



## Public Document Pack

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

K. Miles  
Chief Executive.

### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Policy Development Committee will be held in the Canteen - Brynsworthy on **TUESDAY, 2ND JULY, 2024 at 6.30 pm.**

**(NOTE: A location plan for the Brynsworthy Environment Centre is attached to the agenda front pages. For meetings held at Brynsworthy only, you can join the meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams. There are also limited spaces to attend the meeting in person. Please check the Council's website for the latest information regarding the arrangements that are in place and the requirement to book a place 2 working days prior to the meeting. Taking part in meetings (northdevon.gov.uk)**

Members of the Policy Development Councillor L. Spear (Chair) Committee.

Councillors Bishop, Bulled, Bushell, Clayton, Jones, P Leaver, Patrinos, Turton, Wilson, Worden and Williams.

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies.
2. To approve as correct records the minutes of the meetings held on 16th May 2024 (attached) and 23rd May 2024 (attached). (Pages 5 - 28).
3. Items brought forward which in the opinion of the Chair should be considered by the meeting as a matter of urgency.
4. 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).

5. To agree the agenda between Part 'A' and Part 'B' (Confidential Restricted Information).

## **PART 'A'**

### **INTERNAL ITEMS**

6. **Actions and outcomes from the special meeting of the Committee held on 23rd May 2024 regarding agriculture within the North Devon area.** (Pages 29 - 32).

To consider the summary of action points, as detailed in the email circulated by the Vice Chair on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (attached).

7. **Performance and Financial Management Q4 2023-24** (Pages 33 - 94)  
Report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to Strategy and Resources on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (attached).

(a) Minute Extract of Strategy and Resources on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (to follow).

8. **Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24** (Pages 95 - 106)  
Report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive to Strategy and Resources on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (attached).

(a) Minute Extract of Strategy and Resources on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 (to follow).

9. **Work programme 2024/25** (Pages 107 - 110)  
To consider the work programme for 2024/25 (attached).

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

24.06.24



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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.

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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).

North Devon Council offices at Brynsworthy, the full address is:  
Brynsworthy Environment Centre (BEC), Roundswell,  
Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 3NP.

Sat Nav postcode is EX31 3NS.

At the Roundswell roundabout take the exit onto the B3232, after about ½ mile take the first right, BEC is about ½ a mile on the right.

Drive into the site, visitors parking is in front of the main building on the left hand side.

On arrival at the main entrance, please dial 8253 for Corporate and Community Services.

All public meetings held at Brynsworthy Environment Centre are held on the ground floor and are accessible through the main entrance to the building or via a ramp located adjacent to the main entrance



**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Policy Development Committee held at Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Thursday, 16th May, 2024 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor L. Spear (Chair)

Councillors Bishop, Bulled, Bushell, Clayton, Jones, P Leaver, Patrinos, Wilson and Williams.

Officers:

Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Environmental Enhancement, Head of Place, Property and Regeneration, Service Manager (Waste and Recycling), Service Manager (Planning) and Senior Planning Policy Officer.

Also Present in person:

Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW).

**7. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Worden.

**8. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH APRIL 2024 (ATTACHED).**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record subject to the following:

- (a) That a follow up letter be sent to the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding additional funding for Street Marshalls as the Committee's original letter, which was sent in March 2023 was not replied to.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised that there was government funding available to Councils for Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) hotspots and that the Council had been awarded funding for Barnstaple under tier two for an amount of £25,000, which would contribute towards the funding of additional street marshalls for the first nine months of the financial year.

## **9. ORDER OF AGENDA**

The Chair requested that item seven on the agenda be considered prior to item six on the agenda owing to personal reasons for of one of the attendees.

RESOLVED, that item seven on the agenda be considered prior to item six on the agenda.

## **10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest announced.

## **11. PLANNING APPLICATIONS: CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH STAKEHOLDERS FROM WATER COMPANIES.**

At its meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the Committee were discussing the work programme for 2024/25 and its ongoing work in relation to water quality and resolved to invite the Service Manager to the next meeting of the Committee on 11th April 2024 to discuss the consultation process with stakeholders from water companies in regards to planning applications particularly around developments and the capacity of existing infrastructure for sewage and waste water.

Following the meeting, the Clerk approached the Service Manager who suggested that it would be beneficial to also have a representative in attendance from South West Water (SWW) and so it was agreed that they would attend this meeting together to answer questions from the Committee.

The Chair welcomed officers from the Council together with the Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW) to the Committee.

She invited the Service Manager to address the Committee and explain the consultation process that the planning officers undertook with water companies in relation to proposed developments and the capacity of existing infrastructure for sewage and waste water.

The Service Manager advised that every planning application submitted for new build to the Council had SWW listed as statutory consultee whether that be for one or one hundred dwellings.

Since the end of 2023, the planning team had held regular meetings with SWW to discuss the sewage capacity of the existing infrastructure when an application had been proposed.

She explained that previously responses from SWW were listed on planning application documents as “no objections”. However, she acknowledged that there needed to be further information together with an explanation to show that they had looked at the capacity of the existing infrastructure and explain how they had reached their conclusion.

The Chair invited the Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW) to address the Committee.

The Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW) highlighted the following:

- To put the situation into context, SWW assessed 30,000 planning applications per year, which ranged from small to large scale schemes.
- They used a tool called “Supply and demand” where they entered the details of the planning application and the system then flags up any issues as a result of the proposed application.
- They also used flow monitors to assess the characteristics of rainfall.
- SWW had already held two workshops with North Devon Council and there was a third workshop planned for July 2024.
- There was greater definition and detail contained within the consultation responses for larger applications.

In response to a question regarding how surface water runoff and flood risks were managed and addressed as part of the Local Plan and whether it might be beneficial to undertake a water cycle study to identify specific areas where sewage and waste water infrastructure was under pressure, the Senior Planning Policy Officer advised that the officers were in the early stages of preparing a new Local Plan.

She took the Committee through the process with regards to the preparation of the new joint North Devon and Torridge Local Plan:

- One of the first stages was the preparation of the Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) panel which assessed the suitability of potential sites for housing and economic uses.
- Officers were currently assessing the sites and then sending the information out to the statutory consultees including Devon County Council and SWW.
- The identified sites would then be considered by the recently established HELAA panel, to which all statutory consultees would be invited to attend, and where the proposed sites and any additional information provided by the consultees would be taken into account. The final assessment used a RAG methodology (Red, Amber and Green) depending on any issues which had been identified.
- Following on from the HELAA, a sustainability appraisal would then be prepared as part of the Local Plan evidence base, which would explore the different site alternatives together with the best options for the proposed sites. Based on this and other information including local community preferences, the Council would then decide which sites would be allocated within the Local Plan.
- The draft Local Plan would then be prepared and circulated to the statutory consultees and the wider community for consultation.

She added that the water study was an interesting point, which could potentially be explored as part of the local plan evidence base.

She explained that the Local Plan looked 20+ years ahead and advised that as part of preparing a new local plan, the Joint Planning Policy Committee had established thematic working groups for councillors to explore particular areas such as climate change etc.

In response to a number of questions, the Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW), the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration and Senior Planning Policy Officer advised the following:

- Regarding at what point SWW would change or improve its infrastructure to allow for any proposals as part of the Local Plan, the company now had far more information regarding areas and their existing capacity to enable them to determine any upgrades that would need to be put into place to facilitate identified sites within the Local Plan. This process would involve a timeframe of about 18 months to allow SWW to build any upgrades into their work programme to enable improvements to be made. There was further information available on the SWW web site together with a presentation, which contained additional links that he was happy to share with the Committee following the meeting.
- As a company SWW had an obligation to build in growth for development within its network and the company acknowledged that growth was required.
- With regards to overflow spills into water courses and the potential utilisation of alternative methods such as reed beds or willow plantations, SWW faced big challenges re. discharge and had recently sent their business plan to Ofwat. The government had set a target of 2050 for a reduction of overflow spills and the target set for that by SWW was 2040 as a priority with the current focus being bathing water.
- SWW acknowledged that climate change had a huge impact upon water levels, which had increased significantly following a winter of heavy rainfall, which was preceded by two very dry summers. Investment infrastructure was a key element to address capacity and supply issues.
- With regards to the consultation process in relation to discussions around sewage capacity, there were further high level consultee responses when potential sites had been selected and more detailed conversations were held to ensure that the Council could demonstrate that the proposed sites could be delivered.
- As part of the consultation process the Council had to be dynamic and forward thinking and both North Devon and Torridge District Councils were involved in a recently launched a pilot project, which was being funded by DEFRA called the Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP), which was looking at flooding issues across Devon. The North Devon and Torridge pilot project was to look at preparing polices in relation to Fluvial Change Risk Management Areas, which would look at how activities up stream could be contributing to flooding issues elsewhere and how the local plan could influence those issues and what policies the Council could put in place to address these matters.
- The DRIP project work would be considered through the thematic working group.



- Sites in the new local plan would only be brought forward if they were deemed to be deliverable during the plan period, and any consultation with SWW should be testing that.
- With regards to action that was taken to mitigate issues with a lack of capacity via an alternative means for proposed larger sites, the preparation of the new local plan would include establishing if the existing infrastructure could cope with the growth that was being proposed and if additional infrastructure was required the Council would need to understand how that impacted the viability and delivery of the proposed site and if the infrastructure required was too costly then the site would not be able to be brought forward or be deliverable.
- SWW utilised tankers to remove sludge from sewage treatment works, which was a bi-product of the sewage treatment process. There were occasions where the system or sewage network couldn't cope and there was a potential overflow situation. However, there was capacity within the sewage plants and they were monitored to reduce the risk of an overflow situation.
- As a statutory undertaker SWW's role was to facilitate and understand growth needs of an area and to accommodate those growth needs accordingly.
- As an organisation SWW did not have the power to decline planning applications and always worked closely with developers to address any issues that had been identified as part of the planning application process.

In response to a question regarding the consultation process leading up to the adoption of the future Local Plan and the differences to what has happened in the future compared to what was predicted in the past. The Lead Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Planning advised the adoption of the new local plan was following a completely different process and that Members should seize the opportunity to be involved in the process through the thematic working groups, which were being established to focus on specific areas of the Local Plan.

He added that as the Chair of the HELAA panel, the next stage was to identify and assess potential new sites to ensure that the Council could secure their five year land supply to avoid the risk of challenge if not delivered. The Local Plan process allowed for local communities to be involved in the site selection process.

The proposed new sites to be included in the local plan would be shared with the communities affected and Members would be encouraged to provide their input into the process.

In response to a question regarding flow information and how it was obtained, the Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW) advised that if SWW did not have the relevant flow information they would install a temporary flow monitor at the site or obtain the required information through connectivity surveys.

In response to a further question regarding that the Council ensured that it kept its five year land supply and what could be done to secure it, the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration advised that this would be addressed as part of the Local Plan review process.

The Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW) welcomed engagement regarding proposed or allocated areas together with the importance of working together to make a difference.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive advised that the process had been changed with the introduction of thematic groups to focus on each part of the Local Plan and ensure that all options were considered.

He added that the special meeting held at Petroc was a really good example of the willingness of all partners to work together and that it was important to get the message out around collaboration.

In response to a question regarding the difference between the SHLAA and HELAA processes, the Senior Planning Policy Officer advised that the SHLAA preceded the HELAA as a piece of evidence that fed into the site allocation process.

The Local Plan was not purely for building houses and that the HELAA process also involved the allocation of employment land for consideration as part of the new Local Plan (and the SHLAA did not). The HELAA would be published later in the year.

In response to a question regarding water capture and its utilisation for the supply chain, the Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW) advised that there were two new water resources in Cornwall and that SWW were always looking at additional water resources.

He explained that there was now a greater demand on supply that as a company they wanted to help customers to manage their water usage more efficiently together with also providing additional water supplies. There were currently no plans to increase water supply in the North Devon area as there was no issues with supply at the present time and the problem at Roadford reservoir had been addressed.

He added that if such a situation occurred within the North Devon area then it would be addressed.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer advised that water efficiency matters could be addressed via a policy within the new Local Plan and the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration confirmed that this would be considered as part of the Local Plan review through the thematic groups.

The Service Manager thanked the Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW) for his attendance at the meeting and the strong working relationship that the Council had developed with SWW over the previous 12 months.

The Chair thanked the Service Manager and the Head of Developer Services and Technical Performance, South West Water (SWW) for their attendance at the meeting.

The Committee agreed the following:

- That the positive working relationship between the Council's planning department and SWW with regards to consultation on planning applications be promoted by the Service Manager via the Council's Communications team; and
- That the Service Manager provides feedback to the Planning Committee following her meetings with SWW for any applications which were due to be considered by the Committee.

## **12. MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY IMPROVEMENT WORKS.**

At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the Committee resolved to invite the Head of Service for Environmental Enhancement to attend a future meeting of the Policy Development Committee to answer questions in relation to the Waste and Recycling Service.

The Chair welcomed the Head of Environmental Enhancement and the Service Manager (Refuse and Recycling) to the meeting.

The Head of Environmental Enhancement explained that the report which presented the Capital Scheme was considered by Full Council on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and had generated a really good discussion amongst the members.

He introduced the Service Manager (Refuse and Recycling) to the Committee and explained that he was there to provide an update to the members in relation to the latest position regarding the Brynsworthy Recycling Works project.

The Service Manager (Refuse and Recycling) highlighted the following points to the Committee:

- The two main parts of the project, which were:
  - Part 1 – Capital Building Works.
  - Part 2 – New Baler and Associated Conveyors.
  - Dormouse habitat survey had been undertaken on the site and new dormouse boxes would be placed around the site to replace what was being removed.
- Part 1 – Building Works.

The building works consisted of the following:

- Upgrade of the drainage system (Environment Agency EA requirement).
- A building to cover the glass bay (EA requirement).
- Fire Suppression System in the process hall.
- Bunding around the process hall to retain fire water.
- New modular building for office staff.
- New weighbridge located by the side road.

- Part 2 – New Baler and Associated Conveyors.

This part of the works consisted of the following:

- A New 12 tonne per hour baler.
- Sunken conveyors to reduce manual intervention.
- Advanced optical sorting equipment to separate materials.
- Ability to separate plastic into valuable streams.
  
- Plans of new building works – Modular Building, which detailed the layout of the new office accommodation for Waste and Recycling office based employees.
- The operations plan, which detailed the new layout of the processing hall.
- Detailed plans for the new baler together with cross section illustrations.

He outlined the challenges that could potentially arise during the building phase of the project, which were as follows:

- Insufficient parking on site at Brynsworthy for office based employees whilst the builders utilised the rear car park.
- Temporary movement of office staff upstairs when the porta cabin was demolished.
- Continued operations with minimal effect on customers.
- Continued operations on site to process material and maintain income generation.

The Chair thanked the Service Manager (Refuse and Recycling) for his presentation.

The Head of Environmental Enhancement advised the following:

- The importance of the installation of the Fire Suppression System in the process hall, which in the event of a fire would prevent water runoff from the site and ensure that the Council did not lose its permit to process recyclable materials.
- The new baler would ensure that the process would be undertaken quickly and efficiently.
- The Council was as well positioned as it could be in terms of the government's policy on simpler recycling.
- The government were also launching a new policy that Councils with refuse collection responsibilities must ensure that they operated a two weekly black bin collection.
- The Council was not in the top quartile for recycling figures but it was still in a good position for a small district Council.
- The deposit return scheme for plastic bottles would be introduced in 2025, which was a concern for the Council as plastic bottles were one of their most valuable income streams and there could potentially be a decline in income for that funding stream. The Council was exploring ways around that with regards to potential contracts that it could apply for to empty the machines.

- With regards to Members being given permission to access the collection database to log missed collections on behalf of their constituents, he confirmed that it would not be possible to give Members access to the system.
- The vehicles now had new Bartec units together with handheld devices and the service had made a few small tweaks to the rounds, as new housing developments are built.
- The website also provided alerts to residents if there were issues within their and updates were provided to keep residents informed.
- Members were reminded to report any missed collections through the Customer Contact Centre.
- Any type of plastic bag could now be utilised within the food caddies and the team would work with the Communications team to promote this to the wider public.
- The Committee members were welcome to visit the newly improved recycling facility once it was up and running.

The Service Manager (Waste and Recycling) advised the following:

- The builders were due to submit plans to the Council within the next few weeks.
- National Grid advised the Council in November 2023 that it did not require any additional works to the processing hall to improve the power supply. However, in March 2024 they advised the Council that it would require a larger substation to facilitate the works. Over the course of several meetings they eventually concluded that the larger sub-station was not in fact required.
- Additional storage would be utilised on site within the food storage shed and the builders had been advised that the processing hall must be kept clear to enable normal operations to continue throughout the build.
- There were currently no plans to increase the types of plastic that could be recycled and at the current time the Council did not collect film, tetra packs or black plastic. That said, the machines that were being installed within the processing hall would be able to be adapted with additional kit should the Council bring on board any additional plastic recycling options in the future as a result of a change to government policy.
- There was currently no space to process food waste at Brynsworthy and the Council were under contract to DCC to process this element of the recycling process.

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

- The new baler would operate at six times the speed of the current baler and produce 12 tonnes of recycling per hour in comparison to the current output of two tonnes per hour.
- The versatility and efficiency of the new baler could enable potential additional income streams in the future.
- The income that the Council received from the sale of recyclable materials was a very volatile market but currently stood at around £600k per year.

- The Council was part of a shared savings scheme through Devon County Council, which returned around £340,000 per year and in addition currently received Recycling credits of £550,000. In total, from all of these income sources, the Council received around £1.5million of income per year.

These income figures could potentially increase in the future through generating an increased volume of material being processed within the service.

RESOLVED:

- a) That monthly updates to be provided to the Committee regarding the number of complaints that were coming in related to missed collections etc;
- b) That the Waste and Recycling team work with the Communications team to promote further communications to advise the wider public that any type of plastic bag could now be utilised within the food caddies; and
- c) That the Committee members be invited to visit the newly improved recycling facility once it was up and running.

The Chair thanked the Head of Environmental Enhancement and the Service Manager (Waste and Recycling) for their attendance at the meeting.

**13. WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25.**

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

The Committee discussed the proposal to potentially change the dates of the scheduled meetings for 2024/25 (circulated previously) following a request from Councillor Jones owing to a clash with his Parish Council meetings.

The Vice Chair advised that he did not have an issue with the proposed changes and felt that it was reasonable to accommodate Councillor Jones's request.

Councillor Jones thanked the Clerk for her work in putting the proposed date changes together.

The Committee discussed the actions and outcomes from the special meeting in relation to water quality in February 2024.

Councillor Jones advised that other Councils had a separate working group purely focussed on improving water quality and suggested that the Committee appoint a Sub-Committee to undertake the external elements of work separately from the work of the main committee.

