

## Cabinet

**Tuesday, 17 September 2024 at 5.15 pm**  
**Phoenix Chamber, Phoenix House, Tiverton**

**Next ordinary meeting**  
**Tuesday, 15 October 2024 at 5.15 pm**

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

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

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

Meeting ID: 357 032 865 723  
Passcode: H4hr6Q

## Membership

L Taylor	Leader of the Council
S J Clist	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader
J Lock	Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader
N Bradshaw	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change
J Buczkowski	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk
G Duchesne	Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement
S Keable	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration
J Wright	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement
D Wulff	Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health

## **A G E N D A**

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

1.     **Apologies**  
To receive any apologies for absence.
2.     **Public Question Time**  
To receive any questions relating to items on the Agenda from members of the public.
3.     **Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**  
To record any interests on agenda matters.
4.     **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (*Pages 5 - 22*)  
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024.
5.     **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** (*Pages 23 - 52*)  
To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) on the 2025/2026 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
6.     **National Planning Policy Framework** (*Pages 53 - 84*)  
To receive a report from the Director of Place and Economy on the National Planning Policy framework.
7.     **Notification of Key Decisions** (*Pages 85 - 98*)  
To note the contents of the Forward Plan.

## **Guidance notes for meetings of Mid Devon District Council**

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 the Council experience technology difficulties at a committee meeting the Chairman may make the decision to continue the meeting 'in-person' only to conclude the business on the agenda.

### **1. Inspection of Papers**

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk)

They can also be accessed via the council's website [Click Here](#)

Printed agendas can also be viewed in reception at the Council offices at Phoenix House, Phoenix Lane, Tiverton, EX16 6PP.

### **2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements**

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership.

The Code of Conduct can be [viewed here](#):

### **3. Minutes of the Meeting**

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting. Minutes of meetings are not verbatim.

### **4. Public Question Time**

Residents, electors or business rate payers of the District wishing to raise a question and/or statement under public question time are asked to provide their written questions to the Democratic Services team by 5pm three clear working days before the meeting to ensure that a response can be provided at the meeting. You will be invited to ask your question and or statement at the meeting and will receive the answer prior to, or as part of, the debate on that item. Alternatively, if you are content to receive an answer after the item has been debated, you can register to speak by emailing your full name to [Committee@middevon.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@middevon.gov.uk) by no later than 4pm on the day before the meeting. You will be invited to speak at the meeting and will receive a written response within 10 clear working days following the meeting.

Notification in this way will ensure the meeting runs as smoothly as possible

## **5. Meeting Etiquette for participants**

- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

For those joining the meeting virtually:

- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Switch off your camera if you are not speaking.
- Speak clearly (if you are not using camera then please state your name)
- Switch off your camera and microphone after you have spoken.
- There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called "turn on live captions" which provides subtitles on the screen.

## **6. Exclusion of Press & Public**

When considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act. If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed. They will be invited to return as soon as the meeting returns to open session.

## **7. Recording of meetings**

All media, including radio and TV journalists, and members of the public may attend Council, Cabinet, PDG and Committee meetings (apart from items Media and Social Media Policy - 2023 page 22 where the public is excluded) you can view our Media and Social Media Policy [here](#). They may record, film or use social media before, during or after the meeting, so long as this does not distract from or interfere unduly with the smooth running of the meeting. Anyone proposing to film during the meeting is requested to make this known to the Chairman in advance. The Council also makes audio recordings of meetings which are published on our website [Browse Meetings, 2024 - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](#).

## **8. Fire Drill Procedure**

If you hear the fire alarm you should leave the building by the marked fire exits, follow the direction signs and assemble at the master point outside the entrance. Do not use the lifts or the main staircase. You must wait there until directed otherwise by a senior officer. If anybody present is likely to need assistance in exiting the building in the event of an emergency, please ensure you have let a member of Democratic Services know before the meeting begins and arrangements will be made should an emergency occur.

## **9. WIFI**

An open, publicly available Wi-Fi network is normally available for meetings held in the Phoenix Chambers at Phoenix House.

**MINUTES** of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 27 August 2024 at 5.15 pm

**Present**

**Councillors**

S J Clist, J Lock, N Bradshaw,  
J Buczkowski, G Duchesne, S Keable,  
J Wright and D Wulff

**Apology**

**Councillor**

L Taylor

**Also Present**

**Councillors**

D Broom, C Harrower, L Knight and S Robinson

**Also Present**

**Officers**

Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Richard Marsh (Director of Place & Economy), Maria De Leiburne (Director of Legal, People & Governance (Monitoring Officer)), Matthew Page (Head of People, Performance & Waste), Paul Deal (Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience), James Hamblin (Operations Manager for People Services), Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene) and Luke Howard (Environment and Enforcement Manager) and Sarah Lees (Democratic Services Officer)

**Councillors**

**Online**

E Buczkowski, G Czapiewski, C Connor and R Roberts

**Officers Online**

Dean Emery, Dr Stephen Carr and Jan Moreland

**43. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from the Leader, Cllr L Taylor.

The meeting was chaired by one of the Deputy Leader's, Cllr J Lock.

**44. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**Paul Elstone**

My questions relate to Agenda Item 5 Budget Monitoring Report plus appendices:

### **Question 1**

The Capital Project Program, Appendix G, shows several Housing Development Scheme Projects. Line Item HRA 1009 is shown as Project 15 and a project having a total spend of £4.5 million. What exactly is Project 15?

### **Question 2.**

Can it be explained exactly what each one of the Housing Development Project numbers refer to as shown in Appendix G?

### **Question 3**

Going forward, and in the full interest of openness and transparency - not only for members of the public but perhaps for members of this Council as well, can all Housing Development Schemes be given their correct name such as Sycamore Road, Cheriton Fitzpaine or Fir Close etc. as opposed to just project numbers?

### **Question 4**

The General Fund Variance Analysis, Appendix B shows a major negative full year variance of £180,000. This in respect of a loss in interest payments.

Line GFb2 description says, '*Forecast investment income lower than budget due to reduced cash balances*'.

A loss of interest payments of £180,000 at current investment returns of around 5% is the equivalent to a reduction in the cash balance of over £3.4 million.

Of this reduction in cash balances of £3.4 million, how much is attributed to the 3 Rivers soft closure?

### **Question 5**

If the reduction in cash balance has nothing to do with 3 Rivers, what is it due to ?

### **Question 6**

The HRA Variance Analysis Appendix F similarly shows a major negative full year variance of £148,000

Line HRA1e description says, '*Forecast investment income lower than budget due to reduced cash balances*'.

A loss of interest payments of £148,000 at current investment returns of around 5% is the equivalent to a reduction in the cash balance of over £2.8 million.

Of this reduction in HRA cash balances of £2.8 million, how much is attributed to the 3 Rivers soft closure?

### Question 7

If the reduction in cash balance has nothing to do with 3 Rivers, what is it due to?

### Question 8

The £3.15 million paid for the five unsold Haddon Heights properties has now shown a loss of over £65,000 in investment interest income so far. Has this in any way been factored into these investment income losses?

### Question 9

If these losses of investment incomes relate to the 3 Rivers soft closure, then reasonably they should be accounted for in the true and cumulative 3 Rivers loss. Will they be?

### Question 10

If not, why not?

The Deputy Leader stated that Mr Elstone would receive written responses to his questions in the usual way and in a 'timely manner'.

## 45. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

No interests were declared under this item.

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

## 46. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 July 2024 were **APPROVED** as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Deputy Leader.

## 47. **2024/2025 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT- QUARTER 1 (00:05:00)**

The Cabinet had before it a report \* from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) presenting the forecast Outturn position for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme for the financial year 2024/25.

The Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The report presented the first budget monitoring for the year 2024/25 covering the period April – June 2024, giving an early forecast of the potential year end position.
- Based on quarter 1 data, the projected outturn position for the General Fund was a £350k under spend. This was a significant improvement on budget and the financial position in previous years and continued the positive action taken by this Cabinet to improve the Council's finances.

- There continued to be areas where the Council was likely to be over budget, which were largely symptomatic of the economic circumstances with Planning and Building Control income lower than forecast due to the stagnation of the housing market. However, these were more than offset by areas that were forecasted to be under budget, either through increased income areas such as Waste and Leisure or through prudent management of costs in services such as Finance, HR or Legal.
- Staff turnover and sickness continued to be quite high requiring more temporary staffing than expected. However, this was forecast to be significantly lower than in previous years. Areas of particular pressure were Waste, Finance and Planning. Given the specialist nature of the roles in finance, these costs were high, but recruitment was underway and would hopefully be complete by Christmas.
- The main service variances were explained in Appendix B, with key income forecast shown within Appendix C and staffing variances within Appendix D.

### HRA

- The HRA also showed a healthy under spend of £118k. This was largely due to staff savings, partially offset by a lower than budgeted investment yield and some relatively minor overspends. The overall forecast was shown in Appendix E with the detailed variances explained in Appendix F.

### Capital Programme

- There was once again a sizable variance against the 2024/25 Deliverable Budget for a variety of reasons including, movements in the HRA Development Programme, continued uncertainty over the future of major infrastructure projects and greater clarity where some projects were no longer required. Further details were included within Appendix F.
- As highlighted within the covering report, a thorough review of the capital programme would be undertaken with a view to remodelling the 2024/25 Deliverable Programme to ensure it more accurately reflected the planned projects for the remainder of the year.

### 3Rivers

- The soft closure of 3Rivers had effectively concluded, with the application for the company to be voluntarily struck off submitted to Companies House. This process had seen all outstanding creditors paid and all contracts ended or novated. Final Accounts had been audited and published at Companies House.
- Work was progressing well with the conversion of St George's Court into an over 60's community by the HRA with the first properties expected to be tenanted by the end of September. The unsold units at Bampton continued to be marketed and generated interest, but to date



no offers had been received. This position was being kept under review.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The Cabinet were encouraged by the positive position being reported.
- Difficult economic circumstances were not only affecting local authorities but other sectors such as agriculture and engineering.
- Spend on agency staff was significantly lower than it had been.
- The average returns on investments were encouraging.
- The report illustrated that the Cabinet were planning strategically for the future.

**RESOLVED** that the following be **NOTED**:

- a) The financial monitoring information for the income and expenditure for the three months to 30 June 2024 and the projected outturn position.
- b) The use of waivers for the Procurement of goods and services as included in Section 8

**RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that:

- The changes to the treasury and prudential indicators in tables 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 be approved.

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

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

#### 48. **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER 1 (00:15:00)**

The Cabinet had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \* from the Head of People, Performance and Waste and the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager providing Members with an update on performance against the Corporate Plan 2024-28 and service performance measures for quarter 1 (2024/25).

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- This was the first performance report on the Council's new Corporate Plan which was adopted in July 2024. A graphic designed version of the Corporate Plan was now available on the Council's website and it had been promoted to staff, the public and other stakeholders.
- Performance reporting was now based upon the Performance Dashboards that the Council had been using for the past year. These had been reconfigured to reflect the new PDG structure, and Corporate Plan indicators had been mapped to these.
- The Dashboards contained 98 performance measures, and of these 65 were performance indicators and 33 were finance measures.

- Section 2 of the covering report provided performance analysis on a theme by theme basis, with the focus on Corporate Plan performance indicators.
- The Performance Dashboards would also be reviewed by the relevant PDGs in due course.
- There was good performance highlighted across the report, but particularly pleasing to note was:
  - 117 tonnes of carbon emissions avoided through our corporate solar panels and electric vehicles
  - 44 homes becoming part of Mid Devon Housing in quarter 1;
  - And household waste recycling 59.5% for the year to date.

Consideration was given to:

- The red RAG rating against 'New subscribers to Let's Talk Mid Devon'. This had an annual target of 400 but showed a performance result of 1 for the first quarter. It was explained that this was not unusual as public engagement work would be a key focus going forwards and improvements would be made in this area in the coming months.
- The Annual Tenants Report was also showing excellent results but would take some time to embed.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

#### 49. **CORPORATE RISK- QUARTER 1(00:20:00)**

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

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report and highlighted the following issues:

- This report presented the Council's current corporate risks with their updated position as of July. These were the risks which had been identified by Council officers that may be most likely to impact the Council meeting its objectives.
- At paragraph 2.1 of the report there was a summary table of the 18 corporate risks that the Council was currently managing. These were now presented with a trend arrow, indicating any change in the risk rating since it was last reviewed by Cabinet.
- Significant changes to the risk register since it was last reported to Cabinet included:
  - The risk rating for the Homes for Ukraine scheme had decreased from 9 to 4 reflecting the excellent mitigation now in place – with ten new properties available to help with any issues, and Government funding schemes being continued.

- Risks around workforce shortage had increased, particularly related to ongoing pay talks. However, this was not an unusual position for the Council to be in, and officers were comfortable managing these risks.
- Since the report was published, there had been announcements regarding Cullompton Station and this would impact all the relevant risks when they were next reviewed by Council officers.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- The recent government announcement regarding the withdrawal of funding for the re-opening of the Cullompton Railway Station. Whilst the Council had expressed its disappointment at this news it had had a strong business case and would continue to work with partners since this was a project with significant local value. The Council remained cautiously optimistic for the future. The withdrawal of funding was part of a national programme but it was hoped the funding could be found from elsewhere. This would be an essential piece of infrastructure needed to support the building and occupation of new homes which was a key objective of the new government.
- The Cabinet were reassured that the Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan would be developed over the next few months and the Planning Policy Advisory Group, the Net Zero Advisory Group and the Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group would play a key part in its development. External engagement would also have an important role to play.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

#### 50. **CARE LEAVER FRIENDLY EMPLOYER CHARTER (00:30:00)**

The Cabinet had before it a report \* from the Operations Manager for People Services and the Head of People, Performance and Waste. Following the publication of the 'Keep on Caring' policy document in 2016, the Council had the opportunity to cement its commitment to Care Leavers by signing the Care Leaver Friendly Employer Charter. This commitment would follow examples set elsewhere within the county and emphasise the Council's commitment to supporting care experienced young people in the Mid Devon area.

The Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report and commented on the following:

- The report provided an overview of the Care Leaver Friendly Employer Charter. In 2016 the Government's 'Keep on Caring' policy document was published with the aim to support young people from care to independence. As part of this policy, a pledge was made to introduce the national Care Leaver Covenant. In agreeing to the Charter put forward, the Council would be making a commitment in the areas of Recruitment, Training and Development to Care Leavers in the Mid Devon area.
- As a part of this, Care Leavers would be offered the chance of an interview if they applied for a vacancy and even if not successful the experience would be of value to them.

Discussion took place regarding:

- This approach was felt to be a very sensible and pragmatic starting point having signed up to the Care Leaver Covenant.
- This was an exciting opportunity to support Care Leavers, however, it would require long term commitment as sadly there would always be a need.
- The next step would be to look to see what other local authorities were doing, to develop best practice and see if the Council could improve on what it was currently offering.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) Mid Devon District Council signs the Care Leaver Friendly Employer Charter as outlined in Appendix 1.
- b) Delegated responsibility be given to the Head of People, Performance and Waste to sign the Charter on behalf of the Council.
- c) Delegated responsibility be given to the Head of People, Performance and Waste to implement policy/guidance to develop our employment offer to Care Leavers.

(Proposed by the Deputy Leader, Cllr J Lock)

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

#### 51. **REVIEW OF BIN- IT 123 (00:35:00)**

The Cabinet had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \* from the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces and the Head of People, Performance and Waste reviewing the effectiveness and progress of the Council's Waste & Recycling Scheme, known as Bin-It 123, as implemented on 10 October 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- This report provided an update on the Council's Bin-It 123 scheme which was introduced in October 2022 to increase the recycling rate and reduce the Council's residual tonnage, to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and help the District meet its carbon net zero commitment.
- Since the introduction of the scheme the Council had seen a 5% positive swing in its recycling rate and a substantial reduction in its residual tonnage, this putting the Council in the top 10% nationally for both our recycling performance and for the lowest volume of residual waste collected from households, which received national recognition from OFLOG (Office for Local Government) for being one of the most improved Councils in the Country.
- The report also included the recent statistics regarding the elimination of additional side waste put out for collection and the very significant reduction seen in side waste instances. There had also been a significant amount of education and support offered through recently conducted site tours with

parish and town clerk representatives but also drop in surgeries that were being currently carried out to address particular challenges that were occurring in certain areas of the District.

