

# West Devon Hub Committee



<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday, 21st November, 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>2.00 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Chamber - Kilworthy Park</b>
<b>Full Members:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Chairman</b> Cllr Ewings <b>Vice Chairman</b> Cllr Renders</p> <p><i>Members:</i>           Cllr Bridgewater           Cllr Leech                           Cllr Daniel               Cllr Moody                           Cllr Edmonds           Cllr Mott                           Cllr Jory</p>
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	Democratic.Services@swdevon.gov.uk

<b>1. Apologies for absence</b>	
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	
In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members are invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests and Non-Registerable Interests including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting;	
<b>3. Items Requiring Urgent Attention</b>	
To consider those items which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by the Meeting as matters of urgency (if any)	
<b>4. Confirmation of Minutes</b>	<b>1 - 8</b>
Minutes of meeting held 19 September 2023	
<b>5. Public Questions</b>	
a period of up to 15 minutes is available to deal with issues raised by the public	
<b>6. Hub Committee Forward Plan</b>	
<b>7. Draft Corporate Strategy</b>	<b>9 - 38</b>
<b>8. Review of Capital Programme (Capital Programme Monitoring) and Review of Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>39 - 56</b>
<b>9. Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2024/25</b>	<b>57 - 78</b>
<b>10. Social Housing and Private Sector Housing Landlords</b>	<b>79 - 88</b>
<b>11. UK Shared Prosperity Fund &amp; Rural England Prosperity Fund Update</b>	<b>89 - 142</b>
<b>12. Long Stay Pay &amp; Display Charges Review</b>	<b>143 - 158</b>
<b>13. Q3 and Q4 Write-Offs 2022/23</b>	<b>159 - 172</b>
<b>14. Climate Change - EV Strategy Update</b>	<b>173 - 206</b>

# Agenda Item 4

At a Meeting of the **HUB COMMITTEE** held in the **Council Chamber, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock** on **TUESDAY** the **19th** day of **SEPTEMBER 2023** at **2.00 pm**

## Members in attendance

\* Denotes attendance

Ø Denotes apology for absence

* Cllr A Bridgewater	* Cllr T Leech
* Cllr L Daniel	Ø Cllr J Moody
* Cllr C Edmonds	* Cllr C Mott
* Cllr M Ewings (Leader)	* Cllr M Renders (Deputy Leader)
* Cllr N Jory	

## Other Member(s) also in attendance in a non-voting capacity:

Cllrs Calder (via Teams), Dexter, Oxborough, Squire, Viney and West

## Officers in attendance

Senior Leadership Team; Head of Democratic Services; Principal Climate Change Officer; Head of Revenues & Benefits; Assistant Director Planning; Head of Housing; and Head of Finance

### \*HC 10/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed but there were none made.

### \*HC 11/23 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 11 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

### \*HC 12/23 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

It was noted that no Public Questions had been received in accordance with the Hub Committee Procedure Rules.

### \*HC 13/23 **HUB COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**

Members were presented with the latest version of the Hub Committee Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Hub Committee meetings for the next four months and proceeded to note its content.

### \*HC 14/23 **A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE & BIODIVERSITY**

The Hub Committee considered a report that provided an update on the work undertaken since the Council had declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 (Minute CM 29 refers).

During the ensuing debate, particular reference was made to:

- (a) recommendation 2. To reflect the point that the 'Mayor's Young Person Environment Award' would only be in place for the term of office of the Mayor, an alternative form of wording for recommendation 2 was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and, when put to the vote, was declared **CARRIED**:  
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*'2. That the establishment of the 'Mayor's Young Person Environment Award' for the 2023/24 Municipal Year be noted.'*

(b) the evolving nature of the Devon Carbon Plan. In discussion, some Members questioned the extent of the changes that had been made to the Plan since it had been last considered by Full Council at its meeting held on 22 November 2022 (Minute CM 53/22 refers). Without the detailed knowledge of the changes, coupled with the absence of a Member Briefing to discuss the updates to the Plan and the contents of the Climate & Ecological (CE) Bill prior to them being formally presented, led to an amendment being **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** (to recommendation parts 3 and 4 respectively) that read as follows:

*'3. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to continue to fully support the aims and intentions of the Devon Carbon Plan and to review the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy through 'A Plan for West Devon' (as appropriate); and*

*4. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to support regional and national policy to reduce emissions and tackle climate change by lobbying our MPs on specific issues and embedding appropriate costed actions into 'A Plan for West Devon'.*

In support of the amendment, some Members felt that this would ensure that the Council was not committing to endorsing the Devon Carbon Plan at this time without being fully aware of both whether it contained any resource implications to the Borough Council and what the changes had been to its contents since last being considered by the Council in November 2022.

These Members also wished for it to be noted that they were fully supportive of the Council's declared Climate Change & Biodiversity Emergency and they could also be minded to endorse the Devon Carbon Plan but they did not feel they had sufficient information on its contents at this time and its implications to the residents and communities of West Devon.

In contrast, other Members stated that they did not support the amendment and, by simply endorsing the Plan and supporting the contents of the CE Bill, would help to underline the Council's commitment to its declared Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency. Furthermore, the wording of the recommendations were not considered by these Members to result in any additional resource implications to the Council.

Given the nature of the debate on the amendment, the Leader suggested that an alternative amendment may be an appropriate way forward. This alternative read as follows:

*'3. That the Committee reconsider the matters of the Devon Carbon Plan and the CE Bill at the next Hub Committee Meeting (to be held on 21 November 2023), with an informal Member Briefing on these subject areas being held before this date.'*

Having been presented with this alternative, the proposer and seconder of the original amendment withdrew their proposal. The alternative amendment wording (as set out above) was then **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and, when put to the vote, was declared **CARRIED** and therefore become part of the substantive motion.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the update regarding the Council's progress on climate change and biodiversity and the emerging priorities set out by the new administration be noted; and
2. That the establishment of the 'Mayor's Young Person Environment Award' for the 2023/24 Municipal Year be noted; and
3. That the Committee reconsider the matters of the Devon Carbon Plan and the CE Bill at the next Hub Committee Meeting (to be held on 21 November 2023), with an informal Member Briefing on these subject areas being held before this date.

**HC 15/23 SUPPORTING OUR CARE LEAVERS: COUNCIL TAX**

A report was considered that sought to recommend to Council approval for the adoption of a Council Tax Discount Scheme relating to Care Leavers.

In the ensuing debate, Members welcomed the leading role that had been taken on by the Council in the development of this Scheme and expressed their full support that it be presented to Council for approval.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt a Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers with effect from 1 October 2023.

**\*HC 16/23 PLANNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

Members considered a report that provided an update on the progress made against key elements of the Planning Improvement Plan.

During discussion, reference was made to:

- (a) paragraph 5.9 of the published agenda report. Officers apologised for the incorrect table being included at paragraph 5.9 of the published agenda report. The correct version was subsequently tabled to the meeting and, for completeness, is set out at Appendix A to these minutes;
- (b) planning income. Whilst the Council had received more planning applications this year, it had received less planning income due to the reduction in major planning applications being submitted.

With regard to planning fees, it was noted that all local authorities had been lobbying Central Government to request that they were increased in order to be reflective of the actual cost of determining a planning application. As a result of this lobbying, officers had recently been informed that planning fees would be able to be increased;

- (c) recruitment and retention challenges for the planning team. When questioned, officers informed that, whilst some progress had been made in recruiting (and retaining) staff, the challenges (which were reflected nationwide) did still remain.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That progress made on delivery of the Planning Improvement Plan and update on performance be noted;
2. That the return to notification of applications in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement with effect from 1 October 2023 be noted; and
3. That the proposal to undertake a full review of the existing policy and approach to handling enforcement complaints be noted.

### **\*HC 17/23    PROGRESS UPDATE ON HOUSING PROJECTS**

Members were presented with a report that provided an update on the various Housing projects taking place across the Borough and that also sought approval of funding for the purchase of additional properties and the modernisation of others already in the Council's ownership.

During debate, particular reference was made to:

- (i) the Central Government Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). Officers were congratulated for their swift responses in successfully applying to access LAHF monies. Having been informed that not all local authorities had applied to the LAHF, Members were hopeful that there would be additional opportunities for the Council to make further applications to access the unspent monies;
- (ii) the details contained in exempt Appendix B on the Spring Hill redevelopment project. Having completed the due diligence works, Members acknowledged the recommendation to put the project on hold, but they hoped that alternative project proposals would come forward as soon as was practically possible.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the acquisition of five homes through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF 1) be noted;
2. That participation in LAHF 2 and the purchase of at least an additional two properties be agreed;

3. That approval be given to expenditure of up to £410,000 from Section 106 affordable housing contributions to purchase properties through LAHF 2;
4. That expenditure of up to £80,000 from the Affordable Housing Revenue Earmarked Reserve be approved for the modernisation of 3 Springhill to a suitable standard so as to enable it to be used as additional temporary accommodation; and
5. That the details contained in the exempt Appendix B to the presented agenda report be noted and that further progression of the Spring Hill redevelopment project be put on hold whilst other options were explored.

**\*HC 18/23 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25**

Members were presented with a report that set out the annual requirement for Councils to revisit their existing council tax support scheme and decide whether to replace or revisit their scheme, the requirements for changing the scheme and the associated time constraints.

In discussion, there was unanimous support expressed for the contents of the report and it was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the proposed public consultation on a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/25 (as detailed in section 3 of the presented agenda report) be approved; and
2. That the results of the public consultation be presented to a future Hub Committee meeting prior to a Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/25 being considered for approval by the Council.

**\*HC 19/23 2022/2023 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN**

Members were presented with a report that set out the draft Revenue and Capital Outturn position for 2022/23 and that also provided a schedule of the Reserve balances at 31 March 2023.

During debate, a number of concerns were expressed over the extensive delays from Grant Thornton in carrying out its external audit work into the Council's accounts. When considering the trend for significant annual increases to be imposed in Audit Fees that the Council was required to pay, a Member **PROPOSED** the following additional recommendation:

*'That officers write to Grant Thornton to express the disappointment of the Committee that the organisation was unable to complete its External Audit work for the Borough Council in a timely manner.'*

The Section 151 Officer was invited to comment and, whilst recognising the sentiments of the proposal, informed the Committee that there was a national recruitment and retention issue that was plaguing the audit industry. The Officer proceeded to advise that she had made representations to senior colleagues at Grant Thornton to point out the Council had a shared finance team working across two councils and, therefore, the proposal to start the external audit work in the middle of the budget setting process (January 2024) was wholly unacceptable. In recognition of the issues raised, Grant Thornton representatives had since committed to bringing forward the external audit to November 2023.

Whilst the Member retained a number of concerns over the current situation, in view of the comments that had been expressed by the Section 151 Officer, she proceeded to formally withdraw her proposal.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

That the draft Revenue and Capital outturn figures for the 2022/23 financial year be noted including the overall Revenue outturn position of an underspend of £79,000 for 2022/23 (1.0% of the total Budget of £7.770 million).

#### **\*HC 20/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AS AT 31 JULY 2023**

A report was considered that advised Members of the Capital Programme financial position as at 31 July 2023.

With no issues raised during the debate, it was then:

### **RESOLVED**

That the contents of the presented agenda report be endorsed.

#### **\*HC 21/23 MONTH 4 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2023/2024**

Members considered a report that provided a forecast for the year end budget position and that also enabled them to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budget for 2023/24.

During discussion, a question was raised regarding the projected deficit for employment estates income. In response, officers informed that an additional income target (amounting to £50,000) had been built into the 2023/23 budget and this was unlikely to be achieved.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

That the forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2023/24 financial year and the overall projected deficit of £37,000 (close to a break-even position at 0.4% of the total Budget £8.588 million) be noted.



**\*HC 22/23 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 TO 2026/27**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy from 2024/25 to 2026/27.

With no issues being raised in debate, it was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the forecast budget gap for 2024/25 of £393,030 (4.4% of the projected Net Budget of £8.97million) and the position for future years, be noted; and
2. That the Senior Leadership Team and Hub Committee Members be tasked with bringing back further options of how to close the predicted budget gap for 2024/25, as part of future budget reports (once more detail of the Local Government Finance settlement is known), for Members' consideration.

(The meeting terminated at 4.00 pm)

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Chairman

***(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2023, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINUTE HC 15/23 – WHICH IS A RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2023, UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES)***

## Planning Performance Indicators

Ref. para 5.9 of the agenda item 9: 'Planning Improvement Plan Update'

		2021			2022			2023 April -June Quarter
Type of application	National Target	% in time	% in time with EoT	Total	% in time	% in time with EOT	Total	Total
SH Major	<b>60%</b>	7%	74%	<b>81%</b>	19%	59%	<b>78%</b>	<b>82%</b>
SH Non-major	<b>70%</b>	49%	34%	<b>83%</b>	51%	36%	<b>87%</b>	<b>92%</b>
West Devon Major	<b>60%</b>	7%	62%	<b>69%</b>	6%	81%	<b>87%</b>	<b>100%</b>
West Devon Non-major	<b>70%</b>	39%	40%	<b>79%</b>	39%	54%	<b>93%</b>	<b>86%</b>

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **21 November 2023**

Title: **Draft Corporate Strategy**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr Mandy Ewings**  
**Leader West Devon Borough Council**

Wards Affected: **All**

Author: **Andy Bates**                      Role: **Chief Executive**  
**Neil Hawke**                                      **Assistant Director**  
**Strategy**

Contact: **Directors@swdevon.gov.uk**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That the Hub Committee:**

- 1. ENDORSES the draft Corporate Strategy (Appendix B refers);**
- 2. DELEGATES authority to the Assistant Director Strategy, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy leader to apply any final amendments to the draft Corporate Strategy prior to commencement of the public consultation exercise;**
- 3. AGREES to commence the formal consultation on the draft Strategy; and**
- 4. INSTRUCTS the Senior Leadership Team and Assistant Director Strategy to support Hub Lead Members in the development of detailed delivery and resourcing plans for the Strategy.**

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the progress since the previous meeting in the preparation of a draft corporate strategy for the period 2024 – 2028. Once adopted, the strategy will be the Council's overarching strategic document setting out our aims and ambitions for the borough.
- 1.2 The report also sets out how we will continue with consultation on the strategy to shape delivery plans for consideration by Council in February 2024.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023, the Hub Committee considered a report on 'setting priorities for the new Council' and agreed the approach and timeline for the development of a new 4-year

corporate strategy for the new political administration to respond to the needs of our residents and communities in West Devon.

- 2.2 The timeline for developing the strategy, including progress to date, is set out in Appendix A to this report.
- 2.3 In parallel with the development of the outline strategy, it was agreed to undertake a fundamental review of the Council's capital programme, earmarked reserves and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, to ensure these are aligned to the delivery of the new administration's plans (which is the subject of a separate report on this agenda).
- 2.4 Since the last meeting, Hub Lead Members, supported by Advisory Groups open to councillors from all political parties, have been refining the aims and ambitions for the borough based on known challenges (such as the lack of truly affordable housing and the climate and biodiversity crisis) and feedback from residents during the May 2023 election campaigns. This has provided an initial opportunity for views from the full membership to be reflected in the draft strategy.
- 2.5 The draft strategy (Appendix B) is intended to act as a catalyst for further conversations with key partners and our communities over the coming months and to assist us with developing detailed delivery plans for the strategy, against which our progress and performance can be assessed.

### **3. Proposal and Next Steps**

- 3.1 The draft corporate strategy is set out at Appendix B to this report and will form the basis for ongoing consultation and engagement. It is intended that it will be updated annually with appropriate amendments, probably relatively minor in most cases, to the actions to ensure it remains relevant.
- 3.2 The draft strategy has been developed based on several discussions with Hub Lead Members and through Advisory Group meetings. The advisory groups have been beneficial in developing the work to date and it is recommended that they meet again to consider the detailed delivery plans.
- 3.3 It is recommended that a period of formal consultation will commence from 27<sup>th</sup> November to 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024. During this period, we will seek views on the draft aims and ambitions through:
  - An online survey on the full strategy;
  - A series of 'quick polls' on social media channels to gain feedback on specific aims and ambitions;

- Conversations with key partners including town and parish council;
- Face to face attendance at several locations across the borough to gain views from residents on our priorities;
- Make available (on request) a paper survey for anyone not able to provide their thoughts online; and
- Provide all Borough Councillors with FAQ's and a briefing note to enable them to have discussions on priorities within their own communities.

3.4 When the consultation closes, the responses will be analysed, and Hub Lead Members will consider the feedback to make any refinements to the strategy alongside delivery of the detailed delivery & resourcing plans for each ambition.

3.5 The final strategy and delivery plans (including resourcing plans) will be considered by the Hub Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and subject to agreement, recommended for adoption to Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

#### 4. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		The Corporate Strategy is one of the plans and policies that comprise the Council's Policy Framework. Consequently, decisions to approve, adopt or amend the final Corporate Strategy and themes will be decisions of the Full Council.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.  The Council will seek to align the Council's corporate strategy (what we plan to do) to the Council's medium-term financial strategy (how we plan to resource it).  Separate finance reports are included on the same agenda.  Having an agreed Corporate Strategy ensures that Council resources are aligned to delivering on agreed priorities and plans.
Risk		There is a risk that the Corporate Strategy is not agreed when finally considered by Council however this is mitigated through our consultation and engagement activity and by forming cross-political party Advisory Groups to shape the strategy and delivery plans.

Supporting Corporate Strategy		This report sets out proposals for consultation on a draft corporate strategy for the Council.
Consultation & Engagement Strategy		<p>Informal consultation has already commenced via conversations with Town and Parish Councils and other key partners to help shape the draft priorities. It is recommended that a period of formal consultation will commence from 27th November and run through until 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024.</p> <p>During this period, we will seek views on the draft aims and ambitions through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· An online survey on the full strategy;</li> <li>· A series of 'quick polls' on social media channels to gain feedback on specific aims and ambitions.</li> <li>· Conversations with key partners including town and parish councils.</li> <li>· Face to face attendance at several locations across the borough to gain views from residents on our priorities.</li> <li>· Make available (on request) a paper survey for anyone not able to provide their thoughts online.</li> <li>· Provide all Borough Councillors with FAQ's and a briefing note to enable them to have discussions on priorities within their own communities.</li> </ul>
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		The strategy will reaffirm our commitment to climate and biodiversity.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		
Safeguarding		
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		
Other implications		

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

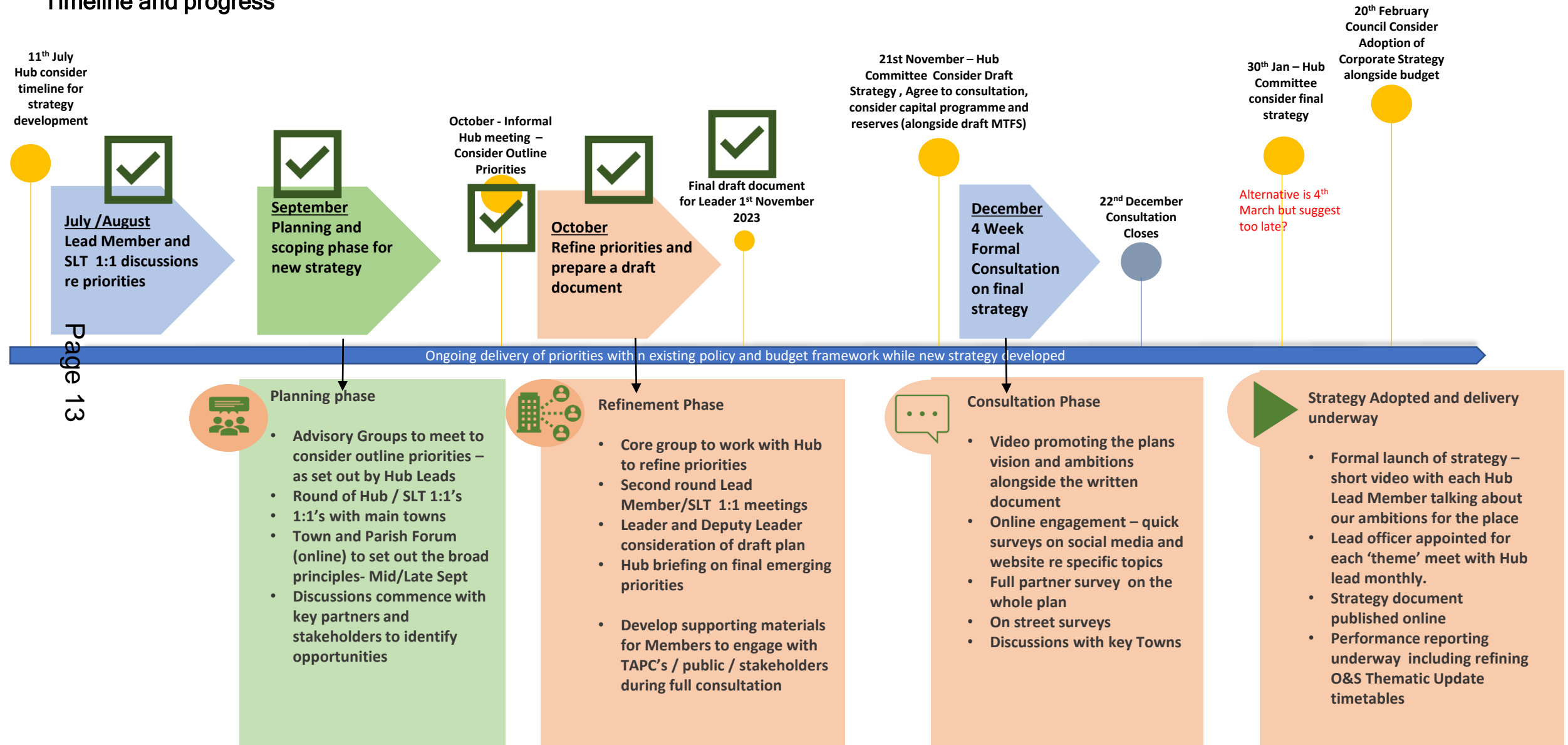
Appendix A – Timeline and progress.  
Appendix B – Draft Corporate Strategy.

#### **Background Papers:**

None

# Appendix A Corporate Strategy Development (West Devon)

## Timeline and progress



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# Corporate Strategy 2024-2028

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West Devon  
Borough Council

Draft for Consultation



# Introduction from the Leader

West Devon is an incredibly special and important place, home to a World Heritage Site, bustling market towns and stunning moorland.

However, there are challenges which many residents face. The ongoing cost of living is putting a squeeze on household incomes and the affordability of housing means that many of our younger residents may struggle to access good quality housing in the future, in the area they have grown up in. There is also the real and current threat of climate change and biodiversity loss. We cannot wait to act; we must continue to deliver on our plans and make sure that we encourage others to do the same.

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**Cllr Mandy Ewings**

Leader  
West Devon Borough Council

Our agricultural community is making great strides in exploring innovative ways to diversify, and we will continue to support them to do so by delivering our UK Shared and Rural Prosperity Funding programmes.

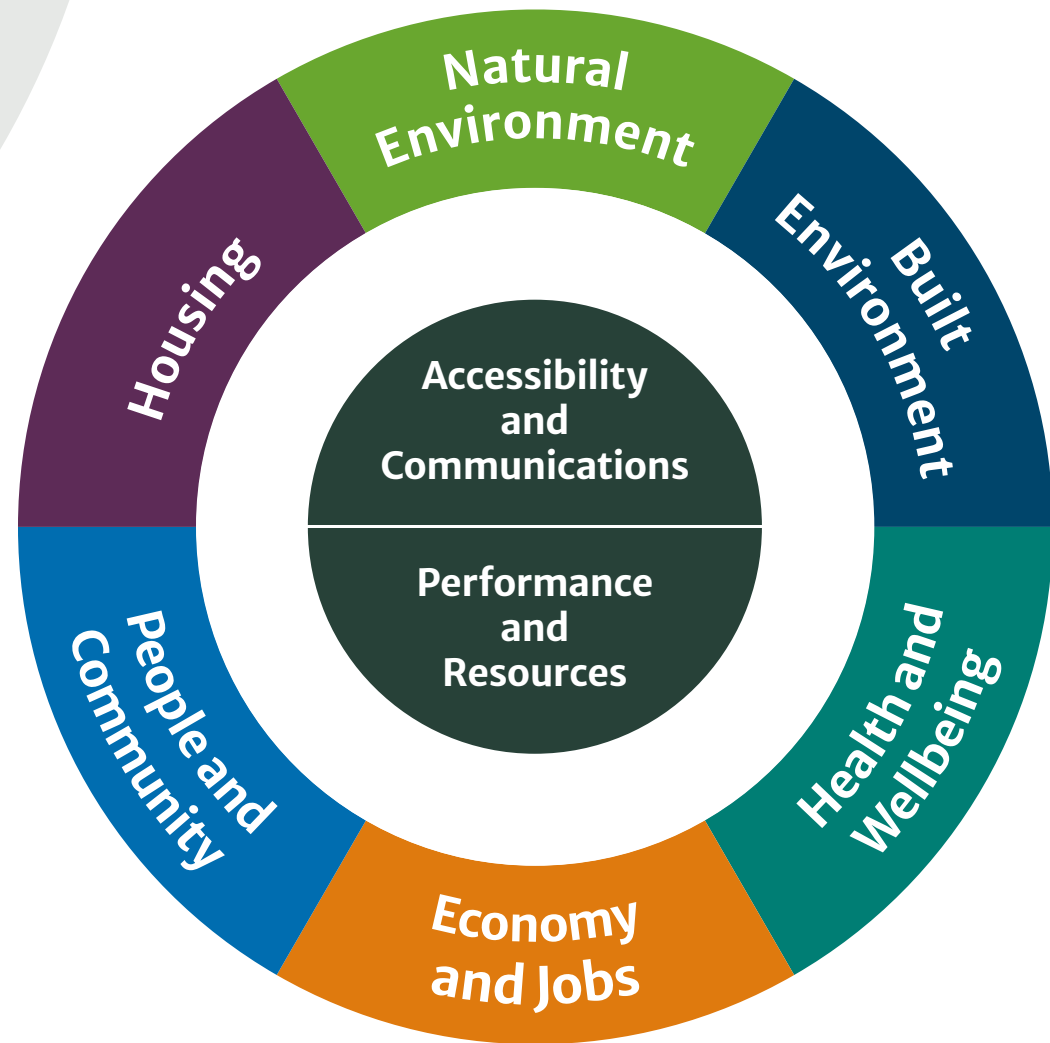
We will also make sure that we provide focused support for our less advantaged groups, We have already taken steps on this by buying our own temporary accommodation properties, developing a package of support for care leavers and guaranteeing interviews for ex-forces personnel.

To do all of this, we must make sure the Council is modern, efficient and innovative – delivering value for money and responsive services that meet the needs of our communities.

We must do all we can to support our residents and to protect West Devon for our future generations. The actions set out in this strategy aim to deliver on our commitment.



# Our developing priorities



We have eight key priorities to focus on for the next four years.

None of them can be delivered in isolation and all will contribute to the overall wellbeing of West Devon residents.

We know that we cannot achieve our ambitions for West Devon alone and so we will work with our communities and key partners in delivering this strategy.



A statement will go here.

# Progressing our plans

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We are not  
starting with  
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of paper ...

Since May 2023, we have taken steps to deliver a number of schemes alongside the development of our corporate strategy, which include:-

- Launching a Young Persons' Climate Award;
- Buying 5 properties for temporary accommodation for those displaced by conflict;
- Leading the Devon Housing Taskforce and been a founder member of a new Devon Housing Commission, a partnership of Devon Councils that will develop recommendations to start to address the broken housing market;
- Launching a £136k Household Support Fund for residents struggling with the cost of living;
- Attending community events such as Tavistock and Okehampton Community Health and Wellbeing Fairs, and Tavistock Pride to directly talk to our residents;
- Launching a new website to make it even easier for online residents to interact with us;
- Progressing delivery of a number of projects funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

**While we are making positive progress on delivering our wider ambitions, this strategy builds on the above and sets out where we are going next.**



## Our plans will be underpinned by

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### Financial Sustainability

Our financial sustainability is important in ensuring that we can deliver our priorities and good quality services to our residents. For many years local councils have received single year finance settlements. We will continue to lobby government for longer term certainty of our budgets, allowing us to make longer term plans.

### Good Governance

We will make sure that we have a robust governance framework, effective decision making, and that we shape our policies and strategies in consultation with our communities and key stakeholders.

### Community Development

We know that we cannot deliver a better future for West Devon alone. Our communities and the voluntary sector play a critical part in this. We will work with them and where we can, support them to deliver projects and schemes that will enhance the area for us all. We will also ensure that we invest in our own staff, making sure that they are equipped with the right skills and tools to provide responsive services.



# Natural Environment

## Our Ambition

The natural environment of West Devon is one of the things that makes it such a special place, one that we must protect for the future. Climate change and biodiversity loss continue to be a significant threat to our area and while any action we take will be small in terms of the required global change, we can and must do all we can. We will lead by example, encouraging our communities to also play their part.

The latest science from The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the UK Government's Climate Change Committee, as well as real world extreme weather events, have demonstrated how critical joined up action is at reducing the very worst of future climate change scenarios.

Having declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity crisis in 2020, we will now take steps to revise our action plan. This is aligned to the Devon Carbon Plan

which sets out a roadmap for how Devon can achieve net-zero carbon by 2050 at the latest. In the meantime, there is a target of 50% reduction (below 2010 levels) by 2030.

We have secured funding to deliver a number of projects to support the Borough on the journey to net zero. This includes developing plans for active travel schemes (walking and cycling) and importantly supporting our agricultural sector to consider opportunities to future proof their businesses in regenerative sustainable ways. We will also develop plans to support and incentivise renewable energy projects such as solar panels and wind turbines to reduce carbon emissions.

We will make sure that the climate and biodiversity impact of all decisions and service changes made is fully considered from the outset, doing all we possibly can to make climate-positive decisions.



**Cllr Lynn Daniel**  
Lead Member for  
Natural Environment



## Our Primary Aims

1. An increase in biodiversity across the Borough over the next 4 years.

2. Continue to make reductions in eCO2 emissions across the Borough to stay on track for net zero by 2050.

3. To encourage others to take action to lessen their own climate impact.

## Our Initial Actions

- Develop and begin to implement our Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- Increasing Electric Charging Points.
- Implement a revised grounds maintenance programme for Council land to increase biodiversity.
- Update our 2020 Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Take a vigorous stance on the climate and biodiversity crisis leading by example and communicating what we are doing to encourage others to take similar steps, including a Use Less / Reuse / Recycle campaign.
- Promote the use of renewable energy sources within the West Devon Community.
- Launch a Thermal Imaging Camera lending scheme to enable residents and community facilities to identify areas for improving insulation in properties.
- Create allotments at South Tawton on West Devon Borough Council land – allowing residents to grow their own produce and reduce food miles.
- Organise visits to Energy from Waste plants and biodigesters to inspire improved levels of recycling and reduction in residual waste:-
  - Learn from successful regenerative farming and natural regeneration sites to inspire our future plans.
- Lobby and encourage partners to address issues not directly in the Council's control:-
  - Work with South West Water (SWW) and the Environment Agency (EA) with a 'Call for Evidence' on discharge of raw sewage into rivers;
  - Collaborate with relevant authorities and stakeholders to improve sewage treatment infrastructure;
  - Refresh our Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy;
  - Develop a plan for Wildlife Wardens.

# Built Environment

## Our Ambition

From the western edge of Dartmoor through to the east of Cornwall, West Devon has a built environment of global importance through the World Heritage Site. We will conserve and maintain existing historic fabric and retain and reflect locally distinctive features in the design of buildings, layouts and landscapes to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the World Heritage Site.

West Devon, together with South Hams and Plymouth, have a strategic plan for the area (Joint Local Plan) which sets out the future vision, policies and plans for our built environment up to 2034.

We will work with our communities to produce new visions for all our towns. We will set out the opportunities and actions needed to make sure they remain thriving, active places and look to reflect these in the future Joint Local Plan.

In our urban centres, we will develop and review Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans to preserve and enhance important historic buildings and places across West Devon. We will also work with our communities to support the development of Neighbourhood Plans. These plans will reflect their hopes and aims and create local policies which will be considered in the determination of planning application to help them shape and manage their communities.



**Cllr Caroline Mott**

Lead Member for  
Built Environment

## Our Primary Aims

1. Conserve and enhance existing historic fabric and retain locally distinctive features in the design of building, layouts, street scene and landscapes to guarantee the authenticity and integrity of the World Heritage Site to maintain it for future generations.

2. Ensure that we have the infrastructure in place to meet the future needs of our communities and that these are secured and delivered by new development.

## Our Initial Actions

- Support neighbourhood forums in the making of two neighbourhood plans a year (including modifications required to existing plans) in West Devon.
- Support the refresh and expansion of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans throughout the Conservation areas.
- Deliver 6-monthly Planning training sessions to Town and Parish Councils – upskilling them to understand what is important when considering applications.
- Update our enforcement procedures and strategy to ensure alignment with local priorities.
- Develop a plan for preserving Bedford Cottages.
- Contribute to the World Heritage Site partnership and provide a longer-term funding agreement.
- Support the delivery of more affordable housing – Pioneer Hamlets.
- Deliver on our Planning Improvement Plan to make sure applicants continue to receive a better service.
- Progress with the Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Delivery of Okehampton Transport Hub.
- Support community infrastructure and facilities through timely allocation of developer contributions to community schemes.

