

Community Policy Development Group

Tuesday, 26 March 2024 at 1.00 pm
Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton

Next ordinary meeting
Tuesday, 25 June 2024 at 2.15 pm

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

The meeting will be hybrid and an audio recording made and published on the website after the meeting.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Membership

B Holdman
C Connor
D Broom
G Cochran
A Cuddy
A Glover
C Harrower
S Robinson

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 notices of appointment of substitute Members (if any).
- 2 Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**
To record any interests on agenda matters.

- 3 **Public Question Time**
To receive any questions from members of the public and replies thereto.
- Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for this item.
- 4 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (*Pages 5 - 10*)
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 23rd January 2024.
- 5 **Chairmans Announcements**
To receive any announcements that the Chairman may wish to make.
- 6 **Performance Dashboard Q3** (*Pages 11 - 12*)
To receive and discuss summary information reflecting performance in Quarter 3 2023/2024.
- 7 **Biodiversity Duty Report** (*Pages 13 - 16*)
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 **Public Access for Vulnerable Customers** (*Pages 17 - 26*)
To receive a report presenting the findings of the Public Access Working Group and subsequent recommendations to the Community PDG.
- 9 **Corporate Health and Safety Policy** (*Pages 27 - 36*)
To advise Members that, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Works Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety at Work Policy has been reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee.
- 10 **Single Equalities Scheme and Equality Objectives** (*Pages 37 - 68*)
To receive an update on action taken to help meet the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act (2010).
- 11 **Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy** (*Pages 69 - 112*)
To consider the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and wider governance arrangements to embed the strategy within the Council Policy Framework.
- 12 **Safeguarding Policy** (*Pages 113 - 148*)
To receive a report to seek approval for the adoption of the revised Corporate Safeguarding Policy.
- 13 **Community Safety Partnership** (*Pages 149 - 160*)
To receive an annual report to provide an update on the East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities and the planned activities of the Partnership for the coming year 2024/25.

- 14 **Chairman's Annual Report** (Pages 161 - 164)
To receive the Chairman's Annual Report 2023/2024.

Stephen Walford
Chief Executive
Monday, 18 March 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 Angie Howell on: ahowell@middevon.gov.uk

Public Wi-Fi is available in all meeting rooms.

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MINUTES of a MEETING of the COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

held on 23 January 2024 at 2.15 pm

Present

Councillors

B Holdman (Chairman)
C Connor (Vice Chairman), M D Binks,
D Broom, G Cochran, A Cuddy and
S Robinson

Apologies

Councillor(s)

C Harrower

Also Present

Councillor(s)

J Buczkowski, S J Clist, M Jenkins, J Lock and D Wulff

Also Present

Officer(s):

Richard Marsh (Director of Place & Economy), Paul Deal (Corporate Manager for Finance, Property and Climate Change), Lisa Lewis (Corporate Manager for Business Transformation and Customer Engagement), David Parker (Democratic Services & Policy Research Officer) and Angie Howell (Democratic Services Officer)

Councillors

Online

A Glover
G Czapiewski

49 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (03:47)

Cllr C Harrower sent her apologies and Cllr M Binks attended as her substitute.

50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (04:11)

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

There were no declarations of interest.

51 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (04:37)

There were no members of the public present.

52 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (04:46)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2023 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

53 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS (5:18)

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

- With regard to Agenda Item 7 – Town and Parish Charter the recommendation had an amendment as follows:-

That the PDG considers and recommends that the proposed new Charter is sent to the Towns and Parishes for review between February and April 2024.

- The next meeting to be held on 26th March 2024 would have several reports to discuss and the meeting was proposed to begin at 1.00pm rather than 2.15pm.

He also reminded Members and officers of the Committee to address the Chair when they wished to speak.

54 MEETING MANAGEMENT (07:04)

The Chair announced that we would be discussing Agenda Item 7 before Agenda Item 6.

55 TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER (07:10)

The Parish Liaison Officer presented a report with a proposal for a review into the Charter between Mid Devon District Council and the Town and Parish Council in Mid Devon and highlighted the following:-

- The Town and Parish Charter was reviewed every 3 years and was a contract between Mid Devon District Council and Town and Parish Councils. It was last reviewed in 2020 with minimal amendments.
- The proposed changes were shown through “tracked changes” so that the Community Policy Development Group (PDG) could review the current and the proposed wording side by side. If agreed, the document circulated to Towns and Parishes would have the same tracked changes so that they could easily reference the proposed changes made.
- The recommendation on the report was incorrect as there was no requirement for the report to go to Cabinet at this stage.
- Once the review was completed in three months’ time the Charter would come back to Community PDG for recommendation to Cabinet for approval.

The following changes were **AGREED**:-

- Page 15 Number 7 – to add the word “and Members” – therefore to now read:- Encourage officers and Members to attend local Council meetings and speak on issues of concern/interest and provide feedback.
- Page 15 Item 9 – to add and explain all acronyms used. Therefore to now read:- Use plain English in written communications and to explain all acronyms used.

- Page 15 Item 6 – to change the wording so that it says:- Formally add to the role of Chairman of the District Council that of being “Local Council Lead Member” who will encourage better working across the district.

The Chairman also reminded Members to promote the review to encourage their Town and Parish Councils to participate.

The Community Policy Development Group considered and **APPROVED** that the proposed new charter be sent to Towns and Parishes for review between February and April 2024 with the amendments identified above.

(Proposed by Cllr S Robinson and seconded by Cllr G Cochran).

Note: *Report previously circulated.

56 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - DRAFT BUDGET UPDATE FOR 2024/2025 (23:18)**

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 being presented to the Cabinet in December 2023 with an update in January 2024.

The following summary was provided:

- Savings of circa £1.644m 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 which had left a gap of £418k.
- 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.
- An additional net sum of £41,000 had been identified for savings.
- Since December Mid Devon District Council received the Finance Settlement and received grant funding of £85,000. Also, due to the Building Control Partnership where the mix of partners percentage of costs had altered which had resulted in a £78,000 saving.
- Additional savings had been identified due to government announcements in December regarding the local government financial settlement and Council Tax and Business Rate changes.
- It was confirmed that a fully balanced budget would be taken to Cabinet and that it would not be necessary to look to this Policy Development Group for further savings in order to balance the budget. However Members were asked to consider savings that could be developed toward the budget for 2025/2026 over the summer.

57 **CUSTOMER CARE POLICY (29:00)**

The Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement presented a report for a review of the Customer Care Policy and Customer Standards of Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) and highlighted the following:-

- The Customer Care Policy was a pre-existing policy which was last reviewed in November 2021.
- The policy remained with little or no change except where acknowledgment was given to vulnerable customers.
- The standards applied not just to Customer Services but to all of the Authority and the required behaviours of all staff and the expectations that our customers should have.
- Those who had concerns about getting in touch with the Council were encouraged to complete a customer feedback report in order that their concern could be fed into the statistics.

Consideration was given to:-

- Whether the public would assume that Councillor response times were included in any statistics. It was confirmed that Councillor response times would differ due to the different relationships they had with their constituents and that reference would be made to that in the report.
- How MDDC compared with similar authorities in terms of opening times and public access.
- How a number of factors had influenced the decision on how services were provided based on budget constraints and to continue to provide the best level of service.
- Due to financial transactions now being online this had also reduced the footfall.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that the revised Customer Care Policy and Standards be approved.

(Proposed by the Chairman)

Note: *report previously circulated.

58 **PUBLIC ACCESS TO PHOENIX HOUSE - WORKING GROUP UPDATE (44:30)**

The Chairman gave an update on the Public Access Working Group. He informed the PDG of the following:-

- The next meeting of the Working Group would be held on 22 February 2024 where they hoped to put forward a recommendation to the Community PDG for an intercom to be fitted.
- This would then go to Cabinet for approval. If approved hopefully it would be implemented within a few weeks.
- The intercom would give vulnerable customers comfort and confidence that they could contact us even when reception was closed.

(The meeting ended at 3.02 pm)

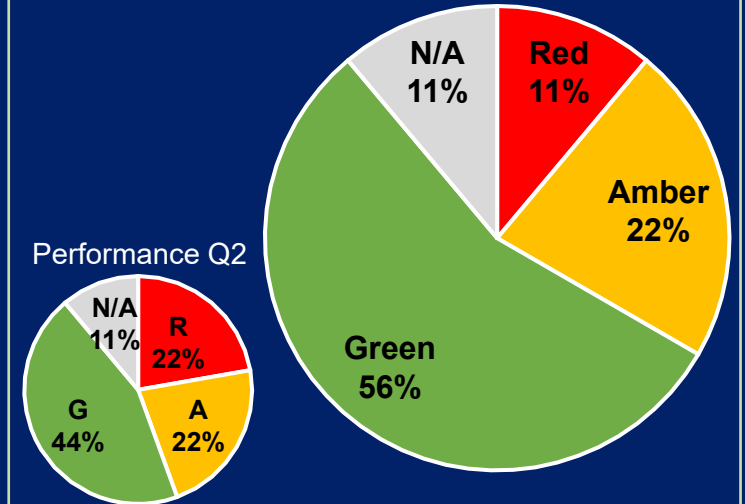
CHAIRMAN

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Community PDG Performance Dashboard – Quarter 3 2023/24

Performance Measures	Performance	Annual Target	RAG
All council complaints resolved within timescales (Average YTD)	93 %	95 %	A
Licenced vehicle inspections (YTD)	90	40	G
Food safety inspections (YTD)	233	200	G
Private water supply sampling (YTD)	94	120	G
Environmental protection service requests (Average YTD)	76.7 %	95 %	R
Engagement rate on Let's Talk Mid Devon (YTD)	24.2 %	TBD	

Overall Performance Q3



Page 11

Finance Measures	Performance	Annual Target	RAG
Community PDG – Outturn	£4,136k	£4,426k	G
Leisure Income	(£3,226k)	(£2,931k)	G
CMY PDG – Capital Slippage % of projects (Current)	21%	0	A

In Focus

100% of environmental protection requests were responded to within 5 working days in Quarter 3

In 2023, Customer Services:

- Answered 85,240 telephone calls
- Saw over 5,500 customers in person
- Received 18,096 emails

In the past year, Mid Devon Leisure have run 26 accredited courses including National Pool Lifeguard Qualification, Swim Teaching, and First Aid and Safeguarding, training approximately 265 people.

Corporate Risk	Risk Rating (Trajectory)
None	

Agenda Item 6

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Briefing Paper: **Community Policy Development Group**

Date of Meeting: 26 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.

Report: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. No.

Section 4 - 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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Report for: Community PDG

Date of Meeting:	26 March 2024
Subject:	Report of the Public Access Working Group
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jane Lock, Cabinet Member for Working Environment
Responsible Officer:	Lisa Lewis, Corporate Manager Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement
Exempt:	No
Wards Affected:	N/A
Enclosures:	Public Access Working Group Report

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report is to present the finding of the Public Access Working Group and subsequent recommendations to the Community PDG.

Recommendation(s):

That the Community PDG recommend to Cabinet the approval of the installation of an intercom for use by the public when Phoenix House is closed (available office hours only).

Report

- 1.0 On the 22 August 2023 the Community PDG determined that a working group was necessary to assess the impact of reduced opening hours of Phoenix House for vulnerable residents.
- 1.1 The working group met a total of three times to discuss and assess current practice and impacts on vulnerable residents.
- 1.2 The Working Group report is attached which outlines what was discussed and agreed. The outcome of which is the recommendation above.
- 2.0 The cost of the intercom solution is approximately £1,000.

- 2.1 The intercom will work by simply lifting the handset. The customer will then be automatically connected to the contact centre at which point the following will be determined:
- Do they have a current appointment
 - Do they require an appointment
 - An assessment will be made to determine if the customer requires immediate assistance
- 2.2 The intercom will be available for use during standard working hours when the building is closed to the public, i.e. when the interior doors are closed. It should be noted that it is not intended for access to the building requests by staff or members unless by prior arrangement.
- 3.0 In addition to the above recommendation the working group has requested that the Parking Services working group consider a request to establish 1 hour free parking for Blue Badge holders. This request has been passed to the relevant service managers by the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement.
- 3.1 Should the intercom installation be authorised, a review will be done six months after installation to confirm usage. A verbal report will be given at Community PDG.
- 3.2 The working group agreed, that on the submission of this report that the group would be disbanded. Further issues/concerns around accessibility will be referred to the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion group.

Financial Implications – See paragraph 2.0

Legal Implications - None

Risk Assessment – Low Risk – the inclusion of an intercom solution ensures that customers in crisis are able to speak with an officer during office hours but when the building is closed.

Impact on Climate Change - There is no impact or opportunity for improvement/adaptation in conjunction with MDDC Climate Action Plan.

Equalities Impact Assessment - The proposed provision of an intercom improves MDDC access for those that are vulnerable or with protected characteristics that may impact on their ability to transact with the council.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

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

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 07 March 2024

Cabinet member notified: (yes/no)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: [details of author of the report]

Email:

Telephone:

Background papers:

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**A Review of Customer Access for Vulnerable Customers
at Mid Devon District Council**

March 2024

**A review by a Working Group of the Community Policy
Development Group**

Contents

Introduction	3
Rationale for the review.....	3
Scope	3
Desired Outcomes.....	4
Methodology and Approach.....	4
Outcomes	5

Introduction

Local Government continues to face growing pressure on resources, with a need to focus on efficiency and value for money. At the same time, however, customers expect a high quality service when dealing with their Local Authority. Balancing the complex nature of Councils and the range of departments, with provision of a seamless service on a tight budget can be challenging.

This report examines access to customer service for those vulnerable in our communities and if/how the reduced opening hours at Phoenix House may have impacted them. Through analysis of data and evidence, feedback from Members and staff, the Working Group has considered the full customer experience when they get in touch with the Council with a specific focus on accessibility for our vulnerable customers.

Rationale for the review

Delivering a positive customer experience is a priority for Mid Devon District Council (MDDC).

Members had been made aware by a small number of residents expressing their disquiet about the reduced opening hours at Phoenix House. Some members expressed concern that this may be disadvantaging those most in need. Issues were also raised about residents arriving at Phoenix House only to find us closed.

The chairman of Community PDG determined that a working group to assess current practice and impact on customers would be helpful. A review of accessibility would enable better understanding for members and provide an opportunity to identify improvements on the customer experience.

Scope

The Working Group agreed that the following scope would form the Review:

“To review the customer experience at Phoenix House in the context of our most vulnerable customer”.

- To look at the possibility of a doorbell on the front door or an intercom service.
- Free telephone number (for those that cannot afford to pay for calls).
- Text messages for deaf people.
- To look at possibility of vending machines or a coffee shop in reception.
- To gather additional data by people affected by the opening times.
- To consider public transport and how this would link into our opening times.

Desired Outcomes

- To provide specific support to the homeless.
- To provide out of hours support.
- To provide appointments face-to-face or via telephone.
- To consider free parking at the front of the building.
- To consider different opening hours to support vulnerable people.

Methodology and Approach

Members of the Working Group were agreed by the Community PDG as:

Cllrs. B Holdman, C Connor, G Cochran, A Glover, C Harrower

The first meeting of the Working Group took place in on 18 Sept 2023, during which Cllr Ben Holdman was elected Chairman. Subsequent meetings took place on 30 November 2023, and 22 February 2024.

Members were clear from the outset that they needed to understand the customer experience across all channels and access to staff through those channels. Areas reviewed were as follows:

- Current contact centre hours
- Availability of appointments when closed to the public
- Duration of standard appointments and access to facilities e.g. toilets, water etc.
- Ability to access the council for those presenting to the building, particularly for those presenting in crisis e.g. Homeless
- Access for Out of Hours assistance
- Current footfall

An overview of how the Contact Centre and Enquiries service worked, provision of previous survey results and current practices were provided and reference was made to previous committee reports which had provided the information.

Members discussed issues around transport, access to the building and facilities whilst customers were in Phoenix House.

Discussions on different vulnerabilities and the challenges presented in interacting with the Council took place. Including how staff identify vulnerability, how it can be hidden, permanent and temporary vulnerability and if/how customers self-identify or share their circumstances. Particular focus was those customers presenting as Homeless and the ability to make contact during office hours.

A survey focussing on access challenges was developed for the group by the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement.

Outcomes

The group reviewed current practice and are comfortable that access to council services generally covers the needs of the most vulnerable and that different channels deliver for those with varying needs. It also acknowledges that there are policies and practices in place which allow for staff to individualise service based on customer needs within our legal/statutory duties.

The number and duration of visits negated additional refreshment requirements and that the neighbouring library was in receipt of a grant to facilitate 'warm spaces' during the winter.

The group have raised concern about the Disabled Parking at the front of Phoenix House. They feel that charging for this parking for Blue Badge holders is wrong and that the requirement for disabled drivers to have to cross a busy car park to pay makes visiting the premises unnecessarily difficult. With the potential increase of such visitors due to an increased presence of partner agencies on site, the group feel that this should be reviewed.

The Public Access group have proposed that the Parking working group consider allowing for 1 hour free parking for Blue Badge holders to facilitate access to Phoenix house for disabled customers. This request has been forwarded to the relevant service managers for consideration by the Corporate Manager for Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement.

The one caveat to the above was access to staff in person during standard office hours for those unaware of our opening hours or in crisis and in need of help.

To that end the group considered the provision of an intercom at the front of the building that could enable contact with a member of staff to assess need and either make an appointment for a mutually convenient time/date or source a member of staff to assist the customer who is in urgent need.

The group felt that the provision of an intercom solution would be the best way forward. If this could be provided the solution would meet the needs of customers as had been expressed to them. They felt that this then negated the need for a survey. The group agreed that this would only need to be accessible Mon-Fri between 09:00 and 17:00 to cover those periods when the building was closed to the public, e.g. afternoons and Wednesdays.

The group will therefore be requesting that the Community PDG make a recommendation to Cabinet that authorisation is sought for the installation of a handset to be placed at the front of the building which is accessible.

The group agreed that on the completion of this report and decision from Cabinet that the working group would disband. An analysis of use of any intercom would be done six months after installation and that further concerns about access to services for the vulnerable would be done via the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group which is made up of a number of members and officers from different services.

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Report for: Community PDG

Date of Meeting:	26 March 2024
Subject:	Health & Safety Policy
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jane Lock, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Working Environment
Responsible Officer:	James Hamblin, Operations Manager Human Resources
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	N/A
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Health & Safety Policy

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To advise Members that, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Works Act 1974, the Council’s Health and Safety at Work Policy has been reviewed by the Health and Safety Committee.

Recommendation(s):

That the Community PDG approves the revised Health & Safety Policy and recommend it for approval to Cabinet.

Section 2 – Report

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 The Health & Safety Policy has been approved by the Health & Safety Committee on 24 January 2024, as well as, the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JNCC) on 25 January 2025.
- 2.0 Future Actions
- 2.1 In accordance with the Health and Safety at Works Act 1974, the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations, Mid Devon District Council will continue to review the Health and Safety Policy on an annual basis. The policy will return to the Community PDG in three year cycles.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 That the Community PDG approves the revised Health & Safety Policy and recommend it for approval to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

Failure to meet the Council's obligations could lead to serious financial implications. The maximum penalties for failing to discharge its duties are unlimited. In addition, litigation costs could be imposed through any civil action.

Legal Implications

Failing to comply with health and safety legislation and regulations could result in the Council being issued with Improvement/Prohibition Notices and/or prosecution. The Council would also be at risk of potential civil litigation.

Risk Assessment

Ensuring the Council has robust health and safety policies and procedures, which are proactively monitored, will ensure the health and safety of employees and those who are affected by its actions and also reduce the potential risk of legal challenges and civil litigation.

Impact on Climate Change

There are no implications regarding climate change.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The policy covers all employees across the organisation and aims to treat everyone fairly regardless of protected characteristic. It seeks to ensure that there are no barriers to anyone accessing and making use of the policy and related procedures. The policy as a whole seeks to advance equality of opportunity for and between different protected groups. The organisation has a range of other policies, projects and actions to help bring people together, e.g. Equality Training, Dignity at Work.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Health and safety impacts across all aspects of the corporate plan as there is an obligation on the Council to ensure that its activities do not adversely affect the health and safety of employees, members of the public, contractors and others with whom we interact.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 12 Mar 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director
Date: 12 Mar 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 05 March 2024

Cabinet member notified: (yes/no)

Report: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Yes/No)

Appendix: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (Yes/No)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: [details of author of the report]
Email:
Telephone:

Background papers:

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Health & Safety Policy

Version Control

Title: Mid Devon District Council Health and Safety Policy

Purpose: Health and Safety

Owner: Stephen Walford, Chief Executive

Date: January 2024

Version Number: v4.2

Status: Draft

Review Frequency: Every three years and annually by the H&S committee

Next review date: January 2027

Consultation

This document obtained the following approvals:

Who	Date	Version Approved
Leadership Team		4.2
JNCC		4.2
H&S Committee		4.2
Community PDG		4.2
Cabinet		4.2

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Scope
3. General Statement of the Policy
4. Organisation
5. Arrangements
6. Monitoring
7. Emergency Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974) to prepare, implement and revise as necessary a health and safety policy. MDDC's Health and Safety Policy sets out how the Council will discharge its duties in relation to the management of occupational health, safety and wellbeing of all staff.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Policy sets out the arrangements for management of health and safety at MDDC. This policy statement has been agreed by the Leadership Team, Joint Negotiation Committee (JNCC), Health and Safety Committee, Community PDG and Cabinet.

3. General Statement of the Policy

- 3.1 MDDC is committed to providing an environment where the health, safety and welfare of all staff, contractors and visitors are maintained. MDDC commits to keeping up to date with safety legislation and best practice in all areas of health, safety and welfare and will review arrangements, with the aim to drive towards continuous improvement. We recognise that the best performing management systems have good arrangements for employee engagement and will consult with employees and/or their representatives on health and safety issues to ensure that they are able to raise and resolve, as far as is reasonably practicable, such issues with senior management.
- 3.2 MDDC will comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act (1974) and other statutory provisions.
- 3.3 MDDC will provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work and will provide appropriate training, information, instruction and supervision for staff, contractors and visitors.
- 3.4 MDDC will make arrangements for the provision of an occupational health service appropriate for the risks faced by employees and to provide them with services to promote health and wellbeing.

3.5 MDDC will discharge its duty of care to any person who may be affected by the work of the Council. It will ensure that there are appropriate measures to control risk to the health and safety of the employees, contractors, visitors and members of the public and that these are acted upon.

3.6 MDDC will ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place for dealing with incidents such as fire or medical emergencies.

3.7 MDDC will encourage a positive health and safety culture through securing the commitment and involvement of all employees and those we work with through effective consultation and communication.

4. Organisation

4.1 Elected members:

4.1.1 Will ensure that there is suitable organisational structure and adequate resources to implement this policy and to operate effective risk control systems.

4.2 The Chief Executive:

4.2.1 Will delegate implementation of the policy through the line management structure.

4.2.2 Shall make arrangements for the provision of competent advice on matters of health and safety policy, guidance and monitoring.

4.2.3 Will delegate, with the assistance of competent advice, the preparation of a Health and Safety Strategy that will include key safety performance indicators.

4.2.4 Will ensure that the attention of Councillors is drawn to information regarding health, safety and welfare where this has a bearing on their decisions.

4.3 Individuals

4.3.1 It is the responsibility of Council employees, visitors and contractors to ensure that their activities or behaviour do not knowingly create hazards for themselves or others. Failure to comply with the requirements of any part of the Health and Safety Policy is a disciplinary matter.

4.3.2 In particular they will be required to:

- take reasonable care for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work;
- cooperate with management to enable the employer to carry out their legal duties or any requirements as may be imposed;

- not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse any item provided in the interest of health and safety;
- bring any deficiencies in health and safety arrangements to the attention of their employer;
- report all accidents, incidents and near-misses through the Council's accident reporting system and additionally ensure that their line management are aware of any such events.

4.4 Managers and Supervisors

4.4.1 In addition to the responsibilities of Individuals, managers and supervisors will:

- foster safety awareness by personal interest and example and encourage a 'Safe Working' ethos and actively work towards a positive safety culture;
- supervise the implementation of any safety policies or procedures where responsibility has been delegated through the line management structure;
- ensure their staff understand the Council's Health and Safety Policy and that they comply with the associated rules relating to their work;
- ensure that all their staff are competent and trained to do their work and have sufficient information, instruction and training to be fully aware of the hazards and risks associated with their work;
- ensure that the appropriate risk assessments for their work activities are prepared and reviewed as necessary;
- ensure that safety practices and procedures are observed and that suitable measures and protective equipment is worn or used where appropriate;
- ensure that deficiencies found during inspections, reviews and audits are corrected, reviewed, repaired or replaced;
- continually develop and monitor safety practices and procedures;
- consult with their employees on all matters relating to health and safety and be responsible for bringing H&S information to their attention;
- set meaningful health and safety objectives for themselves and their team members through the annual appraisal process.

4.5 Senior Management

4.5.1 Senior Managers and Directors will be fully aware of the general duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and will ensure that in all functions under their control the Council's Health and Safety Policy is effectively implemented.

4.5.2 In addition to the responsibilities of managers and supervisors they will:

- where appropriate, review reports of accidents, incidents and near misses, and ensure corrective action has been taken to prevent or reduce the probability of reoccurrence;

- Ensure that, in consultation with HR, sufficient personnel are nominated for safety roles within their area. These include First Aiders, and Service Area Health and Safety advisors.

5. Arrangements

5.1 Risk Assessments

5.1.1 MDDC will ensure risks are assessed across all activities of the Council. The Chief Executive will delegate responsibility for the completion of risk assessments through the line management structure.

5.2 Consultation with employees

5.2.1 MDDC recognises Unison as the union that represents employees for consultation on Health and Safety under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 (as amended) and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 (as amended).

5.2.2 MDDC will consult with employees' routinely on health and safety matters as they arise and formally at the review of this policy

5.3 Training

5.3.1 MDDC will ensure there are Health and Safety inductions for all staff and contractors and will provide appropriate health and safety training.

5.3.2 MDDC will support training provision through HR. Training records will be maintained by HR and reviewed by the Health and Safety Officer and internal audit.

6. Monitoring

6.1 The Council, will through the Corporate Health and Safety Officer:

6.1.1 Carry out regular workplace inspection.

6.1.2 Investigate any accidents or reports of ill health.

6.1.3 Regularly review policies and procedures whenever necessary.

7. Emergency procedures – fire and evacuation

7.1 Operational managers, with responsibility for the buildings they are operating will ensure that:

7.1.1 There are emergency plans in place to deal with any potential emergency.

7.1.2 Emergency evacuation procedures are developed and implemented.

7.1.3 All fire safety checks are completed in accordance with the fire risk assessment.

7.1.4 Emergency evacuation procedures are tested from time to time.

Report for: Community PDG

Date of Meeting:	26 March 2024
Subject:	Single Equality Scheme
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jane Lock, Cabinet Member for Working Environment
Responsible Officer:	Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Performance and Waste Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Single Equality Scheme 2024 Appendix 2: Equality Action Plan Report 2023/24

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To provide Members with an update on action taken to help meet the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act (2010).

Recommendation(s):

- 1. That Members recommend to Cabinet that they approve the Single Equality Scheme together with the Equality Objectives for 2024/25.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** The Equality Act (2010) replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with the aim of simplifying the law and removing inconsistencies. The Act places a requirement on public bodies to demonstrate compliance with each part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

- 1.2 Under the Equality Act 2010 local authorities have a duty to have 'due regard' to the following:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 1.3 Underpinning the General Duties are Specific Duties which require public authorities to:
- Publish information that demonstrates how the authority is meeting the General Duty (updating this at least annually).
 - Publish one or more specific and measurable objectives to achieve the General Duty (updating these at least every four years).
 - Publish the information and objectives in an accessible way, so that the public can see for themselves how the authority is performing.
- 1.4 'Information' includes that relating to the protected characteristics of employees and other people affected by policies and practices:
- Workforce profiles (this can include data about recruitment, training, promotion, flexible working, maternity returners, grievance/issues, dismissal, leavers, service, pay, satisfaction, Members). Only applies where the organisation has more than 150 employees.
 - Service user/community profiles (this can include information about outcomes such as health, safety and wellbeing, achievement such as skills and education, access to services, satisfaction, complaints, feedback, demographics).
- 1.5 Case law has clarified that considerations of equality should not only be placed at the centre of policy development but that bodies subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty must apply this duty to the carrying out of any functions of a public body not just statutory functions.
- 1.6 Local authorities also have specific duties under the Act to publish Equality Information annually and 'Equality Objectives' at least every four years. All such information is either included in this report or signposted to. The council's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpages](#) were updated in 2023/24 to better promote this information. There is also a new webpage which lists all the [Equality Impact Assessments](#) the Council has completed (since September 2023) that are in the public domain.
- 1.7 The Single Equality Scheme has been reviewed and updated by officers (Appendix 1). This is a detailed policy document which sets out the council's approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. This document has been revised and updated for 2024/25.

- 1.8 The Council is a member of the [Devon Joint Declaration for Equality](#). The declaration demonstrates our commitment to the achievement of equality and fairness for all people in the county and our district. Through it, the Council also recognises the importance and benefits of an equal society and that the Council will behave in ways that reflect an equal society.
- 1.9 The Council wants to understand the needs and views of our residents and people working in our district. We have a dedicated [web page](#) to access all our consultations and welcome residents to participate. The public and interested stakeholders are encouraged to respond to consultations via the "[Let's Talk Mid Devon](#)" portal.
- 1.10 Whilst the Council aims to provide high-quality services to all who live or work in the Mid Devon area, we recognise people may wish to complain, or pay a compliment to our officers or give us suggestions on how we could improve a service. Full details for providing feedback are available on our [website](#) using a number of different mediums.