Consideration was given to:

- How working together could achieve positive results.
- Clarity was awaited from the government regarding its views on future waste collections. The Council would be lobbying to retain its autonomy with regard to its remit with Bin-It 123.
- The importance of the involvement of young people.
- There had been an increase in the number of requests for black bins but there were criteria which needed to be met before additional bins were provided. Reviews were currently carried out on a two yearly basis.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

## 52. **FUTURE WASTE AND RECYCLING OPTIONS REPORT (00:50:00)**

The Cabinet had before it a report \* from the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces and the Head of People, Performance and Waste setting out future options regarding the provision of the Waste and Recycling service to the residents of Mid Devon.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- This report examined some of the potential options regarding future recycling activity that could be offered to residents above and on top of what the service already offered. This had been a key area of interest for Members and the report should be read alongside the Review of Bin-It 123 and would build upon what the scheme had already established.
- The Council was keen to get feedback and views on the different options put forward. Any options that the administration wanted the service to seriously consider in terms of taking forwards would need to be both properly costed and have the full practical implications of the collection considered in terms of its potential implementation. The Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement PDG had recommended that the Council prioritise looking at the options regarding collecting pots and pans as well as disposable nappies.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Any investigations would be reported back through the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement PDG in the first instance.
- Local authorities were able to charge, through a S106 Agreement, for the cost of receptacles to protect their services, however, this could have the effect of reducing funding for other projects. This was an inevitable risk.
- As this was a key public facing service, consideration needed to be given to more publicity and public engagement. It was noted that recent public engagement events had been very positively received and more was planned for the future. This was a key priority moving forwards.

- A possible trial for the recycling of pots and pans was being considered in the near future.
- The importance of recycling nappies as well as adult sanitary products was accepted.

**RESOLVED** that:

Further investigation be undertaken regarding the financial and practical feasibility of introducing the following practices in the District:

- a. Soft plastic (flexibles) collections
- b. Nappy waste collections
- c. Collecting used coffee pods
- d. Collecting unwanted metal pots and pans
- e. A chargeable scheme to allow residents the ability to place extra waste out for collection
- f. Charging new house builders for new bins and containers to each property
- g. Increased publicity
- h. Enhanced education in schools and with the residents of Mid Devon

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

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

### 53. **ANNUAL ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT REPORT (01:05:00)**

The Cabinet had before it, and **NOTED**, a report \* from the Environment and Enforcement Manager and the Head of People, Performance and Waste providing an overview and review of the Environment and Enforcement service for the 2023/24 financial year and the improvements that have been made during this period.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement outlined the contents of the report and highlighted the following areas:

- This end of year report highlighted key statistics relating to the Environment and Enforcement service. Issues relating to Fly Tipping, Littering, Abandoned Vehicles and the Public Space Protection Order were key areas that affected all residents of Mid Devon.
- The report highlighted the work the service had undertaken over the financial year 2023/24 to tackle these issues and provide confidence to communities that appropriate action would and had been taken against those committing such offences. Most pertinent was the decline in reported Fly Tipping activity in the district, which reflected on the work the service had performed along with working with other services to highlight the positive impact of the Bin-It 123 scheme.

Consideration was given to:

- The importance of information being provided by members of the public and councillors to enable enforcement action to take place.



- Sharing knowledge and good practice with Planning Enforcement colleagues and other service areas would prove beneficial. Pooling knowledge and resources was encouraged.
- It was noted that April and November 2023 had been key months for increased fly tipping. If this occurred again in 2024 an investigation could be undertaken to ascertain why this was.
- There had been a significant shift in users opting to pay for their parking via the Ringo cashless option, suggesting trends for easier cashless payment options were increasing.

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

#### 54. **SFS (SPECIAL FLEET SERVICES) TRANSPORT CONTRACT 01:14:00)**

The Cabinet had before it a report \* from the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces and the Head of People, Performance and Waste considering and recommending the extension of the existing contract of the Council's fleet provision with SFS (Specialist Fleet Services Limited) by a further seven years for the reason set out within the report.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement outlined the contents of the reports with particular reference to the following:

- This report sets out the reasons to extend the existing fleet contract with Specialist Fleet Services for a further seven years from 2026 to 2033. It followed on from a decision taken by a previous administration in March 2019 to agree to a seven year contract with SFS which runs until 2026. As part of this agreement the Council had the option to extend this contractual agreement by a further seven years between 2026 to 2033. An extension of this contract would ensure that the Council continued to utilise the SFS expertise, experience, influence and buying power which had made the current fleet reliable and roadworthy with support readily available.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- The fleet contract was critical, if the option recommended was not approved the Council would need to conduct a full 9 month tender exercise.
- The Council currently had a specialised and nuanced contract with SFS.
- SFS had already pledged to assist the Council in three ways:
  - Build a new depot in Wellington
  - Assist with a future Apprenticeship Programme
  - Put money aside to provide a social action fund to support future projects for the next generation.
- An elongated tender process would put all this at risk.
- Managers would work with SFS to ensure the Council's ambitions regarding carbon emissions were met.
- The interface between officers and fleet manufacturers was of vital importance in terms of driving home the need for the reduction of carbon emissions. It was confirmed that officers were already engaging in constant dialogue on this issue.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) The decision to extend the contract with SFS (Specialist Fleet Services Limited) for a further seven year period to cover 2026-2033 at the earliest possible opportunity be approved.
- b) To include lease borrowing in the Capital Programme.
- c) Authorisation be given for the negotiation of the removal of the indexation rate from the master contract for all new vehicles as soon as possible and replace it with a fixed rate for the term of the individual contract.

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

Note: \* Report previously circulated.

55. **A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PLACE AND ECONOMY (01:30:00)**

The Director of Place and Economy provided the Cabinet with a brief verbal update regarding the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road. This included the following information:

- Mobilisation of the Cricket Club works had occurred. The contractors were now on site with physical works underway. This was excellent news and marked a significant step forward and supported the Council's commitment to deliver the Relief Road. It also helped to keep the project live and broadly on timetable.
- He hoped to be able to provide a more detailed and formal update on the Homes England Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road bid in the near future.

56. **NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS (01:31:00)**

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

The Clerk listed the changes that had been made to the list since it was published with the agenda. This included the following:

- The Tenancy Management Policy had moved from the 15<sup>th</sup> October Cabinet meeting to 10<sup>th</sup> December.
- The Right to Buy Policy had been deferred until March 2025 and would come before Cabinet in April 2025.
- The Tenure Reform & Tenancy Agreement Project Plan would now be a verbal update to the Homes PDG and will need to be removed from the Forward Plan as no decision will be required.
- The HRA Asset Management Strategy would move from the 15<sup>th</sup> October Cabinet meeting to 10<sup>th</sup> December.
- The MDH Asbestos Management Plan would now come to the Cabinet meeting in October and not December.
- The Infrastructure Funding Statement would come to the Cabinet at its December meeting.



- Blackdown Hills National Landscape Partnership which was coming to the September Cabinet meeting would now come in October instead.

The Clerk confirmed that these changes would be reflected in the revised Forward Plan when it was next published and would appear on the website.

Note: \* Notification of Key Decisions previously circulated.

57. **THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING DATE (01:32:00)**

The Cabinet **NOTED** that the next scheduled meeting would take place on 17 September 2024 at Phoenix House, Tiverton.

(The meeting ended at 6.47 pm)

**LEADER**

This page is intentionally left blank

**Cabinet 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024 - Public Questions and Answers**

<b>Name of person submitting</b>	<b>Questions</b>
<p><b>Paul Elstone</b></p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 19</p>	<p>My questions relate to Agenda Item 5 Budgeting Monitoring Report plus appendices.</p> <p><b>Question 1</b></p> <p>The Capital Project Program, Appendix G, shows several Housing Development Scheme Projects. Line Item HRA 1009 is shown as Project 15 and a project having a total spend of £4.5 million. What exactly is Project 15?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:</b> School Close, Bampton.</p> <p><b>Question 2</b></p> <p>Can it be explained exactly what each one of the Housing Development Project numbers refer to as shown in Appendix G?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:</b> Once the project is confirmed, a fuller description will be used. Some of the future projects are a potential pipeline of developments which may never come to fruition.</p> <p><b>Question 3</b></p> <p>Going forward, and in the full interest of openness and transparency - not only for members of the public but perhaps for members of this Council as well, can <u>all</u> Housing Development Schemes be given their correct name such as Sycamore Road, Cheriton Fitzpaine or Fir Close etc. as opposed to just project numbers ?</p>

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:**

See response to Q2.

**Question 4**

The General Fund Variance Analysis, Appendix B shows a major negative full year variance of £180,000. This in respect of a loss in interest payments.

Line GFb2 description says, '*Forecast investment income lower than budget due to reduced cash balances*'.

A loss of interest payments of £180,000 at current investment returns of around 5% is the equivalent to a reduction in the cash balance of over £3.4 million.

Of this reduction in cash balances of £3.4 million, how much is attributed to the 3 Rivers soft closure?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:**

We have had to reduce our cash balances and therefore investment funds will be reduced. This consequence of the soft closure of 3Rivers has been explained and agreed by the membership in a number of formal reports.

**Question 5**

If the reduction in cash balance has nothing to do with 3 Rivers, what is it due to?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:**

See response to Q4.

**Question 6**

The HRA Variance Analysis Appendix F similarly shows a major negative full year variance of £148,000

Line HRA1e description says, '*Forecast investment income lower than budget due to reduced cash balances*'.

A loss of interest payments of £148,000 at current investment returns of around 5% is the equivalent to a reduction in the cash balance of over £2.8 million.

Of this reduction in HRA cash balances of £2.8 million, how much is attributed to the 3 Rivers soft closure?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:**

See response to Q4.

**Question 7**

If the reduction in cash balance has nothing to do with 3 Rivers, what is it due to?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:**

See response to Q4.

**Question 8**

The £3.15 million paid for the five unsold Haddon Heights properties has now shown a loss of over £65,000 in investment interest income so far. Has this in any way been factored into these investment income losses?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:**

Yes, See response to Q4.

**Question 9**

If these losses of investment incomes relate to the 3 Rivers soft closure, then reasonably they should be accounted for in the true and cumulative 3 Rivers loss. Will they be?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:**

As the company is currently in operational dormancy prior to voluntary strike off and all assets have been sold or transferred to the Council, any future gains or losses will be borne by the Council.

**Question 10**

If not, why not?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk:**

See response to Q9.



**Report for: Cabinet**

---

Date of Meeting:	17 September 2024
Subject:	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan – General Fund (GF)</b>
Cabinet Member:	James Buczkowski – Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Jarrett – Deputy Chief Executive (S151)
Exempt:	N/a
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Sensitivity Analysis Appendix 2 – MTFP Summary Position Appendix 3 – Emerging Budget Pressures Appendix 4a – Cabinet Savings Options Appendix 4b – PDG Savings Options

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

To present to Member's the updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which covers the period 2025/26 to 2028/29 and takes account of the Council's key strategies (i.e. the Corporate Plan, Business Plans, Treasury Management Plan, Asset Management Plan, Work Force Plan and Capital Strategy) and demonstrates it has the financial resources to deliver the Corporate Plan. This models potential changes in funding levels, new initiatives, unavoidable costs and proposed service savings.

**Recommendation(s):**

**That Cabinet Members:**

- 1. Note the updated MTFP's for the General Fund covering the years 2025/26 to 2028/29;**
- 2. Agree the principles and endorse the approach to balancing the General Fund Revenue Budget outlined in paragraph 6.2.**

3. **Seek recommendations from the Policy Development Groups on the Round 1 Budget Proposals and their views on where savings should be sought and to what level.**

## **Section 2 – Report**

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

- 1.1 The main purpose of the MTFP is to show how the Council will strategically manage its finances in order to support the delivery of the priorities detailed in the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and future years beyond that plan.
- 1.2 The MTFP links the financial requirements, constraints and objectives included in all the key planning documents of the Council (i.e. Asset Management Plan, Treasury Management Strategy, Work Force Plan, and Business Plans) which culminate in the Corporate Plan.
- 1.3 The MTFP has been a key corporate requirement for a number of years and is an essential part of the budget setting process. It provides a financial model which forecasts the cost of providing Council services over a future rolling five year period, together with an estimate of the financial resources that will be available. Note a new year 5 covering 2029/30 is currently being modelled. This model provides an early warning mechanism if there is a significant budget gap between estimated costs and available resources.
- 1.4 The MTFP helps strategically plan the budget setting process, but of equal importance, gives Management and Members an overview of future budget gaps so strategic decisions can be made over levels of future spending, Council Tax levels, policies for fees and charges, asset investment or disposal, etc.
- 1.5 In addition to considering the General Fund financial position, the MTFP also reviews the affordability of the Council's Capital Programme over the same five year period. It forecasts required capital projects (in the main focusing on essential asset replacement and health and safety items) matched against potential capital receipts and grant funding. Note however, at this time, the financing requirement included reflects the 2024/25 Capital MTFP as it is currently being refreshed. The update will be brought back to Cabinet later in the budget cycle.
- 1.6 In addition to these two key areas of Council expenditure, the Council also prepares an MTFP for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This also shows a five year programme and outlines the key issues affecting the HRA costs and income streams from April 2025 onwards. Once again, the 2025/26 – 2028/29 HRA MTFP is currently being refreshed as there are significant



implications arising from the Capital Programme. The update will be brought back to Cabinet later in the budget cycle.

1.7 Therefore this report focuses solely on the General Fund Account.

## 2.0 Framework for the Medium Term Financial Plan

2.1 The starting base for the MTFP is the 2024/25 approved budget, which is then adjusted for any supplementary estimates approved by the Council or any significant budget variances identified in the monthly budget monitoring report to the Cabinet.

2.2 This base then has to be adjusted for unavoidable costs, such as, pay increases, inflation, service pressures associated with new legislation, a growing residential or business property base or improving performance, etc. The MTFP will also consider forecasts for investment receipts and income from fees and charges.

2.3 Finally the MTFP considers and makes assumptions regarding future levels of funding, in particular Council Tax including the potential growth in tax base, Business Rates again including any movement in the baseline as well as changes in the reliefs, multipliers and overall retention levels. Forecasts are also made for the likely level of future Central Government funding.

2.4 The MTFP models an overall aggregated position for the Council based on a range of assumptions. This then predicts an overall budget position, which can highlight a potential budget gap and then propose remedial action which can be taken to resolve it. Clearly, these assumptions can be challenged. They will vary due to changes in the local, national and international economic position and of course, the ongoing consequences of the Cost Of Living Crisis will have implications, not only for the current year, but also for the years to come.

2.5 The development of a five year financial model is based on a number of assumptions and perceived risks. These become more difficult to predict the further into the future you consider. In general terms a prudent/reasonable approach has been taken regarding forecasts, professional accounting guidance has been followed and external technical opinion has been sought where necessary. As a consequence, **Appendix 1** illustrates possible risks within the plan and the potential financial sensitivity to changes in the assumptions.

2.6 The following underlying principles have been adopted as a base assumption during the life of the MTFP:

2.6.1 Principle 1 – General Fund Reserves

- Each year the Council will target a balanced revenue budget without the use of General Fund reserve balances. The level of predicted deficits over the period of this plan may ultimately require the application of reserves to a degree to achieve the mandatory balance. However, this option is not reflected in the numbers presented and must only be considered as a last resort;
- The Council faces considerable financial risks that can have a potentially significant and immediate impact on its finances. The MTFP will attempt to ensure that the General Fund Reserve balance does not fall below the current minimum agreed level (£2m).

### 2.6.2 Principle 2 – Optimise Income Generation

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

### 2.6.3 Principle 3 – Allocation of Revenue Resources

- Resources will be directed to high priority and statutory services and hence away from low priority services, which will likely result in less investment in discretionary areas. With the exception of spend to save projects on lower priority services that can either cut future costs or increase revenue to enable cross subsidisation of higher priority services;
- It will seek to deliver further efficiency in its service delivery models and secure procurement savings in its new contractual arrangements which will then be factored into future spending plans. Note that opportunities to improve efficiency reduce over time and now only deliver benefits at the margins. Similarly, effective procurement does not always deliver savings as it is dependent upon market conditions at that time.

