

# Public Document Pack

**Mid Devon District Council**

**Cabinet**

**Tuesday, 19 September 2023 at 5.15 pm  
Phoenix Chamber, Phoenix House, Tiverton**

**Next ordinary meeting  
Tuesday, 17 October 2023 at 5.15 pm**

**Please Note:** This meeting will take place at Phoenix House and members of the Public and Press are able to attend via Teams. If you are intending to attend in person please contact the committee clerk in advance, in order that numbers of people can be appropriately managed in physical meeting rooms.

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Meeting ID: 342 042 713 396  
Passcode: N43rou

## **Membership**

Cllr L Taylor  
Cllr N Bradshaw  
Cllr J Buczkowski  
Cllr S J Clist  
Cllr S Keable  
Cllr J Lock  
Cllr J Wright  
Cllr D Wulff

# **A G E N D A**

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

1.     **Apologies**  
To receive any apologies for absence.
  
2.     **Public Question Time**  
To receive any questions relating to items on the Agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.
  
3.     **Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**  
To record any interests on agenda matters.
  
4.     **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** *(Pages 5 - 16)*  
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 29 August 2023.
  
5.     **2024/25 - 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan Update**  
*(Pages 17 - 38)*  
To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)
  
6.     **Notification of Key Decisions** *(Pages 39 - 56)*  
To note the contents of the Forward Plan.

**Stephen Walford**  
Chief Executive  
Friday, 8 September 2023

## Meeting Information

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## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 29 August 2023 at 5.15 pm

### **Present**

#### **Councillors**

L Taylor (Leader)  
J Buczkowski, S J Clist, S Keable, J Lock, J Wright and D Wulff

### **Apologies**

#### **Councillors**

N Bradshaw

### **Also Present**

#### **Councillors**

D Broom, E Buczkowski, G Duchesne, R Gilmour, C Harrower,  
L Knight and S Robinson

### **Also Present**

#### **Officers:**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Maria De Leburne (District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer), Paul Deal (Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Simon Newcombe (Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing), Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene), Luke Howard (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Andrew Seaman (Member Services Manager) and Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer)

## 31. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr N Bradshaw.

Cllrs A Cuddy, G Czapiewski, M Fletcher, N Woollatt attended via Teams.

## 32. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

### **Paul Elstone:**

#### **Question 1**

Paragraph 2.7 on Page 169 of your papers says that the Council contracted to purchase the Post Hill Site for £410,000 in December 2017. But Land Registry shows the land was purchased for £492,000 in October 2020. Can these differences be explained?

#### **Question 2**

In a document dated December 2017 3 Rivers are shown as a Nominee as part of the commercial transaction to acquire the Post Hill site. Please explain the full reasons as to why this Nominee status was necessary?

#### **Question 3**

In papers presented to the Planning Committee on the 8th June 2016, as justification for the Council buying the Post Hill Land, for Affordable Homes the following is said. "Benefits in bringing forward the development more quickly". That was 7 years ago. Since then, David Wilson Homes, who were contractually required to build around 70 affordable homes before the Council took over this liability as part of the land purchase agreement, have now fully completed their Braid Park development with all homes occupied. Despite spending over £1 million, this Council has not put a single affordable home on the site. The Council wasted money and has effectively blocked the building of 70 Affordable Houses - how does this demonstrate the good governance that is both expected and required of a Council?

**Question 4**

According to the Land Registry, 3 Rivers paid £2.75 million plus taxes in December 2019 for land in Knowle Lane, Cullompton. The land had Outline Planning permission which had only been granted on appeal after this Council supported by Cullompton Town Council had refused it. Yet this Council lent 3 Rivers the money to buy this highly contentious plot of land. 3 Rivers has done nothing with it since and has allowed the outline planning approval to lapse. Any future development will have to apply for new Planning permission, which this Council should oppose again. The Council has allowed 3 Rivers to devalue this site, how does this demonstrate the good financial governance that is both expected and required of a Council?

The Leader thanked Mr Elstone for their questions and stated that a written answer would be provided.

**Graeme Barnell****Question 1**

What is the strategy of this administration in addressing the availability of housing especially of affordable and social rented housing?

**Answer**

Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services confirmed that the Council does currently have a clear Housing Strategy 2021-25, with an objective to increase the number of affordable homes and specifically to increase the Council housing stock of social and affordable rent accommodation. The report is consistent with this strategic position, nonetheless the draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) target of 500 new Council houses in 5-years represents an acceleration and increase of the original strategy target of 160 homes.

**Question 2**

If such a strategy is being formulated, when can it be expected?

**Answer**

See above.

**Question 3**

When will regular performance data regarding the delivery of the various types of affordable housing become available? I asked many times for this KPI to be included in the regular performance updates during my time on the Council both as Cabinet member and as a member of Scrutiny and the Homes PDG but it has never happened. Perhaps you will be more successful?

**Answer**

The number of new Council houses built will be part of the new performance dashboard for Homes PDG provided on a quarterly basis.

**Barry Warren****Question 1**

It is noted that under Section 3 of the report on Page 175 of the papers the heading Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks that the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer signed on the 15th August 2023. It is also noted that the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing has signed on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director.

As the recommendations within this report have major implications for the council on a number of issues why hasn't the Chief Executive been personally involved to safeguard the reputation of the Council?

**Answer:**

The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing responded and stated that the report has been fully reviewed and approved by the Leadership Team including the Chief Executive. Nonetheless, following the retirement of the former Corporate Director responsible for Housing (Jill May), the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing has been appointed to act as an interim Director for all Housing functions from 1 June 2023, therefore has authority to sign-off the report.

**Question 2**

Why have the relevant elements of this report in relation to acquiring housing and the expenditure of HRA monies not been referred to the Homes PDG (HPDG) in the first instance so that they could consider the proposals and make recommendations to Cabinet?

**Answer:**

The HPDG (and Cabinet) have already approved a policy position to build more Council Housing under the Housing Strategy 2021-25. This report does not represent a new policy approach but puts forward recommendations aligned with policy that are financial decisions relevant for Cabinet.

**Question 3**

Recommendation 1 refers to 'subject to and agreed valuation'. Who is to set the valuation and who is to agree it? Will it be a genuine independent valuation?

**Answer:**

Should Cabinet agree to take the recommendation forward, the final amount that the HRA pay for St George's Court will be informed by an independent valuation. Who will provide this valuation has not been determined at this stage. This will be further informed by a valuation for the purposes of HRA rent setting for this site which legally has to be provided by the District Valuer.

**Question 4**

A potential purchase price for St George's Court is set out in the body of this report and is given as £8.65M. What is the basis for this amount?

**Answer:**

This is the impaired value of the outstanding loan to 3RDL for St George's Court and has been used for the basis of the appraisal of potential value for money and viability of this site to the HRA. This figure is allowed for in the draft MDDC Statement of Accounts 22/23.

**Question 5**

In the light of many concerns expressed as to the quality of workmanship on the site of St. Georges Court will there be an independent survey and report commissioned before any final valuation or agreement to purchase?

**Answer:**

The Council continues to work with 3RDL to ensure that the site meets the relevant standards of workmanship. Furthermore, the HRA would not be in a position to complete the potential acquisition of the site until full Building Control sign-off has been provided for every dwelling and all other regulatory approvals are in place.

**Roger Davey****Question 1**

Given the projected scale of losses incurred by 3 Rivers, in particular the town hall development. Will the council commit to finishing this project including the landscaping to as high a standard as possible and then to place it on the open market and market it aggressively in order to maximise the monies returned to the public coffers?

**Answer**

The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that the Council has committed a number of times to fund to completion both the St George's Court and Haddon Heights projects. This remains our firm commitment.

**Question 2**

Will the council arrange a public enquiry into the whole 3 Rivers debacle where all of the information held by the council and 3 Rivers is released to the public?

**Answer**

The Council has discussed the potential of a "lessons learned" piece of work. This was discussed only last week at a meeting of our Scrutiny Committee.

**Question 3**

Will the council release the cost analysis report prepared by Randell Symonds LLP for this development given that all the reasons for the original decision to withhold the report i.e. that disclosure would damage 3 Rivers ability on future contracts and would give competitors insight into the costing and procurements methods used by this company etc., are now irrelevant as the company is to be wound up?

**Answer**

The company is still trading and a formal decision on the future of St George's has not yet been finalised. Therefore the Council will not be releasing any commercially sensitive information regarding this development at the current time.

**33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

No interests were declared under this item. Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interest where appropriate.

**34. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 1 August 2023 and 16 August 2023, were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Leader.

**35. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a report\* of the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste which provided Members with an update on performance against the corporate plan and local service targets for quarter 1 (2023/24).

It was highlighted that with regards to complaints, performance had been higher than what was detailed within the report presented.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.



### 36. CORPORATE RISK REPORT

Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a report\* of the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste which provided Members with a quarterly update on the Corporate Risk Register.