The Vice Chair advised that the Committee needed to consider the impact upon the officer resources to support a separate sub-committee and that the Committee should instead focus on working more closely with Torridge District Council in a joint capacity.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive also advised that the thematic groups which had been established as part of the revision of the Local Plan would cover a lot of the work that the Committee were looking at.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the proposed date changes for 2024/25 be agreed;
- b) That the work programme be noted; and
- c) That clarity in relation to the structure of the thematic groups be provided to the Committee.

Councillor Jones thanked the Committee members for their agreement and support with regards to his request to amend the Committee dates.

Chair

The meeting ended at 8.42 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 special meeting of Policy Development Committee held at G107, 1st Floor, South West Institute Development Building, Petroc, Barnstaple - Petroc College on Thursday, 23rd May 2024 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor L. Spear (Chair).

Councillors Bishop, Bulled, Bushell, Jones, P Leaver, Patrinos and Williams.

Officers:

Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and Place Manager, Economic Development and Regeneration.

Also Present in person:

Invited Members from Torridge District Council.

**14. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clayton, Wilson and Worden.

**15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest announced.

**16. 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.

**17. AGRICULTURE. TO CONSIDER AGRICULTURE 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.

The Chair introduced Councillor Bulled to the special meeting and invited her to address the Committee.

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

She outlined the following key points to the special meeting:

- Farming was going through probably the biggest transition in financial backing since the Second World War.
- Important to raise awareness to the Council and the general public the important role farming plays in the North Devon economy as a whole together with the challenges facing it.
- The payment of subsidies to farmers had moved from the previous payments to offset the desire for cheaper food to compensate farmers for “income forgone” to now financial payments to farmers on the basis of “public money for public good”.
- The new Sustainable Farming Initiative (SFI) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme payments had taken some time to develop but were basically to improve and protect the environment, support food production and improve productivity for the benefit of all.
- The prime purpose of farming remained to be the production of food.
- Farmers were currently only 55% self-sufficient.
- Without the support of farmers, a lot of potential greening and environmental issues could not be achieved within the North Devon area.
- Referred the Committee to appendices A-G of the agenda papers.
- Following the announcement on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 of a General Election, which would be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024, the members were advised to refrain from making a political statements with the aim of the special meeting being that of a cross party discussion.

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 agriculture.

Councillor Bulled then invited each of the officers present to introduce themselves to the panellists, the Members and the invited public.

The Vice Chair addressed the members and explained that the point of the meeting was to find out what the locals councils could do to help support the agricultural sector.

He added that financially the Council had reopened a second tranche for the Rural Business grant scheme, which was funded through the Rural England Prosperity Fund and invited the Place Manager, Economic Development and Regeneration, North Devon Council to address the special meeting.

The Place Manager, Economic Development and Regeneration, North Devon Council advised that the North Devon Council had re-opened the second tranche of funding for the Rural Business Grant scheme, which was administered by North

Devon + with the aim of increasing prosperity and opening up new innovations with the aim of the agricultural and rural communities at large.

She explained that grants were available from £2,500 up to £35,000 and that the Council had the lowered match funding to 10-20% for the applicants contribution to match the grant they would receive.

Details were available on the North Devon + website and the application form was live as of the date of the meeting. Leaflets were available at the meeting, which contained website details, email address and the contact telephone number for anyone who wished to discuss further.

She added that the only caveat to eligibility for the grant related to certain grants or funding that applicants might already be in receipt of from DEFRA and requested that potential applicants check their eligibility prior to beginning the application process.

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

1. **Please can the panellists elaborate on the multiplier given from subsidies to farmers, which would benefit the local economy and comment on statements that we were hearing from farmers that “Grants were all well and good but without thought out farmer’s subsidies the cash flow didn’t exist to benefit from them?”**
  - **North Devon +:** Farmers decided what was best for them, there was a stigma and fear factor amongst farmers with regards to the Farmers Ministry. More flexibility and countryside stewardship required together with a top up from FSI. Role was to look at each case on an individual basis and not to dictate to the farmer as it was ultimately their decision.
  - **Bloomfield Landsense:** Some higher claims with planting a field and then not harvesting it. There were options available but a top up of funding to higher levels. Might have to utilise agricultural land to achieve this.
  - **Director, Mole Valley Farmers:** The sea change between the ministry and DEFRA was quite significant. DEFRA existed to assist farmers to deliver inputs. However, there had been a reduction in in employment within the ancillary industry.
  - **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer’ Union (NFU):** Herbal lays didn’t require much fertiliser and if it wasn’t for grants and stewardship green fields would not be so common. There were grants available to dairy farmers to subsidise their income. Sometimes the planning system was too slow.

➤ **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:**

- The multiplier effect was quoted at different levels and the industry had to be careful that changes didn't get lost within the economy.
- There was an income of 70% from agricultural businesses such as Mole Valley Farmers and there was a requirement to ensure that the balance between food production and environmental delivery that was sustainable.
- DEFRA figures for grazing livestock showed a 5% increase on return.
- Income for lowland farmers was well below the minimum wage.

**1(a) Follow up question: Banks were not favourable to borrowing or granting loans. Were banks offering less loans so that subsidies were not guaranteed?**

- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** There was a different situation regarding bank loans in that they were no longer calculated up to asset base but instead through serviceability.
- **Bloomfield Landsense:** Grants were available over £50,000. However, £50,000 didn't go very far and had to be signed off by an accountant.
- **Local Farmer and Chair of Exmoor Hill Farming Network:** Funding often came in arrears.

**2. There were lots of suggestions as to the different uses or functions of land i.e. water catchment/renewable energy. North Devon Council were currently reviewing the local plan. Could a piece of land within the plan be identified as providing several different functions?**

- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** Multi use land recognised all of those elements and farmers should be financially rewarded to reflect this. There should be an increase in subsidies for those who operated using good practice and services. With multiple land use farmers would still get a good return for all uses of land.
- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** Multi-functional land use for both upland and lowland farmers was great but not every farmer could diversify their land for that purpose and it would very much depend on the type of renewable energy together with grid capacity as North Devon was full and solar energy was not possible.
- **Local Farmer and Chair of Exmoor Hill Farming Network:** Offsetting companies were only interested in the bigger areas.

**3. With regards to the changes that were taking place right now, were North Devon going to be better off or worse off? Especially the changes in the rural economy and the impact on those actually involved in farming and should we be concerned?**

- **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** Huge opportunity with a lot of policies released within the previous week, there was an opportunity for a land use strategy. With private finance there was a whole new challenge with regards to a landscape recovery approach, which could be in the form of a collaborative approach. With the right advice and opportunities there was a requirement to capitalise on the benefits of biodiversity net gains.
- **North Devon +:** There were always winners and losers with grant schemes and it was dependent on the individual farmers. Not everyone adapted well to change and if there was a requirement to revise a business model it might not be well received by everyone.
- **Director, Mole Valley Farmers:** Over the next eighteen months to two years we might be in a better position to answer these questions.
- **Bloomfield Landsense:** Most of the farmers that our business works with want to earn their money as farmers. How do you qualify what is better and it was sometimes a case of pride verses the financial benefits.
- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** There was not a one size fits all approach and you had to bear in mind the current climate conditions where there had been 6-7 months of intense rainfall and a sheep farmer could be worse off financially in the current than the previous year due to lamb losses.

#### 4. If there was one thing that North Devon Council could do to help, what would it be?

- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** Improvements to the grants and planning application system/process, often planning applications would stall and farmers worked on tight timelines, which could put them at risk of losing their livelihoods as the planning process was too slow. The Council should promote buying local/British as much as possible.
- **Bloomfield Landsense:** Commended NDC and TDC for the document that they published in January 2024 that recognised the difficulties that farmers were currently facing with Section 106 ties to land and not being able to claim VAT, which added an additional 20% to financial burden. Public livestock worrying was a big issue for farmers as most members of the public had no idea of the impact that their presence had on the animals.
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** The process was often much more straight forward with a more consistent approach to the planning process with issues such as pond siting etc. Had to look at better ways of making and selling produce locally.
- **Director, Mole Valley Farmers:** The impact of council tax on young people when they were trying find a rural property. Could the Council look

into charging in different ways such as a council tax charge on a six monthly basis between July and December?

- **Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, North Devon Council:** Advised that Council Tax was an annual charge set out over a certain amount of months but that he was happy to explore options with regards to alternative payment plans.
- **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** When funding became available, its availability should be well publicised by the Council to ensure that the funding makes its way into the rural economy. Biodiversity net gain should also be utilised to recirculate funds around the local economy.

**5. Community Tax reference – Government Land Tax was distinctly different from Council Tax. Would this adversely affect farmers in terms of the value of their assets?**

- **Local Farmer and Chair of Exmoor Hill Farming Network:** Was aware of the existence of land tax and would hope that agricultural land would be at the lowest end of the tax band.
- **Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, North Devon Council:** No comment to make at this stage as the Council had not received any further information regarding community tax.

RESOLVED, that Standing Orders be SUSPENDED to allow questions from members of Torridge District Council and the invited public present.

The Chair invited the members of Torridge District Council present at the special meeting to ask questions of the panellists and received the following responses:

**1. Councillor Harding, Torridge District Council:**

**Owner of one of the largest farms in the country, received letters from various transport companies that regularly visit the farm to advise that they won't be collecting the milk owing to the condition of the road network. Will there be any future in farming for young people?**

- **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** Back in 1978 if you looked at the percentage of return for capital investment on farming you would always sell up and invest the money elsewhere. However, if you had done that at the value you would have sold at that time you would be looking and thinking that you should have kept the value of your money within the land.
- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** Would like to think that there was a future in farming. However, you sometimes see young people raised within farming families who witness how hard their parents work and they see other opportunities other than farming to make an income for themselves. Solely dependent going forward on the support that British farmers receive

from the public and that was recognised by the NFU. However, for that support, we need to be price makers not price takers. Not in the farmer's interest to ruin the countryside, they were proud and resilient people but they had to make money.

## 2. Councillor Pennington, Torridge District Council:

**Why do we go on about farmers subsidies? Always been a cheap food policy in this country and has been provided for far too long. Not celebrating farming enough, do you worry about the mental health of farmers?**

- **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** Wholeheartedly agree with you that food had never been any cheaper than it was currently but it was also of the finest quality as well. Subsidies to farming disappeared around the beginning of SPS. No subsidies for food production for 25 years and a real problem that the perception of supported food production had been perpetuated continually. In reality what farmers had done was take some money that arrived through the European system at the time for land management and adherence to quality and levels of control and they actually subsidised producing cheap food for the population with it. Farming has not been subsidised rather farmers had subsidised food production. The country had reached an era where it was important to provide environmental management. So, it was not a subsidy but a management payment.
- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** Would agree with Councillor Robin Milton and if you were to ask farmers if they would prefer to have the support payment or to receive a fairer price for their food we know what the answer would be.
- **Director, Mole Valley Farmers:** After the war the average household income spent 40% on food and now it was down to about 7%. Global warming would have an effect on other parts of the world and water would one day be more precious than oil.
- **Local Farmer and Chair of Exmoor Hill Farming Network:** Mental health was a big issue and there were many contributing factors such as financial issues/pressures, stock value and adverse weather conditions i.e. rainfall. Many farmers were quite self-contained and not able to communicate their concerns easily. There were many support networks available to them. However, farmers were not always aware of the resources available to support them.

## 3. Councillor Newton, Torridge District Council:

**There were occurrences of pollution and sewage discharge together with the release of nitrates from farming upstream, which were the by-products from farming. How do we get the agricultural sector to respect our watercourses?**

- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** By separating clean water from dirty water through clear advice, support and good

husbandry. There was an opportunity to review how the agricultural sector managed nutrients. Many farmers bought their ammonium nitrates from countries such as Russia and South Africa and we should be working with landowners to look at nutrient training.

- **Bloomfield Landsense:** Many farmers did respect water but it came down to time pressures and financial achievability together with the impact of the planning process.
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** The Biosphere Partnership did a calculation and it would cost £90m to improve the rivers and waterways and make them clean.
- **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** A lot of the issue was based around monitoring in that you couldn't solve a problem until you admitted it. The intensification of agriculture was based on cheap food and there were varying systems in place to monitoring the quality of the waterways. There were capital grants and infrastructure tax relief for the purchase of farm vehicles such as a new tractor. However, the same benefits were not readily available to farmers for the infrastructure to reduce the impact of farming on the environment.

#### 4. Councillor Tinsley, Torridge District Council:

- **Difficult to ascertain a way forward with the issues raised when we don't know what the government's plans will be following the General Election on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024. Do you communicate with the various parties?**
- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** Spoke with the president of the NFU Tom Bradshaw recently and the organisation was in regular contact with the government and various other political parties.

The Chief Executive, North Devon Council reminded Members that they should be mindful of the heightened sensitivities surrounding the upcoming general election. However, he acknowledged that there was also an opportunity to establish some bullet points after the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 to lobby whichever government was in place.

#### 5. Councillor A. Brenton, Torridge District Council:

**Agree that subsidies should be referred to as support. European Union subsidies were supporting farmers. However, there was a bigger issue in the UK regarding the accessibility of cheap food and consideration should be given to families who were on lower incomes and already utilising local food banks to feed their families.**

**If food prices were to increase dramatically, these families would struggle even more and how would this be addressed?**



- **Director, Mole Valley Farmers:** Listening to BBC Sounds recently and the comments made by farmers from Lisbon and Spain were the same as the comments that you hear from UK farmers. The supermarkets played a key role in driving down the costs of food production and this evident within their profit figures.

## 6. Councillor Cottle-Hunkin, Torridge District Council:

### What would you like to see from the next government to support farmers and the rural economy?

- **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** To listen and understand the issues and acknowledge that it was not a single issue approach. Any government in power had to address the issue of poverty separately. There was also a requirement to understand the value of food production together with the value of the environment in that there had to be an element of income to ensure a balanced viable business.
- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** The NFU had its own manifesto and would urge the government to listen to what they were saying, as they represented a large number of farmers and all political parties should listen to their views.
- **North Devon +:** That there should be a greater focus on animal welfare and unfair contributions.
- **Bloomfield Landsense:** British farming was gold plated and the UK should value British farming.
- **Local Farmer and Chair of Exmoor Hill Farming Network:** The Defra scheme should be managed in a co-defined and positive way and they should continue to listen to farmers.
- **North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:** The introduction of a 25 year environment plan together with the revival of trade agreements to ensure that we were not exporting problems out of the country.
- **Director, Mole Valley Farmers:** That the next government think beyond the next political cycle.

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

### 1. Disappointed that there was no representation on the panel with regards to horticulture. Why are you not considering horticulture as part of the discussions?

- **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** Horticulture had suffered in the same way as agriculture with imports from abroad and orchards scrubbed out in many areas. The cheaper supply chains had also contributed as well as supermarkets selling produce at reduced costs.

## 2. Where would you want to be in terms of agriculture in 20 years' time and how do we get there?

- **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** Farming sustainably and providing great British food for the great British public.
- **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** From a farming family of eight generations in an area of countryside that thousands of people wanted to visit. Exmoor ponies and red deer were of no financial value to farmers but they were kept on the land for all to enjoy and to maintain a sustainable business.
- **Director, Mole Valley Farmers:** By having a sustainable food provision together with a sustainable landscape.

## 3. Thanked North Devon Council for arranging the special meeting and for listening to the views of the public.

The planning system could be more streamlined and the process by which farmed goods travelled to reach the retailer had very little value. Supermarkets were taking the value out of the towns.

- **Can we increase taxation for supermarkets to help farmers sell their produce locally?**
  - **The Chief Executive, North Devon Council:** Advised that taxation was a national system on which the Council had very little impact. Important to encourage people to our high street and to publicise the future high streets fund together with the pannier market. Utilising social media to encourage people to buy local. He acknowledged that the Council could do more to promote local produce.
- **What can we do to encourage young people into farming?**
  - **Local Farmer and Deputy Chair of the National Farmer' Union (NFU):** The biggest hurdle for young people wishing to pursue a career in farming was obtaining suitable housing. Affordable housing for young people was vital to the agricultural industry. Frustrating when applications made by developers for housing developments, which were supposed to deliver affordable homes were often deemed not viable following viability assessments.
  - **Councillor Robin Milton, Local farmer:** NDC by default were in the process of reviewing their Local Plan. So, suggest that everyone in the room makes a representation to the consultation to make the Councillors listen.

#### 4. How practical would it be to buy local?

- **The Chief Executive, North Devon Council:** Members from NDC would be reviewing the procurement strategy with the emphasis to buy local. The Council always tried where possible to use local contractors and to buy local.

RESOLVED, that Standing Orders be REINSTATED to enable the remaining business to be transacted.

#### 18. ACTIONS/NEXT STEPS

The Vice Chair advised that he had made a summary of the key points from the discussions held and the Committee would consider these alongside the formal minutes at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chair stated that it had been a brilliant evening and thanked the members of the public, the Councillors and the panellists for their expert contributions.

Councillor Bulled reiterated the Chair's comments.

Chair

The meeting ended at 8.39 pm

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

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## Email from Vice Chair to the Policy Development Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**NOTE: The email detailed the actions suggested during the special meeting of the Committee held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 regarding agriculture and should be considered in addition to the minutes of the special meeting**

### By North Devon Council (NDC):

- Promote use of Rural England Prosperity Fund grants (see northdevonplus.co.uk). Grants of £2.5k to £35k available requiring 10-20% match funding.

### By the National Farmers union (NFU):

- Speed up the planning process as delayed permissions can endanger businesses.
- Promote buying local produce, or buying British.
- Look at the key asks in here NFU manifesto.
- Affordable rural housing for young people to help keep them in the sector.

### By Landsense:

- Overcome the problem of s106 agreements not allowing businesses to reclaim 20% VAT.
- Increase public awareness of livestock worrying, including the need for the public to occasionally accept reduced access.

### By ND+:

- Ease the thresholds at which planning permission is required for some works e.g. ponds.
- Source public procurements locally.
- Address animal diseases, animal health and welfare.

### By Mole Valley Farmers:

- Decrease Council Tax on young farmers.
- Listen to Farming Today on Radio 4 at 5:45 each morning to better understand agriculture.
- Collect Council Tax six monthly to match the timing of agricultural income.
- Think beyond one electoral cycle.

### By Councillor Robin Milton:

- Ensure any source of external funding is fully taken up and spent locally.
- Locally recirculate income from offsetting required for biodiversity net gain.

# Agenda Item 6

## By North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Partnership:

- Stop exporting our problems through flawed trade deals that allow the import of poor quality food to undercut UK agriculture.

## By Exmoor Hill Farm Network:

- Co-design.

## By members of the public:

- Tax supermarkets and use the income to support local producers.
- Encourage local shopping.
- Help keep young people in agriculture.
- Speed up the land use planning process.

## By just about everyone:

- Listen to the agricultural sector to better understand their challenges and respond appropriately.