# Housing

## Our Ambition

West Devon Borough Council has been striving to tackle the 'housing crisis'; the real term cost of housing compared to earnings and the critically low availability of rented accommodation. Strong headwinds in the private rented sector as government legislation bites, are forcing landlords to sell or increase their rents, making it difficult to find houses which are available and affordable.

The cost of energy is placing an ever greater strain on essential income, leaving many in fuel poverty. The quality of our existing housing stock is some of the worst performing, in terms of energy efficiency, in northern Europe. This mirrors the rest of the UK, which, as a whole, is responsible for around 40% of all of the country's carbon emissions.

Tens of thousands of homes already exist in West Devon, whereas only a few thousand new ones have been built in the last 5 years, and even fewer of those are affordable. To improve housing outcomes, we must therefore apply our efforts proportionally to where the biggest challenges lie.

**We are, and will continue to be, a force for good, looking for opportunities to improve housing outcomes that make the greatest difference to our residents.**



**Cllr Mark Renders**

Deputy Leader and  
Lead Member for Housing

## Our Primary Aims

1. Help our communities to bring affordable housing in their areas.
2. Support the needs of Homeless households and provide good quality temporary accommodation and value for money.
3. Improve outcomes for care-experienced young people by supporting them to access the housing they need.
4. Tackle damp and disrepair in rented homes.
5. Decarbonise the existing social and affordable housing stock to improve living standards, lift people out of fuel poverty and reduce energy costs for residents.

## Our Initial Actions

- Progress plans with redevelopment of Council owned office space (Plymouth Road, Tavistock) for temporary accommodation.
- Work with housing associations and community land trusts to improve the number of affordable, safe and good quality homes delivered for our residents.
- Lobby government for:-
  - Changes to Right to Buy legislation to reduce the loss of existing rented housing stock particularly in rural areas;
  - An increase in the local area housing allowance, which does not reflect the true cost of rented accommodation.
- Hold landlords to account where property is substandard.
- Update our Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy Delivery plans.
- Develop new policies that influence the proportion of new development that is affordable and social rented accommodation particularly in rural areas.
- Implement 200% Council Tax charging on second homes as soon as Government allows.
- Help where possible in the delivery of affordable homes where conditions for housing need, finance, partner involvement, deliverability and social outcomes align:-
  - Support communities to bring forward housing within their locality which may include Council land;
  - Support Registered Providers (RPs) with grant applications, planning applications and communities, Towns & Parishes (Enabling Housing Team).

# Health and Wellbeing

## Our Ambition

The health, wellbeing and safety of residents is vitally important to achieving a better quality of life and promoting independence across the Borough.

We will support healthier, safer and fairer communities through a range of measures and by working in partnership with other agencies. We will also play a direct role in this through delivery of a range of Council services such as inspecting food premises, carrying our environmental protection schemes and responding to concerns about private sector housing standards.

Enabling residents to remain as independent as possible in their own community will continue to be a focus for us. We will achieve this through delivering of grant schemes such as disabled facility grants and supporting residents who may be struggling financially by making sure that they access benefits and grants that they are entitled to.

We will deliver this by working, and actively participating, with partner agencies like Citizens Advice and the Community Safety Partnership to support the health and wellbeing of our residents. This will mean West Devon is a place where all residents and visitors feel safe, happy and healthy.



**Cllr Tony Leech**  
Lead Member for  
Health and Wellbeing

## Our Primary Aims

1. To protect and improve the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.
2. Provide direct support to residents through the provision of schemes such as Homes Upgrade Grant, Disabled Facilities Grants and energy grants.

## Our Initial Actions

- Efficiently deliver schemes that will directly contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents – Disabled Facilities Grants, Energy Efficiency Grants and Household Support Funding.
- Support young people with their Mental Health by commissioning a programme of support in schools.
- Delivery of Junior Life Skills Programme.
- Work with the Community Safety Partnership to maximise impact in the Borough to deal with anti-social behaviour and safeguarding, violence prevention, domestic abuse, drugs, changing youth culture, exploitation and hate crime.
- Implement a Council Tax Discount Scheme and Leisure Centre Access Schemes for Children in Care and Care Leavers.
- Lobby the NHS to financially support exercise referral for those unable to pay and work with Fusion Leisure to promote activities already available.



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**Cllr Adam Bridgewater**  
Lead Member for  
People and Community

# People and Community

## Our Ambition

Our communities are the beating heart of West Devon, they work together to overcome local challenges and deliver action to improve the Borough for our future generations.

As a Council, our role is to enhance community action and to support local groups to deliver their own ambitions. We will work closely with partner organisations such as Citizens Advice and voluntary sector groups to make sure those residents who need support can access it in a timely manner.

Another key partner is the Community Safety Partnership which plays an important role in tackling anti-social behaviour across the Borough.

Looking to our own services, we will ensure that our frontline services (such as Grounds Maintenance and Localities) are responsive, keeping West Devon's open spaces tidy and enabling them to be enjoyed by residents.

We know that our communities are at the forefront of making West Devon the best place to live, and we will make sure we celebrate the work of individuals and organisations.

Finally, many causes of frustration for our residents, such as poor condition of roads and provision of youth services, are outside of our direct control, but we can, and will, lobby those responsible organisations for action.



## Our Primary Aims

1. To ensure that we provide responsive support and good quality frontline services.
2. Build effective relationships with key partners, working together to address local challenges.
3. Be a voice for our communities, calling partners to action.

## Our Initial Actions

- Progress with the Okehampton Hamlets Community Governance Review.
- Implement enhanced council community services.
- Support our communities to deliver projects to enhance open spaces, parks, play pitches and other community assets by awarding funding from developer contributions (Section 106) and capital projects funds.
- Carry out a review of funding for key partners to ensure alignment to our aims and ambitions.
- Work with the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) to co-produce a Community Development Action Plan.
- Raise the profile of the Council within the community by attending a range of events to promote Council services.
- Introduce a Young Persons' Climate and Biodiversity Award (Mayor).
- Lobby partners for better service provision in West Devon – for example Devon County Council (DCC) for Potholes and youth provision.
- Develop an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment for the Council.
- Support communities to develop community resilience plans.



# Economy and Jobs

## Our Ambition

We will create the environment for all sizes of business to flourish, through direct and indirect support and policy. This will include infrastructure and development aligned to our priorities.

We will strengthen our visitor economy, maximising the promotion of our unique cultural and heritage offer. We will identify opportunities to lobby for the best outcomes for our agricultural sector and make sure that we seize on future opportunities to attract additional funding through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity, Community Renewal Funds and other sources.

As a Council, we have a good track record of securing government funding for schemes and we will continue to leverage and improve strategic infrastructure as a means of attracting business and higher earning jobs for our residents. For example, by championing for improvements to broadband and mobile connectivity across the area.

We will also support the delivery of town plans to shape the economy of West Devon and take steps to enrich the Borough through promotion of cultural, heritage and sport activities to draw people into the area.

**Cllr Neil Jory**

Lead Member for  
Economy and Jobs

## Our Primary Aims

1. Deliver on the UK Shared Prosperity and Rural Prosperity Funding programmes.
2. Ensure improvements to strategic infrastructure (including digital connectivity) and influencing partners to act.
3. Create an environment in which business in all sectors can innovate.

## Our Initial Actions

- Deliver our UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programmes across West Devon.
- Support the progress of the Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan and work towards its implementation.
- Focus on boosting digital connectivity across the Borough – including broadband and 4G services.
- Delivery of Okehampton Transport Hub by March 2025.
- Support key business sectors in West Devon:-
  - Work with partners such as Devon Agri-tech alliance to facilitate networking between and with farms to support the implementation of regenerative farming methods;
  - Explore ways to support local farms through grants and funding opportunities to support agricultural diversification;
  - Develop a culture and arts support plan for the borough.
- Work with Town Councils and partners to develop town plans to help shape the economy of our places.
- Consult on the formation of a Okehampton Business Improvement District or Chamber of Commerce.



# Performance and Resources

## Our Ambition

At the core of delivering on our ambitions for West Devon, is the need for us to deliver good quality services that respond to the needs of our residents and that we demonstrate value for money through everything we do.

Delivering rural services is expensive and we will continue to lobby Government for fairer funding for rural authorities.

Recruiting and retaining skilled employees is difficult, more so since the changing working practices coming from the pandemic – you can now live in the Southwest but work for an organisation anywhere in the country. We will focus on ensuring we invest in training and support for our employees, with the aim of being an employer of choice, where each and every employee has the right skills and tools to deliver the best service for our residents.

We will also ensure we make the best use of Council assets including our buildings, taking steps to ensure we maximise occupancy at our Kilworthy Park offices.

Only by delivering good quality, value for money services can we achieve our wider ambitions for the Borough.

### **Cllr Chris Edmonds**

Lead Member for  
Performance and  
Resources

## Our Primary Aims

1. Support the wellbeing of our staff with training and development, the right tools to do the job and recognition of successes.

2. Make sure that we manage Council finances and assets well.

3. Guarantee efficiency in service delivery by managing performance.

4. Lead by example, ensuring that Council assets respond to our climate ambitions.

## Our Initial Actions

- Deliver targeted and refreshed recruitment approaches to overcome local government job challenges.
- Identify further areas for service reviews to make sure our teams provide a good quality service.
- Carry out an annual staff survey to get feedback from staff on how we are doing.
- Apply an IT Strategy which includes a clear roadmap to adopting developing technology such as artificial intelligence (AI).
- Work with the Rural Services Network to lobby Government for fairer funding for rural services.
- Respond to the Government consultation on the Finance Settlement.
- Set a balanced budget for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026.
- Update our procurement strategy to guarantee greater emphasis on reducing climate impact of the Council supply chain and increased social value.
- Hold a 'Meet the Buyer' event to support local businesses bid for future Council contracts.
- Prepare an asset management strategy to set out how we will maximise use of our assets.

# Accessibility and Communications

## Our Ambition

As a Council, it is important that we constantly consider how best to deliver our services, making sure that all residents can access the services they need as easily as possible.

Most West Devon residents are able to interact with us online, and we have taken proactive steps to make our website easy to use. We have also implemented online accessibility tools to help as many people as possible to find online support. We encourage a digital first approach – which means that residents can carry out tasks with the Council 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However, we are aware that some residents in West Devon, whether by choice or due to the lack of internet access in rural area, do not have internet access. For these residents, we will do all we can to assist them to access Council services in alternate ways.

We will ensure that West Devon residents will be consistently updated regarding Council business and services, and any local issues involving the Council – putting our community at the centre of our communications.

**We will continue to be a Council that takes pride in listening to responding to our residents' concerns, ideas and aspirations.**



**Cllr Jeff Moody**

Lead Member for  
Accessibility and  
Communications

## Our Primary Aims

1. To ensure that all residents can easily access whatever Council services they might require.
2. To promote the Council's work and how it affects the community.
3. To strive for and achieve a high level of customer satisfaction.

## Our Initial Actions

- Digital Accessibility 24/7 – Continuing Website enhancement, continuing to give customers around the clock access to Council services online.
- For those residents who are unable to access Council services digitally or by phone, we will offer, where necessary, a Face to Face service. This service will be promoted through key partners (CAB etc.).
- Proactively and continuously improve our customer communication channels so they are fully accessible and inclusive for all residents.
- Continuous review of our new Consultation & Engagement Portal.
- Engage with our community through Customer Satisfaction Surveys.
- Provide a planned programme of regular 'Customer Engagement Roadshow Events' to promote Council Services and to obtain feedback from residents.
- Implement a regular 'information programme' featuring important Council information through the local press, online videos, social media and various digital platforms.

# Our contribution to a global blueprint

Adopted by the United Nations Members States in 2015, the sustainable development goals provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet now and into the future.

They are an urgent call to action by all countries, recognising that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. This plan directly contributes to 11 of the 17 goals as highlighted throughout the document.

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West Devon  
Borough  
Council

SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

West Devon Borough Council supports the Sustainable Development Goals

Want to know more?  
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

[www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk)



## **NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972  
(applies to Appendices A and C)

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **21 November 2023**

Title: **Review of Capital Programme  
(Capital Programme Monitoring) and  
Review of Earmarked Reserves**

Portfolio Area: **Resources – Cllr C Edmonds**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: **Clare Scotton** Role: **Principal Accountant**  
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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It is RECOMMENDED that the Hub Committee RESOLVES to RECOMMEND to Council to: -**

- 1) withdraw three capital projects from the current Capital Programme, being Parklands Leisure Centre contribution to moveable floor (£50,000) and Tavistock Viaduct (£20,000). It is also recommended to withdraw the Springhill Temporary Accommodation budget from the capital programme, following the Hub Committee decision to put this project on hold whilst other options are explored, freeing up a further £193.2k. Therefore, the review of the capital programme is freeing up capital resources of £263.2k which is potentially available for future corporate priorities and can be re-purposed;**
- 2) continue to progress all other capital projects, in line with the existing capital projects within the overall Capital Programme;**
- 3) note the content of the Capital Programme Monitoring Report in Appendix C which shows the current expenditure on capital projects between April 2023 and September 2023 of £1.692m, being 21% of the profiled budget for 2023/24 (the first six months of the financial year);**

- 4) note the revised capital allocation for the UK Shared Prosperity fund (UKSPF) scheme for 2023/24 and 2024/25 as set out in section 3.2;
- 5) note the addition of £26,632 to the capital programme for a new boiler at Okehampton Business Centre to be financed from the Maintenance Earmarked Reserve, set out in section 3.3;
- 6) approve the outcome of the review of revenue reserves, releasing revenue reserves of up to £871,000 which is potentially available to support the delivery of the emerging Corporate Strategy.

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the progress on individual schemes within the approved capital programme, including an assessment of their budgets and financial position. In addition, initial consideration has been given to how schemes may align with the emerging corporate priorities.

### Review of the Capital Programme

- 1.2 The conclusion from the review of the Capital Programme is that it is recommended to withdraw all three capital schemes (being Parklands Leisure Centre contribution to moveable floor (£50,000), Tavistock Viaduct (£20,000) and Springhill Temporary Accommodation (total budget £953,311 with reserves of £193,248)). This would free up **£263,248** of capital funding which could be re-deployed (Appendix A).

### Review of Revenue Reserves

- 1.3 The review of revenue reserves has identified up to **£871,000** of revenue reserves which is potentially available to support the delivery of the emerging corporate strategy (Appendix B).
- 1.4 Therefore there is potentially **£1,134,200** available to fund the new emerging corporate strategy.

### Capital Budget monitoring for 2023/24 (spend at Month 6)

- 1.5 The monitoring of the capital programme at month 6 (end of September 23) has shown that all projects are within their existing budget approved by Members. £8,119,687 has been profiled into 2023/24 with the remaining budgets rolled forward into future years. The spend against this profiled budget is £1,692,503 (21% of the profiled budget) as at the end of September 2023 (Appendix C).

- 1.6 It was approved at Hub Committee on 19 September 2023 (minute ref HC17/23) that expenditure of up to £80,000 from the Affordable Housing Revenue Earmarked Reserve is used for the modernisation of 3 Springhill to a suitable standard, to enable it to be used as additional temporary accommodation. This has been added to the capital programme.

## 2. Conclusion of Review of the Capital Programme and Revenue Reserves

### Capital Programme Review

- 2.1 The capital programme has been reviewed and analysed against the following criteria and with regard to the emerging priorities set out within the new Council:

Colour Code	Criteria	Total Amount
	Projects in progress and nearing completion - Recommend continuing with these projects. This is the Rewilding Woodland Creation project.	£52,430
	Projects not yet started but either recently approved or still considered to be in line with emerging corporate priorities - Recommend continuing with these projects. The largest project in this category is the solar panel installation on the leisure centres.	£590,000
	Capital projects which remain consistent with emerging corporate priorities through ringfenced Government Grant Funding. This grant funding is ring-fenced for these specific projects. The main project in this category is the Okehampton Transport Hub (£14,950,000).	£17,692,240
	Capital projects needed to maintain the Council's assets and essential service delivery. This category consists of IT scheme to maintain IT infrastructure (£175,000) and Community Project Grants (£56,446)	£323,782
	Waste and recycling service. This includes Waste Fleet vehicle replacements and funding for Hayedown Depot.	£1,035,863
	Housing enabling funding (seed funding). It is envisaged that members will want to review these projects whilst developing the new corporate strategy. The schemes in this category relate to Affordable Housing.	£67,500

Colour Code	Criteria	Total Amount
	<b>Capital projects that have not yet started and would free up an element of capital resources if a decision was made not to proceed with them. There are three projects within this category. Further detail is in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.5.</b>	£1,023,311
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£20,785,126</b>

2.2 The conclusion from the review of the Capital Programme is that it is recommended to withdraw three capital schemes (being Parklands Leisure Centre contribution to moveable floor (£50,000), Tavistock Viaduct (£20,000) and Springhill Temporary Accommodation (total budget £953,311 with reserves of £193,248)). **This would free up £263,248 of capital funding which is potentially available to support the delivery of the emerging corporate strategy and this funding can be re-purposed.**

2.3 Withdrawing the Springhill project from the capital programme (minute HC17/23) would also free up £683,683 of Section 106 funding that could be used on other Affordable Housing projects. Of this amount, £410,000 S106 has been approved for Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 2.

2.4 The moveable floor at Parklands is currently working and there isn't a need for this partnership contribution at the current time.

2.5 The other Tavistock capital project (Tavistock viaduct) has not progressed and is therefore no longer required in the capital programme.

### Revenue Reserves Review

2.6 The revenue earmarked reserves have been reviewed and analysed against the following criteria:

Colour Code	Criteria	Total Amount
	Earmarked Reserves which are essential for operational core service delivery (for example programmed renewal and replacement of plant and equipment). The largest reserve in this category is the Business Rates Retention Reserve at £971k.	£4,951,000

<b>Colour Code</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
	Earmarked Reserves which are being used to fund new corporate initiatives and corporate priorities. The largest reserve in this category stands at £376k for the Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn).	£756,000
	Earmarked Reserves which is Government Grant funding being used for the purposes of the grant determination letter. Revenue Grants (Government Grant Funding) is the largest reserve in this category with a balance of £1.303m.	£2,017,000
	Notional Earmarked Reserves which are held for a technical accounting purpose for the Collection Fund (this is not funding available to the Council to spend). This is the Section 31 Compensation Grant for business rates relief.	£307,000
	<b><i>Uncommitted Revenue Earmarked Reserves and available for Members to decide how to allocate these funds for future priorities. There are two reserves within this category being the COVID-19 Reserve and the Financial Stability Reserve. Further information is in paragraph 2.6 below</i></b>	£871,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£8,902,000</b>

2.7 The review of revenue reserves has identified **£871,000** of revenue reserves that are available for Members to decide how to allocate these funds for future priorities. Recommendation 6 is to approve the outcome of the review of revenue reserves, releasing revenue reserves of up to £871,000 which is potentially available to support the delivery of the emerging corporate strategy.

2.8 These reserves are as shown below: -

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>	<b>Background of the Reserve</b>
COVID-19	£254,000	This was a reserve set up at the end of 20/21 used to hold grant funding provided by central government to finance costs & income losses incurred as a direct result of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The current balance in this reserve is uncommitted.

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>	<b>Background of the Reserve</b>
Financial Stability Reserve	£617,000	This was a new reserve set up in 2018/19, which was to fund any future financial pressures arising from local government funding reforms and any other budget pressures. It is currently uncommitted funding.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£871,000</b>	

### **3. Capital Programme Monitoring 2023-2024 (spend to month 6)**

- 3.1 The monitoring of the capital programme at month 6 (end of September 23) has shown that all projects are within their existing budget approved by Members. £8,119,687 has been profiled into 2023/24 with the remaining budgets rolled forward into future years. The spend against this profiled budget is £1,692,503 (21% of the profiled budget) as at the end of September 2023 (Appendix C).
- 3.2 Part of the capital budget for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has been reallocated to revenue following discussions with the DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities). The DLUHC has confirmed that if we meet their minimum thresholds for capital spend, the rest of the funding can be used for revenue. The funding has been reallocated as follows:

	<b>2023/24 (plus 2022/23 carried forward)</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Original agreed allocation</b>			
Capital	80,568	282,148	362,716
Revenue	184,284	453,000	637,284
<b>Total</b>	<b>264,852</b>	<b>735,148</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>
<b>Revised allocation</b>			
Capital	50,954	147,030	197,984
Revenue	213,898	588,118	802,016
<b>Total</b>	<b>264,852</b>	<b>735,148</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>

- 3.3 £26,632 has been approved from the Maintenance Fund Earmarked Reserve for a new biomass boiler at Okehampton Business Centre. The current boiler has ceased working and parts are no longer easily obtainable, so a new boiler is the best option to ensure heating is in place for the winter months.

#### 4. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		<p>The capital programme is implemented in accordance with the Council's statutory powers and the Council's governance requirements, which are examined on a project-by-project basis. To date there are no undue legal concerns.</p> <p>Since there is commercially sensitive information in Appendices A and C regarding the budgets for individual capital projects, there are grounds for the publication of these appendices to be restricted, and considered in exempt session (paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972).</p> <p>The public interest has been assessed and it is considered that the public interest will be better served by not disclosing the information in the Appendices A and C.</p>
Financial Implications to include reference to Value for Money		<p>The conclusion from the review of the Capital Programme is that it is recommended to withdraw all three capital schemes (being Parklands Leisure Centre contribution to moveable floor (£50,000), Tavistock Viaduct (£20,000) and Springhill Temporary Accommodation (total budget £953,311 with reserves of £193,248). <i>This would free up £263,248 of capital funding which is potentially available to support the delivery of the emerging corporate strategy.</i></p> <p>Recommendation 5 is to approve the outcome of the review of revenue reserves, releasing revenue reserves of up to £871,000 which is also potentially available to support the delivery of the emerging corporate strategy.</p> <p><b>Therefore, there is potentially £1,134,200 (being £263,248 from the capital programme review and £871,000 from the reserves review) available to fund the new emerging corporate strategy.</b></p> <p>The monitoring of the capital programme at month 6 (end of September 23) has shown that all projects are within their existing budget approved by Members. £8,093,055 has been profiled into 2023/24 with the remaining budgets rolled forward into future years. The spend against this profiled</p>

		<p>budget is £1,692,503 (21% of the profiled budget) as at the end of September 2023. (Appendix C)</p> <p>The regular monitoring of the Capital Programme ensures the Council has arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p>
Risk		<p>The Council demonstrates that capital investment contributes to corporate priorities, provides value for money, and takes account of the revenue implications of the investment. Regular monitoring of the capital programme and consideration of new pressures enables Members to control the programme and secure appropriate mitigation where problems arise.</p> <p>There is regular quarterly monitoring of the Capital Programme to Members where any cost overruns are identified at an early stage.</p>
Supporting Corporate Strategy		The Capital Programme supports all the Thematic Delivery Plans within 'A Plan for West Devon'.
Consultation and Engagement Strategy		External consultation and engagement have not been undertaken regarding this report.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		<p>The Council declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency on 23 July 2019 and a Climate Change Action Plan was presented to Council in December 2019.</p> <p>Further detail is set out in the Council's 'A Plan for West Devon' strategy.</p>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Safeguarding		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Other implications		None

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Analysis of Capital programme – **Exempt**;

Appendix B – Revenue reserves as at 31 March 2023; and

Appendix C – Capital monitoring as at 30 September 2023 – **Exempt**.

#### **Background Papers:**

None



By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**ANALYSIS OF RESERVES (EARMARKED RESERVES AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES)**

**APPENDIX B**

<b>EARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>Closing balance 31.03.2023</b>	<b>Future Commitments</b>	<b>Funding needed to hold a prudent provision</b>	<b>Unallocated spend</b>	<b>Annual reserve contribution</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Specific Reserves - General Fund</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	
<b>Earmarked Reserves which are essential for operational core service delivery (for example programmed renewal and replacement of plant and equipment)</b>						
Business Rates Retention Reserve (remainder of the reserve needed to manage business rates volatility each year)	(971)	150	821	0		This relates to a timing issue on the accounting adjustments required for the localisation of business rates. This reserve deals with any volatility in Business Rate income. In 2023/24 £150,000 is budgeted to be used of this reserve to smooth the volatility in business rates income used to finance the revenue budget.
Car Park Maintenance Reserve	(534)	38	496	0		The majority of this reserve is uncommitted. Future commitments are for the provision of electric car charging points and resurfacing of car parks.
Elections	(61)	61	0	0	(20)	This reserve is held to fund the cost of Borough Council elections, an annual contribution of £20,000 is made into this reserve.
Environmental Health Initiatives	(104)	104	0	0		The additions to this reserve applied in 2022/23 relate to savings on Environmental Health salaries, and are committed to fund a post for the next two years (2023/24 & 2024/25).
Grounds Maintenance	(99)	99	0	0		A reserve set up in 2019/20 to hold the Grounds Maintenance in year surpluses to be reinvested back into the service.
Homelessness Prevention Reserve	(184)	141	43	0		This reserve has been created following underspends on Homelessness Prevention Costs. The future commitments of £74k are £50k towards the part funding of capital works at Springhill, and the future funding of service salary costs £31k.
ICT Development Reserve	(45)	45	0	0	(50)	An annual contribution of £50k is made into this reserve. Commitments in 23/24 are for the new website and planning system.
Leisure Services	(133)	86	47	0		A reserve set up in 2016/17 to support non recurring costs of the leisure service. The future commitments of £86k are contributions towards the cost of capital works at Parklands Leisure Centre and Tavistock Viaduct Walk.
Maintenance Funds	(436)	95	341	0		A reserve set up in 2016/17 to support potential non recurring maintenance costs of property assets held by the authority. The future commitments of £95k are contributions towards the cost of capital works at Heron Rd, Exeter and Hayedown Depot.
Maintenance, Management and Risk Management Reserve (MMRM) - 10% of annual income from investment properties is set aside into this reserve	(418)	0	418	0		This reserve was set up in 2018/19 to manage the ongoing maintenance costs of the Council's Investment Property. The contributions to this reserve equate to 10% of the rental income on an annual basis. This is being reviewed for the future.
New Homes Bonus (Revenue Base Budget funding)	(150)	150	0	0		Funding set aside to finance the 2023/24 revenue budget.
New Homes Bonus	(363)	363	0	0		Commitments for capital programme funding from allocations approved in previous years, such as Springhill, Tavistock and other capital projects.
Planning Policy & Major Developments	(123)	118	5	0	(25)	This reserve is for all planning matters and is also required to put funding aside to meet any future appeal costs. Commitments mainly relate to the Planning restructure. A contribution of £25,000 is made into the reserve annually.
Joint Local Plan	(25)	25	0	0	(25)	This reserve is to fund the salary costs of the JLP team. An annual contribution of £25k is made into this reserve.
Section 106 Monitoring and technical support	(3)	3	0	0		This reserve funds the costs of staff to oversee the administration of S106 deposits and how they are spent.
Organisational Development Strategy	(20)	20	0	0		This reserve was created from external work carried out in other Councils e.g. HR work with Councils also embarking on a Transformation Programme. This funding is now earmarked for implementing the Council's Organisational Development Strategy.
Vehicle Replacement	(376)	376	0	0	(50)	Earmarked for the Vehicle Fleet Replacement Programme. An annual contribution of £50k is made to this reserve.
Waste & Cleansing Options Review	(678)	450	228	0		This reserve was established in 2016/17 to support and promote changes in service provision and capital investment. Amounts have been committed to fund capital expenditure for an additional waste fleet vehicle and for the upgrade of Hayedown Depot.
Tree Maintenance	(14)	14	0	0		This reserve was set up in 2021/22 to hold underspends in the revenue budget and to support longer term ongoing costs of the tree maintenance programme.
Affordable Housing Reserve	(159)	98	0	(61)		This is a new reserve set up in 2022/23 to support the delivery of affordable housing initiatives. £98k has been committed to support the continuation of the tenants incentive scheme and capital works to modernise 3 Springhill, the balance of the reserve is currently uncommitted.
Tamar Trails	(55)	55	0	0		This is a new reserve set up in 2022/23 to support the delivery of capital improvement works to the trail. The reserve is fully committed as detailed in capital monitoring report to Hub Committee 07/03/23
Sub - Total	(4,951)	2,491	2,399	(61)	(170)	
<b>Earmarked Reserves which are being used to fund new corporate initiatives and corporate priorities</b>						
Broadband Community Support Reserve	(50)	50	0	0		The set up of this reserve was approved by Hub on 01/12/20, min ref HC40, funded by a £50k contribution from the Business Rates Retention Reserve to support the council's economic and health & wellbeing objectives.
Business Rates Retention Reserve (Corporate Strategy)	(104)	104	0	0		£104k has been committed to fund initiatives included in the Corporate Strategy, including supporting enhancements to Tavistock & other towns
Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn)	(376)	287	0	(89)		This reserve was set up in 2016/17, current commitments are for a contribution towards the upgrade of Hayedown Depot and Corporate Strategy projects £80k.
Recovery Plan & Corporate Strategy Reserve	(159)	159	0	0		This was a reserve established at the end of 2020/21 to support the costs of the Recovery Plan & Corporate Strategy (Hub 16/03/21), it is fully committed to fund the cost of various initiatives as detailed in the Corporate Strategy.
Strategic Change (T18)	(67)	33	0	(34)		£33k has been committed to finance the 2023/24 revenue base budget
Sub - Total	(756)	633	0	(123)	0	
<b>Earmarked Reserves which is Government Grant funding being used for the purposes of the grant determination letter</b>						
Neighbourhood Planning	(45)	45	0	0		This is Neighbourhood Planning Grant funding received in previous years yet to be applied to finance relevant expenditure
Revenue Grants	(1,303)	1,303	0	0		This reserve comprises of government grants received for specific initiatives or new burdens, and are held in the reserve for accounting purposes.
Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis (Government Grant funding)	(669)	669	0	0		This reserve was set up in 2022/23 to hold funding received to support the Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis which will be spent in 2023/24. An amount of £496,583 will be spent in 2023/24 on the purchase of five properties through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) as approved by Hub Committee (07/03/23).
Sub - Total	(2,017)	2,017	0	0	0	
<b>Notional Earmarked Reserves which are held for a technical accounting purpose for the Collection Fund (this is not funding available to the Council to spend)</b>						
S.31 Compensation Grant (Business Rates Section 31 Grants for business rates relief)	(307)	307	0	0		This is a new reserve set up to hold the business rates S31 grants received in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to offset the business rate reliefs given to businesses during lockdown. Under current Collection Fund accounting rules, the S31 grants received will not be discharged against the Collection Fund deficit until the following year in 2023/24. This reserve is not money which is available for the Council to spend and it is important that this is not misinterpreted in the Accounts, as this is a national issue.
Sub - Total	(307)	307	0	0	0	
<b>Uncommitted Earmarked Reserves and available for Members to decide how to allocate these funds for future priorities</b>						
COVID-19	(254)	0	0	(254)		This was a reserve set up at the end of 20/21 used to hold grant funding provided by central government to finance costs & income losses incurred as a direct result of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The current balance in this reserve is uncommitted for these purposes.

Financial Stability	(617)	0	0	(617)		This was a new reserve set up in 2018/19, which is to be available for any future financial pressures arising from local government funding reforms and any other budget pressures. It is currently uncommitted funding.
Sub - Total	(871)	0	0	(871)	0	
<b>TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>(8,902)</b>	<b>5,448</b>	<b>2,399</b>	<b>(1,055)</b>	<b>(170)</b>	
<b>TOTAL UNEARMARKED RESERVES (General Fund Balance)</b>	<b>(1,569)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,569</b>	<b>0</b>		This Unearmarked Reserve has a minimum balance of £0.9 million and an operating level of £1.25 million (set by Members as part of the budget process). The 2022/23 surplus of £79,000 from the 2022/23 Accounts has been transferred to Unearmarked Reserves, in accordance with normal accounting practice. The £1.569m includes the surplus of £79,000 for the 2022/23 financial year outturn.
<b>TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES (EARMARKED AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES)</b>	<b>(10,471)</b>	<b>5,448</b>	<b>3,968</b>	<b>(1,055)</b>	<b>(170)</b>	

West Devon Borough Council  
Statement of Earmarked Reserve Balances as at 31st Mar 23

Code	Reserve	Balance £'s	Balance £000's	Reserve Category	Check £000's
W0932	Broadband Community Support Reserve	(50,000.00)	(50)	Corporate Initiatives and Corporate Priorities	(50)
W0824	Business Rates Retention Reserve	(1,075,309.92)	(1,075)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(1,075)
W0866	Business Rates s31 Compensation Grant Reserve	(307,427.39)	(307)	Notional earmarked reserves held for a technical accounting purpose	(307)
W0833	Car Park Maintenance Reserve	(534,065.92)	(534)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(534)
W0930	COVID-19 Reserve	(253,811.29)	(254)	Uncommitted earmarked reserves available to members	(254)
W0903	Elections Reserve	(60,671.40)	(61)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(61)
W0857	Environmental Health Initiatives Reserve	(103,673.84)	(104)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(104)
W0859	Financial Stability Reserve	(616,956.94)	(617)	Uncommitted earmarked reserves available to members	(617)
W0901	Grounds Maintenance Reserve	(99,460.24)	(99)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(99)
W0924	Homelessness Prevention Reserve	(183,911.89)	(184)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(184)
W0836	ICT Development Reserve	(44,662.78)	(45)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(45)
W0850	Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn) Reserve	(375,917.59)	(376)	Corporate Initiatives and Corporate Priorities	(376)
W0855	Leisure Services Reserve	(133,566.37)	(134)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(133)
W0927	Maintenance Funds Reserve	(435,656.54)	(436)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(436)
W0861	Maintenance, Management and Risk Management Reserve (MMRM)	(417,502.84)	(418)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(418)
W0897	Neighbourhood Planning Reserve	(44,788.25)	(45)	Government Grant Funding used in conjunction with grant determination	(45)
W0804	New Homes Bonus Reserve	(513,546.99)	(514)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(513)
W0840	Planning Policy & Major Developments Reserve	(122,661.32)	(123)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(123)
W0864	Recovery Plan & Corporate Strategy Reserve	(158,627.96)	(159)	Corporate Initiatives and Corporate Priorities	(159)
W0821	Revenue Grants Reserve	(1,302,710.69)	(1,303)	Government Grant Funding used in conjunction with grant determination	(1,303)
W0860	Joint Local Plan Reserve	(25,000.00)	(25)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(25)
W0862	s106 Technical Support Reserve	(2,801.40)	(3)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(3)
W0925	Strategic Change Reserve (T18)	(67,399.66)	(67)	Corporate Initiatives and Corporate Priorities	(67)
W0856	Organisational Development Reserve	(19,774.75)	(20)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(20)
W0931	Vehicle Replacement Reserve	(376,050.23)	(376)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(376)
W0853	Waste & Cleansing Options Review Reserve	(677,864.90)	(678)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(678)
W0934	Tree Maintenance Reserve	(14,156.86)	(14)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(14)
W0822	Affordable Housing Reserve	(159,584.00)	(160)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(159)
W0876	Tamar Trails Reserve (Capital)	(55,000.00)	(55)	Essential for operational core service delivery	(55)
W0875	Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Reserve	(669,158.26)	(669)	Government Grant Funding used in conjunction with grant determination	(669)
Totals (Ledger)		(8,901,720.22)	(8,902)	Actual	(8,902)
				Control	(8,902)
				Roundings	(0)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **21 November 2023**

Title: **Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2024-25**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr M Ewings – Budget Setting Process**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: **Lisa Buckle** Role: **Corporate Director for Strategic Finance**

Contact: Email: [lisa.buckle@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.buckle@swdevon.gov.uk)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Hub Committee considers the Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2024-25 and:

- a) **NOTES** the forecast budget gap for 2024/25 of £142,030 (1.5% of the projected Net Budget of £9.265million) and the position for future years; and
- b) **TASKS** the Senior Leadership Team working with Hub Committee Members with bringing back further options of how to close the predicted budget gap for 2024/25, as part of future budget reports in early 2024 (once more detail of the Local Government Finance settlement is known), for Members' consideration.

