

NOTICES OF MOTION

Report of the County Solicitor

Recommendation: that consideration be given to any recommendations to be made to the County Council in respect of the Notices of Motion set out hereunder having regard to the relevant factual briefing/background papers and any other representations made to the Cabinet.

~~~~~

The Notices of Motion submitted to the County Council by the Councillors shown below have been referred to the Cabinet in accordance with Standing Order 8(2) - for consideration, reference to another committee or to make a recommendation back to the Council.

A factual 'Briefing Note/Position Statement' prepared by the relevant Head of Service is also included, to facilitate the Cabinet's discussion of each Notice of Motion.

### **(a) Public Health (Councillor Connett)**

*Devon County Council notes:*

*\* the vital role played by Public Health in helping Devon residents to lead healthier lives by, for example, avoiding diseases, unwanted pregnancies, support to stop smoking, and eating better;*

*\* with grave concern the announcement of a further £85m cut to the Public Health Budget, as one of 12 Ministerial statements published by the Government on the last day of the Parliamentary term before Christmas, only weeks after the Secretary of State for Health described prevention as his priority; and*

*\* this is on top of cuts to the Public Health budget announced since Summer 20*

*\* 15, now totalling just over £600 million.*

*This Council meeting further notes:*

*\* the comments of the Health Foundation, who described these cuts as a false economy and who have calculated that an additional £3bn a year is required to reverse the impact of government cuts to the Public Health grant to date and have called for this increased budget to be allocated according to need; and*

*\* the warnings from the King's Fund that such cuts could put pressure on councils to cut non-statutory sexual health prevention services, which could lead to more sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies.*

*\* This Council believes that our Public Health team perform vital work to help keep the residents of Devon healthy and to avoid more costly admissions to hospital and other*

*interventions by our NHS and that this should be properly funded by central Government.*

*This Council meeting resolves to:*

- thank our Director of Public Health and her team for the great work they do across Devon despite continued financial challenges;*
- condemn the Government's use of the time just before Christmas to make announcements such as this;*
- call on the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member to consider carefully the required cuts to services will be implemented; and*
- ask the Leader and Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Health, calling on the Government to deliver increased investment in Public Health and to support a sustainable health and social care system by taking a "prevention first" approach*

**Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity**

**Background**

The Comprehensive Spending Review announced the Government's intention to reduce the public health grant to local authorities over five years. In 2015/16 the grant was subject to a 6.4% clawback, in year, and it is from this already reduced baseline that further reductions would be applied. The impact nationally is a reduction of 2.2% in 2016/17, a further 2.5% in 2017/18 and 2.6% in each of the two following years.

The 2019/20 allocation for Devon County is £26,786,000. This is equivalent to £34 per head of population, which is significantly less than the national average of £59 per head and places Devon near the bottom of all local authorities in the country in terms of public health grant per head and the second lowest in the South West. The highest is City of London with £172 per head. The settlement represents a significant reduction in cash terms which continues to fall as costs such as salaries increase, and other cost pressures arise for example increased demand for sexual health services and increasing costs for medicines.

A savings plan to deliver the necessary financial savings was agreed by the Council on 18th February 2016 and this has been implemented and supported by impact assessments, action was taken to end contracts where feasible and considering mitigation to minimise impact. Many of the funded programmes that are left are mandated and commissioned as long-term contracts which leaves no flexibility in public health spend. Devon County Council has been very supportive of the work of public health and its financial position.

In making the savings over time, the priority for Devon County Council has been to protect public health services and programmes for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Devon, and for children and young people, but some very difficult decisions had to be made that have had an impact on other public health services, and we have tried to mitigate these as much as possible. Having said that, Public Health Devon continues to work with partners and stakeholders to improve the

health of the population and tackle health inequalities and there has been significant investment to the area for example, the Sport England Delivery Pilot for Exeter and Cranbrook and several grants awarded for new programmes which will improve health outcomes for the residents of Devon.

### **Issues raised by the Motion**

The issues raised are recognised and Devon County Council would support and wholly endorse the importance of prevention and early intervention and a need to invest in this approach. The Council has sought to minimise the impact of the budget reductions over time in a managed way so that there has not had to be cuts to significant services such as mandated sexual health services and 0-19 Public Health Nursing.

However, the Council recognises that further cuts to the budget or increases to costs will reduce the ability to continue to maintain all services at current levels. To further mitigate this and to take the opportunity that arises from the NHS commitment to prevention public health and colleagues will seek to maximise the impact of interventions for prevention in the NHS 10 year forward plan. For example, there are commitments to provide support to stop smoking in acute settings which will bring extra capacity to stop smoking services.

