

## 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 Chief Officer and / or Head of Service is also included, to facilitate the Cabinet's discussion of each Notice of Motion.

### **(a) Armed Forces (Councillor Asvachin)**

We call upon the council to make their armed forces champions and lead officers aware of the difficulties experienced by commonwealth veterans and ensure that those who are currently experiencing problems, whether financial or immigration difficulties, are not disadvantaged whilst their applications are ongoing.

We also call upon the leader of the council to write to the Prime Minister, Kevin Forster the Minister of State for Immigration, and Johnny Mercer the Minister of State for Veterans Affairs, outlining this Councils support for all Commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years being granted automatic and free of charge right to remain in the UK and that any veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically given British Citizenship.

Further, we call upon the Leader of the Council to write to our Devon MPs, on behalf of this council, to ask that they continue to press the government for a change in the legislation that affects those that have served diligently and honourably for this Country"

### **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Communities**

Devon County Council holds the Duty for the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) as the principle Local Authority. ***(The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly).*** The Covenant has three main principles which are:

- There must be regard to the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces;
- That those who serve or have served in the UK Armed Forces and their families should not be disadvantaged by their Service; and
- That special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces

The Armed Forces Covenant covers serving personnel, veterans and their families from across all Military Services and as such does not have any specific requirements explicit within it for Commonwealth veterans.

The Council facilitates a multi-agency (Civilian/Military) partnership of signatories to the Devon and Torbay Armed Forces Community Covenant and coordinates a group of Armed Forces Champions from across the Devon Districts. The District Councils play an important role in the delivery of the AFC not least with regards to housing and benefits.

The Council is also jointly commissioned, with Cornwall Council a Veterans Joint Strategic Needs Assessment <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/43017381/jsna-armed-forces-veteran-summary-2019.pdf>

The Council has been working in Partnership with other South West Councils for some time now through a Consortium called Forces Connect South West. This not only gives the South West a powerful voice Nationally with regards to all Armed Forces Matters, but it is also striving to ensure that Armed Forces Families and Veterans get an equitable offer no matter where in the South West they are. The Devon Forces Family Website, which was recognised Nationally as an exemplar model has been developed to become Forces Connect South West <https://www.forcesconnectsouthwest.org.uk/>. Through this partnership we have been involved in response to Government consultation regards the pending legislation to further enshrine the Armed Forces Covenant in Law.

The Government's goal for this legislation is to ensure that the Covenant is an enduring part of life. While there's been amazing progress in delivery of the Covenant, there's no guarantee that the current resources devoted to Covenant issues will continue. By giving it a legislative footing, they are looking to future-proof it. Proposals for the legislation which is due to start process through Parliament December 2020/January 2021

It will be a duty of due regard which means that in making decisions and in day to day activities a body subject to the duty must consciously consider the Covenant.

- It will not legislate outcomes – it's about being able to demonstrate that due regard has been taken.
- The Covenant is made up of 3 principles. There can sometimes be confusion around this, as the first 2 principles are often considered collectively as if they are one principle. The legislation will cover these first 2 principles which are:

- there must be regard to the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces and
  - that those who serve or have served in the UK Armed Forces and their families should not be disadvantaged by their Service.
- They are exploring the potential for including the third principle too. This hasn't been confirmed yet, but the legislation team will ensure the focus groups (Forces Connect South West being one of these) are kept updated about this. The third principle is:
  - that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces
- The duty will apply to local and regional public bodies and those working at a national level - such as NHS England – which have policy and delivery responsibilities at the local and regional level.
- It'll also apply to private sector bodies when they're exercising public functions.
- The duty will focus on specific aspects of healthcare, education and housing. As these areas are found to be key areas where disadvantage exists and where legislation would make the most difference. They're fundamental to having high quality family life. These are the same policy areas which are included in the existing legislation (Secretary of State's duty to lay an annual Covenant report in parliament).
- It will encourage the use of existing complaints processes, such as the relevant ombudsmen when appropriate, but as a last resort, complainants should use Judicial Review.

Why has this approach been chosen: For LAs currently delivering the Covenant to a high standard, this will not change what they're doing. It will encourage them to continue doing the great work they're already doing. The intention is to future-proof the Covenant and improve consistency in quality of delivery across the country.

