

Public Document Pack

Mid Devon District Council

Cabinet

**Tuesday, 1 August 2023 at 5.15 pm
Phoenix Chamber, Phoenix House, Tiverton**

**Next ordinary meeting
Tuesday, 29 August 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.

To join the meeting online, [click here](#)

Membership

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

AGENDA

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 4 July 2023.
5. **Care Leavers Council Tax Exemption** (Pages 17 - 28)
To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151).
6. **Community Engagement Strategy** (Pages 29 - 66)
To receive a report from the Communication and Engagement Manager.

The Following recommendation from the Community Policy Development Group was made to Cabinet:

That the content of the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and Media and Social Media Policy be approved.
7. **Notification of Key Decisions** (Pages 67 - 78)
To note the contents of the Forward Plan.

Stephen Walford
Chief Executive
Monday, 24 July 2023

Meeting Information

From 7 May 2021, the law requires all councils to hold formal meetings in person. The Council will enable all people to continue to participate in meetings via Teams.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4.

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 4 July 2023 at 5.15 pm

Present

Councillors J Buczkowski, N Bradshaw, S J Clist, S Keable, L Taylor, J Wright and D Wulff

Apology

Councillor J Lock

Also Present

Councillors D Broom, E Buczkowski, R Gilmour, B Holdman, M Jenkins and L Knight

Present

Officers Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Richard Marsh (Director of Place), Maria De Leburne (District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Simon Newcombe (Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing), Paul Deal (Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change), Dr Stephen Carr (Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager), Sue Hanwell (Operations Manager for Housing), Tristan Peat (Forward Planning Team Leader), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist), Keith Ashton (Facilities Manager for Corporate Property and Commercial Assets), David Parker (Member Services & Policy Research Officer) and Sarah Lees (Member Services Officer)

9. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr J Lock.

10. **Public Question Time**

Before consideration of the Public Questions the Leader stated that he had been made aware of some frustration experienced at the last meeting that questions submitted in advance should have been responded to in the meeting. Going forwards he requested that all questions submitted by 4pm on the preceding day to the meeting receive an answer at the meeting the following day.

The following questions were received from members of the public:

Nick Quinn

Problems Caused by Written Answers to Public Questions at Cabinet 06/06/23

A number of public questions were asked, during Public Question Time at the meeting of the MDDC Cabinet on 06/06/2023. The public had to wait 13 days before the written answers were provided - and there are clear problems with some of the answers given. According to the MDDC Constitution, these written answers "should be reported to the following meeting" – which is the Cabinet meeting on 04/07/2023 - but there is no agenda item that allows the Public to respond to these answers or raise the problems they contain.

Below are problems with two of the written answers given. Perhaps Cabinet Members might address them, when the "reporting of written answers" takes place.

Question Asked 1:

In paragraph 3.6.12 – it is stated that: "the Council has considered its outstanding loans to 3Rivers and has concluded that it needs to impair some of the loans". The loan impairment figure given in the report is more than £4.5Million!
What was the date of the meeting of the Council, at which this matter was considered and this conclusion reached?

Answer Given 1:

The Council's loan impairments is a matter for their Section 151 officer to determine and will then be subject to review during the annual audit process. Any impairment calculation made by the Section 151 will be based on all available information held at the time in question the overall impairment estimate was included in the annual outturn report considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 6 June 2023.

Problem 1:

The written answer makes it clear that "*the Council*" did not "*consider its outstanding loans*" nor did the Council "*conclude it needs to impairs some of the loans*".
What was written in the 2022/23 Financial Outturn Report ,discussed at the last Cabinet meeting, is now shown to be incorrect – it still contains the words "*the Council has considered its outstanding loans to 3Rivers and has concluded that it needs to impair some of the loans*".

Will Cabinet ask for this 2022/23 Financial Outturn Report to be noted as incorrect on the public records and ask that, in future reports, it is made clear where Officers are making decisions on behalf of the Council?

Question Asked 2:

This report is for the 2022/23 financial year - up to the end of March 2023. There was never any public mention of the likely impairment of 3 Rivers loans during this year. Now, more than £4.5M needs to be impaired!
Which loans are being impaired and how was the specific amount of this impairment arrived at?

Answer Given 2:

Currently 4 3Rivers loans are being impaired – 2 development loans and a working capital loan. The impairment was based on the likely level of repayment based on all information held.

Problem 2:

The written answer makes it clear that FOUR 3Rivers loans are being impaired . It is then stated this is made up of TWO development loans and ONE working capital loan.

In my mathematics $TWO + ONE = THREE$ (not FOUR).

So where/what is the Missing Loan?

The Cabinet Member for Finance responded to the questioner by stating that with regards to question number 1 the section of the report in question was informing Members of the Council that the S151 Officer had considered the outstanding loans and concluded that some needed to be impaired. It was not unusual that the advice or actions of officers were referred to in general as 'the Council' and given that this report was from officers to Members in this context it was perfectly reasonable to use the term in his opinion. However, feedback had been taken on board to make sure that all reports are clear to all readers in the future. Further, for the avoidance of doubt if there was a question as to when Members would approve the advice, as Cabinet merely noted the outturn report, then Members would have the opportunity to do so when the Statements of Accounts were finalised, reviewed by Audit and then presented to full Council. At this point Members would have the opportunity to debate and approve this advice. This had been made clear at the Cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet Member continued that in regards to problem number 2, there were currently 4 loans being impaired so the first part of the answer was correct, clearly there was an error in the further detail given as there were only 3 loans listed and he confirmed that the 4 loans that were being impaired were 2 projects loans, Riverside and Knowle Lane, the working capital loan and the balance of the aborted Park Road project. It was the latter that was missed from the original answer.

Barry Warren

My questions relate to item 4 on your agenda, and in particular at the top of page 6, where the recorded minute in relation to my second question is completely wrong in that it virtually repeats my first question and misrepresents what was asked.

My questions are recorded correctly on the audio recording, and in the questions and answers which are a supplement to the minutes and published on the website.

Will Members, please instruct that the written minutes be amended to include the correct wording of that part of my question 2 so as to give an accurate version and not the complete misrepresentation shown?

Why is the Chief Executive, as evidenced by his input at the recent Standards Committee, trying to reduce and misrepresent the public input?

Is his policy in fact making more work for officers by having to précis the minutes when questioners have provided written documents to the officers so that they can just cut and paste?

Why is this policy being pursued when in fact the room for error is increased thereby taking up more committee and Officer time to correct it as evidenced in this case, and the number of other instances prior to this?

Does this not create a potential for more conflict with the public, rather than achieving ruling party members wishes to encourage more public interest and involvement?

The Leader stated that there had been a lot of discussion on this at the Standards Committee, as well as how meetings were run, what information Members received and how information was recorded in the minutes. He continued by saying that councillors themselves did not have everything they say recorded in the minutes and whilst members of the public are encouraged to come and ask questions at Public Question Time Members don't necessarily need to have the entire statement before the question. This had been a cross party discussion and vote at the Standards Committee meeting. It was also very difficult to try and include all those pieces of information that somebody had submitted when a lot of the time it could be a huge page of statement and one part of question. We want to make sure that the questions are answered fully whilst not also having minutes that last 20 pages with the first part being Public Question Time. He further stated that all questions asked by members of the public were in the public domain as they were recorded.

The Leader stated that if Mr Warren wanted a further response he would ensure he received one in writing. With regard to the question about amending the minutes, the Leader was happy to put that forward to the Cabinet to include his full question when the minutes were discussed on the agenda.

There were no other questions from the members of the public present.

The Leader reiterated his request to have questions in advance by 4pm on the day before the meeting to ensure they were answered at the meeting the following day.

11. **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.

12. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 6 June 2023, were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Leader subject to the following amendments:

- a) Minute no. 5 – 2022/23 Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report
The Cabinet were informed that this report should have included an onward recommendation from the Cabinet to full Council for approval, it had not.

The Leader asked the Cabinet whether they were content to **RECOMMEND** the 2022/23 Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report to full Council for approval on 19th July 2023. A vote in favour of this was taken and was carried unanimously.

- b) Question no.2 asked by Mr Barry Warren at the 6th June Cabinet meeting to be amended to read:

Question 2.

If the Company has not sold any properties since The Orchards in Halberton, is it not therefore a fact that 3 Rivers are paying interest to the Council out of loans from the Council?

Answer

In Paragraph 3.5.7, on page 36 of the papers, it is reported that Council agreed to commission an external 3 Rivers option appraisal.

An amount of £30k was included in the Revised 2023/24 Budget for this review. I am aware that the last Cabinet agreed, with Officers, the terms of reference for that review and directed that the reviewer be appointed before the election date (of 4th May 2023) in order that the results of the review would be available early for the new Cabinet to consider.

c) The written minutes be amended to include the following Members as being present at the meeting on 6th June 2023:

- Cllr Emma Buczkowski
- Cllr Gordon Czapiewski
- Cllr Matt Fletcher
- Cllr Andrea Glover
- Cllr Claudette Harrower
- Cllr Ben Holdman
- Cllr Lloyd Knight
- Cllr Sue Robinson
- Cllr Nikki Woollatt

d) Cllr N Bradshaw had attended the meeting in person and not virtually.