2.0 Equality Objectives

- 2.1 In 2023/24, the council had five Equality Objectives, these were:
1. Meeting the needs of an aging population
 2. Overcoming the problems faced by vulnerable individuals caused by rural isolation
 3. Overcoming the effects of multiple disadvantage in families with complex needs
 4. To continue to concentrate on mental health issues within Mid Devon District Council and the wider community
 5. Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon (Corporate Plan aim).
- 2.2 Progress to meet the Equality Objectives in 2023/24 is detailed in the Equality Action Plan Report at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 A change to our approach to Equality Objectives from 2024/25 is proposed to make them more specific and measurable whilst retaining the ambitious outcomes we wish to deliver.
- 2.4 The Equality Objectives for 2024/25 are arranged by six themes, and proposed measurement is provided in parentheses. They have been discussed by the EDI Group.
- 1. Meeting the needs of an aging population.**
- Implement the Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document (narrative update)
 - Provide housing adaptations in MDH housing stock (Number per year)

- Provide adaptations for adults in private sector housing through grant awards (Number per year)
- Increase our understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to Know You” project (% of residents with data captured)

2. Overcoming the problems faced by vulnerable individuals caused by rural isolation.

- The Council, and partners, effectively signpost individuals to relevant information e.g. neighbourhood officers signpost vulnerable individuals to support, MDH surgeries (narrative update).
- Implement the Care Leavers Council Tax Discount Policy (household uptake)
- Carry out MDH Neighbourhood roadshows, “Neighbourhood Matters” based in communities where tenant satisfaction is low (Number of events/ attendees)

3. Overcoming the effects of multiple disadvantage in families and individuals with complex needs.

- As a partner of The Community Safety Partnership (CSP), practitioners within the Council support to transition from being Trauma Aware to Trauma Informed (CSP Annual report)
- Tackling damp and mould in council housing stock (% of all homes have received damp and mould relating inspections or works in the past 5 years)
- Increase the understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to Know You” project (% of residents with data captured)
- Deliver on Serious Violence Duty through the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 (narrative update)
- Provide adaptations for children in the private housing sector (Number of grants approved)
- Monitor cases dealt with where hoarding, cluttering or cleanliness in the home is an issue (Number of cases)
- Monitor homeless approaches (Number per year)
- Undertake private rented housing inspections and monitor those that related to damp and mould where action is taken (Number per year)

4. To continue to concentrate on mental health issues within MDDC and the wider community.

- Include regular articles contained within internal communications (Number of articles in “The Link”)
- Provide free at the point of use leisure services for adult carers, parent carers and young carers (provisional, uptake)
- Increase our understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to know You” project (% of residents with data captured). Supported by the MDH Vulnerability Policy.
- As a partner of The Community Safety Partnership, practitioners within the Council support to transition from being Trauma Aware to Trauma Informed (CSP Annual report)
- Host financial support drop in sessions supported by Navigate (Number of events/ attendees)

5. Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon

- Monitor and lobby for better digital connectivity (narrative update)

6. Continuous improvement at Mid Devon District Council

- Staff and Councillors undertake training to improve their understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Equality and Diversity course, % completion/ uptake)
- Develop a better understanding of our workforce (% of workforce with equality monitoring data)
- Improve accessibility to council facilities, particularly accessible toilets (projects completed)

2.5 Progress to meet our Equality Objectives will continue to be monitored by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Group and be reported annually to the Community PDG.

3.0 Further Updates on Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion

3.1 We publish information on our website about our [pay policy](#) and [pay supplement policy](#). Within our pay policy we include reporting on the council's gender pay gap, this is included at Table 1 for ease of reference.

	Mean Average Hourly Rate	Median Average Hourly Rate
Male	£15.52	£13.91
Female	£15.37	£14.17
HMRC % Gap	0.97%	-1.87%

Table 1: Mid Devon District Council gender pay gap, as reported in the Pay Policy 2023.

3.2 The mean gender pay gap for the whole economy (according to the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) figures) is 7.7%. Mid Devon District Council's mean gender pay gap is 0.97%, therefore, significantly lower than that for the whole economy.

3.3 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group meets four times per year. This group contains both council officers and elected members. It has had a wide ranging focus over the past 12 months, including:

- Monitoring and compiling the Equality Action Plan Report
- The review of the Single Equality Scheme and the Equality Objectives
- A review of accessibility information
- Review of the Equality Impact Assessment template and guidance

- 3.4 Devon Audit Partnership undertook an internal audit of Equality arrangements at the Council in autumn 2023, with an audit opinion of “Reasonable Assurance”.
- 3.5 Following an internal audit recommendation, the Equality Impact Assessment process was reviewed in 2023/24 with a new template and guidance finalised in January 2024.
- 3.6 In February 2023, Mid Devon District Council signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme to be recognised as a Disability Confident Committed employer.
- 3.7 Through the Changing Places grant fund, the council has been awarded more than £150,000 to improve our existing disabled toilet provision at our leisure centres. Work is being undertaken at Exe Valley and Culm Valley.
- 3.8 Inclusion and Diversity Working Group
- An update from the Inclusion and Diversity Group was reported to Scrutiny committee on 19 February 2024. This Member Working Group is taking forward work relating to Motion 564 relating to greater inclusion in council business by under-represented groups including women.
- 3.9 The Working Group are taking forward a number of recommendations including:
- Training for all Councillors in protected characteristics
 - Training for chairs and vice chairs in inclusive practices
 - In person and online sessions describing the role of being a councillor
 - Undertake a survey into councillor’s views on increasing inclusion and diversity
 - How to build councillor networks (particularly for women or those with caring responsibilities).

Financial Implications

The Single Equality Scheme does not have any financial implications itself beyond those identified in individual service’s equality impact assessments.

Legal Implications

The Single Equality Scheme contributes to the Council’s complying with the Equality Act (2010). Failure to adopt Equality Objectives or to collect relevant data could lead to the Council being in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

Risk Assessment

Approving the Single Equality Scheme and Equality Objectives helps to ensure the council meets its legal responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act (2010).

Impact on Climate Change

No impacts identified for this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The Single Equality Scheme sets out the Council's approach to delivering improved equality outcomes for the district. It details an equality profile for the area and outlines specific objectives the council is undertaking.

The adoption and monitoring of Equality Objectives helps to ensure that the needs of all protected groups are taken into account in service delivery. The reframing of these objectives will ensure that progress being achieved by the Council can be more easily measured and demonstrated.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The Equality Objectives reflect Corporate Plan aims under the Community and Corporate priorities.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

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

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 01 March 2024

Cabinet member notified: (yes/no)

Report: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (No)

Appendix: Exclusion of the press and public from this item of business on the published agenda on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (No)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Dr Steve Carr
Email: scarr@middevon.gov.uk
Telephone: 3CX 4217

Background papers:

Appendix 1: Single Equality Scheme 2024

Mid Devon District Council's Single Equality Scheme sets out how we are working to implement the equality duties that are set out in the Equality Act (2010).

The Equality Act (2010) protects us all from unfair treatment because of a physical or other specific characteristic that is fundamental to our being. It also requires public authorities to observe the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.

Through the Equality Act (2010) legislation, we are all legally protected against discrimination on the basis of:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Disability
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Section 149 of the Act imposes a duty on 'public authorities' and other bodies when exercising public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct.
- Advance equality of opportunity (remove or minimise disadvantage; meet people's needs; take account of disabilities; and encourage participation in public life).
- Foster good relations between people (tackle prejudice and promote understanding).

These three parts of the Duty are complementary but must also be considered separately. The protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership only applies in relation to Work.

Underpinning the General Duties are Specific Duties which require public authorities to:

- Publish information that demonstrates how the authority is meeting the General Duty (updating this at least annually).
- Publish one or more specific and measurable objectives to achieve the General Duty (updating these at least every four years).
- Publish the information and objectives in an accessible way, so that the public can see for themselves how the authority is performing.

'Information' includes that relating to the protected characteristics of employees and other people affected by policies and practices:

- Workforce profiles (this can include data about recruitment, training, promotion, flexible working, maternity returners, grievance/issues, dismissal, leavers, service, pay, satisfaction, Members). Only applies where the organisation has more than 150 employees.
- Service user/community profiles (this can include information about outcomes such as health, safety and wellbeing, achievement such as skills and education, access to services, satisfaction, complaints, feedback, demographics).

1.0. Our Vision

Mid Devon District Council is committed to providing quality services delivered in a fair and equitable way and to promoting good relations between different groups within the

community. We value the positive contribution that all our residents bring to the district, and want to work with individuals and groups to continue to improve our services and to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion.

2.0. How will we achieve this?

In order to achieve our vision we will:

- Seek to understand the needs of our community
- Know our customers and their specific needs
- Involve the community in changes that might affect them
- Develop services that can respond to the requirements of different residents
- Develop an inclusive working environment
- Ensure equality in procurement and commissioning
- Promote equality through working with others
- Recognise the needs of specific equality groups

3.0. Equality Profile – Mid Devon

In order to provide services that meet the needs of people who live, work and study in our region, we must first understand our community. This equality profile aims to provide a brief overview of the people living in our district. This data is drawn from a range of published sources including the 2021 Census, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Public Health England and various Government Departments. Wherever possible, the most recent data has been used.

Mid Devon is a rural district lying equidistant between the north and south coasts. Covering an area of 91,290.07 hectares, Mid Devon has three principle towns – Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton. These towns provide services for surrounding rural communities, Figure 3.1.



Figure 3.1: A map of Mid Devon showing electoral boundaries and major settlements.

3.1. Population

In 2021, the population of Mid Devon was 82,852 (51.2% female and 48.8% male, data derived from the 2021 Census). This is a 6.5% increase since the 2011 Census when the population was 77,750. This increase in population is lower than the average for the South West overall (7.8%). Mid Devon ranked 281st out of 309 local authority areas in England for total population, an increase of two places in a decade.

The population pyramid for Mid Devon for 2021 indicates that the region has an aging population (Figure 3.2).

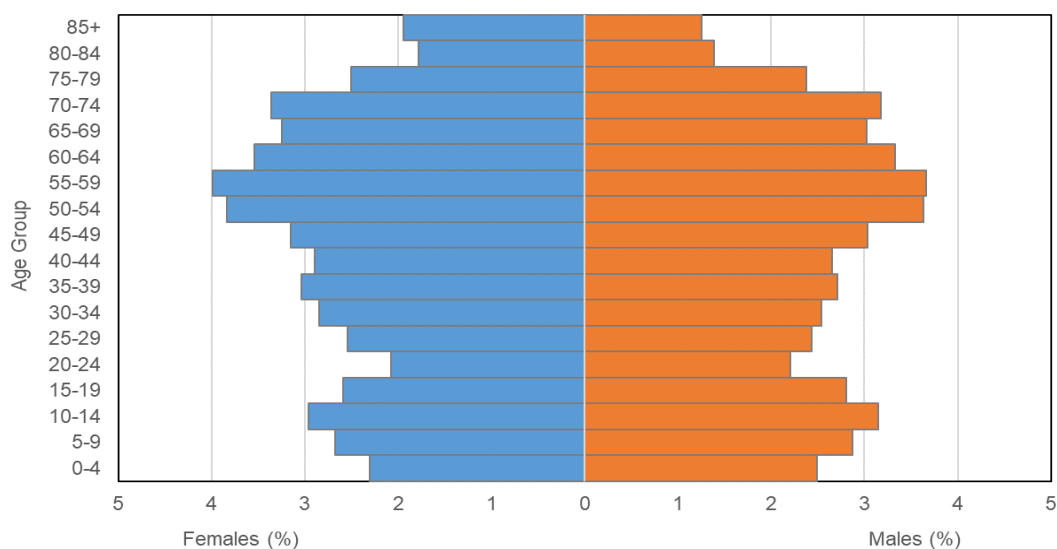


Figure 3.2: Population Pyramid for Mid Devon, 2021. Data from the Office for National Statistics.

The population distribution for Mid Devon shows a number of key differences to the South West (average), Figure 3.3:

- Mid Devon has more people aged 0-14 than the South West
- Mid Devon has fewer people aged 20-34 than the South West
- Mid Devon has slightly more people aged 50-54 than the South West

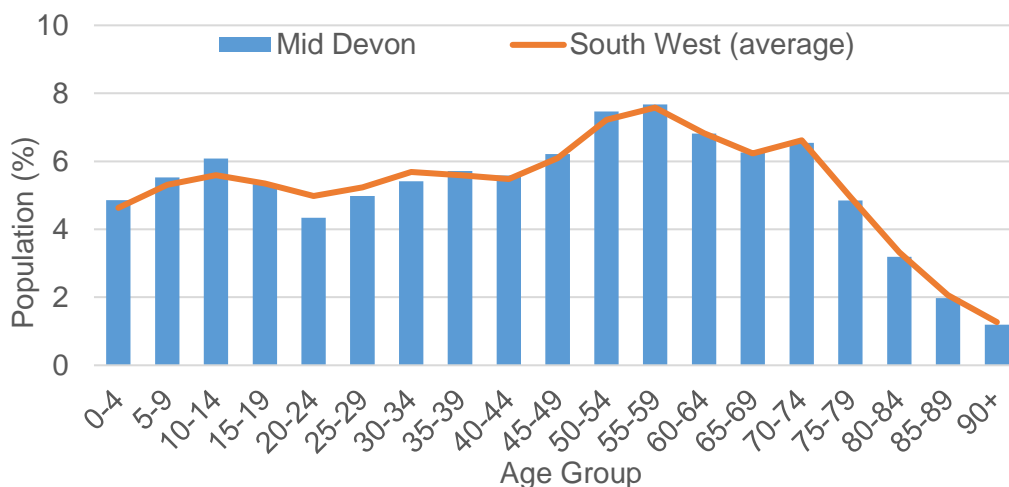


Figure 3.3: Population Distribution by age for Mid Devon and the South West of England, 2021. Data derived from the 2021 Census, LG Inform Plus.

The median age of Mid Devon residents has increased from 44 years old (2011) to 46 years old (2021). The median age in 2021 is higher than the South West (44 years old) and England as a whole (40 years old).

In Mid Devon there has been an increase of 25.4% in people aged 65 years and over in the past ten years (2011 to 2021), Figure 3.4. There has also been an increase of 1.8% in people aged 15 to 64 years old, and an increase of 1.1% in children aged under 15 years. When considering five year age bands, there has been a decrease in populations in six groups most notably those aged 40-44 (-19%), age band 45-49 (-14%), and 0-4 (-11%). The largest increases are for those aged 70-74 (+45%), 75-79 (+39%), and those aged 90 years old and above (+32%).

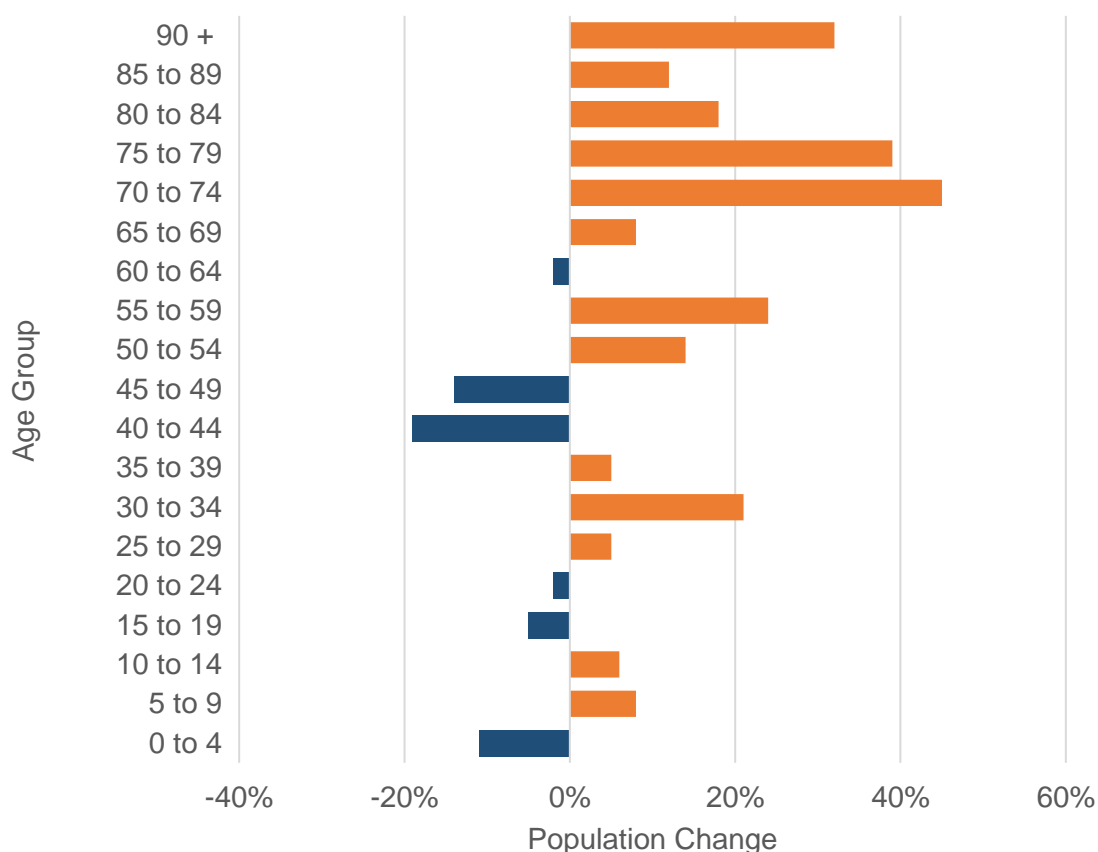


Figure 3.4: Population Change (%) by Age Group in Mid Devon, 2011 to 2021. Data derived from the 2011 and 2021 Census.

Mid Devon has a comparatively low population density. As of 2021, Mid Devon is the fourth least densely populated of the 30 local authority areas in the South West, with an area equivalent to two football pitches per resident.

3.2. Ethnicity

In the 2021 Census, 81,068 (97.8%) residents in Mid Devon identified as White, with 1.1% identifying as Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups, 0.7% as Asian/Asian British, 0.3% selecting 'Other ethnic group', and 0.1% identifying as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, Figure 3.5.

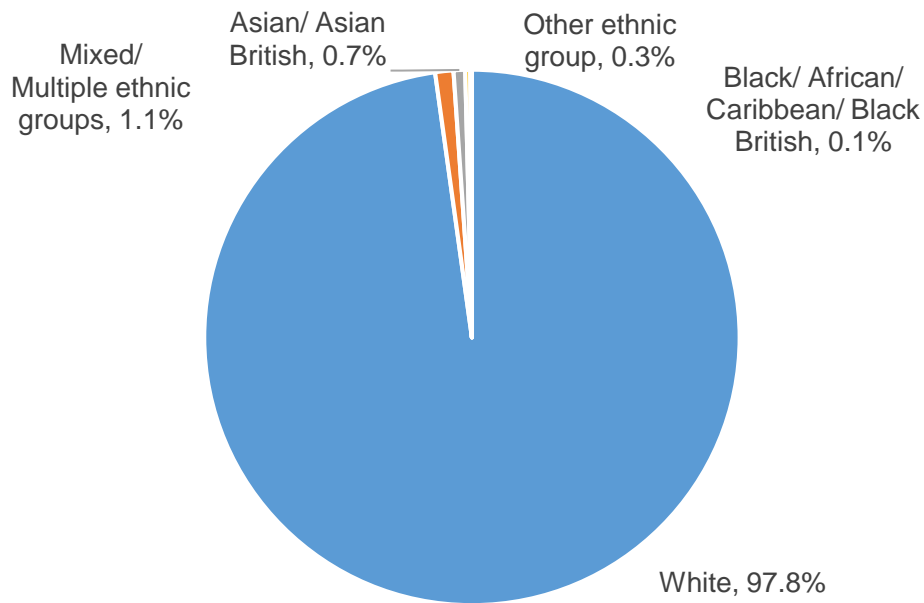


Figure 3.5: The ethnic split of Mid Devon residents in 2021. Data derived from the 2021 Census, LG Inform Plus.

In the 2021 Census, around 75,700 Mid Devon residents said they were born in England. This represented 91.4% of the local population. The figure has risen from just under 71,900 in 2011, which at the time represented 92.4% of Mid Devon’s population.

Wales was the next most represented country of birth, with just under 1,000 Mid Devon residents reporting this country of birth (1.2%). This figure has remained relatively unchanged from 2011.

The number of Mid Devon residents born in Poland rose from just over 650 in 2011 (0.9% of the local population) to just over 850 in 2021 (1.0%).

3.3. Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction, and behaviour. In the Census 2021 a new question on sexual orientation was asked. It was a voluntary question asked of those aged 16 years and over.

The sexual orientation of the residents of Mid Devon is presented in Table 3.6. Mid Devon has a slightly higher proportion of individuals reporting as straight or heterosexual than the South West or England. The total number of people reporting a sexuality other than straight or heterosexual in Mid Devon was 1,674 people.

	Mid Devon	South West	England
Straight or heterosexual	90.18 %	89.84 %	89.37 %
Gay or Lesbian	1.13 %	1.48 %	1.54 %
Bisexual	1.06 %	1.29 %	1.29 %
Pansexual	0.18 %	0.11 %	0.10 %
Asexual	0.06 %	0.06 %	0.06 %

	Mid Devon	South West	England
Queer	0.01 %	0.03 %	0.03 %
All other sexual orientations	0.02 %	0.13 %	0.16 %
Not answered	7.36 %	7.06 %	7.45 %

Table 3.6: Sexual Orientation as recorded in the 2021 Census for Mid Devon, the South West and England. Percentages are calculated from the total usual resident population aged 16 years and over.

3.4 Gender Identity

Gender identity refers to a person's sense of their own gender, whether male, female or another category such as non-binary. This may or may not be the same as their sex registered at birth.

In the Census 2021 a new question on gender identity was asked. It was a voluntary question asked of those aged 16 years and over. The Gender Identity of Mid Devon residents is presented in Table 3.7. Mid Devon has a slightly higher proportion of individuals reporting their gender identity the same as sex registered at birth than the South West or England. The total number of people reporting a gender identity other than the sex registered at birth in Mid Devon was 240 people.

	Mid Devon	South West	England
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	94.15 %	93.99 %	93.47 %
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	0.17 %	0.14 %	0.25 %
Trans woman	0.07 %	0.08 %	0.10 %
Trans man	0.05 %	0.08 %	0.10 %
Non-binary	0.03 %	0.07 %	0.06 %
All other gender identities	0.03 %	0.04 %	0.04 %
Not answered	5.50 %	5.59 %	5.98 %

Table 3.7: Gender Identity as recorded in the 2021 Census for Mid Devon, the South West and England. Percentages are calculated from the total usual resident population aged 16 years and over.

3.5. Disability

The age-standardised proportion of non-disabled residents decreased in Mid Devon between the 2011 and 2021 censuses, but rose across England. Age-standardised proportions enable comparisons between populations over time and across geographies, as they account for differences in the population size and age structure. In Mid Devon, the proportion of non-disabled residents fell from 83.3% in 2011 to 82.4% in 2021, while across England it rose from 80.7% to 82.3%.

The percentage of people who identified as being “disabled and limited a lot” in Mid Devon decreased from 7.1% to 6.6%, while the percentage of people who identified as being “disabled and limited a little” increased from 9.6% to 10.9%.

The Census in 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus pandemic. This may have influenced how many people perceived their health status and activity limitations, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.

3.6. Religion

In the 2021 Census, 45.0% of Mid Devon residents reported having “No religion”, an increase from 28.5% in 2011, Figure 3.6. This question is voluntary and as such there can be varying response rates between different areas or censuses. Across the South West, the percentage of residents who described themselves as having “No religion” increased from 29.3% to 44.1%, while across England the percentage increased from 24.8% to 36.7%.

In 2021, 47.3% of people in Mid Devon described themselves as Christian (62.1% in 2011), while 6.3% did not answer this question (8.4% in 2011).

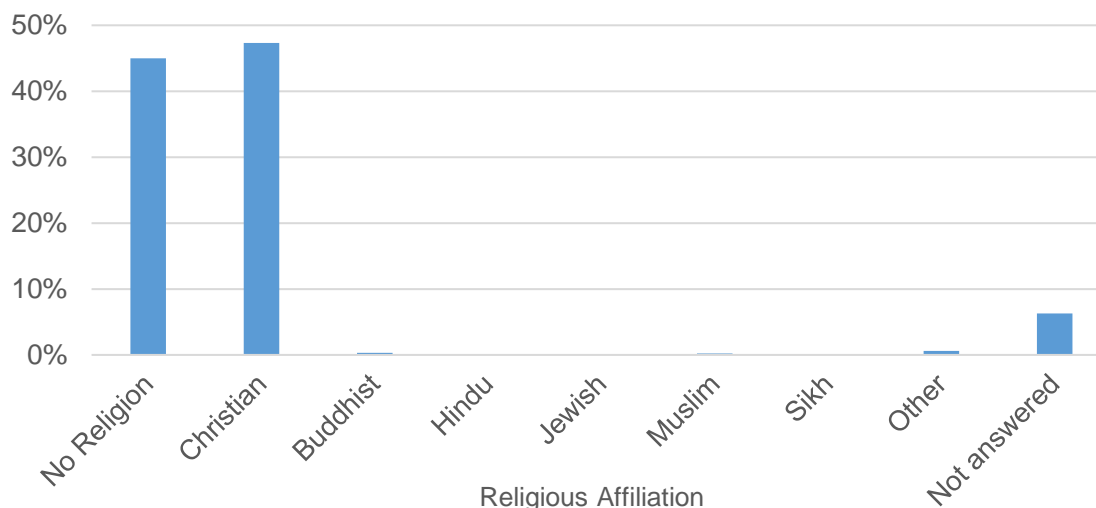


Figure 3.8: Religious Affiliation of residents in Mid Devon, 2021. Data from 2021 Census.

3.7. Economy

Strategically located on South West England’s main transport and communication corridor, Mid Devon is mid-way between Taunton and Exeter. Mid Devon has a number of business parks which are mostly concentrated around the edges of the three main towns and along the M5 corridor at Junctions 27 and 28, and at Willand. These sites have extremely high occupancy rates and units tend to be filled very quickly when one becomes available. New sites are under development and a major new development of up to 5,000 houses are planned for the ‘Culm Garden Village’. Key employment sectors in Mid Devon include Manufacturing (specialist/ light industrial), Agricultural, Food and Drink, and (Green) Tourism.

In Quarter 2 of 2023 (12 months ending), the overall employment rate for those aged 16-64 in Mid Devon was 80.1%. This shows an increase from the previous two reporting periods (76.1% for Q4 2022, and 76.6% for Q1 2023). The employment rate for Mid Devon is higher than the South West (78.9%).

In the 2021 Census, the total number of residents that were “economically active” was 61.1% in 2021, a decrease from 2011 (64.2%), Figure 3.7. In 2021, 1.7% said they were unemployed, compared with 2.4% in 2011. The percentage of retired Mid Devon residents increased from 25.3% to 26.5%.

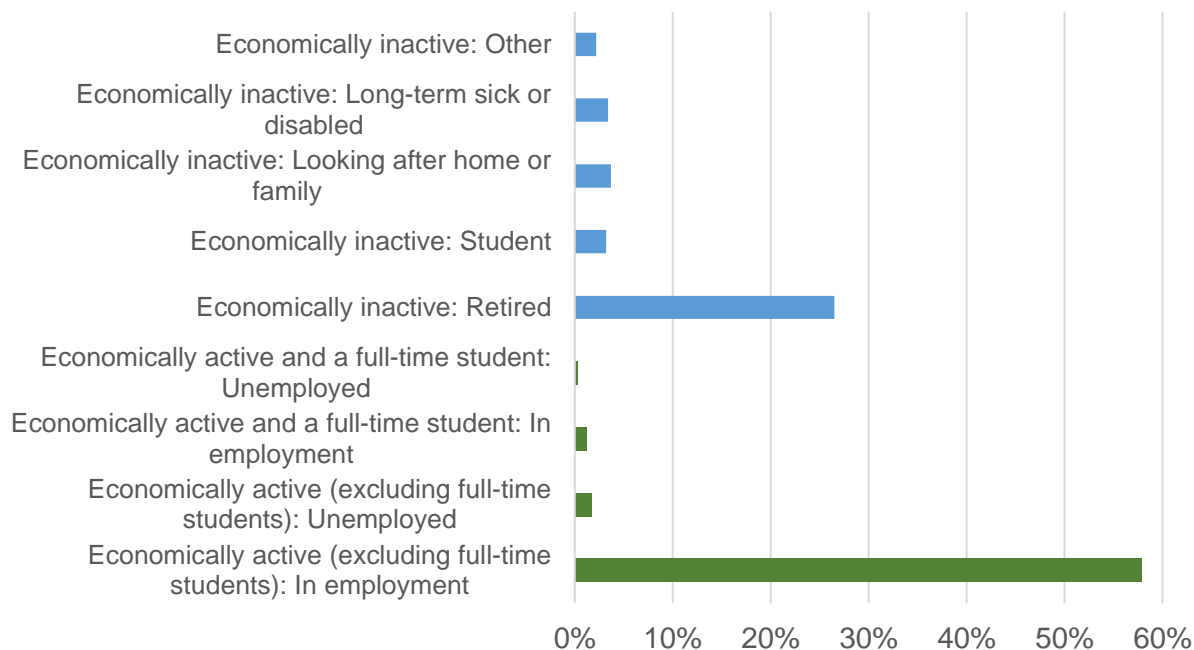


Figure 3.9: Employment status of Mid Devon residents, 2021.

The occupation of Mid Devon residents is shown in Figure 3.8. The most common occupation is classified as “Professional”, with this replacing “skilled trades” as the top profession in the district between 2011 and 2021. There has been the largest increase in the “Managers, directors and senior officials” category (+1,067), with the largest decrease (-533) for “Skilled trades”.

