



## Public Document Pack

North Devon Council  
Brynsworthy Environment Centre  
Barnstaple  
North Devon EX31 3NP

K. Miles  
Chief Executive.

To: All Members of the Council  
and Chief Officers

**NOTE: PLEASE NOTE THAT PRAYERS WILL BE SAID AT 6.25 P.M. PRIOR TO THE COUNCIL MEETING FOR ANY MEMBER WHO WISHES TO ATTEND.**

### **COUNCIL MEETING**

**YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED** to attend a meeting of **NORTH DEVON COUNCIL** to be held in the G107, 1st Floor, South West Institute Development Building, Petroc, Barnstaple - Petroc College on **WEDNESDAY, 27TH MARCH, 2024 at 6.30 pm.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Miles', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Chief Executive**

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 (attached) (Pages 11 - 26).
3. Chair's announcements.
4. Business brought forward by or with the consent of the Chair.
5. Replies to any questions submitted by the Public and/or to receive Petitions under Part 4, Council Procedures Rules, Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Constitution.
6. To consider motions of which notice has been submitted by Members in accordance with Part 4, Council Procedure Rules, Paragraph 11 of the Constitution.

(a) To consider the following notice of motion from Councillor P. Leaver.

**DEBATE NOT HATE**

“The intimidation and abuse of councillors and council officers, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election, and undermining public life in democratic processes.

North Devon Council notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact on local democracy, and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents. North Devon Council therefore commits to challenge the normalisation of abuse against councillors and officers and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does.

North Devon Council further agrees to sign up to the [LGA's Debate Not Hate campaign](#). The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support those in public life facing abuse and intimidation.

In addition, this council resolves to:

- Write to the local Member of Parliament to ask them to support the campaign.
- Write to the Government to ask them to work with the Local Government Association to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of politicians and council officers at every level.
- Ensure that North Devon Council has a clear reporting mechanism which can be used to monitor and record incidents of harassment and abuse of councillors and officers.
- Regularly review the support available to Councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and councillor safety.
- Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families and discuss the need to take a preventative approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face, as they do with other high-risk individuals, like MP's.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers.”

## 7. Declarations of Interest.

Please telephone the Corporate and Community Services team to prepare a form for your signature before the meeting. Interests must be re-declared when the item is called. A declaration of interest under the Code of Conduct will be a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, an Other Registrable Interest or a Non-Registrable Interest. If the item directly relates to your interest you must declare the interest and leave the room for the item, save in the case of Other Registrable Interests or Non-Registrable Interests where you may first speak on the item as a member of the public if provision has been made for the public to speak. If the matter does not directly relate to your interest but still affects it then you must consider whether you are affected to a greater extent than most people and whether a reasonable person would consider your judgement to be clouded, if you are then you must leave the room for the item (although you may speak as a member of the public if

provision has been made for the public to speak) or, if you are not, then you can declare the interest but still take part).

8. Chair's replies to any questions to Council by Members submitted under Part 4, Council Procedures Rules, Paragraph 10 of the Constitution.
9. To agree the agenda between Part 'A' and Part 'B' (Confidential Restricted Information).

## **PART A**

10. **Chairs Charity Ball - presentation of cheques.**  
Chair to present cheques for donations raised at the Charity Ball to representatives of the North Devon Hospice and the Royal Devon Hospitals Charity.
11. **Report of the Leader of the Council** (Pages 27 - 28).  
Report by Leader of the Council (attached).
12. **Questions by Members.**  
Questions to the Leader or the Chair of a Committee submitted under Part 4, Council Procedure Rules, and paragraph 10.4 of the Constitution.
13. **Statutory Pay Policy 2024** (Pages 29 - 38)  
Report by Head of Organisational Development (attached).
14. **A progress update on the UK Shared Prosperity Funds programme** (Pages 39 - 50).  
Report by Place Manager, Economic Development and Regeneration (attached).
15. **Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3** (Pages 51 - 56).  
Report by Head of PMO and Environmental Health and Housing (attached).
16. **Outside Bodies - Report by Appointees** (Pages 57 - 88).  
Report by Head of Governance (attached).
17. **Minutes of Committees**  
Council is recommended to note the schedule of Committee minutes and approve recommendations as listed below:
  - (a) Governance Committee (Pages 89 - 98).
    - (a) 11 March 2024.
  - (b) Planning Committee (Pages 99 - 104).

- (i) 28 February 2024.
- (ii) 13 March 2024 (to follow).

(c) Policy Development Committee (Pages 105 - 120).

- (i) 29 February 2024.

(d) Strategy and Resources Committee (Pages 121 - 130).

- (i) 4 March 2024.

**18. Exclusion of Public and Press and Restriction of Documents.**

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended from time to time), namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- (b) That all documents and reports relating to the item be confirmed as “Not for Publication”.

**PART B (CONFIDENTIAL RESTRICTED INFORMATION)**

19. Material Recovery Facility Improvement Works (Pages 131 - 138).

Report by Head of Environmental Enhancement (attached).

**If you have any enquiries about this agenda, please contact Corporate and Community Services, telephone 01271 388253**

19.03.24

## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR RULES OF DEBATE AT MEETINGS OF COUNCIL**

### Part 4, Council Procedure Rules of the Constitution

#### **The basics**

At a meeting of Full Council, Members shall stand when speaking unless unable to do so and shall address the Chair.

While a Member is speaking, other Members shall remain seated unless rising for a point of order, a point of information or in personal explanation.

No speeches may be made after the mover had moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion has been seconded.

Unless notice of motion has already been given, the Chair may require it to be written down and handed to him before it is discussed.

When seconding a motion or amendment, a member may reserve their speech until later in the debate.

Speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to be personal explanation or point of order.

A speech by the mover of a motion may not exceed 5 minutes without the consent of the Chair.

Speeches by other Members may not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the Chair, unless when the Council's annual budget is under discussion, the leader of each political group on the Council may speak for up to 5 minutes or such longer period as the Chair shall allow.

#### **The rules of Question Time**

At a meeting of the Council, other than the Annual meeting, a Member of the Council may ask the Leader or the chair of a committee any question without notice upon an item of the report of a committee when that item is being received or under consideration by the Council.



### **North Devon Council protocol on recording/filming at Council meetings**

The Council is committed to openness and transparency in its decision-making. Recording is permitted at Council meetings that are open to the public. Members of the public that attend meetings must be aware that these meetings are open to the public and so therefore both individuals and the Council itself have the right to record the meeting. The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be filmed. The Chair of the meeting will make sure any request not to be filmed is respected.

The rules that the Council will apply are:

1. The recording must be overt (clearly visible to anyone at the meeting) and must not disrupt proceedings. The Council will put signs up at any meeting where we know recording is taking place.
2. The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to stop or suspend recording if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting or if the person recording is in breach of these rules.
3. We will ask for recording to stop if the meeting goes into 'part B' where the public is excluded for confidentiality reasons. In such a case, the person recording should leave the room ensuring all recording equipment is switched off.
4. Any member of the public has the right not to be filmed. We ensure that agendas for, and signage at, Council meetings make it clear that recording can take place – anyone not wishing to be filmed must advise the Chair at the earliest opportunity to allow them to be directed to an area in the room where they will not be caught on camera. Subject to paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 above, audio recordings shall be permitted at all times during public meetings.
5. The recording should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or in a way that ridicules or shows a lack of respect for those in the recording. The Council would expect any recording in breach of these rules to be removed from public view.

#### **Notes for guidance:**

Please contact either our Corporate and Community Services team or our Communications team in advance of the meeting you wish to record at so we can make all the necessary arrangements for you on the day.

For more information contact the Corporate and Community Services team on **01271 388253** or email [memberservices@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@northdevon.gov.uk) or the Communications Team on **01271 388278**, email [communications@northdevon.gov.uk](mailto:communications@northdevon.gov.uk).

Room G107 is located on the first floor of the South West Institute Development building at Petroc, Old Sticklepath Hill, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 2BQ. A lift is available to the first floor.

The following page shows a location plan of Petroc.

G Block on the plan indicates the South West Institute Development building.

### **Parking**

Point 5 on the plan indicates the short stay car park which is located adjacent to the South West Institute Development building which is free to park after 5.00 p.m.

### **Cycle Racks**

Covered cycle racks are located on the grassed area opposite Petroc's main reception, before the Lifestyle building.

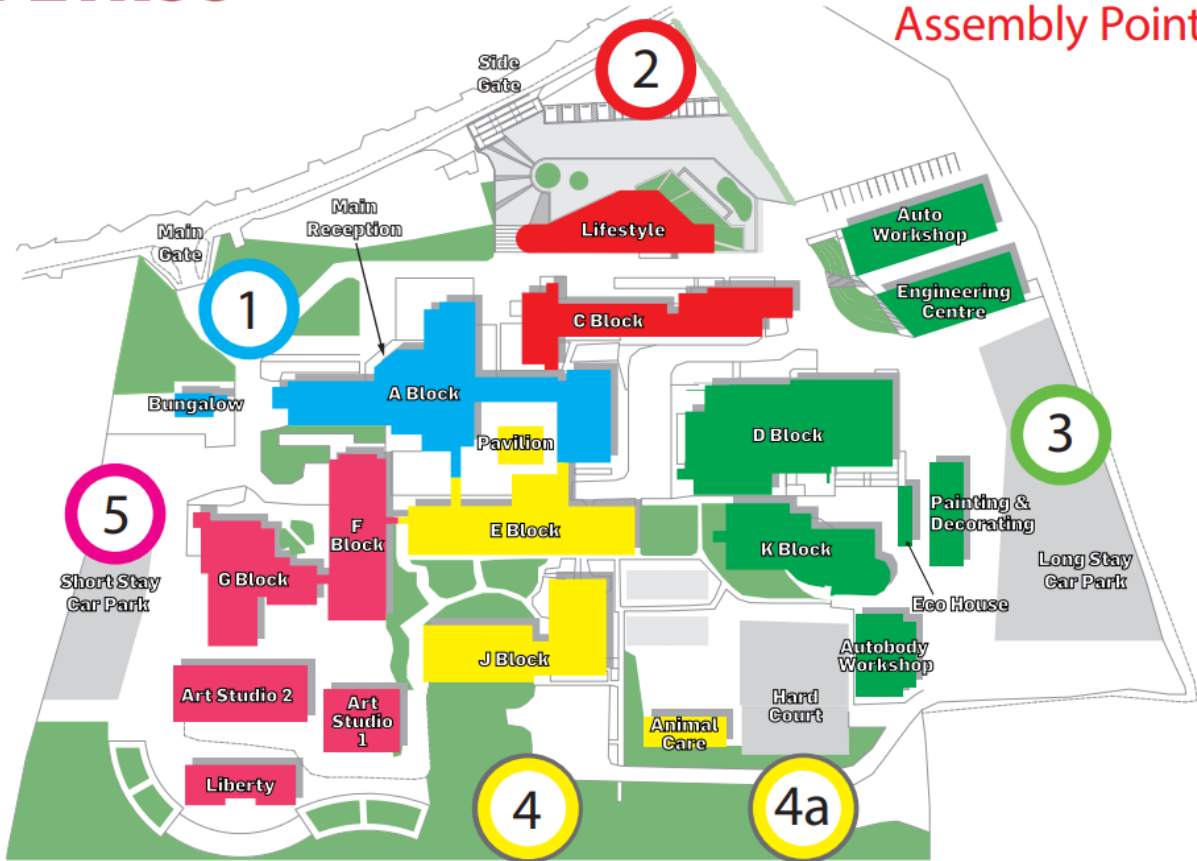
### **Bus Routes**

Stops in **Sticklepath Hill** (East bound) bus service 310  
Wrey Arms (West bound) bus services 5B, 21, 21A, 21C, 62C, 322, 386, 646, 815, 821, 903, 921  
([Sticklepath, Barnstaple – Bus Times](#))

### **Fire evacuation procedures**

Fire evacuation procedures - Upon hearing a constant 2-tone alarm, please leave the building via your nearest marked fire exit and make your way to the nearest assembly point which is the short stay car park (Point 5 on the map). Lifts are not to be used. Please do not take time to pick up personal belongings and leave the building promptly.





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**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Council held at G107, 1st Floor, South West Institute Development Building, Petroc, Barnstaple - Petroc College on Wednesday, 21st February, 2024 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Hunt (Chair)

Councillors Bell, Biederman, Bishop, Bushell, Cann, Clayton, Crabb, Davies, Haworth-Booth, Jones, Jusef, R Knight, Lane, C Leaver, Lethaby, Maddocks, Maskell, Milton, Norman, Patrinos, Prowse, Quinn, Renshaw, Roome, L. Spear, Stevenson, Topps, Turton, Walker, Wilkinson, Williams, Wilson, Worden and York

Officers:

Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

**94. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bulled, Denton, D. Knight, P. Leaver, Lovering, Orange and Whitehead.

**95. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**96. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(a) Chair's Valentine Charity Ball – 10 February 2024**

The Chair thanked those Councillors that had attended her Valentine Charity Ball held on 10 February 2024 and advised that over £5,000 had been raised which would be split between the North Devon Hospice and the Royal Devon Hospitals Charity. Representatives from both charities would be invited to the meeting of Council in March 2024 to be presented with a cheque.

**97. BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY OR WITH THE CONSENT OF THE CHAIR**

There was no business brought forward by or with the consent of the Chair.

**98. REPLIES TO ANY QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC**

**AND/OR TO RECEIVE PETITIONS UNDER PART 4, COUNCIL PROCEDURES RULES, PARAGRAPHS 8 AND 9 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

There were no questions submitted by the Public and/or to receive Petitions under Part 4, Council Procedure Rules, Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Constitution.

**99. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 4, COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES, PARAGRAPH 11 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

There were no motions of which notice had been submitted by Members in accordance with Part 4, Council Procedure Rules, Paragraph 11 of the Constitution to be considered.

**100. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**101. CHAIR'S REPLIES TO ANY QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL BY MEMBERS SUBMITTED UNDER PART 4, COUNCIL PROCEDURES RULES, PARAGRAPH 10 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

There were no questions submitted by Members under Part 4, Council Procedure Rules, Paragraph 10 of the Constitution.

**102. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Council considered and noted a report by the Leader of the Council (circulated previously) regarding work that had been undertaken since the last Council meeting.

He advised that at the recent local businesses support event held at the NODE centre, businesses were advised of grants that were available, which included grants for improvements to be carried out on shop frontages. This grants scheme was being administered by North Devon+ and there were still funds available if any Councillors were aware of any businesses that would benefit.

**103. DEVON AND TORBAY DEVOLUTION OFFER**

Council considered a report by the Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the Devon and Torbay Devolution Offer.

Keri Denton, Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills, of Devon County Council joined the meeting virtually. She advised that discussions had been ongoing for some time in relation to providing additional powers. Central Government had now published the provision for the creation of County Combined Authorities and for the devolution of powers to those authorities as part of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The offer for Devon and Torbay was now out for public consultation and District Councils were invited to comment alongside local businesses and residents. It was recognised that this offer may lead to other

discussions about further devolution in the future. The proposal would include the devolution of the adult education budgets which was currently held centrally by Devon and Torbay. This would include co-designing with education and training providers, benefit from funding for free courses for jobs and longer term co-design skills programme. Housing would remain with District Councils. The proposal would be to work collaboratively to deliver investment in affordable housing schemes for local people and work direct with Homes England. Devon and Torbay would strengthen their joined up approach as equal partners to improve transport and request that their powers are devolved. To meet net zero ambitions, it was proposed there would be more investment in green business growth and attracting inwards investment. The next stage would be to develop a business case for the allocation of the £16m for new capital funding to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). There would be direct engagement with the Government and other Government Departments. In addition to the Combined County Authority (CCA) and Team Devon Joint Committees, there would be number of advisory boards established in relation to employment, housing and Net Zero. These advising boards would be developed by building on existing arrangements that were already in place. Following the conclusion of the consultation, the legal arrangements with Government would commence and there would be opportunity to work with District Councils and other stakeholders on the design of the CCA to ensure that it met the needs of everyone.

It was moved by Councillor C Leaver and seconded by Councillor Roome “that the formulation of a consultation response to the Devon and Torbay Devolution proposal on behalf of the Council be referred to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 4 March 2024”.

Council requested that Councillors forward any concerns on the proposal by emailing the Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer to enable these to be considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee. It was noted that any Councillor could attend the meeting of the Committee.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Bushell and seconded by Councillor Maddocks “that Strategy and Resources Committee be requested to formulate ideas and that an extraordinary meeting of Council be arranged to enable all Councillors to have a vote on the formulation of a response to the consultation on the Devon and Torbay Devolution proposal”.

In response to the debate, the Chief Executive advised the following:

- Responses to the consultation had great value and would be taken into consideration when the governance and constitution arrangements were being shaped by Devon and Torbay Councils.
- Homelessness function would remain with Council and would not be transferred over to a new CCA.
- The only existing powers that would be transferred to the new CCA were in relation to transport. The other powers were new powers and functions devolved from Government.

- The proposed CCA would give the Council a more local voice and a much stronger say when making representations to the Government which was a tangible benefit for the Council.
- A mayor would not be appointed. The mayoral option provided for the most extensive powers devolved from Government.
- If a new CCA was not established, the new powers would not be devolved from Government as they would not be devolved to District or County Councils.

In response to the debate, the Head of Economy, Enterprise and Skills, of Devon County Council advised the following:

- The Councils would each appoint three members to the CCA. There would be a rotation of the appointment of Chair of the CCA. The Chair would not have a casting vote.
- It was anticipated that the shaping of the governance and constitution arrangements would provide further reassurance to address Members concerns.
- The membership of the proposed Housing Advisory Board could be the same as the existing task force and chaired by a representative from a District Council. District Councils would retain their housing functions and powers. The CCA would not affect the District Council's existing relationship with Homes England. The CCA would work at a national level as a unified voice and provide an opportunity to engage with the Government.
- The £16m from the Shared Prosperity Fund was for new capital funding to support housing and net zero priorities. It was a one off fund and could not be used for setting up governance arrangements. An amount of £1m would be provided over a period of three years to set up the mobilisation of the CCA. It was intended although the CCA was a separate corporate body, resources would be shared by the upper tier authorities and also District Councils if they wished to do so. The sharing of resources would also minimise costs to tax payers.
- Responses to the consultation would be listened to. A summary of the responses received together with Devon County Council and Torbay Councils responses would be presented to the Government and would be in public domain for openness and transparency.
- The principle of setting up the CCA was to add value and to not duplicate.
- The consultation period ended on 24 March 2024. There would then be a three week period for consideration of the consultation responses and formulation of a summary document. The outcomes of the consultation would be presented to Devon County Council's Cabinet and Torbay Council's Cabinet for consider whether to accept the offer or not. The decision to accept the statutory instrument would be a delegated decision. It would then be submitted to Government with the anticipation that it would then start before the summer recess commenced on 24 July 2024 and then proceed to the House of Lords in September. It was anticipated that the CCA would then be established in October/November 2024.
- 60% of the population of England would be covered by a devolution arrangement.

The amendment was put to the vote and was lost.

The motion was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED that the formulation of a consultation response to the Devon and Torbay Devolution proposal on behalf of the Council be referred to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 4 March 2024.

**104. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

Council noted that no questions had been submitted to the Leader or the Chair of a Committee under Part 4, Council Procedure Rules, paragraph 10.4 of the Constitution.

**105. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT Q3 2023-24**

Council considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive on the Performance and Financial Management report for quarter 3 of 2023-24 to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 6 February 2024 (circulated previously).

(a) **Report of the Policy Development Committee**

Councillor Spear, Chair of the Policy Development Committee presented the Committee's report on the Performance and Financial Management for quarter 3 of 2023-24 to the Policy Development Committee on 12 February 2024 (circulated previously).

(b) **Report of meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee**

Councillor Roome, Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee reported the recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 on the Performance and Financial Management report for quarter 3 of 2023-24 (circulated previously).

It was moved by Councillor Worden and seconded by Councillor R. Knight "that recommendation 88 (f) of the report of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 regarding the Performance and Financial Management report for quarter 3 of 2023-24 be adopted".

RESOLVED that recommendation 88 (f) of the report of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 regarding the Performance and Financial Management report for quarter 3 of 2023-24 be adopted.

**106. FEES AND CHARGES 2024-25**

Council considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive on the Fees and Charges for 2024-25 to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 6 February 2024 (circulated previously).

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised that the report that had been presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 6 February 2024 had been amended and an updated report had been included on the agenda for Council. The original report had omitted the Non-EU Certificate (£70) and Non-Standard applications (£35), both of which had now been included within Appendix E of the final version of the report for approval by Council.

(a) **Ilfracombe Harbour Charges Review 2024-25**

Councillor Wilkinson, Chair of the Harbour Board reported the recommendation of the Harbour Board (circulated previously) held on 6 February 2024 regarding the Ilfracombe Harbour Charges Review 2024-25.

