



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

Thursday 3 December 2020

**1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR G HOOK
Re: Emergency Active Travel Fund**

Has the Emergency Active Travel Fund been allocated? If so, what sums are involved and where will this be seen around the County? Are other funding sources being sought for similar purposes?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

In August this year the County Council submitted a bid for tranche 2 emergency active travel funding, with schemes identified in Barnstaple, Newton Abbot and Exeter and a commitment to either extend or make permanent the successful tranche 1 market town schemes. On 20th November, the Council received confirmation of £1.283m on the understanding that it would deliver the objectives as set out in the original bid.

On this basis, the funding has provisionally been allocated as follows:

- In Exeter £860,000 grant funding will match £480,000 developer contributions to deliver cycle improvements relating to the E3, E9 and/or E12 strategic cycle corridors as well as improving walking and cycling access in the city centre.
- In Newton Abbot £225,000 grant funding will match £90,000 Local Transport Plan funding to deliver new crossings as part of the East-West cycle corridor.
- In Barnstaple £125,000 grant funding will match £90,000 developer contributions to deliver a new crossing on the approach to Barnstaple station and to complete the Anchorwood development town centre link with the Tarka Trail.
- There will also be approximately £70,000 grant available for the tranche 1 funded market towns to extend or make permanent their trial schemes. Some of this funding will be used to assist with monitoring and evaluation, which is a requirement of the programme.

As the programme expects schemes to be committed by the end of March 2021, schemes have been chosen at an advanced stage of design, with approvals either in place or achievable in the coming months.

In terms of other funding sources, in recent years the County Council has successfully secured funding for walking and cycling improvements through grant programmes including the Growth Deal, Housing Infrastructure Fund, Growth

and Housing Fund and National Productivity Investment Fund. The Council continues to get schemes shovel-ready to be in the best position to take advantage of future funding. Unfortunately, most of the external grants are targeted at urban areas with high levels of growth, which means progress on the rural leisure trails has been comparatively slow.

2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR ATKINSON
Re: Effect of COVID-19 on micro businesses

What has been the effect of the pandemic on micro businesses across Devon and how does this compare with SMEs and large employers?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR GILBERT

The overall impacts from the pandemic on the Devon economy are severe, both in terms of its workforce, businesses, sectors and communities. Micro businesses make up nearly 90% of businesses across the county, defined as employing 1-9 people and there are above average numbers of levels of self-employed individuals. Therefore, the majority of the impacts previously reported would be focused on micro businesses.

It is hard to show from the available data specific consequences for micro businesses compared to larger organisations, and there will be variation in terms of their location, sector and structure and we are continuing to monitor and analyse emerging data. We do know that Devon has seen a greater impact (above the national average) across the self-employed sector and a greater reliance on the self-employed income support scheme.

Claimant count data does not identify the original workplace of the claimants. Redundancies data likewise is only what we and Government are notified of and there is no one comprehensive source.

Anecdotally, in terms of the retail sector, there have been some notable recent impacts, and in some locations independent retailers have fared better when open, than larger chains running on tight margins who have struggled. Conversely many tourism and hospitality businesses, which are often small are finding conditions more difficult.

3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR HANNAFORD
Re: Public Pay Freeze – Gender Gap

- a) The current gender balance of Devon County Councils staff, both in numbers and percentages?
- b) What is the existing gender pay gap at Devon County Council?
- c) That a public pay freeze will disproportionately adversely affect women?
- d) How much in financial terms will this freeze cost our female staff in comparison to male staff in totality?
- e) What further work is being done to tackle the gender pay gap at Devon County Council?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR PARSONS

- a) 73% of the Council's workforce (3,540) were women and 27% (1,320) were men on 31st March 2020. This date was used because it is the date that gender pay gap (GPG) statutory reporting figures must be based on.
- b) The Council's most recent GPG figures and other related information can be found in the [Gender Pay Gap Report](#) published in November 2019. The mean GPG was 13% and the median was 17.2%.