The following was discussed:

- It was asked whether the risks titled Culm Garden Village and Cullompton's Town Centre Relief Road, should be considered at the same level of risk. To which the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) acknowledged that these were linked, but the reason for a difference in risk was due to the long term funding received for the Culm Garden Village and that it was appropriate to treat these as separate risks. The relief road was considered higher, which was also agreed by the Audit Committee.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

### 37. QTR. 1 BUDGET MONITORING

Cabinet had before it a report\* which presented the forecasted outturn position for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme for the financial year 2023/24, covering the period between April 2023 to June 2023.

The following was highlighted:

- The General Fund faced a £527k overspend at year end, which was significantly better than initial projections. The previous administration set a budget with a projected yearend overspend of £625k. Along with this, there was a £400k salary saving target which meant that a balanced budget required over £1m to be delivered in year.
- Planning and Building Control income was lower than forecasted due to stagnation of the housing market. Recycling income prices had dropped since the budget was set. However these were offset by higher income from Garden Waste and Leisure Services.
- HRA was projected to have a £346k underspend due to slippage of projects.

The following was discussed:

- Whether vacancy targets had put pressure on the use of agencies and it was asked how this was managed. The Corporate Manager for Finance explained that agency costs were included within the savings target presented which was above £400k.
- It was highlighted that many organisations and Local Authorities were struggling with sickness rates and turnover.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. The Cabinet are asked to:

- a) Note the financial monitoring information for the income and expenditure for the three months to 30 June 2023 and the projected outturn position;

- b) Agree the amendment to the Capital Programme of £3,733k reflecting the inclusion of Leasing costs in line with amended regulations and other additions since the budget was set;
- c) Note the updated Treasury Management reporting as required by regulation, and recommend that Council approves the changes to the treasury and prudential indicators in tables 6.3.1 and 6.3.2;
- d) Note the use of Waivers for the Procurement of goods and services as included in Section 9.

(Proposed by J Buczkowski, seconded by S Keable)

Reason for the decision:

The financial resources of the Council impact directly on its ability to deliver the Corporate Plan prioritising the use of available resources in 2023/24. The Monitoring Report indicates how the Council's resources have been used to support the delivery of budgetary decisions.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

### 38. **PERFORMANCE UPDATE - PERFORMANCE DASHBOARDS**

The Cabinet **NOTED** a verbal update from the Corporate Manager of People, Governance and Waste in which it was outlined that the development of performance dashboards were delivered to each Policy Development Group (PDG), with Homes PDG having two. There was also a planning and corporate dashboard and that the Corporate Dashboard would be circulated to Cabinet.

### 39. **ENVIRONMENT ENFORCEMENT YEARLY REVIEW REPORT**

Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a report\* of the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste which provided Members with an overview of the Environment and Enforcement service for the financial year 2022/23.

It was highlighted that there were no outstanding abandoned vehicles from the 22/23 financial year.

The following was discussed:

- An explanation was sought on the process followed when abandoned cars were removed by the Council. An officer explained that they were kept for up to for 14 days, after that, they were crushed. If someone claimed the vehicle, they would have to pay the removal costs as well as a fixed penalty notice for abandoning a vehicle.
- Parking Outturn 2016 – 2023 was raised and it was noted that costs had increased. But so had the variance. An officer explained that due to increased costs the income generated had reduced.
- The Council's fleet of electric vehicles was welcomed.
- The Enforcement team were due to undertake Police and Criminal Evidence Act training.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

#### 40. REVIEW OF 3 WEEKLY BIN COLLECTIONS

Cabinet had before it a report\* of the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste which outlined the effectiveness of the council's waste and recycling scheme, known as the Bin-it 123 scheme, as implemented in October 2022. It also highlighted the improvement of operational efficiency of collection crews, increased recycling rates and limiting CO2 emissions. It also provided a review of recycling frequency following the Cabinet decision on 29 Nov 2022 to complete a weekly recycling trial in the District during the financial year 2023-2024.

The following was highlighted:

- The Council had been flexible with the transition to the 'Bin it 123' scheme and that side-waste had been collected, but there was a need to stop collecting side-waste. It was noted that other top performing Authorities had a zero tolerance approach and did not collect side-waste.
- First few months were encouraging and that the recycling rate was just under 60%.
- A weekly recycling pilot was agreed to be undertaken but due to unclear funding and costs it was asked to defer until financially feasible.

The following was discussed:

- Concern was raised over stopping the collection of side-waste and of the length of time it would be left until dealt with. It was also asked how communal refuse points would be managed and how those that left side-waste would be identified. An officer explained that initially households would be contacted but if further breaches continued, Section 46 would be applied. This would be a formal warning that would last for 1 year and could then be escalated further if this warning was breached.
- The Corporate Manager for People Governance and Waste explained that the Council would not let the District become untidy and that they were asking for residents to comply with the scheme. The Council would ensure that residents had the appropriate containers and bins, it was also about working with residents and landlords, providing support if needed.
- That statistics and figures should be reported to the Environment PDG to ensure that the Council kept on track.
- That top performing authorities were collecting every 2 weeks, clarification was sought as to why the council was being compared to every 2 week collection models when the Council collected every 3 weeks. The officer explained that these authorities were identified as the top performers and that it was to highlight that none collected side-waste.
- It was raised that this Council should be compared to authorities that also collected every 3 weeks. To which the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste agreed that this could be reported to the Environment PDG.
- It was noted that the increased recycling rates should be celebrated, and that recycling pots and pans should also be considered.
- Education on recycling was raised, to which the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste explained that education was important and needed to be continual so that recycling awareness was maintained. In addition, it was also raised

that many people learn in different ways and that it was key to find the right medium of communication.

- School education on recycling was raised. To which an officer explained that Schools were already being engaged with.
- It was noted that all had a responsibility to keep wards within the Council clean and tidy.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. To cease collecting side waste from 1 October 2023 and deliver a comprehensive communications programme in advance of this to minimise the need for enforcement.
2. To postpone the trial scheduled for 2023-2024 to allow for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current scheme against the metrics of recycling % achieved, residual tonnage reduction, and overall cost to the authority.

(Proposed by the Leader, Cllr L Taylor)

Reason for decision:

This report identifies with the 'Environment' priority area of the Corporate Plan for 2020- 2024 'increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of residual waste generated'. Supporting and enabling customers to recycle and reduce residual waste contributes to Mid Devon District Councils' commitment to the Devon Climate Emergency.

Note: \* Report previously circulated

#### 41. **NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Cabinet had before it a report\* of the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing which outlined that under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires all registered providers to publish a policy setting out, how in consultation with their tenants, they will maintain and improve the neighbourhood's associated with their homes. This has been developed following an in-depth review of the policy in consultation with tenants and partner organisations.

The following was discussed:

- That there were no comments were received during the consultation. It was asked how the Council could engage more widely so that responses were received. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing explained that it was difficult getting responses for consultations, and that a new approach to improve engagement was due to take place, with other new always considered.
- The topic of vulnerable people was raised along with the safeguarding elements found within the report. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing explained that all vulnerable people were considered within Council policies.
- It was sought that a paragraph on vulnerable people/safeguarding be added to these policy reports, to which the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing agreed that that this could be included in future policy reports.

**RESOLVED** that:

Cabinet adopt the updated Neighbourhood Management Policy and Equality Impact Assessment contained in Annexes A and B respectively.

(Proposed by S Clist seconded by J Wright)

Reason for decision:

A stated aim of the Council is to deliver sustainable communities.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

#### 42. **3 RIVERS OPTIONS APPRAISAL REPORT**

No recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee were received

#### 43. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNTS - LARGE SITES OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Cabinet had before it a report\* from the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing which provided options for potential large sites within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) development programme. The sites considered are Post Hill, Tiverton, St Georges Court, Tiverton and Knowle Lane, Cullompton. These sites are presently within the control of the Council with Post Hill held within the HRA.

The report aimed to obtain agreement for the 5-year HRA development programme (2023/24 to 2027/28) in respect of these large potential sites for new social housing within Mid Devon Housing (MDH) stock taking into account the options analysis presented.

The following was discussed:

- Clarification was sought over the costs to adapt housing as it seemed like quite a round number. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing explained that this was an estimated cost, but there was data to support this estimated cost.
- Asked why this accommodation was appropriate for those over 60. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing explained that the accommodation had ground floor and lift access and with more adaption work it would be suitable for over 60s. In addition, the location was central to town and had good transport links and good accessibility to medical sites. It was also noted that there was not a similar site within the vicinity of Tiverton.
- Some over 60s occupied family homes and that this could generate some healthy movement within the council's stock.
- Asked if this accommodation would be available for the whole of Mid Devon. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing reassured that there was flexibility with this, but the initial focus was for Tiverton tenants.
- Asked if there would be any flexibility in terms of the age of the targeted tenants. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing explained that there would be flexibility but the focus was to target over 60s. In addition, that there was no perfect age to choose and that other tenants would still be considered.
- Asked how tenants would be encouraged to downsize and whether this would be managed by Devon Home Choice. The Corporate Manager for Public Health,

Regulation and Housing explained that the aim was to invite tenants to free up family homes and that it would sit outside of Devon Homes Choice.