(b) **Report of the Policy Development Committee**

Councillor Spear, Chair of the Policy Development Committee presented the Committee's report on Fees and Charges 2024-25 to the Policy Development Committee on 12 February 2024 (circulated previously).

(c) **Report of meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee**

Councillor Worden, Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee presented the Committee's report on Fees and Charges 2024-25 to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 February 2024 (circulated previously).

It was moved by Councillor Maskell and seconded by Councillor Worden "that the recommendation 35 of the Harbour Board held on 6 February 2024 and recommendation 89 of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 regarding Fees and Charges 2024-25 be adopted."

In response to a question, the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Service Manager had confirmed that the fees for the modification of section 106 agreements as detailed on page 195 of the agenda related to section 106 agreements for planning permissions for sites of 10+ dwellings.

RESOLVED that the recommendation 35 of the Harbour Board held on 6 February 2024 and recommendation 89 of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 regarding Fees and Charges 2024-25 be adopted.

**107. REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024-25 TO 2029-30**



The Lead Member for Resources and Commercialisation addressed Council gave a brief introduction:

- The Council had a legal duty to prepare a balanced budget.
- This had been achieved despite the unforeseen pressures on Councils due to higher than expected pay awards, ever decreasing central Government funding and the high rise in inflation.
- The budget process began in the summer of 2023 with a cross party workshop in the autumn of 2023.
- The Council had responded to the Government's consultation on the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.
- Rural authorities were still seen as the 'poor relation' compared to urban authorities. With an average, per head, of £142 less awarded to rural authorities.
- Council tax had to be increased to help bridge the gap in funding.
- The purchase of Green Lanes was seen as a strategic decision proving to be a beneficial revenue stream.
- £200,000 had been earmarked for the continuation of the much-valued Street Marshal scheme.
- The demand on Temporary Accommodation was an ever growing burden but somewhat mitigated by the purchase of properties, by the Council, to help offer a cheaper alternative to expensive Bed and Breakfast placements.
- The delay in the fair funding review, which was now expected in two years' time, meant predicting the Medium term finance strategy was challenging.
- She thanked the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and his team for producing a balanced budget without the need to cut services but increasing services with the continuation of the Street Marshal scheme.

Council received a presentation by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive on the Revenue Budget 2024-25, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2029-30 (circulated previously) as follows:

- The provisional Local Government finance settlement was announced in December 2023 and confirmed a 3% funding guarantee for all authorities and Council Tax Referendum limit principles of 3% or £5 (whichever was the highest).
- The final Local Government finance settlement figure had been announced last week.
- Members had previously received the detailed budget book early, normally circulated ahead of the February Council meeting. This information looked in detail at funding each service area of the Council.
- Nationally the total funding settlement stood at just over £64 billion with a core spending power of 6.5%. This included council tax setting.
- The allocation of the finance settlement depended on the type of authority. North Devon Council was a Shire District authority.
- Nationally a Shire District authority received 4.9% Core Spending Power share but our allocation was lower still at 4.7%.
- The level of CPI inflation at October 2023 was 4.6%.

- For 2024-25 the Revenue and Support Grant and Baseline Funding increased by £119,000.
- The Rural Services Delivery grant saw an increase of £57,000.
- The New Homes Bonus award of £351,000 was £97,000 less than 2023-24. This was a reduction in the grant not the Council’s lack of new homes.
- Services grant provided was £21,000 that was £100,000 less than 2023-24.
- The 3% Funding Guarantee of £1,507,000 gave an increase of £354,000 more than 2023-24.
- The Net impact of the changes above gives the Council an additional £333,000 funding. Just for context, the pay award last year cost the Council an additional £436,000 over the original budgeted forecast.
- The final settlement resulted in an additional £131,000 to that announced in the provisional settlement in December 2023 and had removed the reliance on the budget management reserve and enabled additional investment into the planning team resources.
- The Government Finance Settlement review consultation closed on the 15 January 2024 and the Council’s response was detailed in Appendix F of the report.
- Income that could be raised over and above the finance settlement came from Council Tax and Business rates.
- As a Shire District a referendum would be required if the authority wanted to increase council tax above 3%. The draft budget, therefore, assumed an increase of 2.99% or £6.11 on a Band D.
- The overall Council tax increase of £287,000 was broken down to £214,000 (as a result of the 2.99% uplift) and £73,000 from an increase in the tax base.
- Business rates income came from ‘retained growth’ made up of £2 million from growth, as well as £680,000 from renewable energy schemes and the Devon-wide pool share of £325,000.
- £3 million overall growth had been assumed for the 2024-25 budget.
- The Fair funding review unlikely to happen now until 2026 with any changes not being felt until 2026-2027.
- There was a zero budget gap for the 2024-25 year, but moving forwards a budget gap was being forecast.
- The summary position for 2024-25:

Medium Term Financial Gap 2024-25 (November 2023)	£475,000
Higher than forecast impact from pay award	£126,000
Phased transfer of Public Conveniences to parishes	£150,000
Increase in External Audit fees	£90,000
Increased Insurance costs	£87,000
Increased Utility costs	£131,000
Reduced subsidy on Benefit Payments	£121,000
Reduced parking fine income	£98,000
Other smaller budget areas (net)	£50,000
Government funding over and	(£428,000)

above original forecast	
<b>Revised 2024-25 Budget gap to bridge</b>	<b>£900,000</b>
Challenge & revised assumptions to draft budget proposals	(£331,000)
Additional growth in Business Rates income	(£250,000)
Re-profiled Borrowing costs (timing of external borrowing and interest payments)	(£272,000)
Increased contribution from Treasury Management reserve	(£47,000)
Use of Budget Management reserve	(£0)
<b>Budget gap for 2024-25</b>	<b>£0</b>

- A breakdown of the draft revenue budget for 2024-25 could be seen at Appendix A of the report, in summary the balanced net budget of £16.433 million was funded by:
  - Council Tax (£7.678m)
  - Business rates retention (baseline) (£3.207m)
  - Business rates retention (growth) (£3.000m)
  - New Homes Bonus (£0.351m)
  - Rural services delivery grant (£0.421m)
  - Revenue support grant (£0.248m)
  - Services grant (£0.021m)
  - Funding guarantee grant (£1.507m)
  - Total funding (£16.433m)
- The details of strategic grants to be paid out could be seen at Appendix B of the report. No reduction to the levels of grants awarded were being planned.
- The only minor change being made was to the Go North Devon grant that was being redirected to Mid-Devon Mobility and Age Concern.
- The Council were looking to support organisations such as Citizens Advice and the Voluntary Services in other ways.
- The launch of the North Devon Community Lottery would provide organisations a chance of an additional income source. There were currently 42 good causes that were live, 9 applications pending approval and 6 incomplete applications. £4,000 had already been raised for good causes, which was positive,
- Appendix C of the report showed the details of the Earmarked reserves.
- The General Fund forecast level as at 31 March 2025 was £1.238m; this was 7.6% of the net budget with the recommended level being between 5-10%.
- Earmarked reserves forecast level as at 31 March 2025 was £6.276m
- Assurance was given that the budget was robust and in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003.
- Appendix D of the report showed the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024-2030. The forecast cumulative budget gap/(surplus) was show as:

Years	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m



responsible for reviewing the demand and resources for their own services that they provided and to match the demand.

- A report would be presented to the next meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee regarding the extension of the Street Marshal scheme and the future delivery of the service medium to long term.

Council congratulated the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and his team for producing a balanced budget in difficult financial times.

(a) **Report of the Policy Development Committee**

Councillor Spear, Chair of the Policy Development Committee presented the Committee's report on the Revenue Budget 2024-25, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2029-30 to the Policy Development Committee on 12 February 2024 (circulated previously).

(b) **Report of meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee**

Councillor Roome, Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee presented the Committee's report on the Revenue Budget 2024-25, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2029-30 to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 February 2024 (circulated previously).

It was moved by Councillor Roome and seconded by Councillor Worden "that the recommendations in minutes 90 (e) to (h) "Revenue Budget 2024-25, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2029-30" of the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 February 2024 be adopted."

Council noted that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations (as amended) and the Constitution, Council was required to take a recorded vote when setting its budget and Council Tax.

**Voting on the motion:**

Voting for the motion: Councillors Bell, Biederman, Bishop, Bushell, Cann, Clayton, Crabb, Davies, Haworth-Booth, Hunt, Jones, Jusef, R. Knight, Lane, C. Leaver, Lethaby, Maddocks, Maskell, Milton, Norman, Patrinos, Prowse, Quinn, Renshaw, Roome, Spear, Stevenson, Topps, Turton, Walker, Wilkinson, Williams, Wilson, Worden and York.

Voting against the motion: None.

Abstained from voting on the motion: None.

Totals: 35 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstained.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in minutes 90 (e) to (h) "Revenue Budget 2024-25, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2029-30" of the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 February 2024 be adopted.

**108. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2024/25**

Council considered a report by the Head of Governance regarding the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 February 2024 (circulated previously).

(a) **Report of the Policy Development Committee**

Councillor Spear, Chair of the Policy Development Committee presented the Committee's report on the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 to the Policy Development Committee on 12 February 2024 (circulated previously).

(b) **Report of the Strategy and Resources Committee**

Councillor Worden, Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee reported the recommendations on the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 (circulated previously).

It was moved by Councillor Roome and seconded by Councillor Worden "that minute 91 of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 regarding the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 be adopted".

RESOLVED that minute 91 of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 regarding the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 be adopted.

**109. 10 YEAR CAPITAL STRATEGY 2024 TO 2034**

Council considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive regarding the 10 Year Capital Strategy 2024 to 2034 to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 5 February 2024 (circulated previously).

(a) **Report of the Policy Development Committee**

Councillor Spear, Chair of the Policy Development Committee presented the Committee's report on the 10 Year Capital Strategy 2024 to 2034 to the Policy Development Committee on 12 February 2024 (circulated previously).

(b) **Report of meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee**

Councillor Roome, Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee reported the recommendations on the 10 Year Capital Strategy 2024 to 2034 of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 (circulated previously).

It was moved by Councillor Roome and seconded by Councillor Worden “that minute 92 of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 regarding the 10 Year Capital Strategy 2024 to 2034 be adopted.”

RESOLVED that minute 92 of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 5 February 2024 regarding the 10 Year Capital Strategy 2024 to 2034 be adopted.

**110. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTIONS 2024/25**

Council considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the Council Tax Resolutions for 2024/25.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the following:

- Devon County Council at its meeting on 15 February 2024 had approved a Council Tax increase of 4.99% which was in line with the report.
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting on 16 February 2024 had approved a Council Tax increase of 2.99% which was in line with the report.

It was moved by Councillor Roome and seconded by Councillor Worden “that the formal Council Tax Resolutions for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A of the report be approved”.

Council noted that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations (as amended) and the Constitution, Council was required to take a recorded vote when setting its budget and Council Tax.

**Voting on the motion:**

Voting for the motion: Councillors Bell, Biederman, Bishop, Bushell, Cann, Clayton, Crabb, Davies, Haworth-Booth, Hunt, Jones, Jusef, R. Knight, Lane, C. Leaver, Lethaby, Maddocks, Maskell, Milton, Norman, Patrinos, Prowse, Quinn, Renshaw, Roome, Spear, Stevenson, Topps, Turton, Walker, Wilkinson, Williams, Wilson, Worden and York.

Voting against the motion: None.

Abstained from voting on the motion: None.

Totals: 35 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstained.

The motion was carried.

RESOLVED that the formal Council Tax Resolutions for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A of the report be approved.

**111. CORPORATE PLAN**

Council considered a report by the Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the Corporate Plan 2023-2027.

Councillor Roome presented the refreshed Corporate Plan for 2023-2027 which had been produced following an all Councillor workshop that had been held in October 2023 and set out the strategic framework for the Council.

In response to questions, the Chief Executive advised the following:

- That the refreshed Corporate Plan for 2023-2027 had been produced following an all Councillor workshop that had been held in October 2023 and that the actions and priorities had formulated directly from the outcomes of this workshop.
- The Corporate Plan would be reviewed as the priorities of the Council changed during the lifetime of the Council.

It was moved by Councillor Roome and seconded by Councillor Worden “that the refreshed Corporate Plan 2023-2027 be approved”.

RESOLVED that the refreshed Corporate Plan 2023-2027 be approved.

**112. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

Council considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the appointment of a co-opted Independent Member to the Governance Committee.

It was moved by Councillor Norman and seconded by Councillor Haworth-Booth that the recommendations in the report be adopted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the appointment of a Co-opted Independent Member to the Governance Committee be approved;
- (b) That Naomi Whitmore be appointed as the Co-opted Independent Member to the Governance Committee;
- (c) That the required changes to Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph 5 of the Constitution as set out in the body of the report and in Appendix A be approved;
- (d) That the Scheme of Members Allowances for 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 be amended to include a special responsibility allowance of £200 per annum for the Co-opted Independent Member of the Governance Committee.



113.

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

(a) **Building Control Joint Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Building Control Joint Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 25 January 2024

(b) **Governance Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Governance Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 9 January 2024

- a. Minute 53: Letter of Representation (NOTE: Council noted that this recommendation had been adopted by Council on 17 January 2024)
- b. Minute 59: Polling District and Place Review 2023 (NOTE: Council noted that this recommendation had been adopted by Council on 17 January 2024)

(c) **Harbour Board**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Harbour Board (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 6 February 2024

- a. Minute 36: Marine Safety Plan

(d) **Joint Planning Policy Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Joint Planning Policy Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 8 December 2023

(e) **Planning Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Planning Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

(i) 10 January 2024

(f) **Policy Development Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Policy Development Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

- (i) 11 January 2024
- (ii) 12 February 2024

(g) **Strategy and Resources Committee**

RESOLVED that the following minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee (circulated previously) be noted and adopted as follows:

- (i) 5 February 2024
  - a. Minute 87: Approval and Release of S106 Public Open Space Funds – Barnstaple, South Molton and Tawstock subject to the minute being amended and adopted as follows “that Council vary the capital programme by £358,019.97 and not £405,112.32 as stated in the minutes”. (NOTE: Council noted that the minutes of this meeting will be amended at the next meeting of the Committee on 4 March 2024)
  - b. Minute 93 (b) and (c): Town Centre Hub

Chair

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.

## **NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL: 27 MARCH 2024**

### **LEADER'S REPORT**

#### **Leaders Report**

In collaboration with Torrington District Council, we've introduced the Northern Devon Flourishing Culture Participation Survey. We have invited residents to join us in shaping strategies to promote cultural engagement in the region by participating in this survey.

Following the development of a new strategy titled "Flourishing Culture: The Northern Devon Cultural Strategy," we are conducting this survey. This strategy articulates a vision for North Devon and Torrington by 2027, aiming to establish the region as a hub where creativity harmonises with its landscape and communities, recognised locally, nationally, and internationally. Crafted through collaboration with the community, cultural organisations, creative practitioners, and businesses, this strategy was officially adopted by both district councils in 2022.

Culture holds diverse significance for individuals, ranging from the intimacy of a local book club to the grandeur of an art gallery, from the excitement of a major festival to the camaraderie of a village sports team. I ask councillors to promote this survey to residents so they can add their own input and aid us in fostering a community brimming with lively cultural pursuits. Together, I hope we can forge a path towards a future where every resident can partake in and enrich the vibrant array of arts and culture flourishing in Northern Devon.

In my ward that I represent it is a fantastic pleasure to see that the council has completed a woodland expansion project by planting 24,000 trees, connecting three existing woodlands at Yeo Valley in Barnstaple. With support from the Forestry Commission, 920 school children, 300 community members, parks staff, and contractors participate in planting. The woodland grows by 15.5 hectares (37 acres), enhancing the area's beauty and biodiversity. The project is expected to remove 3,500 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over 100 years, supporting climate goals. Various tree species enrich the expanded woodland's ecology.

I would like to thank all involved in bringing this project to fruition, acknowledging the collaborative effort that has turned the vision of a thriving community woodland into a reality.

As discussed in prior council sessions, it's crucial to prioritise levelling up initiatives, particular in Ilfracombe, as current evidence indicates it really needs significant investment. This is partly due to the competitive nature of council bids for central government funds rather than an equitable allocation system. The council is urging for an "exceptional fund" of £24 million from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities for Ilfracombe. The proposal aims to expand key worker accommodation, bolster health initiatives to address inequalities, carry out public

realm enhancements (such as revitalising town areas), and invigorate the private sector rental market.

I can confirm that following input from members that North Devon Council have submitted our response to the Devon and Torbay Devolution Deal. We will now await the response from Devon County Council and Torbay to the consultation process.

Finally as Easter draws near, I extend warm wishes to everyone for a joyful Easter season.

Councillor Ian Roome

March 2024



## **North Devon Council**

Report Date: Wednesday, 27 March 2024

Topic: Statutory Pay Policy 2024

Report by: Head of Organisational Development

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. This report details the Council's Statutory Pay Policy, which under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 must be agreed annually by Full Council.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. That the report, its Appendix and Annex thereto, be approved.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1. There is a statutory requirement for Full Council to agree a Statutory Pay Policy each year.

### **4. REPORT**

4.1. The attached draft Statutory Pay Policy Statement sets out the background to this matter and details the Council's policy which, subject to the agreement of members, will be published on the Council's web site.

4.2. The Appendix to the draft Statutory Pay Policy Statement details the remuneration arrangements of the Chief Officers concerned.

4.3 Members should note that the reduction in the Pay multiple of Head of Paid Service to median has continued and for 2024 is now 3.70, in 2023 it was 3.91 and in 2022 it was 4.08. The Pay multiple of Head of Paid Service to lowest paid full time employee (Not including Apprentices) has also further reduced, for 2024 it is now 4.45, in 2023 it was 4.78 and in 2022 it was 5.07.

4.4 All Councils are required to publish their Pay Policy information and the following table shows how the Pay multiple of the Head of Paid Service to the lowest paid employee compares across the other District Councils in the area.



Authority	Pay multiple to lowest paid employee
North Devon	4.45
Mid Devon	5.22
Exeter	5.53
Torridge	5.6
East Devon	5.9
Teignbridge	6.14
South Hams	6.24
West Devon	6.24

In addition to the above, published data from the Taxpayers Alliance enables a further comparison nationally of the remuneration of senior posts within Local Councils. This data shows that the post of Head of Paid Service for North Devon Council was one of the lowest paid Chief Executives in the Country.

A pay analysis was also carried out by the Local Government Association in 2023, which has highlighted the following between comparative Councils throughout the Country that are similar to North Devon Council:

- The lowest salaried job role of the CIPFA councils is awarded to the Chief Executive, North Devon District Council, which is an annual salary of £97,664. It should be noted that this salary is a spot salary, therefore no means of progression.
- The differential between the maximum remuneration for the highest salaried and lowest salaried Chief Executives job roles of the CIPFA councils is £47,315 – which is a 48% differential.
- The cumulative average Tier 1 annual salary, to maximum of the pay range, is £122,327.
- The mid Tier 1 annual salary in the CIPFA Councils range is £121,321 which is between £119,247 and £121,685.

The analysis also then looked at comparative pay data for Councils neighbouring North Devon Council, which highlighted these findings:

- The lowest salaried job role of the neighbouring councils is awarded to the Chief Executive, North Devon District Council which is an annual salary of



£97,664. It should be noted that this salary is a spot salary, therefore no means of progression.

- The differential between the maximum remuneration for the highest salaried and lowest salaried Chief Executives job roles of the neighbouring councils is £37,335 – which is a 38% differential.
- The cumulative average Tier 1 annual salary, to maximum of the pay range, is £119,074.
- The mid Tier 1 annual salary in the neighbouring councils is £116,331, which is between £115,897 and £118,549.

4.5 The remuneration of the Head of Paid Service was last reviewed in 2019. The pay multiple figures outlined above, together with comparative pay analysis from the Local Government Association and published figures from the Taxpayers Alliance, clearly show that the remuneration of the Head of Paid Service for North Devon Council is the lowest comparable to District Councils in the area and nationally. It is important that the Council fairly reflects the pay remuneration for Senior posts that attract the level of responsibility that the post carries, this is crucially important to ensure staff retention and/or attracting officers within this statutory role.

4.6 The other posts outlined in the Appendix to the Pay Policy of Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Heads of Service and the post of Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer have been recently reviewed in 2021, when structural changes were made to the organisation and their pay and remuneration was reviewed as part of this process.

## 5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The remuneration arrangements are all contained within the existing revenue budget approved by Members of Full Council. Failure to publish a Statutory Pay Policy would leave the Council open to challenge and the opportunity costs associated with dealing with enquiries for information which would otherwise be available online.

## 6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1 Please refer to paragraph 7.1 of the attached Statutory Pay Policy Statement.

## 7 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

7.1 The decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made pursuant to Article 4. Paragraph 4.5.18 of the Constitution.



## 8 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Localism Act 2011 and 2022 report to Council by Head of Organisational Development, Statutory Pay Policy Statement and Appendix thereto

(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

## 10 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

10.1 The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Senior Management Team and Financial Services.



## North Devon Council

### Pay Policy Statement for Chief Officers - 2024

#### 1 Purpose and scope of the Policy

1.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a statutory Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13 and for each financial year after that.

