the A379, which was planned for Summer 2022.

He also updated on progress with estimated dates for delivery for the improved cycle path connecting Kennford with Exeter, via the new development at South West Exeter, highlighting there were currently no timescales for progressing the scheme due to Park and Ride bus services suffering and had not yet recovered well with use below 50% as a result of changing commuter patterns. However, the Exeter Transport Strategy 2020-2030 identified the need to support active travel from villages on the edge of Exeter, therefore the Council would seek future funding opportunities to deliver the Kennford to Exeter improvements.

He also reported on progress towards supporting the safety of young people from the Deaf Academy in Douglas Road, Exmouth whilst using the highway outside the school, in light of the previously submitted petition. The Cabinet Member commented that surveys had been undertaken and the Engineering Design Group were reviewing the data and considering road safety options. However, Wig Wag signals had been ordered for Douglas Avenue as a short term measure. He highlighted the criteria for 20 mph limit, as outlined in the recent members briefing and that Douglas Avenue would form part of the local Members consideration.

85 Minutes

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

Development Management Committee	-	1 December 2021 and 26 January 2022
Appeals Committee	-	6 December 2021 and 7 February 2022
Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Office Conduct Committee	-	19 January 2022
Procedures Committee	-	8 February 2022
<i>(including Minute 16 and the proposal to increase Members Allowances in line with the staff pay award)</i>		
Children's Scrutiny (ordinary)	-	18 January 2022
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny (ordinary)	-	20 January 2022
Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny (ordinary)	-	27 January 2022

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

86 Restoring Railway Resilience (Minute 72 of 2 December 2021)

Pursuant to County Council Minute 72 of 2 December 2021 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hannaford that:

Council warmly welcomes and celebrates the restoration of the Okehampton to Exeter daily rail services after an absence of forty-nine years.

After many years of strong cross party support at Devon County Council, we are especially pleased and proud that the first reopening under the governments "Restoring Your Railway Programme" has taken place at the heart of Devon.

Hopefully heralding a national railway service revival across the whole country, that will see a transformational change in commuter movements, and a substantial reduction in harmful emissions.

Council also welcomes the £50,000 to develop a business case to reinstate passenger rail links between Tavistock and Plymouth, and the new additional funding to reopen Cullompton Railway Station.

However, Council is greatly concerned, that there is still an estimated huge gap in regional railway service investment of 4.5 billion for the South West Region, based on its ONS projected population over the period to 2045.

Therefore, in order to continue to build upon the restoring your railway programme, increase the far South West's general connectivity, secure our railway resilience, and crucially assist with the climate emergency, Council commits its active support, working with others to lobby, help facilitate, and advocate for the following projects;

- The completion of the Great Western electrification programme.
- The development of the North of Dartmoor line, connecting Plymouth, via Okehampton and Tavistock.
- Additional passing loops, and an increase in line speeds, between Exeter and Salisbury to improve journey times between Exeter and Waterloo Station.
- Encouraging and working with the logistics sector to commit to a serious switch to rail freight for the distribution of consumer goods, food, and industrial products.

Furthermore, Council resolves to make formal representations to the Government, national and regional transport bodies, the business sector, and our local Devon Members of Parliament, to secure the necessary funding and investment to progress these much needed and long awaited improvements.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 103(a) of 12 January 2022:

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

(a) continue to work collaboratively with the Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body authorities to develop a Peninsula Rail Strategy to inform future rail investment priorities; and

(b) through the Peninsula Transport Sub National Transport Body, work closely with rail partners and key stakeholders to make the case for future funding in line with the industry's Delivery Plan process.

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

87 After COP 26 (Minute 73 of 2 December 2021)

Pursuant to County Council Minute 73 of 2 December 2021 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Atkinson that:

The final draft of the COP26 agreement recognises "the urgent need for multilevel and cooperative action." which is understood by those negotiating on behalf of local government to refer to governance, and mean that action should include all levels of Government from local to central.

This Council

- will work with Government and Local Government networks, to make sure the COP26 text is translated into meaningful local and national programmes to reduce carbon which are supported by agreed and sufficient financing by Government;
- demands that national plans formulated by the Government are discussed and negotiated between local and devolved Governments and not imposed centrally by Government;
- demands that when the Government promotes new financial measures addressing climate change, these should be discussed with local Governments and associations before implementation to ensure that the resources are used effectively at a local level and provide value for money; and
- considers the current national Government competitive approach introduced in 2010, which has introduced an array of short-term and one-off funding pots for which Councils have to dedicate resources to bidding for to access to often small pots of money is not an effective way to address action to reduces global warming.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 103(b) of 12 January 2022:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that Council endorse the Notice of Motion and continues to work with national government to provide the resources necessary to meet the Paris Agreement commitments.

