

Impact Assessment



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Assessment of: [Proposed Civic Agreement between Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) and Devon County Council (DCC)]

Service: Communities Team

Head of Service: Simon Kitchen

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: V0.1 041024

Assessment carried out by (job title): Simon Kitchen

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Devon has multi-tiered elected local government structures , with County Council, District and Town and Parish (TAPs) Councils in place. Good, open and informing relationships and timely collaboration are key to our daily activity as well as achieving our joint strategic outcomes; especially pertinent as we move towards working within a Combined Authority. In time of both crisis and celebration, local government bodies and their communities have worked closely together to support and connect with each other and to ensure community resilience.

Town and parish councils are the first tier of local government and the closest to communities, providing our towns and villages with a democratically accountable voice, with structure to deliver local services and champion what matters to local people. There are 410 parishes in Devon, of which there are 359 parish or town councils representing approximately 550,000 electors.

Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) plays a key role in supporting vibrant local governance in Devon. As a member based organisation for local councils in Devon (currently 348 of the 359 TAPs are members (97%)), DALC supports vibrant local governance in the county by:

- supporting councils to serve their communities effectively,
- promoting good governance and leadership, community engagement , and partnership working.

DALC aims to strengthen the capacity, capability and impact of local councils, whilst promoting the principles of democracy, transparency, inclusivity, and continuous improvement. Its strategic aims are :

- Supporting member councils
- Fostering knowledge sharing and support among members
- Encouraging meaningful engagement between councils and communities]
- Proactively representing and advocating for the interests of the local council sector
- Building strategic partnerships and alliances

The Council has worked alongside town and parish councils throughout its history, and continues to do so in order to deliver across joint areas of concern and aspiration, such as but not limited to highway and drainage matters, conservation and public rights of ways, as well as developing alternative community provision (such as community libraries, lavatories and transport). During the recent pandemic DALC and TAPs demonstrated their local knowledge and expertise, agility and innovation in providing vital local support to the most vulnerable in Devon and coordinating/facilitating mutual aid and support work. This demonstrated the key relevance and importance of this first tier of government on the resilience of local people and communities.

2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change or review

Devon County Council and the DALC now wish to reaffirm and galvanise further their historical but often ad-hoc working relationship through a shared Civic Agreement.

The proposed agreement formalises previously ad-hoc collaborative activity, introducing a framework to inform, plan, facilitate, and implement strategic activities to achieve jointly agreed outcomes. As a result, engagement between DCC and DALC will be more efficient and effective, with more informed decisions taken, and action implemented on key strategic challenges and opportunities.

Our joint vision is of vibrant local governance at all tiers, with robust leadership, informed and decisive action, and effective partnerships, proactively addressing key strategic issues within our communities

The proposed agreement sets out an ongoing commitment to work in partnership to better understand and collectively respond to key challenges and opportunities for Devon in the years ahead.

The agreement recognises the fundamental role that both DALC and DCC, alongside other key partners, have in collaboration, co-design, and sharing resources to generate greater benefits and improved outcomes for Devon, its people and its communities.

The agreement will set out shared strategic priorities, principles and ways of working.

Critically, the agreement will be underpinned by an annual and mutually agreed plan of activity around specific areas of focus and priority, which will include key priorities for the Council.

3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored (summary)

No other options were considered.

There are a number of Corporate strategic and operational risks which relate to the Council's interaction with DALC; and could be mitigated through intervention from DALC and its members (Town and Parish Councils). This agreement and its delivery can support the response to key risks and opportunities for the Council

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

The benefits and relationships developed as a result of the proposed Civic Agreement has the potential to impact any of Devon's residents. However, it is not anticipated that the Agreement in isolation will have any direct impact on residents.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

DALC's network of locally elected members encompasses 97% of town and parish councils (348 of the 359 councils), representing a wide range of local and electorate issues, concerns and perspectives, from across all the geographical areas of Devon and Torbay, excluding Plymouth.

DALC works across all areas of community concern; as raised by their elected members. DALC is fully committed to equality and diversity, and aims to ensure DALC's work is member led and that DALC representatives are involved at the earliest possible stage. DALC's values leadership, collaboration, inclusivity, excellence and agility.

DALC is a company limited by guarantee, and is managed by a board of 9 non-executive directors. As a member-led body it is the member councils (348 councils) who remain the sovereign body of DALC's organisation, and their involvement in DALC's governance is significant to DALC's success – the main vehicle for members influencing DALC's governance arrangements is via motions at the DALC Annual General Meeting. A small team of paid officers support the work of DALC, its Board and members.

In addition, the agreement will require relevant officers and members of the Council to engage and respond as appropriate.

