

# Public Document Pack

**Mid Devon District Council**

## **Scrutiny Committee**

**Monday, 14 August 2023 at 5.30 pm**  
**Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton**

**Next ordinary meeting**  
**Monday, 11 September at 5.30 pm**

**An extraordinary meeting has been called for**  
**Thursday, 24 August 2023 at 5.30 pm**

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

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

## **Membership**

Cllr R Gilmour  
Cllr G Westcott  
Cllr D Broom  
Cllr Mrs F J Colthorpe  
Cllr A Cuddy  
Cllr G Czapiewski  
Cllr M Farrell  
Cllr B Holdman  
Cllr L G J Kennedy  
Cllr R Roberts  
Cllr S Robinson  
Cllr N Woollatt

# **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 relating to items on the agenda from members of the public and replies thereto.

Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for this item.

4        **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** (*Pages 5 - 12*)  
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on Monday 17 July 2023

5        **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET**  
To consider any decisions made by the Cabinet at its last meeting that have been called-in.

6        **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
To receive any announcements that the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee may wish to make.

7        **ESTABLISHMENT UPDATE REPORT** (*Pages 13 - 22*)  
To receive and Note the Establishment update report from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste

8        **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Pages 23 - 36*)  
To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the committee's future consideration, taking account of:

a) Any items within the Forward Plan for discussion at the next meeting;

b) Suggestions of other work for the committee in 2023/24.

**Stephen Walford**  
Chief Executive  
Friday, 4 August 2023

## Meeting Information

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

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

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Public Wi-Fi is available in all meeting rooms.

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## MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 17 July 2023 at 5.30 pm

### **Present Councillors**

R Gilmour, D Broom, Mrs F J Colthorpe, A Cuddy,  
G Czapiewski, M Farrell, B Holdman, L G J Kennedy, R Roberts,  
S Robinson, G Westcott and N Woollatt

### **Also Present Councillors**

J Lock, D Wulff

### **Present Officers:**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Richard Marsh (Director of Place), Maria De Leburne (District Solicitor and Monitoring Officer), Dean Emery (Corporate Manager for Revenues, Benefits and Recovery), Matthew Page (Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste), Andrew Seaman (Member Services Manager) and David Parker (Member Services & Policy Research Officer)

## 10 **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (03:34)**

No apologies were received.

Cllrs , E Buczkowski, J Buczkowski, A Glover, S Keable, L Taylor attended the meeting virtually.

## 11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (03:44)**

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

## 12 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (04:00)**

Paul Elstone's questions related to Item 8 on the agenda; on the subject of Review Recommendations of the Planning Enforcement Working Group.

Question 1:

The Summary Report indicates there were 3 levels of priority in terms of Caseload. High Medium and Low. What were the selection criteria for determining in which priority an enforcement issue was allocated to?

In reply to Mr Elstone's questions, the Director of Place answered:

Answer:

The priority of a case was determined by the enforcement officers using their professional knowledge, expertise and judgement and in accordance with principles as set out within the current Local Enforcement Plan.

The list of enforcement matters were also regularly reviewed (monthly) with the Development Management Manager and Corporate Manager. The Director of Place reviewed high priority cases on a monthly basis.

The new enforcement policy – currently in draft and being worked on by officers prior to presentation to Cabinet – would consider a revised approach to how cases are prioritised and escalated, although the focus would continue to be on high priority cases.

It should be noted that a high degree of officer discretion would always be necessary in relation to prioritisation given that each case is unique and would need to be considered based on its own facts.

#### Question 2

Was there a MDDC Policy or Procedure Document that clearly outlined the priority selection process?

Answer:

The Local Enforcement Plan set out the priority level of cases in a broad sense.

#### Question 3

Was this document available for public review?

Answer:

Yes – the current plan was on the public website and was easy to find.

#### Question 4

Of the High Priority enforcement issues, which were estimated to be currently around 22, how many had been outstanding for over 6 months?

Answer:

There were 12 cases.

#### Question 5

What was the longest outstanding High Priority enforcement case? And why had it taken so long to close down?

Answer:

A case from 2020 relating to a Listed Building and UPVC windows. The reason the case had been outstanding for so long was because they were awaiting information from the owner.

#### Question 6

Of the 517 cases that had been closed how many of these were handled by.

- Non Material Amendments.
- Certificates of Lawfulness.
- Planning Variation Agreements of any sort.

Answer:

That information was not to hand – If Mr Elstone was keen to have that information then the Department would need to consider the request separately and they would need to consider how long it would take to deal with that request.