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

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

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

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

3.1 Members should be aware that this MTFP has been developed against a backdrop of:

- Austerity – an aggregate cut in Central Government Grant of c£5m during the austerity measures put in place since 2010/11 and been replaced with lower levels of more volatile funding sources e.g. Service Grant / Funding Guarantees, Business Rates and numerous one-off grants;
- Covid-19 – service income through fees and charges in some areas has only just recovered to pre-covid-19 levels, i.e. Leisure and Car Parking;
- The invasion of Ukraine significantly impacted the availability and therefore price of energy and fuel, leading to A Cost of Living Crisis not seen since the early 1980's. It has required the reallocation of Council resources into supporting the Government Homes for Ukraine scheme for example;
- Nationally, the cost of the Pandemic and Cost of Living Crisis has been significant, with the government's latest gross debt being £2.721bn

(101.3% of GDP) with the net borrowing £40.8bn<sup>1</sup>. This indicates that austerity measures are likely to continue;

- Political change at a national level leading to uncertainty and emergency policy decisions;
- High interest rates and high inflation which are now expected to reduce at a slower rate.

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

- 3.2 There are still some fundamental issues that have not been resolved or are still to be fully evaluated. These issues may either improve or worsen the summary budget position currently reported and are covered in Section 7 of this report.

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

- 4.1 As outlined above, the MTFP takes into consideration the current financial position against the 2024/25 base budget. The Qtr. 1 forecast indicated an under spend of £350k on the General Fund, indicating that services are managing their budgets well and further savings could be captured.
- 4.2 The initial 2024/25 pay offer has been tabled and is being considered by the unions. Currently, the tabled pay offer should not add material pressure to the 2024/25 in-year position. However, with a new Government keen to resolve outstanding public sector pay disputes, discussions continue nationally. Given the delays in agreeing the 2024/25 pay award, it is difficult to project what the 2025/26 pay award might be, particularly in the current economic circumstances which is extending over a longer period than first envisaged and the appetite for industrial action across many sectors. Therefore, the assumed pay award has been increased to circa 3% across the MTFP timeframe – adding a pressure of circa £500k per annum to the budget.
- 4.3 Many services are experiencing high staff turnover and sickness levels requiring additional temporary staff being employed to keep key services such as waste collection operational. To mitigate this pressure we continue to examine all vacancies as and when they occur. Where a role is required to maintain key service provision, for example a lifeguard or waste operative, these positions will be filled. However, where other posts become vacant, recruiting is being delayed / postponed to free up budget. Inevitably, this does impact on the quality and speed of service delivery, and this is mitigated as far as possible.
- 4.4 The significant increases in energy charges have also had an impact on the Council's finances. The Cabinet agreed to extend the current provider (Laser) and increase the proportion of Electricity purchased from 100% renewable

---

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

sources. It is currently too early to receive the new energy prices due to cover the year beginning 1 October 2024, therefore the forecast remains as previously projected, although the energy cap has reduced since that forecast, potentially leading to a saving for the Council from the assumed circa £400k pressure. To mitigate this, the Council has invested in options to reduce energy consumption, for example switching from Gas to renewable energies using ground and heat source pumps and increasing the volume of LED lighting at two of our leisure centres. Further options include lowering the heating temperature of our buildings and swimming pools and isolating areas of buildings where heating can be switched off.

- 4.5 In summary, the forecast shortfall for 2025/26 can be attributed to the assumed inflationary uplift driven by the Cost of Living Crisis and a lower draw on reserves. The sum of these pressures has added c.£1.2m to our cost base.
- 4.6 Other mitigations include additional income from fees and charges. For example, we are able to charge for services, for example the Green Waste service, Planning and Car Parking. Some services are experiencing greater take up, i.e. Leisure and Car Parking or increasing recycle prices, however, some are also seeing the impact of the economic conditions, with Qtr. 1 forecasting a drop in income from Planning and Building Control.
- 4.7 Therefore, all options to limit costs where possible, including vacancy management processes and a review of fees and charges are being considered.

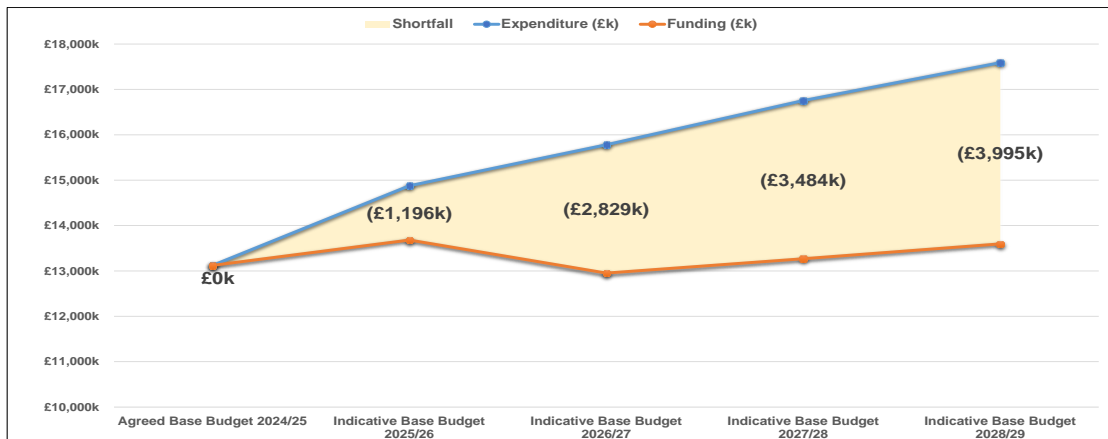
## 5.0 summary of the Medium Term Financial Plan

- 5.1 Table 1 and the associated graph shown below, gives a summary position for the MTFP with greater detailed information is shown in **Appendix 2**. This shows an overall deficit of £3,995k over the life of the plan, equivalent to approximately 25% of the current Net Service Cost.

**Table 1 – MTFP General Fund Summary**

2024/25		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
£000		£000	£000	£000	£000
13,123	Expenditure	14,878	15,782	16,754	17,591
(13,123)	Funding	(13,682)	(12,952)	(13,270)	(13,596)
<b>0</b>	<b>Annual Shortfall</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>1,633</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Cumulative Shortfall</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>2,829</b>	<b>3,484</b>	<b>3,995</b>

**Graph 1 – MTFP General Fund Cumulative Budget Gap 2024/25 to 2028/29**



5.2 Due to the cumulative nature of this plan, if the Council balances its revenue spend to its available funding, each subsequent year will only then need to find the difference (the annual shortfall). However, if no remedial action is taken to reduce the overall level of spend, the MTFP predicts an estimated cumulative shortfall on the General Fund budget of £3,995k. At present the General Fund reserve of £2,025k (plus/minus any in-year movement would be sufficient to absorb the 2025/26 deficit.

5.3 The majority of this cumulative deficit impacts during years one and two largely due to the Cost of Living Crisis and the assumed reductions in funding across Business Rates and Government Grants after years of delays.

5.4 This is clearly a challenge built upon a number of assumptions, caveats, decisions based upon external advice and the most up to date information available at this time. Clearly, any major variations in these assumptions would require a fundamental review of the Council’s MTFP and would be reported back to Cabinet and the wider Membership as soon as practical, coupled with proposed courses of action that could be implemented.

5.5 The Council has a legal requirement to set a balance budget and needs to ensure its overall costs are affordable i.e. they can be funded through income and planned short-term use of reserves. Members therefore need to take the necessary decisions and actions to manage net spending within affordable limits.

**6.0 Approach to closing the Budget Gap**

6.1 Many of the issues, assumptions and sensitivity of items included within the MTFP are complex, often inter-related and will undoubtedly be subject to variation and ultimately fundamental review depending on the levels of future funding reductions. However, strategic decisions have been ongoing to reduce the current and future operational costs.

6.2 In order to reduce the forecast deficit the Council will strive to constantly manage its costs and revenues by:

- Ensure fees/charges are revisited regularly and that the Council are charging appropriately for all items possible;
- A continued reduction of discretionary service and employee costs – which may incur short term upfront costs;
- Continue and expand partnership working where practical;
- Investigation of spend to save projects;
- Review the current and future property asset requirements;
- Maximise procurement efficiencies;
- Explore new commercial opportunities;
- Examine different ways of delivering services to reduce costs;
- Continued benchmarking and learning from best practice;
- Consideration of growing the residential and commercial property base to align delivery with Government funding priorities.

6.3 Part of that saving could come from increasing income from Service Fees and Charges. Following a full review last year, many services now have delegated authority to increase fees in line with inflation. The working assumption is that this will be done.

6.4 During the summer, Leadership Team and services have been reviewing a range of budget options that could be considered in order to help mitigate that remaining budget shortfall across this MTFP, with a particular focus on 2025/26. Indicative areas where possible budget savings could be found will form the basis of the discussions with the Policy Development Groups (PDG's). In addition the PDG's will be asked to identify further options to resolve the immediate budget gap for 2025/26 and future years.

6.5 In putting forward the options, officers have applied a risk level to them based upon Red, Amber, Green as follows:

**Red** – indicates the saving could be taken, but there are higher risks/ implications associated with it and therefore officers would not recommend it;

**Amber** – indicates the saving could be taken, but there are risks and implications associated that members need to be aware of / accept;

**Green** – indicates a saving that is recommended by officers.

6.6 Based on only accepting the Green and Amber budget options, the overall 2025/26 position is forecast to move as set out below:

<b>Initial forecast Shortfall</b>		<b>£1,196k</b>
Emerging Budget Pressures	Appendix 3	+ £725k
Budget Options Identified:		
Cabinet	Appendix 4	(£757k)
Economy & Assets PDG		(£172k)
Community, People and Equalities PDG		0

Homes		(£129k)
Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG		(£39k)
Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement PDG		(£434k)
<b>Revised forecast Shortfall</b>		<b>£390k</b>

6.7 Clearly there remains a significant budget shortfall in 2025/26. Therefore, all possible options to increase income or reduce costs must be considered. Options will be brought forward for consideration over the next few months in the run in to setting the 2025/26 budget in February 2025. The above plans will require all service areas to play an active role in securing future savings and the Council will also continue to consult with all of its major stakeholders, especially the tax payers, to ensure all future budgetary decisions accord with their priorities.

6.8 Members will appreciate that all budget options will require political support and therefore if some suggestions are deemed to be unacceptable then other savings will need to be proposed. Members should indicate where these alternatives should be sought.

## 7.0 Risk, Opportunities and Uncertainty

7.1 The level of uncertainty in funding and external pressures as outlined below makes forecasting difficult and with it a need to highlight risks and the need to push for further efficiencies within services. Ongoing risks and uncertainty for the budget at this stage include:

7.1.1 **New Government** – following the July General Election and the change in Government, a number of announcements have been made in areas such as Housing Targets, further increases to Planning Fees and possible multi-year Funding Settlements. However, announcements have also been made to “fix the broken NHS” and continue spending levels on defence and tackling unemployment, all of which draw on very limited public funding. Therefore, it is not expected that Local Government will see significant changes, and importantly increases, in funding.

7.1.2 **Future Local Government Funding** – the Council awaits to hear the level of funding it will receive in 2025/26 and future years. Although some ambiguous messages have been given by government, these then need to be translated into individual Council funding. These will be dependent upon the Governments views on the long term funding requirement and allocation mechanism. Therefore, it is critical that we continue to lobby for the Fair Funding Review and holistic review of Business Rates to be completed fully as soon as possible, along with the implementation of any replacement of the New Homes Bonus Scheme.



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

- 7.1.3 **Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS)** – the Council await the Provisional Settlement expected to be announced in December, covering 2025/26. The previous multi-year settlement expired in 2019/20 and for the last five years has simply been rolled forwards as the sector awaits the outcomes of the much delayed Fair Funding Review. We continue to lobby for multi-year settlements that offer some certainty over the level of grants and therefore enable more meaningful planning.
- 7.1.4 **Cost of Living Crisis / Inflation** – As highlighted previously in this report, the Cost of Living Crisis has had a significant impact upon the Council's finances, although this is beginning to reduce.
- 7.1.5 To combat high inflation, the Bank of England Base Rate is increased to reduce spending levels. Whilst this provides a greater return on our investments, this has a significant impact on the interest rates the Council is able to borrow at. With the significant growth in the Capital Programme primarily to deliver additional homes across the district, additional borrowing will be required. Although inflation has reduced back to near the Government's 2% target, interest rates are only just beginning to fall and this is likely to reduce / slow the deliverability of such projects.
- 7.1.6 **Council Tax** – The MTFP is based on the assumption of a maximum 2% increase on a Band D property each year. This may of course not be possible due to Central Government restrictions. This is only likely to be known on an annual basis as each Settlement is announced. Lobbying continues to remove, or relax, the referendum limit
- 7.1.7 **Council Tax Base** – This MTFP must consider the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis on collection rates. Recovery can be estimated back to the normal 98% over the MTFP.
- 7.1.8 **100% Business Rates Retention / Revaluation** – Government had committed to devolve 100% of Business Rates to Local Government in 2015 but this was later reduced to 75% before being abandoned in 2021. As with the fair funding Review, any proposed changes have been significantly delayed, with no changes to be brought in before 2025/26. A full or partial reset of this baseline will divert resources away from Mid Devon. The sector also awaits what transitional measures will be included to smooth this detrimental impact.

7.1.9 **Levelling Up Fund** – The future long term growth relies on the large scale infrastructure projects such as J28, Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension and Culm Garden Village. The Council has to date been unsuccessful in its bids for substantial funding to support the Cullompton HIF Project. As such, the project is delayed and alternative funding sources are being sought. Should a bid be successful, plans to deliver the major infrastructure project will continue. All the while, the costs continue to rise due to the economic climate. Similarly, plans to reopen Cullompton train station are dependent upon government support, and we await formal clarity from the new Government on their direction of travel.

7.1.10 **Homes for Ukraine Scheme** – Part of the national support to the Ukraine is to offer safe housing for those escaping the conflict. Funding measures have already been reduced to support the scheme. Once the scheme ends it is not clear whether there will be options to relocate families to other hosts or to private landlords. Therefore there is a risk that some of those initially covered by the scheme could present as homeless and require the Council to house them. Less, if any, associated funding will be available to cover those additional costs.

7.1.11 **Net Zero Commitments** – The council needs to reflect on the availability of resources or the reprioritisation required to deliver this ambition. Currently the only government assistance is linked to one off bids to deliver specific schemes. We await any national announcements from Government on how this will be funded / prioritised in the future.

7.2 All of the above items highlight once again just how difficult it is to forecast ahead with any degree of accuracy. Nevertheless, the MTFP helps us examine the likely trends to assist in setting realistic capital and revenue budgets going forward.

## 8.0 Balances and Reserves

8.1 The Council should look to match on-going spending plans to available in-year resources. However, it currently holds an uncommitted General Fund Reserve with a balance of £2,025k, which is above the current balance of £2m set by Full Council. However, this will be impacted by the outturn position of 2024/25 which is currently forecasting an underspend and therefore an increase in general reserves of £350k.

8.2 The Council holds this reserve for a number of reasons. Firstly to deal with any short term cash flow or funding issues. Secondly to provide a contingency for exceptional one-off acts (i.e. flooding, fire, terrorism, business rate failure, etc.) and, thirdly to provide a buffer for known circumstances whose final affect is unknown (i.e. changes in legislation or major funding changes). Clearly, the more uncertainty that exists, the higher the balance required to

mitigate this risk. This level of minimum reserves is assessed annually to ensure it is adequate.

- 8.3 As stated above, this plan does not include any utilisation of these reserves. However, with the scale of the deficit, it is conceivable that some utilisation could be necessary. If so, this should be on the basis that the reserve is replenished by the end of the MTFP period.
- 8.4 The Council also holds Earmarked Reserves which have been set aside for a specific purpose, such as sinking funds for asset replacement. Although these reserves are ring-fenced and not available to support the budget generally, a review of all Earmarked Reserves is undertaken annually and any identification of funding no longer required to be earmarked can be released and could be used to support the budget. As these funds are one-off, they should not be used to support ongoing expenditure and therefore only delay the requirement for the identification and implementation of a sustainable saving.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

- 9.1 The MTFP will continue to be updated to ensure it is a live document. It is subject to amendment and review by Leadership Team and Members and will provide a clear guide prior to commencing the annual budget setting process in future years.
- 9.2 Like all councils, Mid Devon is facing an ongoing and very challenging financial future. The Corporate Plan aligns to available financial resources so that the District can be best placed to maximise cost effective delivery of its services that are valued by its residents.
- 9.3 It should also be noted that Management will continue to play a pro-active role in both reducing ongoing service costs and exploring new possibilities to raise additional income.
- 9.4 Having a realistic financial plan for the next five years will enable the Council to ensure it is allocating its limited financial resources to its key priorities. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's goals/objectives over a four year period and must clearly be matched by the financial resources that are available. The previous Government's move from a relatively fixed core funding system to more of a '*payment by results*' process has introduced a lot more uncertainty and volatility for the future of the Council's funding streams, which makes medium term financial planning an even more challenging process. We await the funding approach of the new Government.
- 9.5 Like any strategic plan, the MTFP has been compiled based upon all available information at a fixed point in time. Clearly, as time moves on assumptions will change, Central Government will set new targets, bring in new legislation and adjust funding levels. The Council is aware that the Fair Funding Review may,

in time, bring significant changes in its core funding including a full or partial Baseline reset in Business Rates. Residents' expectations will change, Member priorities will alter and therefore any plans must be flexible enough to cope with major changes. It is not only prudent but imperative that the Council seeks to maintain its reserve levels to the fullest extent possible. Moving forward Members will be provided with regular updates on the financial impact of any variation to what has been previously assumed.