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

88 **Behaviour Change and Phasing Out Fossil Fuels (Minute 74 of 2 December 2021)**

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and the Leader of the Council **SECONDED** that in accordance with standing order 11(11) that the debate be adjourned to the next meeting.

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

89 **Community Composting Initiatives (Minute 75 of 2 December 2021)**

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and the Leader of the Council **SECONDED** that in accordance with standing order 11(11) that the debate be adjourned to the next meeting.

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

90 **Neonicotinoid Ban**

Councillor Brazil **MOVED** and Councillor Leaver **SECONDED**

'It is desperately disappointing that once again the Government has permitted the use of a pesticide known to have catastrophic effects on bees. This Council will not permit the use of thiamethoxam or any neonicotinoid pesticides on County farms or any County land. We would also encourage farmers to adopt more sustainable farming practices and reduce their reliance on toxic pesticides. The Government needs to support our farmers to do this and uphold its own ban on neonicotinoids'.

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

91 **Devon's Cost Of Living Crisis**

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

Council notes with concern that:

According to the **House of Commons Library**, the **UK cost of living** has been rising since **early 2021**, but in **December 2021** inflation reached its highest recorded level in decades, seriously affecting the ability of households to afford basic goods and essential services. Economic experts agree that the UK is now expected to experience will be the **sharpest fall in disposable incomes since records began in 1990**, as the cost of living crisis wreaks havoc among **middle and lower-income households**.

Inflation

Consumer prices, as measured by the **Consumer Prices Index (CPI)**, were **5.4% higher in December 2021** than a year before – **the highest inflation rate recorded since 1992**. In mid-December, the **Bank of England forecast** the CPI inflation rate to remain around **5%** over the winter, before rising to **6% in April 2022**. However now against a backdrop of rising household energy prices, the **Bank said** inflation was on course to peak close to **7.25%** in April, a **sharp adjustment to its previous forecast**.

Fuel and Petrol Prices

Petrol and diesel prices both fell over the first two months of the first lockdown. At the end of May 2020 they were at their lowest level for around five years: the UK average was 104.9 pence for a litre of petrol and 111.7 pence for diesel. Prices increased steadily during most of 2021 and particularly rapidly in October and November. Petrol reached a **record price of 147.5 pence per litre** on 29 November 2021. Diesel reached a **record price of 151.3 pence per litre** on the same day. Both prices have fallen slightly since then; on 17 January 2022 average prices were 144.8 and 148.7 pence for a litre of petrol and diesel respectively. However these prices were still historically very high and are even more economically regressive in a rural county like Devon, where driving is often essential.

Housing Costs

Particularly in the private rental sector ever rising costs are adding pressure to those in most in need. The latest **HomeLet Rental Index** figures show average monthly rental costs in the UK rose by **8.6 percent**, with the average rent being **£1,060**. An article on the cost-of-living crisis in the homeless charity magazine, **The Big Issue**, noted,

“Already, data shows that private rents are unaffordable for the poorest in the country, with data from 2021 showing that there are **just two areas in England** where the poorest families spend less than **30 per cent** of their income on **rent costs**.”

As proven by the research done by **Team Devon**, the distortion of the rental market from ever more **holiday homes, second homes**, and an explosion in **Airbnb properties**, and the scarcity of affordable and social housing in all parts of Devon, are all feeding into this crisis.

Also following recent **Bank of England** interest rate increases, homeowners with mortgages are expected to see an average £15-a-month increase, but for many its much higher, depending on their own individual rates, and especially in Devon where property prices remain some of the highest in the UK.

Energy Prices and Devon’s Fuel Poverty

A particularly important driver of inflation is obviously energy prices, with household energy tariffs increasing. Between January and November 2021 domestic **gas prices increased by 28%** and **domestic electricity prices by 19%**.

Energy regulator **Ofgem** has now announced the new energy price cap on , confirming it will increase by **54 per cent, or £693**, from 1 April. This will allow energy firms to charge customers up to £1,971 per year, up from the previous limit of **£1,277**. The energy price cap is the maximum amount a utility company can charge an average customer in the UK per year for the amount of electricity and gas they use.