### 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is based on a financial forecast over a rolling three-year period to 2026/27. The Hub Committee considered the MTFS at its meeting on 19 September 2023.
- 1.2 The Council, along with other local authorities, has faced unprecedented reductions in Government funding. Between 2009/10 and 2020/21, the Council's Core Government funding has reduced by £3 million. The Council now receives minimal Government Grant (Revenue Support Grant) of £89,000 in 2023/24 to fund its services and the Council must be self-sufficient.
- 1.3 The Council has continued to work in partnership with South Hams District Council which has allowed West Devon to achieve annual savings of £2.2 million and more importantly protect all statutory front

line services. Between both Councils the annual shared services savings being achieved are over £6 million per annum. However, the Councils continue to face considerable financial challenges because of uncertainty in the wider economy and constraints on public sector spending.

- 1.4 It is important to note that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out the budget strategy for the Council for the next three years, with regular reviews (at least annually) and updates when items are further known or are announced by the Government.
- 1.5 Prudent financial management in the past, has meant that the Council was in a relatively healthy position financially before the pandemic hit. The management of risk and promoting financial resilience is a key principle of our budget strategy and this has helped facilitate our response. Key to the Council's financial resilience is its reserves, which are at a prudent level.
- 1.6 The Fair Funding Review, business rates baseline reset, and other funding reforms now look set to be pushed back to 2026/27 although this has not been confirmed by the Government so the MTFS and Budget Proposals for 2024/25 assumes that these changes will happen in 2026/27. The Council is awaiting a Policy Note from the Government (due to be issued in November 2023) on the key principles upon which the Finance Settlement for 2024/25 will be based.
- 1.7 The MFTS in September 2023 identified a budget gap of £393,030 for 2024/25. Since that report, there have been several updates to the proposed Budget for 2024/25. This has been set out in Section 3.1 of the report.
- 1.8 The latest position is shown in the table below. The predicted budget gap for 2024/25 onwards for the Council is **as shown in Appendix B:**

<b>Budget Gaps</b>	<b>2024/25 £</b>	<b>2025/26 £</b>	<b>2026/27 £</b>	<b>Total Aggregated Budget Gap £</b>
'New' Budget Gap each year	142,030	301,232	702,132	<b>1,145,394</b>
*Cumulative Budget Gap	142,030	443,262	1,145,394	<b>1,730,686</b>

\* (Cumulative Budget Gap assumes annual new budget gaps have not been addressed)

- 1.9 ***The forecast budget gap for 2024/25 is £142,030. This is 1.5% of the Projected Net Budget for 24/25 of £9.265million.*** A cumulative budget gap of £443,262 is predicted for 2025/26 (the £443,262 assumes that the 24/25 budget gap of £142,030 has not been closed). The cumulative

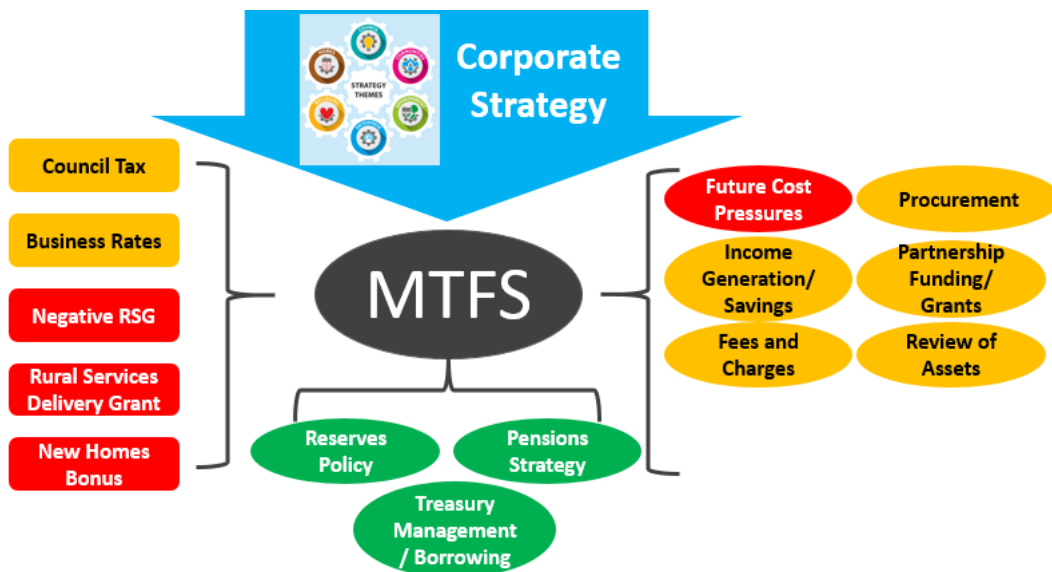
aggregated Budget Gap by 2026/27 is £1.73 million, if no action has been taken in each individual year to close the budget gap annually.

- 1.10 The budget gap for next year of £142,030 is very much in line with the level expected at this point in the financial planning cycle. In the year after the budget gap is £301,232. The budget gap increases to £702,132 in three years' time, 2026/27, due to the local government reforms that are expected. These are the reset of the business rates baseline, the fair funding review and the impact of negative RSG (Revenue Support Grant), coupled with the loss of the business rates pooling gain.
- 1.11 There are continuing uncertainties about the level of local government funding for 2024/25 and there is no indication yet of the detailed local government funding levels for 2024/25 and beyond. Therefore, there are many uncertainties in preparing for the challenges we know we will face soon. It is thought that the first realistic opportunity for implementing funding reforms is 2026/27. There is now a very pressing need to update population and council tax data (both of which are at least a decade old). It is assumed that the core finance settlement for 2024/25 will increase in a similar manner as that for 2023/24.
- 1.12 The provisional local government finance settlement is likely to be published late (just before Christmas), due to delays to the Autumn Statement.
- 1.13 Further options for Members' considerations of how to close the predicted budget gap of £142,030 will be presented as part of future budget reports in early 2024.

## **2 KEY ASSUMPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Diagram below sets out all the component parts which constitute the make-up of the MTFS. Items in Green denote those elements where the Council has a large degree of control in the setting of policies and strategies. Items in Amber denote those components of the MTFS where the Council has a degree of control. Red items signal components where the Council has hardly any control over funding allocations which are decided by the Government and future cost pressures which can be outside of the Council's control or influence.

**2023/24 Net Budget £8.59 million**



2.2 The key assumptions within the MFTS and the latest Budget Proposals for 2024/25 are as below.

- The business rates baseline reset will be deferred until 2026/27 at the earliest (with no negative Revenue Support Grant in 2024/25 or 2025/26).
- There will be a phasing in of negative Revenue Support Grant as part of the business rates baseline reset (predicted to be in 2026/27) with a transition period, to avoid Local Authorities losing/gaining too much in one go. The modelling assumes negative RSG of £117,000 in 2026/27. Some of the negative RSG could be offset by growth.
- It is assumed Council Tax limits for District Councils will remain at the higher of £5 or 2.99% for 2024/25 onwards.
- It is assumed that 2024/25 will be another roll over settlement, which will give an amount of around £300,000 of NHB funding (or a similar replacement housing incentive scheme) that could be used to fund the 2024/25 revenue base budget.
- A business rates pooling gain of £200,000 has been modelled for 2024/25 and 2025/26, with no further gains for 2026/27 onwards.
- A council tax surplus of £151,000 for 24/25 has been assumed, with a council tax collection rate of 97.5% (98.34% was achieved in 2022/23 which was in the top quartile nationally).
- Rural Services Delivery Grant has been assumed to continue annually at the same level as 23/24 (£544,625).
- A 4% pay increase has been modelled from 2024/25 onwards (4% equates to £216,000 on total pay of £5.4m). The pay assumption has been reduced to 3% in 2025/26 and 2026/27.

### 3 UPDATES TO THE BUDGET POSITION FOR 2024/25

3.1 The MFTS in September 2023 identified a budget gap of £393,030 for 2024/25. Since that report, there have been several updates to the proposed Budget for 2024/25 which are summarised in the Table below.

	£
<b><i>Budget gap for 24/25 reported in the Medium Term Financial Strategy in September 2023</i></b>	<b>393,030</b>
<b>Additional cost pressures identified (£100,000)</b>	
Cost pressure for flooding – recent events have highlighted the need to add a cost pressure for dealing with the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, on our communities. This would give a contingency budget each year so that the cost of responding to and recovery from such events is covered (i.e. contractors used for the clear up, skip hire for disposal of waste etc)	50,000
Additional cost pressure for external audit fees – audit fees are increasing nationally	30,000
Increase the cost pressure for IT software and support contracts from £90,000 to £110,000 as per the latest budget monitoring report. This is reflective of increased cyber security risks and inflationary pressures.	20,000
<b>Changes to Financing of the Base Budget (£151,000)</b>	
Increase the amount of New Homes Bonus used to fund the Base Budget from £150,000 to £300,000 (see section 3.20)	(150,000)
Increase the Council’s share of the Collection Fund surplus for 2024/25 (increased from £150,000 to £151,000)	(1,000)
<b>Additional income/savings identified (£200,000)</b>	
Long stay car parking pay and display charges review (as set out in the Hub Committee report 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023) – inflationary increases since March 2021. It is proposed to increase the long stay car parks tariffs only, ensuring that short stay shopping opportunities are not impacted.	(150,000)
Increase the additional income target for income from treasury management from £300,000 to £350,000 – This would set an income target of £750,000 for 2024/25 for treasury management income and it is proposed to reduce the target to £600,000 for 2025/26.	(50,000)

<b>Latest Budget gap for 2024/25 as set out in this report (as at November 2023)</b>	<b>142,030</b>
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- 3.2 There is a separate report on this Hub Committee agenda regarding the long stay car parking pay and display charges review. It must be noted that in the 2023/24 Budget the Council reduced its income target for car parking income by £150k. Therefore, the review of car parking charges as is proposed in this report by an inflationary amount (since March 2021) is taking the Council's car parking income back to pre-pandemic levels and a pre pandemic budget position. It is proposed to increase the long stay car parks tariffs only, ensuring that short stay shopping opportunities are not impacted.
- 3.3 The Council is awaiting a Policy Note from the Government (due to be issued in November 2023) on the key principles upon which the Finance Settlement for 2024/25 will be based. The provisional local government finance settlement is likely to be published late (just before Christmas), due to delays to the Autumn Statement. <sup>[OBJ]</sup>
- 3.4 Further options for Members' considerations of how to close the predicted budget gap of **£142,030** for 2024/25 will be presented as part of future budget reports in early 2024.

#### **OVERALL POSITION – BUDGET GAP**

- 3.5 Financial modelling has been undertaken for the next three years to predict the Council's financial situation for the short and medium term.
- 3.6 **Appendix A** to the Budget report sets out the Budget Pressures forecast for the next three years, and the additional savings and income forecast. **Appendix B** illustrates the overall financial forecast for the forthcoming five years. The Council's Net Budget is £8.59 million in 2023/24.
- 3.7 A Summary forecast is shown below of the potential budget situation if all the budget pressures and the savings and income generation in Appendix A were approved. It also shows the situation if the Council Tax is increased by 2.99% per annum (shown in Appendix B).
- 3.8 The following table illustrates the predicted budget gap from 2024/25 onwards for the Council **as shown in Appendix B**:

<b>Budget Gaps</b>	<b>2024/25 £</b>	<b>2025/26 £</b>	<b>2026/27 £</b>	<b>Total Aggregated Budget Gap £</b>
'New' Budget Gap each year	142,030	301,232	702,132	<b>1,145,394</b>
*Cumulative Budget Gap	142,030	443,262	1,145,394	<b>1,730,686</b>

\* (Cumulative Budget Gap assumes annual new budget gaps have not been addressed)

- 3.9 ***The forecast budget gap for 2024/25 is £142,030. This is 1.5% of the Projected Net Budget for 24/25 of £9.265million.*** A cumulative budget gap of £443,262 is predicted for 2025/26 (the £443,262 assumes that the 24/25 budget gap of £142,030 has not been closed). The cumulative aggregated Budget Gap by 2026/27 is £1.73 million, if no action has been taken in each individual year to close the budget gap annually.

### **Council Tax**

- 3.10 The Council Tax Referendum limits for District Councils for 2023/24 was the higher of 2.99% or £5. An increase in council tax of 2.99% for the next three years has been modelled for council tax purposes. This would equate to a Band D council tax for the Borough Council of £261.59 in 2024/25 as shown in Appendix B (an increase of 2.99% for the year which is 15 pence per week or £7.59 for the year). The Council's share of the council tax for 2024/25, will be set at the Council meeting on 20th February 2024. (A 1% increase in council tax generates £55,000 of extra council tax income).
- 3.11 Of an average Band D Council Tax within the Borough of £2,346.79, an amount of £254.00 is the element of a council tax bill set by West Devon Borough Council. Therefore 11pence of every £1 paid (11%) in council tax is received by West Devon Borough Council to pay for our services. The rest of the council tax bill is set by Devon County Council, the Fire, the Police and Town and Parish Councils to fund the services they provide.
- 3.12 The Council collected 98.34% in council tax in 2022/23 which was in the top quartile of all Councils nationally. A council tax collection rate of 97.5% has been assumed for 2023/24. It has been assumed that the number of properties within the Borough will increase by 300 per annum from 2024/25 onwards.

### **Business Rates and Negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG)**

- 3.13 It has been assumed that the Business Rates Reset will be delayed to 2026/27. Whilst this change is not confirmed by the Government, a reset based on the current taxbase would appear very unlikely.
- 3.14 The Fair Funding Review, business rates baseline reset, and other funding reforms now look set to be pushed back to 2026/27 although this has not been confirmed by the Government so the MTFS assumes that these changes could happen in 2026/27. The 2025/26 finance settlement will be the first year of a new spending review period.
- 3.15 The MTFS assumes that the full range of changes from the Fair Funding Review will be implemented based on the proposals in the December 2018 consultation paper, plus the latest population estimates (2022) and

the latest council tax data. It is assumed that the business rates baseline reset will happen in 2026/27.

- 3.16 Estimates have been made of the business rates baseline funding levels for 2024/25 onwards and the relative deductions for negative RSG in 2026/27. For example, in 2024/25, the £2.391m is the amount the Council is projected to retain from its business rates income collected of around £8.97 million (this equates to around 27p in every £1 collected of business rates).

#### **Devon Business Rates Pool**

- 3.17 West Devon Borough Council has elected to remain part of the Devon-wide Business Rates Pool for 2024/25. The latest modelling shows that a pooling gain in the region of £9.7million is forecast for 2024/25, with the Council's share of the pooling gain being in the region of £200,000.

#### **Rural Services Delivery Grant**

- 3.18 Rural Services Delivery Grant has been modelled to continue for 2024/25 onwards at previous levels (WDBC share of £544,625) and the methodology for distribution is assumed to remain unchanged from 2023/24. This is Government grant to recognise the additional cost of delivering services in rural areas.

#### **New Homes Bonus (NHB)**

- 3.19 A decision on the future of New Homes Bonus funding (NHB) will be announced before the 2024-25 finance settlement. The consultation on the future of NHB was in February 2021. In the absence of any decision or announcement, it is assumed that NHB will continue for one more year in 2024-25.

- 3.20 In 2023/24 the NHB allocation for the Council was £384,230. The latest modelling of the potential NHB payment for 2024/25 is an amount in excess of £440,000. This is based on a property increase of 371 properties. (The amount received is 371 less the baseline of 0.4% (103 properties) at 80% of £2,065 which is an average national council tax). It is proposed that the allocation of NHB for 2024/25 could be used in the following way: -

<b>NHB Provisional allocation for 2024/25</b> (this is modelling only - as NHB has not been confirmed as continuing for 24/25 by the Government)	<b>£440,000</b>
Amount used to fund the 2024/25 revenue base budget	£(300,000)
Funding for capital projects for 2024/25, to set aside an annual provision for the roof at Kilworthy Park and a capital budget for the bank reconciliation software. (see 8.4)	£(140,000)



- 3.21 The Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 6.7% (August 2023 CPI), which is down from 6.8% in July. Inflation over the past 18 months has been at a 40 year high. An extra £150,000 cost pressure for inflation on goods and services and increases in utility costs has been included within the cost pressures in Appendix A. The latest minutes from the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) state that it is expected that inflation will drop back to 4.8% by the end of 2023, accounted for by lower energy, and to a lesser degree, food and core goods price inflation. At present, there is no indication from Government of any additional funding to meet inflationary cost pressures.
- 3.22 A provision for the 2024/25 pay award has been modelled in the MTF5 at 4% (£216,000), with total pay being £5.4million. This has been reduced to 3% in 2025/26 and 2026/27. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy is not an expression of Council Policy on pay awards, but a means of ensuring an appropriate provision is made as part of the overall financial planning of the Council. The Council is particularly affected by inflation in terms of the Local Government Pay Award as staffing forms a significant proportion of the Council's budget.
- 3.23 The pay award for 2023-24 has now been agreed. This is for £1,925 per Scale Point or a 3.88% increase for Scale Point 44 upwards. This would cost an extra £147,000 and this amount also needs to be built into the Base Budget for 2024-25 as a 'catch up' as the budget for 23/24 has already been set.
- 3.24 The current Bank Base Rate will increase the Council's income from treasury management investments and additional income of £350,000 has been built into the Budget for 2024/25. This would set an income target of £750,000 for 2024/25 for treasury management income and it is proposed to reduce the target to £600,000 for 2025/26. It is predicted that bank base rate will remain at 5.25% until September 2024 when it is predicted to reduce to 5%, with a predicted reduction to 4.5% by December 2024 and 4% by March 2025.

### **Corporate Strategy**

- 3.25 The Council is in the process of setting out its corporate strategy for the period 2024-2028 and there is a report on the Draft Corporate Strategy on the Hub Committee agenda for 21 November 2023. Once adopted, the strategy will be the Council's overarching strategic document setting out our ambitions and priorities for the Borough.
- 3.26 There is a separate report on the Hub Committee agenda for 21 November 2023 for the review of the Capital Programme and a review of Reserves. The report recommends that the Hub Committee resolves to recommend to Council to withdraw three capital projects from the current Capital Programme, potentially freeing up £263,200 and to also approve the review of revenue reserves, potentially releasing a further

£871,000 of revenue funding. **Therefore, there is potentially £1,134,200 available to fund the new emerging corporate strategy.**

### **Climate Change**

- 3.27 The Council's annual delivery plan on 'Growing our natural environment' sets out the Council's action plan for addressing climate change and the carbon/biodiversity impact.

### **OTHER BUDGET ITEMS**

- 3.28 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 allows Billing Authorities the discretion to charge second homeowners a council tax premium of 100% (so a second home dwelling would pay double the council tax charge). The Act requires Billing Authorities to have a minimum period of 12 months between making its first determination and the financial year in which it takes effect. That means the earliest that Councils can introduce it is for the start of the 2025-26 financial year, i.e. 1 April 2025. At Council on 21 February 2023, Council approved charging up to an extra 100% council tax in second homes. Modelling shows that extra council tax income of £157,000 could be generated and this has been modelled for the 2025-26 financial year (see Memorandum note)
- 3.29 The revenue budget monitoring report to the Hub Committee on 19th September shows an overall projected deficit of £37,000 for the 2023/24 financial year. This is 0.4% of the overall net budget set of £8.588million and this is very close to a break-even position.

## **4. Treasury Management and Borrowing Strategy**

- 4.1 The Council has previously taken external treasury management advice on the Council's overall borrowing levels and debt levels. The Council set an Upper Limit on External Borrowing (for all Council services) as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy of £50 million in 2019 and it is not proposed to change this limit at present.
- 4.2 In 2022/23 the long-term borrowing of the Council decreased from £27,726,000 (2021/22) to £27,012,000. Short-term borrowing increased from £615,000 to £714,000. This is due to the profiling of the debt repayments where long-term borrowing has moved to short term borrowing. Total borrowing as at 31 March 2023 has reduced from £28,341,000 to £27,726,000. No further external borrowing took place during 2022/23.

## **5 FEES AND CHARGES**

- 5.1 As part of the budget process, fees and charges will be reviewed. A delegation is in place to enable service managers to increase fees and charges by inflation where these are not material changes or increases.
- 5.2 DEFRA has confirmed that the implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) will be deferred from October 2024 to October 2025.

## **6 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND TIMESCALES**

- 6.1 The Council will continue to assess the options for closing the budget gap for 2024/25 onwards, and in the longer term, to achieve long-term financial sustainability and further options will be presented to Members in further budget reports. This will consider ways to reduce the Council's operating costs and generating further income and savings.
- 6.2 Making the best use of our resources and setting a balanced budget annually is within the 'Delivering Quality Services' Delivery Plan of the Council's corporate strategy.

## **7 Earmarked and Unearmarked Reserves Policy**

- 7.1 Unearmarked Reserves total £1.569 million at 31 March 2023. There was a surplus of £79,000 on the outturn position for 2022/23 (1.0% of the net budget of £7.770m) as shown in the Draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 published by the end of June 2023. In accordance with normal accounting practice, this underspend has gone into Unearmarked Reserves.
- 7.2 At Council on 21 February 2023, Members set a minimum balance for Unearmarked Reserves of £900,000, with an operating level of a minimum of £1.25million (Minute reference CM 66/22). This was based on a risk assessment basis and a sensitivity analysis. Therefore, the current level of Unearmarked Reserves of £1.569million at 31 March 2023 is still above these minimum levels to be held which are set annually.
- 7.3 Legislation does not prescribe how much the minimum level of reserves should be. The Section 151 Officer is tasked with recommending the minimum level of reserves required as part of the budget setting process having regard to elements of risk in the Council's finances (this was recommended at £900,000 being the minimum level in February 2023, with an operating level of £1.25million). Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 Officer to report on the adequacy of the Council's financial resources on an annual basis.
- 7.4 **Earmarked Reserves** have reduced by £0.287m in 2022/23 moving from £9.189m on 1 April 2022 to **£8.902m at 31 March 2023 as shown in Appendix C.**
- 7.5 Reserve levels will be kept under constant review and will be reviewed throughout the budget setting process to consider commitments against Earmarked Reserves, their unallocated balance, and the contributions to/from Earmarked Reserves for 2024/25 and future years also.
- 7.6 There is a separate report on this Hub Committee agenda which sets out a review of Earmarked Reserves. It is recommended that the Hub Committee resolves to recommend to Council to approve the outcome

of the review of revenue reserves, releasing revenue reserves of up to £871,000 which is potentially available to support the delivery of the emerging Corporate Strategy.

- 7.7 The proposed contributions to/from Earmarked Reserves for 2024/25 are shown in Appendix A. It is recommended to make an annual contribution of £50,000 to a JLP reserve, to commence the JLP review and to also commence making a £350,000 annual contribution to the vehicle replacement reserve for the future replacement of the waste fleet. An options report on waste vehicles will be presented to Members in 2024.
- 7.8 The Council currently puts 10% of its annual income from investment properties into a Management, Maintenance and Risk Earmarked Reserve. The Council will review this for 24/25 and will conclude whether to increase its percentage contribution into this reserve, once the Council has seen the detail of the local government finance settlement for 24/25.
- 7.9 The provision of an appropriate level of balances is a fundamental part of prudent financial management, enabling the Council to build up funds to meet known and potential financial commitments.
- 7.10 As highlighted above there is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government. However, the Section 151 Officer is keeping a close watch on developments and planning for this longer-term uncertainty.

## **8 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND PRUDENTIAL BORROWING**

- 8.1 The Capital Programme is set by the Council and may be funded by sale proceeds from the disposal of assets (capital receipts), external grants and contributions, directly from revenue or from borrowing.
- 8.2 Capital projects will be scored on the following criteria:
- Health and Safety compliance
  - Essential to keep operational assets open
  - Fit with the Council's Delivery Plans for the new emerging Corporate Strategy
  - To rationalise service delivery or service improvement
  - To generate income, capital value or to reduce revenue costs
- 8.3 It is important that future bids for capital are aligned with the review of the new emerging Corporate Strategy.
- 8.4 There are two capital bids for 2024/25 (total £140,000) that it is recommended form part of the Capital Budget Proposals for 2024/25 and be funded from New Homes Bonus funding. These are as below:

- £90,000 – to renew and upgrade the Councils’ bank reconciliation software (This is 50% of the projected cost, which is shared with SHDC); and
- £50,000 – Annual amount set aside for a provision for the roof at Kilworthy Park

8.5 The Council’s Asset Base is £38.3 million at 31 March 2023. The Council will continually review and challenge its asset base in order to deliver the optimum value for money from the Council’s Assets.

## 9 NEXT STEPS AND PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

9.1 The MTFFS is the starting point for developing a meaningful three-year strategy that sets out the strategic intention for different strands of funding available to the Council. The Council will then be able to rely on this to inform future decisions.

9.2 The Council’s budget is fixed in cash terms and its ability to raise income is limited as there are national controls in place around council tax and business rates.

9.3 Officers will continue to work with the Hub Committee and the results of this will be incorporated into future Budget reports. This will consider ways to reduce the Council’s operating costs and generating further income and savings.

9.4 Further options for Members’ considerations of how to close the predicted budget gap of £142,030 will be presented as part of the 16 January 2024 report. The table below shows the budget timetable for the budget meetings for the 2024/25 Budget process.

19 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	Hub Committee – To consider the three-year MTFFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) for 2024/25 to 2026/27
21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	Hub Committee – To consider draft proposals for the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2024/25.
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 (4pm)	All Member Briefing on the Budget Proposals for 2024/25
16 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Overview & Scrutiny Committee - To consider draft proposals for the Revenue and Capital Budget for 2024/25.
30 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	Hub Committee – To recommend Final Budget Proposals to Council for 2024/25
<b>15<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (9am)</b>	<b>Date which Council Procedure Rule 16 applies</b>
20 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Full Council – To approve Final Budget Proposals for 2024/25 and set the WDBC share of the Council Tax

22 February 2024	Council Tax Setting Panel – to agree the Council Tax Resolution for 2024/25 (This is WDBC share plus all other precepting authorities share).
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**Note 1-** Council Procedure Rule 16 states that ‘Where a member intends to move a motion or amendment in relation to the Budget, the text of that motion or amendment must be put in writing and submitted to the Head of Paid Service by 9am on the third working day before the meeting, in order that officers may have sufficient time to consider and advise the Council of the financial implications of any such motion or amendment’. As per the timetable above, this would need to be submitted by 9am on Thursday 15 February 2024.

### 10. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		<p>The Hub Committee is responsible for recommending to Council the budgetary framework. It is the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the Budget proposals being proposed by the Council on an annual basis. In accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules, Council must decide the general level of Reserves and the use of Earmarked Reserves.</p> <p>The preparation of the Budget report is evidence of whether the Council has considered all relevant information and proper advice when determining its financial arrangements in accordance with statutory requirements, and, that it will set a lawful budget.</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		<p><b><i>The forecast budget gap for 2024/25 is £142,030. This is 1.5% of the Projected Net Budget for 24/25 of £9.265million.</i></b> A cumulative budget gap of £443,262 is predicted for 2025/26 (the £443,262 assumes that the 24/25 budget gap of £142,030 has not been closed). The cumulative aggregated Budget Gap by 2026/27 is £1.73 million, if no action has been taken in each individual year to close the budget gap annually.</p> <p>There is no indication yet of the detailed local government funding levels for 2024/25 and beyond.</p>

		<p>Therefore, there are many uncertainties in preparing for the challenges we know we will face in the near future.</p> <p>As part of Grant Thornton's external audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2022/2023, they will assess the arrangements the Council has in place for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness</li> <li>• Financial Sustainability</li> <li>• Governance</li> </ul> <p>The outcome of Grant Thornton's work in this area will be reported to Members at the Audit Committee meeting in March 2024.</p>
Risk		Each of the budget options taken forward by Members will consider the risks of the option.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Many activities set out in the Council's delivery plans can be delivered through refocusing and reprioritisation of existing resources however, to realise the ambition set out in the strategy, some of the activities will require additional resources.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		<p>A report was presented to Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 'Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan update'.</p> <p>In March 2021, Council approved to set up an Earmarked Reserve for £200,000 for the Recovery Plan and Corporate Strategy.</p>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Consultation and Engagement Strategy		External consultation and engagement have not been undertaken regarding this report.
Equality and Diversity		Equality Impact Assessments are completed for the budget proposals.
Safeguarding		None directly arising from this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None directly arising from this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None directly arising from this report.
Other implications		None directly arising from this report.