### **Financial Implications**

By undertaking regular reviews of the MTFP the Council can ensure that its Corporate Plan priorities are affordable. The implications of the budget gap are set out within the paper. Many areas require greater clarity, particularly around national funding and possible changes to Government Policy. Therefore a number of key assumptions underpin the reported position, which will be refined as greater clarity is received through the budget setting process.

### **Legal Implications**

None directly arising from this report, although there is a legal obligation to balance the budget. There are legal implications arising from any future consequential decisions to change service provision, but these would be assessed at the time.

### **Risk Assessment**

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

### **Impact on Climate Change**

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

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

No implications arising from this report.

### **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

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

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

**Statutory Officer:** Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

**Date:** 21 August 2024

**Statutory Officer:** Maria De Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date:** 21 August 2024

**Chief Officer:** Stephen Walford

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive

**Date:** 21 August 2024

**Performance and risk:** Dr Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

**Date:** 21 August 2024

**Cabinet member notified:** Yes

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

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

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

Telephone: 01884 234242

#### **Background papers:**

- 2024/25 Budget
- 2024/25 Qtr. 1 Budget Monitor

This page is intentionally left blank

## Key Assumptions used in Medium Term Financial Plan

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

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

### Inflation

Future inflation is of course an unknown quantity. It has been at a generational high in recent times peaking at over 10%, but has now fallen back close to the Government’s 2% target. It is critical to use as realistic assumptions as possible.

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

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

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

A change in the inflation factors causes the following movements:

	2024/25 Budget £000	Inflation Assumption %	2025/26 Forecast Financial Impact £000	(+/-) 1% Change £000
<b>Staffing*</b>	16,663	3.00%	500	166
<b>Pension Back Funding</b>	590	3.00%	24	N/A
<b>NDR on Council Properties</b>	729	2.00%	15	8
<b>Computer Software</b>	1,031	5.00%	52	10
<b>Gas<sup>#</sup></b>	107	25.00%	27	5
<b>Electric<sup>#</sup></b>	862	16.75%	144	9
<b>Water</b>	178	2.00%	4	2

<b>Members Allowances*</b>	343	3.00%	10	3
<b>Insurance</b>	309	3.00%	9	3
<b>Fuel</b>	522	5.00%	26	5
<b>Leisure Fees and Charges</b>	(3,419)	2.00%	(68)	(34)
<b>Support Service Recharge to HRA</b>	(1,945)	3.00%	(58)	(19)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,970</b>		<b>1,046</b>	<b>148</b>

\* Recent pay offers, including the current 2024/25 offer, have been a flat cash uplift as opposed to a percentage. However for the purposes of the MTFP, a percentage is applied which on average broadly equates to what we anticipate any pay offer to be.

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

### **Localised Tax Funding**

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

The Council Tax taxbase forecasts growth in line with the Local Plan. This equates to approximately 350 homes and contributes approximately £80k per annum. A prudent collection rate of 98% is expected, having recovered from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The assumed annual increase in the Band D charge is in line with the Governments recent referendum limits at 2%. Each 1% increase in Council Tax generates approximately £70k. It should be noted that extra housing also affects the Council's cost base too, i.e. waste collection, street cleaning etc.

The overall Business Rates scheme is likely to be reviewed and altered by the new Government. Currently there is little on how or when this might happen. The key Business Rates assumptions are:

- that the expected Baseline Reset continues be delayed. The Baseline Reset will update the baseline year(s) used in the Settlement funding model and therefore a degree of local growth will be lost depending on the method of the reset applied. The assumption is that the reset will remove approximately half of the growth in the retained income since the introduction of the baseline in 2013/14, which equates to approximately £500k. This is currently included within 2026/27 but there is no clarity on this date. No expectation of transitional support or use of the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve is currently assumed, but is available and could well happen;
- the estimate is for a minimal growth in the overall Rateable Value and the national multiplier in 2025/26, which is normally linked to CPI inflation. Growth in future years is based upon a 2% increase. Anything above this will benefit the Council.
- The next revaluation is introduced in 2026/27 – the assumption is that this is cost neutral for the Council, but this could increase or decrease retained income.

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



## Government Funding

Most forms of Government funding is included within the Local Government Financial Settlement provided by the (renamed) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Given there is a new Government, little is known about possible changes or timing of the funding settlement.

However, at an individual local authority level, there can still be movement depending on the way funding is allocated – i.e. at a sector level the funding could be the same, but if more funding is directed towards Social Care for example, as a lower tier authority, this will negatively impact our funding. For 2025/26, the current assumption is for a cash freeze.

It is very difficult to predict whether the current grants will continue, and if so at what value. It is also difficult to envisage a reduction in funding in the current economic climate. The current sum of these four grants is £1,732k. Therefore a movement of +/- 10% would equate to £173k.

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

## Interest – Investment Returns and Financing Costs

To combat inflation, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee move interest rates to encourage/discourage spending. With inflation being at a 40-year high, interest rates have been increasing rapidly, starting at a historic low of 0.1% up to December 2021 to the peak of 5.25% (August 2023). The first reduction following the reduction in inflation back to nearer the Government's 2% target occurred in August 2024, with further movements are expected during the remainder of 2024 and 2025.

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

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

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

Link Group Interest Rate View	28.05.24											
	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27
BANK RATE	5.25	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.00	3.00	3.00
6 month ave earnings	5.30	4.90	4.40	3.90	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.10	3.10	3.20
12 month ave earnings	5.10	4.80	4.30	3.80	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.20	3.30	3.40
5 yr PWLB	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.80
10 yr PWLB	5.00	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.90
25 yr PWLB	5.30	5.20	5.00	4.80	4.70	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.30
50 yr PWLB	5.10	5.00	4.80	4.60	4.50	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10

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

**Risk**

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

---

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

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

**MTFP General Fund Summary**

2024/25 £'000		Notes	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000
<b>15,815</b>	<b>Net Direct Cost of Services</b>		<b>16,477</b>	<b>17,309</b>	<b>17,997</b>	<b>18,612</b>
(1,957)	Net recharge to HRA		(2,015)	(2,076)	(2,137)	(2,201)
813	Provision for Repayment of Borrowing	1	872	968	1,093	1,138
<b>14,670</b>	<b>Net Service Costs</b>		<b>15,334</b>	<b>16,202</b>	<b>16,953</b>	<b>17,548</b>
(1,059)	Net Interest Costs/(Receipts)	2	(629)	(680)	(633)	(628)
352	Finance Lease Interest Payable		352	352	352	352
(841)	Net Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	3	(178)	(92)	83	319
<b>13,123</b>			<b>14,878</b>	<b>15,782</b>	<b>16,754</b>	<b>17,591</b>
	<b>Funded By:</b>					
(4,422)	Retained Business Rates	4	(4,610)	(4,200)	(4,282)	(4,366)
(105)	Revenue Support Grant	5	(105)	(52)	(52)	(52)
(634)	Rural Services Delivery Grant	5	(634)	(634)	(634)	(634)
(414)	New Homes Bonus	5	(414)	(207)	(207)	(207)
(14)	2024/25 Services Grant	5	(14)	(7)	(7)	(7)
(566)	2024/25 Funding Guarantee	5	(566)	(283)	(283)	(283)
(6,968)	Council Tax–MDDC	6	(7,340)	(7,569)	(7,805)	(8,047)
<b>(13,123)</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>		<b>(13,682)</b>	<b>(12,952)</b>	<b>(13,270)</b>	<b>(13,596)</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Annual Gap – Increase/(Decrease) In-year</b>		<b>1,196</b>	<b>1,633</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>511</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>Cumulative Gap</b>		<b>1,196</b>	<b>2,829</b>	<b>3,484</b>	<b>3,995</b>

**Notes:**

1. The Provision for repayment of borrowing incorporates the financial implications of the current Capital Programme.
2. The reduction in Net Interest Costs / (Receipts) reflects the assumption that interest rates reduce and balances held reduce as they are used to fund the capital programme.
3. Net Transfers to / (from) Earmarked Reserves reflects planned contributions to, or drawdowns from reserves. This is likely to change significantly during this budget process.
4. The Retained Business Rates increase is assumed to be a 2% increase. However income drops in 2026/27 to reflect the potential changes the Government might implement to the Business Rates Retention Scheme. These include Re-Baselining and Resource Equalisation. No use of the Smoothing Reserve has been factored in (currently £801k but dependent upon annual collection surplus/deficit).
5. The current assumption is for a cash freeze in grants for 2025/26. However in 2026/27, it is assumed that the long awaited implications for grant funding arising from the Fair Funding Review are implemented, i.e. those announced as one off / ceasing will have stopped. However, there is an expectation that these are replaced, at least in part, but forecasting that is impossible. For simplicity, all except the Rural Services Grant are assumed to half, but it is hoped that this is the prudent / worst case forecast.
6. Council Tax income is forecast assuming Band D charge increases in line with recent referendum limits and an increase in the taxbase in line with the local plan requirements (c350 properties per annum) and a return to normal (98%) collection rate over the life of the MTFP.

This page is intentionally left blank

Emerging Budget Pressures

(xk) = Saving, +£k = Pressure

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description (including risks of delivery)	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
						(£k)	(£k)	(£k)
1	Cabinet	ICT	Lisa Lewis	IT700	Increased resources to tackle Cyber Security	£50		
2	Cabinet	ICT	Lisa Lewis	IT700	Possible increase resources to fully implement CRM / Transformation and gain maximum benefit (one off)		£125	
3	Cabinet	ICT	Lisa Lewis	IT900	Increased costs of payment card security solution		£30	
4	Cabinet	All Services	All CMT	All	Develop a plan to increase the cohort of Apprentices, considering static placements, rotating around service areas, and a graduate trainee programme		£150	
5	Cabinet	Property	Paul Deal	PS codes	Increase provision to sinking funds		£100	
6	Cabinet	Finance Leasing costs	Paul Deal	All	Likely increase in financing lease charges due to increase in numbers of vehicles leased	£50		
7	Economy & Assets	Property	Paul Deal	PS950	Increase budget within Climate Change - planned for consultancy, funding bid completion, grant schemes or increased officer time			£100
8	Homes	Housing	Simon Newcombe	PH373	Additional 1.2 FTE to support homelessness		£50	
9	Homes	Housing	Simon Newcombe	PH320	Creation of a new Sinking Fund to maintain the 11 new temporary accommodation houses	£20		
10	Planning, Environment & Sustainability	Planning (Development)	Angharad Williams	PR200	Reduction in Planning Income		£150	
11	Planning, Environment & Sustainability	Planning Enforcement	Angharad Williams	PR110	Increase the resource for Planning Enforcement			£100
<b>Emergin Budget Pressures - Sub Total</b>						<b>£120</b>	<b>£605</b>	<b>£200</b>
								<b>£925</b>

This page is intentionally left blank

**Round 1 - Initial Savings Options**

(xk) = Saving, +£k = Pressure

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description	2025/26		
						Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
1	Cabinet	Finance	Paul Deal	FP100	Saving delivered through revised staffing structure	(£20)		
2	Cabinet	Finance	Paul Deal	FP200	Reduction in internal audit	(£15)		
3	Cabinet	People Services	James Hamblin / Matthew Page	HR100	Capturing benefits from CRM system to achieve efficiency saving.		(£27)	
4	Cabinet	People Services	James Hamblin / Matthew Page	HR100	We obtain legal insights from seminars and other online means	(£3)		
5	Cabinet	People Services	James Hamblin / Matthew Page	HR100	Centralise Training budgets and capture underspend		(£5)	
6	Cabinet	Corporate Performance	Dr Stephen Carr	CM205	Remove the support and maintenance for the SPAR software	(£3)		
7	Cabinet	Revenues & Benefits	Dean Emery / Fiona Keyes	RB100	Review staffing structure as more more benefits claimants more to Universal Credit.			(£30)
8	Cabinet	Communications	Lisa Lewis	IT200	Let's Talk MidDevon - reduction in engagement activity opportunities digitally		(£11)	
9	Cabinet	ICT	Lisa Lewis	IT500	Remove MBPM - old CRM	(£7)		
10	Cabinet	Elections	Jackie Murphy	LD100 LD200 LD201	Maximise the recharges included within the recovery of external election costs from Government	(£5)		
11	Cabinet	Elections	Jackie Murphy	LD100 LD200 LD201	Increase the use of temporary staff and reduce the permanent staffing	(£5)		
12	Cabinet	Elections	Jackie Murphy	LD100 LD200 LD201	Reduce postage costs through increased electronic communications		(£1)	
13	Cabinet	Finance	Paul Deal	IE290	Possible increase in investment returns while rates are higher (based on ave 3.5% return on £20m ave investment, less 40% to HRA) - one off		(£100)	
14	Cabinet	All Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	Account code 3404	10% saving estimation on both fuel spend/savings	(£50)		
15	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	Account codes 2301 / 2304	Saving estimation on Utilities spend, following reduction in prices and price cap		(£150)	
16	Cabinet	All Services	Workforce Review Group and CMT	All	Vacancy Saving from Workforce Review Group delivered through delayed recruitment and robust challenge	(£50)		
17	Cabinet	All Services	Workforce Review Group and CMT	All	Reduced Sickness levels across the council increase productivity and reduced agency requirement		(£20)	
18	Cabinet	Capital Financing	Paul Deal	All	Likely reduction in capital financing charge due to level of slippage in 2023/24 Capital Programme	(£50)		
19	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potential to free up Earmarked Reserves through reprioritisation of funds		(£100)	
20	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potential further increase in Council Tax income above current assumptions (e.g. a combination of further increase Band D charge, additional growth in Taxbase and improvement in collection rate)		(£50)	

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description	2025/26		
						Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
21	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potential further increase in Business Rates income above current assumptions (e.g. a combination of additional growth in Taxbase and improvement in collection rate)		(£50)	
22	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potential increase in Grant Funding income above current cash frozen assumptions (2% increase = £35k)		(£35)	

**Initial Savings Options - Sub Total**

<b>(£208)</b>	<b>(£549)</b>	<b>(£30)</b>
		<b>(£787)</b>

**Ideas that need more consideration to identify possible financial benefit**

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description (including risks of delivery)	2025/26		
						Low Risk (£k)	Medium Risk (£k)	High Risk (£k)
55	Cabinet	Property	Paul Deal	PS160	Potential reduction in project maintenance spend - high risk as dependent upon condition survey results and requirements			??
56	Cabinet	Customer Services	Lisa Lewis	CS932	Reduce Contact Centre hours to match open hours e.g. 09:00 - 14:00			??
57	Cabinet	Revenues & Benefits	Dean Emery	IT500	Investment in GovTech/CRM and migration from NEC portal for self-serve and automation into back office		??	
58	Cabinet	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS700	EPR is due to go live for 2025-26. Value assumed equal and opposite to loss of Waste Shared Saving	??		
59	Cabinet	Economic Development	Adrian Welsh	PR992	Maximise the use of S106 within economic development projects		??	
60	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potentially sell services, or provide training to other organisations			??
61	Cabinet	Democratic Services	Laura Woon	LD300	Cease printing committee papers and fully utilise Mod.Gov		??	
62	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Improved procurement could save money across all service areas		??	
63	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Possible reduction in pension contributions in 2026/27 based on current fund valuation		??	
64	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Policy on printing [default email for services - statutory excluded if necessary) - costings/savings TBC		??	