13. Corporate Risk Report (00:25:00)

The Cabinet had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager and the Corporate Manager for People, Performance and Waste providing it with a quarterly update on the Risk Register.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The high risk rating applied to Cyber Security and the necessity for this. Even with the most robust mitigations in place the risk rating would always be high. It was confirmed that a Corporate Management Team, including two IT managers, the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) and the Cabinet Member had been established to specifically monitor this area.
- Risks in relation to the Cullompton Relief Road and the Culm Garden Village had been highlighted by the Audit Committee. Comments were made that the risk scores and actions needed were currently quite broad and vague and would need to be revisited to better reflect the risks involved. It was explained that funding in relation to such schemes was traditionally announced in the latter part of the financial year so hopefully this could provide some reassurance. It was also confirmed that officers could further develop the mitigating action identified to provide an extra level of detail.

- It was highlighted that under 'Equalities' no issues had been identified. The Corporate Performance Manager stated that this would be rectified before the report was next presented to committee.
- How items end up on the Risk Register? It was explained that issues could be raised through officers to their Corporate Manager or the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager, and indeed Members were encouraged to report issues of concern. It was confirmed that the Corporate Risk Register was reviewed quarterly by officers with this being reported to the Audit Committee and the Cabinet.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

14. **Performance Outturn Report for 2022/23 (00:40:00)**

The Cabinet had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager and the Corporate Manager for People, Performance and Waste providing it with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan and local service targets for 2022/23.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

15. **Award of Cleaning Contract for HRA Properties 2023-2026 (00:43:00)**

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing advising it on the results for the tendering of the Cleaning Contract for HRA Properties 2023 – 2026 (+1+1) and seeking confirmation of the contract.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services confirmed that the procurement process and matrix was fully explained within the report.

The following was discussed:

- An explanation was provided as to why a three year contract was being sought. This was a compromise option, to have gone through a tendering exercise for one year would have been expensive and unlikely to yield value for money. Three years represented a sensible timeframe and the contract would be monitored closely and performance would be regularly reviewed. Measures would be in place to escalate issues should there be a need.
- The Cabinet Member stated that it was anticipated that this contract would come in below budget.
- Whether the new contract would have an effect on reducing turnaround times on void properties? It was explained that at any one time 97% of HRA properties were occupied. It was further explained that a new Voids Policy was approved in March 2023 which set out exactly what a 'void' was. There were lots of reasons as to why a property was classed as a void. Complicated issues needed to be thought through regarding each void so that the Council managed its assets to best effect. A thorough explanation regarding voids would be coming to the Homes PDG in August
- Going for the cheapest contractor was not always the best option. Many factors had to be weighed up, a significant one being the quality of the work being offered.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The new three year Cleaning Contract for HRA Properties 2023 – 2026, with the option to extend for two additional one year periods, be awarded to Contractor 1.
- b) Delegated authority be granted to the S151 Officer (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and property Services) to complete the associated Cleaning Contract for HRA Properties 2023 – 2026 (+1+1)

(Proposed by Cllr S Clist and seconded by Cllr J Wright)

Reason for the decision

Mid Devon Housing (MDH) had a requirement to maintain Health and Safety and meet the Decent Homes Standard. This contract would support this duty by reducing the risk of fire in the communal blocks of flats, enabling our homes to be cleaned ready to be let to tenants and maintaining the cleanliness of the Housing (Building Services) office space at Old Road.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

16. ASB Policy & Procedures(00:55:00)

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing. Under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) required all registered providers to publish a policy setting out, how, in consultation with their tenants, they would maintain and improve the neighbourhood's associated with their homes. Registered suppliers were required to publish a policy on how they work with relevant partners and tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

The contents of the report were briefly outlined by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services who made reference to the requirements of the Housing Regulator and the considerable work that had gone on to formulate a revised policy including the involvement of a Member Working Group. He also highlighted the fact that the team responsible for dealing with ASB had recently won a national award. Congratulations were extended from the Cabinet to the team.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- The lessons that could be learnt from the award winning team and whether these could be utilised in other areas of the Council. A lot of effort had been given to working with tenants face to face. An online tool kit was available which helped to provide quality evidence. Multi agency working with the Police, social services and others had been key providing joined up face to face engagement on all sides.
- The Council understood ASB better as a result of wider tenant engagement work. The team were proactively trying to assist tenants at an earlier stage so that the impact was lessened on all those involved in the long run.

- The Cabinet Member stated that there had been an impressive improvement since he was last portfolio holder for this area and suggested that other local authorities would be looking to see how Mid Devon had achieved this.

RESOLVED that the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Statement, Procedures and Equality Impact Assessment contained in Annexes A,B,C & D respectively be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr S Clist and seconded by Cllr D Wulff)

Reason for the decision

The Council was required, under Section 12 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, to prepare a policy and procedure on ASB and to publish the following documents:

- Statement of policy on ASB;
- Statement of procedure on ASB;
- Summary statement of current policy and procedures on ASB

Note: * Report previously circulated.

17. **Local Development Scheme (01:08:00)**

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Director of Place updating the Local Development Scheme and providing an updated timetable for the production of a new Local Plan for Mid Devon.

The following was highlighted in the report by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration:

- The report was about the need for an amended timetable for preparing a new Local Plan for Mid Devon.
- Local Planning Authorities were required to prepare and keep up to date a development plan for their area. The Mid Devon Local Plan was adopted in July 2020 and work had commenced with preparing a new local plan that would cover the period to 2043. This new local plan had the working title 'Plan Mid Devon'.
- A new Local Development Scheme was needed following a review of progress made so far, where there have been significant competing work pressures on the Forward Planning team that had contributed to a delay in reaching a Draft Policies and Site Options stage. Consideration had also been given to the Government's proposed reforms to the plan making system and the potential introduction of new style plans from late 2024.
- The report set out in detail the context for a new Local Development Scheme and options that had been considered.
- A new Local Development Scheme was included in Appendix 1, which included updated key milestones. The next key stage for preparing the new Local Plan, which would be a Draft Policies and Site Options report, would be reached in late 2024. This would provide an early opportunity for public consultation on emerging proposals for the future planning of Mid Devon, and

modifications to be made to those proposals before a draft plan was finalised and was submitted to the Secretary of State for its independent examination.

- Draft Policies and Site Options would be informed through technical evidence about the need for new homes, jobs, community facilities, supporting infrastructure and a range of other considerations relevant to plan-making. It would be shaped through the engagement of the Planning Policy Advisory Group over the coming months, with consideration given to a draft spatial development strategy for the district, site allocations and strategic and local planning policies to guide the development and use of land and buildings. This work would build on and take forward 6 top priorities that had previously been identified as part of policy Issues that were consulted on in early 2022. These included responding to the climate emergency, moving to a net-zero carbon future, and addressing housing affordability and improving choice. A Draft Policies and Site Options consultation report would be brought to the Cabinet in late 2024 for consideration.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- How the residents of Mid Devon would be consulted? It was confirmed that the Forward Planning Team would do more than the statutory minimum requirements in order to utilise all opportunities for community engagement. This would include a range of consultation events in each of the towns as well as workshops and opportunities to provide comments online. The team would also work with Members through the Planning Policy Advisory Group.
- The Cabinet Member provided assurance that the towns and the parishes would be at the heart of any proposals going forward.
- Sustainability would be a significant factor in all discussions.
- There was a need to avoid the delays which had occurred before the adoption of the previous Local Plan. It was explained that there had been particular reasons for those delays. Currently the timetable did hinge around the capacity of the Forward Planning Team, however, whilst the timetable was ambitious it was also achievable.
- There was a degree of uncertainty in the planning policy world at the moment, however, the team were continuing to make positive steps towards creating a new Local Plan.
- The new plan would need to be robust enough in order to support the levels of housing needed both currently and in the future.

RESOLVED that the revised Local Development Scheme (Appendix 1) be approved for the period from 12th July 2023.

(Proposed by Cllr S Keable and seconded by Cllr S Clist)

Reason for the decision

Local Planning Authorities were required to prepare and keep up to date a development plan for their area. It was important that the development plan was kept up to date to ensure that it reflected recent changes in the planning system, the Council's current corporate objectives and provided a sound basis for decision making.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

18. Options for Procurement of Energy (01:32:00)

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change providing an overview of options available to the Council for the supply of Gas and Electricity.

The contents of the report were briefly outlined by the Cabinet Member for Finance who made reference to the need for a swift decision since a decision well in advance of the contract end (30 September 2024) would enable the Council to secure timely access to aggregated volumes and related benefits.

Consideration was given to:

- LASER Energy were part of Kent County Council, a specialist trading arm dedicated to delivering gas, electricity and other utility value-added services for the public sector. They were an established Public Buying Organisation (PBO) set up for this very purpose and recognised nationally. It was one of the largest energy buying organisations in Europe, purchasing over £500m of energy per annum and serving over 200 public sector customers. There was a small risk in using them but they were recognised as outstanding in what they did.
- Steps could be taken to ensure the provider were ethically and socially viable via the procurement process. There had already been a lot of due diligence undertaken regarding this company.
- Reassurance was provided that 'call off contracts' were able to be provided if necessary.
- The energy 'chain of custody' would be maintained.

