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To: The Chair and Members of the Corporate
Infrastructure and Regulatory Services
Scrutiny Committee

County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD

Date: 20 September 2023

Contact: Fiona Rutley

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**CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 28th September, 2023

A meeting of the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee is to be held on the above date at 10.30 am at Committee Suite - County Hall to consider the following matters.

Donna Manson
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

PART I - OPEN COMMITTEE

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Minutes
Minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2023, previously circulated.
- 3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention
Items which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.
- 4 Public Participation
Members of the public may make representations/presentations on any substantive matter listed in the published agenda for this meeting, as set out hereunder, relating to a specific matter or an examination of services or facilities provided or to be provided.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION OR REVIEW

- 5 Call-In of Cabinet Decision - Mobile Library Service (Minute *359 of 12 July 2023)
(Pages 1 - 28)

In accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Chair of the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Committee (Councillor Dewhurst) has invoked the call-in procedure in relation to the decision of the Cabinet (Minute *359 of the 12 July 2023) in relation to the Mobile Library Service in Devon.

The grounds for this call-in are detailed in the attached document. Also attached is the original Cabinet report containing proposals for the Mobile Library Service and associated Impact Assessment to support Members in considering this call-in.

- 6 Scrutiny Work Programme

In accordance with previous practice, Scrutiny Committees are requested to review the list of forthcoming business and determine which items are to be included in the [Work Programme](#).

The Committee may also wish to review the content of the [Cabinet Forward Plan](#) and the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services [Risk Register](#) to see if there are any specific items therein it might wish to explore further.

- 7 Moving Traffic Offences Spotlight Review - Progress on Recommendations
(Pages 29 - 46)

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/64), attached.

- 8 Highways Performance Dashboard - Summer 2023 (Pages 47 - 60)

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/23/65), attached.

- 9 Report of the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Standing Overview Group: Climate Change (Pages 61 - 66)

- 10 Anaerobic Digestion Plant Visit, June 2023 (Pages 67 - 70)

Report of the site visit, June 2023, attached.

STANDING ITEMS

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

- 11 Items Previously Circulated

Below is a list of information previously circulated (date in brackets) to Members since the last meeting, relating to topical developments which have been or are currently being considered by this Scrutiny Committee:

- RISK Register with key risks for this Committee (11 September 2023)
[Risk Registers - Democracy in Devon](#)

-Anaerobic Digestion Visit Report/Agricultural Land Use for Energy Crop Production (15 September 2023)
[The Land Use Framework briefing hub - Food, Farming and Countryside Commission \(ffcc.co.uk\)](#)

PART II - ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPT INFORMATION MAY BE DISCLOSED

Nil

Members are reminded that Part II Reports contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). They need to be disposed of carefully and should be returned to the Democratic Services Officer at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.

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Induction Loop available



Call-In of Cabinet Decision – Mobile Library Service (Minute *359 of 12 July 2023)

In accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Chair of the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Committee (Councillor Dewhirst) has invoked the call-in procedure in relation to the decision of the Cabinet (Minute *359 of the 12 July 2023) in relation to the Mobile Library Service in Devon.

The grounds for this call-in are detailed below.

1. When Cllr Connett spoke, the issue of leasing was raised. Then during the Cabinet meeting, it was revealed by the Head of Communities that officers had looked at leasing mobile library vehicles as an option to continue the service. However, this was not mentioned in the report to Cabinet, so Cabinet members had no opportunity to consider leasing as an alternative option to sustain the service. It was only in response to Cllr Connett's comment that the Head of Communities revealed leasing had been considered. However, the report did not set out how officers looked at this, what the financial considerations were and why it was not considered a viable option.

2. The report is unclear on whether the £217,000 being saved by axing the mobile library service is a genuine revenue saving to the council or is the money being 'recycled' into Libraries Unlimited to help meet service costs? This was not made clear during the meeting. It was stated that that the saving was a 'saving to the council'. It was also said it would support Libraries Unlimited who, without it, would have to make other cuts. Therefore, the Cabinet has decided to axe the mobile library service without the knowledge of what other cuts the library contractor would make - and therefore the Cabinet did not compare and consider the range of cuts and their likely impact on communities. The only option was to axe the mobile libraries.

3. Two councillors from Torridge District Council presented a petition at the start of the Cabinet meeting against the cuts. The petition was presented to the Leader of the Council. However, the Cabinet did not consider the petition, refer to it, or take it into account in any way before deciding to cut the mobile library service.

4. The Report before the Cabinet was silent or obscure on how any costs of the mobile libraries closure would be dealt with - for example, redundancy, pension costs etc. Therefore, the Cabinet has failed to consider the full financial impact on other budgets of the council - including identifying how the proposed one-off grant of £25,000 in Option 2 would be funded, and where any redundancy costs would be met from.

Agenda Item 5

5. The Cabinet had not considered the adequacy of the proposed £25,000 for mitigation measures of withdrawing the mobile library vans. The report did not describe how the figure of £25,000 was arrived at, what the evidence is to show it would be sufficient, nor how long the proposed mitigations proposals would last. The Cabinet was not clear on the detail of the proposed mitigations, what the various schemes are and how they would work in detail so that they had assurance about residents still being able to access books and library services.

6. There appeared to be confusion about the figures used to support the recommendation to axe the mobile library service. Figures, it was said, described a fall in the number of users but it was not clear that analysis was on a like for like basis in that there used to be 8 vans, then four which included the use of a 'stand-in' replacement vehicle, resulting in vans not being able to operate if they were in for servicing or had broken down... all leading to fewer customers being recorded. Cllr Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin (Torrige, petition presenter) in her commentary suggested there had been an increase in customers from 2019 to 2022.

Proposals for the Mobile Library Service

Report of the Head of Service of Communities

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

That the Cabinet be asked to approve the recommended Option 2 – Decommission the Mobile Library vehicles and provide £25K transition support for vulnerable users to continue to access alternative library provision.

2) Summary / Reasons for Recommendations

Given the significant pressures on the Council's finances, on balance the Council considers that the proposals are a reasonable solution to reducing costs and the need for considerable reinvestment in mobile library vehicles when there are viable and more cost-effective alternatives that have the potential to develop the reach of our quality library services closer to people in their communities.

Whilst the service is well regarded by its users, the usage is comparatively low, does not represent a cost-effective means of delivering the service, and given the financial challenges, is ultimately not sustainable. Reducing the costs from this service will help to secure the wider sustainability of library services in Devon.

3) Background / Introduction

Through the service contract with Libraries Unlimited, the Council provides for a mobile library service. The service has been reducing in demand over the last 10 years. In 2013, a major service review was completed resulting in reducing the mobile library fleet from 8 to 4 vehicles. There are 374 'stops' on a 4 weekly cycle for 4 routes. Stops vary from 15 minutes to 1hr depending on the location and number of visits.

More recently the stops where there have been consistently less than 4 active members who visit the stop, have also been removed. Last year the Torrington mobile vehicle was destroyed due to an arson attack and was not replaced. The reserve vehicle was put into action and subsequently when there is a scheduled maintenance break or a breakdown, the service for that area does not operate.

In 2021, Libraries Unlimited replaced one of the less mechanically reliable vehicles with a second-hand refurbished van. This was funded from a small grant from DCC and local

fundraising with the balance made up from Libraries Unlimited reserves. There remain 3 vehicles owned by DCC.

The vehicles are ending their serviceable life and the Council needs to make a decision regarding the future of the mobile service. New, smaller vehicles cost in the region of £150-200k per vehicle so a significant capital investment would be required to continue to operate this service into the future.

There are currently around 3100 active users of the service who use at least 1 of the 374 stops around the county. Through previous years, active users have been gradually declining, as have the number of stops and subsequently stock issues.

We have an extensive network of 50 static libraries across the County and many of the stops are near or close to one our existing buildings. An analysis of the stops in relation to the 20 * largest libraries concluded:

- 15.51% of mobile stops 3 miles or less by road
- 39.84% of mobile stops 5 miles or less by road
- 84.49% Mobile stops 10 miles or less by road

**Barnstaple, Bideford, Chagford, Crediton, Cullompton, Dartmouth, Exeter, Exmouth, Holsworthy, Honiton, Ilfracombe, Ivybridge, Newton Abbot, Okehampton, Sidmouth, South Molton, Tavistock, Teignmouth, Tiverton and Totnes*

There are also existing and complementary services that support vulnerable members such as the *Good Neighbour* scheme where friends, family and neighbours can sign up to reserve, pick up and drop off books, and the *Home Library* service where volunteers fulfil the same role. The use of the online resources such as e-books, audiobooks and magazines have continued to grow in popularity since COVID and remain strong post pandemic. Libraries Unlimited also support many book clubs.

The Council will also, as part of its developing future libraries strategy support development of relationships with community libraries across the county and work on testing a model that provides access to our library network for rural communities.

During April and May this year the Council consulted with users of the service to help inform its strategy going forward and to find out more about the users of mobile libraries in Devon to hear more from people about potential alternative solutions. The return rate was around 30% of current active members of the service and the findings from the consultation are detailed in section 6.

The Council, like all Local Authorities in England, is facing significant financial pressures and is needing to review ways across all services to reduce cost and limit future investment. The Council, unlike most Council's in England has not reduced its Library footprint, and through its strong partnership with Libraries Unlimited has continued to reduce costs whilst maintaining a high quality and evolving offer.

However, the Council has to live within its means and delivery of efficient and cost-effective services are required in order to sustain any comprehensive library offer.

4) Proposal

The proposal is to decommission the Mobile Library vehicles and to support active members to utilise existing alternatives such as digital, library buildings, the home library service and good neighbour schemes by December 2023.

Feedback from the consultation highlighted a proportion of existing members with physical disabilities and issues with transportation and self-isolation. Therefore, the proposal would include a one-off investment of £25,000 to support expansion of the alternative service options listed above and to provide support to our vulnerable members so that they are able to continue to access library services as far as possible.

Following feedback from the consultation we will also work with Libraries Unlimited to develop a rural outreach offer that includes how the Council can provide support to the community libraries around the County.

5) Options / Alternatives

5.1 Option 1 – Decommission the Mobile Library vehicles.

There are viable alternatives currently available to using mobile vehicles including library buildings, digital, home library scheme and good neighbour scheme. The Council would also develop a community library support scheme for rural areas that will in many circumstances mitigate the mobile visits. There would be a capital return for the vehicles estimated at £18,000.

The Council would work closely with Libraries Unlimited regarding future investment in rural outreach library services.

5.2 Option 2 – Decommission the Mobile Library vehicles and provide £25K transition support for vulnerable users to continue to access alternative library provision.

The Council would provide funding to help with the transition to other existing and new library services to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the mobile library community continue to access services they value.

