

## **Service Delivery for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity: In Year Briefing**

Briefing Paper by the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This mid-year report for Scrutiny covers the functions of Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity (CoPHEP), i.e. the service areas of Communities (Head of Service: Simon Kitchen), Public Health (Director of Public Health: Virginia Pearson), Planning, Transportation and Environment (Head of Service: Dave Black) and Economy, Enterprise and Skills (Head of Service: Keri Denton).

### **2. Communities**

#### **Head of service: Simon Kitchen**

The Communities team has responsibilities to deliver four key areas of the Council's duties:

- commissioning of Devon's youth services, support around domestic and sexual violence and library and heritage services;
- community safety and co-ordination of related work and partnerships; and statutory co-ordination to preventing extremism and radicalisation;
- community development across the county and its links to the Council's priorities; and
- work to support a range of communities including the Armed Forces Covenant partnership; the resettlement of Syrian families, gypsies and travellers and through Active Devon accessing and increasing physical activity across the County.

The team has made significant progress across each of these four areas during the past year alongside our commissioned and wider partners. The work of the team is diverse and often complex requiring a wide set of skills, networks and resources. The commissioning in these areas has been innovative and has brought additional national funding, interest and recognition. This report has outlined four examples of the team's work this year.

The Council's crowdfunding pilot, in partnership with most of Devon's District Councils and Devon and Cornwall Police, is understood to be the first of its kind nationally in drawing together such a large partnership of organisations and geography. In its first three months of deployment, hundreds of ideas have been posted on crowdfunder.uk, many being supported to deliver new and innovative local projects across Devon. Members have already used some Locality funding to support homelessness work, local economic development, and projects to promote physical activity, local events and culture, which in turn have each been funded by either private or commercial donations.

There has been recent good work in partnership to consider the needs of the Gypsy and traveller community across Devon. There remains an ongoing shortage of sites to meet

the needs of the Gypsy and traveller population often resulting in unlawful encampments and tensions with the wider community. Resources and expertise are being increasingly shared across partners to assess encampments, solutions and action as required and there is ongoing momentum and shared commitment to consider new or alternative sites, both permanent and temporary in the future.

The Council is leading work in partnership to consider emerging threats around extremism and risks to people as a result of gang and knife crime; county lines and modern slavery. There is growing understanding around vulnerabilities and increased risks to some young people and people with disabilities around crime and being drawn into extremism. The Council's response and focus, in collaboration with partners and communities, will need to continue to evolve to reflect these risks and changes in society.

December's Full Council will see the recommitment to the Armed Forces Covenant for Devon which will outline the Council's work and commitment to support serving men and women and their families, veterans, cadets and reservists. The Council has recently been recognised for its leadership and role in local employment within the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and will be seeking 'Gold' status within this scheme over the next 12 months. The Council continues to lead and facilitate an active Armed Forces partnership of over 70 organisations.

### **3. Public Health**

**Chief Officer/Head of service: Virginia Pearson**

Public Health works across all strategic areas. Starting with the joint strategic needs assessment, priority areas are identified within Devon. These can be around any of the strategic objectives. Use of evidence contributes to making good decisions, and senior members of the public health team sit on the Health and Wellbeing and Safeguarding Boards and other strategic partnerships such as the Safer Devon Partnership.

Public Health, through the work with children and commissioning of the public health nursing service contribute to ensuring children have the best start in life.

Work with NHS partners across the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) has also contributed to supporting individuals to remain independent.

Public Health is on track to deliver the budget as agreed and currently forecasting a small underspend. There have been some areas of overspend including within sexual health services and £100,000 to extend the Early Help for Mental Health service in partnership with the CCGs until April 2019 when the new children's services contract begins. There have been some additional costs within the substance misuse contract, but these have been offset by underspends in NHS Health Checks, obesity, and smoking and tobacco work, which are dependent on demand. There have been a number of staff vacancies/secondments and where these have occurred there have been some gaps between outgoing and incoming staff and the opportunity to review staff skill mix/grade which has enabled some additional cost savings.

### **4. Planning, Transportation and Environment**

**Head of service: Dave Black**

Key activity in resilience is several schemes focused on improved flood protection at Modbury, Uplyme, Bideford plus programmed schemes at Ivybridge, Sidmouth, Exeter

and Cullompton. The School Place Planning Team have delivered (or onsite) 7 new schools, Charlton Lodge, Trinity (Exeter) Kingsteignton, Okehampton, Sherford, Loddiswell and Marland also aimed at improved resilience and prosperity. The Planning Team are working with the Local Planning Authorities to ensure existing and emerging development plans are accompanied by the necessary strategic infrastructure such as education, transport, flood, health etc together with a funding stream.