As an employer, Devon County Council has facilitated an Armed Forces support Network for staff who are veterans, reservists or close family members of those who are serving. Being one of only a very few Local Authorities to have done this, it has been seen as a model of good practice. We have shared this model with the National County Councils Network of Locality Officers and other LA's are now replicating.

This along with the fact that we do have an HR policy for Reservists helped us to achieve the Employers Recognition Silver Award in the Autumn of 2020.

The Employer Recognition Scheme recognises organisations who pledge, demonstrate and advocate their support for the Defence community. There are three tiers of award – Bronze, Silver and Gold – for employers who advocate support to the Armed Forces Community in alignment with the Armed Forces Covenant.

Silver Awards holders demonstrate support for Defence, employing at least one Reservist, actively communicating and upholding a positive stance to their employees via established HR policies and procedures. Silver Award holders support Reservists by showing flexibility to plan for and allow them to fulfil their annual training and mobilisation commitments.

### **(b) Loneliness and Isolation (Councillor Connett)**

This Council notes that loneliness and isolation are a public health issue that must be tackled at a local, as well as at a national level. It is estimated one in ten people of pensionable age living in the Devon County Council area are likely to be classed as lonely or severely lonely. And that the Covid 19 pandemic will have increased the chronic nature of this loneliness.

This Council believes:

1. Loneliness increases the risk of heart disease and puts people at greater risk of blood clots.
2. Being chronically lonely is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
3. Loneliness makes people more likely to drink more alcohol, eat more and exercise less.
4. Raising awareness of the health impact of loneliness is important because it affects older people's mortality and morbidity.
5. Councillors and the authority as a whole can play a key leadership role in ensuring Devon is an area in which people maintain and forge social connections.
6. The Health and Wellbeing Board must play a central role in mapping local services and supporting local interventions to help reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Devon County Council will work at three levels to address loneliness:

One to one:

1. Improve information and advice on existing services and activities that reduce loneliness and isolation. Make sure this information is available both off and online.
2. Launch a local campaign to raise awareness of the health effects of loneliness and isolation amongst target risk groups.

Neighbourhood:

3. Set up a pilot scheme in a selected Division to map local assets for, and barriers to, keeping connected in older age. Involve local businesses, police officers and voluntary organisations in the project.
4. Involve older people, including those experiencing or at risk of loneliness, in mapping local assets, determining responses, and co-producing solutions.
5. Support the voluntary and community sector to build referral partnerships with frontline healthcare staff, fire services and social workers.

Strategic:

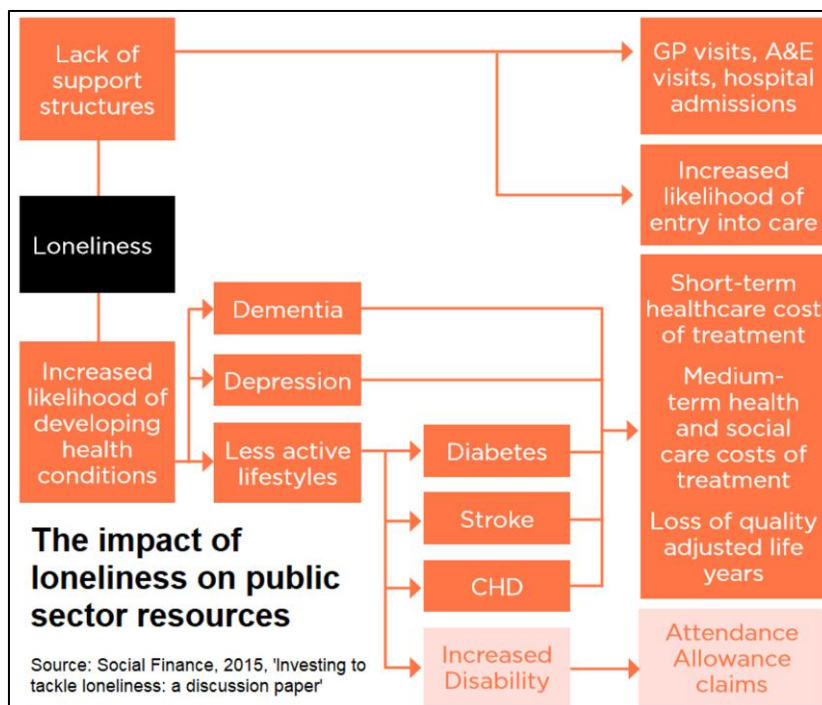
6. To take an active interest and role in ensuring the public health problem of social isolation in Devon is recognised and assessed.
7. To regularly measure loneliness and mapping need through Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and/or lifestyle surveys. Use this to monitor impact of interventions.
8. To ensure addressing loneliness and isolation is part of any 'ageing well' or 'mental health' or other relevant priority in the Health and Wellbeing Board's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
9. Protect subsidies for public transport for over-60s, and improve accessibility to public and community transport.
10. Agree a plan, in conjunction with the Health and Wellbeing Board's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to take action to prevent and reduce loneliness.