5.3 Option 3 – Replace the 4 mobile libraries with new vehicles.

There would be upfront capital investment of between £600-800k to purchase the vehicles and would expect the running costs to be lower with more efficient and smaller mobiles. This option would be investing heavily in the service now and continuing in its current format. With numbers of active members, stock issues and visits at some stops gradually reducing we have discounted this option in favour of a wider rural access offer.

6) Consultation

A Consultation was launched on 31st March aimed at current mobile library users on a proposal, within the context of the financial challenges that Devon County Council currently faces, to end the current mobile library service delivered by Libraries Unlimited, and instead

to seek and develop further alternative arrangements to ensure that people can continue to access and engage with their local library or library service.

Mobile library customers were advised of this consultation through email, social media and promotional materials in the mobile vans and every library building. The consultation ran for eight weeks allowing the library van to complete two four weekly routes.

Overall, 1197 consultation responses were received from individuals, households and one school. Letters and emails were also received from individuals and on behalf of groups and town councils. 95% of respondents said they or a family member use the mobile library, with 93% using it every month or as often as it comes to their stop or village.

The main demographic of respondents are older, with 79% over the age of 65 and 44% being 75 or older and primarily female (72%). Just over a third (34%) considered themselves to have a disability, with 13% saying that their day-to-day activities are limited a lot.

Consultation feedback showed how valuable the service is to its users, averaging 4.46 out of 5 in importance. Some of the key themes highlighting why the service is considered essential by users are:

- *it's easy access to books*
- *location convenience*
- *lack of access to cars/public transport*

The mobile library allows users to take out more books than at a static library with longer return times, no fines and no charges to reserve a book. These were all seen as a significant benefit and an essential given the rural locations the mobile library visits.

The service was often described as one of the last services in rural villages and therefore has become a place to meet, socialise and catch up with neighbours and the librarians. The social aspect was mentioned in 18% of respondents' comments. For some that said they are isolated or unable to get out of the house much, the social aspect of the service is the only time they get to talk to people. It was also mentioned that having access to books was a lifeline to help combat isolation and loneliness, concluding that this has benefited their mental health.

A few responses were received from children; however, as under 18, this data was not captured on the consultation. It must be noted that children are an important demographic of the mobile library user, as 9% of respondents mentioned children or grandchildren's access to books and reading when describing how essential the service was to them. Children were also reflected in the most popular stop mentioned in the consultation, Witheridge (5%), where the van visits the local primary schools. Another primary school responded on behalf of their reception class, mentioning the service was a 'lifeline for rural schools and future literacy'.

The consultation questions wanted to unearth if any users also used other services that Libraries Unlimited offer. 21% of respondents said they had recently visited a static library building, and 21% said they would do so if the mobile library service ceased. The main reason for not using a static library was not having access to a car or public transport to get there, with 34% of responses mentioning this. This was also one of the primary pieces of feedback given in the free text box as well as parking, fuel cost and time it would take to

travel to a library building. Considering the primary age demographic, 27% mentioned they would have difficulty carrying heavy books home, particularly the number of books they would averagely get from the mobile library. 16% mentioned they could not access a static library due to health conditions or disability, and 10% said they did not have time due to caring responsibilities.

The digital library service has been accessed less than a static library, with only 15% of respondents saying they currently use it. Some who mentioned they used the service said they had received audiobooks from the mobile library. Half of the respondents said they prefer a physical book, and 28% said they do not have access to a computer or are not confident with using a computer or device. Many said this was not an option due to bad connectivity in their rural location and 6% said they would continue to access the digital library if the mobile library service ceased.

Over half (53%) felt like the mobile library service is their only way of accessing library services in Devon and said they would or could not use the library service at all if the service stopped. A further 28% said they would use the library service less. Some comments expressed concern and worry over relying on volunteers, and the viability of the Home Library Service, but 8% said they would use this option and 1.5% said they would use the Good Neighbours scheme. A key theme mentioned was the need for users retaining independence than these alternatives provided, which is valued through the mobile service, and a small number were not keen on the idea of books being chosen on their behalf. 8% said they would visit a community library not run by Devon County Council instead.

At the end of the consultation, consultees were provided an opportunity to offer other ideas on how they would like to engage with library services. 515 comments were made, with a majority of respondents wanting to keep the mobile library service running. Other ideas mentioned include paying a small fee to access the service, extending borrowing times and providing/helping run small libraries in community facilities and providing better parking at static libraries.

This section was also used for general comments where there was a primary feeling of sadness, disappointment, anger and further isolation over the potential ceasing of this service and the reduction of other services, including public transport in rural villages. Concerns were also made around the environmental impact of ceasing this service, meaning more cars will be on the road to visit static libraries.

7) Strategic Plan

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan>

The recommended proposal, alongside a commitment for further investment in community based support and ongoing significant investment in the wider Library service, maintains the Council's commitment to its Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025.

8) Financial Considerations

It will require capital investment of £600k-800k to replace the mobile library fleet. There is no capital allocation in the Corporate Capital programme and if option 3 was preferred an

application would need to be made to the Corporate Programme Group for allocation of funding.

The combined annual running costs of the 4 Mobile libraries is £217,000 which if the vehicles are decommissioned, will be a saving to support the delivery of library services across the County.

The Council proposes a £25k one-off funding for expanding and developing alternatives funded through dedicated budget to support vulnerable people in Devon.

The implementation costs for Libraries Unlimited will be for potential redundancies estimated to be a maximum of £63k including strain costs of the Mobile Library Assistants. Libraries Unlimited are currently running a staff consultation pending the decision on the future of the service. We are working closely with Libraries Unlimited to ensure the Council's liabilities are minimised through redeployment opportunities within the service.

9) Legal Considerations

The Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide comprehensive and efficient library service. The Mobile Library service falls within this duty. The Council considers that with the alternatives proposed alongside development of community library support the Council will continue to meet its statutory obligations.

10) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

This proposal will not significantly affect factors relating to climate change. There will be a reduction in direct emissions and fossil fuels from the aging diesel vehicles as a result of decommissioning.

There is likely to be an increase in car journeys where users will access a library building, however these journeys are will probably be multi-purpose.

11) Equality Considerations

Where relevant, in coming to a decision the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding

in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

In progressing this particular scheme / proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the Council's website at [https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published Mobile Libraries closures - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published-Mobile-Libraries-closures-Impact-Assessment-devon.gov.uk). The key points have been included in section 4 of this report.

Members will need to consider the Impact Assessment for the purposes of this item / meeting.

12) Risk Management Considerations

This policy/proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken / included to safeguard the Council's position.

These are outlined within the related Impact Assessment and in the Council's consideration of its consultation. Risks regarding alternative provision are low, given that these relate to existing service.

Simon Kitchen, Head of Communities

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Equality Councillor Roger Croad

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper Nil

Contact for enquiries:

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Address: Communities Team, Rm G60, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QD

Proposals for the Mobile Library Service - Final

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Closure of the Mobile Libraries and the alternative offers in place.

Service: Communities

Head of Service: Simon Kitchen

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: 30/03/2023

Assessment carried out by (job title): Kathryn Blake, Commissioning and Programme Assistant

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Devon County Council commissions Libraries Unlimited to operate four mobile libraries. They have a current route of 374 stops working on a four-week rotation covering Devon. These stops include a variety of local community buildings, including churches, village halls and schools, with an average of 5 visitors per stop for 2022. Most locations are timetabled to have one stop every four weeks, generally lasting 30 minutes. Mobile libraries can offer limited service due to their size, with a small book collection and limited access compared to the broader range in static libraries or online.

2. Reason for change / review

Devon County Council has agreed to spend more on priority services to meet growing demand; therefore, savings must be made elsewhere. Libraries have seen a decline in real-term funding for many years; there are cost pressures around the delivery of mobile libraries, including staff costs, insurance and other costs, including fuel. The mobile library service's cost in 2022/23 is £211,683.

Three of the four vans used to run the mobile library service are 15 years old, and the other is around nine. Collectively, they spent about 670 hours off the road last year, with 45% due to van issues. Vehicle issues and repairs have accounted for 98% of the reason they have been off the road for the first two months of 2023. As a result, the vans are no longer reliable or provide a good level of service.

As all of the vans are ageing, replacement costs were investigated in 2022 and cost approx. £145,000 for a smaller vehicle, while a larger vehicle would start at £195,000. Because of this and the ongoing running cost, Devon County Council can no longer afford to replace the ageing vans and therefore propose to close this service before the vans give up and the service becomes more unpredictable and unreliable.

Indicator	2012-2013	2022	% Change
Active users	5546	3080	-44%
Visits	55,793	14,872	-73.34%
Loans	161,317	51,130	-68.3%

The service has seen a large decline in active users, visits and physical loans in the past 10 years. The pandemic did have an effect on mobile library visits and loans in 2020 and 2021, however in 2022 the statistics showed an increase in these areas back to similar levels seen in 2019. Active users have seen a rise since 2019 of 3%.

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

The mobile libraries primarily serve older and more vulnerable communities. The aim is to provide other services as alternatives to mobile libraries, which means anyone wanting to access a library service will still be able to do so. The consultation will look at gathering opinions on the following 4 options:

Local Library - There are 50 libraries across Devon, providing access to where people live, shop and work. Libraries in the city of Exeter and towns across the county offer various services, including free Wi-Fi and internet access, events, and community activities as well as space to meet and connect with others. Some also offer meeting rooms for hire, support for business start-ups and Workspaces.

Digital – The broad range of eBooks, audiobooks, digital magazines and digital newspapers has become very popular in recent years – available 24 hours a day.

Good Neighbours - Membership for friends, neighbours and family wishing to choose and deliver books to people not able to get to the library.

Home Library Service – Delivers books to vulnerable and isolated customers who are unable to get to the library because of health, mobility, or caring responsibilities. Dedicated volunteers choose and deliver books, including large print and audiobooks, free of charge and often have time to chat.