Due to prioritising the Council's response to the pandemic and supporting our front-line staff through this exceptionally difficult time, the next report is expected to be available in February 2021 (1 month before the statutory obligation).

- c) Nationally agreed pay awards apply to everyone employed under each set of terms and conditions, irrespective of gender, so individual men and women would be affected equally by a pay award or pay freeze. However, as 73% of the Council's workforce are women, more women than men are affected by each pay award.
- d) The average NJC and Leadership Grade Pay Award for the last 5 years (rounded to the nearest half percent) is 2%. If we apply a 2% pay award to the permanent workforce as at November 2020, the total additional payment to female employees would be £1,608,991 and the total additional payment to male employees would be £779,159 per annum.
- e) The 2019 [Gender Pay Gap Report](#) outlines what the Council has committed to do to reduce the GPG. The actions already taken include;
 - Integrating workforce demographic analyses into Workforce Planning processes to prompt proactive consideration of gender
 - Conducting service area analyses of GPG data to establish causes and potential improvement initiatives
 - Organised the Council's first internal careers event in 2019 to raise awareness of options and promote career paths within and across service areas
 - Developed dedicated [career development web pages](#)
 - Defined requirements for the new HR database to collect recruitment statistics to analyse and improve gender ratios of applicants through recruitment stages
 - Committed and prepared to introduce default flexible working vacancy adverts across the Council from 2021 (delayed due to the pandemic)
 - Ensured leadership development programmes are proportionately represented by women (10 women and 4 men participating in schemes started in 2020)

4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: young people in the care outside of Devon CC area

For each month this calendar year (including November if only a part month available) how many children or young people in the care of Devon County Council have been in placements outside of the Devon County Council area?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

Please see Question 6 response and table.

5. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: young people in the care outside of the county of Devon

For each month this calendar year (including November if only a part month available) how many children or young people in the care of Devon County Council have been in placements outside of the county of Devon?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

Please see Question 6 response and table.

6. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT

Re: young people in care distance

For each month this calendar year (including November if only a part month available) what is the furthest distance from County Hall in Exeter that a child or young person has been placed in care?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

On average in 2020 93.5% of Children in Care were placed either in Devon or a neighbouring authority. This has continued to improve from 2018 when the average was 89% amid a continuing focus on placing children as close to Devon as possible. As an example, nearly 50% of the 131 children placed outside the County of Devon are placed in Somerset, Cornwall or Dorset. Given the size of Devon, a placement outside of the county in a neighbouring authority can be physically closer to a child's home address than a placement in Devon. For some children with very complex needs, a specialist placement, which may be at considerable distance, may still be the best option to meet the child's needs.

	Placed Devon Council Boundary	outside County	Placed outside County of Devon	Furthest Distance (miles)
Jan	192		115	288.5
Feb	191		133	288.5
Mar	187		116	288.5
Apr	185		106	288.5
May	193		115	288.5
Jun	210		120	288.5
Jul	219		126	288.5
Aug	232		139	248.1
Sep	229		141	248.1
Oct	223		135	248.1
Nov	225		133	248.1

7. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: number of Free School Meals

For each month this calendar year, including November if only a part month available) how many children in the Devon County Council area are in receipt of Free School Meals?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

Data for children in receipt of free school meals is collected in the school's census which takes place in January and October. In January 2020 there were 12680 pupils claiming free school meals. In October 2020 this had risen to 14773.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of successful requests to register for free school meals and this is shown in the table below. We do not yet have the October/November data but this can be shared when it becomes available.

Authorised claims	March /April	June/ July	Aug/ sept
2019	206	572	771
2020	1257	1816	1,130

8. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Waiting times for CAMHS

In relation to Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), as at the 31 October 2020, what are the waiting times for treatment after referral, and how many weeks is the longest single wait for treatment.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

As of 31st October 2020, the mean wait time for routine cases, from referral to treatment is 11.2 weeks. This is below the national average of 14 weeks (National CAMHS Benchmarking).