RESOLVED that:

- a) Delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Finance - in consultation with the Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change - to contract with the LASER Energy to procure, manage and supply the Council's gas and electricity between 01 October 2024 and 30 September 2028 (four years); and
- b) Delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Finance - in consultation with the Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change - to continue with the current 'purchase in advance' gas and electricity purchasing model managed by LASER but also to utilise other available LASER Framework options such as the 'purchase within period' basket if there is a sound business case for doing so; and
- c) To continue to participate in the Devon Energy Group; and
- d) The Council moves towards a 100% renewable tariff for electricity consumption at its main operational facilities from sources such as via the LASER 'green basket' or certificate-backed renewable electricity, in order to seek to achieve 100% within the next 2 years.

(Proposed by Cllr J Buczkowski and seconded by Cllr N Bradshaw)

Reason for the decision

The Council's current contract period with LASER Energy (LASER) for the supply of gas and electricity ends 30 September 2024. The Council needed to consider the procurement options and next steps, and a decision needed to be made. This varied from undertaking a full procurement process to a direct award to one of the Public Buying Organisations (PBO).

The Council gains economies of scale (added discount) by participating in the Devon Energy Group with other Devon authorities. The collective is coordinated by Devon County Council who also provide Procurement support to the Council. The new contract would be directly between the Council and LASER, and the arrangement meant LASER would procure energy on behalf of the Council.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

19. Notification of Key Decisions (01:40:00)

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

The following three items had been added to the Forward Plan since the publication of the draft plan attached to the agenda for the meeting:

- a) Review of 3 weekly bin collections, this would be presented to the Environment PDG on 15th August and then to the Cabinet on 29th August 2023.
- b) Environment Enforcement Yearly Review Report, this would be presented to the Environment PDG on 15th August and then to the Cabinet on 29th August 2023.
- c) 3 Rivers Options Appraisal Report, this would be presented to the Cabinet on 29th August 2023 with a recommendation for Council on 6th September 2023.

Note: * Notification of key Decisions previously circulated.

(The meeting ended at 6.59 pm)

LEADER

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Report for: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	01 August 2023
Subject:	Care Leavers Discount
Cabinet Member:	Cllr James Buczkowski, Cabinet Member for Finance
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Jarrett Deputy CEO & S151 and Dean Emery, Corporate Manager
Enclosures:	Care Leavers Discount Policy

Executive Summary

The policy outlines the Council's approach to grant discretionary reductions in liability for Council Tax under S13a (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 in respect of specified care leavers within the Council's area. The Council has the ability to reduce liability in relation to individual cases or class(es) of cases.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. Cabinet are requested to recommend to full Council the adoption of the care leavers discount policy.**
- 2. Delegated authority is given to the Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits & Corporate Recovery to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council (4.0 in policy)**

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Under Council Tax legislation the Council can set local discounts that apply to certain properties and/or certain groups of people.
- 1.2 Definition of Care Leaver for this policy is found at (3.7 & 3.8) within the policy document.
- 1.3 Discounts to apply until the care leaver turns 25 years old. From this date no discount will apply and the care leaver will be liable to pay any council tax due after any discounts, disregards and Council tax reduction.

- 1.4 If approved the discount will take effect from 1st April 2023 for those liable at that date, this may result in an overpayment which will be refunded.
- 1.5 The policy will be monitored by two officers with Revenues and Benefits, one being the Welfare Officer.
- 1.6 The benefits of introducing this policy are:
- Greater customer care for a vulnerable group
 - Care leaver has sight of a bill and gains understanding of council tax
 - Reduces the chance of recovery notices being sent
 - Removes the need for a care leaver to pass on bills to 'children services'
 - Helps the Council engage with the care leaver, allowing Mid Devon's Welfare Officer to contact them and assist with the pressures of daily life
 - Brings Mid Devon District Council in line with other Authorities, both locally and nationally.

2.0 Financial Implications

- 2.1 The discount is paid under regulation 13a (1) (c) within the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Warding reductions under this regulation means that Mid Devon District Council takes 100% of the cost. All statutory reductions will be applied before Care Leaver Discount.
- 2.2 The total estimated cost of implementing the policy for the care leavers currently in the district is c£17k. This equates to an approximate £4k amount annually, however costs will change as care leavers become liable and receive the discount and turn 25 years old where no discount will be awarded. Whilst there are currently 15 care leavers, only 6 will qualify for a discount. The others are not liable or already have reductions within Council Tax legislation.

3.0 Legal Implications

- 3.1 It is considered that the approval of this policy accords with the Council's statutory responsibility as a corporate parent under the Children's Act, 2004 and the Children's and Social Work Act, 2017. In its Care Leavers Strategy 'Keep on Caring; Supporting Young People from Care to Independence (2016)', the Government encouraged local authorities to consider exempting care leavers from Council Tax, using their existing discretionary powers under Section 13A. As a result, many councils have introduced a council tax discount for care leavers.

Risk Assessment: There are no known risks.

Impact on Climate Change: Less paper bills to be issued by delivering a more automated approach between Devon County Council and Mid Devon District Council.

Equalities Impact Assessment: The Care Leavers Discount Policy supports the Council in meeting its Equality Objectives, notably “Overcoming the problems faced by vulnerable individuals caused by rural isolation.” It may also contribute to the council’s objective “Overcoming the effects of multiple disadvantage in families with complex needs.”

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Helps Mid Devon to support customers and vulnerable households, bringing the Council and community closer together by working in partnership with other councils.

Statutory Officer sign-off

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 24/07/2023

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 24/07/2023

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Dean Emery Corporate Manager

Email: demery@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 - 234945

Background papers: Care Leavers Policy

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**Mid Devon District Council
Care Leavers Discount Policy
Council Tax
S13A (1) (c)
Local Government Finance Act 1992**

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The following policy outlines the Council's approach to granting discretionary reductions in liability for Council Tax under S13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 in respect of specified care leavers within the Council's area. The Council has the ability to the reduce liability for Council Tax in relation to individual cases or class(es) of cases that it may determine where national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied.
- 1.2 This policy covers the decision by the Council to support certain care leavers with their liability for Council Tax.

2.0 Legislation

- 2.1 The relevant legislation, Section 13A (1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 2012), states the following:

Reductions by billing authority

- (1) The amount of council tax which a person is liable to pay in respect of any chargeable dwelling and any day (as determined in accordance with sections 10 to 13);
- (a) in the case of a dwelling situated in the area of a billing authority in England, is to be reduced to the extent, if any, required by the authority's council tax reduction scheme;
- (b) in the case of a dwelling situated in the area of a billing authority in Wales,
- (c) in any case, may be reduced to such extent (or, if the amount has been reduced under paragraph (a) or (b), such further extent) as the billing authority for the area in which the dwelling is situated thinks fit.**
- 2.2 The provisions stated in (c) above, allows the Council to reduce the Council Tax liability for any taxpayer in addition to any application for Council Tax Reduction under the Council's scheme. This is a general power is available to the Council.

3.0 Council Tax Care Leavers Discount Scheme

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council has decided to provide assistance with Council Tax to certain persons who are leaving care. This has been implemented to reflect challenges faced by many care leavers as they learn to budget their finances independently.
- 3.2 Care leavers are a particularly vulnerable group for Council Tax debt, and as they move into independent accommodation and begin to manage their own budget, it can be a challenging time, exacerbated if they fall behind with Council Tax.

- 3.3 The Council wants to support care leavers **up to the age of 25**, by the granting of a discretionary reduction of up to 100% of the Council Tax liability. This means that the Council will be providing financial support to care leavers whilst they develop independent lives and life skills.
- 3.4 Assistance will only be provided to care leavers who reside within the Mid Devon District Council area.

The Council's Policy in respect of Carer Leavers.

- 3.5 The Council shall operate the scheme as follows. :

Part 1

This applies to the following:

- (a) Care leavers who are sole occupants of a dwelling and who have liability for Council Tax; or
- (b) Dwellings that are solely occupied by care leavers, where one or more of the residents are liable for council tax.

Part 2

This part applies to the following:

- (a) Care leavers who are jointly and severally liable with one or more other liable person (s) who is/are not a care leaver.

- 3.6 A reduction in liability will only be applied after the entitlement to other national discounts or reductions have been applied and will only apply to Council Tax liabilities within the Mid Devon area.

Definition of a Care Leaver for the purposes of this scheme

- 3.7 The term 'care leaver' is defined in The Children (Care Leavers) Act 2000 and refers to eligible, relevant, and former relevant children:
- The person is someone for whom Devon County Council has acted previously as a corporate parent;
 - Relevant children are those young people aged 16 and 17 who have already left care, and who were 'looked after' for at least 13 weeks from the age of 14 and have been 'looked after' at some time while they were 16 or 17; and
 - Former relevant children are those young people aged 18, 19 or 20 who have been eligible and/or relevant.
- 3.8 Care leavers can also be classified as a 'qualifying' care leaver. This category applies to young people who:
- (a) Left care after 1st October 2001, after they had turned 16, but who are not 'eligible' or 'relevant' because they did not fulfil the 13-week criteria;
 - (b) Were accommodated, but in residential education, mental/health provision

- private fostering or Special Guardianship; or
(c) For the purposes of this policy 'qualifying care leavers' will be treated in the same way as 'care leavers'.