Consultancy Cornwall Insight said that the households whose energy bills are tied to the price cap can expect the cap to rise further, to around **£2,350**, at the next review in **October**.

The number of homes set to be plunged into ‘**fuel stress**’ could rise to over **six million in April** when a new price cap comes into play, according to the think-tank **Resolution Foundation**. **This will see the proportion of households in England in fuel stress rise from nine per cent to 27 per cent.**

The current international situation in **Ukraine** could make matters even worse, with **Europe highly dependent on Russian natural gas**. Although the UK imports barely any gas from Russia. It meets about half of its gas requirements from the North Sea, while another third is sourced from Norway. The rest is imported by pipelines connecting the UK to Europe, or in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG), which is transported by tankers typically from Qatar or the US.

However, the UK’s gas sources could all becoming eye-wateringly expensive if markets in Europe soar. The UK’s market is closely connected to markets in Europe, so a price rise in Germany or the

Netherlands, should tensions rise, **would also lead to higher prices in Britain.**

Rising energy charges such as these could **devastate the UK's poorest families**, analysis suggests, as many adults could be forced to **spend more than half of their income after housing costs on electric and gas bills.**

The latest government information from April 2021, that does not factor in the forthcoming price hikes, already indicates **substantial fuel poverty in Devon**, and it is also widely estimated that these figures hide a much higher actual number in reality.

	Number of households ¹ in poverty	Number fuel	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
Devon	355,130	38,051	10.7
East Devon	64,942	6,148	9.5
Exeter	54,298	6,439	11.9
Mid Devon	36,079	4,162	11.5
North Devon	43,963	5,073	11.5
South Hams	40,597	3,834	9.4
Teignbridge	59,478	5,886	9.9
Torridge	30,763	3,637	11.8
West Devon	25,010	2,872	11.5

Food Prices

Food and non-alcoholic drink prices were up by 4.2% in the year to December 2021 on the official CPI measure of inflation. They may rise further in the coming months. However some everyday food items have increased in price by 344% in a year.

It comes as food poverty campaigner, activist and chef **Jack Monroe** has successfully urged the **Office for National Statistics (ONS)** to reconsider how the cost of living is actually measured in the wake of rising prices for **everyday essentials**, such a **flour, pasta, rice and milk**, rather than luxury items, that the poor cannot afford and never buy.

Nationally its estimated that **Foodbanks** are already handing out 32 meals a minute, despite seeing a big drop in donations because of the cost of living crisis.

One in 10 households in the Devon County Council area suffer "substantial disruptions" to get enough food. Overall, **17%** of households were shown to experience some **food insecurity** and "not having reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious food".

Other Pressures On Household Budgets

As well as higher inflation, household budgets will be also be further squeezed by changes in taxes and benefits in the coming months. This includes an **increase in National Insurance Contributions from April 2022**, and **changes to income tax**, as well as the **withdrawal of the £20 Universal Credit uplift**.

Stagnant wages will also affect household incomes. Furthermore **public transport costs** will be raised.

Overall a recent report by **The Resolution Foundation** predicts households will be on average at least **£1,200 a year worse off from this year**.

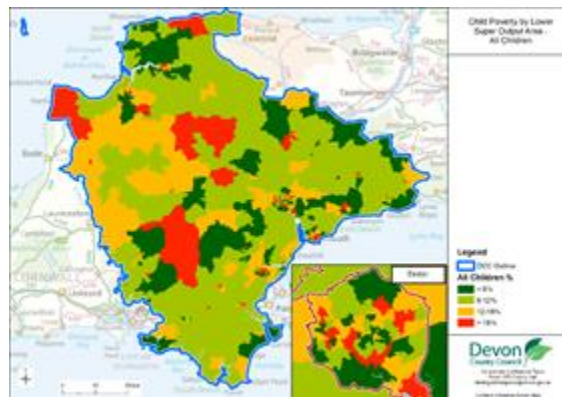
Low Income Households & Child Poverty

Low income households spend a larger proportion than average on energy and food, and will therefore be relatively more affected by increases in prices. **The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)** say that low-income families may have to spend, on average, **18%** of their income on energy bills, which rises to **54% for single adult households**, and around a quarter for **single parents and couples without children**.