**Ideas that need further work - Sub Total**

<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
-----------	-----------	-----------



Round 1 - Initial Savings Options

(xk) = Saving, +£k = Pressure

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description (including risks of delivery)	2025/26		
						Low Risk (£k)	Medium Risk (£k)	High Risk (£k)
1	Cabinet	Finance	Paul Deal	FP100	Saving delivered through revised staffing structure	(£20)		
2	Cabinet	Finance	Paul Deal	FP200	Reduction in internal audit	(£15)		
3	Cabinet	People Services	James Hamblin / Matthew Page	HR100	Capturing benefits from CRM system to achieve efficiency saving.		(£27)	
4	Cabinet	People Services	James Hamblin / Matthew Page	HR100	We obtain legal insights from seminars and other online means	(£3)		
5	Cabinet	People Services	James Hamblin / Matthew Page	HR100	Centralise Training budgets and capture underspend		(£5)	
6	Cabinet	Corporate Performance	Dr Stephen Carr	CM205	Remove the support and maintenance for the SPAR software	(£3)		
7	Cabinet	Revenues & Benefits	Dean Emery / Fiona Keyes	RB100	Review staffing structure as more more benefits claimants more to Universal Credit.			(£30)
8	Cabinet	Communications	Lisa Lewis	IT200	Let's Talk MidDevon - reduction in engagement activity opportunities digitally		(£11)	
9	Cabinet	ICT	Lisa Lewis	IT500	Remove MBPM - old CRM	(£7)		
10	Cabinet	Elections	Jackie Murphy	LD100 LD200 LD201	Maximise the recharges included within the recovery of external election costs from Government	(£5)		
11	Cabinet	Elections	Jackie Murphy	LD100 LD200 LD201	Increase the use of temporary staff and reduce the permanent staffing	(£5)		
12	Cabinet	Elections	Jackie Murphy	LD100 LD200 LD201	Reduce postage costs through increased electronic communications		(£1)	
13	Cabinet	Finance	Paul Deal	IE290	Possible increase in investment returns while rates are higher (based on ave 3.5% return on £20m ave investment, less 40% to HRA) - one off		(£100)	
14	Cabinet	All Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	Account code 3404	10% saving estimation on both fuel spend/savings	(£50)		
15	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	Account codes 2301 / 2304	Saving estimation on Utilities spend, following reduction in prices and price cap		(£150)	
16	Cabinet	All Services	Workforce Review Group and CMT	All	Vacancy Saving from Workforce Review Group delivered through delayed recruitment and robust challenge	(£50)		
17	Cabinet	All Services	Workforce Review Group and CMT	All	Reduced Sickness levels across the council increase productivity and reduced agency requirement		(£20)	
18	Cabinet	Capital Financing	Paul Deal	All	Likely reduction in capital financing charge due to level of slippage in 2023/24 Capital Programme	(£50)		
19	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potential to free up Earmarked Reserves through reprioritisation of funds		(£100)	
20	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potential further increase in Council Tax income above current assumptions (e.g. a combination of further increase Band D charge, additional growth in Taxbase and improvement in collection rate)		(£50)	

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description (including risks of delivery)	2025/26		
						Low Risk (£k)	Medium Risk (£k)	High Risk (£k)
21	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potential further increase in Business Rates income above current assumptions (e.g. a combination of additional growth in Taxbase and improvement in collection rate)		(£50)	
22	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potential increase in Grant Funding income above current cash frozen assumptions (2% increase = £35k)		(£35)	
23	Economy & Assets	Property	Paul Deal	PS810	Lease more space commercially within Phoenix House (including recharges). Clarity required on requirements for PH, flexibility in changing accommodation, hybrid working etc			(£50)
24	Economy & Assets	Property	Paul Deal	PS980	Capturing benefits from CRM system to achieve efficiency saving. (previously offered in 2024/25 but this will be delivered through vacancy management).			(£30)
25	Economy & Assets	Property	Paul Deal	PS200	An assumption that either a financial contribution or transfer of assets is secured with some or all of the major Town and Parish Councils.		(£60)	
26	Economy & Assets	Property	Paul Deal	PS992	Refresh out of date leases - dependent upon market conditions at the time			(£10)
27	Economy & Assets	Property	Paul Deal	PS810	Use PH or leisure centres for pick-up points for Amazon, etc.			(£5)
28	Economy & Assets	Car Parking	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	CP520 / CP540	Pay & Display - recommended fee increase plus inclusion of growth	(£30)		
29	Economy & Assets	Car Parking	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	CP520 / CP540	Permits - recommended fee increase plus inclusion of growth	(£10)		
30	Economy & Assets	Car Parking	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	CP530	Introduce notional charge to most utilised Amenity Car Parks	(£10)		
31	Economy & Assets	Economic Development	Zoe Lentell / Adrian Welsh	PR400	Restructure staffing resources OR seek cost contribution from Towns / Parishes		(£62)	(£50)
32	Homes	Housing	Simon Newcombe	PH320	Reduced B&B costs following the purchase of 11 houses for temporary accommodation Potential further reduction in B&B costs through investment in additional temporary accommodation. (match funding to LAHF3).		(£75)	
33	Homes	Housing	Simon Newcombe	PH320	Proposal to include assumed grant allocation for Domestic Abuse - as received in recent years		(£34)	
34	Homes	Housing	Simon Newcombe	PH320	Increased income from recent houses purchased for temporary accommodation	(£20)		
35	Planning, Environment & Sustainability	Planning (Development)	Angharad Williams	PR200	Additional Pre-App Planning Income			(£40)
36	Planning, Environment & Sustainability	Planning (Development)	Angharad Williams	PR200	Cease advertising within local newspapers, online only	(£10)		
37	Planning, Environment & Sustainability	Planning (Development)	Angharad Williams	PR200	Additional income generated from Planning Engagement in EUE proposals.			(£10)
38	Planning, Environment & Sustainability	Planning (Forward Planning)	Tristan Peat	PR600	Review service costs/delivery		(£29)	
39	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Customer Services	Lisa Lewis	CS932	Close reception to walk-ins - would still need a solution to building access			(£25)
40	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Customer Services	Lisa Lewis	CS932	Restructure staffing resources			(£25)

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description (including risks of delivery)	2025/26		
						Low Risk (£k)	Medium Risk (£k)	High Risk (£k)
41	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS700	Projection on Garden Waste Income from residents - recommended fee increase plus inclusion of growth in subscriptions	(£50)		
42	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS710	Projection re Trade Waste - recommended fee increase plus inclusion of growth in subscriptions	(£38)		
43	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS725	Projection of recycle income - volatile area in terms of selling prices		(£100)	
44	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS700	Recover set up costs from new housing developments			(£20)
45	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS710	Price increase in waste disposal charges	£100		
46	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS725	Price increase in recycling credits	(£100)		
47	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS725	Review Management Structure		(£25)	
48	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS700	Shared Savings - Assumes current agreement ceases on 2025/26 to be replaced by EPR - see below.		(£120)	
49	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS770	Increased rental charges from increased footprint at Carlu Close to future proof service for next 15-20 years. Potential release on one area once new operational layout implemented.	£53		
50	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Leisure Services	Dean Emery	RS140 / RS150 / RS160	Review staffing Structure		(£83)	
51	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Leisure Services	Dean Emery	RS140 / RS150 / RS160	Reduce overtime by minimum target		(£25)	
52	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Leisure Services	Dean Emery	RS140 / RS150 / RS160	Recognise growth in income - over and above assumed inflationary increase	(£34)		
53	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Leisure Services	Dean Emery	RS140 / RS150	Change from Chlorine to Salt solution	(£12)		
54	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement	Leisure Services	Dean Emery	RS140 / RS150 / RS160	Potential income from advertising on Apps			(£10)

## Initial Savings Options - Sub Total

(£369)	(£1,162)	(£305)
(£1,836)		

Ideas that need more consideration to identify possible financial benefit

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description (including risks of delivery)	2025/26		
						Low Risk (£k)	Medium Risk (£k)	High Risk (£k)
55	Cabinet	Property	Paul Deal	PS160	Potential reduction in project maintenance spend - high risk as dependent upon condition survey results and requirements			??
56	Cabinet	Customer Services	Lisa Lewis	CS932	Reduce Contact Centre hours to match open hours e.g. 09:00 - 14:00			??

Ref	Cabinet / PDG	Service	Budget Holder	Cost Centre	BRIEF Saving Description (including risks of delivery)	2025/26		
						Low Risk (£k)	Medium Risk (£k)	High Risk (£k)
57	Cabinet	Revenues & Benefits	Dean Emery	IT500	Investment in GovTech/CRM and migration from NEC portal for self-serve and automation into back office		??	
58	Cabinet	Waste Services	Darren Beer / Matthew Page	WS700	EPR is due to go live for 2025-26. Value assumed equal and opposite to loss of Waste Shared Saving	??		
59	Cabinet	Economic Development	Adrian Welsh	PR992	Maximise the use of S106 within economic development projects		??	
60	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Potentially sell services, or provide training to other organisations			??
61	Cabinet	Democratic Services	Laura Woon	LD300	Cease printing committee papers and fully utilise Mod.Gov		??	
62	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Improved procurement could save money across all service areas		??	
63	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Possible reduction in pension contributions in 2026/27 based on current fund valuation		??	
64	Cabinet	All Services	Paul Deal	All	Policy on printing [default email for services - statutory excluded if necessary) - costings/savings TBC		??	
<b>Ideas that need further work - Sub Total</b>						<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>



**Report for: Cabinet**

---

Date of Meeting:	17 September 2024
Subject:	<b>Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system</b>
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Keable, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Richard Marsh, Director of Place & Economy
Exempt:	N/a
Wards Affected:	All wards.
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Mid Devon District Council NPPF Consultation Response

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

This report provides a summary of the Government’s proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system, and provides a draft response to the Government’s consultation on the revised NPPF for noting and/or comment.

**Recommendation(s):**

**That Cabinet:**

- 1. Notes the contents of this report and the draft response to the Government’s consultation on ‘Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system’ included in Appendix 1.**
- 2. Notes that Mid Devon consultation response, incorporating any final amendments, will be submitted ahead of the closure of the consultation deadline on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024.**

## Section 2 – Report

### 1.0 About the NPPF

#### 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

“sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner. Preparing and maintaining up-to-date plans should be seen as a priority in meeting this objective. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan<sup>1</sup>, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.”

1.2 The NPPF was first introduced in 2012, replacing previous national planning policy guidance and statements, and has been subject to updates made in July 2018, February 2019, July 2021 and in December 2023. The current version of the NPPF includes revisions made in response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation at that same time. In particular, the December 2023 NPPF removed the requirement for local authorities with an adopted local plan less than five years old to continually demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply.

### 2.0 Consultation on proposed changes to the NPPF

2.1 On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 the Government published its consultation “Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system”, and has made clear that reform is necessary to reverse the December 2023 changes to the NPPF which it considers “were damaging to housing supply, disrupting plan-making and undermining investor confidence.” The proposed reforms to the NPPF take “a different, growth-focused approach” which the Government sees as “vital to deliver [its] commitments to achieve economic growth and build 1.5 million new homes”.

2.2 The consultation document includes 106 questions and comments are invited by 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024. There is now an opportunity for the Council to consider the implications of the proposed reforms in relation to plan making and also the determination of planning applications in Mid Devon and submit its own response to consultation. To assist Members, Section 3.0 of this report provides a summary of key proposed reforms that are being consulted on. However, it is recommended that Members review the Government’s consultation proposals in full. A link to the full suite of the Government’s consultation proposals is provided at the end of this report. **Appendix 1** to this report includes recommended responses from the Council to the consultation questions.

---

<sup>1</sup> In Mid Devon the development plan includes the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan 2013 – 2033, neighbourhood plans that have passed their local referendum, and the Devon Minerals and Waste Plans.

### **3.0 Summary of Consultation Proposals**

3.1 There are 15 chapters within the consultation document which set out the Government's proposed approach to revising the National Planning Policy Framework as well as seeking views on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increased planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. The 15 chapters cover the following topics:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Policy objectives

Chapter 3 – Planning for the homes we need

Chapter 4 – A new Standard Method for assessing housing needs

Chapter 5 – Brownfield, grey belt and the Green Belt

Chapter 6 – Delivering affordable, well-designed homes and places

Chapter 7 – Building infrastructure to grow the economy

Chapter 8 – Delivering community needs

Chapter 9 – Supporting green energy and the environment

Chapter 10 – Changes to local plan intervention criteria

Chapter 11 – Changes to planning application fees and cost recovery for local authorities related to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Chapter 12 – the future of planning policy and plan making

Chapter 13 – the Public Sector Equality Duty

Chapter 14 – Table of questions

Chapter 15 – About this consultation

3.2 A brief summary of the proposals within each chapter is provided below:

*Reforming the presumption in favour of sustainable development*

3.3 The function of the presumption is to provide a fall back to encourage planning permission to be granted where plan policies are not up-to-date, including where there is an insufficient supply of land. It broadly does this in two ways. It brings land into the scope of potential development where it has not been specifically allocated for development (e.g. a site on the edge of existing settlements), or where land is allocated for another purpose. Additionally, it 'tilts the balance' towards approval by making clear that permission should be granted unless doing so would cut across protections for safeguarded areas.

3.4 The proposed changes seek to clarify the application of the presumption. Currently, the presumption is triggered when there are 'no relevant

development plan policies’ or those which are ‘most important for determining the application are out of date’ The Government proposes making clear that the relevant policies are those for the supply of land. It is also proposed to address concerns that developers have used the presumption to promote low quality, unsustainable development through adding and explicit reference to the need to consider locational and design policies, as well as policies for the delivery of affordable housing.

*Restoring 5-year housing land supply requirements (5YHLS)*

- 3.5 Prior to December 2023, the 5 year housing land supply required local planning authorities to annually identify and update a specific supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of 5 years’ worth of housing. In December 2023, several changes were made with the effect that where a local planning authority has an up-to-date plan which meets certain criteria, it is exempt from having to continually demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply while that plan remains up to date. The 2024 proposals state that ‘the logic for making these changes was incentivising plan-development – to ‘protect’ authorities from the presumption where they have a well-developed or up-to-date plan. But this means that if circumstances change over the 5 year lifetime of an up-to-date plan, and allocations turn out to be not deliverable, it is harder for new development to come forward and there is no clear mechanism for making up the shortfall’. The Government therefore proposes to reverse the December 2023 changes and re-establish the requirement for all local planning authorities, regardless of local plan status, to continually demonstrate 5 years of specific, deliverable sites for housing. The Government is also proposing to reintroduce the 5% buffer (which existed prior to December 2023) which will be added to all 5YHLS calculations in decision making and plan making, to provide an important buffer of sites, ensuring choice and competition in the market.

*Effective co-operation and strategic planning (cross-boundary working)*

- 3.6 In accordance with its manifesto commitment, the new Government has set out that it intends to introduce effective new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning. The intention is to enable universal strategic planning coverage, which will be formalised in legislation. The model will support elected Mayors in overseeing the development and agreement of Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs) for their areas. The Government will also explore the most effective arrangements for developing SDSs outside of mayoral areas, in order to achieve universal coverage across England.
- 3.7 In the short term, the Government is proposing to amend the NPPF text to ensure that the right engagement is occurring on the sharing of unmet housing need and other strategic issues where plans are being progress. This will apply in conjunction with the Duty to Cooperate in the current plan making system.



- 3.8 Members will be aware the Council already has a proactive and supportive approach to strategic planning and continues to work closely with Exeter City Council, Teignbridge and East Devon District Councils in relation to cross border planning and infrastructure matters. This has included the recent preparation of a non-statutory Joint Strategy for the four local authority areas.

*Changes to housing need*

- 3.9 The Government is proposing significant changes in respect of assessing housing needs including restoring the use of the standard method as mandatory. The new proposed standard method is now proposed to be a “stock based” approach. The approach starts with how many houses exist in the area at the moment, and then aims to increase that level every year by 0.8%. A further increase is then applied in areas where house prices are more than 4 times higher than earnings (to account for unaffordability),
- 3.10 For Mid Devon, this would mean an increase from 346 homes per annum under the current standard method to 571 homes per annum under the new proposed methodology. The table below sets out the implications of the proposed changes for all of the local authorities within the Exeter Housing Market Area:

*Table 1: Outcome of the proposed revised method. Source: [https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system?mc\\_cid=4e7cb7bfb](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system?mc_cid=4e7cb7bfb)*

ONS Code	Local Authority Name	Region	Current Method	Proposed Method	Average Annual Net additions (2020/21-2022/23)
E07000040	East Devon	South West	893	1,146	972
E07000041	Exeter	South West	642	815	518
E07000042	Mid Devon	South West	346	571	276
E07000045	Teignbridge	South West	717	1,066	557

- 3.11 In all cases, the new proposed housing need figure significantly exceeds the current standard method and indeed, recent average annual net additions to housing supply.
- 3.12 The Government’s approach is intended to support its ambition of delivering 1.5 million new homes over the next five years and provide greater certainty to the sector through more stable and predictable housing numbers.

