

Economy Policy Development Group

Thursday, 7 March 2024 at 5.30 pm
Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton

Next ordinary meeting
Thursday, 20 June 2024 at 5.30 pm

Please Note: This meeting will take place in person **ONLY** at Phoenix House due to installation of the new Audio Visual equipment system in the meeting rooms.

Membership

Cllr G Cochran
Cllr A Cuddy
Cllr J M Downes
Cllr M Farrell
Cllr B Fish
Cllr M Fletcher
Cllr N Letch
Cllr R Roberts
Cllr G Westcott

A G E N D A

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

- 1 **Apologies and Substitute Members**
To receive any apologies for absence and notice of appointment of substitutes.
- 2 **Public Question Time**
To receive any questions relating to items on the Agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.
- 3 **Declaration of Interests under the Code of Conduct**
To record any interests on agenda matters.

- 4 **Minutes** *(Pages 5 - 10)*
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 4th January 2024.
- 5 **Chairman's Announcements**
To receive any announcements that the Chairman may wish to make.
- 6 **Parking Consultation Working Group - Proposals regarding Long Stay Tariffs** *(Pages 11 - 20)*
To receive a report of the Environment and Enforcement Manager and the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste providing recommendations from the Parking Consultation Working Group.
- 7 **The Biodiversity Duty** *(Pages 21 - 24)*
To receive a briefing paper from the Climate and Sustainability Specialist and the Director of Place and Economy stressing the need for all of the Council's operating areas to be fully aware of their responsibility in needing to meet the general biodiversity duty.
- 8 **Performance Dashboard Q3** *(Pages 25 - 26)*
To receive and discuss summary information reflecting performance in the Economy Development area for the previous quarter.
- 9 **Junction 27 and Junction 28 update** *(Pages 27 - 34)*
To receive a report from the Director of Place and Economy updating Members on the current position in relation to development at both Junction 27 and Junction 28 of the M5 within Mid Devon.
- 10 **Economic Development Team Update** *(Pages 35 - 42)*
To receive a report from the Director of Place and Economy updating members on town centre health, projects and activities undertaken by the Growth, Economy and Delivery Team during the last two months.
- 11 **Mid Devon's Prosperity Programme Update** *(Pages 43 - 56)*
To receive a report from the Director of Place and Economy updating Members on the progress under the Shared Prosperity Investment Plan (Year 2) and informing Members of the Year 3 (2024/2025) Delivery Plan for Mid Devon's Prosperity Programmes.
- 12 **Flexible Workspace Provision Update** *(Pages 57 - 64)*
To receive a report from the Director of Place and Economy updating Members on the viability study for the provision of flexible workspace in Tiverton town centre.
- 13 **Tourism Events Update**
To receive a presentation and update on forthcoming tourism events.
- 14 **Field to Fork: Meet the Producer Project Update**
To receive a presentation and update regarding this project.

- 15 **Income Generation**
The Group to discuss how best to initiate a pooling of ideas in relation to income generation, both as a Policy Development but also to include the ideas of the wider membership.
- 16 **Chairman's Annual Report for 2023/2024** (*Pages 65 - 66*)
To receive the annual report of the Chairman on the work of the Economy Policy Development Group during 2023 – 2024.
- 17 **Identification of items for the next meeting**
Members are asked to note that the following items are already identified in the work programme for the next meeting:
- Election of Chairman
 - Election of Vice Chairman
 - Start time of Meetings for 24/25
 - Performance Dashboard for Quarter 4
 - Work Programme for 24/25
 - SFS (Specialist Fleet Services) Transport Contract

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

Stephen Walford
Chief Executive
Wednesday, 28 February 2024

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.

If you want to ask a question or speak, email your full name to Committee@middevon.gov.uk by no later than 4pm on the day before the meeting. This will ensure that your name is on the list to speak and will help us ensure that you are not missed. Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible.

Residents, electors or business rate payers of the District may make a statement or shall be entitled to ask questions at a meeting which concerns the Council's powers / duties or which otherwise affects the District. If your question does not relate to an agenda item, the question must be submitted to the Democratic Services Manager two working days before the meeting to give time for a response to be prepared.

Please note that a reasonable amount of hardcopies at the meeting will be available, however this is a limited number. If you are attending the meeting and would like a hardcopy of the agenda we encourage that you notify Democratic Services in advance of the meeting to ensure that a hardcopy is available. Otherwise, copies of the agenda can be found on our website.

If you would like a copy of the Agenda in another format (for example in large print) please contact Sarah Lees on: slees@middevon.gov.uk

Public Wi-Fi is available in all meeting rooms.

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **ECONOMY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP** held on 4 January 2024 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors

J M Downes (Chairman)
G Cochran, M Farrell (Vice Chairman),
B Fish, M Fletcher, N Letch, R Roberts and
G Westcott

Also Present

Councillors

D Broom, E Buczkowski and J Buczkowski

Also Present

Officers

Richard Marsh (Director of Place), Paul Deal (Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change), Adrian Welsh (Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery), Zoë Lentell (Economic Development Team Leader), Angie Howell (Democratic Services Officer) and Sarah Lees (Democratic Services Officer)

Councillors

Online

A Cuddy, S Keable and D Wulff

47 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllr A Cuddy who was not able to attend the meeting in person but attended online.

48 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present and none had registered to ask a question.

49 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

No interests were declared under this item, however, Members were reminded of the need to make a declaration should it become relevant during the course of the meeting.

50 MINUTES

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

51 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no announcements to make.

52 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - DRAFT BUDGET UPDATE FOR 2024 / 2025 (00:04:00)

The Group received, and **NOTED**, a verbal update from the Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change regarding the 2024/2025 budget position. This was based on the Medium Term Financial Plan report presented to Cabinet in December and the latest position being presented to the Cabinet on 9th January 2024.

The following summary was provided:

- Savings totalling £1.68544m had been identified as part of the budget setting process during recent months. These had been listed under the RAG rating system so as to identify red, amber and green risks in terms of deliverability and impact on the service.
- It was confirmed that staff savings would only be taken if a post became vacant, redundancies would not be a factor as part of this budget.
- As a result of a great deal of hard work by both staff and Members there was now only a shortfall of £150k as compared to a shortfall in December 2023 of £418k.
- Some of this was due to government announcements in December regarding the local government financial settlement and Council Tax and Business Rate changes.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- Possible income from battery boxes in the future.
- There was some flexibility with regard to purchasing energy in advance.
- Savings with regards to changes in the Leadership Team structure were reflected in the draft budget.
- It was hoped that there would be a new mechanism for local government funding following the General Election as the current system was viewed by many as 'broken'.
- Mid Devon was in a pool of local authorities for Business Rate purposes. This had benefits in terms of sharing risks and reducing our levy payment of any growth achieved.
- A full condition survey would be undertaken on all Mid Devon assets over the coming 12 months to assess their short term maintenance needs, longer term viability and options to improve carbon neutrality.

The Group wished to express its congratulations and thanks to all members of staff and Members of the Council who had played a part in helping to identify budget savings in order to reduce the shortfall for next year's budget.

53 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM UPDATE (00:20:00)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Director of Place updating Members on activities undertaken by the Economic Development Team during the last two months. This included the following:

Prosperity Funding:

- 9 applications had been received to the current round. A further 5 businesses had been invited to full application (from rounds 1 and 2) but had not yet submitted forms. The next round closed for applications at the end of January.
- The Funding Panel meet on 17 January to make grant award decisions and a decision summary will be shared with the PDG Members.
- The January 'Be Grant Ready' workshop had 13 places booked with 7 spaces remaining.

Field to Fork:

- The 'Meet the Producer' project was proving popular with good levels of engagement on social media. The project was approximately halfway through with another 6 producers to be featured. A more in depth update on this project would be presented to the next Committee meeting. This project was specifically supporting the Field to Fork elements of the Shared Prosperity Delivery Plan with targets for:
 - Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support, and
 - Number of people reached.
- The 'Meet the Producer' posts and reels had been published weekly on Facebook and Instagram throughout December and would be ongoing.
- Grants had been offered to Food and Drink Devon and Devon County Show for further support projects to Mid Devon producers. This included networking events, membership support schemes and subsidised trade stalls. This supported delivery of outputs for businesses receiving non-financial support and supporting enterprises to reach new markets.
- Through the Devon Agri-tech Alliance, as part of the Business Support project with Devon County Council, 4 specialised events for farm businesses were being organised, the first of which would focus on "Routes to Market" taking place on 22 February at Pipers Farm. The next two events were pencilled in for end of March/ early April looking at Diversification and the third event in November looking at Regenerative Farming. The fourth event would take place early 2025 with the topic to be confirmed.

Visitor Economy

- Project work continues on both the Walking Festival and Tiverton Swan Trail.
- The programme for the Walking Festival was being collated, with the initial content to be featured in a promotional campaign - "Escape to Mid Devon" - running later this month to encourage holiday bookings in Mid Devon.
- The swans were with the artists until the end of January, when they would return for an anti-graffiti lacquer coating before being ready for installation by the end of March. The Planning Application for the Swan Trail would go to Planning Committee in February.
- A more in depth update on both the Walking Festival and Swan Trail would be presented to the next Committee meeting.
- With regards to other Visitor Economy projects outside the SPF:
 - The Bradninch board was installed Friday 8 December opposite the SPAR, outside the Guildhall. Many thanks to the Town Council and residents of Bradninch for all their help with content and pictures.
 - Additional boards were installed in Crediton on Tuesday 28 November, one in St Saviours Way car park, one in Market Street car park and again, our thanks to the Town Council for working with us on this.
- Visit England was creating a portfolio of nationally supported, strategic and high-performing Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs).
- The team continued to engage with the Heart of the South West LEP and destination management colleagues across Devon on a potential Local Visitor Economy Partnership for Devon. The recent workshop in December looked at options for a framework for the new LVEP. The team fed back the importance of:
 - Communication and ensuring that district councils had a clear voice on the LVEP.
 - Recognition of the different USPs and offer that parts of the county provide, ensuring that countryside, city and moors were promoted as well as the coast.
 - The need for the LVEP to encourage skills support both with regards to best practice updates for our businesses but also to liaise with and advocate for sectoral qualifications locally to support employment needs.
 - Fair membership models to ensure that micro tourism businesses had equal access to sectoral information and advice in the same way as the larger tourism businesses.
- Tomorrow's Tourism were working on behalf of the LEP to assemble the bid to Visit England. They were collating the feedback from the workshop and the team expect to receive an update on this soon.

Business Innovation

- Under the Business Innovation project, Petroc were hosting another business breakfast engagement event on 1 February and a business growth workshop at the end of January in their new Innovation Centre.

Looking Ahead

- The team were proceeding with Q4 delivery and preparing for the start of 2024/25 with the launch of the People and Skills projects.
- Mid Devon and other District Authorities across Devon were in conversation with Devon County over options for supporting an Enterprise and Skills Hub. This would directly support the Youth Skills and Supported Employment interventions in the team's Delivery Plan. Discussions were still underway and an outline of the confirmed proposal would be reported in March.
- With regards to the Green Skills intervention, a grant award had been offered to Apricot Centre, towards a Regenerative Agriculture Training, Skills and Employment Project. Due to the delivery timescales, this project would start in January 2024.
- The team were looking to host some business support surgeries in February and March. The February event would coincide with a consultation event at the Market Centre building looking at its potential use as a work hub. A survey was live and the team would present the findings of the study at the next PDG meeting.