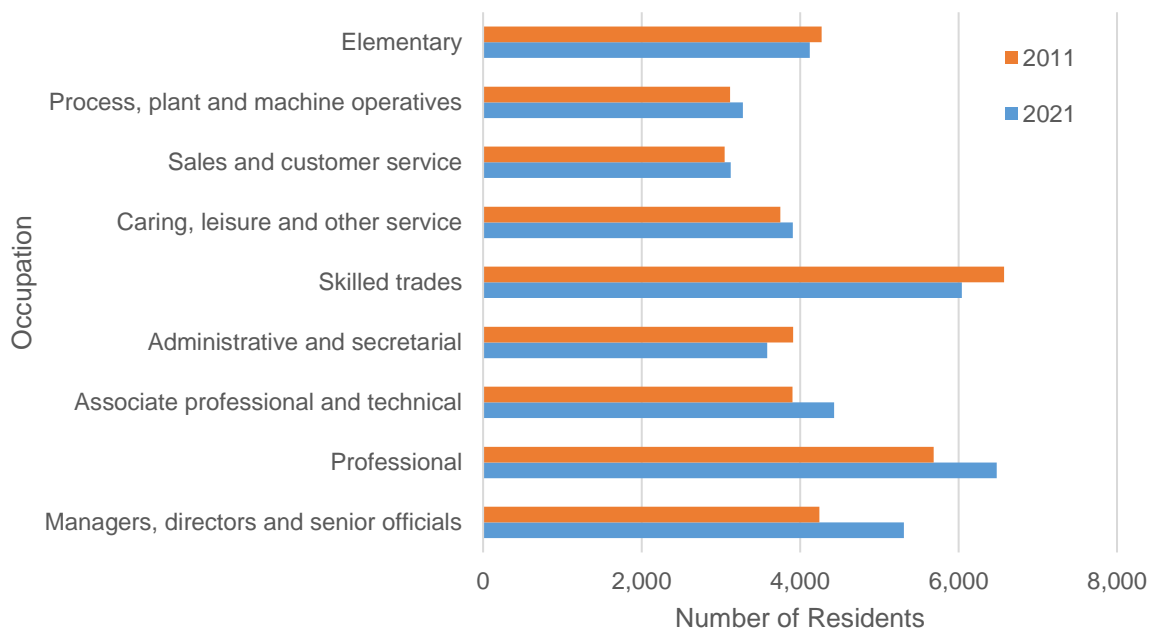


Figure 3.10: Occupations of the residents of Mid Devon, 2011 and 2021. Data from Census 2011 and 2021.

3.8. Housing

According to the 2021 Census, there are 35,633 households in Mid Devon. Mid Devon District Council has a social housing stock of approximately 3,000 homes. Household tenure in Mid Devon is:

- Owned outright (39.6%)
- Owned with a mortgage or a loan (28.0%)
- Rented from private landlord or letting agency (16.0%)
- Rented from Council or equivalent (7.9%)
- Rented from other social landlords (4.7%)
- Rented from other private owners, including from relative or employer (2.5%)
- Shared ownership (1.0%)
- Occupiers living rent free (0.1%)

The largest number of households live in properties owned outright (39.6%). This compares with 42.2% for Devon County and 37.7% for the South West.

The second largest number of households live in properties owned with a mortgage or loan (28.0%). This compares with 26.0% for Devon County and 28.2% for the South West.

In 2021, it was estimated that 13.7% of Mid Devon households were in fuel poverty (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) compared to 12.4% for the South West and 13.4% of households in England.

3.9. Deprivation

When considering deprivation, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a useful tool. IMD is a combined measure of deprivation based on 37 indicators that have been grouped into seven domains. Each domain reflects a different aspect of deprivation experienced by individuals living in an area. Using the IMD produced using 2019 data, Mid Devon is ranked 9th (out of 18) districts in the South West, and 174th out of 317 authorities in England. When calculating the IMD, England is broken down into 32,844 small geographical areas called LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas). Mid Devon has no LSOAs that are within the 10% most deprived in England. Figure 3.9 shows the distribution of Mid Devon LSOAs according to levels of multiple deprivation.

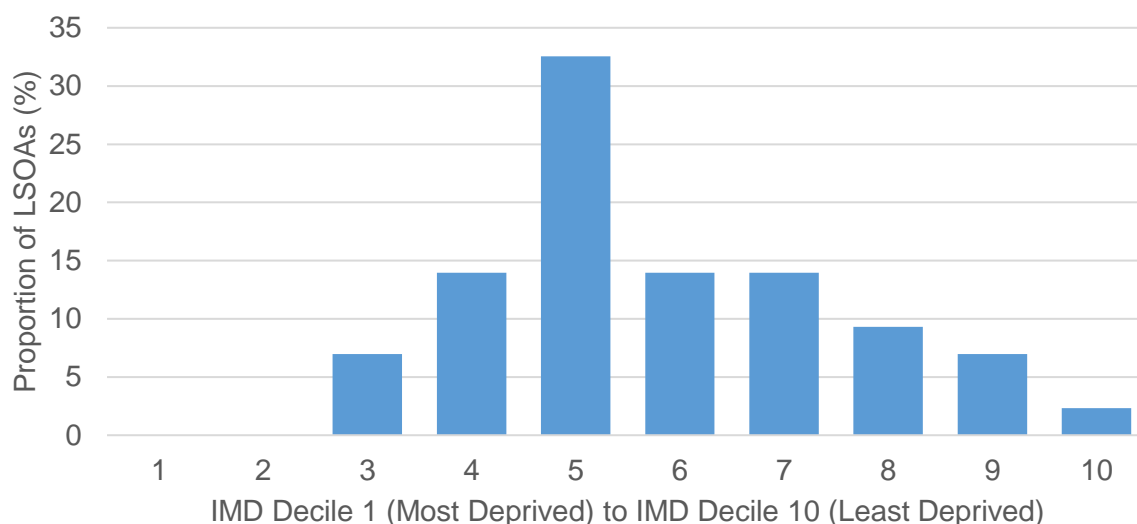


Figure 3.11: Proportion of Mid Devon LSOAs in each IMD decile, data from LG Inform for 2019.

When considering the seven domains which make up the IMD tool, Mid Devon achieves the following rank position in 2019 for each week (where rank 1 is the most deprived district in England, and rank 317 is the least deprived):

- Living Environment (24th)
- Barriers to Housing and Services (68th)
- Education, Skills and Training (147th)
- Employment (186th)
- Income (198th)
- Health and Disability (259th)
- Crime (284th)

This shows that using the IMD tool, the lowest scoring domain for Mid Devon is “Living Environment” which is calculated based on the quality of housing, air quality, and road traffic accidents.

3.10. Education

The Census asks residents about their highest level of educational qualification, Figure 3.10. There has been an increase in residents having higher levels of qualifications in Mid Devon, with the number of residents with a qualification at level 3 or above increasing from 39% (2011) to 49% (2021). The number of residents indicating they have no qualifications has decreased from 23% (2011) to 17% (2021).

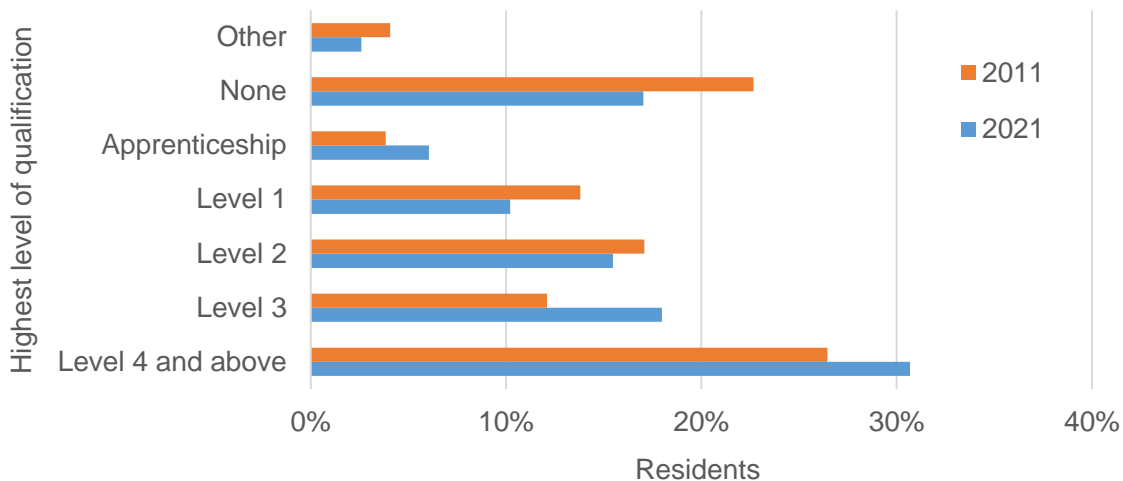


Figure 3.12: Highest level of qualification for residents of Mid Devon for 2011 and 2021, from Census data.

3.11. Access

Being a rural district, a large proportion of residents live in rural areas. This brings challenges for residents to access a variety of services, including employment opportunities. The average travel time to access key services by car in Mid Devon is 15.4 minutes (2019, Department for Transport), compared to 10.3 minutes for England. The average travel time to access key services in Mid Devon has increased from 12.8 minutes in 2014. Journey times are likely to be considerably longer when considering alternative forms of transport.

The need to be digitally connected in rural areas is also high. In Spring 2023, 84% of homes in Mid Devon have superfast broadband available (data from Connected Nations, Ofcom).

3.12. Health

In the 2021 Census, 48.9% of Mid Devon residents described their health as “very good”, increasing from 47.2% in 2011. Those describing their health as “good” fell from 35.5% to 34.5%. These are age-standardised proportions.

The proportion of Mid Devon residents describing their health as “very bad” was 1.0% (similar to 2011), while those describing their health as “bad” remained as 3.4%. This data reflects people’s own opinions in describing their overall health on a five point scale, from very good to very bad.

Census 2021 was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived and rated their health, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.

Life expectancy has increased across the UK over the past 40 years, but has remained fairly stable over the past decade. Life expectancy (at birth) is higher in Mid Devon than the average for the South West and for the UK, Table 3.11. There is some evidence for a slight decline in life expectancies for 2018-20 due to COVID-19 pandemic leading to a greater number of deaths than normal in 2020.

	Female	Male
Mid Devon	84.7 years	80.8 years
South West	84.2 years	80.4 years
UK	82.9 years	79.0 years

Table 3.13: Life Expectancy at Birth, 2018-2020. Data from LG Inform.

Obesity levels are lower in children in Mid Devon than in England when measured at both reception year and in year 6. For the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21, the obesity levels were:

- Reception year: Mid Devon (5.4%), England (9.9%)
- Year 6: Mid Devon (15.4%), England (21.6%)

Obesity levels have decreased in Mid Devon when measured at reception year, from 7.9% (2014/15 and 2015/16) to the current figure (5.4%), despite an increasing national trend.

3.13. Marriage and Civil Partnership

Of Mid Devon residents aged 16 years and over, 30.0% said they had never been married or in a civil partnership in 2021, up from 26.4% in 2011 (Data from the 2011 and 2021 censuses).

In 2021, 50.7% said they were married or in a registered civil partnership, compared with 53.9% in 2011. The percentage of adults in Mid Devon that had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership increased from 9.7% to 10.0%.

4.0. Equality Objectives

Mid Devon District Council has reviewed and refreshed its Equality Objectives for 2024/25 onwards. These are arranged by six themes, and proposed measurement is provided in parentheses.

1. Meeting the needs of an aging population.

- Implement the Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document (narrative update)
- Provide housing adaptations in MDH housing stock (Number per year)
- Provide adaptations for adults in private sector housing through grant awards (Number per year)
- Increase our understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to Know You” project (% of residents with data captured)

2. Overcoming the problems faced by vulnerable individuals caused by rural isolation.

- The Council, and partners, effectively signpost individuals to relevant information e.g. neighbourhood officers signpost vulnerable individuals to support, MDH surgeries (narrative update).
- Implement the Care Leavers Council Tax Discount Policy (household uptake)

- Carry out MDH Neighbourhood roadshows, “Neighbourhood Matters” based in communities where tenant satisfaction is low (Number of events/ attendees)

3. Overcoming the effects of multiple disadvantage in families and individuals with complex needs.

- As a partner of The Community Safety Partnership, practitioners within the Council support to transition from being Trauma Aware to Trauma Informed (CSP Annual report)
- Tackling damp and mould in council housing stock (% of all homes have received damp and mould relating inspections or works in the past 5 years)
- Increase the understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to Know You” project (% of residents with data captured)
- Deliver on Serious Violence Duty through the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 (narrative update)
- Provide adaptations for children in the private housing sector (Number of grants approved)
- Monitor cases dealt with where hoarding, cluttering or cleanliness in the home is an issue (Number of cases)
- Monitor homeless approaches (Number per year)
- Undertake private rented housing inspections and monitor those that related to damp and mould where action is taken (Number per year)

4. To continue to concentrate on mental health issues within MDDC and the wider community.

- Include regular articles contained within internal communications (Number of articles in “The Link”)
- Provide free at the point of use leisure services for adult carers, parent carers and young carers (provisional, uptake)
- Increase our understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to know You” project (% of residents with data captured). Supported by the MDH Vulnerability Policy.
- As a partner of The Community Safety Partnership, practitioners within the Council support to transition from being Trauma Aware to Trauma Informed (CSP Annual report)
- Host financial support drop in sessions supported by Navigate (Number of events/ attendees)

5. Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon

- Monitor and lobby for better digital connectivity (narrative update)

6. Continuous improvement at Mid Devon District Council

- Staff and Councillors undertake training to improve their understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Equality and Diversity course, % completion/ uptake)
- Develop a better understanding of our workforce (% of workforce with equality monitoring data)
- Improve accessibility to council facilities, particularly accessible toilets (projects completed)

5.0. Knowing Our Customers – Equality Monitoring

Mid Devon District Council understands that it is important to know who uses our services. By comparing this with what we know about the community as a whole, we can see if there are any groups who are underrepresented, highlighting where there may be barriers to overcome.

Where customers are prepared to share information regarding equality, data is captured to inform and shape services and customer engagement based on customer needs. For example, the Housing service has been undertaking work to better understand its tenants.

The Mid Devon Housing “Getting to know you project” will survey all tenants to gather a better understanding of our tenants to ensure we can tailor of services to meet specific needs.

Our Complaints and Feedback policy was reviewed in October 2021. It details our commitment to encourage and accept customer feedback of all types. This will enable the identification of recurring issues and support us to learn from any mistakes. It also sets standards for all staff in recording and managing feedback received.

As part of the complaints process within the Council, complainants are asked if they believe they have been discriminated against because of protected characteristics. If yes is selected, they are asked to provide details of their reasoning for this. This process enables the Council to identify any equality issues that may contribute to the complaint or problem. The equality information collected can be used to:

- Review service delivery
- Compare our performance over time
- Assist in the development of services in line with people’s needs
- Monitor the impact of any service changes

Under current legislation, we will publish relevant equality information. This includes:

- An equality profile of the district
- Workforce information

6.0. Involving the Community

As part of our commitment to good consultation, the Communications and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan were reviewed and approved during 2023. The Council is keen to make sure that people from different equality groups take part in consultation, and will try to find the most appropriate way to consult with them according to their needs.

The communications team uses multiple channels to engage and inform our communities to ensure we reach as many people as possible, with the resources available. We acknowledge that engaging with minority groups can be difficult in Mid Devon, particularly due to the limited diversity within the district. However, the communication team will engage with groups on an issues basis and will ensure all our communications are provided in multiple formats and channels. This is through Language Line, by ensuring our website is (WCAG)2 compliant and through our multiple channels – print, online, in person, social media, sign up notification systems and through our many stakeholders.

Mid Devon District Council will:

- Work with groups representing the interests of people from different equality groups to get feedback on proposed service changes particularly relevant to them
- Develop and support forms of consultation that are appropriate to the communication needs of different groups within the community
- Monitor and assess the consultation methods used and where necessary adapt them to meet the needs of different participations
- Publish the results of these consultations and feed them back into our decision-making processes in an open and responsible way

Customer feedback

Mid Devon District Council positively welcomes feedback. We want to ensure residents' views, whether positive or negative, are noted and their concerns are addressed. We are aware that the Council's formal feedback process may be inaccessible to those sections of the community who have difficulties in accessing services. The Council encourages helper organisations to act as advocates for a complainant if necessary.

Mid Devon Housing

Mid Devon Housing (MDH) is committed to listening to residents, and offers a wide range of opportunities for tenants to have their say using different communication methods and at a level that suits them.

MDH wants residents to be at the heart of everything they do, making sure they are involved in the policy and decision-making processes. MDH offer a wide range of opportunities for tenants to have your say, scrutinise performance, comment on service improvements, and any proposals that may affect them. Opportunities include:

- Social Media - Like and follow MDH Facebook and Twitter pages to keep up to date with housing news.
- Consultations - Involvement in any future changes that may have an impact on a tenant's home or neighbourhood.
- Website – MDH signpost to relevant pages on our website using social media platforms.
- Neighbourhood Walkabouts - Meet with MDH housing officers twice yearly and join them on an estate walkabout.
- Annual Report - Every year, MDH produce and publish a report which reflects on their performance and achievements.
- Communal Inspections - Conducted on a monthly basis to ensure that areas are clean, safe and free from potential fire hazards.
- Champions - The champion roles provide tenants with the opportunity to drive service changes, from personal experiences or from their desire to promote positive service development.
- Opportunities to Scrutinise Performance - Residents would have an opportunity to undergo training in order to effectively scrutinise performance and make recommendations for improvements to the service.
- Focus Groups - This is an opportunity for residents to review specific policies and topics. MDH hold focus groups with residents, when there is a topic or common theme identified, MDH will gather tenant feedback, develop an idea with them and make changes.
- TPAS - MDH are a member of [TPAS](#). This allows tenants to join and take advantage of free support and training to help MDH continuously improve the housing service.

7.0. Developing responsive services

A primary factor in making a service accessible is providing information and advice in a usable and convenient format.

We seek to ensure that all users:

- Know about the relevant services they might need
- Are given support where necessary e.g. with completing forms
- Are confident about using and contacting a service and, if necessary, complaining about it

We will do this by:

- Communicating clearly both internally and externally
- Providing information in plain English
- Making services as internet accessible as possible
- Ensuring that buildings that are open to the public, including leisure and community facilities, can be accessed and used by all residents
- Making sure that our employees are trained and supported to deliver the highest possible levels of customer service in line with this policy

Accessibility

Mid Devon District Council will endeavour to make online services compliant with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Website(s) or mobile app(s) will be made accessible by making them 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust'.

Changing services and policies

Mid Devon District Council has a responsibility to assess the likely impact on residents and employees of policies or services it is proposing to change or introduce before they are adopted. This is to make sure that any changes do not disproportionately affect any particular group, and any adverse impacts can be reduced as much as possible. Policies, in particular, are frequently adapted or replaced to reflect changes in the legal, social and political environment. Our objective is to build equality and diversity into the policy making process and to make that process clear, open and inclusive.

The Council undertakes detailed Equality Impact Assessments on those changes most likely to impact on the wellbeing of certain individuals or groups. The impact assessment process asks how the service or policy affects the different groups in the community. Each Equality Impact Assessment includes an action plan for describing what actions can be taken to mitigate any negative impacts identified. The template includes the consideration of rurality which is identified as a specific issue in Mid Devon.

In 2023, a review of our Equality Impact Assessment process was completed to ensure it meets current best practice.

8.0. Developing an inclusive working environment

The Council considers equality and diversity in all aspects of employment, from advertising vacancies, recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, training and personal development, to reasons for ending employment.

We will promote equality in recruitment by:

- Advertising jobs as widely as possible (i.e. online)

- Providing job details and accepting job applications in alternative formats on request as appropriate to the needs of the applicant
- Monitoring recruitment processes and taking action as a result of the findings
- Acknowledging that recruitment and selection decisions should be based upon objective, measurable and reasonable selection criteria
- Asking only for the skills and qualities actually needed to do the job
- Commitment to equality in employment and in service delivery will be reinforced in staff induction programmes for new staff
- Training managers on how to recruit in a non-discriminatory way, making sure that all job applicants, whether redeployment candidates, existing employees or people who do not currently work for the District Council, demonstrate that they are qualified, motivated and competent to do the job.

We will promote equality in disciplinary procedures by:

- Regularly reviewing our disciplinary and grievance procedures to ensure an appropriate mechanism is in place to deal with bullying and harassment at work

We will promote equality in pay and conditions by:

- Using a pay structure that makes sure employees are treated fairly and equitably.

We publish information on our website about our pay policy and gender pay gap.

We will promote equality in training and development by:

- Providing training programmes for staff to raise awareness of equality issues and assist them in applying equality principles to their role within the Council
- Recognising and supporting the potential of all employees by offering opportunities for training and personal development
- Monitoring employee development to make sure that training and development opportunities continue to be open to all employees

9.0. Ensuring equality in procurement and commissioning

Mid Devon District Council is a major purchaser of services. Every year we spend over £6 million with businesses so that we can deliver our services. We recognise that our spending power gives us the chance to influence how others work and to promote equality. We will:

- Require any company or business that wishes to be one of our contractors or suppliers to demonstrate appropriate consideration in their policies on equality in relation to employment and service delivery
- Seek to encourage any company, business or individual wishing to provide goods or services to Mid Devon District Council, to contribute to our policy by implementing fair practices in employment and training
- Review our own policies and practices and where necessary make changes to them to ensure they do not discriminate or place unfair requirements on small businesses from Mid Devon
- Cease issuing contracts to, purchasing from or commissioning any contractor, business or organisation, where we believe they fail to comply with our values in relation to equality and diversity
- Follow good practice by having a procurement strategy that gives a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination and disadvantage.

10.0. Promoting equality through working with others

The Council recognises that it cannot meet its equality responsibilities without working closely with other public bodies, community groups and individuals. Mid Devon District Council will:

- Use our standing in the area to help shape public opinion to promote understanding between different sections of the community
- Work with other public, private, voluntary and community groups in Mid Devon to ensure that equality and diversity policies and plans similar to our own are adopted and implemented more widely
- Share information, experience and examples of good practice on equality through links with other public, private, voluntary and community organisations in the region
- Promote equality and diversity within partnership working and in our dealings with the media
- Involve people from different equality groups in influencing our work and progress on equality
- Learn from the equality and diversity policies and plans of other local authorities and organisations

11.0. Meeting the needs of specific equality groups

The Council is aware that certain groups within society are particularly vulnerable to discrimination because of a particular protected characteristic (e.g. age, disability, gender, etc.). In order to eliminate discrimination and promote equality we recognise the need to work with representatives who can advocate on behalf of particular equality groups in order to develop services that meet their specific requirements. We also recognise that people are individuals, and that although they may be included within a particular equality group, they also have individual needs that may differ from the rest of the group. We are committed to dealing with every resident as an individual with their own particular needs.

12.0. Monitoring

Monitoring Impact and Acting on Results

Mid Devon District Council recognises that monitoring is an important way of assessing the effects of policies in practice and is a vital part of any strategy to promote equality. Monitoring will help us check whether our policies, operations and organisational culture are discriminating against some groups and individuals. This will help us find out why and how discrimination takes place. Where we see that any of our policies or procedures have a negative impact we will investigate the reasons for this and revise them accordingly.

Publishing Results

If Mid Devon District Council is to be successful and keep public confidence, we need not only to promote equality but also to be seen to be doing so. The Council will therefore publish the results of its monitoring, assessment and consultation activities. This includes our Equalities Impact Assessments, an annual report on the Single Equality Scheme, and our pay policy and data on the gender pay gap.

13.0. Concerns

If there are any concerns about any matter regarding equality of opportunity or discrimination is suspected, you are referred to the following related policies:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Dignity at Work and
- Grievance Policy

Appendix 2: Equality Action Plan Report 2023/24

This Action Plan Report details the progress made by the Council in 2023/24 to meet its five equality objectives.

Equality Objective 1: Meeting the needs of an aging population

- The Mid Devon Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document was approved at Cabinet in March 2023 for public consultation. The public consultation ran from Monday 17 July to Friday 25 August 2023. This planning document highlights the growing need for housing for older persons and people with disabilities. It includes sections on accessible and adaptable homes, wheelchair accommodation, and bungalow provision.
- Where a tenant or household member has a disability or a long term illness, the council may provide equipment or adaptations to their home to enable them to remain living in that property. The council will provide minor adaptations for works under £250 where the tenant feels that they may help them or their household member to live more independently. The council requires a referral from the Occupational Therapist for adaptations costing between £250- £1,000.
- Mid Devon Housing (MDH) adapted 155 homes where the value of the work was less than £1k in the period 1 April 2023 until 31 January 2024. MDH carried out works to 59 properties to adapt them in cases where the value of the work was over £1k during the same period.
- In addition, MDHC have approved 77 grants to provide a range of adaptations for adults with disabilities and completed 46 grants helping them to remain safe in their homes in the period 1 April 2023 until 31 January 2024.
- MDH host a community cuppa every other week in Tiverton (weekly from November 2023). It is attended by a number of elderly residents and provides an important opportunity to socialise.
- MDH have prepared a questionnaire (“Getting to Know You”) which will be sent to all tenants. This will ask all tenants to tell MDH about their needs and it includes questions relating to age, disability and communication preferences. This will help MDH to ensure services can be tailored to meet the needs of our tenants. The survey was launched in January 2024 and MDH will collect data in a rolling programme over a period of 24 months.
- Lifeline Alarms can provide peace of mind to people that feel at risk in their own homes. These are provided to tenants and private householders for a fee:
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/mid-devon-housing/help-and-support/lifeline-alarms/>

Equality Objective 2: Overcoming the problems faced by vulnerable individuals caused by rural isolation

- Neighbourhood Officers signpost and refer MDH tenants to help and support where appropriate. MDH provide ad hoc surgeries in specific areas, including some that are designed to combat issues associated with rural isolation. For those that are unable to travel into a larger town, we offer online events alongside in person events which

offers an opportunity for tenants to discuss any concerns, problems, or seek general advice.

- MDH complete bi-annual Neighbourhood Walkabouts. Tenants in rural areas are encouraged to join and can request a door knock from their Neighbourhood Officer on the day.
- Care Leavers Discount Policy: If Care Leavers have been in the care of Devon County Council and are leaving care they may be entitled to a reduction in Council Tax until they reach the age of 25, up to 100% depending on your circumstances (Policy in place from 1 April 2023).

Equality Objective 3: Overcoming the effects of multiple disadvantage in families with complex needs.

- Since October 2021, the council has appointed a Customer Engagement Coordinator who works to support tenants' involvement.
- In 2022, Mid Devon Housing adopted a revised [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard Policy](#). The aim of this policy is to ensure that our tenants live good quality lives in a place where people come together and contribute as one community, where people value decency and dignity and where neighbourhoods are clean, safe and well maintained.
- Neighbourhood Officers work with vulnerable tenants on a daily basis and signpost to further support as necessary. Neighbourhood Teams conduct multi-agency partnership work for example with The Police, Social Services etc. to provide support where necessary.
- MDH Tenancy home checks are also used to identify safeguarding issues.
- The MDH "Getting to Know You" project will help us better understand and support the needs of our tenants. This includes supporting families with complex needs.
- The Council has worked closely with Devon County and partners as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Since the scheme began in March 2022, there have been 293 guests through the scheme. The current number of guests being hosted in the district is 93 (February 2023). We have helped guests to move into the private rented sector using the Ukrainian Guest Grant and landlord incentive:
 - 30 grant applications received (22 approved so far) relating to 55 guests in total (families and individuals)
 - 29 applications for the landlord incentive (18 approved so far).
 - Providing the grant and incentive payment has prevented guests potentially presenting to the council as homeless, whilst supporting their stay in the district.
- The MDH Damp and Mould Policy was approved in 2023. The aim of the new policy is to take every reasonable action to identify, remedy and provide advice on damp and mould in Council homes in order to ensure safe, healthy and comfortable environment for our residents, as well as to protect the fabric of our buildings. This policy also ensures that, wherever possible, residents are not adversely affected by the causes of damp and mould and drives forward an agenda of proactive action to tackle/ manage the causes of damp and mould.

- The Council works with partners through the Safer Devon Community Safety Partnership (and the local partnerships) and is committed to becoming more trauma informed in the way that we work, design strategies, and deliver services. Training is being offered to members of the Community Safety Partnership to raise awareness, and individual organisations are promoting trauma informed approaches in specific areas of activity. A good example is the new countywide Serious Violence Strategy, reported to Cabinet in January 2024. The strategy has a trauma informed approach at its core, with one of the cross-cutting objectives being 'Priority 6 - We will work towards trauma, shame and neurodivergence-informed systems'. This strategy is also informed by lived experience.
- MDDC have approved four grants to provide a range of housing adaptations for families with disabled children and completed one grant helping them to remain safe in their homes in the period 1 April 2023 until 31 January 2024. In the same time period, there have been 164 cases (with 2 or more household members) provided with housing advice following approach to MDDC.
- 26 full inspections of private rented homes have been undertaken so far this year with 10 of those having damp and mould resulting in further action being taken.
- A new Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) System is being implemented at MDDC. This will aim to provide a more complete record of our residents and customers so that we can provide even better levels of support. The new CRM system will make it easier for residents and customers to access council services.

Work on the implementation of the new CRM started in January 2023. The portal went live in October 2023 with a small number of processes such as waste, clinical and assisted waste collections. Complaints is in the process of being tested to go live in Spring 2024. We are also looking to implement a solution where contact centre calls, general emails etc. will move to the new platform and council services will be required to access/ manage these through the new platform. The new CRM System will eventually be able to track resident/ customer contact and ensure people are receiving appropriate responses in a timely manner.

Equality Objective 4: To continue to concentrate on mental health issues within MDDC and the wider community.

- Regular articles have been posted in the council staff newsletter (The Link) regarding wellbeing and mental health. Examples from 2023/24 include:
 - My whole self-talking tips from Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England
 - My whole self MOT from MHFA England
 - Articles from Work Right – Working Minds make it routine campaign (Health and Safety Executive)
- December saw the launch of the Mental Health Champions – a rebranding of MDDC's Mental Health First Aiders – supported by a poster campaign.
- Details of organisations who can support mental health are available on the [council's website](#).
- The council's Reasonable Adjustment policy includes mental health impairments (this includes mental health issues). Examples of adjustments that can be made under this policy are – time off for counselling, extra breaks to help cope with fatigue (which can be a symptom of mental illness), additional supervision or mentoring, and allowing an

employee to work in a private room instead of being in an open plan office (could be good for those who suffer with anxiety, etc.).