Question 7.

Of the Preceding categories in question 6, how many had been closed down on a delegated authority i.e. by MDDC Officers and without any referral back to the MDDC Planning Committee?

Answer:

Planning enforcement matters are not referred back to the Planning Committee. Under the previous Council, the Cabinet Member for Continuous Improvement had oversight of planning enforcement matters and was kept involved regarding the closure of cases and matters relating to high-priority cases.

Despite the fact that the constitution affords delegated authority to officers to deal with matters relating to planning enforcement, the intention was to keep the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration apprised of key performance measures and key cases in relation to planning enforcement.

Question 8.

Was it MDDC's policy to refer any enforcement decision back to the MDDC Planning Committee where the application came before the Planning Committee in the first instance? This was where the Planning Committee itself set or agreed the conditions.

Answer:

No, it was not MDDC policy. There were certain scenarios where enforcement action needed a decision from the planning committee such as urgent works notices.

Question 9.

If the answer to the previous question was no, did that not defeat the integrity of the Planning Committee Process? That it further lead to a lack of public trust and the will of their elected members potentially being fundamentally ignored?

Answer:

No, it did not. The question suggests that a breach of a planning condition would always be allowed to continue when in fact officers will seek to address planning breaches in order to ensure compliance with the planning conditions – noting that officer necessarily have to focus on high priority cases first.

On occasion, breaches could sometimes involve a planning application to regularise activity – which would then be a public process.

Where compliance did not occur, and no application to seek to regularise was put forward, appropriate enforcement action would follow if it was deemed to be proportionate and expedient in the eyes of the LPA. As stated previously; high risk cases would always necessarily be prioritised.

### 13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (07:02)

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19 June 2023 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chairman.

### 14 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (10:28)

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 4 July 2023 had been called in.

## 15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (10:35)

The Chairman and others had attended a meeting of the Scrutiny Network for the South West. The Chairman had therefore requested reports on Highways and on Deprivation from the clerk to that committee.

## 16 MOTION 564 - INCLUSIVITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (11.32)

The Committee **NOTED**, a verbal report on Motion 564 – Inclusivity and Community Engagement from the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste.

The officer explained that two previous councillors, Elizabeth Lloyd and Jo Norton, led a project which looked to enhance the diversity of candidates who would apply and put themselves forward to be prospective councillors at Mid Devon District Council. There were different events organised about how to potentially broaden a pool of applications, and this led to a number of recommendations which were approved by full council. These included:

- That the Council considered ways to better promote the role of a Councillor
- That all chairs of Committees and PDGS be required to attend formal training
- That a Councillor be identified to be the Equalities and Accessibility champion
- That the Council developed a mentoring scheme for new members of the Council
- That the Council supported and facilitated the building of councillor networks in particular between women councillors and councillors with families or caring responsibilities, to grow peer to peer support
- That the Council developed a (password protected) private members area on the Council website, in order to create a bank of shared training materials and documents for reference and ongoing learning
- That the Council ensured all officer roles were offered flexibly (unless there was a business need) and gave consideration to the option and promotion of job shares for officers
- That further research was carried out into member experience of equality in the Council

There had been good progress made against these objectives including:

- There was an open evening at the Council and promotional videos had been released prior to the 2023 election to encourage more candidates from different areas and backgrounds to put themselves forward.
- Mandatory training for Chairs and Vice Chairs formed part of Induction training.
- The Councillor Champion was renamed as the Member Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. A role description had been drawn up with the LGA and it was recommended that this became a formal Cabinet responsibility.
- In July 2023 the Cabinet determined that Cllr Jane Lock would become the Council's first Member Champion for Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Initial research had been carried out with the LGA to look into building peer networks and these existed within some political parties but further work was required to determine what best suits the Council.



- A members' area now existed for training, presentations and recordings to be stored.
- A survey was being considered to better understand member experience of equality in the Council (discussions with the Member Champion and the LGA).

It was **AGREED** that a cross party working group be established to create a report on Inclusivity and Community Engagement within Mid Devon that would feedback to the Scrutiny Committee in early 2024 with the following membership: Cllrs Mrs F J Colthorpe, G Westcott and L G J Kennedy.

## 17 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT REPORT (17:28)

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, a \*report on planning enforcement from the Director of Place.