- Asked if there would be an option for right to buy, if covenants would be set and whether ground rent and service charges would apply. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing explained that details would be introduced to the Homes PDG and that in terms of right to buy a certain percentage could be exempt from this and that all details would be made aware to incoming tenants. There was an aim to build a community and that policies would be made clear outlining any service charges.
- Concern was raised over the cost of £100k and felt that this report was good enough for tax-payers. In addition, it was felt that the data and evidence provided in this report was poor. It was raised that those over 60 leaving their homes would be when medical support was needed and often already had established communities and families to support them and so felt it was unlikely to convince these individuals to move.
- That St George's court was not appropriate accommodation and that clarification was sought as to how the upkeep costs would be maintained with social housing charges.
- The rent plus model was raised as an idea that could be used by the Council.
- The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing reassured that tenants would not be recharged and that the HRA would maintain those properties and would only apply to those who had a right to buy. No tenants were charged to maintain their properties. A local letting approach should not be compared to the decanted example provided as these were two very different things. The HRA does not use the rent plus model because it does not work with the long sustainability of the HRA's stock. Other providers could use the rent plus model and it had been known to work well. For Post Hill better suited providers would be sought and where the rent plus model could be applied.
- There was a need to make difficult decisions quickly to avoid further costs and that other ways to recuperate costs should not be discredited.
- There were two main benefits of this report, firstly it made more social housing available within the district, and secondly, it provided the Council 38 new properties.
- Disappointment was raised that this report had not thought wider and that there was concern of what would happen to aging tenants when the accommodation was no longer appropriate. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing explained that specific needs of individuals would be identified and that a move through to the adult social care sector would be needed. Many properties were already suitable but would consider individual needs.
- It was noted that this report was in the interest of the HRA and not 3 Rivers Development Ltd.
- Raised whether better options for St George's Court could be considered and that this decision was not eliminating potentially better options. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that was a binary decision and that the HRA had considered other options. In addition, options for St George's could not be maintained indefinitely.
- This would be a community asset, and that housing was a big issue within this community and that community needs outweighed commercial needs.



- It was asked how this report fitted in procedurally and whether it was valid, it was felt that this report verged on predetermination. The District Solicitor & Monitoring Officer explained that this decision was subject a valuation and would not impact any upcoming decision due to go to Full Council.
- In addition, it was raised that regardless of what the Council agrees at Full Council on 3 Rivers Development Ltd, these properties would still be for sale and were therefore not linked.
- It was raised that the delegated authority given should be closely monitored and that Cabinet should consider implementing a deadline. To which the Leader reassured that he was confident that the Cabinet members involved would work closely with officers. In addition the Deputy Chief Executive explained that regular financial updates were provided at meetings of the Cabinet.
- The Knowle Lane viability was raised, to which it was explained that the option presented and the circumstances within the HRA were different to the 3 Rivers Development Ltd business plan previously presented to the previous administration.
- The Post Hill site was raised, with reassurance sought that this would not proceed. It was also asked how likely it was to pass this site onto another provider. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing explained that the cost of Post Hill was too expensive and that grant funding was unavailable for this site. However, other providers might be able to obtain funding due to differing restrictions and that the rent plus method could be applied in this instance, but was not viable for the HRA.

**RESOLVED** that:

1. That Cabinet approve the acquisition of St Georges Court, Tiverton by the HRA subject to an agreed valuation.
2. Delegated authority be granted to the S151 Officer and the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing (in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Housing & Property Services) to complete the purchase of St Georges Court, Tiverton.
3. Subject to Recommendations 1 and 2, that Cabinet approve a local lettings approach for the allocation of social housing at St Georges Court as primarily over-60 years accommodation with a mix of 28 social rent and 11 affordable rent units.
4. That Cabinet approve the HRA undertaking a feasibility study into the acquisition and development of Knowle Lane, Cullompton as social housing for potential inclusion later in the HRA 5-year development programme.
5. That Cabinet agree the HRA will not progress its proposed development and relevant tender for Post Hill, Tiverton.
6. Subject to Recommendation 5, that Cabinet grant delegated authority to the S151 Officer and the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing to explore alternative options for the delivery of affordable housing at Post Hill, Tiverton including potential sale or transfer of the site. This is to be brought back to Cabinet for consideration in due course.

(Proposed by S Clist, seconded by J Lock)

Reason for decision:

Homes and the Environment are a priority for the Council and this includes increasing the supply of affordable homes in the District.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

**44. NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS**

The Cabinet had before it, and **NOTED**, the notification of Key Decisions\*.

The S106 Governance item had been postponed from the 19 September 2023 to the 14 November 2023.

Note: \* Notification of key Decisions previously circulated.

**45. ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE CLOSURE OF (STAFFED) TICKET OFFICES ON THE RAILWAY NETWORK**

The Leader of the Council raised concern of the announcement made by the Rail Delivery Group that train companies were pressing ahead with plans to close up to 1000 rail ticket offices across England over the next 3 years.

It was highlighted that:

- Not all residents are able to use station ticket machines, or have the means to book a ticket in advance.
- Concern that the closure of ticket offices will disproportionately affect elderly and disabled residents.
- Concerns was raised over possible staff redundancies.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to Mark Harper MP Secretary of State for Transport, and the Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, expressing this Council's opposition to the possible closure of staffed rail ticket offices – and in particular the offices across the Devon County Council area, including Tiverton Parkway.
- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the rail operator(s) running local ticket offices, expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket office at Tiverton Parkway or within the Mid Devon area.
- Refer this issue to Scrutiny with the recommendation that representatives from the relevant rail operator(s) are invited to attend a Scrutiny Meeting at the earliest possible point to discuss future plans for ticket offices within Mid Devon.

Proposed by Leader, Cllr L Taylor)

Reason for decision:

That Staffed ticket offices provide a vital service to residents in Mid Devon.

(The meeting ended at 7.46 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**





**Report for: Cabinet**

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Date of Meeting:	19 September 2023
Subject:	Medium Term Financial Plan – General Fund (GF)
Cabinet Member:	James Buczkowski – Cabinet Member for Finance
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Jarrett – Deputy Chief Executive (S151)
Exempt:	N/a
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Sensitivity Analysis Appendix 2 – MTFP Summary Position

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)**

To present to Member’s the updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which covers the period 2024/25 to 2028/29 and takes account of the Council’s key strategies (i.e. the Corporate Plan, Business Plans, Treasury Management Plan, Asset Management Plan, Work Force Plan and Capital Strategy) and demonstrates it has the financial resources to deliver the Corporate Plan. This models potential changes in funding levels, new initiatives, unavoidable costs and proposed service savings.

**Recommendation(s):**

**That Cabinet Members:**

1. **Note the updated MTFP’s for the General Fund covering the years 2024/25 to 2028/29**
2. **Agree the principles and endorse the approach to balancing the General Fund Revenue Budget outlined in paragraph 6.2.**
3. **Seek recommendations from the Policy Development Groups on the appropriate fees for Services to charge and the services areas where savings should be sought and to what level.**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **1.0 Introduction and purpose of the Medium Term Financial Plan**

- 1.1 The main purpose of the MTFP is to show how the Council will strategically manage its finances in order to support the delivery of the priorities detailed in the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 and future years beyond that plan. This will importantly need to take account of the new council administration in their emerging corporate plan ambitions
- 1.2 The MTFP links the financial requirements, constraints and objectives included in all the key planning documents of the Council (i.e. Asset Management Plan, Treasury Management Strategy, Work Force Plan, and Business Plans) which culminate in the Corporate Plan.
- 1.3 The MTFP has been a key corporate requirement for a number of years and is an essential part of the budget setting process. It provides a financial model which forecasts the cost of providing Council services over a future rolling five year period, together with an estimate of the financial resources that will be available. This model provides an early warning mechanism if there is a significant budget gap between estimated costs and available resources.
- 1.4 The MTFP helps strategically plan the budget setting process, but of equal importance, gives Management and Members an overview of future budget gaps so strategic decisions can be made over levels of future spending, Council Tax levels, policies for fees and charges, asset investment or disposal, etc.
- 1.5 In addition to considering the General Fund financial position, the MTFP also reviews the affordability of the Council's Capital Programme over the same five year period. It forecasts required capital projects (in the main focusing on essential asset replacement and health and safety items) matched against potential capital receipts and grant funding. Note however, at this time, the financing requirement included reflects the 2023/24 Capital MTFP as it is currently being refreshed. The update will be brought back to Cabinet later in the budget cycle.
- 1.6 In addition to these two key areas of Council expenditure, the Council also prepares an MTFP for the Housing Revenue Account. This also shows a five year programme and outlines the key issues affecting the HRA costs and income streams from April 2024 onwards. Once again, the 2023/24 Capital MTFP as it is currently being refreshed as there are significant implications arising from the Capital Programme. The update will be brought back to Cabinet later in the budget cycle.
- 1.7 Therefore this report focuses solely on the General Fund Account.