1.2 In the context of managing scarce public resources, remuneration at all levels within the Council needs to be adequate to secure and retain high-quality employees dedicated to the service of the public, but at the same time needs to avoid being unnecessarily generous or otherwise excessive.

1.3 This Pay Policy Statement applies specifically to chief officers (a term which includes both statutory and non-statutory chief officers) and addresses the legal requirement to set out how the policy for agreement of chief officer remuneration differs to that of other Council employees. For the purposes of this Statement this includes:

- **Head of Paid Service (the Chief Executive Officer)**
- **Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive**
- **Heads of Service including Section 151 Officer responsibilities and Monitoring Officer responsibilities**

1.4 The Hutton Report outlined that the most appropriate metric for pay dispersion is the multiple of chief executive to median earnings. Tracking this multiple will ensure public service organisations are accountable for the relationship between the pay of their executives and the wider workforce. Through this pay policy statement North Devon Council will track this multiple annually and will also publish the following information (please see Annex A) :

- the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer;
- the remuneration of the lowest paid employees;
- the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and other officers;
- other specific aspects of chief officer remuneration.

## 2 Terms Explained

**Spot salaries** – these are salaries which are a specific sum and are not related to a grade with increasing levels of pay.

**Pay multiple** – this is calculated by comparing all taxable earnings for the given year (including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances and the cash value of benefits in kind) for the Head of Paid Service compared to median earnings and the lowest paid in the organisation.

**Job Evaluation Scheme** – North Devon Council currently uses the Inbucon scheme. It is a systematic process for defining the relative worth or value of jobs. It provides an objective basis for determining a rational pay structure.

## 3 Specific Policy Areas

- 3.1 The Joint Negotiating Committee has previously emphasised that ‘it is good governance that local authorities can demonstrate that decisions on pay and reward packages for chief executives and chief officers have been made in an open and accountable way.’
- 3.2 Salaries below Head of Paid Service are subject to North Devon Council’s Job Evaluation Scheme.
- 3.3 The salary of the Head of Paid Service and the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive are a ‘spot salary’ and this has been and will continue to be agreed through an accountable and transparent process. Salary levels will be consistent with similar organisations which aim to pay according to median salaries. There will be due regard to balance the need to ensure value for money but enable North Devon Council to recruit and retain high quality chief officers in the context of national, regional and local labour markets.
- 3.4 In determining the remuneration package for appointments to Head of Paid Service and Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, the Governance Committee will take independent pay advice from South West Regional Services or similar. The Governance Committee will then make recommendations which will be subject to the approval of Full Council.
- 3.5 The Governance Committee may recommend to Full Council changes to the remuneration package following any review. Any changes to the remuneration packages will be subject to Full Council approval.
- 3.6 Full Council will need to approve severance packages of £100,000 or more.
- 3.7 Salary increases in relation to cost of living will be made in line with National Joint Council recommendations.
- 3.8 At present, there are no additional payments made to senior officers which specifically relate to performance such as performance bonuses; neither is there an element of pay which can be enhanced for performance.

- 3.9 Any termination payments to chief officers on ceasing office will comply with North Devon Council's Redundancy and Early Retirement Policies.
- 3.10 Additional payments are made by Central Government to officers carrying out additional duties at elections. These payments are not within the scope of this policy.
- 3.11 Through this policy the pay multiple of the Head of Paid Service will be monitored annually. Should the multiplier between the annual salary paid to a full time employee on the lowest spinal column point and the annual salary paid to the Head of Paid Service be greater than 10, this will be reported by the Leader of the Council to Full Council for consideration.
- 3.12 Because of the specific structure within the Council, the Head of Paid Service manages a number of functions, and so the salary levels of only the Head of Paid Service and the Heads of Service are included in the Pay Policy Statement as an example. The Senior Solicitor is also included as he is the Monitoring Officer and this is a statutory position.

#### **4 Outcomes**

- 4.1 In introducing this policy North Devon Council will ensure that the process for setting pay at a senior level is transparent. This policy will be reviewed annually to track the relationship of chief officer pay with the rest of the workforce.

#### **5 Who is responsible for delivery?**

- 5.1 The Head of Organisational Development is responsible for the delivery of this policy.

#### **6 Performance Monitoring**

- 6.1 Annual monitoring of this policy will take place and reported at Full Council.

#### **7 Equality Impact Considerations**

- 7.1 The principles of equal pay are integral to this policy. 'Equal work' is defined as:

- like work where the woman and the man are doing the same job; or
- work rated as equivalent where the two jobs are different but have been evaluated by the employer's job evaluation scheme (JES) at the same level/grade; or
- work of equal value where the jobs are again different but an argument is made that both jobs should be regarded as being of equal value or worth.

## 8 **Related Legislation, Guidance and Policies**

- Equal Pay Act
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006
- Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008
- Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013
- Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions and Savings) Regulations 2014
- Accounts and Audit (Amendment)(Regulations) 2011
- Code of Practice on Data Transparency 29.9.2011
- Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector
- Department of Communities and Local Government Guidelines
- Local Government Association Guidelines
- Redundancy and Redeployment Policy
- Early Retirement Policy
- Pension Discretions Policy
- Pay Policy
- Expenses Policy
- Nationally Agreed Subsistence Rates

## Appendix A

1. The levels and elements of remuneration for each chief officer are:

Head of Paid Service - £101,082 p.a.

Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive - £86,034 p.a.

Head of Service - £58,225 - £70,648 p.a.

Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer - £47,420 - £56,505 p.a.

### **Allowances**

Expenses when occur as set out in Expenses Policy e.g. mileage

2. The full time remuneration of the lowest paid employee (not including Apprentices):

CCTV Control Room Operator - £22,737 p.a.

### **Allowances**

Expenses when occur as set out in Expenses Policy e.g. mileage

3. The multiplier of the remuneration of the chief officer and other officers based upon taxable earnings :

- The annual median pay of all employees is £27,334 p.a.
- The pay multiple of Head of Paid Service to median is 3.70
- Pay multiple of Head of Paid Service to lowest paid full time employee (Not including Apprentices) is 4.45
- Annual mean pay of all employees is £27,824 p.a.

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## North Devon Council

Report Date: 27th March 2024

Topic: UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

Report by: Place Manager, Economic Development & Regeneration

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In early 2022 the Government published its broad social and economic [Levelling Up White Paper](#), and within this, the [prospectus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) (UKSPF).
- 1.2. Following the successful submission of an Investment Plan for these funds which was approved by Full Council in July 2022, North Devon Council was allocated £1,214,999 in January 2023, for the three financial years of 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.
- 1.3. Further to that allocation for UKSPF, North Devon was allocated £1,091,259 which covered the years 2023/24 and 2024/25 under the [Rural England Prosperity Fund](#) (REPF) managed by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).
- 1.4. The purpose for this report is to update Members on the progress made with delivering projects under both the UKSPF and REPF.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That members note the progress towards delivering the 3 year Investment Plan and associated projects contained within it.
- 2.2. The proposed publicity activity is approved.

### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To update Members on progress to date.
- 3.2. It is important that the delivery of the UKSPF and REPF is transparent and clearly communicated both internally with Officers and Members and externally with members of the community and businesses.

### 4. REPORT

- 4.1. The primary goal of the UKSPF (the successor to European Structural Funds) is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, categorising investment priorities under three investment themes:

- Communities and place
- Supporting local business
- People and skills



North Devon Council proposed investment under each of the three themes. Communities & Place and Supporting Local Business spend was eligible from January 2023 to March 2025, with People & Skills only becoming available in April 2024 to March 2025.

4.2. The primary goal of the REPF is to support the aims of the government’s Levelling Up White Paper and Future Farming Programme. It funds capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure. This will help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. The REPF objectives sit within the UKSPF investment priorities for:

- Communities and Place
- Supporting Local Business

North Devon Council proposed investment under both of the two themes. Spend for the REPF was from April 2023 – March 2025.

4.3. There have been a couple of notable changes to the budget allocations and interventions supported under the UKSPF investment plan for North Devon, as shown below:

Original intervention	Budget	Moved to (fully/partial)	Justification
<b>Communities &amp; Place</b>			
E7: support for active travel enhancements in local area	£25,000	Fully moved to E6: local arts, culture, heritage & creative activities	A joint e-bike scheme with Torridge was being discussed at the time of our investment plan submission. However on further investigation this was not deemed suitable/possible to implement as there are a wide range of private sector e-bike providers (hire and purchase) and a publically funded scheme could risk distorting the market. After some consultation with Highways regarding another option, due to the lack of ‘ready to go’ schemes and the limitation of the budget available here, we took the





			decision to move the budget to a strand that was currently very active with project delivery and could weave in sustainable transport and communities as a theme of activity.
E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living	£25,000	Fully moved to E14: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies	This allocation was intended to support the development of a resources website that would signpost people to support if they were facing issues related to the cost of living. However, by the time the investment plan was approved, a website had already been organised with partners such as OND. Also we were delivering the Household grants provided by central government and so the need for this funding allocation fell away.
Supporting Local Business			
E16: Open markets and town centre retail & service sector	£100,000	Partial move of £89,000 to E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth	£11,000 remains in this intervention to provide a bespoke business advice service to the town centre businesses and pannier market traders. The budget moved, was to support the business support programme delivered under E30 by ND+ which included retail and service sector business advice and micro grants.



4.4 Government allows up to 30% change of budget between interventions within each theme without the need for any formal change request. The changes we have made to our original investment plan as detailed above, fall within that 30% limit so no formal change request has been submitted. The changes are noted by Government as part of our 6 monthly reporting process. No changes have been made or are proposed for the REPF.

4.5 The spend for both REPF and UKSPF during the first full year of activity has been slow but steady, with a lot of project development taking place with partners prior to any funds being released. Due to slight delays in getting MOU's in place, Government allowed a full roll-over of funds from the 2022/23 year to 2023/24, which has been our first full year of project delivery. Government have confirmed that any underspend from year two (2023/24 financial year) will be rolled over and that no funds will be lost as long as they are fully spent by March 2025. The current position with North Devon's spend to date is:

Fund	Allocation (revenue)	Allocation (capital)	Spend as at end Feb 2024
UKSPF	£949,600*	-	£190,516.27
UKSPF	-	£265,399	£22,625.82
REPF	-	£1,091,259	£50,993

\*£350,000 of this allocation is under 'People & Skills' theme which only comes into operation in April 2024.

4.6 The projects and deliverables

Communities & Place, Supporting Local Business, People & Skills

Interventions	Projects/Indicative Budget/Activity	Communications activity
E1: Improvements to town centres and high streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Town Centre Enhancement Scheme (£155,399):</b> small grants for shop/commercial building enhancement and public realm improvements in key locations such as town centres, high street, tourist hotspots. Individual grants or collaborative grants – led by business, town/parish council or NDC</li> <li><b>FHSF Public Realm (£50,000):</b> some possible provision to support public realm improvements linked to FHSF scheme in Cross Street/Butchers Row</li> <li><b>Bus Station Development (£50,000):</b></li> </ul>	<p>We will be putting together a series of releases for social media showing pictures of before/after for buildings receiving enhancement grants, town centre cleaning and bin replacements.</p> <p>An overall press release to detail the full range of investments across the district will also be</p>



	Reinstating a waiting air for the public, including a café and toilets within the building.	<p><b>prepared.</b></p> <p><b>For larger projects such as the bus station development – an opening event will be planned.</b></p>
<b>E1. Summary of outcomes</b>	Capital investments will improve derelict or rundown buildings, improve town centre and high street appearances, build back pride in places and increase the footfall to town centres and encourage dwell/spend time.	
<b>Actual Spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	Spend on enhancement grants and town centre public realm: <b>£22,625.82</b>	
<b>E6: Support for local arts, culture, heritage and creative activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Events Coordinator (£10,000):</b> to put together a programme of celebratory events on the reopening of the Pannier Market</li> <li>• <b>Events Programme (£12,500):</b> free events open to the public within the Pannier Market</li> <li>• <b>Cultural Board Grants (£32,500):</b> making available small grants for cultural organisations to be part of a ‘show and tell’ event organised via the Cultural Board alongside other identified priorities from ND cultural town team action plans</li> <li>• <b>Screen Devon contribution (£10,000):</b> developing infrastructure to boost the film industry and associated creative industries in North Devon under the umbrella of Screen Devon</li> </ul>	<p><b>Publicity has already taken place around some of the Pannier Market events since its re-opening.</b></p> <p><b>Further promotion of the awarding of cultural grants will take place – with short videos of some of the activity.</b></p>
<b>E6. Summary of outcomes</b>	Linked to delivery of the Flourishing Culture, these investments will increase cultural participation, increase the number of events and boost footfall in key locations such as town centres and key attractions. The Screen Devon contribution will go towards the formalisation of an organisation to coordinate and attract more film industry activity in our areas.	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	<p><b>£10,000</b> for the events coordinator to celebrate Pannier Market opening</p> <p><b>£12,500</b> on events associated with the Pannier Market opening</p>	
<b>E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Volunteer Connect (£60,000):</b> Boost volunteering opportunities and placements across North Devon – through recruitment of Volunteer Connector across 3 years via NDVS</li> </ul>	<b>Press release on progress and possible interviews with new volunteers and</b>



social action projects		their placements.
<b>E9. Summary of outcomes</b>	1 job created (volunteer connector). Increase of volunteers and volunteer placements, development of Devon Connect portal with ND content	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	£40,000 spent to date on employment of coordinator	
<b>E14: Funding to support relevant feasibility studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development Support for CLTs (£25,000):</b> upfront costs supported for the development of CLT proposals (via Jaimie Jeyes)</li> </ul>	<b>Press release at point of delivery – potential to link to wider CLT news story.</b>
<b>E14. Summary of outcomes</b>	Feasibility report/pre planning support for an existing or new CLT to help them move forward with capital programmes.	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	No spend	
<b>E16: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wrap around support for small businesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Retail Boost Support (£11,000):</b> Dedicated strand of the Business Boost offer for retail businesses delivered by ND+ over 2 years</li> </ul>	<b>Promotion of the successful engagements will take place once the service has been delivered.</b>
<b>E16. Summary of outcomes</b>	Working with smaller and flexible retailers, such as Market traders to deliver training that will boost their business potential and embed new skills around digital tools and marketing.	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	£5,500 spend	
<b>E17: Development and Promotion of the Visitor Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nature Tourism Project (£20,000):</b> Delivered via the Biosphere – engagement with tourism businesses to improve carbon footprint and offer a more sustainable product over two years</li> <li>• <b>Visit Exmoor (£3,450):</b> contribution towards improving the North Devon content on the website</li> <li>• <b>Town Visits (£6,550):</b> Develop marketing library for town visit websites to use – aerial footage, interviews, photos, consistent ‘branding’</li> </ul>	<p><b>Events have been publicised as they are held, via the Biosphere and NDC social media.</b></p> <p><b>Further work will be profiled via the Town Visits as they complete their marketing works – this may coincide in a tourism marketing event to show case the offer we have.</b></p>
<b>E17. Summary of outcomes</b>	Tourism still plays a huge role in the North Devon economy. This strand of funding has been working with various partners to help build a more	



	consistent and high quality marketing profile for North Devon. The Nature Tourism project is working with businesses to look at ways in which they can reduce their carbon footprint and put nature at the heart of their visitor offer.	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	<p><b>£7,000</b> spent on Nature Tourism Project</p> <p><b>£3,200</b> spent on Town Visits</p> <p><b>£1,450</b> spent on Visit Exmoor</p>	
<b>E21: Funding for the development and support of appropriate innovation infrastructure at the local level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clean Maritime &amp; Green Energy Officer (£40,000):</b> employed by ND+, for a one year term, a joint post with TDC to deliver the outcomes of the Marine/Green Energy Strategy for Northern Devon and to coordinate inward investment enquiries to the area associated with any sector, but particularly the Floating Off Shore Wind industry.</li> </ul>	<b>The new Officer will post updates on work they are carrying out and promote any events that might be delivered during their post</b>
<b>E21. Summary of outcomes</b>	Work has been taking place to shape the role and make preparations for recruitment through North Devon + as the host for the job role. The post will be advertised from mid-March with an appointment in early April.	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	No spend	
<b>E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sector Development Activities (£20,510):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Makers Map, collaboration with NDMA and Petroc to produce a map of manufacturing companies across ND</li> <li>○ Heritage Construction Skills launch event</li> <li>○ Marine/Green Energy Strategy</li> <li>○ Harbours, Ports and Jetties study</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Further Ecosystems development (£37,840):</b> projects will be programmed into further inward investment or sector development activities for year 3 (24/25)</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Heritage Constructions Skills <a href="#">event</a> was publicised and further promotion will take place at the time.</b></p> <p><b>The studies will be promoted once they have been finalised.</b></p> <p><b>The makers map will have an event around it once it is completed and set to go live.</b></p>
<b>E23. Summary of outcomes</b>	Working across multiple sectors, this strand of work will promote growth within existing industry as well as develop the opportunities to attract new sectors particularly in the clean maritime and green energy fields. The Makers Map is going to profile the high quality range of manufacturing companies in the area, and we are working towards the same for the creative industries. There will be a further sector development programme put in place for the 24/25 year working with more of our existing sectors.	



<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	<p>£2,118.77 towards the Heritage Skills event</p> <p>£3,747.50 towards the Harbour, Ports Jetties study</p>	
<b>E27: Funding to develop angel investor networks nationwide</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop North Devon Angel Network (£30,000):</b> working with TechSW to develop the Angel Investment network across North Devon and Torridge with partners such as TDC, Chamber of commerce, Petroc, ND+.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The project is in early stage development but promotion of key events and successes will be posted at the appropriate time.</b></p>
<b>E27. Summary of outcomes</b>	<p>The project will bring together a network of Investors with investment-ready businesses to help circulate the wealth within North Devon and accelerate the growth of local businesses.</p>	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	<p>No spend but the full £30,000 is in contract with Tech South West to deliver.</p>	
<b>E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Decarbonisation Projects (£56,250):</b> contract with the Biosphere to further develop the natural capital market place and develop strands of the aquaculture enterprise zone business case. This is also being jointly funded by Torridge District Council through their UKSPF investment plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Biosphere team will be promoting the work they are starting to undertake around the development of marine industries (aquaculture and others) and their Smart Biosphere sensor project.</b></p>
<b>E29. Summary of outcomes</b>	<p>Work has been slightly delayed as staff changes were made. However, work will progress at pace now with development plans in place to help deliver improvements to the natural capital in North Devon and Torridge.</p>	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	<p>No spend but the full £56,250 is in contract with the Biosphere.</p>	
<b>E30: Business support measures to drive employment growth, particularly in areas of higher unemployment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business Boost Programme (£234,000):</b> delivery by ND+ over 2 years. Business support programme supported with a micro grants scheme</li> </ul>	<p><b>ND+ and NDC promote the programme via social media to encourage greater take-up.</b></p> <p><b>We will compile a summary of support given and run a press release to coincide with the new financial year – to help promote further interests.</b></p> <p><b>Some case studies on individual businesses will be developed also.</b></p>



<b>E30. Summary of outcomes</b>	Good range of businesses taking up the support – which is aimed at those already in business and wishing to grow, not pre-start or start-ups. So far 27 businesses have received free support with 8 also attracting a micro grant to help them deliver their growth plans.	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	<b>£105,000</b> spend to date on business advice and micro grants	
<b>E33:</b> Employment support for economically inactive people: Intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment, supplemented by additional and/or specialist life and basic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Future Skills and Employment Hub (£150,000):</b> (linked to E35 below) Partnership with DCC to set up a hub in Barnstaple with dedicated outreach to Ilfracombe. Employed Hub Coordinator will provide advice and signpost to skills and employment opportunities. Link with existing provision and guided by a network of hub partners (Petroc, ND+, DWP, Seetec, NDVS, etc.)</li> </ul>	<b>A press release and opening event will be planned once the Hub is in place and the coordinator recruited. Lots of events will be promoted as part of this provision throughout the year.</b>
<b>E33. Summary of outcomes</b>	Preparation work has been taking place with Devon County Council to get the delivery agreement in place. Discussions taken place with Libraries unlimited for a space within Barnstaple to set up a central hub where a dedicated coordinator will be based (new job funded by this money). Also looking at outreach space in Ilfracombe – with the work hub a potential space to be used there.	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	No spend – allocated funds are only available from April 2024	
<b>E35:</b> Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Future Skills and Employment Hub £100,000):</b> (linked to E37 above) See description above, this is linking with the Hub activity above to provide a ‘soft’ entry to the labour market through volunteering</li> </ul>	<b>As above.</b>
<b>E35. Summary of outcomes</b>	Linked to E33 above.	
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	No spend – allocated funds are only available from April 2024	
<b>E37:</b> Tailored support to help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heritage Construction Skills Hub (£100,000):</b> develop the heritage</li> </ul>	<b>A taster engagement <a href="#">event</a> was held at Arlington Court</b>