- 3.13 The proposals also seek to amend the policy on housing mix with the NPPF's text including specific reference to Social Rent and "looked after children" as among those for whom needs should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. The changes set out that policies should specify the minimum proportion of Social Rent homes required.

*Brownfield, grey belt and the Green Belt*

- 3.14 The Government intends to set out in national policy that brownfield development is acceptable in principle and is consulting on whether it would be beneficial to expand the definition of 'Previously Developed Land' to include hardstanding and glasshouses, but are keen to understand how this might affect the availability of horticultural land.
- 3.15 Additionally, a number of significant policy changes and reversals from the December 2023 changes are proposed which will make it more difficult for authorities to rely on Green Belt constraints to argue against meeting their full local housing needs in local plans. The consultation proposals also introduce 'Grey Belt' which is defined as land within the Green Belt comprising Previously Developed Land and other parcels that make a limited contribution to the Green Belt purposes.
- 3.16 However, as there is no Green Belt within Mid Devon, there will be no direct implications for the planning of the district arising from these changes.

*Affordable, well-designed homes and places.*

- 3.17 The consultation proposals include a clear commitment to improve the existing system of developer contributions (s106 and CIL). The new Government has confirmed that it will not be implementing the Infrastructure Levy as introduced in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 by the previous Government. Officers will investigate the implications of this confirmation, which will require consideration by the Council alongside the preparation of the new local plan.
- 3.18 In respect of affordable housing requirements, the Government proposes to remove the prescriptive requirements relating to affordable home ownership products. It is proposed to remove the requirement to deliver at least 10% of the total number of homes on major sites as affordable home ownership and the requirement that a minimum of 25% of affordable housing units should be secured as First Homes.
- 3.19 Additional policy is proposed to promote mixed tenure developments that could include rented affordable housing, build to rent, housing designed for specific groups such as older people's housing and student accommodation, and plots sold for custom or self-build.

- 3.20 The consultation also proposes greater support for community-led development, including amending the definition of ‘community-led development’ and removing the size limit for community-led exception sites, where an alternative limit is established through the development plan.
- 3.21 The Government is also concerned that SME house builders are not able to access the small sites that they need, and that local planning authorities are not bringing forward small sites in their plans to the level set out in the NPPF. In response, the Government is seeking views on whether the 10% small site allocation should be mandatory and what would be required to implement this more stringent approach.

*Infrastructure and economic growth*

- 3.22 Alongside supporting housing, changes to the NPPF are proposed to drive greater commercial development in those sectors which will be the engine of the UK’s economy in the future. Changes are proposed to provide particular support for laboratories, gigafactories, digital infrastructure and freight and logistics.

*Community needs*

- 3.23 In order to help improve the provision and modernisation of key public services infrastructure such as hospitals and criminal justice facilities, it is proposed to add to the wording at paragraph 100 of the NPPF to make clear that significant weight should be placed on the importance of facilitating new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development.
- 3.24 The proposals also introduce a ‘vision led’ approach to transport planning. The Government states that ‘at present, planning for travel too often follows a simplistic ‘predict and provide’ pattern, with insufficient regard for the quality of places being created or whether the transport infrastructure which is planning is fully justified.’ The approach set out in the draft NPPF is designed to focus on the outcomes desired, and planning to achieve them.

*Green energy and the environment*

- 3.25 On 8<sup>th</sup> July, the Chancellor announced that the additional tests placed on onshore wind schemes by the previous Government would no longer apply. This consultation proposes to re-integrate onshore wind into the NSIP (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) regime and direct decision makers to give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation, and proposals’ contribution to reaching zero carbon electricity by 2030. The consultation invites comments on whether the thresholds at which on-shore wind and solar developments are deemed to be Nationally Significant and therefore consented under the NSIP regime. Increased thresholds could mean more proposals can be determined by local authorities.

### *Local Plan intervention*

- 3.26 The Government's proposals make clear it is "committed to taking tough action to ensure authorities have up-to-date plans in place... Where authorities fail, the law provides powers for the Government to take action to ensure that plans are progressed and in place". The consultation seeks views on better aligning this with the Government's priorities for planning to be a key driver for growth by either removing or revising the policy criteria for intervention (although it is important to note there is no proposal to change the legal powers set out in Part 2 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

### *Planning application fees / cost recovery*

- 3.27 This chapter sets out views on whether to raise planning application fees, and whether to introduce statutory cost recovery for local planning authorities for their role in applications for development consent under the NSIP regime. The Government recognises that current planning fee levels do not generate enough income to cover the full cost of some planning applications and want to reduce this funding shortfall.

The proposals include a proposed fee increase for householder applications. Currently the fee is £258 although the Government has acknowledged that the costs to local planning authorities to process these applications is significantly higher. It is therefore proposed that the fee for householder applications should be increased to £528 which the Government estimates would be the level needed to meet cost recovery.

- 3.28 The consultation also requests views on any other forms of application for which the fee is currently inadequate as well as application types for which fees are not currently charged but which should require a fee.

In addition to the above, the consultation is seeking views on two potential models for the localisation of planning application fees. These are as follows:

- **Model 1 – Full Localisation** – This assumes that fees would no longer be set nationally. Instead all local planning authorities would set their own fees within the existing fee categories and exemptions set by the Secretary of State
- **Model 2 – Local Variation** (from default national fee) – Local variation would maintain a nationally set default fee but give local planning authorities the option to vary the fees within prescribed limits where they consider the nationally set fee does not meet their actual costs.

Finally, the proposals note that there are wider planning services, for example plan-making and enforcement, heritage and conservation and design services, for which no fees are charged and therefore these have to be funded through other council budgets. It is estimated that to cover the costs of wider planning services all existing fees would need to increase by 157%,

which could risk deterring some development. The Government is interested in views on the principle of allowing fees to fund wider planning services and if so, what the appropriate fee increase should be.

#### *Future of planning policy and plan making*

- 3.29 This chapter sets out the future direction of plan-making and the Government's aspiration to ensure complete coverage of up-to-date plans as soon as possible. The Government is clear that local planning authorities should continue to progress their plans to adoption under the existing system without delay. A number of transitional arrangements are proposed for emerging plans in preparation, to facilitate continued progress in light of the proposed reforms.
- 3.30 In terms of future proposals, the Government has confirmed its intention to implement the new plan-making system as set out in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act from summer or autumn 2025. However, new regulations and future national planning guidance will be necessary to set out what the new plan-making system will be. It therefore remains unclear whether the Government intends to carry forward previous proposals for the introduction of a 30 month plan-making timetable and 'gateway' checks at key stages in the plan's preparation. It is anticipated that all current plans subject to the transitional arrangements will need to be submitted for examination under the 2004 Act system no later than December 2026.
- 3.31 Officers are continuing to progress the preparation of Plan Mid Devon and will keep its timetable under review and update the Local Development Scheme as necessary. Members are advised that should the Government's proposed amendments to the standard method be implemented, the resulting increase to the district's housing requirement may require additional technical work to be undertaken and create time challenges to progress to a Draft Plan Stage, consult and submit by December 2026.

#### **4.0 Groups consulted / Next Steps**

- 4.1 The Planning Policy Advisory Group was briefed about the Government's consultation at its meeting on 29 August 2024 and also comments provided from the Net Zero Advisory Group. This meeting provided an opportunity to shape the Council's responses to proposed amendments to the NPPF, that are included in **Appendix 1**. This meeting was open to all Council Members to attend and have their say on the Government's proposals.
- 4.2 Responses to the Government's consultation must be submitted before the deadline of 23:45 on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Officers will update Members as and when policy proposals are implemented.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this proposal. There are a number of proposals within the consultation proposals which address cost recovery associated with planning applications. If these changes are implemented then the Council would generate additional funding from relevant applications going forwards. However, the proposals also place a number of additional resourcing commitments upon the Council, for example, with reference to strategic planning without additional resourcing commitments.

## **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising directly from the consultation.

## **Risk Assessment**

There are no risks arising directly from the consultation. However, the Government has indicated that it is intent on implementing a new plan-making system from summer or autumn 2025. While it has published transitional arrangements for plans that are currently being prepared, plans will need to be submitted under the current 2004 Act system no later than December 2026. Officers are currently investigating the implications of this in relation to the preparation of a new local plan for Mid Devon ('Plan Mid Devon'). New planning regulations and guidance will be needed to support the implementation of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act and until these are published there remains uncertainty about what the new plan-making system will entail and how this may impact on Plan Mid Devon. The proposals would also inevitably result in greater resourcing requirements, to facilitate delivery of key proposals, such as any future strategic planning obligations.

## **Impact on Climate Change**

No direct impact, although the proposals are implemented, national policy will direct decision makers to give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

The Government is responsible for assessing the potential impacts of their proposals on persons with a relevant protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and is inviting views on this as part of the consultation exercise.

## **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

If the Government's proposed changes to the NPPF are implemented as drafted they will help support the Council achieve some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028, including:

"Planning, Environment & Sustainability" – support the district's response to the climate emergency

"Homes" – increase the delivery of quality new homes, including affordable housing across the district

“Economy and assets” – growing the district economy

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

**Statutory Officer:**

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151- Andrew Jarrett

**Date: 03/09/2024**

**Statutory Officer:**

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer – Maria De Leburne

**Date: 03/09/2024**

**Chief Officer:**

Agreed by or on behalf of the Corporate Director – Richard Marsh

**Date: 03/09/2024**

**Performance and risk:** Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

**Date:** 09 September 2024

**Cabinet member notified:** yes.

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

**Contact:** Arron Beecham (Principal Housing Enabling and Forward Planning Officer)

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

Telephone: 01884 234221

**Contact:** Tristan Peat (Forward Planning Team Leader)

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

Telephone: 01884 234344

**Background papers:**

[Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework: draft text for consultation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

This page is intentionally left blank



## **Mid Devon District Council**

### **DRAFT Consultation Response: Proposed Reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system**

**August 2024**

#### **Question 1: Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made to paragraph 61?**

The proposed changes to paragraph 61 are supported.

#### **Question 2: Do you agree that we should remove reference to the use of alternative approaches to assessing housing need in paragraph 61 and the glossary of the NPPF?**

Yes, the proposed changes remove current uncertainties around alternative methodologies and when such approaches might be appropriate. Universal application of a standard method for assessing need provides consistency and clarity to all local authorities, developers and communities.

The Council notes that local authorities would be able to justify a lower housing requirement than the figure the method sets on the basis of local constraints on land and delivery, such as existing National Park, protected habitats and flood risk areas, but would (as now) have to evidence and justify their approach through local plan consultation and examination.

#### **Question 3: Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made on the urban uplift by deleting paragraph 62?**

Yes, it is agreed that the current paragraph 62 provides a poor basis for directing housing growth to larger urban areas. The Council would welcome clarity on the Government's proposals to strengthen the existing Duty to Cooperate and mechanism for cross-boundary strategic planning at the earliest possible opportunity to help facilitate timely plan-making and reduce uncertainty in the process going forward.

#### **Question 4: Do you agree that we should reverse the December 2023 changes made on character and density and delete paragraph 130?**

Yes.

**Question 5: Do you agree that the focus of design codes should move towards supporting spatial visions in local plans and areas that provide the greatest opportunities for change such as greater density, in particular the development of large new communities?**

Yes. Greater clarity on how this can be achieved is welcomed.

**Question 6: Do you agree that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be amended as proposed?**

The changes to paragraph 11 are supported and it is recognised that there is a need for a policy mechanism to facilitate development where policies for the supply of land become out-of date. The Council concurs with the concerns raised that some developers have used the presumption to promote low quality, unsustainable development and welcomes the additional clarity provided in the revised NPPF to make clear that it cannot offer a route to creating poor quality places. However, paragraph 11 should go further and make clear that planning permission will also not be granted where the development would not provide infrastructure that is necessary to support it or meet other policy requirements, including affordable housing.

**Question 7: Do you agree that all local planning authorities should be required to continually demonstrate 5 years of specific, deliverable sites for decision making purposes, regardless of plan status?**

No. Paragraph 76 should remain as it is currently worded to support the plan-led system. LPAs should not be required to continually demonstrate a 5 year supply where the local plan for its area is less than 5 years old. The robustness of the local plan's provision for 5 year supply will be tested through the examination process, and if delivery is not being achieved in the way that was expected then this will become evident through the Housing Delivery Test results and there are existing provisions for the preparation of action plans where delivery falls below targets. Local Plans are a very significant investment in time and money for their production (costs typically exceeding £800k (excluding staffing)) and they provide certainty to local communities about where development is planned and which areas are protected. The proposed changes to the NPPF could be a disincentive for preparing local plans and will undermine public trust in the planning process.

In the short term, it is recognised that 5 year land supply will need to continue to play a part in helping to significantly boost the supply of land for housing. However, it is unlikely on its own to achieve the desired results. Research demonstrates<sup>1</sup> that the accounting processes for a 5 year housing land supply in England normalises land speculation as the condition for housebuilding whilst instituting perverse incentives for landowner and developers to reduce the supply of new homes. Clearly, local planning authorities have little genuine influence over the pace at which any given

---

<sup>1</sup> Bradley, Q (2020) The financialisation of housing land supply in England. Available from: The financialisation of housing land supply in England - Quintin Bradley, 2021 (sagepub.com)

development is built out, beyond a grant of planning permission and timely discharge of conditions. Additional mechanisms to incentivise timely build out of development by developers will need to be considered and implemented by Government at the earliest possible opportunity, whilst at the same time, safeguarding a plan-led system.

Notwithstanding this, evidence demonstrates that the total quantum of homes built by private developers is unlikely to materially increase to achieve the Government's housing delivery ambitions. The below graph demonstrates the output of private enterprise completions remaining largely fairly static since the 1950's, averaging around 150,000 dwellings per annum. Irrespective of a significant land supply increase, the Government will need to implement reforms which seek to address barriers to local authority housebuilding, significant increases in housing association completions as well as maximising delivery from other sources including community led housing and custom and self-build.

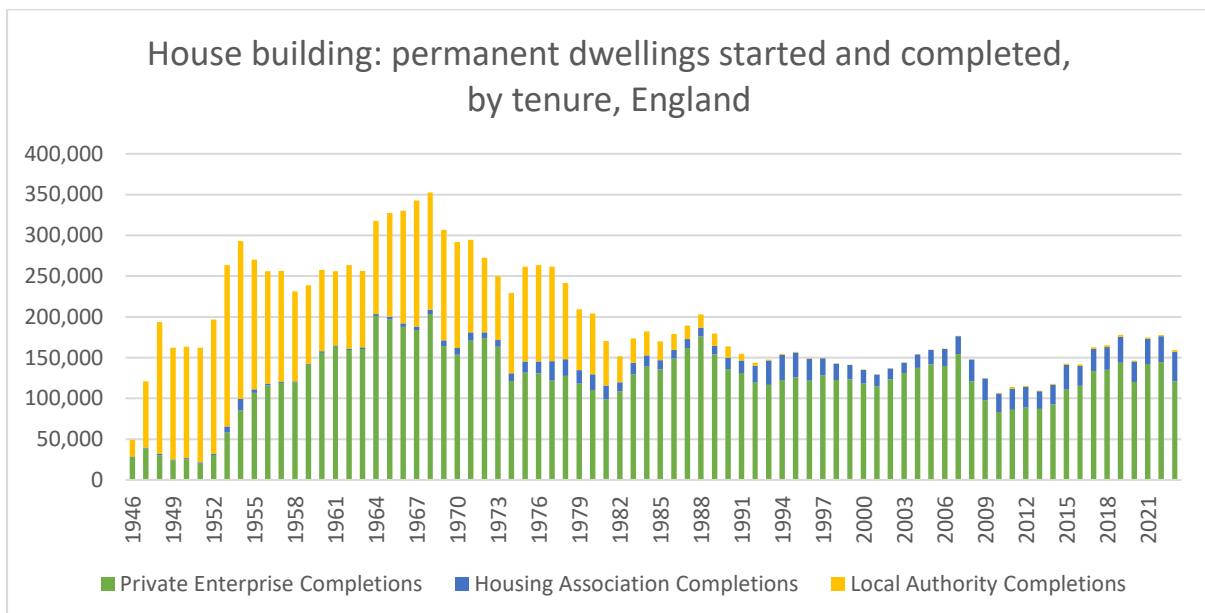


Figure 1: Housebuilding: Permanent dwellings started and completed, by tenure. Data source: MHCLG Table 244

**Question 8: Do you agree with our proposal to remove wording on national planning guidance in paragraph 77 of the current NPPF?**

No. Past delivery is taken into account in 5 year supply calculations and also in the Housing Delivery Test.

