

**QUESTIONS TO THE  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBERS**

Thursday 20 February 2020

**1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD  
Re: Okehampton Sunday Rail Service**

Will the County Council continue to support the 2020 Summer Sunday service to Okehampton?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS**

The announcement that Dartmoor Railway has gone into administration makes it difficult to offer anything definitive at this stage; however, the County Council has made provision for supporting the 2020 Summer Sunday service between Exeter and Okehampton.

**2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD  
Re: Appledore Shipyard**

Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on plans to reopen Appledore Shipyard, to include:

- do we now have a date for reopening?
- is the Cabinet Member aware that the Ferguson Marine shipyard in Scotland was nationalised at the end of 2019, to stay open, and is due to receive £49 million pounds of public investment according to budget documents?
- does the Cabinet Member agree that if no viable private sector solution can be found to keep Appledore Shipyard open, that it should be renationalised and given government related work to underpin any other work streams?
- Furthermore, does he also agree, that Appledore Shipyard, once renationalised, should also receive parity of funding in line with the shipyard in Scotland to make sure that it becomes a hub for innovation and best practice?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR GILBERT**

The commitment and political will from Devon County Council is not in question when it comes to re-opening Appledore Shipyard. We know how important it is to the local community, and we're as keen as everyone to get a deal over the line as soon as possible and get the shipyard up and running. We have worked extremely hard with partners and local MP Geoffrey Cox to get to this point and find potential new owners for the shipyard. Regular engagement with Government over how public investment can be secured to support the re-opening of the yard remains ongoing. Critically, we wish to achieve a sustainable and viable future for the yard and secure long term employment and economic benefits for the local area.

**3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD  
Re: Police Community Support Officers**

Can the Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Panel Member please brief Council on the recent decision to cut the number of Police Community Support Officers in Devon and Cornwall? Are

there measures in place to allow PCSO to become Police Officers and do we have any indication how many we will lose in the Devon County Council area and in which communities?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

The Cabinet Member will provide a verbal response.

**4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**  
**Re: Betting Companies access to Children's personal details**

Betting companies have been given access to a database containing the personal details of millions of children and young people, the Times newspaper reports. It is said the Learning Records Service database, intended to provide schools and other education providers with information about children's educational achievements, had been shared beyond the agreement made with the Department for Education resulting in gambling firms being able to use it.

Is Devon County Council aware of this breach? Has it led to the data of any children and young people in Devon being disclosed to gambling firms or any one else without proper authority? What checks will Devon County Council make to ensure data it provides about children and young people in the County to the Government or any other organisation are kept safe?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

The Council understands that this nationally reported alleged data protection breach is currently being investigated by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). To-date, Devon County Council has not been notified as part of these investigations.

This alleged data protection breach concerns an information system that is operated by the Education Skills Funding Agency and is commissioned by the DfE. Investigations into this alleged data protection breach are continuing. Until the conclusion of these investigations, the council is unable to confirm whether any data regarding Devon school pupils, might have been accessed.

In this instance, the Learner Records Service holds information from a variety of sources. The Council undertakes a Data Protection Impact Assessment before commencing any new initiative that involves the sharing of large quantities of personal data. This ensures that the privacy risks associated with any new initiative are documented, and mitigating controls are put in place to manage these risks during the life of the initiative. The Council also has a security assessment process to ensure that those who we contract with to hold personal data, are able to provide the highest levels of assurance over the security arrangements they have in place to safeguard this data.

**5. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**  
**Re: Children and young people in care**

Please confirm how many children and young people were in the care of Devon County Council for each month from January 2018 to the end of January 2020.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

Month	Number of Children Looked After	Placement outside DCC
31-Jan-18	708	177
28-Feb-18	706	182
31-Mar-18	695	175
30-Apr-18	710	177
31-May-18	708	171
30-Jun-18	705	168
31-Jul-18	727	179
31-Aug-18	715	177
30-Sep-18	725	173
31-Oct-18	723	172
30-Nov-18	733	179
31-Dec-18	746	185
31-Jan-19	757	182
28-Feb-19	750	178
31-Mar-19	750	180
30-Apr-19	768	190
31-May-19	764	190
30-Jun-19	776	183
31-Jul-19	790	193
31-Aug-19	789	196
30-Sep-19	787	186
31-Oct-19	786	192
30-Nov-19	762	184
31-Dec-19	762	179
31-Jan-20	768	182

**6. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**  
**Re: Children in Care outside Devon**

How many children and young people in each of those months were placed in care setting outside of the Devon County Council area?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

The number of children and young people placed outside of the Devon county council area is included in the table provided in response to question 5.