- 3.9 Additionally former care leavers born before 2001 will be designated as a qualifying care leaver for the purposes of this policy.
- 3.10 The Council will only consider a reduction in liability where it receives confirmation that the applicant is a Devon County Council Former Relevant Child. The confirmation **must** be received from Devon County Councils Education and Families Team.

Reductions for care leavers falling into Part 1 of this scheme

- 3.11 The Council, under this policy, will reduce the amount of Council Tax payable to nil, after the application of all other discounts or reductions, where a care leaver, as defined in this policy, is **solely liable** for Council Tax, and any other adult residents in the dwelling also meet the definition of care leaver as defined within this policy.

Reductions for care leavers falling into Part 2 of this scheme

- 3.12 The Council, under this policy will reduce the amount of Council Tax payable, by applying a reduction of 50%, after the application of all other discounts and reductions, where one or more care leavers, as defined in this policy, are jointly liable for council tax, together with any other adults resident the property who are not care leavers.

Exclusions

- 3.13 This reduction will only apply where the property is occupied. No reduction will apply where premises are no one's sole or main residence or where the premises is defined as a second home.
- 3.14 Where the care leaver is liable for more than one property, the reduction will only be awarded in respect of the dwelling which is deemed to be their sole or main residence.
- 3.15 Where a care leaver lives in a household and the dwelling would be deemed exempt from Council Tax if the care leaver did not reside at the property, a 100% reduction will be awarded.
- 3.16 For the sake of clarity, no reduction will be granted where the care leaver resides in a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) or where the care leaver resides in a property for which they are not liable for Council Tax.

Changes in circumstances

- 3.17 The Council may revise any reduction in liability where the applicant's circumstances or situation changes.

The award and duration of a reduction in liability

- 3.18 Both the amount and the duration of the reduction are at the discretion of the Council and the reduction will be awarded on the basis of the evidence supplied and the circumstances of the individual.

Effective Date

- 3.19 The effective date of this policy shall be 1st October 2023. However, any care leaver meeting the criteria and who is liable for Council Tax with effect from 1st April 2023 shall have the reduction applied from that date.

4.0 Delegated Powers

- 4.1 This Care Leavers Discount policy has been approved by the Council. However, the Corporate Manager: Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Recovery, is authorised to make technical scheme amendments to ensure it meets the criteria set by the Council.

5.0 Notification

- 5.1 The Council will issue a written decision either by a letter or by a revised demand notice, to the applicant within one month of the request, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

6.0 Review of Decisions

- 6.1 Notwithstanding any discounts or reductions applied automatically to the Council Tax account, where any application is refused, the applicant will be notified that they can ask for the decision to be reviewed. Any request for a review must be made, in writing or by email, within one month of the decision letter.
- 6.2 A relevant officer of the Council shall undertake the review and shall respond within two months and will have regard to any further evidence supplied.
- 6.3 If the applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, they can, within two months of the Council's reply, appeal to the independent Valuation Tribunal Service to consider their case.

7.0 Financial Arrangements

- 7.1 The Council will reimburse the full cost of the scheme to the collection fund in accordance with legislation.

8.0 Changes in circumstances and misrepresentation

- 8.1 A reduction in liability under this policy can be recovered if it has been made as a result of misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact. It can also be recovered as a result of the subsequent application of a national discount or reduction or any adjustment in banding by the Valuation Office Agency
- 8.2 Changes of circumstances that subsequently negate the need for a reduction in liability under this policy will be recovered by the Council. Where this occurs, the Council shall notify the taxpayer accordingly.

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Report for: Cabinet
(Previously seen by Community PDG)

Date of Meeting:	1 August 2023
Subject:	Communication and Engagement Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Cllr David Wulff, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure
Responsible Officer:	Jane Lewis, Communication and Engagement Manager
Exempt:	No
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Enclosures:	Communication Strategy 2023 Media and Social Media Policy 2023

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

The purpose of this report is to provide members with the revised Communication and Engagement Strategy and accompanying Media and Social Media Policy. The 2023 Communications and Engagement Strategy was referred back to Community PDG following a meeting of the Cabinet in April 2023. Following the Cabinet's request this amended strategy now includes more detail about the Council's engagement plans.

Recommendation(s):

To recommend to Cabinet the content of the reviewed Communication and Engagement Strategy and the Media and Social Media Policy

Section 2 – Report

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to consult and engage effectively with residents, partners, employees and other stakeholders when deciding about future changes to services and new developments.
- 1.2 As a council we must offer value for money and customer satisfaction, therefore two way engagement is an essential part of delivering our services.
- 1.3 This engagement must be delivered in an open and transparent way that is accessible to our audience.
- 1.4 Since the last strategy was revised in 2021 the communications team has continued to support services across the Council.
- 1.5 Notably in the past year the team has contributed to the successful launch of the Bin IT 123 scheme leading on the branding, advertising, and interaction with residents.
- 1.6 The team has also supported the elections service, notably with the Tiverton and Honiton bi-election which saw more than 50 members of the media present at the count. The team also supported the elections team with the district wide elections in May 2023 and the roll out of voter ID.
- 1.7 Each year the communications team organises the Council's stand at the Mid Devon Show, which in 2022 focused on sustainability and our environment, and highlighted the Council's work in this area with support from our Climate Specialist Jason Ball.
- 1.8 A drive to improve engagement with our residents has also seen our social media presence grow and we now have more than 34,000 followers across our platforms.

Channel	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023
Facebook	2,272	3,562	5,171
LinkedIn	-	2,109 (March 2022)	2,452
Twitter	4,243	4,435	4,573
Next Door	-	-	10,024 (March 2023)
Gov Delivery	9,754	10,954	12,329

- 1.9 The team has also launched two full resident surveys, which in both 2021 and 2022 saw more than 1400 people respond to us each time.

2 Future

- 2.1 The communications team will continue to support services across the authority.

- 2.2 Upcoming projects in 2023 include supporting the delivery of the new CRM project and the implementation of Engagement HQ, an online consultation platform. The team will also continue to share the positive news and achievements to both our residents and our staff.

Appendices:

Appendix one: Communication and Engagement Strategy 2023.

Appendix two: Media and Social Media Policy 2023

Financial Implications

The revised strategy does not have any specific financial implications. Should the Council wish to implement larger scale communication changes, such as to develop a new intranet or carry out a full rebranding exercise, this would involve a financial cost and these would be accompanied by a business case.

Legal Implications

To ensure that all communication and methods of consultation are GDPR compliant and adhere to the Council's Single Equality Scheme.

Risk Assessment

Failure to engage with the Council's stakeholders could mean the Council's actions and objectives are not understood, risking reputational damage.

Impact on Climate Change

The Communication and Engagement Strategy includes work to support the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. By maximising our digital communication and engagement channels we contribute to a reduction of our carbon footprint from printing and postage.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Any consultation and communication channels would have regard to the Council's Single Equality Scheme.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

To ensure that our customers, staff, members and stakeholders are informed about Council services, news and changes through appropriate and varied channels.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 16/06/2023

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 16/06/2023

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 16/06/2023

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 14/06/2023

Cabinet member notified: No

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jane Lewis

Email: jlewis@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 234953

Background papers: Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021.

Appendix One

Version Control Sheet

Title: Communication and Engagement Strategy
Purpose: To set out how the Council will inform, engage and listen to our communities, in order for the Council to provide services which are fit for purpose for our customers and provided in a cost effective and transparent way.

Owner: Communications & Engagement Manager
jlewis@middevon.gov.uk

Date: May 2023

Version Number: 2.0

Status: DRAFT

Review Frequency: Every two years or sooner if required

Next review date: May 2025

Consultation: This document will be sent out for consultation to the following:
Community PDG
Cabinet

Document History

This document obtained the following approvals.

Title	Date	Version Approved
Community PDG*		
Cabinet		

*- Delete if not applicable

1.0 Introduction

The Communications and Engagement Strategy sets out how the Council will inform, engage and listen to our communities, in order for the Council to provide services which are fit for purpose for our customers and provided in a cost effective and transparent way.

Communication within the Council supports the Council's values which are People, Pride, Performance and Place as well as and sharing the objectives and successes detailed in our Corporate Plan.

The Communication function is split into three key areas. These functions are:

- Community engagement
- Media relations
- Internal communication

This strategy works in conjunction with the Media and Social Media Policy, the Corporate Branding Guidelines and the Single Equality Scheme.

2.0 What we do

The core functions of the communication team are:

- Media relations and media monitoring
- Social media management
- Staff communication
- Community consultation and engagement
- Stakeholder consultation and engagement
- Branding and corporate campaigns
- Communication advice and training
- Website editing

The current structure of the Communication Team is a part time Communication and Engagement Manager, a part time Communications Officer and a full time Digital Communications Officer. The team sits within the Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement service and works closely with all service areas of the Council to provide a more effective approach to communication and engagement with our customers.

3.0 Who we communicate with

The Council has a wide audience in terms of demographics with a population of approx. 82,800 spread over a largely rural area.

The majority of the work carried out by the Communication Team is with our customers who live in the district and with our staff who run our services.

This communication may be directly with these audiences or via the local media, partners or stakeholders such as local charities, parish and town councils, MPs and schools, as well as visitors to the area.

