

# Public Document Pack

## Mid Devon District Council

## Scrutiny Committee

**Monday, 18 January 2021 at 2.15 pm**  
**Virtual Meeting**

**Next ordinary meeting**  
**Monday, 15 February 2021 at 2.15 pm**

**Important** - this meeting will be conducted and recorded by Zoom only. Please do not attend Phoenix House. The attached Protocol for Remote Meetings explains how this will work.

## Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99569118154?pwd=R0NCMjVBL1Y5V2tZUS9PdE9oaTZEdz09>

Meeting ID: 995 6911 8154

Passcode: 771132

## One tap mobile

08003582817,,99569118154#,,,,,0#,,771132# United Kingdom Toll-free  
08000315717,,99569118154#,,,,,0#,,771132# United Kingdom Toll-free

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Meeting ID: 995 6911 8154

Passcode: 771132

## Membership

Cllr F W Letch

Cllr G Barnell

Clr W Burke

Cllr L J Cruwys

Cllr Mrs C P Daw

Cllr J M Downes

Clr R L Stanley

Cllr B G J Warren

Cllr E J Berry

Cllr Mrs S Griggs

Cllr S J Penny

Cllr A Wilce

# AGENDA

*Members are reminded of the need to make declarations of interest prior to any discussion which may take place*

- 1      **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**  
To receive any apologies for absence and notices of appointment of substitute Members (if any).
- 2      **REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL** *(Pages 5 - 10)*  
Members to note the Remote Meetings Protocol
- 3      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**  
Councillors are reminded of the requirement to declare any interest, including the type of interest, and reason for that interest, either at this stage of the meeting or as soon as they become aware of that interest.
- 4      **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**  
To receive any questions relating to items on the Agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.  
  
Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for this item.
- 5      **MEMBER FORUM**  
An opportunity for non-Cabinet Members to raise issues.
- 6      **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** *(Pages 11 - 18)*  
Members to consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.  
  
The Committee is reminded that only those members of the Committee present at the previous meeting should vote and, in doing so, should be influenced only by seeking to ensure that the minutes are an accurate record.
- 7      **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET**  
To consider any decisions made by the Cabinet at its last meeting that have been called-in.
- 8      **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
To receive any announcements that the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee may wish to make.
- 9      **CABINET MEMBER FOR WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES** *(Pages 19 - 30)*  
To receive a report from the Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services on services within her portfolio.
- 10     **DRAFT BUDGET** *(Pages 31 - 66)*

To consider the initial draft 2021/22 Budget and options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget.

11 **ANNUAL REPORT OF COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS** *(Pages 67 - 80)*

Members to review the annual report of Compliments, Comments and Complaints previously presented to the Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020

12 **3 RIVERS DEVELOPMENT LTD BUSINESS PLAN**

Cllr G Barnell has requested that Members of the Scrutiny Committee discuss the 3 Rivers Development Ltd Business Plan which has not yet been produced but is due to be presented to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> February.

13 **SCRUTINY OFFICER UPDATE**

The Scrutiny Officer to provide an update on current work priorities

14 **FORWARD PLAN** *(Pages 81 - 92)*

Members are asked to consider any items within the Forward Plan that they may wish to bring forward for discussion at the next meeting.

15 **IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Members are asked to note that the following items are already identified in the work programme for the next meeting:

- Establishment Annual Update
- Menopause Working Group recommendations
- Performance and Risk
- Whistleblowing 6 Month update
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers

Note: - this item is limited to 10 minutes. There should be no discussion on items raised.

**Stephen Walford**  
Chief Executive  
Friday, 8 January 2021

**Covid-19 and meetings**

The Council will be holding some meetings in the next few weeks, but these will not be in person at Phoenix House until the Covid-19 crisis eases. Instead, the meetings will be held remotely via Zoom and you will be able to join these meetings via the internet. Please see the instructions on each agenda and read the Protocol on Remote Meetings before you join.

If you want to ask a question or speak, email your full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) by **no later than 4pm on the day before the**

**meeting.** This will ensure that your name is on the list to speak and will help us ensure that you are not missed – as you can imagine, it is easier to see and manage public speaking when everyone is physically present in the same room. Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible

If you would like a copy of the Agenda in another format (for example in large print) please contact Carole Oliphant on:

E-Mail: [coliphant@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:coliphant@middevon.gov.uk)

## **Mid Devon District Council - Remote Meetings Protocol**

### **1. Introduction**

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations permit remote attendance in Local Authority meetings.

Remote attendance is permitted as long as certain conditions are satisfied. These include that the Member is able to hear and be heard by the other Members in attendance. Also, being able to hear and be heard by any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting (in line with the public participation scheme). A visual solution is preferred, but audio is sufficient.

This also relates to members of the public attending the meeting also being heard. The regulations are clear that a meeting is not limited to those present in the same place, but includes electronic, digital or virtual locations (internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers).

### **2. Zoom**

Zoom is the system the Council will be using for the time-being to host remote / virtual meetings. It has functionality for audio, video, and screen sharing and you do not need to be a member of the Council or have a Zoom account to join a Zoom meeting.

### **3. Access to documents**

Member Services will publish the agenda and reports for committee meetings on the Council's website in line with usual practice. Paper copies of agendas will only be made available to those who have previously requested this and also the Chair of a virtual meeting.

If any other Member wishes to have a paper copy, they must notify the Member Services before the agenda is published, so they can arrange to post directly – it may take longer to organise printing, so as much notice as possible is appreciated. Printed copies will not be available for inspection at the Council's offices and this requirement was removed by the Regulations.

### **4. Setting up the Meeting**

This will be done by Member Services. They will send a meeting request via Outlook which will appear in Members' Outlook calendar. Members will receive a URL link to click on to join the meeting.

### **5. Public Access**

Members of the public will be able to use a weblink and standard internet browser. This will be displayed on the front of the agenda.

## 6. Joining the Meeting

Councillors must join the meeting early (i.e. at least five minutes before the scheduled start time) in order to avoid disrupting or delaying the meeting. Councillors should remember that they may be visible and heard by others, including the public, during this time.

## 7. Starting the Meeting

At the start of the meeting, the Member Services Officer will check all required attendees are present (viewing the participant list) and that there is a quorum. If there is no quorum, the meeting will be adjourned. This applies if, during the meeting, it becomes inquorate for whatever reason.

The Chair will remind all Members, Officers and the Public that **all microphones will be automatically muted**, unless and until they are speaking. This prevents background noise, coughing etc. which is intrusive and disruptive during the meeting. The Hosting Officer will enforce this and will be able to turn off participant mics when they are not in use. Members would then need to turn their microphones back on when they wish to speak.

## 8. Public Participation

Participation by members of the public will continue in line with the Council's current arrangements as far as is practicable. However, to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly and that no member of the public is missed, all those who wish to speak must register **by 4pm on the day before the meeting**. They should email their full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk). If they wish to circulate their question in advance, that would be helpful.

At public question time, the Chair will invite the public by name to speak at the appropriate time. At that point, all public microphones will be enabled. This means that, to avoid private conversations being overheard, no member of the public should speak until it is their turn and they should then refrain from speaking until the end of public question time, when all microphones will be muted again. In the normal way, the public should state their full name, the agenda item they wish to speak to **before** they proceed with their question.

Unless they have registered, a member of the public will not be called to speak.

If a member of the public wishes to ask a question but cannot attend the meeting for whatever reason, there is nothing to prevent them from emailing members of the Committee with their question, views or concern in advance. However, if they do so, it would be helpful if a copy could be sent to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) as well.

## 9. Declaration of Interests

Councillors should declare their interests in the usual way. A councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest is required to leave the room. For remote meetings, this means that they will be moved to a break-out room for the duration

of this item and will only be invited back into the meeting when discussion on the relevant item has finished.

## **10. The Meeting and Debate**

The Council will not be using the Chat function.

The Chair will call each member of the Committee to speak - the Chair can choose to do this either by calling (i) each member in turn and continuing in this way until no member has anything more to add, or (ii) only those members who indicate a wish to speak using the 'raise hand' function within Zoom. This choice will be left entirely to the Chair's discretion depending on how they wish to manage the meeting and how comfortable they are using the one or the other approach.

Members are discouraged from physically raising their hand in the video to indicate a wish to speak – it can be distracting and easily missed/misinterpreted. No decision or outcome will be invalidated by a failure of the Chair to call a member to speak – the remote management of meetings is intensive and it is reasonable to expect that some requests will be inadvertently missed from time to time.

When referring to reports or making specific comments, Councillors should refer to the report and page number, so that all Members of the Committee have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.

## **11. Voting**

On a recommendation or motion being put to the vote, the Chair will go round the virtual room and ask each member entitled to vote to say whether they are for or against or whether they abstain. The Member Services Officer will announce the numerical result of the vote.

## **12. Meeting Etiquette Reminder**

- Mute your microphone – you will still be able to hear what is being said.
- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Speak clearly and please state your name each time you speak
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

## **13. Part 2 Reports and Debate**

There are times when council meetings are not open to the public, when confidential, or "exempt" issues – as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – are under consideration. It is important to ensure that there are no members of the public at remote locations able to hear or see the proceedings during such meetings.

Any Councillor in remote attendance must ensure that there is no other person present – a failure to do so could be in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Member Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, remove them to a break-out room for the duration of that item. They can then be invited back in when the business returns to Part 1.

Please turn off smart speakers such as Amazon Echo (Alexa), Google Home or smart music devices. These could inadvertently record phone or video conversations, which would not be appropriate during the consideration of confidential items.

#### **14. Interpretation of standing orders**

Where the Chair is required to interpret the Council's Constitution and procedural rules in light of the requirements of remote participation, they may take advice from the Member Services Officer or Monitoring Officer prior to making a ruling. However, the Chair's decision shall be final.

#### **15. Disorderly Conduct by Members**

If a Member behaves in the manner as outlined in the Constitution (persistently ignoring or disobeying the ruling of the Chair or behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs the business of the meeting), any other Member may move 'That the member named be not further heard' which, if seconded, must be put to the vote without discussion.

If the same behaviour persists and a Motion is approved 'that the member named do leave the meeting', then they will be removed as a participant by the Member Services Officer.

#### **16. Disturbance from Members of the Public**

If any member of the public interrupts a meeting the Chair will warn them accordingly. If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chair will ask the Member Services Officer to remove them as a participant from the meeting.

#### **17. After the meeting**

Please ensure you leave the meeting promptly by clicking on the red phone button to hang up.

#### **18. Technical issues – meeting management**

If the Chair, the Hosting Officer or the Member Services Officer identifies a problem with the systems from the Council's side, the Chair should either declare a recess while the fault is addressed or, if the fault is minor (e.g. unable to bring up a presentation), it may be appropriate to move onto the next item of business in order to progress through the agenda. If it is not possible to address the fault and the meeting becomes inquorate through this fault, the meeting will be adjourned until such time as it can be reconvened.



If the meeting was due to determine an urgent matter or one which is time-limited and it has not been possible to continue because of technical difficulties, the Chief Executive, Leader and relevant Cabinet Member, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, shall explore such other means of taking the decision as may be permitted by the Council's constitution.

For members of the public and press who experience problems during the course of a meeting e.g. through internet connectivity or otherwise, the meeting will not be suspended or adjourned.

## **19. Technical issues – Individual Responsibility (Members and Officers)**

Many members and officers live in places where broadband speeds are poor, but technical issues can arise at any time for a number of reasons. The following guidelines, if followed, should help reduce disruption. Separate guidance will be issued on how to manage connectivity – this paragraph focusses on the procedural steps. Joining early will help identify problems – see paragraph 6.

- Join public Zoom meetings by telephone if there is a problem with the internet. Before all meetings, note down or take a photograph of the front page of the agenda which has the necessary telephone numbers. Annex 1 to this protocol contains a brief step-by-step guide to what to expect
- Consider an alternative location from which to join the meeting, but staying safe and keeping confidential information secure. For officers, this may mean considering whether to come into the office, subject to this being safe and practicable (childcare etc.)
- If hosting a meeting via Zoom (briefings etc.), consider creating an additional host when setting up the meeting. The additional host can step in if the main host has problems – remember that without a host, the meeting cannot close and any information on the screens will remain on view
- Have to hand the telephone number of another member or officer expected in the meeting – and contact them if necessary to explain the problem in connecting
- Officers should have an 'understudy' or deputy briefed and on standby to attend and present as needed (and their telephone numbers to hand)
- For informal meetings and as a last resort, members and officers may be able to call another member or officer in the meeting who can put the 'phone on loudspeaker for all to hear – not ideal, but it ensures some degree of participation and continuity
- Member Services will hold a list of contact details for all senior officers

## Phone only access to zoom meetings

(Before you start **make sure you know the Meeting ID and the Meeting Password**) – Both of these are available on the agenda for the meeting

**Call the toll free number** either on the meeting agenda or on the Outlook appointment (this will start with 0800 --- ----)

(Ensure your phone is on 'speaker' if you can)

A message will sound saying *"Welcome to Zoom, enter your meeting ID followed by the hash button"*

- **Enter Meeting ID followed by #**

Wait for next message which will say *"If you are a participant, please press hash to continue"*

- **Press #**

Wait for next message which will say *"Enter Meeting Password followed by hash"*

- **Enter 6 digit Meeting Password followed by #**

Wait for the following two messages:

*"You are currently being held in a waiting room, the Host will release you from 'hold' in a minute"*

**Wait.....**

*"You have now entered the meeting"*

### Important notes for participating in meetings

Press **\*6** to toggle between **'mute'** and **'unmute'** (you should always ensure you are muted until you are called upon to speak)

If you wish to speak you can **'raise your hand'** by pressing **\*9**. Wait for the Chairman to call you to speak. The Host will lower your hand after you have spoken. Make sure you mute yourself afterwards.

## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 14 December 2020 at 2.15 pm

### **Present**

#### **Councillors**

F W Letch (Chairman)  
G Barnell, W Burke, L J Cruwys,  
Mrs C P Daw, Mrs S Griggs, S J Penny,  
B G J Warren, A Wilce, Mrs F J Colthorpe,  
C J Eginton and B Holdman

### **Apologies**

#### **Councillor(s)**

E J Berry, J M Downes and R L Stanley

### **Also Present**

#### **Councillor(s)**

R J Chesterton, R M Deed, R J Dolley, R Evans,  
D J Knowles, B A Moore and Mrs N Woollatt

### **Also Present**

#### **Officer(s):**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Jenny Clifford (Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Jill May (Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation), Maria De Leburne (Legal Services Team Leader), Andrew Busby (Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets), Lisa Lewis (Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), Adrian Welsh (Group Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery), Catherine Yandle (Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security), Sally Gabriel (Member Services Manager), Tristan Peat (Forward Planning Team Leader), Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer) and Carole Oliphant (Member Services Officer)

## **118 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0.04.41)**

Apologies were received from Cllrs E J Berry, J M Downes and R L Stanley who were substituted by Cllrs C J Eginton, B Holdman and Mrs F J Colthorpe respectively.

## **119 REMOTE MEETING PROTOCOL (0.05.17)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the \*remote meetings protocol.

Note: \*protocol previously circulated and attached the minutes

## **120 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0.05.27)**

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interest when appropriate.

## 121 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0.05.41)**

The Chairman read out a question submitted by a local resident, Nick Quinn:

### **Concerning Agenda Item 7: Decisions of the Cabinet**

I agree with both these Cabinet decisions being called-in for scrutiny.

Though the Monitoring Officer is very much open on the first decision, I also question the basis of the first decision to fix the Post Hill development at 70 Affordable properties of a particular bed/size mix.

There is no evidence in the open report to justify why this particular option was recommended, or should have been accepted. A failure on Openness. The proportions of the agreed property mix do not reflect the proportions of the Registered Housing Applicants which are listed in the report.

Other property mixes, which would be more in proportion to the registered need, and generate more rental income, should have been considered. This decision also fails the Proportionality and Options tests.

I also question the second decision, where the meaning is plainly stated: “the delivery of the housing will be through the new company”.

The Cabinet tried to qualify that statement, by saying that the new company should meet certain conditions and “any other material factors”. But, by not being specific on these factors, this decision also fails the Openness test. The Monitoring Officer states “the Cabinet must, in any decision, consider all relevant and material factors at the time of the decision” – not later!

It is extremely Relevant and Material that, at the time of the decision, the Teckal Company does not exist - and no advice on creating one had been received by Cabinet.

Councils award their Teckal Companies business on a contract basis. By pre-awarding this development contract to a Company, which they hope to create, I believe Cabinet may be in breach of Council Financial Regulations.

My question is:

Please will Scrutiny Committee pass both these decisions back to Cabinet for further consideration?

The Chairman advised that the question would be addressed at item 7 on the agenda.

## 122 **MEMBER FORUM (0.08.37)**

There were no issues raised under this item.

## 123 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0.08.55)

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record

## 124 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (0.09.54)

The Chairman informed the Committee that two decisions made by the Cabinet at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 (with regard Land at Post Hill) had been \*called in for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The decision had been called in by Cllrs Barnell, Holdman, Clist and White.