<p>people in employment, who are not supported by mainstream provision to address barriers to accessing education and training courses. This includes supporting the retention of groups who are likely to leave the labour market early</p>	<p>construction skills hub, including boot camp skills programme and web-based database/information on available heritage construction companies. Working with Petroc, ND+ and National Trust, plus businesses to develop</p>	<p><b>last year and a video clip of the event was posted to our social media channels.</b></p> <p><b>Once the Hub is more established there will be more opportunities for publicising events and hopefully the introduction of bootcamps specifically for heritage construction skills.</b></p>
<p><b>E37. Summary of outcomes</b></p>	<p>A taster/interest building session was held in Arlington Court at the end of 2023 to raise awareness of this developing project. That has created a core of interested traders and students from Petroc in taking forward a Heritage Construction Skills Hub – where we will look to build awareness of existing heritage crafters and encourage new entrants in all fields. Working with Petroc to run a series of bootcamps in key skills.</p>	
<p><b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b></p>	<p>No spend – allocated funds are only available from April 2024</p>	

## Rural England Prosperity Fund

Communities & Place

Supporting Local Business

<p><b>Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support and Capital grant funding for creation and improvements to local rural green spaces</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ilfracombe Seafront Projects (£293,259):</b> two capital projects for Ilfracombe – shelter/toilets for the seafront and developing seating area on the Lime Kiln at the Watersports Hub</li> </ul>	<p><b>We have press coverage as both of these projects are completed.</b></p>
<p><b>Summary of outcomes</b></p>	<p>Provision of new toilets and a shelter on the seafront will further deliver the aspirations in the Seafront Masterplan and the planning application is due to be submitted with the procurement process being prepared alongside that.</p> <p>The Lime Kiln project is underway with contractors appointed and the works due to complete in April/May. This will provide an excellent extension to the popular Lime Kiln Café, as well as being an open</p>	





	viewing platform for residents and visitors even when not using the café.
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	No spend to date, but £85,000 is committed in a contract, with the remaining funds also being committed in contract by April/May and spent shortly after.
<b>Micro investment in the rural economy – tourism, agriculture, community businesses, innovation and carbon reduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rural Grants Programme (£798,000):</b> delivered by ND+ in a 'LEADER' style grant scheme over two years – grants from £2,500 - £25,000 for rural businesses, including farming, tourism, and social businesses. This fund excludes Barnstaple under the rurality criteria</li> </ul> <b>ND+ are collating applicant details and we will do some individual publicity around the first successful projects to complete.</b>
<b>Summary of outcomes</b>	There have been 4 open calls for applications since the scheme opened in mid-2023 which resulted in 21 applications received and likely 15 will be approved. The claims are retrospective, so projects must complete before the money is paid out – we have had 4 applicants complete so far. Solar panels, tourism infrastructure/diversification and rural business innovation are some of the eligible themes. Further rounds of funding will open in April 2024.
<b>Actual spend @ end Feb 2024</b>	Grant claims paid on completed projects is <b>£50,993</b>

4.7 Most of the funds within the UKSPF and REPF are committed in contracts or ring-fenced within a grant funding agreement. Most of these agreements make payments retrospectively and therefore funds are released at the end of the contracted period. Given the very small value of funds that aren't yet fully committed to a project or contract/agreement, we are confident that all our UKSPF and REPF allocation will be spent by the set deadline of end of March 2025.

## 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Officer time has and will continue to be involved from Place, Property and Regeneration team together with support from Finance, Procurement, Parks and Climate Change officers.

5.2. Government provided a cost of burden grant of £20,000 to all authorities to support the implementation of their Investment Plans. As the REPF capital programme had not revenue stream attached to it for administration, NDC transported the £20,000 to ND+ to manage the Rural Grants Programme. The team there are also delivering the Business Boost support programme and associated seed fund grants.

## 6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. There are no equalities implications anticipated as a result of this update report.



## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. There are not any environmental implications anticipated directly as a result of this report, as the purpose of this report is to update on progress of the delivery against our UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan. Individual projects within the wider action plan that will follow will highlight any specific environmental impacts associated with any of those interventions when they come forwards.

## 8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. The submission of the investment plan supports the wider delivery plans of the Council in achieving our corporate priorities and towards financial security in unlocking government funding to deliver upon the priority interventions.

8.2. Individual projects that come forwards under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan will support the corporate priorities of climate and environment and pride of place and prosperity.

## 9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Article 4.5.15

## 10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report.

## 12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

Dominie Dunbrook, Place Manager, Economic Development & Regeneration



## North Devon Council

Report Date: 27 March 2024

Topic: Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3

Report by: Nina Lake, Head of PMO and Environmental Health & Housing

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Autumn Statement 2023 announced the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) would be building on the success of 2 previous rounds of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and launching a third round to run over the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26. They published guidance 07 March 2024, which will provide £450 million over two financial years to provide local authorities with a longer term pipeline of support and to unlock more new supply and developments with the funding.
- 1.2. North Devon Council were beneficiaries of Round 1 funding receiving £1,001,081 and purchased 9 properties, match funded using allocated capital programme monies for temporary accommodation to support the purchase of those houses.
- 1.3. The Council declined to take part in Round 2 as it would have been difficult to have utilised the properties for general temporary accommodation.
- 1.4. Funding for Round 3 has initially been prioritised to areas facing the highest housing pressures, with 203 local authorities receiving an initial funding allocation.
- 1.5. North Devon Council are one of those 203 authorities and has provisionally been identified as eligible for capital grant funding (under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003), with an indicative allocation of £602,500 in funding to deliver a specified targeted number of homes. Two homes for general needs temporary accommodation; and two homes for resettlement (one of those being a large 4+ bed property). These properties should be acquired in our own North Devon area.
- 1.6. In addition to the grant, they have included a non-ringfenced additional payment of £21,000 to allow for costs such as energy efficiency measures, legal costs, decoration, furnishings etc.
- 1.7. Government recognise that the grant will not meet all acquisition / delivery costs and will expect the Council, or its partners, to provide the remainder of the funding required. If we enter into a Memorandum of Understanding a further report will be brought back to members for consideration in terms of capital match funding and revenue support.
- 1.8. The grant base rate has been calculated on our local area with greater detail set out in the 4.10 and 4.11 of this report.
- 1.9. We are encouraged to deliver 50% of our allocation as new homes with a 10% uplift to the grant rate for each property delivered as a new home to



recognise potential higher costs of this type of delivery together with external support from Homes England where required.

1.10. LAHF Round 3 will fund additional high-quality temporary accommodation for homeless families and provide housing for those on the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) who supported UK efforts in Afghanistan.

1.10 This fund will support the Council acquiring good quality temporary accommodation for families owed a homeless duty and further reduce our reliance on B&B plus this will enable local authorities to grow their asset base and help manage local pressures.

1.11 The objectives of the scheme are to:

1.11.1 Reduce local housing pressures and use of expensive and unsuitable accommodation, by providing better quality temporary accommodation those owed homelessness duties by local authorities.

1.11.2 Reduce temporary accommodation costs.

1.11.3 Provide sustainable settled housing to show on ACRS so that they can build new lives in the UK.

1.11.4 Support local housing markets by assisting the delivery of new housing stock or new developments to grow overall housing supply.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Members approve the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) and completion of the Validation Form (VF) as part of DLUHC's review process for Round 3 of Local Authority Housing Fund.

2.2 That Members delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) based on the information provided as part of recommendation 2.1 above.

2.3 To note that if we enter a MOU noted in 2.2 above, a further report will come to Members to consider additional capital contributions to match fund Round 3 plus an indication of the additional revenue resources required to manage these properties both from a housing and property perspective.

## 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The EOI and VF has to be submitted by 5pm 28 March 2024.

3.2 All MOUs for LAHF R3 allocations must be agreed by 31 May 2024, otherwise the Local Authorities allocation may be withdrawn and reallocated.

3.3 To be transparent that additional capital funds will be required to continue to bolster our temporary accommodation housing stock and offer, as our capital programme for TA following the most recent round of purchases has been predominately spent and that it is very likely that additional revenue will be required to fund resources to support the ongoing management of these properties.



## 4 REPORT

4.1 North Devon Council have participated in Round One (R1) and Round Two (R2) of the previous Local Authority Housing Funds, March 2023 and July 2023 respectively. This increased our temporary accommodation stock by 9 units through R1 and allowed us to decrease our reliance on private social landlords and B&B accommodation and reduce our financial burden. [Note: The Council withdrew from R2 due to scheme changes to the terms and conditions of the fund as it progressed].

4.2 Autumn Statement 2023 announced that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) would be launching a third round of the Local Authority Housing Fund, to the value of £450 million, to run over the financial years 2024-25 and 2025-26. There will also be revenue funding to support delivery of the fund. North Devon Council has received an initial allocation and invited to submit a validation form.

4.3 The third round of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF R3) will:

4.3.1 Support local authorities to acquire good quality, and better value for money Temporary Accommodation (TA) for families owed a homelessness duty. This will reduce the usage of B&B accommodation and will enable local authorities to grow their housing stock, creating sustainable assets to help manage local housing pressures.

4.3.2 Continue to provide resettlement housing for those on the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). We expect these homes to become available to support wider local authority general housing and homelessness responsibilities after the resettlement needs of the eligible cohort have been addressed.

4.3.3 Support local housing markets by assisting the delivery of new housing stock or new developments to grow overall housing supply.

4.4 The government remains committed to welcoming and supporting Afghans who worked alongside the government and risked their lives alongside our Armed Forces, as well as people who assisted British efforts in Afghanistan. They recognised that Local authorities have played a vital role in integrating recent arrivals to the UK and it is thanks to the hard work of so many in local government and the wider public sector across all parts of our country that we have been able to welcome over 24,000 people to safety.

4.5 Government have made some changes to this scheme to further support local authorities. They have:

4.5.1 removed the requirement to match fund a specific percentage on each home, with the full fungibility across the fund elements e.g. temporary



accommodation and settlement, providing maximum flexibility and simplifying delivery,

4.5.2 increased the programme timeframe to a full two years, increasing scope for a wider range of delivery options, including new supply,

4.5.3 Introduced a 10% new supply uplift to support the growth of overall housing supply.

4.5.4 Providing revenue funding to local authorities to support programme delivery.

4.6 North Devon has provisionally been identified as eligible for capital grant funding (under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003), with an indicative allocation of £602,500 in funding. With an expectation that we will provide: 2 homes for temporary accommodation; and 2 homes for resettlement (one of those being a larger house with 4+ bed).

4.7 Our allocation is based on the median property price in North Devon of £305,000. The base grant rate per property for our area is £122,000 (based on 40% of the median property price). For the larger resettlement element (4+ bed), 50% of the median property price is provided.

4.8 Each TA unit delivered as new supply would attract a grant of £176,000 (44% of the median property price); and each large resettlement unit delivered as new supply would attract a grant of £220,000 (55% of the median property price).

4.9 There is an additional £21,000 per property to account for any other costs, for example refurbishment and conveyancing costs.

4.10 To support delivery we have been allocated an indicative £4,375 to support human resources.

## 5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.3 Staff time to complete the submission.

5.4 As outlined, a further report will come to Members to consider additional capital contributions to match fund Round 3 plus an indication of the additional revenue resources required to manage these properties, both from a housing and property perspective.

## 6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.3 If as an outcome of this report we enter into a MOU then there will be positive impacts for our residents and anyone falling under the ACRS scheme as



accommodation for those most in need will be provided. However, for the submission of a EOI and VF this is not considered to have any relevance.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.3 There are no environmental implications from submitting the EOI and VF.

## 8 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.3 What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.3.1 The commercialisation agenda +

8.3.2 Housing +

8.3.3 People +

8.3.4 Regeneration or economic development +

## 9 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.3 The decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made pursuant to Article 4.2 and 4.5.17 of the Constitution.

## 10 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Local Authority Housing Fund: Round 3 prospectus and guidance

[Local Authority Housing Fund: Round 3 prospectus and guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

## 12 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author Nina Lake Confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate

Councillors and Officers:

Council G Bell      Lead Member for Housing

Ken Miles            Chief Executive

Jon Triggs           Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland    Head of Place, Property & Regeneration

Simon Fuller        Senior Solicitor & Monitoring Officer

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## **North Devon Council**

Report Date: Wednesday, 27 March 2024

Topic: Outside Bodies - Report by Appointees

Report by: Head of Governance

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The purpose of this report is to receive reports from appointees to Outside Bodies to improve the Council's knowledge of and communications with outside bodies.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. To note the reports from appointees to Outside Bodies.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1. To improve the Council's knowledge of and communications with outside bodies by requiring reports from appointees.

### **4. REPORT**

4.1. In accordance with the report presented to the Annual Council meeting on 18 May 2023, all appointees to Outside Bodies are required to report back to Council at appropriate intervals, usually annually.

4.2. Reports from appointees have been received and are attached in Appendix A to this report.

### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. Not applicable.

### **6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT**

6.1. This report has no relevance to equalities and the protected characteristics. The reports by appointees to Outside Bodies are reported to Council on an annual basis for information only.

### **7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

7.1. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

### **8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: Not applicable

8.1.2. Improving customer focus and/or: Not applicable

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: Not applicable



## 9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

This report is for information only.

## 10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:  
(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

## 12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Head of Governance

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Outside Body	Number of Representative(s) and Name(s)	Notes For Consideration
Barnstaple and District Chamber of Commerce	1 Hunt	Report to follow.
Barnstaple Town Centre Management	2 Clayton and Jusef	Has not met since Member was appointed, and thus no report to give.
Barnstaple Youth House Association	1 Orange	No report received.
Braunton Marsh Internal Drainage Board	3 Bell, Maddocks and Spear	Report received.
The Bridge Trust	2 Haworth-Booth and Prowse	Report received.
Chulmleigh Town Hall Committee	1 Davies	Report received.
Citizen's Advice (Torrige, North Devon, Mid Devon and Bude)	1 Bishop	Has not contacted appointed Member, and thus no report to give.  Supporting documents provided.
Combe Martin Business Association	1 Lethaby	No report received.
Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)	1 Maddocks	Report received.
Devon and Cornwall Police Crime Panel	1 C. Leaver	Report to follow.
Devon Districts Forum	2 (1 Member and 1 Officer)  Roome and Chief Executive	No report received.
Devon Rail Forum (formerly Devon and Exeter Rail Project Working Party)	1 R. Knight	Report received.
Devon Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee	1 D. Knight	No report received.
District Council's Network Assembly	1 Worden	No report received.

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Exmoor National Park Authority	2 Milton and Patrinos	Report received.
Fremington Quay Environment Group	1 Denton	No report received.
Ilfracombe and District Business Tourism Association	1 Williams	Report received.
LGA General Assembly	1 P. Leaver	Report received.
LGA Coast Issues Special Interest Group	1 + 1 Reserve Wilkinson (Renshaw as Reserve)	Report received.
Mid Devon Mobility Board	1 York	Has not contacted appointed Member, and thus no report to give.
North Devon Against Domestic Abuse	1 Biederman	No report received.
Northern Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	1 Wilkinson	Report received.
North Devon Athenaeum	1 York	Report received.
North Devon Biosphere	1 Stevenson	No report received.
Northern Devon Growth Board	1 Roome	No report received.
North Devon County Locality Committee <i>(This meeting follows immediately after HATOC)</i>	2 D. Knight and Spear	Has not met since Member was appointed, and thus no report to give.
North Devon Highways and Transport Orders Committee	3 D. Knight, R. Knight and Spear	Report received.
North Devon +	1 Prowse and Roome	Report received.
North Devon Voluntary Services	1	No report received.

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	Cann	
One Barnstaple	1 York	Report received.
One Ilfracombe	1 Roome	No report received.
PATROL	1 Walker	Report received.
Safer North Devon Community Safety Partnership Board	1 C. Leaver	Report received.
South West Provincial Council for Local Authority Services	1 Worden	No report received.
Trustees of Pilton Charities	1 Hunt	Report to follow.
Woolacombe and Morteohoe Tourism Association	1 Wilkinson	Report received.

## **Braunton Marsh Internal Drainage Board**

Report by Councillor L. Spear

So far this council year the Board has met 5 times. I have missed two of them, one which was in May 2023 which I was not invited to and the other in January 2024 as it clashed with Policy Development Committee at NDC which I chair.

The Agendas consist of various updates from Board members and landowners regarding the conditions of the drains, dykes, ditches etc, the upkeep of which the Board is responsible. The Board collects levies from landowners on the Marshes towards these repairs.

The Board are consulted on Planning Applications which affect the Marshes including the White Cross Offshore Windfarm application to which it gave a detailed response.

Various Policies reviewed and updated and annual reports including one to Defra completed.

Report by Councillor Maddocks

Since May the board has met five times and I have been present in three times. I have also spent half a day being shown around to see how the drainage system works and where they are.

The purpose of the board is to maintain the good working order of the drains to allow the land to be used for farming and to prevent flooding.

The body helps the council with its biodiversity and its carbon neutral aims as it provides great natural habitats and protection and the drainage system itself is driven by gravity alone.

The achievements this year are that nothing has changed the drainage system. It is constantly maintained to a high standard. It does have a problem with an invasive weed called parrot's feather which they are on top of.

The body is very effective in meeting its aims due to the fact that the committee is consisted of farmers that have been working on the marsh for generations.

It not be useful to appoint another member to the body.

## Bridge Trust

Report to Council: March 2024 Malcolm Prowse

The Bridge Trust owns some clusters of listed buildings within the town centre of Barnstaple. Over recent years the high level of empty properties, and some in poor repair, has left the charity unable to carry out its purpose in helping the needs of the town's communities.

I am pleased to report that recent changes and appointments, together with the brilliant work of Alston Mills in bidding for Arts Council funding, have led to the complete reversal of this decline. The successful bid to the Cultural Development Fund will not only support our work with the FHSF works in Boutport Street but will breathe new life into the iconic Bridge Chambers of the riverbank.

The work across the past two years of Steve Shortridge as an external advisor has also led to a number of new leases. The CAB and a local firm of architects have taken up vacant capacity in Bridge Buildings and the properties are now fully occupied – and a new bin store completed for the pedestrianised Maiden Street.

With Graham Lofthouse taking on the new role of Clerk to the Trust and Gerry Duffy the day to day management of the estate have under-pinned turning around the fortunes of the ancient body. The properties in the High Street are occupied and the Property Committee are negotiating with potential partners to revitalise the mainly empty block of properties in Boutport Street between Joy Street and Green Lanes.

Things are certainly more optimistic than they have been in my 5 years as a Trustee and the financial stability of the Bridge Trust is now assured. One of the Council's priorities is the regeneration of Barnstaple town centre and the continued partnership with this major and strategic landowner certainly meets this objective. I would definitely encourage to continue nominations from North Devon Council to this organisation to help promote the vitality of our Regional Centre. At the moment this fits my portfolio and Mark Haworth Booth's wide range of cultural knowledge and experience. The main Trust meet twice a year and the Property Committee on which I sit similarly, the only meeting I missed and had to apologise was the pre-Christmas Trust meeting – so no mince pies and sherry for me!

## **Campaign For the Protection of Rural England**

Report by Councillor Maddocks

My first meeting with them other than a phone conversation is going to be in March.

The charity aims are a thriving beautiful countryside for everyone from tackling the climate emergency to improving access to England's landscapes for everyone.

The charity runs many workshops one which stands out for me is planning workshop for parish councils and members to replay to planning applications correctly.

The body has achieved many things this year to many to mention helping members on aggressive planning applications, litter picking, plastic waste and countryside education.

The body is very effective in reaching its goals, look on their website for more information.





**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO:**

Date: 2<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2024

**OUTSIDE BODY: CHULMLIEGH TOWN  
HALL COMMITTEE**

**REPORT BY:**

**Councillor KEVIN DAVIES**

## 1 Activity

1.1 The committee have met five times formally during the year including the AGM although most of the committee will meet informally, sharing ideas and resolving various issues on a weekly basis. I continue to be a Trustee and have been elected as Chair and re-elected as joint Health & Safety Officer. I am pleased to report a 7<sup>th</sup> member has recently joined the committee and we all look forward to a busy year and fulfilling our purpose as best we can.

## 2 Purpose

2.1 The Committee are responsible for the general management and control of the Trust Premises being the Town Hall. The Committee make and alter the Rules and Regulations for the conduct of its business and for the summoning and conduct of its meetings and in particular with reference to: the terms and conditions upon which the Trust Premises may be used; the appointment of an Auditor, Treasurer and officers and their terms of office; the engagement and dismissal of such paid officers and servants for the Trust Premises and the number of members who shall form a quorum at its meetings.

The Town Hall is held upon trust for the purpose of physical and mental training and recreation and social moral and intellectual development through the medium of reading and recreation rooms, library lectures, classed recreations and entertainments or otherwise as may be found expedient for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Chulmleigh and its immediate vicinity without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions.

2.2 The Town Hall is a publically accessible 'hub venue' in the centre of Chulmleigh. It hosts and promotes numerous activities including for education, social engagement and leisure & fitness. I am in no doubt that the body engages and furthers the interests, quality of life, well-being and development of the community. Involvement with the body aligns with the councils priority areas.