Within CAMHS there are multiple pathways that will have different wait times associated with them. The current accepted NHS standard is 18 weeks (with the exception of eating disorder, crisis and urgent referrals). Currently, 79.2% of routine referrals are seen within the 18 week standard; 78.9% of urgent referrals are seen within 7 days; and 100% of crisis referrals are responded to within 24 hours.

The longest wait is 51.7 weeks. It is an exceptional incidence if a young person has not started treatment within this timescale; the reasons underlying this are due to the young person's circumstances or preferences e.g. preferring to be seen by an alternative service, but not closed to CAMHS; or a young person who wanted to wait until post-Covid, to be seen face to face, and who's needs, on review, were not considered urgent.

An improvement plan and trajectory is in place to reduce the number of children and young people waiting longer than 18 weeks where a routine assessment is indicated as potentially helpful, with a predicted return to 92% compliance with the 18 week standard by April 2021. However, the improvement trajectory is above target and if this remains stable, performance is likely to return to 92% compliance by January.

All referrals received are triaged by clinicians daily and prioritised according to risk and need. For any child or young person waiting, information is provided which includes details of what to do should needs alter. The service is also in regular contact with the family/individual, operating a protocol which ensures that children's needs are reviewed whilst they are waiting for treatment to start and any risks are managed.

9. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Total number of Social Workers

How many Social Workers are employed by Devon County Council (head count - total number including newly qualified)

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER & MCINNES

Adults: 214
Children's: 289

10. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Social Workers employed by Devon County Council

How many Social Workers are directly employed by Devon County Council?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER & MCINNES

Adults: 199
Children's: 212

11. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Agency Social Workers

How many Social Workers are engaged through an agency or through another employment form, personal company, for example?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER & MCINNES

Adults: 15
Children's: 77

12. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Social Worker Salaries

What are the gross salaries for Social Workers employed by Devon County Council? (expressed as lowest full time, highest full time and mid point)

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER & MCINNES

£32,910 min - £36,922 NJC Grade G Current Average is £35,502

13. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Salaries of Agency Social Workers

By comparison, what is the salary paid to Social Workers employed through an agency or personal company (expressed as lowest full time, highest full time and mid point)?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER & MCINNES

The South West Agency rates are between £31-£41 per hour (£59,808 to £79,101 pa). The current average is £37.23ph, £71,846 pa

14. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Numbers of Social Workers left DCC in 2019/20

In the financial year 2019/20 and the financial year 2020/20 to Friday 20 November, how many Social Workers have left Devon County Council?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER & MCINNES

Adults:	2019/20	28 Leavers	2020/21	11 Leavers
Children's:	2019/20	29 Leavers	2020/21	22 Leavers

15. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Number of Social Worker vacancies

As at Friday 20 November 2020, how many vacancies does Devon County Council have for Social Worker posts including those posts which are on the establishment but filled by an 'agency' Social Worker?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER & MCINNES

According to Etips Agency system there were the following FTE's covering a vacancy:

Adults: 5.07
Children's: 64.65

16. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST
Re: School Exams

Even though we are now well over half way through the first academic term of the new school year, headteachers still have no idea what form tests and external exams take, even as they try to prepare pupils to take them in just a few months' time. Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools give some guidance for GCSE, A-Level and SATs in light of the 'second wave' of Covid-19 when the Department for Education clearly are unable to provide this.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

The Council has, since the start of the Autumn term, been asking the DfE for further information relating to both GCSE exams and end of Key Stage assessments.

The Government has stated that GCSE exams should go ahead and that exam boards have been asked to give consideration to the content: it is not yet known what those considerations will look like.

