

PH/24/04

Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee

28 November 2024

Service Delivery for Public Health and Communities: In-Year Briefing

Report of the Director of Public Health and Communities

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

The Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny is asked to note the update on the delivery of Public Health, Communities and Prosperity services so far in 2024.

2) Introduction

This mid-year report for Scrutiny covers the functions of Public Health and Communities.

3) Public Health

Public Health Intelligence and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Public Health Intelligence Team has continued to develop and innovate the utilisation of data and intelligence to support access and better utilisation of data. The JSNA [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#) is a statutory function of the local authority and provides a central resource supported by a range of tools such as Power BI and interactive dashboards to present key public health information. Dashboards developed over the last year include the supporting dashboard for the Annual Public Health Report for 2024 focused on health in an ageing Devon. This includes data on population, life and health expectancies, health and wellbeing projections, and recommendations to support ageing well Devon Annual Public Health Report 2023-24 - Devon Health and Wellbeing. The Devon Population Dashboard [Devon Population Dashboard - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#) provides further details and insight into demographic change in Devon, and the new Cardiovascular disease dashboard [CVD Data Dashboard - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#) provides intelligence to inform prevention activities across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. A number of topic summaries have also been produced to provide more detailed evidence for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment including overviews for oral health, poverty and suicide [Topic Overviews - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#).

Public health and health improvement

Public Health's commissioned services continue to innovate and seek best value to continue to meet the needs of Devon residents. Demand for public health services continues to increase, specifically sexual health services and substance misuse and NHS health checks. The service has had to respond to a marginal increase in the public health grant and lack of certainty of funding in future years to commission the required services

within budget. The sexual health service is a mandated service, and a significant proportion of the public health grant spend, the tender for the new service has closed and the outcome will be announced in due course.

Following receipt of the supplementary Smokefree Generation grant funding. A variety of workstreams have started focussing on increasing the number of people being supported to quit smoking using evidence-based approaches, as well as working creatively with a wide range of stakeholders on novel approaches to increase reach. The programme also includes working with the Public Health Nursing Service to increase tobacco harm prevention activities. The completion of the planned activities is projected to result in Devon surpassing the quit ambitions outlined in the grant agreement, by supporting over 4000 people to stop smoking each year, benefitting their health, wellbeing and financial circumstances. The current smoking prevalence rate for Devon is 10.8% down from 13.9% (2022).

Additional national grant funding has been awarded for a third year to support delivery of the national drugs strategy. The Devon Drug and Alcohol Strategic Partnership has responsibility to update the needs assessment and produce a local delivery plan to break drug supply chains, ensure an effective treatment and recovery system and reduce demand for recreational drugs. The additional funding has resulted in increasing numbers in treatment, increase in the volume of schools Y-SMART have delivered alcohol and other drug harm education sessions to, increases in the number of people funded to access residential rehabilitation and inpatient detoxifications and we have funded some opiate users to receive the long acting injectable buprenorphine medication which has proven transformational for many.

It has been confirmed that the Public Health Teams in local authorities within Devon will receive additional funding for oral health promotion from the NHS underspend on Dental activity. This additional funding will be used to expand the existing supervised toothbrushing scheme to enable coverage across all primary schools and nurseries within Devon.

The Public Health Nursing Service has been engaged in an extensive transformation programme and is currently meeting or exceeding national targets for all core contacts. Improvements in the timeliness of core contacts supports early identification of need and positively contributes to the SEND agenda.

August performance figures:

- New Birth Visit (10-14 days) In Time: 85% (target - 80%)
- 6-8 Weeks maternal mental health review In Time: 62% (target - 25%)
- 12m developmental review In Time: 88% (target - 80%)
- 15m developmental review In Time: 92% (target - 75%)
- 30m developmental review In Time: 88% (target - 75%)

For Quarter 1, 2024-2025 6–8 week Breastfeeding Prevalence, 64.06% of women are giving their babies breastmilk at 6-8 weeks post-delivery which indicates the service are encouraging mothers to continue with their breastfeeding journeys. This figure continues to improve.

The HUGS (Helping US Grow More) Programme, delivered by Devon Public Health Nursing, is an early help health visiting intervention designed to address health inequalities for children. Currently, 51 families are actively participating in the HUGS program.

Public Health future need and demand and health inequalities

The Director of Public Health Annual Public Health report for 2023/24 [Annual Public Health Report 2023-24: Health in An Ageing Devon - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#) highlights the changing demographic profile of Devon over the next twenty years and through modelling predicts future levels of illness and disability in Devon. The report not only provides a greater understanding of the future challenges we could face, but also provides an overview of what the evidence tells us we can do to enable people to maximise the number of years spent in good health, remaining active and living independently for as long as possible.