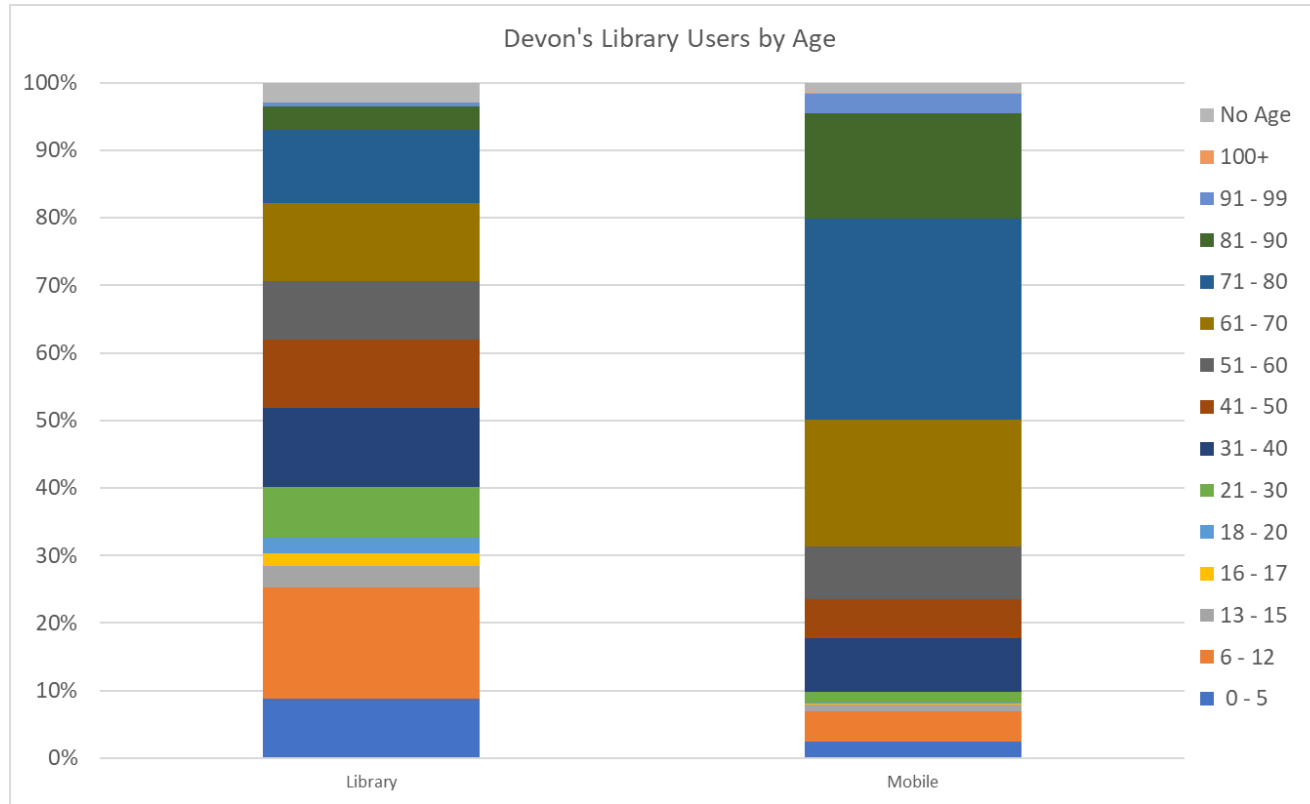
It is recognised that there could be limitations to these services and may not be the best option for all; therefore, Devon County Council will be seeking the views of the service users to gain further insight into other alternatives that they would like to see.

Devon County Council is also aware of community run libraries across the County in community halls and public spaces which are not supported by DCC. These provide access to small stocks of books and other material and maybe a preferred option to some.

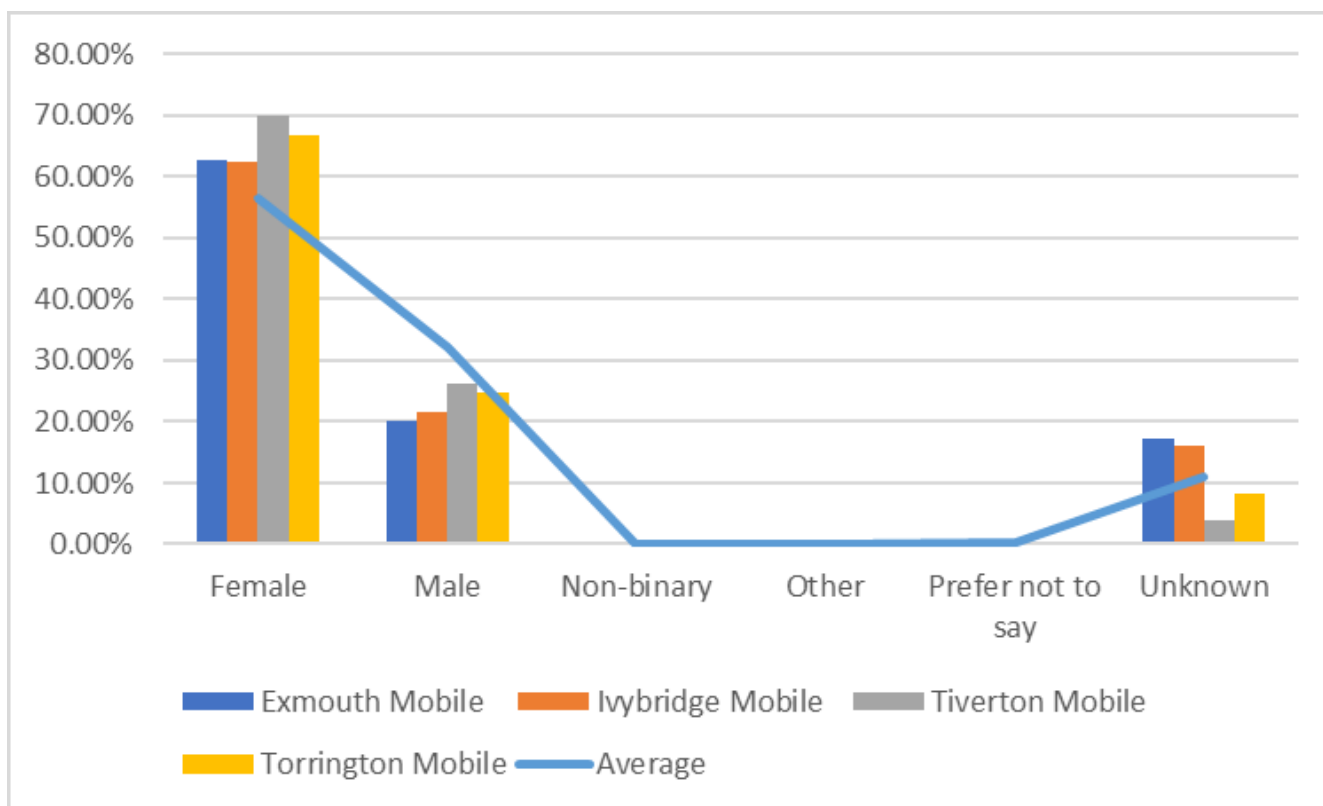
4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

Closure of the mobile libraries does have the potential to impact on three primary groups; staff working within Libraries Unlimited; active users of services identified and wider community members, who may use the services infrequently, or will do so in the future. The profile of mobile libraries users and the available demographic data is shown below.

Age - This graph shows the age profile of mobile library customers (and compared to other libraries in Devon and Torbay). It demonstrates for the Mobiles that over 80% are aged 41+ and 70% are aged 61+.



Gender – This graph shows the gender (where disclosed) of active users of the Mobile Libraries. There is generally lower than average use by males and higher than average females. Tiverton Mobile in particular has 70% of its customers that identify as female compared to an average of libraries in Devon of 57%.



Ethnicity – There is very limited data collection regarding ethnicity for Mobile Library customers. Across the four libraries the average non-completed data is 98.2% of customers. Of those where ethnicity has been recorded, 98.88% identify as white.

Disability – There are less than five (combined across the four mobile libraries) active users registered as “concessionary”. This may in part be due to longer loan periods and free reservations being standard service offer for Mobile Library customers, thereby negating the “benefits” of being registered as concessionary.

The Mobile Libraries do not have any registered Good Neighbours or Home Library Service customers. These are more likely to be associated with library buildings where stock levels are higher and for some the Mobile Library itself is providing the same service – almost coming to the doorstep. However, the data does show that there was one visit to the Torridge Mobile Library by a Good Neighbour in the last six months

Access to other library services – The motivations for using the Mobile Library service are varied and individual. The service covers a wide rural geographic area which may make it harder for some users to access a library building if they do not have their own transportation and rely on public transport

A proportion of Mobile Library customers use library buildings. Statistical approximations for those proportions is demonstrated below. This is calculated on the basis of: the minimum being those who's data (age, gender, postcode) did cross-reference, but obviously not all customers will have provided their age, gender and postcode; the reasonable approximation being based on the proportion of those who had provided all three pieces of data and then cross referenced; the highest being all those that didn't provide their age, gender or postcode being counted as having a second library card and added to those that cross referenced.

	Minimum % of mobile users likely to have a second library card	A reasonable approximation of % of mobile users to hold another library card	The highest % of mobile users likely to hold another library card
Exmouth Mobile	20%	40%	63%
Ivybridge Mobile	19%	24%	41%
Tiverton Mobile	18%	24%	42%
Torrington Mobile	17%	19%	29%

4. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

The core stakeholders are Devon County Council and Libraries Unlimited.

Libraries Unlimited as the Council's operator of Library Services.

As mobile libraries are a community asset, the wider community need to be considered in any plans of potential closure.

5. Additional research used to inform this assessment

ONS Internet survey - [Internet users, UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

6. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Any proposed changes require statutory consultation. This will take place for 8 weeks, finishing on the 26th of May and primarily directed at mobile library users.

This target group will be informed directly by email if available, and advertisement in the mobile and static libraries. The consultation will be on the DCC Have Your Say site with a link to an online questionnaire. Paper and large print copies will be in the mobile and static libraries. Mobile libraries will complete their timetabled route twice in this time, providing sufficient time for users to be notified on the consultation and provide feedback.

The aim of this consultation is to ask service users to help us find ways to ensure that they can continue to have access to library serviced in the future.

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7. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary
 - Reasonable, and
 - Those affected have been adequately consulted.