Overall Devon County Council residents achieve comparatively good health outcomes in many areas (for example smoking rates have reduced to 13.5%) it is recognised for some indicators and for some groups this is not always the case.

If there were to be any service changes as a result of budget restrictions, these would be impact assessed and reported to Cabinet as part of normal procedures.

### **(b) Boniface Patron Saint of Devon (Councillor Way)**

*There is increasing interest in Crediton-born Winfrith, who became Saint Boniface, being recognised as Patron Saint of Devon. The Boniface Link Association is a secular organisation campaigning for the adoption of Boniface as Patron Saint of Devon. With links to Fulda in Germany and Dokkum in Holland, this initiative has gained letters of support from many churches and prominent civic figures from across the county.*

*Devon's most famous native-born saint, Boniface was born in the Crediton area circa 680AD. He is highly regarded for his missionary work across a large part of Europe. A significant historical figure he is often referred to as the First European. He studied at the monastery at Exeter, then at the monastery at Nursling, near Southampton.*

*In 716 he set sail to convert the tribes in Frisia (now Friesland) in the Netherlands to Christianity. Subsequent work in Frisia and Hesse gave him a reputation as an outstanding missionary and administrator. In 722, Pope Gregory made him Bishop of all Germany East of the Rhine. Much of his later work laid the foundations of Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire 50 years later. In 754 he was martyred at Dokkum and buried at Fulda in Hesse.*

*The national shine to Boniface is at the Roman Catholic church at Crediton and the many references to him in Crediton's Parish church attract visitors to the town. A blue plaque can be seen at Tolleys, Crediton traditionally regarded as his birth place. An impressive statue of St Boniface is located at Newcombes Meadow.*

*Proud of Devon's heritage and recognising Boniface as a significant historic figure this Council supports the initiative to adopt Saint Boniface as Patron Saint of Devon.*

### **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the County Solicitor**

'Saint' comes from the Latin word sanctus, meaning 'holy'. More particularly a saint is usually defined as a Christian who has shown heroic virtue in some respect. A 'saint', is a Christian whom the Church knows and agrees has lived and died faithfully. A 'canonized' saint, recognised by the Church, does not differ really from many unknown saints except in recognition and therefore, the feast of All Saints' Day (November 1st) honors not only the canonized saints, but the countless men and women of faith who died in obscurity.

The Roman Catholic Church has an elaborate, formal, canonization process for investigating claims of sanctity, yet for the Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Catholic Churches the process of canonization is much less formal. The Church of England has no mechanism for canonising saints and avoids the use of the prenominal title "Saint" with reference to uncanonised individuals.

The practice of adopting patron saints goes back to the building of the first public churches in the Roman Empire.

The patron saints of churches, and more broadly of regions and countries, have generally been chosen because of some connection of that saint to that place – (preached the Gospel and / or died there / relics transferred there).

Patron saints tend to differ in importance from the general calendar of saints because they are, or become, cultural icons as well as religious figures.

In relation to St Boniface, the idea of St. Boniface as Patron Saint of Devon originated with a group in South Zeal who suggested that St. Boniface could be adopted as Patron Saint of Devon and his feast day, 5th June, should also be celebrated as Devonshire Day. Boniface believed that church and state should work together and was dedicated to a peaceful co-existence among the peoples with whom he worked.

The Boniface Link Association (Crediton) believe that celebrating St. Boniface as Devon's patron saint could celebrate its Saxon heritage, to encourage tourism and support the economy.

The idea of Boniface as Patron Saint of Devon has gained the support of all the main churches and letters of support have been received from the Bishop of Plymouth, Bishop of Exeter, Senior Pastor at Crediton Congregational Church, Crediton Methodist Church and Rector of the Orthodox Parish of the Holy Prophet Elias.

The medal of St Boniface is conferred personally by the Bishop of Exeter in recognition of their outstanding service to the Church and wider community. This celebrates faithful and sacrificial service, generous self-giving, and imaginative and innovative work in response to the commission to make new disciples.

It is understood that Boniface is honoured in the national church calendar on 5th June and most especially in Crediton. The Bishop of Exeter has also said that in the coming months, he shall be in a position to make an announcement about an initiative that honours and commemorates St Boniface.

This Report has no specific equality, environmental, legal or public health implications that will not be assessed and appropriate safeguards and/or actions taken or included within the detailed policies or practices or requirements in relation to the matters referred to herein.

JAN SHADBOLT

[Electoral Divisions: All]

**Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers**

Contact for Enquiries: K Strahan

Tel No: 01392 382264      Room: G31

| <b><u>Background Paper</u></b> | <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>File Reference</u></b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Nil                            |                    |                              |