Consideration was given to:

- There had not been any specific analysis of the change in uptake following the introduction of a fee for pre-planning advice but it appeared that the uptake was the same. The introduction of the charge had generated income for the Council, which was used to help cover the costs of providing the service. Councillors should be confident that because of the pre-planning involvement that officers were better engaged with the applicants.
- Monitoring statistics of caseloads moving forwards and the grounds for determining whether a case went to Enforcement.
- Admin support for the two full time Enforcement Officers had now ceased and the two officers do their own admin as a self-contained unit and both members of staff were content with that way of working.
- Enforcement cases would in future be reported on as KPI's within the reports the department already deliver.
- Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Regeneration would have oversight of Enforcement.
- Reminder to the Planning Department to keep the Ward Councillors informed of progress of matters.
- Changes have been made within the Planning Department since the previous Scrutiny working group report, from an officer perspective they were on top of the cases and that they were managing the processes appropriately.
- There was now a dedicated planning solicitor.
- There was one outstanding action from the previous working group relating to the Local Enforcement plan, they were working upon a revised draft of the Local Enforcement Plan to make it as robust and fit for purpose as it could be. That draft plan could go to the Planning Policy Advisory Group for comment before it went to Cabinet.
- Enforcement action was taken against highest and high priority cases, as a statement of intent.

The Chairman invited Mr Warren (a former Cllr of the previous administration) to speak. Mr Warren provided his opinion on the planning enforcement working group actions. The Chairman thanked Mr Warren for his input.

The Chairman summed up that officers should keep ward members abreast of enforcement cases and that building KPI's on planning enforcement into the reporting process should commence. The report would be sent to the Planning Policy Advisory Group before it went to Cabinet.

Note: \*Report previously circulated and attached to the minutes

## 18 **WORK PROGRAMME (57:56)**

The Committee reviewed the current \*Forward Plan and \*Scrutiny Work Plan and **NOTED** the following items:

Motion 583 - Protecting Rivers and Seas work – The Scrutiny Policy Research Officer would report back to the October meeting

Motion 564 – Inclusivity and Community Engagement – does Local Government work for women? The working group of Cllrs G Westcott, Mrs F J Colthorpe and L G J Kennedy would report back to the Scrutiny Committee in February 2024. Cllr R Gilmour had some reports that she would pass to the working group.

3 Rivers - This matter would come back to the Scrutiny Committee once both external reports had been received. An entire meeting would be dedicated to that matter in the September meeting.

Participatory budgeting review – this was going to the Community PDG. The Scrutiny Committee Policy Research Officer would continue to look for examples of Participatory Budgeting, he would look at other councils within the LGA and seek examples both good and bad.

National Grid – The Chairman said that she was not sure that that was something for this Scrutiny Committee to be concerned with. She thought it should go to the Net Zero Advisory Group in the first instance – that was agreed.

Vacancy Issues – This would be included within the Establishment update report in August 2023.

### Other matters for the work plan:

1. Making Green requirements part of future planning applications – It was agreed that this matter would be passed to the Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG).
2. Installation of sprinkler systems into all new build residential properties. It was agreed that this matter would be passed to the PPAG.
3. Making the Exe Valley an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. – It was agreed that this was a matter for Parliament and that Councillors should lobby their MP's.

There was a conversation about the work of committees overlapping, and some of the matters that had been raised overlapping with Policy Development Groups.

The Chairman again stated her intention that the Scrutiny Committee would be as transparent as possible and that at the September meeting dealing with 3 Rivers as little as possible would go into part 2.

Note: \*Scrutiny Work Plan previously circulated and attached to the minutes

(The meeting ended at 6.47 pm)

**CHAIRMAN**

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**Report for: Scrutiny Committee**

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Date of Meeting:	14 August 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Establishment Report</b>
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jane Lock, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Working Environment
Responsible Officer(s):	Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste and James Hamblin, Operations Manager - Human Resources
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	N/A

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

To give Members an update on both the Establishment of the Council together with its performance. This report should be read in conjunction with the functions of individual officers highlighted in the Constitution.

This report sits within the current budget and policy framework.

The committee is asked to note the information below.