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Budget pressures and savings

Appendix B – Modelling of the Budget Position

Appendix C - Schedule of Reserves as at 31 March 2023

#### **Background Papers:**

None

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**WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**BUDGET PRESSURES**

	<b>BASE 2023/24 £</b>	<b>Yr 1 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Yr 2 2025/26 £</b>	<b>Yr 3 2026/27 £</b>
Waste collection, recycling and cleansing contract inflation (estimate) - assume 7.5% 2023/24 onwards (23/24 also includes some extra inflation provision from 22/23)	345,000	245,000	245,000	245,000
Waste collection, recycling and cleansing contract - Council 19 July 2022	400,000	0	0	0
Waste collection, recycling and cleansing - additional properties	50,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Triennial Pension revaluation (increase in Pension Employer primary rate contributions)	50,000	0	0	75,000
Inflation on goods and services	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Salaries - provision for pay award at 4% (£216,000) for 2024/25 (total pay of £5.4m), reducing to 3% in 25/26 and 26/27	0	216,000	170,000	170,000
Salaries - 22/23 award of £1,925 per Scale point has been modelled (an extra £210,000 on top of the 2% provided for)	360,000			
Pay award 2023-24 - Initial figures of £1,925 per Scale Point or a 3.88% increase for Scale Point 44 upwards. (£147,000 is the amount over the current budget provision). This will need to be built into the Base Budget in 2024-25.		147,000		
Increase in salaries - increments and pay and grading	175,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
IT inflationary cost pressures - increases in prices	0	110,000	0	0
Flooding - recent events have highlighted the need to add a cost pressure for dealing with the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, on our communities		50,000		
Extra insurance costs		30,000		
Reduction in car parking income - Income targets were reduced in 2023/24 - There is a report to the Hub Committee in November 2023 on fees and charges for car parking - This is shown in the savings section further down.	150,000	0	0	0
Increase in external audit fees	60,000	30,000	0	0
Housing Delivery Team - Hub Committee 7th June 2022	29,800	0	0	0
Head of Revenues and Benefits - Hub Committee 12th April 2022	30,000	0	0	0
The Planning Improvement Plan, Hub Committee 7 June 2022, noted that the cost of the restructure, £33K per annum, will be funded for the first three years from the additional planning income held in the planning earmarked reserve.	33,000	0	0	0
A Plan for West Devon - Council 28.9.21 - £122,000 cost pressure for 22/23 and £168,000 for 2023/24 (Base Budget of £168,000 in 2024/25 onwards)	46,000	0	0	0
Reduction in Housing Benefit administration subsidy	10,000	10,000	0	0
National Insurance and National Living Wage (NLW increases)	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
<b>TOTAL IDENTIFIED BUDGET PRESSURES</b>	<b>1,928,800</b>	<b>1,203,000</b>	<b>780,000</b>	<b>855,000</b>

**WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Contribution to Earmarked Reserves**  
(This line shows the annual contributions into the Reserve)

	<b>BASE 2023/24 £</b>	<b>Yr 1 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Yr2 2025/26 £</b>	<b>Yr 3 2026/27 £</b>
Contribution to IT Development Reserve (£50K per annum)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Contribution to Planning Reserve (£25K per annum)	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Contribution to Elections Reserve (20K per annum)	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Contribution to a Joint Local Plan Earmarked Reserve - to commence the JLP review	0	50,000	50,000	50,000
Contribution from the Planning Reserve for the cost of the restructure within the planning service - Hub Committee 7 June 2022 - to be funded for the first three years from the additional planning income held in the planning earmarked reserve	(33,000)	(33,000)	(33,000)	0
Contribution from Business Rates Retention Reserve to smooth the volatility in business rates income from the baseline reset	(150,000)	(150,000)	(150,000)	(150,000)
Contribution from Strategic Change Earmarked Reserve	(32,567)	0	0	0
Contribution to Vehicles Replacement Reserve (£50K per annum) - An increase to £350,000 per annum per year has been built in as a cost pressure. An options report will be brought to Members in early 2024.	50,000	350,000	350,000	350,000
Contribution to Joint Local Plan Earmarked Reserve (staffing costs)	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
<b>Total Contribution to/ (from) Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>(45,567)</b>	<b>337,000</b>	<b>337,000</b>	<b>370,000</b>

**SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION IDENTIFIED**

	<b>BASE 2023/24 £</b>	<b>Yr 1 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Yr 2 2025/26 £</b>	<b>Yr 3 2026/27 £</b>
Income from Investment properties (£350,000 is in the Base Budget for 2023/24) - periodic upwards rental reviews on investment properties	50,000	0	0	0
Management fee income from external contracts such as leisure - Council 15 February 2022	45,500	0	0	200,000
IT FIT Project - software savings	10,000	0	0	0
Establishment savings (salary savings) gained from IT and digital communications	50,000	0	0	0
Extra recycling income - this income has already been achieved in 2021-22 (Base budget of £515,000 in 2023-24)	190,000	0	0	0
Extra trade waste income (Base budget of £45,000 in 2023-24)	30,000	0	0	0
Extra treasury management income to reflect increases in the Bank Base rate (Base Budget of £400,000 in 2023-24)	375,000	350,000	(150,000)	0
Car parking income (Hub Committee report 21st November 2023 - inflationary increases since March 2021)	0	150,000	0	0
Extra garden waste income (Base budget of £305,000 in 2023-24)	60,000	25,000	0	0
Savings on staff and Member travel and expenses	30,000	0	0	0
Housing Benefit overpayments	40,000	0	0	0
Additional Employments estates income (Base budget of £427,000 in 2023-24)	50,000	0	0	0
Funding from Homelessness prevention government grant (this funds housing posts - funding to be reflected within the base budget)	180,000	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION</b>	<b>1,110,500</b>	<b>525,000</b>	<b>(150,000)</b>	<b>200,000</b>

**Memorandum note on Planning Fee Income**

The Government has confirmed that a 35% increase for major applications and 25% for all other applications is anticipated to apply from 1 April 2024. This is expected to generate around £60,000 to £70,000 of additional planning income. In 2022-23, the Council experienced a shortfall in planning income of £185,000 (39%) against the budgeted income target of £473,000. Therefore no additional income has been built into the base budget for 2024/25.

**Memorandum on 'A Plan for West Devon' cost pressure**

There is currently a £168,000 base budget for the 'Plan for West Devon' corporate strategy. This was agreed at Council on 28 September 2021. This budget has not been taken out of the base budget in the MTF5 as it is assumed that a similar level of investment will be needed for the new corporate strategy.

	<b>BASE 2023/24 £</b>	<b>Yr 1 2024/25 £</b>	<b>Yr 2 2025/26 £</b>	<b>Yr 3 2026/27 £</b>
Second Homes 200% council tax - Projected Income and Expenditure				
Income: Discretion to charge up to an extra 100% extra council tax on Second Homes (timescale is that legislation is likely to be introduced for 25-26). There was a separate report on the Council agenda of 21 February 2023 regarding this. This could generate further council tax income (WDBC share) of £157,000 from 2025/26 onwards.		0	(157,000)	(157,000)
Expenditure: The Council is experiencing additional temporary accommodation costs  This has been identified in the latest Budget Monitoring report (19.9.23) as being an on-going cost pressure. Significant increases are anticipated in the expenditure on temporary accommodation over and above what is claimable back through DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) subsidy. This is reflective of the national picture.		100,000	100,000	100,000

<b>Modelling assumptions: Assumes Council Tax is increased by 2.99% annually</b>				
Line	BASE	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
No.	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
1	7,769,695	8,587,995	9,123,965	9,752,733
2	1,928,800	1,203,000	780,000	855,000
3	(1,110,500)	(525,000)	150,000	(200,000)
<b>4</b>	<b>8,587,995</b>	<b>9,265,995</b>	<b>10,053,965</b>	<b>10,407,733</b>
<b>Funded By:-</b>				
5	5,391,371	5,630,952	5,880,108	6,138,976
6	377,000	151,000	150,000	150,000
7		60,000	60,000	60,000
8	1,761,000	2,316,000	2,350,000	2,450,000
9		75,000	90,000	100,000
10	0	0	0	(117,000)
11	89,000	93,000	93,000	143,000
12	200,000	200,000	200,000	0
13	544,625	544,625	544,625	544,625
14	51,044	112,000	366,000	0
15	(88,262)	(88,262)	0	0
16	0	0	0	250,000
17	150,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
18	0	0	0	0
19	66,650	66,650	56,000	56,000
20	45,567	(337,000)	(337,000)	(370,000)
<b>21</b>	<b>8,587,995</b>	<b>9,123,965</b>	<b>9,752,733</b>	<b>9,705,601</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>142,030</b>	<b>301,232</b>	<b>702,132</b>
<b>Actual Predicted Cumulative Budget Gap</b>				
	<b>0</b>	<b>142,030</b>	<b>443,262</b>	<b>1,145,394</b>
<b>Aggregated Budget Gap (if no action is taken in each individual year to close the budget gap annually)</b>				
	<b>0</b>	<b>142,030</b>	<b>585,292</b>	<b>1,730,686</b>

<b>Modelling Assumptions: (Assumes an increase in Band D Equivalent properties of 300 per annum)</b>				
Council Tax (Band D) (an increase of 2.99% per annum has been modelled)	254.00	261.59	269.41	277.46
Council TaxBase	21,225.87	21,525.87	21,825.87	22,125.87

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RESERVES - PROJECTED BALANCES					APPENDIX C
	Opening Balance 01.04.2022 £000's	Additions to Reserve 2022/23 £000's	Actual Spend 2022/23 £000's	Closing Balance 31.03.2023 £000's	Comments
<b>EARMARKED RESERVES</b>					
<b>Specific Reserves - General Fund</b>					
Affordable Housing (Revenue)	0	172	(12)	160	This is a new reserve set up as part of the 2022/23 Budget setting process and has been created from a one off contribution from the New Homes Bonus funding in 2022/23 (£172,084).
2016/17 Budget Surplus Contingency	86		(86)	0	This is the Budget Surplus from 2016/17 which was put into an Earmarked Reserve. £55,000 of this spend has been transferred to a new earmarked reserve for Tamar Trails capital expenditure.
Broadband Community Support	50			50	As per the report to the Hub Committee on 1st December 2020, Council approved the creation of a Broadband Community Support Earmarked Reserve, to be financed by transferring £50k from the existing Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve in 2020/21.
Car Parking Maintenance	534			534	There is a future commitment for an allocation from this reserve in respect of Brook Street Car Park. This reserve covers all of the Council's car parks.
COVID Losses Earmarked Reserve	254			254	This reserve was set up in 2020/21 to protect against future COVID losses. The current balance in this reserve is uncommitted.
Economic Grant Initiatives	26	5	(31)	0	
Elections	34	50	(24)	60	This reserve is used to fund the cost of District Elections.
Environmental Health Initiatives	20	84		104	The additions to this reserve relate to savings on Environmental Health salaries in 2022/23 mainly due to additional Disabled Facilities Grant income offsetting salary costs.
Financial Stability	454	163		617	This reserve was created in 2018/19 from the Business Rates Pilot funding. This funding was set aside to assist to smooth out future years' funding variations or reductions, in particular any changes from the Fair Funding Review. A one off contribution of £162,850 was approved as part of the 2022/23 budget (Council Feb 2022). This is currently uncommitted funding.
Flood Works	15		(15)	0	
Grounds Maintenance	78	21		99	This reserve holds the Grounds Maintenance in year surpluses to be reinvested back into the service.
Homelessness Prevention	244		(60)	184	This reserve has been created following underspends on Homelessness Prevention Costs. The spend mainly relates to salary costs following the Housing restructure - Hub 7/6/22.
ICT Development	25	57	(37)	45	Predicted spend in 2022/23 includes the Future IT project.
Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn)	378	5	(7)	376	This reserve originated from New Homes Bonus funding. Future commitments include the upgrading of Hayedown Depot.
Joint Local Plan	0	25		25	
Leisure Services	48	87	(1)	134	The contribution in 2022/23 relates to the re-profiling of the leisure management fees which also attracts an inflationary uplift.
Maintenance Fund (Estates)	361	80	(6)	435	The contribution of £80,000 in 2022/23 was referenced in a report to the Regeneration and Investment Committee on 2 May 2023 with regards to the investment property monitoring report.
Management, Maintenance & Risk Management	418			418	This is a relatively new reserve set up to manage the ongoing maintenance costs of the Council's Investment Property Portfolio.
Neighbourhood Planning Grants	47		(2)	45	
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	506	352	(344)	514	The NHB allocation for 22/23 is £352,084. Spend in 2022/23 includes a £150k contribution to the base revenue budget and £172,084 contribution to the Affordable Housing Earmarked Reserve.
Organisational Development	20			20	This reserve was created from external work carried out in other Councils e.g. HR work with Councils also embarking on a Transformation Programme.
Outdoor Sports & Recreation Grants	16		(16)	0	
Planning Policy and Major Developments	146	30	(54)	122	This reserve is for all planning matters and is also required to meet appeal costs. The spend for 2022/23 relates to the Planning restructure. The cost of the first three years of this restructure is to be met from additional planning income in the Planning earmarked reserve (Hub 7/6/22).
Recovery Plan and Corporate Strategy	182		(24)	158	In March 2021 the Hub Committee recommended to Council to transfer £200k of the 2020/21 projected surplus into a new Recovery Plan and Corporate Strategy Earmarked Reserve.
Revenue Grants	1,417	405	(519)	1,303	This reserve comprises of government grants received for specific initiatives or new burdens and are held in the reserve for accounting purposes. The additions in 2022/23 amounting to £405,000 include the Supported Housing Improvement Programme Grant (£104k), New Burdens Council Rebate Final Assessment Grant (£65k) and Contain Outbreak Management Fund Grant (£44k). It is anticipated that a significant amount of these grants will be applied in 2023/24. The grants applied in 2022/23 amounting to £519,000 include the Covid-19 New Burdens Administration Support Grant (£140k), Covid-19 Hardship Fund (£46k), New Burdens Covid-19 Admin Support Grant (£34k) and Covid-19 Local Council Tax Support Schemes Grant (£30k) and various other smaller grants.
Strategic Change (T18)	67			67	£32,567 has been committed as a contribution to the base revenue budget in 2023/24.
Tamar Trails	0	55		55	This is a new earmarked reserve set up in 2022/23 to fund capital expenditure on the Tamar Trails. The £55,000 was transferred from the 2016/17 Budget Surplus Contingency earmarked reserve.
Tree Maintenance	17		(3)	14	A new reserve set up in 2021/22 to hold in year surpluses generated to reinvest back into the Tree maintenance service in future years.
Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis	0	669		669	This reserve was set up in 2022/23 to hold funding received to support the Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis which will be spent in 2023/24.
Vehicle Replacement	328	50	(1)	377	This is a new reserve set up to fund the Council's vehicle replacement programme (Council 4 Dec 2018). £50k a year is contributed to this reserve.
Waste & Cleansing Options Review	658	225	(205)	678	In 2022/23 £205k of additional recycling income was transferred to this reserve and this was used to pay for the additional costs of the waste and recycling contract relating to the uplift in the contract sum, effective from 1 July 2022 (Hub Committee 12 July 2022). Future commitments include the capital work at Hayedown depot and an additional vehicle.
Other Reserves below £15,000 (combined)	42	17	(56)	3	
<b>Sub Total excluding the Business Rates Reserves</b>	<b>6,471</b>	<b>2,552</b>	<b>(1,503)</b>	<b>7,520</b>	
Business Rates Retention	1,087	103	(115)	1,075	This relates to a timing issue on the accounting adjustments required for the localisation of business rates. This reserve also deals with any volatility in Business Rate income. In 2023/24 £150,000 was earmarked to smooth the volatility in business rates.
S.31 Compensation Grant (Business Rates)	1,631		(1,324)	307	This is a new reserve set up to hold the business rates S31 grants received in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to offset the business rate reliefs given to businesses during lockdown. Under current Collection Fund accounting rules, the S31 grants received will not be discharged against the Collection Fund deficit until the following year. This reserve is not money which is available for the Council to spend and it is important that this is not misinterpreted in the Accounts, as this is a national issue.
<b>TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>9,189</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>(2,942)</b>	<b>8,902</b>	
<b>TOTAL UNEARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>79</b>		<b>1,569</b>	Note: This Unearmarked Reserve has a minimum balance of £900,000 and an operating level of a minimum of £1.25million (set by Members as part of the Budget Process). The 2022/23 surplus of £79,000 has been moved to Unearmarked Reserves, in accordance with normal accounting practice.
<b>TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES (EARMARKED AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES)</b>	<b>10,679</b>	<b>2,734</b>	<b>(2,942)</b>	<b>10,471</b>	

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Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **21 November 2023**

Title: **Social Housing & Private Sector Housing Landlords**

Portfolio Area: **Housing: Cllr Renders**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: Ian Luscombe Role: **Head of Environmental Health and Licensing/ Head of Housing**  
Isabel Blake

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**That the Hub Committee:**

- 1. APPROVES an enhanced approach to improving Social and Private Sector Housing standards in West Devon; and**
- 2. REQUESTS an annual performance report on the investigations of housing standards complaints.**

### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out a commitment by the Council to support tenants in social and private sector rented accommodation to take action against their landlords when there are unacceptable delays or challenges in remedying repairs.
- 1.2 An online form has been designed and is now available for tenants to report to the Council such complaints. This will be reviewed and where appropriate, the Council will take action on behalf of the tenant to resolve delays or challenges with remedying cases of disrepair.
- 1.3 The tenant will receive a response to their complaint within 2 weeks. We will respond more quickly to an emergency where there is a more urgent matter (such as an electrical fault) reported.
- 1.4 We will ensure every tenant can expect to live in accommodation that is free of damp and disrepair and commit to

ensuring the highest possible standard of accommodation in the Social and Private Rented Sector.

- 1.5 The tragic death of Awaab Ishak, who died at the age of two, as a direct result of mould in his family home in Rochdale, serves as a national reminder of the dangers of living in poor quality accommodation. In this case, the family were living in social housing.
- 1.6 The Government responded by publishing the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill with the aim of giving more protection to social housing tenants and re-enforcing the role of the Housing Ombudsman. The Bill received Royal Assent on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Although a few of the Act's provisions came into force on that date, most will depend upon the Secretary of State making regulations to bring them into force.
- 1.7 This report provides some details of new measures in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and sets out how the Council is already working towards making it easier for a tenant to make a complaint regarding their housing conditions and how we will deal with those complaints.

## **2. The Council's commitment**

- 2.1 The Council will provide a clear point of contact for tenants raising issues with the Council. We will triage all complaints, inspect the property, and contact landlords directly in serious cases where it is appropriate to do so. For Social Housing tenants, where the problem is less serious, we will refer the tenant back to Registered Provider and track progress with the Registered Provider until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.
- 2.2 Where the complaint is linked to a Devon Home Choice assessment, we will liaise with the Devon Home Choice Officer and ensure that the property is assessed quickly in accordance with existing guidelines.
- 2.3 Tenants will be able to receive advice and support and raise complaints through a new online form, aimed at simplifying the process and ensuring disrepair continues to be monitored and if not resolved in a timely manner, escalated.
- 2.4 The Council will take a staged approach to enforcement in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy. Where requirements are not complied with, and a property is sub-standard, the Council will consider prosecution or a civil penalty.
- 2.5 We will record and monitor each Housing standards complaint and provide Members with an update on numbers received and actions taken on an annual basis.



- 2.6 We will continue to ensure that Environmental Health Officers are fully trained and competent to assess Housing Hazards in domestic properties.
- 2.7 We will aim to reduce the number of serious reported hazards over the next four years by dealing with all Category 1 hazards and working with Landlords to improve housing standards.
- 2.8 We can measure success by recording the number of complaints received and dealt with in an agreed timescale as a performance indicator and by benchmarking with other rural District Councils.
- 2.9 The Council will educate more private and social landlords to be aware of their responsibilities by promoting good housing standards via newsletters and social media.
- 2.10 We will continue to meet with senior officers from all Registered Providers, to ensure that our approach is understood at an Operational level.
- 2.11 We will continue to invite a Chief Officer from Livewest (our largest Registered Social Provider) to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny meeting where Councillors will have the opportunity to question Livewest.
- 2.12 The Council can also highlight enforcement action and prosecutions taken through press releases, newsletters, and social media.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 In the West Devon there are approximately 2600 social rented properties, owned and managed by Registered Social providers. The largest of which is Livewest, who are the owners of the stock transferred from West Devon Borough Council.
- 3.2 The Council was required to submit a response in January 2023, to the Secretary of State following the death of Awaab Ishak, confirming the approach the Council undertakes with regards to dealing with complaints from tenants of social housing. The letter may be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 To ensure we are making the process of reporting complaints as easy as possible for tenants, we have launched a new online form as well as our traditional telephone service to report an issue. Tenants will be able to upload photos of their disrepair and officers will be able to prioritise the work appropriately. We will ensure we lend a voice to those tenants having trouble with their Registered Provider (and private Landlord) and that, according to the severity of the damp or disrepair that complaints are dealt with in a timely manner.

- 3.4 The Council has always had a role in the enforcement of Housing Standards in these properties, together with the Social Housing Ombudsman. Council Environmental Health Officers are trained and authorised to enforce the Housing Act 2004 using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to ensure that tenants live in suitable conditions.
- 3.5 The Social Housing Ombudsman investigates complaints and resolves disputes involving tenants and leaseholders of social landlords (housing associations and local authorities), as well as for voluntary members (private landlords and letting agents).
- 3.6 The Social Housing (Regulation) Bill received Royal Assent on 20 July 2023. The Bill received broad support across parliament with all the Government's amendments being upheld.

These included:

- An amendment introducing Awaab's Law which requires social landlords to investigate and fix reported hazards in their homes within a specified time or rehouse tenants where a home cannot be made safe.
- An amendment providing new powers for the Housing Ombudsman to help social landlords improve performance by instructing them to self-assess against guidance during a complaint investigation.
- An amendment enabling the Social Housing Regulator to set a standard relating to information and transparency requiring social landlords to provide residents with information on how they can make a complaint against them.
- An amendment that will require all social housing managers to have a professional qualification. The aim of this change is to help to protect residents and raise standards, ensuring residents receive a high level of service and are always treated with respect.

#### **4. Options available and consideration of risk**

- 4.1 If we do not respond to and enforce social and private sector housing standards, we could miss an opportunity to improve housing stock and improve health and wellbeing of West Devon residents. We would also risk not being compliant with our statutory duty under the Housing Act 2004 to investigate housing standards complaints.
- 4.2 The Council has evaluated national guidance and good practice, local good practice and included both private and social landlords to ensure balance and consistency. The introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 provides a clear steer for Councils on the importance of housing standards in the social rented sector.

- 4.3 The approach outlined will include both private and social landlords to ensure balance and consistency.

## 5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 The Council will continue to work with residents and social and private landlords to promote better quality housing in West Devon. The Council will enhance its engagement, inspections and follow up monitoring of social and private sector housing complaints.
- 5.2 The Council will monitor the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and seek to carry out any opportunity that new legislation presents to improve the housing stock for its residents.
- 5.3 Officers will report back to Members on the number of complaints received, how quickly they have been investigated and the outcome of the investigation on an annual basis. The lead member for Housing will be kept informed on a more regular basis.

## 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		The Council has a statutory duty under the Housing Act 2004 to respond to complaints of poor housing standards in the Borough. Specifically, under Part 1 - the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.  The implications of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 are set out in the report.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		Whilst the renewed approach may be more resource intensive the capacity will be found by using efficiencies identified in the Environmental Health Business plan 2022-24.
Risk		Failing to ensure social rented property is maintained at a high standard could have an adverse effect on the health of our residents
Supporting Corporate Strategy		This work supports the "Housing" Corporate Priority.
Consultation & Engagement Strategy		Not applicable

Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		No direct impact although high standards of energy efficiency - which can be linked to reducing poor housing quality - will help reduce carbon emissions.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		All processes must be equality impact assessed
Safeguarding		None as a direct result of this process, however there may be an increase in safeguarding referrals if there are more identified hazards
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None as a direct result of this process
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		The condition of a tenant's home will have impacts on Health, Safety and Wellbeing
Other implications		

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1** Letter to Secretary of State January 2023

**Background Papers:**

None



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Rt Hon Michael Gove MP Secretary of State for Levelling  
Up, Housing & Communities  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW10 4DF

Our ref: MGD&M2  
25<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Dear Mr Gove

### **Housing Standards in Rental Properties in England**

I write further to our letter of the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak as a direct result of damp and mould in his family home. As we explained in our letter it was our intention to set out to you before the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023 a comprehensive answer to your questions and the to provide the data requested.

The Council's approach to damp and mould is two-fold, firstly ensuring that we are responding to complaints from tenants in private sector housing in an effective manner and also engaging fully with partner organisations and Registered Providers. We have already started to receive letters from our local RPs about action they are taking in their own stock.

And secondly; continuing to improve the fabric of all housing in the South Hams and West Devon area by accessing and effectively using Government Retro-fit Grant schemes, such as Green Homes Grants and Home Upgrade grants.

The Council has in the last 12 months declared a Biodiversity and Climate Crisis, a Housing Crisis and a Cost-of-Living crisis. Each of these features the need to ensure that people can live in homes that are warm and efficient. Housing is also a top priority in the Council's strategic plans.

Information requested in your letter of 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022 may be found below.

The table below shows the numbers of cases reported and remediated in each of the last three calendar years for South Hams and West Devon Council areas.

The vast majority of damp and mould cases have been investigated and resolved by taking an informal approach with either Private Sector landlords or Registered Providers, in line with the Councils enforcement policy.

Where civil penalties have been served, damp and mould was one part of the wider defects with the property, for example lack of heating.

There were no prosecutions pursued in relation to damp and mould hazards.

#### Table of data requested

Date	Damp and Mould	South Hams	West Devon
01/01/2020 - 31/12/2020	Cases reported and remediated	14	14
01/01/2021- 31/12/2021		7	3
01/01/2022- 31/012/2022		20	17
01/01/2020 - 31/12/2020	Enforcement action	1	0
01/01/2021- 31/12/2021		0	0
01/01/2022- 31/012/2022		1	0
01/01/2020 - 31/12/2020	Civil penalties	1	0
01/01/2021- 31/12/2021		0	0
01/01/2022- 31/012/2022		1	0
01/01/2020 - 31/12/2020	Prosecutions	0	0
01/01/2021- 31/12/2021		0	0
01/01/2022- 31/012/2022		0	0

We are prioritising enforcement of housing standards more generally in our authorities, across all tenures, including ensuring that we have adequate enforcement capacity to drive up standards in the private rented sector.

The Council's enforcement policy provides guidance to Officers regarding when to escalate a non-compliance to formal action

All our Environmental Health Officers are fully trained on HHSRS, and we have also trained our locality staff who are out and about in our communities and complete a number of home visits

(not always housing related) to look out for the signs of mould and damp in properties that they visit. We already have particular regard to high scoring (bands D and E) category 2 damp and mould hazards, as outlined in the guidance 'Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) enforcement guidance: housing conditions'

The Council's Environmental Health Officers and Housing Officers working together, triage complaints from private sector tenants, based upon where there may be greater risk, or when there are children in the household (and particularly if they have health vulnerabilities), significant damp/mould growth and poor energy efficiency. We ensure our officers are equipped to get to the heart of the problem, i.e., to determine if the damp is due to the construction of property (rising/penetrating/poor ventilation or energy efficiency) or whether the occupiers are exacerbating the situation by not taking care with drying clothes in doors, not ventilating etc. We are concerned that due to the cost-of-living crisis there is a third category emerging of damp caused by high fuel bills and households not being able to afford to put the heating on. We are already working on an education campaign locally to support people with this and have completed numerous actions as part of the Councils wider approach to the Cost of Living crisis.

We have requested an update from all Registered Providers in the Council's area regarding the prevalence of Category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards within their housing stock. Once we are in receipt of this information we will work with them to drive up standards and improve the process by which damp and mould is identified and dealt with both as a result of their internal inspection programmes and when in receipt of complaints.

We are continuing to improve the fabric of all housing in the South Hams and West Devon area by applying for and effectively using Government Retro-fit Grant schemes, such as Green Homes Grants and Home Upgrade grants. Our most recent application for Home Upgrade Grant assistance if successful will enable us to improve 250 of the hardest to heat homes in the South Hams and West Devon.

We remain committed to working with you on this serious matter to continue our support for people living in poor conditions where it is detrimental to their health

Yours sincerely



Ian Luscombe  
Head of Environmental Health and Licensing  
South Hams & West Devon Councils



Isabel Blake  
Head of Housing  
South Hams & West Devon Councils





Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **21<sup>st</sup> November 2023**

Title: **UK Shared Prosperity Fund & Rural England Prosperity Fund Update**

Portfolio Area: **Economy & Jobs**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y / N**

Date next steps can be taken: N/A

Author: **Chris Shears** Role: **Head of Place & Economy**

Contact: **chris.shears@swdevon.gov.uk**

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **That the Hub Committee:**

- 1. agrees to convene an all-Member Briefing session to take place at the earliest opportunity so that Members can further explore the work being delivered through the UKSPF programme;**
- 2. agrees to disseminate and promote the work of the UKSPF programme to their local communities; and**
- 3. supports the Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant Policies.**

## **1. Executive summary**

1.1 In 2022, the Government Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) awarded West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) £1 million of funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). To access this funding, WDBC needed to develop a detailed 3-year investment plan, recognising local business and community needs and challenges, and pulling together a programme of activity that would meet these challenges.

1.2 Through allocating funding directly to local authorities, the Government introduced a level of flexibility to UKSPF which hadn't been seen with previous programmes. As a result of this flexibility, our UKSPF programme consists of a collection of projects designed to help our strategically important sectors to lead the way nationally on advancing decarbonisation activities, developing sustainable food and drink production methods, ensuring the

resilience of our rural communities, and creating a testbed for new technologies. The approach to developing our UKSPF programme has enabled us to move away from generic support projects, and towards bespoke activities which will focus on delivering quality over quantity, having a positive impact on business productivity, innovation, and resilience.

1.3 The investment plan was submitted at the start of August 2022 and the funding was awarded in December 2022. It was developed by officers in the Place and Economy team, in consultation with Members, businesses, community groups and business sector specialists. The investment plan aligned local priorities with wider Government strategic objectives, resulting in a golden thread of “clean growth and decarbonisation” running through our entire delivery programme. Projects within the investment plan were split into 3 key themes:

- Active and Inclusive Travel - £500,000 (includes a £120,000 contribution to the West Devon Transport Hub)
- Agri-Tech and Regenerative Farming - £265,000
- Business and Community Support - £195,000

1.4 Since the awarding of UKSPF a variety of projects have been contracted to delivery partners, with several additional projects expected to go live over the next 6 months. A full breakdown of the projects can be found in the Programme Detail section of this report, below.

1.5 Projects are reviewed and monitored on a quarterly basis and discussed at a partnership meeting. The first partnership meeting took place at the beginning of September 2023 (after originally being scheduled for July), with the next taking place at the end of October 2023. These meetings include members of the Place and Economy Team from WDBC, the economy portfolio holders from WDBC and South Hams District Council, all project delivery partners and Devon County Council (DCC). It is also suggested that an all-member briefing be arranged to give members the opportunity to meet with delivery partners and to find out more about specific projects and their beneficiaries.

1.6 UKSPF programme progress is reported to Government on a 6 monthly basis. The latest Government return was submitted at the end of October 2023. Funding is received annually with the most recent funding, for the 2023/24 financial year, received in July 2023. The programme ends in March 2025.