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
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<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
<p>All residents (include generic equality provisions)</p> <p>Page 19</p>	<p>Mobile libraries are a community asset and free to access and therefore there will be an impact on the users of this service and wider community who wouldn't be able to access this service anymore if it was no longer available.</p>	<p>Closure of this service will likely impact those in more rural settings and disproportionately is likely to include older people. This can be mitigated through existing alternatives for borrowing and access books/learning. Good Neighbours and the Home Library Service will be offered as an alternative.</p>
<p>Age</p>	<p>Most mobile library customers are over 41 with a large proportion over the age of 61. Closure of mobile libraries would have a disproportionate impact on older community members.</p> <p>Mobile libraries have and do stop at local primary schools. Data from 2022 shows some of these stops are considerably more popular than town/village locations.</p>	<p>It cannot be presumed that an older age means reduced ability to travel. Local libraries can provide more services such as events and community activities as well as a space to meet and connect with others. This could benefit this age group who can be particularly vulnerable to loneliness. With the distance from mobile library stops to static libraries, there may be more reliance on public transport which may not be convenient to all.</p> <p>There also cannot be assumptions on the use of digital technology as a result of older age. However, the ONS Internet Users survey found in 2020 that those over 75 are still much less likely to be recent internet users as those aged 16-44, although this has been steadily increasing. For those who wish to access these services, digital sessions can take place to help</p>

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
<p>Page 20</p>		<p>people learn how to use the library's borrowing apps. Mitigation through seeking a boost the Home Library Service which will give access to a wider selection of books and large print and often have time to chat as well as the Good Neighbour offer to the immediate vicinity of the customer base</p> <p>Young people are users of mobile libraries and there is higher amount of interaction at a couple of these specific spots for primary age children. It is clear from the data that more young people are likely to be users of static local libraries.</p>
<p>Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people</p>	<p>The data available on disability impact for library users is very limited and not sufficiently evidence based in order to make firm extrapolations about impact.</p> <p>However, increasing the travel requirements to reach a library is likely to have a greater impact on those members of those communities with disabilities, particularly affecting their mobility,</p>	<p>Supporting vulnerable residents through the home visit service provided to those who have a physical or mental impairment which prevents them being able to visit a library without support would mitigate some of the negative impacts identified. If this option is pursued, it would be important to communicate widely the home visit service in order for the full extent of the mitigation to be realised.</p> <p>Staff of Libraries Unlimited can have more targeted conversations with individuals known to them and signpost appropriately on a case by case basis to find an appropriate alternative.</p>

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
	<p>if they then must travel further to access services.</p>	
<p>Culture and ethnicity: Nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief</p>	<p>There is a lack of data regarding ethnicity of library customers and therefore inferences that the vast majority identify as White should be treated with suitable caution.</p> <p>The data that is available shows there are no anticipated positive or negative impacts on this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>No specific mitigation.</p>
<p>Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)</p>	<p>More women than average use the mobile libraries. The data indicated these are generally older women. Where women are more likely to be primary carers their library usage may be taking place around other commitments. Removal of the potential convenience of the mobile libraries may therefore have</p>	<p>Promotion of online resources for those who may struggle to reach a static library and have access to a device. If this is not possible, promotion of the Home Library Service and Good Neighbour offer.</p>

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
	<p>a negative impact of removing a manageable library opportunity.</p>	
<p>Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership</p>	<p>Data not collected on this characteristic. Cannot identify if there are any positive or negative impacts.</p>	<p>No specific mitigation.</p>
<p>Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban</p>	<p>The four mobiles cover a wide rural geographical area and does include some areas of deprivation (most notably North Devon and Torridge).</p> <p>The rural location of some users may make it harder to access a static library if they do not have their own transportation and rely on public transport.</p>	<p>Promotion of online resources for those who may struggle to reach a static library and have access to a device. If this is not possible, promotion of the Home Library Service and Good Neighbour offer.</p>

8. Human rights considerations:

Not applicable

9. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

Promotion of online resources with additional help and training will help to keep independence of those who may struggle to reach a static library. Promoting mobile library users to return to their local library if they can gives access to events, community activities and meeting new people.

Members of the community who may struggle to access static libraries have other alternatives like the Home Library Service and Good neighbour programme to aid them in still having access to the same resources they did with mobile libraries.

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	N/A
Planning Permission	N/A
Environmental Impact Assessment	N/A
Strategic Environmental Assessment	N/A

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:	Not applicable	
Conserve and enhance wildlife:	Not applicable	
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	Not applicable	
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	Not applicable	
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:	Closure of the Mobile Library Service, which currently uses old diesel vehicles would reduce the emissions of particulate matter from the vehicles. And although diesel emits less CO2 than petrol engines, it does still contribute towards CO2 pollution.	This could have a positive consequence, but this may be offset by more individual car journeys to reach library services in other towns. Encourage use of public transport or combining with other trips. Also, use of Good Neighbour or Home Library Service where eligible could reduce number of journeys.
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):	Closure of the Mobile Library Service, as above, given pollution from the diesel engines of the vehicles.	This could have a positive consequence, which could be offset if more people travel in their own cars to reach library services elsewhere. Encourage use of public transport or combining with other trips. Also, use of Good Neighbour or Home Library Service where eligible could reduce number of journeys.

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Contribute to reducing water consumption:	The closure would reduce overall water consumption by the vehicles.	A positive only if the vehicles were not repurposed and reused. An immediate positive consequence, which would be negated if the vehicles were reused.
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):	Not applicable	
Other (please state below):		

11. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:	Free access to information, signposting to support, and opportunities for learning is provided by mobile libraries. These will all be negatively impacted upon by a removal of these services.	Promotion of local static libraries and online material will give more access to mobile users.
Impact on employment levels:	Pending the outcome of any public and staff consultations, roles could be made redundant as a result of any changes. Each mobile library has one full time position (plus relief staff) and this will be a significant impact to them, although the negative impact on employment levels in the community is minimal.	An appropriate consultation process will be undertaken with all affected staff run by Libraries Unlimited. All redeployment opportunities within Libraries Unlimited for staff will be considered to try to find alternative roles for staff whose roles are being made redundant. Support will be available to any staff given notice of redundancy to apply for alternative roles either within or outside of the organisation, such as reasonable time off for interviews and support with CV's. Staff will also have access to a variety of online training courses.
Impact on local business:	N/A	N/A

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12. Describe and linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

N/A

13. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

There are limited specific benefits for the communities impacted but all who use the current service will still have the ability to have access to the resources of a library.

14. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

Captured through consultation and iteration of this document.

CET/23/64

Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee
28 September 2023

Moving Traffic Offences Spotlight Review – Progress on Recommendations Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

That the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee be asked to note the progress made on the recommendations from the Moving Traffic Offences Spotlight Review and the current position on the application to Department for Transport for Moving Traffic Enforcement powers.

2) Background / Introduction

Devon County Council (DCC) is one of a handful of local authorities in England applying to the Department for Transport (DfT) for powers to enforce Moving Traffic Offences (MTOs). MTOs are actions taken by drivers that are in direct violation of the rules of the road. Examples include driving through a no entry sign, making banned turns, entering a yellow box junction when the exit isn't clear and driving on routes that are for buses and taxis only.

Previously, outside of London, the powers to enforce these restrictions fell only to the Police. Following a change in the law, local authorities are now able to apply for powers to enforce MTOs, and DCC is consulting on whether our residents would like to see us adopt these powers.

The new powers will enforce areas where existing restrictions are already in place. The Council is considering ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) camera systems to be located at a number of locations around the county.

At its meeting on 22 September 2022, the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee considered the Report of the MTOs Spotlight Review and resolved:

“(a) that the Spotlight Review Report be approved and the six recommendations contained therein be commended to the Cabinet for approval and implementation; and

(b) that, subject to approval of the Report by the Cabinet, a report come to this Committee one year after the introduction of the powers, for Members to review the number of contraventions captured, and number of appeals (including those upheld).”

(Minute 70 and report [Moving Traffic Offences Spotlight Review](#) refers)

Agenda Item 7

This Spotlight Review had been established following the invitation to provide a policy steer on whether adopting the enforcement of MTOs was the right option for the Council.

This report provides a progress update on the recommendations made by the Spotlight Review and approved by the Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.

3) Overview of Progress to date

The following work has been undertaken in support of key recommendations. A summary of key actions is included in Appendix A.

On 12 October 2022, Cabinet considered the recommendations of this Committee and resolved:

“(a) that the findings of the Spotlight Review on Moving Traffic Offences and recommendations of the Report be acknowledged; and

(b) that the Report being presented to Cabinet in November 2022, on Highway and Traffic Policy Reviews, includes reference to the recommendations from the Report.”

On 9 November 2022, DCC’s Cabinet gave its approval to submit an application to the DfT to acquire powers to enforce MTOs under Part 6 of The Traffic Management Act 2004. (Item 238,

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=4462&Ver=4>)

The Cabinet was presented a list of sites for initial consideration, based on the use of existing CCTV cameras. The sites were as follows:

1. Heavitree Fore Street, Exeter – Bus Lane
2. Exe Bridges, Exeter – Bus Lane
3. Exe Bridges, Exeter – Yellow Box Junction
4. Penn Inn, Roundabout Newton Abbot – Yellow Box Junction
5. Topsham Road / Burnthouse Lane, Exeter – Bus Lane
6. The Square (near Boutport Street) Barnstaple – Bus Lane.

However following engineering review, issues have been identified with some of the sites and these must be resolved before we can consider camera enforcement. Therefore, those sites will be considered as part of a future tranche.

It has also been identified that the use of the existing CCTV infrastructure would not be appropriate for enforcement purposes and therefore dedicated cameras will be required.

Following technical review 8 sites have been identified as requiring enforcement support and these are listed in Appendix B.

Prior to the submission of our application to the DfT in October this year there are a number of requirements for Local Authorities, the key tasks in relation to our application are as follows:

- **Consultation with the appropriate Chief Officer of Police**

Our team is in contact with appropriate Police representatives and an initial meeting was held to discuss proposals on Thursday 27 July.

- **Public Engagement**

It is a requirement that the Authority carry out public engagement, for a minimum six-week period, on the locations and types of moving traffic restriction selected by the Authority as appropriate for enforcement action. This should explain the rationale for enforcement along with opportunity for local residents and businesses to raise concerns.

The team have prepared web pages with detailed information on the sites being considered as part of our application

(<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/parking/traffic-regulation-orders/moving-traffic-enforcement/>) and the public will be able to provide feedback via our “Have Your Say” pages. Our communications team will provide support via promotion of the engagement process via press releases and social media.

The public engagement exercise was formally launched on Monday 14 August.

Feedback received through this process will be reviewed by the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management prior to any application being made.

- **Procurement of Enforcement Hardware**

It is a requirement that all relevant equipment has been certified by the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) specifically for moving traffic contraventions.

The team are working with the Procurement Team to ensure appropriate equipment is procured and that best value is achieved for any sites that are included in our first tranche.

In the coming months as the Authority works towards the launch of its new Moving Traffic Enforcement Service it will develop enforcement Policy to include where appropriate the recommendations made by this Committee.

4) Summary / Conclusions / Reasons for Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note progress in respect of the application of Moving Traffic Enforcement powers. A further update is proposed following the provision of powers to the Authority and updating on progress on launching enforcement at the 8 sites identified in this report.