Low income households are paying an estimated "**poverty premium**" of **£478 each year**, according to research by the campaign group **Fair By Design**.

As a result **thousands of people already in poverty across Devon** are paying more for essentials such as **energy and insurance**, because they are unable to afford lump sums and instead have to opt for pricier regular payments. This includes higher tariffs and fees through **prepayment meters** and **car insurance premiums**. Recent data from **2016** shows that **12.3% of children in Devon are in low income families** compared to 17% for England, although this does not take into account the social and economic effects of the pandemic.

However **a fifth of children were living in households with a low income for at least three of the four years between 2016-2019**, rising to around one in three children in single-parent families. **The child poverty rate for children in families with three or more children, was almost twice as high as the rate for children in one- or two-child families (47% versus 24%)**.



Financing Progressive Measures

The governments financial position is much better than expected. **Tax revenues are coming in higher than forecast**, and some substantial expected **government spending has not occurred**. We are nine months into the current financial year and thanks largely to that more money is coming into the exchequer than expected, the deficit is lower than expected. It is still huge, **£147bn**, because of the economic effects of the global pandemic, but that is **£13bn less** than the **Office for Budget Responsibility** expected. So in conjunction with an new **annual windfall tax** and **some careful strategic borrowing**, the government does have some considerable financial headway to make sure **its leveling up agenda in the face of a cost of living crisis is more than just an empty slogan**.

Council Notes;

The recent announcements by the **Chancellor** including;

- All households will receive **£200 off their energy bills in October under a rebate and claw back” scheme** – but then pay the discount back by £40 a year over five years from 2023.
- **Council taxpayers** in England in bands A to D would receive a **rebate of £150** from their bills in April, which will not have to be paid back.
- Local authorities would receive **£150m** to make **discretionary payments** to the neediest.
- The number of poorer households eligible for the **warm homes discount** – worth **£150 from October** – would be **increased by a third to 3m**.

Council Believes That:

The Government has made a **limited intervention** to tackle the energy bills crisis. **But this isn't the only cost of living challenge families face.**

As such the Chancellor's announcements are **hopelessly inadequate**. For most families it's just £7 a week and more than half must be paid back. It's too little, it's poorly targeted, and it's stop gap measures instead of fixing the big problems.

The support may not reach people quickly enough. The £200 energy bills rebate won't arrive in people's bank accounts until October. But people are struggling right now.

And while the **£150 Council Tax rebate** is coming this April, **one-in-eight of the poorest families in England won't even qualify** for support because of the houses they live in.

Finally, most of the £9 billion of support is being paid for via higher energy bills over the next five years. This is a very risky strategy, especially if the cost of gas doesn't fall sharply and soon. **High energy bills could be a feature of the 2020s** – continuing to hammer the poorest in society – and **a reminder of the need to wean ourselves off fossil fuels.**

Council therefore resolves:

To call on the UK Government and our local Members of Parliament to effectively tackle the cost-of-living crisis facing Devon families and act now to support them with the following specific measures;

- a) A new **revised local government settlement** that adequately funds local councils so that **council tax does not have to be raised this year** to protect and operate vital front line services.
- b) A twelve month pause in the proposed **National Insurance rise** to directly help those on low and fixed incomes.
- c) Revise the planned **3.1%** increase in the **value of welfare and benefits**, and build in a rise of 6% to protect the poorest and most vulnerable in society.

- d) A [VAT cut](#) on everyone's **home energy bills** for a year from **5% to 0% percent**.
- e) Increasing the **Warm Home Discount** from **£140 to £400** per year and expanding the number of households eligible to **9.3 million**.
- f) Introducing a **year-long increase to corporation tax** for North Sea oil and gas producers in order to secure at least a **£1.2 billion windfall** from their increased price rise profits to help mitigate household energy bills.

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

92 **Motion for the Ocean - Ocean Recovery Declaration**

Councillor Aves **MOVED** and Councillor Barnes **SECONDED**

Devon County Council is developing the Devon Carbon Plan aiming to reach net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. The Plan includes the ambition to enhance the ability of habitats along our 200 miles of coast, in our countryside and in our villages, towns and cities to store carbon. This offers tremendous opportunities to reverse the decline of biodiversity and restore healthy ecosystems. This council has shown its wider environmental values through its support of projects such as the Exe Estuary Management Partnership.