## 3 Achievements

3.1 The Town Hall continues to attract a myriad of users and groups from all sectors of the community. These include the following: Yoga and Ying Yang, Police Drop-in, Line Dancing, CAMEO, the Parish Council, Chulmleigh Old Fair, Folk Club, various celebrations/ private functions & parties, Sunday Lunch Club and Violet & Sage Sisterhood Circle.

Coffee Mornings are held on Saturdays. These are available to and run by local groups, clubs and charities. These include: Chulmleigh and Chawleigh Churches, local sports clubs (tennis, table tennis, football, cricket, badminton, bowls etc), other clubs (Pre-School, Cubs, Scouts etc), Garden Society, Chulmleigh Recreation Association, Chulmleigh Old Fair, Little Red Hen Craft Group and North Devon Hospice.

Various seasonal events are held in particular for Christmas and The Chulmleigh Old Fair. Pancake day is a favourite and there have been a number of fund raising events to support Red Cross Ukraine.

3.2 The usage is stable and we are pleased that the new Chair Yoga classes and the Folk Club are getting established and proving very popular.

3.3 To help generate additional funds, in order to help cover increased energy costs, the committee is now running quarterly craft markets and hosting live music. Both have been extremely popular and we are delighted these are well supported.

3.4 The Chulmleigh Town Hall Committee remains financially sound.

## 4 The future

4.1 The body is effective in trying to meet its aims.

4.2 At this time I do not see that it is necessary for the council to make a further appointment to the body.

## 5 Other

5.1 The acoustic improvements have now been completed. This included the provision of acoustic insulation to separate the upper and lower halls, the installation of six acoustic rafts to the underside of the ceiling of the lower hall and fitting blinds to both halls and the upstairs 'backroom snug.' We are very grateful for the s106 and community councillor grants received.

5.2 In order to accommodate the newly formed Folk Club great efforts were made to tidy up and put back into hire usage the upstairs back room now renamed the 'snug.' This room has also been used to increase the area available for the craft market and stall holders.

5.3 The Chulmleigh Town Hall website has been launched and we hope this simplifies the booking process and makes our offering clear.



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO: NORTH DEVON  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Date: 12.03.24

**OUTSIDE BODIES:**

**1. DEVON RAIL FORUM**

**REPORT BY:**

**Councillor RICKY KNIGHT**

**Activity**

3. Met twice; attended once.

**Purpose**

Similar to above but Devon-wide – more clout – not always easy to spot relevance to ND/NDC – but it does marry well with 2.

**Achievements**

As above, chaired by Cllr Andrea Davis - and very well too. Lots of 'achievements' – as per the minutes. Very useful on passenger numbers – and the post-Covid recovery. Ongoing quandary over number of students taking the rush hour services to Exeter.

**The future**

It would be churlish for me to intimate that any of these bodies are not 'reasonably effective' in meeting their aims! I sincerely believe they are. At every stage, communication is well maintained, agendas are followed, minutes taken and disseminated. All members have the chance for input and taken seriously. So yes, as such, all four are effective outreach bodies for NDC – *in my considered opinion*.



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO: NDC**

Date:3/3/24

**OUTSIDE BODY : EXMOOR NATIONAL  
PARK AUTHORITY**

**REPORT BY:**

**Councillor ROBIN MILTON**

**Activity**

ENPA meets on a monthly basis for main authority business and planning as well as informal members forum and workshops sessions.

As Deputy Chair of ENPA I have attended 8/10 authority and planning meetings, at least 10 meetings as chair of 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' grant assessment panel and 3 Exmoor and Parish consultative Forum. Also meetings with Leadership team and Chair on a monthly basis.

Other committees associated that I attend on a regular include the 'FAPAP' (financial affairs), Moorland and Farming Board, Exmoor Hill Farm Network.

I also attended National Parks UK meeting in Cumbria.

**Purpose**

Exmoor National Park Authority has 2 statutory purposes and a duty to seek to foster economic and social wellbeing

As a statutory planning authority within North Devon area ( 1/3 of Exmoor is in North Devon) its policies are intrinsically linked to NDC whilst the purposes are directly beneficial to NDC in delivering nature and climate change objectives as well as maintaining the natural environment benefits so obvious to all.

**Achievements**

ENPA has a considerable list of achievements that can be easily accessed on its website. Whilst struggling with funding constraints it has delivered a robust planning service whilst addressing the problems of ownership of a considerable land and property estate in order to ensure best public value for money against current environmental objectives. A Landscape recovery scheme has been approved for further development, many trees have been

planted and the considerable funds in the Farming in Protected Landscape Scheme allocated fully to best effect.

### The future

ENPA is more effective than many National Parks at managing its limited funds for maximum impact and value. It is a vital and necessary partner to NDC over the area designated National Park in North Devon and may well provide opportunities for NDC to offset carbon and biodiversity to enable appropriate economic development here.

Further appointments to ENPA are vital to ensure the opportunities for partnership working continue and North Devon is fully represented in the policy context of this protected landscape as members of the ENPA

### Other

As past chairman of ENPA and currently elected deputy chair then I fully understand the complexities of working in a protected landscape and the different approaches required as a body funded by DEFRA with specific responsibilities. I am certain that I can represent the interests of NDC fully as an appointed member of ENPA



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO:** NORTH DEVON COUNCIL  
**Date:** 27 MARCH 2024  
**OUTSIDE BODY:** EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
**REPORT BY:** Councillor JOHN PATRINOS

### Activity

ENPA meets on the first Tuesday of each month, although the structure is changing slightly in 2024/25 to include a separate Planning Committee which I will be a member of.

### Purpose

National Parks have two purposes:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and

- To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks.

Parks also have a duty to promote the sustainable economic and social development of the areas communities.

ENPA covers one sixth of the land area of NDC and provides services that would otherwise be provided by the Council.

### Achievements

ENPA has achieved a lot in the last year, within the constraints of a budget that has basically been the same in cash terms for several years because the great majority of it is funded by a grant from the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

A detailed report on ENPA's achievements can be found in item 7 of [this](#) report.

## **Ilfracombe and District Business Tourism Association**

Report by Councillor Williams

Body made up of many different members who all, appear, to have the interest of the town. Members include Hoteliers and business owners who, wish to, promote their own business, and swell visitor numbers to the town

Is it useful, to have a Cllr as a rep on this

Yes it is as it enables NDDC in my opinion and in my case also ITC to have an insight into, the thoughts of this organisation and where possible support and encourage members who appear to want to continue the work previously put in by members. historically Ilfracombe has always had a TIC but with the present financial climate this has not proved financially viable and a new way of promoting, Ilfracombe has had to be implemented.

Unfortunately this years short term plan will mean a slight change to previous years but it is hoped that with careful planning we can still see the benefits and hopefully a way forward for future years

I therefore consider that a rep on this body is necessary and with the support of Dominie and Sarah Jane from NDDC this organisation/body will see a benefit



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO: COUNCIL**

Date:

**OUTSIDE BODY: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION  
CONFERENCE**

**REPORT BY: Councillor PETER LEAVER**

### Activity

I was appointed to represent North Devon Council at the Local Government Association Conference.

### Purpose

The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice for local councils and works to promote, support and improve local government. I attended the LGA conference in July 2023 and, as a newly elected councillor, I learnt about how councils across the country are addressing many of the issues that are facing North Devon. Some of this has been fed back into the strategic plan for North Devon Council and into the debate on Strategy and Resources committee.

### Achievements

Nationally, local government is on the news agenda in a way that it hasn't been for decades. The spotlight has been on councils who have had to issue S114 notice. Less newsworthy, but equally important for the communities we serve, are the cuts in real term funding over the last 14 years and the additional costs caused by increased levels of homelessness, changes to the asylum system, the impacts of climate change and high levels of inflation. Local council staff and councillors trying to work within this context, find themselves facing increasing levels of intimidation and hate at the hands of social media in particular.

The LGA has been promoting a series of campaigns to share good practice among councils and to campaign for changes in government policy and the conduct of public life.. These campaigns include:

**Debate Not Hate** Anyone, regardless of their background or political affiliation, should feel safe to become a councillor and be proud to represent their community. But the increasing level of abuse and intimidation aimed at local politicians is undermining local democracy and putting councillors at risk. Our new campaign is working to challenge the toxicity of public debate and pushing for change.



(<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/debate-not-hate>)

**Make It Local** Public services can be delivered faster, better and more efficiently at a local level. The Government will only be able to tackle challenges and achieve the ambitions of its electorate if it resets the relationship between national and local government. This means trusting that communities, through their local councils, are best placed to take decisions on how frontline services are delivered. To deliver priorities for the public the next government needs to #MakeItLocal.

(<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/make-it-local>)

**Save local services** The future financial sustainability of councils is on a cliff-edge. Without Government action, they will have no choice but to significantly cut the local services our communities – and economy – rely on.

(<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/save-local-services>)

**Back Local Climate Action** Tackling climate change is one of the biggest threats facing our communities and ranks high in peoples' priorities. Councils have **some impact on over 80 per cent** of an areas' emissions, and direct impact over a third of emissions given their central role in housing, transport and energy. The impact of local climate action can be enormous, and councils are united in the call for devolved approaches that realise this potential.

(<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/make-it-local/back-local-climate-action>)

**Be a Councillor** Increasing the pool of talent from which councillors are elected is a key task for local government. We need different kinds of people willing to stand for election so that parties get a choice of quality candidates.

(<https://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor>)

### The future

The LGA is an effective voice for the local government sector and one to which it is useful for the Council to continue to support and engage with. The annual conference provides a great opportunity for members and senior officers to share experiences of other councils around the country and to influence government policy. It is useful for the Council to continue to be represented on the organisation.



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO:** NORTH DEVON COUNCIL  
**Date:** 20/03/24  
**OUTSIDE BODY:** LGA COASTAL ISSUES GROUP  
**REPORT BY:** Councillor Malcolm Wilkinson

**Activity**

The group meets 4 times a year. Two of the meetings were held virtually and the December meeting was held in London. The September AGM and conference took place in Skegness, which I also attended. I was able to attend 3 sub-committee meetings concerned with Bathing Water Quality. There are currently over 60 member authorities in the group covering 60% of the coastline and representing over 16 million people.

**PURPOSE**

The Objectives of the Group are:

To increase awareness and debate at a national level of the environmental, economic and social issues that directly or indirectly impact coastal, estuarine and maritime communities;

To act as a focus for liaison between member local authorities and other bodies representing coastal, estuarine and maritime interests;

To secure improved cross-departmental co-ordination with Government on coastal, estuarine and maritime issues with a view to ensuring consistency in policy and the provision of resource;

To work in partnership with other organisations This group’s principal aim is to establish improved governance, management and community wellbeing to ensure that the UK has the best managed coast in Europe, and to identify appropriate and sustainable funding strategies to support this aim. It also works towards achieving the recognition that England’s coast deserves in policy and decision making. As per Government and North Devon Council priorities there is now a real importance levied on the effects of climate change and the management of our coastline in this changing environment of local government.

Communities on Britain’s coastline have fallen behind the rest of the country but the government could unlock their potential by adjusting its Levelling Up policy, according to research published on 1st February 2023 in the Communities on the Edge – Pragmatix Report. Household income in coastal areas is almost £3,000 per year lower than in non-coastal communities. This deprivation, both financial and mental, was highlighted by Sir Chris Whitty in his annual CMO report.

## **Achievements**

The key accountabilities of the Group are:

1. Raising the profile of the challenges, issues and opportunities faced by coastal, estuarine and maritime communities;
2. Representing the best interests of local authority members across all opportunities, with a primary focus for those located in England as in-house expertise allows;
3. Acting as a discussion forum for issues raised, with a view to reaching a consensus of opinion where required and preparing discussion papers or inviting presentations on issues of specific interest to coastal, estuarine and maritime communities;
4. liaising with other Special Interest Groups, LGA Boards and Executive of the LGA, and delivering for coastal, estuarine and maritime communities by developing and maintaining strong collaborative partnerships;
5. Making representations to Government, in so far as they are consistent with and will not conflict with or undermine LGA policy as a whole or damage the interests of other member authorities, to ensure that issues affecting coastal, estuarine and maritime communities are reflected in Government policy and the result is an adequate distribution of funding/resources;
6. Maintaining an annual Workplan formed around the Groups' Strategic Priorities to be agreed each year, normally at the March meeting;
7. To uphold the Nolan Principles of Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership. Although three of the four meetings have been virtual, a considerable amount of work has been undertaken this year. As previously mentioned, I have been an active part of the Bathing Water Quality sub-group and am delighted with the recent bathing water results for North Devon, in particular the improvements at Combe Martin. I compliment the work of the village Water Action Group and Combe Martin Parish Council.

I continue to represent the authority on The Northern Devon Coastal & Taw/Torridge Estuary Working Group. This is a joint sub-committee working with Torridge DC to try and address the very real problem of coastal erosion.

I also sit on the North Devon Council/North Devon Homes sub-committee which concentrates on the regeneration/protection of rural coastal communities and also the South West Coastal Productivity Planning Group.

## **THE FUTURE**

I am delighted to report that the 2024 LGA Coastal Issues AGM and Annual Conference will be hosted by North Devon Council. It is a real opportunity for us to showcase what we have achieved, what we are working on and what still needs to be addressed. It will be based around the corporate priority of the regeneration of Ilfracombe and I have been working with officers to prepare the agenda. Clear reference will be made to the HMO report of Sir Chris Whitty and the "Communities on the Edge" Pragmatix report.

## **WORLD/NATIONAL SURFING RESERVE**

I am a steward for North Devon World Surfing Reserve and was delighted that all of the hard work by the committee resulted in the designation in 2023. This group is very forward thinking and recognises that the award is really the

starting point for protecting our wonderful coastline both geographically and environmentally.

### **MOTIONS TO COUNCIL**

I brought forward two motions to North Devon Council this year. The first was to support the call for an independent review of the actions of all of the Water Authorities and the second was to reinforce the request from the LGA Coastal Issues group for a dedicated Minister for the Coast. Unfortunately neither received government backing!

### **OTHERS**

I have found that working with members and officers from other authorities has enabled me to gain a far greater insight into the problems experienced by our coastline and has also enabled me to have a better understanding of how to develop strategies to overcome them.

Several of the other committees that I sit on dovetail together coastal issues: The A.O.N.B. (now rebranded as National Landscapes), The Woolacombe Tourism Association, Morteohoe & Woolacombe CLT and the Ilfracombe Harbour Board.

Our coastline is one of our greatest assets and we must do everything possible to retain and enhance its character as well as put in place effective and positive policies to combat the effects of climate change. I therefore urge continuation of the membership of this outside body. This has been a busy year in my role as Lead Member for Coastal Communities. There have been some exciting and rewarding results but there have also been some that cause concern for the future. I was delighted with the announcement that North Devon has been awarded status as a World Surfing Reserve. This is only the 12th designation awarded and the only one in the cold waters of the Northern hemisphere. I am privileged to be a steward of the reserve and am well aware that the aims are both environmental and promotional. There is much concern within the group regarding the discharge of sewage into our waters, and this links to a motion that I took to Full Council to request support for independent reviews of all of the Water Authorities. This is a nationwide problem and is being pursued by the LGA Coastal Issues group on which I represent N.Devon Council. There is a real need to look closely at the monitoring of bathing water quality, particularly in light of the emergence cold water swimming throughout the year.

In my role as Chairman of Ilfracombe Harbour, it was a real pleasure to attend the opening of the Ilfracombe Water Sports Centre. This is a tremendous facility, not only for the residents of Ilfracombe, but for all of North Devon. There are further plans afoot to increase the leisure facilities around the harbour and make it central to the regeneration programme.

The disparity between property prices and average income in coastal communities is a massive cause for concern. Not only are people being forced out of the towns and villages in which they were born but also the hospitality industry is having real problems recruiting staff because of spiralling rental costs and lack of affordable accommodation. I sit on the Woolacombe Community Land Trust and we have just submitted a planning application to build 21 affordable, rent only dwellings in Woolacombe. There will be a much needed local needs connection and will help, not just the local

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industries, but also retain the integrity of village life. I was interviewed by the BBC "Escape to the Country" team regarding the CLT scheme and it was aired on national television on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

## North Devon Plus

Report to Council from Malcolm Prowse; March 2024

I represent North Devon Council on the board of North Devon+ alongside the Leader of the Council. I have been a Director for a number of years and have been pleased to ensure there is a vehicle to intervene and help improve the economic environment.

The board meets on a 6-8 week cycle and is chaired by Alan Dykes of Lambda in Ilfracombe. I think I may have missed just one meeting in the past 12 months when I tendered my apologies.

The mission statement can be found on the website: [northdevonplus.co.uk](http://northdevonplus.co.uk) but in laymen's terms it seeks to promote economic growth in Northern Devon by helping new and existing businesses, seeking to raise skills levels and hence wages across the patch. Encouraging innovation and the use of new technologies.

**This Company certainly helps achieve one of North Devon's Priorities.**

Main activities include:

- Rolling out the UK Shared Prosperity funding to help local business across North Devon & Torridge
- Managing programmes to help the changing financial outlook facing farmers with the reducing SFPs. Exploring ways to support diversification and new initiatives. (Working in partnership with both planning teams to help and support the agricultural sector through the planning process)
- Acting as the delivery organisation for a raft of 'grant making' activities. Town Centre refurbishment grants and Torridge councillor grants

North Devon+ is an effective, slim and efficient body that can react in pace and intervene to support our Council's priorities. It is vital that the Council continues to nominate leading members to North Devon Plus.



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO:**

Date: 20/03/24

**OUTSIDE BODY: NORTH DEVON AREA OF OUTSTANDING  
NATURAL BEAUTY (NATIONAL LANDSCAPES)**

**REPORT BY: Councillor Malcolm Wilkinson**

### Activity

This year I have attended 3 of the 4 meetings. Many different organisations from Northern Devon are represented on this committee.

### Purpose

The intention of the organisation is to protect and enhance our beautiful area of Northern Devon, paying particular attention to conservation, enhancement and the threat of climate change.

There is a small management team who help to deliver the Management Plan by making things happen, working with partners, advising on planning, obtaining external funding, developing projects, engaging communities and businesses, delivering results and outcomes to make a difference.

### Achievement

There continues to be a large number of opportunist planning applications within the AONB area and Dave Edgcombe and his planning committee have been really busy formulating their responses as a consultee. In many cases the responses to applications had a significant impact on the decisions made by the relevant planning authorities.

Many local organisations have benefitted from the grant scheme which focusses on sustainable projects within the locality.

### The future

There will be some significant changes to the dynamics of the organisation this year with the recent retirement of both Dave Edgcombe and Jenny Carey-Wood. Both have worked tirelessly for the organisation and will be sorely missed.



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO: NORTH DEVON  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Date: 12.03.24

**OUTSIDE BODIES:**

**HATOC**

**REPORT BY:**

**Councillor RICKY KNIGHT**

**Activity**

Met four times; attended twice

**Purpose**

DCC Highways-led but focus is on North Devon. Everything from potholes to LTZs. Definitely helps NDC by definition.

**Achievements**

I would say a great deal but the brief is possibly too wide/complex to do justice to the time allocation. Useful input on LTZs and from the police re: enforcement

**The future**

It would be churlish for me to intimate that any of these bodies are not 'reasonably effective' in meeting their aims! I sincerely believe they are. At every stage, communication is well maintained, agendas are followed, minutes taken and disseminated. All members have the chance for input and taken seriously.

So yes, as such, all four are effective outreach bodies for NDC – *in my considered opinion.*





Open

**REPORT TO: ANNUAL COUNCIL**

Date: 11/03/2024

**OUTSIDE BODY: NORTH DEVON  
ATHENAEUM**

**REPORT BY:**

**Councillor LOUISA YORK**

**Activity**

The Board have met four times and I have been able to attend two meetings.

**Purpose**

The North Devon Athenaeum has several collections and archives documenting North Devon's history. They collect and preserve information about North Devon and the people who have lived here over the centuries. 2.2 This helps to meet the following NDC Corporate Priority: "We become focussed on delivering the best for our citizens".

**Achievements**

No Annual report received to date.

**The future**

See forward plan attached. NB some of the plans will not be achievable this year as priority has been given to developing new governance plans after the sad death of Peter Christie.

No

**Other**

<https://northdevonathenaeum.org.uk/>

## **North Devon Highways & Traffic Orders Committee**

Report by Councillor L. Spear

The Committee has met twice during the year – I attended both meetings.  
Topics for report/discussion included:

Sensitive Streets Review – a statutory duty of DCC to co-ordinate works activities on the road network – including power to designate certain streets as “sensitive” – such designation allowed works on a road to be better regulated to ensure the free flow of traffic.

New Barnstaple Longbridge Junction scheme to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities.

Update on future works of the Dragon Patcher and also cleaning and jetting of drains.

Tarka Trail – a very welcome update on Phase 5 and the Phased Strategy – approval given for Phase 5 between Willingcott and Knowle.