**Recommendation(s):**

1. The committee is asked to note the information below.

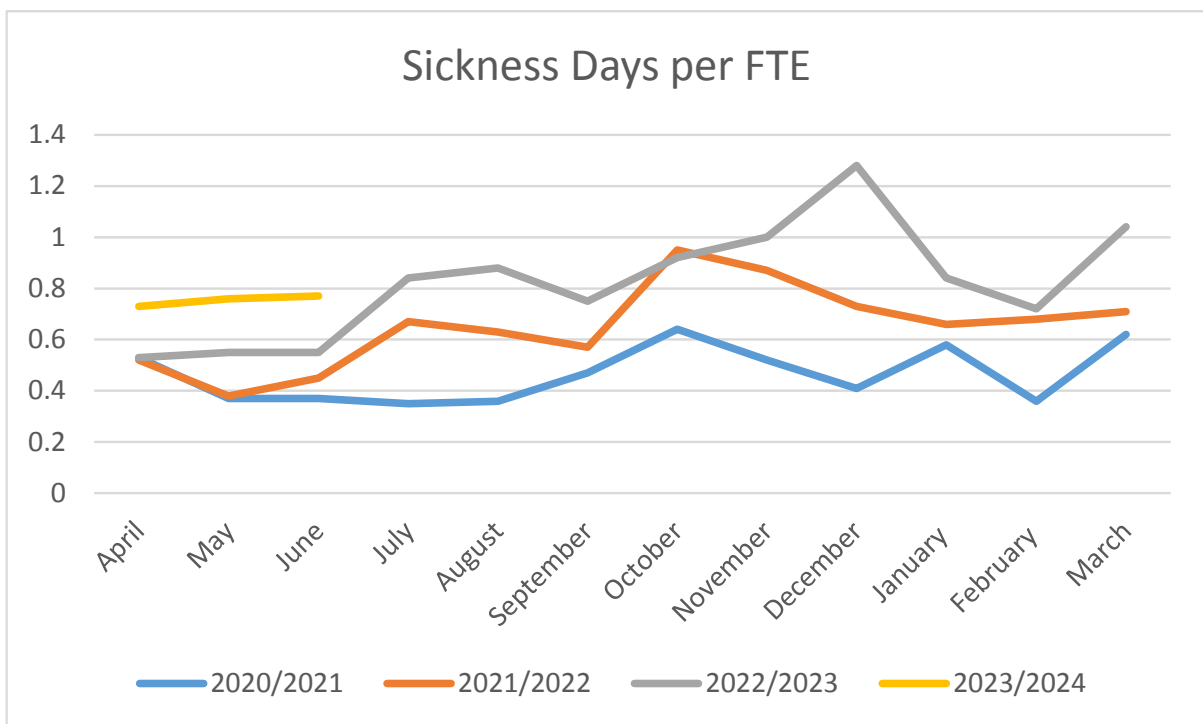
**Section 2 – Report**

- 1.0 Introduction/Background
- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the performance of our workforce.

- 1.2 These items include updates on the key Establishment indicators of sickness, agency expenditure and turnover.
- 1.3 Focus on data/analysis continues to be at the forefront of our mind as we share and embed this across service areas through initiatives such as the quarterly performance review report and meeting. Additionally monthly updates are provided to the Corporate Management Team and Leadership team on workforce data.

2.0 Sickness Absence, Agency Expenditure and Establishment

2.1 For 2022/2023 the Council had an average of 9.9 sickness days per full time equivalent (FTE). This compared to 7.82 days per FTE in 2021/2022, 5.58 days per FTE in 2020/2021 and 8.10 days per FTE in 2019/2020. Graph 1 outlines sickness absence since 2020/2021 and includes the first quarter of 2023/2024 which is discussed further in 2.4. Our current policy, expects employees to not exceed 6 days absence in a rolling 12 month period. It should be noted that there will be a difference between FTE and per employee statistics. Lower sickness absence levels during the ‘pandemic years’ will reflect both the furlough scheme in place at the time and employees being able to work from home.