To consider:

### ***Lack of consideration of alternative options;***

- 1. The building of more Social Rented Homes is a key priority of the Corporate Plan recently agreed by Full Council. The development of the Post Hill site presents an important opportunity to build a significant number both of Affordable Rented and of Social Rented Homes in Tiverton and thereby address the local gap in affordability that impacts most on families with a low income .*
- 2. The options presented to and considered by Cabinet included three options:-*
  - a. Option 2-For 50 Social and 20 Affordable Homes*
  - b. Option 3- For 50 Social, 15 Affordable Homes and 5 Self Build Homes*
  - c. Option 4- 70 Affordable Homes*
- 3. The report to cabinet recommended Option 4 on the basis of budgetary considerations. External and expert financial assessments were appended to the report to explain these issues.*
- 4. Cabinet were asked only to consider options that were posed at opposite ends of a continuum of possible mixes of tenure. It should also have considered other options that may well have presented very different assessment and comparisons of affordability.*
- 5. There were other options that were not presented that would have allowed Cabinet to consider and compare the financial implications of different mixes or proportions of Affordable rented and Social rented housing.*
- 6. Such options might have included, say, a 35/35 split between affordable rented and social rented homes and also a 20/50 split. Either option would still yield a significant addition on the Council's stock of Social Rented Housing.*
- 7. Finally the report to Cabinet presented only a single set of proposals on the numbers of housing units of a particular size. This proposal did not relate to the analysis of need for particular size of dwelling as presented in the report. No other options were considered even though different options would have a significant impact on costs and forecast returns.*
- 8. We are, therefore asking that Cabinet consider other options for the mix of Social Rented and Affordable Rented Homes and also for the mix of the size of units. This will allow Cabinet to carry out more reasonable analysis and comparisons of both cost and returns.***

### ***Pre-determination of a future decision of Full Council***

*1) A decision to set up a TECKAL compliant company to deliver some or all of the Council's Housing services is a major step that has yet to be made and that will require a decision of Full Council. This decision will need to be supported by a full business case setting out elements of the Councils services that are to be managed and delivered by the SPV and include an assessment of the risks and opportunities involved.*

*2) The range of services that might be transferred to the proposed TECKAL company might include the full range of the Councils Housing services. On the other hand it might be limited to include only the remit to develop new affordable and social rented housing.*

*3) The Cabinet decision that the delivery of 70 units of affordable rented housing will be through any new TECKAL company clearly pre-empts a future decision of Full Council on the scope of the MDDC services and activities to be transferred to such a Company.*

***4) This decision is unnecessary and unconstitutional. Cabinet could have decided instead to recommend that the delivery of the Post Hill homes be through a future TECKAL company.***

The Lead Member for the call in explained to the Committee that his belief was the options considered by the Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> December were not based on evidence of need and that the whole Post Hill site being allocated for affordable housing was a failure of evidence. He explained that his evidence was based on studies of affordable housing and was based on household income and gave a split on affordable social housing. He stated that the Council was failing to keep pace with right to buy and that it had been haemorrhaging social housing over a 9 year period. He stated that he felt that the infill sites available were not sufficient.

Another Member, who had also signed the Call in, stated that his concerns were that there was not enough social housing in Devon and that there were too many second home owners. He felt that the Council was not keeping up with social housing needs.

In response to a question asked to the Lead Member for the call in about his previous involvement in deciding the housing mix, he explained that he had been on a previous working group looking at the options. He explained that at that time he was in favour of social housing dependant on the need and affordability.

The Lead member for the call in explained that he felt the Cabinet were very keen to make decisions on a future company which did not yet exist and therefore they had pre-determined the outcome. He felt that this was unconstitutional.

Another Member, who had also signed the Call in, stated that the Cabinet had made an assumption that everything would go to plan and that a Teckal company was going to be formed.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services, addressing the concerns raised stated that the design options for the Post Hill site were not binding and were subject to a final design which would explore a mix of housing to be delivered. He stated that a feasibility study and options would be required before a final decision was made. He explained that Officers preparing the report on options, received by the Cabinet, had taken advice from Members, including the previous Cabinets working group, with regard to options presented.

The Group Manager for Property Services and Commercial Assets explained to the Committee that there had been a Working Group set up by the previous Cabinet to considered the housing mix for the Post Hill Development and that it had been decided by that group not to present too many options to Cabinet. It was also agreed to complete further analysis on two Options (2&3) including financial costings that have been provided in supporting Part 2 documentation and based on the housing mix agreed by the previous Working Group, with one additional Option (4)

Consideration was given to:

- The views of the Members who had called in the decision to the Scrutiny Committee
- The advice of the Monitoring Officer
- The views of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services
- The views of the Member of the Public who had submitted questions

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** that the Cabinet: reconsiders its decision on the delivery of Post Hill homes by a possible Teckal Company and that it instead substitutes it for a recommendation to Full Council.

(Proposed by Cllr G Barnell and seconded by Cllr L Cruwys)

6 votes for, 6 votes against – Chairman's casting vote

**Reason for the Decision: To allow for the creation of a Teckal Company to be a decision considered by full council**

Notes:

- i.) A proposal requesting the Cabinet to consider other options for the mix of social rented and affordable rented homes and also for the mix of the size of units, this will allow Cabinet to carry out more reasonable analysis of the comparisons of both cost and returns **was not supported**.
- ii.) \*Report previously circulated, copy attached to minutes

## 125 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (1.08.55)**

The Chairman wished all Members and Officers Seasons Greetings and thanked them for civilised debates.

## 126 **CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION (01.10.28)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a \*report of the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlining the key area's within his portfolio.

He explained that the report was long but this was necessary due to the variety of work that his portfolio covered.

Committee Members asked a variety of questions and gave consideration to:

- The increase in unemployment claims from 820 to 2055 between March and September 2020



- Members were hugely impressed with the department's ability to get on top of new priorities due to the pandemic
- The 1700 business grants that had been issued totalling in excess of £20m
- The business case for the Hydro Mills project was underway
- Advice from the Environment Agency had informed the Tiverton hydro proposal
- The purpose of the Hydro Mills project
- The Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan was due to be brought to Cabinet in March after further consultations with the Town Council, businesses and Ward Members
- What happened to the budget for a Town Centre Manager (the Deputy Chief Executive S151 would provide an update to Members)
- The Cullompton relief road was due to be completed within the next 2-3 years
- A number of large developments which had been granted permission that had not yet been started would be investigated by the Development Delivery Advisory Group (DDAG) to try to understand the reasons for delay
- The introduction of the Self Build Policy should increase interest in the scheme
- The Cabinet Member had investigated the lack of admin support for the Planning Enforcement team and was looking to review the processes used. Members would need to decide if they wanted to allocate a budget for Planning Enforcement admin support during the budget setting process
- The Council would publish its S106 records of funds received and spent for 2019/2020 by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020
- The planning performance targets were set by Government and were reported to the Planning Committee on a quarterly basis

Notes:

- i.) Cllr W Burke left the meeting at 16.01pm
- ii.) Cllr G Barnell left the meeting at 16.09pm
- iii.) \*report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

## **127 UPDATE IN THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS (02.23.14)**

The Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement provided Members with a verbal update on the status of the recommendations made by the Customer Experience Working Group as follows:

1. Business Case for CRM – Officers had engaged with the market and a prior interest notification had been issued. This had resulted in a number of demonstrations being received on the various offerings available. Officers, Cabinet Members and the Chairman of the Working Group had been involved in scrutinising these and deciding what kinds of activities were required in the final product. A lot of work was going into the business case as a new CRM system would be a significant investment for the Council
2. Systems work to full capacity – This was on hold until a decision had been taken with regard to a new CRM



3. Customers at the heart of the Council – Officers were planning some workshops in the New Year which would be open to Members to discuss their experience and explore their requirements. Officers would engage with the public via a small group of tenants, residents and businesses
4. Customer Survey – This was in progress but had been limited as there were restrictions on face to face contact. Online and telephone surveys were being carried out and this would run until the end of December 2020
5. Re-establishing a dedicated Planning department phone service – there had been a reduction in staff and this would be re-addressed after the current ongoing recruitment campaign had been completed
6. Phone waiting times – this had improved by 15% but was still below target. The main issues were that some experienced call centre staff had been redeployed to assist other departments cope with an increase in duties due to the pandemic

The Chairman of the Working Group thanked the Officer and explained that what she had seen so far had been promising.

The Officer advised that a further update would be provided in 6 months time.

## 128 **PERFORMANCE AND RISK (02.40.04)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the \*Performance and Risk report presented by the Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security.

She outlined the contents of the report and explained that there was an additional appendix of measures against the new corporate plan which had been agreed by Cabinet.

In answer to a question the Officer explained that the percentage of complaints resolved would be adjusted upwards once the complaints had been closed.

The Committee then discussed issues with regard to anti social behaviour in the Tiverton Multi Storey Car Park and the Officer explained that although the risk was monitored it wasn't reported to Members unless the risk was scored 10 or above.

Note: \*Performance and Risk report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

## 129 **FORWARD PLAN (02.57.57)**

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the \*Forward Plan.

Note: \*Forward Plan previously circulated and attached to the minutes.

## 130 **SCRUTINY OFFICER UPDATE (02.58.26)**

The Member Services Manager on behalf of the Scrutiny Officer provided the following update:

- The Committee held a Work Programme planning workshop on 16 November. A note of the session has been sent to Members of the Committee. Members

had a good discussion and agreed that, alongside the current Working Group's we have on Menopause and Planning Enforcement, the Committee will look into further work around Anaerobic Digesters and rural broadband; and that a regular update on Customer Service will be brought to the Committee.

- An informal meeting of the Planning Enforcement Working Group was held two weeks ago to discuss Terms of Reference. The Group will meet formally for the first time in January.
- The Menopause Working Group will bring its final report to the February Scrutiny Committee.

### **131 UPDATE ON SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS (02.59.28)**

The Member Services Manager on behalf of the Scrutiny Officer provided the following update:

- At the Work Programme planning session Members requested regular updates on recommendations that the Committee has made. The Committee has heard today the update on the Customer Experience Working Group Recommendations. The Committee will receive a further on this work in another six months' time.
- The other recommendation made by this Committee was in July, it said: 'It was RECOMMENDED that the Housing Infrastructure Funding risks were investigated by the Audit Committee'.
- At the November meeting of the Audit Committee this was one of the risks that the Committee discussed, in particular around infrastructure delivery and why the mitigating actions have remained the same for some time. This is now being reviewed by Officers.

### **132 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (03.00.29)**

No additional items were identified.

(The meeting ended at 5.16 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Cabinet Member for Support Services and the Working Environment Annual Report to Scrutiny January 2020**

### **Human Resources**

#### **Establishment Management and Workforce Planning**

We have continued to make good progress around reporting key aspects of Establishment Performance and how these relate to both workforce planning and budget performance. For example we have been able to illustrate how the relationship between falling sickness absence (down from 8.24 days in 18/19 to be at between an estimated 6.5 and 6.75 days per FTE employee in 20/21) relates to a better grip on agency spend and expenditure (down from £628, 636.06 in 18/19 to a predicted £560, 000 spend in 20/21. This would be a lot lower had it not been for COVID-19 and the immediate demand this has meant for agency staff from time to time). Turnover is still fairly high in being predicted to come in at between 16 and 18% but this is covered in the next section.

#### **Pre-empting and troubleshooting risk**

The Council has had some considerable challenges with staff conduct issues this year and employees in some areas of the Council not understanding the implications of their own actions and how these can both compromise their own employment contract as well as the activity of the Council. This had led to some employees facing disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, which in turn has impacted upon our turnover rate.

In response to these issues the Council has published a new Conduct policy agreed with the Union which has raised awareness of what constitutes unacceptable behaviour as well as the importance of the Nolan principles which underpin the high standard of conduct expected from all local government employees.

#### **Employee Engagement and Wellbeing**

The all staff consultative group 'Impact' has gone from strength to strength, heavily shaping the organisations work around COVID-19 and both the site plans and wider workforce support that has been provided to employees. They have also been heavily involved with the design and implementation of the Evolve project which looks to strengthen staff development and engagement (see following learning and development section).

The Council has promoted a range of initiatives and practice around mental health and wellbeing in the workplace through our Health and Safety officer Chris Hodgson. This has included raising awareness of our in house employee assistance programme which offers telephone counselling services and wider support to employees. We are also planning to use

an employee wellbeing index to assess the mental health provision and support on offer to our workforce during the 21/22 financial year.

## **Payroll**

A 2.75% pay rise was implemented, meaning our lowest pay rate is now £9.25 per hour.

As a result of Covid-19, we have devised a system for the reporting of employees that have been furloughed, and a process for calculating the amounts that we have claimed from HMRC. We have also used the data that we have received to provide daily and weekly workforce reports regarding the deployment of our employees (see below section on COVID-19).

## **Learning and Development**

The Evolve project (a series of initiatives around supporting our workforce and allowing training needs and skill development to be co-ordinated effectively) has made formally launched with promotional videos and literature allowing staff to access the different measures that we are introducing.

This has focused initially on the roll out of online Appraisal and PDR, the use of a new competency framework and the carrying out of a skills analysis exercise to show where the strengths and development areas of the workforce are. This will then further inform future leadership development and talent management programmes.

The Corporate Training Catalogue using training provider CRISP was delivered virtually throughout 2020 with a focus on employee wellbeing. The Conflict Training Company were used to deliver sessions to 60 Building Maintenance and Housing Staff.

The options of free training resources including Open Learn, E Learning College, Learn Devon together with the free Mentoring programme delivered by South Devon College and the Developing Business Flexibility programme delivered by Petroc were taken up by employees.

The Levy has continued to be used fully, (no expired funds returning to the government) with 6 Apprenticeship sign ups and 7 on plan to complete their programmes this financial year.

## **COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a range of extra activity being undertaken to ensure vital services are still delivered to our community and HR has been at the centre of helping and advising the organisation on how its resources are deployed.

This has included collecting and distributing daily and weekly workforce data to show how our employees were being deployed including WFH, working at site and Furlough (as well as

levels of sickness and annual leave). The Payroll team have processed monthly furlough requests to ensure that we have been reimbursed by the government where decisions have been taken to furlough staff.

We have also ensured that cases where staff have had to self-isolate have been tracked and we have also set up a testing application service so the Council can refer its own employees to be tested expediently. To date we have had no positive COVID-19 test results in our workforce during the pandemic.

Finally we have worked hand in hand with our Property Services team to ensure that our sites and office space is both safe, legally compliant but also COVID-19 friendly. Wider actions have included carrying out staff surveys to collate feedback around WFH and ensuring communication and wellbeing advice has been well distributed and advertised including our online employee assistance programme.

### **Health & Safety**

This report covers the period from 4 May to 8 December 2020.

During this period the focus has been on COVID and the associated risk assessments to ensure Mid Devon District Council is operating COVID secure across its services.

### **Accidents/Incidents**

There have been 24 employee accidents for the reporting period, two of which have been under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 2013 (RIDDOR). There have been 8 accidents involving members of the public, one of which was reported under RIDDOR. There have been 22 incidents of verbal abuse or threatening behaviour towards council officers.

One incident of note, an activation of the fire alarm in the waste transfer station at Carlu close - following an investigation this was identified as a false alarm, no fire. However, it highlighted a potential issue with the fire detectors, instigating a manufacturer's review of those detectors. All detectors were found to be free of defects.

### **Potential Items of Interest**

- The following policies have been reviewed during this period: Temporary home working policy \_ COVID- implemented (Display Screen Equipment(DSE) assessments of the majority of temporary home workers completed); Home working Policy, out for review; First Aid Policy, implemented; Corporate Health and Safety Policy, out for review.
- Regular visits to all front line services (Street scene, Carlu Close; Building services, Old Road; Leisure Services, Exe Valley, Culm Valley, Lords Meadow; Phoenix House; and the Pannier Market. This is with an acknowledgement that, with an ongoing Pandemic, 'normal' health and safety audits of service areas is not appropriate.
- Fire and water risk assessments are being undertaken by outside contractors, all assessments will be completed by 17 December.

- An agreed approach for the provision of First Aid Training and the training of Accident Investigation and manual handling has been agreed with learning and development.
- The health and safety officer has undertaken training in Emergency Planning, in order to be able to support the Corporate Management Team.

### **Covid**

Covid is the ongoing priority with respect to safety, as of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December Devon moved to tier 2. Interestingly the restrictions under this higher tier are greater than under the pre lockdown tier 2 and a consistent emphasis across all 3 tiers is everyone who can work from home should do so. The change of tier has triggered a further review of COVID risk assessments across the Council, the reviews are ongoing.

November coincided with a second national lock down, with a renewed emphasis on working from home. In light of this we have endeavoured to put something in the Link each week on wellbeing. Acknowledging the fact that a significant majority of our colleagues cannot work from home and are still working delivering essential services, posters around the theme of wellbeing are being put together and posted at sites, Carlu Close, Old Road and Leisure.

### **Electoral Services**

#### **Electoral Registration 2020-21**

- Met 100% of Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Electoral Registration
- Ran annual canvass of electors under Covid conditions (no door to door visits) and under new regulations, whereby a data match with the Department of Work and Pensions was run prior to the canvass. Any properties where all electors matched were sent a form which they only needed to respond to where there were changes to be made.
- The team worked from home as far as they were able to, but needed to work in the office for scanning and printing.
- Will end the year on budget.