Currently, 23% of children in the care of Devon county council are placed outside Devon. This compares very favourably to an England average rate of 41% and a Statistical Neighbour rate of 26%.

There are many good reasons why children may be placed outside Devon, and most often that will be because of the appropriateness of the provision to meet their particular assessed need.

**7. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**

**Re: Distances from Devon**

In each of those months, what was the furthest distance a child or young person was placed from the Devon County Council area?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

We do not currently capture data in a way that makes producing an answer to this question on a month-by-month basis possible within the timescales before full council.

**8. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**

**Re: Social Worker Visits**

In each case, has Devon County Council ensured it met its obligations for a social worker to visit the child or young person wherever they were in care?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

Visits by social workers is a statutory requirement and the service assures itself that it meets its obligations through a range of different measures, including:

- A weekly report on visits is generated and circulated to managers in the service.
- Monitoring by Independent Reviewing Officers (with an escalation policy in place if required).
- Quality Assurance of providers
- Performance and management information reports.
- Supervision of staff.

During the recent Ofsted inspection, inspectors fed back during one of the daily update meetings that children placed outside Devon received regular visits from their social workers and similarly were well supported by the Virtual School too.

**9. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**

**Re: Budgets for highways drainage**

For each of the financial years from 2009/10 to date please report on the approved budget for highways drainage and the actual spend at year end.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

	Budget £	Spend £
2009/10	6,015,153.00	4,705,652.98
2010/11	5,701,805.00	4,577,578.89

2011/12	5,094,219.00	4,767,783.65
2012/13	6,726,514.00	5,562,340.29
2013/14	6,610,982.00	4,523,489.49
2014/15	6,555,735.00	5,552,195.68
2015/16	5,222,735.00	5,231,220.00
2016/17	5,337,527.00	4,459,497.87
2017/18	5,136,631.00	4,044,566.61
2018/19	6,897,893.00	7,342,878.01

**10. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**

**Re: Road Warden Scheme**

For each of the years since the start of the Road Warden scheme, please report on the number of Road Wardens who have completed the Chapter 8 Training, and renewed their authorisation when it expired?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

The chapter 8 qualification is valid for 5 years. The number of Parish and Town council representatives who have received the training are as follows:

Year	Representatives
2014	6
2015	62
2016	52
2017	68
2018	20
2019	22
2020	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>237</b>

We are starting to receive enquiries from and have contacted those whose qualification has expired. Training will be arranged when numbers enable it to be cost effective to do so.

**11. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**

**Re: Potholes**

Is the County Council aware of how many potholes have been filled each year by community road wardens? If so, please give the number for each year.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

Whilst we do not have a robust record of the number of potholes filled by community road wardens, we do have a record of the amount of pothole repair material supplied to each parish in 25kg tubs, totalling 971 tubs:

Organisation	Date of order	Tubs ordered
Bishops Clyst Parish Council		35
Lustleigh Parish Council	13-Jan-20	52