The DfE have stated they are working closely with stakeholders on a comprehensive set of measures that will ensure exams can be held and students will have the best possible opportunity to do themselves justice. While further details were expected this month they said last week that they will set out the plans in the coming weeks.

Schools have said they must have certainty about contingency arrangements and what further measures will be put in place to ensure that these exams will be fair to pupils in light of the huge disruption to learning caused by Covid.

17. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST Re: PPE in schools

Headteachers complain that there is no clarity on the use of PPE in schools. Can some guidance be given for Devon schools?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

The use of PPE is only required in schools in very limited circumstances and this mainly relates to non Covid based circumstances where PPE would always have been used.

However, advice on how to use PPE is provided by the DfE in the [Safer working in schools guidance](#). Additional advice relating to PPE and wider protection measures has also been provided to Devon schools in the Risk Assessment documentation, the Head teacher updates. The safe use of masks etc has been provided in posters and online webinars. The Devon Public Health team have also been available to offer bespoke advice.

If the Councillor is aware of any particular school that is struggling, could he make the Head of Education aware of this and she will ensure this is followed up with the school.

18. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST
Re: ICT and Broadband for Schools and Pupils

IT equipment was promised for schools and home internet access was promised for our most disadvantaged students. The Department for Education pledged to provide devices for children in Years 3 to 11 on free school meals who do not have laptops as well as any disadvantaged children who are shielding. Can the Cabinet Member give an indication when schools and disadvantaged children might receive this equipment? Can he also indicate how many laptops were promised for Devon schools and how many have been delivered?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

During phase 1 (vulnerable children with a social worker) and phase 2 (disadvantaged children), Devon received a total of approximately 2000 devices for young people. The number is approximate as academies had to order their devices directly from the DfE. This equipment was received in the summer term and over the summer holidays.

Phase 3 of the Digital Device rollout was to support children in Devon schools (Academies and Maintained schools) who were accessing remote learning due to bubbles self-isolating or due to lockdowns.

The initial allocation for phase 3 was 2226 devices, however later changes in how the Government felt these devices should be prioritised (linked to areas of high incidence) reduced Devon's allocation to 503. A 78% reduction which was in line with that described nationally in the press. The rollout of these devices is still taking place and the schools are required to order these directly from the DfE.

In terms of home internet access. This is provided by the use of a prepaid mobile dongle. While an effective way of providing access in urban areas it is problematic in a rural county with poor signal coverage. We have alerted the DfE to this but no alternative is currently available. Families were asked if they needed support to access the internet and a total of 93 families said they did. 93 dongles have been provided to support these families.

19. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST
Re: School Closures

Can the Cabinet Member give details of the number of Devon schools closed for more than 24 hours since 1st September please?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

As Devon schools did not go back after the summer break on the 1st September this information has been provided from the school's first day of term.

Since their first day of term to date there are 8 schools which have closed for a period of more than 24 hours, for Covid related reasons. 4 of these schools were very small rural primary schools which each had to operate as one bubble.

20. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST

Re: Young Minds Survey

A recent Youngminds.org.uk survey indicated that 69% of respondents described their mental health as poor and 40% said there was no school counsellor available to support students at their school. Can the Cabinet Member indicate how Devon compares with these national statistics please?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

There are different models of support provided to children and young people across Devon, including some schools which employ their own school counsellor. NHS Devon CCG commission online and face-to-face counselling support for children and young people across Devon. Kooth <https://www.kooth.com/> (commissioned through Child and Family Health Devon) is available across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and is a confidential online support service. This offers online chat and text messaging with qualified counsellors, discussion boards, daily journals and up to date information on all aspects of mental health and well-being. This service is well used and particularly effective in reaching rural parts of Devon through its online operation. NHS Devon CCG also commission Young Devon to provide both online and face-to-face support; this comprises face-to-face counselling, online participation groups, online 'well-being cafes' and well-being conversations with Wellbeing Practitioners.