Promoting sustainable travel and access to the countryside aims to improve opportunities for healthy lifestyles. New cycle routes have been delivered in Newton Abbot and Exeter plus plans to complete the Wray Valley Trail. In addition, there continues to be a programme of independent travel training for children with special needs. Working with partners and the local community to maintain momentum with the Cranbrook Healthy New Town programme.

The service is proactive in the development of Sherford and Cranbrook. In addition, there are two National Productivity Investment Funds and new bus services which are focused on enhancing prosperity of these key growth areas. Working with the Local Nature Partnership and other partners for the promotion and sustainability of Devon's Natural Capital.

The North Devon Link project and the A382 scheme are key areas where there are planned major improvements to connectivity. The recent reopening of the A379 Slapton Line 8 months after the damage caused by the "beast from the east" demonstrates how the combined resources of the Planning, Environment team and EDG can proactively assist in the delivery of a very sensitive highway scheme.

There are a series of initiatives focused on driver and cyclist use of the road network that are aimed at improving road safety. Examples of this are the "Learn to Live" initiative where we work with partners to promote a greater recognition of the potential hazards of driving to younger drivers. There continues to be a programme of accident data analysis and investigation to better inform future design criteria.

The current forecast is a break-even position for Planning, Transportation and Environment. There are no planned significant variations. There are concerns with Transport Coordination where there are a number of pressures on delivery of services as some of the operators and services are struggling under the weight of increased legislation, wage and operating inflation.

## **5. Economy, Enterprise and Skills**

### **Head of service: Keri Denton**

The Economy, Enterprise and Skills Service has supported the Council's strategic objectives. Set out below are some of the highlights and achievements:

The Service has delivered a community learning programme through learn Devon with a focus on supporting those furthest from the labour market. Courses to improve confidence building support, numeracy, literacy and digital skills have formed the primary support offer often being delivered in partnership, for example with Housing Associations. Learn Devon working with colleagues from Adult Social Care and Public Health has also supported placements for individuals with disabilities.

The Service is working through a range of projects to stimulate business growth securing external funding to deliver a Growth Support Programme aimed at small and micro businesses and a dedicated programme to support the social enterprise sector. The Buy

With Confidence approved trader scheme operated under the joint Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards Service is helping to level the playing field for businesses whilst maintaining consumer confidence.

Investment in Okehampton East Park continues supporting expanding local businesses. The Service has secured additional grant funding to take forward a new Enterprise Centre at Roundswell in Barnstaple and planning permission is expected shortly. Three new grow-on buildings are nearing completion at the Exeter Science Park.

Working in partnership with partners across the Heart of the South West to promote a number of key strategic priorities continues. A Productivity Strategy has been produced which sets out an ambition to double the size of the economy and support prosperity for all. The County Council is also supporting the establishment of the Great South West partnership with Cornwall, Dorset and Wiltshire focusing on rural economic development. Key projects we are engaged in working with the LEP includes the launch of a new Careers Hub, working with 60 secondary schools and Further Education colleges to improve careers advice and guidance to young people and the first of two national pilots to create a Digital Skills Partnership.

Awareness raising activity has taken place to support vulnerable adults of scams and door step crime, with the joint Trading Standards team working with Adult Social Care colleagues and has helped reduce health problems.

The Service has operated within its set budget, and has maximised external funding and other sources of incomes wherever possible. Examples are Innovate UK funding of circa £60,000 to pilot rural business support and £300k to support adult retraining working with Department for Education. There are no current significant variations from planned spend.

Dr Virginia Pearson  
Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity

## **Electoral Divisions: All**

Cabinet Member for Policy, Corporate and Asset Management: Councillor John Hart

Cabinet Member for Resources Management: Councillor Stuart Barker

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Services and Cabinet Liaison for Exeter:  
Councillor Andrew Leadbetter

Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools: Councillor James McInnes

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development and Waste: Councillor Andrea Davis

Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills: Councillor Rufus Gilbert

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services:  
Councillor Roger Croad

Cabinet Member for Organisational Development and Digital Transformation: Councillor Barry  
Parsons

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
Nil		