Town Centre Health

- Quarter 4 shop surveys were undertaken in January each year. This will be reported to the March Committee meeting along with the latest footfall data.
- Sadly the team were losing their Project Support Officer the following day. The post would be re-advertised.

Consideration was given to the following:

- Businesses had to be officially registered as a business enterprise in order to qualify for funding consideration under the various agricultural schemes.
- It was confirmed that 'Levelling Up' funding in this area did not feature as part of the 'bottom line' on the budget, it was up to the Group to identify ways of using the funds.
- Businesses did not currently pay to advertise as part of the Field to Fork programme. This had originally been a way of helping businesses through Covid and as part of a recovery plan. This would be reviewed as part of the Destination and Culture Management Plan due to be undertaken during 2024.
- There were potential income opportunities for businesses to advertise their goods and services as part of the Walking Festival / campaign.

- Future presentations to the Group by businesses applying and being successful in receiving funding were encouraged.
- It was requested that future data in relation to some of the schemes and projects discussed this evening be presented more 'pictorially' going forwards rather than the Group just receiving a written report.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

54 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (00:40:00)

In addition to the items already listed the following was requested by the Group for either the next meeting or a future meeting:

- An update in relation to J28 as well as J27, to include the Culm Garden Village, the Cullompton Relief Road and the Cullompton Railway line.
- The Chairman's annual report. This would also be used as a wider agenda item at the first meeting in the new municipal year to highlight achievements during the last year, take stock of progress with regard to the Shared Prosperity Programme and also identify work programmes for the following year.
- An informal session of the Group (to which all Members be invited) to be arranged to discuss income generation.

(The meeting ended at 6.20 pm)

CHAIRMAN



Report for: Economy PDG

Date of Meeting:	7 March 2024
Subject:	Parking Consultation Working Group Proposals re Long Stay Tariffs
Cabinet Members	Cllr James Buczkowski, Cabinet Member for Finance Cllr Josh Wright, Cabinet Member for Environment and Services
Responsible Officers:	Luke Howard, Environment and Enforcement Manager Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	N/A
Enclosures:	Appendix 1- Tariff proposals.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report provides recommendations from the Parking Consultation Working Group. The group have been working through proposals to amend tariff functions in order to better support local community demand.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. For Economy PDG to consider approving the proposed tariff changes that have come from the Car Parking Consultation Working Group and recommend these to Cabinet for ratification.**
- 2. The approval of five free Saturdays parking at the Multi Storey car park, Tiverton, High Street (St Saviours), Crediton and Station Road, Cullompton in the lead up to Christmas 2024.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Parking Consultation Working Group was formed to work with local communities and business groups to better understand the parking requirements of towns in Mid Devon. Members, Local business owners, Town Council and Officers represent the District through attending the group and these have been productive. Cllr Guy Cochran chairs the Group and reports back to the Economy PDG advised by relevant officers.
- 1.2 In March 2023 a higher set of Tariff and Permit charges for parking were decided upon and implemented in June 2023. During the decision making process there were concerns raised by members and business groups regarding how the figures had been calculated and the input (or lack of) there had been from local representatives.
- 1.3 As parking tariffs had not been increased for some years, an accumulative interest was added to the charges. This raised the question as to why charges had not increased year on year to prevent a sudden hike in cost.
- 1.4 To prevent similar issues occurring again and to explore how parking stock is best utilised, Economy PDG requested a consultation group be founded to engage with community groups, town councils and leading business representatives.
- 1.5 In order to determine the scope of the group and better understand what proposals could be explored, terms of reference were discussed and agreed by officers and representative members at its first meeting
- 1.6 The terms of reference agreed were as follows;
- Sustainability of car parks including climate impacts
 - Visible presence of The Council to user groups
 - Development of current redundant/zero revenue parking areas
 - Future planning and community provision
 - Revenue streams
 - Tariff and permit options
 - Highway Authority traffic management plans
- 1.7 The group have prioritised looking at long term stay tariffs and what could be done to potentially increase resident and visitor presence in our town centres. In particular, the group felt and aired the view that more needed to be done to incentivise the purchase of 3 hour parking tickets over purchasing 2 hour tickets. This would encourage people to spend longer periods of time when shopping and meeting family and friends in the community.
- 1.8 As a result, the group are ready to put forward new proposals regarding additional tariffs relevant to long stay car parks for consideration by the Economy PDG and, if seen as a viable option, by Cabinet for ratification. The priority for looking at this issue has come from representatives wanting the

tariffs to be revised to encourage more visitors to stay longer in our town centres. It was felt by the group that this was a priority for consideration. By enabling users to have a varied choice in tariff options it would assist town centre business and encourage longer stay.

- 1.9 The proposals put forward by the group regarding Long Stay parking tariffs have been carefully deliberated and all aspects considered regarding how they support the community, local businesses and the Council. The Council was praised by group members at its last meeting for taking steps to merge the gap between the Council and local communities when making decisions and for building greater collaboration and shared working.

2.0 Proposals

- 2.1 The group is proposing to implement some additional tariff bands in long stay car parks throughout the district. The group is also proposing to implement a 3 hour tariff in Market Place, Tiverton, to support medium stay visitors in the centre of town. The group has also requested this PDG to consider five free Saturdays in the Multi Storey car park, Tiverton, High Street, Crediton and Station Road, Cullompton to support Christmas 2024. The proposed dates are:

- 23 November 2024
- 30 November 2024
- 7 December 2024
- 14 December 2024
- 21 December 2024

Further explorative discussions have been held about the possibility of offering free Sunday Parking to compliment the Saturdays. This is to be further looked into regarding funding and viability.

- 2.2 The proposals have been costed based on vends from the financial year 2022/23. However, due to the nature of the proposals which are implementing new tariff bands, it is extremely difficult to compare any relative data in respect of what the likely user take up would be. The costings are therefore best estimates based on knowledge of vends for the other tariff bands currently in place and are available on request.
- 2.3 The proposals are included as Appendix 1 in support of this report and include the inflation increase of 6.7% approved by Cabinet to support the budget setting process.

Financial Implications

Parking generates substantial revenue and proposals from the group are expected to help the council balance income against community requests. The group also explores opportunities to increase revenue streams.

Legal Implications

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 regulates how changes can be implemented. Any decisions need to have consideration for this act and requirements for amendments.

Risk Assessment

None required

Impact on Climate Change

The group will consider how decisions impact on the climate, with special consideration given to improving climate impacts of parking through the implementation of technology such as EV Charging.

Equalities Impact Assessment

All decisions will consider the needs of all user groups. Any amendments will follow legislative requirements for advertisements, consultation and engagement with community groups.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The aim of the group is to explore ideas to advance the corporate plan of The Council.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

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

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 19/02/2024

Cabinet member notified: (yes)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Luke Howard, Environment and Enforcement Manager

Email: lhoward@middevon.gov.uk Telephone 01884 233033

Pay and Display car parks

NAME AND LOCATION	INFORMATION	PRICES	Proposed 2024 + 6.7% pending
Station Road, Cullompton EX15 1AG	Type - long stay Spaces - 112 Disabled bays - 2 Motorcycle bays - 1 RingGo Zone - 2997 Number of machines - 1 Machine number - 115	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.50 Up to 2 hours - £2.70 Up to 10 hours - £6.00 Up to 24 hours - £12.00</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.00</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.00 Up to 30 Minutes - Free</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.60 Up to 2 hours - £2.90 Up to 3 hours – £3.30 Up to 4 Hours - £3.80 Up to 5 Hours - £4.30 Up to 10 hours - £6.40 Up to 24 hours - £13.00</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.10</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.10 Up to 30 Minutes - Free</p>
High Street, Crediton EX17 3JU	Type - long stay Spaces - 190 Disabled bays - 0 Motorcycle bays - 0 RingGo Zone - 2988 Number of machines - 2 Machine numbers - 113 & 114	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 2 hours - £2.70 Up to 5 hours - £4.00 Up to 10 hours - £6.00 Up to 24 hours - £12.00</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.00</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.00</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.60 Up to 2 hours - £2.90 Up to 3 hours – £3.30 Up to 4 Hours - £3.80 Up to 5 Hours - £4.30 Up to 10 hours - £6.40 Up to 24 hours - £13.00</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.10</p>

Pay and Display car parks

		Up to 30 Minutes – Free	Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.10 Up to 30 Minutes - Free
Multi-storey, Tiverton EX16 5DQ	Type - long stay Spaces - 630 Disabled bays - 12 Motorcycle bays - 3 Max headroom - 1.80m / 5'10" Shopmobility - Level 6 RingGo Zone - 2989 Number of machines - 5 Machine numbers – 107, 108, 109, 110 & 111	Monday to Sunday Open 24 hours Up to 2 hours - £2.70 Up to 5 hours - £4.00 Up to 10 hours - £6.00 Up to 1 day - £15.00 Up to 2 days - £24.00 Up to 3 days - £36.00 Up to 4 days - £48.00 Up to 5 days - £60.00 Up to 7 days - £84.00	Monday to Sunday Open 24 hours Up to 2 hours - £2.90 Up to 5 hours - £4.30 Up to 10 hours - £6.40 Up to 1 day - £16.00 Up to 2 days - £26.00 Up to 3 days - £38.00 Up to 4 days - £51.00 Up to 5 days - £64.00 Up to 7 days - £90.00
Wellbrook Street, Tiverton EX16 5JW	Type - long stay Spaces - 27 Disabled bays - 1 Motorcycle bays - 0 RingGo Zone - 2996 Number of machines - 1 Machine number - 118	Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.50 Up to 2 hours - £2.70 Up to 3 hours - £4.00 Up to 24 hours - £12.00 Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.00 Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.00 Up to 30 Minutes - Free	Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.60 Up to 2 hours - £2.90 Up to 3 hours – £3.30 Up to 4 Hours - £3.80 Up to 5 Hours - £4.30 Up to 10 hours - £6.40 Up to 24 hours - £13.00 Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.10 Overnight

Pay and Display car parks

			6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.10 Up to 30 Minutes - Free
Beck Square, Tiverton EX16 6LR	Type - short stay Spaces - 23 Disabled bays - 4 Motorcycle bays - 1 RingGo Zone - 2990 Number of machines - 1 Machine number - 105	Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.50 Up to 2 hours - £2.70 Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.00 Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.00 Up to 30 Minutes - Free	Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.60 Up to 2 hours - £2.90 Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.10 Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.10 Up to 30 Minutes - Free
Market Place, Tiverton EX16 6NL	Type - short stay Spaces - 110 Disabled bays - 12 Motorcycle bays - 2 RingGo Zone - 2991 Number of machines - 4 Machine numbers – 101, 102, 103 & 104	Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.50 Up to 2 hours - £2.70 Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.00 Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.00 Up to 30 Minutes - Free	Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 1 hour - £1.60 Up to 2 hours - £2.90 Up to 3 Hours - £3.30 Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.10 Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.10 Up to 30 Minutes - Free

Pay and Display car parks

<p>Westexe South, Tiverton EX16 5DQ</p>	<p>Type - medium stay</p> <p>Spaces - 47 Disabled bays - 2 Motorcycle bays - 0</p> <p>RingGo Zone - 2995</p> <p>Number of machines - 1 Machine number - 117</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 30 mins – £1.00 Up to 1 hour - £1.50 Up to 2 hours - £2.70 Up to 3 hours - £4.00</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.00</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.00 Up to 30 Minutes- Free</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 30 mins – £1.10 Up to 1 hour - £1.60 Up to 2 hours - £2.90 Up to 4 hours - £4.30</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.10</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.10 Up to 30 Minutes- Free</p>
<p>William Street, Tiverton EX16 6BJ</p>	<p>Type - short stay</p> <p>Spaces - 45 Disabled bays - 2 Motorcycle bays - 2</p> <p>RingGo Zone - 2992</p> <p>Number of machines - 1 Machine number - 112</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 30 mins - £1.00 Up to 1 hour - £1.50 Up to 2 hours - £2.70</p> <p>Free 30 min - 8.30-09.30 and 15.00-16.00</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.00</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.00 Up to 30 Minutes - Free</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 30 mins - £1.10 Up to 1 hour - £1.60 Up to 2 hours - £2.90</p> <p>Free 30 min - 8.30-09.30 and 15.00-16.00</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.10</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.10 Up to 30 Minutes - Free</p>
<p>Market Street, Crediton</p>		<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm</p>	<p>Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 6.00pm</p>

Pay and Display car parks

		<p>Up to 1 hour - £1.50 Up to 2 hours - £2.70</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.00</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.00 Up to 30 Minutes - Free</p>	<p>Up to 1 hour - £1.60 Up to 2 hours - £2.90</p> <p>Sunday and Bank Holidays 8.00am to 6.00pm Up to 10 hours - £2.10</p> <p>Overnight 6.00pm to 8.00am Up to 14 hours - £2.10 Up to 30 Minutes - Free</p>
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Briefing Paper: Economy Policy Development Group

Date of Meeting: 07 March 2024

Subject: The Biodiversity Duty

Responsible Officer(s): Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist.
Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy.