- The council can flag the account of someone who may be struggling to pay their council tax due to mental health issues so that officers are aware and can treat the individual accordingly.
- Following a successful pilot offering free leisure access to unpaid carers, parent carers and young carers at Mid Devon Leisure Centres in 2022/23, the council is considering introducing this scheme in the near future. The pilot ran at all three MDDC leisure centres (Culm Valley, Exe Valley and Lords Meadow. Unpaid carers had access to all activities, excluding swimming lessons, and in order to access this scheme, all they had to do was show identification that they are an unpaid carer (a 'Carers Passport'). The purpose of this scheme is to enable unpaid carers to exercise freely and boost their own physical and mental wellbeing.
- The MDH "Getting to Know You" project will help us better understand and support the needs of our tenants. This includes supporting families with mental health issues.
- The Neighbourhood Officers responsible for collecting income on behalf of MDH will refer cases to Wiser£money if the tenant discloses that they are experiencing financial difficulty.
- MDH Vulnerability Policy states that MDH has due regard for tenants with mental health issues and will look at ways to support them including making reasonable adjustments in the way we communicate with them. The Policy gives guidance to officers on ways to identify vulnerable tenants with mental health issues and offers a range of procedures to help support the tenant, this can include signposting to other support services.
- MDH works closely with other partners including Devon County Council (DCC) through the Early Help Locality partnership in East and Mid Devon. We are involved at a strategic, as well as a more operational level, and the Neighbourhood Officers work with other agencies to support vulnerable children and families in Teams Around the Family. DCC is moving to a new model of involvement with other agencies and is also looking at implementing family hubs but MDH will continue to work within the partnership, as appropriate.
- Mid Devon District Council is currently updating its Safeguarding Policy, with mental health and vulnerable adults as a major theme.
- The Council has produced an internal guidance document for staff who may be working with clients who threaten suicide. This supports staff to take appropriate action to support the client, details a large number of support organisations, and outlines support for the staff member in terms of their own wellbeing.

Equality Objective 5: Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon (Corporate Plan aim).

- In Spring 2023, 84% of homes in Mid Devon have superfast (at least 30 Mbit/s) broadband available (data from Connected Nations, Ofcom). This compares to 97% for the UK as a whole. As operators focus increasingly on delivering gigabit capable services, any future increase in superfast coverage across the UK are expected to be modest and publically funded.

- Airband is undertaking a programme of work to connect more than 40,000 homes in Devon and Somerset to full fibre broadband by the end of 2024. Updates are provided regularly by Devon County Council through press releases, e.g. [Airband rolls out full fibre broadband to another 1,700 homes and businesses](#).
- MDH organised digital access workshops in Tiverton library in 2023/24. These aimed to help get tenants online, set up an email address, complete online forms, etc. – upskilling tenants and reducing digital exclusion. Tenants are encouraged to go paperless when receiving our annual report and newsletters. The launch of Let's Talk Mid Devon also enables tenants to get more involved online through surveys, forums and polls.

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Report for: COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Date of Meeting: 26 March 2024

Subject: **DEVON PREVENTING SERIOUS VIOLENCE STRATEGY 2024-29**

Cabinet Member: Councillor David Wulff, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure

Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

Exempt: None

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: Annex A – Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

On the 9 January 2024, Cabinet approved the overarching statements of intent within the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and its Impact Assessment together with the overarching governance arrangements under the new Serious Violence Duty. This enabled publication of the Devon-wide strategy to be completed by 31 January 2024 as required. The final published document can be found at <https://saferdevon.co.uk/safetypartner/uploads/2024/02/Serious-Violence-Strategy-v.Final-2024.01.31-for-publishing.pdf> and is also attached in full in Annex A.

At the January meeting, Cabinet further resolved:

That the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and wider governance arrangements is brought back to the Community Policy Development Group and Cabinet in due course to embed the strategy within the Council policy framework to enable delivery.

The purpose of this report is to meet the above resolution and enable the Community PDG to make a forward recommendation for adoption of the strategy. As a new strategy within the policy framework it will require full Council approval to adopt.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the PDG recommends that Cabinet recommends to Council the adoption the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 as attached in Annex A to enable delivery by as appropriate by the Council's Community Safety Partnership (as a specified authority under the Serious Violence Duty).**

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

1.1 The Serious Violence Duty (the SV Duty) was introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and commenced on 31 January 2023.

1.2 The SV Duty requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area.

1.3 The core elements of the SV Duty are:

- To establish a local serious violence Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA)
- To prepare, publish and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence
- To review and revise the strategy as required.

1.4 District Councils and their Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) specifically are named as specified authorities in the duty. There was a legal requirement for a strategy for the area to be published by **31 January 2024**. This requirement is set out in The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022 and was achieved as described in the report summary.

1.5 In common with the other district level CSPs in Devon, the East and Mid Devon CSP is a member of the Safer Devon Partnership (Devon County Council upper tier CSP) who are leading the strategy for Devon. They have worked closely with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to develop the adopted governance framework for delivery of the duty.

2 Governance arrangements

2.1 In Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, a peninsula-wide partnership arrangement already exists to actively tackle serious violence. The Duty will strengthen the region's Serious Violence Prevention Programme (SVPP), mandating regional collaboration via multi-agency delivery. CSPs agreed a

Serious Violence Prevention Concordat which sets out a shared commitment to collaborate, to prevent and reduce serious violence across the Peninsula.

- 2.2 Each of the CSPs have therefore already started to develop a local response to serious violence, informed by the Peninsula Strategic Needs Assessment, local Strategic Needs Assessments and other information provided by CSP partners. More information on this is set out in the CSP Action Plan 2024/25 as a separate item on this PDG agenda. This work will be refined now the Devon Strategy has been finalised.
- 2.3 Looking ahead, delivery and decision-making associated with core elements of the SV Duty will be met through our local collaboration with the upper-tier Safer Devon Partnership CSP this will allow existing partnerships to tailor their response to serious violence to meet local need. This will also enable the CSPs to report back to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in line with their requirements and timetable. The PCC will undertake the administration of official reporting, as per Home Office funding requirements.
- 2.4 Strategic overview and monitoring of the SV Duty at a Peninsula level will be provided by the 'Strategic Serious Violence Prevention Partnership' (Strategic Group). This group will bring together representatives from across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to ensure that the strategic approach is sustainable, and evidence based, and also delivers the outcomes required to meet the needs of the regional community.
- 2.5 The Strategic Group will be chaired by the PCC as designated convener under the SV Duty and serviced by the PCC's Serious Violence Prevention Team, with specialist support from the office's Governance Team as required.
- 2.6 The purpose of the Strategic Group will be:
 - To facilitate and co-ordinate the overall strategic direction of serious violence prevention across the Peninsula; particularly to ensure consistency between the respective Community Safety Partnerships, in such a way that supports sustainability.
 - To provide strategic oversight of the core elements of the SV Duty, and assurance of CSP delivery against the SV Duty.
 - To identify opportunities for collaboration and enable these opportunities as far as possible.
 - To consider and manage strategic risks in relation to delivery of the SV Duty – and emerging gaps and threats.
 - To share best practice, both within and outside of Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly
 - To encourage innovation and identify opportunities for pilots, test and learn projects, and evidence-based practice.
 - To identify and develop opportunities for improvements to data and information sharing across the Peninsula.
 - To align with contiguous Peninsular level portfolios (e.g. the Local Criminal Justice Board)
 - To identify and leverage additional funding opportunities, both regionally and nationally, through joint procurement, grant funding and other avenues.

2.7 In line with the SV Duty, the Strategic Group must have each of the specified authorities represented, in addition to the PCC. The East and Mid Devon CSP will therefore be included in the membership through the CSP chair and there are still discussions needed to identify the appropriate Local Authority representative for the peninsula.

3 Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29

Devon level collaboration and approach

3.1 The Preventing Serious Violence Strategy outlines Safer Devon's framework for preventing and reducing serious violence in Devon. As required under the legislation and statutory guidance, the strategy is grounded in a public health response to violence; recognising that addressing the root causes of violence is crucial for prevention.

3.2 Work has been completed through the SDP to commission the SNA and agree the following core strategy components:

- Overall vision
- Definition of violence
- Priorities and intended impacts for work to prevent violence
- Focus area
- Principles and timeline for a delivery plan

3.3 The above components were agreed at the SDP Executive meeting including all CSPs across Devon on 22 November 2023. Work has now been completed to produce a public-facing strategy publication incorporating these components which met the required publication deadline of 31 January 2024.

Definition of violence

3.4 The strategy follows the SDP agreed definition of violence:

The intentional use of physical, sexual or psychological force or power (including threats of violence, and including coercive and controlling behaviour).

Vision, focus and priorities

3.5 The strategy vision has been defined and has been further refined within the final publication version as:

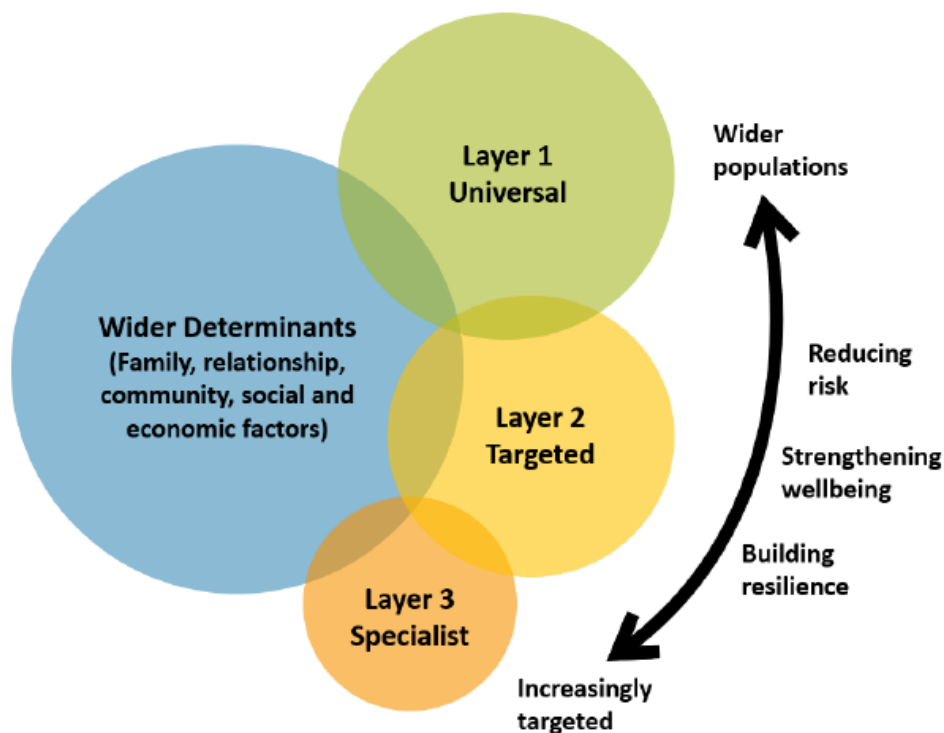
Our vision is for people, families and communities in Devon to thrive, safe from the risk and experience of violence.

3.6 Within this are defined 'focus areas' which are in keeping with the Serious Violence Duty's focus on 'public space youth violence', weapons-related violence and criminal activities where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as drug related activities. The focus areas are also reflective of the findings from the SNA (see 3.9):

- Violence linked to specific contexts and factors, including domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls, weapons related violence, violence linked to drugs and alcohol, violence in the context of exploitation and violence linked to specific places and spaces
 - Peer to peer harms, including physical violence, harmful sexual behaviour and violence taking place online
- 3.7 As required under the SV Duty legislation, the strategy is grounded in a public health approach to violence prevention; recognising that addressing the root causes of violence is crucial for prevention. It seeks to understand the complexity of violence and its causes, of people's lives and needs, and the complexity present in our systems and acknowledges that violence prevention is a long-term ambition requiring sustained preventative focus, system leadership, commitment and investment.
- 3.8 The strategy therefore outlines a 5-year framework for initial action, laying the groundwork for continued long-term focus on prevention.
- 3.9 As set out above, in line with the SV Duty requirements, in 2023 the SDP completed its serious violence SNA to understand what serious violence is happening in Devon and its drivers. This assessment is available in full at <https://saferdevon.co.uk/safetypartner/uploads/2024/02/PDF-SeriousViolence-Needs-Assessment.pdf>
- 3.10 The assessment highlights the unequal occurrence and effects of violence across Devon; a people and place-based approach to prevention will allow all partners holding the SV Duty to identify groups and places which, due to the disproportionate incidence of violence or factors understood to contribute to its occurrence, require a more targeted focus. This will enable delivery and resources to be directed where need is greatest.
- 3.11 In order to adopt a 'prevention first focus' requires a layered approach that stretches from whole populations through to more highly targeted with groups and places experiencing the most immediate risk of violence. This allows for steps to be taken to prevent violence as early as possible and before individual vulnerabilities have emerged, whilst also responding where concerns are developing or accumulating, and where risks have increased.
- 3.12 The diagram below shows an adapted version of the public health model of violence prevention, showing the three stages of prevention built into the Strategy. These three stages or layers can be described as:
- Layer 1: Universal (Primary Prevention)**
- Prevention of vulnerability factors emerging, focus on large groups with no or few vulnerability factors e.g. adolescents. Example: healthy relationships education in schools
- Layer 2: Targeted (Secondary Prevention)**
- Early intervention where vulnerability factors are emerging or accumulating, with focus on reducing risk and harm. More specific groups. Example: whole family recovery support from domestic violence

Layer 3: Specialist (Tertiary Prevention)

- Specialist support where risk is increased or risk of immediate harm. Very targeted groups. Example: work with young people directly experiencing exploitation



Safer Devon: Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 (Public Health Model of Violence Prevention, adapted from Public Health Devon).

- 3.13 Within the above context, the final strategy priorities outline the overarching statements of intent which have been informed in more detail by the SNA. The original six priorities within the draft strategy have been simplified and are now set out across seven areas, separated as core and cross-cutting approaches.

Core Priorities:

Priority 1: Shape a series of preventative responses for young people and adults who, based on their individual needs and experiences, are at greatest risk of involvement in violence, taking account of intersecting needs and the individual ways needs may present.

Priority 2: Strengthen our understanding and response to contextual harms to reduce exploitation and peer group related risks.

Priority 3: Strengthen our early years and early help targeted offer for families where risk and vulnerability factors in relation to violence are present.

Priority 4: Challenge the normalisation of violence, particularly in relation to young people - supporting them to develop healthy and respectful relationships, both intimate partner and peer to peer.

Priority 5: Work towards creating inclusive and supportive education environments where all young people can thrive, with a focus on strengthening their wellbeing, resilience and opportunities.

Cross-cutting priorities

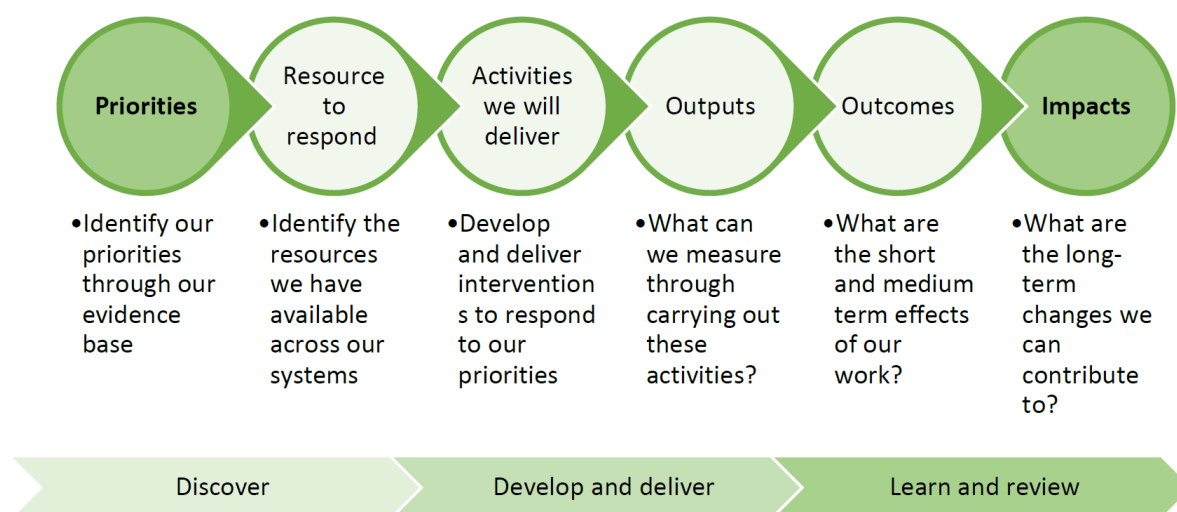
Priority 6: Work towards trauma, shame and neurodivergence-informed systems (see Appendix 1 within the strategy for a definition of these terms).

Priority 7: Strengthen our learning about serious violence, needs and drivers, and what works well as prevention.

4 Next steps

4.1 All CSPs will be working with the SDP to define achievable actions, outputs, outcomes and impacts with the subsequent long-term changes we aim to see in our communities in an overarching strategy delivery plan. This will be developed during 2024 following publication of the Strategy. As such, the strategy influence on CSP action planning and local activity will become more apparent from 2025/26 onwards.

4.2 The steps to achieving the intended impacts of the strategy are explored further in the diagram below:



Safer Devon: Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 (model theory of change)

4.3 Once specific, aligned actions have been identified in the East and Mid Devon CSP then performance will be reported back to the SDP who will formally report to the PCC alongside its Devon-level actions or geography specific shared activity with specific CSPs. Our CSP will continue to deliver work that will support the Devon level strategy and will inform an update of the next iteration of our local CSP Action Plan from April 2024. In overall terms, there are some specific opportunities around a modest level of 2024/25 Home Office funding and in more depth going forward within the resources available.

5 SV Duty funding

- 5.1 The Home Office has provided limited funding for 23/24 and set out an indicative, higher level of support for 24/25 to specified authorities to prepare for and deliver the SV Duty.
- 5.2 As the 'local Policing Body', the PCC receives the funding and is responsible for meeting Home Office reporting and oversight responsibilities to ensure the funding is spent appropriately. A funding formula has determined the geographical split set out in the table below (see 5.5) based on an existing approach developed by the PCC for its SVPP which takes into account the overall population base, demographics (e.g. number of young people) and existing violent crime levels.
- 5.3 This funding associated with the SV Duty will be devolved to each upper-tier Community Safety Partnership (SDP in Devon). The SDP are responsible for ensuring that specified authorities including District CSPs can access this funding to support them to meet the duty with opportunities within this approach of working collaboratively across Devon. The SDP will be required to agree to the terms of a Grant Agreement with the PCC.
- 5.4 Non-labour funding (for interventions) will be allocated by an agreed funding formula; labour funding (for staff to deliver the SV Duty) will be allocated equally between the four upper tier CSPs. Whilst this may be subject to refinement, the Home Office has provided indicative funding levels for 24/25, under a total of £657,300. This will be devolved in accordance with the formula as follows:

Community Safety Partnership	Non-labour funding (split by formula)		Labour funding
Safer Cornwall (including Safer Scilly)	25%	£125,804.25	£38,520
Safer Plymouth	26%	£130,836.42	£38,520
Safer Torbay	19%	£95,611.23	£38,520
Safer Devon	30%	£150,965.00	£38,520

- 5.5 As part of the SDP Executive Board our CSP was involved in agreeing the distribution of the Safer Devon element of the funding. The labour costs will be utilised at SDP level to support the delivery of the Strategic Needs assessment and strategy development.
- 5.6 As part of the work required to be in place by 31 January, alongside the strategy publication, the SDP was required to submit an outline funding delivery plan to the PCC. Consequently, the SDP entered into a time-limited but robust process with CSPs for funding bids to support projects aligned with the strategy priorities which could be stood-up and delivered effectively within 2024/25. Several Devon-level projects were considered alongside some from district CSPs including East and Mid Devon CSP.
- 5.7 The East and Mid Devon CSP submitted two bids, one of which was successful. This will provide an additional £8k towards the funding of a full-time East Devon District Council based dedicated ASB officer post. As such, the funding will enable that role to extend its work across into Mid Devon and target specific localities or ongoing incidents one-day per week within the district working

alongside other agency partners under a refreshed ASB Action Team approach which is part of the wider CSP Action Plan for 24/25.

5.8 There is currently no notice of allocation of Home Office funding after 24/25.

6 Conclusion

6.1 In order to discharge our duties under the SV Duty we are required to agree publish a strategy and governance arrangements that underpin delivery going forward. The Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy as outlined above (and attached in Annex A) has been developed by the SDP including East and Mid Devon CSP as SDP Executive members. The strategy utilises a public health approach over the next five years to address the key areas identified through the SNA.

7 Recommendations

7.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendation is made:

1. That the PDG recommends that Cabinet recommends to Council the adoption the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 as attached in Annex A to enable delivery by as appropriate by the Council's Community Safety Partnership (as a specified authority under the Serious Violence Duty).

Financial Implications

These are set out in Section 4 above.

Legal Implications

These are set out in Section 1 with further information on governance set out in Section 2 above.

Risk Assessment

There is a risk that if the Devon strategy and in particular the overarching statements of intent (Priorities 1-7) are not agreed by CSPs then the published collaborative strategy for Devon cannot be taken forward. Consequently, as a specified authority the Council would not be complying with the legal SV duty and Home Office funding may not be drawn down.

Impact on Climate Change

None directly arising from the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

For consistency, a single EIA was required for the Devon-level Strategy document. The SDP have completed this overarching assessment against the strategy priorities and intended impacts using the Devon County Council (DCC) Impact template which was attached and approved at Cabinet on 9 January 2024.

The overarching vision and aims underpinning the strategy is for residents, families and communities in Devon to thrive, safe from the fear and experience of violence. It sets out to work with our communities to prevent harms as early as possible, address the impacts of harms that have occurred, and work to strengthen people's wellbeing, resilience and opportunities in life.

In achieving the above, the strategy adopts a public-health led methodology which is preventative and targeted as required by legislation. It is therefore intended to provide a framework for actions and interventions that support some of the most vulnerable or at risk persons in society and takes a trauma-informed approach. Consequently, the strategy accords with public sector equality duty and proactively seeks to address needs of people who are disadvantaged or suffer inequality as a result of serious violence.

The DCC impact assessment is much broader than just an equality analysis and covers a level of economic analysis, human rights information and environmental analysis. It also provides an in-depth summary of the strategy stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts. As such, it provides helpful additional contextual information on the strategy as well as setting out how the public sector equality duty has been met. The assessment was supported by district colleagues in Teignbridge and Exeter.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Communities are a priority for the Council and this includes seeking opportunities to address public health issues and disparities to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Mid Devon.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Chief Officer: Simon Newcombe

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

Date: 29 February 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 07 March 2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk.

Telephone: 01884 255255

Background information:

Statutory Guidance on Serious Violence Duty

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty>

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Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29

Foreword

This Preventing Serious Violence Strategy outlines our collective ambition for keeping people, families and communities in Devon safe from the risk and experience of violence.

Our Serious Violence Needs Assessment has demonstrated with stark clarity the prevalence and impacts of serious violence in Devon. It has also highlighted the complexity of violence and the factors that can contribute to its occurrence. This Strategy presents a unique opportunity to respond, placing our communities and their lived experiences of violence at the centre of our work.

At the core of the Strategy is an appreciation of the inherently complex nature of violence and its drivers and of people's needs and experiences, and the importance of public health and human learning systems approaches to our work. This involves addressing the root causes of violence across the life course and developing holistic, flexible and bespoke responses that take account of complexity and are tailored for our communities and local contexts.

Building on our existing work to prevent violence and harm in Devon, we have already made progress towards achieving some key areas of this Strategy. We recognise we are at a much earlier stage of realising our ambitions in relation to other areas and intend for this Strategy to support us in furthering this work, strengthening our learning and evolving our practice as we do so.

This Strategy also presents an opportunity to galvanise leadership and commitment around the prevention of serious violence and encourage a greater focus on this agenda across the work carried out by our partnerships and systems in Devon. This includes seeking opportunities to realign and evolve existing work to focus on the people, places and priorities we have outlined below as forming the foundation of our Strategy.

The ways in which we work, both as partnerships and with our communities, and the approaches we use are as important as the work we carry out. This Strategy includes a commitment to act in alignment with our guiding principles, which are grounded in public health, trauma-informed and human learning systems approaches.

We intend for the collective vision, ambition and approach outlined in our Strategy to form the start of a sustained, long-term focus on preventing serious violence across Devon.

Steve Brown, Director of Public Health, Communities and Prosperity, Devon County Council and Chair of the Safer Devon Partnership

Councillor Laura Wright, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Culture and City Centre Strategy, Exeter City Council

Penny Smith, Interim Chief Nursing Officer, NHS Devon ICB

Councillor Roger Croad, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Equality, Devon County Council

Louise Arscott, Head of Devon and Torbay, Probation Service South West

Councillor Martin Wrigley, Leader of the Council, Teignbridge District Council

Chief Superintendent Jenny Bristow, Devon and Cornwall Police

Councillor Simon Clist, Deputy Leader, Mid Devon District Council

Gerald Taylor, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Tracy Hendren, Interim Chief Executive and Director of Housing, Health and Environment, East Devon District Council

Becky Hopkins, Deputy Director - Head of Children's Social Care, Devon County Council and Chair of the Devon Youth Justice Partnership Board

Councillor Julian Brazil, Leader of the Council, South Hams District Council

Councillor Mandy Ewings, Leader of the Council, West Devon Borough Council

Phil Gilbert, Public Health and Community Safety Manager, Torridge District Council

Darren Hale, Lead Environmental Health Officer, North Devon Council

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Introduction	5
What do we mean by serious violence?.....	5
What serious violence is occurring in Devon?	7
How will we respond and who is involved?	9
Our strategy	12
Our areas of focus: people and places	12
Our underlying themes.....	25
Our guiding principles	26
Appendix 1: Definitions.....	28
References	31

Introduction

This Strategy has been developed in response to the Serious Violence Duty, introduced in 2023, which requires specified authorities in local areas to ‘work together to prevent and reduce serious violence’.¹ It outlines Safer Devon’s framework for preventing and reducing serious violence in Devon.

The Strategy is grounded in a public health approach to violence prevention; recognising that addressing the root causes of violence is crucial for prevention. It appreciates the complexity of violence and its causes, of people’s lives and needs, and the complexity present in our systems and acknowledges that violence prevention is a long-term ambition requiring sustained preventative focus, system leadership, commitment and investment. The Strategy therefore outlines a 5-year framework for initial action, laying the groundwork for continued long-term focus on prevention.

In line with the Duty requirements, we have carried out a Needs Assessment to understand what serious violence is happening in Devon and its drivers. It highlights the disparate occurrence and effects of violence across Devon; a people and place-based approach to prevention will allow us to identify groups and places which, due to the disproportionate incidence of violence or factors understood to contribute to its occurrence, require a more targeted focus. This will give opportunity to direct delivery and resource where need is greatest.

Devon has good foundations in place to support a preventative response to serious violence. We can build on work initiated over recent years by the Safer Devon Partnership, Devon’s District Community Safety Partnerships and our wider partners to build resilience to harms taking place in the home, between peers and in communities. However, we recognise that further work and dedication is required to fulfil our collective ambitions.

This Strategy outlines an overall vision and priorities for our work to prevent violence. An action plan outlining how we will work towards these priorities will ensure the delivery of the Strategy and provide detail about our specific actions and activities as well as their expected impacts on our communities.

Additional to our core delivery work, there will be opportunity to link into and align with activities taking place across the peninsula and in other strategic partnerships across Devon, including the Devon Safeguarding Children’s Partnership and the Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership. Through building on our existing relationships, we can work across these partnerships to consider how violence prevention can be best supported through our local systems.

This Strategy is iterative and will evolve through learning and reflection, as we recognise that our understanding of violence and its drivers, the experiences and strengths of communities, opportunities for prevention and the maturity of our responses will evolve over time.

What do we mean by serious violence?

There is no single accepted definition of serious violence. When explaining what we mean by this term it is important to consider which harms we are referring to, their impacts and the factors that contribute to their occurrence.

¹ The Serious Violence Duty was introduced through the [Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#). The full statutory guidance can be read here: Home Office (2023), [Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance](#).

This Strategy follows the Safer Devon Partnership's agreed definition of violence:

The intentional use of physical, sexual or psychological force or power (including threats of violence and including coercive and controlling behaviour).

Within this, we have defined 'focus areas'. These are in keeping with the Serious Violence Duty's focus on 'public space youth violence', weapons-related violence and criminal activities where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as drug related activities.¹ The focus areas are also reflective of the findings from our Serious Violence Needs Assessment:

- Violence linked to specific contexts and factors, including domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls, weapons related violence, violence linked to drugs and alcohol, violence in the context of exploitation and violence linked to specific places and spaces.
- Peer to peer harms, including physical violence, harmful sexual behaviour and violence taking place online.

Within these focus areas, our attention has been given to:

- Violence in young people (under 25s).
- Adults in the context of the harms they can cause towards young people (for example sexual and criminal exploitation).
- Adults who are more vulnerable to involvement in or victimisation through violence, including adults experiencing multiple disadvantages.

These focus areas have informed the groups and priorities we give attention to in this Strategy, which are discussed further below.

We have drawn on local and national datasets, partner insights, academic findings and lived experience insights from young people living in Devon about their experiences of violence. We have identified a significant number of key findings and also areas where additional exploration is needed to strengthen our understanding. When we refer to our findings about 'serious violence', we are referring to a range of offences that, based on the above criteria, were agreed to be in scope for our Serious Violence Needs Assessment.

Three key data sets are observed within the Needs Assessment which form the evidence base for this Strategy. These are: Police crime data, Youth Justice Service data and Probation data. It is important to note that each agency will include differing offences within the scope of what they consider to be 'serious violence'. A breakdown of offences in scope in relation to each agency can be found within the Appendix of the Needs Assessment.

In relation to Police data, which forms the basis for the vast majority of findings below, offences in scope are as follows; **Homicide, Violence with Injury, Robbery, Arson, Trafficking of Drugs, Possession of Weapons, Rape, Other Sexual Offences and Stalking and Harassment**. Although not an offence in its own right, **domestic abuse related offences** are captured in these figures.²

² In law, there is no specific offence of 'domestic abuse'. It is a general term describing a range of behaviours and can be applied to a number of offences. Crown Prosecution Service (2022), [Domestic Abuse](#). In Devon and Cornwall Police crime data, offences can be flagged as domestic abuse related, for instance an offence of Actual Bodily Harm could be flagged as domestic abuse related.

What serious violence is occurring in Devon?

Our findings show that whilst levels of serious violence taking place in Devon are low compared to national comparators, **serious violence is a growing concern within Devon’s communities with indications of increasing trends in recent years.**³

The following headline findings should be read in conjunction with our Serious Violence Needs Assessment and Executive Summary, which provide more detail including a complete list of caveats associated with the data.