## 2.0 Framework for the Medium Term Financial Plan

- 2.1 The starting base for the MTFP is the 2023/24 approved budget, which is then adjusted for any supplementary estimates approved by the Council or any significant budget variances identified in the monthly budget monitoring report to the Cabinet.
- 2.2 This base then has to be adjusted for unavoidable costs, such as, pay increases, inflation, service pressures associated with new legislation, a growing residential or business property base or improving performance, etc. The MTFP will also consider forecasts for investment receipts and income from fees and charges.
- 2.3 Finally the MTFP considers and makes assumptions regarding future levels of funding, in particular Council Tax including the potential growth in tax base, Business Rates again including any movement in the baseline as well as changes in the reliefs, multipliers and overall retention levels. Forecasts are also made for the likely level of future Central Government funding.
- 2.4 The MTFP models an overall aggregated position for the Council based on a range of assumptions. This then predicts an overall budget position, which can highlight a potential budget gap and then propose remedial action which can be taken to resolve it. Clearly, these assumptions can be challenged. They will vary due to changes in the local, national and international economic position and of course, the ongoing consequences of the Cost Of Living Crisis will have implications, not only for the current year, but also for the years to come.
- 2.5 The development of a five year financial model is based on a number of assumptions and perceived risks. These become more difficult to predict the further into the future you consider. In general terms a prudent/reasonable approach has been taken regarding forecasts, professional accounting guidance has been followed and external technical opinion has been sought where necessary. As a consequence, **Appendix 1** illustrates possible risks within the plan and the potential financial sensitivity to changes in the assumptions.
- 2.6 The following underlying principles have been adopted as a base assumption during the life of the MTFP:
- 2.6.1 Principle 1 – General Fund Reserves
- Each year the Council will target a balanced revenue budget without the use of General Fund reserve balances. The level of predicted deficits over the period of this plan may ultimately require the application of reserves to a degree to achieve the mandatory balance. However, this option is not

reflected in the numbers presented and must only be considered as a last resort;

- The Council faces considerable financial risks that can have a potentially significant and immediate impact on its finances. The MTFP will attempt to ensure that the General Fund Reserve balance does not fall below the current minimum agreed level (£2m). However, this floor may be revised in light of the financial position and likely risks, or breached as a last resort to achieve a balanced budget. Nb these considerations will need to be reflective of the challenge inherited from the temporary measures agreed when setting the 2023/24 budget where over £1m of unspecified savings targets were agreed.

#### 2.6.2 Principle 2 – Optimise Income Generation

- Council Tax funds the largest share of the Council's budget. Annual increases will be kept within Government set guidelines. In reality this now gives the Council very little scope to significantly increase Council Tax income as the recent nationally prescribed referendum rate has been limited to a maximum of 2% or £5. This plan assumes that this rate will remain unaltered throughout the five year cycle;
- The Council will continue to look at opportunities to generate additional sustainable income. This could be through reviews of existing Fees and Charges or through new charges for discretionary services. Such charges should be set at levels that are appropriate and proportionate to the costs of the service they are delivering and the market within which they operate. The Council will continue to explore new commercial opportunities (as a 'business as usual' model is clearly no longer deliverable).

#### 2.6.3 Principle 3 – Allocation of Revenue Resources

- Resources will be directed to high priority and statutory services and hence away from low priority services, which will likely result in less investment in discretionary areas. With the exception of spend to save projects on lower priority services that can either cut future costs or increase revenue to enable cross subsidisation of higher priority services;
- It will seek to deliver further efficiency in its service delivery models and secure procurement savings in its new contractual arrangements which will then be factored into future spending plans.

#### 2.6.4 Principle 4 – Allocation of Capital Resources

- The Council will continue to prioritise schemes, for instance to generate income, to meet corporate objectives and to enhance its asset base;

- The Council will continue to ensure it provides Value for Money through the efficient and effective use of its assets. The Council will look to dispose of surplus assets in order to maximise capital receipts and reduce ongoing revenue maintenance costs associated with holding the asset. Careful consideration will also need to be used to ensure the maximum market value is achieved when disposing of assets;
- Prudential borrowing will only be made during the life of the MTFP after the production of a fully costed business case that demonstrates how the investment meets the Council's policy objectives, has exhausted all other external funding routes and delivers measurable improvement within a reasonable payback period;
- The Council will keep its internal borrowing under review and when appropriate will consider the potential to fix rates in the medium to long term to manage the risk and potential financial impact of interest rate increases. Consideration will also be given to whether the most appropriate funding mechanism is to fully utilise cash balances and undertake short-term borrowing to meet cash flow requirements. The Council continues to consult specialist advice to keep this under review.

2.7 These are all underpinned by a culture of Budget Ownership across all services.

### **3.0 Background to the Medium Term Financial Plan**

3.1 Given this is a new administration, Members should be aware that this MTFP has been developed against a backdrop of:

- Austerity – an aggregate cut in Central Government Grant of c£5m during the austerity measures put in place since 2010/11 and been replaced with lower levels of more volatile funding sources e.g. New Homes Bonus, Business Rates and numerous one-off grants;
- Covid-19 – service income through fees and charges in some areas is only just recovering to pre-covid-19 levels, i.e. Leisure and Car Parking;
- The invasion of Ukraine significantly impacted the availability and therefore price of energy and fuel, leading to A Cost of Living Crisis not seen since the early 1980's. It has required the reallocation of Council resources into supporting the Government with their Energy Rebate and Homes for Ukraine schemes;
- Locally, resources previously realigned to manage the Government's response to the Pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis are again only just returning to their substantive roles;
- Nationally, the cost of the Pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis has been significant, with the government's gross debt being £2.537bn (100.5% of

GDP) with the net borrowing £24.4bn<sup>1</sup>. This indicates that austerity measures are likely to continue

- Political change at a national level leading to uncertainty and emergency policy decisions being taken that have unsettled the financial markets. Interest rates have soared to combat the high inflation as is now expected to reduce at a slower rate.

Yet the Council continues to deliver a wide range of well performing services.

- 3.2 There are still some fundamental 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 are covered in Section 7 of this report.

#### **4.0 Current In-Year Monitoring Position and associated actions taken**

- 4.1 As outlined above, the MTFP takes into consideration the current financial position against the 2023/24 base budget. There is significant pressure on the budget arising from the decisions taken to balance the 2023/24 budget cost, namely the £400k staffing vacancy target and the £625k draw from reserves. In line with the principles outlined in Section 2, these are not rolled forward into 2024/25. However, despite this in-year £1,025k challenge, the Qtr. 1 forecast indicated an over spend of £527k on the General Fund, indicating that £498k has been offset, albeit not all through ongoing savings measures. Any overspend position will negatively affect reserve balances, which reduce the option to smooth this budget deficit over time.
- 4.2 There is also a pressure due to the Cost of Living Crisis affecting all services. The initial 2023/24 pay offer has been tabled and has been rejected by the unions, although discussions continue nationally. Currently, the tabled pay offer should not add material pressure to the 2023/24 in-year position. However, given the delays in agreeing the 2023/24 pay award, it is difficult to project what the 2024/25 pay award might be, particularly in the current economic circumstances which is extending over a longer period than first envisaged and the appetite for industrial action across many sectors. Therefore, the assumed pay award has been increased to circa 4% - adding a pressure of circa £700k to the budget.
- 4.3 Many services are experiencing high staff turnover and sickness levels requiring additional temporary staff being employed to keep key services such as waste collection operational. To mitigate this pressure and deliver the £400k staffing vacancy target, a soft recruitment freeze has been implemented. Where a role is required to maintain key service provision, for example a lifeguard or waste operative, these positions will be filled. However, where other posts become vacant, recruiting is being delayed / postponed to free up budget.

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<sup>1</sup> [UK government debt and deficit - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Inevitably, this does impact on the quality and speed of service delivery, and this is mitigated as far as possible.

- 4.4 The significant increases in energy charges have also had an impact on the Council's finances. The Cabinet reduced agreed to extend the current provider (Laser) and increase the proportion of Electricity purchased from 100% renewable sources. It is currently too early to receive the new energy prices due to cover the year beginning 1 October 2023, therefore the forecast remains as previously projected, although the energy cap has reduced since that forecast, potentially leading to a saving for the Council from the assumed circa £400k pressure. To mitigate this, the Council has invested in options to reduce energy consumption, for example switching from Gas to renewable energies using ground and heat source pumps and increasing the volume of LED lighting at two of our leisure centres. Further options include lowering the heating temperature of our buildings and swimming pools and isolating areas of buildings where heating can be switched off.
- 4.5 In summary, the forecast shortfall for 2024/25 can be attributed to the removal of the one-off targets included within the 2023/24 budget, plus the assumed inflationary uplift driven by the Cost of Living Crisis. The sum of these pressures has added c.£2.1m to our cost base.
- 4.6 Other mitigations include additional income from fees and charges. For example, we are able to charge for services, for example the Green Waste service, Planning and Car Parking. Some services are experiencing greater take up, i.e. Leisure and Car Parking, however, some are also seeing the impact of the economic conditions, with Qtr. 1 forecasting a drop in income from Planning and Building Control and recycle prices dropping.
- 4.7 Therefore, all options to limit costs where possible, including vacancy management processes and a review of fees and charges are being considered. However, pressures are so great that it's unlikely that this will be sufficient to compensate for the pressures the Council is seeing. Some combination of Government intervention through additional grant funding and use of Reserves is almost inevitable.