1.0 Introduction.

1.1 The Council's statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity (habitats and species) is set out by the Environment Act 2021 and the amended Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). This is known as 'the biodiversity duty'. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) has published [guidance](#) on purpose and compliance.

1.2 The first consideration of what action to take with regard to this duty was carried out by Cllr Natasha Bradshaw, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, and a [Biodiversity Duty report](#) submitted to [Cabinet](#). Cabinet Decision [published here online](#). The next step is to develop a policy framework and action plan, in consultation with committees and teams across the Council.

1.3 The Council must:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on its consideration.
- Act to deliver its policies and achieve its objectives.
- [Report on its biodiversity duty actions](#). (Defra has [guidance](#) on this.)

2.0 The approach to action and policy development.

2.1 The legislation's explanatory notes (Part 6, section 102) carry key points:

- a) A requirement for public authorities to assess how they can take action to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and then to take these actions (beyond simply discharging its duties as the Local Planning Authority).
- b) The aim is to provide for the enhancement or improvement of biodiversity, not just its maintenance in its current state.
- c) To comply, a public authority must periodically consider the opportunities available across the full range of its functions. This represents a proactive, strategic assessment of a public authority's functions, rather than considering each function in isolation.

- d) The Council may decide there is no action it can reasonably take that is consistent with the proper exercise of its functions. For example, if particular action is not possible within budget constraints, not good value for money, or it conflicts with other priorities. However, if there is action it can take, then it must decide how that action can be put into effect, through appropriate policies and objectives.
- e) It is possible the duty can be satisfied by adjusting existing policies and objectives, rather than requiring public authorities to introduce new policies or undertake new projects.

2.2 Committee contributions to the Council's action planning.

2.2.1 Action and policy development will be split into two separate streams: either matters within the Council's statutory Planning Policy making process and the statutory powers as a Local Planning Authority (LPA) largely governed and prescribed by national policy and through the work of the Forward Planning and Development Management teams; or items outside those functions, such as land management and its wider corporate operations.

2.2.2 Responsibility to deliver on the general biodiversity duty is shared across all Council operations. As such, this matter will be raised on agendas for all Policy Development Groups (PDGs) and, where within the jurisdiction of the LPA, the Planning and Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) to request input to the policy framework and action plan.

2.2.3 Cabinet has delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, the Director of Place and the Climate and Sustainability Specialist to develop a policy framework and action plan in consultation with staff and Council bodies as above, with recommendations to be brought to Cabinet.

2.2.4 Cabinet seeks to consider initial recommendations by the end of this Administrative year cycle (April 2024) to enable a plan to be finalised.

2.3 Examples of actions and policy areas that could be taken forward by different committee remits are provided below. Details may be developed later but some initial feedback at this stage will help shape the action plan.

2.3.1 Economy PDG: promote sustainable local food systems; promote environmental land management grants and partnerships; promote local investment in urban green space, habitat carbon sequestration (carbon banking) and biodiversity net gain (biodiversity banking); recognise / monitor the economic benefits of e.g. natural flood management schemes; promote green business schemes and innovations; include habitat gains in major regeneration bids; support ecology training for key trades e.g. roofers and retrofitters (opportunity to conserve and enhance biodiversity value of built assets in Mid Devon).

- 2.3.2 Homes PDG: tenant engagement projects to help celebrate and monitor biodiversity on Council owned land; build enhancement targets into estate and asset strategy e.g. roost bricks, mowing regimes; basic ecology awareness training for key staff e.g. garden wildlife, bats, nesting birds.
- 2.3.3 Community PDG: review strategic grants to include biodiversity benefits; promote and monitor the health and wellbeing benefits of community and nature engagement activities; consider the community / social benefits of nature-based solutions for climate change e.g. natural flood management schemes, urban tree cover.
- 2.3.4 Environment PDG: monitor the effects of conservation management and less mowing regimes in cemeteries and green spaces; review management plans to ensure gains; strengthen tree policy; devise a tree strategy; engagement projects to help celebrate and monitor biodiversity on Council owned land; build enhancement targets into estate and asset strategy.
- 2.3.5 PPAG, Forward Planning and Development Management: build on the Biodiversity Net Gain work so far e.g. local policy, promote biodiversity banking; build on the ecological elements of the climate emergency interim planning policy statement (resources and practice); measure impacts / celebrate success of the Ecology Service Level Agreement; reinforce policy and practice around delivering the NERC Act duty and new Environment Act obligations such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) with service targets e.g. for number of non-BNG cases with gains conditioned, district tree cover, bat roost bricks installed in buildings, wildlife road crossings, dark zones, connectivity and areas permeable to wildlife movement.

Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist: Email: JBall@MidDevon.gov.uk Tel: 01884 255255.

Background papers: Biodiversity statutory duty [report](#) submitted to [Cabinet 09 January 2024](#).

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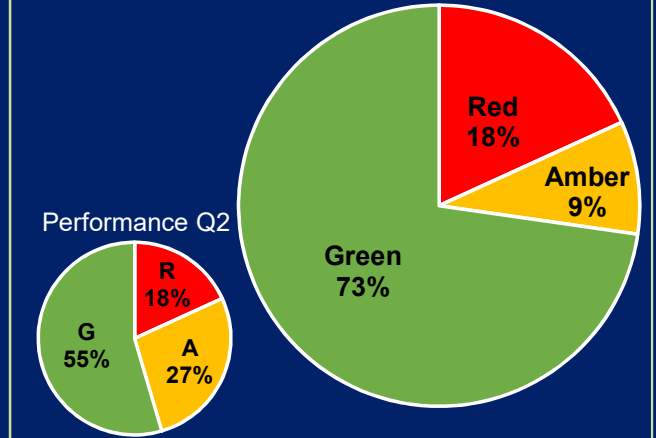
Economy PDG Performance Dashboard – Quarter 3 2023/24

Performance Measures	Performance	Annual Target	Rating
Business rateable value (Current)	£53,980,047	£53,433,767	G
Pannier market occupancy rate (Average YTD)	87 %	85%	G
Businesses supported (YTD)	292	250	G
Empty business properties (Current)	226	253	G
Funding secured to support economic projects (YTD)	£486,704	£400,000	G
Industrial units occupancy (Current)	15	15	G

Finance Measures	Performance	Annual Target	Rating
Economy PDG - Outturn	£919k	£193k	R
Car Parking Income	(£699k)	(£696k)	G
Pannier Market Income	(£98k)	(£98k)	G
Commercial Portfolio – % Voids (Current)	6.25%	0%	A
Economy PDG – Capital Slippage % of projects (Current)	50%	0%	R

Corporate Risk	Risk Rating (Trajectory)
Culm Garden Village – Loss of capacity funding	25 (revised)
Culm Garden Village – Project delays/ impacts due to infrastructure delays	20 (revised)
Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road	25 (no change)

Overall Performance Q3



In Focus

Through grant schemes and business support/ advice, the Economic Development team in 2023 supported:

- Nine businesses decorate their shopfronts and two to fit-out a town centre unit.
- Seven businesses take on empty units.
- 46 town centre events and activities including a programme of events at Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton Library, Christmas and Coronation events and craft workshops.
- Town centre regeneration activities and enhancement works including the public realm enhancement works at Cullompton Bullring, and the installation of new pedestrian signage (fingerposts) in Tiverton.

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Report for: Economy PDG

Date of Meeting:	7 th March 2024
Subject:	Junction 27 and Junction 28 update
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Economic Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To update members on the current position in relation to development at both Junction 27 and Junction 28 of the M5 within Mid Devon.

Recommendation(s):

1. That members note the contents of the report.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Development at Junctions 27 and 28 of the M5 offers a significant opportunity for Mid Devon in terms of the provision of additional employment and/or residential accommodation in highly accessible, strategic and sustainable locations.
- 1.2 This opportunity has already been recognised by virtue of the fact that the Council's adopted Local Plan makes significant allocations at both

of these locations. J27 is focused on commercial/leisure development whilst J28, given its proximity to the existing settlement of Cullompton, is predominantly residential focused.

- 1.3 However, given the nature of these locations; existing barriers to delivery, and; changes in the development sector since the adoption of the Local Plan, development and progression of the sites/allocations has been slower than would have originally been anticipated. This is especially true of Junction 27 where a significant 'gateway' scheme is identified within the adopted local plan but where no significant development activity has taken place since the adoption of the Plan.
- 1.4 This report provides an update in terms of the position with development around both junctions.

2.0 Junction 27

2.1 The adopted Local Plan sets out land at Junction 27 is *“allocated for the provision of a major high quality regional tourism, leisure and retail attraction supported by ancillary roadside services and supporting infrastructure including a pedestrian bridge across the M5 motorway linking the site to Tiverton Parkway railway station.”*

2.2 The policy is also specific in terms of the expected mix of development, requiring;

- *Travel Hub (7ha) – Motorway/roadside services; electric car hub; hotel.*
- *Agronomy Visitor Centre (9ha) – exhibition space and hall, gallery; research and education space; regional visitor centre and hotel. The Agronomy centre will include up to 1,000 square metres of ancillary retail.*
- *Outdoor Adventure Zone (6ha) – Surf lake/lagoon; beach; high ropes adventure area.*
- *Outlet Shopping Village (6ha) - Designer outlet shopping centre retailing controlled goods comprising discontinued/end-of-range lines, seconds and surplus/sample stock. The Outlet Shopping Village to include up to 14,000 square metres of controlled comparison goods and up to 2,000 square metres of A3 uses.*

2.3 Finally, the Local Plan is also prescriptive in terms of its requirements around how development proposals will be progressed and brought forwards, requiring that;

- *“Development of the site should be brought forward in accordance with the terms of a detailed development brief, comprehensive masterplanning including at least two stages of public consultation and*

adoption of the Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document before any planning application for any part of the site is determined.”

