

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL
Wednesday 9 November 2022

1. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BRAZIL
Re: Customer Service Centre and Waiting Times

What are the average call waiting times for residents calling 0345 155 1015
An overall average and individual directorates?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR SAYWELL

This 0345 155 1015 is the general enquiries number, so it is not possible to provide the data by directorate, because it isn't recorded that way.

However, the table below shows the average call wait times on each line into the Customer Service Centre over the last 12 months, in seconds.

The general enquiries line referred to in the question is highlighted in yellow.

Service Descriptor	Avg Ans Wait (s)
Emergency Duty Team (EDT)	55
MASH	99
Children's Social Work	105
Care Direct	159
Highways	124
Registrars	177
ACS Survey	106
Blue Badge Hotline	178
Concessionary Bus Passes	167
Family Information Service	160
General Enquiries	127
NOCC	61
Learn Devon	40
Libraries	99
Residents' Parking	162

Schools & Education	157
Schools Admissions	170
Schools Transport	162
Switchboard (x3000)	105
Trading Standards	195
Waste & Recycling	116
CSC Overall Results	143

2. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BAILEY
Re: Terms of Reference for Enquiry

At the cabinet meeting on 26th September 2022 the Portfolio Holder for Childrens Services agreed, in response to my supplementary question, to publish the terms of reference for Devon County Council's investigation into its failure to hold a multi agency safeguarding meeting following a referral to DCC about John Humphreys in 2014. Disgraced former Conservative councillor John Humphreys was convicted of the sexual abuse of two boys and sentenced to prison for 21 years in 2021. To-date I am not aware that the terms of reference have in fact been published, please can they now be published forthwith.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR LEADBETTER

The terms of reference are attached at Appendix 1.

3. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BAILEY
Re: Vaccination of Badgers

Please can the Portfolio Holder for the Environment advise whether she supports the vaccination of badgers in order to prevent the spread of bovine TB.

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR DAVIS

The Government's strategy on tackling bovine tuberculosis (TB) in England includes badger vaccination. This is because government research has shown that vaccinating badgers can reduce the risk of bovine TB in individual badgers and reduce the transmission of the disease from badger to badger. It is, therefore, likely that vaccinating badgers could also reduce transmission between badgers and cattle. This is beneficial for badger populations but, crucially, may help to counter the devastating effects of bovine TB for livestock farmers in infection hotspots in Devon. At present, such vaccination must be carried out under a licence issued by Natural England. The latest data available on the GOV.UK website relating to such licences indicates that in 2020 they covered an area of 3.7 square kilometres in Devon, with only 27 badgers vaccinated. This is despite Devon being a high risk area for bovine TB with a particularly high incidence of herd infection.

However, Defra is bolstering government vaccinator capability to deploy badger vaccination over ever larger, more contiguous, areas. Over time this will help gather more evidence of the direct impact of badger vaccination on reducing TB in cattle herds.

In this context, I support the principle of increased deployment of badger vaccination in relevant parts of Devon, with this forming part of a wider programme of measures to reduce bovine TB.

4. QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BAILEY
Re: Badger Cull and DCC owned Land

From 2013 until last year 35,022 badgers were killed through the cull in Devon - the highest figure for any county in England. How many of these 35,022 badgers were culled on Devon County Council owned land?

REPLY BY COUNCILLOR HART

The Council does not hold this information – Council farms are tenanted and as such tenants are free to choose whether or not they allow a licenced cull on their land and they are not required to seek approval from DCC.

Terms of Reference Independent Review

Purpose

- To determine whether the LADO service followed safeguarding policies and good practice in relation to concerns reported to Devon County Council in respect of JH
- To consider if decision making was properly based on all available information, and was proportionate, with the information available at the time
- To examine whether information was shared with all proper authorities in a timely way
- To determine whether there were missed opportunities in relation to safeguarding children

Scope

- To review the period from the referral to the police in 2004 to the date of JH's conviction
- To provide a comprehensive chronology of all significant events, including referral dates, dates JH was in post as Councillor/School Governor, dates DM was employed by school, dates for key decision points
- To conduct an evaluation of the action taken in response to information shared with the LADO service; in particular whether it was in line with policies and procedures at the time
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- To consider the quality and impact of partner relationships and the quality and timeliness of information sharing.

Activity

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- Review all records DCC records held in relation to the allegations about JH shared with DCC
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- Interview any relevant professionals
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- Other activity may be as identified as necessary by the independent reviewer during the course of the review

Outcome

Provide a report and executive summary which

- identifies the extent to which policies and procedures were followed in this case
- identifies any missed opportunities to safeguard children
- sets out any learning from this review
- develops recommendations accordingly