

COUNCIL – DECISION NOTICE

5 December 2024

Present:-

Councillors T Adams, M Asvachin, Y Atkinson, S Aves, J Bailey, J Berry, F Biederman, J Bradford, J Brazil, J Brook, P Bullivant, R Chesterton, I Chubb, A Connett, D Cox, R Croad, A Davis, A Dewhurst, H Gent, R Gilbert, I Hall, R Hannaford, J Hart (Chair), J Hawkins, L Hellyer, J Hodgson, S Hughes, S Randall Johnson, S Khan, A Leadbetter, C Leaver, P Maskell (Vice-Chair), D McGeough, J McInnes, J Morrish, R Peart, P Prowse, R Radford, L Samuel, P Sanders, A Saywell, R Scott, D Sellis, C Slade, M Squires, J Trail BEM, P Twiss, C Whitton, J Wilton-Love, M Wrigley and J Yabsley

Apologies:-

Councillors D Barnes, C Channon, G Gribble, M Hartnell, P Henderson, F Letch MBE, I Roome and D Thomas

2 **Minutes**

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and it was duly **SECONDED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024, previously circulated, be signed as a correct record.

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

6 **Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (DTCCA) - Appointments**

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Hughes and **SECONDED** by Councillor Leaver;

(a) that the Members, as outlined above, be appointed to the Combined County Authority, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Combined County Authority and the Audit Committee of the Combined County Authority to hold office until the date of the quadrennial Elections in May 2025; and

(b) that the Chief Executive be authorised to approve such changes to memberships of the Combined County Authority and Committees, as outlined in the Report, as may be notified from time to time by the relevant political group to which those seats have been allocated by the Council.

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

10 **Terms of Reference for Team Devon Joint Committee**

The Leader of the Council **MOVED** and Councillor Davis **SECONDED**

(a) that the Council's membership of and participation in the Team Devon Joint Committee on the basis of the constitution, set out in Appendix 1, be approved, and delegated authority also be given to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to make minor amendments thereto;

(b) that the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Council's representative on the Team Devon Joint Committee;

(c) that the Deputy Leader of the Council be appointed as the substitute for the Leader on the Team Devon Joint Committee; and

(d) that the initial focus of the Team Devon Joint Committee's work on the preparation of a Devon-wide housing strategy and also, in the context of devolution to Devon and Torbay, economic growth, employment and skills be endorsed.

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

12 **Councillor Complaints Process**

The Chair of the Council **MOVED** and Councillor Connett **SECONDED** that the proposed new process for dealing with Councillor Complaints, as outlined in the Report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services (LDS/24/27), and as endorsed by the Standards Committee (14 October 2024) (Minute 59 refers) be approved.

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

13 **Minutes**

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

Appeals Committee	-	2 September, 7 October, 24 October and 26 November 2024
Investment & Pension Fund Committee	-	13 September & 2 December 2024
Procedures Committee	-	19 September & 18 November 2024

(including approval of Minute 79 relating to the adoption of a protocol (attached) to support site visits for the Land and Property Committee, and the associated update to the Constitution)

Audit Committee	-	30 September 2024
Standards Committee <i>(including approval of Minute 59 relating to the adoption of a revised Councillor Complaints process for uploading to the website – dealt with earlier on the agenda)</i>	-	14 October 2024
Development Management Committee	-	23 October 2024
Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Office Conduct Committee	-	7 November 2024
Public Rights of Way Committee	-	14 November 2024
Children’s Scrutiny	-	16 September & 11 November 2024
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny	-	23 September & 21 November 2024
Corporate Infrastructure & Regulatory Services Scrutiny	-	25 September & 28 November 2024.

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

14 Divestment from Pension Scheme (Minute 313 of 5 September 2024)

The motion in the name of Councillor Morrish was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** (outlined below).

that Council;

(a) Expresses solidarity with the innocent people directly affected by the ongoing situation in Israel and Gaza;

(b) Supports the engagement activity undertaken on behalf of the Devon Pension Fund by the Brunel Pension Partnership with companies operating in high risk areas including Gaza and the West Bank to use their influence to promote positive human rights outcomes;

(c) Supports the exclusion from investment portfolios of companies manufacturing controversial weapons (cluster bombs, biological and chemical weapons, antipersonnel landmines);

(d) Affirms the inclusion in the Pension Fund investment strategy of the allocation to the Global Developed Paris Aligned Equity Fund, as part of the commitment to work towards net zero investment portfolios; and

(e) Has officers and members engage in conversations with Brunel representatives and other pool members on ensuring that the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as set out in

paragraph 3.10 of the report to the Investment and Pension Fund Committee, are fully reflected in investment policies.