- 2.4 At the time of the original proposals, there was demonstrable developer and occupier interest in the site, with the Eden project (Eden Westwood) identified as a key occupier which could also give the scheme the “*unique leisure destination at the gateway to Devon and Cornwall*” as referenced within the Local Plan.
- 2.5 However, since the adoption of the Local Plan, significant changes have taken place within the retail, tourism and leisure sectors. Schemes have been impacted by the continuation of changing shopping habits, the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent and more recent cost of living crisis. As such, proposals for the scheme have not progressed as would have originally been envisaged.
- 2.6 In December 2021, Eden secured funding from the Community Renewal Fund (via DCC and Government) to undertake further work to consider and refine proposals for the J27 site – considering the viability of a new Eden facility in the context of the Local Plan policies. After engagement with key landowners and stakeholders, Eden presented an update to this PDG group in November 2022 which summarised that, whilst the Eden Westwood scheme at Junction 27 did have notable benefits and opportunities, the delivery of the Eden scheme at that point in time was financially challenged and therefore would not be progressed in the near term.
- 2.7 Since that time, ad-hoc conversations have continued with landowners and prospective occupiers and, whilst some land is believed to have changed hands and some individual proposals partially progressed, no meaningful progress has been made in terms of seeing the clear delivery of development in line with the Local Plan vision or policies. This is despite proactive attempts on behalf of this Council to seek to engage some of the key landowners and occupiers.
- 2.8 With the continued non-delivery of development at Junction 27 in the manner originally conceived through the adopted Local Plan, it will be necessary to consider how the existing allocation should be amended, changed or even removed within the context of the new and emerging Local Plan; Plan Mid Devon.
- 2.9 To support the consideration of the J27 site and other sites/policies through the Plan Mid Devon process, the Forward Planning team have commissioned Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH), a surveying firm with good knowledge of the retail, tourism and leisure sectors, to complete a technical study of the sectors to support the development of Plan Mid

Devon and ensure that the new plan is reflective of current and future market trends, supply and demand of certain types of accommodation and aware of market activity within the district.

- 2.10 The study is nearing completion and will, in due course, be discussed with Members via PPAG (Planning Policy Advisory Group). It is also expected that a high-level summary of findings will be presented to the Economy PDG in due course as the findings of this study will also be crucial in supporting other policy documents including the Economic Strategy and Destination Management Plan – both of which are coming up for review.

3.0 Junction 28 (Cullompton)

- 3.1 Proposals at Junction 28 are in a significantly different position to those at Junction 27. The current Local Plan makes significant allocations for planned growth at the town, especially in terms of residential development. Residential allocations include significant allocations at North West Cullompton as well as at East Cullompton. Potential for further residential development to the east of Cullompton is also identified through the 'Garden Village' proposals. Expectations also exist in terms of the delivery of further commercial development across allocated sites with some development now progressing.
- 3.2 However, whilst significant development is identified within Cullompton and whilst developer interest is strong, development is reliant upon the provision of supporting and enabling transport infrastructure interventions. Notably, this includes the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road and the need for a 'strategic intervention' at Junction 28 in order to release subsequent phases of planned and anticipated growth.
- 3.3 Unfortunately, despite repeat attempts with compelling funding applications, the Council has not yet been able to secure the infrastructure funding required to unlock delivery of these projects and, as such, Cullompton is now at a point where further development cannot progress until these projects are funded and delivered. This is proving to be a significant constraint to planned growth within Cullompton, but also has wider reaching impacts and implications across the whole district.
- 3.4 Discussions are on-going with regard to securing the funding required to deliver the required infrastructure and enable the planned growth in Cullompton. Notably; officers are continuing discussions with Homes England with regard to funding to enable delivery of the relief road and Mid Devon DC/Devon County Council (DCC) are also completing the

preparation of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for Junction 28 (incorporating the relief road) which, if approved by DCC's Cabinet in March, will then be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT).

- 3.5 Regarding the J28 submission; the 'strategic intervention' at J28 was identified within the Governments 'Network North' scheme prospectus as a beneficiary of funding released from the re-scaling of the HS2 project in order to support connectivity through the whole of the UK. It is therefore expected that the submission will find favour within Government, as an identified scheme, and that further funding will therefore be forthcoming to support the progression of the scheme in a very timely manner in order to support the delivery of much needed, and planned for, development.
- 3.6 It should be noted that an options consultation exercise was recently completed in support of the Junction 28 SOBC submission and that 884 responses were received through the public consultation with overwhelming public support for both the improvements to Junction 28 (95% support) and the town centre relief road (92% support, up from 77% in 2018.) These are phenomenally high levels of support given the increasing level of public concern around climate change and road construction, but they clearly demonstrate the desire and need for the planned infrastructure in Cullompton and the value which the community attributes to these interventions.
- 3.7 Finally, it should also be noted that the Cullompton station re-opening project continues to make good progress with the submission of the Final Business Case to DfT due imminently. Recent announcements and feedback in relation to the project have been extremely positive with every indication that the projects (Cullompton and Wellington) will receive full funding to enable delivery and re-opening to passenger service. Clearly, whilst this will not address the existing traffic constraints within the town, this re-opening will support the town in providing more sustainable travel links with neighbouring towns and cities.
- 3.8 Therefore, whilst successes are being achieved within Cullompton through projects such as the Heritage Action Zone scheme and the station re-opening projects, much depends on the successful delivery of the relief road and J28 upgrade. Timely delivery of these is required in order to support the Council in delivering planned growth and in supporting Cullompton in achieving its full economic, social, environmental and financial potential.

Financial Implications

The report is an information report and does not of itself have any financial implications and require any decisions. However, some of the information contained within the report does have implications for the Council – notably where planned delivery of residential and employment accommodation is failing to materialise which, in turn, has direct financial, social, economic and environmental implications for the district.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this information report.

Risk Assessment

There are no further risks associated with the updates in this report that have not already been reported.

Impact on Climate Change

Delivery of planned development is both positive and negative in terms of climate change implications: the re-opening of Cullompton station offers opportunities for more sustainable travel whilst the delivery of new roads reinforces private car usage and involves significant construction with all of the associated environmental impacts.

However, it should also be noted that the schemes will seek to offset their carbon and climate change impacts and that the schemes themselves will also deliver benefits. This is especially relevant within Cullompton, where the infrastructure upgrades have notable potential to reduce the pollution and congestion which arise from the current lack of highways capacity. It is therefore expected that significant local benefits (in the widest sense) will accrue as a result of these infrastructure projects.

Equalities Impact Assessment

No negative equalities impacts are expected: indeed, it is hoped and expected that inequalities should be reduced through the scheme discussed owing to the opportunities to deliver economic, environmental, social and financial benefits and improvements.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The work of the Growth, Economy and Delivery team supports the full range of corporate objectives and the corporate plan.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151
Date: 27 Feb 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria DeLeiburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 27 Feb 2024

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh
Agreed by Corporate Director
Date: 27 Feb 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 19/02/2024

Cabinet member notified: yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy
Email: rmarsh@middevon.gov.uk
Telephone:

Background papers:

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Report for: Economy PDG

Date of Meeting: 7 March 2024

Subject: Economic Development Team Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Regeneration

Responsible Officer: Richard Marsh, Director of Place

Exempt: N/A

Wards Affected: All wards

Enclosures: N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To update members on town centre health, projects and activities undertaken by the Growth, Economy and Delivery Team during the last two months.

Recommendation(s):

That members note the contents of the report.

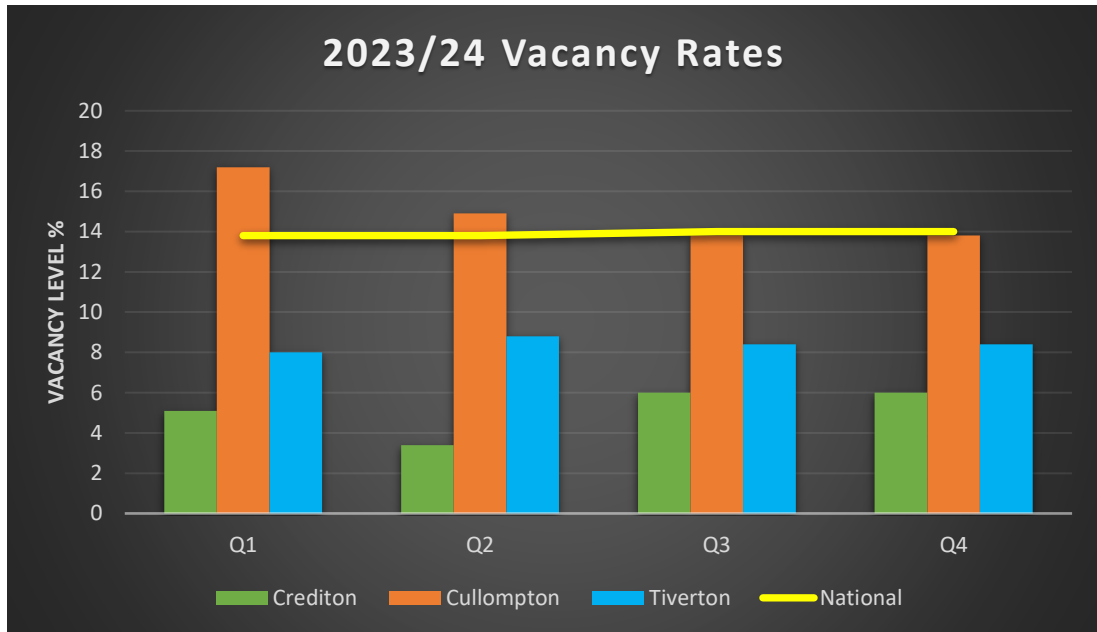
Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on activities carried out by the Growth, Economy and Delivery Team over the last two months, since the last committee meeting. Projects being delivered through the Shared Prosperity Fund will be reported separately to the Committee.