#### **Elections 2020-21**

- Cancelled the 2020 Police and Crime Commissioner polls.
- Planning for May 2021 elections, including all the postponed polls from 2020, which will be run under Covid safe conditions. These include:
  1. Police and Crime Commissioner Election
  2. Cullompton Neighbourhood Planning Referendum
  3. Two District by-elections (Taw and Westex wards)
  4. A number of town and parish elections (number growing all the time)
- The district elections will be funded by MDDC. All other elections will be recharged to the relevant authority. The Cabinet Office is yet to confirm whether there will be national funding for election PPE.

### **Member Services**

The Member Services Team continues to provide support, advice and assistance to elected Members and Council Officers both informally and through the formal decision-making structure of the Council and maintaining and improving the quality of decision making throughout the Council.

This year Carole Oliphant, Member Services Officer, completed the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) Certificate in Democratic Services Knowledge (Level 4 – qualification) and was presented with her certificate at an online awards ceremony in November 2020. The certificate is seen as good grounding for anyone working in Democratic Services and will complement Carole’s existing knowledge and skills.

The Member Services Manager, Sally Gabriel, has been working with ADSO for a number of years, supporting and assessing learners working towards the Certificate in Democratic Services Knowledge, she will now step up by mentoring, supporting and assessing learners who are studying for their Diploma in Local Democracy (Level 6 – qualification)

**Meetings support** – The team supports services to the Council, Cabinet, Committees, Policy Development Groups and working groups etc. Providing advice on meeting procedures and legislation. Ongoing work continues on a day to day basis in this regard with the monitoring of decisions to be made via the Forward Plan, the publication of agendas for all meetings (formal and informal) and the preparation of minutes and actions from these minutes.

Throughout the pandemic, the team have been working from home and have daily meetings via Skype to discuss work programmes and for well-being purposes. The team has continued to support Members and meetings through the Zoom platform. 63 public meetings have been hosted since April 2020 following the publication of the legislation which allowed for remote meetings to take place, along with 61 briefings for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Cabinet, Committees and PDG’s. The remote meetings have required additional officer time, as all public meetings have required a clerk and a host to be present. The team has also supported 21 working/advisory group meetings within this period.

It is worth mentioning here, how well Members have coped with the transition to remote meetings. The whole process of remote meetings was a complete culture change for everyone and although some Members required extensive training by the team, attendance at meetings has been excellent; debates and decision-making have taken place and although there have been some broadband issues, the Zoom platform has held up to allow the business of the Council to continue.

**Member Training** – the regular programme of training has not been progressed this year due to the current climate. The shared service (with other Devon authorities) for Member Development has been paused for the current year, due to the pandemic, however one session on Chairing Skills did take place (remotely) with 4 members attending. 5 in-house sessions have also taken place which were well attended.

**Civic – Chairman’s PA** – one member of the team continues in her role as PA to the Chairman. The Chairman has not attended any civic events due to the current pandemic, he has however recorded several video messages for special events and has kept in touch with his civic colleagues. The officer also organised the laying of wreaths and the firing of maroons on Armistice Day as normal procedures for that day were not possible.

**Independent Remuneration Panel** - Provision of support and assistance to the Independent Remuneration Panel on their annual review of Members Allowances. Administration support is provided to the IRP throughout the year.

**Town and Parish Councils** - A member of the team is also provides specific support as the single point of contact for the town and parish councils. She also provides a monthly town and parish newsletter.

**Scrutiny/Policy Research** – The Policy and Research Officer continues to support to the Scrutiny Committee and Policy Development Groups with regard to research, providing information and report writing. Specific work has taken place with the Customer Engagement Working Group, the Menopause Working Group and the Net Zero Advisory Group. A working group looking at Planning Enforcement has also been established in the past few weeks. The officer is also working with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change progressing work following the Climate Change Declaration which has included arranging ‘Climate Conversations’ with local stakeholders and administering the Net Zero Advisory Group.

### **Health Services**

Mid Devon Leisure supports and leads on health initiatives across the district via variety of Referral schemes. These schemes are either funded through the health sector, or subsidised and included in the pay and play activities across the Mid Devon Leisure portfolio. Access to the facilities is also available for 3rd party organisations to deliver health and wellbeing sessions to their own clients.

Following Government instruction to close facilities in March 2020, all activity ceased until the phased reopening as previously updated in August 2020. Following the reintroduction of; fitness (Gym) and group exercise classes, swimming lessons, lane swimming, aquatic clubs and schools, with outdoor clubs and organisations accessing the pitches, participation was increasing steadily as can be seen in table 1 below. The impact of the national restrictions enforced in November again meant the closure of the facilities from 5<sup>th</sup> November to 2<sup>nd</sup> December, which upon reopening with the fullest compliment of facilities and activities in a Covid safe environment, showed healthy participation, albeit restricted and notwithstanding the normal lower levels of participation in December.



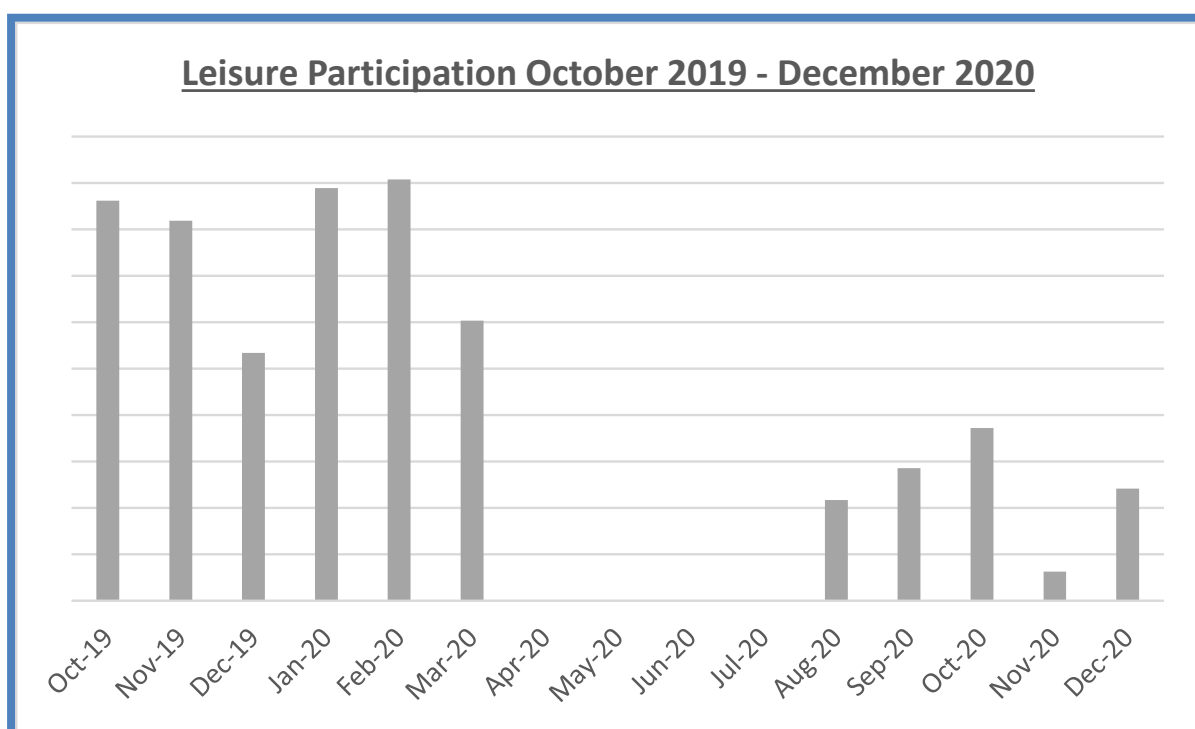


Table 1 – Leisure Participation Oct 19 – Dec 20.

Mid Devon Leisure continues to network with the Devon Leisure Local Authority Partnership for sharing of best practice and progress for reopening of facilities, and the South West Leisure Group hosted by the Local Government Association. Both groups collaborate regarding the plight of the in house leisure provider and outsourced operators.

During the period March 20 to December 20, there were minimal opportunities to safely recommence the health referrals; Cancer Rehabilitation (NHS), Escape Pain (NHS), Strength & Balance Pilot (NHS), Walking Football (Active Devon/Public Health), Cardiac Rehabilitation, GP Referrals or 3rd Party Organisations. This is likely to be the case until social distancing measures are relaxed, following the roll out of the vaccination programme.

Whilst operating in Tier 2, facilities can remain open though the change to tier 3 at the end of December meant that some activities have needed to be discontinued. Should we be placed into Tier 4 this would mean a further closure of the facilities.

Mid Devon District Council and Mid Devon Leisure continue to monitor the local and National position closely.

### **CUSTOMER SERVICES**

This year has been a year unlike any other. Customer Services have had to severely restrict physical access to customer service and transfer customer contact to telephone and online.

The table below illustrates the shift in customer contact during 2020 in comparison to the year before.

Contact Method	Dec 2019 – Nov 2020	Increase/Decrease
Number of visitors to the office for enquiries	5333	-64%
Telephone Payments (including automated)	47698	-21%
Calls to call centre	96381	-10%
Calls to direct lines (not including calls to mobiles)	300345	-11%
Emails Received	Over 1.4 Million	+40%
Digital Payments	98063	+10%
Kiosk Payments	6352	-60%
Online- forms submitted	44101	+6.5%

This has been difficult for the staff, but they have risen to the challenge. Traditional face-to-face (F2F) transactions had to decrease and staff were concerned for the welfare of our customers. However, both staff and customers have shown resilience. Those that still need direct contact have been able to visit during vastly restricted hours, but they have been able to do so safely for them and our staff.

Interestingly customer contacts have decreased via telephone too for payments and other issues and we have seen a continued shift to digital transactions. We have also seen a significant increase in emails. The number above relates to a corporate-wide figure and a significant increase will be due to officers now working from home.

Customer Services specifically has seen an increase in email traffic. This is probably one of the most ineffective ways to transact with the council as failure to provide enough information about a request up front results in multiple emails between staff and customers, adding delay in for the customer. During 2021 as we look to improve services via a potential new CRM and other customer focussed projects, it important that we ensure our digital provision moves our customers away from email. Not everyone likes filling out online forms, but to maximise any investment we make in staff training or systems we will need to move our customers to this method. So we'll be looking to understand barriers to digital.

2020 has been a difficult and an unusual year for everyone due to Covid. From mid-March 2021 we focussed on maintaining as normal a service as we were able and trialling home working in a small way. In late summer we increased the number of staff working from home to ensure that we had resilience and were minimising exposure within the team as we predicted a second wave of the virus which came to pass.

During the first national lockdown, whilst the Customer Services team focussed on business as usual, the Customer Services management team worked with a number of staff from different services to set up the Shielding hub which facilitated the national food delivery service. During that time we helped co-ordinate deliveries, customer requests for food and other help 7 days a week. We sign-posted for hardship and contacted local community groups around the district to confirm what help was available to vulnerable residents. This team was stood back up for the second round of national restrictions and continued to monitor over the Christmas/New Year period.

Customer Service management also provided out of hours duty manager cover with our call monitoring service for emergencies for residents, tenants and property ensuring those most in urgent need had appropriate access to help.

We have carried some vacancies during 2020, although new starters will commence in January 2021. During 2020 we provided a very experienced member of staff to take up the new Customer Welfare Officer post to help the increasing number of customers with hardship and other needs as a result of Covid. We also released resource temporarily during Nov/Dec in order to shore up the Economic Development team with the processing of grants to ensure businesses got the support they were entitled to.

As we move into 2021 we will continue to see the effects of Covid for some months yet. But there have been many positives to come out of this. There has been closer working with other services. Putting customer need before service need and the resource where it is most urgently needed. MDDC has proved that 'it can' and with the customer focussed projects planned for 2021 we hope to build on this new willingness to do things a bit differently.

## **LEGAL SERVICES**

The small Legal Services team provides legal advice and support across the full range of council functions. Where, due to capacity or expertise, some work requests cannot be undertaken in-house, external advice is commissioned. However, that is kept to an absolute minimum. Court advocacy is mostly undertaken by the solicitors – unless it is a particularly complex matter, or when there are no advocates available for the date set by the court. The Legal Services team have also carried out some court hearings via BT Meet me for the first time as a result of the pandemic.

Some high level stats by way of a snapshot of activity are:

- 4 extensions to Closure Orders
- Significant work on the Dog Public Spaces Protection Order
- Anti-Social Behaviour cases, including Injunctions when needed
- Committal Proceedings for breaches of Injunction for threats against council employees
- Advising on numerous Contracts and potential litigation cases
- Licensing & Regulatory matters – attendance and advising at Hearings and also providing ongoing legal advice regarding Covid-19 and ongoing legislative changes

- 11 completed S106 Agreements, numerous ongoing
- Temporary Stop Notices/Enforcement Notices
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Prosecution and advising on other HMO cases
- Successful Health and Safety Prosecution, now appealed
- 7 Housing Disrepair cases
- Several Right to Buy sales completed and ongoing
- Completed one repurchase of Council houses and have two more in progress
- Advising on, drafting, negotiating and completion of numerous new Leases, Renewal Leases and Deed of Variations
- Completed the purchase of land at Post Hill
- General Property legal advice both commercial and housing stock, boundaries, easements ( rights of way, drainage, footpaths), responsibilities for maintenance and ownership

Members of the team have also undertaken the following work, in addition to day to day legal advice on planning, housing, licensing, property, contracts, employment and all other council functions:

- Tree Preservation Orders
- Advising on Assets of Community Value
- Recovering debts such as Council Tax, and applying to court for Charging Orders
- Advice throughout the pandemic on gas safety issues
- Housing possessions and debt recovery
- Dealing with any LGSCO complaints

The team provides advice and support in and to council meetings and considers the legal implications of all reports going to them. Where policies (new and updated) are referred to members, these will also have been through Legal Services before issue.

In May the team welcomed a new Solicitor Deborah Sharpley who although joined us during the initial lockdown has since become an asset to the team. Two team members are also undertaking professional qualification training – to practise as a Chartered Legal Executive and as a Paralegal respectively. Maria de Leburne (Legal Services Team Leader) was shortlisted for ‘Legal Professional of the Year’ at the national annual Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) awards. The award ceremony was postponed from 2 April 2020 to 2 July 2020. Maria de Leburne came second in this category and was ‘Highly Commended’.

Cllr Nikki Woollatt

Cabinet Member for Working Environment and Support Services

January 2021



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## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18 JANUARY 2021

### BUDGET 2021/22 - UPDATE

**Cabinet Member** Cllr Andrew Moore, Cabinet Member for Finance  
**Responsible Officer** Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151)

**Reason for the report:** To review the draft budget and discuss any further changes required in order for the Council to move towards a balanced budget for 2021/22.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To consider the updated budget proposals for 2021/22 included in Appendix 2 and the Capital Programme included in Appendix 4.

**Reason for the recommendation:** The Local Government Finance Act 1992 places a legal requirement on the Council to approve a balanced budget. The first draft of the General Fund budget for 2021/22 indicated a deficit of £3.012m. This latest version proposes measures to reduce this deficit to £490k and considers other measures to achieve the statutorily required neutrality.

**Relationship to the Corporate Plan:** To deliver our Corporate Plan's priorities within existing financial resources.

**Financial Implications:** The current budget for the General Fund shows a deficit of £490k. In addition we are predicting a funding deficit of c£2m on our General Fund in 2022/23. This highlights the need to take steps to plan for further reductions to our ongoing expenditure levels.

**Legal Implications:** None directly arising from this report, although, as above, there is a legal obligation to balance the budget. There are legal implications arising from any future consequential decisions to change service provision, but these would be assessed at the time.

**Risk Assessment:** In order to comply with the requirement to set a balanced budget, management must ensure that the proposed savings are robust and achievable. We must also ensure that the assumptions we have used are realistic and prudent. Failure to set a robust deliverable budget puts the Council at risk of not being able to meet its commitments and casts doubt on its "going concern" and VFM status.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** There are no Equalities Impact implications relating to the content of this report.

**Climate Change Assessment:** The allocation of resources will impact upon the Council's ability to implement/fund new activities linked to climate change.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 On 19 October the first draft of the 2021/22 General Fund budget was presented to Cabinet and is included (without appendices) as Appendix 1 to the current report. It indicated a looming deficit of £3.012m; a position arising significantly due to income losses as service activity has reduced due to the pandemic. Other factors were rising operational costs including an estimated inflation factor; cyclical essential maintenance costs relating to our property assets and reduced utilisation of ear marked reserves (EMRs) (NHB, NNDR smoothing reserve and the property maintenance reserve).
- 1.2 Apart from some small gains in Waste Services income relating to garden waste and the Shared Savings Agreement (SSA) with Devon County, the main area offering mitigation of these losses were Treasury ie interest receivable and interest payable. A capital accounting review also enabled us to recognise a reduced MRP (Minimum Revenue Provision).
- 1.3 It is worth reiterating that the 2020/21 budget, completed as it was around this time last year, does not imagine any of the impacts of Covid 19. In comparing the 2020/21 budget with the (draft) budget for 2021/22 we are comparing a pre-Covid budget with a Covid recovery budget. That is, this budget draft assumes that income streams will continue their current recovery trajectories into next year. Time will tell, how reasonable this proves to be. Covid 19 is nothing if not persistent. Whilst news of a vaccine is heartening, the discovery of new strains and announcement of tighter controls over Christmas advise caution in our expectations. Serious deterioration from the current situation would impact the achievability of this budget.
- 1.4 The “Provisional local government finance settlement: England, 2021 to 2022” has just been published (17 December) giving further funding information for next year. The government have indicated that core spending power will rise by an average of 4.5% on the assumption that Councils raise their council tax by the maximum permitted without a referendum. This includes social care authorities who may raise council tax by up to 5%, and so the benefit to district councils is demonstrably lower. After accounting for inflation and cost pressures arising from Covid 19 the true uplift to us will be marginal.
- 1.5 The Chancellor has, however, recognised that Council services have been and continue to be undeniably critical in the fight against COVID-19 with further funding to manage the budgetary impacts of the pandemic. The Government’s commitment to work with local government on the lasting impact of this crisis is to be welcomed. It will be vital that the Government guarantees the financial challenge facing councils as a result of COVID-19 will be met in full, including funding for cost pressures and full compensation for lost income and local tax losses.