Communication with Mid Devon businesses is an important part of the Council's work, but this strand of communication is led by the Growth and Economic Development Team.

4.0 Our aim

The Council aims to provide communication which is:

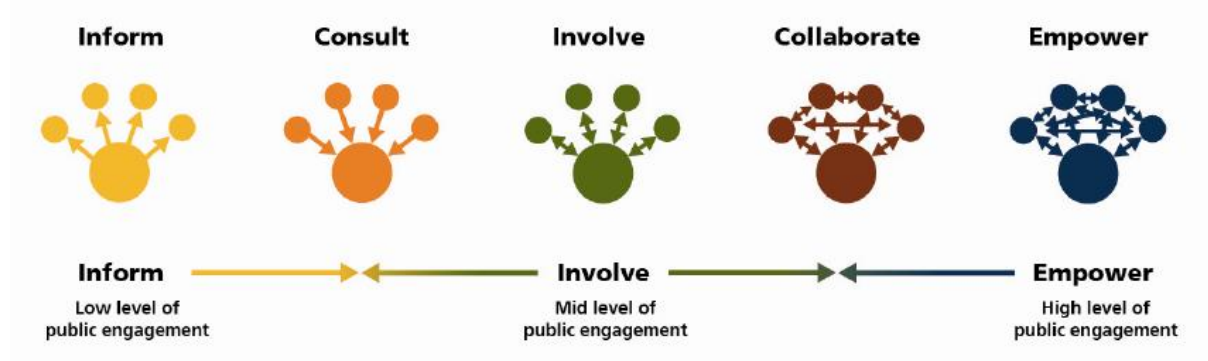
- accessible and clear
- planned and proactive
- creative and engaging
- cost-effective
- positive and transparent

5.0 Community Engagement

The Communications Team provides effective engagement channels which aim to give the local community a greater say and impact on the delivery of local services, while being better informed about the Council's work. Community engagement is about putting communities at the heart of their own local services. Effective community engagement is essential to ensure the services the Council operates are fit for the communities they serve.

In some areas of the Council there is a statutory consultation requirement when the Council has a duty to engage with the public, such as Planning and Licensing, which is supported by the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement 2020. At other times the Council voluntarily and actively seeks out the views of the community to ensure the Council is delivering a high quality, cost effective service which meets the needs of the customer.

There are different levels of engagement and this should be considered when embarking on any form of engagement. The most appropriate method of engagement will depend on the desired outcome and audience.



To develop and improve community engagement the Council should:

- understand and respond to the needs of our customers
- plan and deliver better and more efficient services
- take transparent decisions based on evidence and be held accountable for these decisions
- build relationships with the local community and partners
- test out ideas and explore local issues
- measure the performance of the Council in delivering services

The Communications Team will support this by:

- Sharing information via multiple channels in multiple formats
- Exploring new partnerships, particularly with community and voluntary groups, as well as statutory/public sector partners
- Working with Members to promote the work of the Council and to receive feedback from constituents
- Encouraging service areas and Members to share news, upcoming events and consultation
- Giving the community and stakeholders clear means to express their views
- Listening to the feedback from our customers and acting on this feedback
- Working with partner organisations

Our community engagement methods will also support and adhere to our Single Equality Scheme 2021.

Our engagement can be split into three main areas: Customers, Members and Staff.

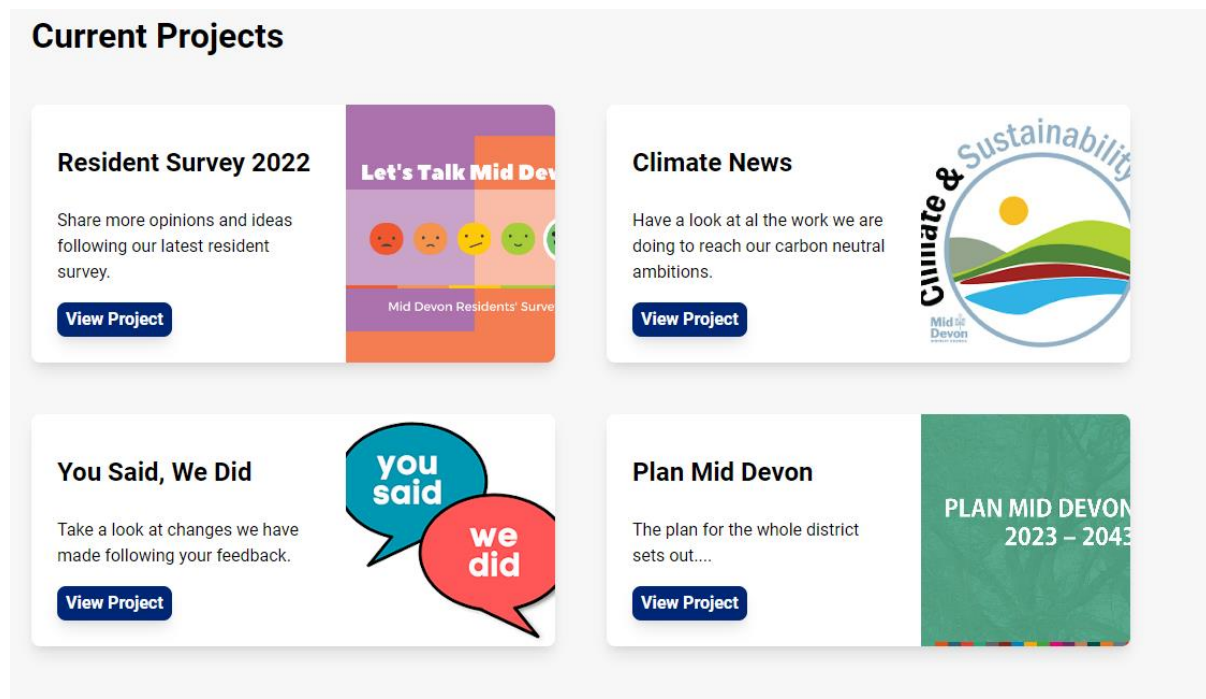
Customers

We share the work of the Council, its achievements and upcoming changes to services. We do this through a digital first approach, while ensuring all residents have access to information by using a number of different communication methods including print, in person events and online platforms.

The Council has recently invested in a new online engagement platform, Engagement HQ, which will be a hub for residents and businesses to communicate directly with the Council.

Engagement HQ will allow the Council to share information, ask questions, invite discussion and host forums directly with residents and businesses. It is a two-way communication tool that can be used for both statutory and non-statutory communication.

Figure 2 Homepage of Mid Devon's New Community Engagement Platform



Our communities already have a number of methods to engagement with us including:

- An annual resident survey
- Service specific consultation exercises
- Service specific feedback processes
- A newsletter subscription service
- Multiple social media channels
- Business Forum
- Mid Devon Show event
- Specific in-person planning events
- Printed and online feedback forms

Elected Members

We aim to ensure our elected members, who represent our residents, are kept informed and engaged with our activities and we ask them to support this work by sharing information within their wards.

We will work closely with Member Services to:

- Share weekly key messages with councillors
- Share our news releases with all members
- Host relevant councillor information on Sharepoint and Teams
- Follow councillors' social media profiles on our official channels

We encourage Members to support community engagement, as they are the face of the Council in the community and can help ensure the Council's priorities reflect the community's wishes. It is important that our Members:

- Support and share council run campaigns
- Share good news within their communities
- Feedback community ideas and issues
- Encourage participation with the Council
- Share community events and consultation

Staff Engagement/ Internal communications

The Communications Team works closely with the Leadership Team, Corporate Management Team, Operations Managers and Human Resources to support staff communication across the organisation.

Our aim is to provide an internal communication system which promotes interaction and ensures staff and elected members, at all levels, feel valued and informed, giving them the best position to support the objectives and values of the Council.

We will do this by:

- Ensuring communication is shared with staff in a timely, easily accessible way, especially during periods of change, so that they feel better informed and engaged
- Help employees see the connection between their job and the organisation's aims and objectives
- Recognising that different methods of communication are needed depending on the audience and message
- Encouraging staff to share good practice and expertise
- Encouraging senior management to listen to staff feedback and questions and respond accordingly, creating a climate of two-way communication and improved levels of trust
- Facilitating free flowing communication

6.0 Media relations

The Communications Team works closely with existing and emerging media (local and national) to inform and engage the public about the work of the Council, ensuring the reputation of the Council is upheld and enhanced.

We will do this by:

- Generating news content
- Generating photo and video content
- Monitoring local and national news and sharing this information internally
- Liaising regularly with local reporters and editors
- Linking trending articles to the Council's work on social media
- Working closely with Members on issues that matter to them
- Using paid for adverts, when budget allows, particularly for campaigns

7.0 Media Training

The Communications Team can support Members and officers who wish to learn or improve their interview skills and media handling, as well as support them with the setting up of social media pages. The team can also support Members by utilising external training providers for media training, particularly as part of the Member Induction programme.

8.0 Emergency Planning

The Communications Team is on hand to support the Council during an emergency ensuring residents, staff, visitors and businesses are kept up to date in a time of crisis. The team is part of the Local Resilience Forum and liaises regularly with other local authorities within Devon. There is a mutual aid agreement in place with Devon County Council for use during an emergency if further communications resources are need.