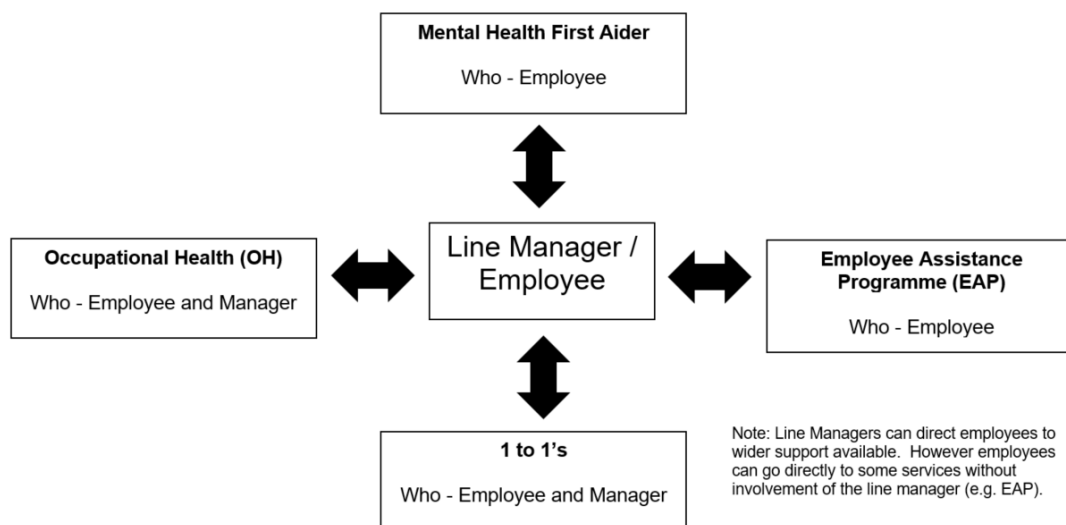


Graph 1. Sickness 2020/2021 – 2023/2024

2.2 An updated policy on managing sickness absence has been reviewed and agreed with the Union as part of our quarterly Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (JNCC) which last took place in June 2023. It should be noted that absence levels faced at the Council track closely with national absence trends. Recent data shared by the Office of National

Statistics shows that in 2022 the percentage of working hours lost because of sickness rose to its highest rate since 2004 [Sickness absence in the UK labour market - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/employment-and-labour-markets/employment/sickness-absence). Work is underway to form closer relationships with other district authorities in Devon to share learning regarding sickness absence management.

- 2.3 In-house management training focused specifically on managing sickness absence has been rolled out in June 2022. Following the success of in house training on ‘Managing Difficult Conversations’, ‘Managing Poor Performance’ and ‘Investigations, Disciplinarys and Grievances’, this latest addition to the suite of management training now available at the Council is timed to work alongside the new policy and to enhance knowledge and confidence within our managerial cohort. An underlying theme of all training provided in house is to encourage early intervention by managers.
- 2.4 In the first quarter of this financial year we recorded 2.26 days sickness absence per FTE. Acknowledging this, projections would suggest we end 2023/2024 with approximately 9.04 days lost per FTE. Our sickness absence is usually less in the first two quarters of the financial year than in the last two due to the Autumn and Winter seasons. However as we move out of the pandemic, it is still unclear, particularly acknowledging wider national statistics on sickness absence, where sickness will move over the coming years.
- 2.5 Wellbeing and supportive measures for employees had been highlighted throughout 2022, as we look to encourage employees to take proactive action. A heavily discounted Leisure membership has been rolled out to employees at the Council (circa 50% of the public fees). A review of our Wellbeing Ambassador initiative has taken place, with greater clarity and sign posting to our mental health first aiders required. Whilst this will continue to be under review, our model (Graph 2) ensures multiple avenues of support for an employee at the Council.



Graph 2. Wellbeing Support at the Council

- 2.6 As we move into Autumn and Winter it will be important to reflect on the low take up of flu vaccination vouchers for under 50's last year. Regular advertisement of the scheme will continue however work is underway to understand if the Council can bring a provider to our sites to remove a further barrier for some employees in getting the vaccination.
- 2.7 Following the all staff survey in Autumn 2021 to gauge opinion and feedback on key organisational performance indicators including communication, leadership, development and wellbeing, a further all staff briefing took place in April 2023. The next all staff survey is scheduled for September 2023.
- 2.8 In 2022 a benefits survey was rolled out to employees at the Council. The aim was to understand what benefits employees currently value and understand, as well as, what benefits they would like the Council to consider in the future. As a result of the survey, a 'Benefits Overview' was published in January 2023. This highlighted the existing benefits employees at the Council can already access and is used as part of our recruitment literature. Additionally an ongoing review of our existing benefits remains in place as we seek to add benefits that both help retain employees and attract talent to our Council. An example of this can be seen in the improved long service award format.
- 2.9 The last 12 months has seen a change in our agency make up as services look to recruit employees directly rather than rely on agency workers. This is against a backdrop of still rising agency costs as nationally we see high levels of employment against a backdrop of low unemployment rates, particularly highlighted in the South West. [Labour market in the regions of the UK - Office for National Statistics](#)
- 2.10 During 2022/23 the Council spent £1,064,794.57 on agency workers. Table 1 outlines agency spend since 2019. In the first quarter of the new financial year, our agency spend totals £196,477.82. This is approximately a 12% year on year (YOY) reduction and runs in parallel with an increase we have seen in employed FTE which stood at 442.30 at the end of June 2023.
- 2.11 An updated Vacancy Approval Form and Workforce Review Group was rolled out in December 2022. This results in all vacancies being reviewed for business need prior to being advertised. To date a total of £150,000 has been saved through this vacancy management process across the Council.

