

## COUNCIL

26 May 2022

### Present:-

Chair: I Hall

Vice-Chair: P Prowse

Councillors T Adams, M Asvachin, S Aves, J Bailey, D Barnes, J Berry, F Biederman, J Bradford, J Brazil, J Brook, P Bullivant, R Chesterton, I Chubb, A Connett, D Cox, P Crabb, R Croad, A Davis, A Dewhurst, R Gilbert, G Gribble, R Hannaford, J Hart, M Hartnell, J Hawkins, L Hellyer, P Henderson, J Hodgson, S Hughes, A Leadbetter, C Leaver, F Letch MBE, D McGeough, J McInnes, S Parker-Khan, R Peart, S Randall-Johnson, L Samuel, P Sanders, A Saywell, R Scott, D Sellis, C Slade, M Squires, D Thomas, J Trail BEM, P Twiss, C Whitton, J Wilton-Love, M Wrigley and J Yabsley

### Apologies:-

Councillors Y Atkinson, C Channon, H Gent, P Maskell, J Morrish, R Radford and I Roome

### 93 Election of Chair

Councillor Chubb **MOVED** and Councillor Hartnell **SECONDED** that Councillor Hall be elected Chair of Devon County Council for the ensuing year. The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

### **COUNCILLOR HALL IN THE CHAIR**

### 94 Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Randall-Johnson **MOVED** and Councillor Berry **SECONDED** that Councillor Prowse be appointed Vice-Chair of Devon County Council for the ensuing year.

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

### 95 Appointment of Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Hart, the Leader of the Council, **MOVED** and Councillor Hughes **SECONDED** that Councillor McInnes be appointed Deputy Leader of Devon County Council for the ensuing year.

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

**96**      **Cabinet Members and Allocation of Remits**

Councillor Hart, Leader of the Council, **MOVED** and Councillor Hughes **SECONDED**:

“that the Council note that the Members shown in the Appendix circulated at the meeting have been appointed to the Cabinet and designated as Cabinet Members as indicated therein with the remits shown, to hold office until the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2023”.

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

**97**      **Minutes**

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2022 be signed as a correct record.

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

**98**      **Announcements**

The Chair of the Council congratulated both Youth Hub Devon, which helped young people find work, enter education and build their confidence, and Exeter Works which supported adults – who had both been recognised by the Exeter Living Awards. Both organisations won the ‘Civic’ category at the prestigious awards ceremony at the University of Exeter which recognised organisations, businesses, projects, and voluntary groups that had made an outstanding contribution to the City.

**99**      **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

**100**      **Appointment of Committees**

Councillor Hughes **MOVED** and Councillor Leaver **SECONDED**:

(a) that in accordance with Standing Order 21 the County Council appoints those Committees, Joint Committees and Working Parties/Panels as shown in the Appendix circulated prior to the meeting and uploaded to the website with terms of reference set out in the Council's Constitution or set out therein for the period expiring at the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2023;

(b) that, as required by section 16(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Members of the Council be appointed as voting members to those Committees, Joint Committees, Joint Consultative Committees and Working

Parties/Panels referred to at (a) above in accordance with the names notified to the Chief Executive by each of the Political Groups represented on the Council, to give effect to the proposed allocation of seats as between political party groups and set out for the time being in the Appendix circulated prior to the meeting and uploaded to the website;

(c) that, as in accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the County Council appoints the total numbers of voting (v) or non voting (nv) members to those Committees, Joint Committees and Working Parties/Panels referred to (a) above as thus denoted in the Appendix (the Council's voting scheme) circulated with the agenda for the period expiring at the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2023;

(d) that the Chief Executive be authorised to approve such changes to membership of the above bodies detailed in the Appendix circulated as may be notified from time to time by the relevant political group to which those seats have been allocated by the Council; and

(e) that additional Members of Scrutiny Committees, Highways and Traffic Orders Committees, the Standards Committee and the Farms Estate Committee as detailed in the aforementioned Appendix (or to be nominated by those bodies listed thereon) be appointed for the period expiring at the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2023 or as otherwise shown (subject to any change notified by the nominating body) or, in the case of parent governor representatives on the Children's Scrutiny Committee, following a ballot of eligible parent governors.