Shaldon Parish Council	13-Nov-19	30
Kenn Parish Council	08-Jan-18	26
Thornbury Hamlets Council	22-Mar-18	52
Plymtree Parish Council	16-Apr-18	8
Thornbury Hamlets Council	22-May-18	52
All Saints Parish Council	24-May-18	10
Ashton Parish Council	24-May-18	2
Chardstock Parish Council	24-May-18	10
Newton Poppleford & Harpford Parish Council	24-May-18	10
Poltimore Parish Council	24-May-18	10
Shute Parish Council	24-May-18	20
North Bovey Conservation Group	09-Jul-19	52
Great Torrington Town Council	11-Jun-18	20
Winkleigh Parish Council	11-Jun-18	6
Bere Ferrers Parish Council	28-Jun-18	5
Modbury Parish Council	02-Oct-19	52
Modbury Parish Council	06-Sep-18	52
Horrabridge Parish council	06-Nov-18	34
Bradford & Cookbury Parish Council	19-Dec-19	52
Winkleigh Parish Council	25-Apr-19	12
Whimple Parish Council	05-Feb-20	52
Rattery Parish Council	05-Feb-20	52
Axminster Town Council	13-Dec-18	10
Plymtree Parish Council	18-Dec-18	10
Ilfracombe Town Council	18-Dec-18	34
Nymet Rowland Parish Council	04-Feb-19	4
Sheepwash Parish Council	04-Feb-19	10
Thornbury Hamlets Council	04-Feb-19	25
Winkleigh Parish Council	04-Feb-19	6
Bradford & Cookbury Parish Council	12-Mar-19	52
Lustleigh Parish Council	13-Mar-19	52
North Bovey Conservation Group	13-Mar-19	52
Thorverton & Brampford Speke	11-Apr-19	10

971

However, as a Road Warden myself I have filled in excess of 125 potholes in my area.

**12. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**  
**Re: Number of potholes reported/repared**

For the year 2013/14 and each subsequent year to date, please confirm how many potholes were reported/known to the County Council and how many were repaired.

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

Potholes reported:

2013/2014 – 80210  
2014/2015 – 43886  
2015/2016 – 55853  
2016/2017 – 48281  
2017/2018 – 72906  
2018/2019 – 50930

Potholes repaired

2013/2014 – 72541  
2014/2015 – 43701  
2015/2016 – 55806  
2016/2017 – 48177  
2017/2018 – 72338  
2018/2019 – 50309

**13. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**  
**Re: Speed Awareness Signs**

Please set out the process through which Parish and Town Councils can install flashing speed awareness signs in their communities

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

DCC welcomes approaches from Communities interested in funding and operating their own VAS (Vehicle Activated Signs) and has worked with several Parish Councils who have funded the purchase of their own, including Kennford, Chudleigh, Sticklepath and Wembury.

VAS have been shown to be effective in reducing vehicles speeds when sited appropriately and can also be an important element of a co-ordinated approach to speed management in Communities.

VAS are ideally sited where there is evidence of a speeding problem as deploying them where they are rarely activated is not good value for money. Therefore VAS (including those funded by Parish or Town Councils) would be considered following a SCARF (Speed Compliance Action Review Forum) assessment indicating that VAS are appropriate.

Where Parish or Town Councils wish to fund a VAS, the Authority would then engage to agree;

- Design (to ensure that the signs communicate the appropriate message to drivers)
- Location (to ensure that they are seen by approaching drivers at an appropriate distance, and can accurately detect the speed of those vehicles)
- Funding (including costs relating to purchase and installation)
- Insurance (the PC will be responsible for insuring the unit against claims for Injury, Accident or Damage)
- Public Liability Cover (the PC will be responsible for providing cover, at least £5m is recommended)

The Authority would facilitate purchase and installation if required, and where reliant on mains power cover those ongoing costs.

**14. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**  
**Re: Care Fees and Land Registry**

In order to secure the payment of care fees, how many residential properties has Devon County Council registered its interests in with the Land Registry?

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

As of 12th February 2020, the Council has registered an interest with the Land Registry Office on 101 properties.

### 15. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

#### Re: Care Fees owed to DCC

For each of the years 2016/17 onwards, to date, how much is owed to Devon County Council for care fees and the number of people the fees relate to.

## REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

As of 1st April 2016:

### Residential Care:

£36,852,207: Charges raised in the preceding 12 months

£13,361,210: Total fees owed of which:

£8,027,845: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Secured

£2,286,158: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Unsecured

3,805: Number of chargeable clients at the time

### Community Based Care:

£6,317,378: Charges raised in the preceding 12 months

**£927,068: Total fees owed of which:**

£213,244: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Unsecured

2,575: Number of chargeable clients at the time

As of 1st April 2017:

### Residential Care:

£39,285,942: Charges raised in the preceding 12 months

**£14,290,414: Total fees owed of which:**

£8,500,823: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Secured

£2,741,764: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Unsecured

3,767: Number of chargeable clients at the time

### Community Based Care:

£7,858,044: Charges raised in the preceding 12 months

**£1,210,405: Total fees owed of which:**

£311,942: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Unsecured

2,954: Number of chargeable clients at the time

As of 1st April 2018:

### Residential Care:

£38,105,952: Charges raised in the preceding 12 months

**£14,407,739: Total fees owed of which:**

£9,000,212: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Secured

£2,534,023: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Unsecured



3,533: Number of chargeable clients at the time

**Community Based Care:**

£9,280,255: Charges raised in the preceding 12 months

**£1,520,238: Total fees owed of which:**

£443,717: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Unsecured

3,164: Number of chargeable clients at the time

As of 1st April 2019:

**Residential Care:**

£38,383,450: Charges raised in the preceding 12 months

**£15,512,199: Total fees owed of which:**

£9,597,473: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Secured

£2,701,875: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Unsecured

3,584: Number of chargeable clients at the time

**Community Based Care:**

£10,608,453: Charges raised in the preceding 12 months

**£1,931,961: Total fees owed of which:**

£552,692: Fees over 12 weeks old owed to DCC and Unsecured

3,422: Number of chargeable clients at the time

NB: It is difficult to secure fees (as the law prevents this) for Community Based Care client's because any property owned usually continues to be lived in by the person.

**16. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT**

**Re: Libraries Unlimited**

How much financial support and officer time (expressed financially) has Devon County Council provided outside of its contract to Libraries Unlimited in each of the years since Libraries Unlimited was established?

**REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD**

Since Libraries Unlimited was established in April 2016, the Council has provided financial support outside of their annual contract value as a one-off payment in 2016/17 of £450,000 and a one-off payment in 2018/19 of £55,000. The Council does not record data on officer time provided.

**17. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SHAW**

**Re: Flooding in Colyton**

A substantial flat section of the road between Colyton and Offwell at Holmebush/Suttons Cross has been flooded extensively throughout the last two winters (and at other times when there has been significant rainfall). Vehicles have got into difficulties on several occasions, and locals make long detours to avoid the flood (the road is the main route from Seaton and Colyton to Sutton Tip). The matter has been raised repeatedly by four different parish councils, and at four consecutive meetings of the Seaton and Colyton Traffic Group between July 2019 and January 2020. I have most recently been informed that the landowner of an adjacent field, who the Neighbourhood Highways Officer has written to, is responsible for preventing the resolution of the problem. Will the Council now take urgent action, including whatever is necessary to make other parties fulfil their responsibilities, to make this road safe and passable?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

The site is drained from a single gully with an outlet pipe across private land. It appears the section on private land, which was piped approximately 40 years ago, is currently blocked and has limited access.

The land owner has been written to and spoken with in regard to their responsibilities by the local Highways Officer. The landowner has since undertaken some remedial measures to remove water from the road. The local highways Officer is continuing to liaise with them to support their works to clear the drainage system in order for DCC to undertake patching works to repair the surface.

#### **18. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT Re: Clearway at Haldon**

Why is Devon County Council retreating from creating the promised Clearway at Haldon which the County Council said was necessary as a result of the development and attractions provided at Haldon Forest park by the Forestry Commission?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES**

When the Clearway Order for Haldon was published, a number of objections were received to the proposal. As the effect of a Clearway prohibits loading and unloading the Order cannot be made without holding a Public Inquiry. As this would be costly, the proposal is being re-considered with alternatives being investigated. I would be content to arrange a meeting with officers to update you as to progress.

#### **19. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR SHAW Re: Axe Beacon Federation**

Will the Cabinet member explain the Council's role in the decision to remove Colyton Primary School from the Axe Beacon Federation, which has resulted in the Federation governors' proposal to dissolve the Federation and to transfer the three other primary schools, Seaton, Shute and Kilmington, to academy trusts based outside East Devon?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES**

In October 2019 Colyton Primary School was judged inadequate at an Ofsted inspection. This judgement means that their pathway is mapped out through government legislation, which requires that any school judged to be inadequate is converted into an academy as part of a multi-academy trust. The governing body has ensured that an interim partnership arrangement with a strong Devon MAT is in place for Colyton.