<p>There has been an overall increase in the level of total serious violence crime, by around 12%.</p>	<p>Domestic abuse is consistently associated with serious violence; around a third of serious violence crime was tagged with a domestic abuse flag.</p>	<p>Violence with Injury comprises the majority of serious violence offences.</p>	<p>There are indications that violent crimes being committed may be becoming more severe in nature; ‘most serious’ Violence with Injury offences (e.g., Grievous Bodily Harm) have risen by 33%.⁴</p>
<p>Adults are responsible for the majority of serious violence offences recorded in Devon within Police crime data. Offences carried out by under 18s account for less than 20% of total offences.</p>	<p>Victims and those linked to committing the ‘most serious’ Violence with Injury offences are most likely to be adult males between the ages of 26-55.</p>	<p>Our evidence indicates that a significant cohort of vulnerable adults carry out serious violence as a result of complex needs and drivers, and that adults experiencing multiple disadvantages are vulnerable to being victims of violence and exploitation.</p>	
<p>Provisional Devon Youth Justice data indicates that serious youth violence appears to be increasing.</p>	<p>Substantial overlap is being seen between young people who are victims and those who are carrying out harm.</p>	<p>Qualitative data indicates a normalisation of violence between young people. Exposure to and use of violence online appears commonplace, including threats, physical violence, bullying, pornography and harmful sexual behaviour.</p>	
<p>Violence appears to be a concern for young people in Devon, including concerns about violence taking place between peers and concerns about feeling unsafe in their local areas.</p>	<p>Young people have identified peer pressure, being cool and fitting in as important factors for involvement in violence.</p>	<p>Knife crime is an area that would benefit from further research. Whilst Police crime data does not suggest young people are at risk, there are known limitations with this data and insights from young people and partners have indicated that knife crime may be an area of risk.</p>	

³ Unless stated, all Police crime data for serious violence relates to the period from November 2018 to October 2022.

⁴ ‘Most serious’ serious violence crimes include offence descriptions such as Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH). A full list has been published alongside the Serious Violence Needs Assessment.

<p>Available evidence indicates that drug related serious violence is increasing.</p>	<p>Drug business models, including county lines and other dangerous drug group activities, present risks to both children and adults from violence, exploitation (including child criminal exploitation) and the cuckooing of vulnerable adult drug users.</p>	<p>Child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE) are often interlinked and co-occur with violence.</p> <p>Generally considered to relate to drugs, CCE is an important factor in young people who have carried out serious violence offences. CSE is seen at lower levels in this cohort, however it is likely to be underreported.</p>
<p>The occurrence of serious violence is gendered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of all serious violence victims with a recorded sex, 60% are female and 40% male. Within the 4 years observed, around 26% of all female victims were victimised more than once, compared to 18% of male victims. <p>Women are much more likely than men to experience specific kinds of violence, including sexual violence and domestic abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% of victims of Rape and Other Sexual Offences were female. 76% of victims linked to a domestic abuse related serious violence crime were female. 	<p>The majority of serious violence that females experience is perpetrated by men. Of crimes linked to an offender, 81% of crimes with a female victim were committed by a male.</p> <p>Females are infrequently recorded as committing serious violence offences in crime data, accounting for 17.5% of those identified as committing an offence. Where females carry out serious violence, evidence indicates that they are likely to have a higher prevalence of vulnerabilities.</p>	
<p>Young females are particularly vulnerable to becoming a victim of a sexual offence, with 50% of female victims of Rape and Other Sexual Offences being under 18.</p>	<p>Most male victims of serious violence are within younger cohorts (26-35, followed by under 18s, then 18-25).</p>	<p>Males between 18-45 make up the majority of people committing serious violence offences.</p>

We have identified a number of needs and drivers throughout our Needs Assessment relevant to people’s involvement in serious violence in Devon. Our findings are weighted towards young people, in keeping with the Serious Violence Statutory Guidance; however, they are likely to be relevant to adults too.

The below diagram presents these needs and drivers through an ‘ecological lens’, demonstrating how they are interlinked across four spheres: ‘individual’, ‘relational’, ‘community’ and ‘societal’. We provide further insights about these needs and drivers in our Needs Assessment.

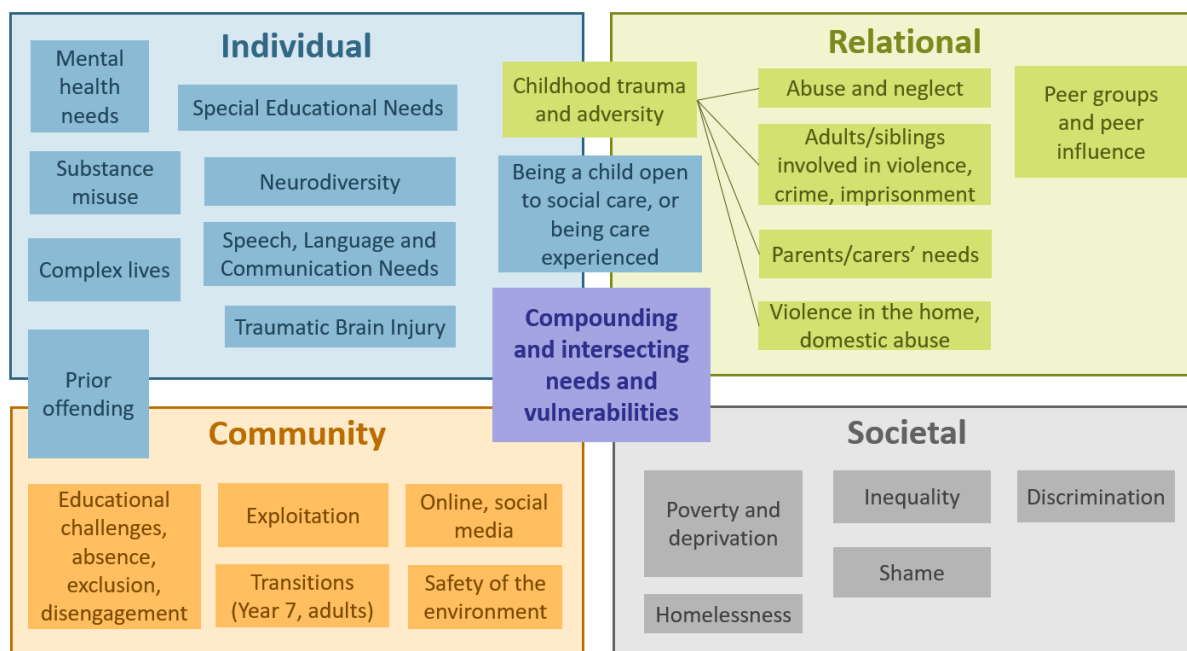


Figure 1: Ecological model of needs and drivers relating to serious violence.

How will we respond and who is involved?

The Serious Violence Duty requires a number of agencies (known as specified authorities) to work together as part of a local response. These are: Local Authorities, the Police, Integrated Care Boards (NHS), Probation services, Youth Justice services and Fire and Rescue services. The Duty also requires relevant authorities (Educational institutions, Prisons and the Children and Young People’s Secure Estate) to be consulted with and involved in partnership arrangements for the Duty.

A separate amendment to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has made preventing people from becoming involved in, and reducing instances of, serious violence a new statutory duty for Community Safety Partnerships. This includes preparing strategies in relation to this requirement.²

Our partners have collectively agreed that the Safer Devon Partnership, which includes senior representatives from specified authorities as well as the Chairs of Devon’s four District-led Community Safety Partnerships, will lead on the Devon response to the Serious Violence Duty. This encompasses the responses of Devon’s four District Community Safety Partnerships.

To have greatest impact, our work to prevent serious violence requires bringing together partners from across our systems and connecting with our communities. We have therefore brought together a varied range of local partners to inform strategy development alongside the specified and relevant authorities.

Given the reach of our partners across District, county-wide, Greater Devon and, in some cases, peninsula geographies, collaboration within and across these localities is important. This will provide opportunity for joint working with shared priorities across a range of geographies and facilitate a place-based focus where concentrations of violence, and vulnerability factors, are greatest.

Additionally, the Police and Crime Commissioner is taking a convenor role for the Duty across Devon and Cornwall. The Commissioner will chair the Peninsula Strategic Serious Violence Prevention Partnership, a group bringing together representatives from across the peninsula to provide strategic oversight and monitoring of the delivery of the Serious Violence Duty.

The core aim of this Strategy is to adopt a public health approach to serious violence which focuses on prevention, addressing the multiple underlying factors that contribute to the occurrence of violence in society.³

Factors influencing vulnerability and resilience to violence are experienced across the life course and in many different contexts and circumstances. This includes influences occurring at individual, relational, community and societal levels (see page 9, figure 1). These influences are likely to intersect with and compound one another, creating greater challenges and complexities over time.

Therefore, preventing serious violence requires holistic, flexible and bespoke responses. These should take account of the complexity of violence and its causes, people's lives and needs, and complexities within our systems and create approaches that work for our communities and local contexts, in keeping with the principles of Human Learning Systems.⁵

Prevention also requires a layered approach, stretching from a universal, population-wide focus to a more highly targeted focus on groups and places experiencing the most immediate risk of violence.

This layered approach allows us to take steps to prevent violence at the earliest possible opportunity and before vulnerability factors have emerged, whilst also responding where concerns are developing, accumulating, and where risk and vulnerability have heightened.

By focusing on prevention throughout our responses we can reduce the risk of harm to people, families and communities and work with them to strengthen wellbeing and resilience.

The diagram below shows an adapted version of the public health model of violence prevention, showing the three stages of prevention built into this Strategy.

⁵ For more information see: <https://www.humanlearning.systems/>

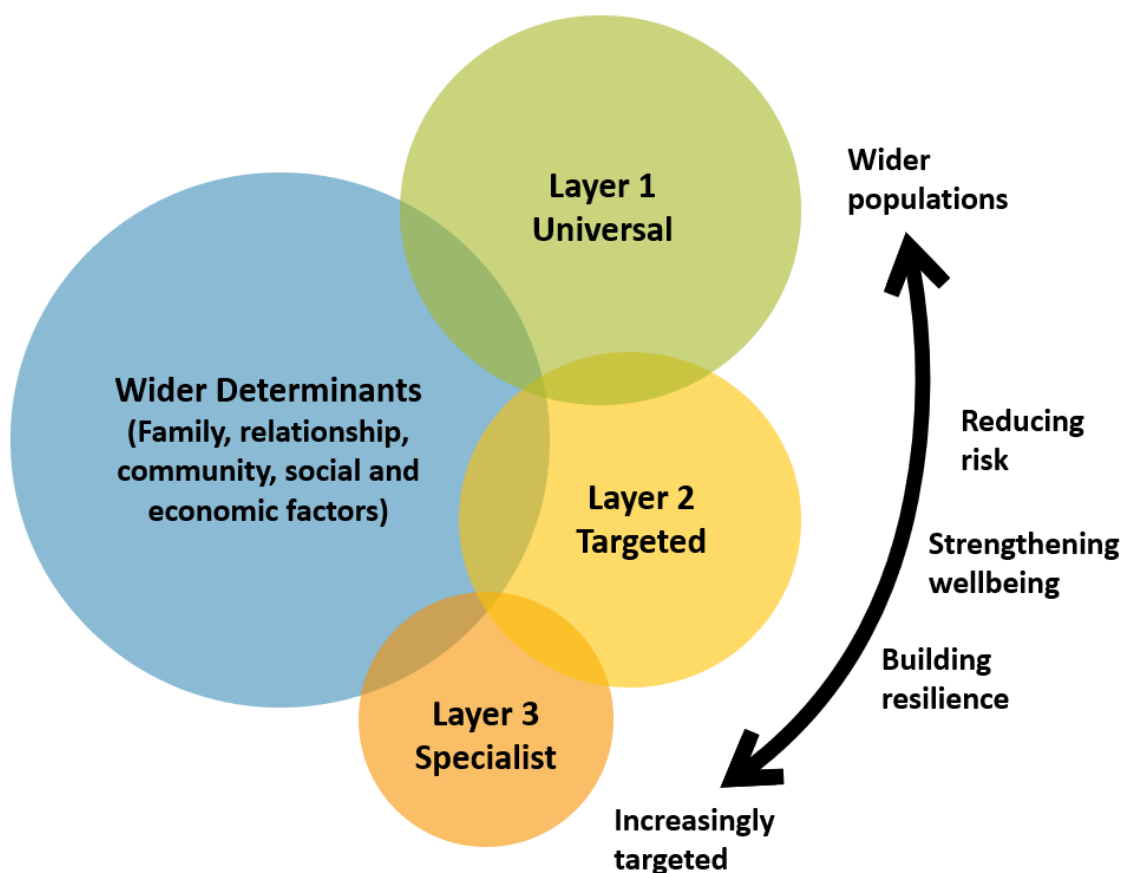


Figure 2: Public Health Model of Violence Prevention, adapted from Public Health Devon

Layer 1: Universal (Primary Prevention)

- Prevent vulnerability factors from emerging by strengthening protective factors.
- Target groups: groups with no or few vulnerability factors, focus on whole populations (e.g., adolescents).
- Examples: Healthy Relationships education for young people in schools.

Layer 2: Targeted (Secondary Prevention)

- Early intervention where vulnerability factors are emerging or accumulating, with focus on reducing risk and harm and building wellbeing and resilience at the earliest opportunity.
- Target groups: groups where concerns are starting to emerge, grow or become more complex with likely impacts on wellbeing and life chances – e.g., children experiencing domestic violence and abuse, children with a family member in prison, children and young people excluded from school.
- Examples: whole family recovery support from domestic violence and abuse.

Layer 3: Specialist (Tertiary Prevention)

- Specialist support where risk is heightening or there is a risk of immediate harm.
- Target groups: groups at heightened risk of becoming involved in or victimised by violence, who are on the periphery of the criminal justice system, or who may be at risk of re-offending.
- Examples: work with young people experiencing exploitation, Turnaround, Young Person’s Behaviour Change Project.

It is important to consider how we can create a shared understanding and commitment to violence prevention across our partnerships and systems and develop opportunities for joint working. Collaboration is best grounded in common approaches and principles, commitment to leadership, and shared responsibility and accountability.

Co-production with people, families and communities will allow us to situate their voices, experiences and expertise at the centre of our response. Identifying opportunities for co-production, including involvement in decision making, and building trust and confidence in this approach within our systems is an area we intend to prioritise.

Through adopting a place-based lens in our response, we will have opportunity to work alongside partners and communities situated in areas of greatest need in Devon and develop ways to build resilience, strengthen protective factors and, through doing so, reduce the disproportionate harms these communities experience.

Our strategy will have a two-fold focus:

- To consider how the Safer Devon Partnership can respond to serious violence through building on existing work and utilising opportunities such as the Home Office-devolved Serious Violence grant.
- To explore how we can embed focus on preventing violence and our strategic priorities across our wider partnerships and systems within Devon and the peninsula, influence opportunities for joint working and encourage the adoption of shared approaches and practices across a wider footprint.

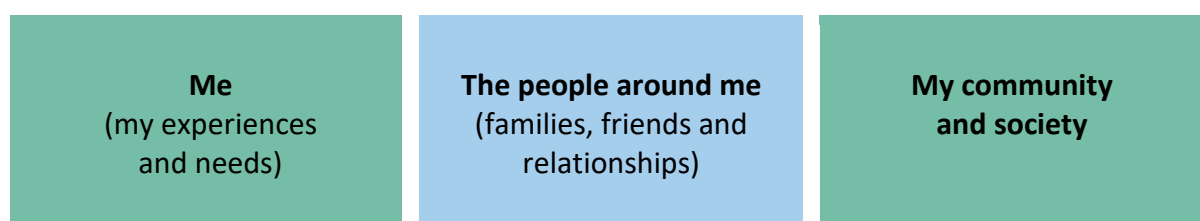
In many cases we believe our priorities and approaches will have benefits beyond the scope of preventing violence, given their focus on building resilience and wellbeing in our families and communities and adopting ways of working that are inclusive, compassionate and take account of people's lived experiences, for example through adopting trauma and shame-informed approaches.

Our strategy

Our areas of focus: people and places

We have identified three key areas of focus for this Strategy. Within these, we have identified groups and places where specific consideration would be beneficial based on the findings of our Needs Assessment.

Given the attention of the Serious Violence Duty on public space youth violence and its causes, we have focused predominantly on children, young people and families, although we have also identified adults with multiple disadvantages as a group of focus given their prominence within our Needs Assessment.



Me (my experiences and needs)	Why we are focusing on these groups
<p>Children who have care experience, and children who are open to social care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people who have care experience are disproportionately represented in the Youth Justice System.⁶ They often face intersecting needs and experiences, such as Adverse Childhood Experiences, trauma and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and may have heightened vulnerability to exploitation. • Children open to social services who are not ‘Looked After’ are also likely to have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma, potentially increasing their vulnerability to becoming involved in serious violence. • Devon Youth Justice data shows that in 2021/22, 39% of serious violence offences were committed by children open to social care. In 2022/23 this figure was 44%. These figures are inclusive of Looked After Children.
<p>Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and who are neurodivergent, particularly where there are compounding risk factors, and including where needs are undiagnosed and unidentified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an overrepresentation of young people with SEND, Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and who are neurodivergent within Youth Justice cohorts, including young people who have carried out serious violence offences.⁴ • The prevalence of young people with SEND in the Devon Youth Justice serious violence cohort is greater than the prevalence in cohorts who have carried out other offences. In 2022-23, 29% of all serious violence offences were carried out by a young person with identified SEND needs, compared to 17.5% of all other offences.⁷ • Underdiagnosis and ‘diagnostic overshadowing’⁸ in relation to SLCN, neurodivergence and SEND is well recognised.⁵ • Partner insights highlight a lack of diagnosis and support as a potentially important factor which may increase vulnerability for some young people. National research evidences this in relation to Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), which comes under the umbrella of SLCN.⁶ Whilst this finding is specific to DLD it is likely to hold relevance to other needs.
<p>Adults who experience multiple disadvantages.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults facing multiple and compounding disadvantages, such as substance misuse needs, being in poor health and experiencing violent or unhealthy relationships are likely to have experienced multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences.⁷ • Exposure to multiple childhood stressors is associated with subsequent involvement in violence as a victim or perpetrator, including intimate partner violence. Indeed, national research suggests up to 52% of violence perpetration could be linked to Adverse Childhood Experiences. Additionally, violence, including violence in the home and intimate partner violence, can facilitate the intergenerational passage of Adverse Childhood Experiences.⁸ • Multiple and complex needs have been identified as a prominent theme for adults in Devon where concerns are greatest around serious violence; a high number of needs were seen in adults who had committed serious violence offences and were on Probation (on average, females were linked to 5.9 needs per offence and males were linked to 5.4 needs per offence). Homelessness and indications of a chaotic living condition were also prevalent. 20% of the Probation cohort were registered to No Fixed Abode or had no recorded address.

⁶ For the purposes of this Strategy, we refer to children who have care experience as those where the local authority has become their corporate parent at some point during their childhood – often referred to as Looked After Children.

⁷ It is unclear how far underreporting as well as underdiagnosis of SEND may be a factor in this data.

⁸ Diagnostic overshadowing is where some behaviours or needs are looked for more than others. This means someone may receive a diagnosis without exploration of whether there may be additional underlying reasons for their behaviour or needs. Once someone receives a diagnosis, any future difficulties they experience or changes in their presentation may be attributed to their existing diagnosis instead of other factors.

- Partner insights suggest that adults with multiple disadvantages are at greater risk of being victims of a range of violent harms, including drug related violence and exploitation. The risk of sexual violence and sexual exploitation towards women is a particular concern.

Children and young people who are at risk of contextual harms (risks from outside of the family).

- Exploitation has been identified as a significant area of concern for children and young people involved in serious violence.
- Data from the Devon Children’s Services REACH (Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care or Home) Team shows that Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is the most commonly identified form of exploitation for children and young people, along with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). CCE is generally considered to relate to drugs; however, business models of exploitation (such as county lines or local dealers) can vary and be unclear, with implications for the exploitation, harm and violence experienced. Often CCE and CSE can co-occur.
- Devon Youth Justice data shows there were concerns regarding CCE for 28.9% of young people who committed a serious violence offence in 2021/22, whilst in 2022/23 this figure was 19.2%. In 2022/23 11.5% of children who committed a serious violence offence were believed to have previously been sexually exploited. It is likely that CSE is underreported.
- Young person peer groups present particular harms, with anecdotal evidence from partners highlighting concerns around certain peer groups who carry out violence and a range of interlinked and wider harms within a group context.

Page 94

People around me

Why we are focusing on these groups

Young people and families who are affected by imprisonment or involvement in crime or violence.

- Familial imprisonment and involvement in crime can be a potential risk factor for children becoming involved in violence and crime. Children who experience parental imprisonment are more likely than their peers to experience multiple adverse childhood experiences, have complex behaviour and emotional needs, and be arrested and imprisoned later in life.⁹
- Local lived experiences research by Space Youth Service indicates parental imprisonment has a significant impact on young people’s mental and physical wellbeing, their home life and their behaviour. 44% of children consulted by Space had experienced family going to prison. Whilst these figures relate to a small sample of 36 children, meaning their generalisability is unclear, they highlight a currently unmet need in Devon.

Young people and families who are affected by the needs of parents and care givers, for example substance misuse and/or mental health.

- Partners have highlighted the importance of the needs of parents and care givers, especially needs around substance misuse and/or mental health, in potentially heightening vulnerability for young people.
- Local data from the first cohort of young people in the Turning Corners programme in 2019/20 (who were identified as being at risk of crime, violence and/or anti-social behaviour) indicates that 39% grew up in a household with adults who experienced alcohol/drug needs and 16% had a parent living with a mental health condition.⁹
- The Devon Young Person’s Behaviour Change Project, which works with young people who display harmful behaviour, has reported that of 28 children in the service from April 2022 - March 2023, 46% had a parent with a mental health need.

⁹ Turning Corners was an early intervention programme for young people in South Devon at risk of carrying out anti-social behaviour, crime and violence.

Young people and families who are affected by domestic violence and abuse.

- National and local research evidences a relationship between witnessing and/or experiencing domestic violence and youth violence.¹⁰ Our understanding of the prevalence and importance of childhood domestic violence and abuse in young people and adults who carry out violence and harmful behaviour is emerging and would benefit from further research.
- Domestic abuse comprises a third of all serious violence crime. Children experiencing familial domestic abuse are recognised in law as victims in their own right.¹¹ The prevalence of childhood exposure to domestic abuse across the population in Devon is currently unclear. However:
 - 49% of First Time Entrants in the Devon Youth Justice Service within a 12 month period had experienced domestic abuse either as a victim or witness.¹⁰
 - 36% of young people engaged in structured activity with the Y-Smart young person’s substance misuse service reported having experienced domestic abuse as victims in their lifetime.¹²
 - 83% of young people in Turning Corners in 2019/20 had experienced domestic abuse as a victim or witness.
 - On average, 85% of adults displaying harmful behaviours that have engaged in community behaviour change programmes report having experienced domestic abuse as children.¹³

My community and society

Why we are focusing on these groups

Page 95

Education settings (schools, alternative provision and colleges).

- Evidence indicates that children involved in serious violence in Devon have experienced multiple educational challenges.
- Children who were cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence in Devon were found to have low educational attainment, a high number of absence periods before the offence, a high number of suspensions or exclusions before the offence (88% had previously been suspended) and a high number of alternative provisions.¹⁴
- Exclusion is a particular concern as a factor increasing risk around involvement in violence. 2021/22 Devon Youth Justice data shows 37% of serious violence offences were committed by children with at least one prior exclusion. In 2022/23 this figure was 44%.
- Attendance at an alternative provision (AP) is also a concern. Local Department for Education data (relating to children in KS4 from 2012/13-2017/18) shows that 42% of children in Devon who were cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence had ever attended an AP. Of this cohort, 65% of children were in an AP before their first serious violence offence.
- National recognition has been given to the importance of disengagement from education, including through suspension and exclusion, in creating conditions for exposure to exploitation, criminality and violence and in escalating risk.¹⁵
- International evidence indicates a link between violence taking place in schools and later criminal justice involvement.¹⁶ Local qualitative insights highlight concerns around bullying, racism, homophobia, transphobia, harmful sexual behaviour, misogyny and violence in schools, and indicate a rise in violence between peers and towards staff.

¹⁰ This research was carried out against Police crime and intelligence reports. It is possible that data around the experience of domestic abuse in First Time Entrants may not have been entered into the system, due to the unreported nature of this crime. Therefore, it is possible that the number of First Time Entrants who had experience of childhood domestic abuse is higher than reported here.

Communities experiencing the greatest levels of violence, harms and factors known to influence this, for example deprivation, poverty, the presence of drug activities and concerns around the Night-Time Economy.

Whilst further work is required to understand the occurrence and experience of violence across our communities in Devon, evidence indicates the occurrence of serious violence is influenced by local factors:

- Local data shows the highest levels of serious violence crimes take place in urban areas; these are busy and usually densely populated areas that often have prominent Night-Time Economies.
- Insights from young people and partners suggest certain places and spaces may present greater risks around violence and associated harms. Lived experience work with young people highlights concerns around the safety of their local areas.
- The presence and nature of drug business models is likely to influence the occurrence of violence linked to supplying drugs.
- Poverty and deprivation can combine with other factors to heighten the risk of young people becoming involved in violence. Socio-economic factors have been identified as a core foundation of violence, and child poverty as a key driver.¹⁷
- 67% of young people cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence in Devon were eligible for free school meals (note, this is less than 2% of the total children on free school meals).¹⁸ Local Police data indicates that drug possession and trafficking offences are more likely to occur in more deprived postcodes.

Page 96

All young people, focusing on safety and exposure to violence and harmful behaviours in adolescence.

- Lived experience insights from young people in Devon tell us that exposure to violence as a witness or victim, online or in person, appears normalised for young people. Online spaces and social media appear an important facilitator of violence. Harms young people are exposed to include bullying, pornography, sexual violence, physical violence and fights. Peer to peer violence is also an important concern.
- Harmful sexual behaviour in young people often appears normalised, including sexual harassment, unhealthy relationships, the sharing of explicit images and online sexual abuse. An anonymous survey of 17 girls working with Space Youth Service in a programme for young people at risk of experiencing/displaying harmful sexual behaviour showed that: 52% had received unwanted physical touching; 76% had experienced unwanted sexual images; and 70% had experienced controlling behaviour from a partner. Regardless of the small sample size, this indicates that harmful sexual behaviour and unhealthy relationships are present, and a concern, for young people in Devon.
- Insights from young people have highlighted knife crime as a concern and a potential area of risk.
- Peer pressure, fitting in, safety and protection appear important for understanding young people's involvement in violence.

Our vision

Our vision is for people, families and communities in Devon to thrive, safe from the risk and experience of violence.

Our priorities

We will strengthen our collective response to preventing serious violence through delivering the following priorities.

Core priorities

Priority 1: Shape a series of preventative responses for young people and adults who, based on their individual needs and experiences, are at greatest risk of involvement in violence, taking account of intersecting needs and the individual ways needs may present.

Priority 2: Strengthen our understanding and response to contextual harms to reduce exploitation and peer group related risks.

Priority 3: Strengthen our early years and early help targeted offer for families where risk and vulnerability factors in relation to violence are present.

Priority 4: Challenge the normalisation of violence, particularly in relation to young people - supporting them to develop healthy and respectful relationships, both intimate partner and peer to peer.

Priority 5: Work towards creating inclusive and supportive education environments where all young people can thrive, with a focus on strengthening their wellbeing, resilience and opportunities.

Cross-cutting priorities

Priority 6: Work towards trauma, shame and neurodivergence-informed systems (see appendix 1 for our definitions of these terms).

Priority 7: Strengthen our learning about serious violence, needs and drivers, and what works well as prevention.

We will define achievable actions, outputs, outcomes and impacts and the subsequent long-term changes we aim to see in our communities in our delivery plan, which will be developed during 2024 following publication of this Strategy. The steps to achieving our intended impacts are explored further in the diagram below.

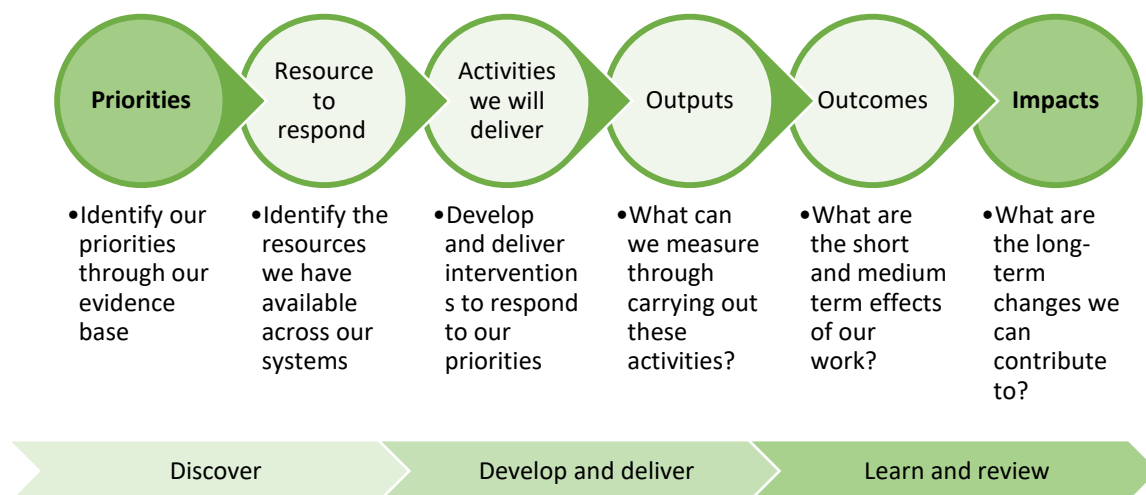


Figure 3: Diagram showing a model theory of change for our Strategy, outlining how our priorities will lead to activities that we deliver, in turn leading to outcomes and long-term impacts for communities.

Further details about our priorities are provided on the following pages, including our rationale for selection. We have listed examples of work already being progressed by partners that are contributing towards delivering our priorities; at the same time, we recognise there is substantially more to do.