## 2. Programme Detail

2.1 Below is a summary of all of the projects currently being delivered through the UKSPF programme:

Theme	Active and Inclusive Travel
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<b>Project</b>	<b>Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£60,000</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Phil Jones Associates, working with Sustrans</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This project will see our consultants develop a comprehensive infrastructure (LCWIP) and behaviour change strategy focused on supporting and encouraging active and inclusive travel activities. It will identify and prioritise key locations to deliver infrastructure improvements which will have the biggest positive impact in encouraging people to use active and inclusive modes of transport. The key active travel routes have now been identified following in-depth analysis of travel movements and substantially audited to identify any barriers along these roads. The next steps are to prioritise the improvements in terms of which would have the greatest positive impact.</p> <p>On the behaviour change side, the survey received 1,500 responses and was followed by in-depth interviews which have been analysed to identify the main barriers and enablers to active and inclusive travel in our rural landscape. The project will now pull the learnings from the research to recommend behaviour change initiatives to encourage active travel, which should be aligned to the outcomes of the infrastructure improvements. These could include “quiet lanes” schemes (stretches of road where non-car users are given priority), electric bike hubs, car sharing programmes, and other activities.</p> <p>Some of these projects will be delivered through the remaining UKSPF funds, and some through a separate pot of funding called the Rural England Prosperity Fund. Other, more significant infrastructure improvements will likely require further funding to be secured, but the LCWIP will provide an evidence base to put the Council in the strongest possible position to secure such funds.</p> <p>The plan is being developed in consultation with officers from a range of council services, members, community organisations and other specialist local groups. The contract was agreed in June 2023 and the plan will be completed by the end of the 23/24 financial year.</p>
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	1 LCWIP – which contains a series of short, medium and long term active and inclusive travel projects
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Active and Inclusive Travel</b>

<b>Project</b>	<b>Contribution towards the West Devon Transport Hub</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£120,000</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Devon County Council</b>
<b>Summary</b>	In the summer of 2022, WDBC agreed to allocate £120,000 of match funding towards a £13.2 million West Devon Transport Hub as part of a bid to the Government's Levelling Up Fund. This would originally have been provided through the Council's reserves, but with the successful securing of UKSPF, the active and inclusive travel funding allocation can be used and will ensure that the West Devon Transport Hub delivers a range of measures to maximise its accessibility through cycling, wheeling and walking.
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	WDBC's match funding requirements will be met for the West Devon Transport Hub. A range of cycling and walking infrastructure will be included in the development as a result of this funding being provided to the project.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Agri-Tech and Regenerative Farming</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Agri-Tech Innovation Project</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£160,000</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Devon County Council</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>"Agri-tech" refers to the range of technologies used in the agricultural sector, to support farming, land management, and food and drink production activities.</p> <p>Over the past 3 years, Devon County Council has developed a growing consortium of organisations called the Devon Agri-Tech Alliance. The Alliance currently consists of over 120 Devon farms and agricultural support organisations, including the NFU, Rothamstead Research, the Apricot Centre and the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth.</p> <p>Through this project, the alliance is working with West Devon farms to create a test-bed for new and emerging technologies to be piloted on site, linking them with tech development organisations and businesses.</p> <p>An example of this would be a dairy farm adopting robotic milking devices which allow the cows to choose when they want to be milked, removing the manual elements of the process, and creating a system which is much better for the health of the herd. The milk can be analysed in real time and the diet of the cow can be</p>

	adjusted over time, based on the feedback from the robot, to maximise the quality of milk being produced.
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	<p>Knowledge Transfer Partnerships between tech developers and the agricultural sector</p> <p>New products and services within the agricultural sector being brought to market</p> <p>Events to share learning among the agricultural community</p> <p>Over 40 agricultural businesses receiving intensive support from specialist organisations</p>

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Agri-Tech and Regenerative Farming</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Regenerative Farming Support</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£72,500</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>The Apricot Centre</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>“Regenerative farming” is a process which sees farms move away from the use of pesticides and fertilisers, and towards a soil quality focused approach to farming. Through focusing on soil quality, a farm is able to reduce carbon emissions, enhance the biodiversity on and in their land, improve water retention (high quality soil is better able to absorb water) and improve crop yields. The lack of fertiliser is a significant cost saving to a farm, reducing their outgoings, while greater yields also improve their productivity, helping to make them more profitable.</p> <p>The Apricot Centre is a working example of a successful regenerative farm. The team who created the centre are experts in regenerative farming practices and have used their site at Dartington to measure and monitor the benefits that the approach can have for a farm.</p> <p>They have found that since transitioning to regenerative farming processes, their earth worm populations have increased by 300%, their yields have significantly increased, and the site is far more resilient than other farms. For example, in the summer of 2022, during a prolonged dry period, most farm fields were dry, and their crops had browned. The Apricot Centre was one of the few sites where the soil had retained water, helping to keep their crops alive.</p> <p>Through this project, farmers and farm workers learn about regenerative farming processes and get to put them into practice, both at the Apricot Centre, and on their own farms. They are provided with up to 1 year of support to begin the journey of becoming a regenerative</p>

	<p>farm. The process takes approximately 7 years for the soil to be restored to its optimum quality, but land benefits can be seen within the first couple of years.</p> <p>The project has already met the majority of its targets for this financial year, and their success is being recognised at a national level. They have recently won an award through the NFU for their work, had articles published in the Guardian newspaper, and the project has seen our local authority being approached by authorities in other parts of the country to learn about setting up similar projects in their areas.</p>
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	<p>Farmers and agricultural workers receiving up to a year of support to help them begin transitioning their farms towards regenerative farming practices</p> <p>Greenhouse gas emission reductions within our farming community</p> <p>People reached (through inviting community-based groups to visit and learn about local farms and regenerative farming practices)</p> <p>Farmers and workers supported onto wider training courses (funded through Department for Education contracts)</p>

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Agri-Tech and Regenerative Farming</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Land Management Consultancy</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£30,000</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>The Apricot Centre</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>The work being delivered through this project takes a master-planning approach to farms and their land, identifying areas where the use can be changed to maximise its productivity, particularly where land is not being used for any useful purpose at present.</p> <p>One of the areas where this can prove particularly useful is through the strategic planting of trees for the purpose of flood risk mitigation.</p> <p>Other examples of land uses that can be implemented include the strategic planting of fast-growing wood for fuel or wildflower planting to improve and enhance local biodiversity by creating spaces which benefit natural pollinators, or which attract bird species which feed on pests.</p>
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	<p>Businesses receiving non-financial support</p> <p>Feasibility studies (identifying changes in land use to maximise the benefit to the business owner and community)</p>

	Properties and sites better protected from flooding
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<b>Theme</b>	<b>Business and Community Support</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Decarbonisation Plans</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£60,000</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Libraries Unlimited (through the Intellectual Property Centres)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This project provides specialist consultancy to businesses to support them to develop a decarbonisation plan for their business.</p> <p>A decarbonisation plan is a document which identifies a range of actions that would help to reduce the environmental impact of a business' activities.</p> <p>The programme looks at all key areas of business activities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The buildings they operate from</li> <li>• Their processes and production lines</li> <li>• Their logistics chains</li> <li>• Their end products and services</li> </ul> <p>This allows a wide range of decarbonisation opportunities to be identified.</p> <p>The project is not sector specific, meaning that any business can apply for support.</p> <p>Once a plan has been completed, the contractor is able to refer businesses to the Decarbonisation Grants programme details in section 3.2 of this report.</p>
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	Detailed decarbonisation plans for businesses Recommendations provided to the Rural England Prosperity Fund Decarbonisation Grants (See section 3.2 of this report for more information)

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Business and Community Support</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Community Energy Group Support</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£30,000</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Tamar Energy Community</b>
<b>Summary</b>	The Government's Rural Community Energy Fund was closed down in 2022. This fund was designed to help community organisation to develop feasibility reports to support the delivery of community energy efficiency, heating and renewable technology installation schemes. The removal of the funding has made it increasingly

	<p>difficult for our community energy groups to take projects forwards.</p> <p>This project is focused on strengthening and increasing the range of local activities that community energy groups can deliver. It will improve their ability to develop feasibility studies for projects, and to access funding from a range of sources to support the delivery of heating, insulation and renewable energy schemes in our local communities.</p> <p>The fund is already proving fruitful, and we have seen a number of funds being applied to and projects evolving over the first few months of delivery.</p> <p>New and emerging community energy groups will also be supported through the delivery of information, advice and guidance, to help them to develop projects within their local communities, and to identify relevant funding programmes that they can apply to.</p>
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	<p>Bids for funding for the development of new energy efficiency projects</p> <p>Bids for funding for the development of community based renewable energy projects</p> <p>Support through advice and guidance provided to new and emerging community energy groups</p> <p>Support provided to existing community energy and energy efficiency projects</p>

2.2 The following projects are not yet delivering but are soon to be contracted:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Agri-Tech and Regenerative Farming</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Food and Drink Distribution Support</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£30,000 (for the primary contractor, and up to a further £15,000 available to other organisations)</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>TBC</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This project will see food and drink producers being supported to bring their products to local markets. These could be actual markets, such as Hatherleigh Market or the Pannier Market in Tavistock, direct to consumers (eg via online food ordering portals) or to the hospitality and leisure sector.</p> <p>The aim is to create stronger links between our communities and the food and drink that they consume, reducing food miles, and reducing the costs that producers often experience when trying to access local markets.</p>



	There will also be support available to develop new cooperatives (enabling multiple sellers to sell their products collectively), and to help food and drink producers and growers to bring community groups to their sites to learn about how the products they consume are produced.
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	<b>TBC</b>

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Business and Community Support</b>
<b>Project</b>	<b>Construction Sector Audit and Support to Enable Decarbonised Construction Projects</b>
<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>£50,000</b>
<b>Contractor</b>	<b>TBC</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This project will see the delivery of an audit of the construction sector in West Devon and its supply chain to identify gaps in the sector's capability to deliver innovative low carbon / decarbonised construction projects.</p> <p>Following the audit, support will be delivered to the sector to help reduce these gaps, equipping our construction sector with the capabilities required to deliver projects which are fit for the future, and ensuring that local businesses are well placed to bid to deliver projects with major contractors, such as national housebuilders.</p>
<b>Key Deliverables</b>	<b>TBC</b>

2.3 Further to the project contracts, WDBC has also awarded the contract for monitoring and evaluation of the programme to Devon County Council (DCC). The UKSPF guidance allowed for up to 4% of the programme costs to be used for monitoring and evaluation activities. The contract awarded to DCC agrees to them delivering all monitoring and evaluation activities for all projects for 1.8% of the programme cost. A key benefit of outsourcing this activity is that it provides us with the feedback from an independent organisation, helping to ensure that we our UKSPF programme is being delivered to the highest of standards.

2.4 It is important to recognise that the UKSPF programme has been agreed with the Government, and that it would be difficult to change the range of projects that are being delivered. The process would involve a renegotiation with the Government's DLUHC Department and could put funding at risk. At present, the programme is running within budget and projects are all delivering as expected. However, if projects do underperform for any reason, and we are unable to rectify the issues with the service provider,

our contracts allow for the Council to claw back funding, and to re-allocate it to projects which are exceeding their targets.

### 3. Rural England Prosperity Fund

3.1 Further to the UKSPF programme, the Government awarded a further £843,000 of capital funding to WDBC through the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). This fund has a narrower scope than the UKSPF programme, needing to align with our UKSPF activities, and having a strong focus on decarbonisation, clean growth and business diversification and community activities. The investment plan was submitted in November 2022, and the funding was approved in April 2023.

3.2 The Council's REPF programme has seen the following capital support grants launch from October 2023:

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Decarbonisation Grants</b>
<b>Value</b>	<b>Up to £10,000 (match must be provided)</b>
<b>Who can apply?</b>	<b>Businesses which have a decarbonisation plan in place (available for free through the UKSPF Decarbonisation Plan Project)</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This grant fund aims to support businesses in their transition towards decarbonisation, helping to mitigate their impact on the climate, while reducing their overall expenditure on energy. Projects should facilitate the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of solutions identified within the business decarbonisation plan</li> <li>• Demonstrable reduction of the carbon footprint associated with the business</li> <li>• Reduction in business expenditure related to energy / fuel</li> </ul> <p>Businesses do not have to go through the UKSPF Decarbonisation Plan project but will need to have a detailed decarbonisation plan in place for their business which will be submitted as part of the application process.</p> <p>Grants are paid in arrears, but the project must not have incurred expenses until grant approval has been agreed.</p> <p>All applicant businesses must be registered for tax purposes.</p>

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Agri-Tech Adoption Grants</b>
<b>Value</b>	<b>Up to £10,000 (match must be provided)</b>
<b>Who can apply?</b>	<b>Businesses which have been through the UKSPF Agri-Tech Innovation Programme</b>

<b>Summary</b>	<p>This grant fund aims to support businesses which have been through our UKSPF Agri-Tech Alliance Project, piloting new technologies and products on their sites.</p> <p>Businesses will be referred to the scheme by our delivery partners for capital grants to adopt the technologies which have been trialled on their sites.</p> <p>Larger projects, which require greater funding than our scheme is able to provide, will be referred to the DEFRA Future Farming scheme which offers grants of &gt;£20,000 for the adoption of new products (but with a limited range of products).</p> <p>Other businesses which have not participated in the Agri-Tech Alliance Project are still welcome to apply, but applications from those businesses who have participated are likely to be looked upon more favourably, as they will be able to evidence the benefit that the equipment will have on their farm.</p>
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<b>Grant</b>	<b>Clean Diversification Grants</b>
<b>Value</b>	<b>Up to £10,000 (match must be provided)</b>
<b>Who can apply?</b>	<b>Businesses which are diversifying their activities in a manner which has a demonstrable positive / neutral environmental impact</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This grant will support businesses to diversify into new areas of activity that will have a demonstrable positive or neutral impact on their carbon footprint.</p> <p>This could include the development of new products or services or facilities that will enable their diversification activity to be delivered, but costs associated with the grant must be capital expenditure.</p> <p>For example, a business could be diversifying into eco-tourism and looking for a grant for the development of accommodation (they would need to secure planning permission prior to being able to access a grant).</p> <p>Or a business could be producing one type of food or drink product, and looking to buy a piece of machinery that will enable them to produce a wider range of products using natural ingredients.</p> <p>This is the broadest grant category and is the only business focused grant which is not geared around businesses going through one of the UKSPF projects. We therefore expect a significant volume of applications, and to be unable to meet demand.</p>

<b>Grant Value</b>	<b>Community Resilience Grants Up to £10,000 (match must be provided)</b>
<b>Who can apply?</b>	<b>Community organisations, town and parish councils which are looking to reduce their outgoings / increase the range of services available in their local communities</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This grant fund will improve the resilience of community facilities, such as community and village halls, village shops, and other sites which provide a range of services to their local communities. Priority will be given to facilities where;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited other community infrastructure exists</li> <li>• Support will demonstrably help to improve the resilience of a facility, either through reduced bills or increased revenue</li> <li>• Facilities will be able to provide additional services to their communities, which are not provided by other local organisations, and where a demonstrable need can be shown</li> </ul> <p>General maintenance of facilities will be treated as low priority.</p> <p>Due to the limited funding available, this grant will not be able to support activities relating to the development or expansion of sports facilities, public toilets or car parks.</p>

- 3.3 Grant policy, guidance, and application documents can all be found on the Council's website at: <https://www.westdevon.gov.uk/your-council/budgets-and-finance/budgets-and-spending/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-0>
- 3.4 The grant policy documents have been designed based on the previous policy documents which were used for the successful delivery of Covid related grants. Through the Covid process, our systems were deemed to be robust by the Government and all auditing and monitoring of our grants programme was exemplar. Copies of these documents are attached to this report.
- 3.5 We are therefore proposing that members approve the policy documents attached which will enable the authority to begin approving grant payments to businesses and community organisations.
- 3.6 Further to these grants, part of the funding (approximately £300,000) has also been allocated for the delivery of active and inclusive travel infrastructure. However, the programme is flexible,

and funding can be allocated to projects where demand is high, and reduced from projects where demand is low.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1 Officers are working to schedule an all-member briefing session which will involve project delivery partners. This would give the opportunity for members to find out about all UKSPF projects in detail and to ask any questions they have directly to the teams that are delivering them.
- 4.2 The programme will continue to deliver and will report to the partnership meetings on a quarterly basis. The Place and Economy Team is willing to update Hub on programme progress and on specific projects as regularly as required.
- 4.3 Promotional activities are being coordinated to raise awareness of the programme to our businesses and communities. This information will be shared with members. With the grants having gone live in the last few weeks, specific communications activities are being developed to drive traffic to the Council's website. 2 email addresses have also been set up to help funnel grant enquiries to the Place and Economy team:
  - [businessgrants@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:businessgrants@swdevon.gov.uk)
  - [communitygrants@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:communitygrants@swdevon.gov.uk)

#### **Background Papers:**

UKSPF Investment Plan Submission

<https://www.westdevon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/UK%20Shared%20Prosperity%20Fund%20Investment%20Plans%20-%20West%20Devon.pdf>

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**West Devon  
Borough  
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# **West Devon Borough Council Grant Scheme Policy 2023**

**Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)  
Agri-Tech Adoption**





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1	11/10/23	AE	REPF Grant Policy

## 1.0 Purpose of the scheme

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine eligibility for a payment under the Council's REPF Grants Scheme.
- 1.2 The new REPF Grant Scheme has been developed by the Council to support businesses with projects that provide a benefit to the local community or economy.
- 1.3 The awarding of grants will be at the total discretion of the Council, based on the benefits delivered for the grant awarded, supporting Council priorities, and wider business and local economy aims.
- 1.4 This document sets out the information which the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have required to be submitted for funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant, the funding allocation the Council will be using to make the awards. It also outlines the approach the Council will take in determining whether an award should be paid or not.
- 1.5 The general principals of the scheme are:
- **Flexibility;** to target grants towards business proposals that provide the greatest benefit to the local economy or community;
  - **Efficiency;** to issue grants as quickly as possible whilst meeting democratic, eligibility and technical requirements;
  - **Simplicity;** the application process will be based on the philosophy of self-assessment and be as streamlined as possible;
  - **Economic Benefit;** grant award levels shall be set to make a difference to those projects, such that the most economic advantage is provided from the REPF grant programme.
  - **Fraud;** the process will capture evidence such as certified accounts/HMRC self-assessments and bank statements that can be used to identify fraudulent applications. A self-declaration that the information provided is a true reflection of the facts, will also be required. The Council will also be applying post application checks as well as sharing data with Central Government and across other grant schemes as necessary.

## 2.0 Funding

- 2.1 Central Government has provided the Council with REPF capital grant funding of £843,000. Of this funding, £300,000 is allocated for improvements to active travel infrastructure while the remaining £543,000 is available across these grant schemes. These figures may be moved between schemes, to maximise the benefit of the programme, but the total budget will not change. Funding is designed to meet several

interventions which were agreed with Government through our REPF investment proposal. These interventions are:

- Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- E11 Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups
- E17 Development & promotion of visitor economy
- E26 Growing the local social economy

2.2 The Council investment proposal agreed to meet these interventions through the delivery of four grant programmes:

- Decarbonisation Grants
- Community Resilience Grants
- Agri-Tech Grants
- Clean Diversification Grants

### **3.0 Eligibility criteria of the fund**

3.1 Applicant organisations must be:

- Registered in the UK for tax purposes
- Based in West Devon
- Actively trading or engaged in business activities in West Devon

Applicant organisations must also have participated in our free-to-access [Agri-Tech Alliance Project](#), and/or be operating in the agricultural sector.

3.2 Applicant organisations must not be:

- In administration
- Insolvent
- Subject to a striking off notice
- In breach of state-aid limits

3.3 Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon, and grants can only be awarded to activities taking place within the Local Authority area.

3.4 Given that funding is restricted to capital expenditure, grants will only be awarded against projects which meet this criteria.

3.5 Any business failing to meet the criteria or failing to provide the Council with sufficient information to determine whether they meet the criteria, will not be awarded a REPF Grant.

3.6 All businesses are required to submit a standard set of information for fraud and tracking purposes. These include:

- A unique tax identifier such as a company number, unique tax reference number or charity number.
  - In the case of community organisations that are not registered for tax purposes, a National Insurance number will be required
- Number of employees at time of application (if applicable)
- Name of the organisation
- Type of organisation
- High level Standard Industrial Classification code
  - [Click here for information about SIC codes](#)
- A nominated bank account, in the name of the business or main applicant.
  - A bank statement showing address, sort code, account number and account name is required

## 4.0 Definitions – Eligibility Criteria

4.1 For the sake of clarity, the following definitions are provided:

- Applicant organisations must be mainly based in West Devon
- Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon
- Businesses providing support to the scheme can be in the wider South West area but projects providing more benefit in the local area will score more highly.
- Applicants agree to supply evidence of spend and completion of the project they are requesting support for within a maximum of 3 months from the confirmation of grant. They also agree to take part in communications and public relations activities if requested.

## 5.0 Local Priorities

5.1 The Council has decided they will only accept applications from businesses and organisations that meet the eligibility criteria as set out in [section 3.0](#).

5.2 The Council has determined that this grant fund should support businesses who have been through our [Agri-Tech Alliance Project](#), piloting new technologies and products on their sites. Businesses will be referred to the scheme by our delivery partners for capital grants to adopt the technologies which have been trialled on their sites.

## 6.0 How will grants be provided to businesses?

6.1 In all cases, an application form is required, and this can be completed online at the Council's website: [Click here to access the REPF Grant webpage](#)

6.2 Supplementary information will also be required, and all businesses should look to provide this where requested to the Council as soon as possible. The application is largely self-certification, but applicants should be aware that the Council is obliged to manage the risk of fraud as outlined in section 16.

6.3 An application for a REPF Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received via the Council's online procedure.

6.4 Projects will be assessed monthly by the Council's panel, from the end of October 2023 to the end of November 2024. If all funds are allocated prior to November 2024, the programme will be closed to further applications. If funds are fully allocated prior to the final round of assessment, remaining eligible applications will be added to a waiting list to be reviewed if existing grant recipients drop out of the programme, so that their funding can be re-allocated.

6.5 Payments will be made to successful applicants once all applications have been assessed. Successful applicants will be advised of their award amount when contacted about their application.

## **7.0 How much money will be awarded?**

7.1 The Council has decided that, for the purposes of this scheme, grants will be awarded at between £5,000 and £10,000.

7.2 The Council will determine the amount of the grant awarded for each business on a case-by-case basis, and may not match the total grant amount requested. Project proposals will be required to provide at least 50% of their total project costs as match funding for the programme.

7.3 Only one REPF Grant will be awarded to any single organisation. This will also apply if more than one Limited Company has the same director(s) or where more than one business has the same proprietor (either sole traders or partnerships).

7.4 An organisation may apply to fund multiple projects, but it is at the discretion of the grant panel to decide which project is funded.

7.5 Applications must be project-specific; a single application should not detail more than one project.

## **8.0 Limitation of funds and applications**

8.1 All monies paid through the REPF Grant scheme will be funded by DLUHC. The funds are limited and, as such, the Council is not able to award a grant where funds are no longer available.

8.2 Any businesses wishing to claim should complete the necessary form on the Council's website, as linked in [paragraph 6.1](#). All claims will be made online, and this will also include the provision of such evidence as required by the Council.

8.3 As there are limited funds available, not all applicants will be successful, and some businesses will be left disappointed.

## **9.0 State Subsidy requirements**

9.1 Any grant awarded is required to comply with the law on State Subsidies. This will involve the applicant declaring to the Council if they have received any other State Subsidies over the past three years.

9.2 If the applicant has not received any other State Subsidy, they are not required to make that declaration to the Council or to complete any declaration statement.

## **10.0 Scheme of delegation**

10.1 The policy has been approved under Part 3(a) of the Council Constitution: Scheme of Delegation. The Head of Paid Service used delegated authority in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

10.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme. The Corporate Director for Strategic Finance and the Director of Place and Enterprise are authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Central Government guidance.

## **11.0 Notification of decisions**

11.1 Applications will be considered by designated officers of the Council.

11.2 All decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant by email. A decision shall be made within 5 working days after the monthly panel meetings.

11.3 If unsuccessful, applicants will be notified of this decision, but specific details about why a proposal is rejected will not be given.

## **12.0 Reviews of decisions**

12.1 All grants will be determined by the Head of Place and Economy, Economic Development Officer and Senior Economic Support Officer.

12.2 This decision will be final, and there is no appeal process.

## **13.0 Complaints**

13.1 If you believe an error has been made, such as a missing payment, in the first instance please raise an enquiry to the grants team using the following link.

[Click here to raise a grants-related enquiry.](#)

13.2 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

## **14.0 Other scheme conditions**

14.1 All grants are taxable. Applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position or liability.

## **15.0 Successful applicant obligations**

15.1 Successful applicants are expected to take part in reasonable public relations, communication and engagement activities directly related to the award.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Press releases
- Social media posts
- Other digital media content
- In-person engagement events (where applicable)

15.2 Successful applicants are required to provide pre-payment evidence of how funds have been allocated and spent.

15.3 Post project outcome analysis, such as surveys, are also desirable, particularly where they focus on local benefit derived from the award funds.

## **16.0 Managing the risk of fraud**

16.1 Neither the Council, nor the Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the scheme and fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or

failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them or their grant offer rescinded if payment has not already been issued.

16.2 Organisations are required to provide the information as detailed in [paragraph 3.6](#) to enable fraud checking which may be conducted through the National Fraud Initiative. Organisations that fail to provide this information will not be considered for a grant and may still be subject to fraud checks.

16.3 Applicants should note that, where a grant is paid by the Council, details of each individual grant may be passed to Government.

16.4 The Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant paid in error.

## **17.0 Data Protection**

17.1 All information and data provided by businesses shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.

17.2 The Council will not make available lists of businesses that have applied or that have been successful for grant payment.

17.3 The Council reserves the right to share relevant information with the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the body overseeing the grant fund allocation.





**West Devon  
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# **West Devon Borough Council Grant Scheme Policy 2023**

## **Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Clean Diversification**



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## 1.0 Purpose of the scheme

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine eligibility for a payment under the Council's REPF Grants Scheme.
- 1.2 The new REPF Grant Scheme has been developed by the Council to support businesses with projects that provide a benefit to the local community or economy.
- 1.3 The awarding of grants will be at the total discretion of the Council, based on the benefits delivered for the grant awarded, supporting Council priorities, and wider business and local economy aims.
- 1.4 This document sets out the information which the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have required to be submitted for funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant, the funding allocation the Council will be using to make the awards. It also outlines the approach the Council will take in determining whether an award should be paid or not.
- 1.5 The general principals of the scheme are:
- **Flexibility;** to target grants towards business proposals that provide the greatest benefit to the local economy or community;
  - **Efficiency;** to issue grants as quickly as possible whilst meeting democratic, eligibility and technical requirements;
  - **Simplicity;** the application process will be based on the philosophy of self-assessment and be as streamlined as possible;
  - **Economic Benefit;** grant award levels shall be set to make a difference to those projects, such that the most economic advantage is provided from the REPF grant programme.
  - **Fraud;** the process will capture evidence such as certified accounts/HMRC self-assessments and bank statements that can be used to identify fraudulent applications. A self-declaration that the information provided is a true reflection of the facts, will also be required. The Council will also be applying post application checks as well as sharing data with Central Government and across other grant schemes as necessary.

## 2.0 Funding

- 2.1 Central Government has provided the Council with REPF capital grant funding of £843,000. Of this funding, £300,000 is allocated for improvements to active travel infrastructure while the remaining £543,000 is available across these grant schemes. These figures may be moved between schemes, to maximise the benefit of the programme, but the total budget will not change. Funding is designed to meet several

interventions which were agreed with Government through our REPF investment proposal. These interventions are:

- Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- E11 Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups
- E17 Development & promotion of visitor economy
- E26 Growing the local social economy

2.2 The Council investment proposal agreed to meet these interventions through the delivery of four grant programmes:

- Decarbonisation grants
- Community resilience grants
- Agri-Tech grants
- Clean diversification grants

### **3.0 Eligibility criteria of the fund**

3.1 Applicant organisations must be:

- Registered in the UK for tax purposes
- Based in West Devon
- Actively trading or engaged in business activities in West Devon

Eligible organisations must also be:

- Limited Companies, including social enterprises and CICs
  - Must be registered with a company number on Companies House
- Sole Traders / Partnerships
  - Registered with HMRC and with a Unique Tax Reference Number
- Charitable Organisations
  - Registered with the Charities Commission, with a Charity Number

3.2 Applicant organisations must not be:

- In administration
- Insolvent
- Subject to a striking off notice
- In breach of state-aid limits

3.3 Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon, and grants can only be awarded to activities taking place within the Local Authority area.

3.4 Given that funding is restricted to capital expenditure, grants will only be awarded against projects which meet this criteria.

3.5 Any business failing to meet the criteria or failing to provide the Council with sufficient information to determine whether they meet the criteria, will not be awarded a REPF Grant.

3.6 All businesses are required to submit a standard set of information for fraud and tracking purposes. These include:

- A unique tax identifier such as a company number, unique tax reference number or charity number.
  - In the case of community organisations that are not registered for tax purposes, a National Insurance number will be required
- Number of employees at time of application (if applicable)
- Name of the organisation
- Type of organisation
- High level Standard Industrial Classification code
  - [Click here for information about SIC codes](#)
- A nominated bank account, in the name of the business or main applicant.
  - A bank statement showing address, sort code, account number and account name is required

## 4.0 Definitions – Eligibility Criteria

4.1 For the sake of clarity, the following definitions are provided:

- Applicant organisations must be mainly based in West Devon
- Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon
- Businesses providing support to the scheme can be in the wider South West area but projects providing more benefit in the local area will score more highly.
- Applicants agree to supply evidence of spend and completion of the project they are requesting support for within a maximum of 3 months from the confirmation of grant. They also agree to take part in communications and public relations activities if requested.

## 5.0 Local Priorities

5.1 The Council has decided they will only accept applications from businesses and organisations that meet the eligibility criteria as set out in [section 3.0](#).

5.2 The Council has decided that this grant fund aims to support businesses and organisations in diversifying into areas of activity that will enable them to operate more sustainably, efficiently and for them to be as low-carbon as possible.

## **6.0 How will grants be provided to businesses?**

6.1 In all cases, an application form is required, and this can be completed online at the Council's website: [Click here to access the REPF Grant webpage](#)

6.2 Supplementary information will also be required, and all businesses should look to provide this where requested to the Council as soon as possible. The application is largely self-certification, but applicants should be aware that the Council is obliged to manage the risk of fraud as outlined in section 16.

6.3 An application for a REPF Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received via the Council's online procedure.

6.4 Projects will be assessed monthly by the Council's panel, from the end of October 2023 to the end of November 2024. If all funds are allocated prior to November 2024, the programme will be closed to further applications. If funds are fully allocated prior to the final round of assessment, remaining eligible applications will be added to a waiting list to be reviewed if existing grant recipients drop out of the programme, so that their funding can be re-allocated.

6.5 Payments will be made to successful applicants once all applications have been assessed. Successful applicants will be advised of their award amount when contacted about their application.

## **7.0 How much money will be awarded?**

7.1 The Council has decided that, for the purposes of this scheme, grants will be awarded at between £2,000 and £10,000.

7.2 The Council will determine the amount of the grant awarded for each business on a case-by-case basis, and may not match the total grant amount requested. Project proposals will be required to provide at least 50% of their total project costs as match funding for the programme.

7.3 Only one REPF Grant will be awarded to any single organisation. This will also apply if more than one Limited Company has the same director(s) or where more than one business has the same proprietor (either sole traders or partnerships).

7.4 An organisation may apply to fund multiple projects, but it is at the discretion of the grant panel to decide which project is funded.

7.5 Applications must be project-specific; a single application should not detail more than one project.

## **8.0 Limitation of funds and applications**

8.1 All monies paid through the REPF Grant scheme will be funded by DLUHC. The funds are limited and, as such, the Council is not able to award a grant where funds are no longer available.

8.2 Any businesses wishing to claim should complete the necessary form on the Council's website, as linked in [paragraph 6.1](#). All claims will be made online, and this will also include the provision of such evidence as required by the Council.

8.3 As there are limited funds available, not all applicants will be successful, and some businesses will be left disappointed.

## **9.0 State Subsidy requirements**

9.1 Any grant awarded is required to comply with the law on State Subsidies. This will involve the applicant declaring to the Council if they have received any other State Subsidies over the past three years.

9.2 If the applicant has not received any other State Subsidy, they are not required to make that declaration to the Council or to complete any declaration statement.

## **10.0 Scheme of delegation**

10.1 The policy has been approved under Part 3(a) of the Council Constitution: Scheme of Delegation. The Head of Paid Service used delegated authority in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

10.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme. The Corporate Director for Strategic Finance and the Director of Place and Enterprise are authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Central Government guidance.



## **11.0 Notification of decisions**

11.1 Applications will be considered by designated officers of the Council.

11.2 All decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant by email. A decision shall be made within 5 working days after the monthly panel meetings.

11.3 If unsuccessful, applicants will be notified of this decision, but specific details about why a proposal is rejected will not be given.

## **12.0 Reviews of decisions**

12.1 All grants will be determined by the Head of Place and Economy, Economic Development Officer and Senior Economic Support Officer.

12.2 This decision will be final, and there is no appeal process.

## **13.0 Complaints**

13.1 If you believe an error has been made, such as a missing payment, in the first instance please raise an enquiry to the grants team using the following link.

[Click here to raise a grants-related enquiry.](#)

13.2 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

## **14.0 Other scheme conditions**

14.1 All grants are taxable. Applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position or liability.

## **15.0 Successful applicant obligations**

15.1 Successful applicants are expected to take part in reasonable public relations, communication and engagement activities directly related to the award.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Press releases
- Social media posts
- Other digital media content
- In-person engagement events (where applicable)

15.2 Successful applicants are required to provide pre-payment evidence of how funds have been allocated and spent.

15.3 Post project outcome analysis, such as surveys, are also desirable, particularly where they focus on local benefit derived from the award funds.

## **16.0 Managing the risk of fraud**

16.1 Neither the Council, nor the Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the scheme and fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them or their grant offer rescinded if payment has not already been issued.

16.2 Organisations are required to provide the information as detailed in [paragraph 3.6](#) to enable fraud checking which may be conducted through the National Fraud Initiative. Organisations that fail to provide this information will not be considered for a grant and may still be subject to fraud checks.

16.3 Applicants should note that, where a grant is paid by the Council, details of each individual grant may be passed to Government.

16.4 The Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant paid in error.

## **17.0 Data Protection**

17.1 All information and data provided by businesses shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.

17.2 The Council will not make available lists of businesses that have applied or that have been successful for grant payment.

17.3 The Council reserves the right to share relevant information with the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the body overseeing the grant fund allocation.



**West Devon  
Borough  
Council**

# **West Devon Borough Council Grant Scheme Policy 2023**

## **Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Decarbonisation Grants**



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## 1.0 Purpose of the scheme

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine eligibility for a payment under the Council's REPF Grants Scheme.
- 1.2 The new REPF Grant Scheme has been developed by the Council to support businesses with projects that provide a benefit to the local community or economy.
- 1.3 The awarding of grants will be at the total discretion of the Council, based on the benefits delivered for the grant awarded, supporting Council priorities, and wider business and local economy aims.
- 1.4 This document sets out the information which the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have required to be submitted for funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant, the funding allocation the Council will be using to make the awards. It also outlines the approach the Council will take in determining whether an award should be paid or not.
- 1.5 The general principals of the scheme are:
- **Flexibility;** to target grants towards business proposals that provide the greatest benefit to the local economy or community;
  - **Efficiency;** to issue grants as quickly as possible whilst meeting democratic, eligibility and technical requirements;
  - **Simplicity;** the application process will be based on the philosophy of self-assessment and be as streamlined as possible;
  - **Economic Benefit;** grant award levels shall be set to make a difference to those projects, such that the most economic advantage is provided from the REPF grant programme.
  - **Fraud;** the process will capture evidence such as certified accounts/HMRC self-assessments and bank statements that can be used to identify fraudulent applications. A self-declaration that the information provided is a true reflection of the facts, will also be required. The Council will also be applying post application checks as well as sharing data with Central Government and across other grant schemes as necessary.

## 2.0 Funding

- 2.1 Central Government has provided the Council with REPF capital grant funding of £843,000. Of this funding, £300,000 is allocated for improvements to active travel infrastructure while the remaining £543,000 is available across these grant schemes. These figures may be moved between schemes, to maximise the benefit of the programme, but the total budget will not change. Funding is designed to meet several

interventions which were agreed with Government through our REPF investment proposal. These interventions are:

- Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- E11 Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups
- E17 Development & promotion of visitor economy
- E26 Growing the local social economy

2.2 The Council investment proposal agreed to meet these interventions through the delivery of four grant programmes:

- Decarbonisation Grants
- Community Resilience Grants
- Agri-Tech Grants
- Clean Diversification Grants

### **3.0 Eligibility criteria of the fund**

3.1 Applicant organisations must be:

- Registered in the UK for tax purposes
- Based in West Devon
- Actively trading or engaged in business activities in West Devon

Eligible organisations must also be:

- Limited Companies, including social enterprises and CICs
  - Must be registered with a company number on Companies House
- Sole Traders / Partnerships
  - Registered with HMRC and with a Unique Tax Reference Number
- Charitable Organisations
  - Registered with the Charities Commission, with a Charity Number

3.2 Applicant organisations must not be:

- In administration
- Insolvent
- Subject to a striking off notice
- In breach of state-subsidy limits

3.3 Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon, and grants can only be awarded to activities taking place within the Local Authority area.

3.4 Given that funding is restricted to capital expenditure, grants will only be awarded against projects which meet this criteria.

3.5 Any business failing to meet the criteria or failing to provide the Council with sufficient information to determine whether they meet the criteria, will not be awarded a REPF Grant.