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

**101**      **Appointment of Chairs' and Vice-Chairs' of Committees**

Councillor Hughes **MOVED** and Councillor Barnes **SECONDED**:

‘that Members shown in the Appendix circulated prior to the meeting and uploaded to the website be elected Chair and Vice-Chair of those Committees as indicated therein to hold office until the date of the Annual meeting of the Council in 2023’.

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

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

The Leader was presented by Mr P Shearn, with a petition containing in the region of 1000 signatures regarding the sale of the KEVICCS site in Totnes and its future usage.

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Rules, the relevant Cabinet Member responded to one question from a member of the public on the following matter:

- the proposed widening on the footpath on Station Hill, Chudleigh and timescales for delivery.

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

The Council also received and acknowledged an oral representation made by Mr Scott on the Nature and Climate Declaration from Zero Hour.

The Chair thanked members of the public for their contributions.

*(NB: A copy of the question and answer are appended to these minutes and the supplementary question and answer may be observed through the [webcast of this meeting](#))*

*(NB: The relevant Director 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](#))*

### **103 Petitions from Members of the Council**

The Leader was presented by Councillor Letch, on behalf of residents of Bow with a petition seeking immediate action to repair pot holes and fix hazardous road conditions, on Station Road and the High Street - A3072.

*(NB: The relevant Director 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](#))*

### **104 Questions from Members of the Council**

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules, the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members and two Committee Chairs provided written responses to seventeen questions submitted by Members of the Council relating to the following matters.

- Lower Hare Farm, Whitestone – additional information from the Environment Agency and remaining landfill capacity at the three Exeter landfill sites;
- Environment Agency information not publicly available and therefore could not be checked;
- Confirmation that data on remaining landfill void capacities was published two days before the Development Management Committee and stated that the remaining void capacity for the three Exeter sites was 553,000m<sup>3</sup>?

- Agreement of Chair that the data published by the Environment Agency did not state that the remaining capacity was only 287,222m3?
- Whether the Council published an Addendum which presented revised data;
- Whether the Addendum appeared to state a position in contradiction to the data provided by the Environment Agency;
- Access to Dawlish Beach, Network Rail Works and relevant permissions;
- Issues with claiming Child Trust Funds, particularly for young people who had been in care and help available;
- Signage in Sannerville Way, Exminster;
- Long closure of the Two Moors Way walking route;
- Priority Reopening of Two Moors Way;
- Two Moors Way and Contingency Plans for the Reopening of Dartmoor Line;
- Concerns raised with the Council about John Humphreys and actions taken to keep children safe;
- Guidance to Devon Schools, following the conviction of John Humphreys for serious child sex offences, about the appointment of school governors;
- Proposed sale of the Elmhirst Fields and former school building by King Edward VI Community College (KEVICCS) in Totnes;
- Anxiety, depression, suicide and drug abuse among school age children and teenagers and what improvements were being provided to respond; and
- Usage of 2013 IPCC weather and flooding data and new Flood Modelling.

The relevant Cabinet Members and Chairs of Committees 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](#))*

## **105 Cabinet Member Reports**

(Councillor Wrigley declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of being a portfolio holder at Teignbridge with responsibility for refugee issues).

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) Adult Social Care and Health Services**

Councillor McInnes circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Hannaford, on children and adults in the Council area who had acute medical needs and disabilities and whether these individuals had to use life-saving

medical equipment, any additional energy needs during the cost of living crisis, in relation to economic vulnerabilities. The Report outlined the additional help available.

**(b) Public Health, Communities and Equality**

Councillor Croad circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Wrigley, on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme across Devon. The Report highlighted the numbers of families, the position with VISA's, the support provided by Devon, including school places and the split of funding and responsibility between County and the Districts.