In May 2019, after Devon County Council declared a Climate Emergency, a partnership formed to respond to the climate and ecological emergency in Devon. Its members represent private sector interests, environmental organisations, academic institutions, and public bodies, including our neighbours Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council. Plymouth City Council is leading the way in connecting people to the ocean through the development of the UK's first National Marine Park, in Plymouth Sound and as the first Council to pass the Ocean Recovery Declaration.

International and national context

The UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development runs from 2021 to 2030. Last year the UK hosted COP26 in Glasgow and the G7 came to Cornwall. The UK Government has publicly declared its ambition to be a global leader in marine conservation. All eyes are on the ocean.

There is national and global recognition that the world ocean is in crisis. The impact of the climate crisis on the ocean is profound, including in our local waters. Raised atmospheric carbon dissolves in the seawater and causes ocean acidification, dissolving the shells,

reefs and other hard parts of marine animals. The heating of the climate causes ocean heating too which makes some parts of the ocean intolerable for life and is changing what lives and is caught locally. It also increases the volume of the ocean which causes sea level rise, added to by ice melt at the poles. Thanks to a more turbulent climate, increased storminess and sea level rise is a serious threat to all coastal communities, economies and infrastructure including Devon coasts. Marine microplastics have been found in all marine environments and in the bodies of many species, including humans. Fish stocks collapse from permitted and illegal overfishing. Poor water quality is impacting seafood and preventing safe bathing.

We must play our part in securing the sustainability and health of the ocean. Action is needed at all levels, from individuals developing their ocean literacy (understanding of the relationship between people and the ocean), individual and collective marine citizenship (promoting and demanding an ocean recovery through local, national and international policy changes).

This Council declares an urgent need for Ocean Recovery.

We recognise that we need ocean recovery to meet our net zero carbon targets, and we need net zero carbon to recover our ocean.

This Council pledges to:

1. Report to Full Council within 6 months on the actions and projects that will begin an ocean recovery in Devon.
2. Embed ocean recovery in all strategic decisions, budgets, procurement and approaches to decisions by the Council (particularly in planning, regeneration, skills and economic policy), aligning with climate change mitigation and adaptation requirements and considering ocean-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.
3. Ensure that local planning supports ocean recovery, working closely with the Marine Management Organisation to embed strong links between the Local Plans and the South West Marine Plan to support ocean recovery.
4. Work with partners locally and nationally to deliver increased sustainability in local marine industries and invest in the development of a sustainable and equitable blue economy that delivers ocean recovery and local prosperity, including the local fishing industry and the vital work of the Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA).

5. Grow ocean literacy and marine citizenship in the county, including ensuring all pupils have a first-hand experience of the ocean before leaving primary school, and promote sustainable and equitable access to the ocean through physical and digital experiences for all students.
6. Create an online portal of the Council website to update on ocean recovery progress, signpost to ocean literacy development opportunities, and marine citizenship pledges.
7. Write to the Government to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030 by
 - a. Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities have the resources they need to effectively research and monitor our growing number of marine protected areas, and to set and enforce appropriate fishing levels that support local economies and deliver environmental sustainability.
 - b. Work with coastal communities to co-develop marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes in local placemaking.
 - c. Appoint a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.
 - d. Stop plastic pollution at source by strengthening the regulations around single-use plastics and set standards for microfibre-catching filters to ensure that all new domestic and commercial washing machines are fitted with a filter that captures a high percentage of microfibres produced in the wash cycle.
 - e. And by listening to marine and social scientific advice to update the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which will:
 - i. Enable the recovery of marine ecosystems rather than managing degraded or altered habitats in their reduced state.
 - ii. Consider levelling up, marine conservation, energy, industrial growth, flood and coastal erosion risk management, climate adaptation and fisheries policy holistically rather than as competing interests.
 - iii. Develop a smarter approach to managing the health of the entire ocean that moves beyond Marine Protected Areas and enables links to be made across sectors towards sustainability.

iv. Establish improved processes for understanding the benefits from ocean management, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.

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

[NOTES:

The Minutes of this meeting and of any Committee referred to above are available on the County Council's Website.

Minutes should be read in association with any Reports or documents referred to therein, for a complete record.

A recording of the webcast of this meeting will also be available to view for up to 12 months from the date of the meeting, at <http://www.devoncc.public-tv/core/portal/home>

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 6.43 pm