Meg Booth

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Agenda Item 7

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Nil

Contact for enquiries:

Name: Chris Rook

Telephone: 0345 155 1004

Address: County Hall, Exeter EX2 4QD

Moving Traffic Offences Spotlight Review – Progress on Recommendations – Final

Appendix A to CET/23/64

Recommendations made by the Moving Traffic Offences Spotlight Review Group, and progress

	Action	Agency	Timeframe	Progress on Recommendations August 2023
1.	Devon County Council (DCC) to apply to enforce Moving Traffic Offences (MTOs)	Cabinet Member	Immediately	Application prepared for the October deadline.
2.	Devon County Council to be explicit in the communication of the adoption of the MTO powers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To include rationale based upon safety and movement of traffic in congested areas b. Regular communications on Social Media about the roll out of the powers and areas that will be enforced as well as updates on appeals upheld c. A report to come to Committee one year after the introduction of the powers for Councillors to review the number of contraventions captured, and number of appeals (including those upheld) 	Cabinet Member supported by Highways and Communications officers	When adopted Upon beginning of operation One year after operation begins	To be reviewed after adoption of powers.
3.	DCC to implement the policy which includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Local Councillors to be made aware of any new MTO enforcement in their constituency. b. Only issue one Penalty Charge Notice per location, per vehicle, per day. c. New enforcement areas to be issued with warning notices for six months for first time moving traffic contraventions rather than penalty charges. d. New Traffic management initiatives to include information to the local community about how they will be enforced. 	Cabinet Member to agree policy	As policy is developed	Policy to be drafted after submission of application in October.

	<p>e. Exploration of ways in which individuals who cannot afford to pay, may do so over an extended period or deferred payment.</p> <p>f. That communication of enforcement of moving traffic violations is explicit in the support available for people who are vulnerable, in line with the existing policy for parking debt, making it clear about how to access support.</p>			
4.	Devon County Council Highways Officers to explore work with Town and Parish Councils with monitoring and enforcement of MTOs, using existing cameras.	Highways Officers	Within 6 months	Initial investigation has concluded that existing CCTV systems within the Authority and used by other Authorities are unlikely to be suitable for Moving Traffic Enforcement purposes.
5.	DCC to further explore opportunities with the Police to link Council enforcement of MTOs with Operation SNAP including supporting members of the public to report offenses.	Highways Officers	Within 6 months	The Authority has worked with Police to promote and utilise the Operation Snap initiative where evidential footage has been gathered showing contraventions.
6.	Devon County Council to Lobby Devon MPs to make amendments to the legislation/policy on MTOs to allow Councils to offer education instead of a fine to motorists who commit moving traffic offenses.	Cabinet Member/ Scrutiny Committee	Once agreed by Cabinet	To be reviewed after adoption of powers.

Appendix B to CET/23/64

Sites included in application to Department for Transport.

Site 1 – BA001 – Bus Gate – Old Torrington Road, Sticklepath, Barnstaple

Moving traffic restrictions

Bus Gate



and
authorised
vehicles

[View the location on Google Maps](#)

Site background

There is Bus Gate on Old Torrington Road between Riverton Road and Grange Avenue. The restriction is being implemented in Summer 2023 to replace the previous bus gate on Gratton Way and is being introduced to better manage traffic in the area due to the new housing development.

The bus gate will have exemptions for

- local buses
- cycles
- approved school transport vehicles between 8am-9.30am and 3.30pm-5pm on Monday to Friday during school term times

Contravention history

The restriction is not yet live so there is no contravention history but from experience of similar restrictions (including the previous prohibition on Gratton Way) the risk of contraventions is high and is why the developers have been asked to pay for an enforcement camera.

Enforcement priorities

Enforcement of moving traffic offences at this site will:

- improve public safety
- support active travel and public transport

Site Compliance Pack

[More information on the site can be found in the site compliance pack](#)

Site 2 – BA002 – No Right Turn – The Square, Barnstaple

Moving traffic restrictions

No Right Turn



[View the location and the restriction on Google Maps](#)

Site background

There is a banned right turn from The Square (A3125) into Taw Vale that applies to all vehicles. The restriction was first introduced in 2007 to compliment the new Barnstaple Western Bypass and restrict inappropriate traffic movements, making the best use of the new road system.

There is no further hard engineering solution for this site due to the lack of space and other manoeuvres still permitted at this location.

Contravention history

Following a video survey between 17/07/2023 – 20/07/2023, 100 contraventions were witnessed.

Enforcement priorities

Enforcement of moving traffic offences at this site will:

- improve public safety

Site Compliance Pack

[More information on the site can be found in the site compliance pack](#)

Site 3 – BA003 – Bus Gate – Taw Vale, Barnstaple**Moving traffic restrictions**

Bus Gate



[View the location and the restriction on Google Maps](#)

Site background

There is bus gate on Taw Vale between the northern junction with Litchdon Street and the junction with The Square. The bus gate was first introduced in 2007 to compliment the new Barnstaple Western Bypass and restrict inappropriate traffic movements, making the best use of the new road system.

The bus gate has exemptions for

- local buses
- cycles
- taxis (hackney carriages)

Contravention history

Following a video survey between 09/01/2023 – 11/01/2023, 124 contraventions were witnessed.

Enforcement priorities

Enforcement of moving traffic offences at this site will:

- improve public safety
- support active travel and public transport

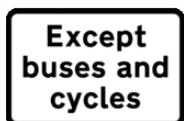
Site Compliance Pack

[More information on the site can be found in the site compliance pack](#)

Site 4 – EX001 – Bus Gate – Wonford Road

Moving traffic restrictions

No Entry



[View the location and the restrictions on Google Maps](#)

Site background

There is prohibition of all vehicles on Wonford Road southeast of its junction with Deepdene Park. A prohibition was first introduced in 2020 as part of the DCC Emergency Active Travel Fund measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a statutory consultation, the prohibition was made permanent in 2021 to improve safety for cycling as the road is part of the E9 cycle route and is part of Exeter's strategic cycle network.

The bus gate has exemptions for

- buses
- cycles

Contravention history

Following a video survey between 24/04/2023 – 28/04/2023, 1002 contraventions were witnessed.

Enforcement priorities

Enforcement of moving traffic offences at this site will:

- improve public safety
- support active travel and public transport

Site Compliance Pack

[More information on the site can be found in the site compliance pack](#)

Site 5 – EX002 – Bus Lane – Topsham Road, Exeter

Moving traffic restrictions

Bus Lane



[View the location and the restrictions on Google Maps](#)

Site background

There is a bus lane on Topsham Road that begins at the junction with Buckerell Avenue and continues south eastwards across the junction with Barrack Road to a point just before the junction with Burnthouse Lane. The bus lane was first introduced in 2000

and is reserved for buses, taxis, private hire vehicles, heavy commercial vehicles and cycles. The bus lane applies at all times (24 hours a day on all days).

Contravention history

Following a video survey between 09/01/2023 – 11/01/2023, 68 contraventions were witnessed.

Enforcement priorities

Enforcement of moving traffic offences at this site will:

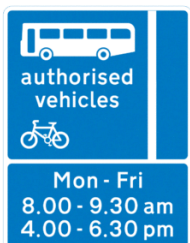
- improve public safety
- support active travel and public transport
- reduce congestion

Site Compliance Pack

[More information on the site can be found in the site compliance pack](#)

Site 6 – Ex003 – Bus Lane – Fore Street, Heavitree, Exeter

Moving traffic restrictions



Bus lane signage

[View the location and the restrictions on Google Maps](#)

Site background

There is a bus lane on Fore Street, Heavitree between Butts Road and Church Street. The bus lane was first introduced in 1994 and is reserved for buses, taxis, private hire vehicles, and cycles. The bus lane applies Monday to Fridays between 8am-9.30am & 4pm-6.30pm.

Contravention history

Following a video survey between 13/03/2023 – 17/03/2023, 181 contraventions were witnessed.

Enforcement priorities

Enforcement of moving traffic offences at this site will:

- improve public safety
- support active travel and public transport
- reduce congestion

Site Compliance Pack

[More information on the site can be found in the site compliance pack](#)

Site 7 – EX004 – Bus Lane – Cowick Street, Exeter

Moving traffic restrictions

Bus Lane



[View the location and the restrictions on Google Maps](#)

Site background

There is a bus lane on Cowick Street, between a point opposite St Thomas Church and the junction with Buller Road. The bus lane was first introduced in 1994 and is reserved for buses, taxis, private hire vehicles, and cycles. The bus applies Monday to Friday between 8am-9.15am.

Contravention history

Following a video survey between 09/01/2023 – 11/01/2023, 545 contraventions were witnessed.

Enforcement priorities

Enforcement of moving traffic offences at this site will:

- improve public safety
- support active travel and public transport
- reduce congestion

Site Compliance Pack

[More information on the site can be found in the site compliance pack](#)

Site 8 – EX005 – One Way – Iron Bridge, Exeter**Moving traffic restrictions**

No Entry Except Cycles



Except
cycles

[View the location and the restrictions on Google Maps](#)

Site background

There is a One Way restriction on Iron Bridge, Exeter from the City Gate pub to Dinham Road. A One Way restriction was first introduced in 2021 to mitigate the impact of displaced traffic from the temporary changes to provide more space for pedestrians on Queen Street. Following a statutory consultation in November 2022, it has been agreed to make the changes permanent and works are currently underway on Queen Street and Iron Bridge to make the necessary changes and are expected to be completed later this year.

There is no further hard engineering solution for this site due to the lack of space.

Contravention history

Following a video survey on the 29/09/2022, 15 contraventions were witnessed.

Enforcement priorities

Enforcement of moving traffic offences at this site will:

- improve public safety

- protect public infrastructure
- support active travel and public transport

Site Compliance Pack

[More information on the site can be found in the site compliance pack](#)

CET/23/65

Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee
28 September 2023

Highways Performance Dashboard – Summer 2023

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

1) Introduction

In response to the recommendations of the Planned & Reactive Maintenance: Potholes & Drainage Task Group presented to the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services (CIRS) Scrutiny Committee in March 2019 an updated Performance Dashboard Report has been produced. The intention of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the performance of the Highways and Traffic Management Team over the summer period.

2) Reactive Works

2.1 PIP (Public Interface Portal) Enquiries

Following the extremely high numbers of publicly reported potholes across the network during the first part of the year, and the increase in repair gangs as a response, numbers have gradually stabilised through the spring and into the summer, however, remain above average for the time of year (see Appendix A). This has meant that there is still some residual pressure on inspection teams in assessing backlogs. Evening and weekend working has remained in place in some areas to assist with this.

Work is underway to improve the messaging on the ‘report a problem’ webpages to reduce the number of defects that are incorrectly reported – since January this year this represents around 55% of all reports received.

2.2 Safety Defects

Following a very challenging winter for asset condition and safety defects, the numbers recorded across the network had reduced sufficiently that Highway Safety Inspectors (HSI) were able to re-start the identification of non-safety or ‘serviceability’ defects in June. This process offers HSI’s the discretion to record defects that do not meet investigatory criteria in our Highway Safety Policy.

Since April, the service has been trialling a product called ‘Elastomac’ which is envisaged to provide a lower carbon and cost-effective means of repairing carriageway defects. The mastic product uses up to 70% recycled materials, including lorry tyres, that would otherwise be incinerated and, in the right scenarios, allows reactive works gangs to undertake repairs much more quickly when compared to conventional techniques.