3.6 All businesses are required to submit a standard set of information for fraud and tracking purposes. These include:

- A unique tax identifier such as a company number, unique tax reference number or charity number.
  - In the case of community organisations that are not registered for tax purposes, a National Insurance number will be required
- Number of employees at time of application (if applicable)
- Name of the organisation
- Type of organisation
- High level Standard Industrial Classification code
  - [Click here for information about SIC codes](#)
- A nominated bank account, in the name of the business or main applicant.
  - A bank statement showing address, sort code, account number and account name is required

## 4.0 Definitions – Eligibility Criteria

4.1 For the sake of clarity, the following definitions are provided:

- Applicant organisations must be mainly based in West Devon
- Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon
- Businesses providing support to the scheme can be in the wider South West area but projects providing more benefit in the local area will score more highly.
- Applicants agree to supply evidence of spend and completion of the project they are requesting support for within a maximum of 3 months from the confirmation of grant. They also agree to take part in communications and public relations activities if requested.

## 5.0 Local Priorities

5.1 The Council has decided they will only accept applications from businesses and organisations that meet the eligibility criteria as set out in [section 3.0](#).

5.2 The Council has decided that this grant fund aims to support Businesses who have been through the free-to-access South West Devon Decarbonisation Plan Project, to have a decarbonisation plan developed for their business, will be eligible for support.



## **6.0 How will grants be provided to businesses?**

6.1 In all cases, an application form is required, and this can be completed online at the Council's website: [Click here to access the REPF Grant webpage](#)

6.2 Supplementary information will also be required, and all businesses should look to provide this where requested to the Council as soon as possible. The application is largely self-certification, but applicants should be aware that the Council is obliged to manage the risk of fraud as outlined in section 16.

6.3 An application for a REPF Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received via the Council's online procedure.

6.4 Projects will be assessed monthly by the Council's panel, from the end of October 2023 to the end of November 2024. If all funds are allocated prior to November 2024, the programme will be closed to further applications. If funds are fully allocated prior to the final round of assessment, remaining eligible applications will be added to a waiting list to be reviewed if existing grant recipients drop out of the programme, so that their funding can be re-allocated.

6.5 Payments will be made to successful applicants once all applications have been assessed. Successful applicants will be advised of their award amount when contacted about their application.

## **7.0 How much money will be awarded?**

7.1 The Council has decided that, for the purposes of this scheme, grants will be awarded at between £2,000 and £10,000.

7.2 The Council will determine the amount of the grant awarded for each business on a case-by-case basis, and may not match the total grant amount requested. Project proposals will be required to provide at least 50% of their total project costs as match funding for the programme.

7.3 Only one REPF Grant will be awarded to any single organisation. This will also apply if more than one Limited Company has the same director(s) or where more than one business has the same proprietor (either sole traders or partnerships).

7.4 An organisation may apply to fund multiple projects, but it is at the discretion of the grant panel to decide which project is funded.

7.5 Applications must be project-specific; a single application should not detail more than one project.

## **8.0 Limitation of funds and applications**

8.1 All monies paid through the REPF Grant scheme will be funded by DLUHC. The funds are limited and, as such, the Council is not able to award a grant where funds are no longer available.

8.2 Any businesses wishing to claim should complete the necessary form on the Council's website, as linked in [paragraph 6.1](#). All claims will be made online, and this will also include the provision of such evidence as required by the Council.

8.3 As there are limited funds available, not all applicants will be successful, and some businesses will be left disappointed.

## **9.0 State Subsidy requirements**

9.1 Any grant awarded is required to comply with the law on State Subsidies. This will involve the applicant declaring to the Council if they have received any other State Subsidies over the past three years.

9.2 If the applicant has not received any other State Subsidy, they are not required to make that declaration to the Council or to complete any declaration statement.

## **10.0 Scheme of delegation**

10.1 The policy has been approved under Part 3(a) of the Council Constitution: Scheme of Delegation. The Head of Paid Service used delegated authority in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

10.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme. The Corporate Director for Strategic Finance and the Director of Place and Enterprise are authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Central Government guidance.

## **11.0 Notification of decisions**

11.1 Applications will be considered by designated officers of the Council.

11.2 All decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant by email. A decision shall be made within 5 working days after the monthly panel meetings.

11.3 If unsuccessful, applicants will be notified of this decision, but specific details about why a proposal is rejected will not be given.

## **12.0 Reviews of decisions**

12.1 All grants will be determined by the Head of Place and Economy, Economic Development Officer and Senior Economic Support Officer.

12.2 This decision will be final, and there is no appeal process.

## **13.0 Complaints**

13.1 If you believe an error has been made, such as a missing payment, in the first instance please raise an enquiry to the grants team using the following link.

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13.2 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

## **14.0 Other scheme conditions**

14.1 All grants are taxable. Applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position or liability.

## **15.0 Successful applicant obligations**

15.1 Successful applicants are expected to take part in reasonable public relations, communication and engagement activities directly related to the award.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Press releases
- Social media posts
- Other digital media content
- In-person engagement events (where applicable)

15.2 Successful applicants are required to provide pre-payment evidence of how funds have been allocated and spent.

15.3 Post project outcome analysis, such as surveys, are also desirable, particularly where they focus on local benefit derived from the award funds.

## **16.0 Managing the risk of fraud**

- 16.1 Neither the Council, nor the Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the scheme and fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them or their grant offer rescinded if payment has not already been issued.
- 16.2 Organisations are required to provide the information as detailed in [paragraph 3.6](#) to enable fraud checking which may be conducted through the National Fraud Initiative. Organisations that fail to provide this information will not be considered for a grant and may still be subject to fraud checks.
- 16.3 Applicants should note that, where a grant is paid by the Council, details of each individual grant may be passed to Government.
- 16.4 The Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant paid in error.

## **17.0 Data Protection**

- 17.1 All information and data provided by businesses shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.
- 17.2 The Council will not make available lists of businesses that have applied or that have been successful for grant payment.
- 17.3 The Council reserves the right to share relevant information with the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the body overseeing the grant fund allocation.



**West Devon  
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# **West Devon Borough Council Grant Scheme Policy 2023**

**Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)  
Community Resilience**



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Version	Version date	Revised by	Description
1	11/10/23	AE	REPF Grant Policy

## 1.0 Purpose of the scheme

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to determine eligibility for a payment under the Council's REPF Grants Scheme.
- 1.2 The new REPF Grant Scheme has been developed by the Council to support businesses with projects that provide a benefit to the local community or economy.
- 1.3 The awarding of grants will be at the total discretion of the Council, based on the benefits delivered for the grant awarded, supporting Council priorities, and wider business and local economy aims.
- 1.4 This document sets out the information which the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have required to be submitted for funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grant, the funding allocation the Council will be using to make the awards. It also outlines the approach the Council will take in determining whether an award should be paid or not.
- 1.5 The general principals of the scheme are:
- **Flexibility;** to target grants towards business proposals that provide the greatest benefit to the local economy or community;
  - **Efficiency;** to issue grants as quickly as possible whilst meeting democratic, eligibility and technical requirements;
  - **Simplicity;** the application process will be based on the philosophy of self-assessment and be as streamlined as possible;
  - **Economic Benefit;** grant award levels shall be set to make a difference to those projects, such that the most economic advantage is provided from the REPF grant programme.
  - **Fraud;** the process will capture evidence such as certified accounts/HMRC self-assessments and bank statements that can be used to identify fraudulent applications. A self-declaration that the information provided is a true reflection of the facts, will also be required. The Council will also be applying post application checks as well as sharing data with Central Government and across other grant schemes as necessary.

## 2.0 Funding

- 2.1 Central Government has provided the Council with REPF capital grant funding of £843,000. Of this funding, £300,000 is allocated for improvements to active travel infrastructure while the remaining £543,000 is available across these grant schemes. These figures may be moved between schemes, to maximise the benefit of the programme, but the total budget will not change. Funding is designed to meet several



interventions which were agreed with Government through our REPF investment proposal. These interventions are:

- Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas
- E11 Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups
- E17 Development & promotion of visitor economy
- E26 Growing the local social economy

2.2 The Council investment proposal agreed to meet these interventions through the delivery of four grant programmes:

- Decarbonisation Grants
- Community Resilience Grants
- Agri-Tech Grants
- Clean Diversification Grants

### **3.0 Eligibility criteria of the fund**

3.1 Applicant organisations must be:

- Registered in the UK for tax purposes
- Based in West Devon
- Actively trading or engaged in business activities in West Devon

Eligible organisations must also be:

- Social enterprises and CICs
  - Must be registered with a company number on Companies House
- Charitable Organisations
  - Registered with the Charities Commission, with a Charity Number
- Town/Parish Councils
  - Applications must be submitted by the town / parish clerk

3.2 Applicant organisations must not be:

- In administration
- Insolvent
- Subject to a striking off notice
- In breach of state-aid limits

3.3 Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon, and grants can only be awarded to activities taking place within the Local Authority area.

3.4 Given that funding is restricted to capital expenditure, grants will only be awarded against projects which meet this criteria.

3.5 Any business failing to meet the criteria or failing to provide the Council with sufficient information to determine whether they meet the criteria, will not be awarded a REPF Grant.

3.6 All businesses are required to submit a standard set of information for fraud and tracking purposes. These include:

- A unique tax identifier such as a company number, unique tax reference number or charity number.
  - In the case of community organisations that are not registered for tax purposes, a National Insurance number will be required
- Number of employees at time of application (if applicable)
- Name of the organisation
- Type of organisation
- High level Standard Industrial Classification code
  - [Click here for information about SIC codes](#)
- A nominated bank account, in the name of the business or main applicant.
  - A bank statement showing address, sort code, account number and account name is required

## 4.0 Definitions – Eligibility Criteria

4.1 For the sake of clarity, the following definitions are provided:

- Applicant organisations must be mainly based in West Devon
- Project beneficiaries must be based in West Devon
- Businesses providing support to the scheme can be in the wider South West area but projects providing more benefit in the local area will score more highly.
- Applicants agree to supply evidence of spend and completion of the project they are requesting support for within a maximum of 3 months from the confirmation of grant. They also agree to take part in communications and public relations activities if requested.

## 5.0 Local Priorities

5.1 The Council has decided they will only accept applications from businesses and organisations that meet the eligibility criteria as set out in [section 3.0](#).

5.2 The Council has decided that this grant fund aims to support the resilience of community facilities, such as community and village halls, village shops, and other sites which provide a range of services to their local communities.

## **6.0 How will grants be provided to businesses?**

6.1 In all cases, an application form is required, and this can be completed online at the Council's website: [Click here to access the REPF Grant webpage](#)

6.2 Supplementary information will also be required, and all businesses should look to provide this where requested to the Council as soon as possible. The application is largely self-certification, but applicants should be aware that the Council is obliged to manage the risk of fraud as outlined in section 16.

6.3 An application for a REPF Grant is deemed to have been made when a duly completed application form is received via the Council's online procedure.

6.4 Projects will be assessed monthly by the Council's panel, from the end of October 2023 to the end of November 2024. If all funds are allocated prior to November 2024, the programme will be closed to further applications. If funds are fully allocated prior to the final round of assessment, remaining eligible applications will be added to a waiting list to be reviewed if existing grant recipients drop out of the programme, so that their funding can be re-allocated.

6.5 Payments will be made to successful applicants once all applications have been assessed. Successful applicants will be advised of their award amount when contacted about their application.

## **7.0 How much money will be awarded?**

7.1 The Council has decided that, for the purposes of this scheme, grants will be awarded at between £2,000 and £10,000.

7.2 The Council will determine the amount of the grant awarded for each business on a case-by-case basis, and may not match the total grant amount requested. Project proposals will be required to provide at least 50% of their total project costs as match funding for the programme.

7.3 Only one REPF Grant will be awarded to any single organisation. This will also apply if more than one Limited Company has the same director(s) or where more than one business has the same proprietor (either sole traders or partnerships).

7.4 An organisation may apply to fund multiple projects, but it is at the discretion of the grant panel to decide which project is funded.

7.5 Applications must be project-specific; a single application should not detail more than one project.

## **8.0 Limitation of funds and applications**

8.1 All monies paid through the REPF Grant scheme will be funded by DLUHC. The funds are limited and, as such, the Council is not able to award a grant where funds are no longer available.

8.2 Any businesses wishing to claim should complete the necessary form on the Council's website, as linked in [paragraph 6.1](#). All claims will be made online, and this will also include the provision of such evidence as required by the Council.

8.3 As there are limited funds available, not all applicants will be successful, and some businesses will be left disappointed.

## **9.0 State Subsidy requirements**

9.1 Any grant awarded is required to comply with the law on State Subsidies. This will involve the applicant declaring to the Council if they have received any other State Subsidies over the past three years.

9.2 If the applicant has not received any other State Subsidy, they are not required to make that declaration to the Council or to complete any declaration statement.

## **10.0 Scheme of delegation**

10.1 The policy has been approved under Part 3(a) of the Council Constitution: Scheme of Delegation. The Head of Paid Service used delegated authority in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

10.2 Officers of the Council will administer the scheme. The Corporate Director for Strategic Finance and the Director of Place and Enterprise are authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council and, in line with Central Government guidance.

## **11.0 Notification of decisions**

11.1 Applications will be considered by designated officers of the Council.

11.2 All decisions made by the Council shall be notified to the applicant by email. A decision shall be made within 5 working days after the monthly panel meetings.

11.3 If unsuccessful, applicants will be notified of this decision, but specific details about why a proposal is rejected will not be given.

## **12.0 Reviews of decisions**

12.1 All grants will be determined by the Head of Place and Economy, Economic Development Officer and Senior Economic Support Officer.

12.2 This decision will be final, and there is no appeal process.

## **13.0 Complaints**

13.1 If you believe an error has been made, such as a missing payment, in the first instance please raise an enquiry to the grants team using the following link.

[Click here to raise a grants-related enquiry.](#)

13.2 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Council's website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about this scheme.

## **14.0 Other scheme conditions**

14.1 All grants are taxable. Applicants should make their own enquiries to establish any tax position or liability.

## **15.0 Successful applicant obligations**

15.1 Successful applicants are expected to take part in reasonable public relations, communication and engagement activities directly related to the award.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Press releases
- Social media posts
- Other digital media content
- In-person engagement events (where applicable)

15.2 Successful applicants are required to provide pre-payment evidence of how funds have been allocated and spent.

15.3 Post project outcome analysis, such as surveys, are also desirable, particularly where they focus on local benefit derived from the award funds.

## **16.0 Managing the risk of fraud**

- 16.1 Neither the Council, nor the Government will accept deliberate manipulation of the scheme and fraud. Any applicant caught falsifying information to gain grant money or failing to declare entitlement to any of the specified grants will face prosecution and any funding issued will be recovered from them or their grant offer rescinded if payment has not already been issued.
- 16.2 Organisations are required to provide the information as detailed in [paragraph 3.6](#) to enable fraud checking which may be conducted through the National Fraud Initiative. Organisations that fail to provide this information will not be considered for a grant and may still be subject to fraud checks.
- 16.3 Applicants should note that, where a grant is paid by the Council, details of each individual grant may be passed to Government.
- 16.4 The Council reserves the right to reclaim any grant paid in error.

## **17.0 Data Protection**

- 17.1 All information and data provided by businesses shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and Privacy Notices which are available on the Council's website.
- 17.2 The Council will not make available lists of businesses that have applied or that have been successful for grant payment.
- 17.3 The Council reserves the right to share relevant information with the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the body overseeing the grant fund allocation.

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **21<sup>st</sup> November 2023**

Title: **Long Stay Pay & Display Charges Review**

Portfolio Area: **People and Community - Cllr Adam Bridgewater**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: After the call in period has expired.

Author: **Chris Brook** Role: **Director of Place and Enterprise**

**Emma Widdicombe** **Principal Assets Officer**

Contact: [Chris.Brook@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.Brook@swdevon.gov.uk)  
[Emma.Widdicombe@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Emma.Widdicombe@swdevon.gov.uk)

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Hub Committee**

**1. Authorises the Head of Assets to publish notice of proposals for the West Devon Borough Council (Off-Street Parking Places) (Variation No.1) Order 2022 amendments to be made as follows:**

- 1.1 Amend the Pay and Display charges in accordance with Appendix A;**
- 1.2 Change Abbey car park from a 4 hour maximum stay to a 6 hour maximum stay car park;and**
- 1.3 Remove Brentor car park and Lydford car park from the West Devon Borough Council (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2022**

- 2. Requests the Head of Assets to prepare a subsequent report summarising any representations received in response to the notice of proposals for consideration by the Hub Committee before deciding whether to make the off-street parking places order as proposed or with modifications; and**
- 3. Authorises the Director of Place and Enterprise in consultation with the Lead Member and Leader to vary the charges payable in respect of off-street parking places to reflect annual changes in the September Consumer Price Index (inflationary uplift) subject to giving the public notice in accordance with Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 specifying the charges payable when the notice comes into effect.**

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Parking charges in West Devon were last increased in March 2021 and the Council has consciously kept parking prices frozen for its residents and visitors over that time.
- 1.2 Since March 2021, the Consumer Price Index has increased by 20.66% and inflation levels over the past 18 months have been at a 40-year high. Service costs have increased, as have salaries, but in recognition of the cost of living crisis and challenging economy, the Council has continued to deliver an efficient service has not passed on those costs.
- 1.3 In fact, the Council has invested in toilets and public realm improvements and continues to install EV charging infrastructure at considerable cost and has now adopted an EV strategy to increase the roll out of charging infrastructure.
- 1.4 Whilst the Council is now considering elevating some limited parking tariffs, it is proposing to do so in a very targeted way that ensures minimal impact on the high street, shoppers and local residents.
- 1.5 A strategic change to selected long stay tariffs is proposed, which is forecast to deliver sufficient income to enable short stay tariffs to remain at 2021 levels.
- 1.6 The set of proposed changes to parking charges has been carefully considered to ensure they are fair and proportionate. They also allow us to offer competitive pricing locally for parking and visits to our towns.



- 1.7 The report also proposes to extend Abbey car park from a four stay to six hour maximum stay to allow for longer terms parking following feedback from the customers.
- 1.8 Members are recommended to amend Pay and Display charges in accordance with Appendix A, for a proposed implementation in April 2024. Furthermore, Brentor and Lydford car park should be removed from the off street parking order and the operation agreement with Dartmoor National Park Authority terminated.
- 1.9 It is also recommended that the Director of Place and Enterprise is authorised in consultation with the Lead Member and Leader of the Council to vary the charges payable to reflect annual changes in the Consumer Price Index (September) subject to a public consultation.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council is aware of the importance of car parking sites to the development and prosperity of the Borough. The tariff review proposed ensures parking charges cover the costs of managing the car parks and their maintenance, whilst remaining competitive with other providers and comparable with other similar local authorities' providers.
- 2.2 The last amendment to the car parks tariffs took place in March 2021, where tariffs were increased by 4%. Parking charges have not increased since.
- 2.3 Between March 2021 and September 2023, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased by 20.66%. Inflation levels over the past 18 months have been at a 40-year high.
- 2.4 In the financial year 2022/23 the Council had a shortfall in car parking income of £168,000 (16%) against the budgeted income target of £1.036 million. The impact of the Covid pandemic and online shopping continue to have an impact and town centre car parks have not made a full recovery.
- 2.5 The Council has not met its car parking income target for several years. So, there is a need to set appropriate tariffs that reflect the cost of the assets and parking service, given the ongoing pressures to parking income.
- 2.6 Car parking income is used to support the vital street scene services provided in the Borough which includes street cleansing, open spaces, parks, public conveniences, and litter bin emptying.
- 2.7 The costs of operating these services have significantly increased due to staffing costs, fuel, utility costs, contract costs etc

- 2.8 Car parking income has been used to support projects such as the electric charging point provision across the Borough, improvement works at Bedford toilets, Tavistock bus station toilets as well as the bus station itself.
- 2.9 Current charges remain low and there is a need to ensure there is a balanced budget given the inflationary pressures noted above.
- 2.10 Therefore, this report seeks to implement an inflationary increase as set out in Appendix A, across long stay car park assets rounded to the nearest 10 pence.

### **Electric Charging Points in Tavistock, Okehampton, Hatherleigh and Chagford**



### **Lydford and Brentor Car Park**

- 2.11 The Council have been in an agreement with Dartmoor National Park Authority since 1970 to manage and operate the car park and public conveniences at Lydford and Brentor car park.
- 2.12 Dartmoor National Park Authority resolved to implement charges in a number of their car parks within the National Park which included Lydford.
- 2.13 Fees generated from this car park will be used by Dartmoor National Park Authority to maintain car parks, visitor services and continuing their outstanding conservation work.
- 2.14 Brentor car park and toilets are proposed to be asset transferred from Dartmoor National Park Authority to the Church.

2.15 It is therefore proposed to remove Lydford and Brentor car park from the Parking Order and the agreement terminated, and assets returned to Dartmoor National Park Authority.

### 3. Outcomes/outputs

#### Pay & Display Charges

##### Tavistock

- 3.1 Most parking stays within the Tavistock car parks are short (maximum stay up to 4 hours). It is therefore proposed to not increase the short stay tariffs in Tavistock to promote pop and shop parking.
- 3.2 The report only recommends increasing the long stay tariff (over 4hours).
- 3.3 The Bedford car park is designated as a long stay car park and is the main visitor car park for the town. The proposal is for the current up to 4-hour tariff of £2.00 to be increased to £3.00 and the all-day tariff from £4.00 to £5.00.
- 3.4 This remains a very competitive tariff for the main visitor town centre car park when compared to other main town car parks in neighbouring areas. For example:
- Multi Storey car park Tiverton - £6.00 all day
  - Panier Market car park, Bideford - £5.00 all day
  - Regent Street car park, Plymouth - £13 all day
  - Imperial Recreation Ground car park, Exmouth - £8.00 all day
  - Quay car park, Kingsbridge - £10 all day
- 3.5 It is proposed to increase Riverside car park from £2.50 to £3.00 all day parking. This provides economical alternative for all day parking.
- 3.6 Abbey car park currently has a maximum stay of 4 hours. It is proposed to introduce a 6-hour charge to allow for longer term parking.

#### Summary of Proposed Charges Tavistock

Parking Place	Max Waiting Period	1/2 hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	all day
<b>TAVISTOCK</b>								
Abbey Current		£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60	£3.00		
Abbey Proposed	4 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60	£3.00	£4.00	
Bedford Current						£2.00		£4.00

<b>Bedford Proposed</b>	all day					£3.00		£5.00
<b>Brook Street Current</b>			£1.30	£2.00	£2.60			£4.00
<b>Brook Street Proposed</b>	3 hours/all day		£1.30	£2.00	£2.60			£5.00
<b>Riverside Current</b>								£2.50
<b>Riverside Proposed</b>	all day							£3.00

### **Okehampton, Chagford and Hatherleigh**

3.7 It is proposed to increase each long stay tariff as shown below:

#### **Summary of Proposed Charges Okehampton, Chagford and Hatherleigh**

Parking Place	Max Waiting Period	1/2 hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	all day
<b>OKEHAMPTON</b>								
<b>Mill Road Current</b>	All day			£1.70		£2.40		£3.00
<b>Mill Road Proposed</b>				£2.00		£2.90		£3.60
<b>HATHERLEIGH</b>								
<b>Hatherleigh Current</b>	All day	£0.30	£0.50	£1.00	£1.30	£1.60		£2.20
<b>Hatherleigh Proposed</b>		£0.40	£0.60	£1.20	£1.50	£2.00		£2.60
<b>CHAGFORD</b>								
<b>Chagford Current</b>	All day		£0.50	£1.20	£1.60	£2.00		£3.00
<b>Chagford Proposed</b>			£0.60	£1.40	£1.90	£2.40		£3.60

#### **4.1 Annual Inflationary Uplift for Car Parking Tariffs (September Consumer Price Index)**

4.2 It is proposed on an annual basis that car parking charges are increased by the Consumer Price Index to respond to the increasing costs of providing services, whilst seeking to maintain pace with the costs of delivery services, and to protect income streams that are critical to the delivery of key services.

- 4.3 It is recommended that the Director of Place and Enterprise is authorised in consultation with the Lead Member to vary the charges payable in respect of off-street parking places to reflect annual changes in the September Consumer Price Index (inflationary uplift) subject to giving the public notice in accordance with Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 specifying the charges payable when the notice comes into effect.

### **Lydford and Brentor Car Park**

- 4.4 It is proposed to remove Lydford and Brentor car park from the Off Street Parking Places Order following the termination of the agreement with Dartmoor National Park Authority.

## **5. Options available and consideration of risk**

- 5.1 A further 21-day public consultation will be undertaken following the meeting.
- 5.2 During the consultation period, customers wish to object to or comment on recommendations will have the opportunity to do so. It is anticipated this exercise will commence in December 2023. Objections will be considered prior to implementation of any changes.
- 5.3 Appendix A shows the revised Pay and Display tariffs.

## **6. Proposed Way Forward**

- 6.1 The proposed amendments to the Off-Street Parking Places Order proceed in accordance with the recommendations.
- 6.2 Should the Recommendations be accepted, the following steps will occur:
- a. 21-day consultation commence (Dec 2023) to which customers will be alerted by notice in the local press, on the Council's website and in all affected car parks.  
This will allow customers to make comments on and/or objections to the proposals, should they wish to do so.
  - b. If a significant number of representations were to be received, the matter would be referred to the Hub for further consideration,
  - c. Otherwise, the detailed implementation of the recommendations should be delegated to the Head of Assets

in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for car parking for implementation in April 2024.

## 7. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>The Council has power to provide and to regulate off-street car parks under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 set out the procedures to be followed before and after making any order regulating the use of car parks.</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>The impact of the tariff increases is expected to generate £150k in additional car parking income from the tariff changes across all car parks.</p> <p>However, it must be noted that in 2023/24 the Council reduced its income target for car parking income by £150k. Therefore, increasing car parking charges as is proposed in this report by an inflationary amount (since March 2021) is taking the Council's car parking income back to pre-pandemic levels and a pre pandemic budget position.</p> <p>We will monitor the income and performance</p> <p>The cost of implementing the changes will be met from the car parking budget.</p> <p>The difference between the income and expenditure on Off Street Car Parking is used to support costs associated with the operation and maintenance of parking services, its infrastructure, and the maintenance of off street car parks. It is also used to support and provide other Council services such as street cleansing, toilets, parks, and open spaces and other lawfully incurred identified expenditure.</p>
Risk		<p>There is a risk that a significant number of objections to the proposals may be received, which would postpone any implementation, as the</p>

		objections would have to be considered by the Hub ahead of any changes.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Council Communities Environment
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	There are no negative impacts.  There may be small positive impacts with customers considering alternative means of transport or care sharing.
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity		No implications.
Safeguarding		No implications.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No implications.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		No implications.
Other implications		None at this stage.

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

Appendix A: Pay & Display Charges

Appendix B: Plan Brentor and Lydford car park

**Background Papers:**

None

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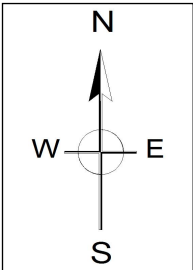
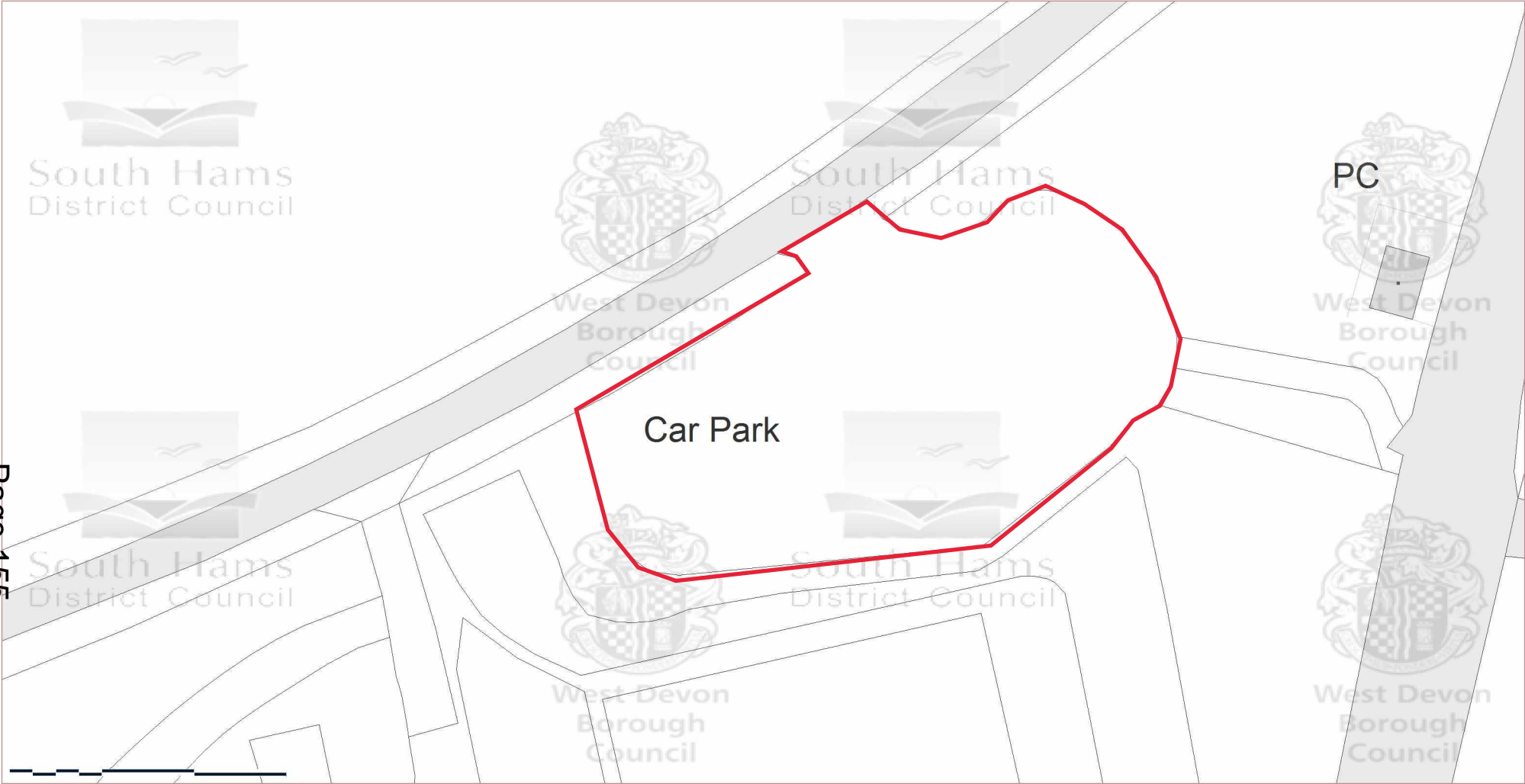
## Appendix A

### Current Parking Tariffs

Parking Place	Max Waiting Period	1/2 hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	all day
<b>TAVISTOCK</b>							
Abbey	4 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60	£3.00	
Bedford	all day					£2.00	£4.00
Brook Street	3 hours/all day		£1.30	£2.00	£2.60		£4.00
Riverside	all day						£2.50
Bedford Sawmills	all day			£1.20			£2.40
Chapel Street	3 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60		
Wharf	3 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60		
Russell Street	2 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00			
Bank Square	1 hour	£0.70	£1.30				
Guildhall	1 hour	£0.50	£1.00				
<b>OKEHAMPTON</b>							
Mill Road	all day			£1.70		£2.40	£3.00
Market Street	3 hours	£0.50	£1.00	£1.80	£2.20		
<b>HATHERLEIGH</b>							
Hatherleigh	all day	£0.30	£0.50	£1.00	£1.30	£1.60	£2.20
<b>CHAGFORD</b>							
Chagford	all day		£0.50	£1.20	£1.60	£2.00	£3.00

**Proposed Parking Tariff (those tariffs changed highlighted in grey)**

Parking Place	Max Waiting Period	1/2 hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	6 hours	all day
<b>TAVISTOCK</b>								
<b>Abbey</b>	4 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60	£3.00	£4.00	
<b>Bedford</b>	all day					£3.00		£5.00
<b>Brook Street</b>	3 hours/all day		£1.30	£2.00	£2.60			£5.00
<b>Riverside</b>	all day							£3.00
<b>Bedford Sawmills</b>	all day			£1.20				£2.40
<b>Chapel Street</b>	3 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60			
<b>Wharf</b>	3 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00	£2.60			
<b>Russell Street</b>	2 hours	£0.70	£1.30	£2.00				
<b>Bank Square</b>	1 hour	£0.70	£1.30					
<b>Guildhall</b>	1 hour	£0.50	£1.00					
<b>OKEHAMPTON</b>								
<b>Mill Road</b>	all day			£2.00		£2.90		£3.60
<b>Market Street</b>	3 hours	£0.50	£1.00	£1.80	£2.20			
<b>HATHERLEIGH</b>								
<b>Hatherleigh</b>	all day	£0.40	£0.60	£1.20	£1.50	£2.00		£2.60
<b>CHAGFORD</b>								
<b>Chagford</b>	all day		£0.60	£1.40	£1.90	£2.40		£3.60



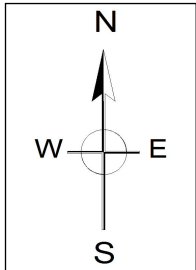
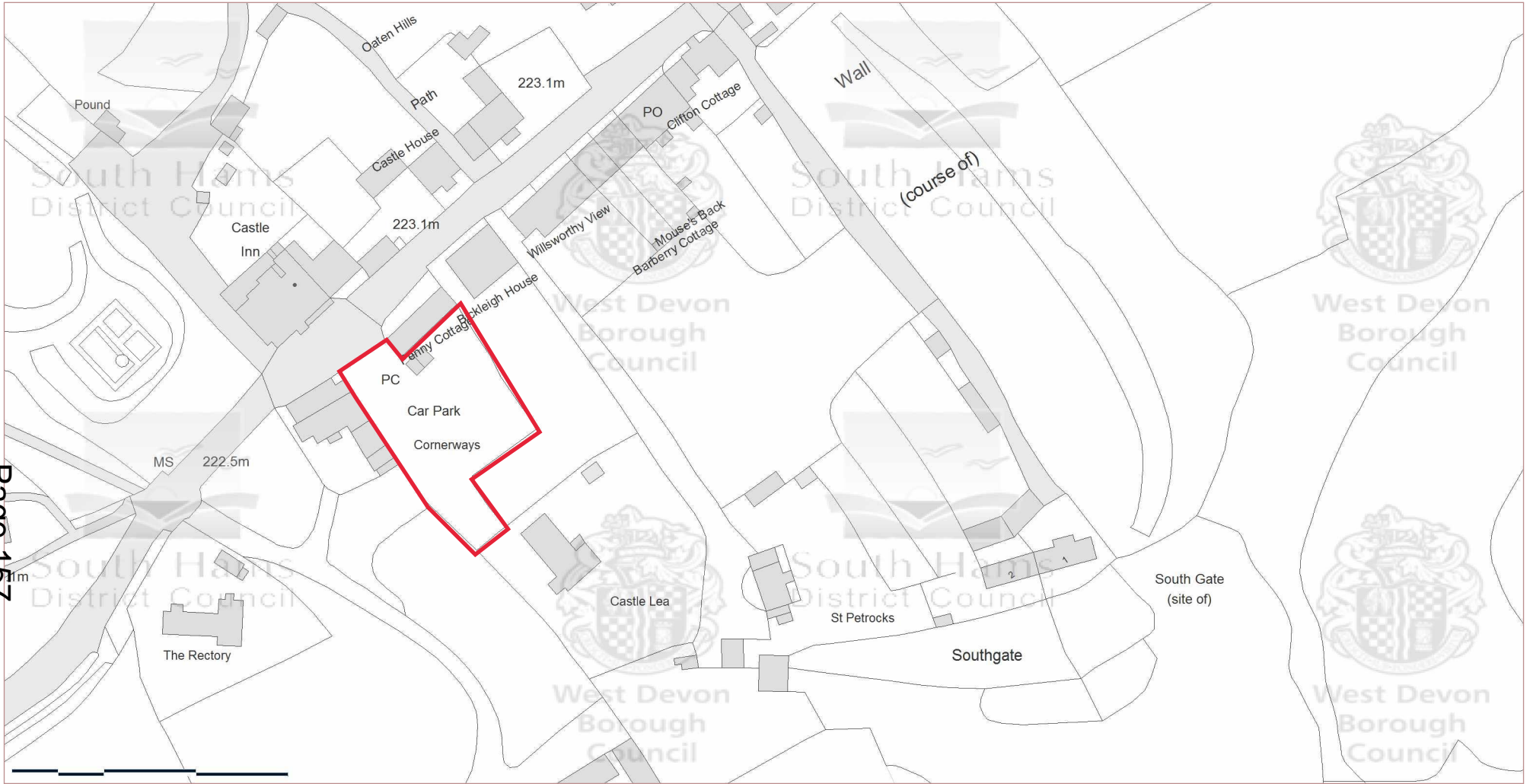
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24. Brentor



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21. Lydford



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## **NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (applies to Appendix A)

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **21 November 2023**

Title: **Q3 and Q4 Write-Off Report 2022/23**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr Edmonds – Lead Hub Member for Resources**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: Upon the expiry of the Call-in period.