## **2.0 2021/22 General Fund Budget – Revised Position**

- 2.1 The draft budget gap has been fallen from £3.012m in round 1 to £490k – a reduction of £2.52m. How this has been achieved is explained below. The Funding Settlement details have allowed us to reflect any changes arising and present more robust numbers in some important areas.



2.2 This movement is summarised in Table 1 below:

<b>Table 1 – 2021/22 Draft Budget Gap Reduction – Round 2</b>		
<b>Movements</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Amount (£k)</b>
<b>21/22 Budget Shortfall (Cabinet Report 29/10/20)</b>		<b>3,012</b>
Further Net Cost Pressures identified	6	128
Net write back of annual salary increment further to the funding review		(207)
Pay award provision (LA award not set centrally)		50
Vacancy management factor		(150)
Property Maintenance specific projects review (see para 4.4)		(246)
3 weekly waste savings (Oct-Mar)		(75)
Leisure centre dual use recharge		(20)
Revised HRA Recharges		9
Treasury Update	4	(105)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) reduction		(136)
EMR Amendments	6	
NNDR Smoothing Reserve		(450)
EMR Surrender Review		(224)
Property Maintenance Annual Provision Forfeit		(182)
New Homes Bonus	3	124
NNDR - 21/22 deficit	1	400
Council Tax Forecast Adjustment	2	(76)
Income Protection Scheme (Apr-Jun)	1/5	(220)
Collection Fund Protection Scheme	1	(350)
Funding Settlement 17/12/20		
Lower Tier Services Grant		(179)
NHB (increase from £777k to £959k = £182k - see note)	3	(182)
Rural Services Delivery Grant increment		(23)
Covid 19 Non Ring-fenced Grant		(408)
<b>Draft Budget Gap for 2021/22 (Cabinet</b>		<b>490</b>

**Table Notes:**

1	These lines are particularly subject to a financial health warning. They are the best estimates of the s151 officer based on the advice received from central government at the current time. Any adverse movement in these numbers will require support from general fund reserves in order to balance this budget.
2	<p>The total budgeted Council share of Council Tax Net Collectable Debt is included in this budget at £6,114,620. This based on a collection rate of 96%. The increment of £76k in this round of the budget draft represents an increase in the collection rate from 95% to 96%. In non Covid times the collection rate would be expected to be 98%. If a collection rate of 98% were applied to this draft, the Net Collectable Debt would rise by £127,400 to £6,242,020.</p> <p>The Funding Settlement has also confirmed that Councils may increase Council Tax by 1.99% or £5. The benefit arising to MDDC from this increment is £24k. Subject to Council approval, round 1 of the budget already included an increment of £5 (Band D increases to £213.84), so no further amendment is required.</p>

3	The Funding Settlement announced an increase to NHB funding and an extension to the scheme for another year. MDDC will therefore receive an additional £182k in 2021/22. New Homes Bonus has the benefit of being available for revenue or capital expenditure and so on receipt are moved to reserves to be drawn down upon in due course according to requirement.
4	This reflects a reduction in interest payable partly offset by an decrease in interest receivable further to an update of spending plans and recognition of falling interest rates.
5	The Funding Settlement also announced an extension to the Income Protection Scheme (IPS) for 3 months. The 2020/21 year scheme compensates for 75% of calculated losses. Details of the extended scheme will be published in June 2021.
6	"Further Net Cost Pressures Identified" includes net reduction in EMR utilisation of £58k.

### 3.0 Funding Settlement Impacts

- 3.1 It was confirmed that Councils could raise Council Tax by 1.99% or £5 whichever is higher. As the £5 allowance was already included in budget draft round 1, this confirms that treatment. The additional funding accruing to MDDC from this dispensation is £24k.
- 3.2 A new Lower Tier Services Grant has been introduced - £111m of which MDDC share is £179k. This partly in response to the current circumstances and there is no guarantee that it will be ongoing.
- 3.3 New Homes Bonus grant has been revisited with a total allocation in England of £196m. MDDC will receive an additional £182k in 2021/22 ie total £959k. This scheme had previously been scheduled to end in 2023/24. However, the Government has now set out an intention to hold a consultation on the future of the New Homes Bonus, with a view to implementing reform in 2022/23.
- 3.4 The Rural Services Delivery Grant will be £85 million in 2021/22. This is an increase of £4 million compared to 2020/21. The Government is minded to retain the current method of distributing the grant ie the bottom line to MDDC is an additional £23k over round 1 (which was set at par with 2020/21).
- 3.5 Government has released a series of tranches of non-ring fenced Covid 19 grants to allow Councils to counter the impacts of the pandemic. The first was released in March 2020 and the total received to date by MDDC is £1.2m. A further tranche of £1.55 billion has been announced to meet expenditure pressures in 2021/22, distributed using the "COVID-19 Relative Needs Formula." Hence, this Council's share will be £408k.
- 3.6 The Government has proposed a continuation of the Sales, Fees, and Charges compensation scheme for the first three months of 2021/22 and to use a quarter of each council's 2020/21 budgeted income as the baseline from which to assess losses. Using this basis a prudent estimate of £220k receivable has been included in this round.
- 3.7 The Income Compensation Scheme for 2020/21 is now live. The first return has been submitted and £530k received in response. The second return was due on 23 December with £775k under claim. Prudent interpretation of the guidelines which accompany this scheme indicate that MDDC will receive

c£1.6m. However this will not be confirmed until the final reconciliation which was scheduled for May 2021.

- 3.8 The Funding Settlement also shared details of how losses in scope of the guarantee to compensate for 75 per cent compensation of irrecoverable 2020/21 business rates and council tax losses will be measured. Whilst there is no explicit mention of this scheme applying to 2021/22, it is conceivable that support will be forthcoming to alleviate pressures arising here.

#### **4.0 Other Impacts**

- 4.1 Recent confirmation that the public sector pay rise for next year would be limited to a £250 increment for those earning less than £25k gives a strong indication how the Local Authority settlement will be made. As such the 2% provision made in round 1 has been reversed (whilst providing for the £250 uplift where applicable) reducing the gap by £207k. However, in recognition that Local Authority rises are settled independently of the public sector generally, provision is made for a reduced settlement.
- 4.2 A £150k provision is also made to accommodate a vacancy management factor. Indeed, services often hold open vacancies whilst they evaluate their ongoing requirement and of course, the recruitment process has its own lead time. In many ways therefore, this is simply formal recognition of current practice.
- 4.3 In round 1 the net collectable debt for Council Tax was based on a collection rate of 95%. Recent collection performance suggests this is slightly pessimistic. Hence this rate has been raised to 96% resulting in an additional £76k funding to MDDC. NNDR numbers remain subject to revision when the NNDR1 form is completed in January. This will then be available for the final draft of this budget.
- 4.4 The Council has a 30 year cyclical programme of essential property maintenance. This contributed £830k of cost to the round 1 draft. After close scrutiny, it is felt that elements of this programme can be delayed until future years. This has benefited the gap by £246k although there are caveats due to the safety implications. As this expenditure will still need to be incurred, it is not an overall saving and will not be a benefit during the period of the MTFP.
- 4.5 Transition to 3 weekly waste collection is estimated to save this Authority £150k per year along with environmental benefits – not least increased recycling. MDDC are initiating a 3 month trial in June which, if it is subsequently rolled out, would save c£75k next year.
- 4.6 Further MRP savings of £136k are recognised further to a review of finance leases, with part of the benefit relating to the delay in the implementation of International Financial Reporting Standard 16 – Lease Accounting (IFRS 16).
- 4.7 Falling interest rates and an update of the Council's borrowing requirement, particularly in the light of 3 Rivers' aspirant activity have reduced net cost by £105k.
- 4.8 Further cost pressures of £128k include confirmation of the terms of the Climate and Sustainability Specialist role and a rework of expected Covid 19 income losses due to the impacts of the November lockdown on their recovery, along with numerous smaller budgetary refinements.

- 4.9 A review early this year of EMRs held, highlighted some small areas where they were not required and so available for release. Recognising these now has funded £224k of deficit.

## 5.0 Capital Programme

- 5.1 A revised version of the capital programme is included in appendix 4. This includes the latest data in respect of 3 Rivers Development Limited with those items subject to approval noted accordingly.

## 6.0 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

- 6.1 Table 2 below summarises the General Fund MTFP as presented to Cabinet 03 December 2020. It should be noted that this incorporates those numbers up to round 1 of the draft budget for 2021/22:

<b>Table 2 – General Fund MTFP 2020/21 -2024/25</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Net Service Costs</b>	10,334,257	12,777,797	12,312,191	12,285,845	11,491,602
Net Interest Costs	(129,104)	(274,400)	(343,352)	(331,122)	(341,122)
Provision for Repayment of Borrowing	1,052,154	868,010	881,871	886,508	920,281
Earmarked Reserves - New Homes Bonus	1,418,189	776,752	460,264	0	0
Earmarked Reserves - Other	(1,151,052)	(1,161,672)	(721,825)	(237,108)	(77,108)
General Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Budget Requirement</b>	<b>11,524,444</b>	<b>12,986,487</b>	<b>12,589,149</b>	<b>12,604,123</b>	<b>11,993,653</b>
<b>Funded By:</b>					
Retained Business Rates	(3,210,478)	(3,312,730)	(3,310,480)	(3,410,480)	(3,510,480)
Business Rates prior year surplus/deficit	(102,250)	439,767	255,323	0	(50,000)
Pooling Dividend	(150,000)	0	0	(50,000)	(100,000)
Revenue Support Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Services Delivery Grant	(466,695)	(466,695)	(466,695)	(466,695)	(466,695)
BR Levy Surplus Grant	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,418,189)	(776,752)	(460,264)	0	0
Council Tax–MDDC	(6,064,832)	(6,038,700)	(6,368,700)	(6,518,700)	(6,668,700)
Council Tax prior year surplus/deficit	(112,000)	180,653	0	0	(50,000)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(11,524,444)</b>	<b>(9,974,457)</b>	<b>(10,350,816)</b>	<b>(10,445,875)</b>	<b>(10,845,875)</b>
<b>Gap – Increase/(Decrease) In-year</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>3,012,030</b>	<b>(773,697)</b>	<b>(80,085)</b>	<b>(1,010,470)</b>
<b>Gap – Cumulative</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>3,012,030</b>	<b>2,238,333</b>	<b>2,158,248</b>	<b>1,147,778</b>

- 6.2 Hence, this MTFP indicates a deficit in 2021/22 of £3.012m which in round 2 of the draft budget has been reduced to £490k. However, as many of the remedial measures taken to substantially reduce this budget gap are non-recurrent, the budget gap for 2022/23 (shown in Table 2 as £2.238m) remains at c£2m.

- 6.3 Like any strategic plan, the MTFP has been compiled based upon all available information at a fixed point in time. Clearly, as time moves on assumptions will change, Central Government will set new targets, bring in new legislation and

adjust funding levels. We are aware that the Fair Funding Review may bring significant changes in our core funding including a Baseline reset or partial reset in Business Rates. Residents expectations will change, Member priorities will alter and therefore any plans must be flexible enough to cope with major changes. As we were already in a period of major financial uncertainty, now compounded by Covid 19, it is not only prudent but imperative that we seek to maintain our reserve levels to the fullest extent possible.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

- 7.1 Along with many Local Authorities, the financial challenges facing this Council are immense. A difficult position with significant uncertainties surrounding future funding, has been compounded by the need to maintain essential services whilst losing critical income streams.
- 7.2 There has been some recognition of this from Government and it has contributed to substantial progress being made in reducing the budget gap for 2021/22 to £490k. This does however, represent a significant remaining challenge.
- 7.3 Councils, however, need clarity and certainty about how all local services will be funded over the next few years and beyond. Next year we need a multi-year settlement which must reflect an understanding of the lasting impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on both service demands and revenue raising.
- 7.4 Moving forward Members and officers need to look to the pressures over the next few years reflected in our MTFP and our need to address ongoing pressures which cannot be satisfactorily addressed by the one-off use of reserves.
- 7.5 This updated draft budget position has been before Cabinet (07 January 2021) and is currently being presented to the PDGs. Subsequent to this meeting, it will be considered at a final meeting of the Cabinet before being agreed at Full Council on the 24 February 2021. During this period officers will continue to identify and examine further savings possibilities that can reduce the current budget gap.

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**Background Papers:** Provisional Settlement Email  
LGA Provisional Local Government Finance  
Settlement 2021/22 On the Day Briefing

**Circulation of the Report:** Leadership Team, Cabinet Member for Finance,  
and Group Managers

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**DRAFT 2021/22 GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL BUDGETS**

**Cabinet Member** Cllr Andrew Moore  
**Responsible Officer** Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151)

**Reason for the report:** To consider the initial draft 2021/22 Budget and options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget and agree a future strategy for further budget reductions for 2022/23 onwards.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To consider the draft budget proposals for 2021/22 and start to plan for additional savings.

**Reason for the recommendation:** The Local Government Finance Act 1992 places a legal requirement on the Council to approve a balanced budget. These draft budget proposals assist the Council in understanding the extent of the budgetary imbalance and offers options to how this may be addressed.

**Relationship to the Corporate Plan:** To deliver our Corporate Plan's priorities within existing financial resources.

**Financial Implications:** The current budget for the General Fund shows a deficit of £3.012M. This highlights the need to take steps to plan for reductions to our expenditure levels, although any remedial measures will need to take account of the unprecedented situation that is currently being faced.

**Legal Implications:** None directly arising from this report. However, there is a legal obligation to balance the budget. There are legal implications arising from any future consequential decisions to change service provision, but these would be assessed at the time.

**Risk Assessment:** In order to comply with the requirement to set a balanced budget, management must ensure that the proposed savings are robust and achievable. We must also ensure that the assumptions we have used are realistic and prudent. Failure to set a robust deliverable budget puts the Council at risk of not being able to meet its commitments and casts doubt on its "going concern" and VFM status.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** There are no Equalities Impact implications relating to the content of this report.

**Climate Change Assessment:** The allocation of resources will impact upon the Council's ability to implement/fund new activities linked to climate change.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 2019/20 was the fourth and final year of a four year fixed funding settlement. The Fair Funding Review together with the business rates baseline reset, originally set for publication in September 2019, were

delayed a year due to Brexit pressures. That intention to publish in 2020/21 for implementation in 2021/22 is now further delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

1.2 As a result, we are awaiting details of the funding that will be received for 2021/22. This also has a significant impact on our ability to forecast for future years. We expect the Review to alter our funding but we have little indication of what this might involve. The areas we are particularly concerned with are:

- Business Rates baseline reset – how much of our growth are we likely to lose?
- When, or even whether, will we move to 100% Business Rates growth retention? In the Budget 2016, this was to be in place “before the end of Parliament”.
- What will 100% Retention mean in terms of losing other funding streams such as RSDG and what additional responsibilities will we have?
- New Homes Bonus – the mechanics of this will change and we may lose additional years’ (we lost 2 years payments in 2018/19). We expect more of the Bonus to be redirected to the Better Care Fund to help Upper Tier authorities cope with the pressures of Social Care.
- Will we lose funding in relation to our rurality (RSDG)?
- Will we be tasked with administering additional reliefs/services?

1.3 It is worth reflecting that our budgets are affected in a number of ways:

- The funding received from Central Government.
- Devon County Council (DCC) and other public bodies’ budgets are being reduced centrally and hence this pressure is passed on to us in areas we work collaboratively.
- The increasing pressure on social care budgets has a “knock-on” effect to the level of funding that is available to lower-tier authorities.
- Government departments such as Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department of Work and Pensions also have lower budgets and reduced grants.
- Changes in customer demand/expectations in the context of the local/national economy.

1.4 No financial report in these times, would be complete without reference to the implications of Covid 19. The pandemic and the effects of the measures to combat it, have structurally altered the services that we offer, the delivery channels that we employ and our funding mechanisms. In the context of budget setting for 2021/22 and beyond in respect of the MTFP, the question becomes an issue of what assumptions should our expectations be based upon:

- The country was placed into lock down largely for the first quarter of 2020/21. This significantly impacted service delivery and those income streams that depend on this activity. Since that time, services have been able to resume but often with new ways of working especially in our leisure centres.
- Further both the ongoing health and economic implications of the virus have impacted residents’ habits and expectations. This can be seen in planning for example where economic uncertainty has



seen a slowdown in the larger development applications, whilst the smaller home improvement type of application have seen an increase in activity.