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2.3 Winter Service

Preparations for winter have been taking place over the summer, with the fleet of gritters receiving their annual servicing and calibration checks. Works to install solar panels on some of the salt barns have also been progressed and salt stocks are being replenished ahead of winter.

By keeping the age of the gritting vehicles under 10 years old maintenance costs are reduced and ensures the fleet is safe and appropriate for the task in hand. In preparation for this winter, 8 of our oldest/most costly gritters will be traded-in against 6 nearly new vehicles. This will reduce the secondary fleet from 12 vehicles down to 10, an appropriate balance of service resilience against financial pressures.

The preventative treatment of some cycleways and footways around Exeter will continue following the success and positive reception last winter. The trial has led to national interest, including from the National Winter Service Research Group and an invitation for colleagues to present at the annual Cold Comfort Conference held in Harrogate in May.

3) Cyclical Operations

3.1 Gully Cleaning

Progress with the gully cleaning programme through to mid August is detailed in Appendix B.

The wet waste bay facility installed at South Molton depot has so far seen disposal savings of more than £24,000 during 2023.

Over 5,000 drainage issues identified by the gully cleaning crews and highway officers have been resolved since April. The challenge remains dealing with over 15,000 outstanding reported issues with funds available.

The ongoing trial to pre inspect gullies due to be cleaned on the cyclical programme has shown 49% of gullies inspected to date do not require cleaning. The aim of the trial is to ensure plant and equipment is being deployed where it is most effective. The communities in which the trial is taking place are listed in Appendix B.

A joint trial with Devon's Flood team to place gully sensors in selected streets in Devon is in the preparation stages. It is hoped this externally funded trial will offer insight into whether technology can be used to inform policy or reaction for cyclical gully cleaning. The trial intends to run for an 18-month period from the winter period.

3.2 Grips, Easements and Buddleholes

Delivery of the programme is under review to ensure this cyclical cleaning operation is being delivered efficiently whilst remaining cost effective.

A trial has been undertaken using electric hand tools that is seeing environmental gains along with cost savings.

Progress with the cleaning programme through to mid August is detailed in Appendix B.

3.3 Grass cutting

Despite a challenging growing season, the planned 1st cut of rural grass has been completed by the end of August. By working alongside Torbay Council efficiencies have been realised in our operations in the south of the county.

Urban grass cutting is now 75% complete with 3 of the 4 programmed cuts completed.

4) Tree Safety Management (including vegetation)

4.1 Expert Scheduled Inspections

As of the end of August, the major road network and additional high-risk sites in seven of the eight districts had received expert tree inspections. 306 records of defective trees have been created. At the same point in the inspection programme last year (2022), 245 records had been created. This represents an increase of approximately 25%.

4.2 Ash Dieback (ADB)

The expert tree inspections have recorded 113 individual reports of ADB, which is an increase when compared with 96 records at the same point last year. This mirrors the overall increase in the total number of individual trees reported with ADB, which is 437 compared with 235 trees at this point last year.

4.3 Highway Safety Inspections

Refresher training on tree assessment was offered to the Highway Safety Inspectors (HSI) towards the end of 2022, which included an explanation of how inspection reports are triaged and assessed. This training has improved the quality of the reports received from HSIs. As of the end of July 2023, 37 tree related defects had been referred to the Tree Safety Management Team for action. At the same time last year, 237 reports had been received though many of those defects were found to present tolerable or negligible risk.

4.4 Tree Inventory

Following successful trials of the National Tree Map dataset and the companion application (App) that has been developed, the data has been rolled-out across the county. While there are some limitations with the data (because of the way it is recorded from aerial imagery and LiDAR which means it underreports the number of trees in closely spaced groups and that the locations are based on the highest point of the canopy), it does provide some valuable intelligence on our highway trees and

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represents a significant improvement in understanding our trees, enabling us to improve the way we manage them. A conservative estimate is that we have approximately 1.3 million highway trees (any tree within falling distance of the highway), of which only around 20% are on Council owned or managed land.

4.5 Overgrown Vegetation

In July a new workstream was formed to trial different ways of tackling the annual problem of high numbers of overgrown vegetation reports. At the same time as dealing with the backlog and new incoming reports of vegetation the project team will be focussed on defining a new process and methodology for the management of future reports. The aim is that this methodology can be properly implemented before the growing season in 2024.

5) Digital Transformation Project

The project continues to increase pace with the successful 'go-live' of three services;

- vehicle crossings,
- scaffolds and other structures,
- minor works on the highway.

In addition, a more comprehensive traffic management form has been incorporated which enables the service to obtain more accurate information about works being planned across the network. 'Apparatus and excavation' is due to go live within the next month and a number of online forms for the Public Rights of Way team are currently in development. Temporary traffic regulation orders/notices (inc. road closures) are in the design phase with development due to start in September.

The main focus for the project team is now the customer relationship management system; ALFIE (Applications, Licences, Faults, Information and Enquiries). A significant amount of development work has taken place, building the structure of the software, and more recently the functional elements of the system. The elements due to be released, by the end of September, include a customer communication tool which allows emails to be sent and received from within the system, internal notes to enable colleagues to liaise from within the system and workflow management. Workflow management assigns a set of predetermined tasks to a team or officer. This will help colleagues to manage workloads, provide valuable performance data and provide a better overview of the stage of an application for others who are involved in the process, and those dealing with customer queries.

Design work has begun on the contractor portal and a number of usability sessions have been held with a range of applicants, including contractors, parish and town councils and statutory undertakers. The portal will make it easier for the Service to monitor compliance with insurance and accreditation requirements while allowing applicants to view and monitor their existing applications, reducing the need for telephone contact. It is hoped to have the portal live in October and work is underway on an appropriate communication strategy.

In addition to the focus on providing licence and application management system for the service, and improved access to services for organisations and citizens, the

project has also identified opportunities to transform other aspects of the highways service, including opportunities to improve revenue recovery and improve existing business processes.

6) Delivery of the Capital Programme

Design and delivery of planned maintenance works continues to go very well. In addition to the £52.8m capital settlement teams have worked hard to ensure that the additional £9.4m funding that was awarded in mid-March 2023, is being invested to maximise impact on the network.

£8 million is being invested into the strategic A-road network, typically through resurfacing and associated drainage refurbishment. Within this funding there is an additional programme of works that addresses locations of known risk of wet-road skidding following SCRIM (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine) surveys. A number of schemes have already been delivered, with others programmed for delivery during September notably Dawlish Rd, Alphington and Fore Street, Heavitree.

Approximately £17 million of planned works are scheduled to be delivered via the Local Asset Capital Programme. This programme aims to prioritise schemes for lower category local roads outside of the A-road network. It is a process that brings different asset data sources and local knowledge together focusing more on the holistic needs of the network, and therefore includes a range of different work types including: resurfacing, patching, footways, drainage, cattle grids, etc. Delivery is progressing well, with a large proportion of the works delivered ahead of winter.

Approximately £6 million is to be delivered through short notice, planned works including minor hand patching and dragon patching on the more minor network. All of which are identified through centrally managed inspections and delivered via a rolling program.

Approximately £7.8 million of planned works are programmed to be delivered by specialist contractors, including surface dressing, high friction surfacing and road restraint systems. The majority of this value is allocated to surface dressing which is a preventative treatment recognising the authority's asset management approach to lifecycle planning and long-term value for money. Despite the inclement weather during the summer season, the surface dressing programme is on track to be complete by early September, which will result in approximately 150 miles of carriageway sealed from water ingress, along with increased skid resistance. A programme of micro asphalt, is due to commence at the end of Aug and be completed by mid-September. Micro asphalt is a relatively low-cost preventative surface treatment similar to surface dressing but is more suitable for urban and residential environments.

£9 million is planned to be spent on bridges and structures. These works include various pedestrian and cycleway bridges such as the replacement of the Gem Aerial Walkway on Drakes Trail which has just been completed, and a contract has been awarded for the replacement of Exe Estuary Trail Courtlands Boardwalk commencing in September and Ley Meadow Footbridge in Barnstaple later this year.

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The Engineering Design Group are developing schemes including Collapark Railway Bridge and Bovey Bridge Cantilever Footway for delivery this financial year.

Bridge safeguarding schemes are planned this year for replacement of the existing parapets (similar to recent schemes at Torridge and Taw bridges) for Humber Lane and Lindridge bridges which span the A380. Joints, bearings and waterproofing schemes are being planned, including emergency work to repair a failed expansion joint to Rolls Farm Bridge, Ide.

Approximately £2.1 million is held for resilience contingency which has been drawn heavily upon, particularly due to the severe weather event in early May. This event resulted in heavy flooding, particularly in the east of Devon leading to road surface and structural damage, alongside heavy debris resulting in multiple legacy works.

The Service continues to engage with the market sector to encourage innovation that will serve to provide the Council with the means to be more versatile in meeting changing environmental, political and funding pressures. To this end approximately £3.6 million has been allocated to a Cross Asset Innovation Fund. Notable programs include a hybrid rural road maintenance trial and a retread recycling programme. The hybrid rural road trial is currently ongoing on three roads in west Devon, the learning from which will hopefully help inform maintenance practices on heavily deteriorated lower category roads. The retread recycling programme is programmed to start mid-September, through to early October across five sites in north and west Devon.

Finally, approximately £0.9 million is programmed to be spent maintaining the public right of way and cycle network, with works allocated and planned for delivery this financial year.

7) Street Lighting and Traffic Signals

The delivery of the capital LED replacement scheme continues towards completion, with a total of circa 70,000 streetlights expected to be converted to LED by the end of this financial year.

In addition, approximately 1,400 lamp columns are planned to be replaced this year as part of the ongoing asset management programme.

The Central Management System (CMS) that allows control of lighting levels continues to expand beyond Exeter, with a target of covering circa 80% of Devon's total lanterns across a 2-year roll-out programme. There are already 22,000 streetlights connected to this system and Tiverton, Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, Ivybridge and Tavistock have been added to the programme.

The combined impact of the above programmes is a continued drive to reduce carbon and energy usage. A decade ago, the County Council's energy usage was circa 31m kWh, whereas by the end of 2022/23 this had dropped to 13m kWh, a reduction of 57%. Similarly, the associated carbon emissions for the same period have dropped from 9.5 tonnes of CO₂ to just 2.8 tonnes, a reduction of 70% and

continues to drop as the LED roll out is finalised and the installation of the CMS provides options for the future of lighting.

8) Traffic Management

8.1 Planned Works

The condition of the lining assets has been an important focus for the Traffic Management Team which delivers our Parish Remark programme of lining in our communities with priorities identified by our Neighbourhood Highways team.

The budget currently available represents only a small portion of the asset value. Recent inventory gathering has placed a total replacement value on our lining asset of approximately £18m.

Since April 23, parish remarks have been undertaken in 6 of our communities with works planned in a further 13. The main road remarks and road stud replacement programme has completed 8 locations with a further 12 locations planned. Details of these locations can be seen in Appendix C.