6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment

Devon County Council reviews the current services internally using contract meetings, service performance quarterly reporting, outcome data and thematic discussions with the current providers. These activities enabled us to better understand how the services have been performing in meeting the needs of Devon residents, meeting the targets set and developing the offer further. The findings from these discussions will be used to inform the Civic Agreement and Work Plan and future thinking and have been a fundamental element in the strategic thinking behind this work.

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

No specific consultation has been commissioned. The Agreement has been produced through co-production with DALC representation, the DALC County Officer and officers from the County Council.

Background information

8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

- a) Is this group negatively or potentially negatively impacted, and in what way?
- b) What could be done or has been done to remove the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage and inequalities?
- c) In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?
- d) What can be done to advance equality further? This could include meeting specific needs, ensuring equality of opportunity and access, encouraging participation, empowering people, making adjustments for disabled people and action to reduce disparities and inequalities.
- e) Is there a need to foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promote understanding) and help people to be safe and protected from harm? What can be done?

[Answer the questions above for each of the characteristics below. Use the data, consultation and research sections 4 and 5 as evidence. If carrying out an options appraisal, explore the pros and cons of each option for each characteristic. Delete this note]

All residents by geographic area

The agreement will align to the Equality Act and DCC's Equality and Diversity Policies . All residents in Devon will be impacted. The agreement will develop understanding, partnerships and relationships across 348 town and parish elected councils and the County Council, covering a variety of issues including those reducing inequality and raising inclusiveness

Age

All ages of people in Devon will be impacted. The agreement will develop understanding, partnerships and relationships across **348 town and parish elected councils and the County Council**, including issues that reduce inequality.

Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people

Discussions in relation to the Civic Agreement, Work Plan and any services resulting from those discussions will be undertaken digitally, via telephone and in person. When in person the service will be required to be responsive to people's individual needs as described above. There are no exclusions to access the Civic Agreement based on someone's disability, including on the grounds of mental illness. Councils are required to address barriers to accessing services which may include inability to pay for transport, childcare responsibilities, language, specific vulnerabilities and issues with reading/writing/digital literacy and are required to be flexible in their approaches to seek solutions to any other individual need that stops access. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the engagement of those that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category

Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs

Individuals with protected characteristics will not be negatively affected by this agreement. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the engagement of those that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category

Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)

Individuals with protected characteristics will not be negatively affected by this agreement. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the engagement of those that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category

Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related

Individuals with protected characteristics will not be negatively affected by this agreement. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the engagement of those that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category

Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality

This includes:

- people on low incomes, children in care and care experienced people, armed services veterans, family background (size/single people/lone parents/family carers etc.), sub-cultures, refugee status, asylum seeker no recourse to public funds.
- housing quality and tenure, education and skills, language and literacy skills, health and wellbeing.
- rural isolation, access to services and transport, access to ICT/Broadband, social connectivity.

Also consider intersectionality with other characteristics.

Individuals with protected characteristics will not be negatively affected by this agreement. This will be assured through consideration relating to the timing and style of meetings and other communication alongside the engagement of those that work with those citizens of Devon that identify within this category

9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

The agreement and its objectives will comply with the Human Rights Act 1998

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	n/a
Planning Permission	n/a
Environmental Impact Assessment	n/a
Strategic Environmental Assessment	n/a

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

[If carrying out an options appraisal, explore the pros and cons of each option for each area]

Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost

DALC has a range of elected member councils and therefore will have members that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with DALC, whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects.

Conserve and enhance wildlife

DALC has a range of elected member councils and therefore will have members that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with DALC, whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects

Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape

DALC has a range of elected member councils and therefore will have members that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with DALC, whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects

Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage

DALC has a range of elected member councils and therefore will have members that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with DALC, whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects

Minimise greenhouse gas emissions

DALC has a range of elected member councils and therefore will have members that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with DALC, whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects

Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)

DALC has a range of elected member councils and therefore will have members that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with DALC, whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects

Contribute to reducing water consumption

DALC has a range of elected member councils and therefore will have members that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with DALC, whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects

Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level)

DALC has a range of elected member councils and therefore will have members that are interested in this area within their networks. By working more closely and building relationships with DALC, whose business is to promote these aspects, there is potential to positively impact on these aspects

Other (please state below)

[Insert text]

11. Economic analysis

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

[If carrying out an options appraisal, explore the pros and cons of each option for each area]

Impact on knowledge and skills

The agreement will develop relationships and understanding across DCC, DALC and its membership (328 elected town and parish elected council) and may lead to similar with other organisations and partnerships - this will lead to greater knowledge and skill development opportunities

Impact on employment levels

The agreement will develop relationships and understanding across DCC, DALC and its membership (328 elected town and parish elected council) and may lead to similar connections with other organisations and partnerships - this may lead to employment opportunities

Impact on local business

The agreement will develop relationships and understanding across DCC, DALC and its membership (328 elected town and parish elected council) and may lead to similar with other organisations and partnerships - this may lead to economic/commercial opportunities

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