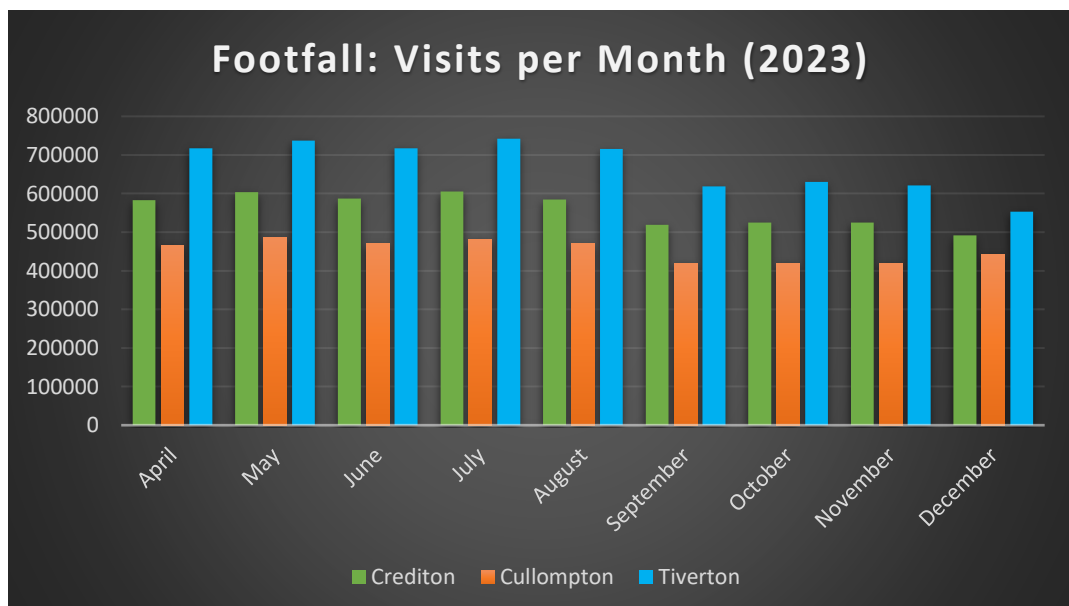
2.0 Town Centre Health

2.1 Quarter 4 shopfront surveys took place in January and we have footfall data up to Quarter 3 (December 2023).

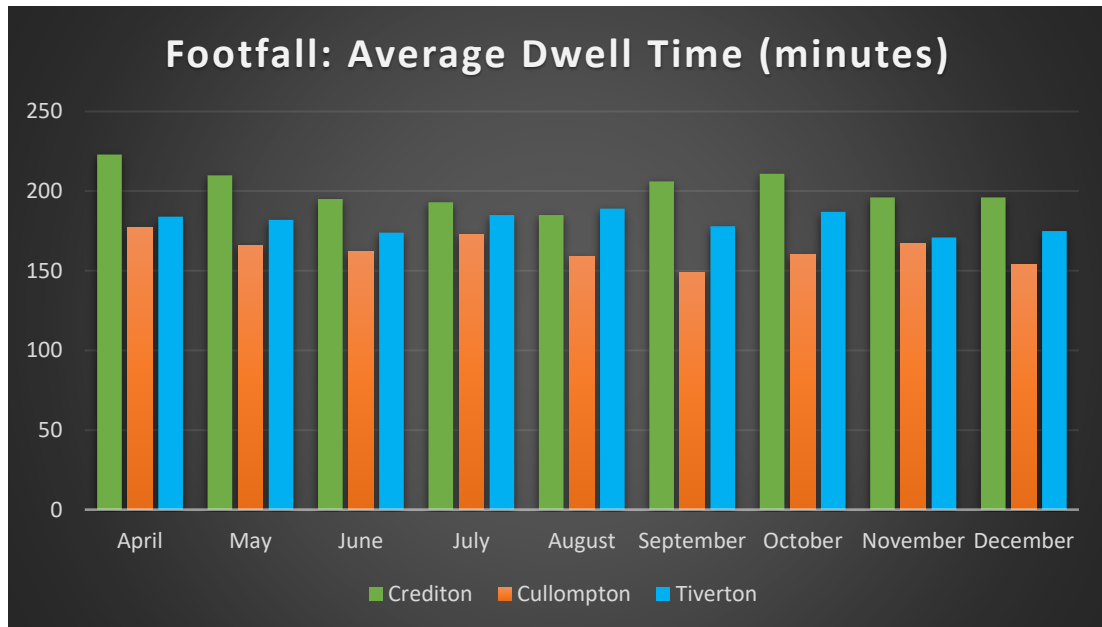


2.2 All three town centres have sustained vacancy levels below the national average between quarters 3 and 4. Although there have been occupancy changes in the three towns, these changes have balanced out resulting in nil change to occupancy levels overall.

2.3 Nationally, the UK saw a year-on-year decline on town centre footfall in December by 4.2%. However, our towns all saw a much larger year-on-year drop in footfall (21% for Crediton, 13% for Cullompton and 31% for Tiverton). We are checking this data with the supplier but as it currently presents, this is a significant decline.



- 2.4 With regards to dwell time, the majority of visits last less than half an hour (quick drop-ins such as for prescriptions, banking, Post Office, Library) with the second highest for visitors staying more than five hours. The average dwell time across the three towns is around the three-hour mark. Leisure offers will encourage longer dwell-time.



- 2.5 Through the Love Your Town Centres Scheme, we are supporting a number of grant funding initiatives to support and boost the vitality of our town centres. The next round of Vibrant Town Centres Funding launches in March with funding awards in April.

3.0 Cullompton Heritage Action Zone

- 3.1 The High Street Heritage Action Zone programme is a national project aiming to unlock the potential of high streets across England, fuelling economic, social and cultural recovery. Cullompton is one of only 10 successful High Streets in the South West region, and 68 nationally, to benefit from this funding, following a successful bid by the District Council to Homes England in 2019. Five years on this programme is now nearing completion.
- 3.2 Works to enhance the public realm are now completed with an opening ceremony held on the 14th February 2024. The opening ceremony went well and it was pleasing to see the space well used with market stalls enjoying the benefits of the enhanced and extended public realm area. The improvements have significantly enhanced the setting of the war memorial in this historic part of the town.

- 3.3 The grants for property owners, focused around Fore Street, to improve their properties are now nearing completion. In total 13 properties and businesses have benefitted from the scheme, some from both the Shopfront Grant and larger Structural & Reinstatement Grants, altogether, totalling 19 grants awarded.
- 3.4 The Cultural programme element has now concluded. This has been a huge success. Notable achievements include special events, such as the Roman festival, various public art projects involving local schools and local residents, poetry and a programme of talks arranged up to April 2024 provided by the new Cullompton History Group.
- 3.5 Officers are currently engaged in the closure of this project and will reflect on legacy opportunities and lessons learnt from this initiative that could benefit other parts of the District should other similar funding opportunities present themselves in the future.

4.0 Crediton Masterplan

- 4.1 The aim of this masterplan is to provide a clear strategy ensuring that Crediton town centre meets its full potential as an attractive, vibrant, and sustainable place with a strong economic function, now and into the future. The role of the masterplan is to provide principles and strategies that bring together the design and future delivery of development, public realm improvements, green infrastructure, and active travel and transport projects in Crediton.
- 4.2 The draft Crediton Masterplan has recently been the subject of public consultation which ran from Monday 15 January 2024 until Monday 26 February 2024. This draft draws on earlier stakeholder engagement in May 2023 and a first round of formal public consultation between the 21 July 2023 and 4 September 2023.
- 4.3 It is envisaged that the plan will be considered by Cabinet in June, once the results of the consultation are analysed and any proposed amendments made. Subject to Cabinet's recommendation it would then be considered by Council in July 2024 for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

5.0 Infrastructure Projects

- 5.1 In Autumn 2023 the Government announced support for both the Cullompton Railway Station and works to address capacity constraints at Junction 28 of the M5 Motorway. The Railway Station is currently programmed for delivery in 2025. The District Council has been instrumental in progressing this scheme which is currently being led by Network Rail.

5.2 Junction 28 improvements are needed to address capacity issues at the junction and facilitate planned growth in the area. This scheme has recently been the subject of public consultation and a Strategic Outline Business Case will be considered by the County Council's Cabinet in March, with a view to submission to Government for funding for the next part of its development. The Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road remains a priority. It is intended that the relief road, which is so important to address the problems associated with through traffic in the town centre, will be implemented as a first stage before any wider junction 28 improvements are made. District Council Officers, in partnership with the County, continue to seek funding to deliver this scheme.

6.0 General Updates

6.1 Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

6.1.1 The bid for a Devon LVEP has been submitted to Visit England for approval. This project is being led by the Heart of the South West Growth Hub and Devon Local Authorities, Destination Management Organisations and other key stakeholders have had the opportunity to feed into the consultation for the development of the bid.

6.1.2 Confirmation of the bid outcome should be received by the end of April, by which point the project leads intend to form a Governance Board with (subject to approval) launch of the new LVEP and a Destination Management Framework by August 2024.

6.1.3 The Economic Development Team will be reviewing Mid Devon District Council's Destination Management Plan over the course of 2024/25 and the outcome of the Devon LVEP bid and its Framework are key to helping us shape our new plan.

Financial Implications

The report is an information report and does not of itself have any financial implications and require any decisions.

It is hoped that the report demonstrates that the Economy and Growth team is achieving in line with expectations in terms of the successful utilisation of grant monies and other financial resources.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this information report.

Risk Assessment

There are no further risks associated with the updates in this report that have not already been reported.

Impact on Climate Change

The impact of individual projects on climate change has been included in the individual reports that will have already been presented to committee.

Equalities Impact Assessment

It is acknowledged that there is a relationship between economy and equality whereby disadvantaged groups of people can have greater or lesser opportunities for economic advantage depending on the climate and growth potential. Economically disadvantaged individuals are socially disadvantaged individuals whose ability to compete in the free enterprise system has been impaired due to diminished capital or credit opportunities as compared to others in the same or similar line of business who are not socially disadvantaged. There are unfortunate intersections between socioeconomic status and those with protected characteristics or from marginalised or minority communities putting them at greater risk of social and therefore economic disadvantage. Social and digital isolation issues across a rural district has the potential to exacerbate these risks.

Mid Devon's Prosperity Programme and the Economic Strategy outline key projects to tackle these risks and grow the economy. They are supported by equality assessments and communication plans.

Key strands of the work of the Economy and Growth team continue to seek to address and tackle causes of inequality and deprivation.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The work of the Growth, Economy and Delivery team supports the corporate objectives for the economy:

- Bringing new businesses into the District
- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria DeLeiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh

Agreed by Corporate Director

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Cabinet member notified: (yes)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Zoë Lentell, Economic Development Team Leader

Email: zlentell@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 234298

Background papers:

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Report for: Economy PDG

Date of Meeting:	7 March 2024
Subject:	Mid Devon's Prosperity Programme: Update
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Richard Marsh, Director of Place
Exempt:	No
Wards Affected:	All – District wide
Enclosures:	[any appendices – list here]

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Members on the progress under the Shared Prosperity Investment Plan (Year 2: 2023/24); and
- Inform Members of the Year 3 (2024/25) Delivery Plan for Mid Devon's Prosperity Programmes.

Recommendation: That members note the contents of the report.

Section 2 – Report

2.0 Background to the Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund

- 2.1 Under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), the Government allocated £1,069,159 over a three-year period (2022-2025) to Mid Devon, to support economic development and community cohesion. The Government also allocated £816,672 of rural uplift over a two-year period (2023-2025) for Mid Devon to build on and complement the SPF under the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

- 2.2 The Investment Plans pulled together a series of projects identified through engagement meetings with business and community stakeholders (as well as Members) that address challenges facing our local economy.
- 2.3 The Prosperity Funding is annualised. The Economic Development Team are currently approaching the end of Year Two (2023/24) with funding for Year Three expected to be received following submission of the Year Two report on 1 May 2024. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has permitted Local Authorities to underspend on Year Two. However, depending on the level of underspend, they may then choose to pay Year Three funding in instalments.
- 2.4 This report outlines the proposed elements for delivery within Year Three to ensure effective spend of the funding within the required timescale. As Year Two has not yet completed, this report will identify potential areas at risk of underspend and will report on actual delivery against budget and impact targets at the June 2024 PDG.

3.0 Delivery Plan

- 3.1 In line with the Investment Plan, the Delivery Plan focuses on the following areas of intervention:

Direct Delivery Projects

- Love Your Town Centre
- Field to Fork
- Visitor Economy
- Work Hubs
- Business Innovation and Growth
- REPF Prosperity Programme Grant Scheme

External Delivery Projects

- Business Innovation Centre
- Business Innovation Outreach
- Business Support Programme
- Employment Skills Hub (new for 2024/25)
- Regenerative Farming (new for 2024/25)

4.0 Love Your Town Centre

- 4.1 'Love Your Town Centre' is a flexible funding mechanism offering small grants through a competitive bidding process with four strands aimed at improving the town centre and increasing the vibrancy and vitality of our three main markets towns: Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton. This includes:

- a) Shopfront Enhancement Schemes

- b) Vacant Shop and Business Growth Scheme
- c) Vibrant Town Centre Scheme
- d) Digital High Streets Scheme

4.2 Love Your Town Centre is part-funded through Shared Prosperity Fund with match funding allocated from S106 and earmarked reserves. We continue to receive enquiries for all the schemes. The current SPF spend is:

	SPF Budget	SPF Spend	SPF Balance
Business Growth Scheme (E1)	£4,417.00	£2,500.00	£1,917.00
Vibrant Town Centres (E6)	£6,072.00	£6,072.00	£0.00
Total	£10,489.00	£8,572.00	£1,917.00

4.3 The remaining balance is earmarked towards SPF intervention E1, which includes town centre public realm improvements such as street art, street furniture or other decorative improvements. We have received a request to fund updated Pannier Market signage in Fore Street (as it was damaged in recent bad weather) therefore we do not project underspend for Love Your Town Centre for Year Two.