Year	Agency Spend	YOY Change (+/-)
2019/2020	£534,378.49	
2020/2021	£576,368.28	+7.56%
2021/2022	£823,288.55	+35.28%
2022/2023	£1,064,794.57	+25.58%

Table 1. Agency Spend 2019/2020 – 2022/2023



- 2.12 Table 2 compares the Establishment for the Council and the associated costs from 2019/2020 to 2022/2023. Costs for 2022/2023 will include the payment made to employees following the completion of Pay Award negotiations that was confirmed in November 2022. The 2023/2024 Pay Award has been rejected by the Unions so far as the Unions now move to balloting on strike action. This comes against a backdrop of increased industrial action across sectors in the UK and ongoing negotiations highlighted within the media. It is unclear at this stage, when an agreement will be reached.
- 2.13 The YOY increase between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 in 'Total Taxable Gross Pay' outlined in Table 2 will reflect the increased FTE, the year's pay award and the yearly incremental increase. It should be noted that the overall yearly payroll budget includes an aspect of agency staffing costs which can be used to cover hard to recruit areas.
- 2.14 There are continued efforts to strengthen the calibre of candidate that applies to work at the Council. We will continue to utilise social media and other online platforms to advertise roles. Additionally we have looked to benefit from 'high foot fall' areas within the Council such as our Leisure sites to advertise roles and the quarterly recruitment fair held in the Pannier Market. Recruitment and Selection training will be rolled out in 2023.

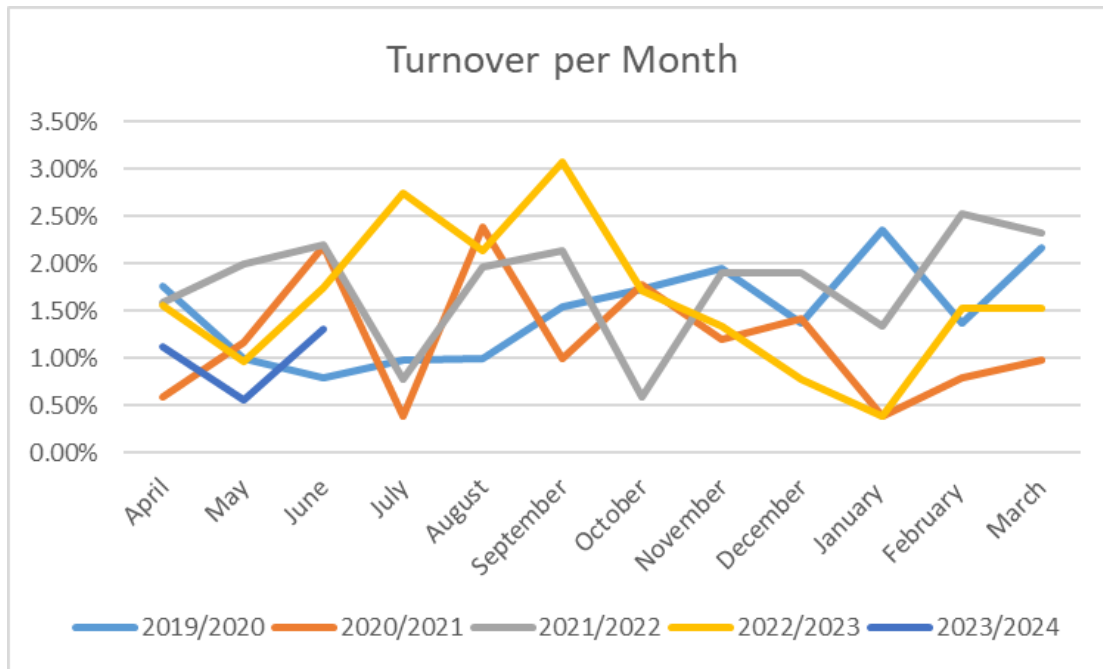
	<b>2019/2020</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
Total number of employees /workers paid	718	697	728	765
Establishment FTE (Average)	422.11	422.79	426.43	430.44
Total Taxable Gross Pay	£11,170,336.78	£11,515,324.63	£12,197,334.88	£13,168,855.70
Employers NI	£1,024,710.32	£1,038,135.28	£1,126,244.53	£1,277,182.95
Employers Pension	£1,595,839.06	£1,832,713.73	£1,938,973.16	£2,093,547.57

Table 2. Establishment 2019/2020 – 2022/2023

### **3.0 Turnover**

- 3.1 Turnover for 2022/2023 stood at 19.49%. This compares to a turnover of 2021/22 in 21.25%, 14.23% in 2020/21 and 17.98% in 2019/20. So far in the new financial year, employee turnover is down YOY as seen in Graph 3. Nationally turnover varies from sector to sector, however the rates we are currently seeing are not uncommon within local government, particularly when we acknowledge specific services which we have in house that can suffer with higher than average turnover rates (e.g. Leisure and Street Scene).