He also responded to questions on free bus passes, approval for pets of refugees and school placements.

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

Councillor Leadbetter circulated a Report, as requested by Councillor Connett, on progress towards achieving a 'Good' OFSTED rating for Devon's Childrens Services and also in response to Councillor Wrigley on savings for children in care, including the numbers of children currently in care who would receive the £20 a month saving.

The Report also covered, as requested by Councillor Biederman data for Suicide, Attempted Suicide & Incidents that were recorded as not a serious attempt of Suicide in young people in Devon aged 11 – 19 and the work with partners, schools and colleges to reduce and tackle the issues.

He also responded to questions on visions and dates of delivery, consultation with foster carers, school buildings programmes, the 'voice of the child' and the role of the Corporate Parenting Forum.

**106 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.

Audit Committee	-	24 February 2022
Investment & Pension Fund Committee	-	25 February 2022
Appeals Committee	-	7 March and 25 April 2022
Public Rights of Way Committee	-	10 March 2022
Standards Committee	-	22 March 2022
<i>(including approval of Minute 15 and the adoption of the Council's revised Code of Conduct)</i>		
Development Management Committee	-	30 March 2022
Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Office Conduct Committee	-	14 April 2022

*(Including approval of minute 21 and the appointment of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport)*

Children's Scrutiny	-	15 March 2022 and the special meeting of 6 April
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny	-	17 March 2022
Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny	-	24 March 2022 and the special meeting of 10 May

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

## **107** **Scrutiny Annual Report 21-22**

The Council received and endorsed the 2021/22 Annual Report summarising the activities and investigations undertaken by each of the Council's three Scrutiny Committees during the course of the year, the outcomes arising and the continuing challenges, particularly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and Elections and the development of the Scrutiny role over that period.

The first year of the new Council had seen Scrutiny focus upon supporting new and returning Members to understand the Council. This was reflected in the unusually high number of masterclasses. After this focus, all Committees had moved to undertake task group investigations and spotlight reviews.

Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Service Scrutiny continued to have a Standing Overview Group on Climate Change and had established a spotlight review on loneliness as well as completing work on the highways Milestone contract.

Children's Scrutiny had continued to have a focus upon the service's improvement journey and had set up task groups on Child Friendly Devon and SEND.

The Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee had sought to ensure ongoing public scrutiny of the NHS's recovery and restoration journey as well as making a referral to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care as well as a spotlight review on ambulance wait times.

Scrutiny Chairs expressed their thanks to all Scrutiny Committee Members, across the four year term. The support of the dedicated Scrutiny team, coupled with the expertise offered by the two special advisors which continued to be critical to the success of scrutiny.

In associating himself with the above remarks the Leader of the Council also expressed his thanks to the Council's Scrutiny Committees for the advice they had given to the Cabinet over the last year.

[NB: A copy of the Annual Report was available on the website <https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13628&path=13626>

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

Pursuant to County Council Minute 74 of 2 December 2021 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hodgson that:

Further to the outcomes of COP26, which failed to secure strong commitments to phase out fossil fuels, this council will seek to support behaviour change in residents and businesses in the County by implementing initiatives modelled on the Welsh Government's One Planet Standard and associated Policies. This will include a commitment to switch funding from fossil fuel intense (e.g. new road building) projects to alternative (e.g. Active Travel) projects that will support low carbon, and healthier lifestyles.

Background information at this link -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSDnAnpaGHs>

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

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet's advice be accepted and that Council endorse the spirit of the Notice of Motion, continues to help residents and businesses reduce their environmental impact, and continues to take opportunities to invest in low-carbon infrastructure for the people of Devon.

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

Councillor Hodgson then **MOVED** and Councillor Biederman **SECONDED** that the motion be amended as follows (words removed via strikethrough and additional words in red).

that Council endorse the spirit of the Notice of Motion, continues to help residents and businesses reduce their environmental impact and ~~continues to take opportunities to invest in low-carbon infrastructure~~ gives a commitment to switch funding from fossil fuel intense (e.g. new road building) projects to alternative low-carbon infrastructure projects (e.g. Active Travel schemes) as a front loaded phased programme over the next 3 years, for the people of Devon.

