



Public Document Pack

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

K. Miles
Chief Executive.

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee will be held in the Barum Room - Brynsworthy on **MONDAY, 3RD MARCH, 2025 at 10.00 am.**

(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 Strategy and Resources Committee Councillor Clayton (Chair)

Councillors Bell, Crabb, Hunt, D Knight, R Knight, Lane, C Leaver, P Leaver, Maskell, Milton, Prowse and Wilkinson

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2025 (Pages 5 - 16)
(attached).
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 Interests.

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'

6. **Night Bus Service Funding** (Pages 17 - 24)
Report by the Lead EHO Environmental Protection (attached).
7. **Decarbonising North Devon Council's Vehicles** (Pages 25 - 32)
Report by Sustainability and Climate Officer (attached).

PART 'B' (CONFIDENTIAL RESTRICTED INFORMATION)

Nil.

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

21.02.25



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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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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.

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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 Strategy and Resources Committee held in the Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Monday, 3rd February 2025 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor Clayton (Chair)

Councillors D Knight, R Knight, Lane, C Leaver, P Leaver, Maskell and Prowse

Officers:

Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Governance, Head of PMO and Environmental Health and Housing, Head of Customer Focus, Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer and Finance Manager

Also Present in person:

Councillors Patrinos and Walker

Also Present virtually:

Councillor Milton

100. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell, Crabb, Hunt, Milton (who attended virtually) and Wilkinson.

101. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 JANUARY 2025

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2025 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chair advised that there would be a change of order to the agenda. Item 11, Annual Performance report to be considered ahead of item 6 on the agenda.

103. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.

There were no declarations of interest announced.

104. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the Annual Performance.

The Chief Executive highlighted the following:

- This would be a regular annual update reviewing the Council's performance against the Corporate Priorities.
- Five priorities had been agreed by Full Council in February 2024, these were:
 - Achieving Financial Security
 - Housing
 - Climate and Environment
 - Pride of Place and Prosperity; and
 - People Matter
- To achieve financial security, a balanced budget had been set, the commercialisation strategy had been reviewed and refreshed, financial plans were continually reviewed, and services had been reviewed to ensure they were efficient. Property had been purchased to help ease the burden of temporary accommodation placement costs, Green Lanes was providing an additional income and we were always looking at ways to share services such as the Joint Building Control services with Mid-Devon council.
- To achieve our Housing provision, £800,000 in funding had been secured to provide affordable housing in rural areas through a Community Land Trust.
- Land had been purchased in Braunton to help ensure affordable housing was available as part of a new development.
- To help residents in need of temporary accommodation, 13 properties had been purchased. £1.7 million had been secured from the Local Authority Housing Fund.
- £2 million funding had been secured for the Ilfracombe Healthy Homes project.
- 180 homes were to be developed on the site of the old Leisure Centre at Seven Brethren, 54 of these would be affordable.
- We continued to work with local landlords to improve property standards in the private rental sector.
- To achieve our Climate and Environment priorities, a new section of woodland had been planted at the community woodland near Frankmarsh.
- Exploring options to install solar panels on the Ilfracombe swimming pool and the North Devon Crematorium.
- Investment into the recycling facilities would ensure we can recycle more waste efficiently as well as offering the opportunity for third parties to recycle with us.
- Options to make the vehicle fleet more environmentally friendly were continually reviewed.
- Funding had been secured to carry out energy efficiency improvement works at Brynsworthy Environment Centre and the Landmark Theatre, Ilfracombe.
- The priority of Pride of Place and Prosperity had seen us complete the Ilfracombe Watersports centre.
- Further works were due for completion along Ilfracombe sea front in Spring 2025.

- The £12 million Barnstaple market quarter project was underway, this included the completed works of the refurbishment of the Pannier Market and Guildhall, the redevelopment of Queen Street and Bear Street car parks, the renovation of a grade II listed building at 36 Boutport Street into a cultural hub for North Devon was progressing.
- An economic strategy for North Devon and Torridge had been delivered.
- Reviewed and refreshed our strategies for car parking and asset management.
- To fulfil our People Matter priority a community hub was being developed in Green Lanes shopping centre, giving greater access for residents and extending our face-to-face offer.
- A behaviour framework, developed by staff, had been implemented and recruitment was undertaken using this framework. Working to achieve making North Devon Council an employer of choice.
- For the sized authority we are an impressive range of projects had been undertaken such as building a new leisure centre, to extending the museum, from redeveloping Seven Brethren and to the purchase of Green Lanes shopping centre.
- Appendix A of the report detailed the achievements made with case studies.

RESOLVED that the Annual Performance Report be approved and released for community engagement.

105. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT Q3 2024-25

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding Performance and Financial Management Quarter 3 of 2024/25.

The Finance Manager highlighted the following:

- The revenue budget for 2024/25 was approved at Council on 21 February 2024 at £16,432,690.
- As at 31 December 2024, the latest forecast net budget was £16,423,690, which produced a budget surplus of £9,000. Details are shown in “Appendix A – Variations in the Revenue Budget”
- There was still pressure on the Temporary Accommodation budget and we were funding the anticipated additional cost of £158,000 from in year Temporary Accommodation grant.
- As part of the previous year outturn we contributed an additional £250,000 into the insurance reserve to mitigate against higher costs in 2024/25 and it was planned to use the full £347,500 balance to offset increased insurance premiums in this financial year. We have increased the 2025/26 budget to help mitigate the estimated increased costs.
- The original budget for 2024/25 included a forecast to achieve £250,000 worth of salary vacancy savings. The current position forecasted we would achieve £263,000 based on known vacancies to date. The £250,000 forecast was an estimate of the natural savings that would be achieved due to the timeline it took to recruit for vacant posts and new post holders to start.