## **Actions suggested in written submissions to the committee.**

### NFU:

- Promote the Back British Farming message - In an increasingly volatile world, food production is vital to our country's health, wellbeing, and security
- Promote the farming sector
- Procure local produce (promoting and driving local, seasonal, and fresh food purchasing, by serving more local food in our hospitals and our schools)
- Importantly, recognise that to stay competitive the industry must continue to adapt and invest.
- Through the wider planning regime support good applications that deliver jobs and growth to the economy (either direct agriculture or diversified businesses)
- Continue to push for better broadband provision in rural areas
- Help to educate our young people about food production and taking care of the countryside
- Support a growing agricultural contribution to renewable energy.

### ND+:

- Government legislation on slurry is also seeing a lot of farms leaving the Dairy sector. Some discussions I have had seem to say that planning for bigger lagoons will not be passed – something that the councils should look into if they wish to keep milk being produced in our area.
- Get a better understanding of agriculture as its changing and being told to change by central government. New animal health and welfare guidance is making some of the more older buildings redundant and new sheds will need to be built to accommodate guidance from the vet. The councils should not be

# Agenda Item 6

looking at the old buildings first for class R or Q but the need of the business if it is to stay farming. In the majority of cases most farmers wouldn't want to convert those buildings as they are too close to their farmhouse and wouldn't want long term tenants or tourists in and out all day.

- Family businesses that split need some support. Businesses can't be left until the last minute to inheritance issues so if we want vibrant businesses they need to be supported at an early stage – so if a farmhouse needs to be built after a partnership split – what does the farmer need to do to show that this is needed for the farm to succeed?
- Look to support and promote initiatives for people and businesses to buy local produce and support wherever possible local supply chains to ensure food security.

## Landsense:

- As a Rural Chartered Surveyor, common issues affecting my client base where I think NDC could offer further support would be a better understanding of agricultural needs and regulations in particular around planning, s106 agreements and their implications on taxation, infrastructure requirements, and an increase in public awareness of agricultural sensitivity such as livestock worrying, farm thefts, trespass etc.
- Working with the farming community and understanding roles and needs is fundamental

## Exmoor Hill Farming Network:

- Signposting, convening and facilitating opportunities for business development and collaboration.
- Efficient and understanding planning processes.
- Enabling improved understanding between the farming and non-farming communities.

## Mole Valley Farmers:

- As all politicians barely think beyond their electoral cycle, it would be great if the council really put in some thinking of what is required for the next 10 or twenty years.
- Since grassland [and permanent grass in particular] is a good carbon sink, it would be good if the council realised the rearing of livestock in North Devon is very sustainable and resisted the temptation to jump on the vegan/ vegetarian band wagon

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## North Devon Council

Report Date: Strategy and Resources Committee: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024

### Topic: Performance and Financial Management Quarter 4 of 2023/24

Report by: Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This is one of the series of regular quarterly reports on the council's overall operational and financial performance. The report covers financial as well as operational performance. It mainly covers the quarter from January to March 2024, but also looks at the whole year.

1.2. Section 4 deals with headline financial performance. More detailed performance information is available in Appendix F, which sets out our five programmes and the projects sitting underneath, with updates on progress to date and those new and historic key results and reportable key performance information. For 2023/24 we incorporated updates on the five programmes and supporting measures within the body of this report. Moving forwards the content of Appendix F will be provided as a separate report from the Programme Management Office to enable members to separate the finances from the deliverables and encourage greater challenge and debate around the delivery of your Corporate Plan and those programmes to support delivery of your vision.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the actions being taken to ensure that performance is at the desired level be noted.
- 2.2. That the contributions to/from earmarked reserves be approved (section 4.2)
- 2.3. That the movement on the Strategic Contingency Reserve (section 4.3) be noted.
- 2.4. The Council approve the variations to the Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27 (sections 4.4.8)
- 2.5. That funds are released for the capital schemes listed in section 4.4.13
- 2.6. That the sections dealing with Treasury Management, Debt Management and General Debtors (sections 4.5 to 4.7) be noted.

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To ensure that appropriate action is taken to allow the council to meet its objectives.
- 3.2. To inform Members of actual results compared to approved Corporate Plan, as well as progress in delivering services within the revenue budget and Capital Programme.



## 4. Financial Performance

### 4.1. Revenue

- 4.1.1. The revenue budget for 2023/24 was approved at Council on 22nd February 2023 at £14,766,450.
- 4.1.2. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, it is pleasing to report that the final out turn position is a budget surplus of £630,000, which is an overall movement of £557,000 from the last forecast at quarter 3. The breakdown showing these movements are shown in "Appendix A – Variations in the Revenue Budget".
- 4.1.3. The last quarter of the financial year has seen a number of variances since the last reported position; most notably, reduction in both Planning fee income, Parking Charge Notice income and additional electricity costs throughout our assets; these have been offset by additional income, interest receivable, less interest payable on borrowing and additional Business Rates income.
- 4.1.4. The net movement from quarter 3 of £557,000 can be mainly attributed to:

#### Adverse variances:

- £89,000 Reduction in Parking Charge Notice income
- £191,000 Premises Electricity
- £132,000 Planning fee income
- £81,000 External Audit fee
- £70,000 Insurance premiums
- £75,000 Transfer of Public Conveniences

#### Favourable variances:

- £66,000 Work and Recycling Transport
- £54,000 Temporary Accommodation costs
- £46,000 Building Control Partnership
- £41,000 Crematorium income
- £57,000 Additional Grant income
- £91,000 Interest receivable and payable
- £760,000 Business Rates income
- £52,000 Contribution from Community Housing reserve

- 4.1.5. The original budget for 2023/24 includes a forecast to achieve £250,000 worth of salary vacancy savings. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 we actually achieved £332,000.
- 4.1.6. The National pay award negotiations for 2023/24 have been settled and was paid to staff in November's salary, backdated to 1 April 2023. The pay award worked out to be an average of 6.7%, the original budget



included 4%, and the additional costs of £436,000 have been funded from the Budget Management reserve.

- 4.1.7. Members approved in June 2021 to proceed with the acquisition of Green Lanes Shopping Centre; which the Council completed the purchase in November 2021. The purchase of Green Lanes Shopping Centre was a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire this strategic asset and complement other significant regeneration improvements being delivered within the Barnstaple town centre through the Future High Streets project. The financial modelling demonstrated that revenue income generated from the centre would cover both the repayment of the loan and asset management costs and would return a contribution to the Council which could be used towards mitigating future risks on income volatility, investment back into the centre and the overarching council budget.

The financial outturn for the Centre produced a net return (income less costs) for:

- 2021/22 year of (£243,600) due to minimal borrowing costs as these commenced in 2022/23.
- 2022/23 trading position produced a net return of (£291,000), including borrowing costs.
- 2023/24 trading position produced a net return of (£237,000), this includes £150,000 from the income volatility reserve due to the financial impact of losing Wilko in August 2023. This reserve having been created in 2021/22 for this purpose to protect the council in the event of a tenant loss and smooth the budgetary impact.

- 4.1.8. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 the Collection Fund reserve balance held is £1,790,180. This earmarked reserve was created to deal with the timing impacts of the Collection Fund (Business Rates), which ensures the revenue budget is not unduly affected in the year the taxes are collected. Collection Fund deficits/surpluses are reversed out to bring the revenue account back to the budgeted figure for the year; the deficits/surpluses are recovered/distributed in the following financial years. This reserve includes an £1,246,078 balance that will be utilised in 2024/25 and 2025/26 to mitigate timing differences of business rate reliefs awarded in 2023/24 that from an accounting perspective impact over the next two financial years; thus leaving the fund reserve with a residue balance of £544,102 protection against future volatility.

- 4.1.9. From the revenue budget surplus of £630,000, it was proposed to set aside the amount into the following earmarked reserves:-



- Corporate Property income volatility reserve - £150,000
- Insurance Reserve - £280,000 – mitigate 2024/25 higher insurance costs
- Digital Transformation Financial system reserve - £200,000

4.1.10. As at the 31st March 2024 total external borrowing was £3,000,000. The timing of any future borrowing is dependent on how the authority manages its treasury activity.

4.1.11.

4.1.12. Due to project spend slippages in the Capital programme and using the cash flow balances for internal borrowing, this has reduced borrowing costs and has resulted in a £304,000 underspend on the borrowing costs and has resulted in a £304,000 underspend on the interest payable revenue budget and in addition an increase in interest receivable of £441,000 over and above the budgeted amount in 2023/24. There was no requirement to use the Treasury Management reserve during 2023/24 and so the full reserve balance of £275,000 and the proposed additional in-year contribution of £150,000 can be carried forwards into 2024/25 to help protect and mitigate against higher borrowing costs in the future financial years.

4.1.13. The recommended level of general fund balance is 5%-10% of the Council's net revenue budget £738,326 to £1,476,645. The forecast general fund reserve at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 is £1,238,000; which is a level of 8.4%.

## **4.2. Earmarked Reserves 2023/24**

4.2.1. "Appendix B – Movement in reserves and Balances" details the movements to and from earmarked reserves in 2023/24

## **4.3. Strategic Contingency Reserve**

4.3.1. Full details of the Strategic Contingency Reserve movements and commitments are attached as "Appendix C – Strategic Contingency Reserve"

## **4.4. Capital**

4.4.1. The 2023/24 Capital Programme is attached as "Appendix D – Capital Programme 2023/24"

4.4.2. The Budget and Financial Framework report to Full Council 22nd Feb 2023 outlined the Capital Programme for the 2023/24 financial year of £21,247,098. Project underspend and further variations of (£8,535,958) were approved as part of the performance and financial management



report to Strategy and Resources Committee, to produce a revised 2023/24 Capital Programme of £12,711,140.

4.4.3. Actual spend on the Capital Programme for 2023/24 financial year was £10,146,403. The variance against budget of £12,711,140 is (£2,564,737); the carry forward to 2024/25 is £2,528,087 (the difference being £36,650, relating to):

- (£94) Greensweep / Bartec migration, small overspend – Project finished
- £3,158 Landmark Theatre, Fire alarm, project complete, remaining budget not required
- £33,311 Ilfracombe Watersports centre – Project complete, carry forwards £22,734 as contingency and return remaining £33,311
- £257 Queen Ann’s building, flat roof replacement, small underspend, project complete
- £18 Queens theatre replacement flat roof and redecoration, small underspend, project complete

4.4.4. In order to pay for the £10,146,403 capital investment the Council funded this from £7,400,238 received from external sources in the form of grants and other assistance, £1,025,988 of earmarked reserves held specifically for capital projects, £277,322 from the Capital receipts reserve and £1,442,855 through internally borrowing.

4.4.5. The 2024/25 to 2026/27 Capital Programme is attached as “Appendix E – Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27”.

4.4.6. The Budget and Financial Framework report to Strategy and Resources 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024, outlined the Capital Programme for the 2023/24 financial year of £12,711,140, 2024/25 financial year of £20,258,368, 2025/26 financial year of £3,856,140.

4.4.7. Project under spends of £2,528,087 from 2023/24 year are brought forward to produce a revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 year of £22,786,455

4.4.8. Further variations of £1,828,292 are proposed to the 2024/25, £1,211,965 to the 2025/26 and £1,211,965 to the 2026/27 Capital programme as follows:



<b>Schemes</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Removal of Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2	(552,000)	Approved by Strategy and Resources 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
Various S106 schemes	358,020	Approved by Full Council 21st February 2024
Hub fit out in Green lanes	220,000	Approved by Strategy and Resources 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024
Material Recovery Facility	350,060	Variation to existing budget, Approved by Full Council 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Office Technology – end User assets	(100)	Virement to Green sweep software (spend was in 2023-24)
Ifracombe Pool Photovoltaic LED Lighting	88,347	New external grant from Sport England
Disabled Facility Grants	1,363,965	Better Care Fund grant allocation for 2024-25
<b>2025/26</b>		
Disabled Facility Grants	1,211,965	Better Care fund allocation (base amount)
<b>2026/27</b>		
Disabled Facility Grants	1,211,965	Better Care fund allocation (base amount)



4.4.9. The overall revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 taking into account the budget variations above is £30,894,817 and is broken down as follows:

- 2024/25 £24,614,747
- 2025/26 £5,068,105
- 2026/27 £1,211,965

4.4.10. The Programme of £30,894,817 is funded by Capital Receipts / Borrowing (£13,411,234), External Grants and Contributions (£15,406,798) and Reserves (£2,076,785).

4.4.11. The timing and realisation of capital receipts can be impacted by events beyond the control of the Council and we have been able to manage cash flows for projects through internal borrowing.

4.4.12. We also have authority to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) as outlined in the Treasury Management Annual Investment Strategy and the Council currently has external borrowing of £3,000,000.

#### **4.4.13. Release of Funds – Capital Programme**

4.4.13.1. Ilfracombe Pool Photovoltaic LED Lighting £88,347

4.4.13.2. Disabled Facility Grants £1,363,965

#### **4.5. Treasury Management**

4.5.1. Bank Rate remained at 5.25% for the quarter.

4.5.2. The Council's benchmark rate 7 day SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Average) at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, was 4.96%

4.5.1. The return earned on the Council's investments was 4.45% (previous year 1.5%).

4.5.2. £561,000 investment interest was earned during the three quarter period. (2023/24 interest receivable budget was £120,000)

4.5.3. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the Council had total external borrowing of £3m.

4.5.4. £60,350 interest was paid at an average rate of 2.01% on the PWLB loans during the half year period. (2023/24 interest payable budget was £364,000).



## 4.6. Debt Management

- 4.6.1. The major areas of credit income are Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit overpayment Recoveries and General Debtors.
- 4.6.2. As billing authority, the Council annually raises the bills for Council Tax (£80,000,000) and Business Rates (£30,000,000).
- 4.6.3. Collection rates are controlled through monitoring:
- 4.6.3.1. The level of write offs
  - 4.6.3.2. Levels of previous years' outstanding debt
  - 4.6.3.3. The level of income collection in the year against the annual sums due to be collected.
- 4.6.4. The council's budget is based on the assumptions that eventually 97.5% of sums due will be collected. To ensure this level is achieved, year on year levels of write offs approved are controlled against a ceiling of 2.5% of annual debt.
- 4.6.5. The outstanding amounts at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 are as set out below:

Age in Years	Council Tax		Business Rates	
	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
1 – 2	1,302	<b>1,311</b>	223	<b>410</b>
2 – 3	849	<b>943</b>	99	<b>154</b>
3 – 4	657	<b>646</b>	169	<b>63</b>
4 – 5	420	<b>502</b>	31	<b>124</b>
5 – 6	277	<b>321</b>	25	<b>32</b>
Over 6	225	<b>289</b>	36	<b>41</b>
Total	3,730	<b>4,012</b>	583	<b>824</b>

- 4.6.6. The levels of collections at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 are:

	Achieved 2022/23	Achieved 2023/24
<b>Council tax</b>	97.23%	<b>96.97%</b>
<b>Business rates</b>	97.05%	<b>97.48%</b>





## 4.7. General Debtors

4.7.1. The level of general invoices raised was £9,200,000 at 31st March 2024 (previous year £9,600,000)

4.7.2. A summary of the outstanding debt, by age, is set out below with comparison to the previous year.

Age of debt	31 March 2023	31 March 2024
	£'000	£'000
3 weeks to 6 months	265	1,122
6 months to 1 year	125	136
1 to 2 years	255	204
2 to 6 years	413	493
Over 6 years	70	73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>2,028</b>

4.7.3 Of the debt aged 3 weeks to 6 months above, £628k related to Planning Section 106 invoices that we were still in the process of recovering.

## 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. All revenue and Capital impacts have been discussed and highlighted in section 4.

## 6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. These will have been completed prior to this report as part of the individual project processes.

## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1 There are not any environmental implications anticipated as a result of this report, as the purpose of this report is to monitor in year performance and financial monitoring. Projects within the Capital Programme will have highlighted any specific environmental impacts associated with those individual schemes when they came forwards for initial funding. The budget papers do contain an earmarked reserve for Environmental Initiatives which has a positive impact and has a year-end 2023-24 balance of £24,285. The Capital Programme includes an approved £17,863 project for changing existing lighting for low energy lamps and fittings within NDC occupied buildings. There is also a £71,272 budget spread across 2 financial years for funding towards LED lighting on car parks and



other Council assets. An Environment Assessment will have been submitted separately for these schemes.

## **8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

8.1 The Revenue budget supports the wider delivery plan of the Council in achieving the corporate priorities.

8.2 Individual schemes within the Capital Programme support the corporate priorities of improving customer focus, regeneration and commercialisation agenda and the environment.

8.3 The acquisition of Green Lanes Shopping Centre and the Future High Street Fund capital projects have a positive impact on both the regeneration priority and also the commercialisation agenda.

