

## 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.

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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 where appropriate or available, to facilitate the Cabinet's discussion of each Notice of Motion.

### **(a) Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police Merger (Councillor Atkinson)**

*Since 2015, Devon & Cornwall Police and Dorset Police (DC&D) have been working together through a 'Strategic Alliance'. Operational police departments such as Operations, Roads Policing and Prevention as well as 17 other business areas are already operating across the three counties with a further 11 departments currently going through changes which will see them aligned.*

*The Chief Constables of DC&D Police recently announced their intention to explore a voluntary merger of the two forces. There are no recent examples of successful voluntary mergers of police forces.*

*Work is now underway to develop a business case for the merger for submission to the Home Office in October 2018, with a decision expected in January 2019.*

- The PCC commenced a public engagement programme across the three counties in August which ended on 28<sup>th</sup> August, the full business case was not be shared with stakeholders or the PCP before the end of this consultation.*
- It is understood that at a PCP meeting on 5th October some of the business case may be shared with the PCP before its submission to the Home Office.*
- DCC had not formally been consulted and this has not been discussed at DCC cabinet or Scrutiny Committee*

*The proposed merger will impact funding and on Council Tax across Devon A much higher proportion of Devon and Cornwall's total funding (61.5%) comes from government. Only 53% of Dorset's funding comes from government and a higher proportion comes from the police precept element. Overall, government funding is more per head for Devon and Cornwall (£103) than Dorset (£85). This would fall to £97.6 per head for a combined force. Having received minimal information regarding the financial impact or benefits of the potential merger, it is difficult to know whether current levels of*

*funding, alongside the substantial reserves held by both forces, would prove sufficient to underwrite any additional costs arising from the merger of the force areas. This is particularly relevant in attempting to understand how the additional 430 police officers or staff would be funded as a result of the merger. At the moment, tax payers in Dorset in an average Band D property pay around £18 a year more for their policing than householders in Devon and Cornwall. Legally, the levels of police precept for both areas must be harmonised for the merger to take place. Will Dorset rates be harmonised down to the Devon and Cornwall level? This seems to have been ruled out. Another proposal is that the rate for Devon and Cornwall will be increased to the Dorset level to fund extra police officers. The estimated increase would mean an extra payment of £1-3 per month (£18 per year) for average Band D residents in Devon and Cornwall.*

*This motion proposes that the*

- Council writes to the PCC to request that the full business case is sent to DCC for its comments before any proposal is submitted to the Home Secretary;*
- Council opposes the merger on information it currently has available to it that it will mean an increase of £18 per year council tax for average Band D residents in Devon and Cornwall and writes to the PCC and if appropriate the Home secretary with its views;*
- Council censures the PCC in relation to her consultation on the merger as the stakeholder consultation was carried out while important local authority stakeholders were in summer recess and without the business case being made available to stakeholders so that the no meaningful consultation could take place.*

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

Members will be aware that the Devon & Cornwall Police and Crime Panel debated the voluntary merger of the two forces at its meeting on Friday 5 October and voted to support the Police and Crime Commissioner's position that she was minded not to support the submission of the proposed full business case to the Home Office. The proposal to create a new force incorporating Cornwall, Devon and Dorset will therefore not progress further. The two police forces will continue to work closely together through the strategic alliance which was established in 2015 with 22 departments now shared by the two forces. The two forces remain committed to collaborative working and exploring opportunities to continue to improve service delivery to all communities.

**(b) Bed Poverty (Councillor Hannaford)**

*More children are living in poverty than at any other time in the past ten years, with 4.1 million children across the UK living below the breadline.*

*Shockingly its thought that there are over 400,000 children in the UK who do not have a bed of their own.*

*Without somewhere to rest their head, bedtime routines become difficult, stress levels rise , and getting a good night's sleep is often near to impossible.*

*Furthermore educational performance deteriorates and safeguarding risks rise.*

*Over the last five years, Dreams Beds has provided Buttle UK with nearly 10,000 children's beds to donate to those families in desperate need — more than ever before.*

*With the number of beds that they supplied during those five years rising by 77 per cent.*

*We applaud the work of this charity, and businesses, social enterprises, church groups, and others across the country in trying to tackle this national scandal.*

*As corporate parents with a duty of care to all of Devon's children , we resolve that the council formally writes to The Rt Hon. James Brokenshire MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and our local members of Parliament , to highlight this issue , and call for serious consideration to be given for a national grants scheme , that allows those in need to apply for help and assistance, to put an to end children's bed poverty.*

**Briefing Note/Position Statement from the Chief Officer for Children's Services**

In Devon, there is no recording or collecting of data on bed poverty specifically.

Where families are experiencing serious financial challenges, the Council can, through its multi-agency early help system, support the family to access the services and resources they need. This would include supporting the parent to make applications to trusts and charities for essential furniture which could include beds and white goods (for example, fridges, washing machines and cookers).

The Council's early help system includes all partners who come into contact with children and families, for example schools, early years, housing, children's centres.

The in-sourcing of Public Health Nursing in April 2019 will give the Council unprecedented access to families of very young children which will help to ensure that the safety net to protect families experiencing poverty, including bed poverty, is made available at the earliest opportunity.

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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

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