- The additional costs of £179,000 for Waste and Recycling transport and SFS lease costs had been mostly offset set in year by £170,000 from the SFS vehicle reserve. The variances were due to the increased costs of borrowing within the finance lease payments combined with an increase in vehicle purchase prices that SFS have experienced.
- Pay and Display income had continued to follow the 2023/24 trend of slightly lower volumes, combined with the effect of the capital works being undertaken at Queen Street car park albeit we saw an increase in car park income at Green Lanes as a result of this displacement. We are now forecasting an overall £200,000 variance for the year.
- Building Control income was still forecast to be £70,000 down on budget, but due to a number of recent larger planning applications we were now forecasting planning income to be in line with the original budget.
- Recycling Sales had seen a downturn in quarter 3, however this was still up on the original budget and we would continue to monitor the income closely. We were expecting income receivable from recycling sales to increase once the new baler was operational.
- We were now estimating income growth from Business Rates to be an additional £200,000.
- As at 1 April 2024 the Collection Fund reserve balance held was £1,790,180. This earmarked reserve was created to deal with the timing impacts of the Collection Fund (Business Rates), which ensured the revenue budget was not unduly affected in the year the taxes were collected. Collection Fund deficits/surpluses were reversed out to bring the revenue account back to the budgeted figure for the year; the deficits/surpluses were recovered/distributed in the following financial years. This reserve included a £1,246,078 balance that would be utilised in 2024/25 £1,012,856 and 2025/26 £233,222 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 £544,099 protection against future volatility.
- At the 31 December 2024 total external borrowing, excluding finance leases, was £6,000,000. The timing of any future borrowing was dependent on how the authority managed its treasury activity.
- Due to project spend slippages in the Capital programme and using the cash flow balances for internal borrowing, we were estimating a reduction in borrowing costs of £152,000 and additional interest receivable of £40,000 over and above the original budget.
- The 2024/25 Capital Programme was attached as “Appendix D – Capital Programme 2024/25” of the report.
- The Budget and Financial Framework report to Full Council 21 February 2024 outlined the Capital Programme for the 2024/25 financial year of £20,258,368. Project underspends from 2023/24 and further variations totalling £2,493,868 were approved as part of the performance and financial management report to Strategy and Resources Committee, to produce a revised Q2 2024/25 Capital Programme of £22,752,236.
- Variations of (£2,562,066) were proposed to the 2024/25 Capital programme as set out in section 4.4.3 of the report.

- The overall revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 taking into account the budget variations above was £35,841,153 and broken down as follows:
 - 2024/25 £20,190,170
 - 2025/26 £14,439,018
 - 2026/27 £1,211,965
- Actual capital spend for 2024/25 as at 31 December 2024 was £10,618,860.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) The actions being taken to ensure that performance was at the desired level be noted;
- (b) The contributions to/from earmarked reserves be approved (as detailed in section 4.2 of the report);
- (c) The movement on the Strategic Contingency Reserve (as detailed in section 4.3 of the report) be noted;
- (d) Funds be released for the capital schemes listed in section 4.4.12 of the report;
- (e) The paragraphs dealing with Treasury Management (as detailed in section 4.5 of the report), and Debt Management (as detailed in sections 4.6 and 4.7 of the report) be noted;
- (f) The Corporate Plan, Key Results and Performance Indicators, (as detailed in section 5 of the report) be noted; and

RECOMMENDED that:

- (g) Council approve the variations to the Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27, (as detailed in section 4.4.3 of the report).

106. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR SERVICES 2025-26

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the Review of Fees and Charges for Services 2025-26.

The Finance Manager highlighted the following:

- This year the guidance was to increase fees and charges by 3%, although some fees were set by statute and those would be set nationally. Other variations to the 3% increase were set out in sections 4.3 to 4.8 of the report.
- Building Control fees had been raised by an average of 13.42% and rounded to the nearest pound, this was to ensure the revenue income recouped the actual cost of providing the service, were competitive in the sector and provided the Partnership with protection against additional temporary staffing costs that were likely to be experienced during the year, as detailed in Appendix B of the report.
- Land Charges fees had been set to recoup the cost of providing the service, the recommended fees for the land charges service was estimated to recover all the costs and break even, as detailed in Appendix D of the report.
- The majority of Environmental Health and Housing services were set by statute or set to recover costs. A minor exception to this was that there was

no planned increase on charges for “Health and Food Certificates” as detailed in Appendix E of the report.

- Cemeteries fees were set to increase by 6%, (3% inflationary uplift, plus an additional 3%). This was to enable the fees to be brought closer in line with comparative figures around the County, as detailed in Appendix F of the report.
- The Garden Waste service charge was to remain unchanged at £60, due to the £5 increases in the previous two financial years (2023/24 and 2024/25), as detailed in Appendix J of the report.
- Street Name Plates had had a simplification of its charging structure, including an uplift to reflect no inflationary increase in the previous seven years. Fees were now set to recoup the cost of providing the service, as detailed in Appendix P of the report.
- The net revenue changes from the above charges was estimated to produce £25,000 of additional income, which had been included within the draft 2025/26 revenue budget, for consideration as an item included within this agenda.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That Council approve the 3% increase, (some rounded), in fees for the 2025/26 financial year, for the following services:
- I. Allotments – as detailed at Appendix A of the report.
 - II. Trade Waste – as detailed at Appendix C of the report.
 - III. Sports Pitches – as detailed at Appendix G of the report.
 - IV. Pannier Market – as detailed at Appendix H of the report.
 - V. Bulky Household Waste Collections – as detailed at Appendix I of the report.
 - VI. Pre-application Planning Fees – as detailed at Appendix K of the report.
 - VII. Dog Waste – as detailed at Appendix K of the report.
 - VIII. Event Licence – as detailed at Appendix M of the report.
 - IX. Contractor Licence – as detailed at Appendix N of the report.
 - X. Modification of S106 agreements – as detailed at Appendix O of the report; and
- (b) That Council approve to vary the remaining fees by the elements outlined in section 4.3 to 4.8 of the report.

107. REVENUE BUDGET 2025-26, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-26 TO 2030-31

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive (circulated previously) regarding the Revenue Budget 2025-26, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2030-31.

The Lead Member for Resources and Commercialisation addressed the Committee to give a brief introduction as follows:

- We had achieved a balance budget.
- Garden waste charges were to remain the same.

- We provided a very affordable bulky waste service.
- The National Insurance changes to employer's National Insurance had produced an additional £325,000 cost to the Council.
- Green Lanes shopping centre continued to provide an income.
- It had to be assumed going forwards that there would be no increase in funding from Central Government so the Council would need to find more ways to become financially self-sufficient.