- A great deal of uncertainty remains regarding the reoccurrence of the virus in the coming months, if not years, and the measures that may be taken to contain it.
- Since the end of lockdown, we now have 3 months of data which give some indication as to how our income streams may behave going forward. This report is based on those trends continuing. It is quite possible, however, that another infection peak over the winter months, say, could result in measures which further limit service activity and significantly disrupt these trends. In this case our assumptions would prove to be over optimistic and income expectations would need to be downgraded accordingly.
- It is noted that the 2020/21 budget was set before Covid 19 was a consideration. Hence when we look at the major budget variances in section 2 below, we are comparing a pre Covid view of 2020/21 with a post Covid recovery scenario in 2021/22. Even without possible further disruption, income is not expected to recover to pre pandemic levels before the start of 2021/22, resulting in losses from budget year to budget year.
- The Collection Fund is another area of deep uncertainty. Collection rates have been impacted with some residents and businesses struggling to make payments on council tax and NNDR respectively. Whilst we have extrapolated the emerging trends, the robustness of this approach will be tested in the face of the risks mentioned above regarding rising infection rates; along with the ending of the original furlough scheme and a generally declining economy.
- In the face of these threats, Council funding has been supported by grants from government. So far £994k has been received in 3 tranches in Covid 19 emergency funding. A fourth tranche of £1 billion has just been announced and we are waiting to hear what the Mid Devon share of this will be. The Council has also benefited from the Job Protection Scheme and a first application of £608k has recently been made under the government's Income Compensation Scheme. There have also been hints at support in relation to collection fund losses although nothing more substantive as yet. There is however no indication from government that any of this support will continue into 2021/22. As stated above, significant income losses are expected to run into next year but there is no certainty as to how these will be funded.

1.5 Although the priority is to balance next year's budget, strategic decisions will need to be made to accommodate reduced or changes to funding going forward.

1.6 Based on years of public sector austerity many services can no longer continue to reduce cost and still be expected to deliver "business as usual". It is important to remember that some services are statutory and in some cases must breakeven, i.e. we cannot generate a profit. This restricts where savings/cuts can be imposed and section 8 below provides more details.

- 1.7 The proposed savings embodied in the draft budget will need to be agreed by Members, as every proposed saving that is rejected will need to be matched by a suggestion of where a similar saving could be made. Members will be aware that the budget is an evolving process. We have already made a range of assumptions relating to: pay awards, inflation, fees/charges, demand for services, property increases, etc. More information may well change/alter our assumptions in the months leading up to February, when the budget has to be finalised. So the current budget gap of £3.012M will be revised over the next few months, but it is based on the most current information, in conjunction with professional guidance that is available.
- 1.8 The Council continues to look at opportunities to reduce operational costs without immediately reducing service levels. However it remains a real possibility moving forward that some difficult decisions will have to be made relating to what the Council can and can't afford to deliver/support in the future.

## 2.0 The Draft 2021/22 Budget

- 2.1 The initial aggregation of all service budgets (which also includes assumptions surrounding predictions of interest receipts, contributions to our capital programme, transfers from/to reserves and Council Tax levels) currently indicates a General Fund budget gap of £3.012m (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 At this point it is worth summarising how we have arrived at this deficit. The table shown below shows the main budget variances affecting the 2021/22 draft budget.

**Table 1 – Reconciliation of Major 2021/22 Budget Variances**

<b>Variances</b>	<b>Pressure £k</b>	<b>Saving £k</b>
<b><i>Covid 19 Losses</i></b>		
Income - Leisure	644	
Income – Waste	66	
Income - Parking	58	
Income – Environmental Services (Licencing)	40	
Income - Planning	201	
Income – Council Tax Collection	46	
Income - Other	28	
	<b>1,083</b>	
Collection Fund – Council Tax	138	
Collection Fund - NNDR	405	
	<b>543</b>	
<b><i>Subtotal</i></b>	<b>1,626</b>	
<b><i>Operational</i></b>		
Income – Waste - SSA		-30
Income - Waste - Garden		-25
Inflationary increases (excl HRA shown below)	46	
Pay award and pension increases	266	

Pension lump sum increase	26	
Pay – CMT increment	39	
Pay – remove DOO (50%)		-46
Pay – CS – Pay movements	25	
Pay – CS – Pay movements - EMR utilisation (vulnerability grant re Customer Welfare Officer)		-15
Pay - FP – revert GM role to full time	13	
Pay – HG - Rough Sleeper Navigator Post & Rough Sleeper Housing Options Accommodation Officer	72	
Pay – HG – Housing Options Officer	38	
Pay – HG – EMR utilisation		-110
Pay – HR – JE's & officer joining the pension scheme	21	
Pay – PS – Climate Change Co-ordinator	23	
Pay – R&B - Restructure		-29
Pay – RS – Covid pressures	42	
Pay - Other	11	
Premises - Blue Frog cleaning contract additional cost	25	
Property Maintenance - 30 year programme	323	
Transport costs		-61
Software upgrade - Efin	52	
Cullompton HAZ – Costs net of grants	169	
Cullompton HAZ – EMR utilisation		-169
Local plan costs	78	
Local plan costs – EMR utilisation		-78
Crediton Masterplan	60	
Crediton Masterplan – EMR utilisation		-60
Garden Village Project	283	
Garden Village Project – EMR utilisation		-283
Other planning projects	64	
Other planning projects – EMR utilisation		-94
Net recharge to HRA (after inflationary increases etc.)		-44
	1,676	-1,044
<b>Other</b>		
Interest Receivable (3RDL + CCLA + Temp investments)		-133
Interest Payable		-123
Finance Lease Interest	111	
3 Rivers Impairment		-131
Capital MRP		-185
NHB - decrease	641	
NHB – EMR transfer		-641
Other EMR utilisation	1,162	
Other small variances	53	
	1,967	-1,213
	5,269	2,257

Deficit	3,012	
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2.3 In compiling the 2021/22 draft budget we have also examined budget performance during 2020/21 and then made any relevant budget corrections for staffing changes, levels of income, changes in legislation, increases in inflation, etc.

2.4 Due to the need to get budget information to all of the PDG and Cabinet meetings during October and November there are key issues that have not been resolved or are still to be fully evaluated. These issues may either improve or worsen the summary budget position currently reported and can be summarised as follows.

- Ongoing impact of Covid 19 on service activity and income streams
- Ongoing impact of Covid 19 and the economic consequences on collection fund receipts
- Further government announcements regarding financial support for the impacts of the pandemic.
- Provisional Finance Settlement in December
- Ongoing service reviews (including changes to fees/charges)

### 3.0 The Past

3.1 Just to remind Members of the financial journey the Council has been on since the austerity programme in 2010/11, here is a list of some of the challenges that have been presented to MDDC in balancing budgets during recent years.

- Net loss of £4.2m in Formula Grant
- Loss of funding for Housing Benefit admin and Regional Housing Pot removed circa £0.6m
- Council Tax freezes accepted for a number of years
- Costs associated with Local Plan
- Tax and pension related pressures including:
  - Pay award
  - Increased pension back-funding costs
  - Government mandated auto-enrolment to the Pension Scheme
  - National Insurance change
- Apprentice Levy introduced (currently c£49k)
- Covid 19 impacts across all budgets, significantly with regard to income and the collection fund.

3.2 The following lists just some of the actions taken by MDDC to mitigate these funding reductions.

- Significant efficiency agenda has led to service reductions amounting to over £2.5m
- Increased income has been generated by a number of services
  - Waste shared savings agreement with DCC
  - Garden Waste Scheme
  - Improved recycling scheme
- Increased commercialisation

- £200k profit from Market Walk and Fore Street properties
- Business Rates Devon Pool participation
- Set up a Special Purpose Vehicle to return profits to the General Fund, along with a margin on interest received
- Increasing CCLA holding to £5m
- Colocation with Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)
- Revised Car Parking Strategy in 2019/20
- Rationalising MDDC property estate, including depots, parks, toilets and car parks (which has involved significant work with third parties – especially Town and Parish Councils)
- Significant renewable energy investment across the corporate estate to reduce utility expenditure
- Joint working with North Devon DC as part of the Building Control Partnership and providing recent waste management support
- DCC Transfer Station located at Carlu Close

## **4.0 The Future**

- 4.1 Already a lot of work has been undertaken to understand the current position, which indicates a draft budget gap of £3.012m. The task now is to develop our spending plans together with an associated funding plan so that we may deliver a balanced General Fund budget by February 2021 in order to formally set the Council Tax. The work with town and parish councils will continue.

## **5.0 Capital Programme**

- 5.1 In addition to this revenue funding pressure, is our ongoing commitment to future capital programmes, not helped by the current low levels of capital receipts and the assumed future phasing out of New Homes Bonus funding stream. Even greater pressure may be placed on future programmes if additional borrowing is made to fund new Council Houses, Depots, Sport Centre and Town Centre enhancement works, etc.
- 5.2 The draft Capital Programme for 2021/22 is attached at Appendix 3. Excluding the HIF infrastructure schemes and further housing development projects, the size of our current and future capital programmes remains very small, due to the reductions in funding and level of sale receipts and now only includes material projects that are essential maintenance, or asset replacement or income generating/cost reducing.

## **6.0 The Autumn PDGs and Cabinet meetings**

- 6.1 The first round of draft budget meetings will allow discussions with Members, Senior Management, Group Managers and Finance Officers in order to review the proposed draft 2021/22 budget. This will include scrutinising and challenging the initial position (and confirming acceptance of all proposed savings put forward) and discussing any other budget areas that Members would like to see additional savings from.
- 6.2 Before the next round of PDGs and Cabinet in January the Council will receive formal confirmation regarding its Formula Grant, other emerging legislative changes, more information regarding the 2020/21 budget performance etc. At

this point if any of the initial assumptions/estimates significantly worsen, then we will need to bring further savings options forward for consideration.

## **7.0 Public Consultation**

7.1 Last year's consultation highlighted the most valued statutory services were:

1. Refuse Collection & Recycling - 93%
2. Street Cleaning - 59%
3. Planning & Building Control - 58%

And those least appreciated were:

1. Licencing - 11%
2. Electoral Services - 15%
3. Benefit Claim Processing - 20%

Similarly for discretionary services, the most valued were:

1. Parks, Playgrounds and Open Spaces - 69%
2. Town Centre Regeneration - 56%
3. Public Toilets - 48%

And least appreciated:

1. Tourism - 19%
2. CCTV - 28%
3. Outdoor Leisure eg tennis courts and football pitches - 34%

## **8.0 Statutory, Discretionary Services and the Level of Service Provision**

8.1 Whilst the Council has a legal obligation to perform some activities, others are at the discretion of the elected members, subject to funding. Although some undertakings are clearly statutory and others clearly discretionary, there are some service areas that have elements of both.

8.2 The main *discretionary* services of the Council comprise:

- Business development (although a corporate priority)
- Community development (includes community group grants)
- Leisure facilities
- Parks and open spaces (identified as important to the public at 7.1)
- Shops and industrial units

### **What can we do to balance the budget?**

8.3 An activity's net cost could be changed by one or more of these factors:

- a) Changing the frequency of service provision, for example 3 weekly waste collection
- b) Changing the quality, instead of a "Platinum service" we may be forced to offer a "Silver service"

- c) Rescheduling activities to less difficult years. This could apply to some aspects of property maintenance. However, with so many funding challenges ahead, it is not clear when the “less difficult years” might be. In the meantime, our capital assets would be declining and costs would likely escalate as a result.
- d) Reducing the overheads and maximising a lean approach to operations. Whilst this is already the case, we are always exploring new ways of working to improve service delivery and drive savings. One option would be to include a vacancy management policy although in many cases this already happens informally.
- e) Stopping the activity entirely
- f) Different models of service delivery (including partnership)

When considering options which contribute to balancing the budget, operational changes require careful planning, possible trials and implementation periods which add up to a lead time which, along with the costs of implementation, will likely reduce the benefit arising in 2021/22.

- 8.4 Over recent years, this Council has prudently built up its general fund reserve and associated ear marked reserves. These reserves have been built up to prudently provide for the maintenance of services to our residents. They also provide a financial buffer to weather any kind of temporary storm associated with changes to the FF review, business rate review and changes to NHB. Whilst nobody predicted the pandemic, its financial effects could justify utilising this contingency in order to maintain the delivery of critical services when our residents need them the most. If we do this, we must be mindful, that all the other challenges remain and must be met with reduced financial resilience.
- 8.5 Over the last five or six years the Authority has concentrated its efforts in maintaining frontline service levels across all sectors by reducing overheads and raising income. It is now clear that following those budgetary cuts some service areas are struggling to deliver their service plans, within their existing budgets. Indeed in a few cases external reviews have necessitated increasing the resources in a particular service area to meet our legal obligations.
- 8.6 **What options are available if something is *statutory*?** Although we cannot stop the function, we may be able to approach it differently in terms of frequency or quality.
- 8.7 Increasing fees (or start charging for a service). Some of our income streams are influenced by external market forces and in setting prices we have to be mindful of the going market rate. This option becomes further limited in the current environment of reduced demand and economic uncertainty. There is an opportunity to revisit legacy dual use agreements for leisure centres to ensure they represent good value for money. Aside from Council tax, the main income streams are:
  - Building control fees
  - Burial fees
  - Car park charges
  - Industrial unit rent
  - Leisure centre fees
  - Licence fees

- Market tolls
  - Shop rents
  - Planning fees
  - Trade waste fees
  - Garden waste
- 8.8 Any multi million pound business employing staff and utilising assets needs teams to support them and our frontline services are no different.
- 8.9 The key components, some statutory, others essential, include:
- Audit
  - Accountancy
  - Customer First
  - Procurement (Buying goods and services)
  - Human resources (Includes health and safety)
  - IT
  - Legal services
  - Property services
- 8.10 For example our waste service has to have vehicles and depots to operate from, both of which need to be maintained. The staff need to be managed, to be paid, and legislation provides for health and safety considerations. Depots and buildings such as Phoenix House are fixed costs, although even here we have created savings by renting out some space. The “back office” activities are therefore intrinsically linked to the “frontline” and savings from both areas continue to be made.
- 8.11 In section 2 we see that even under the assumption of ongoing recovery from the Covid 19 measures, this draft budget predicts losses arising from the pandemic in the region of £1.6m. Government has shown a willingness to assist local authorities through the worst effects of these difficult times, not least in the form of emergency grants and the Income Compensation Scheme. No announcement has yet been made relating to schemes which would alleviate pressures in 2021/22. However, with many local authorities unable to rely on their reserve base to get through the crisis, it is conceivable that further support will be forthcoming.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

- 9.1 The feedback from all of the PDGs and Scrutiny will be reported to the January Cabinet for consideration in order to set a balanced 2020/21 budget. Faced with such a daunting budget gap this is likely to require difficult choices. The Medium Term Financial Plan is in process for presentation to Cabinet in December so that the savings programme for the next 4 years can be achieved based on the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan. Having identified possible savings, there will need to be careful consideration of their potential impact, probable lead times for delivery of that saving and any associated disengagement costs or possible ‘spend to save’ implications that would arise.