9.0 Corporate Branding

The Council recognises the importance of communicating in a way that is clear, consistent and uses plain English. The Council has Corporate Branding Guidelines which should be adhered to when undertaking communications.

10.0 Accessibility

The Council must follow WCAG 2.1 AA standards on all public facing websites and business applications that the public can use such as apps. The standards required can be found here: <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>

Any software procured / commissioned by the authority should be checked to ensure it meets WCAG 2.1 AA standards. We would be breaking the law if we purchase publicly visible apps / websites that don't meet this criteria.

The Communications team and web developer manage a team of content editors/uploaders who are responsible for the accessibility of the content they upload to any Council run website or where a website is hosted by a third party supplier such as ModernGov.

Officers in the Council have a responsibility to ensure content they would like in the public domain is accessible following WCAG 2.1 AA Standards.

11.0 Our success and accountability

It is important that our communities know how we are performing and what decisions we are making, so that they can challenge us and hold us accountable.

The Council is committed to working with communities to give them the chance to shape our priorities and to ensure they have the information they need to hold us to account for our performance.

This can be achieved by:

- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Tenant Involvement
- Business Forums
- Performance sharing
- Consultation exercises
- An open budget setting process
- A simple and transparent complaints process

We will measure communication and engagement success by:

- **Evaluating** website and digital analytics
- **Monitoring** media coverage
- **Increasing** our social media following and reach
- **Developing** partnership work
- **Implementing** an annual resident survey
- **Supporting** the annual staff survey
- **Launching and then evaluating** a new, two-way engagement platform

Appendix One:

Media & Social Media Policy

February 2023

Media and Social Media Policy

Version Control Sheet

Title: **Media and Social Media Policy**

Purpose: **To outline how we deal with media and social media and to provide advice and guidance to officers and elected Members**

Owner: **Communications & Engagement Manager**
jlewis@middevon.gov.uk

Date: **February 2023**

Version Number: **1.0**

Status:

Review Frequency: **Every two years or sooner if required**

Next review date: **February 2025**

Consultation: **This document will be sent out for consultation to the following:**
Community PDG
Cabinet

Document History

This document obtained the following approvals.

Title	Date	Version Approved
Community PDG*		
Cabinet		

*- Delete if not applicable

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1 Introduction

This policy outlines procedures for Mid Devon District Council officers and elected Members who may come into contact with the media. It supports the Council's **Communication and Engagement Strategy**.

With the growth of social media, online versions of newspapers, blogging and citizen journalism, any media policy must now take into account both the traditional media (newspapers, magazines, radio and TV) and online digital media (including websites, blogs and social media).

It explains processes in relation to: proactive media relations; dealing with media enquiries; and dealing with posts on social media. It also provides guidance on a range of other media-related issues.

1.1 Our strategic aim

To work closely with existing media, and to develop relationships with new media channels, to inform and engage the public about the work of the Council, ensuring the reputation of the Council is upheld and enhanced.

1.2 Our policy statement

Mid Devon District Council recognises the value of the media and social media, as a means of communicating information and messages to the public. We are committed to:

- transparent government;
- a positive working relationship with the media;
- always being open, honest and proactive in our dealings with the media and on social media, and;
- respecting the right of the media to report all views on any given topic.

2 Proactive media relations

Positive media coverage comes from pro-active media relations and the recognition of a good news story. Ideas for stories can come from both officers and elected Members. The drafting of press releases is undertaken primarily by the Communications team. Creative and editorial support is also offered to services; however they are free to submit their own drafts where appropriate sign-off has already been sought.

2.1 Press releases

Media coverage is predominantly generated through the publication and distribution of press releases to:

- Increase public awareness of services provided by the Council and the functions we perform
- Explain to residents and council taxpayers the reasons for particular policies and priorities
- Improve local accountability
- Publicise forthcoming events
- Encourage participation in public consultations
- Explain changes to services
- Explain how the Council is dealing with issues of particular interest to local communities
- Share good news

2.1.1 Press release content

For advice on writing a press release, see **Phoenix Portal >> Communication >> Media Relations:**

- [How to write a good press release](#)
- [Quick checklist when writing a press release](#)

Tip: Make sure that the relevant Cabinet Member(s) – and, for local issues, any Ward Members – are informed about what is happening and that a press release is being prepared (even if those Members are not actually quoted in the press release).

2.1.2 Who should be quoted in a press release?

Quote attribution depends on the nature of the press release, for example:

- The relevant Cabinet Member and the officer most directly involved in the subject may both be quoted – this gives the media a strategic/policy viewpoint, as well as the day-to-day operational viewpoint
- An officer
- A Member
- An external partner

If the press release provides only straightforward information, there's no need to include a quote.

2.1.3 Contact details on press releases

Only contact details for the Communications team are included in the 'ENDS' of all press releases for follow-up enquiries from the press. This is to prevent journalists from contacting officers directly with future enquiries and to ensure all contact with the press is directed through, and logged with Communications.

Specific contact details may only be included in relation to consultations, where a 'return path' is required for respondent enquiries.

Tip: Where a press release covers a specialist subject for which follow-up inquiries from the press can only be answered confidently by a specific officer or Member, he/she should ensure they're available for contact by the Communications team, the following few days after release

2.1.4 Press release approval

For press releases written by the Communications team, sign-off is sought from the relevant Corporate Manager and Cabinet Member. Where a press release has been written by a service directly, it's up to the author to agree sign-off with the relevant Service Manager or Corporate Manager and Cabinet Member before submitting to communications@middevon.gov.uk, for publication and distribution.

Before issuing to the media, the Communications team will undertake checks for spelling, language and grammar.

Tip: Depending on the complexity of the subject matter, various people may need to agree the wording of a press release, such as:

- Any quoted elected Member/officer(s)
- The relevant service manager
- The Chief Executive, Director or Corporate Manager (for important corporate issues or important operational issues)
- The Leader of the Council or the relevant Cabinet Member (for important strategic issues or policy decisions)
- Relevant partner organisations

2.1.5 Press release distribution

Press releases from services which are time-sensitive and sent in advance, must contain *****EMBARGOED***** within the subject line, along with the specified date for release. Press releases must also be accompanied with an appropriate image at an industry standard resolution of ~300dpi. This is not only for publication online, but also for reprinting by the press, should they choose to cover the article.

All press releases are published onto the Council's website and then distributed via email to all media contacts, town and parish councils, and internally to Corporate Managers, Members and Customer First for info.

Press releases are further promoted through:

- social media posts published on the corporate [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) , LinkedIn and Next Door pages, which link back to the story on www.middevon.gov.uk/news and;
- via e-bulletin to GovDelivery subscribers subscribing to the Council's email subscription service.

2.2 Other ways of generating coverage

The Communications team can be consulted for advice on other aspects of media relations including:

- Planning media campaigns
- Setting up photo opportunities
- Media briefings and media launches
- Use of embargos (where the media is given advance notice but cannot publish until a specified date)
- Negotiating special features
- Improving web pages to support publicity
- Making better use of social media
- Increasing community engagement through GovDelivery

3 Reputational issues

3.1 Imbalanced or inaccurate media coverage

When media coverage of a particular issue is unduly negative and imbalanced, services can liaise with the Communications & Engagement Manager about how best to try to redress the balance. Action taken in response may involve:

- A letter to the press
- A request for a correction
- Communications & Engagement Manager, Chief Executive and/or Leader to meet and discuss with the Editor
- Generating further media coverage to move the story on in a more positive way

If we judge the following coverage to still be unfair or not based on fact, a complaint may be made to IPSO.

3.2 Confidential information

Leaking of confidential information, exempt agenda items and minutes to the media, is viewed seriously by the Council. The [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#) (see also 4.3 below), allows certain information to be available on request to anyone including the media, unless the Council has a valid reason for not releasing it. Please refer to the [Freedom of information Policy](#) on SharePoint for further information.

Occasionally, issues come to the notice of the media that involve staff or Members and aspects of their private lives or employment contracts. Our policy is not to comment upon such issues. Factual responses are permitted, for example: *'I can confirm that the employee is no longer in employment with Mid Devon District Council, but I am not able to discuss the situation in any greater detail'*.

The Communications Team will liaise with a member of the Leadership team to discuss any response to the leaking of sensitive information.

3.3 Issues relating to employee relations

It is recognised that there will be occasions where the Unions wish to comment to the media in relation to issues rather than individual cases, on behalf of itself and its members.

There are mechanisms for complaining about issues or situations arising in the workplace and individual employees should refer to the procedures laid out in the appropriate policies (e.g. [grievance](#), [dignity at work/harassment](#) and [appeals procedure](#), [whistle-blowing](#)), available on SharePoint. If in doubt about how to raise concerns or which policy would be most appropriate for their needs, employees should seek advice and guidance from [Human Resources](#).

3.4 Protecting the Council's reputation

While it is recognised that elected Members will want to comment on particular issues such as Council policies and decisions, neither officers nor Members should bring the Council into disrepute or publicly criticise individual officers or associates. Any actions that bring the Council into disrepute could be brought as a code of conduct complaint to the Monitoring Officer to be investigated.