- 3.2 Reviewing our existing workforce’s length of service, we have 9.6% of our FTE with 25 years or more service. This equates to 48 people across the Council.
- 3.3 A new exit interview was launched in February 2023, with a focus on collating data in a more efficient and effective way. The new exit interview allows for greater learning from those that are departing the Council and this, in turn, can help formulate more informed decision making and action planning.



Graph 3. Turnover 2019/2020 – 2023/2024

- 3.4 Acknowledging this change in system, we have seen a mixture of both career progression and retirement as key reasons for leaving the Council. It is understood that for some employees, by the very nature of being a district authority, further development (whether this is developing specific specialised knowledge or progressing into more senior roles) can be limited. That puts further importance on ensuring we obtain the most from employees, maximising their value added, whilst they are with the Council.
- 3.5 Mid Devon, like other local authorities, has faced increasing challenges over turnover due to a number of different external factors. As a result we have looked to diversify our strategy of attraction and retention through the use of schemes such as market supplements. Wider workforce challenges including the lack of trained skilled labour in the Mid Devon area and a reduction in European workers has seen schemes such as ‘growing our own talent’ and hybrid working included in our strategy. In some sectors a movement towards ‘contractor’ work rather than ‘employed’ work has been supported by record levels of vacancies across the UK as workers attempt to earn more money in the current cost of living crisis.

- 3.6 Apprenticeships across services support the 'grow your own talent' initiative at the Council with June seeing a total of 24 apprentices (both 'apprentices' and those on 'upskilling' apprenticeships) employed by the Council. The Council supported 13 students for work experience across multiple services in July 2023 as we continue to work closely with local educational providers. The Council continues to maximise the apprenticeship levy by utilising this for both those joining the Council as an 'apprentice' and those currently employed by the Council but who are developing further skills/knowledge through training accessed via the levy. The Council has also been an early adopter of T Level placements, with success of these within our ICT department.
- 3.7 January 2023 saw the launch of the latest Appraisal process. Staggering our approach to allow for objectives to filter down through the organisation, the timescale has been extended to factor in the local elections. We will continue to monitor our appraisal process, particularly as some authorities have moved away from this traditional format and adopted an approach which sees regular 121's take place with objective setting still a focal point.

#### **4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 4.1 There are a number of priorities which the Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste wants to focus on in terms of our Establishment performance.
- 4.2 It is vital that we continue to review our establishment and budget, acknowledging the gap between our employed workforce and what is budgeted for. We consistently average 40+FTE vacant from our budget each month. We acknowledge some of these vacancies will be filled by temporary workers. Continued efforts to monitor and challenge this could result in further savings for the Council.
- 4.3 Continued efforts to keep business continuity plans under regular review are essential when we acknowledge the challenges brought to service delivery through sickness absence rates. The roll out of training and a new policy aims to address sickness absence where we can. In light of current of high sickness absence for this time of year and other potential actions (e.g. strike action) we have identified a corporate risk moving forward.
- 4.4 Learning from the previous all staff survey will be dovetailed into the next survey scheduled for September 2023. We remain committed to communicating with employees to keep them updated with business developments and changes and receive positive feedback from the all staff briefings.
- 4.5 As a result of the above our overarching long term focus remains as: Getting the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, performing at the right level at the right time.

## **Financial Implications**

Financial risk will only occur where the structure of a service changes without adherence to allocated budgets.

## **Legal Implications**

In accordance with Article 14 of the Constitution.

## **Risk Assessment**

If the Establishment is not appropriately managed and reviewed then service delivery may be put at risk.

## **Impact on Climate Change**

No climate change issues are highlighted in this report.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

No equality issues are highlighted in this report.

## **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

This report highlights the Establishment figures and, as such, supports our aim to reduce costs without affecting service quality and continuity.