Inclusion health groups are the most vulnerable groups of our society and include those who are homeless; vulnerable migrants; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities; sex workers; and victims of modern slavery. While they make up a small proportion of the population they experience disproportionately and significant poorer health and opportunity. Targeted work focusing on the most vulnerable individual, families and communities continues in Devon. Examples include the formation of the Devon Drug and Alcohol Strategic Partnership to ensure a multi-agency approach to tackling substance misuse and the creation of a multi-agency alliance in Exeter (STaR) focused on supporting the health of rough sleepers.

Public health and health protection

The UK Covid-19 inquiry recently published the outcomes of Module 1 (Resilience and Preparedness). The learning from the national inquiry is supporting the work of the Local Health Resilience Forum who are leading the development of a system-wide pandemic and High Consequence Infection Disease plan. Public Health Devon are inputting into the development of the plan.

The team continues to focus on supporting vaccination programmes to ensure there is an impact on inequalities.

Delivery of the budget in line with the previously agreed budget

The work of Public Health Devon, including all its commissioned services, are funded from within a ring-fenced public health grant that is paid directly to Devon County Council from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). There are no actual or projected overspends to report against the Public Health Grant at the mid-year point. There is increased activity in some areas including NHS Health checks but the increased spend can be managed within the overall budget.

Public Health continues to receive additional time-limited ring-fenced funding to support tackling substance misuse (3 years) and funding to implement a Smokefree generation (5 years). The additional funding is conditional that the historical spend in these areas are not reduced.

4) Communities

Devon Libraries

The Libraries for Life 2024/25 campaign and the supporting winter support programme will once again provide warm and safe spaces alongside access to specific information to help navigate through the cost-of-living challenges.

Libro's Friends, a new reading adventure for under 5's, launched this April. Libro's Friends is aimed at 0–4-year-olds and rewards little ones when they visit their local library. The scheme promotes literacy through carefully chosen word and rhyme with the wonderful illustrations of Emily Fox, to instil a love of libraries from an early age. There has already been a good take up, with 1,032 children participating so far in Devon. Bookstart packs for 0–4-year-olds are given out to families directly through Devon libraries and distributed to children's centres, registrars, nurseries and childminders; ensuring that an introduction to literacy through reading and rhymes starts as early as possible and gets to families that may not have books at home. 2,755 packs were distributed in total - 1485 Baby packs, 1,200 Pre-schooler packs and 70 Toddler packs were gifted across Devon in Quarter 1.

Having the 100-year birthday of a county wide public library service featured on BBC Spotlight was great opportunity, particularly in showing the value of libraries as community hubs and the variety of services on offer.

The Community Bookshelves Pilot scheme is well underway to assist people in rural villages, who are unable to travel, to continue to access books since the closure of the mobile library service. Ipplepen & Langtree Community Bookshelves are now operating the new pilot, with bookshelves built and a delivery of gifted books. In Langtree, it will operate at the same time as the weekly market, alongside other local services including the post office van, milk kiosk and café.

The rollout of new public access computers has taken place over the Spring and Summer and have been well received by library users; and the website has been relaunched providing a more intuitive approach to information on all the libraries in Devon including a virtual tour of each library.

Youth Services

Street Based Work continues to be one of the Council's delivery priorities for the service. The two Devon County Council commissioned pieces of street-based work (Cranbrook and Sherford) are longstanding and therefore have become embedded within the communities. Young people in these areas see our street teams as 'their local youth centre' and are every bit as engaged as the members at the 100 club in Exeter or Georgie's youth centre in Barnstaple as examples.

The Cranbrook groups have recently worked with Exmouth Youth Centre and the 100 Club to raise funds towards a summer programme that provided high energy, developmental opportunities for young people over the summer period - in total the young people raised just over £2,000. Our Sherford group have been able to impact future services in the town and have their say on services for young people in their age group - working with the local

action group. Through this, youth workers have been able to facilitate opportunities for young people to feed in their opinions and needs, in a non-threatening and accessible way.

The youth service Community Team continue to provide support to new and existing youth organisations via face-to-face visits, supportive phone calls, and our training offer. The team have supported 18 separate groups so far this year. Support for newly developing groups included:

- Topsham - meetings with local councillors around the re-establishment of the youth club there.
- Seaton & Colyton - meetings with the local councillor, who is keen to see the establishment of youth clubs in both Seaton and Colyton.
- Barnstaple Town Council Youth Network- supporting development of the network, including the range of opportunities for young people. New groups opened.
- Support for new Youth club that has now opened in Hemyock and for The Den, a new after-school drop in Honiton.