Media enquiries

Every media enquiry can be used as a positive opportunity to get a message across to the public. Failure to provide a response explaining 'our side of the story' is an opportunity missed to ensure the subsequent reporting is fair and balanced. Our preference is to provide a response rather than a reply of 'no comment', which can come across as aloof, uncaring or that we have something to hide. If, for some reason we cannot comment in detail, for example, in relation to case work which is ongoing, we can usually provide a general comment and an explanation as to why we cannot go into detail.

3.5 Points of contact for media enquiries

3.5.1 Communications

The press and media personnel are encouraged to contact the Communications team with any requests for comments, supporting information or interviews. Communications will liaise with the relevant Corporate Manager or service spokesperson to coordinate a response. The enquiry and proposed response is also Cc'd to the relevant:

- generic department email;
- Cabinet Member;
- Leader of the Council (if controversial), and;
- Committee Chair (if in relation to an incident or comment made at a committee meeting).

The Communications team will ensure all statements received are well written and submitted within the media's deadline. Final statements will be appropriately attributed, ensuring staff names and job titles are correct. Care is also taken to ensure that direct contact details for staff are not disclosed in any replies sent to the press.

Where a response from the relevant service is outstanding, we will respond to acknowledge receipt of the journalist's enquiry and to ask whether he/she is willing to extend the deadline for their enquiry. If no one is available, we will reply stating that the appropriate officer is currently unavailable for comment.

All contact between the press and staff is currently documented on the media reporting system CommsFlow for future reference and month end analysis. This system will be replaced in the new CRM.

3.5.2 Officers and Members

The media may contact officers or Members directly. If the enquiry is straightforward, requiring only a factual answer, this can be answered there and then. However, the responding officer or Member must notify the Communications team to record the enquiry onto CommsFlow.

With the immediacy of news now being published predominantly online, Officers and Members should be aware of the urgent need to respond within the deadline set by the enquiring journalist. It is within our mutual interest to respond positively and on time. The forging of good relations with the press allows us to build favours and any future coverage will likely be more favourable, or at least less critical if the story is negative. Similarly, journalists will be more willing to amend or withdraw a story if it's been reported inaccurately.

Note: Nothing in this policy precludes Members or political groups from speaking to or contacting the media. Members should make it clear to the media whether they are speaking:

- officially on behalf of the Council – in this case the Communications team should be kept informed, *or*;
- officially on behalf of their particular political group, *or*;
- in a personal capacity.

Media training will be offered to all Members who are likely to be called on to speak to the media.

3.6 Media interviews and comments

3.6.1 Officers

It is up to heads of service and Corporate managers to make arrangements for which officers in their teams can act as a spokesperson to provide comments or be interviewed by journalists.

The relevant Cabinet Members, should be consulted for advice at any time and be involved in drafting any media statements or preparing for interviews that are highly controversial or where this is a significant reputational risk to the Council.

Officers are likely to be called on to comment on these issues:

Chief Executive / Leadership Team	Major corporate issues (and in situations where the Leader would normally respond but is not available within the timescale)
Corporate Managers	Corporate issues within their service areas (and in situations where the Cabinet Member would normally respond but is not available within the timescale)
Officers	To answer questions of fact and/or technical information within their areas of expertise and in relation to projects and initiatives they are involved in, but they will not be expected to do live on-air interviews unless they have received appropriate media training

3.6.2 Members

Members are likely to be called on to comment on these issues:

Leader	Strategic issues, key policy decisions, and other major corporate issues affecting the Council
Cabinet Members	Issues that come under their remit
Chairmen of PDGs	Issues their PDG is involved in
Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of committees	Recent committee decisions
Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny	Issues that Scrutiny raise and reviews that they are working on
Local Ward Members	Issues of particular local concern
Group Leaders	Issues that transcend politics, for example obituaries

3.7 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests

Some media enquiries are submitted as FOI requests, in which case the Performance, Governance and Health & Safety team will coordinate the response in accordance with the applicable legislation. See [Freedom of Information Policy](#) in the Governance area within 'Policies & Strategies' on SharePoint.

4 Social media

In addition to posting proactive stories on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), Linked In and Next Door, social media is now also used as a customer service channel, where we can respond directly to customers' questions, comments or complaints.

Customer enquiries are currently dealt with via the Communications team but in future this area of social media may fall to the Customer Services team. The new CRM may also affect how direct messages are answered by the Council and by whom.

4.1 Main corporate accounts

The Communications team maintains and administers the corporate [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and Next Door accounts. Where applicable, notifications in the form of questions, complaints and comments are dealt with directly by a member of the Communications team. If the query is more complex, or concerns service policy, the relevant service is approached for information and guidance when forming an appropriate response.

Services should be aware there is no such thing as a deadline on social media; customer expectation is for a quick response – certainly hours rather than days – and leaving a post (particularly a negative comment or complaint) unanswered for more than a few hours gives the impression we are ignoring it.

4.2 Other service-specific accounts

A number of services have their own specific social media accounts and these include:

- Mid Devon Housing
- Tiverton Pannier Market
- Electric Nights Streetfood
- Mid Devon Leisure (three separate pages, one for each site)
- Culm Garden Village
- Mid Devon Business
- Visit Mid Devon

Staff within these services respond to their own notifications, however, with the use of Meta Business Suite for Facebook, the Communications team can access and publish posts onto these pages, where urgent action is required and the relevant page editor is absent. (This does not apply to Twitter, for which there is no Business Manager equivalent).

Any service wishing to set up a new social media account must discuss this with the Communications & Engagement Manager first. An officer/ service must prepare a business case in conjunction with the Communication and Engagement Manager before setting up any new channel/page. This must include details about clear aims and reason for the channel, methods of management control and responsibility for content creation and direct messaging. The overall approval for a new social media page/channel lies with the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement & Digital Services.

The relevant service Operations Manager (or equivalent post) has overall responsibility for their social media content and users.

Two factor authentication must also be used on all social media channels. This will have implications for users who access pages using personal devices. Under Facebook T&Cs all pages must be linked to a personal profile meaning personal accounts must use two factor authentication.

All users must be included in the Council's Register of Social Media Access document. Each department will be limited to a maximum of five registered social media users per team/site, unless the Operations Manager (or equivalent role) has put a case forward for more users to Communications team

It is also mandatory for all registered users to read the latest Media and Social Media policy each year via the LMS.

As a commercial arm of the Council, Mid Devon Leisure also runs a number of social media pages and channels. The leisure social media pages, and those staff accessing these pages and platforms, will follow this policy and it is recognised the overall governance of those accessing these pages is the accountability and responsibility of the leisure management team.

4.3 Dealing with detractors

When dealing with detractors, ALL page editors and administrators using social media business accounts should avoid getting into an argument or inflaming a discussion. Officers will try to help in the first instance; if the user continues to post without engaging our offer of help, their posts will be ignored.

4.4 Deleting abusive or discriminatory comments

As a general principle we do not attempt to moderate posts on social media, as to do so could also open us up to accusations of censorship. However, we will remove any posts from our social media accounts that are abusive (for example, use of language or personal attacks on a particular named officer or Member) or discriminatory (for example, racist or homophobic).

4.5 Social media guidelines

The following guidelines set out the responsibilities, standards of behaviour and provide guidance to employees and Members using social media in a professional capacity, and things to consider when using social media for personal purposes.

All employees and Members should be aware of and adhere to the following policies, whichever is applicable:

- [Dignity at Work](#)
- [Single Equality Scheme](#)
- [Member Code of Conduct](#)
- [Officer Code of Conduct](#)
- [MDDC safeguarding policy](#)

4.5.1 Do

- **be responsible and respectful** at all times by adhering to the existing policies listed above
- **trust yourself** to use social media – the Council already trusts you to send an email on behalf of the organisation and the same applies for social media
- check your **privacy** settings – understand who can see the information you publish and your personal information
- **chat** informally with other users – use language and tone of voice that's consistent with your target audience
- **credit** other people's work, ideas and links
- **respond** to all comments and private messages as quickly and honestly as possible. Be personal and professional in your response –

show empathy and a desire to find a resolution to problems where appropriate

- Drive the conversation **offline if it's sensitive** in nature or likely to escalate – ask the individual to message you privately with more details and include your name so the customer knows who he or she is talking to.
- **listen** in on other pages to what's being said about the Council, its services and the local area, then join in on discussions, and;
- **share** helpful content and links signposting people to the appropriate service or authority to inform & grow your audience. If you're in any doubt about sharing any particular content, the best rule-of-thumb to follow is don't share it!
- **seek** [legal advice](#), it's there to help you
- **add value** by creating content that educates and spreads awareness about Council services. Include positive stories encountered whilst on the 'day job' and news-bites with perspective to show the human side to public services
- align your posts with the **Council's purpose and values** as summarised in the [Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) and [Communications & Reputation Guidelines](#) (needs to be reviewed but still relevant)
- **seek permission** to publish any information, report or conversation that is not already in the public domain. Do not cite or reference customers, partners or suppliers without their approval
- **respect copyright** when linking to images or other online material – obtain owner permission and provide appropriate attribution when using images that aren't your own, and make sure you purchase the correct license for any stock images used
- respect the pre-election period known as '**Purdah**' (see local.gov.uk/our-support/purdah)
- **ask** your followers questions to glean valuable insights (but ensure there's a clear and resourced return path for respondents to leave their feedback and make sure you share the results with them)
- **monitor and evaluate** the success of your activity.