In order to improve the lining assets a proposal to utilise Methyl Methacrylate (MMA) lining as standard across the county has been developed. The cost of applying MMA is higher than traditional thermoplastic material but it has a far greater life span offering much improved value for money in the long term. A further benefit is that this is a cold laid product, as opposed to thermoplastic that is laid at temperatures in excess of 200 degrees centigrade, improving the safety of our workforce.

Following a review, it has been identified that the condition of our rural give way markings was an area for improvement and that these provided important information to drivers. As such a new workstream has been developed to systematically remark these features in rural areas. There are approximately 6,000 markings that will be treated through this project that is anticipated to take 4-5 years to complete. Since April 2023, our contractor has delivered works to approximately 80 junctions in the South Hams area where works will continue through the year, the expectation being that the whole of that District area will be treated this financial year.

8.2 Programme

Each year our Traffic Management team delivers an extensive programme of work including high profile projects such as our waiting restriction, speed limit, and residents parking projects, along with maintenance of signing, lining, and road studs. Including most recently the launch of new residents parking schemes in Topsham and Exmouth.

Since April, 162 requests for waiting restrictions have been delivered through the Highways and Traffic Orders Committees (HATOC) Waiting Restriction Programme and work has continued on 20mphs limits in Winkleigh, Atherington, Ashburton and Tiverton, which will be implemented later this financial year. In addition, the team have progress 350 applications for new or the remarking of disabled bays and 56

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applications for new or the remarking of Access Protection Markings which have been processed and orders for works placed.

A total of 26 Traffic Regulation Orders have been advertised and 24 sealed.

Following agreement of new Policy at Cabinet on the 9 November 2022, additional work has been bought into that programme to deliver reviews of parking management in 8 of our communities, the application to Department for Transport for Moving Traffic Enforcement powers, and relaunch of our offer of sponsorship of highway assets. As such the delivery programme has been reviewed to ensure key tasks are delivered, the team provide regular updates to members on their programme and a link will be circulated for Members.

9) Carbon Reduction Project

The infrastructure for electric vehicles has been extended, with 8 charging points in place throughout various DCC locations such as Great Moor House and a number of depots. The service is operating with 13 electric vehicles across the Neighbourhood Teams and Civil Parking Enforcement with a further order expected shortly.

Since April 2023, the service has been able to use hydrated vegetable oil (HVO), as an alternative fuel to diesel. This has been rolled out in the north and west areas of the county. The HVO is derived entirely from food waste and has an associated reduction in carbon emissions in the order of 90% when compared with diesel at no increased cost.

All contractors delivering new construction and maintenance works on behalf of the Council have been required to provide returns on their operations via the new web portal developed on behalf of the Service. These returns allow an estimate of the total carbon emissions associated with the works to be calculated. Although early in the journey, this data is being used to understand trends and patterns for carbon hotspots which in turn will focus efforts to reduce or eliminate carbon. The service has also used the data to develop a Highways Decarbonisation Strategy. Governance arrangements have been established which saw a revised carbon board meet in July.

Work with software suppliers has led to the development of number of carbon dashboards that will give the ability to understand and view carbon emissions when setting programmes of work. Although in its early stages, this is a major step towards truly embedding carbon reduction into our work programmes.

Meg Booth

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Nil.

Contact for enquiries:

Name: Robert Richards

Telephone: 01392 383000

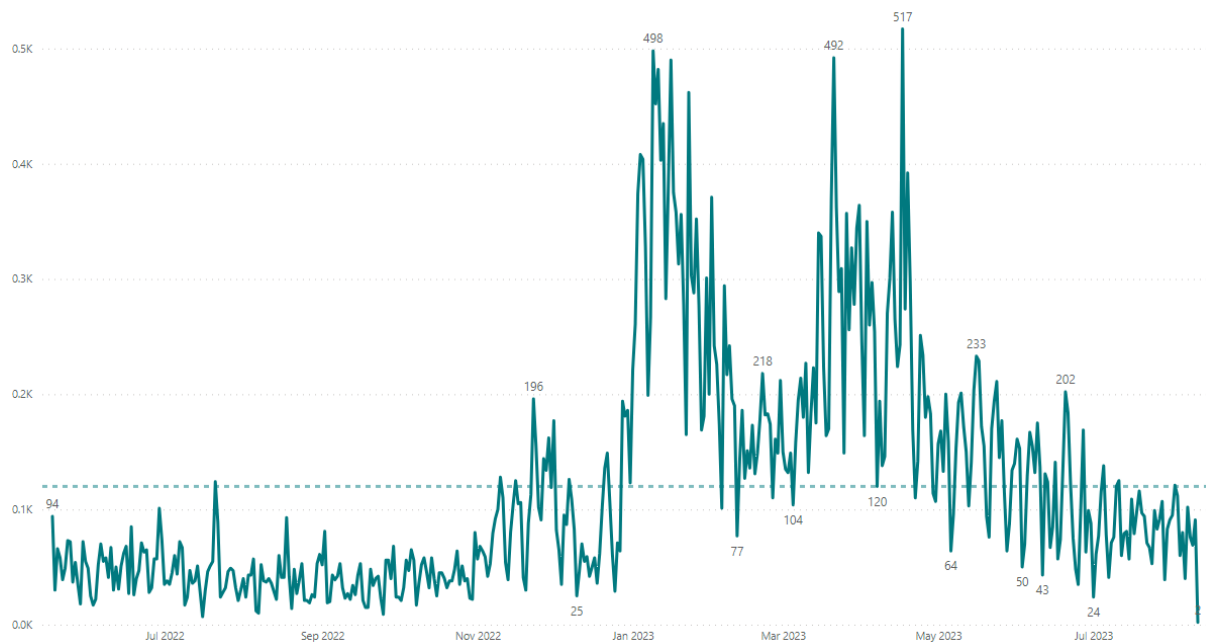
Address: County Hall, Exeter. EX2 4QD

Highways Performance Dashboard Summer 2023 - Final

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Appendix A to CET/23/65

Public reports of potholes received since July 2022



Number of potholes recorded across the Devon network per month/year to 10 August 2023

	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Avg
April	3,489	9,782	3,741	6,505	3,904	2,981	4,627	5,004
May	4,329	6,339	3,344	4,764	4,248	3,493	4,181	4,385
June	3,293	5,120	3,713	5,179	5,743	2,948	3,731	4,247
July	3,148	5,225	2,719	4,040	4,301	2,759	3,466	3,665
Aug	3,352	4,423	2,041	3,071	3,845	2,343	3,766	3,263
Sept	2,831	3,378	2,745	3,297	2,874	2,132		2,876
Oct	3,750	3,137	3,013	2,465	2,545	1,477		2,731
Nov	4,316	3,434	3,931	3,349	2,697	2,648		3,396
Dec	3,766	3,533	3,393	2,465	2,723	2,432		3,052
Jan	7,408	5,770	6,694	5,181	3,494	7,376		5,987
Feb	7,687	5,121	5,269	5,619	2,972	4,308		5,163
March	8,523	6,706	7,884	6,190	4,917	4,888		6,518
Total	55,892	61,968	48,487	52,125	44,263	39,785	19,771	46,025

Appendix B to CET/23/65

Gully Cleaning Programme

As of 13/08/2023 (37% through the financial year)

	Total Programmed	Gullies Attended	Remaining	% Complete Overall
Exeter	37,436	8,176	29,260	22%
East & Mid Devon	27,408	7,985	19,423	29%
Teignbridge	16,596	7,959	8,637	48%
South Hams	13,571	4,931	8,640	36%
West Devon	22,175	8,630	13,545	39%
Torridge	16,196	5,216	10,980	32%
North Devon	22,352	6,947	15,405	31%
Totals	155,734	49,844	105,890	32%

Gully Inspection Trial - Communities

Appledore
 Ashburton
 Berrynarbour
 Bickleigh
 Bideford
 Buckland Monachorum
 Combe Martin
 Cornwood
 Crediton
 Exeter City
 Exminster
 Exmouth
 Fremington
 Ilfracombe
 Lamerton
 Moretonhamptead
 Newton Poppleford & Harpford
 Northam
 Orchard Hill
 Shaugh Prior
 Sparkwell
 Tavistock
 Tedburn St Mary
 Upton Pyne
 Westward Ho!

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Grips, Easements and Buddlehole Cleaning Programme

As of 13/08/2023 (37% through the financial year)

	Total Asset Programmed	Total Assets Cleaned	Left to Attend	% Complete
South Devon	12,673	4,363	8,310	34%
North Devon	14,341	5,252	9,089	37%
West Devon	20,188	7,768	12,420	38%
Torridge	22,033	7,082	14,951	32%
East Devon	42,680	13,149	29,531	31%
Totals	111,915	37,614	74,301	34%

Appendix C to CET/23/65

Traffic Management Programme

Since April 23, parish remarks have been undertaken in 6 of our communities

Bovey Tracey
Cullompton (on going)
Dartington (on going)
Exminster (on going)
Tedburn St Mary (on going)
Topsham

With further works planned for the remainder of financial year:

Axminster
Broadclyst
Colyton
Dartmouth
Ilsington
Mary Tavy
Newton Poppleford
Northam
Pinhoe
South Molton
St David's & Haven Banks
Staverton
Tavistock

Since April 23, main road remarks and road stud replacement have been undertaken on:

- A39 County Gate - Blackmore Gate
- A3079 Brandis Corner - Fowley Cross
- A376 Exmouth - Clyst St George
- B3344 Bovey Tracey - Chudleigh Knighton
- B3387 Bovey Tracey - Widecombe in the Moor
- C454 Heathfield roundabout - A383 Goodstone
- C90 Knighton Heath - Clay Lane
- C156 Ashburton - Buckfastleigh

With further works planned on:

- A361 Bolham roundabout- South Molton
- A3122 Totnes Cross - Dartmouth sea front
- A382 Heathfield Roundabout - Whiddon Down roundabout
- A388 Cornwall - Liftondown
- A388 Holsworthy - Cornwall
- A388 Landcross - Holsworthy
- B3178 Exmouth - Knowle Hill roundabout
- B3180 Knowle Hill roundabout - Four Firs
- B3227 South Molton - UMBERLEIGH
- C463/C465 Lewtrenchard - Pitland Corner
- C773 Bovey Tracey - Manaton
- Tesco loop Ilfracombe

Report of the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Climate Change Standing Overview Group of 28 June 2023

1. Introduction

The Standing Overview Group of the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee meets regularly as an informal information sharing and member development session where issues are presented to the councillors to raise awareness and increase knowledge. The Standing Overview Group considers key updates and pertinent issues from across different services, with the aim of developing Members' knowledge, and bringing to the forefront any areas which may benefit from further scrutiny.