15 Young Carers Covenant (Minute 314 of 5 September 2024)

The amendment in the name of Councillor McInnes was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED** and subsequently thereafter also **CARRIED** as the substantive motion (outlined below)

that Council;

(a) support the proposed review of the existing contract so that the contract delivers a more dynamic approach to supporting our young carers and their families; so that young carers receive the right help from the right service at the right time;

(b) acknowledge the work of the Place Called Home Board in undertaking their best practice consultation;

(c) support progression of actions through the existing Steering Group reporting into the Place Called Home Board, so that the Council can evidence what it is delivering against the key changes identified by young carers and submit the application for the Covenant once the new contract has been developed and awarded; and

(d) ask the Childrens Scrutiny Committee Members to monitor progress against the actions identified by the Young Carer's Steering Group and update Cabinet next year on the proposal for the new contract.

16 Winning A Better Devolution Deal For Devon (Minute 315 of 5 September 2024)

The motion in the name of Councillor McInnes was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**, outlined below.

that Council;

(a) notes the new Labour Government's decision to finalise the regulations to establish the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority which will give effect to the agreed devolution deal;

(b) acknowledges that on 24 April 2024 full Council agreed the final proposal for a Devon and Torbay Council devolution deal to be submitted to the Secretary of State. The proposal has been fully consulted upon. The proposal was reviewed by two separate governments, and the Council is delighted that it is progressing;

(c) note that the deal represents the start of a positive and productive relationship with Government which can lead to wider and deeper

opportunities. Complementing Torbay and its coastal position, Devon County Council and Torbay Council would encourage the Devon District Forum to consider nominating an urban and a rural District Council representative to sit on the CCA Board once established. Once the Devon and Torbay CCA is established, the Council welcome the prospects of widening the remit of the CCA, to take on additional devolved funding and powers from national government; and

(d) note that the opportunity for Plymouth to join the Devon and Torbay CCA remains open, should Plymouth wish to pursue this.

17 Protecting British Family Farms and Preserving Rural Communities

The Motion (incorporating the amendment as outlined below) was then put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

“This Council **understands the importance and value of farming to the national economy and especially the rural landscape of Devon. Council also** notes with concern the proposed changes to inheritance tax, announced by **the Government** in the **Autumn budget**, which would scrap Agricultural Property Relief (APR). Agricultural Property Relief has been instrumental in allowing British family farms to remain intact across generations, and aiding environmental stewardship.

Devon County Council is proud that it has maintained a County Farms Estate of 3,873 hectares (9,570 acres) which currently comprises 65 fully equipped residential dairy and mixed livestock farms categorised into starter and progression units ranging from 37 to 301 acres. The Farms Estate aims to provide people with their first opportunity to farm but with a view that within a reasonable time frame, they secure an independent livelihood from agriculture.

The Government’s proposed Inheritance Tax change is estimated to impact over 70,000 (1) family farms, leaving the average farming family with a tax bill of at least £24,000 (2), which will force many to sell portions of their land or close entirely, paving the way for corporate ownership over family ownership.

The Council believes that this tax will have severe impacts:

1. Food Security: Selling off land or closing farms will put our national food independence at risk, at a time when global stability is already fragile. British family farms are critical to ensuring a steady supply of homegrown food.

2. Rural Community Stability: Family farms are the foundation of rural Britain, contributing to local jobs, schools, and essential services. Labour’s proposed tax risks destabilising communities, eroding the rural way of life, and causing a negative ripple effect across the countryside.

3. Environmental Stewardship: Farms cover 70% of the UK's land, with family farms playing a leading role in nature recovery, biodiversity, and sustainable land management. The sale and fragmentation of these lands would hinder conservation efforts and undermine environmental initiatives.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Oppose **the Government's** changes to inheritance tax affecting family farms
- Advocate for the exemption of family farms to preserve the UK's food security, rural communities, environmental initiatives.
- **Commit to maintaining the County Council Farms Estate at the current acreage as a minimum.**
- **Where possible, Devon County Council will increase the acreage and number of County Farms, so offering more people a supported route into farming and agriculture.**

This Council urges all Councillors to stand with Britain's family farms, to support our rural communities, and to protect the environment by formally rejecting this proposed "family farm tax" and asks for a cross party letter from Group Leaders of this council to write to the Chancellor expressing the concerns about the inheritance tax policy on farm land over £1m (which will come into effect in 2026), outlining the detrimental effect on the future of farming in Devon, food security, environmental stewardship and the need to sustain rural communities.

18 Control of Local Bus Services

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

19 Children's Social Care Policy Statement.

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