In Devon there is a Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in operation in Exeter/Cranbrook area, and following a successful bid earlier this year, another MHST is in preparation in Barnstaple – the Education Mental Health Practitioners who will staff this MHST have just commenced training. The teams will link directly with the schools in their area and provide a variety of early intervention support, linking and integrating with local early help professionals. In addition Devon is rolling out the national Wellbeing for Education programme, delivering online training for education staff on the impact of COVID-19 on children and young peoples' mental health open to all Devon schools, followed by support/supervision (until 31.03.20) to schools to help them embed approaches to support children and young people.

21. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Merge of Devon & Cornwall Police with Dorset

Was Devon County Council consulted by the Police and Crime Commissioner or their Office before announcing the plans to merge the Devon & Cornwall Force with Dorset Police?

If there was prior consultation, who was consulted and when, and what response was sent?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR CROAD

An initial assessment of the potential voluntary merger of Devon & Cornwall Force with Dorset Police was undertaken by the two Chief Constables and the two Police and Crime Commissioners in Spring 2018. The Leader of the Council wrote to the Police and Crime Commissioner on 23 August 2018 with his views and copy of his letter is appended. The Devon & Cornwall Police and Crime Panel considered the results of the engagement at its meeting on 5 October 2018. The Panel agreed to support the Police and Crime Commissioner's 'minded to' decision to reject the proposed merger. The proposal to create a new force incorporating Cornwall, Devon and Dorset did not progress further.

Please see appendix one attached to this document.

22. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE
Re: Flash Flooding in Barnstaple

To ask when the report on the flash flooding event in Barnstaple in August will be available for Cllr Mathews and I to see the report to allow us to make any input we have?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

The report on the flash flooding in Barnstaple was sent to Councillors Greenslade and Mathews on 2 November 2020 and resent to Councillor Greenslade on 27 November following his submission of this question. Councillor Mathews has discussed with officers.

23. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE
Re: Barnstaple Economy

At a recent Cabinet Meeting Cllr Gilbert brought a comprehensive report on the Devon economy to the meeting. Contained in this report was reference to special treatment for central Barnstaple. Can he say what these measures are and what consultation with Barnstaple took place before identifying central Barnstaple for special treatment.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR GILBERT

The Devon Economic Recovery Report taken to Cabinet on 14 October set out the significant impact on the Devon economy, its communities, workforce and businesses from the pandemic. There was no special treatment singled out in the report for Central Barnstaple. Part of the analysis the Council and its partners have considered has been the places where specific consequences are being felt through a vulnerability index. This shows significant impacts and potential impacts on several places, including Central Barnstaple. Part of the proposed package of support as part of the 21/22 budget setting process approved by Cabinet would seek investment and support across a number of places and communities. This would be to take forward elements of the actions set out in the Team Devon Economy and Business Recovery Prospectus which has been developed by partners. As set out in the report, a Places and Communities Support Package would be developed jointly with district and town councils.

24. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE Re: Funding Per Pupil

Can Cllr McInnes say what the effect of additional funding for schools will have on funding per pupil and Devon's place in the national league table for funding per pupil firstly in 2020/21 and secondly following the Chancellors very recent budget statement of additional funding for schools in 2021/22 and beyond?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

The funding announcements mentioned in the recent spending review are one-off funding arrangements for Covid and therefore do not affect Devon's standing in the league tables. The information below lays out the wider position of schools funding in Devon.

Devon's position nationally for 2020/21 was 128 out of 149 at £4,578 per pupil. The national average is £4,845 meaning Devon is currently £267 below this.

Based on the indicative data for 2021/22 Devon will be 129 out of 149 at £5,954 per pupil whilst the national average is £6,332. This means Devon will potentially be £378 below the national average. It should be noted that the 2021/22 Final settlement will be notified late December 2020 and uses the update census data for schools.