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



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

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

Pursuant to County Council Minute 75 of 2 December 2021 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hodgson that:

‘In the spirit of COP 26 to reduce the carbon footprint of waste recycling, this Council will encourage and support community composting initiatives that are supported by Parish Councils in the County’.

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

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet’s advice be accepted, that Council note the current position and the planned work on community composting and no further action be taken on the Notice of Motion.

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

Councillor Hodgson then **MOVED** and Councillor Biederman **SECONDED** that the motion be amended as follows (words removed via strikethrough and additional words in red).

‘that Council note the current position and planned work on community composting and ~~no further action be taken on the Notice of Motion~~ **set aside a budget of up to £1,000 per parish that can be accessed by community groups via their parish council to establish community composting initiatives, subject to agreed criteria for these composting schemes. As there are 426 civil parishes listed for Devon, the potential drawdown of £426,000 can be phased over the next 3 years, starting with £150,000 in the coming budget year 22/23**’.

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

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

**110**      **Neonicotinoid Ban (Minute 90 of 17 February 2022)**

(Councillor Hodgson declared a personal interest in this matter by virtue of being a bee keeper).

Pursuant to County Council Minute 90 of 17 February 2022 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Brazil that:

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’.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 313(a) 9 March 2022:

Councillor Hart **MOVED** and Councillor McInnes **SECONDED** that the Cabinet’s advice be accepted and that Council endorse the spirit of this Notice of Motion given the significant environmental concerns relating to the use of neonicotinoids and calls on Government to carefully review its consideration of emergency use applications to ensure consistency with the objectives of the National Pollinator Strategy and the 25 Year Environment Plan. It will continue to pursue relevant action in line with its Pollinator Action Plan.

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.

**111 Devon's Cost Of Living Crisis (Minute 91 of 17 February 2022)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 91 of 17 February 2022 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Hannaford that:

**Council notes with concern that;**

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 of households <sup>1</sup> households in poverty	Number fuel	Proportion of households fuel poor (%)
<b>Devon</b>	<b>355,130</b>	<b>38,051</b>	<b>10.7</b>
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.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 131(b) of 9 March 2022:

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

(a) note that one the Council's Strategic Plan priorities for 2021 to 2025 is to make Devon a fairer place, address poverty, health, and other inequalities, and ensure support for those people and families struggling most;

(b) agree that the Annual Plan for 2022/23 should include measures to address poverty in the light of current increases in the costs of living; and

(c) work with Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council and Team Devon in the forthcoming devolution deal negotiations with Government to devolve flexibilities and responsibilities which will help to address issues described in the Notice of Motion.'

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.

**112** **Motion for the Ocean (Minute 92 of 17 February 2021)**

Pursuant to County Council Minute 92 of 17 February 2022 relating to the Notice of Motion set out below as previously submitted and formally moved and seconded by Councillor Aves that:

'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.

and having had regard to the advice of the Cabinet set out in Minute 131(c) of 9 March 2022:

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

- (a) support the adoption of the 'Motion for the Ocean', based around the model motion advocated by the Ocean Conservation Trust, as set out in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet Report; and
- (b) that the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport writes to the Secretary of State for the Environment to urge Government to put the ocean into net recovery by 2030.

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

Councillor Aves then **MOVED** and Councillor Asvachin **SECONDED** that the motion be amended as follows (words removed via strikethrough and additional words in red).