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive gave a presentation, and highlighted the following:

- The Government's Finance Policy Statement issued in November 2024 guaranteed that no council would see a cash reduction in its Core Spending Power (CSP). The increase for local government was 3.2% in real terms.
- All councils were to receive additional income from Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging payments.
- Confirmed £233m new funding for homelessness prevention – also consolidating main rough sleeping and single homelessness grants into a single grant outside of settlement.
- Council tax increases would remain at 2.99% or £5 (whichever was higher).
- Rural Services Delivery grant was to be abolished – this was currently paid to 50 district councils and worth £15m in total.
- Services grant would also be abolished – this was currently paid to all districts and worth £3.5m in total.
- A new £600m recovery grant – targeted councils with highest levels of deprivation – would likely only be open to a minority of districts.
- Councils would be compensated for the cost of the Employers National Insurance increase – for directly employed staff only.
- There would be a fundamental reform to the local government funding model after 2025/26.
- Government would launch a consultation in December on a new approach to allocation funding (Fair Funding) and a further technical consultation on resetting business rates in January.
- The Core Spending Power total for England was 6%. By region, the South West Core Spending Power was 5.4% and by authority type North Devon Council, being a Shire District, the Core Spending Power was however only 0.3%. In comparison, the CPI (Consumer Price Index) inflation to November 2024 was 2.6%.
- The draft budget has assumed an increase on Council Tax of 2.99%. The overall Council Tax Increase of £708,000 was broken down as £223,000 from the 2.99% increase and £485,000 from increase in tax base (of which £353,000 came from the second homes premium and £132,000 tax base).
- The Business Rates draft budget figure came from the Retained Growth (made up of £2m North Devon Business rates growth, £680,000 Renewable Energy Schemes and £350,000 Devon pool retained income).
- Giving an overall figure of £3.030m factored into the draft budget.
- Revenue Support Grant and Baseline Funding – additional £49,000
- New Homes Bonus – actual award £705,000 (£355,000 more than 2024-25).
- Rural Services Delivery Grant – removed (£421,000 less than 2024-25).

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- Services Grant – removed (£21,000 less than 2024-25).
- Funding Guarantee – removed (£1,507,000 less than 2024-25).
- New Recovery Grant – additional £267,000
- New Funding Floor Grant – additional £988,000.
- The overall net impact of less Government funding = -£290,000 reduction.
- Government’s consultation on the Finance Settlement ended 15 January 2025.
- North Devon Council’s consultation response could be seen in Appendix F of the agenda report.
- There was an increase in the gap of funding per head of population between rural and urban authorities of £166.19
- The Extended Producer Responsibility aimed to make ‘producers’ responsible for the cost of collection, managing and recycling of packaging and incentivise them to make their products recyclable by modulating fees based on the recyclability of products. It also aimed to reduce unnecessary packaging, increase quality and reduce litter.
- The Government had made an announcement on ‘Simpler Recycling’ services due to start March 2026.
- New burdens funding to be provided for food waste collections.
- The provisional Extended Producer Responsibility payment allocation for North Devon was £1,178,000
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (2024-2030) showed a budget gap year on year:

| Years | 2024-25 £m | 2025-26 £m | 2026-27 £m | 2027-28 £m | 2028-29 £m | 2029-30 £m |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Budget gap/(surplus) | 0 | 0.487 | 2.945 | 3.306 | 3.044 | 3.263 |

- Key elements already factored into the above forecasts were:
 - Pay increases for 2025-26 at 3% and 2026-27 2% and ongoing
 - Ongoing 2.99% increase in council tax level
 - 2025-26 inclusion of 100% premium on second homes
 - Review of fees and charges on car parks in 2025-26 and 2028-29
 - Assumed transfer of all public conveniences to town and parishes by the end of 2025-26
 - Government Funding review assumed for 2026-27
- The summary position for 2025-26:

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Medium Term Financial Gap (February 2024) | £487,000 |
| Net impact Employers National insurance increase 25/26 | £323,000 |
| Employee costs (pay award 24/25, other NI changes 24/25) | £281,000 |
| Increase in Finance Lease costs (vehicles) | £140,000 |
| Increased Insurance costs | £257,000 |
| Phased transfer of Public Conveniences to parishes | £155,000 |
| Government funding changes | £164,000 |
| Extended Producer Responsibility grant | (£1,178,000) |
| Revised 2025-26 Budget gap to bridge | £629,000 |

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|--|------------|
| Additional Planning Fee income (price change) | (£120,000) |
| Growth in Recycling sales material income | (£54,000) |
| Proposed 3% increase on fees and charges | (£25,000) |
| Re-profiled Borrowing costs (timing of external borrowing and interest payments) | (£96,000) |
| Use of additional grant funding to offset revenue spend | (£115,000) |
| Additional Business Rates income | (£30,000) |
| Use of Budget Management reserve | (£164,000) |
| Other | (£25,000) |
| Budget gap for 2025-26 | £0 |

- Appendix A, of the agenda report, detailed the breakdown of the North Devon net budget of £18.073m for 2025-26.
- Appendix B, of the agenda report, detailed the breakdown of Grants. New for 2025-26 was the North Devon Council central fund from the Community Lottery of £12,000.
- Appendix C, of the agenda report, detailed the breakdown of Reserves.
- The General Fund balance forecast at 31 March 2026 was £1.238m, which equated to 7% of the net budget. The recommended level was 5% -10%.
- Earmarked reserves were forecast at 31 March 2026 at £5.727m
- In compliance with Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Financial Officer assured Members of:
 - The robustness of the estimates; and
 - The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- Appendix D, of the agenda report, detailed the refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2025-2031:

| Years | 2025-26 £m | 2026-27 £m | 2027-28 £m | 2028-29 £m | 2029-30 £m | 2030-31 £m |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Budget gap/(surplus) | 0 | 1.558 | 2.804 | 3.074 | 3.629 | 4.161 |

- Key factors assumed included the recent decisions not to fully compensate local councils for the increased National Insurance contributions and the cumulative impact of a 0% future Core Spending Power.
- Appendix E, of the agenda report, detailed the Draft Capital Programme for the years 2024-25 to 2026-27 of £35.841m.
- This was funded by:
 - External and Internal Borrowing (£13.991m)
 - Capital receipts (£0.320m)
 - External grants and Contributions (£19.546m)
 - Reserves (£1.984m)
 - **Total funding (£35.841m)**
- The following areas of risk could affect the financial plans:
 - Government Grants
 - Key areas of income
 - Capital receipts

- Savings plans
- Increase in demand for services
- Localisation council tax support
- Business rates retention
- Welfare reform
- Devolution, this was a newly added risk.
- The Budget and Council Tax setting would be considered at the next Full Council meeting scheduled for 26 February 2025.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the latest forecast for Budget 2024-25 and the proposed contributions to earmarked reserves be noted;
- (b) That the Chief Financial Officer's assurance on the adequacy of the reserves and the robustness of the budget, as seen in paragraph 4.1.4.7 of the report, be noted;
- (c) That the Chief Financial Officer's highlighted areas of risk identified with the budget process, as seen at paragraph 4.1.4.8 and section 4.3 of the report be noted;
- (d) That the latest Medium Term Financial forecast for 2025-2031, as detailed in section 4.1.5 of the report be noted; and