Author: **Geni Hotchkiss** Role: **Head of Revenues and Benefits**

Contact: **geni.hotchkiss@swdevon.gov.uk**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **That the Hub Committee:**

- 1. Notes that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Section 151 Officer has authorised the write-off of individual debts totalling £77,279.31 as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report; and**
- 2. Approves the write-off of the individual debts totalling £29,868.75, as shown in Appendix A of the report.**

### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for the collection of Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates, overpaid Housing Benefit and Sundry Debt.
- 1.2 This report informs members of debt written-off for these revenues streams. Debt up to the value of £5,000 can be written off by the Section 151 Officer under delegated authority. Permission needs to be sought from Hub Committee to write off individual debts with a value of more than £5,000. Members agreed a write-off policy in March 2023 which sets out the circumstances in which a debt is deemed to be irrecoverable. This includes insolvency cases and where the debtor is deceased or cannot be traced.

- 1.3 The report covers the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. The total amount of debt to be written-off is £107,148.06. The amount written-off for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022, for all revenue streams, was £125,528.70.
- 1.4 One of the key outcomes of the Revenues and Benefits Service Review is the improvement of collection rates for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates and the report includes information about the amount of debt written-off by financial year as well as comparing collection performance against shire districts.
- 1.5 In 2022/23 the Council achieved a Council Tax collection rate of 98.3% which was significantly above both the national average of 96% and the average for shire districts which was 97.2%. This placed West Devon Borough Council in the top quartile nationally.
- 1.6 For Non-Domestic Rates, our collection rate of 99% also placed us in the top quartile nationally, compared to a national average of 96.8% and an average collection rate of 97.5% for shire districts.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council's sound financial management arrangements underpin the delivery of all the Council's priorities, including the commitment to provide value for money services. This report forms part of the formal debt write-off procedures included in these financial arrangements. The Hub Committee agreed at its meeting of 7 March 2023 to adopt a Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate (Business Rates) and Housing Benefit Overpayments write off policy to ensure transparency and consistency in decisions regarding the writing-off uncollectable debt.
- 2.2 It was also agreed that future write-off reports would be presented in an updated format. Previously the report detailed debt written-off during a quarter regardless of the financial year to which it relates. One of the key outcomes of the Revenues and Benefits Service Review is the improvement of collection rates for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates and the report contains additional detail on debts written-off by financial year.
- 2.3 The writing-off of debt which is irrecoverable is recognised as good practice by the Department of Housing, Levelling Up and Communities, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Department for Work and Pensions. Debts are only considered for write off after we have taken all steps to collect them. It is important is that processes and procedures are frequently reviewed to ensure maximum effectiveness in debt collection and recovery.
- 2.4 Whilst it is recognised that most of the income owed to the Council will be successfully billed for and collected, there are a variety of



reasons why debt will become irrecoverable and needs to be written off. Debts will only be recommended for write-off once all options to recover and enforce them, as allowed for by the relevant legislation, have been exhausted.

- 2.5 When it is certain that debts are irrecoverable or the cost of recovery would outweigh the benefit, debts should be written-off following appropriate review and authorisation with reference to the write-off policy. A full audit trail is also retained.

### 3. Outcomes/outputs

#### Council Tax Write-Offs

- 3.1 The table below shows Council Tax debts which have been approved for write-off in Quarters 3 and 4 of 2022/23 by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers. It also compares the cases and amounts against the corresponding quarters of the 2021/22 financial year.

Reason for write off	No. of cases	2021/22 – Amount written off (£)	No. of cases	2022/23 – Amount written off (£)
Debtors who cannot be traced	4	4,803.01	2	472.24
Death of a debtor	5	2,764.17	13	5,678.69
Insolvency	34	34,691.55	34	48,786.34
Small balance	112	15,813.94	101	1,454.69
Miscellaneous	5	2,060.65	2	394.28
Uncollectable old debt	147	6,463.41	20	3,917.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>66,596.73</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>60,703.56</b>

- 3.2 The primary reason for writing off Council Tax debt remains insolvency. This includes debt relief orders and bankruptcy, and the amount continues to reflect some of the financial issues council taxpayers may be experiencing due to the cost-of-living crisis.

#### Council Tax Write-Offs by financial year

- 3.3 The breakdown below details the write-offs by financial year. Our collection rate of 98.3% was significantly above the average performance of Shire Districts which was 97.2% and we wrote off a small amount of debt in year.

Financial year	Amount written off (£)	In-year Collection Rate	Shire District average
Pre 2018/19	10,424.44	Various	Various

2018/19	4,491.93	97.7%	97.9%
2019/20	7,052.60	97.7%	97.7%
2020/21	4,647.94	97.3%	96.9%
2021/22	23,681.77	97.8%	97.2%
2022/23	10,404.88	98.3%	97.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,703.56</b>		

### **Council Tax Write-Offs – over £5,000**

3.4 Permission needs to be sought from Hub Committee to write off individual debts with a value of over £5,000. As this information is confidential, the full details are contained in exempt Appendix A, however the high-level detail is as follows:

#### **Case 1**

**Amount - £6,472.85**

**Reason for write-off – Individual Voluntary Arrangement**

#### **Case 2**

**Amount - £6,240.84**

**Reason for write-off – Individual Voluntary Arrangement**

#### **Case 3**

**Amount - £5,173.96**

**Reason for write-off – Individual Voluntary Arrangement**

The amounts requested for write-off by financial year are as follows:

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Amount to be written-off (£)</b>	<b>In-year collection rate</b>	<b>Shire District Average</b>
Pre 2018/19	6,538.93	Various	Various
2018/19	1,668.16	97.7%	97.9%
2019/20	2,528.73	97.7%	97.7%
2020/21	3,299.27	97.3%	96.9%
2021/22	2,155.03	97.8%	97.2%
2022/23	1,697.53	98.3%	97.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,887.65</b>		

### **Non-Domestic Rate Write-Offs**

3.5 The table below shows debts under £5,000 which have been approved for write-off in quarters 3 and 4 of the 2022/23 financial year, as approved by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers. It also compares the cases and amounts against the corresponding quarters of the 2021/22 financial year.

Reason for write off	No. of cases	2021/22 – Amount written off (£)	No. of cases	2022/23 – Amount written off
Insolvency	7	11,988.32	6	12,590.30
Debtors who cannot be traced	1	654.71	0	0.00
Small balance	1	0.01	1	0.10
Uncollectable old debt	0	0.00	2	260.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12,643.04</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12,850.58</b>

3.6 The primary reason for writing-off Non-Domestic Rate debt remains insolvency.

### **Non-Domestic Rate Write-Offs by financial year**

3.7 The breakdown below details write-offs by financial year and compares our in-year collection rate against the average for shire districts. No in-year debt, under £5,000, was written-off in 2021/22 and it should be noted that we achieved a NNDR collection rate of 99.0% compared to an average for shire districts of 97.5%.

Financial year	Amount written off (£)	In year collection rate	Shire District average
Pre 2018/19	977.48	Various	Various
2018/19	6,462.99	97.6%	98.4%
2020/21	677.31	91.5%	95.0%
2021/22	4,732.80	93.7%	97.0%
2022/23	0.00	99.0%	97.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,850.58</b>		

### **Non-Domestic Rates Write-Offs over £5,000**

3.8 Permission needs to be sought from Hub Committee to write-off individual debts with a value of over £5,000. Details of two cases, which relate to previous financial years, are included in the exempt appendix:

#### **Case 1**

**Amount - £6,042.65**

**Reason – Company dissolved**

#### **Case 2**

**Amount - £5,938.45**

**Reason – Company dissolved**

The amounts requested for write-off by financial year are as follows:

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Amount to be written off (£)</b>	<b>In-year collection rate</b>	<b>Shire District Average</b>
Pre 2018/19	5,938.45	Various	Various
2018/19	6,042.65	97.6%	98.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,981.10</b>		

### **Housing Benefit Overpayments Write-Offs**

3.9 The table below shows debts under £5,000 which have been approved for write-off in quarters 3 and 4 of 2022/23 by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers. It also compares the number of cases and amounts to the same quarters in 2021/22.

Reason for write off	No. of cases	2021/22 – Amount written off (£)	No. of cases	2022/23 – Amount written off (£)
Insolvency	0	0.00	0	0.00
Death of a debtor	1	594.51	1	5.82
Small balance	4	32.45	1	2.68
Uncollectable old debt	15	2,926.88	3	122.51
Miscellaneous	1	2,957.29	28	834.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6,511.13</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>965.17</b>

3.10 The reduction in the total written-off reflects, in part, an overall reduction in housing benefit overpayments due to the Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Initiative. It is a programme launched by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to help local authorities improve the accuracy of housing benefit payments and reduce fraud and error.

### **Sundry Debt Write-Offs**

3.11 The table below shows debts under £5,000 which have been approved for write-off in quarters 3 and 4 of 2022/23 by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers. It also compares the number of cases and amounts to the same quarters in 2021/22.

Reason for write off	No. of cases	2021/22 – Amount written off (£)	No. of cases	2022/23 – Amount written off (£)
Insolvency	3	2,999.37	1	2,760.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2,999.37</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2,760.00</b>

3.12 The amount of debt written-off is comparable across financial years and the primary reason for write-off remains insolvency which may be indicative of continuing difficult trading conditions.

#### 4. Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 The Hub Committee can either approve the debt being written-off or not. Should the write-off of an individual debt not be approved, it will remain on the relevant system as an outstanding balance. In cases of insolvency there is no other option available to the Council other than to write-off the debt.

4.2 If debts remain on the system, it may result in additional time and cost spent pursuing the debt when there is no realistic prospect of collection. This is an inefficient use of the Council's staffing resources.

#### 5. Proposed Way Forward

5.1 The Hub Committee approves the write-off of individual debts more than £5,000 as detailed in Appendix A.

5.2 The Hub Committee notes the debts under £5,000 approved for write-off by the Section 151 Officer under delegated powers.

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		<p>The relevant billing, collection and recovery processes are governed by statutory provisions linked to the type of debt. Debts will be written-off in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate (Business Rates) and Housing Benefit overpayments write off policy and any legislation relevant to the type of debt. All relevant enforcement remedies will be pursued before a recommendation to write-off is made.</p> <p>The relevant powers for this report are contained within the following legislation.</p> <p>Section 151 Local Government Act 1972            Section 44 Local Government Finance Act 1988            Section 14 Local Government Finance Act 1992</p>
Financial implications to include reference		<p>A clear process for the writing-off of irrecoverable debt represents effective financial management practice. To continue to pursue debt when it is no longer cost effective to do so is an inefficient use of</p>

to value for money		<p>resources. Provision for bad debts is made in the Council's accounts.</p> <p>The Committee notes that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Section 151 Officer has authorised the write-off of individual Council debts totalling £77,279.31 as detailed in paragraph 3.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Committee approves the write-off of the debt more than £5,000 for £29,868.75, as detailed in the exempt Appendix A. The total debts to be written off are £107,148.06.</p>
Risk		<p>The Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate (Business Rates) and Overpaid Housing Benefit write off policy provides assurance regarding controls and the operational process in recovering debt. It should be recognised, however, that due to the volume, value and nature of annual debt due to the Council there will always be irrecoverable amounts which will be recommended for write-off once all enforcement remedies have been exhausted.</p> <p>A provision for bad debts is made in the Councils' accounts. The debt recovery policy and the write off policy and supporting procedures are in place to minimise risk.</p>
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Delivering efficient and effective services.
Consultation & Engagement Strategy		There is no requirement to consult.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		No direct carbon/biodiversity impact arising from the recommendations.
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity		All enforcement action prior to writing off debt is undertaken in accordance with the relevant legislation and accepted procedures. The Council's approach to dealing with debtors remains fundamentally unchanged, however through formalising policy and procedures we are better able to engage with debtors who have potentially tried to ignore their debts.
Safeguarding		None directly arising from this report.

Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None directly arising from this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None directly arising from this report.
Other implications		A bad debt provision is built into the financial management of the Council.

**Supporting Information**

**Appendices:**

Exempt Appendix A – Write-offs of individual debts over £5,000

**Background Papers:**

None

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **21<sup>st</sup> November 2023**

Title: **Climate Change – EV Strategy Update**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr Lynn Daniel**  
**Natural Environment**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:  
Recommendations will be considered at the Full Council meeting to be held on 19 December 2023.

Author: **Adam Williams** Role: **Principal Climate Change Officer**

Contact: **adam.williams@swdevon.gov.uk**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Hub Committee RECOMMENDS that Council adopt the West Devon Borough Council Electric Vehicle Strategy 2023-2025 (as set out at Appendix B).**

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency in 2019 and developed and implemented a strategy and action plan in response to the declaration.
- 1.2 In support of the declaration, Action NE1.2 within the Council's corporate strategy 'A plan for West Devon' commits the council to developing and adopting an Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy.
- 1.3 Development of the strategy began in 2022 and public consultation took place in the summer of 2023.
- 1.4 Since the EV strategy was developed and consulted on, learning and reflection on EV charging roll out on our own land has taken place. This report sets out a new approach in this regard.

- 1.5 The report recommends that the updated Electric Vehicle Strategy 2023-2025 be adopted by Council.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. On 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the final draft of the EV strategy and recommended to the Hub Committee that a consultation was carried out (Minute O&S 6/22 refers).
- 2.2. On the 7<sup>th</sup> March, the Hub committee resolved to carry out a consultation (Minute HC 83/22 refers).

## **3. Consultation Summary**

- 3.1. A consultation on the Council's draft EV strategy took place between 7<sup>th</sup> June and 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
- 3.2. The consultation was survey based with links posted in Council bulletins, on social media and with a PR sent to media agencies in advance of the consultation beginning.
- 3.3. The survey was short and asked respondents to rate their agreement with our chosen actions on a sliding scale, the end of the survey had some open-ended responses where participants were able to write about opportunities for the council's fleet as well as anything else they felt might be missing from the strategy.
- 3.4. Forty-one people responded to the consultation and out of all the questions asked, respondents predominantly agreed or strongly agreed with the actions. Appendix A contains a summary of the consultation outcomes and some written responses to some of the open questions.

## **4. EV Strategy Review**

- 4.1. The EV Strategy 2023-2025 presented as Appendix B of this report contains minor amendments to the draft presented in February 2023. Whilst much of the structure remains the same, some of the actions have been amended to take account of changes in existing projects and timescales.
- 4.2. Alongside small amendments to the background texts, the aims have been altered to include reference to community chargers as this was highlighted as a need through consultation.

- 4.3. An important change relates to broadening the options for EV charging installations on our land, for both council and public use.
- 4.4. Since the original development of the EV strategy, the DELETTI scheme (Devon Low carbon Energy and Transport Technology Innovator) scheme has now been completed with 22kW chargers installed in Hatherleigh car park, Chagford car park, Bedford car park, Tavistock (4 bays), Mill Road car park and Okehampton.
- 4.5. The DELETTI scheme saw the Council enter into collaborative agreements with the private sector to install chargers in our car parks. The takes the form of a public/private concessionary model where we offer time-limited leases on our land for the private sector to install EV chargers. Whilst this method mostly de-risks the Council when it comes to management and maintenance and installation costs, we have little control over delivery time scales and pricing.
- 4.6. As a result of delivering this scheme and work elsewhere, we have gained greater understanding around the installation and management of EV chargers and have also carried out feasibility on further sites.
- 4.7. We have developed skills in-house to install EV chargers, created close working relationships with National Grid, adopted back-office management software to take care of payments and management, and are now registered with the Officer for Low Emissions Vehicles (OLEV) as a registered installer of EV chargers.
- 4.8. In view of this, alongside the public/private concessionary model and a private operator funded, we will look at options to fund the installation of EV charges directly and benefit from the ability to control pricing and usage. It is proposed that each site is assessed and, where relevant, a business case for funding be brought forward. The EV strategy has been amended to reflect this and establish a 'West Devon Network Ownership' model.
- 4.9. We are working with the Energy Saving Trust to establish what grants or funding is available for the different types of installations we are looking at as a Council, predominantly:
  - Work-place chargers
  - On-street public chargers

- Car park chargers (public/private/combined)
- Fleet infrastructure and chargers

4.10. We are currently carrying out feasibility studies for sites in West Devon and will bring forward plans and business cases for these in due course, in the first instance we are looking at Kilworthy Park and Okehampton and Tavistock Business Centres.

## 5. Proposed way forward

5.1. It is proposed that the Hub Committee notes the new approach to EV charging roll out and the option for inhouse EV charging installs alongside collaboration arrangements so we can achieve faster EV charging roll out across the Borough.

5.2. That the Hub Committee recommends to Council to adopt the revised Electrical Vehicle Strategy 2023-2025.

## 6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposal Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal / Governance	Y	<p>This report includes an overview of process in developing the strategy.</p> <p>The Public Charge Point Regulations 2023 come into force on 24 November 2023. They apply to charge points which are intended for use primarily by members of the public and includes a charge point that may only be accessed during specific hours; or are situated in a public car park, whether that car park is available only to persons intending to purchase specific goods or services. The Regulations impose requirements on those owning or operating public charge points on behalf of the owner to (a) ensure that a person can pay to charge an electric vehicle by contactless payment without a pre-existing contract with the operator; (b) ensure that, by 24 November 2024, their network of rapid</p>

		charge points is, on average, 99% reliable; (c) ensure by 24 November 2025, a person is able to pay to charge an electric vehicle using a payment service provided by a third party roaming provider; and (d) to provide a staffed telephone helpline that is available 24 hours a day to provide assistance to those using their charge points.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	There are no financial implications as part of this report. The workstreams that will develop out from the action plan will either be resourced internally, or funding applications made to support new EV charging infrastructure
Risk	Y	None
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	This report related to action NE1.2 of a Plan for West Devon.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact	Y	This report provides an update on the development of an EV strategy which aims to increase the uptake of EV's in the area, thereby helping to reduce transport emissions
<b>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</b>		
Equality and Diversity		None as a direct implication of this report
Safeguarding		None as a direct implication of this report
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None as a direct implication of this report
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None as a direct implication of this report
Other implications		

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – EV Strategy Consultation summary

Appendix B – Revised EV Strategy

#### **Background Documents:**

None

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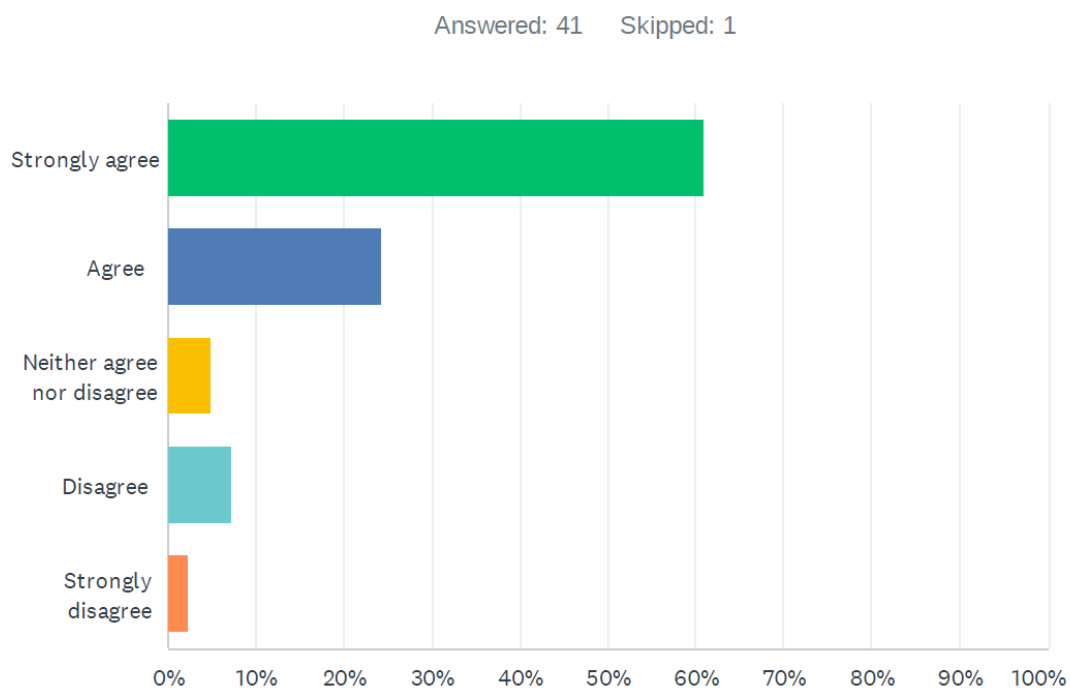
## West Devon Borough Council EV Strategy Consultation Summary and Recommendations

A consultation on the Council’s EV strategy took place between 6<sup>th</sup> June and 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

The consultation was survey based with links posted in Council bulletins, on social media with a PR sent to media agencies in advance of the consultation beginning. The survey was short and asked respondents to rate their agreement with our chosen actions on a sliding scale, the end of the survey had some open-ended responses where participants were able to write about opportunities for the council’s fleet as well as anything else they felt might be missing from the strategy.

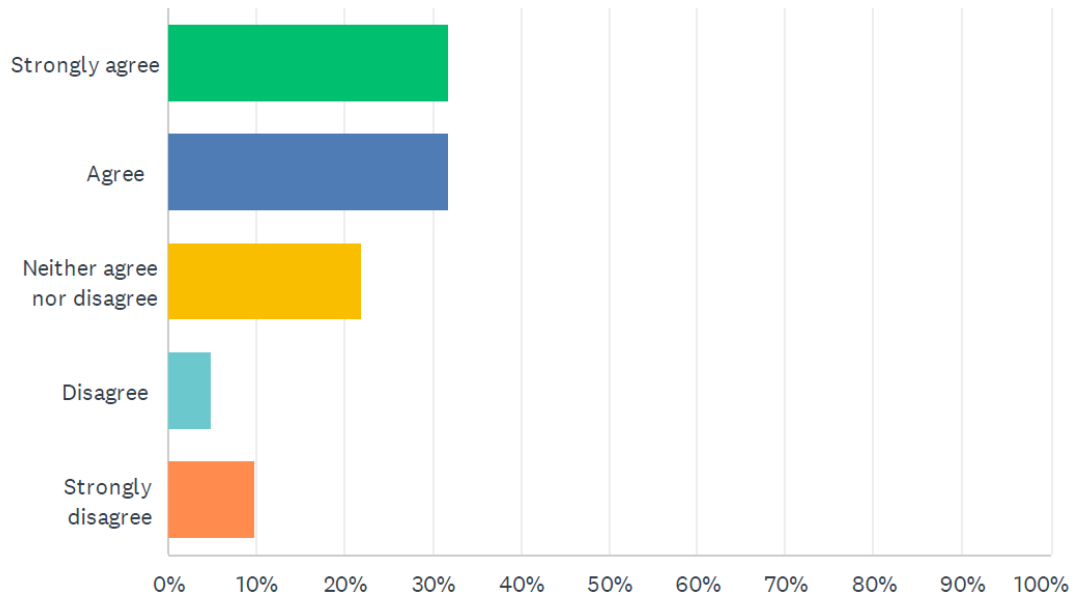
43 people responded to the consultation and out of all the questions asked, respondents predominantly agreed or strongly agreed with the actions.

**Q1: We’re looking to identify opportunities to support research and innovation in electric vehicles. One part of this would be to submit a new bid under the new Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure scheme. This would involve a call for sites to identify areas for off-street rural charging hubs. Do you think this action would benefit your area?**

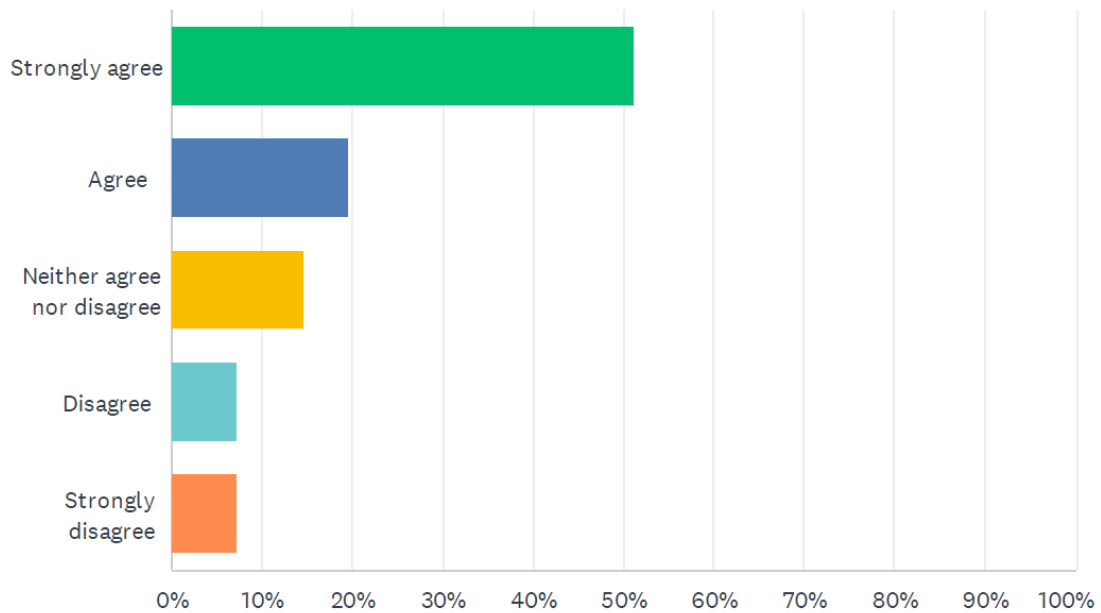


**Q2: We’re looking to promote and support community charge schemes, such as Zap-Home and Co Charger. Both organisations have a network of residences with home charge points of users that have decided to share them with other EV drivers. Would supporting these organisations be beneficial in your area?**

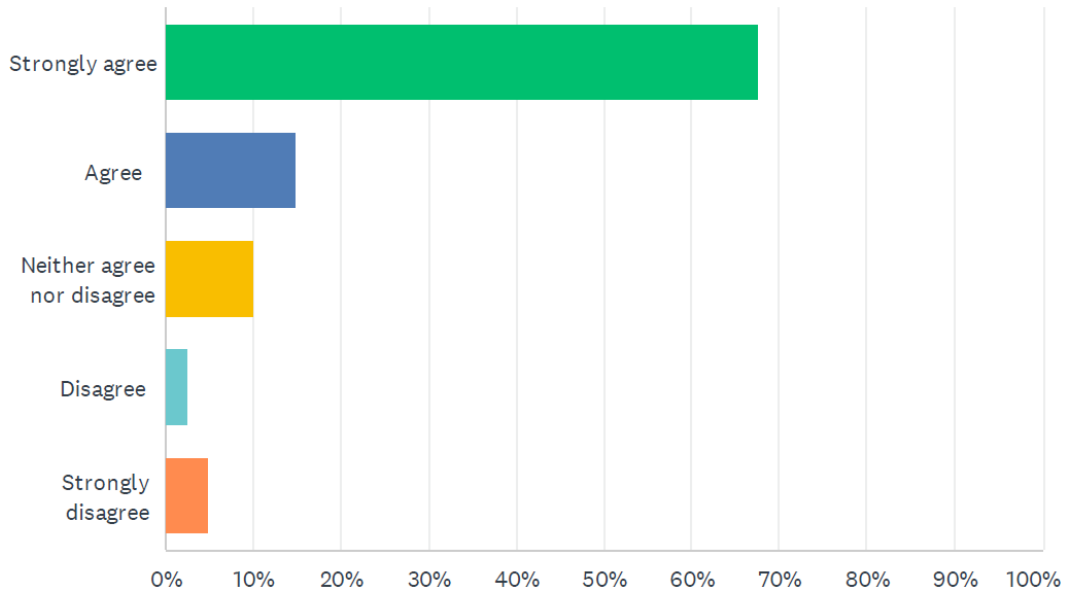
Answered: 41 Skipped: 1



**Q3: We're looking to promote the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) Workplace Charging Scheme to businesses and workplaces in the district. The scheme provides eligible businesses with support towards the upfront costs of the purchase and installation of EV charging points. Do you think us promoting the scheme is worthwhile?**

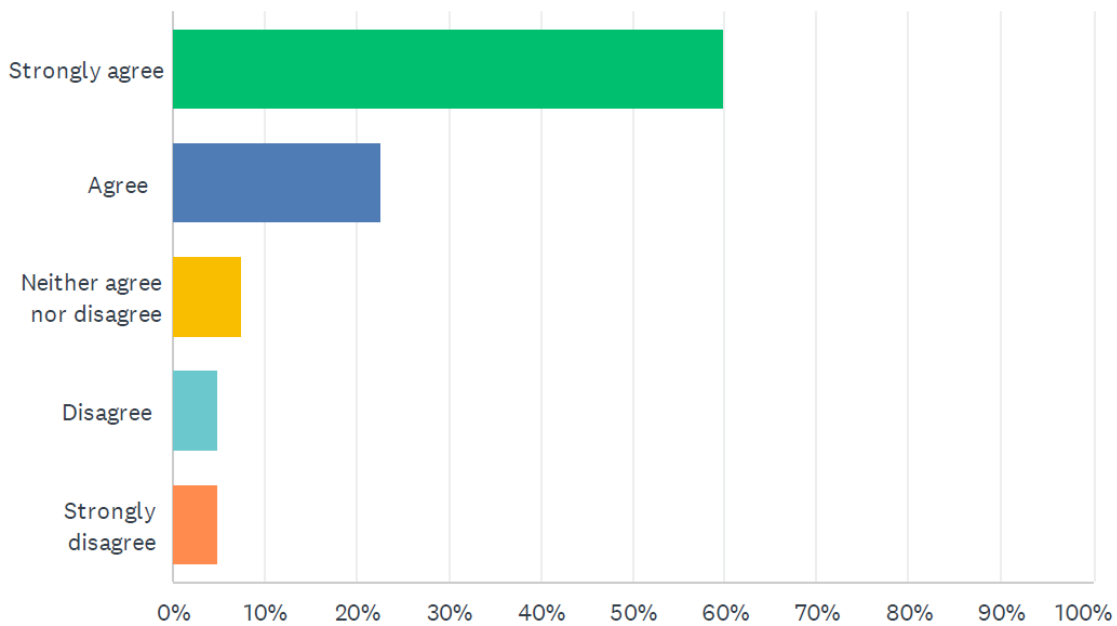


**Q4: We want to work with Devon County Council, OLEV and the National Grid to install ten more charging points at Council-owned car parks. Would this be beneficial to EV drivers in the West Devon?**



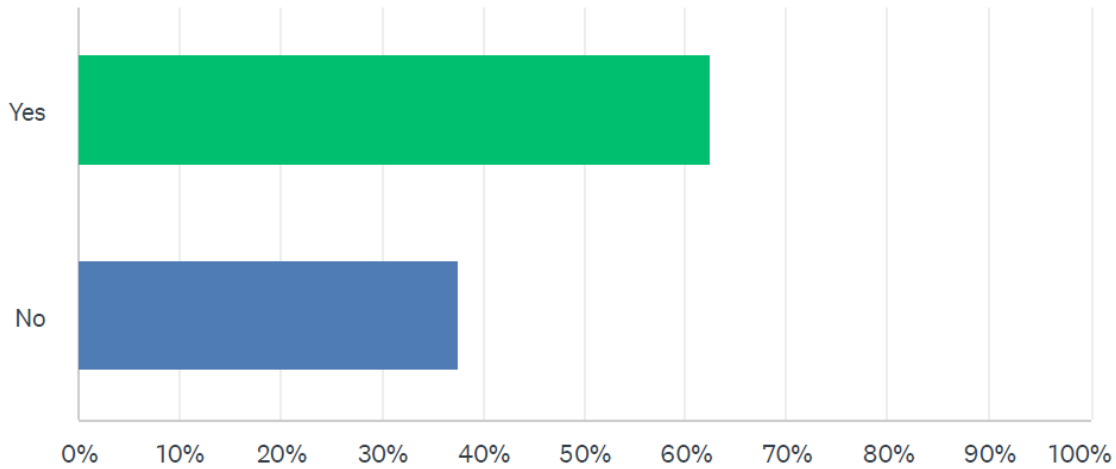
**Q5: We want to encourage supermarkets, rail stations and other partners and stakeholders to deliver EV charging points at other key destinations across West Devon. Do you think this is worth us doing?**

Answered: 40 Skipped: 2



**Q7: Do you think our EV strategy should include investigating other methods of e-mobility, such as e-bikes or car sharing?**

Answered: 40 Skipped: 2



Two open ended questions were asked,

*Q6. What else do you think the Council can do to help improve the number of EV charging points in the West Devon?*

And

*Q8. Is there anything the Council should specifically be doing as it transitions its "light vehicle" fleet to electric vehicles?*

In terms of question 6, there were some comments and suggestions that warrant a written response, these are as follows.