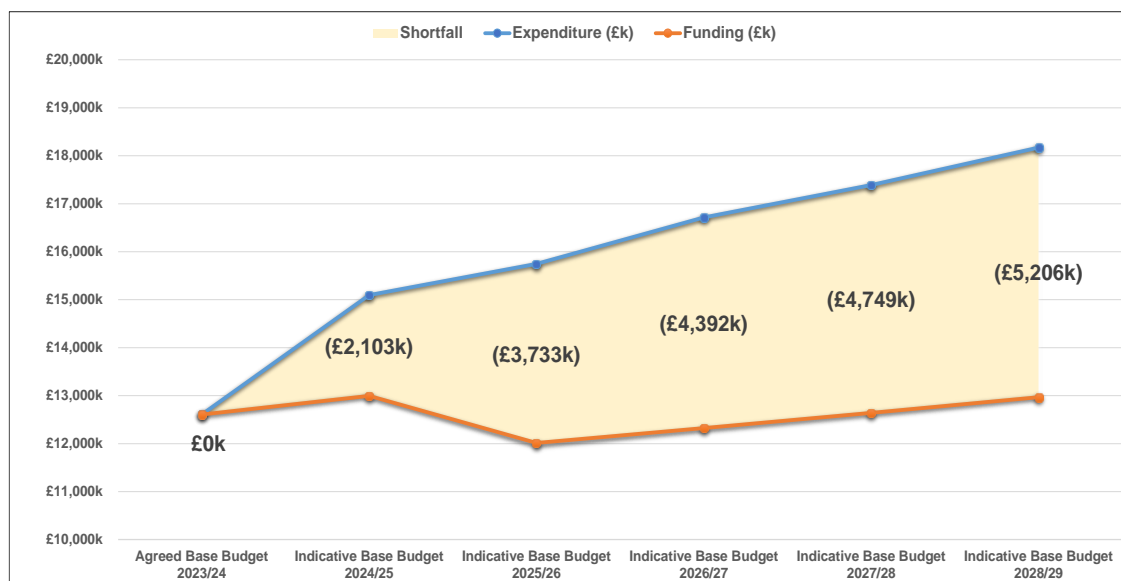
## **5.0 Summary of the Medium Term Financial Plan**

- 5.1 Table 1 and the associated graph shown below, gives a summary position for the MTFP over the next five years, with greater detailed information is shown in **Appendix 2**. This shows an overall deficit of £5,206k over the 5-year life of the plan, equivalent to approximately 30% of the current Net Service Cost.

**Table 1 – MTFP General Fund Summary**

2023/24		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
£000		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
12,606	Expenditure	15,097	15,747	16,715	17,389	18,172
(12,606)	Funding	(12,994)	(12,013)	(12,323)	(12,641)	(12,967)
<b>0</b>	<b>Annual Shortfall</b>	<b>2,103</b>	<b>1,631</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>457</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Cumulative Shortfall</b>	<b>2,103</b>	<b>3,733</b>	<b>4,392</b>	<b>4,749</b>	<b>5,206</b>

**Graph 1 – MTFP General Fund Cumulative Budget Gap 2023/24 to 2028/29**



- 5.2 Due to the cumulative nature of this plan, if the Council balances its revenue spend to its available funding, each subsequent year will only then need to find the difference (the annual shortfall). However, if no remedial action is taken to reduce the overall level of spend, the MTFP predicts an estimated cumulative shortfall on the General Fund budget of £5,206k. At present the General Fund reserve of £2,025k (less any in-year over spend – currently projected to be £527k) would be insufficient to absorb the 2024/25 deficit.
- 5.3 The majority of this cumulative deficit impacts during years one and two largely due to the Cost of Living Crisis and the assumed reductions in funding across Business Rates and Government Grants after years of delays.
- 5.4 This is clearly a challenge built upon a number of assumptions, caveats, decisions based upon external advice and the most up to date information available at this time. Clearly, any major variations in these assumptions would require a fundamental review of the Council’s MTFP and would be reported back to Cabinet and the wider Membership as soon as practical, coupled with proposed courses of action that could be implemented.



- 5.5 The Council has a legal requirement to set a balance budget and needs to ensure its overall costs are affordable i.e. they can be funded through income and planned short-term use of reserves. Members therefore need to take the necessary decisions and actions to manage net spending within affordable limits.
- 5.6 During the summer, Leadership Team and services have been reviewing a range of budget options that could be considered in order to help mitigate that remaining budget shortfall across the five years of this MTFP, with a particular focus on 2024/25. Indicative areas where possible budget savings could be found will form the basis of the discussions with the Policy Development Groups (PDG's). In addition the PDG's will be asked to identify further options to resolve the immediate budget gap for 2024/25 and future years.
- 5.7 Part of that saving could come from increasing income from Service Fees and Charges. Following a full review last year, many services now have delegated authority to increase fees in line with inflation. The working assumption is that this will be done.
- 5.8 Clearly there remains a significant budget shortfall in 2024/25. Therefore, all possible options to increase income or reduce costs must be considered. Options will be brought forward for consideration over the next few months in the run in to setting the 2024/25 budget in February 2024.

## **6.0 Approach to closing the Budget Gap**

- 6.1 Many of the issues, assumptions and sensitivity of items included within the MTFP are complex, often inter-related and will undoubtedly be subject to variation and ultimately fundamental review depending on the levels of future funding reductions. However, strategic decisions have been ongoing to reduce the current and future operational costs.
- 6.2 In order to reduce the forecast deficit the Council will strive to constantly manage its costs and revenues by:
- Ensure fees/charges are revisited regularly and that the Council are charging appropriately for all items possible;
  - A continued reduction of service and employee costs – which may incur short term upfront costs;
  - Continue and expand partnership working where practical;
  - Investigation of a number of spend to save projects;
  - Review the current and future property asset requirements;
  - Maximise procurement efficiencies;
  - Explore new commercial opportunities;
  - Examine different ways of delivering services to reduce costs;
  - Continued benchmarking and learning from best practice;

- Consideration of growing the residential and commercial property base to align delivery with Government funding priorities.
- 6.3 The above plans will require all service areas to play an active role in securing future savings and the Council will also continue to consult with all of its major stakeholders, especially the tax payers, to ensure all future budgetary decisions accord with their priorities.
- 6.4 Members will appreciate that all budget options will require political support and therefore if some suggestions are deemed to be unacceptable then other savings will need to be proposed. Members should indicate where these alternatives should be sought.
- 6.5 The level of uncertainty in funding and external pressures as outlined in Section 7 makes forecasting difficult and with it a need to highlight risks and the need to push for further efficiencies within services.

## **7.0 Risk, Opportunities and Uncertainty**

7.1 Ongoing risks and uncertainty for the budget at this stage include:

7.1.1 **Future Local Government Funding** – the Council awaits to hear the level of funding it will receive in 2024/25 and future years. Although some ambiguous messages have been given by government, these then need to be translated into individual Council funding. These will be dependent upon the Governments views on the long term funding requirement and allocation mechanism. Therefore, it is critical that we continue to lobby for the Fair Funding Review and holistic review of Business Rates to be completed fully as soon as possible, along with the implementation of any replacement of the New Homes Bonus Scheme.

**Delays in additional funding opportunities** – consultation and announcements with to regard to major income opportunities e.g. Extended Producer Responsibilities and move to increase Planning Fees towards a breakeven revenue position have, as yet, not been implemented.

7.1.2 **Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS)** – the Council await the Provisional Settlement expected to be announced in December, covering 2024/25. The previous multi-year settlement expired in 2019/20 and for the last four years has simply been rolled forwards as the sector awaits the outcomes of the much delayed Fair Funding Review. We continue to lobby for a multi-year settlements that offer some certainty over the level of grants and therefore enable more meaningful planning.

7.1.3 **Cost of Living Crisis / Inflation** – As highlighted previously in this report, the Cost of Living Crisis is having a significant impact upon the Council's finances. To date, little has been done to help Council's deal with the current implications. It is hoped that some ongoing support / mitigation is included within the 2024/25 funding settlement.

To combat high inflation, the Bank of England Base Rate is increased to reduce spending levels. Whilst this provides a greater return on our investments, this has a significant impact on the interest rates the Council is able to borrow at. With the significant growth in the Capital Programme primarily to deliver additional homes across the district, additional borrowing will be required. This is likely to reduce / slow the deliverability of such projects.

7.1.4 **Council Tax** – The MTFP is based on the assumption of a maximum 2% increase on a Band D property each year. This may of course not be possible due to Central Government restrictions. This is only likely to be known on an annual basis as each Settlement is announced. Lobbying continues to remove, or relax, the referendum limit

7.1.5 **Council Tax Base** – The 2023/24 budget assumed a reduction in the collection rate. This MTFP must consider the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on collection rates and therefore forecasts it to be prudent to continue the reduction into 2024/25. Recovery can be estimated back to the normal 98% over the MTFP. Future long term growth relies on the large scale infrastructure projects such as J28, Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension and Culm Garden Village.