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**Circulation of the Report:** Leadership Team  
Elected Members  
Group Managers

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## GENERAL FUND REVENUE ACCOUNT DRAFT BUDGET SUMMARY 2021/22

		Budget 2020/2021	Movement	Draft Budget 2021/2022 Round 1	Movement	Draft Budget 2021/2022 Round 2
	Notes	£	£	£	£	£
Cabinet	2	5,433,721	292,620	5,726,341	1,028,662	6,755,003
Community		2,890,445	1,546,959	4,437,404	(1,403,213)	3,034,191
Economy		(549,012)	261,002	(288,010)	(29,340)	(317,350)
Environment		3,736,850	318,215	4,055,065	(242,356)	3,812,709
Homes		303,880	69,180	373,060	19,950	393,010
<b>TOTAL NET DIRECT COST OF SERVICES</b>	1/4	<b>11,815,884</b>	<b>2,487,976</b>	<b>14,303,860</b>	<b>(626,297)</b>	<b>13,677,563</b>
Net recharge to HRA		(1,481,630)	(44,449)	(1,526,079)	58,069	(1,468,010)
Provision for the financing of capital spending		1,052,154	(184,144)	868,010	(136,290)	731,720
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>		<b>11,386,408</b>	<b>2,259,383</b>	<b>13,645,791</b>	<b>(704,518)</b>	<b>12,941,273</b>
PWLB Bank Loan Interest Payable						
Finance Lease Interest Payable		48,340	111,070	159,410	-	159,410
Interest from Funding provided for HRA		(49,000)	2,600	(46,400)	-	(46,400)
Interest Receivable / Payable on Other Activities	3	439,878	(122,998)	316,880	(176,360)	140,520
Interest Received on Investments		(568,322)	(135,968)	(704,290)	71,120	(633,170)
Transfers into Earmarked Reserves	5	2,597,050	(639,978)	1,957,072	404,300	2,361,372
Transfers from Earmarked Reserves	5	(1,369,370)	(169,025)	(1,538,395)	(679,545)	(2,217,940)
Proposed Contribution from New Homes Bonus Reserve	5	(960,540)	522,040	(438,500)	-	(438,500)
<b>TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>11,524,444</b>	<b>1,827,124</b>	<b>13,351,568</b>	<b>(1,085,003)</b>	<b>12,266,565</b>
<b>Funded by: -</b>						
Revenue Support Grant		-	-	-	-	-
Lower Tier Services Support Grant		-	-	-	(179,252)	(179,252)
Rural Services Delivery Grant		(466,700)	-	(466,700)	(23,042)	(489,742)
Covid19 Non Ringfenced Grant		-	-	-	(407,699)	(407,699)
Covid19 Income Compensation Schemes	12	-	-	-	(570,000)	(570,000)
New Homes Bonus	6	(1,418,190)	641,440	(776,750)	(182,000)	(958,750)
Retained Business Rates	7/8	(3,312,727)	255,320	(3,057,407)	(3)	(3,057,410)
Business Rates Pooling Dividend	9	(150,000)	150,000	-	-	-
CTS Funding Parishes		-	-	-	-	-
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	11	(112,000)	112,000	-	-	-
Council Tax (28,239.34 x £213.84)	10	(6,064,827)	26,127	(6,038,700)	(75,920)	(6,114,620)
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>		<b>(11,524,444)</b>	<b>1,184,887</b>	<b>(10,339,557)</b>	<b>(1,437,916)</b>	<b>(11,777,473)</b>
<b>REQUIREMENT TO BALANCE THE BUDGET</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>3,012,011</b>	<b>3,012,011</b>	<b>(2,522,919)</b>	<b>489,092</b>

**Current Assumptions: -**

1. The annual salary increment has been reduced in line with public sector arrangements detailed in the Funding Settlement.
2. Income flows have been reviewed and adjusted for changes in demand and unit price. Provision has been made to reflect the estimated impacts of the pandemic assuming recovery continues according to current trends in this line.
3. Investment income has been based upon the existing lending criteria now in force.
4. Support services have been calculated in accordance with the annual process.
5. All earmarked reserves have been reviewed and adjustment made based upon existing need.
6. New Homes Bonus receipts based on the latest announcements in the Funding Settlement.
7. Retained Business Rates - s31 grant relating to 100% relief for Retail, hospitality and Leisure in 2020/21 will compensate for deficit brought forward and has been included in this line.
8. Any business rates deficit brought forward from 2020/21 is expected to be funded from EMR and so is not included as a pressure here.
9. It is assumed that in the shadow of Covid 19, there will be no dividend from the Devon Business Rates Pool in 2021/22.
10. Council Tax has been increased by £5 (the higher of £5 or 2%) from £208.84 to £213.84. Confirmation of this treatment was received in the Funding Settlement.
11. As with NNDR, any Council Tax deficit brought forward from 2020/21 is expected to be funded from EMR and so is not included as a pressure above.
12. This line relates to receipts in respect of compensation schemes for revenue losses arising in year from the pandemic. It is subject to a financial health warning and represents the best estimates of the s151 officer based on the advice received from central government at the current time. Any adverse movement in these numbers will require support from general fund reserves in order to balance this budget.

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**2021-22 BUDGETS**

Appendix 3

Appendix 3

**Transfers into Earmarked Reserves**

SERVICE	EMR		Total	PLANT BUDGET	EQUIPMENT BUDGET	VEHICLES BUDGET	OTHER BUDGET	NEW HOMES BONUS
IE435	EQ653	NEW HOMES BONUS GRANT	958,752					958,752
IE440	EQ659	NNDR Smoothing EMR	400,000				400,000	
PS990	EQ685	FORE STREET MAINT S.FUND	0					
PS992	EQ685	MARKET WALK MAINT S.FUND	0					
CP540	EQ686	PAYING CAR PARKS (MACHINE REPLACEMENT SINKING FU	3,000		3,000			
LD201	EQ720	ELECTION COSTS - DISTRICT	25,000				25,000	
LD300	EQ721	DEMOCRATIC REP & MANAGEMENT	5,000				5,000	
PR810	EQ728	STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN	100,000				100,000	
EQ754	EQ754	PHOENIX PRINTERS EQUIP SFUND	2,200		2,200			
EQ755	EQ755	ICT EQUIPMENT SINKING FUND	189,500		189,500			
EQ756	EQ756	FLEET CONTRACT FUND	559,600			559,600		
IT300	EQ759	MOBILE PHONE CONTRACT	5,000		5,000			
GM960	EQ760	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	15,820	15,820				
EQ761	EQ761	RECYCLING PLANT SFUND	20,000	20,000				
EQ763	EQ763	RECYCLING MAINTENANCE SINKING FUND	0					
PS880	EQ765	BUS STATION	0					
ES100	EQ766	CEMETERIES	0					
ES450	EQ767	PARKS & OPEN SPACES	0					
RS140	EQ837	LEISURE SINKING FUND	75,000		75,000			
PS980	EQ837	Property maintenance - new	0					
WS710	EQ839	WASTE PRESSURE WASHER	2,500		2,500			
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>2,361,372</b>	<b>35,820</b>	<b>277,200</b>	<b>559,600</b>	<b>530,000</b>	<b>958,752</b>

**2020/2021 Budget**
**34,360      272,200      559,600      130,000      1,418,190**
**Movement**
**1,460      5,000      -      400,000      (459,438)**

**2021-22 BUDGETS**

Appendix 3

**Transfers from Earmarked Reserves**

SERVICE	EMR	Description	TOTAL	UTILISE NHB	OTHER
EQ638	EQ638	DEV CONT LINEAR PARK	(4,170)		(4,170)
EQ640	EQ640	W52 POPHAM CLOSE COMM FUND	(1,950)		(1,950)
EQ641	EQ641	W67 MOORHAYES COM DEV FUND	(1,630)		(1,630)
EQ642	EQ642	W69 FAYRECROFT WILLAND EX WEST	(4,620)		(4,620)
EQ643	EQ643	W70 DEVELOPERS CONTRIBUTION	(6,650)		(6,650)
EQ644	EQ644	DEV CONT WINSWOOD CREDITION	(3,080)		(3,080)
ES733	EQ652	PUBLIC HEALTH	(53,130)		(53,130)
PR402	EQ652	CULLOMPTON HAZ	(15,000)		(15,000)
CD200	EQ653	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	(45,000)	(45,000)	
PR400	EQ653	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	(80,000)	(80,000)	
EQ755	EQ653	ICT EQUIPMENT SINKING FUND	(189,500)	(189,500)	
PR402	EQ653	CULLOMPTON HAZ	(124,000)	(124,000)	
IE440	EQ659	NNDR Smoothing EMR	(3,537,610)		(3,537,610)
PR402	EQ722	CULLOMPTON HAZ	(30,000)		(30,000)
PR810	EQ726	BROWNFIELD SHARED PLAN	(36,263)		(36,263)
PR400	EQ728	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	(60,000)		(60,000)
PR810	EQ728	STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN	(86,270)		(86,270)
PR810	EQ729	CUSTOM & SELF BUILD	(45,000)		(45,000)
HG320	EQ742	HOMELESSNESS EMR	(178,740)		(178,740)
FP100	EQ755	ICT EQUIPMENT SINKING FUND	(20,000)		(20,000)
EQ756	EQ756	FLEET CONTRACT FUND	(524,060)		(524,060)
CS932	EQ776	CUSTOMER FIRST	(19,362)		(19,362)
IE420	EQ777	C/Tax Smoothing EMR	(101,530)		(101,530)
PR810	EQ821	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FUNDING	(13,200)		(13,200)
PR225	EQ824	GARDEN VILLAGE PROJECT	(338,000)		(338,000)
LD100	NEW	ELECTIONS	(45,000)		(45,000)
	EQ653	RELEASING OF RESERVES TO SUPPORT THE GENERAL FUND IN THE FIRST YEAR OF REDUCTION OF HRA RECHARGES	(58,069)	(58,069)	
	EQ660	RELEASING OF RESERVES TO FUND THE 21/22 GF BUDGET	(223,746)		(223,746)
	EQ700	RELEASING OF RESERVES TO FUND THE 21/22 GF BUDGET	-		
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>(5,845,580)</b>	<b>(496,569)</b>	<b>(5,349,011)</b>

2020/2021 Budget

(960,540) (1,369,370)

Movement

463,971 (3,979,641)

	Estimated Capital Programme 2021/22 £k
<b><u>Exe Valley Leisure Centre</u></b>	
Evlc - Boilers and CHP	122
Evlc - Fitness Studio renewal of equipment	153
<b><u>Culm Valley sports centre</u></b>	
Cvsc - remodelling dance studio	153
Cvsc - Squash court conversion to fitness	204
	<b>Total Leisure 632</b>
<b><u>MDDC Shops/industrial Units</u></b>	
Market Walk Unit 17 - remodelling options	510
<b><u>Other Projects</u></b>	
Hydromills Electricity generation Project - Tiverton Weir	800
	<b>Total Other 1,310</b>
<b><u>HIF Schemes</u></b>	
Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road (HIF bid)	4,141
Tiverton EUE A361 Junction Phase 2 (HIF bid)	4,700
	<b>Total HIF Schemes 8,841</b>
<b><u>ICT Projects</u></b>	
Additional Unified Communications budget	30
Hardware replacement of Network Core Switch	80
	<b>Total ICT 110</b>
<b><u>Private Sector Housing Grants</u></b>	
Disabled Facilities Grants--P/Sector	577
	<b>Total PSH Grants 577</b>
	<b>TOTAL GF PROJECTS 11,470</b>
<b><u>Other General Fund Development Projects</u></b>	
* 3 Rivers Scheme - Bampton	503
3 Rivers Scheme - Riverside Development (rear of Town Hall) Tiverton	430
* 3 Rivers scheme - Knowle Lane, Cullompton (note slippage from 20/21 will fund planned spend in 21/22)	0
* 3 Rivers Scheme - Park Road	1,250
<b>* These schemes require signed loan agreements before they can be progressed further</b>	
	<b>TOTAL GF OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS 2,183</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL GF PROJECTS 13,653</b>
<b><u>HRA Projects</u></b>	
<b><u>Existing Housing Stock</u></b>	
Major repairs to Housing Stock	2,275
Renewable Energy Fund	250
Home Adaptations - Disabled Facilities	300
<b>* <u>Housing Development Schemes</u></b>	
HRA Building Schemes - to be identified (note slippage from 20/21 will fund schemes in 21/22)	0
Garages Block - Redevelopment	408
Affordable Housing/ Purchase of ex RTB	500
Waddeton Park, Post Hill, Tiverton (note slippage from 20/21 will fund planned spend in 21/22)	0
<b>* Proposed Council House Building / Other schemes subject to full appraisal</b>	
	<b>GRAND TOTAL HRA PROJECTS 3,733</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL GF + HRA Projects 17,386</b>

[FUNDING](#)

**MDDC Funding Summary**

**General Fund**

	2021/22 £k
<b>EXISTING FUNDS</b>	
Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve	577
Capital Receipts Reserve	88
NHB Funding	1,014
Other Earmarked Reserves	150
HIF Funding	8,358
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>10,187</b>
<b>NEW FUNDS</b>	
PWLB Borrowing	3,466
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,466</b>
<b>Total General Fund Funding</b>	<b>13,653</b>

**Housing Revenue Account**

	2021/22 £k
<b>EXISTING FUNDS</b>	
Capital Receipts Reserve	951
NHB Funding	21
HRA Housing Maintenance Fund	88
Other Housing Earmarked Reserves	2,673
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,733</b>
<b>NEW FUNDS</b>	
PWLB Borrowing	0
Revenue Contributions	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Housing Revenue Account Funding</b>	<b>3,733</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	<b>17,386</b>



**DRAFT 2021/22 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Bob Evans (Cabinet member for Housing), Cllr Andrew Moore (Cabinet member for Finance)

**Responsible Officer(s):** Andrew Jarrett – Deputy Chief Executive (S151), Simon Newcombe – Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services

**Reason for Report:** To present proposals for the second draft of the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/22.

**Recommendation:** That the PDG recommend to Cabinet to agree the rent increase proposed and the other budget proposals for 2021/22.

**Financial Implications:** A balanced and realistic budget must be set for 2021/22 in order to maintain a sustainable Housing Revenue Account with adequate investment for necessary maintenance.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** This report forms part of the Council's annual process of setting balanced budgets across all areas of income and expenditure.

**Legal Implications:** It is a statutory requirement for the local authority to set a balanced budget each year.

**Risk Assessment:** Service Managers and Finance staff have assessed volatility in income and large contractor budgets, taking account of current and estimated future demand patterns. In addition, prudent levels of reserves will also continue to be maintained.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** It is considered that the impact of this report on equality related issues will be nil.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The financial resources of the Council impact directly on its ability to deliver the Corporate Plan; prioritising the use of available resources brought forward and any future spending will be closely linked to key Council pledges from the updated Corporate Plan.

**Impact on Climate Change:** It is considered that the impact of this report on climate change related issues will be nil.

**1.0 Introduction/Background**

1.1 The HRA is a ring-fenced account within Mid Devon's financial accounting system. This means that a balanced budget must be set each year including all income and expenditure pertinent to the Council's landlord function and excluding all other income and expenditure (since this would be captured as part of the General Fund budget).

1.2 This report will set out the officers' proposals for a draft HRA budget for 2021/22 and members will see from Appendix 1 that, as it stands, the budget has been

balanced and so nets to nil. The report will outline the key issues affecting the HRA today, along with how they impact on the setting of a budget for 2021/22.

## 2.0 Key Issues

### COVID-19

- 2.1 The global pandemic that has been experienced so far in 2020, and continues to be experienced across our region and others, has had an obvious and significant impact on the local economy. In terms of the direct impact on the HRA, at the time of compiling this report indicative markers such as arrears levels and debts written off are not notably different from the previous year, however this does not suggest there will not be an impact going forward, therefore the budget (as reflected in the round 1 draft) has been updated in respect of the provision for bad debts (see 2.4).
- 2.2 Given there is no end date to the current lockdown and any future lockdowns cannot be ruled out, Members will need to be aware that this will potentially have an impact for the remainder of the 2020/21 and future budgets.

### Rent Policy

- 2.3 Rent policy set out by central government states that existing rents can be increased annually by the previous September's CPI rate, plus an additional 1%. Although this calculation has been applied (giving a rent increase of 1.5%) the overall increase in dwelling rent budget is only 0.7%. The reasons for this are as follows.
- Increased void turnaround times mean that more properties sit empty at any one time, thus generating no rent.
  - Similarly, the transition to Universal Credit means that some rents that would have been received automatically are now recoverable from the tenant. Where tenants suffer a financial impact from the current climate, arrears are likely to increase with the potential for further write-offs, which represent a cost to the Council.
  - Therefore it is proposed to apply an increase to social and affordable rents by CPI (0.50%) +1% for 2021/22.
- 2.4 It is unclear at this stage precisely to what extent our arrears will be affected and for what duration. For purposes of this draft budget it has been assumed that arrears will continue to rise during 2021 and that it may therefore be necessary to increase the bad debt provision at the end of March 2022. A budget to increase the bad debt provision by £150k has been proposed.

### Other Income

- 2.5 The garage rents budget is based on rent levels remaining at £10.71 per week (based on a 52 week year) and customer numbers remaining at current levels. Should customer numbers change significantly there would clearly be an impact on the budget position, either adverse or favourable.

- 2.6 Due to the current economic climate it is proposed to keep garage ground rents at their current level, ie £275 per annum. This can be reviewed in a year's time when we may have more economic certainty.
- 2.7 Income generated from interest where cash balances have been invested have performed reasonably well over recent years. However, due to uncertainties and the economic impact of Brexit, the budget target has been reduced by a further £22k from the first round (draft) budget.

#### Building Services carrying out Major, Cyclical and non-HRA works

- 2.8 Each year any low demand periods experienced by our operatives are put to good use by carrying out works that might otherwise require Mid Devon to use an external contractor and so incur additional cost. In doing so, the Repairs team are able to transfer a significant amount of their costs to the relevant area and so reduce the overall Repairs team budget.
- 2.9 For 2021/22, the Building Services team have budgeted to carry out major voids upgrades, installations of both traditional and renewable heating systems as well as other major work, cyclical servicing and remedial fixes. This should result in a transfer of £1,228k of their costs to other areas as well as £619k of disabled adaptations work.

#### Staffing costs

- 2.10 In line with Council policy for the General Fund, our estimates for HRA establishment costs assume a pay freeze for 2021/22. This has resulted in a £37k saving estimated on the original draft budget, this is net of a forecast pay award provision of £15k (approximately 0.50% of establishment costs) as local authority pay increases are not set centrally. The corporate management lead for housing is currently working with both HRA service areas and the Cabinet member to develop proposals for a restructuring to create a combined 'One Housing' HRA service. Any restructure will therefore bring together Housing and Building Services and is aimed at ensuring a sustainable HRA is in place capable of delivering further service improvements. This will be subject to a business case and wider consultation in due course, but may have a positive impact on staffing costs as the service transitions during 2021/22 and be more clearly shown in the budget for 2022/23 onwards. In the short term, the Operations Manager for Building Services has advised of a revision to the establishment reflected in the 2020/21 budget. This should be in place, subject to the necessary consultation period, for the commencement of the new financial year. Taking account of the assumed pay freeze the establishment saving, year on year, will be £92k, with further additional savings on overhead expenditure. This has been reflected in the proposed budget for next year.
- 2.11 In 2021/22 there is a proposal to bolster the complement of staff within Tenancy Services. This proposal is to create three new posts, not including an additional 30% charge from the General Fund for use of a Tree Officer; year on year salary increases are forecast at £172k. The Repairs team are carrying some vacancies at present and it is anticipated that these will be filled. It is also anticipated that in 2021/22 the expenditure on materials and contractors will

return to levels similar to 2019/20 and so increases in those budgets are required to meet this need.