## **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Director of Public Health**

### **1. Context**

1.1 Loneliness has a considerable impact on health and wellbeing, with lonely individuals having a greater risk of ill-health and a lower quality of life. Lonely people are more likely to develop dementia and depression, and through living less-active lives will also be at increased risk of experiencing diabetes, stroke, heart disease and disability. A lack of social support structures also makes individuals more like to use health services and enter care. Figure 1 below illustrates the ways in which loneliness impact on health (Social Finance, 2015, 'Investing to tackle loneliness: a discussion paper').

**Figure 1, how loneliness impacts on health and services**



## 2. Current evidence on loneliness

2.1 According to the analysis of loneliness risk factors produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2018

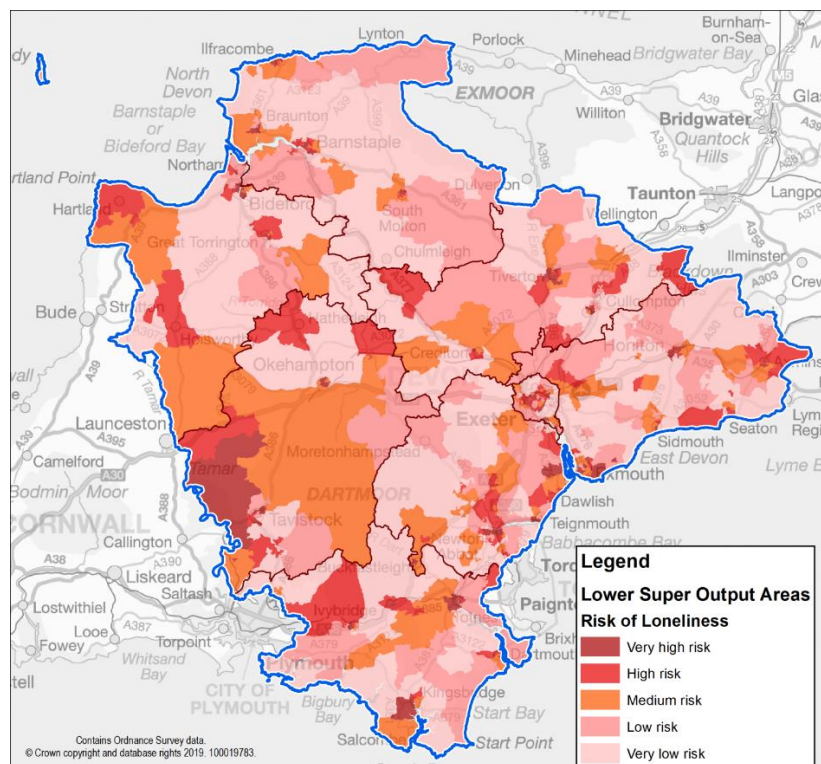
(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/lonelinesswhatcharacteristicsandcircumstancesareassociatedwithfeelinglonely/2018-04-10>), around 5% of the population are often or always lonely, and 16% of the population are sometimes lonely, equating to around 40,000 often/always feeling lonely and 128,000 sometimes feeling lonely in Devon. Characteristics and circumstances associated with a higher likelihood of loneliness included being female, being single or widowed, being in poor health, being in rented accommodation and having a weak sense of belonging to a neighbourhood. Deprivation is also strongly associated with loneliness with those living in more deprived areas more likely to experience it, and loneliness is experienced across the life course with young adults (aged 16-24) reportedly feeling lonely more often than older age groups. Whilst loneliness can affect anyone, the ONS define three groups who are at particular risk of being lonely:

- Younger renters with little trust and sense of belonging to their area
- Unmarried middle-agers, with long-term health conditions
- Widowed older homeowners living alone with long-term health conditions

2.2 Age UK produce a loneliness risk map which assigns neighbourhoods to five risk categories based on the social and demographic composition of the area. In Devon, as illustrated in figure 2, neighbourhoods at very high risk or high risk of loneliness are seen in all local authority districts. Very high-risk communities are seen in the city of Exeter and market and coastal towns across the county, with higher loneliness risk associated with socio-economic deprivation. Whilst rural areas typically have a lower risk of loneliness than urban areas very high risk or

high-risk rural communities are still evident, particularly in West Devon, Torrridge and Mid Devon. This is associated with higher levels of deprivation in rural communities linked to lower incomes and access.

**Figure 2, Risk of Loneliness by Devon Neighbourhood**



Source: Age UK 2019

2.3 The latest available information on loneliness and mental wellbeing in Devon from the Adult Social Care and Public Health Outcomes Frameworks suggests that:

- Less than half of people receiving social care (46%) had as much social contact as they would like.
- Less than a quarter of adult carers (23%) had as much social contact as they would like.
- According to the ONS Annual Population Survey, around 6% of the Devon adult population (c39,000) had a low happiness score in 2018/19.

2.4 The Covid-19 pandemic has increased levels of loneliness across the UK. Two particularly useful sources of information on this impact are the 'Covid-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveillance Report' and 'Build Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot Review' are summarised below:

- Covid-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveillance Report (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report>) – the surveillance report reveals a worsening of self-reported mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic. Older adults who were recommended to shield were more likely to report higher levels of depression, anxiety and loneliness in than people of a similar age but not



recommended to shield. Adults not in employment or on a low income were also more likely to experience loneliness during lockdown.

- Build Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot Review (<https://www.health.org.uk/publications/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review>) – the review includes a sub-section on social isolation and loneliness, and highlights increasing levels of social isolation, resulting in loneliness and adverse associated health impacts such as poor mental health. As well as reflecting the findings from the mental health and wellbeing surveillance report, digital exclusion was also highlighted as a key influencing factor. Loneliness during lockdown was found to occur most frequently in those aged 16 to 24, and in adults with a disability.

### **3. Devon Health and Wellbeing Board**

3.1 The Devon Health and Wellbeing Board has identified loneliness as a priority across partners in Devon. 'Happy and Healthy Communities' Devon's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25

(<https://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/strategies/>), includes as a main priority a focus on mental health and building good emotional health and wellbeing, happiness and resilience, with a specific sub-priority on reducing loneliness in all age groups. Specific Health and Wellbeing Board work in the area include:

- Devon's Charter to End Loneliness – highlighting the commitment of the board and the Devon Sustainability and Transformation to coordinate partnership work to tackle loneliness (<https://www.devonnewscentre.info/devons-charter-to-end-loneliness/>)
- A Loneliness Campaign, which ran in December 2018 to raise awareness of loneliness during the festive period (<https://www.devonnewscentre.info/make-them-count-12-days-12-ways-to-combat-loneliness/>)

### **4. Conclusion**

4.1 This report summarises current evidence around loneliness in Devon and the UK, including the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic on loneliness and mental wellbeing.

#### **(c) Children's Social Workers (Councillor Brazil)**

Once again Devon's Children's Social Care Services has failed its OFSTED inspection. DCC continues to fail some of the most vulnerable, the very people we should be doing our utmost to support and protect. Cornwall Children's Social Care Services is rated excellent. In comparison Devon's children's social workers have worse terms and conditions of employment including training and career progression. Not surprisingly Devon has a high turnover of social workers and employs a higher number temporary (and more expensive) agency staff.

As a matter of urgency DCC will commit to improving the terms and conditions of employment and invest in the support of these social workers.



## **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Children's Services**

Children's Services has developed a comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Strategy to address the current difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified social workers. This included comparing the terms and conditions for social workers across the South West Peninsula. Local Authorities in the South West including Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay have refreshed their recruitment packages to address retention challenges.

Within Devon, the turnover of qualified social workers is acute in our Children and Families Teams, but not in all areas of the service. We do not have recruitment and retention issues within our MASH, Youth Offending, Fostering and Adoption services.