7.1.6 **100% Business Rates Retention / Revaluation** – Government had committed to devolve 100% of Business Rates to Local Government in 2015 but this was later reduced to 75% before being abandoned in 2021. As with the fair funding Review, any proposed changes have been significantly delayed, with no changes to be brought in before 2025/26. A full or partial reset of this baseline will divert resources away from Mid Devon. The sector also awaits what transitional measures will be included to smooth this detrimental impact.

7.1.7 **Levelling up Fund** – the Council has twice been unsuccessful in its bid for substantial funding to support the Cullompton HIF Project. As such, the project is delayed and alternative funding sources are being sought. Should a third bid be successful, plans to deliver the major infrastructure project will continue. All the while, the costs continue to rise due to the economic climate.

- 7.1.8 **Homes for Ukraine Scheme** – Part of the national support to the Ukraine is to offer safe housing for those escaping the conflict. Additional funding is being received to support the scheme. However, once the scheme ends it is not clear whether there will be options to relocate families to other hosts or to private landlords. Therefore there is a risk that some of those initially covered by the scheme could present as homeless and require the Council to house them. Less, if any, associated funding will be available to cover those additional costs.
- 7.1.9 **Net Zero Commitments** – The council needs to reflect on the availability of resources or the reprioritisation required to deliver this ambition. Currently the only government assistance is linked to one off bids to deliver specific schemes.
- 7.2 All of the above items highlight once again just how difficult it is to forecast ahead with any degree of accuracy. Nevertheless, the MTFP helps us examine the likely trends to assist in setting realistic capital and revenue budgets going forward.

## **8.0 Balances and Reserves**

- 8.1 The Council should look to match on-going spending plans to available in-year resources. However, it currently holds an uncommitted General Fund Reserve with a balance of £2,025k, which is above the current balance of £2m set by Full Council. However, this will be impacted by the outturn position of 2023/24 and the degree to which the £1,025k target cannot be mitigated, which is projected to reduce to £527k. This will only leave £1,498k in the reserve and will need to be replenished over the lifetime of this MTFP.
- 8.2 The Council holds this reserve for a number of reasons. Firstly to deal with any short term cash flow or funding issues. Secondly to provide a contingency for exceptional one-off acts (i.e. flooding, fire, terrorism, business rate failure, etc.) and, thirdly to provide a buffer for known circumstances whose final affect is unknown (i.e. changes in legislation or major funding changes). Clearly, the more uncertainty that exists, the higher the balance required to mitigate this risk. This level of minimum reserves is assessed annually to ensure it is adequate.
- 8.3 As stated above, this plan does not include any utilisation of these reserves. However, with the scale of the deficit, it is conceivable that some utilisation could be necessary. If so, this should be on the basis that the reserve is replenished by the end of the MTFP period.

8.4 The Council also holds Earmarked Reserves which have been set aside for a specific purpose, such as sinking funds for asset replacement. Although these reserves are ring-fenced and not available to support the budget, a review of all Earmarked Reserves is undertaken annually and any identification of funding no longer required to be earmarked can be released and could be used to support the budget. As these funds are one-off, they should not be used to support ongoing expenditure and therefore only delay the requirement for the identification and implementation of a sustainable saving.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

9.1 The MTFP will continue to be updated to ensure it is a live document. It is subject to amendment and review by Leadership Team and Members and will provide a clear guide prior to commencing the annual budget setting process in future years.

9.2 Like all councils, Mid Devon is facing an ongoing and very challenging financial future. The Corporate Plan will need to be aligned to available financial resources (which will include a regularly updated Work Force Plan) so that the District can be best placed to maximise cost effective delivery of its services that are valued by its residents.

9.3 It should also be noted that Management will continue to play a pro-active role in both reducing ongoing service costs and exploring new possibilities to raise additional income.

9.4 Having a realistic financial plan for the next five years will enable the Council to ensure it is allocating its limited financial resources to its key priorities. The current Corporate Plan, and its successor will set out the Council's goals/objectives over a four year period and must clearly be matched by the financial resources that are available. The Government's move from a relatively fixed core funding system to more of a '*payment by results*' process has introduced a lot more uncertainty and volatility for the future of the Council's funding streams, which makes medium term financial planning an even more challenging process.

9.5 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. The Council is aware that the Fair Funding Review may, in time, bring significant changes in its core funding including a full or partial Baseline 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 the Council has already gone through a period of major financial uncertainty which still shows no sign of abating, it is not only prudent but imperative that it seeks to maintain its reserve levels to the fullest extent possible. Moving forward Members will be provided with regular updates on the financial impact of any variation to what has been previously assumed.

## **Financial Implications**

By undertaking an annual review of the MTFP the Council can ensure that its Corporate Plan priorities are affordable. The implications of the revised budget gap are set out within the paper. Many areas require greater clarity, particularly around national funding and the possibility of additional funding to offset the implications of the Cost of Living Crisis. Therefore a number of key assumptions underpin the reported position, which will be refined as greater clarity is received through the budget setting process.

## **Legal Implications**

None directly arising from this report, although 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**

The MTFP makes a number of financial assumptions based on a sensible/prudent approach, taking account of the most up to date professional advice that is available. However, many of these assumptions are open to challenge and due to this fact **Appendix 1** of this report shows the financial effect on key items in the plan if assumptions were to change (this is referred to as sensitivity analysis).

## **Impact on Climate Change**

The allocation of resources will impact upon the Council's ability to implement/fund new activities linked to climate change, as the MTFP sets the broad budgetary framework for the Council over the coming years. However, some provision has already been included in the base budget and further evaluation/consideration will be made as the draft budget passes through the PDGs over the next few months. Significant investment is currently forecast within the Capital Programme, however this will be dependent upon full options appraisals and levels of Grant funding available.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

No implications arising from this report.

## **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out the financial resources available to deliver the Council's ongoing Corporate Plan priorities.

### **Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks**

**Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett**

Agreed by the Section 151

**Date: 8 September 2023**

**Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne**

Agreed by the Monitoring Officer

**Date: 5 September 2023**

**Chief Officer: Stephen Walford**

Agreed by the Chief Executive

**Date: 5 September 2023**

**Performance and risk: Andrew Jarrett**

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

**Date: 8 September 2023**

**Cabinet member notified: Yes**

### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Andrew Jarrett – Deputy Chief Executive (S151)

Email: [ajarrett@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:ajarrett@middevon.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01884 234242

**Background papers:**

- 2023/24 Budget
- 2023/24 Qtr. 1 Budget Monitor

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## Key Assumptions used in Medium Term Financial Plan

A number of assumptions have been made in formulating the strategy. Clearly some of these are harder to predict than others and in addition the magnitude of the “error” of prediction may be greater in certain specific areas. Detailed below are the main assumptions made and importantly an analysis of the sensitivity to variance.

As previously mentioned, many of the assumptions could be subject to challenge and may well alter during the life of the MTFP. Therefore, it is important to show the magnitude (or sensitivity) in financial terms of minor alterations to assumptions made.

### Inflation

Future inflation is of course an unknown quantity. At the present time, where inflation near its highest for over 40 years, it has never been more critical to use as realistic assumptions as possible.

The level of inflation assumed in this plan is therefore high and it could come to pass that the actual inflation figures are higher, having a significant impact on our medium term projections. The sensitivity analysis below provides some context for the scale of any variation from the forecast.

The forecast inflationary increases across this MTFP period are (applicable to both General Fund and HRA – as appropriate):

	2024/25 %	2025/26 %	2026/27 %	2027/28 %	2028/29 %
<b>Staffing*</b>	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<b>Pension Back Funding</b>	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<b>NDR on Council Properties</b>	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
<b>Computer Software</b>	15.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
<b>Gas<sup>#</sup></b>	50.00%	25.00%	12.50%	6.25%	6.25%
<b>Electric<sup>#</sup></b>	33.50%	16.75%	8.38%	4.19%	4.19%
<b>Water</b>	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
<b>Members Allowances*</b>	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<b>Insurance</b>	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
<b>Fuel<sup>-</sup></b>	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
<b>Leisure Fees and Charges</b>	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
<b>Support Service Recharge to HRA</b>	4.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%

A change in the inflation factors causes the following movements:

	2023/24 Budget £000	Inflation Assumption %	2024/25 Forecast Financial Impact £000	(+/-) 1% Change £000
<b>Staffing*</b>	15,872	4.00%	635	159
<b>Pension Back Funding</b>	567	4.00%	24	N/A
<b>NDR on Council Properties</b>	710	2.00%	14	7
<b>Computer Software</b>	906	15.00%	136	9
<b>Gas<sup>#</sup></b>	111	50.00%	55	1
<b>Electric<sup>#</sup></b>	878	33.50%	294	9
<b>Water</b>	152	2.00%	3	1

<b>Members Allowances*</b>	330	4.00%	13	3
<b>Insurance</b>	259	3.00%	8	3
<b>Fuel~</b>	554	5.00%	28	4
<b>Leisure Fees and Charges</b>	(2,931)	3.00%	(88)	(29)
<b>Support Service Recharge to HRA</b>	(1,884)	4.00%	(75)	(19)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,493</b>		<b>1,046</b>	<b>148</b>

\* Recent pay offers, including the current 2023/24 offer, have been a flat cash uplift as opposed to a percentage. However for the purposes of the MTFP, a percentage is applied which on average broadly equates to what we anticipate any pay offer to be.