Local Police also attended a meeting to answer any questions.



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO: ANNUAL  
COUNCIL**

Date: 11/03/20204

**OUTSIDE BODY: ONE  
BARNSTAPLE**

**REPORT BY: Councillor LOUISA YORK**

**Activity**

One Barnstaple usually meets monthly. I have attended some of their network meetings including The Blue & Green Network and the Youth Forum.

**Purpose**

Our mission is to effectively address challenges faced in and by our community.

To work together, with compassion, to improve the wellbeing of our community; the place itself, those living, working and visiting it.

This helps to meet the following NDC Corporate Priorities: "We become focussed on delivering the best for our citizens" and "We plan for North Devon's Future".

**Achievements**

Please refer to <https://onebarnstaple.org.uk/>

**The future**

Please see attached Community Action Plan.

Yes, because One Barnstaple has several networks which different Councillors will find useful in which to be involved.

**Other**



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO:**

Date:

**OUTSIDE BODY:**

**PATROL**

**REPORT BY:**

**Councillor WALKER**

**Activity**

AGM

**Purpose**

Parking and transport decisions outside of London.

Not really, but impacts on motions brought to full council

**Achievements**

Support for councils implementing changes in parking and road traffic orders in various locations, explaining the mechanism for this to be done.

**The future**

N/A

**Other**

It would be useful for the representative for this organisation to be a member of the HATOC committee in future.



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

**Open**

**REPORT TO:**

Date: 4 MARCH 2024

**OUTSIDE BODY: SAFER NORTH DEVON COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

**REPORT BY: Councillor LEAVER**

### Activity

The North Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is made up of statutory partners including North Devon Council, Devon & Cornwall Police, The NHS, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. There are also non-statutory members such as North Devon Against Domestic Abuse and North Devon Voluntary Services.

### Purpose

The purpose of The Partnership is to bring local key agencies together to deliver multi-agency solutions to Community Safety issues by pooling resources, expertise and experience

Involvement in the Community Safety Partnership helps in North Devon Council's priority of "Becoming Focused on Delivering The Best For Our Citizens".

### Achievements

ASB Steering Group - continues to develop and focus on ASB prevention and addressing local ASB issues across Northern Devon. The multi-agency meetings take place monthly and look in detail at individuals and areas of reported issues, with an emphasis on hotspots and emerging issues. This approach has been particularly well received in relation to the street drinking issues in Barnstaple.

Street Marshals continue to be active in Barnstaple following funding being agreed with North Devon Council. The marshals, provided by a local security company, are patrolling the town on a daily basis. They helped to increase feelings of reassurance amongst both the public and businesses and dealt with incidents as and when they occurred.

The CSP engaged with a local training provider to develop and provide training to 8 local primary schools to increase resilience in their pupils - topics included relationships, social media, dealing with emotional development and confrontation. The course provided an improved understanding of self, self-

management strategies, better relationships, recognition of impact of behaviour and self and others.

Public Space Protection Orders have been renewed and two small areas that have been subject to Anti-Social Behaviour have been added to the map due to an increase in incidents. The new order will be effective from January 2024.

The CSP has been part of the planning for the duty to prevent serious violence. The focus is violence amongst under 25 year olds.

The Partnership contributed to The Devon Counter Terrorism Local Profile. An Officer now attends the monthly Channel that attempts to divert referred individuals away from terrorism.

The CSP have prioritised Hate Crime over the last year and are currently engaged on both a local and Devon level in an effort to increase the reporting of incidents, increasing feelings of safety amongst all our communities.

### The future

By working together, The CSP allows for a coordinated response to local crime and disorder issues. North Devon remains one of the safest places to live in England and joint working helps to maintain this.

By working together, The CSP allows for a coordinated response to local crime and disorder issues. North Devon remains one of the safest places to live in England and joint working helps to maintain this.

### Other

The North Devon Community Safety Partnership acts jointly with its Torridge equivalent who currently hold the secretariat. Administration will switch to North Devon at the end of the current year.



## NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Open

**REPORT TO:** NORTH DEVON COUNCIL  
**Date:** 20/03/23  
**OUTSIDE BODY:** WOOLACOMBE & MORTEHOE TOURISM ASSOCIATION  
**REPORT BY:** Councillor Malcolm Wilkinson

### Activity

This group meets approximately 5 times a year. I attended 4 meetings in 2022/2023

### Purpose

The intention of the organisation is to promote Tourism in Morteheo, Woolacombe & Croyde. This falls in line with N.Devon Council and North Devon + priorities for tourism.

### Achievement

This TIC, unlike many others in North Devon, is flourishing with a strong membership and the production of an excellent website. Recognition has been made of the changing face of advertising and the rapidly increasing use of the website compared to the guide. The website is regularly updated and has links to many local organisations and businesses. The TIC manager also produces an online, monthly guide to activities in and around North Devon. The management committee held two very successful Farmers Markets during 2022 highlighting the produce of local farmers. The TIC was also responsible for the highly popular Scarecrow Festival.

### The future

I am encouraged by the work being undertaken by the Woolacombe Plastics Free and the N.Devon Plastics Free organisations and am very keen to see their mantra carried out regarding the sales of cheap plastic surfboards and the use of non bio-degradable equipment in the local hostelrys and accommodation providers. They also provided a wooden shed that housed a toy library of beach items such as buckets and spades etc. It is essential that a further appointment is made in order to continue the working partnership between the council and TIC's.

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**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Governance Committee held at Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Monday, 11th March, 2024 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Norman (Chair).

Councillors Bushell, Haworth-Booth, Jones, Orange, Quinn and Stevenson.

Co-opted Independent Member Naomi Whitmore.

Officers:

Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Governance, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer and Emergency Planning Officer

Also Present in person:

Paul Middlemass (Devon Audit Partnership).

Alex Walling (Bishop Fleming).

Charlie Martin (Bishop Fleming).

Also Present virtually:

Ken Johnson (Devon Audit Partnership).

**66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**67. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH JANUARY 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**68. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE MEETING AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.**

The Chair welcomed the new Auditors and the Co-opted Independent Member of the Committee.

The Chair advised those present that the annual survey for the Governance Committee would be issued soon, and requested that it was completed promptly to enable the results to be collated and presented at the next meeting.

**69. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

**70. INTRODUCTION TO NEW EXTERNAL AUDITORS - BISHOP FLEMING**

The Chair welcomed the new External Auditors (Bishop Fleming) to the Committee and invited them to introduce themselves.

The Auditors provided a brief summary of their background, experience, and their role within Bishop Fleming.

The Public Sector Audit Director (AW) advised that Bishop Fleming predominately covered the South West of England. She acknowledged the nationwide shortage of auditors and the issues regarding unfinished audits across the UK. She was confident that Bishop Fleming would meet the audit requirements with their resources.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that meetings had taken place with the auditors and that the works/dates had been programmed.

**71. BUSINESS CONTINUITY UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on Business Continuity from the Emergency Planning Officer.

The Emergency Planning Officer gave an overview of the subject; advising it was the process for assessing the risks faced by the organisation, and analysing the impacts they may have on day to day operations. Business Continuity Management was about identifying what parts of the business it could not afford to lose, such as premises, staff or information and putting the necessary plans and mitigations in place so if the worst happens it could maintain essential services.

The Emergency Planning Officer advised:

- Exercising and testing was a vital element of the business continuity management life cycle as it ensures our arrangements were validated.
- Last year SMT signed off the exercise and testing strategy which outlined the frequency of exercises and types of exercises that would be completed across the organisation.
- In addition to exercising, the Council had recently procured organisational resilience training for all managers. This was a key recommendation following

the exercises. This training was currently being installed, ready to be rolled-out.

- There were a range of plans in place to help the council respond to a business interruption or incident. These included the Business Continuity Implementation Plan, the Business Continuity Policy and Service Resumption Plans. There were also specific risk plans such as the Fuel Shortage Plan (which outlined the council's response to a fuel shortage)
- There were supporting plans such as the crisis communications framework which was currently in development with the communications team.
- There were two outstanding recommendations for emergency planning. One was awaiting an output from the Local Resilience Forum, and the other was for the training to resume for Councillors. This training would be scheduled for any who had not yet received it.
- So in terms of next steps:
  - All services would be moved across to the new service resumption templates.
  - The service resumption plans would need to be validated through an annual exercise to ensure they were accurate, reliable and workable.
  - All managers were required to complete the business continuity training.
  - A joint Cyber and business continuity exercise was being considered for 2024.
- The National Security Risk assessment was released by government at the end of 2023. The local resilience forum, which was a multi-agency group of emergency services; local authorities and other responders have assessed this and developed a more localised community risk register. The next steps were to assess these risks and ensure the plans currently in place were appropriate and where further mitigation may be needed look to introduce a new specific risk plan.

In response to questions from the Committee the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that:

- The ICT team carried out continual testing of their back-up systems.
- Procedures were in place to support organisations (including zoos) during times of hardship – such as support through the licencing team and the previous financial assistance provided in the form of business grants during the pandemic.
- National protocols were in place for National emergencies.

In response to questions from the Committee the Emergency Planning Officer confirmed that:

- The organisation was now in a stronger position, and more prepared, than before (the pandemic).

- Risk assessments had been completed as part of the business impact assessments.
- The plans were flexible and enabled responses using minimal resources

In response to a question from the Co-opted Member, the Emergency Planning Officer confirmed that although Climate Change was not identified as a risk in the plans, the effects of climate change, such as local flooding would be. The plans considered the effects and results of climate change, rather than the cause.

RESOLVED that the update on Business Continuity be noted.

**72. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2023-24**

The Committee considered a report by Devon Audit Partnership regarding the Internal Audit Progress Report (circulated previously).

The Internal Auditor advised the Committee that;

- The overall opinion was that of Reasonable Assurance.
- Within the report, three audits were 'reasonable assurance' – these were Harbour Management, Vehicle Maintenance, and Climate Change.
- Building Control Partnership report was limited assurance. This was a joint partnership with Mid Devon District Council. There had been an issue in recruitment of Building Control Officers which was having an impact on the organisation.
- It had been agreed to defer two audits (Procurement and Food Safety) due to insufficient resources being available.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer confirmed that he thought the Councillors had now all received their Harbour training, but this would be checked and confirmed to the Chair as the data was not available at the meeting.

The Internal Auditor confirmed (in relation to the Harbour Management audit) that;

- The Development Strategy for the harbour had covered the period 2012-2026, and a business plan created in November 2019 covered 2020-2023 which now needed to be updated or re-issued.
- The information available on the Council's website in relation to the harbour was of a low-level.
- Performance measure indicators could be set once it had been decided what these should be – and what the aims were- e.g. in terms of visitor numbers/targets.

In response to questions from the Committee. The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised that;

- There had been a number of vacant posts within Building Control at the time of the audit, but now five of those seven posts had been filled. There was now

only one agency staff member in that team. He also noted that market share had increased from 75% to 80% in quarter 3 (of 2023/34).

- The partnership had now been in place for 5-6 years and would be reviewed during 2024 and assessed to determine whether any changes were required. The sharing of resources did provide benefit on paper. The costs were currently split at 60%/40% with NDC covering the 60%.

The Internal Auditor confirmed that the Building Control Partnership audit would be followed-up in 2024-25.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Progress Report be noted.

**73. INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER AND STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a report by Devon Audit Partnership regarding the Internal Audit Charter and Strategy (circulated previously).

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Charter and Strategy be approved.

**74. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024-25**

The Committee considered a report by Devon Audit Partnership regarding the Internal Audit Plan Report 2024-25 (circulated previously).

The Internal Auditor advised that the Internal Audit Plan Report 2024-25 detailed the audits proposed for the next four years: 2024-25, 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28, along with the dates when each had previously been undertaken.

The plan was based on 247 days' work (an increase on the prior year).

In response to questions from the Committee, the auditor advised that there was an element of flexibility to the plan and audits could change their priority. He advised that District Councils had more clarity about which audits were required in comparison to larger, County Councils.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the draft audit plan had been considered by the Senior Management team (SMT). A further 7 days were available as a contingency plan.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Plan 2024-25 be approved.

**75. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL COUNTER FRAUD RESILIENCE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report by Devon Audit Partnership regarding the Internal Audit Annual Counter Fraud Resilience Report (circulated previously).

The Internal Auditor (KJ) advised the Committee:

- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) reported that Local Authorities needed to respond to an ever-increasing threat from fraud, and that the DWP had used the CIPFA framework to drive their agenda across their partnerships.
- NDC complied in almost all areas of counter-fraud 'best-practice'. Further work in awareness training and the exchange of knowledge between DAP and NDC would add further value to counter fraud resilience.
- The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) exercise 2023-24 (the matching of data between public and private sector bodies to detect and prevent fraud) was nearing completion and results had been issued. The DAP were working with officers and targeted those areas of highest risk. Departments completing those matches do so to ensure their data management was compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018. This covers data minimisation, accuracy, and data retention periods.
- Government reports regarding serious fraud indicate that likelihood of being a victim of fraud was increasing in society and it was clear that fraud activity had been increasing for some time.
- The DAP were available should any officers require advice and/or assistance with any issues.
- Looking at risk assessments it was clear that there had been good work undertaken by officers in looking to identify and reduce fraud.
- On the whole the report findings were that the authority had a 'good bill of health' and good work was being done.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Annual Counter Fraud Resilience Report be noted.

**76.                    EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023-24**

The Committee considered a report by Bishop Fleming regarding the External Audit Plan 2023-24 (circulated previously).

The External Auditor (AW) confirmed:

- Nationally there were 771 outstanding audits. There was a large backlog due to issues regarding recruitment across the industry. Much discussion had taken place over the past 12-18mths with regards to a solution.
- There were potential changes to the CIPFA code with regards to the valuation of property, plant and equipment. This could have an impact on audits during 2023-24.
- NDC was in a positive situation as was not one included in the number of authorities affected by the backlog.

The External Auditor (CM) confirmed:

- The high-level audit timetable had been agreed with the NDC management.

- The report set out the areas of audit work, risks, and confirmed the independence of Bishop Fleming as the auditors for NDC.

In response to a question from the committee, the External Auditor (CM) advised that the 'value for money' arrangements were included in the planned works.

RESOLVED that External Audit Plan 2023-24 report be noted.

**77.           UPDATE REPORT ON FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS**

The Committee considered a report by the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer regarding the update on the Conduct of Investigations (circulated previously).

The Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised the Committee there had been no investigations since the last report.

RESOLVED that the Update Report on the Conduct of Investigations be noted.

**78.           HALF YEARLY REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the Half Yearly Report of the Chair of the Governance Committee (circulated previously).

RESOLVED that the Half Yearly Report of the Chair of the Governance Committee be noted and proceed to Council for consideration.

**79.           AUDIT RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Committee considered the Audit Recommendation Tracker report by the Chief Executive in respect of actions taken to address internal and external audit recommendations (circulated previously).

The Committee noted the following updates:

- There were 19 live audit reports – as listed in table A.
- 9 recommendations had been included in table B (recommendations completed since the last meeting of the Governance Committee)
- Table C detailed 7 recommendations for which time extensions were being requested. Of those, any relating to Emergency Planning were discussed under item 7 of the agenda, and the ICT recommendations were 95% complete and required a short extension to 31 March 2024

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive explained that:

- 22 EM 12 - The Property team had been busy dealing with some large-scale projects (Future High Street Fund etc.) and were only required a

short extension to enable them to complete the global list of survey requirements. The condition surveys that then followed would eventually then feed into the new Asset system software.

- 22 PO 07 – A car-parking strategy was being developed to enable their use to be maximised. A report outlining this strategy would be considered at Strategy and Resources Committee in May/June 2024.
- Appendix E had previously shown 16 audits; now just one remained outstanding. 21 AG 13 was at 85% completion and would be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the time extensions requested in the Audit Recommendation Tracker be approved; and
- (b) that the number of any previous extension requests be added to the report in the future; and
- (c) that the Audit Recommendation Tracker be noted.

## **80. WORK PROGRAMME 2024 - 2025**

The Committee considered the work programme for 2024-25 (circulated previously).

RESOLVED:

- a) that the item 'Letter of Representation be moved from 23 Sept 2024 to 12 Nov 2024, and
- b) that the work programme for 2024-25 be noted.

## **81. SUMMARY OF THE RISKS IDENTIFIED UNDER THE CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Committee considered the Summary of the Risks Identified under the Corporate Risk Register report by the Head of Governance (circulated previously).

The Head of Governance confirmed that the risks identified would be considered in greater detail under agenda item 19 of this agenda.

Item 19 was classified as restricted and would be discussed following the exclusion of Public and Press.

## **82. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS AND RESTRICTION OF DOCUMENTS**



RESOLVED:

- a) That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended from time to time), namely information relating to the financial business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- b) That, all documents and reports relating to the item be confirmed as “Not for Publication”.

**83.            ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

RESOLVED that it being 8:14 pm the meeting adjourn for five minutes for a comfort break.

RESOLVED that it being 8:19 pm, the meeting now re-convene.

**84.            CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Committee considered the Corporate Risk register report by the Chief Executive (circulated previously).

The Head of Governance advised the Committee that:

- The corporate risk group (CORGI) had met on 21<sup>st</sup> February, to review and update the corporate risk register. Whilst there had been no changes to the scores, each risk had an updated note for review
- With the permission of the chair, it had been agreed to report only those corporate risks above the risk toleration line i.e. scoring more than a six on the risk matrix on page 122.
- The Business Continuity risk had been covered on this agenda with Cyber and Temporary Accommodation covered at previous committee meetings. It was planned that an update on staff recruitment and retention would be provided at the September committee meeting.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the risk of Cyber Security would be a potential risk for all organisations and would be classed as a ‘high risk’ due to the continual changes and advances in technology and the skills of potential ‘hackers’.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Risk Register be noted.

Chair

The meeting ended at 8.32 pm

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.

**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Planning Committee held at Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Wednesday, 28th February, 2024 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Davies (Chair)

Councillors Bishop, Bulled, Haworth-Booth, R Knight, Lane, C Leaver, Maddocks, Prowse, L. Spear, Walker and Williams

Officers:

Service Manager (Development Management), Lead Planning Officer (North), Lead Planning Officer (Major Applications) and Legal Advisor

**71. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Denton and Whitehead.

**72. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE MEETING AS A MATTER OF URGENCY**

There were no items brought forward which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered by the meeting as a matter of urgency.

**73. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest announced.

**74. 76784: NORTH DEVON LEISURE CENTRE, SEVEN BRETHREN BANK, BARNSTAPLE, DEVON EX31 2AP.**

The Committee considered a report by the Lead Planning Officer (Major Applications) regarding planning application 76784 (circulated previously).

Marsh Pullen (representing Barnstaple Town Council), Tony Hopwood (agent) and SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland (applicant) addressed the Committee.

The Senior Corporate and Community Services Officer read a statement received from Councillor David Knight, in his capacity as Ward Member, to the Committee.

The Chair advised that as Councillor C. Leaver had arrived after the start of the consideration of this item, was unable to move or second a motion or take part in the vote, however was able to ask questions

In response to questions, the Lead Planning Officer (Major Applications) advised the following:

- The scheme needed to demonstrate that regard had been had to the National Design Guide and relevant strategic and development policies in the Local Plan. There was a conflict in terms of policy DM04 in terms of design, DM07 and ST017 in terms of planning and listed building and paragraphs within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- There were some concerns regarding the 6 storey element and the scheme had been redesigned and it was now proposed that the 6<sup>th</sup> storey would be stepped back.
- Further details had been provided in relation to the design and materials and how it would look when it had been built. High quality materials would be used and landscaping had been included within the design to minimise some of the impact. However, there was still a slight conflict with policy DM04 which had been given moderate weight as a planning judgement.
- The Heritage and Conservation Officer had advised that the element of harm on the listed building was less than substantial harm and this needed to be considered against the public benefits.
- Having considered the benefits versus the disbenefits, it was a matter of planning judgement as to how the balance will fall. In considering the cumulative weight of the disbenefits, against that of the benefits, the weight of the benefits arising from this proposal would clearly outweigh the harm arising from policy conflict identified above. The balance of achieving a sustainable, viable and attractive development in this location were highly challenging and the scheme presented was not the perfect scheme however this was not considered to result in a such significant conflict to the development plan, when read as a whole, which would justify refusal of the scheme.
- The plans had not been reviewed by a Design Review Panel. This was not a statutory requirement. However recommendations of a Design Review Panel could be given weight as part of the planning process. Officers had reviewed the design and external consultants had provided their critiques.
- The relocation of the higher density part of the scheme from the riverside to the south west part of the site had not been considered as part of the reserved matters application. The proposed design optimised the layout for the site.
- There were taller residential buildings already located on the other side of the river adjacent to the Oliver Buildings and at the Anchorwood Bank development. This development was smaller scale. The location of six storey building opposite to Rock Park would look out of place.
- A viability appraisal had been carried out on this site as part of the outline application. It was a borderline viable scheme which had been assisted by the securing of external funding. If the development was reduced it would have an impact on the viability.