The spending review mentions the Government's commitment to level up education standards by providing for an increase in the schools' budget from £47.6 billion in 2020-21 to £49.8 billion in 2021-22 (an increase of £2.2 billion). This is not new funding and reaffirms the commitment to increase the core schools' budget by £7.1 billion by 2022-23, compared to 2019-20 funding levels.

In addition to the above allocations Education is seeing one-off funding of £1.4 billion in 2020/21 and £0.4 billion in 2021/22 from the Spending review including:

Catch-up premium funding of £650 million nationally is one-off universal funding and sees school allocations calculated on a per pupil basis.

- Mainstream school will get £80 for each pupil in from reception to year 11 inclusive.
- Special, AP and hospital schools will get £240 for each place for the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

National Tutoring Programme of £350 million to provide additional, targeted support tutoring support for disadvantaged children and young people who need the most help including a schools programme for 5 to 16 years olds and an oral language intervention programme for reception aged children. Some of this funding is targeted at the most disadvantaged areas in the country.

Holiday Activities and Food programme £220 million nationally to provide enriching activities and a healthy meal for disadvantaged children in the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays in 2021. This provides funding up to the end of 2021-22 and supports the government's commitment to establish a Flexible Childcare Fund to increase the availability of high quality and affordable flexible childcare. Devon has registered its interest in this programme. Note this funding is allocated to LAs to deliver the provision and not to schools.

25. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR GREENSLADE
Re: Additional School Funding

I recently noted that Cllr McInnes had written to Government pressing for additional funding for schools to help defray the costs of making schools Covid safe. Can he say whether he has had a reply and if so what was the Government's response?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR MCINNES

I wrote to the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, on 20th October 2020, however a response has not yet been received. I will update Members as and when a response is received. A reminder prompt has been sent to DfE following up this letter.

26. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR DEWHIRST
Re: Longer Semi-Trailers trial

The Department for Transport is trialling longer semi-trailers (LSTs) for articulated goods vehicles. The trial aims to see if using longer LSTs brings about anticipated environmental savings of over 3,000 tonnes of CO₂ - a very good outcome.

The trial involves LSTs of 15.65 metres in length (18.55 metres total vehicle length) and a weight limit of 44 tonnes. The trial started with a total allocation available of 1,800 LSTs - the government has agreed to increase the number by 1,000 and to extend the trial to 2027.

Please can the Cabinet Member for Highways Management indicate how Devon's huge road network and many bridges will cope with these behemoths?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

The trial has been running since 2012 and I see from the Government website that the latest annual report for 2019 provides an update on the outcomes to date. The trial is progressing well with over 2400 vehicles operating across the UK network.

The single most effective change in reducing the impact of freight on our roads in the short term is the use of higher capacity vehicles. The findings show that there are over 54million vehicles kilometres saved and a carbon saving of 48000 tonnes. Furthermore, the accident rates are more favourable when compared to general HGV usage. I see that operators are using these vehicles mainly to transport goods between distribution centres and retail sites and consequently they are travelling along the Motorway and A road network for 98% of the total journey length.

While the trailers are longer than existing HGV trailers, they cannot be heavier. The total weight of the trailer, the goods and the tractor unit must still be within the UK domestic weight limit of 44 tonnes. They must also pass the turning circle test applied to the existing HGV trailers. To achieve this, LSTs usually have a steering rear axle. So, it appears from the trial that Devon's roads are already coping well with use of these vehicles, with no emerging issues of concern to date.

27. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR WAY Re: Community Funded Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)

Although there is a brief mention of community funded VAS in the latest Speed Working Group Members Update Report, there is no detail concerning any changes to the process for community groups including Parish Councils obtaining permission from the authority and installing the equipment themselves. Many of us understood a review was promised. A number of these groups have found the current process both clumsy and bureaucratic. Can the portfolio member please report on what progress has been made on these changes?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HUGHES

As part of our speed management project, the working group requested that officers review our approach to community funded Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS).