**Question 9: Do you agree that all local planning authorities should be required to add a 5% buffer to their 5-year housing land supply calculations?**

Yes, this will provide some headroom in the housing target however it will mean that sufficient additional sites will need to be identified to accommodate the buffer.

**Question 10: If yes, do you agree that 5% is an appropriate buffer, or should it be a different figure?**

Yes, 5% is an appropriate buffer.

**Question 11: Do you agree with the removal of policy on Annual Position Statements?**

Yes, it has been seldom used.

**Question 12: Do you agree that the NPPF should be amended to further support effective co-operation on cross boundary and strategic planning matters?**

Yes. However, if Spatial Development Strategies are required to be prepared across all areas this will place additional cost and resource burdens on LPAs and it is not clear how this work will be funded.

**Question 13: Should the tests of soundness be amended to better assess the soundness of strategic scale plans or proposals?**

No. It is considered that the current tests of soundness remain appropriate, which already include a clear reference to meeting the area's objectively assessed needs, informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet needs from neighbouring areas may be accommodated.

**Question 14: Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?**

Yes. Effective housing delivery should be a shared responsibility across the development industry and the NPPF should set out what is required of developers in terms of the commencement of new housing and publishing annual delivery trajectories for major housing schemes. The government should introduce measures to hold developers to account for the delivery of new homes through better and more transparent data and sharper tools to drive up delivery (e.g. taking into account the developers track record in delivery when considering whether to grant planning permission and shortening the timescales for developers to implement a permission. Additionally, there will be a need to boost local authority capacity and capability to support housing delivery through plan-making and decision taking on planning applications.

**Question 15: Do you agree that Planning Practice Guidance should be amended to specify that the appropriate baseline for the standard method is housing stock rather than the latest household projections?**

No. The problem with the proposed approach is that housing stock is not an accurate indicator of housing need. The proposed approach means that the more housing there is in a local authority area, then the more homes are needed. This fails to take into account; migration; where homes are vacant or are under occupied; where occupants will not generate future housing need; or where there will be household dissolutions.

**Question 16: Do you agree that using the workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio, averaged over the most recent 3 year period for which data is available to adjust the standard method's baseline, is appropriate?**

Yes. This accords with the findings of the Competition and Markets Authority, and provides a more stable methodology and avoids too frequent changes which increase uncertainty at the local level.

**Question 17: Do you agree that affordability is given an appropriate weighting within the proposed standard method?**

No. The proposed increase in the multiplier will result in uplifting the standard method housing requirement but will not help secure the delivery of more affordable homes. It is not currently clear how the Government has reached the affordability multiplier of 0.6, other than this being the adjustment required to reach the Government's stated housing delivery ambitions. The multiplier should be fully and robustly justified to ensure it reflects underlying local needs and affordability and should be independent of Government policy aspirations.

**Question 18: Do you consider the standard method should factor in evidence on rental affordability? If so, do you have any suggestions for how this could be incorporated into the model?**

Yes, as rental prices can be higher than house prices, and affect a significant proportion of people who are not home owners.

**Question 19: Do you have any additional comments on the proposed method for assessing housing needs?**

Yes. The results of the revised standard method show a significant uplift in the minimum number of homes the Council will need to plan for Mid Devon. Part of the district is within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape, and parts are also affected by flood risk. However, there are also significant transport infrastructure constraints (road and rail), capacity challenges with water and electricity supply, and currently unfunded strategic improvements that are necessary to unlock the ability to plan major growth at key locations in the district. This includes a new railway station at Cullompton and a strategic intervention at Junction 28 on the M5 that is necessary to support the proposed Culm Garden Village and circa 5000 new homes. There is a need for government intervention to facilitate the delivery of strategic infrastructure to support proposed major scale development and new communities e.g. garden

villages. The proposed method will uplift the overall housing requirement for the district and increase the likelihood of needing to identify sites with greater infrastructure and other delivery challenges through the preparation of a new local plan. Funding for infrastructure needs to be identified sufficiently early in the development process, with greater certainty and confidence of delivery in a timely manner.

**Question 20: Do you agree that we should make the proposed change set out in paragraph 124c, as a first step towards brownfield passports?**

Yes. The proposed wording is supported. But, consultation does not explain what is meant by a brownfield passport i.e. will this become another form of permission in principle and which could lead to poorly designed and unacceptable development.

**Question 21: Do you agree with the proposed change to paragraph 154g of the current NPPF to better support the development of PDL in the Green Belt?**

Yes.

**Question 22: Do you have any views on expanding the definition of PDL, while ensuring that the development and maintenance of glasshouses for horticultural production is maintained?**

The definition of PDL should not be expanded as for land to be 'developed' it will need to fall within the definition of development in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Horticulture is included within the definition of agriculture, which is not development. But, the NPPF should signal that LPAs should weigh up the merits of the development and re-use of land that has been despoiled (e.g. glasshouses and reuse of existing agricultural buildings).

**Question 23: Do you agree with our proposed definition of grey belt land? If not, what changes would you recommend?**

No. This should also include reference to land that has been despoiled, but exclude land affected by minerals operations and which is subject to a requirement for restoration back to its former countryside.

**Question 24: Are any additional measures needed to ensure that high performing Green Belt land is not degraded to meet grey belt criteria?**

Yes, include provision for a baseline date for determining the status of land, to avoid deliberate despoiling of greenbelt land as a pre-cursor to seeking its development.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Questions 25 to 46 are in relation to the planning in the Green Belt and are not relevant to planning in Mid Devon**



**Question 25: Do you agree that additional guidance to assist in identifying land which makes a limited contribution of Green Belt purposes would be helpful? If so, is this best contained in the NPPF itself or in planning practice guidance?**

**Question 26: Do you have any views on whether our proposed guidance sets out appropriate considerations for determining whether land makes a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes?**

**Question 27: Do you have any views on the role that Local Nature Recovery Strategies could play in identifying areas of Green Belt which can be enhanced?**

**Question 28: Do you agree that our proposals support the release of land in the right places, with previously developed and grey belt land identified first, while allowing local planning authorities to prioritise the most sustainable development locations?**

**Question 29: Do you agree with our proposal to make clear that the release of land should not fundamentally undermine the function of the Green Belt across the area of the plan as a whole?**

**Question 30: Do you agree with our approach to allowing development on Green Belt land through decision making? If not, what changes would you recommend?**

**Question 31: Do you have any comments on our proposals to allow the release of grey belt land to meet commercial and other development needs through plan-making and decision-making, including the triggers for release?**

**Question 32: Do you have views on whether the approach to the release of Green Belt through plan and decision-making should apply to traveller sites, including the sequential test for land release and the definition of PDL?**

**Question 33: Do you have views on how the assessment of need for traveller sites should be approached, in order to determine whether a local planning authority should undertake a Green Belt review?**

**Question 34: Do you agree with our proposed approach to the affordable housing tenure mix?**

**Question 35: Should the 50 per cent target apply to all Green Belt areas (including previously developed land in the Green Belt), or should the Government or local planning authorities be able to set lower targets in low land value areas?**

**Question 36: Do you agree with the proposed approach to securing benefits for nature and public access to green space where Green Belt release occurs?**

**Question 37: Do you agree that Government should set indicative benchmark land values for land released from or developed in the Green Belt, to inform local planning authority policy development?**

**Question 38: How and at what level should Government set benchmark land values?**

**Question 39: To support the delivery of the golden rules, the Government is exploring a reduction in the scope of viability negotiation by setting out that such negotiation should not occur when land will transact above the benchmark land value. Do you have any views on this approach?**

**Question 40: It is proposed that where development is policy compliant, additional contributions for affordable housing should not be sought. Do you have any views on this approach?**

**Question 41: Do you agree that where viability negotiations do occur, and contributions below the level set in policy are agreed, development should be subject to late-stage viability reviews, to assess whether further contributions are required? What support would local planning authorities require to use these effectively?**

**Question 42: Do you have a view on how golden rules might apply to non-residential development, including commercial development, travellers sites and types of development already considered 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt?**

**Question 43: Do you have a view on whether the golden rules should apply only to 'new' Green Belt release, which occurs following these changes to the NPPF? Are there other transitional arrangements we should consider, including, for example, draft plans at the regulation 19 stage?**

**Question 44: Do you have any comments on the proposed wording for the NPPF (Annex 4)?**

**Question 45: Do you have any comments on the proposed approach set out in paragraphs 31 and 32?**

**Question 46: Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Question 47: Do you agree with setting the expectation that local planning authorities should consider the particular needs of those who require Social Rent when undertaking needs assessments and setting policies on affordable housing requirements?**



Yes. Social rent is a vital part of housing options to meet housing need in the community, for those households who cannot afford to purchase their own home or who cannot afford to rent at market values or at a discounted affordable value. This is particularly the case in rural districts with comparatively low wage economies. Local Housing Needs Assessments for Mid Devon already include assessment of need for social rented accommodation. Where developers leave land undeveloped, this should be made available to Councils for the delivery of social rent housing.

**Question 48: Do you agree with removing the requirement to deliver 10% of housing on major sites as affordable home ownership?**

Yes. This will provide more flexibility to look at other housing tenure options through the preparation of local plans.

**Question 49: Do you agree with removing the minimum 25% First Homes requirement?**

Yes. This will provide more flexibility to look at other housing tenure options through the preparation of local plans.

**Question 50: Do you have any other comments on retaining the option to deliver First Homes, including through exception sites?**

No.

**Question 51: Do you agree with introducing a policy to promote developments that have a mix of tenures and types?**

Yes. The inclusion of this in national planning policy can help support policies in local plans that require a mix of tenures and types. Type, mix and tenure should reflect what is required locally based on evidence. The Council is aware of significant demand for bungalow development but the market is not currently delivering this type of accommodation.

**Question 52: What would be the most appropriate way to promote high percentage Social Rent/affordable housing developments?**

This can be guided through the findings of Local Housing Need Assessments, and balanced through viability appraisal to make sure the percentage set does not make a housing scheme undeliverable. The percentage of social rent / affordable housing will also need to be balanced with other considerations, such as the need for open space, education, transport and infrastructure necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

**Question 53: What safeguards would be required to ensure that there are not unintended consequences? For example, is there a maximum site size where development of this nature is appropriate?**

A flexible approach should be taken in terms of the size of a high percentage Social Rent / affordable housing schemes, to avoid constraining potential opportunities, subject to meeting other policies of a local plan.

**Question 54: What measures should we consider to better support and increase rural affordable housing?**

Provide further funding to local authorities through replenishing the Community Housing Fund, to help local authorities support community led housing development. Whilst the Council has made funding available to local community groups to help bring forward schemes in their areas, the Community Housing Fund the Council holds will soon be fully committed. If further funding were to become available, this would allow local authorities to build upon previous successes and work with local communities to deliver greater numbers of high quality, affordable, community led homes. Further funding would assist in helping alternative models such as community led housing to become part of the mainstream solution to addressing the housing crisis. A more diverse housing market means providing more housing of varying types, designs and tenures and meaningfully addressing housing affordability. At the local level, greater uptake of community led housing would result in new homes that can target specific local housing needs thereby helping to empower local communities. They can be constructed to high environmental standards, and support local economic growth through providing training and employment opportunities as well as supporting SME builders and local tradespeople.

**Question 55: Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 63 of the existing NPPF?**

Yes. However, a clearer definition of 'looked after children' is needed (i.e. does this also include young adults)

**Question 56: Do you agree with these changes?**

Yes, these changes can help support community-led housing.

**Question 57: Do you have views on whether the definition of 'affordable housing for rent' in the Framework glossary should be amended? If so, what changes would you recommend?**

No comments.

**Question 58: Do you have views on why insufficient small sites are being allocated, and on ways in which the small site policy in the NPPF should be strengthened?**

Insufficient numbers of small sites may be being allocated owing to infrastructure and viability challenges associated with delivery.

The small site policy could be strengthened by placing a requirement for large scale sites to include provision for a proportion to be in the form of small scale developments, to target delivery via SME builders, although with measures in place to avoid meeting policy requirements in full e.g. the provision of affordable housing.

**Question 59: Do you agree with the proposals to retain references to well-designed buildings and places, but remove references to ‘beauty’ and ‘beautiful’ and to amend paragraph 138 of the existing Framework?**

Yes. The term ‘beauty’ is subjective and open to interpretation, with potential to frustrate the determination of planning proposals. We welcome the retention of “well-designed” and would support the addition of “high quality”.

**Question 60: Do you agree with proposed changes to policy for upwards extensions?**

Yes. The Council welcomes the proposed amendments to ensure the same level of support for other forms of upward extension that the Government has for mansard roofs.

**Question 61: Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?**

No.

**Question 62: Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraphs 86 b) and 87 of the existing NPPF?**

Yes.

**Question 63: Are there other sectors you think need particular support via these changes? What are they and why?**

Farming (where this requires forms of development) and food production should be given more support through the NPPF as these are important to the food security of the nation, and are also important to supporting prosperous rural economies.

**Question 64: Would you support the prescription of data centres, gigafactories, and/or laboratories as types of business and commercial development which could be capable (on request) of being directed into the NSIP consenting regime?**

No comments.

**Question 65: If the direction power is extended to these developments, should it be limited by scale, and what would be an appropriate scale if so?**

No comments.

**Question 66: Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?**

No.

**Question 67: Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 100 of the existing NPPF?**

Yes. But this should go further to identify other public service infrastructure, including infrastructure to support police, fire and rescue services, all forms of healthcare and social care infrastructure. This will help make sure the impacts of planned development on those services can be mitigated.

**Question 68: Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraph 99 of the existing NPPF?**

Yes, as this makes clear that supporting education needs goes beyond just 'schools' (11- 16 years).

**Question 69: Do you agree with the changes proposed to paragraphs 114 and 115 of the existing NPPF?**

Yes. But it is recognised that a "vision led" approach can still require significant infrastructure improvement in order to ensure the vision can be delivered.

**Question 70: How could national planning policy better support local authorities in (a) promoting healthy communities and (b) tackling childhood obesity?**

It could be more specific through requiring major residential and mixed use development to include opportunities that support growing food locally. The NPPF could also set a minimum distance threshold for the location of hot food takeaways away from schools. The NPPF should also recognise the value of high quality environments to support health and wellbeing (e.g. formal and informal exercise) and opportunities for social interaction and community cohesion (e.g. youth clubs).

**Question 71: Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?**

No.

**Question 72: Do you agree that large onshore wind projects should be reintegrated into the s NSIP regime?**

Yes.

**Question 73: Do you agree with the proposed changes to the NPPF to give greater support to renewable and low carbon energy?**

Yes.

**Question 74: Some habitats, such as those containing peat soils, might be considered unsuitable for renewable energy development due to their role in carbon sequestration. Should there be additional protections for such habitats and/or compensatory mechanisms put in place?**

Yes.

**Question 75: Do you agree that the threshold at which onshore wind projects are deemed to be Nationally Significant and therefore consented under the NSIP regime should be changed from 50 megawatts (MW) to 100MW?**

Yes. This will allow more onshore wind projects to be determined by local planning authorities and a potential quicker route for determining such schemes. The NPPF is currently lacking reference to the need for means to store surplus electricity generated to put back into the grid at peak demand e.g. battery storage.

**Question 76: Do you agree that the threshold at which solar projects are deemed to be Nationally Significant and therefore consented under the NSIP regime should be changed from 50MW to 150MW?**

Yes. This will allow more onshore wind projects to be determined by the local planning authority and a potential quicker route for determining such schemes.

**Question 77: If you think that alternative thresholds should apply to onshore wind and/or solar, what would these be?**

No comments.