The impact of this judgement on the three other Federation schools, however, was that in order for them to focus on their own improvement journey as maintained schools, they have had to dissolve the federation.

Supported by the Local Authority, the new governing board has worked tirelessly to stabilise leadership across all the schools and secured strong partnerships between the remaining schools and other high performing schools within the maintained sector. The opportunity to collaborate with other schools who have a robust record of school improvement is a very positive step and will drive better outcomes for the children whilst staying within the maintained family of schools.

#### **20. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR PROWSE Re: Working from Home Scheme**

The Working from Home scheme:

- When was it introduced?
- How many staff take the opportunity to access the scheme?
- Does the Leader agree that if the scheme was further promoted this is another example of this Council's commitment to engage staff and others to contribute in a positive way towards our target of being carbon neutral thus having positive outcomes on our climate change activities?

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR PARSONS**

Devon County Council has a number of working policies and practices that enable and encourage staff to work flexibly and agilely which can result in staff reducing the amount of travel they undertake for work purposes, because not all roles are suitable for homeworking. These include:

Devon County Council's Corporate Flexible Working Policy which was introduced in April 2009 and applies to all DCC Staff, including Centrally Employed Teachers but excluding All Staff in Schools. The Council recognises, and supports, the benefits of offering flexible working in its retention of staff, together with the importance of helping its employees balance their work and home life by offering flexible working arrangements that enable them to balance their working life with other priorities, which could include parental and other caring responsibilities; their wellbeing; life-long learning; voluntary work; leisure activities and other interests. In turn it recognises that staffing levels must at all times remain in line with the demands of the business.

Devon County Council's Health and Safety Arrangements for Teleworking. Teleworking is a way of employees using information and communication technology (ICT) to work away from their regular base. Using ICT allows employees to occasionally be based at home, in other locations or mobile such as from vehicles.

Devon County Council's Formal Homeworking policy. Formal homeworking can apply to full and part-time employees and is where work is carried out at home for the entire employee's contractual hours with the home designated in the contract of employment as the employee's work base for tax purposes. Decisions on the appropriateness of homeworking will always be made on an individual basis as not all roles, individuals or homes will be suitable for homeworking.

Phil Norrey, Chief Executive, supports the view that 'Our need to work in new and different ways has opened up a variety of opportunities for individuals and teams within DCC. Now is the time to embrace these opportunities to help us work more flexibly for the benefit of all'.

The Council has invested in technology which gives all staff the opportunity to work effectively from any location where connectivity is available including home. All DCC offices are equipped with Wi-Fi and technology enabling staff to attend meetings virtually which significantly reduces the need to travel for business meetings. Inside Devon (the weekly Council newsletter) is used to highlight good practice, good examples of home or remote working and encourage staff to explore the options open to them.

Arrangements for these flexible working options are made at a local level between staff and their line managers meaning the numbers of staff taking up these arrangements are not monitored centrally.

#### **21. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE Re: Budget Provisions**

Would the Cabinet Member for Resources Management please set out by headline service area the change in real terms in the value of the budget provision for 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 and for 2020/21 compared to the budget for 2009/10.

#### **REPLY BY COUNCILLOR BARKER**

The change in real terms in the value of the budget for 2020/21 compared to 2019/20:

	<b>Net Change from 2019/20 to 2020/21 in cash terms</b>	<b>real terms net change from 2019/20 to 2020/21, adjusting for RPI at 2.2% (Dec 2019)</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Adult Care and Health	+ 10.0%	+ 7.7%
Children's	+ 8.5%	+ 6.2%
Community, Public Health, Environment & Prosperity	+ 2.4%	+ 0.2%
Corporate	+ 7.1%	+ 4.8%
Cross Council Savings Strategies	- 87.1%	- 87.4%
Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste	+ 5.1%	+ 2.8%
<b>Total Service Budgets</b>	<b>+ 8.7%</b>	<b>+ 6.3%</b>

The change in real terms in the value of the budget for 2020/21 compared to 2009/10:

Due to restructures and funding changes it is not possible to show this by service area and even using the overall position is not possible to compare like with like. However, RPI over this time has increased by 37% and service budgets have increased by 19.3%.