### Housing Maintenance Fund

- 2.12 Any surpluses generated by the HRA are used to contribute to the Housing Maintenance Fund (HMF). This fund is designed to meet any spikes in the cost of major works in the HRA's plan to 2048. In order to balance the 2021/22 proposed budget, it is proposed that the contribution to the HMF for the year is circa £895k.

## **3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 It is recommended that members consider the proposals for this draft HRA budget along with the details laid out in this report.
- 3.2 However, it should be noted that some items within the budget may change between now and the final budget being agreed by Full Council and these changes could come as a result of members' suggestions, management proposals or central government instructions.

## **4.0 Future Issues**

- 4.1 Following 2021/22, there will be three further years of the September CPI plus 1% rent increases. After that, it is unclear what rent policy central government will set out for us to follow. Clearly, there is great uncertainty of how costs of running the service will increase with inflation over the coming years and so it is hoped that rent collected will be sufficient to meet the needs of the service.
- 4.2 The immediate concern for the HRA, as well as the wider Council financial position, are the currently unquantifiable effects of Brexit and the scale of the Covid pandemic.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 This report has set out a proposed balanced budget for the HRA for 2021/22, with appendices attached showing the following.
1. The overall makeup of the budget at summary level
  2. The proposed rent for 2021/22
  3. The proposed fees and charges for 2021/22
- 5.2 It has been recommended above that members agree the contents of this report and details of the proposed budget to be forwarded to Cabinet prior to approval by Full Council in February 2021.

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**Circulation of the Report:** Cllr Bob Evans, Cllr Andrew Moore, Leadership Team

## Analysis by service

Code	Best Value Unit	Budget 2020/2021 £	Movement £	Draft Budget 2021/2022 Round 1 £	Movement £	Draft Budget 2021/2022 Round 2 £
	<b>Income</b>					
SHO01	Dwelling Rents Income	(12,366,750)	(22,070)	(12,388,820)	(61,860)	(12,450,680)
SHO04	Non Dwelling Rents Income	(595,720)	33,880	(561,840)	2,010	(559,830)
SHO07	Leaseholders' Charges For Services	(21,640)	(2,170)	(23,810)	0	(23,810)
SHO08	Contributions Towards Expenditure	(29,220)	0	(29,220)	0	(29,220)
SHO10	H.R.A. Investment Income	(53,000)	21,200	(31,800)	21,800	(10,000)
SHO11	Misc. Income	(7,350)	0	(7,350)	0	(7,350)
	<b>Services</b>					
SHO13A	Repairs & Maintenance	3,593,980	69,290	3,663,270	(146,420)	3,516,850
SHO17A	Housing & Tenancy Services	1,485,620	191,020	1,676,640	33,260	1,709,900
	<b>Accounting entries 'below the line'</b>					
SHO29	Bad Debt Provision	53,000	97,000	150,000	0	150,000
SHO30	Share Of Corp And Dem	162,640	5,400	168,040	0	168,040
SHO32	H.R.A. Interest Payable	1,115,180	0	1,115,180	(88,750)	1,026,430
SHO34	H.R.A. Transfer To/From Earmarked Reserves	2,072,410	(444,500)	1,627,910	271,190	1,899,100
SHO36	H.R.A. R.C.C.O.	0	0	0	0	0
SHO37	Capital Receipts Res Adjustment	(26,000)	6,500	(19,500)	0	(19,500)
SHO38	Major Repairs Allowance	2,260,000	0	2,260,000	0	2,260,000
SHO45	Renewable Energy Transactions	(89,000)	0	(89,000)	(16,000)	(105,000)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(2,445,850)</b>	<b>(44,450)</b>	<b>(2,490,300)</b>	<b>15,230</b>	<b>(2,475,070)</b>

# Subjective analysis

Code	Best Value Unit	Budget 2020/2021	Movement	Draft Budget 2021/2022 Round 1	Movement	Draft Budget 2021/2022 Round 2
1000	Employees	2,891,590	149,190	3,040,780	(63,890)	2,976,890
2000	Premises	197,320	0	197,320	38,180	235,500
3000	Transport	256,060	17,310	273,370	(34,510)	238,860
4000	Cost Of Goods And Services	7,532,960	(345,290)	7,187,670	104,500	7,292,170
7000	Income	(13,323,780)	134,340	(13,189,440)	(29,050)	(13,218,490)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(2,445,850)</b>	<b>(44,450)</b>	<b>(2,490,300)</b>	<b>15,230</b>	<b>(2,475,070)</b>

Code	Best Value Unit	CY FY Budget	Movement	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget	Proposed Budget
5000	Internal Recharges	1,481,630	44,450	1,526,080	(24,670)	1,501,410
6000	Capital Charges	964,220	0	964,220	9,440	973,660
		<b>2,445,850</b>	<b>44,450</b>	<b>2,490,300</b>	<b>(15,230)</b>	<b>2,475,070</b>

	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
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Summary of movements from Round 1		£k
Dwelling rent calculation updated to reflect 1.5% increase across all dwelling types		(62)
Revised Ground Rent income forecast		2
Forecast investment income revised down to reflect market uncertainty		22
Building Services establishment savings		(73)
Reduced forecast of the transfer of costs out of the DLO		19
Reduction on overheads relating to proposed Building Services restructure		(74)
Vehicle overheads reduction		(10)
Car allowance budget removed		(23)
Minor increase to Tenancy establishment		9
Forecast increase of valuation fees		2
Budget introduced for cleaning contract		33
Increased budget towards grass verge cutting		4
Calculated reduction in interest payable		(89)
Forecast increase in net revenue for renewables		(16)
Increase on capital charges		9
Minor reduction on R1 internal recharges to the HRA from GF		(25)
EMR contributions increased based on forecast reduction in net service cost		271
Minor variances		1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>0</b>

## Assumptions

Dwelling rent increase of 1.5%  
 Void levels are based on current position  
 Garage rents frozen at £10.71 per week  
 Ground rents frozen at £275 per annum  
 Planned Maintenance costs based on the 30 year plan  
 Ten properties sold during 2020/21  
 Fifteen properties sold during 2021/22  
 Average of 36 social rent and 4 affordable rent properties void at any one time

# HRA Rent Budget 2021/22

Description	Average rent (52 week basis) £	Average properties 2021/22	Annual rent total £	Void level	Annual rent total (less voids)	Budget (rounded)
Social rent (in use)	80.70	2,895	12,146,480	1.24%	11,995,409	11,995,410
Affordable rent properties	116.16	85	513,427	4.71%	489,266	489,270
Rent written off					(35,000)	(35,000)
Write-offs recovered					1,000	1,000
HO budget					12,450,675	12,450,680
Affordable rent surplus					144,788	144,790
TOTAL		2,980				

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HRA: Proposed Fees and Charges 2021/22

	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Increase %</u>	<u>2021/22</u>
Garage rents per week (52 week basis)	£10.71	£0.00	0.00%	£10.71
<i>It should be noted that council tenants receive a discount of £1.85 per week on any garage rent</i>				
Garage ground rents (Annual charge)	£275	£0	0.00%	£275

N.B

MDDC Formula Rent on average (52 weeks)	£79.55			£80.72
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**SCRUTINY**  
**18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr N Woollatt  
**Responsible Officer:** Lisa Lewis, Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement

**Reason for Report:** Annual report on compliments, comments and complaints received as part of our 2 million plus contacts with customers in 2019/2020.

**RECOMMENDATION:** to note the record of compliments, comments and complaints previously presented to the Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Financial Implications:** None

**Legal Implications:** None

**Risk Assessment:** Accurate recording and monitoring of complaints is good practice and ensures openness and accountability to all customers.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** Compliments, comments and complaints are received by a variety of means which ensures that there is equality of opportunity for all customers. In addition, where there is a need Customer Services staff will always assist in the recording of these communications and complaints. There is also an interpretation service available.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** To ensure that the Council provides access to services for customers in whatever way they choose to transact with us. Ensuring extended access via digital means and improving the way that we hold information and deliver our services to customers, placing them at the centre of what we do.

**Impact on Climate Change:** None

## 1.0 Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Council receives contact from customers in a variety of ways for all services. The table below shows the overall number of contacts for each method for the last two years covering 2019 and 2020 to date.

Contact Method	01 December 2018 – 30 November 2019	01 December 2019 – 30 November 2020
Number of visitors to the office for enquiries	14789	5333
Telephone Payments (including automated)	60784	47698
Calls to call centre	106662	96381
Calls to direct lines (not including calls to mobiles)	340888	300345
Emails Received	Over 1 million	Over 1.4 Million
Digital Payments	89477	98063
Kiosk Payments	15857	6352

Online- forms submitted	41413	44101
Planning Applications	1001	1081

- 1.2 Traditionally this has been an annual retrospective. However, due to the pandemic and busy cabinet agendas this report has been postponed a number of times. The figures therefore also include Apr20 - Nov20; a period which covers the recent months of the pandemic and can be used as a measure of how we have been providing services over this period.
- 1.3 This report provides a summary of the number of complaints, compliments and comments received for each service from 1 April 2019 to 30 November 2020 (see **Appendix 1**). An official complaint is recorded when a customer has been unable to resolve their issues with the service concerned or where the issue is more serious than a normal service request that can be resolved by officers as part of their day to day activities.
- 1.4 Compliments, comments and complaints are recorded on the CRM in accordance with our corporate complaints policy. The name, address and contact details of the complainant, the nature of the complaint and the outcome of the complaint investigation are all recorded.
- 1.5 Feedback recorded is not the totality of the expression of dissatisfaction with service delivery. For example, Customer Services record many service requests and services also record contacts/service requests in their own ICT systems. These include routine enquiries, requests for service and logging service failures which can be resolved quickly to the customers' satisfaction.
- 1.6 Members are provided with performance statistics for complaints via the six weekly PDG Performance Management reports and as part of the Audit cycle.

## 2.0 Performance Statistics

- 2.1 Feedback is recorded on the CRM, based on the information recorded we are able to extract the number of complaints raised at each level. Level 1 complaints are investigated the Service Manager and Level 2 Complaints are investigated by Group Managers/member of Leadership Team.
- 2.2 Numbers of complaints upheld is recorded within the CRM.
- 2.3 As a measure of performance with complaint handling, the number acknowledged within 3 working days and resolved within timescales is recorded and reported on monthly as mentioned at 1.5.

## 3.0 What does feedback tell us?

- 3.1 As a result of complaints made, service managers have made changes to the working practices within service areas. These are also recorded in the CRM. Feedback where a change can be identified is an excellent way to improve services and respond to the needs of our customers.
- 3.2 Compliments received are often for members of staff who customers feel have done a good job. These are fed back to staff by line managers and in where appropriate in staff communications.

- 3.3 2020 has been a difficult and an unusual year for everyone due to Covid. We witnessed a decrease in customer contacts across most channels during the 1<sup>st</sup> lockdown in March. Surprisingly, even online transactions and phone calls went down as we reduced our hours for Face-to-Face contact and our customers adjusted to a very different way of life. There inevitably followed a decrease in the number and complexity of complaints that were reported.
- 3.4 The analysis of why customer transactions and complaints initially decreased has yet to be assessed in detail. But it does indicate customer behavioural change due to shifting priorities within the pandemic.
- 3.5 Additionally, as the customer transactions increased as we came out of the first lockdown we can see our customers moving away from the traditional telephony method of communication. Email became an important tool, but this can be a time consuming and inefficient way for customers to transact with us. This will be something that we need to consider as we review our customer based policies and consider the case for a new Customer Service system.
- 3.6 Overall feedback numbers are down by 16%. Despite the decrease in overall comments, the public have increased the number of compliments they have reported to us. That is testament to the hard work of staff over the last few months in continuing to provide a high level of service, even as it has been delivered slightly differently. It also indicates the value that our customers have placed on that. Samples of compliments received can be found at **Appendix 5**.
- 3.7 The Complaints Policy and Customer Care Policy are due for review in 2021 and this opportunity will be used to examine how we are managing complaints and the performance measures we have in place. Additional guidance in the management of Housing complaints has also been received, so the policy review will be brought forward to ensure that the guidance is appropriately reflected and communicated to staff.
- 3.8 In light of the above policy review, and as part of the Customer Service training requested following Scrutiny and Cabinet recommendations, the authority will be reviewing complaints training for managers as a substantive part of that work.

#### **4.0 Referrals to the Ombudsman complaints service**

- 4.1 11 complaints were made to the ombudsman by residents. Only one of these was upheld by the ombudsman. A summary of complaints to the Ombudsman 2019-20 (the latest available) is provided at **Appendix 2**.
- 4.2 The Local Government Ombudsman Annual review letter is provided at **Appendix 3**.
- 4.3 For comparison, a table of neighbouring authorities and their ombudsman cases has been provided at **Appendix 4**.

**Contact for more Information:** Lisa Lewis, Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement

**Circulation of the Report:** Cabinet Member



## Feedback recorded on CRM

Feedback Received	01 December 2018 to 30 November 2019	01 December 2019 to 30 November 2020
Complaints received	556	247
Invalid or withdrawn complaints	0	0
Comments received	114	106
Compliments received	90	113
Number of complaints at level 2	45	25
Number of complaints at level 2 upheld	10	10
Number of complaints at level 1 upheld	67	68
Number where a change was made to the service procedures as a result of the complaint	14	6
Open at start of date range	123	152
Open at end of date range	205	205

Fig. 1

## Percentage change 2018/19 – 2019-20 – Processed and/or Completed

Complaints	30%	DECREASE
Compliments	25%	INCREASE
Comments	9%	DECREASE

Fig.2

## Feedback by service – Processed and/or Completed

Feedback Processed	01 December 2018 to 30 November 2019			01 December 2019 to 30 November 2020		
Service	Complaints	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
Bulky Waste		2		1	1	
Business Rates			1	1		
Car Parks	3		2	5		2
Community Alarms	2	1		3		
Community Safety	1					
Council Tax Billing	12		5	2		1
Council Tax Recovery	7	1		2		1
Customer Services	9	8	8	13	8	7
Democracy and Members			11	1		
Dog Strays or Fouling			2	1		2
Economic Development				1		
Electoral Register	1		1			

Environmental Services	2	1	
Finance			
Garden Waste	7		10
Grass Cutting	5	5	
Health & Safety			
High Hedges			
Homelessness	6	6	3
Housing Benefits	7		
Housing Repairs	85	29	26
Housing Tenancy	37	10	2
Human Resources			
Legal Services	1		
Leisure	14		6
Monitoring Officer	1		
Parks and Flower Beds	1	1	1
Payments	2		2
Planning - Development Control	28	2	1
Planning - Forward Planning			
Pollution Inc. Noise			
Private Sector Housing	4		
Property Services	10	1	2
Recycling	38	8	12
Refuse Collection	64	10	17
Street Cleansing	4	4	2
Trade Waste	1		
Waste Transfer Station		1	
Uncategorized			2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>352**</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>116</b>

3		1
1		
5	1	10
6	2	3
3		
1		
4	8	1
1	2	1
59	35	28
50	23	1
1		
		1
3	1	
1		1
23	*	2
1		
2		
3		
9		3
19	8	15
21	18	21
1	6	5
<b>245**</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>106</b>

**Fig.3**

\*Compliments not recorded in CRM – recording process to be amended going forward.

\*\*Fig.1 relates to items received.

Fig.3 relates to comments processed through to completion. The totals will differ based on a number of cases (particularly complaints) remaining 'active' on the dates selected for reporting. Complaints can take a number of days to complete.



## Ombudsman Decisions 2019-20

Category	Decided	Decision	Decision Reason
Planning & Development	22/08/2019	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged injustice
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	07/05/2019	Not Upheld	no mal
Planning & Development	15/08/2019	Upheld	mal & inj - no further action, BinJ already remedied
Planning & Development	01/04/2019	Closed after initial enquiries	S27 not by member of the public
Housing	09/10/2019	Not Upheld	Other reason not to continue with investigation
Highways & Transport	01/07/2019	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given
Planning & Development	05/11/2019	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged mal/service failure
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	17/10/2019	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given
Planning & Development	11/12/2019	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - referred to BinJ
Housing	18/11/2019	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given
Planning & Development	28/02/2020	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged mal/service failure

# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

22 July 2020

*By email*

Mr Walford  
Chief Executive  
Mid Devon District Council

Dear Mr Walford

## **Annual Review letter 2020**

I write to you with our annual summary of statistics on the decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about your authority for the year ending 31 March 2020. Given the exceptional pressures under which local authorities have been working over recent months, I thought carefully about whether it was still appropriate to send you this annual update. However, now, more than ever, I believe that it is essential that the public experience of local services is at the heart of our thinking. So, I hope that this feedback, which provides unique insight into the lived experience of your Council's services, will be useful as you continue to deal with the current situation and plan for the future.

## **Complaint statistics**

This year, we continue to place our focus on the outcomes of complaints and what can be learned from them. We want to provide you with the most insightful information we can and have made several changes over recent years to improve the data we capture and report.