**Question 78: In what specific, deliverable ways could national planning policy do more to address climate change mitigation and adaptation?**

Many local authorities have declared a climate emergency, recognising that urgent action is needed to address the impacts of climate change and to move towards a net zero carbon economy as soon as possible. However, climate / carbon considerations can lack the profile and attention needed in the development management process, where this may be overshadowed by other planning considerations. There is a need for national planning policy to take a lead on this through including a requirement for planning applications to be supported by information that is proportionate to the scale and kind of development proposed to demonstrate how proposals will mitigate their impacts on and adapt to climate change, and minimise emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases. This will help achieve greater transparency how climate impacts are being considered through the planning process. It will be for local planning authorities to set out what type of information is expected to support planning applications. Mid Devon District Council has introduced a scheme for this through its local validation criteria for

planning applications that are submitted for determination: [Non-Statutory Interim Planning Policy Statement: Climate Emergency - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/planning-policy-statement-climate-emergency)

In addition to flooding, the NPPF should address other consequences of climate change arising from extreme weather events, where a planning response may be necessary e.g. temperature increases and voracious wind.

**Question 79: What is your view of the current state of technological readiness and availability of tools for accurate carbon accounting in plan-making and planning decisions, and what are the challenges to increasing its use?**

There should be a national net zero carbon toolkit and net zero housing assessment tool, that can be applied by all local planning authorities, supported by suitably ambitious building regulations. These should address design considerations such as orientation of buildings as well as whole life cycle carbon impacts associated with development. This would put in place a consistent approach and avoid duplication and unnecessary costs incurred by local planning authorities seeking to develop their own approaches.

**Question 80: Are any changes needed to policy for managing flood risk to improve its effectiveness?**

No comments. The policy should be sufficiently flexible to facilitate the delivery of innovative flood mitigations in the design of new building. For example, the Council's Zedpods development at Shapland Place, Tiverton.

**Question 81: Do you have any other comments on actions that can be taken through planning to address climate change?**

The NPPF should make clear the scope of how local planning authorities can set local energy efficiency standards in local plans that go beyond the building regulations. Currently this is set out in the December 2023 ministerial statement, but may be subject to an appeal against the High Court's rejection of a claim over the unlawfulness of the ministerial statement. National guidance on reconciling climate standards, viability implications and historic buildings would also be welcome.

**Question 82: Do you agree with removal of this text from the footnote?**

Yes. The correct approach should be that the availability of agricultural land should not be considered since it is unclear how 'availability' would be measured and tested.

**Question 83: Are there other ways in which we can ensure that development supports and does not compromise food production?**

The NPPF should require major residential and mixed use development to facilitate opportunities that support growing food locally (e.g. including allotments, community orchards and forms of incidental planting within open spaces that generate fruit, nuts and other edible products)

**Question 84: Do you agree that we should improve the current water infrastructure provisions in the Planning Act 2008, and do you have specific suggestions for how best to do this?**

No comments.

**Question 85: Are there other areas of the water infrastructure provisions that could be improved? If so, can you explain what those are, including your proposed changes?**

The NPPF should place greater emphasis on forms of water capture and storage for new development to reduce demand on fresh water supply and more efficiently utilise existing infrastructure. It should also make clear the need for the planning process to take into consideration the management of waste water and sewerage capacity, and also the effective management and protection of water quality in rivers and the sea.

**Question 86: Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?**

The NPPF should set out where proportionate technical studies will be required for the provision of potable water supply, wastewater disposal, and maintaining and improving water quality in rivers, watercourses and the sea in relation to the planned levels of development through local plans.

**Question 87: Do you agree that we should we replace the existing intervention policy criteria with the revised criteria set out in this consultation?**

Yes, these allow the consideration of exceptional circumstances that may affect the ability of a local authority to do what is required to get their plan in place, or keep it up to date.

**Question 88: Alternatively, would you support us withdrawing the criteria and relying on the existing legal tests to underpin future use of intervention powers?**

No.

**Question 89: Do you agree with the proposal to increase householder application fees to meet cost recovery?**

Yes, and we would suggest this principle needs to be expanded to incorporate cost recovery of the planning service as a whole, including related enforcement activity, which is a key priority for communities.

**Question 90: If no, do you support increasing the fee by a smaller amount (at a level less than full cost recovery) and if so, what should the fee increase be?**



**For example, a 50% increase to the householder fee would increase the application fee from £258 to £387.**

**If Yes, please explain in the text box what you consider an appropriate fee increase would be.**

**Question 91: If we proceed to increase householder fees to meet cost recovery, we have estimated that to meet cost-recovery, the householder application fee should be increased to £528. Do you agree with this estimate?**

Don't know on the exact amount proposed – but we would suggest that fees should be set locally on a full-cost recovery (and non-profit) basis. This would require LPAs to publish their fee regime, perhaps triennially, alongside planning service costs to show no profit being realised.

**If No, please explain in the text box below and provide evidence to demonstrate what you consider the correct fee should be.**

**Question 92: Are there any applications for which the current fee is inadequate? Please explain your reasons and provide evidence on what you consider the correct fee should be.**

Councils should be provided with the ability to charge for services provided in relation to: repeated applications, where additional advice is sought from/by the applicant, and to recover costs associated with enforcement.

**Question 93: Are there any application types for which fees are not currently charged but which should require a fee? Please explain your reasons and provide evidence on what you consider the correct fee should be.**

Consideration should be given to introducing a fee for standalone Listed Building Consent Applications (i.e. excluding those needing planning permission as well). The Council estimates that given most LBCs require an internal inspection of the property. It is also often the case that Conservation Officers need to consider highways, drainage, housing, disability grants, building control, archaeology etc which means liaison with other departments therefore adding time and complexity which is comparable with planning officer considerations. In order to aid cost recovery, it is considered a fee of approximately £150 would be reasonable. If an LBC application is submitted jointly with planning permission, then the fee could be waived.

Local authorities should be provided with the ability to impose charges for breaches of planning condition and where development has taken place without planning permission to cover costs incurred through investigation and actions taken (e.g. where legal advice is sought).



Increased or additional fees should be applied to planning applications that are made retrospectively, to encourage applications seek planning permission before work is undertaken.

**Question 94: Do you consider that each local planning authority should be able to set its own (non-profit making) planning application fee? Please give your reasons in the text box below.**

Yes.

**Question 95: What would be your preferred model for localisation of planning fees?**

Full Localisation

**Please give your reasons in the text box below.**

**Question 96: Do you consider that planning fees should be increased, beyond cost recovery, for planning applications services, to fund wider planning services?**

Planning fees should only be set at a level to cover planning services (including enforcement). They should not be used to subsidise other areas of council activity, but by the same token general council tax revenues should not have to support development/planning activity.

**If yes, please explain what you consider an appropriate increase would be and whether this should apply to all applications or, for example, just applications for major development?**

A fee could potentially be applied to land promotion activity i.e where land is submitted to local authorities for consideration as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment, which is used to help evidence the preparation of local plans, and which requires significant work by the local authority.

**Question 97: What wider planning services, if any, other than planning applications (development management) services, do you consider could be paid for by planning fees?**

Planning fees for planning proposals for new dwellings should include monitoring of development which is used to inform housing land supply calculations and decisions made on planning applications, and also enforcement. It is also important to ensure that fees cover the costs of other services such as building control.

More broader support for other services, including plan making, design, ecology, landscape and heritage, whilst desirable, would not be feasible without significant additional increases in planning fees, and could deter development coming forward, and could continue to be funded through other means.

**Question 98: Do you consider that cost recovery for relevant services provided by local authorities in relation to applications for development consent orders under the Planning Act 2008, payable by applicants, should be introduced?**

No comment.

**Question 99: If yes, please explain any particular issues that the Government may want to consider, in particular which local planning authorities should be able to recover costs and the relevant services which they should be able to recover costs for, and whether host authorities should be able to waive fees where planning performance agreements are made.**

No comment.

**Question 100: What limitations, if any, should be set in regulations or through guidance in relation to local authorities' ability to recover costs?**

No comment.

**Question 101: Please provide any further information on the impacts of full or partial cost recovery are likely to be for local planning authorities and applicants. We would particularly welcome evidence of the costs associated with work undertaken by local authorities in relation to applications for development consent.**

No comment.

**Question 102: Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?**

No comment.

**Question 103: Do you agree with the proposed transitional arrangements? Are there any alternatives you think we should consider?**

No. The consultation proposals state that 'if the revised LHN figure is more than 200 dwellings per annum higher than the annual housing requirement set out in the adopted version of the plan, the local planning authority will be required to begin preparation of a plan under the new system as soon as possible. This is at odds with the draft NPPF text which states 'the emerging annual housing requirement in a local plan that reaches or has reached reg19 on or before the publication date + one month is no more than 200 dwellings below the published relevant LHN figure'. The consideration of whether a revised LHN figure is more than 200 dwellings higher than a plan requirement should be in relation to the new plan being prepared that is under examination (i.e. not the current adopted local plan).

**Question 104: Do you agree with the proposed transitional arrangements?**

No. The Government's proposal to extend the deadline for submitting plans through the current system by 18 months (i.e. to December 2026) is welcomed. However, there is no transitional provision for those plans in preparation that are unable to be submitted by December 2026, to move to the new system. This could result in abortive work, or the need to re-do elements of plan-making (e.g. re-consult on regulation 18 stage issues, draft policies and site options and related sustainability appraisal) which have time and resource implications for local authorities and could frustrate local communities. Additionally it could also result in need to re-do elements of technical evidence, at significant cost to local authorities. There is a need for clarity from Government about the carry-over of work from the current system to the new system of plan making.

**Question 105: Do you have any other suggestions relating to the proposals in this chapter?**

Yes, there is a need to see what the national development management policies include as soon as possible to avoid potential repetition in local plans and abortive work. There is also a need to understand in more detail what is expected for digital plans and welcome guidance should the Government seek a standardised format, structure and content for local plans.

**Question 106: Do you have any views on the impacts of the above proposals for you, or the group or business you represent and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic? If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how. Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?**

No comment.

This page is intentionally left blank

# MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS

September 2024



The Forward Plan containing key Decisions is published 28 days prior to each Cabinet meeting

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Page 2 of 2 September					
<b>2024/2025 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)</b>	Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group  Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet  Economy & Assets Policy Development Group  Service Delivery & Continuous	3 Sep 2024  10 Sep 2024  17 Sep 2024  19 Sep 2024  23 Sep 2024	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	

Agenda Item 7.

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
	Improvement Policy Development Group  Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group	24 Sep 2024			
<b>National Planning Policy Framework</b>	Cabinet	17 Sep 2024	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	
<b>8 October</b>					
<b>2024/2025 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)</b>	Cabinet	15 Oct 2024	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
<b>Streetscene Depot - Additional Lease</b> To receive a report regarding an additional lease for the Streetscene Depot.	Cabinet	15 Oct 2024	Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
<b>Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan</b>	Cabinet	15 Oct 2024	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Leisure Pricing Strategy (Part II)</b> To receive and approve the revised leisure Pricing Strategy.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group  Cabinet	23 Sep 2024  15 Oct 2024	Dean Emery, Head of Revenues, Benefits & Leisure	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Fully exempt
<b>Hoarding Policy</b> To receive the revised Hoarding Policy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	10 Sep 2024  15 Oct 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>Repairs and Maintenance Policy (New)</b> To receive the new Repairs and Maintenance Policy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet  Council	10 Sep 2024  15 Oct 2024  30 Oct 2024	Mike Lowman, Building Services Operations Manager	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>Corporate Anti Social Behaviour Policy</b>	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group  Cabinet	25 Jun 2024  15 Oct 2024		Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>S106 Governance</b>	Cabinet	15 Oct 2024		Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
<b>Planning Enforcement-Enforcement Policy Update</b>	Scrutiny Committee Cabinet	19 Feb 2024 Not before 15th Oct 2024	Angharad Williams, Development Management Manager	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
<b>MDH Asbestos Management Plan</b> To receive the HRA Asset Management Strategy	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	10 Sep 2024 15 Oct 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>Mid Devon Draft Policies and Site Options</b>	Cabinet	15 Oct 2024	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
<b>November</b>					
<b>Willand Neighbourhood Plan</b>	Cabinet Cabinet Council	12 Nov 2024 4 Feb 2025 19 Feb 2025	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	



Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Grand Western Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan</b>	Cabinet	12 Nov 2024	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	
	Cabinet	10 Dec 2024			
	Council	18 Dec 2024			
<b>2024/2025 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)</b>	Cabinet	12 Nov 2024	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
	Homes Policy Development Group	19 Nov 2024			
	Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group	26 Nov 2024			
	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group	28 Nov 2024			
<b>The Statutory Duty to Conserve and Enhance Biodiversity</b>	Cabinet	12 Nov 2024	Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>December</b>					
<b>CCTV Policy</b> To receive the updated CCTV Policy	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group  Cabinet	3 Dec 2024  7 Jan 2025		David Wulff	Open
<b>2024/2025 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)</b>	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group  Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group  Cabinet	2 Dec 2024  3 Dec 2024  10 Dec 2024	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
<b>HRA Asset Management Strategy</b> To receive the updated HRA Assets Management Strategy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Tenancy Management Policy</b> To receive the revised Tenancy Management Policy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>Infrastructure Funding Statement- Infrastructure List</b>	Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group  Cabinet	26 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Elaine Barry, Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
<b>Destination Management Plan for Mid Devon</b>	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group  Cabinet	28 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
<b>Economic Strategy 2024 - 2029</b>	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group  Cabinet	28 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Climate Strategy Action Plan</b> To consider the Climate Strategy Action Plan	Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group  Cabinet	26 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change	Open
<b>Tenant Involvement Strategy</b> To receive the revised Tenant Involvement Strategy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>National Assistance Burial Procedure</b> To consider the National Assistance Burial Procedure	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group  Cabinet	2 Dec 2024  10 Dec 2024		Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
<b>Tenant Compensation Policy</b> To receive the revised Tenant Compensation Policy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open

Page 92

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Service Standards</b> To receive the Service Standards for Housing.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>Housing Strategy</b> To receive the revised Housing Strategy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>Corporate Performance Q2 including Dashboard; Corporate Risk Q2;</b>	Cabinet	10 Dec 2024	Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager	Leader of the Council	Open
<b>Phoenix House Accommodation Opportunities</b>	Cabinet		Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive (S151)	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
<b>Tenancy Strategy</b> To receive the revised Tenancy Strategy	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet	19 Nov 2024  10 Dec 2024	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>January 2025</b>					
<b>Green Enterprise Grants</b>	Cabinet	7 Jan 2025	Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change	
<b>2024/2025 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)</b>	Cabinet	7 Jan 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
<b>Future Waste &amp; Recycling Options</b> To receive a report regarding fully investigated future Waste & Recycling Options as identified at the previous PDG meeting.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group  Cabinet	2 Dec 2024  7 Jan 2025	Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
<b>National Assistance Burial Procedure</b> To receive and approve the updated National Assistance Burial Procedure.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group  Cabinet	2 Dec 2024  7 Jan 2025	Steve Densham, Land Management Officer	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Air Quality Action Plan</b> To consider the report	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group  Cabinet	2 Dec 2024  7 Jan 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health  Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration  Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>February 2025</b>					
<b>2024/2025 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)</b>	Cabinet  Council	4 Feb 2025  19 Feb 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
<b>Team Devon Joint Committee</b>	Cabinet  Council	4 Feb 2025  19 Feb 2025		Leader of the Council	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Regulation of Investigatory Powers</b>	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group  Scrutiny Committee  Cabinet	3 Dec 2024  13 Jan 2025  4 Feb 2025	Maria De Leiburne, Director of Legal, People & Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader    Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>March 2025</b>					
<b>Tenancy Options Waste Services– Carlu Close</b> To consider the future of the tenancy at Carlu Close	Cabinet	28 Mar 2025	Andrew Busby, Corporate Manager for Property, Leisure and Climate Change	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change	Open
<b>April 2025</b>					
<b>Right to Buy Policy (New)</b> To receive the new Right to Buy Policy.	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet  Council	18 Mar 2025  1 Apr 2025  23 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open



Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Corporate Recovery Policy</b> To receive the updated Corporate Recovery Policy.	Audit Committee  Cabinet	25 Mar 2025  1 Apr 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
<b>Community Safety Partnership Policy</b> To consider the report	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group  Cabinet	25 Mar 2025  1 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health  Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement	Open
<b>Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objective</b>	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group  Cabinet	25 Mar 2025  1 Apr 2025	Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste	Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health  Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>Safeguarding Children &amp; Adults at Risk Policy</b>	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group  Cabinet	25 Mar 2025  1 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
<b>Data Policy (new) for MDH</b> To receive the new Data Policy for Mid Devon Housing	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet  Council	18 Mar 2025  1 Apr 2025  23 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
<b>Safeguarding Policy (new for MDH)</b> To receive the new Safeguarding Policy for Mid Devon Housing	Homes Policy Development Group  Cabinet  Council	18 Mar 2025  1 Apr 2025  23 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open

86 of 98