4.4 Proposal for Year Three

YEAR THREE Element	BUDGET					TOTAL
	SPF (CAP)	SPF (REV)	REPF	OTHER		
Business Growth Scheme	£ 5,935.00	£ -			£ 5,935.00	
Empty Unit Fit Out Grant	£ 5,935.00	£ -			£ 5,935.00	
Vibrant Town Centres	£ -	£ 11,160.00	£ -	£ 22,000.00	£ 33,160.00	
> Crediton	£ -	£ 10,000.00		£ -	£ 10,000.00	
> Cullompton	£ -	£ -		£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	
> Tiverton	£ -	£ -		£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	
> Bampton	£ -	£ 1,160.00	£ -	£ 2,000.00	£ 3,160.00	
Shopfront Enhancement Scheme		£ -		£ 44,956.26	£ 44,956.26	
> Crediton	£ -	£ -		£ 10,433.20	£ 10,433.20	
> Cullompton	£ -	£ -		£ -	£ -	
> Tiverton	£ -	£ -		£ 24,523.06	£ 24,523.06	
Digital High Street	£ -	£ -		£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	
TOTAL	£ 5,935.00	£ 11,160.00	£ -	£ 76,956.26	£ 94,051.26	

4.5 We propose to continue all four schemes under Love Your Town Centre. The figures for shopfront scheme are tentative based on carried forward budget remaining and may reduce depending on outcomes of current applications. The shopfront scheme for Cullompton was supported through the Heritage Action Zone project. The team are identifying funding options for continuing support into 2024/25.

5.0 Field to Fork

5.1 In response to the needs of the agricultural sector we have the Field to Fork Project. In this project we hope to work with farmers, local producers, retailers and hospitality businesses to strengthen the local food supply chain, by

- promoting direct supply through box schemes, farmers markets, farm shops, local packers / distributors, and local independent retailers
- linking local food producers and local food businesses (retailers and hospitality) through 'meet the buyer' events, and
- stimulating demand through 'Buy Local' campaigns, promoting local markets, and expanding and promoting food tourism.

5.2 This project focuses on supporting local producers in Mid Devon and encouraging business growth either through transition from producing, to supplying and retailing or expansion into food tourism (such as food tours and experiences or farm shops). There are three primary areas of activity under this intervention: promoting direct supply, linking local food producers, and local food initiatives. The current SPF Spend is:

	SPF Budget	SPF Spend	SPF Balance
Promoting Direct Supply (E17)	£9,028.00	£7,974.95	£1,053.05
Linking Local Food Producers (E23)	£9,403.00	£8,240.00	£1,163.00
Local Food Initiatives (R1.1)	£511.40	£0.00	£511.40
	REPF Budget	REPF Spend	REPF Balance
Tourism Grants (E17)	£50,000	£50,000.00	£0.00
Total	£68,942.40	£66,214.95	£2,727.45

5.3 Year Two focused on supporting local food producers through a 'Meet the Producer' campaign, networking membership support with Food Drink Devon and funding a 'Meet the Expert' event to take place in Quarter 4. The networking membership support has already supported 8 businesses with a further three coming forward. We have been requested to increase our funding award to extend the support to more Mid Devon producers. In addition, there are still some costs to come through for the Meet the Producer advertising therefore we do not project underspend for Field to Fork.

5.4 Year Three Proposal

	YEAR THREE	BUDGET					
	Element	SPF (CAP)	SPF (REV)	REPF	OTHER		TOTAL
E17	Promoting Direct Supply	£ -	£ 9,717.00	£ -	£ -		£ 9,717.00
	> Meet the Producer Campaign	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ -	£ -		£ 5,000.00
	> Buy Local Campaigns	£ -	£ 1,717.00	£ -	£ -		£ 1,717.00
	> Showcasing Events	£ -	£ 3,000.00	£ -	£ -		£ 3,000.00
E23	Linking Local Food Producers	£ -	£ 9,717.00	£ -	£ -		£ 9,717.00
	> Farmers' Market Initiative	£ -	£ -	£ -			£ -
	> Meet the Buyer Event	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
	> Meet the Expert Event	£ -	£ 6,000.00	£ -	£ -		£ 6,000.00
	> Networking Membership	£ -	£ 3,717.00	£ -	£ -		£ 3,717.00
R1.1	Local Food Initiatives	£ -	£ -	£ 100,000.00	£ -		£ 100,000.00
	> Food Innovation Grant Scheme	£ -	£ -	£ 100,000.00	£ -		£ 100,000.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
	TOTAL	£ -	£19,434.00	£ 100,000.00	£ -		£ 119,434.00

5.5 Promoting Direct Supply: the Meet the Producer campaign proved successful in Year Two. We propose to continue this in Year Three extending into features on producers offering visitor experiences (such as tours, workshops, events).

5.6 Linking Local Food Producers: we will continue working with Food Drink Devon on Meet the Expert events offering featured support workshops for the food and drink sector. Alongside this will be Meet the Buyer events, connecting our producers with local hospitality businesses and independent retailers.

6.0 Sustainable Visitor Economy

6.1 This project is the development and piloting of a Mid Devon Walking Festival to encourage more people to explore the local area and increase visitor numbers, particularly at the close of the main holiday season. It is complemented by wider promotional activities to raise awareness of Mid Devon as a visitor destination, increase footfall and support our tourism businesses. The current SPF Spend is:

SPF	Budget	Spend	Balance
Promoting Mid Devon (E8)	£692.79	£692.79	£0.00
Promoting Leisure and Tourism Businesses (E17)	£2,000.00	£2,032.21	-£32.21
Tourism Events (E8)	£10,656.00	£10,575.00	£81.00
Tourism Events (E17)	£7,494.00	£7,475.00	£19.00
REPF	Budget	Spend	Balance
Tourism Grants (E17)	£50,000	£45,088.00	£4,912.00
Total	£70,842.79	£65,863.00	£4,979.79

6.2 The Walking Festival is due to take place in September 2024. Feedback from town and parish councils has been positive with circa 40 guided walks planned for the Festival. The Tiverton Swan Trail is on schedule for launching

on 3 April and will run until October 2024. In partnership with the Hartnoll Hotel, we ran a competition for a weekend stay in Mid Devon, which achieved an engagement of 4,412. The remaining SPF balance will go towards promotional posts for the Swan Trail therefore we do not project SPF underspend for Sustainable Visitor Economy. The remaining REPF balance will likely be allocated at the next Funding Panel at the end of February.

6.3 Year Three Proposal

	YEAR THREE		BUDGET				
	Element	SPF (CAP)	SPF (REV)	REPF	OTHER		TOTAL
E8	Promoting Mid Devon		£ 4,717.00	£ -	£ -		£ 4,717.00
	> Visitor Signage	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
	> VMD Campaigns	£ -	£ 1,717.00	£ -	£ 5,000.00		£ 6,717.00
	> Website Enhancement	£ -	£ 3,000.00	£ -	£ -		£ 3,000.00
E17	Promoting Leisure and Tourism Businesses		£ 4,717.00		£ 10,000.00		£ 14,717.00
	> Social Media Influencer	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ -		£ 1,000.00
	> VMD Competitions	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ -		£ 1,000.00
	> VMD Business Awards	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 10,000.00		£ 10,000.00
	> VMD Campaigns	£ -	£ 2,717.00	£ -	£ -		£ 2,717.00
E8	Tourism Events		£ 5,000.00		£ 2,500.00		£ 7,500.00
	> Walking Festival	£ -	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ -		£ 2,500.00
	> Sculpture Trail	£ -	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ 2,500.00		£ 5,000.00
E17	Tourism Events		£ 5,000.00		£ 2,500.00		£ 7,500.00
	> Walking Festival	£ -	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ -		£ 2,500.00
	> Sculpture Trail	£ -	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ 2,500.00		£ 5,000.00
E17	Sustainable Visitor Economy			£ 160,000.00	£ 1,000.00		£ 161,000.00
	> Tourism Innovation Grant Schem	£ -	£ -	£ 100,000.00	£ -		£ 100,000.00
	> Showcasing Equipment	£ -	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ -		£ 5,000.00
	> Tourism Projects	£ -	£ -	£ 30,000.00	£ -		£ 30,000.00
	> Visitor Signage	£ -	£ -	£ 25,000.00	£ 1,000.00		£ 26,000.00
	TOTAL	£ -	£ 19,434.00	£ 160,000.00	£ 11,000.00		£ 180,434.00

6.4 Year Three will focus on delivery of the pilot Walking Festival and Swan Trail (including post-project costs) followed by a tourism business event. Promotional campaigns will be targeted at group travel visitors.

6.5 Year Three also includes £60,000 of REPF budget towards tourism projects, visitor signage (at main transport locations such as J27) and showcasing equipment (for promoting Mid Devon at tourism events).

7.0 Work Hubs

7.1 The Work Hub Development Scheme offers grants of up to £20,000 to local businesses to support incubator space and work hub development to create small flexible office and workshop space for start-up and growing micro-businesses. To date, we have supported three businesses with a grant under this scheme (two in Cullompton and one in Crediton). Current SPF spend is:

SPF	Budget	Spend	Balance
Work Hub Scheme (E2)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Work Hub Scheme (E22)	£40,000	£20,000	£20,000

Work Hub Scheme (E26)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total	£40,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00

7.2 We have a further grant funding request of £16,823.00 coming to a Funding Panel this month for a decision. If this is approved, there will be £3,177 revenue SPF remaining, which will be reallocated towards the Administration and Management contract for the grant schemes.

7.3 Proposal for Year Three

7.4 Year Three will focus spend on delivering work hub and incubator space within MDDC-owned assets:

YEAR THREE		BUDGET					TOTAL
Element	SPF (CAP)	SPF (REV)	REPF	OTHER			
E2	Work Hub Development Scheme	£ 32,302.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 32,302.00	
	> Market Area Enhancements	£ 32,302.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 32,302.00	
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
E22	Work Hub Development Scheme	£ 74,345.00	£ 25,134.00	£ -	£ -	£ 99,479.00	
	> Market Area Enhancements	£ 74,345.00	£ 25,134.00	£ -	£ -	£ 99,479.00	
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
E26	Work Hub Development Scheme	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
	> Market Area Enhancements	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
R1.1	Work Hub / Incubator Scheme	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
	> Work Hub Study	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
	> Set-Up Costs	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	
R1.1	Work Hub / Incubator Scheme	£ -	£ -	£ 100,000.00	£ -	£ 100,000.00	
	> Market Area Enhancements	£ -	£ -	£ 100,000.00	£ -	£ 100,000.00	
	TOTAL	£ 106,647.00	£ 25,134.00	£ 100,000.00	£ -	£ 231,781.00	

8.0 Business Innovation & Growth

8.1 This intervention includes elements of external delivery (the innovation hub and outreach programme) and a grant scheme (see Prosperity Programme Grants).