#The increase in energy budgets reflects the increase in prices expected to come into effect from October 2023. Prices will be available shortly as all energy is purchased in advance of need.

~The fuel increase largely reflects the increases experienced in 2022/23, which have currently stabilised, but begun to creep up again.

### **Localised Tax Funding**

Internal estimates have used to project the levels of Council Tax and Business Rates income over the five year period.

The Council Tax taxbase forecasts growth in line with the Local Plan. This equates to approximately 350 homes and contributes approximately £80k per annum. A prudent collection rate, in line with the reduced forecast during the Covid-19 pandemic of 96%, is expected. Recovery to the normal 98% is expected over the life of the MTFP. The assumed annual increase in the Band D charge is in line with the Governments recent referendum limits at 2%. Each 1% increase in Council Tax generates approximately £70k. It should be noted that extra housing also affects the Council's cost base too, i.e. waste collection, street cleaning etc.

The key Business Rates assumptions are:

- that the expected Baseline Reset will be delayed until 2025/26, as recently confirmed. The Baseline Reset will update the baseline year(s) used in the Settlement funding model. Given the impact of Covid-19, the latest year this is likely to use is 2019/20 and therefore a degree of local growth will be lost depending on the method of the reset applied. At that time, the assumption is that the reset will remove approximately half of the growth in the retained income since the introduction of the baseline in 2013/14, which equates to approximately £500k. No expectation of transitional support or use of the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve is currently assumed, but is available and could well happen;
- the estimate is for a minimal growth in the overall Rateable Value and the national multiplier in 2024/25, which is normally linked to CPI inflation. This assumes that the government will protect businesses from significant tax increases during this cost of living crisis. Growth in future years is based upon a 2% increase. Anything above this will benefit the council.

A 1% variation within these assumptions is very difficult to calculate as each could impact onto the other. For example, a significant increase in the annual multiplier, or the rateable value arising from the Revaluation could potentially force a business to close, which would consequently reduce our retained income. Therefore, an overall movement of 1% in our retained income equates to approximately £43k.

## **Government Funding**

Most forms of Government funding is included within the Local Government Financial Settlement provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Ambiguous announcements over the last year have indicated that the 2024/25 settlement will be similar to that for 2023/24. However, at an individual local authority level, there can still be movement depending on the way funding is allocated – i.e. at a sector level the funding could be the same, but if more funding is directed towards Social Care for example, as a lower tier authority, this will negatively impact our funding. However, for 2024/25, the current assumption is for a cash freeze but with the following considerations:

- Rural Services Delivery Grant – this has generally been static over the last 4 years, but increased by c10% in 2023/24, so the uplift is assumed to remain;
- Lower Tier Services Grant – was announced as one-off in 2020/21 but was awarded again in 2022/23, but ceased in 2022/23 so no funding is assumed;
- New Homes Bonus Scheme – Previously announced to cease in 2022/23, and as yet no replacement scheme has been announced. The source of the funding was topsliced from Revenue Support Grant and therefore should remain in the “local government funding pot”. One off grants have been allocated in 2022/23 and 2023/24, so the assumption is the current allocation will be repeated;
- 2022/23 Services Grant – was announced as one-off in 2022/23, but was again awarded in 2023/24, therefore it has been assumed to continue in 2024/25;
- Some grants were rolled into the main settlement in 2023/24 meaning that the Council received Revenue Support Grant for the first time since 2017/18. It is assumed this continues.

It is very difficult to predict whether the above grants will continue, and if so at what value. It is also difficult to envisage a reduction in funding in the current economic climate. The current sum of these four grants is £1,538k. Therefore a movement of +/- 10% would equate to £154k.

We await the Provisional Settlement in December and the Final Settlement in the following February for the definitive figures to use in our final budget calculations.

## **Interest – Investment Returns and Financing Costs**

To combat inflation, the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee move interest rates to encourage/discourage spending. With inflation being at a 40-year high, interest rates have been increasing rapidly, starting at a historic low of 0.1% up to December 2021 to the current 5.25% (August 2023). Further movements are expected during the remainder of 2023 before reducing in 2024 and 2025.

On one hand this is good news as the Council will earn more interest on its temporary investments. However, this will be offset to a degree by not lending to 3 Rivers Development Ltd (3 Rivers) following the Cabinet agree to soft close the company.

The largest impact of movements in interest rates will be on the cost of financing external (PWLB) debt. Given the increase in the Capital Programme in the last couple of years and the ambitious plans for the development of more social housing, external borrowing is likely to be required. Wherever possible, the continuation of internal borrowing will be undertaken. However it’s unlikely there is sufficient capacity to meet the full demand of the full programme.

Forecasts for interest rate increases are difficult to predict as they will adjust to the current circumstances. Current expectation is that inflation is not easing as quickly as projected and therefore interest rates will not fall back as quickly. It is also likely that the economy will fall into recession.

At present, we are expecting PWLB rates will increase to broadly the below levels:

Link Group Interest Rate View	26.06.23												
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26
<b>BANK RATE</b>	5.00	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.60	5.50	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	5.80	5.90	5.70	5.50	5.10	4.60	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.70	2.60	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	6.30	6.20	6.00	5.70	5.30	4.80	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.80	2.70	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	5.50	5.60	5.30	5.10	4.80	4.50	4.20	3.90	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20
10 yr PWLB	5.10	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	3.90	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40
25 yr PWLB	5.30	5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.70
50 yr PWLB	5.00	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.00	3.80	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50

A 0.25% movement in interest rates equates to £3,500 – £4,500 per annum<sup>1</sup> additional interest earned/cost for every £1m lent/borrowed.

## Risk

All of the assumptions made in the MTFP have been examined for risk and estimates of expenditure and income have been made on a prudent/most likely occurrence. This has been based on previous experience, evidence in the current financial year, consultation with specialist advisers and taking account of all known market factors at the time of finalising the plan.

<sup>1</sup> Depending on the initial interest rate

## Appendix 2

The Table below gives an overall summary of the Council's General Fund MTFP position (which includes a wide range of assumptions).

### MTFP General Fund Summary

2023/24 £'000		Notes	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
<b>16,845</b>	<b>Net Direct Cost of Services</b>		<b>17,035</b>	<b>17,468</b>	<b>18,210</b>	<b>19,036</b>	<b>19,752</b>
(1,884)	Net recharge to HRA		(1,948)	(2,006)	(2,067)	(2,129)	(2,193)
703	Provision for Repayment of Borrowing	1	898	970	1,066	1,063	1,101
<b>15,665</b>	<b>Net Service Costs</b>		<b>15,986</b>	<b>16,432</b>	<b>17,210</b>	<b>17,969</b>	<b>18,659</b>
(1,032)	Net Interest Costs/(Receipts)	2	(1,030)	(1,000)	(900)	(900)	(900)
180	Finance Lease Interest Payable		200	126	116	106	99
(1,582)	Net Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	3	(59)	188	288	214	314
(625)	Net Transfers to/(from) General Reserves		0	0	0	0	0
<b>12,606</b>	<b>Total Budget Requirement</b>		<b>15,097</b>	<b>15,747</b>	<b>16,715</b>	<b>17,389</b>	<b>18,172</b>
	<b>Funded By:</b>						
(4,319)	Retained Business Rates	4	(4,449)	(4,138)	(4,218)	(4,301)	(4,385)
(98)	Revenue Support Grant		(98)	0	0	0	0
(547)	Rural Services Delivery Grant		(547)	(547)	(547)	(547)	(547)
(320)	New Homes Bonus	5	(320)	0	0	0	0
(90)	2022/23 Services Grant	5	(90)	0	0	0	0
(485)	2023/24 Funding Guarantee		(485)	0	0	0	0
(6,749)	Council Tax–MDDC	6	(7,007)	(7,330)	(7,560)	(7,795)	(8,037)
<b>(12,606)</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>		<b>(12,994)</b>	<b>(12,013)</b>	<b>(12,323)</b>	<b>(12,641)</b>	<b>(12,967)</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Annual Gap – Increase/(Decrease) In-year</b>		<b>2,103</b>	<b>1,631</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>457</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Cumulative Gap</b>		<b>2,103</b>	<b>3,733</b>	<b>4,392</b>	<b>4,749</b>	<b>5,206</b>

### Notes:

1. The Provision for repayment of borrowing incorporates the financial implications of the current Capital Programme.
2. The reduction in Net Interest Costs / (Receipts) reflects the removal of the possible interest earned from 3 Rivers Developments Ltd and is replaced by an assumption on interest earned through treasury investments. Assumption on interest rates to be reviewed.
3. Net Transfers to / (from) Earmarked Reserves reflects planned contributions to, or drawdowns from reserves. This is likely to change significantly during this budget process.
4. The Retained Business Rates increase is assumed to be 3% in 2024/25 and a 2% increase is assumed in future years. However income drops in 2025/26 to reflect the potential changes the Government might implement to the Business Rates Retention Scheme. These include Re-Baselining and Resource Equalisation. No use of the Smoothing Reserve has been factored in (currently £720k but dependent upon annual collection surplus/deficit).