## **9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

9.1. Part 3, Annex 1 1 (e) - Delegated.

9.2. Article 4.4 - Referred

## **10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1. None

## **12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE**

12.1. The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Author Tony Rumble, Finance Manager; Date 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Appendix C – Strategic Contingency Reserve

<b>Strategic Contingency Reserve 2023-24 - Original (9980) (8245)</b>	
<b>Resources Available</b>	<b>£</b>
Balance brought forward 1st April 2023	(£132,102)
	<b>(£132,102)</b>
Community Lottery Scheme	£5,597
<b>Balance Remaining 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>(£126,505)</b>

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## Appendix D – Capital Programme 2023/24

Project	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Actuals 2023/24 £	Variance +ve = Underspend £	Carry Forwards / (spend from 2024-25)	Complete (C) / Carry forwards (CF)
<b>Customer Focus</b>					
Disaster Recovery and Backup testing	93,102	94,302	-1,200	-1,200	CF
Office Technology Fund - End User Assets and IT Assets in Data Centre	133,973	113,616	20,357	20,357	CF
	<b>227,075</b>	<b>207,918</b>	<b>19,157</b>	<b>19,157</b>	
<b>Environmental Enhancements</b>					
Greensweep / Bartec migration and automation	34,303	34,397	-94	0	CF
Leisure Provision at Seven Brethren	156,138	-95,715	251,853	251,853	CF
Material Recovery Facility - Infrastructure	112,115	100,065	12,050	12,050	CF
S106 Contributions - Various projects	590,437	363,823	226,614	226,614	CF
S106 Crematorium Works and creation of memorial garden	39,704	0	39,704	39,704	CF
S106 Public Realm improvements at Library Square, Barnstaple	33,295	27,014	6,281	6,281	CF
	<b>965,992</b>	<b>429,584</b>	<b>536,408</b>	<b>536,502</b>	

Project	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Actuals 2023/24 £	Variance +ve = Underspend £	Carry Forwards / (spend from 2024-25)	Complete (C) / Carry forwards (CF)
<b>Place and Regeneration</b>					
Acquisition of Land off Frankmarsh, Barnstaple	42,626	52,222	-9,596	-9,596	CF
Barnstaple Bus Station re-furbishment	46,394	0	46,394	46,394	CF
Digital Transformation Asset and Financial Management System	40,000	40,000	0	0	C
Future High Street Fund	2,450,123	2,190,312	259,811	259,811	CF
Land Release Fund - Seven Brethren	868,755	1,046,027	-177,272	-177,272	CF
Planned Maintenance Seven Brethren	57,209	10,930	46,279	46,279	CF
Green Lanes	615,927	345,692	270,235	270,235	CF
Barnstaple Town Centre Hub	0	7,000	-7,000	-7,000	CF
Self-build Housing projects	3,496	10,050	-6,554	-6,554	CF
Harbour Infrastructure	282,095	318,539	-36,444	-36,444	CF
Watersports Commercial Complex	177,328	157,662	19,666	19,666	CF
Landmark Theatre, Fire alarm	50,000	46,842	3,158	0	C
Fremington Quay River Wall	120,000	50,791	69,209	69,209	CF
Queen Ann's building, flat roof replacement	35,000	34,743	257	0	C
Queens theatre, replacement of Flat roof and redecoration of SE and NE elevations	313,650	313,632	18	0	C

Project	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Actuals 2023/24 £	Variance +ve = Underspend £	Carry Forwards / (spend from 2024-25)	Complete (C) / Carry forwards (CF)
NDC occupied office buildings, change existing lighting for low energy lamps/fittings	79,879	62,016	17,863	17,863	CF
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	87,429	27,562	59,867	59,867	CF
LED lighting	25,000	3,728	21,272	21,272	CF
Lime Kiln, Larkstone Cove Regeneration	111,325	42,934	68,391	68,391	CF
Victoria Pleasure Grounds, new Public Conv. and new shelter	50,000	7,216	42,784	42,784	CF
Fairview and Brookdale Carparks	0	2,250	-2,250	-2,250	CF
Cultural Development Fund	20,000	1,020	18,980	18,980	CF
Lynmouth Coastal Study	20,000	53	19,947	19,947	CF
Rural England Prosperity fund	100,000	54,223	45,777	45,777	CF
Stone bench landing Ilfracombe harbour masonry repair	45,336	0	45,336	45,336	CF
South Quay Ilfracombe	223,000	21,877	201,123	201,123	CF
Replacement street cleaning vehicle - Lynton Agency	20,000	20,000	0	0	C
Harbour Commercial boat operator kiosk	23,496	23,496	0	0	C
Water Sports Centre Ilfracombe	465,589	409,544	56,045	22,734	CF
	<b>6,373,657</b>	<b>5,300,361</b>	<b>1,073,296</b>	<b>1,036,552</b>	

Project	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Actuals 2023/24 £	Variance +ve = Underspend £	Carry Forwards / (spend from 2024-25)	Complete (C) / Carry forwards (CF)
<b>Planning, Housing and Health</b>					
Licensing Software	40,000	40,000	0	0	C
Affordable Homes Beechfield Road, Fremington	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	CF
Disabled Facilities Grant Programme	1,477,752	1,686,455	-208,703	-208,703	CF
ECO Warm up Grants	2,000	1,189	811	811	CF
Provision of temporary accommodation	3,604,664	2,480,896	1,123,768	1,123,768	CF
	<b>5,144,416</b>	<b>4,208,540</b>	<b>935,876</b>	<b>935,876</b>	
	<b>12,711,140</b>	<b>10,146,403</b>	<b>2,564,737</b>	<b>2,528,087</b>	





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## Appendix E – Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27

Project	Original Budget 2024/25 £	Original Budget 2025/26 £	Original Budget 2026/27 £	Total Capital Programme £
<b>Customer Focus</b>				
Disaster Recovery and Backup testing	5,698	0	0	5,698
Office Technology Fund - End User Assets and IT Assets in Data Centre	220,624	70,000	0	290,624
	<b>226,322</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>296,322</b>

<b>Environmental Enhancements</b>				
Leisure Provision at Seven Brethren	251,854	0	0	251,854
Material Recovery Facility - Infrastructure	3,650,605	0	0	3,650,605
S106 Contributions - Various projects	584,633	0	0	584,633
S106 Crematorium Works and creation of memorial garden	39,704	0	0	39,704
S106 Public Realm improvements at Library Square, Barnstaple	6,281	0	0	6,281
	<b>4,533,077</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,533,077</b>

Project	Original Budget 2024/25 £	Original Budget 2025/26 £	Original Budget 2026/27 £	Total Capital Programme £
<b>Place and Regeneration</b>				
Acquisition of Land off Frankmarsh, Barnstaple	7,939	0	0	7,939
Barnstaple Bus Station re-furbishment	46,394	0	0	46,394
Future High Street Fund	6,276,494	2,300,000	0	8,576,494
Future High Street Fund - Temp accommodation rear 36 Boutport street	632,000	0	0	632,000
Future High Street Fund - Public Realm works	0	500,000	0	500,000
Ilfracombe Harbour - Kiosks	5,955	0	0	5,955
Land Release Fund - Seven Brethren	962,443	0	0	962,443
Planned Maintenance Seven Brethren	46,279	0	0	46,279
Public Maintenance - Public House corner of Castle Street and 16 Castle Street	90,000	0	0	90,000
Green Lanes	1,664,544	0	0	1,664,544
Hub fit out in Green Lanes	213,000	0	0	213,000
Retaining Wall - Cross Street Car Park Lynton	9,500	0	0	9,500
Self-build Housing projects	486,950	0	0	486,950
South Quay, Ilfracombe	201,123	0	0	201,123
Harbour Infrastructure	45,204	0	0	45,204
Watersports Commercial Complex	19,666	0	0	19,666

Project	Original Budget 2024/25 £	Original Budget 2025/26 £	Original Budget 2026/27 £	Total Capital Programme £
Seven Brethren Flood defence	1,150,000	0	0	1,150,000
Fremington Quay River Wall	69,209	0	0	69,209
Ilfacombe Museum Car park retaining wall repairs	222,947	0	0	222,947
NDC occupied office buildings, change existing lighting for low energy lamps/fittings	17,863	0	0	17,863
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	227,837	0	0	227,837
LED lighting	46,272	25,000	0	71,272
Ilfacombe Pool Photovoltaic LED Lighting	88,347	0	0	88,347
Lime Kiln, Larkstone Cove Regeneration	68,391	0	0	68,391
Victoria Pleasure Grounds, new Public Conv. and new shelter	172,784	0	0	172,784
Fairview and Brookdale Carparks	392,750	0	0	392,750
Cultural Development Fund	1,578,825	870,155	0	2,448,980
Lynmouth Coastal Study	79,947	0	0	79,947
Rural England Prosperity fund	745,711	0	0	745,711
Stone bench landing Ilfracombe harbour masonry repair	45,336	0	0	45,336
Adelaide Terrace Retaining Wall	561,500	0	0	561,500
Water Sports Centre Ilfracombe	22,734	0	0	22,734
	<b>16,197,944</b>	<b>3,695,155</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19,893,099</b>

<b>Project</b>	<b>Original Budget 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Original Budget 2025/26 £</b>	<b>Original Budget 2026/27 £</b>	<b>Total Capital Programme £</b>
<b>Planning, Housing and Health</b>				
Licensing Software	30,000	0	0	30,000
21 Social Rents at Woolacombe	630,000	0	0	630,000
Affordable Homes Beechfield Road, Fremington	20,000	0	0	20,000
Disabled Facilities Grant Programme	1,655,262	1,211,965	1,211,965	4,079,192
ECO Warm up Grants	524,374	0	0	524,374
Provision of temporary accommodation	571,768	0	0	571,768
Community Led Housing models	226,000	90,985	0	316,985
S106 Affordable Housing - Higher Westaway, Newton Tracey	0	0	0	0
	<b>3,657,404</b>	<b>1,302,950</b>	<b>1,211,965</b>	<b>6,172,319</b>
	<b>24,614,747</b>	<b>5,068,105</b>	<b>1,211,965</b>	<b>30,894,817</b>

## Appendix B – Movement in Reserves and Balances

Earmarked Reserves	Closing Balance 31st March 2023	Transfer to Reserves	Transfer from Reserves (to Capital)	Transfer from Reserves (to Revenue)	Transfers	Closing Balance 31st March 2024
Collection Fund Reserve	1,340,177	450,000				1,790,177
Repairs Fund	1,953,268	314,110	-718,124	-405,806		1,143,447
Budget Management Reserve	814,627	150,000		-436,000		528,627
H4UK	527,815	278,816		-286,750		519,880
Crem Equipment Replacement Reserve	417,288	101,539				518,827
Treasury Management Reserve	275,000	150,000				425,000
Capital Funding Reserve	382,914		-1,284			381,630
Insurance Reserve	80,000	280,000		-12,500		347,500
Office Technology Reserve	441,345	115,000	-212,318	-51,367		292,661
Digital Transformation Financial Systems	202,039	210,190	-36,721	-99,708		275,800
Transformation Reserve	315,212		-36,997	-11,100		267,115
Local Plans Fund	255,850			-21,510		234,340
SFS Vehicle Tender Reserve	208,152					208,152
Town Centre Management Reserve	49,332	200,000		-46,000		203,332
Rough Sleeper Initiative - DCLG grant	195,470			-4,699		190,771
Community Housing Fund-Hsg Enabling	209,826	62,161		-87,557		184,430
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	201,798			-40,200		161,598
Economic Development Reserve	149,091	18,090		-15,071		152,110
Corporate Property Income Volatility	150,000	150,000		-150,000		150,000
Regeneration Projects	200,000	228,000		-295,204		132,796
Planning Health and Housing Employees	120,395	120,000		-108,500		131,895
Strategic Contingency Reserve	132,102			-5,597		126,505
Temporary Accommodation	0	123,666				123,666
Go North Devon	0	123,376				123,376
Tarka Tennis Surface replacement	109,873	13,000				122,873
Council Tax Support Scheme Reserve	148,973			-27,420		121,553
Corporate Property Management Initiative	168,600			-68,961		99,639
BNG Innovation Fund Reserve	0	66,807		-13,360	36,854	90,301

<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>Closing Balance 31st March 2023</b>	<b>Transfer to Reserves</b>	<b>Transfer from Reserves (to Capital)</b>	<b>Transfer from Reserves (to Revenue)</b>	<b>Transfers</b>	<b>Closing Balance 31st March 2024</b>
Vehicle Renewals Fund	83,720					83,720
UK Shared Prosperity Fund Reserve	62,500	81,226		-62,500		81,226
Leisure Centre Reserve	80,820					80,820
Project Man Performance (Levelling Up)	105,454			-25,183		80,271
Planning Skills Delivery Fund	0	75,000				75,000
New Homes Bonus Reserve	65,064					65,064
Crem Budget Management Reserve	25,477	36,000				61,477
Arab Scheme	0	58,053				58,053
Elections New Burdens Reserve	22,032				35,565	57,597
HR Payroll	16,013	39,674				55,687
Programme Delivery Reserve	116,200			-66,200		50,000
ICT Cyber Treatment	115,100			-67,793		47,307
Members Technology Reserve	33,583	12,470				46,053
Prevention CLG Grant Reserve	45,317					45,317
Next Step Accom Programme	43,451					43,451
P C Planned Maintenance Fund	40,156					40,156
Climate & Environmental Grants	40,000					40,000
Community Consultation	36,279					36,279
External Audit	35,238					35,238
External Legal Services Reserve	20,875	34,393		-20,875		34,393
Specialist Domestic Abuse Reserve	34,020					34,020
Rough Sleeper Pods	0	32,700				32,700
CCTV Reserve	27,540					27,540
Brownfield Land Registers & Permission	26,263					26,263
Ilfracombe Watersports Centre Reserve	66,456		-17,266	-23,440		25,750
Ilfracombe Harbour Repairs	24,520					24,520
Environmental Initiatives	82,814			-21,675	-36,854	24,285
Material Recovery Facility Reserve	26,145	24,000		-26,145		24,000
RS Rapid Rehoming Pathway	23,956					23,956
W&R Covid Toilet Cleaning	71,961			-51,671		20,290
Neighbourhood Planning	34,517			-16,050		18,467



Earmarked Reserves	Closing Balance 31st March 2023	Transfer to Reserves	Transfer from Reserves (to Capital)	Transfer from Reserves (to Revenue)	Transfers	Closing Balance 31st March 2024
Internal Audit Plan	14,927					14,927
Self Build & Custom Housebuild	11,492					11,492
Museum development fund	11,240					11,240
Planning External Professional Services	0	11,134				11,134
Waste Shared Savings Reserve	42,000			-31,300		10,700
Parks Reserve	6,321	2,100				8,421
Economic Financial Hardship	48,047			-41,530		6,517
Cold Weather Prov fdr Rough Sleepers	0	6,000				6,000
Town & Parish Fund	5,159					5,159
ICT Microsoft Licence Reserve	0	4,520				4,520
Crem Earmarked Reserve	290,096			-285,649		4,447
Future High Street Fund FHSF	4,221					4,221
Health and Safety Reserve	3,714					3,714
Car Parking Reserve	7,909			-5,000		2,909
Noise Equipment reserve	6,129	2,000		-5,652		2,477
Pannier Market	1,872					1,872
Habitat Directive Reserve	945					945
Development Control Fund	760					760
Greensweep Replacement Fund	708					708
Planning Enquiries Fund	6,723	40,000		-46,300		423
Litter Bin Strategy	10,000			-9,780		220
Office Accommodation Reserve	41					41
Licensing Reserve	3,279		-3,279			0
Lynton Agency Reserve	8,772			-8,772		0
Rechargeable Works Reserve	36,734			-36,734		0
Food Safety	25,281			-25,281		0
Brexit Exports EH	25,000			-25,000		0
District Council Election	107,698	116,261		-188,394	-35,565	0
	<b>11,133,683</b>	<b>3,730,285</b>	<b>-1,025,988</b>	<b>-3,278,233</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,559,746</b>

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### Appendix A – Variations in the Revenue Budget

*Key: A figure in brackets is a positive impact on the Council's budget*

Service and Cost Area	Qtr 3 variance to budget £	Outturn variance to budget £	Outturn movement from Q3 £
Leisure Contract Management Fee	(30,000)	(30,000)	0
Works & Recycling Employees	1,000	0	(1,000)
Works & Recycling Transport	51,000	(15,000)	(66,000)
Works & Recycling Tipping Charges	(67,000)	(77,000)	(10,000)
Works & Recycling Supplies & Services	44,000	15,000	(29,000)
Works & Recycling Trade Waste income	78,000	107,000	29,000
Works & Recycling Recycling Credits	34,000	69,000	35,000
Works & Recycling Recycling Sales	119,000	162,000	43,000
Works & Recycling Shared Savings Scheme	(56,000)	(83,000)	(27,000)
Works & Recycling Bulky Household income	1,000	0	(1,000)
Works & Recycling Vehicle Sales	0	(35,000)	(35,000)
Other	(4,000)	(4,000)	0
<b>Environmental Enhancement</b>	<b>171,000</b>	<b>109,000</b>	<b>(62,000)</b>
Museum Rates Refund	(396,000)	(396,000)	0
Museum External Professional services	14,000	14,000	0
Business Rates Retention (Museum)	154,000	154,000	0
Cont to Regeneration reserve (Museum rates)	228,000	228,000	0
Car Parks (Ringo)	20,000	20,000	0
Reduction in Parking Charge Notice income	98,000	187,000	89,000
Lynton Agency	25,000	25,000	0
Premises Electricity	36,000	227,000	191,000
Garage Rents	9,000	13,000	4,000
Car Parks pay & display income	78,000	99,000	21,000
Corporate Properties rent income	22,000	61,000	39,000
Other	3,000	0	(3,000)
<b>Place, Property &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>291,000</b>	<b>632,000</b>	<b>341,000</b>
Eco Flex Declaration income	(9,000)	(7,000)	2,000
Old scheme Deposits	10,000	10,000	0
Temporary Accommodation Costs	239,000	185,000	(54,000)
Temporary Accommodation Additional Grant	(194,000)	(194,000)	0
Refugee Grant	(45,000)	(45,000)	0
Planning fee income	0	132,000	132,000
Building Control partnership	88,000	42,000	(46,000)
Crematorium income	0	(41,000)	(41,000)
Other	10,000	(19,000)	(29,000)
<b>Planning, Housing &amp; Health</b>	<b>99,000</b>	<b>63,000</b>	<b>(36,000)</b>
Legal Client income	(15,000)	5,000	20,000
Land Charges income	25,000	45,000	20,000
Other	0	(2,000)	(2,000)
<b>Governance</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>48,000</b>	<b>38,000</b>
Further Education	0	2,000	2,000
<b>Organisational Development</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>
Additional Grant income	0	(57,000)	(57,000)
<b>Customer Focus</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(57,000)</b>	<b>(57,000)</b>
Bank Charges	10,000	(4,000)	(14,000)

# Agenda Item 7

## Appendix e

Service and Cost Area	Qtr 3 variance to budget £	Outturn variance to budget £	Outturn movement from Q3 £
External Audit Fees	0	81,000	81,000
Other	8,000	(24,000)	(32,000)
<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>53,000</b>	<b>35,000</b>
Interest Receivable	(380,000)	(441,000)	(61,000)
Interest Payable	(274,000)	(304,000)	(30,000)
Additional pay award, average 6.7% (4% in original budget)	436,000	436,000	0
Additional pay award funded from Budget Management Reserve	(436,000)	(436,000)	0
Minimum Revenue Provision	14,000	14,000	0
Additional Vacancy Savings	(46,000)	(82,000)	(36,000)
Business Rate additional income	(950,000)	(1,710,000)	(760,000)
Contribution from Community Housing Reserve	0	(52,000)	(52,000)
Contribution to Collection Fund Reserve (Business Rates)	450,000	450,000	0
Contribution to Budget Management Reserve	150,000	150,000	0
Contribution to Town Centre Management Reserve	200,000	200,000	0
Contribution to Treasury Management Reserve	150,000	150,000	0
Contribution to Economic Development Reserve	0	18,000	18,000
Contribution to Material Recovery Reserve	24,000	24,000	0
Insurance Premiums increases	0	70,000	70,000
Transfer of Public Conveniences	0	75,000	75,000
Government Grants	0	(30,000)	(30,000)
Other	0	(12,000)	(12,000)
<b>Corporate</b>	<b>(662,000)</b>	<b>(1,480,000)</b>	<b>(818,000)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(73,000)</b>	<b>(630,000)</b>	<b>(557,000)</b>

## Appendix F

Corporate Plan Delivery Highlight Report with Key Results & Performance Indicators

This Appendix provides a high-level update in relation to your programmes delivering your current Corporate Plan priorities and your new performance measures for Q1-4 2023/24, with some historic information where available and year-end figures.

### Corporate Plan Priority: We Achieve Financial Security

**Objective:** We will remove the reliance on government grant & make the council financially self-sufficient.

Jon Triggs & Adam Tape

#### Key Results

1a: Gross income mainly out of our control.

Budget: 2023/24 = £23,758,390 as % of overall budget (Excluding Benefit Subsidy £30,005,500) = 79.18%

Budget: 2024/25 = £25,509,930 as % of overall budget (Excluding Benefit Subsidy £32,092,190) = 79.49%

1b: Gross income mainly within our control from fees and charges generated from our assets.

2023/24 Annual Estimate = £7,409,000 vs Outturn = £6,857,671

2024/25 Annual Estimate = £7,346,260

#### Reportable Key Performance Indicators

BV9: Percentage of Council Tax Collected [Quarterly figures show a cumulative %]

2022/23 = 97.24%

2023/24 Q1 = 28.44% | Q2 = 55.26% | Q3 = 81.60% | Q4 = 96.98% (This is the end of year outturn)

[This is in line with previous year's collection percentages & a cumulative increase]

BV10: Percentage of Non-domestic Rates Collected.

2022/23: 97.05%  
2023/24: Q1 = 35.27% | Q2 = 58.38% | Q3 = 81.40% | Q4 = 97.48% (This is the end of year out-turn)

BV8: Percentage of invoices paid on time.  
2022/23: Q1 = 88.75% | Q2 = 91.72% | Q3 = 90.68% | Q4 = 92.09%  
2023/24: Q1 = 91.77% | Q2 = 90.98% | Q3 = 89.22% | Q4 = 90.34%

## Housing and Community Safety Programme

Senior Responsible Owner Nina Lake

### Vision

We will strategically plan and deliver housing provision to meet local needs. Working with our partners, we will take the action necessary to tackle the widening imbalance in supply and demand.

### Objectives

1. Make increasing use of existing housing to meet current needs for more housing. This will be through repair, improvement, adaptation or conversion.

2. Enhance our prevent work to keep people in their homes or assist people to move to more suitable accommodation. Homelessness services will be able to access more suitable and affordable temporary accommodation when they need it.

3. Respond to the diversity of needs of its community. Focus on socially marginalised users or potential users will provide fair and equal access to services and wider opportunities.

### Key Results

KR 4a: Number of households in North Devon<sup>1</sup> living in fuel poverty = 6,420 [14.4%] Data 2021. Two year lag in reporting.  
= 7,052 [15.6%] Data 2022

KR 4b: Number of homes in North Devon meeting the Decent Homes Standard as a direct consequence of our actions.

**Update:** The Council were encouraged to work up an Exceptional Bid to address housing conditions in Ilfracombe, following substantial investment into this BID we were advised in April by DLUHC that there were no funds to support such an Ask. Since that disappointment, we have submitted a scaled down version of that ask to our new County Combined Authority – we await evaluation and feedback (May 24).

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<sup>1</sup> 44,729 Households @ 2021.

KR4c: Housing Standards number of Category 1 & 2 Hazards Eliminated.

The team noted above are now baselining the HMO situation and will then be pro-actively program the inspection / licensing of HMO premises. We have invested in a new ICT solution to help the management of HMOs.

KR 6: Housing Supply: Net additional dwellings North Devon (DLUHC). Office for National Statistics Table 122  
2019/20 = 858 (↑) | 2020/2021 = 527 (↓) | 2021/2022 = 599 (↑) | 2022/2023 = 597 (↓) | 2023/2024 = Data awaited

New KR 7: Gross new affordable homes delivered in North Devon area annual figure  
2022/23 = 87<sup>2</sup> Annual Figure 2023/24 will be reported in our next Q1 report  
(NI 155 Existing affordable housing indicator 2022/23 = 82 | 2023/24 = 30).

KR 8: No. of residential properties (see 8a below) that have been classed as empty for more than 3 months on the Council Tax base  
2023/24: Q1 = 730 (1.50%) | Q2 = 755 (1.55%) | Q3 = 754 (1.54%) | Q4 = 736 (1.50%)

8a: Gross number of residential properties on the Council Tax base  
2023/24: Q1 = 48,560 | Q2 = 48,675 | Q3 = 48,824 | Q4 = 48,999

8b: Total number of properties registered as 2<sup>nd</sup> homes each quarter [Note: calculated on the numbers shown in 8a not the 2021 figure].  
2023/24: Q1 = 1,806 (3.71%) | Q2 = 1,820 (3.73%) | Q3 = 1,887 (3.86%) | Q4 = 2058 (4.20%)

Keeping as many properties on the Council Tax Registered as Residential properties and these not flipping to 2<sup>nd</sup> Homes / Holiday Lets<sup>3</sup>.  
Second Homes 01 April 2020 = 1729 vs 01 April 2022 = 1779 [Note: Properties > 140 days = business rates not CT]

## Reportable Key Performance Indicators

MiA: Average number of days it takes to get a decision notice on minor planning applications (apps) - end to end times

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<sup>2</sup> Net new affordable housing reported under NI155 plus open market conversions to affordable housing using grant funding, other additionality outside of the planning system and gross number of affordable housing on demolished sites where new affordable housing replaces older stock. Please note Local Needs Dwellings are NOT included in this figure as they are not affordable housing. Geography - across both North Devon LPA and Exmoor National Park LPA (i.e. the NDC Local Housing Authority area).

<sup>3</sup> These are furnished properties but not a person's sole or main residence. For CT purposes such properties are classed as second homes. These properties could be used for the owners' personal use i.e friends and family or they could be available for holiday letting on a commercial basis for not more than 140 days per year.

2023/24: Q1 = 113 | Q2 = 114 | Q3 = 141 | Q4 = 101

MaA: Average number of days it takes to get a decision notice on a major planning applications - end to end times

2023/24: Q = 347 | Q2 = 360 | Q3 = 321 | Q4 = 541

COM: Number of live compliance / enforcement cases on our systems

2023/24: Q1 = 2,340 | Q2 = 2,243 | Q3 = 1,303 | Q4 = 1,235

A M: Appeals allowed or part allowed

2023/24: Q1 = 4 (7 dismissed) | Q2 = 1 (4 dismissed) | Q3 = 2 (3 dismissed) | Q4 23/24 = 0 (5 dismissed)

B&B: Total number of households accommodated in leased / B&B Accommodation

2023/24: Q1 = 63 | Q2 = 67 | Q3 = 58 | Q4 = 74

TA: Total number of households accommodated in our own temporary accommodation

2023/24: Q1 = 15 | Q2 = 19 | Q3 = 18 | Q4 = 28

BV78a: Speed of processing new housing benefit / council tax benefit claims

2022/23: Apr 20.4 | May 20.8 | Jun 22.4 | Jul 19.6 | Aug 23.9 | Sept 21.3 | Oct 24.2 | Nov 24.6 | Dec 18.0 | Jan 28.2 | Feb 23.9 | Mar 17.9

2023/24: Apr 26.9 | May 23.3 | Jun 22.2 | Jul 22.3 | Aug 22.3 | Sept 16.7 | Oct 19.2 | Nov 18.5 | Dec 18.1 | Jan 22.7 | Feb 22.4 | Mar 24.1

BV78b: Speed of processing changes of circumstances for housing benefit / council tax benefit claims

2022/23: Apr 10.3 | May 09.1 | Jun 08.9 | Jul 09.0 | Aug 10.7 | Sept 11.8 | Oct 09.2 | Nov 08.7 | Dec 05.0 | Jan 07.9 | Feb 04.3 | Mar 07.6

2023/24: Apr 09.1 | May 11.4 | Jun 10.2 | Jul 08.5 | Aug 06.8 | Sept 09.4 | Oct 09.1 | Nov 08.6 | Dec 06.9 | Jan 08.0 | Feb 04.4 | Mar 06.0

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
H&CS: 00	<b>Gone back to Feasibility Phase</b>	We commenced procurement to appoint a housing consulting to produce an options report looking at various housing models, including Registered



Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
Establish a Housing Company TAP Team	<b>Objectives:</b> Having a model to manage and hold a range of property tenures that aren't social/temporary housing.	Providers versus a Housing Company. During this time we continued to engage with our local authority peers and determined that if we commissioned a previous report to be refreshed this would provide sufficient evidence to selection a short to medium term vehicle. We will continue to brief members and work to deliver their mandate and find a solution to this strategic matter.
H&CS: 01 Empty Homes Fred Shelton	<p><b>In delivery</b> There is no firm closure date currently for this project as all opportunities are being pursued.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> * Support the repair, improvement, adaptation or conversion of empty properties to bring them back into use as homes. * Improve neighbourhoods by targeting long-term empty properties that have become the focus of anti-social behaviours and/or neglect * Set up our own Private Sector Leasing Scheme for use as temporary accommodation – linked to project 00.</p>	<p><b>Class F Exemptions:</b> There are 17 cases that are over a year old and some go back 6 to 8 years. Legal &amp; Housing are working to find a tracing solution.</p> <p><b>Active Cases:</b> There are 250 active cases under the empty homes banner, from the overall schedule of 700. A number of site visits have taken place, establishing properties as a range of second homes, holiday lets etc. Communication with accounts is ongoing to rectify the billing for these properties. We continue to actively engage with landlords with a view to bringing empty homes back into rental use or on the open market. The Residential Property Officer is collating approaches and will hold a schedule of those we are in dialogue with.</p> <p><b>Lendology:</b> We have two significant loans in place with Lendology an in receipt of the loan are keen to work with the Council to actively promote their use of the scheme and create case studies.</p> <p><b>Use of Powers</b></p> <p>The Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act has been used to board up a property and prevent immediate danger to the public. No notice was required due to the immediate safety concerns. The property has been empty for 35 years.</p>
H&CS: 03 Placed Based Regeneration Team around the Town (TAT)	<p><b>Various Strands</b> Individual re-active cases have been addressed but this strand of the programmes wants to have a programme of planned interventions / acquisitions.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Work with Development Management to try to limit the number of hotels into HMOs / supported accommodation.</p>	<p>Our Exceptional Ask to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities, which we were encouraged to submit for Ilfracombe was unfortunately turned down.</p> <p>We continue to work with Homes England.</p> <p>Plus submitted a Healthy Homes Bid for Ilfracombe via our new Combined County Authority for just under £2m.</p>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
<p>H&amp;CS: 04 Affordable Housing Jaimie Jeyes</p>	<p><b>Various Strands</b> There are various schemes under this strand.</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> To continue to deliver affordable housing working with Homes England and other partners, utilising whatever model the Government next deploy.</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> We continue to Lobby Government to support these initiatives via alternative funding streams.</p>	<p>We continue to work with Homes England.</p> <p>Plus submitted a Community Land Trust Bid via our new Combined County Authority for just over £800k.</p>
<p>H&amp;CS: 08 Homeless Households and Temporary Accommodation Sarah Bentley</p> <p>Spend up to 2022/23 £478,274</p> <p>Budget 2023/24 = £323,700</p> <p>Actual spend 2023/24 £478,519</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 £395,210</p>	<p><b>This is a Business as Usual Function but on the Programme for Visibility &amp; Cost Management</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> * To keep people in their homes where possible. * To have suitable housing in which to house customers where it isn't viable to keep them in their own homes.</p> <p>* To reduce the number of people we have to place in hotels or B&amp;Bs. * Temporary accommodation new model of risk assessment needs to be devised.</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> We continue to house 70+ units of accommodation to house people/families in temporary accommodation per night &amp; remodelling &amp; funding arrangements agreed for 70 per night.</p>	<p>The numbers in temporary accommodation remain high and all cases are under constant review. We are seeing an increase in those presenting from Adult Social Care due to a change in their thresholds. Work continues with our partners to support our young care leavers to provide starter tenancy arrangements and wrap around support.</p> <p>The team are almost up to full strength with just one more newly created role to be filled.</p>
<p>H&amp;CS: 10 Precariously Housed in Poor Quality and/or Expensive Private Sector Accommodation</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b> * To use all of the legislation available to us to improve the living arrangements for those in private rented accommodation. * Work with landlords to support their business model and keep good quality / affordable accommodation in the market.</p>	<p>We continued to recruit into this team. The team are working through this list of houses in multiple occupation to licence those and will then move onto the unlicensed properties as our next phase of work. We continue to work with the Fire Service assessing a couple of properties per week. We are working with One Ilfracombe and Ilfracombe Town Council to dovetail</p>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
<p>(often shared) plus Healthy Homes Wendy Slate</p> <p>DFG Grant allocation for 2024/25 is £1,363,965</p>		<p>their local knowledge vs our database and an external report to help us target those properties in most need of inspection.</p> <p>Disabled Facility Grants our BID for 2024/25 is shown in cell number one.</p> <p>ECO Grants: We are now looking to support Park Homes as part of our wider officer.</p> <p>We are part of a DLUHC Pilot for Healthy Homes and form part of their data gathering strand.</p>
<p>H&amp;CS: 11 Rough Sleepers Patasha Rowland</p>	<p><b>In Delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To encourage rough sleepers including those 'entrenched' into step up accommodation.</p> <p>The <b>risk</b> of future funding remaining a concern. The current funding runs through to March 2025. This would result in the loss of 9 staff and the accommodation in which they support. <b>Lobbying</b> for an earlier decision on funding could be considered. We are working with a designated government advisor.</p>	<p>The seasonal out of area cases continue to rise. Cases are also becoming more complex.</p> <p>The above items both pose additional <b>risks</b> to our staff. Our risk assessments are being reviewed frequently and being updated, where required. Our specific approach to individuals therefore is adapted to their needs and our awareness of each case.</p>
<p>H&amp;CS: 12 Gypsies &amp; Travellers &amp; Van Dwellers TAP formed to resolve property and welfare issues.</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Establish the baseline of Northern Devon need.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> The next iteration of the Local Plan will have to incorporate a G&amp;T permanent site, without which it will not be adopted.</p>	<p>The draft policy has been updated to capture the eviction procedures. This will be circulated for a final review before being adopted.</p> <p>We are working on a budget solution to support the new stop over site at Seven Brethren, when it is constructed later this year. Works have commenced on site and updates are captured through the R&amp;EG programme.</p>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
		We await further dialogue with DCC regarding a solution for a more permanent site.
H&CS: 13 Refugee Programme Sarah Bentley  Page 68	<p><b>This strand continues to grow in scope with very little control we can exercise.</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> * To respond to those schemes in an agile manner. * Keep dialogue open with the Home Office, our partners and those impacted by the refugees and our communities.</p>	We will be celebrating National Refugee Week in June. We plan to hold a meet and greet day to share our food from our cultures and continue to get to know our new neighbours.

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
H&CS: 14 Local Authority Housing Fund Helen Bond	<p><b>In Delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> To move refugees away from hotel accommodation and into individual homes.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> We are buying houses at pace to take advantage of these purchasing opportunities, we need to ensure that our processes and staff are equipped to manage these acquisitions.</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> The Government have indicated they plan the change the model we signed up for in our memorandum of understanding.            Update: Government advised it was highly unlikely that we would be able to use Round II funding for local temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>Of the 9 properties in round 1, we have completed on 9.</p> <p>A report was prepared and presented by Cllr Bell at Full Council to gain approval and delegation to enter into Round 3, which would include purchasing four properties. Two being for general TA accommodation and two for the Refugee Properties (one of those being a 4 bed + property). Our allocation within the round is £602k, plus £21k revenue for each property to aid those purchases and a small admin allocation under £5k. If those properties are new then we can claim an addition 10% uplift. The report recommended the bid for round 3, as noted above, be supported and this was submitted on 28 March following unanimous support by Full Council. The purchase of properties under round 3 can be accelerated although funds will be split across the two financial years (24/25 and 25/26).</p> <p><b>Next Phase:</b> Prepare a further report for S&amp;R setting out the estimate additional costs which are likely to be in the £1m ball park figure to include additional staffing to support our increasing housing portfolio plus support with debt recovery.</p>
H&CS: 15 Housing Strategy		<p>It has been agreed that the Commercialisation; Asset Management; and Housing Strategy will be developed to ensure they support each other all to be delivered by September 2024.</p>
H&CS: 16 Community Safety Tim Birtwistle		<p>We were successful in receiving ASB hotspot funding to further enhance our Street Marshall scheme. A tender will be issued to continue the service. We will enhance the presence in Ilfracombe. We will explore the possibility of providing more delegations to the Marshalls in Public Safety Protection Order areas.</p> <p>The Community Safety Partnership are also supporting the Night Bus again this summer, which will run Barnstaple-Bideford-Barnstaple; and Barnstaple-Ilfracombe- Barnstaple.</p>

# Regeneration & Economic Growth Programme

Senior Responsible Owner SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland

## Vision

This programme will be highly influenced by the emerging Vision for the review of the Joint North Devon Local Plan that will set the place based / spatial strategy for the area and the rest of the Council.

## Objectives

1. Ensure a vibrant, thriving area for residents/businesses.
  2. Ensure our Economic Strategy is written alongside the Joint Local Plan Review (Plan). The Plan must allow for the right growth in the right areas. The Economic Strategy will ensure that partnership work helps create the right place for business with associated skills/support etc. We want our Cultural Strategy to inform the Joint Local Plan Review.
  3. Maximise the use of our assets to provide the best places and contribute to the commercialisation agenda. Our ambitions must feed into the Joint Local Plan Review such as the Car Parking Strategy and review of our land and property assets.
  4. Work collaboratively with the Housing & Community Safety Programme to find innovative solutions to the housing crisis, working in partnership to secure funding to deliver housing in the most sustainable locations.
- Deliver projects on the ground to contribute towards our Vision and pave the way for private sector investment.

## Key Result

KR 05: Economic Growth Level of new sector development

2023/24 : Q1 = 6350 | Q2 = 6342 | Q3 = Void | Q4 = 6233

The last quarters figures represent a slight decrease from the previous quarters. There isn't one particular area of type of business that have been a decrease, this appears to be evenly spread across the district.

## Reportable Key Performance Indicators

CA: Increased participation in Cultural activity

**Carnival Exhibition & Fun days:** This series of events was used to gain interest in the rejuvenation of Barnstaple Carnival. We set up a fun day and series of workshops for all ages to take part in. We also used this opportunity to gain support in creating a steering group for the event. The high turnout at the fun day, which was the first event of the week helped to garner interest in the rest of the week. It was good to be able to work with local creatives and to develop materials and display possibilities for those wanting to be involved in the main carnival event later in the year.

**International Day (IWD):** Our main role within the International women's day event was to support through admin time and facilitate the use of the pannier market

**Action for Children:** Once again this was an event that had happened in a smaller way in previous years. Having been contacted by Action for Children we worked in partnership with them and the Pannier market staff to evolve the event to include Exmoor Zoo Roadshow, Bouncy Castles, face painting and the Dear zoo book trail. This resulted in amazing footfall and in reality the actual attendee figure is much higher as footfall counters have trouble discerning between families and often don't count the smaller children as they don't register due to their height!

**Easter Trail:** Because the CDF project involves the creation and development of various trails around the town we booked in an augmented reality trail. This involved various businesses around the town displaying a QR Code, which people would then scan and be directed to the next one; this also allowed businesses to advertise certain deals they have. The figures came from an event report provided by the company who created the trails. They told us the figures were good compared to other trails they had presented. In future we need to publicise this earlier in order to have a greater impact.

**Busking Festival:** This was another event that had taken part in previous years. This year the CDF funded the event and undertook much of the organisational work. The attendee figures represent who stayed and watched / listened.

Events	Dates	Attendees*	Volunteer	Agencies/Performers/Practitioners	
Carnival Exhibition & Fun days	February half term	3489	17	6 Practitioners	23 Performers
IWD	March 6 <sup>th</sup>	105			
Action for Children	April 10 <sup>th</sup>	1467		5 Agencies	
Easter Trail	March/April	360		1 Agency 10 Businesses	
Busking Festival	April 20 <sup>th</sup>	1531	8	38 Performers	
Totals		6952	25	83	Cumulative Total 7060

\* Total attendees evidenced through footfall data, head counts and workshop involvement - unless stated otherwise.

RKPI 728: Percentage of the gross internal area of the investment estate currently let.

2022/23: Q4 = 95.93%.

2023/24: Q1 = 95.93% | Q2 = 95.93% | Q3 = 95.93% | Q4 = 95.83%

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
R&EG: 00 Operating Model Recruitment SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland	Structural Changes  On Track for Recruiting into these posts in a timely manner.	Many of the posts have now been recruited to and referenced below in the update.
R&EG: 01 Barnstaple Vision Hannah Harrington	<b>In Delivery</b>  <b>Objectives:</b> * To restore and strengthen Barnstaple's status as the heart of civic, commercial, educational, cultural and community life in North Devon in the mid-21st century.	* The Terms of Reference for the Barnstaple Place Board is being finalised with the intention of the inaugural meeting being held on the 7 <sup>th</sup> June. Work is being finalised on the setting up of both a Business and Property group to support the Board. Project Initiation Documents will be developed for for Tuly Street and Waterfront activity (making the best use of the river).



Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
<p>R&amp;EG: 02 Local Plan Review SJMS</p>	<p><b>5 Year Review Complete</b> <b>Next Phase Comprehensive Review to be Determined</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Is bold, ambitious and provides the framework for at least the next 15 years of growth.</li> <li>* Should be all about what you want to see rather than what you do not.</li> <li>* Addresses critical issues highlighted by Members, communities and other stakeholders.</li> <li>* Set the vision / strategy for how the area should be developed over the lifetime of the plan.</li> </ul> </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The local plan PID was agreed at the JPPC meeting in March2024</li> <li>* There is still no indication from the government on the details of the new local plan process and associated timescales. Our request to form part of the first tranche of reviews from November 2024 has been submitted. We await an update and further guidance.</li> </ul>
<p>R&amp;EG: 03 Future High Street Fund SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland</p> <p>Spend up to 2022/23 £1,374,293</p> <p>Spend for 2023/24 £2,190,312</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 £6,276,494</p> <p>Budget 2025/26 £2,300,000</p> <p>Total Project Cost</p>	<p><b>In Delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Restoration of NDC assets to enhance the Town Centre experience of visitors and provide linkages through those 4 asset.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> The financial and phasing risks of this programme remain during project delivery phase. Contingencies are in place and contractors provide updates on progress against their respective programmes at contractor progress meetings.</p> <p><b>Issue:</b> Cost and potential delay associated with clearance of the</p>	<p>There are 4 Elements to this Programme following the de-scoping of Butcher Row, which will be delivered with Council funds opposed to FHSF:</p> <p><b>1. Pannier Market</b> The Pannier Market has been shortlisted for the Mitchelmore awards in the heritage category. The venue is hosting a range of cultural activities following its successful refurbishment last year. The final account has been agreed at £2,381,381.15</p> <p><b>2 &amp; 3. Alexander Road &amp; Queen Street / Bear Street Car Park</b> The contract has been awarded (Mac Plant Limited). The contract is being collated for signing. Works started on the 7<sup>th</sup> May under a letter of intent that has been issued (with a value of £30k).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft S278 agreement is in final form and will be completed alongside the works contracts together with the Schedule of Amendments and Bond.</li> <li>• Communications: Stakeholders are being kept informed throughout the project. Officers have 'dropped in' on businesses; issued a first leaflet drops in the car park;</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
<p>£12,141,099</p> <p>Professional fees funded from revenue in 2023/24 £303,322</p>	<p>contamination within the cellar of no.36 Boutport Street (funded from the project contingency)</p>	<p>a second leaflet drop took place at the beginning of May to tie in with closure of Queen Street side of the car park on 7 May. Information boards will be displayed on the herras fencing providing details of the scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian access will be maintained onto Bear Street as will vehicular access where there are rights of ways.</li> <li>• It has been raised that all projects over £1m capital will need additional insurance cover. This will be in place for the 7<sup>th</sup> May costing £2,239.</li> <li>• The awarded contract value is £2,021,943.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. 36 / 37 Boutport Street:</b></p> <p>* The contract has been awarded to Pearce Construction and is now signed. The works commenced on site at the beginning of April and the first progress meeting has been held. Additional rigour is being applied to financial recording given the size of the project – monthly meetings will be held with the S151 officer, 1 week after receipt of the monthly cost report.</p> <p>* The contractor has begun to clear the cellar area of no 36. The excavation of material/spoil is underway. Upon initial sampling of the material, sulphates have been found. This means the material needs to be taken away to a licenced waste site rather than general waste. Costs to cover this additional work are unknown at present. This will be found from the contingency.</p> <p>* The awarded contract value is £6,893,967.03 (this includes the two units of temporary accommodation to the rear of 36 Boutport Street, funded from TA budget at a cost of £630k)</p> <p>Due to the increased construction costs, fee's have now been funded from revenue reserve budget.</p>
<p>R&amp;EG: 04</p> <p>Brownfield Land Release Fund Seven Brethren SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland</p> <p>Flood Defence Budget</p>	<p><b>In Delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Re-development of old landfill car park site.</li> <li>* Aesthetically attractive development with sustainability maximised.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Reserved Matters planning consent was secured in March 2024 ✓</li> <li>* The demolition of the old leisure centre was completed in April 2024. ✓</li> <li>* We await revised flood defence plans.</li> <li>• Work has now started on the new car park. It is likely to impact this year's fair, and we will need to issue a licence for 2024 event on the existing fair site. A site visit has taken place with BTC, The Showmen and our Development Partner to ensure all parties fully appraised of the site progress.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
Spend 2023/24 £0  Budget 2024/25 £1,150,000  Total Project Cost £1,150,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Demolition &amp; removal of the old leisure centre.</li> <li>* Moving of the Gypsy &amp; Traveller 'Stop Over' site to a new location</li> </ul> <p>Issue – Due to delay in programme for the new long stay car park, the 2024 fair will now take place on the existing car park. A licence will be issued.</p>	
R&EG: 05 Barnstaple Flood Defence SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland	<p><b>Feasibility Pre-project</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* To protect land and buildings</li> <li>* To bring brownfield land into use</li> </ul>	<p>* Officers have met with the Environment Agency in March 2024. They are looking at 'zoning' the town centre to enable proactive discussions with landlords around upper floor uses. They are reviewing the strategic report to look at next steps. A follow up meeting has been diarised for later in May.</p>
R&EG: 09 Ilfracombe Seafront Masterplan Dominie Dunbrook	<p><b>Parts in delivery &amp; parts in planning Phase</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>Re-establish Ilfracombe as the premier coastal destination in North Devon. Delivered through a coordinated investment in developing our cultural offer and enhancing the Seafront.</p>	<p><b>Environment Agency</b> No immediate timeframe for sea defences.</p> <p><b>Golden Coast</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have met with the land owner and discussed a solution for the culvert – who is now discussing those proposals with the Environment Agency – it would feed into the culvert that we have responsibility for. The owner is going to share CCTV footage of our part of the culvert for us to assess if any works required. A general discussion was held around future use.</li> </ul> <p><b>Kiosks &amp; PC's</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has secured planning consent.</li> <li>• Structural designs are being prepared to support the drawings and specification for the tender. The tender will be issued by the end of May.</li> </ul> <p><b>Seafront Play Area</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The seafront play area was formally opened on 27 March by outgoing Chair Cllr Julie Hunt.</li> <li>• The event was well attended with members of the public and Ilfracombe Member, representatives from Ilfracombe Town Council and Ilfracombe Pirates.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project has been delivered on budget using £87k of S106 funds.</li> <li>Further minor works will be undertaken outside the scope of the play area project, which includes the addition of planters adjacent to the play area. This has been identified through working with business and offering seasonal licences for cafes in close proximity.</li> </ul>
R&EG: 10 Ilfracombe Harbour Georgina Carlo-Paat (MBE)	<p><b>Elements being Delivered</b>  <b>Elements stalled</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide training</li> <li>To update Harbour Authority Powers and bring in line with industry standards and to incorporate Lynmouth Harbour into said Powers.</li> <li>To rejuvenate the lower Cove area, provide fit for purpose premises for current tenant and provide fit for purpose premises for the Harbour Team to enable efficient Harbour Management. To provide new premises for additional tenants</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Cove</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A pre-app has been prepared and submitted. A response is awaited.</li> <li>A PID needs to be developed further.</li> </ul> <p><b>Marine Training Academy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There has been initial discussion with Petroc regarding location and availability for Firefighting training. Options will be explored.</li> <li>The Course criteria books from the Merchant Navy Training Board have arrived. This will help to collate a list of equipment and training requirements.</li> <li>IRB were presented with the Hardesty Jones report. Positive feedback was received and the next steps are to set up the STCW Course.</li> <li>A PID has been developed and a further business case is being submitted as part of the Devolution fund.</li> </ul>
R&EG: 11a Car Park Strategy Helen Bond	<p><b>In delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objective</b>            To widen the scope of this Strategy to include maintenance and modelling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The final draft is being reviewed to apply a 'plain English' approach to the strategy.</li> <li>This will be brought to SMT for consideration in May before being presented to members in early Summer.</li> </ul>
R&EG:12 Neighbourhood Plans Elizabeth Dee	<p><b>In delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support town and parishes in the delivery and adoption of their neighbourhood plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Policy continue to provide support to town and parish councils engaged in the Neighbourhood Plan process.</li> </ul>
R&EG:16	<p><b>In Delivery</b></p>	<p><b>Overarching</b></p>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
<p>Cultural Development Fund Alison Mills</p> <p>Spend up to 2023/24 £1,020</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 £1,578,825</p> <p>Budget 2025/26 £870,155</p> <p>Total Project Cost £3,450,000</p>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Create a cultural hub</li> <li>* Develop cultural space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are in discussion with Arts Council England (ACE) regarding the covenants for properties associated with this project.</li> <li>• Capital draw down requirements have been clarified by ACE, prior to submission of over first capital claim.</li> </ul> <p><b>Bridge Chambers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning application was submitted in early May.</li> <li>• Accessibility consultants are reviewing the plans, as one of the key objectives of the project is to improve access.</li> <li>• Discussion between officers is ongoing regarding issue of an annual licence for land which will provide the access to the side of bridge chambers. The NDC land adjacent to the fountain, which would create new access and a terrace.</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity Plan &amp; Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A supplier has been appointed to develop the Barnstaple website.</li> <li>• A committee has been set up to continue the re-establishment of Barnstaple Carnival</li> </ul> <p><b>Wayfinding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specification for the fingerpost signs and plinths is being prepared.</li> <li>• The project team continue to work with key partners to establish constraints and dependencies for the locations ie planning, highways.</li> </ul>
<p>R&amp;EG:17 Sea Pool, Ilfracombe Georgina Carlo-Paat (MBE)</p>	<p><b>Feasibility</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> To work with the Royal Life Saving Society to fully understand the risks and opportunities this proposal may bring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two issues were raised as part of the RLSS report setting out the Councils ambitions to create a sea pool. (1) Water Quality; (2) Obstructions.</li> <li>• Water Quality - To mitigate the risk, we are proposing to implement the standard bathing regulations. Costs for this are yet to be established.</li> <li>• Obstruction - Discussions with the RLSS are ongoing, to establish how the public and groups will formally access and use the pool and how to mitigate the risks associated with obstruction. Feedback will be provided following this meeting.</li> </ul>
<p>R&amp;EG:18 UKSPF/REPF Dominie Dunbrook</p>	<p><b>In Delivery</b></p>	<p><b>Total Funds Allocated</b></p> <p><b>UKSPF</b> - £1,214,999 of which £949,600 is revenue and £265,399 is capital <b>REPF</b> - £1,091,259 all of which is capital</p>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
		<p>All funds must be spent by March 31st 2025</p> <p><b>Spend to date (up to March 31st 2024)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding received/spent in 22/23: <b>UKSPF:</b> £142,451 of which £39,000 was spent and the rest rolled into 23/24 year due to the funding MOU from Government being signed in January 2023, leaving very little time for spend in this f/y.</li> <li>• Funding received/spent in 23/24: <b>UKSPF:</b> £284,903 + £103,451 (rolled over from 22/23) = £388,354 of which £262,260 has been spent and the rest rolled into 24/25</li> <li><b>REPF:</b> £692,259 of which £54,223 was spent and the rest rolled into</li> <li>• Funding expected to be received in 24/25: <b>UKSPF:</b> £787,645 + £126,094 (rolled over from 23/24) = £913,739</li> <li><b>REPF:</b> £399,000 + £638,036 (rolled over from 23/24) = £1,037,036</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Projects</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are currently expecting to fully spend on both UKSPF and REPF funds. This confidence comes from the fact that most funds are wrapped into projects/Grant Funding Agreements/contracts which are on schedule. Some key projects to highlight (positively not due to concerns): <b>UKSPF:</b> Business Boost programme (£234k) business support delivered by ND+, to a wide range of businesses looking to grow, develop new products or enter new markets. Micro grants are available alongside the initial business support and diagnostic. 27 businesses received free advice to date, with 8 receiving a micro grant to develop their business plans further. Looking to deliver a retail bespoke training programme, which will be a discreet session aimed at up to 11 businesses who are looking to improve their retail business – this may be delivered around Pannier Market traders or micro businesses in the retail sector.</li> <li><b>Heritage Skills Hub</b> (£100k), delivered internally (ED&amp;R and Conservation Officers) to develop the infrastructure around heritage skills development. Including boot camps for skills in particular heritage construction trades and creating an online portal for traders, trainees and customers to interact.</li> <li><b>Employment and Skills Hub</b> (£250k), delivered by Devon County Council as part of their successful model currently being delivered in Exeter. The establishment of a hub in Barnstaple (at the Library) and possible outreach work to Ilfracombe to support those seeking work to get the right advice, skills and support to find and</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
		<p>retain employment. This will work with a lot of existing partners delivery and bring the advice into a 'one-stop-shop'.</p> <p><b>Town Centre Enhancement Scheme</b> (£155,399), delivered by ED&amp;R, a small grant scheme aimed at town centre property owners looking to make improvements such as painting, signage, gutter clearance etc. This also incorporates wider collaborative projects such as replacing bins, benches and bollards to improve the general overall appearance of town centres/high visitor footfall areas.</p> <p><b>REPF:</b> Rural Grants programme (£798k) being administered by ND+, looking to support farmers, tourism business and rurally based entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and to adopt greener operating models. 21 applications received, 15 approved and 4 finished projects - £22,625k claimed/paid out in grants so far. New funding rounds due to go live in May 2024.</p>
<p>R&amp;EG:19 Butchers Row Hannah Harrington</p>	<p><b>Initiation Phase</b></p>	<p>* This project has been de-scoped from FHSF and brought into the programme as a standalone project, * Engagement with stakeholders/tenants has been scheduled for the end of May to discuss the priorities and agree the next steps for procurement and delivery of the project.</p>

## Customer Focus / Digital by Design Programme

Senior Responsible Owner Sarah Higgins

### Vision

North Devon Council want to provide the best possible services to our customers in the most efficient way. Our approach must recognise the digital age we live in and how we can make the best use of technology for the benefit of our customers, partners and employees.

### Objectives

1. Engage with stakeholders to ensure services meet their requirements, they are accessible and maximise convenience.
2. Work towards dealing with enquiries at first point of contact in a professional / consistent way, resulting in a positive experience.
3. Redesign and optimise services based on user research and not just automate our current processes.
4. Shift paper based transactions online that encourage a new kind of interaction with our customer.
5. Invest in our people capabilities to ensure we can deliver the required improvements for our customers.

6. Transform as one organisation moving away from a silo-based approach to service delivery to enhance both the customer experience and that of our employees.

## Key Results

KR 3a: How satisfied or dissatisfied are our Customers' with various elements of our service delivery?

**Update:** The results of our existing survey don't provide us with sufficient intelligence, out of 250 surveys sent via email we only had 14 (5.65%) returned with a 98% satisfaction rating. Zoom our new telephony solution went live in October 2023, which provides a much more agile way to test our customers views on our service delivery at the time of interaction, where we can target those questions around particular topics. The implementation of Zoom, training and collection of the first set of results will be with you for Q1 2024/25. If you have any topic areas within our control that you would like the Head of Customer Focus to survey on then please do raise those.

KR 3b: How satisfied or dissatisfied are our Members' with various elements of our service delivery?

Mid Year 2023/24 = 87.88% [33 out of 42 (78.6%) Councillors responded to this survey.

A further survey will be undertaken in June 2024. The feedback will be provided in the Q2 report for 2024/25.

**PR 9:** Number of justified complaints where the council is at fault out of a total number of complaints received

2023/24: Q1 = Total no. 98 of which 65 were justified 66.32%

Q2 = Total no. 142 of which 108 were justified 76% [result amended]

Q3 = Total no. 146 of which 115 were justified 79%.

Q4 = Total no. 90 of which 66 were justified 73%

RKPI DC: Number of transactions / interactions nudged to digital channel that are available 24/7 and result in a financial saving

2023/24: Q1 Self-serve 8,599 vs serviced by a member of staff 17,550 (33% using digital channels)

Q2 Self-serve 13,549 vs serviced by a member of staff 22,473 (38% using digital channels, increased due to green bin renewals)

Q3 Self-serve 6,085 vs serviced by a member of staff 13,984 (30% using digital channels)

Q4 Self-serve 5,752 vs serviced by a member of staff 17,027 (25% using digital channels) – W&R delivery form was turned off from 29/11/23 – 20/02/24 to manage volumes outstanding this is one of our most used form which may explain the drop in percentage



Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
CF: 01 Customer Focus Andrea Beasley	<b>Delivery Phase</b>  <b>Objectives</b> * Reduced failure demand * Nudge to digital where appropriate	<b>Process Mapping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process mapping will now fall under PMO remit. A schedule has been prepared detailing all process maps in progress. Meetings have been set up, where feedback is awaited from relevant teams.</li> <li>• Audit reports with limited or reasonable assurance could also form part of the work programme for process mapping.</li> <li>• Work on the Crematorium Service Improvement Plan continues.</li> </ul> <b>Value / Call Failure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting has been captured since January 2024. We are now building up a clearer picture to accurately reflect call value or failure.</li> <li>• The highest percentage for call failure is 14%. This is for missed bins and Deliveries.</li> <li>• Reasons for call failure continue to be reviewed and analysed so service improvements can be made.</li> </ul> <b>KPI's</b> Customer Services are now logging call value/failure. This will be a new KPI with data reporting from Quarter 1 2024/2025. The team have been undergoing training to ensure value/failure is recognised and recorded accurately. We feel starting from Q1 will ensure consistency moving forwards.
CF: 02 Digital By Design Andrew Tapp	<b>Delivery Phase</b>  <b>Objectives:</b> A planned costed / deliverable action plan to advance our ICT landscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-Billing for the Revenue's and Benefits will be in place for April 2025.</li> <li>• 1500 individuals have signed up for the Revenues &amp; Benefits Portal, as a result of publishing details as part of annual Council Tax billing. CSC can also add users to the portal during interactions with customers. There will be a Comms campaign later in the year to encourage sign up for paperless billing.</li> <li>• More landlords are also signing up to the portal, where payment schedules can be viewed.</li> <li>• There is no update on E-Store2. We await input from Accounts following year-end. Some issues have been raised during testing that need to be resolved.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firmstep: Estates forms are ready for publishing; there are five requests for Trade Waste forms; the Council Tax Landlord contact form need revising; the incident form has been soft launched; and HSF has gone live.</li> <li>• Firmstep forms to be created/finalised: Motor Claim Insurance; Enforcement; Eco Flex energy application.</li> <li>• We are almost in a position to go live with the online Missed Bin form which will check the validity of the report before sending to the back office. This is the first step in enabling us to use Power BI proactively for the service.</li> <li>• We have procured Orlo which is a social media platform which will give us improved scheduling and reporting functionality, an inbox showing all comments on NDC post allowing us better monitor and reply to customer comments and social media AI 'listening' so we can understand what matters to the residents of North Devon.</li> </ul>
CF: 04 Feasibility of New Town Centre Hub Sarah Higgins	<b>Planning Phase</b>  <b>Objectives</b> * Make the Council more visible and potentially increase the footfall into Green Lane and its car park. * Opportunities for Lynton House * Widen the offer of the hub to our customer base / citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final amendments and tweak to the plans are being made by the architect.</li> <li>• It is hoped to commence procurement of the works by the end of June.</li> <li>• We have received interest from third parties regarding use of the hub, for example the NHS.</li> <li>• The Police have confirmed the space will not meet their requirements for their general enquiries office and so we will return to the original plan of their neighbourhood officers having daily presence.</li> <li>• ICT are fully engaged in the development of the scheme.</li> <li>• Meetings to discuss the implementation plan are to be scheduled.</li> </ul>
CF: 06 Cyber Security Andrew Tapp	<b>This is an ongoing programme of works to mitigate cyber threats</b>  <b>Objectives</b> * Protect NDC from cyber attacks and the exploitation of our systems, networks and technologies. * Education of Officers to prevent the threat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PAM provider has been bought out. They will continue to provide the service until October 2025. 'Quick wins' will be pursued, other work may be abortive. This has been added to the ICT Service Risk Register.</li> <li>• The Infrastructure Team have training scheduled to assist with the roll out of Boxphish training for members. There is an issue with personal phones with NDC email access, which needs resolving.</li> <li>• CAF Audit report produced two recommendations, these being: (1) an index of policies so we can review on an annual basis and (2) Creation of 5 new policies.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
	<p><b>Risk:</b> Consequences of no Cyber insurance. LGA are lobbying as numerous councils will be affected. Delivering the new Disaster Recovery Kit will increase the likelihood of gaining this transference of risk by obtaining the Insurance Policy.</p> <p><b>Risk:</b> Members have not yet commenced Boxphish training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Continuity Training has been created and will put into test shortly. This will be rolled out using 'Moodle'.</li> <li>• An onsite workshop will be held to test our Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity plan, is scheduled for June for ICT and September for SMT</li> </ul>
<p>CF:07 New internal website Andrew Tapp</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 83</p>	<p><b>In Delivery</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Web content is policy complete.</li> <li>• Onboarding of users continues.</li> <li>• Recruitment pages are being developed and search function being reviewed.</li> <li>• The scope for the intranet has been agreed. We received 60 responses to the staff survey for intranet usage.</li> <li>• Intranet build has started with NDC branding.</li> <li>• The Social Media Policy is complete and rolled out.</li> <li>• We have been speaking to external supplier re Intranet.</li> <li>• JP did survey on how we use Intranet and what for- had 60 responses.</li> </ul>
<p>CF:08 Verso New Licensing Software Richard Fowler</p>	<p><b>Delivery Phase</b></p> <p>New project entering the programme due to the number of external customers who we will need to engage with and support to self-serve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fortnightly project meetings are being held with Rock Time</li> <li>• We now have access to the development site, which provides a feel for what it will look like and how it will operate.</li> <li>• Testing of the HMO licence function is ongoing and feedback has already been provided to the supplier. This will be the first form to Go Live, date to be confirmed.</li> <li>• Testing of the Estore 2 payment integration has also commenced. However, integration with Civica has not yet been achieved and ongoing dialogue with both suppliers and ICT is required.</li> <li>• Training with some stakeholders may be required once the modules Go Live, Taxi Drivers for example.</li> <li>• It was noted that 50% of applications are completed out of normal working hours, demonstrating the need for this software, The highest number of applications come from Fly Tipping and Abandoned Vehicles.</li> </ul>
<p>CF:09 Gov.uk WIFI Andrew Tapp</p>	<p><b>Feasibility Phase</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have increased our connection from 200MB to 1000MB, which is 10x faster and future proof's our network.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status And Objectives	Latest update
CF:10 Consultation/Engagement Software Bev Triggs	<b>Initiation phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Statement of Requirements has been prepared in partnership with Communications.</li> <li>• One Northern Devon and Devon Voluntary Services are keen to be part of the project.</li> <li>• Suppliers will be contacted to start arranging demos.</li> </ul>

## Environmental Enhancement

Senior Responsible Owner: Mark Kentell

### Vision

Consider environmental implications in everything we do. Strive to reduce negative environmental impacts and increase positive impacts wherever practically possible.

### Objectives

1. Enhance our green spaces
2. Explore investment opportunities in renewable energy and the installation of renewable energy in/on council buildings.
3. Include environmental considerations in decision making across the council services.
4. Work with our trusted partners to reduce our carbon footprint. **Key Results**

KR 10: Reduction in our carbon footprint as an authority. Gross tCO2e Emissions from ND Operations baseline. This will reported at the end of this financial year.

KR 11: Nature Recovery / Biodiversity Net Gain measures to be developed aligned to national guidance.

**Update:** A metric had previously been proposed to measure nature recovery / BNG, however we have not been able to establish a measurable output this will therefore we will no longer report on this.

KR 12a L146: Total tonnage of household waste arising's.

2022/23: Q1 = 9,864.42 | Q2 = 9,493.82 | Q3 = 8,761.00 | Q4 = 8,687.00

2023/24: Q1 = 10,150 | Q2 = 9,899 | Q3 = 8,988 | Q4 = **8,795 (estimate)**

KR 12b LPI 192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

2022/23: Q1 = 49.12% | Q2 = 46.84% | Q3 = 45.00% | Q4 = 45.41%.

2023/24: Q1 = 49.53% | Q2 = 49.06% 48.60% | Q3 = 43.50% | Q4 = **41% (estimate)**

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
<p>E:2A Reducing carbon emissions from our built assets Chay Mckenzie</p> <p>£3,728 spend in 2023/24</p> <p>LED Lighting Budget 2024/25 £46,272 2025/26 £25,000</p>	<p><b>Elements in Planning Phase</b> <b>Elements in Delivery Phase</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b> * Reduction/elimination of our carbon impact through operational efficiencies and the methodology our energy is sourced moving towards more sustainable solutions.</p> <p><b>Issue</b> We are now aware that the process hall project does not require additional electric capacity from NG. However when we look to deliver additional eV charge points and solar at BEC further infrastructure will be required. NG have advice this is likely to be in the region of 100k.</p>	<p><b>Solar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers are preparing a draft specification for the solar PV at BEC.</li> <li>• A consultant has also been approached by the Crematorium Manager to prepare a specification for the Crematorium. No response has been received. It was noted this consultant has failed to undertake tasks previously instructed for the EPC project, noted below. The Climate Officer will now make contact with the Crematorium Manager to discuss use of alternative consultants.</li> <li>• It is envisaged these would be procured as one piece of work together.</li> <li>• New infrastructure will be required from National Grid (NG) to support Solar and EV charge-points at BEC. NG have provided and initial estimate of £100k subject to the details specification.</li> </ul> <p><b>EPC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are circa 6 outstanding.</li> <li>• After months of chasing, the consultant appointed has now advised he is unable to complete the final EPC assessments. The team are now looking to appoint another consultant to complete the remainder assessments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sport England Swimming Pool Improvement Fund</b></p>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 85k awarded for installation of solar and LED lighting at Ilfracombe Pool will be delivered by Parkwood Leisure, as tenant.</li> <li>• The Funding Agreement has been signed.</li> <li>• A meeting with Parkwood will be scheduled to understand delivery of the project, associated timescales and communications for impact on users.</li> <li>• The project must be delivered by 31 March 2025.</li> </ul>
<p>EE:2B Reducing carbon emissions from our fleet</p>	<p><b>Feasibility</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b> * Transition to a more efficient and carbon emission reducing fleet. Promotion of sustainable fleets to our residents and visitors.</p> <p><b>Issue</b> We are now aware that the process hall project does not require additional electric capacity from NG. However when we look to deliver additional eV charge points and solar at BEC further infrastructure will be required. NG have advice this is likely to be in the region of 100k.</p> <p><b>Risk</b> - EV has a higher purchase price than ICE vehicles and may need to form part of the modelling for the MTFs.</p> <p><b>New Risk:</b> Reputational risk if we fail to deliver on our commitments within the Carbon, Environment &amp; Biodiversity Plan</p>	<p><b>Transition to Electric Vehicles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A report was taken to S&amp;R on 13 May recommending transition of two Parks ICE Vehicles to Electric Vehicles. This was approved by Members.</li> <li>• There is a charging solution at BEC and the team are also exploring options for a further charge-point at Marlborough Road Cemetery, Ilfracombe. We have EV payment cards that can be used as a back up if charging is required whilst the vehicle is out on the daily rounds.</li> <li>• This proposal, if approved by members, would reduce the Councils carbon footprint by less than 1%</li> <li>• If approved, SFS will need to ensure their maintenance team have appropriate EV training.</li> <li>• Risk registers will need to be reviewed and updated to take account of guidance provided by Insurance, to include: ensuring space is clear around charge-points and also risk of electrocution when maintaining vehicles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Eco Pro Hydrogen Electrolyte Trial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A date for installation of the equipment needs to be arranged.</li> <li>• SFS would not permit this trial on a new vehicle so it will now be trialled on one of our older vehicles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Exeter University - data analysis for hydrogen vehicles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data is being collated to send to Professor Chris Smith at Exeter University, to allow the next steps of data analysis to be undertaken.</li> <li>• Timescales for this piece of work need to be agreed.</li> </ul> <p><b>South West Net Zero Hub</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDC and TDC have been awarded a total of £100k to support production of a Green Hydrogen Road Map for northern Devon.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will set out what can be delivered and also form a place based approach to supporting a green hydrogen hub.</li> <li>• Communities will be actively involved in the engagement exercise with the overall end target of creating an investor prospectus.</li> <li>• A consultant will be appointed to undertake the first piece of place based planning.</li> </ul>
<p>EE2C Management of our non-built assets Richard Slaney, Andrew Moulton, Mark Saunders &amp; Andrew Jones</p>	<p><b>Planning Phase</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* To work with developers and partners to improve the environment and wellbeing of our residents.</li> <li>* Seeks to protect, enhance, extend and manage the green infrastructure throughout North Devon.</li> <li>* Establish and promote groups within our communities to assist with our Nature Recovery plan.</li> <li>* Increase our forestation within North Devon.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Green Estate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'Shape Files' have been sent to North Devon Biosphere, which will enable them to baseline our habitats to the rear of Brynsworthy and also Hillsborough. This piece of work will be undertaken in June/July.</li> <li>• Once we understand our habitat, a separate report will be brought back to members with any options moving forward for using the site as a potential Habitat Bank.</li> <li>• A generic update report was taken to S&amp;R on 13 May, providing progress to date with regard to Biodiversity.</li> </ul>
<p>EE 3B Material Recovery Facility Infrastructure (Murphy) External: Myles Clough</p> <p>Spend 2023/24 £100,064</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 £3,650,606</p>	<p><b>Planning Phase</b></p> <p><b>Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* To specify and deliver a fit for purpose system to allow Works &amp; Recycling to increase recycling and respond to customer demand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk:</b> The cost profile for these works is being kept under close review with particular focus on the baler and the fire suppression elements. The programming</p>	<p><b>Baler</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contract has been awarded, signing is due imminently.</li> <li>• We await updates on the requirements for the baler pit, which will be delivered by the construction contractor, noted below.</li> <li>• Ensuring these two contracts work in tandem and the programmes mirror the correct timescale for delivery is crucial. They are inter-dependent on each other.</li> </ul> <p><b>Construction Contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contract has been awarded and again is due for signing in line with the above notes.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 88</p>	<p>of this project is further complicated by our neighbouring partners and the summer break.</p> <p><b>Issue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Electric Capacity at BEC. Cabling may need upgrading. A new substation may be required. Update: Capacity anticipated to be adequate for the proposed changes.</li> <li>* Drainage not as mapped, a minor redesign the drainage and fire strategy is required.</li> <li>* The drainage survey indicated some damage. The cost of drainage remediation is currently unknown.</li> <li>* Impact for day to day operations where drainage repairs are required across the site. Unknown at present.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Not having a suitable drainage scheme to meet the requirements of the EA permit.</li> </ul> <p><b>New risk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delay to programme may require waste to be taken to Deepmoor, resulting in additional disposal costs and staffing time/resource.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pit specification is being finalised by way of a post award variation with associated pricing. Once resolved this will inform the programme, drawings and final contract documentation. The anticipated start on site to be the middle of June.</li> </ul> <p><b>Dormice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This task falls on the project critical path. The Dormice boxes need to be installed on site by the end of May. The ecologist were on site at BEC during mid-May to install these boxes to comply with the licence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Electric Capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After months of dialogue with the National Grid, it has been confirmed that no additional infrastructure nor change to our usage agreement are required for delivery of the Process Hall project.</li> <li>• However, when we are in a position to budget and tender for the Solar PV and any new charge points at BEC, National Grid have confirmed infrastructure improvements would be required. This is already estimated to be circa £100k.</li> </ul> <p><b>Car Parking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was confirmed that the 37 spaces in the bottom car park would be lost for the duration of the works but with a net loss of 30 spaces as the remaining 7 others were used for storage.</li> <li>• Lorry's will not be parked at the top of the main car park to maximise spaces for staff.</li> <li>• Staff and visitor parking will be managed through co-ordination of teams and their days within the office.</li> </ul> <p><b>Insurance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction insurance needs to be confirmed.</li> <li>• Details have been provided to our broker to secure a quotation.</li> <li>• The premium for construction will be funded from the project budget.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communications Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A communications plan will be developed to ensure staff are aware of any office and car parking changes/requirements in a timely manner. A rota for teams working from the office will be required.</li> </ul>



Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will be provided updates on the project at the next Managers Forum and staff briefing.</li> <li>• Where any impact on customers is anticipated, a press release or bulletin will be prepared.</li> </ul> <p><b>Portacabin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will be relocated to the Exmoor Room and former car park space in the main office at BEC.</li> <li>• ICT are aware of the requirements. Arrangement for moving the MFD need to be co-ordinated.</li> <li>• Desks and chairs will be stored on site.</li> </ul>

## Organisational Development

Senior Responsible Owner Nikki Gordon

Page 88

### Vision

Our vision is to create the conditions for everyone to perform at their best. We will improve processes and policies, invest in health and wellbeing, and continue the development of our teams and individuals to create a high performing one.

### Objectives

1. Develop an organisational improvement plan with involvement and engagement with employees and members applying its outcomes through all levels of the council embedded in the culture of our organisation.
2. We will be driven forwards by our new values and behaviours and these are just the start to underpinning our day-to-day behaviours.
3. To focus on the organisation as one team, not individuals, and looks for change in culture to help it become better performing.
4. Develop a Wellbeing Strategy using a holistic health & wellbeing approach exploring physical mental and nutritional health and the importance of these to our employees resulting in happy, healthy and resilient employees.
5. Equip us all with the necessary, tools, skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours to deliver our corporate priorities and deliver the very best service we can for our customers, whilst embracing our new hybrid way of working.