Core priorities	Our evidence	Examples of work we are already doing
<p>Priority 1 Shape a series of preventative responses for young people and adults who, based on their individual needs and experiences, are at greatest risk of involvement in violence, taking account of intersecting needs and the individual ways needs may present.</p>	<p>Young people and adults at greatest risk of involvement in violence are likely to experience multiple, intersecting and compounding experiences and needs. For example, in relation to young people, the Department for Education has demonstrated nationally that: ‘children with higher numbers of multiple risk factors are more likely to be children who are cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence, compared to children with fewer multiple risk factors’.¹⁹ Regarding adults, offences committed by people on Probation between April 2022 and March 2023 were linked to 5 needs per offence on average for the total cohort, indicative of high and multiple needs.</p> <p>It is important that when working with people we take account of the breadth and complexity of their experiences and needs. This involves using person-centred approaches that are adaptable and flexible to people’s needs and exploring inclusive and wraparound models of support.</p> <p>It is also important that services are aware of how presenting (primary) needs (e.g., substance misuse) can mask underlying (secondary) needs and experiences such as past or ongoing trauma.</p>	<p>The Young Person’s Behaviour Change Service supports young people who have experienced domestic abuse in their home and are beginning to demonstrate harmful behaviours towards a family member or intimate partner. Two evaluations have evidenced the efficacy of this service in reducing aggressive behaviour, improving relationships, feelings and behaviours, and reducing the burden on partner services.</p> <p>Dialectical Behaviour Therapy training has been introduced by Y-Smart, the young person’s substance misuse service, to educate young people in how to live in the moment, develop healthy ways to cope with stress, regulate their emotions and strengthen their relationships with others.</p> <p>Together, the adult substance misuse service, is strengthening pathways between Police Custody suites and people arrested due to substance related needs to encourage them into treatment. Where relevant to their offending, courts can award Mental Health Treatment Requirements, Drug Rehabilitation Requirements and Alcohol Treatment Requirements. These are delivered by Together practitioners.</p> <p>The Police-led Intervention Clinic is creating opportunities to intervene with young people under the age of 18 when they offend for the first time or are on the periphery of offending behaviour. A whole-family approach is taken, focusing on intrafamilial harm and risks from outside the family. With consent, young people are referred to services offering skilled support and intervention. This could be linked to wider needs such as speech and language, neurodivergence, or family dynamics.</p> <p>A Fire Safety Intervention Programme is provided by the Fire Service for children and young people under the age of 18 who show an unhealthy fascination with fire or have engaged in fire setting behaviours. Interventions include fire safety education, arson awareness and peer pressure, personal and family safety. This promotes children and young people’s development and social and emotional learning, building their resilience around making safer choices.</p>

**Priority 2
Strengthen our understanding and response to contextual harms to reduce exploitation and peer group related risks.**

Exploitation has been highlighted as a factor in violence taking place in Devon. As noted on page 14, Devon Youth Justice service data highlights the presence of Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation within cohorts of young people who have committed a serious violence offence.

Anecdotal insights have highlighted risks within young person peer groups, with indications that certain peer groups are carrying out violence and wider harms within a group context. Evidence about these areas is limited and would benefit from further exploration.

The Devon Adolescent Safety Framework (ASF) has provided a framework for responding to contextual harms experienced by young people. A review of the ASF has identified opportunities to strengthen Devon’s existing contextual safeguarding response.

The Devon Adolescent Safety Framework is undergoing review, including the identification of recommendations and priorities for future work and the production of an outcomes framework.

The Devon Youth Justice Service is carrying out work with partners to increase the understanding of young people experiencing exploitation and how they present across different services.

Work is ongoing to explore and develop a Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Service for interventions with children and young people whose risks and needs are outside of the home, in line with their age and developing maturity. This will include missing episodes, antisocial behaviour and pro-social identities/activities, and young people at risk of exploitation.

**Priority 3
Strengthen our early years and early help targeted offer for families where risk and vulnerability factors in relation to violence are present.**

Evidence indicates that familial experiences can heighten vulnerability in relation to violence for children and young people. Our Needs Assessment has identified the importance of focus on childhood trauma and adversity, including domestic violence and abuse, parental and caregivers’ needs (including substance misuse and mental health) and families affected by imprisonment or involvement in crime or violence.

Adverse childhood experiences are associated with vulnerability to violence throughout the life course and can transmit intergenerationally, creating potential for cycles of violence in families. Research shows a significant proportion of justice-involved children and adults in prison have experienced adverse childhood experiences.²⁰

Traumatic experiences during the early years of life, including the first 1,000 days, are particularly crucial for later outcomes.²¹ This highlights the importance of early years as a focus for work with families. Further evidence for the areas discussed above can be found on pages 14-15.

A 12-month whole-family Domestic Violence and Abuse Recovery Support ‘Test and Learn’ Pilot was recently introduced. Run by SAFE, NDADA and Community Links and commissioned by Safer Devon and Devon County Council, it worked with families, including children, who had experienced domestic abuse with the aim of supporting them to recover from these experiences, build resilience and break the cycle of violence. An external evaluation is currently taking place.

FearFree deliver a whole family behaviour change offer. Family members who have perpetrated domestic abuse are supported through a behaviour change programme, whilst children, if appropriate and desired, are supported by a children's worker. Family members who are victims/survivors are allocated an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advocate) for direct support and to co-ordinate the response.

Anti-social behaviour and safeguarding training for frontline housing officers in East Devon Council is being developed to help identify and respond to ASB early on. This will help prevent escalation, identify families and young people with potential vulnerability and provide support and signposting. Similar work in Mid Devon is being explored.

**Priority 4
Challenge the
normalisation of
violence,
particularly in
relation to
young people -
supporting them
to develop
healthy and
respectful
relationships,
both intimate
partner and
peer to peer.**

Local evidence indicates there is a growing culture of normalised violence and harmful behaviour in young people. Lived experience insights from young people in Devon show that online violence is commonplace with 52% of young people viewing violent content on social media. Misogyny and harmful sexual behaviour are frequently observed and perpetuated both online and offline.

Bullying, racism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia have all been noted to occur in schools in Devon and seem normalised. Further work is needed to understand the extent of serious violence experienced by people with protected characteristics.

International evidence indicates links between school violence and later criminal justice involvement.²² Preventative, education-based and bystander approaches focused on young people, parents and carers at the earliest opportunity are likely to address the roots of these issues and promote healthy and respectful behaviour and relationships.

[Let's Talk](#) online support sessions for parents and carers of teenagers and pre-teens are being run by South Devon and Dartmoor Community Safety Partnership, focusing on challenges young people are facing today and exploring ways they can be supported. Recent topics have included exploring teenage relationships, mental health and emotional wellbeing, anger and challenging behaviour, and bullying and online challenges.

A pilot of the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme is being rolled out by Safer Devon to a selection of secondary schools, where trained young people teach their peers about the scope of violence and empower them through their own leadership to be 'active bystanders' by challenging harmful behaviours.

A Safer Spaces, Safer Places project is being developed in Teignbridge in partnership with Young Devon and Space Youth Service. The project is commissioned through the Community Safety Partnership utilising funding from the Government Levelling Up Fund, and tackles violence by building resilience in communities with a focus on young people and women and girls. This includes work to make town centres feel safer for all, and to change the culture of misogyny through a whole community approach.

A Reactive and Harmful Sexual Behaviour Panel is currently being set up across Targeted Early Help services, which will include training and supervision for practitioners, information, advice and guidance for partners and a route into service delivery where needed. The Panel will focus on harmful behaviours which are sexually motivated and also on behaviours which are reactive to specific situations for a child, but which result in inappropriate behaviour which can be seen as sexual.

Police Youth Engagement Officers are delivering education in local schools where concerns are greatest around knife crime through the national Operation Sceptre initiative, raising awareness in young people regarding the consequences and dangers of carrying knives.

**Priority 5
Work towards
creating
inclusive,
supportive
education
environments
where all young
people can
thrive, with a
focus on
strengthening
their wellbeing,
resilience and
opportunities.**

Page 102

Educational challenges, particularly exclusion as well as disengagement from school, have been identified as important factors heightening risk around involvement in serious violence.²³ Devon Youth Justice data shows that in 2022/23, 44% of serious violence offences were committed by children who had at least one prior exclusion.

Local Department for Education data shows that attendance at an alternative provision (AP) is also a risk factor for children. 42% of children who were sentenced or cautioned for a serious violence offence in Devon (who were in KS4 between 2012/13-2017/18) had attended an AP. Of these, 65% were in the AP before an offence was committed.

Exclusion disproportionately affects certain groups, including children and young people with SEND, children and young people on free school meals and children and young people open to social care. These groups are also overrepresented in cohorts involved in serious violence.²⁴

Partners have also highlighted concerns around bullying, violence and harmful behaviour taking place in schools.

Partners have indicated that more could be done to ensure education environments are inclusive and safe places where all young people feel supported, including young people with additional needs.

The Inclusion and Education Wellbeing Teams work to support children and young people where they may have additional needs or be unable to attend school, and where children and young people are at risk of exclusion. This includes providing guidance to schools regarding reasonable adjustments, funding packages to support therapeutic adjustments, and alternative provisions.

Additionally, the Inclusion Team, in partnership with organisations such as Space Youth Service, provide support to schools where concerns or challenges arise, for example around harmful behaviour occurring within a year group. Support can include group work for young people within the school setting delivered by Space to address concerns and give young people the tools to challenge harmful behaviour.

Early Help and School Inclusion are working together to promote integrated working and close the gap for children at risk of not reaching the best education outcomes. This includes exploring opportunities to focus on this agenda within the Youth Justice Service and to provide learning for practitioners about the barriers to successful education engagement.

Work is ongoing with Early Help to explore the development of a transition offer across Devon for young people moving from year 6 into year 7 who may benefit from support with the transition from primary to secondary school. This follows a successful pilot in Exmouth.

Devon County Council encourages all education settings to report incidents of bullying, prejudice and racism. Each incident is reviewed to ensure settings are taking appropriate response, preventative and proactive measures. Support provided by the Council to settings includes: workshops to support young people who are targeted and feel unsafe and young people who cause repeated harm; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion pupil forums to hear Devon children's voices on what equality, safety, belonging and respect looks like to them and in their school; and resources to support schools to improve policy, practice and awareness around Equality and Diversity.

Cross-cutting priorities	Our evidence	Examples of work we are already doing
<p>Priority 6 Work towards trauma, shame and neurodivergence-informed systems (see appendix 1 for our definitions of these terms).</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 103</p>	<p>A significant number of young people and adults in the criminal justice system have experienced childhood trauma and adversity.²⁵ This is in addition to traumatic experiences that may take place later in life.</p> <p>The experience of shame is closely linked to trauma, and it is likely that many people who have encountered trauma also experience shame. Experiencing shame can lead people to behave in ways that mask the shame they feel. These responses vary depending on the individual and can include anger, aggression, hostility and violence.²⁶</p> <p>A high number of young people and adults in the criminal justice system are understood to be neurodivergent, and may have differences in how they process and learn information, function, and communicate.²⁷</p> <p>Being trauma, shame and neurodivergence-informed across our organisations and systems is crucial for ensuring we work with people in a compassionate, inclusive and person-centred way that can take account of their past experiences, meet their present needs and address barriers in the way our services and systems operate.</p>	<p>In a Devon County Council initiative, pioneer professionals supporting victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence have been PATH (Psychological Advocacy Towards Healing) trained to improve psychological support available to victims.</p> <p>Supported by the EOS Board,¹¹ the Sexual Violence Pathfinder is delivering a trauma stabilisation workforce development programme across the domestic and sexual violence and abuse system. This will improve the psychological support available for adults who have experienced sexual violence and abuse and provide trauma stabilisation interventions.</p> <p>The Interpersonal Trauma Response Service, commissioned by NHS Devon, provides training and support services to all GP practices across Devon to identify indicators of trauma and abuse and make clinical enquiries. Adults and children affected by domestic abuse, adults affected by sexual abuse or sexual violence or concerned about their own abusive behaviour in relationships, and children affected by domestic abuse are eligible for support.</p> <p>‘Putting the Pieces Together’ is being delivered through the Devon Integrated Care System, providing training on complex trauma and language and communication development for professionals working with children, young people and their families in Devon, Torbay and Plymouth.</p> <p>Facilitated through the Anna Freud Centre, the National Autism Trainer Programme is being delivered to the Devon Youth Justice Service. The programme is co-designed and co-delivered by people with lived experience of neurodiversity. Professionals will be trained as trainers to upskill staff in the needs of young people with autism.</p>

¹¹ The EOS Board is a partnership between Southwest peninsula local authorities, Integrated Care Boards, Victim Support and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

**Priority 7
Strengthen our
learning about
serious violence,
needs and
drivers, and what
works well as
prevention.**

Page 104

Our Needs Assessment has developed a detailed picture of violence taking place in Devon and factors influencing its occurrence and has highlighted where we can build further insights.

The prevalence and scope of some kinds of violence in Devon is unclear, including knife crime, violence within peer groups, exploitation, modern slavery-related violence and the role of Organised Crime Gangs and the level of harm they may cause to communities.

There are currently gaps in our understanding of the experiences of violence of people with protected characteristics, including ethnically diverse people and LGBTQ+ people, and the intersection between hate crime and violence.

Evidence suggests that many people involved in serious violence may have multiple and intersecting needs, however conclusive local evidence is lacking. We need to strengthen our understanding about how intersecting personal characteristics, experiences and needs can combine to create unique experiences of violence and in some cases heighten vulnerability and risk.

We can build on our existing ‘test and learn’ approach to strengthen our understanding of what works well as prevention – using evaluation, quantitative data and qualitative insights from people accessing services and those involved in delivery.

Trauma informed work is being developed through the Children’s Social Work Academy. To date, this has included the development of a Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) Forum and awareness raising materials for practitioners.

The Trauma Informed Health Project, funded by NHS Devon, is a collaborative project with the Royal Devon University Hospitals Trust to develop examples of, and guidance for, providing trauma informed and shame sensitive health care in acute settings such as hospitals.

Space Youth Service has been working with Safer Devon to collect information from peer-led lived experience research projects about young people’s experiences of topics including familial imprisonment, weapons, drugs and alcohol, harmful sexual behaviour and fights.

Work is taking place with the Devon Children’s Social Care Quality Assurance Service to design multiagency learning events focusing on serious youth violence cases. This will involve a multiagency exploration of the events in these cases, interventions from services, successes and missed opportunities. Timescales around this work are to be determined.

We are working to strengthen the sharing of data around serious violence, using the findings from our Needs Assessment and gaps in our understanding to identify areas for future work.

Our underlying themes

A number of themes run throughout this Strategy and will be used to inform work against our priorities.

- 1) Relatable moments** - identifying opportunities to engage with young people, families and adults to build resilience and wellbeing and support change.

Relatable moments can include times and places where there may be greater opportunity for engagement, such as during early years and through education settings. They can also be moments when risk is heightened, including at the point of exclusion, when a child or young person comes into social care, or when they first come into contact with the Police.²⁸

- 2) Breaking cycles of harm in families and communities** – working to break cycles of harm and violence, including the intergenerational transmission of harm and violence in families.

This involves taking account of needs and drivers taking place at individual, familial/relational, community and societal levels, and considering the impacts of trauma and shame within families and communities. Through adopting whole-family and whole-community approaches, the root causes of these needs and drivers can be addressed and protective factors and resilience can be strengthened.

- 3) Transitions** – supporting young people during times of transition, for example primary to secondary and child to adult, with particular focus on 18-25s.

Key life transitions have been highlighted by our partners, Devon Youth Voice and in research as critical times for young people, being potential times of challenge and creating opportunities to build resilience. These include transitions taking place at the start of adulthood, such as from child to adult services, from youth justice to probation, from child to adult safeguarding and mental health services, and transitions from being in care. Young people have also identified transitions from primary to secondary, from school to college, from education to employment and into housing as important.²⁹

- 4) Equality, diversity and intersectionality** – consideration needs to be given to protected characteristics, understanding and taking account of the intersecting identities and experiences that can shape vulnerability and resilience to harm.

When we talk about intersectionality, we are referring to how multiple identities, such as race, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, interact to create unique individual experiences of discrimination and oppression.³⁰

Given the prominence of gender-based violence within our Needs Assessment, it is important that our responses consider a gendered lens where appropriate.

Our guiding principles

Finally, how we work matters as much as the work we carry out. We have developed a set of guiding principles that are grounded in public health, trauma-informed and human learning systems approaches to working.

They will inform how we work together with our partners, how we work with people, families and communities, and how we seek to prevent violence. As system leaders we will commit to working in line with these principles and to using our example and influence to encourage their adoption across our systems.

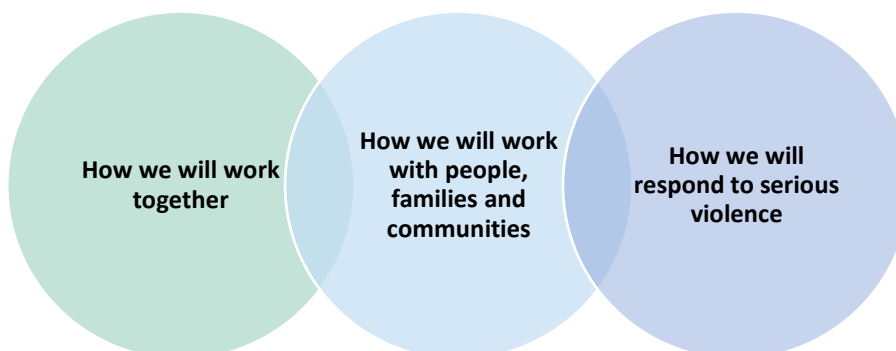


Figure 4: Diagram showing our guiding principles and how they interlink.

How we will work together

- 1) We will work together across our organisations, partnerships and systems to prevent serious violence, with focus on strengthening leadership, creating shared responsibility and accountability and addressing barriers to change.
- 2) We will take a co-production approach to our work, valuing and maximising the voice, expertise and role of young people, families and communities in our actions, including in decision making.
- 3) We will empower our practitioners – giving them the time, opportunity and support to work with our communities in new ways and embed new approaches in their practice.
- 4) We will make the most of the unique value each partner can bring to our work and maximise opportunities for involvement from all specified authorities and Community Safety Partnerships, and from the wider statutory and voluntary sector.

How we will work with people, families and communities

- 1) We will be strengths-based - focusing on wellbeing, resilience and opportunity and building on the assets of our people and communities.
- 2) We will be relationship-based – building trusted relationships within families and peer groups and with professionals.
- 3) We will be inclusive, compassionate and non-judgemental – respecting people’s lived experiences and circumstances.
- 4) We will take a holistic approach - thinking whole-person, whole-family and whole-community.
- 5) We will recognise and challenge harmful norms, inequalities, exclusion and discrimination, and advocate respect and inclusion.

How we will respond to serious violence

- 1) We will address the root causes of violence through long term and sustainable prevention and early intervention.
- 2) We will take a life course approach - focusing on factors that influence vulnerability and resilience from early years and throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood.
- 3) We will recognise complexity (in violence and its causes, in people's lives and needs, and in our systems) and the importance of creating bespoke, considered responses that foster connection, value relationships and work for our communities and our local contexts, focusing on learning through the journey.
- 4) We will be curious and evidence informed – building on our existing understanding and taking account of what we don't know.
- 5) We will focus on continuous learning and improvement.

Appendix 1: Definitions

Trauma-informed

Trauma-informed practice is an approach to interventions that are grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development. The purpose of trauma-informed practice is not to treat trauma-related difficulties, which is the role of trauma-specialist services and practitioners. Instead, it seeks to address the barriers that people affected by trauma can experience when accessing services.

Trauma-informed practice aims to:

- Increase practitioners' awareness of how trauma can negatively impact on individuals and communities and their ability to feel safe or develop trusting relationships with services and their staff.
- Improve the accessibility and quality of services by creating culturally sensitive, safe services that people trust and want to use. It seeks to prepare practitioners to work in collaboration and partnership with people accessing services and empower them.
- Acknowledge the need to see beyond an individual's presenting behaviours and ask, 'What does this person need?' rather than 'What is wrong with this person?'
- Avoid re-traumatisation, which is the re-experiencing of thoughts, feelings or sensations experienced at the time of a traumatic event or circumstance in a person's past. This can be damaging to people's wellbeing and can affect their engagement with services.

Trauma-informed practice involves 6 principles: safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration.³¹

Shame-informed

Shame is a complex and negative emotional experience that can take many forms. It occurs when we feel negatively judged or 'less than' others, when we feel unworthy, unloved or as though we might be rejected, or if we feel we have transgressed the standards and expectations we set for ourselves or that are set by others.³² Shame is closely linked to trauma; emerging research indicates that events such as traumatic experiences and/or societal inequalities can cause an individual to experience shame.³³

'Chronic' or 'toxic' shame can result in behaviours and responses that mask the shame people feel. These responses vary depending on the individual and can include anger, aggression, hostility and violence.³⁴ Shame has also been identified as an important barrier to seeking and receiving support. Shame-sensitive practice is important to overcoming this barrier and avoiding further shaming and stigma when engaging with services.³⁵

Being shame-informed involves following the principles of shame competence. This is a set of skills, principles and practices that can be learned by individuals and applied within workplace settings, enabling people, teams and organisations to constructively engage with shame to advance wellbeing, dignity and inclusion.³⁶

Neurodivergence-informed

Everyone can be described as neurodiverse, as we all vary in the way our brains work, including how we think, learn, communicate and function. The term neurodivergence is used where someone processes, learns or functions differently from what is considered average or typical. Neurodivergent people may find some things very easy and other things more difficult.³⁷

The social model of disability states that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. Barriers can be physical or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference. Removing these barriers creates inclusion, equality and opportunity and amplifies diverse abilities.³⁸

Being neurodivergence-informed involves taking an inclusive, accessible and non-judgemental approach to the way we work with people and design and deliver services, recognising where barriers exist in the current ways our services, organisations and systems operate. This involves listening to and accommodating peoples' individual needs and preferences around language, processing, learning and communication and ensuring our approaches to support are flexible and inclusive.

Ableism refers to the belief that 'typical' abilities or ways of being are normal and superior, including being 'neurotypical'. An ableist attitude defines people who are neurodivergent as lesser and can lead to harmful stereotypes and discriminatory beliefs, attitudes and actions.³⁹ Neurodivergence is in no way 'lesser' than any other way of being. Being neurodivergence-informed involves accepting neurodivergence as equal to any other way of thinking, learning, communicating and functioning, and actively challenging ableist beliefs and practices.

Some important components of a neurodivergence-informed approach are training relating to neurodiversity and ableism, accessible practical tools for staff, and cultures that promote inclusion, accessibility and diversity.⁴⁰



West Devon
Borough
Council



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE



PREVENTING
SERIOUS
VIOLENCE
BREAKING THE CYCLE

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Report for: Community PDG

Date of Meeting:	26 th March 2024
Subject:	UPDATED CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY
Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Wulff, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure
Responsible Officer:	Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing
Exempt:	Not Applicable
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Annex A – Updated Corporate Safeguarding Policy Annex B – Equalities Impact Assessment screening

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the adoption of the revised Corporate Safeguarding Policy (recommendation 1). As a local authority public sector body we must have adopted policies for staff and members to follow that set out our roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

The current Policy was last reviewed by the Community PDG in March 2022 and Cabinet in April 2022 and is scheduled to be reviewed every 3 years, but can be reviewed earlier at the request of the Council’s Corporate Safeguarding Lead as is the case. A Policy review was instigated to take into account changes of responsibilities within the Council, inclusion of new sections on the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the importance of Corporate Parenting alongside updates to legislation and guidance and a refresh of the ‘Safeguarding Champions’ Group.

As part of the review process, views were sought on current safeguarding policy and operational practice from an informal, internal working group of safeguarding leads and the external Devon Districts Safeguarding Officers network.

The updated Corporate Safeguarding Policy was also reviewed by a consultant with national experience carrying out a self-assessment of Mid Devon Housing in January 2024. The purpose was to assess the proposed changes against the expectations of the new housing regulatory regime and in recognition of the particular involvement of housing in safeguarding matters. Further changes have been made to the Policy to reflect recommendations made.

Introductory safeguarding training for Members was carried out in December 2023 and a second session is planned for March 2024 for any Members missing the first date. Feedback from the first session has also helped to shape the policy format in particular.

Together, the review process and recent member training have also identified a potential gap in safeguarding provisions for Members with a recommended mechanism to review DBS checks which could be included in a future update of relevant policies (recommendation 2).

Recommendations:

- 1. That the Community PDG recommends the updated Corporate Safeguarding Policy to Cabinet for approval.**
- 2. That the Community PDG recommends to Standards Committee that a Member working group is established to review the potential future inclusion of DBS checks for Members within the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and related DBS Policy.**

Section 2 – Report

1 Background

- 1.1 We have adopted policies for staff and Members to follow, which set out our roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The Districts' Safeguarding Leads in Devon have produced a combined policy as part of the Devon Districts Safeguarding Officers Network, drawing on good practice found in existing safeguarding policies to ensure that we all have access to a policy that is relevant and appropriate. This year we have adapted it to reflect this Council's specific way of working. An updated version of the proposed policy is shown at Annex A.
- 1.2 The Policy sets out a series of high level responsibilities and goes into detail on the requirements to provide clarity on who should be doing what.
- 1.3 In essence we have a duty to work with other agencies and the Policy reminds us of the Council's responsibility under the Children's Act 2004, the Care Act 2014 and other relevant legislation, which is essential to ensure that our functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and other vulnerable groups.

- 1.4 We have a shared responsibility with a variety of statutory agencies to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, ensure their safety, and prevent impairment of their health or development. As a partner agency we appreciate that safeguarding is not just the duty of Social Services and child protection specialists.
- 1.5 As a minimum all employees, Members and partners/contractors should become familiar with our Corporate Safeguarding Policy and procedures on how to report and handle incidents where we suspect abuse or neglect.

2 The Council's Commitments and Further Actions

- 2.1 We have set out a series of commitments in the Policy which state that we will seek to tackle and manage safeguarding concerns.
- 2.2 We have raised awareness of our duties through the staff induction process, making on-line safeguarding mandatory training for staff, development of an internal Safeguarding Champions Group and we will take update reports to the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- 2.3 There is mandatory training on induction for all staff which is renewable every three years. We are also working towards being able to provide a Level 2 course for frontline staff that come into regular face to face contact with customers and require more than just an awareness of the issues. We have also provided a dedicated briefing for Members and are also working toward enhancing this with a package of safeguarding training for members and senior Leadership Team, alongside bespoke enhanced safeguarding/mental capacity training for staff. These bespoke elements are subject to further investigation and budgetary provision.
- 2.4 The Safeguarding Champions Group has been in place since October 2023 (having been a previous forum that did not meet for several years) and is made up of representatives including the Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead, the Corporate Safeguarding Officer and Safeguarding Champions from Services. The forum meets every two months to discuss the direction of safeguarding delivery internally, monitoring how we are currently working and drawing on National/County and local learning to inform staff and keep their knowledge current around emerging trends.
- 2.5 We will encourage managers to reinforce awareness of safeguarding issues with their teams at team meetings to help keep this important duty in our corporate consciousness.
- 2.6 In adopting a revised Policy it will also be necessary to underpin this Policy with improved procedures that set out how staff and Members should deal with particular situations. We draw on good practice and advice from our Safeguarding Partnerships to ensure that we have a Policy and procedure that is clear and easy to follow.

- 2.7 Our membership of the Devon Districts Safeguarding Officers Network, which has representatives from both safeguarding boards and the other Devon districts ensures that we are aware of all relevant local updates, changes and emerging threats. We share these updates with our Safeguarding Champions for cascading to relevant frontline staff.
- 2.8 The Mid & East Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) also deals with some safeguarding issues on a more strategic and district-wide basis such as domestic and sexual violence and abuse, modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and preventing violent extremism. The Specialist Lead for Community Safety and Safeguarding (which encompasses the role of Corporate Safeguarding Officer) sits on the Safeguarding Champions Group and the CSP and hence is able to ensure that strong links are maintained between the two policy areas. The CSP is also currently chaired by the Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead. This provides essential continuity across the different functions/role involved with and responsible for safeguarding.

3 Policy Amendments

- 3.1 Amendments have been made to the following sections of the existing Policy in addition to minor wording changes. These reflect a significant revision and update on current Policy.
- Updates throughout to reflect internal organisational changes as well as those to external partners
 - 1.3 New section of definitions added
 - 2.1 Additional Policy aim added 'Ensure the importance of listening to children and adults at risk and responding appropriately'
 - 3.1 Scope of Policy – Care Leavers up to the age of 25 added, and includes 'employees and Members involved in decision making with regard to licensing'
 - 3.4 New paragraph on consent added.
 - 4.1.1 The six principles of safeguarding added for clarity
 - 4.1.2 Reference to new statutory guidance (December 2023) added: [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/working-together-to-safeguard-children)
 - 4.1.3 and 4.1.9 to 4.1.12 added
 - Section 5 – updated role descriptions
 - 5.5 Safeguarding Champions – title and role description updated
 - 5.9 Additional cross-referenced policies added (bottom six bullet points)
 - 6.1.1 Updated description of responsibilities for Members
 - 6.2 Bullet point 8 added – 'Ensure the Council officers take account of the Section 11 Duty in the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to ensure that the Council's functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in all decision making' to clarify statutory duty

- 6.3 Updated description of senior management responsibilities
- 6.4 Updated description of management responsibilities
- 6.5 Updated description of HR responsibilities
- Section 9 - A new section on Confidentiality and Information Sharing to provide additional guidance and clarity
- Section 10 - A new section on Mental Capacity and Best Interest
- Section 11 - A new section on Partnership Working, Escalation and Resolution
- Section 12 - A new section setting out the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibility under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 in relation to certain children and young people
- Section 13 - A new section describing the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) setting out how the organisation will respond to requests for information from the LADO
- Appendix 1 inclusion of new safeguarding summary process flowchart

4 Members and DBS checks

- 4.1 Members are currently not included in policy provisions to undertake a basic DBS check as a requirement of their role.
- 4.2 Unlike specific officer roles, Member DBS checks are not a legally mandated requirement however can be considered as a best practice from a safeguarding perspective. It is therefore a key provision that merits further consideration given the role of Members:
- As trusted community leaders at a very frontline ward level with day to day direct engagement with families including children
 - Being in receipt of sensitive and confidential information with regard to safeguarding matters and vulnerable persons where consented
 - In ensuring the Council has an adequate Corporate Safeguarding Policy in place that is resourced and implemented
 - As safeguarding promoters concerned with the protection of vulnerable people in our community
- 4.3 Many of our residents may be under an assumption our Members currently undergo the same checks as officers engaging in the frontline areas of the Council, notably across housing, public health and leisure. As such they are arguably relying upon misleading assurances including where they consent to the sharing of sensitive information.