- The housing mix was not strictly in accordance with the housing needs assessment, however there was a caveat within the policy that the viability of a site could alter the housing mix.
- No final decision had been taken by Devon County Council Highways Authority in relation to whether the road on the site would become adopted or whether it would be a private estate. There were ways to control parking whether it was adopted or a private estate. Devon County Council Highways Authority had recently consulted on altering the junction to Seven Brethren. This would have no implications for this scheme.
- Affordable housing had been secured through a development agreement and not through a section 106 agreement.
- There were no prescribed parking standards within the Local Plan. There was a need to look at the circumstances for each site and apply. It was proposed that 2 parking spaces would be provided for each dwellinghouse including affordable housing. Less parking spaces would be provided for the apartment block.
- A section 106 agreement would secure an off site contribution for biodiversity net gain payments.
- The Planning Authority had no control over the use of internal materials. The materials to be used externally had been provided.
- In terms of Biodiversity Net Gains, the Northern Devon Biosphere Reserve had schemes running. Discussions would take place with the Sustainability Officer in terms of identifying a suitable site.
- The application had been submitted in April 2023 and since that time there had been a lot of redesigns.
- Any stepping down in the height of the buildings would affect the viability of the site.

In response to questions, the Service Manager (Development Management) advised the following:

- There were no prescribed parking standards within the Local Plan. The developer had been asked to reduce the number of parking spaces, who had been in agreement to reduce the number but not remove completely.
- It was accepted that the site was located in a sustainable location, within walking distance of the town centre and access to the train and bus links.
- There was no reason to refuse the application on the basis of providing 2 car parking spaces for each dwellinghouse, as it would not outweigh the benefits.
- The Local Plan and national policies did not enable a planning application to be refused on the basis of the development not being net zero.
- The scheme design had been reviewed by officers who had a lot of experience in design.
- The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 135 states that there should be a strong sense of place. This development would provide a gateway building. There had been a lot of work on the design in terms of providing balconies and use of materials along the riverfront to create a sense of place. The benefits outweighed the harm and in terms of design there was not a strong reason to refuse the application.

- If the application was deferred to allow for the scheme to be reviewed by a Design Review Panel, it would need to be for longer than 2 months and would be quite costly. It was considered that it was too late for this to be undertaken at this stage, and should be considered as part of the pre-application stage or at outline stage.

In response to questions, SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland (applicant) advised the following:

- There were time constraints in terms of external funding and the Land Release Fund.
- The design and access statement had previously been considered by the Committee as part of the outline application and the reserved matters application had been based on those principles.
- There had been a number of design iterations.
- It was a constrained site for the provision of 180 dwellings.
- A Design Review Panel was not considered to be appropriate in this instance.

RESOLVED (10 for, 0 against, 0 abstained) that the application be APPROVED as recommended by the Lead Planning Officer (Major Applications).

## **75. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

RESOLVED that it being 11.51 am that the meeting be adjourned for a short comfort break.

RESOLVED that it being 12.00 pm that the meeting be reconvened.

## **76. 77915: ILFRACOMBE WATERSPORTS HUB LARKSTONE LANE**

The Committee considered a report by the Lead Planning Officer (North) regarding planning application 77915 (circulated previously).

RESOLVED (unanimous) that the application be APPROVED as recommended by the Lead Planning Officer (North).

## **77. 77952: LAND AT MILL ROAD, BARNSTAPLE, DEVON, EX31 1JQ.**

The Committee considered a report by the Lead Planning Officer (North) regarding planning application 77952 (circulated previously).

Carl Metcalfe (applicant) addressed the Committee.

In response to a question, the Lead Planning Officer (North) advised the following:

- That further to the comment made by the Highways Authority stating “It should be noted that the Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan indicates a future aspiration for a cycle route

through this land from the Tarka Trail to Rolles Quay and this proposal should not prejudice that aspiration”, he did not consider that this application would prejudice this aspiration.

- Currently the use of this site was for a council depot and the application was purely for a change of use with no physical development.
- The Highways Authority had not raised an objection to the using of the proposed access to the site.

RESOLVED (unanimous) that the application be APPROVED as recommended by the Lead Planning Officer (North).

Chair

The meeting ended at 12.19 pm

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.

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## **NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Policy Development Committee held at G107, 1st Floor, South West Institute Development Building, Petroc, Barnstaple - Petroc College on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor L. Spear (Chair).

Councillors Bishop, Bulled, Bushell, Jones, Wilson and Worden.

Officers:

Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and Senior Environmental Protection Officer.

Also Present in person:

Councillors Bell, R. Knight, Maskell and Wilkinson.

Councillor Smith – Torridge District Council.

Also Present virtually:

Councillors Prowse and Williams.

### **1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING**

The Chair welcomed the panellists, Members and the public to the meeting. She outlined the format of the meeting, how it would work in practice and reminded all parties to be polite and respectful to each other at all times.

### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clayton, Hunt, P. Leaver and Patrinos.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest announced.

**4. WATER QUALITY. TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF WATER QUALITY WITHIN THE NORTH DEVON AREA.**

The Committee collectively noted the responses to the pre-submitted questions under item 5 on the agenda at appendices A-G.

Councillor Jones outlined the proposed format for the meeting, he identified the reasons behind calling the special meeting which involved addressing public concern at both national and local level.

He outlined the following key points to the special meeting:

- The focus of the special meeting was to discuss water quality in our local rivers and on our local beaches. There was a lot of information already within the public domain but it was not always clear as to the truth and what's actually happening.
- The aim of the special meeting was to discuss pollution. He added that the Council had received a number of questions from both District Councillors and members of the public. In order to ensure that all areas of concern were covered at the meeting the questions were used to define the key areas of focus for the special meeting.
- From the questions raised, the Council had identified five key subjects to discuss.
- Councillors would be given the opportunity to ask follow up questions initially based on the responses provided in the attached appendices, which would then lead on to further discussions.

He detailed the five key subjects, which were as follows:

- 1. How bad was the current situation and what were the issues:** How bad was the current situation regarding water pollution for North Devon's Rivers and beaches and what were the main issues?
- 2. Differences in information who is responsible and who should we trust:** There was a variety of different information regarding water quality for local rivers and the coast, which was sometimes conflicted. Who was responsible for the confusion and how should the public be informed?
- 3. Planning:** In order for planning authorities to properly determine planning applications, should water companies provide up to date appropriate information on the capacity of sewage disposal for the proposed development?
- 4. Testing and Data:** Individual organisations and groups currently undertook their own testing. How can those results be compared and the data used in the most effective way?

- 5. When will the situation be resolved and how, what were the main impediments:** What could North Devon Council do to support the responsible organisations?

Each Member of the panel was invited to introduce themselves and their organisation and to provide a brief overview of their role together with their organisations responsibilities for managing water quality.

The Committee members asked follow up questions of the panellists and received the following responses:

**1. How serious is the situation regarding pollution and water quality in North Devon?**

- **Surfers Against Sewage:** The issues in North Devon were a combination of treated/untreated sewage together with agricultural runoff. There were 98 designated water bodies within the North Devon area and of these 83 failed to reach good ecological status and zero met good chemical status. So essentially none had good overall status.
- **North Devon World Surfing Reserve:** Not a good situation, the reports that they had received from regular water users consisted of complaints of illnesses and infections that had been contracted from raw sewage in the ocean result of the policy for a combined sewage, which the whole sewage system seems to be based on. There needs to be plans put in place to stop raw sewage discharge, the Safer Seas and Rivers Service and WaterFit Live, tells us that there were incidents happening in real time around the North Devon coast. Sewage being discharged into the rivers and waterways undoing the work people who were creating eco systems in the sea for the future.
- **Local Angling Journalist:** Water quality impacted by a number of different factors. There has been a dramatic decline in salmon, which can be mirrored right across the whole eco system. There had been a loss of aquatic life as a result of water quality and need to find a solution by working together.
- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** Questioned how bad our rivers were. Lots of different areas of rivers impacted and our rivers were the conduit to everything that we do in our society. We see problems with pollution from sewage treatment works, septic tanks or animals. There were huge problems with sedimentation, chemical discharge from highway run off, plastics entering our waterways, which affected the spawning habitats and all caused pressure at various different stages of the water treatment process. Acknowledged that there were many contributing factors that were now at the point where the situation was so bad that society were

seeing evidence of the problems as a more frequent occurrence.

- **Environment Agency:** Whole network of monitoring points for data collection along the rivers Torridge and Taw together with the coastal areas, some looking at chemical samples whilst others looked at organic samples. Look at insects and invertebrates to assess if they were pollution tolerant or intolerant. Bathing water quality was good and fairly resilient. However further work was required to improve the water quality at Ilfracombe Hele. Contributing factors to water quality issues within the rivers of the North Devon area occurred with chronic problems from agricultural land run off and occasional failure of sewage infrastructure.
- **South West Water (SWW):** The State of the Environment report was owned by the Environment Agency, which sets out the plan, actions and priorities that needed to be achieved to good ecological status. Acknowledged that as a water company, they had a part to play in the process. However, even if South West Water made all the required improvements to their infrastructure there would still be 70% of other impacts on water quality that needed addressing. We all need to work together to make the required improvements to water quality. South West Waters contribution to poor water quality was around 30%. However, there was an obligation for the company to make improvements. As of December 2023 SWW had 100% of storm overflows monitored, which equated to 1,342 storm overflows of these 96 were located within the North Devon area and around 40-50% of them already met water quality requirements. Part of the Environment Act would be to look at the impact of those storm overflows.
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** The partnership was very concerned about water quality and had been working with farmers to develop programmes to reduce pollution. There was a catchment working group established within the Biosphere reserve that was working in various waterbodies around the North Devon area. They were also working in partnership with the Environment Agency to ensure that there was no duplication of work. There was a requirement to focus on the management of highway run off, which had also been identified as an area of work and to work with the agriculture sector to improve issues with run off.
- **Councillor Milton representing the National Farmers Union (NFU):** Climate change was a huge issue with more rain this year than ever before. River water quality had declined over the years and had been driven by 50 years of a cheap food policy together with additional farming rules for workers. Regulated use of chemicals together with a land run off was bad for the rivers and for the farmers. Land use together with policy changes to more environmental methods. Green energy was not as green as it appeared to be with the use of biomass plants, which required a whole land management policy. There was a requirement for partnership

working to bring about change together with improvements to infrastructure where there was a lack of investment from the government.

- **National Trust:** There was a different pollution challenge on the land and there was a requirement to understand catchment working to plant buffer strips and removing gateways.

## 2. The biggest change to North Devon over the years had been the increased demand on the existing sewage infrastructure from the building of new homes. What is the impact of the additional pressure on the sewage system and what can be done to improve the situation?

- **South West Water:** Developed their long term plans based on what was projected and occurring in terms of developments and published a Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan and take into account the impact of any new development. To meet these demands for new builds, improvements were required to treatment works, the management of discharge into the rivers together with the installation of appropriate sized sewers to manage the increase in future use. Sewage treatment and compliance was managed as much as possible and the information should be readily available within the public domain.
- **Environment Agency:** Extra resources were being brought in for greater standards of regulation and they were also reviewing dry spill data whereby sewage discharged happened during dry periods, which was not supposed to happen. This would inform the debate to see what impact dry spills had on water quality.
- **Surfer's Against Sewage:** We need to know when work was undertaken and the impact that it had upon the ecology and the people who are using the rivers and beaches as this data wasn't available. We also need to look at the risk to humans together with understanding the impact. Getting more data about spills was really important but also understanding the impact of these spills as well.
- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** The Council should look at the levels of assurance they sought as a planning committee when determining an application for housing at parish and at district level and the potential impact upon sewage capacity.
- **South West Water:** Bathing water quality was monitored between the months of May to September, which was transferred over from European Union law. The water quality in the summer for the majority of the time was either excellent or good. The impact of discharge both up and downstream together with storm overflow should be collected

and used effectively.

- **North Devon World Surfing Reserve:** When the Council's Planning Committee considered applications for housing developments, the members should be given adequate assurance that there was sufficient capacity within the existing sewage system.

### 3. Councillor Roome, parliamentary candidate asked the panel:

**If you could wave a magic wand what would suggest that central government could do to improve water quality for North Devon?**

- **Environment Agency:** Would like to see a significant investment in the system for water management nationally.
- **Westcountry River's Trust:** More regulations and greater incentives for farmers.
- **North Devon World Surfing Reserve:** Need to explore the relationship between waste water and reusable water and how excess clean water could be either utilised or discharged into an alternative environment such as reservoirs.
- **Local Angling Journalist:** Put water quality higher on the agenda.
- **National Trust:** More work focussed on water recovery projects.
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** Something transformative that would focus on the economy. Explore the possibilities of phosphate recycling to limit the amount that was released into the water system. Look alternative ways of soil management to reduce its impact upon rivers and waterways. Ensure that there were sufficient technological systems in place to capture high resolution data, which was reliable and accurate.
- **NFU:** The government needed to provide greater incentives for organisations to work together in real time. Regulatory management had to be the backstop for a collaborative approach in working together to improve the situation and not just manage the problems.
- **SWW:** Flood and Water Management Act Schedule 3 was passed by parliament 13 years ago. However, an act for SUDS and soakaways as opposed to discharging into the sewer system was still not in place.
- **Surfers Against Sewage:** Enforce the existing laws around water management. Data should be targeted, prioritised and easier to interpret.

## 4. What can North Devon Council do as a local authority to help improve water quality?

- **SWW:** Through planning changes around property improvements. There was an increase of urban creep as a result of paving over gardens to enable off road parking for vehicles, which increased surface run off finding its way into the rivers and sea. To reduce the impact, residents could be encouraged to use a permeable surface as an alternative, which would still allow drainage into the ground. Greater investment from the government to identify nature based solutions together with other green ideas to address the problem.
- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** Understanding the capacity of the existing sewage system during the planning process.
- **North Devon World Surfing Reserve:** Citizen Science community testing, the district council could become the co-ordinators of the process. Useful data could be validated at district level to provide assurance that the information was correct.
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** The use of artificial intelligence. Early indications had shown that this new technology could be quite effective to assess both statutory and voluntary information. There were catchment partnership meetings, Seafast, which was a government agency that were focusing on coastal resilience looking at pathogens and factors that had an impact and the district council could become part of the network.
- **Environment Agency:** There were lots of ways for the council to get involved. The weather observer's site was a really useful tool that the Council could utilise as it allowed users to log in and add data themselves and build up a picture of the current situation.

## 5. So many organisation do their own individual citizen's science projects. How do we navigate this?

- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** There were many different data gathering exercises undertaken by various organisations and you had to trust the data that you were given. The Rivers Trust alone had 75 active citizen scientists who in 2023 collected 1,000 samples. There was an organisation called Riverfly that undertook studies that focussed on invertebrates that lived within the river system. Different ways of how you could use citizen's science within the community, as a lot of the information and data that had been gathered in similar areas were all pointing towards the same things. The rivers rust was currently involved in two projects:

- **CaSTCO (Catchment Systems Thinking Cooperative)** which combined citizen's science data collected from rivers and water bodies and analysed. Volunteers were provided with training to ensure that the samples collected were reliable.
- **In River:** Working at a regional level to assess the impacts on the river system and turn it into data that local communities had an interest in.
  
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** Shared outcomes programme there to try and bridge across government departments to utilise their data in a more combined way. The Biosphere Partnership had made an application to the trial for shared outcomes fund, which looked at health, environment and access to heritage. Will look at NHS data to assess how many people had become ill as a result of poor water quality together with the impacts on health from the area that someone lived in. What access improvements could be made to green spaces etc.
  
- **SWW:** All water companies were currently involved in the development of a National Environment Hub, which was looking to integrate all data from all of the storm overflows from the water companies across the country in real time. There was also a programme for River Water Quality Monitors, which would be put in place over the next 10 years and integrated into the National Environment Hub so that all of the information was in one place and accessible to all. Also working with the Rivers Trust and other bodies to see how citizen science data could also be incorporated.
  
- **Local Angling Journalist:** Vitally important to report pollution incidents to the Environment Agency.
  
- **NFU – Councillor Milton:** Opportunity for NDC to be tested on its commitment to new biodiversity net gain rules, which looked to enhance nature and to increase biodiversity. This was linked to the Councils planning system and the requirement to ensure that there was a real gain in terms of the use of nature based solutions for biodiversity use the opportunities through the planning system. The council should use those opportunities to their full advantage in its support the rural economy and to utilise some of the land management to its advantage. Those measures would ensure that the developers were not absolved from its responsibilities both on site and within the immediate area.

Councillor Milton declared an interest as a member of North Devon Council.

## 6. Recognise pollution issue but what is the plan to repair the damage to the environment and habitat for fish and other wildlife?



- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** Pollution in rivers and waterways was a very complex problem. There were several contributing factors including funding issues, the quality of soils, of which were 30-40% were severely degraded. Soil quality improvement alone required a huge amount of work. There were also issues with barriers within rivers and waterways, which impacted upon fish migration.
- **SWW:** A storm overflows action plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2023. The plan was due for publication within the next week or so and contained a full list of storm overflows across the country together with the plans for each one.

## **7. Was there a plan to help the fish stocks and environment to recover?**

- **SWW:** As an organisation, SWW were looking at what they extracted from rivers, making sure that the extractions were taken at the right time and were ecologically acceptable flow within the river environment. They had also been working closely with the Rivers Trust to look at shading habitats. He added that the issue with salmon numbers did not start within the UK but out in the Atlantic environment. Their role as an organisation was to maximise the opportunities for salmon to spawn when they reached UK waters as opposed to dying as soon as they entered the estuaries.
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** The biosphere had piloted biodiversity net gain a few years ago with a scheme in the River Caen catchment in Braunton working with the landowner to reduce the flow by introducing new hedge banks and leaky dams, which was a good local opportunity to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

RESOLVED, that Standing Orders be SUSPENDED to allow questions from members of the public present.

The members of the public present at the special meeting were invited to ask questions of the panellists and received the following responses:

### **1. A question was asked by a local angler regarding fish deaths in the River Taw:**

**A photo of an alleged chemical sewage spillage was shown, which had been reported by the gentleman to the Environment Agency on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The response he received from the Environment Agency was that they wouldn't respond to the report of a spillage unless there was a major environmental impact.**

**What constitutes an impact that should be monitored?**

- **Environment Agency:** The panel member explained that he would speak with the member of the public at the end of the meeting and report back to him. He added that the Environment Agency had a limited amount of resources that they could utilise to investigate reported incidents and there was simply not enough resources to meet the demand. Where they received reports of high impact that's where they had to prioritise their response.
- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** The trust was always devastated when any fish death occurred and was reported as a result of pollution and equally devastated at the lack of response to the incident. He added that it was crucial to collect own information and data.
- **Local Angling Journalist:** The subject of the environment needed to be brought far higher up the political agenda. He reported that there used to be eight Fishery Enforcement Officers and that there was now only one officer.

**2. The co-founder of "Save the River Torridge Group" campaign, which was launched at the beginning of the 1980s asked if there were any plans to install large capacity holding tanks to deal with the situation of surplus sewage and water and hold it back to avoid discharge.**

- **Environment Agency:** When there wasn't capacity within a sewage system the Environment Agency used to put embargos in to stop water companies discharging if the system was at capacity and wouldn't allow water companies to connect anymore into that system. However, the planning authorities then gave permission for many more septic tanks then spent years after the embargo was lifted connecting all of the septic tanks back into the sewage system. On one hand there were benefits but on the other hand there were negatives because development pressures were so huge.
- **SWW:** Set out a plan to spend three billion pounds over a 15 year period to improve the sewer network across the south west. The company would be looking at grey solutions where tanks were installed together with the introduction of green and blue solutions. An example of a green being SUDS when excess water was drained away into the environment and blue providing another pathway for surface water to feed into streams and rivers and not to mix with sewage in the first place. They were also looking to invest in alternative pathways to move surface water away. Would be spending £750m within the next five years to deliver 300 overflows across the region.

**3. In terms of testing and what appears to be a lack of information sharing between different organisations. How difficult is it as separate organisations to communicate with each other with impartiality?**

- **Environment Agency:** We do regularly talk to each other especially with SWW. When designing a scheme the scientists and engineers from both sides work together. SWW undertake monitoring and scoping on behalf of the Environment Agency to establish the best place for the environment to install an outfall together with the level and treatment needed to ensure that there was very limited or no impact upon the environment.
  - **SWW:** Meet with Surfers against Sewage (SAS) and the Westcountry Rivers Trust every two weeks to share data with them. Need to find a way to extract data to provide greater knowledge and intelligence to make decisions in the right way.
  - **Surfers against Sewage:** A lot of citizen's science data was accredited using accredited methods. However, there was a requirement to bring data together and to have it all in one centralised location and be delivered with open communication. Safer Seas and Rivers service app came directly from SWW and provided a platform to educate people about that data from an impartial perspective. There were no bathing rivers in north Devon, so no rivers were tested except for through citizen science programmes. Residents with local knowledge from fisherman and local river users were just as qualified to provide information on water quality.
  - **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** There was a catchment partnership with a catchment based approach and there was a good dialogue between all of the organisations that were involved.
  - **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** Citizens science investigation data was all independent and was funded centrally but ultimately was not their data but the scientist's data and was very valuable. A lot of the data backed up information obtained from other sources but sometimes it contrasted as well in tests of upstream and downstream areas. All contributed towards a crucial weight of evidence, which was really good to see.
4. **South Molton sewage treatment works was at capacity and it was felt that local knowledge and information was largely ignored regarding the capacity of the sewage treatment works regarding but then allowed 37,354 hours of spillages into the local rivers?**

**Why were citizen's organisations arranging prosecutions and not the Environment Agency or South West Water?**

- **Environment Agency:** SWW had a number of discharge outlets and had permits to legal discharge when at capacity and the Environment Agency would not prosecute for those anyway. What they did do was test the sewage works quality and that would be addressed through the courts if issues were identified.