The view of officers and the group was that a much more permissive approach should be taken. This would allow communities to consider a greater range of VAS products allowing the message to be best suited to the location. These might include display of smiley / sad faces, in addition to the existing format where the posted speed limit is displayed.

Additionally, it was agreed that sites could be treated even when the speeds recorded would not have met triggers used in the SCARF (Speed Compliance Action Review Forum) process. It is agreed that if communities believe there is a problem and are motivated to act, they should be allowed to do so, so long as no harm is done.

Sites would still be tabled at SCARF allowing comment from NHT, Road Safety, Police and Policy teams, we also need to understand the impact of this more permissive approach so data gathering is part of this.

An updated procedure document was drafted and supported by the group. This will be briefed to the Highways Teams and Members shortly alongside updating public facing information on our webpages explaining our approach to speed complaints.

28. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT **Re: Number of NHS hospital beds**

How many NHS hospital beds were available in the Devon County Council area at 01 January 2010 and at 31 October 2020?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

It is not possible to provide an answer for the Devon County Council area.

Validated data on bed availability is collected and published as part of the [KH03 data collection](#). This is a quarterly collection from all NHS organisations that operate beds.

Validated figures are available for 2009/10 and the second quarter of 2020 (Up to the end of September 2020) across all providers in the NHS Devon CCG area.

Please note:-

- Hospital capacity has had to be organised in new ways as a result of the pandemic to treat Covid and non-Covid patients separately and safely in line with enhanced Infection Prevention Control measures.
- These temporary measures have required beds and staff to be deployed differently from in previous years in both emergency and elective settings. In the region of 5% to 13% of beds have been lost due to infection control restrictions as a result of the pandemic.
- Between 2010 and 2020 there has been 19% growth in admissions and bed occupancy levels have increased from 82.8% in quarter 3 of 2010 to 90.3% in quarter 3 19/20 (pre-Covid) illustrating a continuing efficient management of our bed base. The reduction to patient's length of stay is due to enhanced care closer to home and has resulted in a requirement for fewer beds.
- There has been significant organisational change across the decade from 2010 to 2020.

For the reasons above caution should be exercised in comparing overall figures between this year and previous years.

Average daily number of available and occupied beds by sector, NHS organisations in England, 2009-10	
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust	1,025
Royal Devon And Exeter NHS Foundation Trust	814
Devon Partnership NHS Trust	323
South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	468
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	401
Devon PCT	216
Torbay Care Trust	49
Plymouth Teaching PCT	237
Total	3,533
Average daily number of available and occupied beds by sector, NHS organisations in England, Q2 / 2020	
Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust	350
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	292
Royal Devon And Exeter NHS Foundation Trust	829
University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust	890
Devon Partnership NHS Trust	277
Livewell	226
Total	2,864

29. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Number of Community Beds

How many NHS beds were available in community hospitals at 01 January 2010 and at 31 October 2020?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

It is not possible to provide a response as bed data is not collected in this manner.

30. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Community Hospital Closures

How many Community Hospitals have closed, or stopped being used for inpatient care and treatment since 01 January 2010?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

Over the last ten years care models have been changing to support people out of hospital where this is possible and appropriate.

The following community hospitals have been closed

- Bovey Tracey Community Hospital
- Dartmouth and Kingswear Hospital

The hospitals listed below have seen a reduction in in-patient beds but continue to provide NHS services, including a small number being repurposed as Health and Wellbeing Hubs or Centres and include, for example, NHS provided outpatient clinics and/or locations for health and wellbeing teams.