Comment	WDBC Response
I have sent in a separate (long) briefing paper, describing how to reduce the installation costs by first checking the electricity distribution maps.	We have received this and are exploring the suggestion in house
Provide secure parking for electric bikes	This is out of scope for this strategy
The major problem for EV charging is that the electricity infrastructure is already limiting the number of houses that can install a charger in anyone street as the cables aren't big enough to take the load so WDBC needs to lobby the grid to increase its electricity cabling otherwise you won't be able to deliver many charging points.	We currently have regular dialogue with National Grid through our existing EV charging schemes and recognise this is a problem specifically with fast and rapid charging. Costs for upgrades often make fast and rapid charging not viable however where we can pool needs and requirement we will do this and seek funding to be able to unlock some of these barriers
For rural areas such as Milton Abbot, purchasing small areas of land that could be used as village car parking as well as ev charging would reduce road congestion as well as provide ev charging. For example, a field above the pub at Milton Abbot would	This would be cost prohibitive for a Local Authority on its own to manage, however we will work in partnership where we can.

provide both and improve parking for the pub, village hall and the church.	
It would be good to put charging points at community hubs such as schools, village halls and church sites. These would be non-profit making organisations.	This is something that can be explore under action EV.1
There is a charger in west Devon council office car park with no details as to if it just for council use, staff use or public use, there are EV chargers in the private car park by the library I have never seen them used the building is empty and there are no details on the chargers on if they can be used and by whom perhaps a bylaw that charger business owners should make it clear if charging is open to public	We will be reviewing charging requirements at key council assets and to balance business continuity against access of charging for the public
Ensure planning approvals require EV charging	2021 Part S building regs now require this, minimum standards exist in planning now for commercial, between 11 and 22 kW.
Help Parish councils and community buildings identify and install community charging facilities in their parishes. (3 similar comments).	A call for sites will be conducted, sites collated through this exercise will inform a bid under LEVI in collaboration with Devon County Council and other Devon Councils

As for question 8, there were some comments and suggestions that are beneficial to explore or comment on

Comment	WDBC Response
Make charging points available to the public	We will be reviewing charging requirements at key council assets and to balance business continuity against access of charging for the public

A separate written response was provided by a resident which outlines potential locations for EV chargers off the A30 at Sourton, this is being reviews by our assets team.

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West Devon Borough Council

# Electric Vehicle Strategy 2023–2025

October 2023



West Devon  
Borough Council



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# Foreword

**Our corporate strategy, a Plan for West Devon recognises the task we face in tackling climate change. Transport is among the highest cause of emissions in our Borough.**

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and a growing global consciousness about the impact of human activity on our planet, the way we approach transportation is undergoing a profound transformation. As we stand at the intersection of innovation and environmental responsibility, it is with great pleasure and optimism that I introduce this Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy.

Our strategy and action plan outlines our proposed approach to developing and implementing an EV charging infrastructure that supports the needs of our community.

We're aiming to help provide convenient and accessible charging solutions that encourage the adoption of electric vehicles, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



**Cllr Lynn Daniel**  
West Devon  
Borough Council  
Lead Member  
for Climate Change





# Introduction

West Devon Borough Council declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency in May 2019. Following this a Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy was adopted in December 2020.

The Council has committed to the following aims:

- To reduce its organisational carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030;
- To work with partners through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to aim to reduce the Borough of West Devon's carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest;
- A 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in the habitat value of its green and wooded public open space by 2025.



**Growing**  
our natural environment

As a proportion of overall emissions, **Transport emissions account for around 27% of all emissions** in West Devon and as opposed to other sectors, hasn't seen much of a reduction. The Council's Climate and Biodiversity Strategy recognises that a **reduction in total vehicle miles travelled and electrification of surface transport is needed** to meet both climate and air quality goals, and that Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in West Devon needs to scale up significantly. However, for certain activities and particularly in rural areas of West Devon with limited public transport provision, cars and vans are the most suitable means of transport. Replacing petrol and diesel vehicles with electric vehicles, alongside facilitating a modal shift in the better populated areas is a key part of our decarbonisation goals.

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This is supported nationally through the Department for Transport's (DfT) Decarbonising Transport document July 2021, which sees increasing cycling, zero emission vehicles and accelerating maritime decarbonisation as key issues<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the Office for Zero Emission Vehicle's (OZEV) Taking the Charge EV strategy launched in March 2022, which outline the government's plans for meeting targets to decarbonise transport and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The Local Authority Toolkit, launched in April 2022, also offers additional evidence to support this, and highlights the

<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport. 2020. Transport Decarbonisation Plan. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-decarbonisation-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-decarbonisation-plan)

synergies with other low carbon transport modes.

The UK Government has revised its targets to phase out petrol and diesel cars, they will require 80% of new cars and 70% of new vans sold in Great Britain to be zero emission by 2030, increasing to 100% by 2035.

According to the Department for Transport, the current transport system places wider costs on society:

- **Air pollution Costs** to health and social care could reach £5.3 billion by 2035.
- The Stern review estimated the **overall costs of unmitigated climate change** to be equivalent to 5–20% of global GDP each year £10bn.
- It's estimated that the **annual social cost of urban road noise** in England is £7 to 10 billion.
- **Health and obesity** – The UK-wide NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050.
- **Overall the current cost of the transport system** to society is £49.9bn with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year.

The Government see a clear role for local authorities for the roll out of EV chargers in particular through its EV strategy 'Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy'<sup>2</sup> stating that local authorities are fundamental to successful chargepoint rollout, particularly for the deployment of widespread on-street charging. We are therefore ideally placed to identify the local charging needs of residents, fleets and visitors.

In order to demonstrate our commitment to the uptake and deployment of electric vehicles, this document sets out our vision and planned approach to EV and travel support. A two-year time horizon has been set for this EV strategy, covering 2023–25. This short time horizon allows the strategy to focus on what is currently known, the current funding streams on offer, what can be practically delivered, and for the EV market in the UK to mature. The strategy will be reviewed regularly to provide opportunity to reflect upon rapid technological and socio-economic change, with a refresh published in 2025.

<sup>2</sup> HM Government, 2022. Taking charge: the electric vehicle infrastructure strategy. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1065576/taking-charge-the-electric-vehicle-infrastructure-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1065576/taking-charge-the-electric-vehicle-infrastructure-strategy.pdf)

# Scope of this Strategy

The scope of this Strategy is limited to vehicle charging with an element of transport decarbonisation through alternative electrically powered modes such as bikes.

We agree with the Committee for Climate Change that zero emission cars and lorries cannot on their own meet all our climate goals or solve all our problems. However, we do need to influence this transition as an electrified transport fleet is a piece of puzzle, alongside reducing the need for trips to reduce congestion and provide safe alternatives to improve air quality, reduce noise and increase health and wellbeing. In essence, a rural solution to transport decarbonisation will involve combining public transport with more tailored on-demand and shared mobility services, including peer-to-peer and volunteer-based solutions.

With all that in mind, this electric vehicle strategy covers the following areas:

- Destination charging
- Residential and community charging
- EV and charge sharing
- E-bikes
- Council fleet transition
- Charging at council sites



The following is not included within the scope of this strategy:

- **Motorbikes** – There is currently low demand for e-motorbikes. Almost all e-motorcycles currently use 3-pin chargers and therefore no dedicated charging infrastructure is required.
- **Rail transport** – Rail infrastructure is the responsibility of Network Rail. The Council has limited powers to influence the rail sector and its adoption of zero emission rail technology.
- **Heavy goods vehicles** – The adoption of zero emission vehicle technology will occur later than the period covered by this strategy. It is unclear at this time if electric or hydrogen will emerge as the primary energy source for powering freight vehicles.
- **Hydrogen power solutions** – The Climate Change Committee concludes that while battery electric vehicles are now well placed to deliver the bulk of decarbonisation for cars and vans, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles could play an important role for heavy-duty transportation (e.g. buses, trains, lorries and marine) where the need to store and carry large amounts of energy is greater. For personal transportation, hydrogen solutions are no better, or in some cases worse than current fossil fuel technology.
- **Active Travel** – While this strategy will cover e-bikes, it is not a supplement to a full active travel strategy which will emerge as part of our Placemaking commitments through the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan we are developing.

# Local Picture

The main challenges involved with rural transport are symptoms of a car-oriented road infrastructure and geographically sparse population which makes it unsafe to walk and cycle. Coupled with insufficient provision of public transport and a lack of critical mass for shared mobility and market-driven solutions<sup>3</sup>, the challenges around decarbonising rural transport are vast and well documented.

In relation to the transition to electric vehicles, West Devon faces very specific challenges and there is a risk that more rural locations are left behind. For instance, many private charging businesses require high turnover of users, which is why cities and service areas off motorways have seen the largest increase in charging availability. Furthermore, many of the more remote areas in the Borough has issues around grid capacity, with some new EV connections requiring substation upgrades which can run into the tens of thousands of pounds. Equally, there is greater dependence on car travel, with longer trip distances than urban areas, providing a significant opportunity to reduce carbon emissions.

The number of EVs in West Devon is growing each year, with nearly eight times as many EVs registered compared to just four years ago. There are high levels of interest in EVs in the Borough, combined with high levels of potential tourist demand for EV charging infrastructure. A range of EV charging infrastructure projects are already underway to support and enable this growth.

<sup>3</sup> UTIP, 2022. The rural mobility challenge for public transport: How combined mobility can help [https://cms.uitp.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Knowledge-Brief-Rural-Mobility\\_FEB2022-web.pdf](https://cms.uitp.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Knowledge-Brief-Rural-Mobility_FEB2022-web.pdf)

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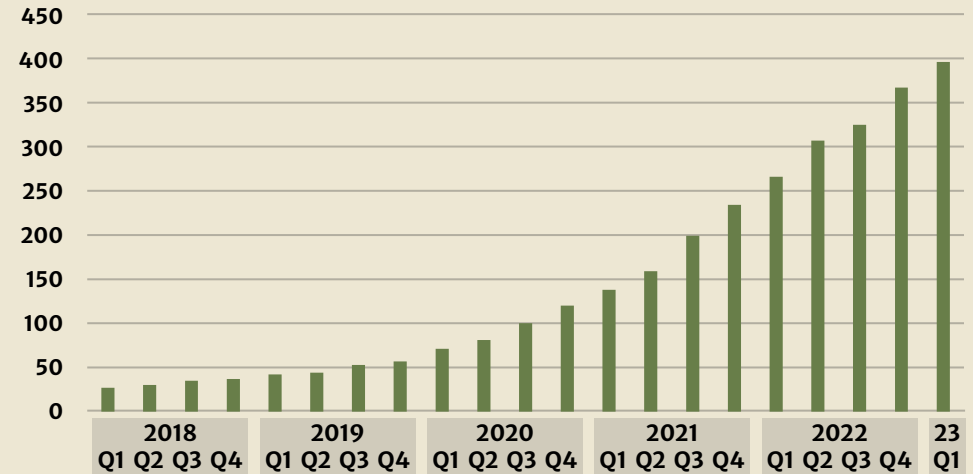


Figure 1: BEV's registered within West Devon between 2018 and 2023 (DVLA, 2023)



Figure 2: Distance Travelled to work in West Devon, working age population (Census, 2011)

The majority of emissions are generated by the most affluent citizens, both globally and at a local level. Across the UK, the highest income group has more than three times the household emissions of the lowest income group. **Figure 3** shows UK household emissions from different sources by income decile. It shows that the most affluent in society have by far the largest share of transport emissions, primarily because of increased travel distances both by car and aviation.

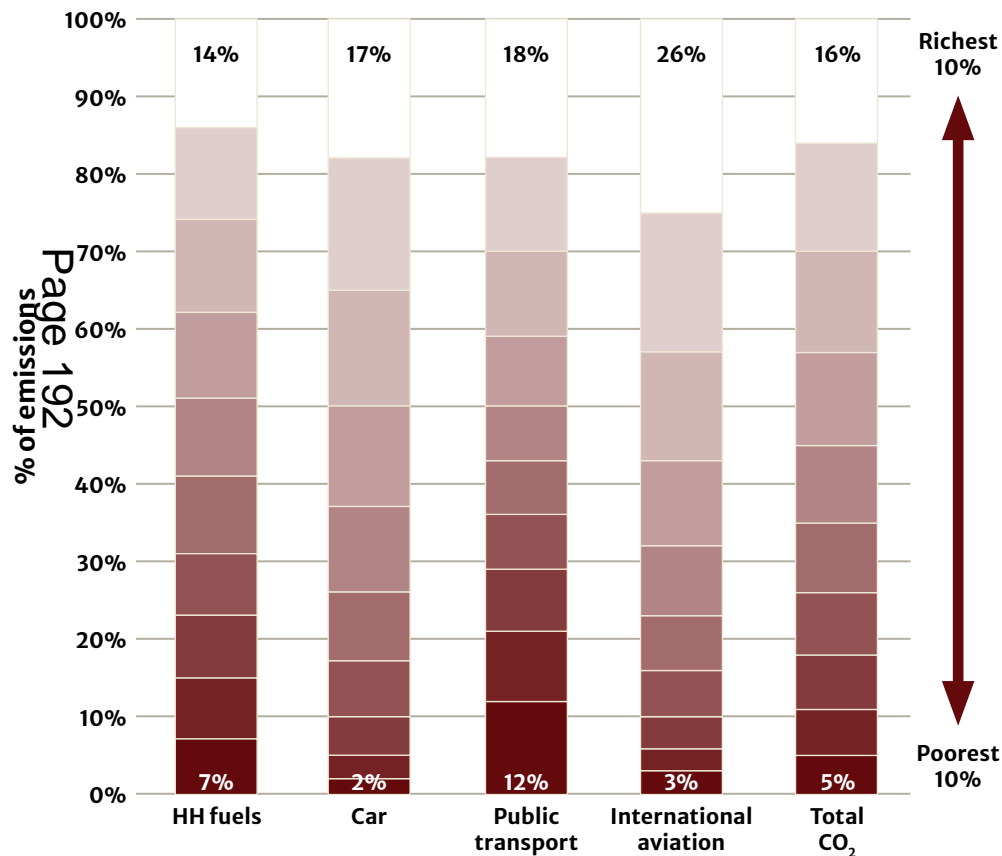


Figure 3: Percentage of UK household emissions from different travel sources by income decile – Source: CSE (2013)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/distribution\\_of\\_uk\\_carbon\\_emissions\\_implications\\_for\\_domestic\\_energy\\_policy.pdf](http://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/distribution_of_uk_carbon_emissions_implications_for_domestic_energy_policy.pdf)

In order to effectively tackle transport emissions through electrification, the solutions need to be equitable, fair and seek to provide different options for different people according to their needs and circumstances. Part of this will be ensure the charging infrastructure is available for those either living in remote areas or unable to install charging points at their own home but also to facilitate the availability of different options such as e-bikes and car sharing.

Just by influencing domestic passenger transport and helping to facilitate a modal shift in transport, West Devon transport emissions have the potential to fall from near 200,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e down to 66,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2050<sup>5</sup> as demonstrated by **figure 4**.

To achieve this level of reduction, we would need to see 100% electric vehicles by 2050, a 25% reduction in trips per person per year by 2030 and the average modal use of cars, vans and motorbikes reduced from 74% to 38% by 2050.

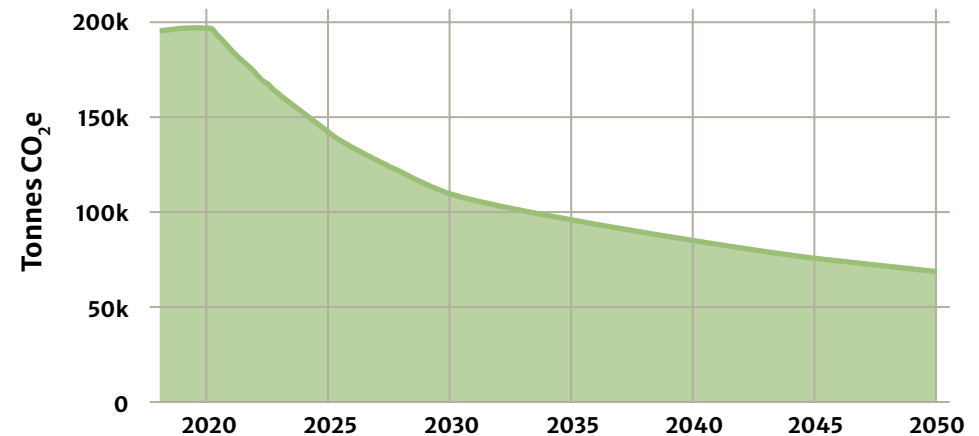


Figure 4: West Devon Transport emissions projections by influencing private transport (Anthesis Group, 2022)

<sup>5</sup> Anthesis, SCATTER Tool, 2022. <https://scattercities.com>

# Local Policy Context

This section presents a policy review, summarising relevant local policy. The West Devon Borough Council EV strategy should align with local policies and priorities.

## Devon Carbon Plan

The Devon Carbon Plan describes Devon's net-zero vision, specific actions within the Devon Carbon are related to EV. It notes:

- T32.** Develop EV Charging Strategies to deploy the right chargers in the right place.
- T33.** Devon Climate Emergey (DCE) partners to use their assets to provide publicly-accessible EV charging and shared mobility infrastructure.
- T34.** DCE partners and organisations in the County to transition their fleets to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.
- T35.** Accelerate the switch to Ultra Low Emission Vehicle taxis by placing requirements and incentives within the licensing process.



## Devon County Council EV Strategy

- The Devon County Council EV Strategy was out for public consultation in December 2022. The recommended actions involve co-ordination between authorities and DCC to increase the availability of charging in more challenging areas and to collaborate on funding bids through schemes such as LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund). Some of the relevant actions read:
- 2c. Deliver off-street residential hubs** - DCC will identify where there are overlaps between areas of need and council or district owned assets to see if publicly-accessible charging could be installed.



3. **Plug gaps in private-sector destination and intermediate charging provisions** - DCC will actively identify sites where destination and/or en-route charging could be installed to meet market need. DCC will then work with landowner, community, public sector and private sector stakeholders to facilitate installation of rapid charging hubs.
7. **Leverage scale through Devon-wide funding applications and procurement** - DCC will seek to collaborate with local districts, boroughs and other strategic partners when applying for grant funding, procuring services, and delivering the strategy. Specific emphasis on packaging up more and less commercially viable sites together.
8. **Lead on local borough co-ordination** - clear benefits of ensuring local councils are co-ordinated, including strengthened funding bids. DCC will coordinate with district councils to ensure Local Plans and EV policies are consistent.

## A Plan for West Devon

The West Devon corporate strategy, 'A Plan for West Devon' also contains actions related to EV's, specifically:

- NE1.1.** Phased conversion of our environmental management fleet to a greener fleet.
- NE1.2.** Increasing availability of electric charging points across the Borough (which includes adopting an EV Strategy).

Producing this EV strategy is delivery milestone for our corporate strategy.





# What have we done so far?

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- ◆ Developed local planning policy requiring EV chargers for new major development (Plymouth & South West Devon Climate Emergency Planning Policy Guidance).
- ◆ 4 chargers installed so far through DELLETI and ORCS.
- ◆ Introduced a salary sacrifice scheme for staff to lease EVs, currently 18 members of staff have taken up the offer.
- ◆ Undertook a survey with the Energy Saving Trust to help understand our fleet requirements.



# Our Vision

## How will we achieve this?



### Aim 1

**Work with partners such as Devon County Council, chargepoint operators, OLEV to provide high quality, and well distributed chargepoint provision**

- Focus on chargepoints in less viable and remote locations to help grow demand in those areas.
- Enable residents and communities without off-street parking to access public chargepoints.
- Ensure chargepoints and designated parking spaces are accessible and maintained.
- Begin to roll out EV chargers installed by WDBC which will be owned and operated by the Council.



### Aim 2

**Increase visibility of EV uptake and lead by example**

- Conversion of Council light fleet vehicles (Vans, cars and grounds maintenance equipment).
- Support the implementation and promotion of alternative and more affordable transport modes including EV car clubs and electric micro mobility options such as e-bikes.

Help to increase the number of charge points in the authority area by 50% (currently 28 publically accessible), provide infrastructure to support uptake of 3138 EVs by 2025 and reduce organisational light transport emissions by 50% by 2025.



## Why do we want to achieve this?

- ◆ Achieve air quality improvements.
- ◆ Carbon emission reductions to support the councils climate emergency declaration aims.
- ◆ Resident and business engagement:
  - a. To understand likely demand for EV charging and their locations;
  - b. To gain support for infrastructure delivery;
  - c. Increase the uptake of fossil fuel transport alternatives through knowledge share (for example try before you buy schemes) and providing alternative options to car ownership.



# Aims and Actions



## Aim 1: Increase EV Chargepoints across the Borough

Availability of public charging points is an important issue, as range anxiety is the single most quoted reason why individuals will not yet buy an electric vehicle. Different speeds of charge points are available and chargers are divided into types, based on capacity:

- 'Slow' chargers are 3 kW (AC);
- 'Fast' chargers are 7kW to 22 kW (AC);
- 'Rapid' chargers are 50 kW but DC in nature;
- 'Ultra rapid' chargers are 150 – 350 kW and again DC in nature.

At home, many people will either make use of a 3pin plug (3 kW) or have a chargepoint installed outside, usually at a rate of 7kW. Fast chargers (7kW to 22kw) are often installed in car parks, council owned ones and business car parks with some even installing rapid chargers. The type of charger installed is also dependent on grid capacity, many of the more remote areas of the district are grid constrained, meaning there is little capacity to install banks of fast and rapid chargers without an upgrade to a nearby substation.

To make the best use of resource, the Council will seek to unlock opportunities to provide charging points for those who are not catered for elsewhere or lack sufficient off street home charging. This would mean ignoring the motorway / trunk road network and workplaces. We will also focus on the Council's own needs (for our own vehicles), which will need adequate charging availability around the most remote areas of the Borough. Innovative solutions are emerging for those areas with little off street parking. For instance, retractable charge stations are now available to reduce street clutter and provide places to charge vehicles on street.

We will also be using our own capability to install public EV chargers which will be owned and operated by WDBC, this will enable us to have more control over local pricing, structure and access.



Emerging and continually evolving technology, are why this strategy has a two-year time horizon, covering 2023–25. We will ensure we keep our attention directed towards emerging technology and solutions to EV charging to provide the best possible strategic direction for EV charging over the next few years.

The Council only has so much land available and often has to balance the need to secure parking

income while providing charging infrastructure to visitors. To maximise opportunity, West Devon communities and parish councils play a key role in identifying local EV charging needs and could help expand the community charging network by installing chargepoints on community spaces such as village halls and parking areas. We already have a baseline of sites following a short survey carried out in December 2021, which ran until February 2022.

The purpose of this survey was to find out which Town and Parish Councils were interested in hosting chargepoints and whether they had any suitable land or buildings.

To achieve a suitable number of chargepoints, it's crucial that we engage with neighbouring local authorities, Town and Parish Councils, landowners, local chargepoint stakeholders, and commercial network operators.

## Action Plan

Action Ref	Action	Resources	Partners	By when
EV.1	Support a bid to the LEVI Scheme with Devon County Council and also explore sites where WDBC can own and operate EV chargers on its assets.	Internal Resource	OLEV, DCC	Call for sites to take place in 2023
EV.2	Promote and support community charge sharing scheme such as Zap-Home and CoCharge.	Internal Resource	Zap-home, CoCharge, Town and Parish Councils	2023–2025
EV.3	For existing workplaces, promote the OLEV Workplace Charging Scheme.	Internal Resource	LEP, DCE,	2023–2025
EV.4	Aim to install 2 more chargepoints at council owned public car parks (through DELETTI and ORCS) and then work on feasibility for in house installation opportunities.	Internal Resource and budget through existing grants in place	DCC, OLEV, Western Power	December 2024
EV.5	Encourage stakeholders to deliver EV chargepoints at other key destinations including supermarkets and rail stations.	Internal Resource		2025



## Aim 2: Increase the visibility of EV uptake and lead by example

The Council currently operates a fleet of 11 vehicles which are primarily used by mobile locality officers and grounds maintenance personal.

Use of these vehicles account for 32 tCO<sub>2</sub>e of the Council's overall operational carbon emissions.

Our vehicles include cars and vans, the waste fleet is managed by FCC. This fleet transition will be dependent on the availability of public chargers for fleet staff, however we will explore alternative options for fleet chargers through solutions such as [Paua](#) and [CoCharge](#).

Alongside the availability of public charging points many people simply are unaware of how EVs operate or cannot afford to finance the cost of vehicle when the used combustion engine vehicle market remains buoyant and affordable, which will only increase as more people begin to sell petrol and diesel cars to buy EV's. Even as the EV market increases and costs decrease, these vehicles will still be costly for those on lower incomes. It's here where an available and affordable EV sharing scheme can help, to increase mobility, bring costs down and clean up our transport emissions across the Borough.

## Action Plan

Action Ref	Action	Resources	Partners	By when
EV.7	Complete Fleet Review to identify internal combustion engine to battery electric vehicle replacement schedule and costs. Analysis of existing vehicle routing and usage using teletrac software already underway.	Internal Resource initially, cost identification an outcome	Energy Saving Trust	March 2024
EV.8	Aim to install chargepoints at Kilworthy, Okehampton and Tavy Business Centre for operational and fleet use	Internal resource seconded for feasibility and electrical, installation and management and maintainence	National Grid	2025
EV.9	Explore additional local incentives to increase EV uptake beyond additional chargepoint infrastructure, such as car sharing clubs (explore car share as part of pool car provision)	Internal Resource	Devon County Council	2022-2024
EV.10	Roll out e-bike trials subject to details through Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund	Funding earmarked through Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund	Devon County Council, GWR	2023 - 2024

# Delivery

Historically, the Council has jointly procured EV charging with partner authorities such as Devon County Council. Alongside this, the Council will seek opportunities to deliver its own charging infrastructure, it's important to highlight the different delivery models.

Delivery Model	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>West Devon network ownership</b></p> <p>This 'own and operate' model is an approach in which a local authority appoints a supplier to install and manage chargepoints on council-owned land for the contract period and fully funds the installations, typically using grant funding and local authority capital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retains full ownership of the charging infrastructure</li> <li>Retains full ownership of revenue</li> <li>Able to select sites regardless of viability</li> <li>Full flexibility of back office function such as tariffs and rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cover costs of ongoing operation, maintenance and upgrade</li> <li>Risk of equipment becoming outdated and left with obsolete charging</li> <li>Reputational risk associated with unreliability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public / private concessionary model</b></p> <p>This is a model where the charging is part funded by the public sector but a private sector operators runs and maintains the charge points i.e. DELETTI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for income share or land leasing revenue</li> <li>Reduced reputational risk associated with unreliability</li> <li>Local authority has no responsibility or costs associated with maintenance and repair</li> <li>Potential for charging type upgrades in the future as part of an agreement</li> <li>no control over delivery timescales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced income vs full ownership</li> <li>Not all chargepoint operators are amenable to the terms, reducing the choice of suppliers</li> <li>Lengthy tender exercise</li> <li>Private operator will likely require large number of sites to make installation viable</li> <li>Burden of contractual disputes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Private Operator</b></p> <p>Full ownership and responsibility from a private operator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowest risk across all issues highlighted above</li> <li>If on public sector land, potential for long term rental income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many of our rural sites will likely be not viable for a private operator</li> <li>Least control, difficult to achieve ambition and vision for far reaching and equitable charging infrastructure</li> </ul>





Based on the advantages and disadvantages of the different models, and from existing experience, the concessionary model, with a private sector delivery partner provides a good balance of risk and control. However there is a need to ensure that the network operator fulfils their service level obligations to maintain a reliable network and provide a customer focussed support function as set out in any framework.

Following learning from our existing partnership schemes, we have also developed skills internally and will therefore consider all options for EV charging delivery across the Borough.

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## How success will be monitored and any lessons learned implemented

Over the course of the strategies life, we will measure the following;

- Monitor charge point use and other market trends to inform future provision of fast and rapid charge points.
- Monitor EV take up.
- No of charge points delivered each year.

# Glossary

Term	Explanation
<b>Battery electric vehicle (BEV)</b>	A vehicle powered by a battery, which can be plugged into an electricity source to recharge. Also known as 'pure' or '100 per cent' EVs, they have zero tailpipe emissions.
<b>Chargepoint</b>	A charging socket which is connected to an electric vehicle via a charging cable to allow the battery to be recharged with electricity.
<b>Chargepoint Network</b>	The way that users access a chargepoint via RFID card or web or app.
<b>DELETTI</b>	Devon Low carbon Energy and Transport Technology Innovator.
<b>eBike</b>	An electrically assisted pedal cycle. The maximum power output of 250 watts should not be able to propel the bike when it is travelling more than 15.5mph. In the UK you must be over 14 years old to ride an e bike.
<b>eCargo bike</b>	An electrically assisted pedal cycle featuring a minimum 125 litre cargo volume capacity and minimum 130 kg weight capacity.
<b>EV</b>	Electric Vehicle; the vehicle is powered by electricity so requires plugging in to recharge the battery.
<b>ICE</b>	Internal combustion Engine.
<b>kWh</b>	Kilowatt Hour; unit of electricity. Car batteries are sized in kWh i.e. a 50 kWh battery stores 50 kWh of electricity.

Term	Explanation
<b>LEVI</b>	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure.
<b>p/kWh</b>	Pence per Kilowatt Hour. Users are charged for each kWh they consume. Charging tariffs are in pence per kilowatt Hour.
<b>Payment by bank card</b>	In line with national regulations, all new Rapid and Ultra Rapid chargers will accept payment via a contactless bank card (credit or debit card). This allows users to access these chargers without joining a Network.
<b>PHEV</b>	Plug-in Hybrid Electric vehicle; combines a smaller battery with a conventional internal combustion engine and an electric motor. This allows an electric range of between 20 – 50 miles and the ability to drive with an empty battery for hundreds of miles using petrol or diesel.
<b>Pool car</b>	A vehicle that is made available to staff to book for business travel.
<b>ORCS</b>	On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme.
<b>Overstay fee</b>	To encourage appropriate use of charging bays and assure they are available for people who need them an overstay fee will apply after a vehicle has finished charging and grace period has been exceeded.
<b>OZEV</b>	Office for Zero Emission Vehicles.
<b>WSP</b>	Williams Sale Partnership, lead consultants for the Devon County Council EV Strategy





West Devon  
Borough Council

[www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk)