

**Report of the Cabinet Member for
Public Health, Communities and Equality**

Introduction

I will be reporting as follows for Full Council on 16 February 2022:

1. by Councillor Hannaford as follows:

- a) The current state of Covid and Flu infections in Devon.
- b) The latest rates of Strep A and Scarlett Fever in children across Devon, including in local schools.
- c) The access and availability of antibiotics for children in Devon.
- d) The medium and long term viability of local Pharmacies in Devon.

2. by Councillor Atkinson as follows:

The Environment Act 2021 requires the Government to set legally binding targets for environmental improvement, including waste reduction. The Government intends to introduce new interim targets to reduce different types of waste including plastic, glass, metal, paper and food to be achieved by 31 January 2028. The setting of these targets was delayed. Do we know why there has been a delay given the importance of the achieving Paris Agreement carbon reduction targets

These interim targets include to make the following per person reductions in municipal wastes:

- residual 29%
- food 50%
- plastic 45%
- paper and card 26%
- metal 42%
- glass 48%.

DCC 's waste reduction strategy is framed by reference to weight. How do these target's relate to our current measurement of waste? How close is Devon to meeting these currently and are they achievable within current budgets? Has government given DCC any policy guidance on how this is to be achieved or any additional funding to help local authorities like DCC achieve this?

If there is a gap and what plans are we making to meet these targets or seeking government support?

When will our new strategy be reported to this Council and scrutiny?

Responses

1. a) The current state of Covid and Flu infections in Devon.

- The latest available data we have for COVID-19 is an estimated infection rate of 1 in 65 people across the South West. Sub Regional data is only updated once per month, and it is yet to be updated this month. To date we have broadly followed the South West rate.
- There have been 13 deaths registered in the latest week with COVID-19 mentioned on the death certificate. During December we did see a peak in excess deaths in Devon, but this had continued to reduce post mid-December. At present there are 184 beds occupied by confirmed COVID-19 as the latest report through the CCG (7th February 2023).
- The latest weekly rate (2nd February Week 5) of flu infections 12.2 per 100,000 for Devon this compares to a South West figure of 9.0 per 100,000 compared to. Similar to COVID, we saw a peak in December and rates have continued to reduce since then. Similarly, positivity regionally peaked in December and has continued to reduce.

b) The latest rates of Strep A and Scarlett Fever in children across Devon, including in local schools.

- The figures below are absolute numbers and caution is required when interpreting numbers rather than rates. UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have not yet pulled together rates for the last month yet.
- In December 2022 there were 52 cases of scarlet fever in Devon reported to the UKSHA. In January 2023 case numbers dropped to 19.
- In December 2022 there were 10 cases of iGAS (Invasive Group A streptococcus) in Devon reported to the UKHSA. In January 2023 there were 11 cases reported.

c) The access and availability of antibiotics for children in Devon

- The audit undertaken by NHS Devon Medicines Optimisation team suggests that antibiotic prescribing was around double what expected to see for the month of December. The precise figure will need to be confirmed when the data is available in a few weeks.
- The Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) has reported, and NHS Devon has observed sporadic availability issues with some liquid antibiotics, although alternative preparations and antibiotics appear to be generally available. It is important to note that information is a snapshot in time and the amount of stock held within pharmacies can't be monitored and may be variation in supplies they hold.
- Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) are designed to mitigate stock shortage issues; an SSP enables community pharmacists, in the event of a serious shortage of any prescribed item to supply in accordance with the protocol rather

than against a prescription, without going back to the prescriber – these are in place to treat Strep A, and these have recently been extended until 28/2/23.

- Current anecdotal feedback from the health system supports that if a patient needs a liquid antibiotic, there is currently enough to satisfy demand, either through stockholding in pharmacies, or employing appropriate mitigation through an SSP.

d) The medium and long-term viability of local Pharmacies in Devon.

NHS Devon take over responsibility for commissioning local pharmaceutical services from NHS England on the 1st April 2023. It will be the responsibility of the commissioner to ensure the medium and long-term viability of local pharmacies in Devon.

2. Waste Reduction

We have been waiting for the Government's responses to a number of consultations in relation to the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations, the Deposit Return Scheme (D.R.S), Consistency and indeed new waste reduction targets. The EPR and D.R.S have now been published and Consistency is promised shortly. I do not know why there has been a delay in producing these responses. The Environment Secretary Therese Coffey recently told the Environmental Audit committee that a waste prevention programme would be published "very soon" and that she hoped work on consistent collections by local authorities of recyclable materials would soon be complete.

The Environment Improvement Plan 2023 (EIP 23) has recently been published setting out the interim materials targets for January 2028. The table below shows how the percentage reductions referred to in the question relate to weights (kg/head/year). The EIP 23 target refers to 'municipal residual waste'

LACW(kg/head/yr)	Food	Plastic	Paper/Card	Metal	Glass	Residue
2028 (Jan) Target	64	42	74	10	7	333
2042 (Dec) Target						287
Devon (21/22)*	31	17	14	3	3	218

*Devon figures based on DASWC Waste Audit (2022)

A waste compositional analysis has recently (October 2022) been carried out of 1800 residual waste bins in Devon and Torbay, so the table above includes our current position.

As you can see the Devon positions look favourable in relation to the targets set for 2028. There are some caveats which need to go with this position. We have not yet received any detail from the government in terms of the exact definitions, for example "total mass of residual waste excluding major mineral wastes" is referenced as the 2042 target and also we have used our own waste compositional analysis results when the Government may choose to use a national data set. As a high performing authority with a recycling rate of 55% we will continue to work with the district councils, focussing on optimising services and encouraging behavioural change to ensure that we continue to meet the targets set.

The Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay 2020-2030 was only agreed at Cabinet on 8th September 2021, and there are currently no plans to produce a new strategy.

Councillor Roger Croad

Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Equality