- 4.4 A number of councils have introduced checks for all Members including those with lower-tier functions where councillors typically operate in less 'arms length' roles in the community. Nonetheless, this is a potentially sensitive subject and one where debate and any changes must be led and agreed by Members.

5 Recommendations

5.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendations are made:

1. That the Community PDG recommends the updated Corporate Safeguarding Policy to Cabinet for approval.
2. That the Community PDG recommends to Standards Committee that a Member working group is established to review the potential future inclusion of DBS checks for Members within the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and related DBS Policy.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications from updating the Policy.

However, it is proposed that face to face training for the most relevant staff teams would be beneficial to increase the awareness and understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and good practice. This approach has been successful at East Devon District Council. Detailed proposals and costing have not been developed at this stage, but it is recommended that is provided as soon as possible to enable external training to be delivered in 2024/25.

Legal Implications

The Children Act 2004 and, specifically Section 11 of the Act places a duty on key people and public bodies, including district councils, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Updated statutory guidance has been issued in 2023.

Section 6 of the Care Act 2014 requires County Councils and their relevant partners including district councils, to co-operate with each other when exercising their respective functions where they are relevant to the care and support. This co-operation can be both at a strategic level and in relation to individual cases.

There is also other relevant legislation which applies to the issue of safeguarding under which the Council has specific duties. Members will note that this legislation is listed in the Policy document and at the end of this report.

Risk Assessment

Failure to meet the requirements of the legislation could lead to children and adults at risk coming to significant harm. This could also result in legal challenge to the Council and adverse reputational damage to the Council.

Failure to take action around safeguarding is a medium risk as we have an existing Policy in place and regularly reviewing this policy keeps it up-to-date with any learning and new legislation. Therefore, the Council has a continued mitigation against those risks occurring as long as an effective policy is fully implemented.

Leadership Team and CMT provide governance to the Policy and resulting actions.

The Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead, and the Corporate Safeguarding Officer work closely with both the Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership, Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safer Devon Partnership and other district councils. This ensures the sharing of best practice and that the Council is kept up to date with any new developments or changes to requirements. This ongoing work has helped shape this policy update.

Impact on Climate Change

No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The equalities considerations are as set out in the report and the Policy. The Policy itself and processes that underpin the Policy are an important way of reducing inequality and ensuring that vulnerable people are protected.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been completed under the revised corporate template. This is attached at Annex B. It concludes that the updated Policy is overwhelmingly positive in terms of equalities and therefore does not require a full EIA.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The Policy helps the Council meet its legal responsibilities in respect to safeguarding and child protection and contributes to the Corporate Plan. An effective Corporate Safeguarding Policy, awareness and training is important to support our staff and to support the most vulnerable in the community we serve. It's particularly relevant to the housing services we provide and in support of our tenants.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Chief Officer: Simon Newcombe

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

Date: 29 February 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 07 March 2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing (and Corporate Safeguarding Lead) or Adrian Gardner, Specialist Lead for Community Safety & Safeguarding (and Corporate Safeguarding Officer)

Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk or agardner@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 255255

Background papers:

1. The Care Act 2014 in particular Sections 42 to 46 related to safeguarding, further information can be found at: [Care Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
2. The Children Act 2004, specifically Section 11 which places a duty on key people and public bodies, including district councils, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. New Statutory guidance has been issued in 2023: [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>
3. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out how all local authorities should approach their Corporate Parenting responsibilities for looked after children and care leavers. For district councils this includes Housing, Leisure and Recreation and Local Taxation Collection as set out in the [statutory guidance](#).
4. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 section 26 which places a duty on certain bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The Prevent Agenda is one of four strands which makes up the Governments counter-terrorism strategy. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents>
5. The Modern Slavery Act 2015. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>

6. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 in particular Part 10 relating to forced marriage. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents/enacted>
7. The Serious Crime Act 2015 particularly Part 5 relating to female genital mutilation, child cruelty and domestic abuse. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/contents/enacted>
8. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Part 1 Sec 3 provides that children who witness domestic abuse are now counted as victims in their own right.
9. Serious Violence Duty within the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The statutory guidance requires specified authorities (including district councils) to focus on youth violence when setting their definition of serious violence. It also encourages a focus on domestic abuse and sexual offences.
10. The Devon Adolescent Safety Framework provides a route to protect young people from extra familial violence such as exploitation and sits alongside the usual statutory child protection procedure that deal with intra familial abuse. <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/policies-and-procedures/adolescent-safety-framework-safer-me/>
11. Devon County Council procedures for managing allegations against staff and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role. [Managing allegations - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership \(devonscp.org.uk\)](#)
12. The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-standards-to-improve-safety-for-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-passengers>

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Corporate Safeguarding Policy

Version Control Sheet

Title: **Safeguarding Policy**

Purpose: Mid Devon District Council is committed to safeguarding from harm all children, young people and adults with care and support needs using any Council services and involved in any of their activities and to treat them with respect during their dealings with the Council's staff and elected members and our partners and contractors.

Owner: **Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing**

Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone Number: **01884 244615**

Date: **February 2024**

Version Number: **4.0**

Status: **Final Draft for Approval**

Review Frequency: **Every 3 years**

Next review date: **April 2027 unless the legislation has been significantly amended**

Consultation **This document was developed in consultation with the following:**

Safeguarding Champions Group
Safeguarding Policy Review Working Group
Councillors Jane Lock and David Wulff (Portfolio Holder)
Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership (Devon SCP)
Claire Fry – MDH
Laura Woon – Democratic Services Manager
Chris Grose Consulting (Housing Safeguarding Lead/external specialist)

Document History

This document obtained the following approvals and is valid on the date printed.

Title	Date	Version Approved
Safeguarding Policy – Community PDG	20/11/2018	1
Scrutiny Committee	14/01/2019	2
Cabinet	07/02/2019	2
Safeguarding Policy – Community PDG	22/03/2022	3
Cabinet	05/04/2022	3
Safeguarding Policy – Community PDG	26/03/2024	4
Cabinet	04/06/2024	4

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Mid Devon District Council (the 'Council') believes that all children, young people and adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse. The Council is committed to safeguarding from harm all children, young people and adults with care and support needs (see definition in point 3.1 relating to the Care Act 2014); that is using any Council services and involved in any activities, to be treated with respect during their dealings with the council, our partners and contractors. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

1.2 We aim to act as an exemplar of safeguarding practice providing strong leadership and improving safeguarding standards through having a robust safeguarding policy and monitoring system.

1.3 Definitions – Safeguarding of Adults

1.3.1 **Safeguarding** means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Safeguarding adults at risk includes:

- protecting their rights to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- people and organisations working together to prevent the risk of abuse or neglect, and to stop them from happening
- making sure people's wellbeing is promoted, taking their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs into account
- recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or wellbeing.

1.3.2 **Abuse** is an act, or lack of appropriate action, which causes harm or distress and occurs within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. Abuse can be:

- a crime
- perpetrated by anyone
- the result of neglect, omission, or failure to act
- unintentional or a result of a lack of knowledge
- consist of a single or repeated acts
- occurring in any relationship

1.3.3 **At Risk** includes those who are unable to take care of or protect themselves; and whose independence and well-being is at risk without support because they are vulnerable through:

- age
- having a long-term limiting illness or condition
- being in an abusive relationship
- having a physical, learning or mental health disability
- frailty
- having been in care, prison or other institution

1.3.4 An **Adult** under the scope of this policy means any person who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of, for example a physical or mental disability, a learning difficulty, reduced physical or mental capacity due to old age, dependency on drugs, alcohol or medication and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.

1.4 Definitions – Safeguarding of Children

1.4.1 Child safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking actions to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

1.4.2 A **child** is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday and includes unborn children. Due to their immaturity and dependency on others, all children are at risk of abuse.

1.4.3 The term **parent** includes carers or guardians. It means, in usual circumstances, someone who is legally entitled to take decisions on behalf of the child.

1.4.4 **Abuse or neglect** takes many forms and can be caused by single or repeated acts or a failure to act by any other person or persons, or in the case of self-neglect, the victim themselves. The circumstances of each individual case will be considered as to not limit what constitutes abuse or neglect. However the Council will reference the *Working Together* definition for abuse:

'A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.'

2. Aims of the Policy

2.1 The aims of the policy are to:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties within scope of the policy.
- Minimise chances of abuse through effective Council recruitment and selection procedures.
- Have procedures in place for dealing with concerns through the process of timely and appropriate reporting of issues to Devon County Council or other relevant agencies.
- Support the promotion of a safe working environment and a culture of care in which the rights of all children, young people and adults with care and support needs are protected and respected and have the right to be safe.
- Ensure the importance of listening to children and adults at risk and responding appropriately.
- Promote best practice in how employees, elected members and associated workers interact with children, young people and adults with care and support needs while providing Council services.
- Develop clear guidance and procedures for those employees, elected members and associated workers and ensure through training and support that they are aware of these and able to implement them.

- Provide a framework for developing partnerships with appropriate external bodies e.g., Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership and Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership, to ensure that the policy continues to reflect legal and best practice requirements in respect of the responsibility of care of children, young people and adults with care and support needs.
- Provide a framework for local Practical Guidance to exist for the consideration and management of safeguarding via the MDDC Safeguarding SharePoint Page.
- To provide a '**Summary Safeguarding Process Chart - Safeguarding Guidance for Staff and Members**' enclosed at Appendix 1 of this policy.

3. Scope of the Policy

3.1 The policy is in respect of the Council's responsibility towards:

- Children and young people legally defined as any person under the age of 18. From this point the terms child or children will be used to refer to this group.
- Care leavers up to the age of 25. The primary function for providing services specifically for care leavers in Mid Devon rests with Devon County Council. However the Council recognises its role in providing services that care leavers may access in particular its housing, homelessness and homeless prevention services.
- Adults to whom the safeguarding duty applies. These are adults with care and support needs who are defined under the Care Act 2014 and for the purposes of this policy, as anyone over the age of 18 who:
 - has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any needs) **and**;
 - is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; **and**
 - as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.
- The employees of the Council who have dealings with children, young people and adults with care and support needs and who are required to act in a position of trust and to act responsibly and within the law.
- The employees and Members of the Council who, while not required to act in a position of trust, will come into contact with members of these groups on a regular basis during the course of their work.
- Employees and Members involved in decision making with regard to licensing.
- Volunteers and other workers involved in the provision of Council services but not employed by the Council, including workers in organisations with which the Council has contracts for the delivery of services.

3.2 It covers all the functions and services of the Council, Members, staff, partners and contractors.

3.3 This document is primarily concerned with protecting children, young people and adults with care and support needs from harm and providing guidance on how to deal with issues. However it is important to remember that safeguarding has a wider meaning which includes the promotion of welfare and taking action to enable all children, young people and adults with care and support needs to have the best life outcomes.

- 3.4 The Council recognises the difference between adults at risk and children when it comes to the approaches used in safeguarding. Consent is a legal requirement for safeguarding adults, unless the adult either lacks capacity; is at significant risk of harm; a crime could be prevented or an employee is an alleged perpetrator of the suspected abuse. Consent **is not** required when considering making a safeguarding referral for a child, however in the appropriate circumstances, speaking with the parent/guardian prior to referrals is seen as best practice. We recognise the importance of the wishes and feelings of a child, however these may sometimes be contradicted in order to act in the child's best interests.
- 3.5 The policy does not cover health and safety issues related to safeguarding children such as use of play equipment or provision of food at events. Separate guidance on this and appropriate behaviours when dealing with children and adults with care and support needs, should be read in conjunction with this policy.
- 3.6 In accordance with this statutory framework, this policy should be read in conjunction with other Council policies which promote wellbeing.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 This policy is based on the Council's responsibilities under:

4.1.1 The Care Act 2014, in particular Sections 42 to 46 related to safeguarding. The Act sets out six important principles of safeguarding:

- **Empowerment:** presumption of person led decision and informed consent.
- **Prevention:** it is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality:** proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risks presented.
- **Protection:** support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership:** local solutions through services working with the communities.
- **Accountability:** accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Further information can be found at: [Care Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

4.1.2 The Children Act 2004, specifically Section 11 which places a duty on key people and public bodies, including district councils, to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. New Statutory guidance has been issued in 2023: [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

4.1.3 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out how all local authorities should approach their Corporate Parenting responsibilities for looked after children and care leavers. For district councils this includes Housing, Leisure and Recreation and Local Taxation Collection as set out in the [statutory guidance](#).

4.1.4 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 section 26 which places a duty on certain bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The Prevent Agenda is one of four strands which makes up the Governments counter-terrorism strategy. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents>

4.1.5 The Modern Slavery Act 2015. Further information can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>

- 4.1.6 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 in particular Part 10 relating to forced marriage. Further information can be found at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents/enacted>
- 4.1.7 The Serious Crime Act 2015 particularly Part 5 relating to female genital mutilation, child cruelty and domestic abuse. Further information can be found at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/9/contents/enacted>
- 4.1.8 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Part 1 Sec 3 provides that children who witness domestic abuse are now counted as victims in their own right.
- 4.1.9 Serious Violence Duty within the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The statutory guidance requires specified authorities (including district councils) to focus on youth violence when setting their definition of serious violence. It also encourages a focus on domestic abuse and sexual offences.
- 4.1.10 The Devon Adolescent Safety Framework provides a route to protect young people from extra familial violence such as exploitation and sits alongside the usual statutory child protection procedure that deal with intra familial abuse. <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/training-and-resources/policies-and-procedures/adolescent-safety-framework-safer-me/>
- 4.1.11 Devon County Council procedures for managing allegations against staff and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role. [Managing allegations - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership \(devonscp.org.uk\)](http://devonscp.org.uk)
- 4.1.12 The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-standards-to-improve-safety-for-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-passengers>

5. Supporting structures, policies and procedures

- 5.1 The Corporate Management Team (CMT) has oversight of safeguarding practice within the Council and responsibility to drive forward improvements and disseminate and implement the policy within their area of responsibility. The Group meets weekly however a specific safeguarding update is presented to CMT quarterly. This will be disseminated to Leadership Team (LT) informally, although a more formal annual report will be submitted to LT
- 5.2 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the Council's safeguarding arrangements. The Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing is currently appointed as the '**Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead**'.
- 5.3 In addition the Council has appointed a '**Corporate Safeguarding Officer**' responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy and providing a single point of contact.
- 5.4 The **Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead** has responsibility for:
- recommending to LT and Members new/revised policies, so that the Council can safeguard children and adults in accordance with its legal obligations.
 - developing procedures, implementing a performance framework and reporting on the Council's safeguarding performance to LT, CMT and Members.
 - promoting the policy within the Council.

- procuring and directly providing training, so that officers can undertake their safeguarding roles successfully and efficiently.
- ensuring there is a secure central record relating to allegations and investigations.
- working with other district authorities to share best practice and create a shared culture for Devon.
- advocating the importance of safeguarding to partners, contractors and customers
- ensuring all safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines are implemented and promoted

5.5 In addition the Corporate Safeguarding Officer chairs a Safeguarding Champions Group made up of a number of staff across the different services of the Council. This group will have an operational overview of safeguarding issues in service areas, together with actions that could be taken.

5.6 **Safeguarding Champions** have responsibility for:

- Receiving concerns, discussing them with whoever has raised the concern and taking advice from the relevant partner agency / Devon County Council service: this could include complex matters such as consent and whether parents/carers should be notified.
- Supporting colleagues from other Services with advice, if their relevant Safeguarding Champion is unavailable.
- Liaison with the relevant Team / Service Manager, and making a decision about how to proceed and whether to make a formal referral. If there is disagreement on the appropriate course of action to take then the Corporate Safeguarding Officer / Corporate Safeguarding Lead will advise and make the final decision. Where a member of staff is dissatisfied with the decision of the Corporate Safeguarding Officer / Lead, they should report their concerns to their line manager in the first instance and can still make a referral if they have strong concerns.
- Ensuring the procedure is followed on such matters as making a referral, confidentiality and recording.
- Working with colleagues to improve practice across the organisation.
- In the event of an incident or query, if a Safeguarding Champion or the Corporate Safeguarding Officer (or escalation to the Corporate Safeguarding Lead) are not available, staff should go straight to the relevant partner agency / Devon County Council service. They can be supported by their line manager but details of any incident must not be shared any wider than absolutely necessary.
- Attending appropriate courses and remaining updated on safeguarding legislation, policy and practice.

5.7 Any staff who has a safeguarding concern should in the first instance discuss the matter with any one of the Safeguarding Champions and/or their line manager who will make a decision whether or not to refer the matter to the appropriate external organisation. A suite of supporting procedural documents is made available to all staff on the Council's SharePoint site.

5.8 The Mid & East Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) also deals with some safeguarding issues on more strategic and district-wide basis such as domestic and sexual violence and

abuse, modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and preventing violent extremism. The Specialist Lead for Community Safety and Safeguarding (which encompasses the role of Corporate Safeguarding Officer) sits on the Safeguarding Champions group and the CSP and hence is able to ensure that strong links are maintained between the two policy areas.

5.9 The Mid Devon Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy contains a commitment that the Council will appropriately risk assess all complaints and prioritise accordingly, acting as swiftly as possible to protect people and property. There may be a legal obligation to share relevant information with other statutory agencies e.g. if there is a safeguarding concern about the complainant where there are allegations of domestic abuse, and/ or about the perpetrator.

5.9 This policy should also be used in conjunction with the following documents:

- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Complaints & Feedback Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Health & Safety at Work guidance
- Disclosure & Barring Service Policy
- Modern Slavery Transparency Statement
- Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy
- Statement of Licensing Policy
- The Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- The Mid Devon Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- The Mid Devon Housing Hoarding Policy
- The Mid Devon Housing Vulnerability Policy
- Domestic Violence & Abuse Employment Policy

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies at all levels of the Council. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

6.1.1 Members

Members are collectively responsible for ensuring that the Council has a policy, which adequately provides protection for children and adults with care and support needs in receipt of its services and for the regular review of this policy in the light of changes to legislation or regulation.

Each Mid Devon District Councillor has the personal responsibility to comply with the policy.

Members are responsible for:

- Undertaking mandatory safeguarding training upon induction and to attend refresher training when provided.
- Ensuring that they are familiar with and understand the policies and procedures relating to their Council work with or in the vicinity of children and adults with care and support needs.
- Treating all those children and adults with whom they come into contact while carrying out their Council duties equally and with respect.
- Reporting to the Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead (or in his/her absence, the Corporate Safeguarding Officer), any concerns they may have about abuse or a lack of care

of children and adults with care and support needs either from other Councillors, staff, from carers, parents or those in place of a parent or between members of the group.

- Members are encouraged to report urgent concerns directly to Devon County Council Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (for Children) or Care Direct (Adults), or other agencies such as the Police.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Leisure has lead responsibility for safeguarding, supported by other relevant Cabinet Members as necessary.

Members of the Regulatory Committee have responsibility for ensuring that those hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers to whom they grant licences are fit and proper people to hold such licences.

The Democratic Services Manager will provide information on the training needs of elected members and preferred methods of learning

6.2 Employees

All employees and particularly those working with children and adults with care and support needs are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are familiar with and understand the policies and procedures relating to their work with or in the vicinity of children and adults with care and support needs.
- Ensuring that they feel confident in working within this environment and working with their managers to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to carry out their tasks in this context.
- Treating all those children and adults with whom they come into contact while carrying out their work equally and with respect.
- Listening to and taking account of the wishes and feelings of children and adults that they work with, both in individual decisions and the development of service
- Reporting to a Safeguarding Champion or line manager, or to make a MASH enquiry (for Children) or contact Care Direct (for adults) with a referral, if they have concerns about abuse or a lack of care of children and adults with care and support needs, either from other staff, carers, parents or those in place of a parent or between members of the group, providing they feel confident and competent to do so
- Taking personal responsibility for their own welfare related to distressing or difficult disclosure of case outcomes and engaging in appropriate levels of support as required by the situation or the organisation.
- Undertaking mandatory safeguarding training upon induction and every three years.
- Ensuring they take account of the Section 11 Duty in the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to ensure that the Council's functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in all decision making.

6.3 LT are required to ensure good governance of the Council and has responsibility to make sure this policy is consistently applied and taken into account when setting strategic direction and reviewing performance.

Members of CMT are further responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy and ensuring that all necessary procedures and practices are in place to provide adequate protection both for the individuals in these groups but also protection for the employees involved with them.
- Ensuring that the procurement framework for the Council includes expectations upon contractors to demonstrate effective safeguarding practices for all their staff.
- Identifying, commissioning and monitoring the Council's safeguarding training needs and attainment of the required training standards.

6.4 Operations and Service Leads (or equivalent senior line manager roles) are responsible for:

- Identifying those services and posts that are likely to have an involvement with children and adults with care and support needs, and undertaking an appropriate risk assessment of posts in respect of Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosure requirements.
- Ensuring that those people appointed by them to the Council, whose normal duties fall into the definition of regulated activity as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, are subject to the appropriate level of DBS disclosure and are appropriately qualified and/or trained in working with these groups.
- Ensuring that proper records are kept of any incidents occurring within their service and that these are held securely and/or passed on to the Council's human resources team if the incident involves an employee.
- Ensuring that employees, volunteers and other workers dealing with these groups are adequately trained and aware of their responsibilities in this area.
- Ensuring that external contractors delivering Council services are aware of the Council's expectation that workers are aware of and abide by the standards of behaviour expected of council employees.
- Ensuring that any evidence or complaint of abuse or lack of care is reported to the appropriate body e.g. Devon County Council, Safeguarding Board or the Police, and to the Council's Human Resources team where employees, volunteers and contractors are involved and to the Monitoring Officer where Members are involved.
- Ensuring that employees and others do not work with children or adults with care and support needs on regulated activities without an appropriate DBS disclosure.
- Working with other associated agencies to ensure the proper transfer of information relating to dealings with children and adults with care and support needs, where necessary.
- Ensuring that adequate supervision and support is available to those who have been directly involved in dealing with safeguarding cases, including a debrief of the case and any relevant outcomes.

6.5 Human Resources are responsible for:

- Working with senior managers in maintaining a record of those posts requiring a DBS disclosure together with the level of disclosure required, and checking when DBS checks need updating.
- Developing and maintaining a robust Recruitment policy and associated working practices in line with the principles of 'Safer Recruitment' (See [Safer recruitment | NSPCC Learning](#)).

- Ensuring that DBS Disclosures are carried out in compliance with legislation and DBS guidance.
- Maintaining a DBS Policy in accordance with best practice.
- Supporting senior managers in dealing with allegations of abuse or lack of care by staff.
- Referring information to the DBS and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) about employees who have been dismissed or removed from working with vulnerable groups (or would have been had they not left/resigned) as a result of a relevant caution/conviction, conduct that has harmed or put a child/vulnerable adult at risk of harm, or satisfied the 'Harm Test' in relation to vulnerable groups.

6.6 **Volunteers, contractors, suppliers and consultants and other workers** are responsible for:

- Working with employees of the Council, to the same standard, in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and adults with care and support needs within their scope.
- Participating in any training or development opportunities offered to them to improve their knowledge of skills in this area.

6.7 A requirement to comply with equality legislation will be included in all contracts and service level/delivery agreements. Failure to comply may lead to the termination of contracts. Organisations doing business with the Council are welcome to adopt the Council's safeguarding policy for their own use.

7. **Events and land hire**

7.1 Any organisation who has lease agreements or regularly hire out or lease Council facilities or open spaces, should have appropriate safeguarding procedures in place. They should also ensure any volunteer or employee that has unsupervised contact with children, young people or adults with care and support needs undertakes a relevant DBS check.

7.2 A positive disclosure is a certificate that shows cautions, warnings or convictions. They may show spent convictions and also unspent convictions and for enhanced checks, they will also show information that a police force deems relevant to disclose based on the nature of the job that the individual will be undertaking. The organisation will be required to use a positive disclosure & barring service disclosure decision sheet to make an assessment about a volunteers' suitability to be named as the safeguarding representative for the event.

7.3 Any safeguarding concerns on Council land should be reported to Corporate Safeguarding Officer or a safeguarding representative. (Not negating a need to call police in a safeguarding emergency) safeguarding representatives are able to provide further advice and support to groups or organisations.

8. **Grant applications**

8.1 All organisations seeking funding from the Council are expected to have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place according to the level and type of their activities. Such policies should include DBS checks for all employees and volunteers working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs. Evidence of these policies and procedures may be requested as part of the grant making process.

8.2 As a minimum, an organisation will be expected to have a policy statement or procedure relating to safeguarding. Commissioned, contracted or grant funded organisations with minimal contact

with children, young people and vulnerable adults may wish to adopt the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy and procedures if deemed suitable.

9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 9.1 The Council will share information appropriately with partners that have a statutory responsibility to investigate safeguarding concerns, including Devon County Council and Devon & Cornwall Police.
- 9.2 Information can be shared lawfully within the parameters of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Council will ensure that all colleagues understand that data protection does not prevent the sharing of information where it would protect the welfare of and/or promote the wellbeing of adults or children.
- 9.3 Emergency or life-threatening situations may warrant the sharing of relevant information with the relevant emergency services without consent.
- 9.4 It is very important that the risk of sharing information is also considered. In some cases, such as domestic abuse or hate crime, it is possible that sharing information could increase the risk to the individual. Safeguarding partners shall work jointly to provide advice, support and protection to the individual.

10. Mental Capacity and Best Interest

- 10.1 People must be assumed to have capacity to make their own decisions and be given all practicable help before they are considered not to be able to do so. If there is a concern that an adult may lack capacity around making a specific decision a referral must be made to Devon County Council Adult Social Care.
- 10.2 Where an adult is found to lack capacity, then any action taken, or any decision made for, or on their behalf, must be made in their best interests. Professionals and other stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure they understand and always work in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Any concerns must be referred to Devon County Council Adult Social Care.

11. Partnership Working, Escalation and Resolution

- 11.1 **Section 42 Enquiries** – The Council recognises that safeguarding adults at risk requires a multi-agency approach. Devon County Council may carry out Section 42 Enquiries which may involve this Council sharing information, attending meetings, putting in protection measures to protect an adult from abuse and/or neglect and in some cases perhaps leading on an enquiry. The Council will comply with obligations highlighted within the Care Act 2014 in relation to Section 42 Enquiries.
- 11.2 **Disagreements** - Effective working together depends on resolving disagreements to the satisfaction of colleagues and partner agencies, and a belief in partnership and joint working for the ultimate benefit of the adult at risk, child or young person. The focus within this Council will be to ensure resolution and the continuation of good partnership working, managing disagreements professionally and escalating concerns where necessary. At no time must any professional disagreement undermine the safeguarding of an adult at risk. The welfare and safety of the individual must remain paramount throughout.
- 11.3 Where a Council employee feels they do not have sufficient experience to challenge a partner agency, they must seek guidance from the Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead or the Corporate Safeguarding Officer.

11.4 **Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)** - A Section 44 Safeguarding Adult Reviews will be undertaken by the Torbay & Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership in the event of a tragedy or near miss. The objective of the review is to learn lessons and not to apportion blame. The Council will co-operate with the Torbay & Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership in carrying out its statutory obligations under Section 44 of the Care Act 2014.

11.5 **Safeguarding Practice Reviews** – The Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership are required, under the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, to undertake a Rapid Review for serious child safeguarding cases where:

- abuse or neglect of a child is suspected and
- the child has died or been seriously harmed.

All agencies, such as the Council, who had been involved with the subject child or family will be required to contribute to the Rapid Review. The Council will co-operate with any such reviews.

12. Corporate Parenting

12.1 Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 applies a set of Corporate Parenting principles to any council “whenever they exercise a function in relation to looked-after children or care leavers”. For a district council the primary impact of this is in relation to the duty to accommodate, council tax support, access to leisure and employment skills development.

12.2 The seven Corporate Parenting principles set out the principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living

12.3 The lead officer for Corporate Parenting is the Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead and the lead member is the Portfolio Holder for Community & Leisure which includes safeguarding.

12.4 Section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires each local authority to consult on and publish a local offer for its care leavers. The local offer should provide information about all the services and support that is available to care leavers from the local authority, including information about both their statutory entitlements as well as any discretionary support that a local authority chooses to provide.

13. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) process

13.1 The LADO is a statutory role which sits within Devon County Council Children Services. The LADO is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them or could cause them harm. The LADO also gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people. Included in this group are volunteers, agency staff and foster carers as well as people who are in a position of authority and have regular contact with children.

- 13.2 The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated they may pose a risk of harm to children.
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children.
- 13.3 Allegations of non-recent abuse should be referred in the same way as contemporary concerns.
- 13.4 If a Council staff member or Member becomes aware of a situation as outlined in 13.2 above they should immediately alert the Corporate Safeguarding Lead (and in his absence the Chief Executive or a Director) and either:
- the Corporate Manager for People, Governance & Human Resources where a member of staff is involved, or
 - The Monitoring Officer where an elected member is involved, or
 - the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation & Housing (where different to the Corporate Safeguarding Lead) in cases which involve a licence issued by the Council,
- who will then inform the LADO within 1 working day.
- 13.5 Having assessed the referral the LADO may arrange one or more Managing Allegations Meetings liaising with the police and other agencies as necessary. **Attendance at a LADO Managing Allegations Meeting should be always be made by two officers together to ensure that if total confidentiality is required (e.g. to safeguard an ongoing police investigation) the weight of responsibility does not fall to one officer alone.**

14. Review

- 14.1 This policy and the related guidance will be reviewed **every three years** or sooner if required by the Designated Corporate Safeguarding Lead and/or CMT. This will include an on-going review of guidance, both nationally and locally, to ensure the Council meets requirements to safeguard children, young people and adults, and there are appropriate procedures and protocols in place.
- 14.2 The Council's scrutiny function will also have a role in scrutinizing and challenging the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and the work of the Safeguarding Champions Group. An annual report will be submitted to the Community PDG.

This policy should be read with the Council guidance and procedures.