5. The current assumption is for a cash freeze in grants for 2024/25. However in 2025/26, it is assumed that the long awaited implications for grant funding arising from the Fair Funding Review are implemented, i.e. those announced as one off / ceasing will have stopped. However, there is an expectation that these are replaced, at least in part, but forecasting that is impossible. Therefore it is hoped that this is the prudent / worst case forecast.
6. Council Tax income is forecast assuming Band D charge increases in line with referendum limits in 2024/25 and assumed referendum limits in future years, and an increase in the taxbase in line with the local plan requirements (c350 properties per annum) and a return to normal (98%) collection rate over the life of the MTFP.

## Forward Plan

In line with the public's general rights of access to information and the promotion of transparency in the way which decisions are taken by or on behalf of the Council, Mid Devon District Council produces a Forward Plan of any Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet and any to be made by the District Council. The Plan normally covers a period of a minimum of four months from the date of publication and is updated every month.

The District Council has defined key decisions as those which by reason of their strategic, political or financial significance or which will have a significant effect on communities in more than one Ward are to be made by the Cabinet or Council, in line with Article 15 of the Council's Constitution must be made by the District Council.

In line with legislation, any item may exceptionally be considered in the absence of the press and public. Where possible the Council will attempt to keep to the dates shown in the Plan. It is possible that on occasion these may need to be rescheduled.

Please ensure therefore that you refer to the most up to date Plan.

Click to see an up to date version of the [Forward Plan](#) on the Council's web site at any time. Also see the website for Copies of [Agenda and Reports](#) of the Cabinet or other Committees of the District Council referred to in this Plan. All items listed in this Forward Plan will be discussed in public at the relevant meeting, unless otherwise indicated for the reasons shown.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the Council/Cabinet about (a) any of the matters proposed for consideration in respect of which a decision is to be made or (b) whether or not they are to be discussed in public or private, as outlined below, may do so in writing, before the designated Date for Decision shown, to the Member Services Manager, Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, EX16 6SA or by email to: [committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:committee@middevon.gov.uk)

## Forward Plan - October 2023

Decision & Summary	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Lead Officer	Consultees	Means of Consultation	Cabinet Member	Public or Private Decision	Documents to be considered
<b>Damp and Mould Policy</b> To receive the new Damp and Mould Policy	Homes Policy Development Group	26 Sep 2023	Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615			Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
	Cabinet	17 Oct 2023						
	Council	1 Nov 2023						
<b>Tenant Involvement update and Action Plan</b> To receive the MDH Tenant Involvement update and Action Plan	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	26 Sep 2023  17 Oct 2023	Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615			Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary



<p><b>Recharges Policy</b> To receive a review of the MDH Recharges Policy</p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>26 Sep 2023  17 Oct 2023</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Phoenix House Accommodation Opportunities</b></p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>17 Oct 2023</p>	<p>Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242</p>					<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Makeup of the senior officer structure in light of posts held vacant</b> To consider a report from the Chief Executive on the makeup of the senior officer structure in light of posts held vacant</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>17 Oct 2023</p>	<p>Stephen Walford, Chief Executive Tel: 01884 234201</p>			<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

<b>Crediton Masterplan</b>	Cabinet	17 Oct 2023	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>2024/25 – 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan Update</b> To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive on the updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period 2024/25 to 2028/29	Cabinet	17 Oct 2023	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>S106 Governance</b>	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Joanna Williams, Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

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<b>Meeting Housing Needs SPD</b> To adopt the SPD	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>Silverton Neighbourhood Plan</b>	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>Infrastructure Funding Statement: Infrastructure List</b>	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

<p><b>Qtr. 2 Budget Monitoring</b> To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the Council's Financial position as at 30 September 2023</p>	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>2023/24 Mid-Year Treasury Management Report</b> To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the treasury performance during the first six months of 2023/24</p>	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>Schedule of Meetings</b></p>	Cabinet  Council	14 Nov 2023  20 Dec 2023				Cabinet Member for Working Environment		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

<p><b>Council Tax Base</b> To consider the Council Tax Base for 2024/25</p>	<p>Cabinet  Council</p>	<p>14 Nov 2023  20 Dec 2023</p>	<p>Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Finance</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Private Sector Housing Fees &amp; Charges</b></p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>21 Nov 2023  12 Dec 2023</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Review of Tenancy Agreements - Project Plan</b> To receive a project plan to tenure reform</p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>21 Nov 2023  12 Dec 2023</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

<p><b>Tenancy Inspection Policy</b> To receive a review of MDH Tenancy Inspection Policy</p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>21 Nov 2023  12 Dec 2023</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Joint Strategy</b></p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>12 Dec 2023</p>	<p>Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration</p>		<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>2024/25 Budget Update</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the updated 2024/25 Budget position and consider options to reduce the remaining shortfall</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>12 Dec 2023</p>	<p>Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Finance</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

<b>Destination Management Plan for Mid Devon</b>	Economy Policy Development Group  Cabinet	4 Jan 2024  6 Feb 2024	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>Economic Strategy 2024 - 2029</b>	Economy Policy Development Group  Cabinet	4 Jan 2024  6 Feb 2024	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>Enforcement Policy</b> To receive a report from the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing	Cabinet	9 Jan 2024	Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615			Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

<p><b>2024/25 Budget Update</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the updated 2024/25 Budget position and consider options to reduce the remaining shortfall</p>	Cabinet	9 Jan 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>Regulation of Investigatory Powers</b></p>	Cabinet	9 Jan 2024	District Solicitor (Monitoring Officer)			Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>Town and Parish Charter</b></p>	Cabinet	9 Jan 2024				Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary



<p><b>Homes Safety Policy</b> To receive a new policy which incorporates the existing Gas Safety Policy, Asbestos Management Policy &amp; Fire Risk in Communal Properties Policy. New Policy includes regulated electrical safety checks being introduced to social housing landlords by the Social Housing Regulation Bill</p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet  Council</p>	<p>16 Jan 2024  6 Feb 2024  21 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Homes Standard</b></p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>16 Jan 2024  6 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Service Standards - Tenant Involvement &amp; Empowerment</b></p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>16 Jan 2024  6 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

<p><b>Garage, GGRP and Parking Space Policy</b> To receive the revised Garage, GGRP and Parking Space Policy</p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet  Council</p>	<p>16 Jan 2024  6 Feb 2024  21 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Health and Safety Policy</b> To receive the annual review of the Health &amp; Safety Policy</p>	<p>Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>23 Jan 2024  5 Mar 2024</p>	<p>Catherine Yandle, Operations Manager for Performance, Governance and Health &amp; Safety Tel: 01884 234975</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Community &amp; Leisure</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Enforcement Policy</b> To receive the updated Enforcement Policy</p>	<p>Community Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>23 Jan 2024  6 Feb 2024</p>				<p>Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

<p><b>CCTV Policy</b> To receive the updated CCTV Policy</p>	<p>Community Policy Development Group</p> <p>Cabinet</p>	<p>23 Jan 2024</p> <p>6 Feb 2024</p>				<p>Cabinet Member for Community &amp; Leisure</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Customer Care Policy</b> To receive the updated Customer Care Policy</p>	<p>Community Policy Development Group</p> <p>Cabinet</p>	<p>23 Jan 2024</p> <p>6 Feb 2024</p>					<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Policy Framework</b> To receive the policy framework report</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Council</p>	<p>6 Feb 2024</p> <p>21 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Member Services Manager</p>			<p>Leader of the Council</p>		<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

<p><b>Business Rates Tax Base</b> To receive the business rates tax base report</p>	<p>Cabinet  Council</p>	<p>6 Feb 2024  21 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Dean Emery, Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Finance</p>		<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Establishment</b> To receive the Establishment report</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>6 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Working Environment</p>		<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Pay Policy</b> To receive the pay policy report</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>6 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Working Environment</p>		<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

<p><b>Qtr. 3 Budget Monitoring</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the Council's Financial position as at 31 December 2023</p>	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>2024/25 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Capital Strategy and recommends the 2024/25 Capital Programme</p>	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy</p>	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

<p><b>2024/25 Budget Update</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Budget and recommends the Band D Council Tax charge for 2024/25</p>	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>2024/25 Council Tax Resolution</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Band D Council Tax charge for 2024/25</p>	Council	6 Feb 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR1)</b></p>	Cabinet  Council	6 Feb 2024  21 Feb 2024	Dean Emery, Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

<p><b>Income Management Policy</b> To receive a review of the MDH Income Management Policy</p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>19 Mar 2024  2 Apr 2024</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Corporate Anti Social Behaviour Policy</b></p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>2 Apr 2024</p>				<p>Cabinet Member for Community &amp; Leisure</p>		<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objective</b></p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>2 Apr 2024</p>	<p>District Solicitor (Monitoring Officer)</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Community &amp; Leisure</p>		<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

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