Devon has been successful in engaging and supporting newly qualified social workers in their assessed and supported year in employment (AYSE) and starter pay rates are competitive. At the point a social worker becomes experienced the pay scales become significantly less competitive than our neighbours. Benchmarking was done with Torbay and Cornwall. It was felt to avoid a 'bidding war' we would align with Torbay as a first step. However, it was noted that this may be a two-stage process. Terms and conditions have been reviewed with significant investment agreed at Cabinet on the 9<sup>th</sup> December.

However, other actions are also being undertaken. In Spring 2020, 212 staff responded to a survey on retention. Workers advised comparable annual leave (with other authorities), a recognised career pathway, recruitment and retention payments, achievement recognition, flexible working arrangements and car leases as important factors in retention. These are being implemented as part of our new approach. We have invested in our Restorative Practice Model and are implementing a career pathway. We have also reduced caseloads and are embedding high-quality supervision and support for frontline staff.

With the other actions mentioned above we are confident that this will improve the recruitment and retention of social workers. In turn, a stable and permanent social work workforce is a key part of enabling the service to improve in response to the Ofsted inspection.

### **(d) Rural Proofing Processes (Councillor Atkinson)**

Given the government's failure to fair fund rural Devon's schools economy health services police and local government and to recognise the Great South West's Industrial strategy this councils considers the Government needs comprehensively to rethink and reform the rural proofing process across Government, to ensure that relevant policies and legislation are attuned to the needs of rural communities and rural economies like Devon. This council considers a reformed approach to rural proofing should be introduced and take into account the following:

- A rural assessment should take place at the start of the policy process, including engagement with rural stakeholders, and be treated as integral,

rather than as an adjunct to urban-focused policy. No legislation should be brought forward without an accompanying rural assessment statement;

- The impact of new policies on rural areas should be systematically and consistently monitored as they are implemented. This would include an update on the performance of rural proofing across government in the Government's annual report on the implementation of the rural strategy;
- All relevant public bodies including government, Devon County Council and the HoSW LEP should be required to rural proof, monitor and report annually on the rural impacts of relevant policies;
- The Government should put in place the appropriate structures to facilitate a more robust rural proofing regime; and
- Agrees to write to the Government and MPs across the SW and the LEP in response to this motion.

### **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills**

Defra Minister, Lord Gardiner of Kimble, confirmed in Parliament on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 that a report into rural proofing would be published shortly. A date for this release has yet to be announced.

Philip Dunne MP and Member for Ludlow, who Chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Rural Services, has called for such a study, so that government departments are truly aware of how rurality can impact the cost and impact of their policies. Mr Dunne stated: "As Chair of the APPG for Rural Services, we have called for years for the government to publish a report into rural proofing, to ensure that departments give real consideration to the impact of policies in rural areas. This commitment to publish shortly the first annual rural proofing report is welcome, and I look forward to reading how the government intends to put in place its levelling up agenda for rural areas."

Devon County Council (DCC) intends to provide comment to Government on this report and its content, which is currently unknown, when it is released and will use the Notice of Motion to help guide our response, along with input from Heads of Service and our evidence base on Devon and UK's rural economy.

With relation to UK Government spending, the Chancellor of the Exchequer separately announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review of 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, that it is currently reviewing a number of funding mechanisms that affect regional spending including:

- A £4bn Levelling Up Fund
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – to broadly replace certain EU funding mechanisms
- Changes to agricultural payments

- Refreshed Green Book guidance on how to assess potential investments, to help achieve the aim of addressing regional imbalances. This will be focused in particular on larger infrastructure project assessment and should benefit areas outside of London and the South East (particularly the North of England).  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/937700/Green\\_Book\\_Review\\_final\\_report\\_241120v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/937700/Green_Book_Review_final_report_241120v2.pdf)

Although this refresh to the Green Book does not mention rural areas specifically, there has been a significant change to take greater account of a weighting towards projects that reflect impact of 'levelling up' by place and contribution to social value and carbon reduction. This specific place-based evaluation will allow us to get across our specific rural challenges in any business cases. Therefore if we are going to put effort into reflecting the rural premium this seems like more of a priority than rural proofing our own policies. We can also, as part of the rural proofing consultation, make these connections.