Any action points arising from the sessions are reported back to the next formal Committee meeting.

This report outlines the topic(s) covered at the meeting of 28 June 2023, highlights the key points raised during discussion and details any agreed actions.

2. Recommendation(s)

The Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee accepts this report as an accurate record of the meeting and makes the following recommendations to Cabinet, namely that:

- (a) Cabinet writes to Government to request more robust controls that developers must adhere to under the Future Homes Standard, in relation to the climate including: making solar panels mandatory for new builds on buildings which it is possible and appropriate to do so; and ensuring that new builds are required to put measures in place to reduce water usage below the Building Regulations Part G Optional Requirement of 110 litres per person per day. This would be to reduce the need for new, strategic energy and water infrastructure;
- (b) Cabinet writes to Government and to South West Water asking them to commit to working together to maintain existing infrastructure (particularly applying greater efforts for leakage reduction) before developing new water storage infrastructure and to prioritise these above the energy-intensive process of desalination;
- (c) Cabinet encourages organisations responsible for strategic infrastructure to prioritise collaboration between one another to ensure that management decisions will not negatively affect the integrity or maintenance requirements of nearby or related infrastructure. This would be to ensure the implications of any such decision do not negatively impact community resilience to climate change, and that such decisions are taken in line with the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaption Strategy.

3. Attendance

Councillors: A Dewhirst (Chair), P Bullivant (Vice Chair), C Slade, J Brook, J Trail BEM, and M Squires.

Cabinet Member: Andrea Davis (Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport)

Officers: Doug Eltham (Environment and Sustainability Policy Officer)

Scrutiny Officer: Fred Whitehouse

4. Summary of Discussion

Draft Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Adaptation Strategy

Prior to the meeting, details of the draft adaptation strategy were made available to Members at [Adaptation Strategy – Climate Resilient Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly \(climateresilient-dcios.org.uk\)](https://climateresilient-dcios.org.uk). The Executive Summary, Quick Read Version and Full Version were all available to look at.

The Adaptation Strategy entails three sections. There are the Risk Assessment (what are the climate risks to the area), the Adaptation Plan (what needs to happen to adapt to these risks), and the Action Plan (more short term, namely five-year, priorities, some sector- and company-specific).

The strategy considers five sectors: Natural Environment; Infrastructure; Health and the built environment; Cross-cutting; and Business and Industry. These broadly correspond with those highlighted in the UK's national climate risk assessment.

Risks to the Area

Devon and Cornwall are at particular risk of flooding, both from river and surface water and also within coastal areas. In the area, many communities are located at the bottom of steeply sided valleys and/or near river channels. These communities are at significant risk of flooding following heavy rain fall.

The area is also at risk of experiencing more intense and more frequent storms; the former has already been observed - with storms approaching via the Atlantic carrying more water due to the temperature of the ocean rising enabling more evaporation. The increased frequency has not been presently observed but is predicted.

The impacts of climate change pose serious risks to the capacity of the natural environment to maintain the services it provides – such as pollination, food production, filtering water, cleaning air and storing carbon. The destruction of the natural environment also contributes to climate change – for example, peatlands emit methane when they dry out which is highly damaging to the environment, more so than CO₂.

Warmer weather conditions are also likely to increase the prevalence of certain diseases that survive better in such conditions; and also some that are transmitted via particular insects which also thrive better in such conditions, such as mosquitoes which are predicted to become increasingly common in the South of England as temperatures increase towards 2050.

Of note was the likelihood of increased ‘cascading’ events – namely events with more far-reaching impacts than the initial, for instance, flooding of an area. The example was given of a power station – if flooded, the power outage could have a serious effect on a geographical area wider than that actually touched by the flood.

Overall, 62 broad impacts are covered in the report.

Adaptation – what needs to happen?

The strategy includes a number of Strategic Directions (objectives) that have been developed which outline how the region can create the enabling conditions and capacity for everyone to adapt to climate change together. The majority of these objectives are at the Policy/Regulator- and Organisational-level, with some Community- and Individual-level directions also included.

Many are about how a group or organisation can improve ‘adaptive capacity’ to climate events, essentially meaning improving resilience to such events. For instance, a community that is at risk of flooding is deemed to have a higher ‘adaptive capacity’ if it has been fitted with flood gates and robust, associated plans in the face of a flood, versus a community which does not have such plans and infrastructure in place.

Sensitivity to such events is also important; contained within this is developing better intelligence systems that warn the region of incoming or likely climate events – namely, building up institutional intelligence so that warnings can be issued appropriately.

Priority actions

The Action Plan identifies priority impacts and actions for 2023-2027, for regional collaboration. These are primarily aimed at policymakers, regional and local government and associated bodies; and for organisations, NGOs, businesses, infrastructure operators, charities and trusts. However some proposals for community groups and local hubs are also included.

Of the actions, some are company specific; for instance, those around water would naturally fall to South West Water to act on and develop.

Next steps

The strategy in its current draft form is going to Devon County Council's Cabinet, with the intention of demonstrating the authority's support of the strategy.

The Standing Overview Group was welcomed to make comments that could be incorporated into the next version of the strategy. It is intended to have a finalised version by Autumn 2023, with all partnership organisations then invited to endorse it and align their resources to help deliver it.

Member discussion

Water was a particular area of member discussion, particularly the risk of future shortages as climate change continues and the need to ensure reduced consumption across the board, including on an individual level. The Standing Overview Group felt that given the current issue of water scarcity, Government was not doing enough to ensure that resilience was built up in this area and that the scope of the Future Homes Standard should be expanded to include water targets to ensure new homes are providing communities and individuals with the necessary home infrastructure to reduce water consumption. It was expressed that, with the Future Homes Standard effectively reducing the powers of Local Authorities to impact building standards locally, then more robust national controls of the sector were required. In particular, Members stressed the importance of dropping water usage below the 110 litres per person per day Optional Requirement in Part G of the Building Regulations and requiring new houses to be built with this in mind, incorporating, for instance, water storage systems and spray fittings on taps. The Members also viewed that solar panels should be mandated for all new builds to reduce the need for new strategic-scale energy infrastructure. The Standing Overview Group's concerns are reflected in recommendation (a) to this report.

Members were also disappointed to hear from officers that South West Water's Water Resource Management Plan, which was out for consultation at the time of this meeting, considers desalination for mainland Devon and Cornwall ahead of developing new reservoir capacity in parts of the region. The Standing Overview Group felt that desalination should not be a priority in relation to water scarcity above and beyond developing further storage capacity – and that, as an incredibly energy-heavy process, it poses its own problems, and reduces resilience should a power failure occur at a time of high water demand. Their concerns are reflected in recommendation (b) to this report.

Councillors also raised concerns around the lack of collaboration between organisations that have responsibility for infrastructure across the region, and the potential ramifications of this lack of collaboration. The example of Dawlish Warren was brought up, with a recent consultation proposing removal of existing coastal defences; Members were concerned that this had not taken into consideration the wider potential impact on other adjacent communities, including on railway infrastructure. These concerns are reflected in recommendation (c).

Problems of sewage, well reported in national media, were also raised; in particular the heightened risk of flooding of a sewage system in response to climate change.

Specifically related to amending the policy, Members proposed that the strategy be altered to incorporate more explicit connection between Devon priorities, and development of strategies, and work being done nationally (for instance, that although South West Water is the water provider for the region, it is involved in national climate response that is not being headed by Devon). Officers agreed that this would be incorporated.

Members also expressed interest in having a future scrutiny session on flood management.

Councillor A Dewhirst
Chair, Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee

Electoral Divisions: All

Contact for Enquiries: Fred Whitehouse, fred.whitehouse@devon.gov.uk

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Nil

The meeting began at 2.33pm and ended at 3.38pm.

ANAEROBIC DIGESTION PLANT VISIT

CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

JUNE 2023



Councillors Alistair Dewhirst and Jacqi Hodgson visited Andigestion in Holsworthy, where food waste from across Devon is collected and processed. Andigestion staff gave them a tour and showed them around the facility, outlining the process in detail and answering questions the councillors had. There were also some engaging discussions around challenges with food waste, and the benefits of anaerobic digestion as an eco-friendly, sustainable source of electricity, gas and potent plant food.

Accompanying the councillors were Chris Chandler (Principal Waste Manager – Operations), Damien Jones (Deputy Director - Transport Operations, Environment & Waste), Tom Scrivens (Waste Management Officer – Operations) and Fred Whitehouse (Scrutiny Support).



THE ANAEROBIC DIGESTION PROCESS

What goes in?

Waste is collected and separated from packaging, which is recycled.

The food waste is then mixed and macerated to a 12mm particle size.

Then it is pasteurised at 70 degrees celsius to kill unwanted bacteria and then cooled to around 40 degrees celsius. Anaerobic bacteria is added, and the food waste is then digested for 60 days.



What comes out?

Gas - made up of approximately 60% methane and 40% carbon dioxide. This can be used in generators to produce electricity. Some is used to power the plant, but most is exported to the national grid. **Biomethane** (near-pure methane) is also injected into the gas grid for direct home usage.

Digestate - a dark, thick liquid bio fertiliser that is packed full of nitrogen, potassium, and phosphate which plants love. Councillor Hodgson took a bottle home for her own garden!

Residual heat - Anaerobic digestion recycles the heat produced back into the process. They also use it to heat water on-site; and also use it to dry woodchip to sell on.

If supply is outstripping demand, then the gas can be stored in a 'biodome' that holds up to 5000 metres cubed of gas. The digestate can also be stored in huge containers, or in 'storage lagoons' over winter when farms have less need for it. Basically, as little as physically possible goes to waste.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Why only food waste?

The AD plant could, in theory, process garden waste – but processing only food waste provides a more 'pumpable sludge'! Practically, garden waste would be harder to process in the pump system.

Challenges

Councillors heard how the Environment Agency were considering implementing new regulations on plastic waste to try and limit it coming into the AD plant in the first place. Staff members were not keen on this, as they were concerned that this would simply disincentivise people to put food in their food waste bin in the first place, and that they had a machine that sorted this anyway, at least allowing the food to be processed in a green way.

Councillors had some interesting discussions around food waste participation across Devon and how to incentivise this. Some interesting programmes of education in primary schools were talked about, with one staff member telling Councillors how his young children were constantly reminding him to recycle!

Good for local businesses

The AD plant runs a service where local business pay a small stipend to receive a food waste bin (or multiple); these are GPS tracked. Their food waste is then collected and brought to the plant where it is weighted (great for collecting data!) and anaerobically digested. This is convenient for local businesses and great for the environment.



Conclusions

Anaerobic digestion offers **obvious and inexpensive benefits** to the gas and energy grid and farmers. Above all, it's **environmentally friendly and completely renewable**, providing clean energy and reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill. Councillors were very thankful for the opportunity to visit the plant.