This policy can be made available in large print and other formats such as printed on yellow paper, taped, etc. as requested.

Appendix 1 MDDC Summary Safeguarding Process - Safeguarding Guidance for Staff and Members.

EVERY Staff & Member has a DUTY to report Safeguarding Concerns and share information.

If you think a child or adult is in immediate danger or a crime has been committed, then always contact the police on 999.

Remember to stick to what is factual or your professional opinion when reporting safeguarding concerns.

Check the client's file/records for any professionals they are already working with and keep them involved.

Staff member discusses the concern about a child or adult at risk with their line manager and/or Safeguarding Champion.

Or the Corporate Safeguarding Officer;
Or the Corporate Safeguarding Lead.

If it involves a member of staff, then raise with HR.
If it involves a Councillor, then raise with the Monitoring Officer

Councillors wishing to raise a concern can seek advice from the Safeguarding Lead (or Safeguarding Officer) but should report direct to Care Direct or MASH and send a copy of the form to the

Staff member records details of the incident if not already done so and what action they took following the **Safeguarding Policy.**

[For Adults](#)

Contact Care Direct for advice – 0345 155 1007. Use the referral form on the [Torbay & Devon Safeguarding Adult Partnership](#)

[For Children](#)

Use the DCFP online link [Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) for making a request for support to MASH safeguarding officer.

Please ensure you have forwarded a copy of the referral form to the MDDC Safeguarding Officer.

If no automated email receipt is received within 24 hrs:
Chase Care Direct or MASH. The form may need to be submitted again.

If it is required the Corporate Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at Devon County Council if the allegation involves a member of staff, or if a Councillor the referral will be made in liaison with the Monitoring Officer.

If a concern is raised to Social Services via Care Direct they will start an enquiry if it reaches the Section 42 Care Act criteria.

If a referral is made to MASH for a child they will start a support enquiry if it meets the threshold.

An email recording the safeguarding decision will be sent to the originating officer for their info. Please forward this to the MDDC safeguarding officer

If your concerns need an urgent response call the agency you have referred to and prompt them to check your referral.
This part of the process should be completed within 24hrs.

The agency that concerns have been raised with should confirm receipt within 24 hrs. Young Person/Child MASH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub - [Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership](#). 0345 155 1071
Adults Care Direct - [Torbay & Devon Safeguarding Adult Partnership](#) 0345 155 1007

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Equality Impact Assessment

Purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment process:

The Equality Act (2010) introduced the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) requiring public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Consideration must be given to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act (2010). Assessments should consider relevant evidence relating to persons with protected characteristics in relation to assessments of potential impact.

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that policies, functions, plans or decisions (hereafter referred to as 'policy/ decision') do not create unnecessary barriers for people protected under the Act. Where negative impacts are identified these should be eliminated or minimised, and opportunities for positive impact should be maximised. An EIA is not required for a decision in relation to an individual.

Screening is a short exercise to determine whether a policy/ decision is relevant to equalities, and if so, whether a full EIA should be conducted.

Section 1: Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Basic Details	
Title and description of the policy/ decision:	Review & Update of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy
Job title of the person(s) undertaking the assessment:	Specialist Lead for Community Safety & Safeguarding
Council service:	Public Health
Date of assessment:	13 th February 2024

What are the aims, purposes, objectives and proposed outcomes of the policy/ decision?

This is a review of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding Policy taking into account updates to legislation and best practice, and the feedback from partner organisations and an internal working group.

The policy was last reviewed by the Community PDG and adopted by Cabinet in March/April 2022. The policy would normally be reviewed every 3 years. The next review is due in April 2027.

In essence the Council has a duty to work with other agencies and the policy reminds us of the Council's responsibility under the Children's Act 2004, the Care Act 2014 and other legislation, which is essentially to ensure that our functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and other vulnerable groups.

We have a shared responsibility with a variety of statutory agencies to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, ensure their safety, and prevent impairment of their health or development. As a partner agency we appreciate that safeguarding is not just the duty of Devon County Council Adult Social Care and child protection specialists.

The aims of the Policy are to:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties within scope of the policy.
- Minimise chances of abuse through effective Council recruitment and selection procedures.
- Have procedures in place for dealing with concerns through the process of timely and appropriate reporting of issues to Devon County Council or other relevant agencies.
- Support the promotion of a safe working environment and a culture of care in which the rights of all children, young people and adults with care and support needs are protected and respected and have the right to be safe.
- Ensure the importance of listening to children and adults at risk and responding appropriately.
- Promote best practice in how employees, elected members and associated workers interact with children, young people and adults with care and support needs while providing Council services.

What are the aims, purposes, objectives and proposed outcomes of the policy/ decision?

- Develop clear guidance and procedures for those employees, elected members and associated workers and ensure through training and support that they are aware of these and able to implement them.
- Provide a framework for developing partnerships with appropriate external bodies e.g., Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership and Torbay and Devon Safeguarding Adults Partnership, to ensure that the policy continues to reflect legal and best practice requirements in respect of the responsibility of care of children, young people and adults with care and support needs.
- Provide a framework for local Practical Guidance to exist for the consideration and management of safeguarding via the MDDC Safeguarding SharePoint Page.

Further Details

<p>Who may be affected by the policy/ decision?</p>	<p>The Policy gives guidance and policy framework for staff and Members, and our contractors and volunteers, based on our legal obligations, good practise and local organisational arrangements in Devon. The policy will support our own staff and Members who may find themselves at risk or vulnerable. The policy supports our service users (including tenants) particularly those who are vulnerable adults with care needs, and children and young people under 18 where we have specific legal duties.</p>
<p>How have stakeholders been involved in the development of the policy/ decision? E.g. a consultation exercise</p>	<p>An internal working group of staff and members met to review the policy and raise issues for review or clarification. Devon County Council officers have reviewed the policy, and an independent consultant working with Mid Devon Homes has also reviewed the policy from a housing regulatory perspective.</p>
<p>Will there be scope for prompt, independent reviews and appeals against decisions arising from the policy/ decision?</p>	<p>The Policy is generated in response to a range of legal duties imposed on the Council by legislation. In the main, the Council refers safeguarding concerns to other agencies (such as Devon County Council) for their evaluation and formal decision making under the legislation.</p>

To which part(s) of the Public Sector Equality Duties is the policy/ decision relevant:	Yes	No	Details
1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Advance equality of opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

To which part(s) of the Public Sector Equality Duties is the policy/ decision relevant:	Yes	No	Details
3. Foster good relations between different groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Which of the protected characteristics is the policy/ decision relevant to?

Tick and briefly describe any likely equalities impact (positive, negative, or neutral)

Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Comments
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Policy covers domestic violence and abuse which has a disproportionate impact on women.
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The purpose of the Policy is to demonstrate the Council's commitment to safeguarding from harm all children, young people and adults with care and support needs using any council services and involved in any of their activities, and to treat them with respect during their dealings with the Council, our partners and contractors.
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Policy has two key purposes, one of which is to demonstrate the Council's commitment to safeguarding from harm all adults with care and support needs using any Council services and involved in any of their activities, and to treat them with respect during their dealings with the Council, our partners and contractors.
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No specific impacts
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Policy includes actions to protect people experiencing cultural issues such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation which tend to affect young people from ethnic minority backgrounds disproportionately.

Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Comments
				The Policy covers Modern Slavery which can affect migrant workers.
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No specific impacts
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No specific impacts
Pregnancy/ maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No specific impacts
Marriage and Civil partnership*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No specific impacts

*Applies only to Employment and the duty to give regard to the elimination of discrimination.

Decision by Corporate Manager to recommend this policy/ decision for an Equality Impact Assessment?

Yes/ No

If the answer is “Yes”, please continue to the Section 2 and complete the Equality Impact Assessment. If the answer is “No”, please give a brief reason here.

The Policy is overwhelmingly positive in terms of equalities with no negative impacts identified. It specifically sets out how the Council will meet its legal duties and also apply best practice in safeguarding vulnerable children and adults.

EIA Screening Complete

Section 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Evidence and Consultation

What existing sources of information have you gathered to help identify how people covered by the protected characteristics may be affected by this policy/ decision? E.g. consultations, national or local data and/or research, complaints or customer feedback. Please identify any gaps in the available information that might make it difficult to form an opinion about the effect of the policy on different groups.

Please complete this table for all the Protected Characteristics. If you have identified any negative impacts you will need to consider how these can be justified or where possible mitigated either to reduce or remove them. (Please add rows where needed)

Protected Characteristic	Potential Impacts/ Issues Identified/ Opportunities identified	Mitigation required (action) or Justification	Lead Officer and target completion date	What is the expected outcome from the action?
Sex				
Age				
Disability				
Religion or Belief				
Race				
Sexual Orientation				
Gender Reassignment				

Protected Characteristic	Potential Impacts/ Issues Identified/ Opportunities identified	Mitigation required (action) or Justification	Lead Officer and target completion date	What is the expected outcome from the action?
Pregnancy/ maternity				
Marriage and civil partnership*				

*(Applies only to Employment and the duty to give regard to the elimination of discrimination)

Please provide details of arrangements to monitor and review the policy/ decision and any mitigating actions or actions to promote equality:

Please state where the EIA will be published (e.g. on the Mid Devon District Council website):

=====

Equality Impact Assessment Sign off

For completion by Corporate Manager

Are you prepared to agree and sign off the EIA?

Yes **No**

If "No", provide details of why and next steps:

Name:

Job Title:

Date:

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Report for: Community PDG

Date of Meeting:	26 March 2024
Subject:	COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE, PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLAN REPORT 2024 - 2025
Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Wulff, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure
Responsible Officer:	Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing (Chair of the East and Mid Devon CSP)
Exempt:	Not Applicable
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This is an annual report to provide an update on the East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities and the planned activities of the Partnership for the coming year 2024/25.

Community safety relates to all crime, anti-social behaviour, harm and other behaviours that negatively affect the lives and local environment of communities. Partners with responsibility for community safety are required to protect communities from the threat and consequences of these issues by reducing their incidence and fear of their occurrence.

Following review by the statutory partners within the CSP, the overarching priorities for the CSP remain unchanged for 2024/25, but with a new Serious Violence Duty on 'specified authorities' (including district councils) introduced in 2023 and requiring the CSP partners to work together and publish a joint strategy and action plan to reduce serious violence in their areas. The CSP must therefore take due accord of the strategy in its priorities going forward and the review identified that the existing overarching

priorities of the partnership were consistent with this enabling continuity. The Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 was published in January 2024 in accordance with legal requirements and deadline. A separate paper specifically on this strategy and its proposed adoption into the Council's policy framework to formalise this in the context of the work of the CSP is provided separately on this PDG meeting agenda.

The future working of CSPs and their formal relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is under review by the Government following a consultation exercise during 2023 and a range of recommendations have been accepted by the Government in November 2023. Proposed changes are nonetheless not expected to directly impact on the CSP priorities or activities for 2024/25.

Furthermore, as part of the national Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Action Plan published on 27 March 2023, the government has also consulted on strengthening some of the powers in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which may present future opportunities for delivery of identified CSP priorities regarding ASB.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. That the Community PDG notes the ongoing priorities of the East and Mid Devon CSP and planned activities for 2024-25 including the new statutory Serious Violence Duty.**
- 2. That the Community PDG notes the potential changes proposed to strengthen the working relationship between PCCs and CSPs, and proposals to change and extend certain anti-social behaviour powers.**

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was formed in order to meet our statutory duties under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and is a multi-agency group working together to reduce crime and disorder.
- 1.2 The formal operating structure of the partnership has been agreed through Terms of Reference. Oversight is provided by a CSP Board which hold quarterly meetings and comprises both statutory and other key partner agencies. The role of chairing the partnership can be met by any of the statutory partners within the partnership and currently this function is carried out by Mid Devon District Council.
- 1.3 The Police and Justice Act 2006 requires the local authority to put in place a method of scrutinising the manner in which the partnership functions. Every local authority must have in place a committee with the power to review and scrutinise

the actions of the CSP and make recommendations about how it functions. The East and Mid Devon CSP is scrutinised through this Council's Scrutiny Committee via an annual report. The most recent report to the Scrutiny Committee was in December 2023.

1.4 The statutory CSP partners in local context are:

- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Devon County Council
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- Probation Service
- East Devon District Council
- Mid Devon District Council (current Chair organisation)
- NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (One Devon)

1.5 The principal purpose of this report is for the Community Policy Development Group to be aware of the planned activities for the CSP going forward.

2 Priority Areas 2024/25

2.1 The East & Mid Devon CSP Priorities for 2022-25 were based on the evidence given in the Safer Devon Partnership (SDP) Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2021/22. An interim update to this assessment was completed in 2022/23. Of concern is the uninterrupted rising trend in issues including domestic abuse and hate crime. This is indicative of the continued challenges faced by families and communities from 'hidden harms' that have been intensified by the pandemic amongst other factors, increasing the vulnerability of populations and their exposure to harm.

2.2 Current financial pressures and cost of living challenges facing households and wider society are highly likely to influence the occurrence, complexity and intensity of hidden harms including domestic and intimate partner violence and abuse. Violence Against Women and Girls, sexual violence and weapons related violence remain substantial issues of concern. Against this backdrop, community safety remains an important area of focus for national government with new policy and legislation continuing to be announced.

2.3 The CSP priority areas of focus for 2024/25 are based on these Strategic Assessments that have been discussed, shaped and agreed by the CSP board members:

- **Violent Crime**
 - Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence & Abuse
 - Street safety (including street drinking)
 - Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking
 - Violence Against Women & Girls

- **Youth Risk & Vulnerability**
 - o Community Wellbeing (including mental health)
 - o Exploitation
 - o Radicalisation and violent extremism (Prevent)
 - o Anti-social Behaviour
 - o Hate Crime and related community tensions
- **Serious Violence Duty (new for 2024)**
- **Martyn's Law - new legislation expected**
- **Review of Community Safety Partnerships & ASB powers**

Trauma Informed Approach

2.4 We will continue to promote a 'Trauma Informed' approach across the partner agencies. This approach encourages practitioners and staff to recognise that many service users and community members have experienced some form of traumatic event that they are living with day to day, and may impact on their life choices, activities and actions. This is even more evident as services notice the increases in domestic abuse, child on parent abuse and an increase in substance and alcohol misuse during the pandemic.

Serious Violence Duty

2.5 The Council became subject to the new statutory Serious Violence Duty in 2023. The Duty requires 'specified authorities' to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in an area, the cause of that violence, and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence. The Duty does not specify a lead authority to be responsible for coordinating activity, or prescribe a structure in which the prescribed authorities are expected to work. Local policing bodies (PCC) are responsible for allocating grant funding for authorities under the Duty.

2.6 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has been amended to ensure preventing and reducing serious violence is a statutory priority for CSPs. We are participating in a Devon working group that has developed a Devon-wide strategic needs assessment and a Devon Serious Violence Strategy which was adopted by all partners in January 2024 (<https://saferdevon.co.uk/about-safer-devon/> - scroll down to the Serious Violence section). It will influence and shape activity by CSPs in the next 12 months and thereafter. This is the subject of a separate report to the Community PDG on this agenda.

2.7 The Duty also requires an annual review of the Serious Violence Strategy by the Safer Devon Partnership / CSP. Further information on the Duty, the Devon strategy and governance arrangements is set out in the separate serious violence duty paper.

Martyn's Law

2.8 The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill is proposed legislation that would enhance the security of public venues and events from terrorist attacks. The Bill is also known as 'Martyn's Law' is named after Martyn Hett, who was killed in the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017. The law would require venues to assess and mitigate potential risks, and to be prepared to deal with incidents. The law was confirmed in the King's Speech on 7 November 2023 to be on the legislative agenda. This law has potential implications around additional focus for the CSP as well as Local Authority Licensing functions.

2.9 Ahead of introduction to Parliament, the government has indicated it intends to launch a public consultation on the standard tier ensuring the Bill strikes the right balance between public safety and avoiding undue burdens on smaller premises, such as village halls and other community venues.

2.10 Martyn's Law will improve protective security and organisational preparedness across the UK by mandating, for the first time, those responsible for certain premises and events to consider the terrorist risk and how they would respond to an attack (also referred to as a PROTECT duty).

2.11 Martyn's Law will follow a tiered approach, with the level of security measures required depending on the size and type of venue. If the capacity of the venue is less than 100 people, it will fall outside of the scope of Martyn's Law. These premises will be encouraged to adopt the spirit of the legislation and undertake voluntary measures to reduce the risk of terrorism attacks.

2.10 Tier 1 (standard tier): Applies to locations with a maximum capacity of over 100 people. These locations will be required to undertake basic security measures, such as staff training, public awareness campaigns, and the development of a preparedness plan.

2.11 Tier 2 (enhanced tier): Applies to locations with a maximum capacity of over 800 people. These locations will be required to conduct a risk assessment and develop a detailed security plan in addition to the Tier 1 measures. Those with maximum capacity of over 5,000 people or those hosting specific types of events, such as major sporting events or concerts will be subject to a more rigorous risk assessment and security planning process.

3 National Review of Community Safety Partnerships and ASB powers - Conclusions & Next Steps

3.1 Based on consultation responses, the Home Office will seek to improve and clarify the ways in which CSPs and PCCs work together by taking forward the following proposals. The measures aim to enhance strategic alignment between CSPs and PCCs and deliver more effective outcomes for the public in tackling crime and ASB:

- Create a requirement for the CSP to include in their strategic assessments how it has had due regard to the police and crime objectives set out in the police and crime plan.
- Create a requirement for the CSP to send a copy of its strategic assessment to the PCC or equivalent.
- Create a requirement for the CSP to publish the executive summary of their strategic assessment.
- Clarify how PCCs can best fulfil their duty to have regard to the priorities of the responsible authorities making up the CSPs in the police force area.
- Create a power for PCCs to make recommendations on the activity of CSPs to support the delivery of the objectives set out in the police and crime plan.
- Create a duty on CSPs to take those recommendations into account. A CSP will not be mandated to implement the recommendation but should demonstrate consideration.

3.2 Within Devon there will be important requirements to set out how the upper tier Community Safety Partnership (Safer Devon Partnership) and existing strategic needs assessments are updated and link into the work of district level CSPs. This close strategic and delivery alignment is already in place but will require review in the context of these specific proposals once formalised.

3.3 Furthermore, the Home Office will explore, either through legislation, updated statutory guidance or best practice documents, how to take forward the following proposals, which all received generally favourable feedback from respondents:

- Create a duty for PCCs to promote awareness of ASB Case Reviews
- Create a duty for PCCs to provide a route for victims to query the outcome made by the relevant agency following the ASB Case Review
- Create a duty for relevant bodies to report, at the end of a reporting period, the following to PCCs:
 - the number of complaints about anti-social behaviour made to the relevant bodies in the period

- the types of incident to which those complaints related
- the locations in which those incidents occurred, including whether any parts of the local government area appear to the relevant bodies to have a high prevalence of such incidents
- the number of ASB case reviews carried out by those bodies in the period
- the outcome of those ASB case reviews
- Extend the power to implement dispersal orders to local authorities
- Extend the timeframe for a dispersal order from 48 hours to 72 hours, with a mandatory review at 48 hours
- Extend the power to implement a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to the police
- Lower the age of a Community Protection Notice (CPN) from 16yrs to 10yrs
- Increase the upper limit for a Fixed Penalty Notice for breaches of a PSPO and a CPN from £100 to £500
- Extend the timeframe that relevant agencies can apply for a Closure Order from 48 hours after service of a Closure Notice through the courts to 72 hours
- Extend the Closure Power to registered housing providers
- Extend the power of arrest to all breaches of a Civil Injunction
- Extend the powers available under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) to allow CSAS officers to enforce breaches of Community Protection Notices and PSPOs

4 Action Plan 2024 – 2025

4.1 Within the above context, the work of the CSP during 2024/25 will focus on the following activities:

1. Continued Partnership working with other Devon CSPs to consider joint project working and funding applications.
2. Review the approach and co-ordination with other agencies in tackling youth ASB, and subject to agreement, re-initiating a Mid Devon Youth ASBAT (ASB Action Team) forum enabling case reviews and a joined up multi-agency approach
3. Work with East Devon District Council to share the resources of their new ASB officer, using serious violence funding to purchase one day per week for Mid Devon.
4. Linked to the review above, produce an ASB Toolkit and work with the Police to introduce new Police processes for the roll-out of CPW/CPN legal powers. Provide local training for practitioners and partners to ensure improved use of powers.

5. Roll-out of delegated powers to Mid Devon Housing under the ASB toolkit including Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs)
6. Link into the evidence base for Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence Working Group at Peninsula and Devon level as required under new Duty, and develop a support the development of the overarching Strategy delivery plan for 2024/25 onwards
7. Review further support, training and awareness raising for staff and practitioners on Trauma Informed Approach. This will focus specific services and areas where best practice can the highest impact on transitioning from being *Trauma Aware*, to being *Trauma informed* - this follows up on Council endorsement in late 2022 to work towards a corporate approach where no specific budget resources were available in the 23/24 budget to deliver this more holistically
8. Supporting communities, organisations and partners to have an increased awareness and understanding of the community safety priorities and their role in tackling these using a systemic model.
9. Continued efforts to reduce the violence towards women and girls.
10. Take a multi-agency approach to tackling street safety through disruption, enforcement and taking steps to increase pro-social activities to reduce the risk of repeated incidents.
11. Work closely with Mid Devon and East Housing services to review potential commencement of work towards gaining UK benchmark Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation
12. Implement expected new legislative requirements and guidance introduced by the Government during the year.
13. Promote ASB Awareness week 2024

5 Funding 2024/25 onwards

- 5.1 Historically the Devon CSPs had received annual grant allocations to support local projects and purchases which support achieving the CSP goals by reducing or tackling specific areas of crime or concern. This financial support was withdrawn three years ago with the PCC adopting a direct commissioning approach.
- 5.2 The CSPs have now adopted a different role in supporting local bids from organisations and community groups for funds from the PCC Community Grant Scheme if the projects meet the CSP priority areas in their grant applications. Furthermore, there is an expectation from the PCC that local bids are consistent with the adopted priorities of the relevant CSP. The CSPs themselves are unable to make a direct bid to this grant scheme.

- 5.3 Sourcing other funding streams is an option but overall resources have been steadily reduced and this has resulted in fewer projects being supported or delivered directly by the CSP. Collaboration with other Devon CSPs will be even more important to share staff resources and expertise, and deliver projects of mutual benefit.
- 5.4 The CSP has been awarded £8k from the Government (Home Office as distributed by the office of the PCC) in 2023/24 for funding projects or initiatives that will support the new Serious Violence Duty. This represents £4k per district area and will be utilised for mobile CCTV for Police partners to target ASB activity across the entire CSP area.
- 5.5 The CSP has also been successful in one of two bids for Home Office serious violence delivery funding for 2024/25. This will enable an additional £8k towards the funding of a full-time East Devon District Council based dedicated ASB officer post. This award will enable that role to extend its work across into Mid Devon and target specific localities or ongoing incidents one-day per week within the district working alongside other agency partners under the above ASBAT approach.
- 5.6 The CSP are legally responsible for the delivery of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. An annual funding contribution has been made by the District Council to Devon County Council / Safer Devon Partnership (SDP) within budget to oversee these reviews on our behalf.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendations are made:
1. That the Community PDG notes the ongoing priorities of the East and Mid Devon CSP and planned activities for 2024-25 including the new statutory Serious Violence Duty.
 2. That the Community PDG notes the potential changes proposed to strengthen the working relationship between PCCs and CSPs, and proposals to change and extend certain anti-social behaviour powers.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report, aside from highlighting ongoing budget provision arising from Domestic Homicide Review responsibilities and successful bids for grant award funding under the Serious Violence Duty Home Office funding managed by the PCC in conjunction with the Safer Devon Partnership.

Legal Implications

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 makes it a statutory requirement for the Police and Local Authorities to engage with partners to form a Community Safety Partnership for the purposes of reducing crime and disorder. The 1998 Act places a legal responsibility on the Partnership to consult with the Community on the priorities it has set and inform them of progress against the action plan. The Act also requires the Partnership to carry out a Strategic Assessment of the area which is used to inform the partnership priorities. The Partnership is also responsible for conducting Domestic Homicide Reviews and these are led under agreement by Devon County Council.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed a duty on Local Authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. A Devon Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board is now in place to assist with the discharge of these duties and is represented for Mid Devon by the Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing (also current East and Mid Devon CSP chair).

The Serious Violence Duty, which is encompassed in the Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 is part of the Government's broad approach to prevent and reduce serious violence. The key strands being a multi-agency public health approach to understanding the drivers and impacts of serious violence, and a focus on prevention and early intervention.

Responsible authorities (also known as "duty holders") who are subject to the Duty include: local authorities and specifically CSPs at upper and lower tier level, the Police, Youth Offending Teams, NHS Integrated Care Boards, Probation Services and Fire Services.

The Serious Violence Duty requires organisations above to work together to share information, analyse the situation locally and come up with solutions, including the publication of an annual strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence on a local basis. The duty also requires the responsible authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities for the area in the preparation of their serious violence strategy.

In addition to the Serious Violence Duty Section 17 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act has been amended to make preventing and reducing Serious Violence a specific statutory requirement for Community Safety Partnerships (CSP).

The Commencement of the Serious Violence Duty was on 31 January 2023 with a requirement to formalise local partnership arrangements during 2023 and for specified authorities to publish their strategy by 31 January 2024. This has been completed at Devon level with appropriate sign-off by the each District area.

Risk Assessment

There is a risk to the Council if it does not fully engage with the Partnership in respect of failing to meet its numerous statutory duties. In turn, the ability of the Partnership to provide effective multi-agency working to reduce crime and disorder in our community is potentially reduced.

Impact on Climate Change

None directly arising from the report. The partnership undertakes the majority of its work remotely through electronic communications which limits officer travel and physical meetings.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The 2018-21 CSP Plan has had an equality impact assessment (EIA) completed. The transition to the Trauma Informed approach plan in 2019-20 also had an equality impact assessment completed. Overall, no adverse impacts on persons with legally protected characteristics were identified. No significant changes have been made beyond those required legally, consequently no new EIA has been produced.

The new Devon Serious Violence Strategy has been subject to the Devon County Council formal equalities impact assessment process.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The priorities of the CSP and the activities undertaken as part of the action plan compliment the ambitions of the Corporate Plan. In particular this activity contributes to the priority of Community. The CSP works directly with the wider community, youth groups and local partners to ensure the district is a safe place to live, work and visit.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12 Mar 2024

Chief Officer: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

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

Date: 08 February 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 13/02/2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing or Adrian Gardner, Specialist Lead for Community Safety & Safeguarding
Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk or agardner@middevon.gov.uk Telephone: 01884 255255

Background information

Safer Devon Partnership

Information relating to the Devon Strategic Assessment and priorities for Devon.

<https://saferdevon.co.uk>

CSP review and ASB powers

Government response including information of ASB power, notices and orders

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/community-safety-partnerships-review-and-antisocial-behaviour-powers/outcome/community-safety-partnerships-review-and-antisocial-behaviour-powers-government-response>

Police and Crime Commissioner Grants

Devon Community Foundation – Grants to enable and empower smaller VCSE organisations to reduce violence and ASB

<https://devoncf.com/grants/pcc-grants/>

Chairman's Annual Report – Community Policy Development Group

So it has been a busy year to date with a lot happening on the Community Policy Development Group.

Firstly I would like to thank Angie Howell and Sarah Lees for their support and constant encouragement and enthusiasm. Also my thanks to the Officers, the Vice Chairman Cllr Cathy Conner plus our Portfolio Holders from Cabinet. I would also like to thank all Members of the PDG for their hard work and commitment. It's been a learning curve for us all and for me personally as Chairman.

You may be a surprised as to what we have achieved so far! We have done quite a bit including:-

- Visits to the 3 Leisure Centres – it was really good to visit and to meet the staff who do an amazing job. Part of our manifesto was to keep the Leisure Centre's going and it was really good to see how passionate everyone is that works there and what a fantastic service is provided.

Also we have seen a lot of investment in Leisure Centres over the past year. From new solar panels to heat source pumps to help improve the running costs. As a Council we subsidise the Leisure Centres by £1.4 million a year in running costs. However the importance of providing this service in Mid Devon is massive in my opinion as it continues to thrive and provides such an essential amenity to so many people.

- Since becoming Chair we have set up a Working Group looking at our vulnerable customers and how the lack of opening hours are affecting them. The Working Group have been looking at different ways this could be improved whilst still keeping within budget and staff constraints. I would like to thank Lisa Lewis, Lynsey Chilcott, Cllr Glover, Cllr Harrower, Cllr Connor and Cllr Cochran for their enthusiasm and input into this. Hopefully the recommendations that we put forward will be approved and we can help improve the way that Mid Devon deliver their services to our vulnerable customers.

- We have also received an update from Devon and Cornwall Police regarding antisocial behaviour and looked at better ways of working together.
- We received a visit from Alex Munroe, Devon Energy Partnership which was interesting and extremely informative.

We have also looked at and reviewed various policies and strategies such as:-

- Communication and Engagement Strategy,
- Vulnerability Statement,
- Climate Change Updates,
- Leisure Policy and Pricing Strategy,
- Strategic Grants to External Organisations where incredibly tough important decisions were made,
- Budget Setting to help MDDC achieve a balanced budget.
- Recommended a full consultation for the Town and Parish Charter;
- Customer Care Policy; with still many more to come.

There's been some tough decisions we have had to recommend to Cabinet, unfortunately due the underfunding of Central Government it has not been easy.

We will still have budget setting for 25/26 so please share any ideas you may have for potential savings.

I have enjoyed being the Chairman of the Community PDG. Looking ahead, if I am still Chair I would be keen to look at:-

- Starting to develop some new policies and would like to set up a workshop to do this. This will enable the whole Council to get involved and it will be great to see some work done on this.

- I would also like to arrange another visit to our Leisure Centres and to see the progress they continue to make.
- Additionally, I would plan to invite Devon and Cornwall Police back to talk to the Community PDG and to continue working together regarding anti-social behaviour.

I am open to other ideas that any of you may have now that you have been part of the Community PDG for a year and you can see the important work we do and will continue to do together.

Once again many thanks to all Members and Officers for their support and commitment.

Councillor Ben Holdman
Chair of Community Policy Development Group
Tiverton Castle Ward

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