

**CORPORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

30 January 2025

Present:-

Councillors F Letch MBE (Chair), C Slade (Vice-Chair), Y Atkinson, J Berry, R Chesterton, A Dewhirst, J Hodgson, M Squires and J Trail BEM

Apologies:-

Councillors J Brook, R Radford, D Sellis and J Wilton-Love

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillors A Davis, S Hughes and P Twiss.

\* 205 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were received, over and above the other registrable interests of Councillors of Devon County Council, arising from membership of City, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities.

[A list of county councillors who are also district, borough, city, parish or town councillors](#)

\* 206 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2024 be signed as a correct record.

\* 207 **Public Participation**

There were no oral representations from Members of the Public.

\* 208 **Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Head of Scrutiny updated the Committee as to the work programme.

**RESOLVED** that the following items be added:

-Development of library strategy; and

-Prevent and Community Safety Partnership Update.

\* **209**      **Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2025/26**

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented the Report of the Director of Finance and Public Value (DFP/25/05), regarding the key issues for 2025/26 set out in the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Overview section of the Report. He commented on the SEND cumulative deficit, as well as other external factors which had had a significant effect on the County Council's cashflows. Whilst Devon had not historically borrowed cash and this decision was not to be taken lightly, the Report detailed:-

(a) The reduced level of cash resources, with the key factor being the continued expenditure in excess of grant funding on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), charged to an unusable reserve. The reduced level of cash balances means it was no longer affordable to fund capital expenditure from internal borrowing;

(b) The resulting requirement was that additional external borrowing would be required to fund both the 2024/25 and 2025/26 capital programme, in addition to re-financing the Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loans repaid in 2023. External borrowing as at 31 March 2026 was projected at £558.48m.

Whilst generally the investment strategy remained broadly similar to 2024/25, the level of cash balances available for investment was forecast to be lower than in past years, reducing the level of investment income that could be achieved.

The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy would be considered by Cabinet along with the draft budget for 2025/26 on 14 February 2025, becoming part of the budget to be approved by Council at its budget meeting on 20 February 2025.

Members' in recognising the reasons behind the current position and in discussing the strategy to manage this, would welcome more regular updates and closure oversight of the council's borrowing strategy.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Dewhirst and **SECONDED** by Councillor Hodgson and

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that this Committee commends the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy to Cabinet;

(b) that regular updates be made to this Committee on external borrowing;  
and

(c) that the Treasury Management Team be thanked for their ongoing work.

\* 210 **Devon Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**

The Cabinet Member for Highway Management introduced the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/25/04). The Countywide LCWIP document had been amended (at Appendix 1 to the Report), following public consultation feedback which was generally well supported. It set out ambitious evidence-based plans for expanding and strengthening Devon's rural multi-use trail network and strongly aligned with Strategic Plan priorities and the Devon Carbon Plan. It would help to ensure the County was best placed to attract and secure external funding, focused in locations that offer greatest opportunity to increase active travel, particularly in rural areas.

Members' comments and in welcoming the priority list for LCWIP schemes:-

-noted that a factor in the priority list was deliverability, which was affected by a number of factors;

-considered that these unique and special trails could be promoted in Devon County Council's recruitment material;

-recognised the wide ranging benefit to young people where these were developed as a safe route to schools;

-supported the development of a single map to show a complete LCWIP picture of both current proposed and already agreed schemes;

-noted the role of the Public Rights of Way team in community led path schemes.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Slade and **SECONDED** by Councillor Squires and

**RESOLVED:**

that the Devon Countywide Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) as detailed in Report (CET/25/04) be welcomed and commended to Cabinet.

\* 211 **Bus Service Improvement Grant Update and In-Year Developments**

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport introduced the Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport (CET/25/03), updating on the positive progress towards delivering the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), through Department for

Transport (DFT) grant, now towards the end of the delivery period of Devon's initial 3-year Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Focus would now switch towards future funding streams, with a plan to maintain and strengthen the bus network in Devon. DCC awaited announcements from Government around the new Buses Bill, including changes to the franchising process for local transport authorities. Partnership work with bus operators and other key stakeholders had continued. The County Council's continued support for the network, together with Government funding allocations and the national fare initiative, meant the existing network had been largely maintained and improvements introduced where possible. Challenges remained, in particular the impact of high inflation, lower passenger numbers since the pandemic and congestion in urban areas. However a corner had been turned and the County Council continued to ensure local bus services played an important part of the transport network in Devon.

Members' comments and discussion included:-

- desire to improve frequency of services;
- study of best practice;
- working with Devon Highways and bus companies to minimise the impact of highways work on bus services.
- consideration of bus lanes in heavily congested locations;
- promoting the carbon savings message amongst users and the general public, using opportunities such as the introduction of electric buses;
- County Council responsibility for bus shelter infrastructure and liaison with parish councils on their maintenance and match funding available;
- highway enforcement at pinch point locations;
- high satisfaction rate of Devon's bus users in a recent survey,  
-recognition of the positive role of the Bus Forum with the County Council and its stakeholders.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Slade and **SECONDED** by Councillor Trail and

**RESOLVED:** that the Committee welcome the updates with regards to the progress towards delivering the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), through Department for Transport (DFT) grant.

\* 212 **Domestic & Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) Champion**

The Committee's DSVa Champion provided a written summary which outline progress and initiatives to date, to be followed by a further report to the next meeting of this Committee.

Members' comments and discussion included:-

-Introduction of Domestic Abuse practitioners Domestic Abuse practitioners in the assessment services as part of the Children's Improvement Plan

-Staff workshops building on best practice across the county;

-disappointment that DSVa in rural areas was not a priority within the police and crime commissioner's plan;

-role of the youth service in awareness and preventative work;

-potential benefits in the national move towards sanctioning schemes which excluded perpetrators rather than rehousing victims, provided the necessary safeguards and support were available from the police and other agencies.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Letch and **SECONDED** by Councillor Slade and

**RESOLVED:**

(a) that the DSVa Champion be thanked for the progress update; and

(b) that the Chief Executive's proposal to highlight issues in her forthcoming discussions with District Councils and actions for Team Devon be noted.

\* 213 **Future Meetings**

Please use link below for County Council Calendar of Meetings:

<http://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=175>

**\*DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.35 pm