- (a) ~~supports~~ **welcomes** support the adoption of the '**Devon** Motion for the Ocean', based around the model motion advocated by the Ocean Conservation Trust, **but would welcome its strengthening with the additional of the following changes to the Devon Motion for Ocean, The Devon Motion for the Ocean was** set out in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet

Report (CS/22/06) -  
<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=133&MIId=4180&Ver=4>

(Changes proposed to the Devon Motion for the Ocean.....  
paragraph 2 – replace the word ‘consider’ with embed’  
paragraph 3 – replace the word ‘promote’ and replace with ‘ensure’  
paragraph 5 – Add ‘local fishing industry and Devon and Severn  
Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA)’ (after the words  
‘marine industries))

The amendment in the name of Councillor Aves was put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

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

### 113 **Better Buses For Devon**

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

That this Council:-

- a) Notes with great concern **the huge reduction in the bus network across Devon**, that has taken place **since privatisation, deregulation, and under funding**.
- b) Believes buses are essential to freeing up congested road space, to cleaning up the air that we all breathe and above all to connecting people to jobs, friends and life opportunities.
- c) Records the specific ongoing problems that our local **school pupils and college students** have in properly attending their places of education across Devon through inaccessible public transport.
- d) **Concludes that the bus service in Devon now presents itself as a failed model, to the extent that it no longer has widespread public confidence, because of its serious long term poor performance and post pandemic dysfunctionality.**
- e) Notes the completely unacceptable regional imbalances in funding for public transport services which prioritise the South East of England, and believes this must be radically reformed, and central government must do more to provide significant funding to revitalise local transport in the South West.
- f) **Wants to develop, design and achieve a good public transport system that runs where people need it, when people need it and at a price that is affordable.**
- g) Understands that the Government's impact assessment of **the Bus Service Act (2017)** highlighted that public control would better address **six out of seven Local Transport Authority objectives** compared to an enhanced partnership and was the only method likely to deliver a “significant increase in patronage”.

- h) **Supports exercising powers to bring Devon’s bus services back under local control via franchising, at the earliest practicable date.**
- i) Acknowledges that the costs of franchising cannot be estimated accurately until a “**notice of intent**” has been released and the associated statutory powers to access bus operators' commercial data is employed.

**Therefore, this Council requests that the Administration:-**

- (i) To conduct a **statutory assessment of franchising** at the earliest possible opportunity in 2022.
- (ii) Explore a **notice of intent to prepare a franchising assessment** at the earliest opportunity.

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

**114 First Homes Not Second Homes**

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

In response to Devon’s serious and ongoing housing crisis council supports the following measures:

- 1) New powers from Government for Councils to progressively raise taxes on holiday lets and unused second homes, up to a quadrupling of council tax, where homes are left empty for much of the year.
- 2) A licensing regime for second homes, Airbnbs and holiday lets - with a minimum of 51% of homes in any community being for local people. Councils should have the powers to raise this level to reflect local circumstances.
- 3) A " Last Shop in the Village Fund" - powers for local councils to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy on holiday lets and Airbnbs, administered by local authorities, to support local shops, pharmacies, post offices and pubs.
- 4) Commitment to build affordable homes and social housing across the South West with a priority for local people.
- 5) Lock in the discount of new homes for future renters and buyers to ensure affordable homes are not lost after the first families move on.

Council therefore resolves to formally write to the Government, including the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, requesting the appropriate changes in legislation to secure these much needed changes as a matter of urgency.

Furthermore, Council resolves to formally write to all our local Devon Members of Parliament advising them of the Council's decision, urging them to also urgently propose, lobby for, support and crucially vote for these vital measures in Parliament.

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

**115**      **MOT Certification Scheme**

Councillor Letch **MOVED** and Councillor Thomas **SECONDED**

'This Council recognises the value of the MOT Certificate scheme to assure roadworthiness of vehicles and will investigate the way to introduce an MOT Certificate scheme for the County's roads to assure everyone that they are fit for use by us all.'

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

**116**      **Implementation Process of 20mph Roads and Zones**

Councillor Hodgson **MOVED** and Councillor Bailey **SECONDED**

'In light of the level of response to the recent call by DCC for Town and Parish Councils to nominate roads for 20mph speed limits and zones, the Council will seek to investigate, support and implement at least 50% of the applications in this financial year, and consider the remainder for implementation in 2023/24.'

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 6.27 pm