RECOMMENDED to Full Council:

- (e) That there be an increase of 2.99% (£6.29) in the level of Council Tax charged by North Devon Council for 2025-26 with a Band D Council Tax level of £216.68;
- (f) The actions identified in sections 4.1.2 to 4.1.4 of the report, which are required to ensure a balanced budget is achieved and, therefore, recommend to Full Council to approve the 2025-26 General Revenue Account Budget;
- (g) To adopt the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-2031, as detailed in section 4.1.5 of the report, as part of the Policy Framework; and
- (h) The Capital Programme 2024-25 to 2026-27, as detailed in section 4.2 of the report, be approved.

108. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2025/26

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Governance (circulated previously) regarding the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025-26.

The Head of Governance highlighted the following:

- This Treasury Strategy covers the borrowing and investment requirements of the Council for the year 2025-26.
- In terms of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), the Treasury Management Strategy ensured the Council was able to meet its borrowing needs to cover the capital programme plans.
- It was estimated that the borrowing requirement (CFR) at the end of the financial year 2024-25 would be circa £34m increasing to approximately £40m for the year 2025-26.

- To cover the £40m CFR it was projected to borrow £22m through external borrowing, £5m borrowing through finance lease arrangements, for our vehicle fleet and finally £13m through our own reserves and cash flows (internal borrowing).
- Current external borrowing for 2024-25, excluding finance leases, stood at £8m but an additional £7m short-term borrowing was being projected by year-end to cover the approved capital costs.
- Any slippages to the capital programme expenditure and or additional capital receipts or grants received would reduce the amount of actual borrowing undertaken.
- The authorised limit for 2025-26 for the Council to borrow was set to £42.5m.
- In terms of our investment strategy, there were no plans to change the way we currently invested and section 7.1 of the report detailed the guidance the Council adheres to in regard to the investment policy.
- The Council's investment priorities remain as:
 1. Security,
 2. Portfolio liquidity; and
 3. Yield or return

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Statement 2025-26, including the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2025-26 to 2027-28 be approved.

109. 10 YEAR CAPITAL STRATEGY 2025 TO 2035

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Governance (circulated previously) regarding the 10-Year Capital Strategy 2025 to 2035.

The Head of Governance highlighted the following:

- The 10-Year Capital Strategy looked at the Council's long-term sustainability of its capital ambitions, affordability and risk management.
- Business as usual projects such as vehicle fleet replacement and ICT improvements impacted on our long-term borrowing plans.
- The Strategy covered the next ten years and the projection for our Capital Financing Requirement was estimated to remain at circa £37m in 2034/35.
- This would be funded by £23.5m external borrowing, £7m financial lease borrowing and £6.5m internal reserves and cash flow (internal borrowing).
- The cost of borrowing was set to remain at around £3m a year over the long-term period of this forecast.

RECOMMENDED that Full Council approve the Capital Strategy 2025-26 to 2034-35.

110. URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ATTACHED)

The Committee noted the urgent decision that had been made by the Deputy Chief Executive in accordance with paragraph 3.45, Annex 2, Part 3 of the Constitution (circulated previously) regarding the Off Street Parking Orders 2025.

Chair

The meeting ended at 11.31 am

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



North Devon Council

Report Date: Monday, 3 March 2025

Topic: Night Bus Service Funding

Report by: Darren Hale, Lead Environmental Health Officer Environmental Protection

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. A night bus service has operated by Stage Coach from July to December 2024, which offers a reduced fare of £2.00. This is supported by partner agencies of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPPC), Devon County Council, North Devon District Council and Torrington District Council. Devon and Cornwall Police have negotiated the agreement with Stage Coach and calculated the proportions due to each partner to support the project.

1.2. North Devon Council's element of the support funding, to date, has been provided in 2023 and 2024 from small savings and underspend within other budgets. There is no specific budget to fund this scheme. The reliance on underspends and use of different budgets is not sustainable and puts the scheme locally at risk if funding is not found.

1.3. In order to guarantee the support for the service it is essential to agree a specific and regular budget provision and also review the value and cost of the service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. Members approve the funding of the North Devon District element of the night bus service between Bideford, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.

2.2. Members approve £3,000 from Strategic Contingency Reserve to fund the scheme.

2.3. Members give delegated power to the Head of Environmental Health and Housing to consider any continuation of the agreement and the service beyond 2025 subject to funding being found from existing budgets.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. To secure a commitment to financially support the night bus in future years, until such time as it becomes self-sustainable.

4. REPORT

4.1. The community safety partnership (CSP) has a number of key priorities, two of which are pertinent to this report.

- Reducing, Serious violence and specifically includes Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Safer Streets & Anti-Social Behaviour



- 4.2. To support these priorities, a Saturday night / Sunday morning bus route between Bideford, Barnstaple and Ilfracombe has been provided by Stage Coach to ensure that safe routes exist between these towns.
- 4.3. This route was developed by Devon and Cornwall Police who have negotiated with Stage Coach to provide a service. To ensure the route is economically viable and is priced to encourage its use, the 21 bus has been supported by additional funding from Devon and Cornwall Police, North Devon District and Torridge District Councils.
- 4.4. For 2025/26 the northern Devon councils' have agreed contributions of £2,500 for Torridge District and £3000 for North Devon District. North Devon Council area is slightly more due to extending the Night Bus to Ilfracombe.
- 4.5. The route has operated since October 23 through to New Years' Eve 2024, which has involved two pilot exercises, initially between Bideford and Barnstaple, then extended to include Ilfracombe. This captures the Christmas and New Year period where the night-time economy is generally busier. The fare has been set at £2 to encourage the use of this service as opposed to other less safe options.
- 4.6. Although there are many other factors that effects the night-time economy this service would have some positive benefits that are supported by the evidence of the volumes of use at appendix A to this report.
- 4.7. By looking at one example at appendix A, it can be seen that the bus is transporting a relatively high number of passengers at key times during the early hours, which typically is when the main bars and clubs close. This has several benefits on community safety. Most passengers will be aware of the departure times and will leave the premises and make their way straight to the pickup location, which avoids crowds hanging around in the streets. Groups of individuals can cause disturbance to local residents and increase the risk of wider anti-social behaviour and or violence. Removing larger numbers of people quickly and at known times will assist with more efficient dispersal at the end of the night. This also impacts positively on the general perception of safety in the area.
- 4.8. After a night out and with the addition of alcohol, those taking advantage of the night-time economy are more at risk of violence and at particular risk are women and girls. The night bus provides an alternative to choosing less wise options such as accepting a lift with strangers. Groups of friends can become separated and even where there was a pre-arranged transport these plans can change and lone individuals are left attempting to find an alternative route home.
- 4.9. At peak and or busy times there may be limited taxis available or there may be a considerable wait. Whilst taxis are well regulated and generally a safe option they may be prohibitively expensive option for longer distances.