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
<p>OD:00 Overarching OD Improvement Plan and Workforce Planning and Retention Nikki Gordon</p>	<p><b>Parts in Pre-project</b> <b>Parts In delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> To have a robust and operational staff structure in place</p>	<p><b>Workforce Profiling and Retention Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The baselined workforce profile is being updated as of 31 March 2024.</li> <li>• This will identify single points of failure/success and critical roles (following a review of business continuity plans)</li> <li>• A draft Retention Strategy has been prepared and will be shared with Unison.</li> </ul> <p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the new structure is progressing, although a confirmed date for implementation has yet to be agreed.</li> <li>• Training specific to the Harbour has been arranged to ensure staff have specialist knowledge in that field.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expenses Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is being reviewed by the Payroll to ensure it works in tandem with the new iTrent expenses module.</li> </ul> <p><b>People Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A list of policies was shared with the OD programme Team. The strategy will be an overarching document to support these policies. The drafting of this strategy has commenced.</li> </ul>
<p>OD:01 Create an Empowering Organisation Sarah Bright</p>	<p><b>In delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Employees understand what behaviours are expected of them. * The payroll and HR software creates a more efficient process that is less labour intense.</p>	<p><b>Imperago</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contract has been extended for a further 12 months, now expiring June 2025.</li> </ul> <p><b>iTrent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Travel and Expenses module is ready and has been moved to the live system. A date for 'Go Live' needs to be confirmed by Payroll.</li> <li>• Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) was placed into the test system yesterday. A number of issues have been identified and these have been passed back to iTrent for review.</li> <li>• The external stakeholders (Town &amp; Parish Councils and ND Plus) who use iTrent have been notified of the proposed MFA changes within the system.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The contract expires in June 2024. Officers from HR and Finance have met with iTrent to discuss re-procurement routes. Officers are now awaiting feedback from DCC Procurement with a proposed route to market to secure a complaint procurement and subsequent contract. It was noted that the prices had increased significantly. The Head of Governance has these anticipated contract values. It is understood these would exceed the baseline budget and a virement to support the annual contract value would be required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Behaviour Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A list of those not completing the Behaviour Framework slip was sent to SMT. The return rate has dramatically improved with just a handful now outstanding.</li> </ul>
<p>OD:02 Workforce Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy Tracey Clapp</p>	<p><b>In delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> *To have a healthy workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The annual wellbeing survey will be issued in September, later than last year. There is concern about 'survey overload' as a number have been issued in recent weeks (monthly pulse survey, 360 survey, team meeting survey).</li> <li>A sickness absence report will be taken to SMT.</li> <li>Wellbeing webinars and events are being programmed for after the summer period.</li> </ul>
<p>OD:03 Performance &amp; Talent Management Claire Marsterson</p>	<p><b>Parts in Pre-project</b> <b>Parts In delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> * To successfully recruit. * To provide training opportunities to employees. * To Monitor Performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The LGA Graduate Scheme continues to progress. The Engagement Day in Birmingham was a success with a number of candidates holding discussion with our staff representatives for the day. The Recruitment Video was played and a selection of other 'goodies' to support our brand were provided at the event. On 13 May we received a candidate list with 4 interviews to be scheduled.</li> <li>Pathway to Planning continues through the next phase of the recruitment process. 1250 applicants have gone through the initial assessment and 850 will advance to the next stage. HR are working with planning colleagues to develop the Councils service offer, which will be uploaded to the Applicant Tracking System to help match applicants with</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
		<p>authorities. Our deadline for uploading our offer is 22 May 2025. We also expect to interview 3 or 4 applicants through this process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 360 Survey for SMT has closed and the responses are being collated. 161 responses were received, down on 198 last year. The results will be given to the Chief Executive.</li> <li>• HR are receiving Check-Ins on a daily basis, with the volume and quality improving. Feedback on the new Check-In approach has been positive particularly around the flexibility it offers. The development of the iTrent Module for recording check-ins continues with further meetings to build upon the development of the module.</li> </ul>
<p>OD: 04 Structure Pay &amp; Policy Nikki Gordon</p> <p>Page 92</p>	<p><b>Parts in Feasibility</b> <b>Parts In delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> * To have a mechanism for recruiting temporary staff. * To ensure the Job Evaluation scheme is robust and comparable to other authorities.</p> <p>Risk: Uncertainty over the lifecycle duration of Inbucon Job Evaluation software.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no update on the pay award for 2024/25.</li> <li>• The Agency Staff spend is being collated and a report will be taken to SMT. The trend shows a reduction in use of Comensura but an increase in spend outside of the contract direct with some specialist agencies.</li> <li>• We are a legacy customer of the Job Evaluation software, Inbucon. There is no annual licence fee associated with this product. A meeting will be scheduled with Inbucon to understand what the duration of our access is likely to be and whether a replacement product is coming forward. This continues to be a risk.</li> </ul>
<p>OD:05 Diversity &amp; Inclusion Nikki Gordon</p>	<p><b>Closure</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> * To ensure policies are up to date * Employees are provided appropriate training. * Publication of data to comply with our legislative requirements.</p>	<p>* KPI's to be agreed with Head of Organisational Development &amp; Head of Governance.</p>
<p>OD:06 Our Brand &amp; Recruitment Helen Owen</p>	<p><b>In delivery</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> To provide effective internal and external communications with our stakeholders, employees and members. * To be an employer of choice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recruitment video was completed and has been well-received. It was used to support the LGA event noted above.</li> <li>• The new recruitment webpages are in draft format. The Communications team have reviewed the draft and are providing feedback to the webmaster to make the necessary changes. Once these have been put in place, HR will review the pages.</li> </ul>

Project Description & Lead	Project Stage & Status	Latest update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Once the new recruitment pages go live, the recruitment email banners and HR bulletins will be launched.</li><li>• Our attendance at North Devon Show is being co-ordinated and the recruitment video will also feature on a rolling loop alongside other videos.</li></ul>

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## **North Devon Council**

Report Date: Monday, 1 July 2024

Topic: Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24

Report by: Adam Tape, Head of Governance

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to recommend to full Council that:

- The annual treasury management report for 2023/24 be noted;
- The actual 2023/24 prudential and treasury indicators be approved.

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

3.1 This Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2023/24. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

3.2 During 2023/24 the minimum reporting requirements were that the full Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council 22/02/2023)
- a mid year treasury update report (Council 22/11/2023)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report)

3.3 This Council confirms that it has complied with the requirements under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all the above treasury management reports by the Policy Development Committee before they were reported to the full Council.



## 4. REPORT

### 4.1 The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing

The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.

The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

£000	31 March 2023 Actual	2023/24 Estimate	31 March 2024 Actual
<b>Capital expenditure</b>	<b>7,578</b>	<b>17,095</b>	<b>10,146</b>
Financed in year	(5,124)	(11,845)	(8,703)
<b>Unfinanced capital expenditure</b>	<b>2,454</b>	<b>5,250</b>	<b>1,443</b>

- *Estimate from the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report*

### 4.2 The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This figure is a gauge of the Council's indebtedness. The CFR results from the capital activity of the Council and resources used to pay for the capital spend. It represents the 2023/24 unfinanced capital expenditure (see above table), and prior years' net or unfinanced capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.

Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the capital expenditure programme, the treasury service organises the Council's cash position to ensure that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. This may be sourced through borrowing from external bodies, (such as the Government, through the Public Works Loan Board [PWLb], or the money markets), or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.





**Reducing the CFR** – the Council’s underlying borrowing need (CFR) is not allowed to rise indefinitely. Statutory controls are in place to ensure that capital assets are broadly charged to revenue over the life of the asset. The Council is required to make an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision – MRP, to reduce the CFR. This is effectively a repayment of the borrowing need.

The total CFR can also be reduced by:

- the application of additional capital financing resources, (such as unapplied capital receipts); or
- charging more than the statutory revenue charge (MRP) each year through a Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP).

The Council’s MRP policy, (as required by DLUHC guidance), was approved as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Report for 2023/24.

The Council’s CFR for the year is shown below, and represents a key prudential indicator. It includes leasing schemes on the balance sheet (fleet vehicles), which increases the Council’s borrowing need. No borrowing is actually required against these schemes as a borrowing facility is included in the contract.

CFR £000	31 March 2023 Actual	31 March 2024 Estimate	31 March 2024 Actual
Opening balance	21,699	23,866	23,866
Add unfinanced capital expenditure (as above)	2,454	5,250	1,443
Add finance leases Principal payments	556	1,767	1,627
Less MRP	(733)	(741)	(741)
Less finance lease repayments	(110)	(182)	(151)
Closing balance	23,866	29,960	26,044

A finance lease scheme was introduced during 2021/22 for our vehicle fleet. Previously these costs would have been included in the capital expenditure, but these have now been shown separately as above.



The opening balance CFR of £23.9m includes the new Leisure Centre and purchase of Green Lanes Shopping Centre. A further £1.4m of unfinanced capital expenditure was added to the CFR during 23/24 including the provision of temporary accommodation (£726k) and work to Green Lanes Shopping Centre (£345k).

Borrowing activity is constrained by prudential indicators for gross borrowing and the CFR, and by the authorised limit.

**Gross borrowing and the CFR** - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2023/24) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2024/25) and next two financial years. This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. The table below highlights the Council’s gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

£000	31 March 2023 Actual	2023/24 Estimate	31 March 2024 Actual
Gross borrowing position	4,337	11,922	5,813
<b>Total CFR</b>	<b>23,866</b>	<b>29,960</b>	<b>26,044</b>
Over / (under) funding of CFR	(19,529)	(18,038)	(20,231)

- *Estimate from the Mid-Year Treasury Management Report*

**The authorised limit** - the authorised limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2023/24 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

**The operational boundary** – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary are acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

**Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream** - this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.



	2023/24
	£
Authorised limit	37.50m
Maximum gross borrowing position during the year	5.8m
Operational boundary	11.9m
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	3.35%

### 4.3 Treasury Position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

The Council's treasury management debt and investment position is organised by the treasury management service in order to ensure adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through member reporting and through officer activity detailed in the Council's Treasury Management Practices. At the end of 2023/24 the Council's treasury position (**excluding borrowing by finance leases**) was as follows:

<b>DEBT PORTFOLIO</b>	31 March 2023	Rate/ Return	31 March 2024	Rate/ Return
<b>£000</b>	Principal		Principal	
Total debt (PWLB)	3,000	2.01%	3,000	2.01%
CFR (excluding Finance Leases)	22,529		23,231	
Over / (under) borrowing	(19,529)		(20,231)	
Total investments	6,984	1.50%	4,472	4.45%
Net debt/(investments)	(3,984)		(1,472)	



The cash balances and reserves have supported a large under borrowing position which is considered further in the borrowing strategy below.

The maturity structure of the debt portfolio was as follows:

	31 March 2023 actual	2023/24 Estimate limits	31 March 2024 actual
Under 12 months	£0m	60%	
12 months and within 24 months	£0m	85%	
24 months and within 5 years	£0.50m (16.67%)	100%	£0.50m (16.67%)
5 years and within 10 years	£0m	100%	
10 years and above	£2.50m (83.33%)	95%	£2.50m (83.33%)

All investments were for maturities less than one year

<b>INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO</b> <b>£000</b>	31 March 2023 Actual	31 March 2024 Actual
<b>Treasury investments</b>		
Banks	5,690	1,790
<b>TOTAL TREASURY INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>5,690</b>	<b>1,790</b>

During 2023/24, the Council made no material non-treasury investments in property with the sole purpose of generating an income stream.



## 4.4 The Strategy for 2023/24

**Investment strategy and control of interest rate risk** - Investment returns picked up throughout the course of 2023/24 as central banks, including the Bank of England, continued to respond to inflationary pressures that were not transitory, and realised that tighter monetary policy was called for.

Starting April at 4.25%, Bank Rate moved up in stepped increases of either 0.25% or 0.5%, reaching 5.25% by August. By the end of the financial year, no further increases were anticipated. Indeed, the market is pricing in a first cut in Bank Rate in either June or August 2024.

The upward sloping yield curve that prevailed throughout 2023/24 meant that local authorities continued to be faced with the challenge of proactive investment of surplus cash, and this emphasised the need for a detailed working knowledge of cash flow projections so that the appropriate balance between maintaining cash for liquidity purposes, and “laddering” deposits on a rolling basis to lock in the increase in investment rates as duration was extended, became an on-going feature of the investment landscape.

The more traditional investment options, such as specified investments (simple to understand, and less than a year in duration), have continued to be at the forefront of most local authority investment strategies, particularly given Money Market Funds have also provided decent returns in close proximity to Bank Rate for liquidity purposes.

While the Council has taken a prudent approach to investing surplus monies, it is also fully appreciative of changes to regulatory requirements for financial institutions in terms of additional capital and liquidity that came about in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/09. These requirements have provided a far stronger basis for financial institutions, with annual stress tests by regulators evidencing how institutions are now far more able to cope with extreme stressed market and economic conditions.



FINANCIAL YEAR TO QUARTER ENDED 28/03/2024							
	Bank Rate	SONIA	7 day	30 day	90 day	180 day	365 day
High	5.25	5.19	5.19	5.20	5.22	5.25	5.08
High Date	03/08/2023	28/03/2024	28/03/2024	26/03/2024	25/03/2024	22/03/2024	28/03/2024
Low	4.25	4.18	4.18	4.02	3.81	3.32	2.27
Low Date	03/04/2023	04/04/2023	11/04/2023	03/04/2023	03/04/2023	03/04/2023	03/04/2023
Average	5.03	4.96	4.96	4.93	4.84	4.64	3.93
Spread	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.18	1.41	1.94	2.80

**Borrowing strategy and control of interest rate risk** - During 2023/24, the Council maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need, (the Capital Financing Requirement), was not fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as although near-term investment rates were equal to, and sometimes higher than, long-term borrowing costs, the latter are expected to fall back through 2024 and 2025 as inflation concerns are dampened. The Council has sought to minimise the taking on of long-term borrowing at elevated levels (>4%) and has focused on a policy of internal and temporary borrowing.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution was adopted with the treasury operations. The Section 151 Officer therefore monitored interest rates in financial markets and adopted a pragmatic strategy based upon the following principles to manage interest rate risks

- if it had been felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in long and short-term rates, (e.g., due to a marked increase of risks around a relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long term borrowings would have been postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing would have been considered.
- if it had been felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long and short-term rates than initially expected, perhaps arising from the stickiness of inflation in the major developed economies, then the portfolio position would have been re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding would have been drawn whilst interest rates were lower than they were projected to be in the next few years.

Interest rate forecasts initially suggested further gradual rises in short, medium and longer-term fixed borrowing rates during 2023/24. Bank Rate had initially been forecast to peak at 4.5% but it is now expected to have peaked at 5.25%.



By January it had become clear that inflation was moving down significantly from its 40-year double-digit highs, and the Bank of England signalled in March 2024 that the next move in Bank Rate would be down, so long as upcoming inflation and employment data underpinned that view. Currently the CPI measure of inflation stands at 3.4% but is expected to fall materially below 2% over the summer months and to stay there in 2025 and 2026. Nonetheless, there remains significant risks to that central forecast, mainly in the form of a very tight labour market putting upward pressure on wages, and continuing geo-political inflationary risks emanating from the prevailing Middle East crisis and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

## HIGH/LOW/AVERAGE PWLB RATES FOR 2023/24

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
<b>Low</b>	4.65%	4.13%	4.20%	4.58%	4.27%
<b>Date</b>	06/04/2023	27/12/2023	06/04/2023	06/04/2023	05/04/2023
<b>High</b>	6.36%	5.93%	5.53%	5.96%	5.74%
<b>Date</b>	06/07/2023	07/07/2023	23/10/2023	23/10/2023	23/10/2023
<b>Average</b>	5.54%	4.99%	4.97%	5.34%	5.08%
<b>Spread</b>	1.71%	1.80%	1.33%	1.38%	1.47%

PWLB rates are based on gilt (UK Government bonds) yields through H.M.Treasury determining a specified margin to add to gilt yields. The main influences on gilt yields are Bank Rate, inflation expectations and movements in US treasury yields.

Since early 2022, yields have risen dramatically in all the major developed economies, first as economies opened post-Covid; then because of the inflationary impact of the war in Ukraine in respect of the supply side of many goods. In particular, rising cost pressures emanating from shortages of energy and some food categories have been central to inflation rising rapidly. Furthermore, at present the Bank of England is being challenged by persistent inflation that is exacerbated by very tight labour markets and high wage increases relative to what central banks believe to be sustainable.

Regarding PWLB borrowing rates, the various margins attributed to their pricing are as follows: -

- **PWLB Standard Rate** is gilt plus 100 basis points (G+100bps)
- **PWLB Certainty Rate** is gilt plus 80 basis points (G+80bps)



There is likely to be a fall in gilt yields and PWLB rates across the whole curve over the next one to two years as Bank Rate falls and inflation (on the Consumer Price Index measure) moves below the Bank of England's 2% target

## 4.5 Borrowing Outturn

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the CFR, excluding finance leases, was £23m. External borrowing was only £3m as our cash flow (working capital) and reserve balances enabled us to internally borrow the remaining £20m. Therefore no new external borrowing was undertaken during 2023/24. The strategy of internal borrowing allowed us to avoid taking on external borrowing during the year when borrowing rates were high.

The 2023/24 original budget prudently assumed a level of new external borrowing would be required to fund approved capital expenditure. As a result of lower spend and less external borrowing taken on, there was a saving on the interest payable budget of £300k. Part of this saving was transferred to our Treasury Management Reserve, which had a balance of £425k at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, to mitigate the impacts of higher interest rates when additional borrowing is undertaken in future financial years.

The Council has not borrowed more than, or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed.

No debt rescheduling was done during the year as it was not a viable option.

## 4.6 Investment Outturn

**Investment Policy** – the Council's investment policy is governed by DLUHC investment guidance, which was implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by the Council in February 2023. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties, and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps, bank share prices etc.).

The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.





**Resources** – the Council's cash balances comprise revenue and capital resources and cash flow monies. The Council's core cash resources comprised as follows:

Balance Sheet Resources (£000)	31 March 2023	31 March 2024
General Fund Balance	1,238	1,238
Earmarked reserves	10,616	9,578
Provisions	926	782
Usable capital receipts/grants	3,907	5,699
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,687</b>	<b>17,297</b>

**Investments held by the Council** - the Council maintained an average balance of circa £13m of internally managed funds. The internally managed funds earned £577,506 interest at an average rate of return of 4.45%. The comparable performance indicator is the 7 day backward looking SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Average) un compounded rate which was 4.96% for the year. The original budget assumption for 2023/24 was for £120,000 investment interest income.

## 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. As detailed in the report

## 6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. There are not any equalities implications anticipated as a result of this report, as the purpose of the report is to present the Council's financial position only.

## 7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. There are not any environmental implications anticipated as a result of this report, as the purpose of the report is to present the Council's financial position only.

## 8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. The Treasury management function supports the delivery of the Councils capital programme and ensures cash flows meets the day to day requirements for service delivery.



## 9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Part 3 Annex 1, para 1(c) – delegated power

9.2. Article 4.5.26 and Part 4 (Financial Procedure Rules) para 13.8 - referred power

## 10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

## 11. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

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

Adam Tape, Head of Governance

Date of Publication

**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**  
**Policy Development Work Programme**  
**For period July 2024- March 2025**

Committee/Date	Description of Decision	Contact Officer
2nd July 2024		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance and Financial Management Quarter 4 2023/24.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasury Management (Annual report)</li> </ul>	
July 2024 - (Special meeting) On a date to be agreed		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special meeting of the Committee to be held jointly? with members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Torridge District Council to discuss dentistry</li> </ul>	
5th September 2024		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance and Financial Management of Q1 for 2024/25</li> </ul>	
3rd October 2024		
October/November 2024 - (Special meeting) On a date to be agreed.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special meeting of the Committee to discuss GP Surgeries and Health inequality</li> </ul>	

Committee/Date	Description of Decision	Contact Officer
7th November 2024		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance and Financial Management Q2 for 2024/25.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasury Management (Mid Year Report).</li> </ul>	
5th December 2024		
9th January 2025		
<b>Policy Development Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service plans 2025/26</li> </ul>	
6th February 2025		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance and Financial Management Q3 of 2025/26</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Fees and Charges 2025-26</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue Budget 2025-26, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2030-31</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 Year Capital Strategy 2025 to 2035</li> </ul>	
13th March 2025		

Committee/Date	Description of Decision	Contact Officer
March 2025 (Special meeting) On a date to be agreed		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special meeting of the Committee to discuss Transport and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	
Potential items for future consideration by the Committee		

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