The UK Government currently has in place a rural proofing process, dated 2017, to enable the assessment of impact of policies on rural areas, which we expect will also be reviewed as part of the anticipated report into rural proofing :  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/600450/rural-proofing-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/600450/rural-proofing-guidance.pdf)

Previously, DCC has identified a number of issues needing to be addressed, or for consideration by Government regarding rural proofing. These include:

- Ensuring a Government wide, rather than DEFRA only, approach to rural proofing and taking account of rural impacts
- Highlighting the range of rural businesses, including innovative, environmentally forward thinking and high-value businesses, to dispel the myth sometimes held that rural businesses are low value. This includes opportunities in the environmental, agri-tech, energy and digital sectors.
- Taking into account the strong economic interplay between neighbouring rural, urban and coastal areas. The use of an arbitrary economic view of rural versus urban is often to miss the nuance and growth opportunities for UK PLC which our rural communities and business can offer.
- Rural England faces new challenges and opportunities from, among others, EU Exit, declining farm profitability, changing consumer and live/work patterns, an ageing population, housing affordability, access to services, training provision, banking and high speed broadband in certain areas, climate change and new technology.

In responding to the government's report, we intend to revisit these issues in terms of new input, information and evidence. We will also use information from partner organisations, such as the National Farmers' Union, the HotSW Growth Hub (business support provider), the Federation of Small Businesses, Visit Devon, the Rural Services Network, Devon Association of Local Councils and District Councils across Devon to help inform our response to the report when issued.

Regarding the rural proofing and annual monitoring and reporting on our own policies, it is expected that there would be a cost involved to authorities outside of central Government who wish to annually measure the specific impacts of individual interventions on rural areas. DCC already reports on the rural economy and measures the impacts of interventions, relying on published datasets and can continue to do so.

Should there be any additional burden placed upon Local Government in implementing rural proofing at the local and regional levels from this report, we intend to feed back the need for Government to fund this and/or ensure that duties placed upon local areas are not overly costly, onerous, or time consuming.

It is unknown how the proposed changes to funding mechanisms, such as the replacement for EU structural funds with UKSPF funding, will affect Devon, or other predominantly rural areas. DCC will provide comment to Government and lobby where necessary, using an evidence-based approach in our aim to ensure an equitable result in terms of funding for Devon and its residents and businesses.

We intend that any response that we make to Government will include highlighting the rural opportunities and challenges across a number of our service areas including education and learning, infrastructure, highways, the environment, communities, health and care and economy. We will also intend to highlight the need for recognition of the additional costs of service provision and difficulty of delivery in rural areas to support fairer treatment in future funding settlements.

### **(e) Climate Change and Fossil Fuel Projects (Councillor Atkinson)**

The UK export finance (UKEF) has used £3.5bn of public funds to support polluting projects since the government signed up to the Paris climate agreement and has directed £6bn of public money into fossil fuel projects around the world in the last decade.

It is considering requests for financial support for seven projects involving fossil fuels that may be agreed in 2021, and has received a further 10 applications for trade finance support in the sector.

Britain must lead by example by urgently aligning our stated net zero priorities at home with our practices abroad in view of our COP presidency next year. The government's seeming willingness to pump billions of pounds of UK public money into overseas oil and gas demonstrates a reckless and inconsistent approach to climate action.

Devon County Council calls on the government to;

- end all financing for new foreign fossil fuel projects immediately or risk undermining its own commitment to tackling the global climate crisis; and
- change the mandate of its credit agency, UK export finance (UKEF), to stop offering billions of pounds in financial support to companies that bid for work on fossil fuel projects overseas despite a pledge to be carbon neutral at home.

## **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment.**

UK Export Finance is the operating name of the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD). It is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations. It works with over 100 private credit insurers and lenders to help UK companies access export finance, operating at no net cost to the taxpayer. The services it can provide includes attractive financing terms offered to overseas buyers of UK goods and services to help exporters make their offering more competitive; this can include direct lending.

Early this year, an investigation by Newsnight, in conjunction with Unearthed - Greenpeace's investigations unit - found that UKEF had helped to finance oil and gas projects that, when complete, will emit up to 69 million tonnes of carbon a year; that equates to nearly a sixth of the total annual carbon emissions of the UK. The UK is just one of a number of backers for these projects. As noted by the Notice of Motion, this research also found that, since 2010, UKEF has financed £6bn of fossil fuel projects, such as oil refineries, power plants and liquified gas extraction, which has involved some of the biggest oil and gas companies in the world.

This follows on from an earlier investigation by the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, which published its **Nineteenth Report of Session 2017-19, entitled 'UK Export Finance' (HC 1804)**, on 10 June 2019 (available [here](#)). This highlighted the environmental implications of financing provided through UKEF and its apparent conflict with the UK's international development and climate change targets. The Government's response (available [here](#)) followed on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019 and commented on each of the 13 recommendations made by the Committee. This provides a helpful synthesis of the respective positions, confirming UKEF support for fossil fuel projects abroad, but also commenting on how it is committed to working with countries across the world to unlock their renewable energy potential and support their transition away from fossil fuels to cleaner alternatives. Some of the disagreement relates to the speed of this transition and the justification for ongoing investment in polluting projects in the interim.

This Notice of Motion and the investigations mentioned above do demonstrate the need to look beyond the climate implications of our own carbon emissions alone in the UK, but to also address those internationally which are supported either by UK finance or, indeed, are serving UK-based consumption of resources and services. This is a complex issue, but one which needs to be tackled to achieve the reductions in carbon emissions which are essential to avoid the worst implications of climate change. It is also the case that such issues will, inevitably, be highlighted through the delayed COP26 event – the international climate change conference which is to be hosted by the UK in Glasgow in November 2021. On this basis, it is likely that government Ministers will be reviewing UK policy positions in preparation for this event and to assist in reaching strengthened international commitment to tackling climate change.

## **(f) Public Sector Pay (Councillor Atkinson)**

Research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed that public sector pay is 1.5% lower than in 2010 after inflation, and among the lowest levels relative to private sector earnings in decades.

That Devon County Council;

- deplores the governments renewed squeeze or pay freeze on public sector pay and should not be attacking public sector workers who have done much to support the emergency response to the coronavirus pandemic.
- considers this will seriously affect morale and services at DCC;
- will exacerbate difficulties with hiring workers and retaining existing employees; and
- agrees to write to the Government and to local M.Ps to ask it to not implement this.

## **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the County Solicitor / Head of Human Resources**

South West Councils have confirmed the following:

The Government has no formal role in the decision about local government annual pay increases which are developed through negotiations with the trade unions. Principal authorities will be consulted to establish an Employers' position on pay once the Trade Unions' pay claim is submitted. This is expected early in the New Year.

In the LGA's response to the Spending Review the following points were made:

- Calculations around the affordability of pay increases take full account of the financial settlement given overall to local government but this is not the only factor involved. Thus, the Government cannot automatically impose a pay freeze in local government unless it uses a legislative route to do so.
- This means also that the announcement of an increase of £250 for employees earning less than the national median wage of £24,000 per annum does not apply automatically for local government staff (30 per cent of whom earn below this salary), as was made clear after a similar announcement by the then Chancellor in 2010/11.
- The LGA will be seeking clarity on which groups of local authority employed staff such as health visitors and school nurses, if any, will be covered by the announced pay increase for health staff including nurses.
- Pay for teaching staff is set by a pay review body following a remit set by the Government. Teachers have been a key part of the community response during the pandemic, ensuring schools remained open for key workers, providing a safe haven for priority children and finding innovative ways to keep children learning. A pay freeze for teachers may exacerbate existing

recruitment and retention challenges, particularly for teachers in key subject areas.

### **(g) The British Horse Society - Dead Slow Campaign (Councillor Hannaford)**

#### Council notes with concern that:

Numbers of road collisions involving horses in the South West are higher than anywhere else in the country, according to the latest figures.

New statistics released by the British Horse Society (BHS) show that 203 incidents were reported to the charity during 2019-20, down slightly from 239 in 2018-19.

Devon reported over half of the overall total with 104 incidents, one human fatality and 33 horse fatalities, also making it the county with the highest equine fatality rate in the UK.

The BHS has collated incident statistics to tie in with Road Safety Week (November 16-22) run by Brake, the road safety charity, to understand the rate of incidents involving horses on UK roads.

Of the 1,037 incidents reported nationally, 80 horses have died and 136 have been injured.

Furthermore, the BHS reveals that 81% of them occurred due to vehicles passing by too closely and close to half (43%) of riders were subject to road rage or abuse. It adds that 40% of incidents occurred because a vehicle passed by too quickly.