4.5.2 Don't

- post content which will **embarrass** the Council or yourself
- **reduce your credibility** by posting your every personal thought – especially if you're complaining
- **moderate posts** unless they are abusive – blocking someone or deleting their posts without just cause will incur accusations of “censorship”
- use council **jargon** or corporate speak
- **ignore comments** and private messages (unless engaging will inflame a situation or the comment is clearly politically motivated, or the person commenting has received an answer multiple times to the same question)
- say anything you **cannot substantiate** – if you don't know the answer, let the individual know you're looking into the matter

- **argue** with customers or inflame a discussion
- refer customers to **another channel** such as email or telephone – if they've contacted you via Twitter, you should respond in kind. The exception would be sensitive topics such as comments in relation to planning applications, etc.
- follow or share **political opinions** or groups which could otherwise compromise the Council's impartial service to the government
- **broadcast** or talk at people. Users who post information which is mostly information-sharing have twice as many followers than those who post mostly relating to themselves
- **cover up** mistakes, be honest and you'll get more respect for it in the long run
- disclose **personal information** – to do so would be in contravention of the [Information Security Incident Policy](#) and the social media platform's rules
- **assume** that social media will look after itself – you will need to invest time, enthusiasm and energy to make it work.
- **share your passwords** with anyone other than the Communications Team.

4.6 Training

One-to-one staff or Member training to use social media can be provided by the Communications team on request. Such requests should be emailed to communications@middevon.gov.uk. A [Social Media Guide for Members and Staff](#) is available. In addition, an in-depth user guide written in-house specifically for Twitter is available to staff who have received the aforementioned training, see [Service User Guide for Twitter](#).

5 Other issues and special circumstances

5.1 Emergencies and out-of-hours contact

In the event of an emergency situation affecting multiple agencies, a Media Cell will be setup by the lead agency to manage communications and the press. For more information, please refer to the [Devon Emergency Planning Service \(DEPS\) Incident Response & Recovery Plan](#) on SharePoint.

In the event of the media contacting the Council outside normal office working hours and if deemed an emergency, contact details for the Communications & Engagement Manager and Communications, Web & Digital Systems Administrator are listed in [Part 5 of the DEPS Incident Response and Recovery Plan](#). The Communications & Engagement Manager will decide if and what response is required. If a response is required, she will contact the relevant officer (Chief Executive or head of service) and/or lead Member.

5.2 Court cases

The Council will occasionally launch prosecutions and will want to use successful outcomes of court cases to deliver a message to the public. The best way of doing this is by issuing a press release, or prior notification to the media of an impending court case. The relevant Corporate Manager should be consulted.

5.3 Photography and child protection

As outlined in our [Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures](#), Officers, Members and volunteers should be vigilant at all times. Any person using cameras or videos within Council premises and at events or activities which involve children and young people, should be approached and asked to complete a [Photography Consent Form](#) (see **SharePoint >> Communications >> External Communications**).

Guidance for commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to cover Council services, events and activities

- Ensure that you make your expectations clear in relation to child protection

- Check credentials of any photographers and organisations used
- Ensure identification is worn at all times, if they do not have their own – provide it
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children or young people or one-to-one photographic sessions
- Parents must be informed when photographs of their child or young person may be taken at activities or events, and parental consent forms need to be signed agreeing to this
- It is recommended that the names of children or young people should not be used in photographs or video footage, unless with the express permission of the child or young person's parent

5.4 Data protection

The [Data Protection Act 2018 \(DPA\)](#) determines the way in which we obtain, hold, use, release and dispose of personal information. Data which is protected should not be released to the media. For guidance, see [Data Protection Policy](#) or contact the Operations Manager for Performance, Governance and Health & Safety.

5.5 Elections

During elections, all publicity referring to a political party or anyone standing for election will – except as in the following paragraph – be suspended between the publication of a notice of election and polling day.

Members will not be quoted in press releases during this period unless it is a Member holding a key political or civic position commenting on an emergency or an important event outside the Council's control and where there is a genuine need for a response by a Member. For further information concerning the publicity restrictions observed by Local Authorities during the pre-election period known as 'purdah', please refer to local.gov.uk/our-support/purdah.

5.6 Filming, recording and use of social media at Council meetings

All media, including radio and TV journalists, and members of the public may attend Council, Cabinet, PDG and committee meetings (apart from items

where the public is excluded). They may record, film or use social media before, during or after the meeting, so long as this does not distract from or interfere unduly with the smooth running of the meeting. Anyone proposing to film during the meeting is requested to make this known to the Chairman in advance. The Council also makes audio recordings of meetings which are published on our website.

6 Media monitoring and evaluation

6.1 Monitoring

6.1.1 Newspaper and online mentions

The Communications team monitors local media, notably Mid Devon Gazette, Crediton Courier and Devon Live and the BBC.

Any articles referencing the Council, its staff or Members are summarised and sent to the Leadership Team, relevant Corporate Managers and Members for information.

For any printed or online reporting which is found to be baseless, either the Communications & Engagement Manager or relevant Corporate/Service Manager can decide whether any follow-up action is required in response (see also 3.1 above). Any coverage generated – whether from a press release or by responding to a media enquiry – is collated and reported monthly to the Leadership Team for evaluation.

6.2 Hard copy press cuttings

Because it is prohibitively expensive, we do not have the necessary NLA Media Access licence to permit us to photocopy or electronically scan press cuttings. Officers and Members should therefore not make or store any copies of press cuttings for any purpose, as to do so would be breaking copyright law. The originals of articles may, however, be cut out from newspapers and kept.

6.3 Social media monitoring

The social media channels for the following areas are monitored by the Communications team:

- (both local and national)
- Media organisations (both local and national)
- Community news and forums

References to the Council or Members are flagged and reported as above where seen. Note that social media monitoring can be a full time role and

there is not currently the capacity within the Council to carry out this task in this way.

6.4 Web Alerts

Monitoring of the web for accessibility is carried out on a quarterly basis using Sort Site.

The Communications team receive Google Alerts to detect changes in content for predefined search terms. Terms have been entered for the Council, its premises, ongoing plans/developments, and names of key staff, Members and vexatious complainers. Additional search terms are added as and when appropriate, or the need arises. Any detections are automatically emailed to communications@middevon.gov.uk, then forwarded to the relevant staff and/or Members, as above.

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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

Forward Plan - August 2023

Decision & Summary	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Lead Officer	Consultees	Means of Consultation	Cabinet Member	Public or Private Decision	Documents to be considered
Communication and Engagement Strategy Outlines interactions with customers and how communities will be informed and engaged.	Community Policy Development Group Cabinet	27 Jun 2023 1 Aug 2023	Lisa Lewis, Corporate Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement Tel: 01884 234981			Cabinet Member for Community & Leisure	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
Care Leavers Council Tax Exemption A report exempting care leavers from council tax	Cabinet Council	1 Aug 2023 6 Sep 2023	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

Damp and Mould Policy 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						
Neighbourhood Management Policy To receive the updated Neighbourhood Management Policy	Homes Policy Development Group	8 Aug 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	29 Aug 2023						
Environment Enforcement Yearly Review Report	Environment Policy Development Group	15 Aug 2023	Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste			Cabinet Member for Environment & Services	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
	Cabinet	29 Aug 2023						

Page 70	Review of 3 weekly bin collections	Environment Policy Development Group Cabinet	15 Aug 2023 29 Aug 2023	Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste			Cabinet Member for Environment & Services	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
	3 Rivers Options Appraisal Report	Cabinet Council	29 Aug 2023 6 Sep 2023				Leader of the Council	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
	Qtr. 1 Budget Monitoring To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the Council's Financial position as at 30 June 2023	Cabinet	29 Aug 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

Makeup of the senior officer structure in light of posts held vacant To consider a report from the Chief Executive on the makeup of the senior officer structure in light of posts held vacant	Cabinet	19 Sep 2023	Stephen Walford, Chief Executive Tel: 01884 234201			Leader of the Council	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
S106 Governance	Cabinet	19 Sep 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
Meeting Housing Needs SPD To adopt the SPD	Cabinet	17 Oct 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

2024/25 – 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan Update 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
Silverton Neighbourhood Plan	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regenerati on	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
Infrastructure Funding Statement: Infrastructure List	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regenerati on	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

Qtr. 2 Budget Monitoring To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the Council's Financial position as at 30 September 2023	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
2023/24 Mid-Year Treasury Management Report To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the treasury performance during the first six months of 2023/24	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
2024/25 Budget Update 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	Cabinet	12 Dec 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

Destination Management Plan for Mid Devon	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
2024/25 Budget Update 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	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
Establishment	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste			Cabinet Member for Working Environment		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

Pay Policy	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste			Cabinet Member for Working Environment		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
Qtr. 3 Budget Monitoring To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the Council's Financial position as at 31 December 2023	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
2024/25 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Capital Strategy and recommends the 2024/25 Capital Programme	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

2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy	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
2024/25 Budget Update To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Budget and to recommend the Band D Council Tax charge for 2024/25	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
2024/25 Council Tax Resolution To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Band D Council Tax charge for 2024/25	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

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