- Axminster
- Ashburton
- Bideford
- Brixham
- Budleigh Salterton
- Crediton
- Dawlish
- Exmouth
- Holsworthy
- Honiton
- Kingsbridge
- Moretonhampstead
- Newton Abbot
- Okehampton

- Ottery St Mary
- Paignton
- Seaton
- Sidmouth
- South Molton
- Tavistock
- Teignmouth
- Tiverton
- Torrington
- Totnes
- Tyrell (Ilfracombe)
- Wipton (Exeter)

31. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR CONNETT
Re: Increasing hospital beds

What action has Devon County Council taken to lobby for an increase the number of NHS hospital beds available in its area since 01 January 2010?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

We know that the preference of Devon's population is to be supported, treated and cared for in their own homes wherever possible and only accessing a hospital bed when it is clinically needed. The model of out of hospital care means there is a focus on services in the community rather than hospital beds and we are working with our NHS partners to deliver this. Our regular meetings and lobbying of others is focussed on securing additional resourcing in the community such as enhanced conditions and parity of esteem for personal care workers with NHS colleagues rather than additional hospital beds.

Alison Hernandez
Police & Crime Commissioner
for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of
Scilly
Alderson Drive
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EX2 7RP

JOHN HART

Conservative Group Leader
Leader of the County Council

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23rd August 2018

Dear Alison,

POTENTIAL MERGER OF DEVON & CORNWALL AND DORSET POLICE FORCES

As Leader of Devon County Council, I am writing to give my views on the proposed merger of Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police.

I have canvassed the views of the other members of my Cabinet and the general consensus is that we would wish to support the merger, subject to a comprehensive Business Case that demonstrates both cost-effectiveness and efficiency and illustrates benefits for communities across Devon.

We believe that a formal merger could build positively on the longstanding strategic alliance between the two organisations that is already in place. It would create one of the largest police forces in the country and the biggest rural force. As such, we would have a greater voice on the national stage, particularly on issues such as rural policing.

We are well aware that demands on the police service are growing, as they are on most public bodies.

There are also fundamental changes in the threats that a modern police force faces. You have to deal increasingly with counter terrorism, cyber-crime, child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, domestic and sexual violence and hate crime.

These issues do not respect police boundaries or indeed national boundaries and a new, larger police force will have more resilience as well as access to greater expertise in tackling increasingly sophisticated threats and risks. The ability to work and operate at scale across the three counties should enable the necessary resources to be used efficiently and effectively.

However, it will also be vital for the new force to retain and strengthen the capacity for continued partnership working on shared priorities such as protecting people at risk of abuse, supporting victims and improving community resilience. It will also be important for the police to continue to play their part strategically with the two Devon safeguarding boards and the Safer Devon Partnership.

As you know, Devon County Council is increasingly working with its district councils and the county and district authorities in Somerset on the Heart of the South West devolution proposals and across the wider South West peninsula on areas such as transport, skills, employment and enterprise. The merger proposal should show how the new force would establish operational connections with Somerset to tackle the range of cross-border issues.

So far I have dealt with strategic issues. However, equally important, is how the potential merger would affect local communities who often feel removed from their police service. You will be well aware of the concerns of Devon residents that the new force may not have a visible presence in our towns and villages because of the size of the area that it covers.

I know that you and the Chief Constable are committed to a proposal which envisages the new force being visible and active in local communities and I and my colleagues would want to be reassured that this can be delivered. I hope that you will also be able to work with my council on developing public sector partnership initiatives to make the best use of public and community facilities.

The other major area of concern about a merger is the impact on Council Tax. If Devon's council tax payers are to face an increase in what they are asked to contribute as a result of any merger, then it is vital that both you and the Chief Constable make the case, clearly and effectively, to demonstrate to our residents the benefits they will enjoy. Local people will clearly want to see that the policing budgets for Devon and for their town, village or district are allocated fairly and transparently.

Finally, I am aware that the Home Office will be assessing the level of local support for the proposal. If there is any information that the council could provide in order to help the finalising of the case that you will be putting to the Home Secretary, then please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Hart', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

John Hart

c.c. Shaun Sawyer
Chief Constable
Devon & Cornwall Police
Middlemoor
Exeter
EX2 7HQ