8.2 The Business Innovation Hub and Outreach Programme is being delivered in partnership with Petroc College and sees the creation of a Business Innovation Hub in the district as a focus for indigenous innovation and product development. The Hub will provide local start-ups and micro-businesses with access to a wide range of advanced technology-based facilities, all designed to nurture business growth and develop product ideas and concepts. This will include spaces for design, development, 3D scanning and printing, and clean room manufacturing, as well as spaces for conferencing and hot desk working.

- 8.3 The physical hub will be complemented by a programme of outreach and knowledge transfer activities, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship across the District's Work Hub network to raise awareness of innovation possibilities and to encourage an entrepreneurial spirit across the area.
- 8.4 Capital works on the physical Hub space are nearing completion with the creation of a link bridge between the Innovation Centre and lab buildings. A new reception area is in the process of being installed. Petroc have created a programme of business workshops, training and networking events.

SPF	Budget	Spend	Balance
Innovation and Technology Grants (E18)	£3,879.60	£3,879.60	£0.00
Innovation and Technology Grants (E20)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Business Innovation Centre (E21)	£22,000.00	£22,000.00	£0.00
Business Innovation Outreach (E23)	£43,000.00	£43,000.00	£0.00
REPF	Budget	Spend	Balance
Innovation and Technology Grants (R1.1)	£54,168.00	£28,956.74	£25,211.26
Business Innovation Centre (E26)	£50,000.00	£50,000.00	£0.00
Total	£173,047.60	£147,836.34	£25,211.26

8.5 Proposal for Year Three

	YEAR THREE	BUDGET					
	Element	SPF (CAP)	SPF (REV)	REPF	OTHER		TOTAL
E18	Innovation and Technology Grants	£ 29,585.00	£ 27,218.00	£ -	£ -		£ 56,803.00
	Growth and Innovation Grants	£ 29,585.00	£ 27,218.00	£ -	£ -		£ 56,803.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
E20	Innovation and Technology Grants	£ 29,585.00	£ 27,218.00	£ -	£ -		£ 56,803.00
	Growth and Innovation Grants	£ 29,585.00	£ 27,218.00	£ -	£ -		£ 56,803.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
R1.1	Innovation and Technology Grants	£ -	£ -	£ 102,504.00	£ -		£ 102,504.00
	Growth and Innovation Grants	£ -	£ -	£ 102,504.00	£ -		£ 102,504.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
E21	Business Innovation Centre	£ 52,000.00	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ 52,000.00
	COTIE @Tiverton	£ 52,000.00	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ 52,000.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
E23	Business Innovation Outreach	£ -	£ 45,250.00	£ -	£ -		£ 45,250.00
		£ -	£ 45,250.00	£ -	£ -		£ 45,250.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
E26	Business Innovation Centre	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
	COTIE @Tiverton	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -		£ -
	TOTAL	£ 59,170.00	£ 72,468.00	£ -	£ -		£ 158,856.00

9.0 Business Support Programme

9.1 Working in partnership with Devon County Council, we commissioned a package of business support services, which consists of a range of options depending on the needs of the business, including:

- Generic business support, delivered through one-to-one support and workshop modules
- New employer support, with specific advice and workshop modules focused on helping businesses become employers
- Green business support, which will complement the existing Low Carbon Devon initiative with further workshops on decarbonisation
- Start-up support, with more specific advice and workshop modules focused on the needs of new businesses, and
- Agri-Tech Alliance and events, which will facilitate knowledge exchange/transfer and collaborations between farmers, horticultural, aquacultural and forestry businesses and Agri-Tech developers, academic institutions, sector experts and stakeholders.

9.2 Support commenced in Autumn 2023 and generic business support has nearly reached its capacity. In March, there will be a business event aimed at supporting enterprises seeking to take on staff or apprentices. SPF spend is currently as follows:

SPF	Budget	Spend	Balance
Business Support (E23)	£75,000.00	£74,712.44	£287.56
Total	£75,000.00	£74,712.44	£287.56

9.3 The remaining SPF balance will be put towards business support surgeries (room hire costs etc) in March therefore we do not predict underspend.

9.4 Year Three Proposal

9.5 The support will continue in Year Three with the full SPF budget of £116,912.00 allocated to the support contract with Devon County.

10.0 People and Skills

10.1 People and Skills is a new element in Year Three, with budget allocated to two projects supporting green skills, supported employment and youth skills (helping young people into employment). The first project – a regenerative farming training project with the Apricot Centre – started in January 2023 using match funding from the Economy Team budget. The training is a 3-month course and this first course had 4 businesses from Mid Devon enrolled.

10.2 The second project is an Employment and Skills Hub project delivered in partnership with Devon County Council. Other Devon authorities are also

supporting this project. The project will see a physical hub facility pop-up in towns across Devon with advisors supporting people into employment via skills workshops, training programmes, and other advice and support packages.

	YEAR THREE	BUDGET				TOTAL
	Element	SPF (CAP)	SPF (REV)	REPF	OTHER	
E33	Youth Skills	£ -	£ 18,432.00	£ -	£ -	£ 18,432.00
	Employment and Skills Hub	£ -	£ 18,432.00	£ -	£ -	£ 18,432.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
E33	Supported Employment	£ -	£ 24,768.00	£ -	£ -	£ 24,768.00
	Employment and Skills Hub	£ -	£ 24,768.00	£ -	£ -	£ 24,768.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
E34	Youth Skills	£ -	£ 18,432.00	£ -	£ -	£ 18,432.00
	Employment and Skills Hub	£ -	£ 18,432.00	£ -	£ -	£ 18,432.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
E34	Supported Employment	£ -	£ 24,768.00	£ -	£ -	£ 24,768.00
	Employment and Skills Hub	£ -	£ 24,768.00	£ -	£ -	£ 24,768.00
		£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
E39	Green Skills Development	£ -	£ 48,000.00	£ -	£ -	£ 48,000.00
	Employment and Skills Hub	£ -	£ 10,000.00	£ -	£ -	£ 10,000.00
	Regenerative Farming	£ -	£ 38,000.00	£ -	£ -	£ 38,000.00
	TOTAL	£ -	£ 134,400.00	£ -	£ -	£ 134,400.00

11.0 Cullompton Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

11.1 In 2023/24, £35,108.57 of SPF was allocated to support the Bullring Enhancement Project supporting Intervention E1. This funding has been fully spent; the project is now complete and there is no allocated SPF budget in Year Three.

12.0 Prosperity Programme Grants

12.1 During Year Two, we have been running the Prosperity Programme Grants Scheme. This has seen 46 businesses submit an Expression of Interest (with 20 of these to come to Round 3 or 4 in 2024/25). The Prosperity Programme supports growth and innovation projects, tourism enhancement projects, work hub development and new for 2024/25 will be the Social Economy theme with £150,000 REPF allocation towards this. Spend to date and Year Three budget for the other themes has been highlighted within each section above.

12.2 The team is actively promoting the grant schemes and we're pleased to see that Year Two funding is almost fully committed with plans for remaining funding to be allocated before year end.

Financial Implications:

Second year funding for SPF (2023/24) and REPF (2023/24) has been received. Identified match-funding towards these projects is allocated from within the service's existing budget and private sector.

Legal Implications

The Council is the accountable body for delivery of the schemes within our allocated funding. As such we have Grant Funding Agreements in place signed by the delivery partners and grant recipients. All partners/recipients funded through this scheme are required to complete a Subsidy Declaration in line with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Risk Assessment

Due to the annualised nature of the grant schemes and the wider economic uncertainty and budgetary challenges facing the UK, there is a risk that the Government may modify their commitment to this funding either in whole or in part. This risk is increased in likelihood if we fail to spend the funding in line with the agreed Investment Plan and timescales, although this rule was relaxed for first year spend. The Project Team have funding agreements in place to commit the funding each year with delivery partners and the Delivery Plan (with regular project review meetings) will monitor progress against targets to minimise and mitigate these risks.

Impact on Climate Change

Climate change and the necessity for businesses to transition to a Low Carbon Economy is a recurring theme within the SPF Investment Plan. All grant schemes ask applicants how their proposed activities support business decarbonisation. The rural uplift will also include a scheme to fund Community Energy Projects to support community-led renewable energy initiatives.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Individual projects will have their own equality impact assessed as part of the detailed planning for delivery. Grant schemes developed offer an open application process with equality safeguards to ensure equal and equitable access to the funding. Communication plans have been devised to identify 'touch points' for engaging with hard-to-reach business groups to ensure they are aware of the opportunities available through these schemes.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The SPF Investment Plan and Rural Uplift directly address a number of objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2020-24, as set out in the report below.

- Bringing new businesses into the District
- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector
- Incubation space, grow-on space and places to expand
- Promote low carbon communities - decarbonisation
- Promote a local economy - People living, working, eating, shopping and spending locally
- Greater digital connectivity in rural areas
- Support for clean growth industries
- A thriving agricultural sector that showcases farm-to-fork practices and low food miles to market

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151
Date: 27 Feb 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 27 Feb 2024

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director
Date: 27 Feb 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 27 Feb 2024

Cabinet member notified: (yes)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Zoë Lentell, Economic Development Team Leader
Email: zlentell@middevon.gov.uk
Telephone: 01884 234298

Background papers:

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Report for: Economy PDG

Date of Meeting: 7 March 2024

Subject: Flexible Workspace Provision Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Regeneration

Responsible Officer: Richard Marsh, Director of Place

Exempt: N/A

Wards Affected: All wards

Enclosures: N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To update members on the viability study for the provision of flexible workspace in Tiverton town centre.

Recommendation(s):

That members note the contents of the report.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Background Summary

- 1.1 Technology, transport costs and cuts and the impact of COVID has changed the way people work. Since the pandemic, the traditional office space, hours of work and commuting has changed drastically, with more people hybrid working and keeping their business running from home. It is evident that this change in pattern and approach to work is the new normal. This new ‘working from home’ model provides businesses with more freedom, greater choice and potentially greater benefits for the environment, economic performance and communities.

- 1.2 This new model offers drawbacks though. In addition to economic impacts with fewer workers coming into our town centres, home-workers themselves suffer disadvantages such as:
- difficulty separating home and work life
 - the initial expense of setting up a business at home or lack of space/resources to accommodate specialist equipment
 - domestic distractions and interruptions
 - impact on wellbeing due to isolation/loneliness
- 1.3 Micro businesses are looking for the benefit of flexible workspace, offering the ability to access equipment, network, or simply adapt their business from the kitchen table to an 'office space' whenever it suits them. According to NOMIS (National Online Manpower Information System (Office for National Statistics; UK)), in 2023, Mid Devon's economy comprised of 4,070 micro-businesses.
- 1.4 As part of our Economy Strategy and Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Delivery Plan, the Economic Development Team is looking to support proposals to bring forward or expand flexible workspace (Work Hubs) in rural locations and town centres in Mid Devon. In addition to the Work Hub Development Grant, funded through the SPF, the team commissioned Work Box CIC to undertake a study looking at work hub provision across the District and opportunities for a town centre facility with specific focus on the potential use of the former Market Centre site as a social work hub.