- **Councillor Milton representing the NFU:** The event that occurred with the issues in South Molton was not related to farming and part of the disposal of digestate from the local green energy plant.

**5. One of the major pollution factors of the local waterways came from agricultural and highway run off. Highways representatives should have been invited to sit on the panel to answer questions.**

The Committee noted the suggestion to invite a highways representative to sit on the panel at future meetings.

- **Environment Agency:** Work was undertaken with National Highways ask for interceptors to be put in on roundabouts through planning guidance standards and certain things had to be put in place on major roads. Tyre wear was also a large polluter as were carcinogens and antibiotics from agricultural runoff.

- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** Had seen issues with oils, petrol and heavy metals that runoff from the road network. There were often drainage issues on new developments and challenges to ensure that systems were maintained. There were issues with sediment from minor roads as hedges eroded and this had been identified through sediment tracing.

**6. The North Devon MP was quoted as stating that “At no point was raw sewage being dumped on our beautiful beaches” Can you confirm if this statement is true?**

- **North Devon World Surfing Reserve:** There were issues with algal bloom foam together with sanitary products being washed up in quantities on the local beaches, which must be coming from drainage overflow. Water quality should be tested throughout the year not just between the months of May to September, would be happy to assist with testing.

**7. Anaerobic digesters, which were used by large dairy farmers contribute heavily to the pollution in the local rivers. Could incentives be offered to farmers to encourage them to farm more sustainably?**

- **SWW:** Information related to the operation of storm overflows was shared and would be available and released in real time. There were 151 designated beaches across SWW and there were plans to explore year round monitoring at a number of locations. In terms of regulation and incentives, regulations were enforced with agriculture and there was an opportunity to incentivise large dairy farmers to farm more sustainably.

- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** There had been issues with pollution in rivers as a result of farming for example the discharge of poultry waste into the River Wye. There were also concerns from milk buyers regarding the availability of water together with mechanisms that could be employed regarding storage and flow of water for farmers to utilise when required.

## **8. What could large suppliers such as supermarkets do to ensure fairness within the supply chain?**

- **Councillor Milton representing the NFU:** There were active discussions ongoing with government in relation to the fairness of the supply chain as a fairer system was required. Supermarkets were contributing to the issue by undercutting farmers on prices for items such as eggs. However, mass produced eggs contained six times the level of antibiotics that local farmers would administer.

In response to a question as to what larger suppliers could do to address the situation, he advised that they could look at the cost of production together with what they pay and look at more sustainable methods of production.

- **Local Angling Journalist:** Would be beneficial if supermarkets were to invest in the environment but also as consumers society also had to do their bit for the environment with an ever increasing pressure from the expanding population of North Devon.
- **SWW:** By adhering to the targets set by government of no more than 10 spills per year into rivers and three spills per year into bathing waters during the bathing season.

## **9. Who do you trust in government to achieve this target? Is the failure to meet these targets do to a lack of appropriate funding or lack of experienced and qualified people to undertake the work?**

- **Environment Agency:** The Water Transformation Project currently had 500 people committed to its development, which would deliver increased audits and would better inform where money was spent.

## **10. There are a lot of pollutants from highways and micro plastics that contribute towards the problem. Who could give assurance that this could be resolved?**

- **Environment Agency:** The main message that they wanted to get across to the public was that the toilet was not a “wet bin” and only the three Ps “Pee, Poo and Paper” should be deposited and flushed into the sewer system, otherwise blockages occurred within the sewer system. Wet wipes together with micro plastic fibres and fragments and sewage sludge’s run off the land

and directly back into the sea.

- **SWW:** Would like to see a government ban on wet wipes, as this would help the burden on the sewer system enormously.

In response to a question regarding how the Committee were planning to progress the outcomes from the special meeting, Councillor Jones advised that the Members would discuss its next steps at a future meeting.

Councillor Roome, Leader of North Devon Council stated that South West Water should not be paying financial benefits to their CEOs when they were continuing to pump sewage into the rivers and waterways.

He added that he would be putting a Motion to Full Council to state that water companies shouldn't pay bonuses to water company executives when they were not meeting their set targets.

In response to a question from Councillor Jones regarding what needs to happen in North Devon to resolve the issue, the various organisations provided the following responses:

- **Surfers against Sewage:** Water companies should not be paying dividends to their shareholders when there had been 18,000 hours of spillages released into the rivers of north Devon. Undertake ecological data assessments. There were no bathing rivers in north Devon and no testing in that area. Beaches should be tested year round and not just the bathing season between May-September.
- **North Devon World Surfing Reserve:** Were proud to be working with the National Trust implementing mitigation measures and having a positive impact upon climate change.

Thanks should be given to the local people who were employed by the water companies in north Devon to clean and maintain the tanks. Really important to engage with the local community and to employ good management, feedback in relation to improvements was also vital.

- **Local Angling Journalist:** Environment needed to be much higher on the political agenda from source to sea.
- **Westcountry Rivers Trust:** The high level of attendance at the meeting indicated the strength of feeling for the subject of conservation and there needed to be a drive to keep the momentum going forward.
- **Environment Agency:** Continued significant investment in water quality was required.

- **SWW:** Thank all participants for the lively discussion, the company were focussed on their delivery programme and would ensure that it was delivered as quickly as possible.
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** Consumer and industry support was vital together with accreditation support to farmers.
- **Councillor Milton on behalf of the NFU:** There was a requirement for joined up thinking together with the requirement for considerably more investment. Better communication with partners on the ground to ensure a vibrant rural economy, which provided good quality products.
- **National Trust:** Thanked the attendees and other organisations for their support.

A member of the public requested that her disappointment be noted that the North Devon Member of Parliament was not in attendance at the meeting.

The Chair thanked the members of the public for their attendance at the meeting together with the members of the panel.

Chair

The meeting ended at 8.41 pm

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.

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**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Strategy and Resources Committee held in the Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Monday, 4th March, 2024 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Roome (Chair)

Councillors Bell, Clayton, D Knight, R Knight, Lane, C Leaver, Maskell, Prowse, Wilkinson and Worden

Officers:

Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Customer Focus, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Place Manager (Town Centres), Head of Place, Property and Regeneration and Sustainability and Climate Officer

Also Present in person:

Councillors Haworth-Booth, Norman and Spear.

Also Present virtually:

Councillor Cann

**95. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crabb and Milton.

**96. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2024**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2024 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to a correction on minute 87, Approval and Release of S106 Public Open Space Funds – Barnstaple, South Molton and Tawstock as follows:

RECOMMENDED that Council vary the capital programme by £358,019.97 and the funds be released subject to a funding agreement upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed by the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for external projects.

**97. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE MEETING AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.**

There were no items brought forward, which in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency.

**98.           DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.**

Councillors C Leaver, Maskell and Roome declared an other registerable interest in item 10, Devolution Offer, as they were all Devon County Councillors.

**99.           FUNDING PROPOSAL FOR THE ROLE OF A CLIMATE  
ENGAGEMENT COMMUNICATIONS INTERN AT THE DEVON  
CLIMATE EMERGENCY PARTNERSHIP**

The Committee considered a report by the Sustainability and Climate Officer (circulated previously) regarding Funding Proposal for the role of a Climate and Engagement Communications Intern at the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership.

The Lead Member for Climate and Biodiversity, Cllr R Knight introduced the report as follows:

The Climate and Engagement and Communications Intern position was vacated in November 2023. Pressure on resources at Devon County Council mean that the position would not be replaced using the authority's funds. It was unlikely that Communications Officers within the partnership would be able to fulfil this role between them. Coordinating meetings and managing the newsletter and social media platforms took up a lot of time and required specialised attention. While North Devon Council communications Officers were willing to help, they considered a leading communications officer was necessary for the success of such a significant project.

At its meeting in December 2023 the Climate Task Force recommended that resourcing on behaviour change and engagement should be increased and monitoring the implementation of the plans needed a dedicated resource to carry this out effectively.

The Sustainability and Climate Officer advised that all the other Devon Authorities had agreed to contribute towards the post with the exception of South Hams, who were still going through their budget process and Plymouth, who had recently contributed to the partnership by leading on a £3million funding bid.

RESOLVED that, subject to other partners agreeing to contribute, £2,000 be allocated from the Environment Initiatives earmarked reserves for four years to fund a Climate Engagement and Communications Intern position as set out in the report.

**100.           THE DEVON, CORNWALL AND ISLES OF SCILLY ADAPTATION  
STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a report by the Sustainability and Climate Officer (circulated previously) regarding the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy.

The Sustainability and Climate Officer highlighted the following:

- The adopted Carbon reduction plan set out how the Council would cut down on carbon emissions.
- This Adaptation Strategy set out how to adapt to Climate change and the challenges that presented.
- The geographical area covered depicted a regional picture of circumstances which was easier to account for as opposed to pinpointing on a smaller geographical area.
- The proposal was to endorse this Strategy which in no way involved any additional officer hours or funding.

In response to a question in relation to ensuring all Town and Parish Councils were engaged with this Strategy. The Sustainability and Climate Officer advised that she was having a meeting to discuss this very issue and would ensure the information was disseminated.

The Chair added that the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) would be good ambassadors for distribution of the message as they had a considerable of Parish and Town Council members.

RESOLVED that the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Adaptation Strategy be endorsed.

## **101. STREET MARSHAL SCHEME**

The Committee considered a report by the Place Manager (Town Centres), (circulated previously), regarding the Street Marshal Scheme.

The Place Manager (Town Centres) highlighted the following:

- The Council had agreed, at a meeting in September 2023, to earmark reserves to extend the Street Marshal scheme from October 2023 until 31 March 2024.
- The extension was to allow Officers to explore funding opportunities to provide a long-term solution to the provision of street marshals in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.
- The Scheme initially only operated in Barnstaple and the extension was agreed to include Ilfracombe with an evaluation of the benefits of widening the provision to both towns reported to a future meeting.
- During the six month extension period the scheme had operated in Barnstaple five days a week and in Ilfracombe for two days a week.
- The scheme had contributed to a significant reduction in overall crime and incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) reported to the Police.
- No towns in Devon were invited to apply for funding from the Safer Streets round 5.
- A further extension to fund this scheme by the Council was being sought as seen in the report at 2.1 to 2.4.
- The results of a recent survey of businesses and general public in both Barnstaple and Ilfracombe showed that:
  - 92% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in ASB
  - 80% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in violence
  - 79% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in criminal damage

- 93% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in street drinking
- 79% of respondents (352) had seen a reduction in theft
- Businesses felt that the presence of street marshals had a positive impact on the day-to-day running of their business.
- 96% of Businesses felt that the street marshals had a positive impact on the community.

The Place Manager (Town Centres), in response to a question on deploying the marshals to other towns and villages confirmed discussions with other parish and town councils could be held and that there could be flexibility to use marshals in other areas.

In response to a question in relation to money being saved by not funding this resource in light of there being CCTV, Police and security at Green Lanes. The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive responded that external funding to continue this service was currently not forthcoming and that earmarked reserves had been made available to continue the service without interruption while external funding could be looked into further. The visual presence of street marshals in the town centre had shown to be of great benefit for the businesses and shoppers in the town.

In response to a question about whether the requested deadline extension of 30 June 2024 was long enough to secure alternative funding. The Place Manager (Town Centres) advised that the deadline was needed and hoped a solution would be found by then.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) The Contract Procedure Rules be waived and approved that a new contract be entered into, up to 30 June 2024, with the existing provider (subject to agreeing terms), on the basis that they have been delivering the service for the last 15 months and have established trusted, invaluable contacts and relationships with Council staff, Police, businesses, Town Council and wider community;
- (b) Authority be delegated to the Place Manager (town centres) and the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to determine the exact operating hours of the scheme in consultation with key partners such as the Police and Town Councils, based on demand and available budget;
- (c) Authority be delegated to the Place Manager (town centres) and the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to determine whether an external contract is the most effective and efficient operating model to deliver the service in the medium to long term or whether employing staff directly would be better value and provide a better service; and
- (d) The cost of the Street Marshal scheme be funded from the Town Centre Management earmarked reserve and any financial contribution from Town Councils' as set out in section 5 of the report.

**102. REVIEW OF THE NORTH DEVON COUNCIL (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES) ORDER 2024**

The Committee considered a report by the Parking Manager (circulated previously) regarding the Review of the North Devon Council (Off Street parking Places) Order 2024.

The Head of Place, Property and Regeneration highlighted the following:

- The Off Street Parking order had been reviewed and adopted by Strategy and Resources at a meeting earlier this year.
- The report today contained a small number of additional updates required to complete the review.
- The amendments could be seen at section 4.1 to 4.8 of the report.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised the Committee that a full review of the parking strategy was underway and once complete a report would be presented at a future meeting for Members consideration.

Councillor Lane asked for it to be noted that he had received confirmation from the Carpark Manager that there were in fact no car parking spaces in Swimbridge and he asked that Swimbridge be removed from the Order.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) The amendments to the Off Street Parking Order as listed be approved:
  - (i) Barnstaple: Lower Pilton – the addition of D4 (Monday to Saturday (including Bank holidays)).
  - (ii) Braunton: (a) Caen Street Car Park – the removal of D3 (Monday to Saturday inclusive) and (b) Chaloners Road Car Park – the removal of D3 (Monday to Saturday inclusive)
  - (iii) Combe Martin: (a) Kiln Car Park – the addition of P1 (Virtual and paper tickets are only valid for the period of purchase. Paper tickets must be clearly displayed in the vehicle at all times) and (b) The Parade Car Park – the addition of P1 (Virtual and paper tickets are only valid for the period of purchase. Paper tickets must be clearly displayed in the vehicle at all times).
  - (iv) Ilfracombe: (a) Hele – the addition of D4 (Monday to Saturday (including Bank holidays)) and (b) Ropery Road Car park – the addition of H3 (8:00am to 8:00pm from 15 March to 31 October).
  - (v) Instow: (a) Instow Marine Car park – the removal of H2 (8:00am to 6:00pm), (b) Instow Marine Car park – the addition of H22 (8:00am to 10:00pm) and (c) Instow Marine Car park – the increase of permits to £175.00.
  - (vi) Lynton and Lynmouth: (a) Manor Foreshore – the addition of P1 (Virtual and paper tickets are only valid for the period of purchase. Paper tickets must be clearly displayed in the vehicle at all times) and (b) Manor Gardens Roadway – the removal of all codes except H21 (parking prohibited at any time).
  - (vii) South Molton: (a) Sheep Pen Car park – the addition of D4 (Monday to Saturday (including Bank holidays)) and (b) South Molton Central – the addition of D4 (Monday to Saturday (including Bank holidays)).

- (viii) Charges: (a) the removal of C58 in its entirety (£120 per annum for Adelaide Terrace Resident’s Association only) and (b) the addition of C62 (3hrs: £3.90, 4hrs: £5.20, 5hrs: £6.50, 6hrs: £7.80, 7hrs: £9.10 and All Day: £10.00); and

- (b) Delegated power be given to the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration in consultation with the Leader, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to make the Order following the consultation subject to there being no material objections or amendments necessary.

**103. DEVON AND TORBAY DEVOLUTION OFFER**

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the Devon and Torbay Devolution Offer.

The Chief Executive introduced Phil Adams, Service Manager, Economic Inclusion, Skills and Knowledge Economy / Programme Lead, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Devolution at Devon County Council who gave the Committee a presentation on the proposed Devon and Torbay Devolution as follows:

- Devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from central government to local government.
- Decisions can be made closer to the communities and businesses they affect.
- It would mean more effective, better targeted public services, greater growth and stronger partnerships between public, private and community leaders in local areas.
- It is the Government’s ambition for every part of England that wants a devolution deal to have one by 2030.
- Devolution deals agreed or proposed to date cover 60% of England’s population.
- The devolution framework continues to evolve, Combined County Authorities (CCA) were a new model that have been designed for rural areas.
- There were different levels of deal on offer depending on the type of governance model.
- The powers and funding available now ranged from the highest level 4 to the lowest level 1.
- A non-mayoral governance, such as Devon, attracted Level 2 powers, other level 2 proposed deals currently accepted by government were from Cornwall, Lancashire (Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council, and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council) as well as Devon and Torbay.
- A Combined County Authority would give the area a stronger voice in Whitehall.
- The priorities of the Authority would include:
  - Maximising our economic potential – skills and education; and supporting local businesses
  - Addressing our housing pressures
  - Improving local transport
  - Meeting net carbon zero ambitions
  - Delivering investment in Devon and Torbay
  - Creating a strong and sustainable local economy

- Benefits of the deal would help in areas such as Economy and Growth, Skills and adult education, housing, transport and net zero and low carbon.
- The immediate impacts of the devolution offer for 2024-25 would mean local control over the Adult Education Budget, input into the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan, Democratic control of the functions and roles of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Capital funding of £16million for Green Homes investment programme, green business transition, green skills capacity building, transition to low carbon shipping, stronger partnership with Homes England and a platform for further devolution over time.
- The Principles of the CCA would be:
  - Effective Leadership
  - Sensible Geography
  - Flexibility
  - Appropriate accountability
  - Partnership
  - Inclusivity
  - Additionality
  - Subsidiarity
  - Collaboration
- The CCA would consist of Constituent Members – Three members each nominated by Devon County Council and Torbay Council.
- Non-Constituent Members – up to four members, including two representatives of the Devon District Councils.
- Associate Members – two members representing business and skills sectors.
- There would be A CCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an Audit Committee, Advisory Boards and the Team Devon Joint Committee – made up of representatives of the Devon District Councils, National Park Authorities and Devon Association of Local Councils.
- The six constituent members would have full voting rights.
- Non- constituent members will have voting rights on all but a small list of reserved matters. Reserved matters included approval of annual CCA budget, constitution changes, the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer and significant financial decisions.
- The Act did not allow associate members to vote.
- There would be no casting vote for the Chair.
- It was hoped that the intent of the CCA would be to seek consensus on decisions between all members, with that principle to be embedded within the Constitution.
- The Constitution was still being drafted.
- Assurance would be provided in the form of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee.
- The political balance of the CCA would be a reflection of the political balance of the constituent authorities.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would not be a member of the same political party as their Lead Member.
- Both the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committee's would include at least two members of each constituent authority and there would be District Council representatives on both committees.
- The Audit Committee would include an independent member.

- The consultation that was being run to establish the Devon and Torbay CCA was open until 24 March 2024.
- A submission to Government would be made in April with the Secretary of State seeking Parliamentary approval during May.
- A letter from the Secretary of State to the two Councils seeking consent to the Statutory Instrument would be expected in June.
- The Statutory Instrument would be laid in Parliament in July this would take 6-8 weeks.
- If legislative process was approved the regulation order would be signed creating the CCA expected in October.
- More information can be found at [www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk](http://www.devontorbaydeal.org.uk)

The Committee debated the issues and concerns they had with the proposal. The Chief Executive summarised the points that the Committee raised as follows:

- On the whole members agreed in principle with the devolution offer and the idea of more local powers to make decisions.
- There were concerns around the democratic deficit.
- Concerns around the District councils not being involved in heavy decisions – around major investment projects as an example.
- A Member appointed to the Board by Devon County Council should be a representative for the North Devon area.
- Greater clarity around what a reserved decision was for example which decisions District Councils would not be a part of.
- Transport functions it was felt District Councils should be involved in those in some way.
- Major investment decisions it was felt District Councils should be involved in the making of them somehow.
- Delivery of projects at a local level.
- Skills delivery.
- The use of the Devon Housing Task force for the delivery of housing.
- Ensuring the relationship District Council already has with Homes England wasn't damaged by having another layer of Council.
- The Pipeline of projects referred to in paragraph 69; "...combining their skills and capacity to reduce the barriers to affordable housing delivery, regeneration and wider housing growth through the development of a shared development pipeline for the region.", of the document – District Councils should be involved around this pipeline of projects.
- Mention of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Business support being delivered locally.
- A strong accountability process was very important with District members involved in that.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the Council were in principle in agreement with the formation of a CCA. To give the Chief Executive delegated power to formulate the response to be shared with the Leader and the three party leaders.



Chair

The meeting ended at 12.33 pm

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.

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