4.10. The bus route would not be economically viable for the provider and therefore requires support of partners financially to ensure it continues to operate and is priced at a level to encourage its use.

4.11. The contract for the provision of the bus is negotiated by Devon and Cornwall Police. Financial support is then shared between relevant partners based on the proportion of route / distances etc.

4.12. The goal is to make the night bus service self-sustainable in the future and not rely on the support funding. Devon and Cornwall Police will work closely with Stage Coach on how this can be achieved. This could include increasing the fare to make it viable but yet still encourage the use.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The contribution of £3000 will come from the Strategic Contingency Reserve.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. None

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. The use of the bus will significantly reduce the number of car journeys and therefore be positive.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

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

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda:

8.1.2. Improving customer focus and/or

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Save as provided in paragraph 9.2 below, the decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made by this Committee pursuant to delegated powers provided in Part 3 Annex 1 paragraph 1

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

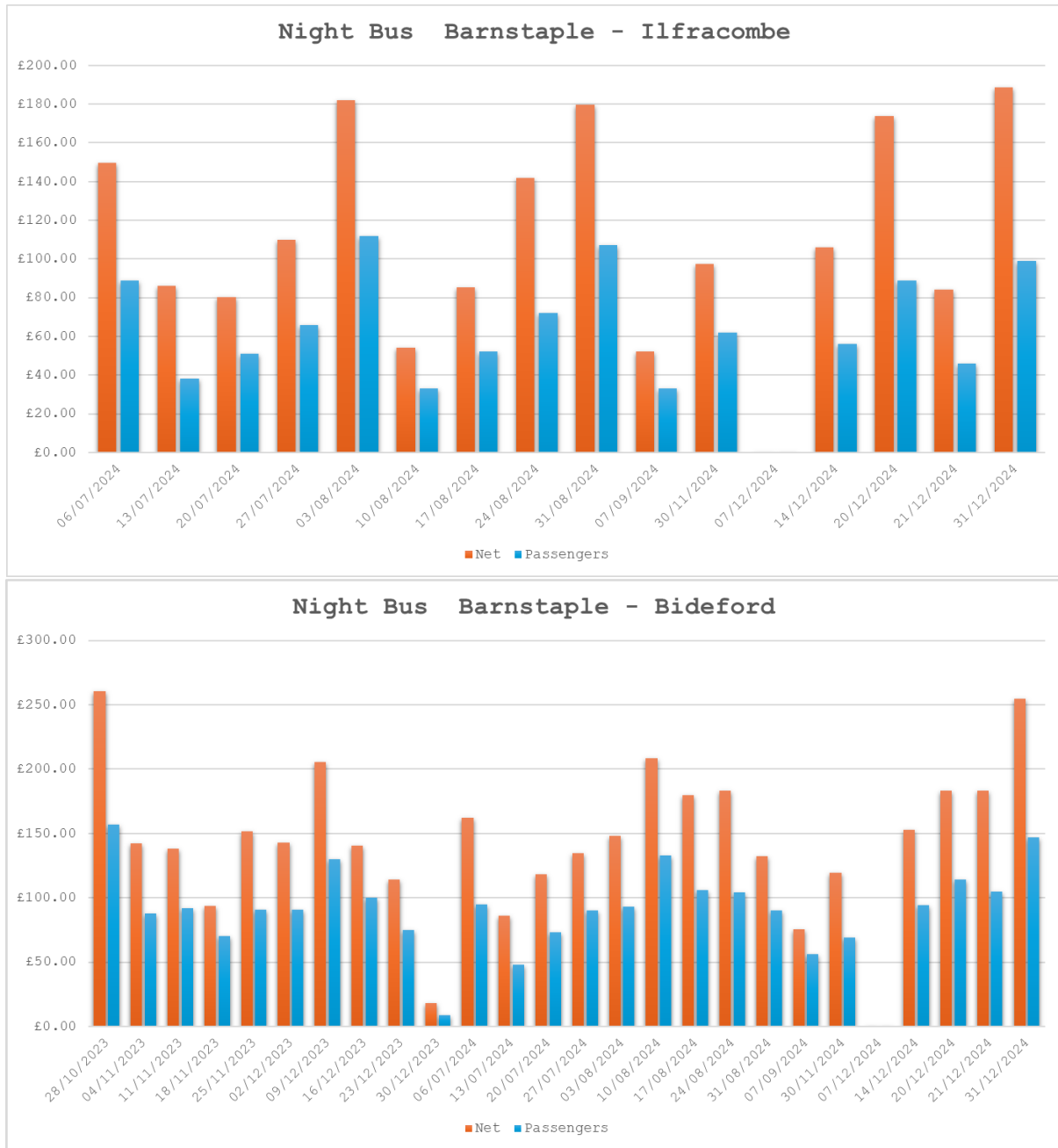
The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
None



12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Ken Miles (Chief Executive), Nina Lake (Head of Environmental Health and Housing), Jon Triggs (director of Finance).

Night Bus Usage 2023/24

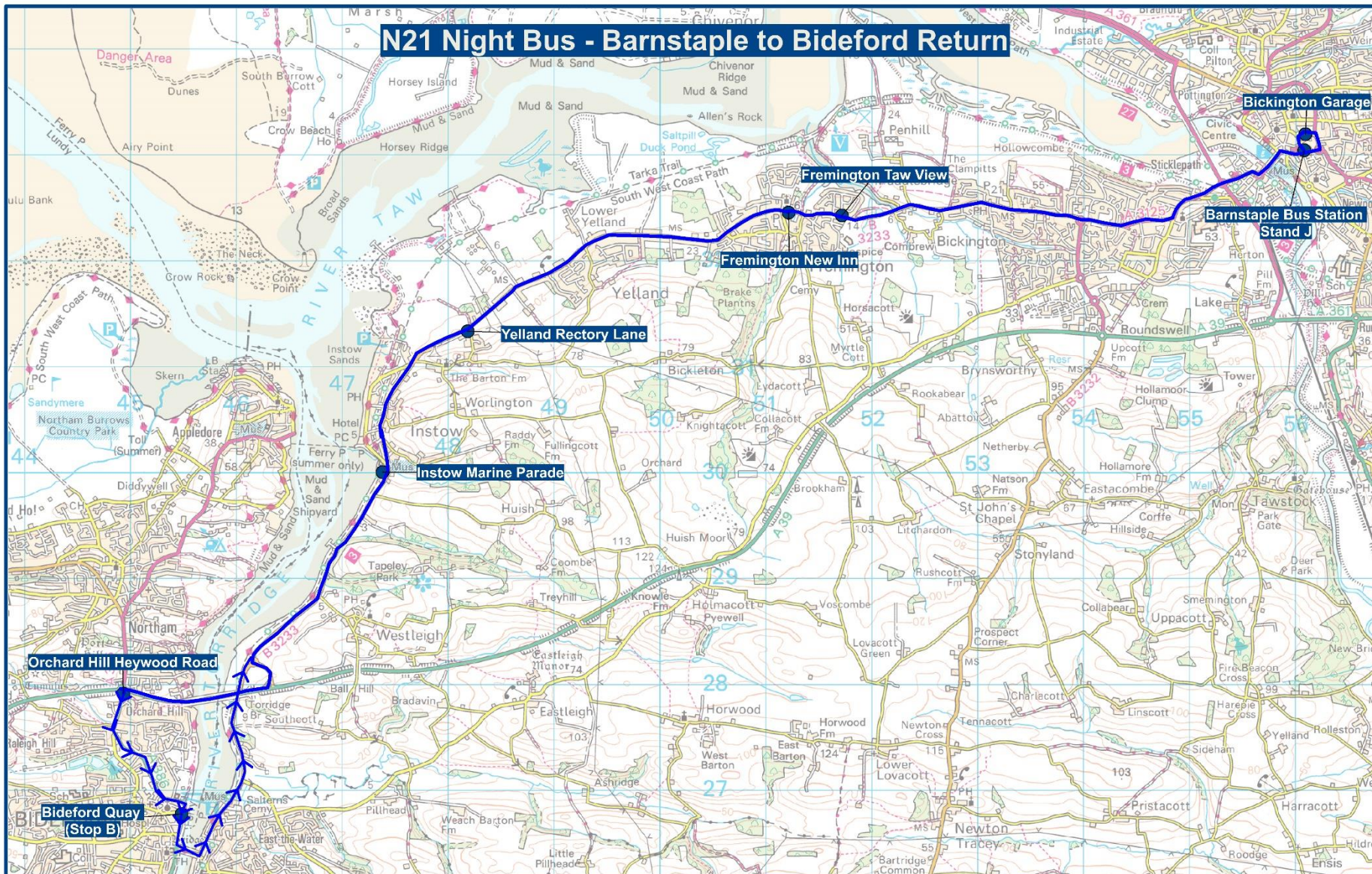


Example 31st December 2024 Route 21 Use

| ETM route code | Day of op (mon-fri, sat, sun) | Departure location | Departure time (am) | Total net | Total passengers |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 21 | Sat | Barnstaple | 12:00 | £9.50 | 6 |
| 21 | Sat | Bideford | 12:30 | £39.50 | 20 |
| 21 | Sat | Barnstaple | 01:00 | £36.00 | 21 |
| 21 | Sat | Bideford | 01:30 | £26.00 | 14 |
| 21 | Sat | Barnstaple | 02:00 | £74.00 | 43 |
| 21 | Sat | Bideford | 02:30 | £0.00 | 3 |
| 21 | Sat | Barnstaple | 03:00 | £50.00 | 28 |
| 21 | Sat | Bideford | 03:30 | - | - |
| 21 | Sat | Barnstaple | 04:00 | £19.50 | 12 |
| Total | | | | £254.50 | 147 |

| ETM route code | Day of op (mon-fri, sat, sun) | Departure location | Departure time (am) | Total net | Total passengers |
|----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 21b | Sat | Barnstaple | 12:30 | £50.00 | 25 |
| 21b | Sat | Ilfracombe | 01:10 | £32.00 | 18 |
| 21b | Sat | Barnstaple | 02:00 | £45.50 | 23 |
| 21b | Sat | Ilfracombe | 02:40 | £3.10 | 3 |
| 21b | Sat | Barnstaple | 03:30 | £56.00 | 29 |
| 21b | Sat | Ilfracombe | 04:05 | £2.00 | 1 |
| Total | | | | £188.60 | 99 |

N21 Night Bus - Barnstaple to Bideford Return



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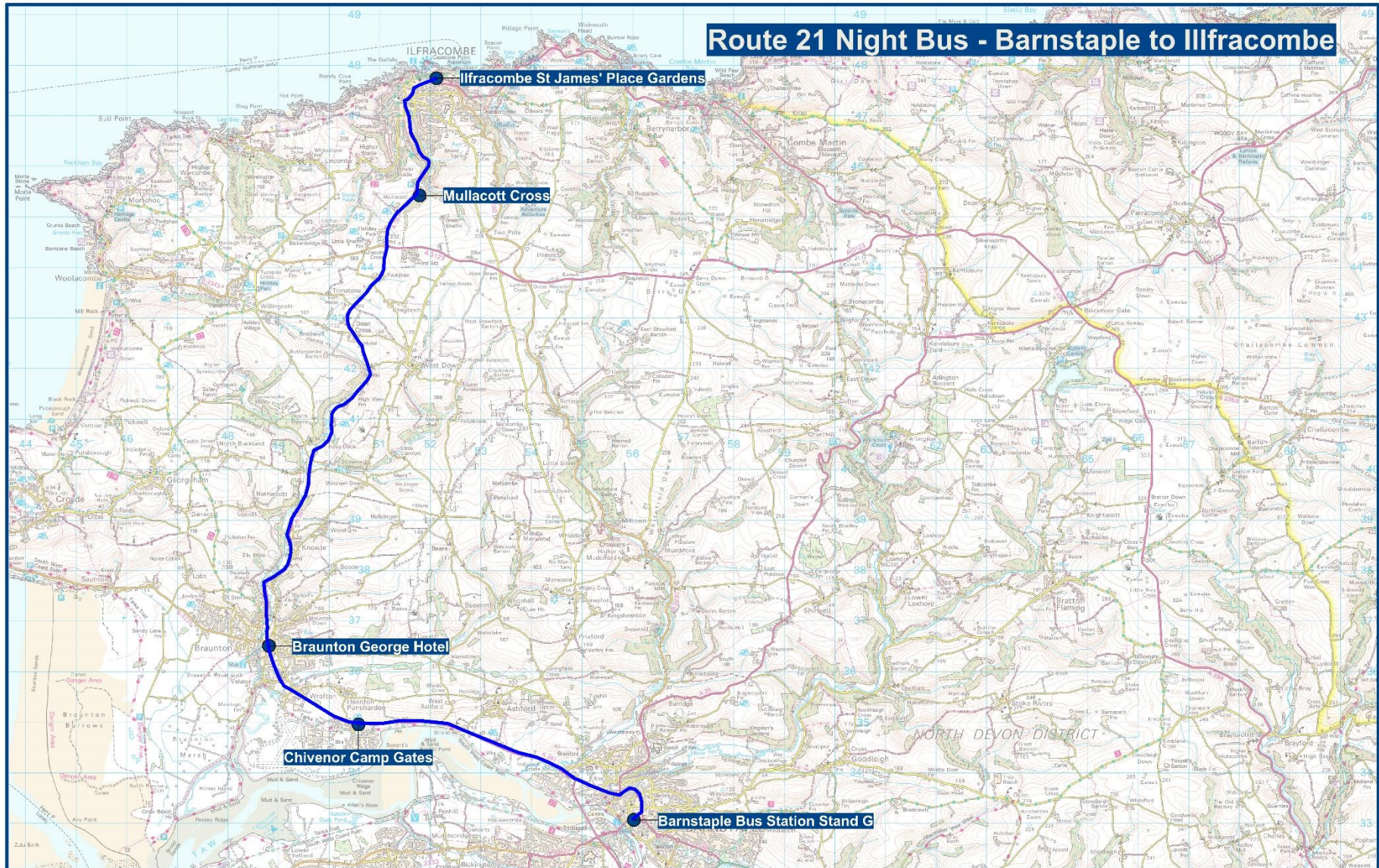


Map Paper Size: A3
Map Scale: 1:250k

Map Created By
Police Staff 6476 CLARK

Date Created: 03/06/2024





Route 21 Night Bus - Barnstaple to Ilfracombe

Ilfracombe St James' Place Gardens

Mullacott Cross

Braunton George Hotel

Chivenor Camp Gates

Barnstaple Bus Station Stand G

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Map Paper Size: A3
Map Scale: 1:250k

Map Created By
Police Staff 6476 CLARK



Date Created: 03/06/2024

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North Devon Council

Report Date: Monday, 3 March 2025

Topic: Decarbonising North Devon Council's Vehicles

Report by: Donna Sibley, Sustainability and Climate Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Our planet's climate is changing and warming is accelerating. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published their sixth assessment report in March 2023. It states that human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850–1900 in 2011–2020. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred. Human-caused climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people.

1.2. Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all. We must make rapid, deep and immediate cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

1.3. North Devon Council has declared a climate emergency, and made a commitment to be net zero carbon as an organisation by 2030. Our carbon footprint for the Council for 2023/2024 shows that our fleet contributes about a third of our total CO₂ emissions.

1.4. The majority of emissions from the Council's fleet comes from our Waste & Recycling vehicles.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That the contents of this report are noted.

2.2. That we will continue to pursue replacement of small and medium vehicles (up to 3500kg) with electric where cost savings can be demonstrated over the lifetime of the vehicle.

2.3. That we will not pursue replacement of large vehicles (over 3500kg) with electric at present due to costs.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. This report sets out the current carbon footprint for our Waste & Recycling service and the plan that the Climate Action Team has put forward to reduce emissions in the future with some indicative costs.

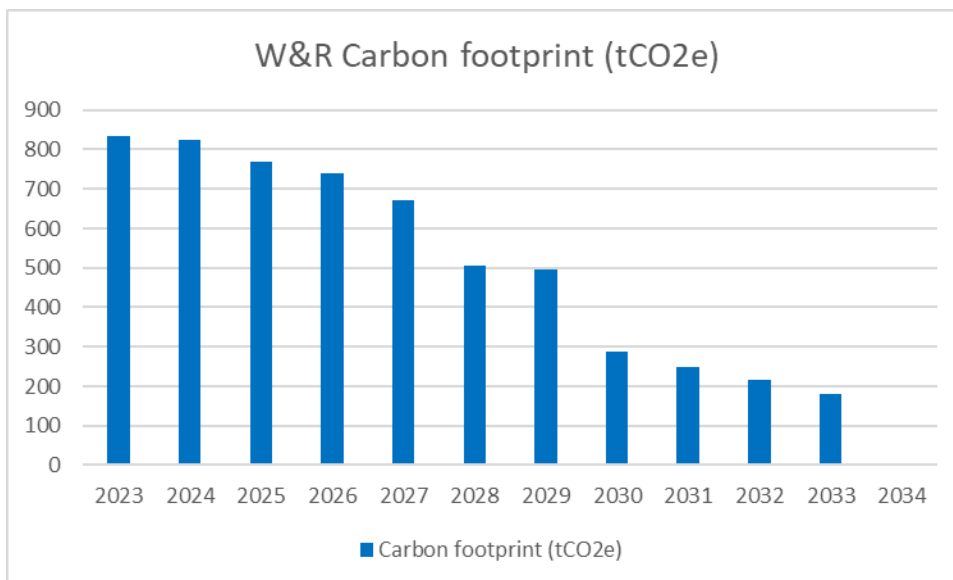


4. REPORT

4.1. In 2023/2024 North Devon Council had a carbon footprint of 3425 tonnes CO2 equivalent (tCO2e) of which approximately quarter of emissions can be attributed to the Waste & Recycling fleet.

The Waste & Recycling Service has trialled a number of electric vehicles; we have found that current EVs are a suitable replacement for small and medium vehicles (up to 3500kg) and that over the lifetime of the vehicle there is a saving to the Council due to reduced fuel costs. Current EVs are not a suitable replacement for our HGVs (over 3500kg). This is due to vehicle range the electric HGV was not able to complete the waste collection round on one battery charge.

We lease our Waste & Recycling fleet from SFS, with a vehicle replacement schedule in place to ensure that our vehicles are replaced before costly repairs are regularly incurred and to schedule regular maintenance, saving money by not making costly repairs towards the end of a vehicle's life. There is a cost penalty for switching diesel to electric vehicles before the lease period expires so it has been suggested we switch to electric vehicles as the current lease ends. The graph below shows the potential path to decarbonisation if we were to follow this route:



5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Estimated costs for replacing our current vehicles with diesel vehicles is £9,485,000 and with electric vehicles is £18,669,000. There will be a saving in diesel which currently costs the service approximately £644,000 per annum in



total, this saving would therefore increase over the years as more electric vehicles are introduced.

We do not have provision for EV charging for HGVs. Exeter City Council have installed a solar farm and HGV charging at their Water Lane Depot at a cost of £3.5M. At present Exeter City Council have three electric HGV's but are not replacing their entire fleet at present because of the additional, upfront costs of replacing existing diesel vehicles with electric.

At NDC, one 26 tonne diesel vehicle is due for replacement in October this year in line with our replacement schedule. The approximate cost of replacing this with electric is set out below:

| | |
|--|--|
| Dennis Eagle with Bin Lift £62,860 + VAT per year | Dennis Eagle eCollect with Bin Lift £108,992 + VAT per year |
| Diesel costs approx. £23,000 per annum | Electric HGV charging infrastructure and cost unknown |

The cost of leasing this one electric vehicle will be an additional £162,000 over the 7-year lease period. This additional cost figure includes the estimated saving on diesel costs. Replacing this vehicle with an electric alternative would result in a carbon saving of 378 tonnes CO2 equivalent.

In 2026 and 2027 there will be opportunities to replace smaller vehicles with EVs; we will bring a paper to this Committee setting out the costs of doing so for Councillor Decision.

5.2 The cost of leasing this one electric vehicle will cost at least an additional £162,000 over the 7-year lease period. Please note that costs of installing an HGV charging point at Brynsworthy Environmental Centre (BEC) are unknown at present. We are liaising with National Grid to understand what infrastructure works may be needed at BEC if we are to replace our existing heating system with an air source heat pump, install EV charges for an electric fleet and have solar panels on site. A further report will follow when future infrastructure requirements and costs are confirmed.



6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. No impact on protected characteristics as a result of these recommendations; Equality Impact Assessments will be completed when further purchase of electric vehicles is brought to this Committee.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. There is a carbon saving of 54 tCO₂e per annum, if this vehicle is replaced with electric, which is approximately 1.6% of the Council's total annual carbon emissions.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

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

8.1.1. The commercialisation agenda: not applicable

8.1.2. Improving customer focus: not applicable; and/or

8.1.3. Regeneration or economic development: not applicable.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Save as provided in paragraph 9.2 below, the decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made by this Committee pursuant to delegated powers provided in Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph 1.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: North Devon Council carbon footprint 2023 2024.

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Donna Sibley, Sustainability & Climate Officer.

Equality Impact Assessment

Service Area: Environmental Enhancement

Head of Service: Mark Kentell

Lead Officer: Donna Sibley

Date of Assessment: 12/02/2025

Name of policy/function/project/service area to be assessed: Waste & Recycling

Brief description of proposal to be assessed: A proposal not to replace a 26 tonne HGV diesel vehicle with electric.

Proposed implementation date of project/proposal: Autumn 2025

Brief description of the anticipated outcomes of the proposal:

| Proposal | Current Arrangement | Proposed Arrangement | Comment |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Provision of 1 diesel HGV to W&R team rather than electric | Diesel HGV | Diesel HGV | In terms of vehicle accessibility it's a 'like-for like' swap. |
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Consultation:

Brief description of any consultation undertaken with stakeholders and summarise the results and how it has influenced the proposal or not. Please attach a summary of consultation results or other relevant reports:

Electric vehicles were trialled by the W&R team to determine usability, including accessibility. Recommendation not to go ahead with purchase is on financial and operational grounds, not accessibility.

Demographic Data by protected characteristic:

Please detail the Census 2021 data for protected characteristics for North Devon (as detailed in the EIA Guidance for Managers and on NDC website):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Equality Data by protected characteristic from consultation:

Please detail the equality data obtained as part of the consultation and compare this data to the Census 2021 data (as detailed in the EIA Guidance for Managers and on NDC website) and identify where this data does not reflect the demographics for North Devon and any disparities in outcomes by characteristic:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Other Data:

Please detail any other data that has been obtained and taken into consideration (for example, Council service areas data, other Census 2021 data which is not related to protected characteristics such as no household members having English as main language, vulnerable groups, education, economy, housing, access to transport etc, Public Health and NHS data, deprived neighbourhoods, workforce profile data):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Impact:

Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts (i.e. potential for discrimination, disadvantage or disproportionate treatment) and any neutral impacts and the evidence/data you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic. (NOTE: please refer to the EIA Guidance for Managers or Equality Strategy for the characteristics) Where an impact is unknown, state so, and identify what steps will be taken to address any gaps in data:

There are not considered to be any impacts on any of the protected characteristics, given this is swapping one vehicle type for the same albeit more modern.

| Characteristic | Impact (what information was used to assess impact? Data/feedback etc. Describe whether this is positive, negative or neutral) | Scale of Impact (High/Med/Low) | Can it be mitigated? (what needs to be done to reduce/remove the impact? Have service users been involved in providing this insight?) |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|
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NOTE: The protected characteristics are: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)

Consideration of Alternatives:

Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative effect identified above (attach evidence to appropriate data, reports, etc):

N/A

Funding Considerations:

N/A

Monitoring Arrangements:

Briefly describe the monitoring arrangements/systems that will be put in place to monitor the effects of this proposal.

N/A.

Date on which you will be re-considering the project/report and submitting a further EIA if applicable.

We will reconsider this when the new vehicle replacements are due (2026).

EIA's should be further reviewed for significant changes or projects within 12 months or as part of a project close down. If after completing a review material changes are identified, these should be reported to the Senior Management Team for consideration. This is to assess the true impact in the delivery.

Reporting and Publication:

As part of the democratic decision making process, Equality Impact Assessments will be published on North Devon Council's website as an appendix to committee reports.

For Equality Impact Assessments that are produced which are not part of the democratic decision making process, please forward to equality@northdevongov.uk for publication on North Devon Council's website.

Corporate and Community Services Use Only: Date of publication to NDC Website: Click or tap to enter a date.