We focus our statistics on these three key areas:

**Complaints upheld** - We uphold complaints when we find some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before we investigated. A focus on how often things go wrong, rather than simple volumes of complaints provides a clearer indicator of performance.

**Compliance with recommendations** - We recommend ways for authorities to put things right when faults have caused injustice. Our recommendations try to put people back in the position they were before the fault and we monitor authorities to ensure they comply with our recommendations. Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An authority with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

**Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority** - We want to encourage the early resolution of complaints and to credit authorities that have a positive and open approach to resolving complaints. We recognise cases where an authority has taken steps to put things right before the complaint came to us. The authority upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your authority with similar types of authorities to work out an average level of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

This data will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), along with a copy of this letter on 29 July 2020, and our Review of Local Government Complaints. For further information on how to interpret our statistics, please visit our [website](#).

### Resources to help you get it right

There are a range of resources available that can support you to place the learning from complaints, about your authority and others, at the heart of your system of corporate governance. Your council's performance launched last year and puts our data and information about councils in one place. Again, the emphasis is on learning, not numbers.

You can find the decisions we have made, public reports we have issued, and the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

I would encourage you to share the tool with colleagues and elected members; the information can provide valuable insights into service areas, early warning signs of problems and is a key source of information for governance, audit, risk and scrutiny functions.

Earlier this year, we held our link officer seminars in London, Bristol, Leeds and Birmingham. Attended by 178 delegates from 143 local authorities, we focused on maximising the impact of complaints, making sure the right person is involved with complaints at the right time, and how to overcome common challenges.

We have a well-established and successful training programme supporting local authorities and independent care providers to help improve local complaint handling. During the year, we delivered 118 courses, training more than 1,400 people. This is 47 more courses than we delivered last year and included more training to adult social care providers than ever before.

To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MK' followed by a stylized flourish.

Michael King  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

### Complaints upheld



33% of complaints we  
Investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average  
of 45% in similar authorities.

<sup>1</sup>  
Upheld decision

Statistic are based on a total  
of 3 detailed investigations for  
the period between 1 April  
2019 to 31 March 2020

### Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations

No recommendations were due for compliance in this period

### Satisfactory remedies provided by the



In 100% of upheld cases  
we found the authority had  
provided a satisfactory  
remedy before the  
complaint reached the  
Ombudsman.

This compares to an  
average of 20% in similar

<sup>1</sup>  
Satisfactory remedy decision

Statistics are based on a total  
of 3 detailed investigations for  
the period between 1 April 2019  
to 31 March 2020

## Appendix 4

### Local Authority Benchmarking

Authority	Number of Complaints Referred	Complaints Upheld
East Devon	7	2
Mid Devon	11	1
North Devon	5	3
South Hams	3	2
Teignbridge	5	0
Torridge	18	2
West Devon	4	1

## Appendix 5

Sample Compliments received – names and addresses have been removed but all other content as received.

### Customer Services

#### October 2020

I just wanted to pass on my thanks to XXXXX, who works in your customer service department and answered the 'phone to me on two separate occasions last week,

My query was regarding Council Tax and was a bit convoluted, but both times Emma was so helpful and friendly, taking the time to really look into the issue and ensure that i had the right advice. Due to her help, the issue is now being resolved and I'd like to thank her and also say that as far as customer service goes, Emma is a complete star! In these days when unfortunately excellent customer service isn't always given the recognition it deserves, the Council should be very proud of the level of service provided by Emma. It makes a real difference. Thanks again. XXXXX

#### October 2020

Mrs XXXXXX has called in to thank us for helping sort out her communal aerial problem. The engineer has called and she can now watch TV. She says she could hug us all

#### November 2020

Good morning My name is XXXXXXXXXXXX my account number is XXXXXXXXX

Ive just got off the phone with one of your staff members named Andrea who advised me her role was customer service, pressing number 4 to speak to some one regarding me bill and payments

I would like to send back some feedback about this human being... This lady has gone above and beyond to comfort me and respect me, she has made me feel relaxed and showed alot of compassion and empathy she respected me with integrity and dignity,... She has explained in great detail how she was able to help me today with my bill... Has provided me with reassurance that I will be okay and restored my faith in businesses and more importantly people today... I cannot speak highly enough of this wonderful women and would like to thank her ever so much for respectfully leaving me with dignity reassuring me there is support available and comforting me when I showed concern

Many Thanks

MDDC for such fantastic customer Service and once again... A VERY passionate and caring member of your company :)

### Waste & Recycling

#### August 2020

Would like to pass on thanks for their superb conduct during these unprecedented times. The refuse and recycling teams have all been marvellous.

#### November 2020

A big thankyou to all refuse and recycling collectors. Unsung heroes in our opinion. My husband is

81 and finds difficulty in walking but carefully sorts our recycling and puts out the boxes each fortnight. The collectors carefully stack the emptied boxes making it easier for him to take in. Please pass on a BIG THANKYOU from us. Stay safe!

## **Street Cleaning**

### **September 2020**

We have just had the road sweeper (XXXXXX) in our close (XXXXXXXXX) and I just wanted to say how brilliant the operator was. All the areas that the vehicle could not reach - he got out of his cab and swept manually (and there was a lot of sweeping). I was really impressed with how the driver went above and beyond what they normally do and it has been noted and appreciated. Please pass the message onto the driver.

### **July 2020**

I wish to send my compliments to the MDDC street cleaner in Cullompton. This morning a huge amount of refuse was on the streets when I passed at 6.00am. When I returned at 8.00 the refuse had been collected and the town centre was immaculate no litter or windblown refuse could be seen. Also thanked him for keeping the Mill stream both clean and tidy. He deserves to receive good feedback for his efforts

## **Housing Tenancy**

### **June 2020**

Can you pass on to the CEO and your line manager that I am really pleased with the action you have taken and the way you have had open communication with me. This is a completely different way of dealing with MDDC and has exceeded my expectations.

### **October 2020**

Thank you so much for all your help today. You've gone above and beyond and I really appreciate it. I'm such a worrier and I'm sorry I've been a pest and asked lots of questions!

### **November 2020**

No Many Thanks to you XXXXX! I think today from yourself has been the best experience of communication I've had at all from MDDC in all! And I'm very glad we have been able to get to the bottom of the rent situation!

Many thanks again

## **Building Services**

### **September 2020**

I would like to thank you and your team  
On the efficient way my request for repair was dealt with.  
James and his apprentice solved the Ongoing 'hot water' problem efficiently and with courtesy.  
Very grateful for a wonderful service!

### **June 2020**

I would just like to thank you for getting this job done today. (XXXXXXXXXXXX) was initially booked in for the 4th July 2020 so was surprised when he rang the buzzer this afternoon!  
The workman arrived at 1pm and completed the job within 10minutes tops. Very happy with the outcome, he was very considerate and social distanced perfectly!

Thank you again, it is very much appreciated!

## **Grounds Maintenance**

### **January 2020**

The customer wishes to thank the people that came and cleared her garden and cut the hedges and bushes as they have done a great job and left it lovely,. This is the customers allocated garden withtin the communal area

### **May 2020**

Mrs Cxxxxxx rang to thank you for doing a very job cutting the hedge at the front of the house. She said that you did a wonderful job and brushed and tidied up after themselves. She just wanted to pass her compliments to you

## **Garden Waste**

### **March 2020**

Mr Bxxxxx would like to thank the operatives who went out on Friday and collected his bin and put the permit on.

They also wheeled the bin back inside his garden boundary which he is thankful for as he has some back problems at present.

### **May 2020**

I just wanted to thank the refuse collectors for their really helpful and intelligent approach to collecting our garden waste today 15 04 20.

Because we were unable to access the Punchbowl Recycling centre and missed collections due to Covid 19, we had a couple of bins with garden waste along with our brown bin. Everything was collected.

This makes life a little easier for us. Once again thank you.



# MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS

February 2021

The Forward Plan containing Key Decisions is published 28 days prior to each Cabinet meeting

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Draft Interim Devon Carbon Plan</b> Group to discuss and review the draft plan with a view to recommend to Cabinet any minor amendments on behalf of the Council.	Environment Policy Development Group  Cabinet	12 Jan 2021  4 Feb 2021	Andrew Busby, Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets Tel: 01884 234948	Cabinet Member for Climate Change (Councillor Elizabeth Wainwright)	Open
<b>Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay</b> To receive a report which outlines the new draft Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon and Torbay. Following its approval at the DASWC meeting on 15th October 2020, the draft Strategy requires the approval of the individual local authorities for proceeding to public consultation.	Environment Policy Development Group  Cabinet	12 Jan 2021  4 Feb 2021	Darren Beer, Interim Group Manager Street Scene and Open Spaces	Cabinet Member for the Environment (Councillor Colin Slade)	Open

<b>Title of report and summary of decision</b>	<b>Decision Taker</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Officer contact</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)</b>
<b>Regulation of Investigatory Powers</b> To receive the annual update of Regulation of Investigatory Powers	Scrutiny Committee  Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet	18 Jan 2021  26 Jan 2021  4 Feb 2021	Kathryn Tebbey, Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer)	Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)	Open
<b>Grass Verges on HRA and Working Group Report</b>	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Jan 2021  4 Feb 2021	Claire Fry, Group Manager for Housing Services Tel: 01884 234920	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Open
<b>HRA Medium Term Financial Plan</b> To consider a MTFP for the HRA.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Jan 2021  4 Feb 2021	J P McLachlan, Principal Accountant	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objectives</b> To receive the Annual review of the Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objective	Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet	26 Jan 2021  4 Mar 2021	Catherine Yandle, Group Manager for Performance, Governance and Data Security Tel: 01884 234975	Cabinet for the Working Environment and Support Services (Councillor Nikki Woollatt)	Open

<b>Title of report and summary of decision</b>	<b>Decision Taker</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Officer contact</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)</b>
<b>Grant payments to external organisations (the strategic grants review process)</b> To receive the 4 yearly review of Grant Payments to external organisations from the Group Manager for Growth, Economy & Delivery	Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet	26 Jan 2021  4 Feb 2021	John Bodley-Scott, Economic Development Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)	Open
<b>Condition and future use of Council owned garages</b> Providing an update to Members on the current garage stock situation, with plans for modernisations and opportunities for change of use/redevelopment, and the adoption of a 6-year rather than the existing 12-year planned maintenance programme.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Jan 2021  4 Feb 2021	Simon Newcombe, Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services Tel: 01884 244615	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Open
<b>Corporate Recovery Policy (recommendation from the Audit Committee to the Cabinet)</b>	Audit Committee  Cabinet	26 Jan 2021  4 Mar 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open

<b>Title of report and summary of decision</b>	<b>Decision Taker</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Officer contact</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)</b>
<b>3 Rivers Development Limited - Business Plan and Appraisal for the 9 dwellings at Bampton</b> To consider a business plan and appraisal for the Bampton site.	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Stephen Walford, Chief Executive Tel: 01884 234201	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Part exempt
<b>Information with regard to the possible creation of a Teckal compliant company</b> To consider advice surrounding the possibility of creating a new Teckal-compliant company entity.	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Stephen Walford, Chief Executive Tel: 01884 234201	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Open
<b>Budget</b> To receive proposals for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account for 2021/22	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2021 24 Feb 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Tax Base Calculation</b> To consider the details of the statutory calculations necessary to determine the Tax Base for the Council Tax	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2021 24 Feb 2021	Dean Emery, Group Manager for Revenues and Benefits	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open

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<b>National Non-Domestic Rates</b> To provide an update of the income generation and financial implications of the number of Business Rate properties in Mid Devon and to approve the NNDR1 (estimated income to be generated in 2021/22 from business rates).	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Dean Emery, Group Manager for Revenues and Benefits	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Cullompton Conservation Management Plan</b> To consider a draft Cullompton Conservation Management Plan for public consultation	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration Tel: 01884 234346	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration (Councillor Richard Chesterton)	Open
<b>Shopfront Design Guide</b> To consider a draft shopfront design guide for public consultation	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration Tel: 01884 234346	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration (Councillor Richard Chesterton)	Open

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<b>Cullompton Town Centre Masterplan</b> To consider a report with regard to the stage 2 public consultation.	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration Tel: 01884 234346	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration (Councillor Richard Chesterton)	Open
<b>Tax Strategy and Policy</b> Policy and procedures for tax affairs of the Council.	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2021 24 Feb 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Capital Programme</b> To seek approval of the 2021/22 Capital Programme and to note the draft 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 programmes	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2021 24 Feb 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Review of Mid Devon Local Plan</b> To consider issues and options for the next review of the Local Plan in Mid Devon	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration Tel: 01884 234346	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration (Councillor Richard Chesterton)	Open

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<b>Local Development Scheme</b> To update the Local Development Scheme	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration Tel: 01884 234346	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration (Councillor Richard Chesterton)	Open
<b>Capital Strategy</b> To request agreement of the proposed Capital Strategy for 2021/22.	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2021 24 Feb 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy</b> To seek agreement of the proposed Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22.	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2021 24 Feb 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Policy Framework</b> To consider the Policy Framework	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2021 24 Feb 2021	Stephen Walford, Chief Executive Tel: 01884 234201	Leader of the Council (Councillor Bob Deed)	Open

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<b>The Establishment</b> Report informing Members of the overall structure of the Council showing the management and deployment of officers.	Cabinet  Council	4 Feb 2021  24 Feb 2021	Matthew Page, Group Manager for Human Resources	Cabinet for the Working Environment and Support Services (Councillor Nikki Woollatt)	Open
<b>Pay Policy</b> To consider a report relating to senior pay in particular the role of the Chief Executive, Directors and other senior officers.	Cabinet  Council	4 Feb 2021  24 Feb 2021	Matthew Page, Group Manager for Human Resources	Cabinet for the Working Environment and Support Services (Councillor Nikki Woollatt)	Open
<b>3 Rivers Development Limited - Business Plan</b> To consider the Business Plan	Cabinet	4 Feb 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Part exempt
<b>Asset Management and Capital Strategy Plan 2021-2025</b> To consider the revised strategy	Cabinet	4 Mar 2021	Andrew Busby, Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets Tel: 01884 234948	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Open



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<b>Tiverton Town Centre Masterplan</b> To consider a draft masterplan for public consultation	Cabinet	4 Mar 2021	Jenny Clifford, Head of Planning, Economy and Regeneration Tel: 01884 234346	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration (Councillor Richard Chesterton)	Open
<b>Crediton NHS Hub Phase 2</b> To consider a funding request.	Cabinet	4 Mar 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Beech Road, Tiverton - Design and Build Tender</b> To consider the award of the tender	Cabinet	4 Mar 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Part exempt
<b>Bereavement Services Fees &amp; Charges</b> To receive the annual review of Bereavement Services Fees & Charges from the Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets	Environment Policy Development Group  Cabinet	9 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Andrew Busby, Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets Tel: 01884 234948	Cabinet Member for the Environment (Councillor Colin Slade)	Open

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<b>EHOD Economic Development Strategy</b> To consider a review strategy	Economy Policy Development Group  Cabinet	11 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Adrian Welsh, Group Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery Tel: 01884 234398	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration (Councillor Richard Chesterton)	Open
<b>Options for Accelerating Affordable Housing Delivery in the District</b> To consider additional governance arrangements for housing delivery	Scrutiny Committee  Cabinet	15 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Open
<b>Housing Revenue Account Asset Management Strategy</b> To receive a report providing a review of the Housing Revenue Account Asset Management Strategy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	16 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Jill May, Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation Tel: 01884 234381	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Open
<b>Devon Home Choice Policy Review</b> To consider a review of the policy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	16 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Claire Fry, Group Manager for Housing Services Tel: 01884 234920	Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services (Councillor Bob Evans)	Open

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<b>Air Quality Action Plan</b> To receive the 4 yearly review of the Air Quality Action Plan from the Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services	Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet	23 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Simon Newcombe, Group Manager for Public Health and Regulatory Services Tel: 01884 244615	Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)	Open
<b>Town and Parish Charter</b> To receive the 3 yearly review of the Town and Parish Charter	Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet	23 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Jill May, Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation Tel: 01884 234381	Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)	Open
<b>Community Engagement Strategy (Including Action Plan)</b> To receive the 2 yearly review of the Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan	Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet	23 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Lisa Lewis, Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement Tel: 01884 234981	Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)	Open
<b>Corporate Anti Social Behaviour Policy</b> To receive the 3 yearly review of the Corporate Anti Social Behaviour Policy	Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet	23 Mar 2021  8 Apr 2021	Jill May, Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation Tel: 01884 234381	Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)	Open

<b>Title of report and summary of decision</b>	<b>Decision Taker</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Officer contact</b>	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)</b>
<b>Tree Policy</b> 5 yearly review	Environment Policy Development Group  Cabinet	Not before 25th May 2021  Not before 30th Jun 2021	Andrew Busby, Group Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets Tel: 01884 234948	Cabinet Member for the Environment (Councillor Colin Slade)	Open
<b>Outturn report 2020/21</b> To receive the outturn for the financial year 2020/21	Cabinet	Not before 10th Jun 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Annual Treasury Management Report</b> To consider the annual report	Cabinet	Not before 16th Jun 2021	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242	Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Andrew Moore)	Open
<b>Customer Care Policy</b> To receive the 3 yearly review of the Customer Care Policy	Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet	September 2021  October 2021	Lisa Lewis, Group Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement Tel: 01884 234981	Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Councillor Dennis Knowles)	Open