Community Safety

This brings together several inter-related strands of Community Safety work where the focus is primarily on tackling and preventing violence and abuse. The team has continued to strengthen the Council's capacity and capability to effectively discharge significant organisational responsibilities in relation to a range of statutory duties, including those in relation to domestic abuse, countering violent extremism and terrorism, and serious violence.

In accordance with the Council's Statutory Duty under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, work to deliver the Council's [Strategy](#) for domestic abuse support in safe accommodation continues. The team has continued to apply a test and learn approach to funding prototyping projects which have contributed to improving the understanding of the needs of those affected by domestic abuse in Devon as well as improving the support available to them. This has included work to provide improved support in safe accommodation.

We have continued to support the refuge operated by North Devon Against Domestic Abuse with enhanced support for children and continue to commission a dedicated therapy and counselling service for victims of domestic abuse. We have worked in collaboration with District councils to develop link roles within Housing and developed a Staying Put offer for victims that wish to remain in their own home. We have continued to support the delivery of 'Brave Spaces' in Exeter and Northern Devon to support vulnerable women with complex needs experiencing domestic and sexual abuse as well as a dedicated offer for women and girls that are seeking asylum or refuge. We have also supported the delivery of a targeted and direct offer for children and young people affected by familial domestic abuse delivered by Young Devon, as well as whole family therapeutic interventions.

The team has also focused on laying the foundations for an improved coordinated community response in Devon by funding and delivering and supporting the delivery of key pieces of workforce development including training on honour-based abuse, domestic abuse and learning disabilities, cultural competence and intersectionality, and trauma stabilisation.

Through this period and informed by the above activity, the team has developed a specification for an Integrated Domestic Abuse Service that will provide a more substantial response to those affected by domestic abuse in Devon. The contract for the new Service has been awarded and is due to commence on the 1st of April 2025. It comprises of five key elements:

- 1) Access and community engagement
- 2) Specialist domestic abuse support/Interventions for victims, as well as those that harm
- 3) Refuge and dispersed safe accommodation
- 4) Safe accommodation for women experiencing multiple disadvantage
- 5) Therapies and counselling for victims of domestic abuse

The team has also continued to lead the co-ordination of responses to the Serious Violence Duty (which came into effect early in 2023). The Duty required specified authorities to produce and publish, by the end of January 2024, a Needs Assessment outlining the picture of serious violence happening in their local area and a Strategy informed by this evidence base.

The multiagency Preventing Serious Violence Strategy outlines our 5-year framework for preventing and reducing serious violence in Devon. It is grounded in a public health approach to violence prevention, recognising that addressing the root causes of violence is crucial for prevention. It acknowledges that violence prevention is a long-term ambition requiring sustained preventative focus, system leadership, commitment and investment.

Strategy delivery builds on foundational work initiated in recent years by the Safer Devon Partnership, Devon's District Community Safety Partnerships and wider partners to support a preventative response to serious violence. Delivery for 2024-25 comprises of interventions funded through the Home Office Serious Violence Grant and further actions resourced through alternative funding streams or in-kind arrangements.

Examples include:

- Commissioning of specialist training to equip youth service and Early Help practitioners with skills to support young people experiencing parental imprisonment, with the aim of embedding learning in these roles. Space Youth Service is also delivering a support programme for young people affected by parental imprisonment / offending, using schools as a route for engagement.
- Extension / introduction of Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) pilots in South Hams, Teignbridge, West, East and Mid Devon, respectively. CPWs are being introduced as a prevention and early intervention approach to anti-social behaviour and serious violence, utilising District Council Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and delivered in partnership with local agencies. Positive results from the initial pilot in South Hams, West Devon and Teignbridge indicate strong compliance and a positive impact on prevention.

The team has also continued to lead on the Council's Counter Terrorism responsibilities in relation to Prevent and Channel. Members will be aware that the Council has a statutory duty, (alongside other specified authorities such as education, health, police and criminal justice agencies), to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The [Prevent Duty Guidance](#) was refreshed last autumn following the [Independent Review of Prevent](#) led by William Shawcross. The Council had a small window in which to

ensure compliance with the refreshed Duty requirements. The team participated in a Home Office led Prevent Duty Assurance Process in the Spring of 2024 and Devon was assessed as meeting the Duty requirements across all areas. The [Channel Duty Guidance](#) was also updated in the autumn of last year. Devon's Channel Panel Chair led a multi-agency assurance exercise early in the New Year and has subsequently led on work to enhance compliance with the refreshed Duty requirements.

Food and Fuel Insecurity

In response to the continued challenges created by the pandemic and compounded by the Cost-of-Living crisis, the team has continued to work across multiple partners to distribute around £35million of Household Support Funds (HSF), made available to the Council from the Department of Work and Pensions since October 2021. HSF aims to support those most in need; helping to address the significantly rising cost of living.

A range of Household Support funded support gateways continue to operate across the County, including Free School Meal holiday vouchers; Team Devon District/City Council household support schemes; a Citizen Advice Devon Energy Relief Scheme to support energy affordability and keeping warm; funding an Early Help family support scheme, and funding Devon Community Foundation, to deliver a Food, Fuel & More grant scheme to voluntary & community sector organisations supporting households that find it difficult to access support elsewhere e.g. via other support gateways such as District Councils, Citizens Advice, school or community hub. Details of these schemes and of the wider support available can be found on the Council's website: [Household Support Fund \(HSF6\): Devon's approach | Cost of living | Devon County Council](#)

The need for support to people and communities continues to rise; evidenced by eligibility for Free School meals, which has risen from around 10,000 children in 2018 in Devon; to around 22,000 currently. To further help communities and people needing to build self/community resilience (capacity & capability to respond to the things that matter), improve mental health, wellbeing support and wider connection, the Council continues to operate the Growing Communities Fund. Grants of £500 - £3,000 are available. So far this financial year, 166 awards have been made across the county with a total value of £275,000. Given the current cost of living crisis, funding has been further targeted towards reducing food/fuel inequalities, reducing loneliness/isolation and supporting warm spaces and service provision. Further details can be found on the Council's website [Growing Communities Fund - Communities \(devon.gov.uk\)](#).

The Government recently announced changes to the Winter Fuel Payment, the latter will only be received by those of state pensionable age and in receipt of benefits, such as Pension Credit. The Government is encouraging pensioners to check if they qualify for Pension Credit, and if so, to apply for it in order to receive the winter fuel payment. Team Devon County and District Councils are supporting the DWP campaign by raising awareness locally through their communication channels: [Are you eligible for Pension Credit and not receiving it? - News \(devon.gov.uk\)](#) Campaign materials have also been shared with Devon Town and Parish Councils via the Devon Association of Local Councils.

Developing new integrated place-based models of support

[Research](#) commissioned by Public Health Devon has provided evidence for the council and for our partners regarding the extent and impact of food and fuel poverty on Devon residents. This research, and that of partners, has informed the [Devon Food Partnership's Food Insecurity Working Group](#) priorities, which include advocacy and the development of new models of support for those experiencing food insecurity.

Funding has been allocated to Devon Community Foundation (DCF) in the form of a contract award, to administer a two-year small grant scheme programme on our behalf. The grants will enable new models of support, such as social supermarkets and food clubs, to be developed and tested in a variety of different Devon geographies.

- These models typically provide a choice of food for a small financial contribution, often alongside accessible opportunities to eat or cook together.
- When delivered through community or family hubs this also allows families to access signposting to other relevant sources of support.
- In addition, delivering this programme through Devon Community Foundation may enable additional funds from philanthropists and other funding sources external to the council, to be identified.

These kinds of integrated place-based models have been shown to make a huge contribution to ensuring fair access to healthy food. Evaluation will shed light on specific delivery issues for Devon's different geographies.

The Council's support for the [Devon Food Partnership](#) is critical in enabling a whole system, partnership approach to the complex interplay of factors that affect the availability and affordability of food, including food that is nutritious, local and sustainably produced.

The Council is supporting a Poverty Truth Commission for Ilfracombe, which was launched in September. This pairs people with current lived experience alongside 'commissioners' from organisations including councils, to work together, to learn together and develop informed solutions to address the real needs of people in poverty. It is hoped the learning from this national model can help to address some of the stubborn symptoms of inequality in the town and if successful could be adopted in other places over time.

Migration and Resettlement

The UK government's resettlement, sanctuary and asylum schemes play a key role in the global response to humanitarian crises: saving lives and offering stability to individuals and families in need of protection.

The County Council continues to receive direct funding from government to do this work, which is led by the Migration and Resettlement Team. Core work falls broadly into two areas (1) warm welcome and support to settle safely (2) community building including creating opportunities for learning, education, employment, training, and cultural connection.

The Council works as part of a Team Devon approach that recognises the strengths and ambitions of individual partners locally including the Voluntary and Community Sector, District Councils, Police, NHS, Schools and Universities. It also works with the South West

Strategic Migration Partnership and Government departments to provide well-balanced and well-informed responses to migration.

In addition to the Team's core work, 2024 has seen thematic focuses on supporting schools to become anti-racist (attracting over 1200 attendees so far), meeting statutory responsibilities towards people who have no recourse to public funds and on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Team produces a quarterly Multicultural Devon newsletter that is sent to all County Councillors and maintains a directory of services to help people from different cultural backgrounds living and/or working in Devon to find the local support they need and to help organisations improve their engagement with different cultural communities. The Team also provides work experience opportunities and is delighted to be hosting its first refugee work placement.

The Council's work to support young asylum seekers who come to Devon alone is undertaken within Children's Social Care. The Young Asylum Seekers Team and Migration and Resettlement Team work effectively together to deliver the best outcomes for these young people locally.

Active Devon

Active Devon is an externally funded partnership, falling within the remit of the Communities team, for which DCC is the accountable body. [Click here for introductory video](#). It is one of a nationwide network of 43 'Active Partnerships' and it enjoys a strong reputation amongst both local partners and at national level, particularly with Sport England, its primary funding partner.

The partnership between DCC and Active Devon has close strategic alignment, with Active Devon's programmes of work contributing to numerous themes of the Best Place strategic plan. The work has a strong community focus, seeking to unlock the ability of movement to change lives. It prioritises opportunities to tackle health, and wider societal, inequalities and to promote equality and inclusion. Active Devon has a successful track record of attracting investment to Devon and delivering positive community impact which DCC would otherwise be unable to deliver.

A full review of Active Devon's work can be accessed via [Active Devon Impact Report 23-24](#). Notable impacts across its strategic priorities in 2023-24 included:

- **Movement with Communities** – we have provided support and recognition for our vital network of volunteers and community groups. We also ensured that the voice of community run outdoor swimming pools was elevated amongst national decision makers. Meanwhile, focused 'place-based' approaches in areas where levels of inequality in physical activity are greatest, such as Northern Devon, have helped us to learn more about inequality locally, develop appropriate approaches with the community and help inform future priorities.
- **Movement for Health & Wellbeing** – Connecting physical activity into the health system and the groundbreaking Future of Public Leisure in Devon body of work has shone a spotlight on our region and provided a catalyst for future collaboration.

- **Movement in Early Life** - We staged a local launch to raise awareness and understanding of the new Physical Literacy Consensus Statement. Schools work has continued, with development support and conferences for education professionals and Opening School Facilities investment delivering increased connection between schools and their local communities.
- **Movement in Later Life** – For Devon’s older population the Connecting Actively to Nature (CAN) programme has continued to deliver impact. Learning from CAN has underpinned much of our wider work to promote the benefits of activity in nature. Our advocacy work around Live Longer Better, co-ordination of Wellbeing Walks and workforce development related to Falls Management and Exercise all recognise the importance of our older population in Devon.
- **Everyday Movement** – This has a significant focus on active travel and so it is one of the main areas where the positive environmental impact of physical activity can be seen. We have expanded the breadth of our partnerships, increased the impact of delivery initiatives such as Adult Cycle Confidence Training, developed our new ‘walkability’ programme (child pedestrian training for Devon schools) and enhanced the coherence and reach of our campaigns / communications activities.

There are many uncertainties in the year ahead with significant investment strands linked to our Early Life and strategic leadership capacity due to end and without full replacement investment yet confirmed. However, we remain clear that many potential opportunities exist. Securing the resources linked to local expansion of ‘Uniting the Movement’ will be an important aspect of our Movement with Communities strand, as it will enable us to work deeper in areas of Devon where high levels of need exist.

5) Strategic Plan

The work undertaken by the Directorate makes a significant contribution to all the Council’s Strategic Plan 2021–2025. This includes: -

- Respond to the climate emergency
- Be ambitious for children and young people
- Support sustainable economic recovery
- Tackle poverty and inequality (address poverty, health and other inequalities)
- Improve health and wellbeing, including any public health impacts
- Help communities be safe, connected and resilient.

6) Financial Considerations

Contained within the report. The Directorate year end forecast is to achieve all the necessary budget targets.

7) Legal Considerations

The deployment of the Public Health Grant for specified services is statutory responsibility under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

8) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)

Contained within the report.

9) Equality Considerations

Contained within the report.

10) Risk Management Considerations

This policy/proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken / included to safeguard the Council's position.

11) Reasons for Recommendations

The Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Committee is asked to note the update on the delivery of Public Health, Communities and Prosperity services so far in 2023.

Steven Brown

Director of Public Health and Communities

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Equality: Councillor Roger Croad

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Nil

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Service Delivery for Public Health and Communities In-Year Briefing - HACSC- Final