Overall since November 2010, 4,774 road incidents have been reported to the BHS, 44 people have lost their lives and 1,220 have been injured, and 395 horses have been killed, with another 1,080 injured.

#### Council supports:

The Dead Slow campaign that can be visited at the website [bhs.org.uk/dead slow](https://bhs.org.uk/dead-slow), consists of four key behavioral change messages to drivers in relation to horses and riders:

- Slow down to a maximum of 15mph;
- Be patient – I won't sound my horn or rev my engine;
- Pass the horse wide and slow (if safe to do so), at least a car's width if possible;
- Drive slowly away.



### Council resolves:

With the documented increase in speeding incidents we support the charity in urging drivers to be very careful when passing horses on the road , and for them to adhere to its Dead Slow campaign messages.

We join with the BHS to encourage all riders and horse owners to report their incidents to the charity at [horseincidents.org.uk](http://horseincidents.org.uk).

Furthermore as Devons highways authority we will aim to work with horse owners & riders, local communities, District, Town and Parish Councils, charities and others to wherever possible promote this campaign, in tandem with other measures such as better signage, to achieve behavioral change and secure better equine safety for all.

### **Briefing Note / Position Statement from the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment.**

The Department for Transport collision records (STATS19) for Devon are recorded by Devon & Cornwall Police. STATS19 data identifies any personal injury collision recorded on the highway. STATS19 includes collisions involving ridden horses\ horse drawn carriages and any collisions where an animal (except ridden horse) was recorded as a carriageway hazard in a collision. For the Devon County Council (DCC) local highway authority area, Table 1 summarises all STATS19 collisions recorded over the last full five years.

|              | <b>Fatality</b> | <b>Serious Injury</b> | <b>Slight Injury</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 2015         | 0               | 0                     | 5                    | 5            |
| 2016         | 0               | 1                     | 5                    | 6            |
| 2017         | 0               | 1                     | 3                    | 4            |
| 2018         | 1               | 2                     | 1                    | 4            |
| 2019         | 0               | 2                     | 1                    | 2            |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1</b>        | <b>6</b>              | <b>15</b>            | <b>22</b>    |

**Table 1**

Over the period 28/02/2019 to 29/02/2020, there were 203 incidents reported to the British Horse Society (BHS). Data provided by the BHS identifies 54 reported horse incidents on roads across the three Devon local highway authority areas. The total of 104 incidents in Devon, includes loose ponies recorded as injured or killed on Dartmoor by the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society. Of the 54 incidents reported by riders in Devon, 3 reports identified mild injury to horses and 7 identified mild or moderate injury to the rider. The reported rider fatality occurred in December 2018. This fatality in 2018 is also identified in Table 1. This accident did involve a vehicle and a horse being led by the rider. But investigation by the Police did not identify that the vehicle had been driven without the appropriate level of care.

It is clear that collision data recorded by Police forces does not represent the full picture of incidents involving horses that occur on the roads. An independent study published in 2020 looked in detail at the issues of equestrian safety on UK roads. This study used data from both STATS19 and the BHS and it also included

survey information collected from over 1900 horse riders from across the country. This study and analysis of the national STATS19 data for the five-year period 2013 to 2017, identified that the DCC area had the seventh highest horse collision rate per 100,000 population. The study then focused in more detail on the collision evidence available within the DCC local highway authority area. The findings of the study highlighted that the majority of collisions involved vehicles passing in the opposite direction and overtaking, with rear-end shunts being the next most prevalent collision type. A large proportion of vehicles involved in collisions with horses were reported not to have impacted the horse, but avoiding impact with a horse was not sufficient to avoid injuries. The survey found that nearly 16% of the riders surveyed had reported a collision, with nearly 8% reporting collisions involving personal injury. Additionally, nearly 80% of riders had reported a near-miss incident. The study concluded that drivers need to understand horse perception limitations, flight behaviours, and horse rider signals. The report recommended that collision frequency and severity could be reduced with education-based initiatives and equally, equestrian riders need to be skilled in communicating correctly with their horses and in approaching drivers.

The BHS as a charity offer a range of resources, education and training opportunities and is proactive in promoting road safety for riders and improving driver awareness. This is something that DCC can support through the road safety team.

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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**

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