2.0 Work Hubs

- 2.1 A work hub is a flexible workspace offering an 'office when needed' service for modern micro businesses and mobile workers, including those who work from home. Shared facilities typically include bookable 'hot' desks, formal and informal meeting spaces, high speed secure broadband and costly or space-hungry professional equipment. Work hubs offer a professional front for a business; businesses can meet clients at a work hub, use its registered address, and have friendly, professional staff handle their phone calls and post.
- 2.2 Work hubs should not be confused with other types of workspace that also offer some form of flexible working/drop-in facilities. For example:
- **Community hubs.** These may have some drop-in working space but also host a range of community activities.
 - **Managed workspaces.** These are buildings dominated by traditional offices on tenancies, not open plan shared working areas.
 - **Innovation centres.** These offer various resources and services to entrepreneurs, start-ups, and established businesses in a collaborative environment where individuals or organisations can come together to exchange ideas, innovate, and develop their projects.

- **Incubation/learning centres.** These are focused on training people. Business Incubators provide start-ups and early-stage businesses with support and resources young companies find difficult to access. Their support might involve access to networks, investors and mentors, or co-working space alongside experienced professionals.
- **Cafés, libraries and hotels.** These are all places someone might use WiFi to work, or hold a meeting, but they usually don't offer a space only work hub members can use.

2.3 Across the District, the following locations offer a form of hub-style flexible workspace:

Location	Hub Name	Type	Key Features
Crediton	The Bookery	Work Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable 'hot' desks • Bookable meeting room
Crediton	The White Room	Managed Workspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rentable offices • Bookable exhibition space
Crediton	Elephant on the Green	Community Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable office space • Rentable kitchen and dining room for pop-up events
Cullompton	The Hayridge	Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable meeting rooms
Cullompton	Coach House Arts	Community Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable workshop (artist) space
Cullompton	The Nook	Work Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable 'hot' desks • Bookable meeting rooms • Rentable offices
Morchurch Bishop	Memorial Hall	Work Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bookable 'hot' desks
Tiverton	COTIE @ Petroc	Business Innovation Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference facilities • Access to digital technology • Developing lab space
Tiverton	The Old Bakery	Managed Workspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rentable offices

2.4 In addition to the above, we are aware of two places that formerly offered co-workspaces in Tiverton in recent years. Centre Space was an arts-focused community hub using the same Market Centre building that is currently being considered for a new work hub. It closed during the pandemic. Oak Hub at the site of a former church closed after the building owners sold it at the end of the pandemic. A further former work hub used to operate in Hemyock (Blackdown Business Centre) but closed in 2022.

2.5 It is recognised that there are other forms of flexible or 'shared' workspace (such as bookable therapy rooms, community spaces including village, school or church halls, leisure facilities, town squares, markets, pay-to-trade Salon

Stations and Science Parks). Although these all offer benefits of flexible provision, they are not relevant for the purpose/focus of this study.

3.0 The 'Issue'

- 3.1 The perceived and actual lack of affordable and accessible employment space within the Mid Devon district, and specifically within Tiverton, is affecting business formation, growth and success. Furthermore, Tiverton sees a low level of new business formation and growth – limiting opportunities for residents to develop their own successful commercial enterprises and also limiting the levels of indigenous economic growth within the district.
- 3.2 This is affecting the economic success of the town and, unless addressed, will mean that the district continues to have a low business formation rate and increases the likely continuation of the low-wage economy which is currently prevalent within Mid Devon.
- 3.3 Alongside this, UK Government reports that although since the pandemic restrictions lifted, home-working has decreased from pandemic levels, they are still higher than pre-pandemic with statistics from September 2022 showing that around 1 in 5 (22%) of the British workforce worked at least one day from home in the previous week and around 1 in 8 (13%) worked from home exclusively. More employers are embracing hybrid working models and with the Great Western Railway line to London and Plymouth just out of town, there is an increasing opportunity for Mid Devon residents to access higher-waged remote employment. There is an opportunity to reconnect these employees with their local town through facilitated work hubs offering access to equipment not readily available in most home offices.

4.0 Vision

- 4.1 The Vision is to address this issue by proactively supporting the continued operation and formation of flexible workspaces within the district. It is hoped that these will encourage increased levels of business start-up and entrepreneurship within the district whilst also supporting businesses in terms of opportunities for collaboration and co-location.
- 4.2 It is expected that the workspace facilities will be focused within the principal market towns but that a 'hub and spoke' model will be established whereby smaller/occasional facilities will be established within more rural location – linked to the centres in the principal market towns in order to create a functioning network of workspaces throughout the district.
- 4.3 Whilst opportunities already exist within Cullompton and Crediton to support existing business/innovation centres, it is expected that a more interventionist approach may need to be taken in Tiverton owing to the lack of

existing/established facilities (noting that Petroc College is now proactively developing its own Innovation Centre facility on its education campus on the edge of Tiverton).

4.4 Aims and objectives of the overall district-wide workspace project/work:

4.4.1 To directly:

- Support business formation within Mid Devon.
- Support existing businesses within Mid Devon to continue to grow, collaborate and diversify in order to support their survival and continued success.
- Boost local entrepreneurship, collaboration and innovation – especially in key sectors
- Support the delivery of our SPF and Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF) programmes
- Support the realisation of key objectives within the Economic Strategy, Local Plan and Corporate Strategy.
- Create a long term and sustainable business model for enterprise, innovation and business incubation within Mid Devon.

4.4.2 To indirectly:

- Support vibrancy and business activity within our existing town/commercial centres – i.e. bring in more businesses/people to town centres to support other businesses within the town (such as cafés), supporting their long term viability and survival rate and supporting our residents, businesses and the Council.

5.0 The Market Centre

- 5.1 As an MDDC-owned asset, the Market Centre offers a unique opportunity for potential investment as a work hub. Its location in the heart of the town centre with nearby amenities make it easy to access and ideally placed to encourage town centre vitality.



6.0 The Study

- 6.1 The team has commissioned Work Box CIC to undertake a viability study looking at opportunities for work hub provision across the District and the potential use of the former Market Centre site as a work hub. The study will identify gaps in our current provision, how different work hub offers could complement each other and operating models should we pursue a potential facility in Tiverton.
- 6.2 Micro-businesses and home-workers have been completing a survey to identify the demand for a work hub in Tiverton. We have received 60 responses so far and initial feedback has been positive, for example:
- *“I am keen to explore a shared working option and would love something like this in Tiverton. I expect I would use it one to two days a week, mostly to have interaction and be in an environment more conducive to being productive.”*
 - *“I run a networking event in Exeter and would love to be able to be part of this coworking space and events in my home town.”*
 - *“I would like a dedicated workspace that isn’t at home but close by”*
 - *“I am looking for a working space that I can walk to on a daily basis (for exercise) and for a change of scene and interaction with others.”*
- 6.3 In addition to viability, the study is also looking at addressing specific needs and challenges relating to a potential Tiverton project:
- Operation model: how to operate a centre within Tiverton i.e; should it be Council-run (noting the risk associated with this), should it be run by an operator, will there be market interest and, if so, how would this operator be identified?

- Relationship with nearby hubs; how a new Work Hub in Tiverton town centre can complement the developing Innovation Centre at Petroc? The ambition would be to have a productive and collaborative working relationship between these two centres such that opportunities were developed for networking opportunities and to encourage the 'grow on' from the Market Centre to the Petroc centre – effectively allowing a business escalator arrangement within Tiverton.
- Use: how can the Market Centre become a focal point for business support activities and enterprise within the town and encourage links with the market (e.g. creative enterprises) and other town centre businesses?
- Features: what infrastructure and physical features does a new hub need to provide? How can it support active travel and other environmental benefits? How can SPF and REPF be used to support this?

6.4 A detailed report is expected to be completed by the end of February 2024. Alongside this, we will verbally present key findings from the study to the PDG.

Financial Implications

The report is an information report and does not of itself have any financial implications and require any decisions. The report is however providing members with information which is pertinent to the utilisation of SPF and REPF monies.

It is hoped that the report demonstrates that the Economy and Growth team is achieving in line with expectations in terms of the successful utilisation of SPF/REPF monies and other financial resources.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this information report.

We have double checked and there are no covenants in the deeds regarding the Market Centre to restrict its use. It is understood, however, that based on the previous usage of the building, the current Planning Use Class is F2 (Local Community Use), which if the proposal for a work hub proves viable, will require a Planning Application for Change of Use to E (Commercial, Business and Service – Eg(i) Office Use).

Risk Assessment

There are no further risks associated with the updates in this report that have not already been reported.

Impact on Climate Change

Any works undertaken to the Market Centre will consider environmental impact. Consultations include proposals for e-bike charging and the potential for solar panels (subject to Planning Permission).

Equalities Impact Assessment

Work hubs help address technological divides by allowing access to equipment and/or services that home-workers would not otherwise have.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

This project supports the corporate objectives for the economy:

- Bringing new businesses into the District
- Business development and growth
- Improving and regenerating our town centres
- Growing the tourism sector (in this case, business tourism)

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria DeLeiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh

Agreed by Corporate Director

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 27 Feb 2024

Cabinet member notified: yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Zoë Lentell, Economic Development Team Leader

Email: zlentell@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 234298

Background papers:

Economy Policy Development Group – 2022/2023

Chairman's Annual Report

The Economy Group have continued to successfully gain and administer funds for the District and I am pleased to report that the Crediton Master Plan has now commenced with the publication of the initial plan and public consultations. We unfortunately have been curtailed in pursuing any more commercial ventures due to the Government now restricting Local Authorities taking out loans to fund opportunities, such as Three Rivers.

As ever the Group and I are indebted to the work and support of Richard, Adrian and Zoe and all of the Economic Development team.

The main focus of the Economic Development team over the last year has been the Shared Prosperity and the Rural England Prosperity programmes. The Policy Development Group has played an important role in the formulation of Shared Prosperity Investment Plans as part of the District's successful submissions to government. The Policy Development Group will continue to play an important role in overseeing the delivery of these plans over the next few years. It should be noted that a great deal of the ground work for these submissions was informed by the Economic Strategy which this Group had a pivotal role in its development. Over the next twelve months members of the group will again be involved in the formulation of the Council's Economic Strategy for the next five year period.

Overview

During 2023/24 the Group considered a number of issues. In summary these included:

- Various UK Shared Prosperity Fund & Rural England Prosperity Fund reports
- Economic Development Team updates
- Economic Updates regarding Junction 27 and Junction 28
- Business Support Programme – Guest Speaker (Rob Evans, Devon County Council)
- Establishment of the car parking working group and subsequent updates
- Town Centre Health updates
- Various Budget updates and financial discussions

As referred above car parking was often discussed at the meetings. Car parking fees were increased only in line with inflation this year. A working group has been convened, working with resident groups and businesses, which will present any proposed revised parking fees to future meetings. In addition throughout the year members have been provided with a number of reports and presentations providing data and analysis regarding the current economic position nationally and locally. Members have also been updated with progress regarding other initiatives such as:

- Job Fairs in partnership with Tiverton JobCentre Plus (DWP) for local employers and job-seekers
- Business support surgeries
- 'Be Grant Ready' workshops
- Cullompton Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) –public realm enhancements
- Cullompton Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) - distribution of grants
- Cullompton Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) – cultural programme
- Digital skills training for businesses
- Local Growth Fund bid for Business Decarbonisation
- Finger posts installation in Tiverton
- Crediton Masterplan
- Mid Devon Walking Festival
- Sculpture Trail
- Thrive business support programme
- Major Infrastructure updates
- Visit Mid Devon – Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality Business
- Love Your Town Centre grants
- Field to fork programme

Cllr John Downes

Chairman of the Economy Policy Development Group