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

**Statutory Officer:** Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

**Date:** 01 Aug 2023

**Statutory Officer:** Maria de Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date:** 01 Aug 2023

**Chief Officer:** Stephen Walford

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

**Date:** 01 Aug 2023

**Performance and risk:** Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

**Date:** 01 Aug 2023

**Cabinet member notified:** (yes)

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

**Contact:** Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste ([MPage@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:MPage@middevon.gov.uk)), James Hamblin, Operations Manager Human Resources ([JHamblin@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:JHamblin@middevon.gov.uk))

**Background papers:** Previous Establishment Reports taken to both Scrutiny

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## Forward Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Forward Plan - August 2023

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



<p><b>Neighbourhood Management Policy</b> To receive the updated Neighbourhood Management Policy</p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>8 Aug 2023  29 Aug 2023</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Environment Enforcement Yearly Review Report</b></p>	<p>Environment Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>15 Aug 2023  29 Aug 2023</p>	<p>Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Review of 3 weekly bin collections</b></p>	<p>Environment Policy Development Group  Cabinet</p>	<p>15 Aug 2023  29 Aug 2023</p>	<p>Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Environment &amp; Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

<b>Housing Revenue Accounts - large sites options appraisal</b>	Cabinet	29 Aug 2023	Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615			Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>3 Rivers Options Appraisal Report</b>	Cabinet  Council	29 Aug 2023  6 Sep 2023				Leader of the Council	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>Qtr. 1 Budget Monitoring</b> To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the Council's Financial position as at 30 June 2023	Cabinet	29 Aug 2023	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

<b>S106 Governance</b>	Cabinet	19 Sep 2023	Joanna Williams, Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>Damp and Mould Policy</b> To receive the new Damp and Mould Policy	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet  Council	26 Sep 2023  17 Oct 2023  1 Nov 2023	Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615			Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>Tenant Involvement update and Action Plan</b> To receive the MDH Tenant Involvement update and Action Plan	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	26 Sep 2023  17 Oct 2023	Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615			Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

<p><b>Recharges Policy</b> To receive a review of the MDH Recahrges Policy</p>	<p>Homes Policy Development Group</p> <p>Cabinet</p>	<p>26 Sep 2023</p> <p>17 Oct 2023</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing Tel: 01884 244615</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Makeup of the senior officer structure in light of posts held vacant</b> To consider a report from the Chief Executive on the makeup of the senior officer structure in light of posts held vacant</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>17 Oct 2023</p>	<p>Stephen Walford, Chief Executive Tel: 01884 234201</p>			<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>
<p><b>Meeting Housing Needs SPD</b> To adopt the SPD</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>17 Oct 2023</p>	<p>Richard Marsh, Director of Place</p>			<p>Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary</p>

18/09/23

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

<p><b>Qtr. 2 Budget Monitoring</b> To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the Council's Financial position as at 30 September 2023</p>	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>2023/24 Mid-Year Treasury Management Report</b> To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the treasury performance during the first six months of 2023/24</p>	Cabinet	14 Nov 2023	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>2024/25 Budget Update</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the updated 2024/25 Budget position and consider options to reduce the remaining shortfall</p>	Cabinet	12 Dec 2023	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

<b>Destination Management Plan for Mid Devon</b>	Economy Policy Development Group  Cabinet	4 Jan 2024  6 Feb 2024	Richard Marsh, Director of Place			Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>2024/25 Budget Update</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) on the updated 2024/25 Budget position and consider options to reduce the remaining shortfall	Cabinet	9 Jan 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<b>Establishment</b>	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Matthew Page, Corporate Manager for People, Governance and Waste			Cabinet Member for Working Environment		Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

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



<p><b>2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy</p>	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>2024/25 Budget Update</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Budget and recommends the Band D Council Tax charge for 2024/25</p>	Cabinet	6 Feb 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary
<p><b>2024/25 Council Tax Resolution</b> To consider a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) proposing the 2024/25 Band D Council Tax charge for 2024/25</p>	Council	6 Feb 2024	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Tel: 01884 234242			Cabinet Member for Finance	Open	Report outlining all relevant considerations, information and material including any equality and / or impact assessments, as necessary

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## SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2023-2024

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Officer Responsible	Comments
14.08.23	<b>Establishment Update report – including Vacancies</b>	Matthew Page & James Hamblin	
11.09.23	<b>3 Rivers</b> – Review once both external reports have been received.	Andrew Jarrett – Deputy Chief Executive (S151)	Report to be scrutinised.
02.10.23	<b>Motion 583 – Protecting Rivers and Seas</b>	Policy Research Officer looking for background information	
19.02.24	<b>Motion 564 – Inclusivity and Community Engagement</b>		Working Group to report back on 19.02.24

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