

Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 February 2025 at 5.00 pm
Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton

Next ordinary meeting
Monday, 17 March 2025 at 5.00 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: 329 856 228 997

Passcode: Q8zyT9

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Membership

Cllr L G J Kennedy

Cllr G Westcott

Cllr D Broom

Cllr E Buczkowski

Cllr A Cuddy

Cllr G Czapiewski

Cllr M Farrell

Cllr C Harrower

Cllr B Holdman

Cllr L Knight

Cllr R Roberts

Cllr S Robinson

AGENDA

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

- 1 **Apologies and Substitute Members**
To receive any apologies for absence and notices of appointment of substitute Members (if any).
- 2 **Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**
To record any interests on agenda matters.
- 3 **Public Question Time**
To receive any questions from members of the public and replies thereto.

Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for this item.
- 4 **Minutes of the previous meeting** (*Pages 5 - 16*)
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on Monday 13 January 2025.
- 5 **Chair's Announcements**
To receive any announcements that the Chair of Scrutiny Committee may wish to make.
- 6 **Decisions of the Cabinet**
To consider any decisions made by the Cabinet at its last meeting that have been called-in.
- 7 **Quarter 3 Monitoring Report on the processing of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) at MDDC** (*Pages 17 - 22*)
To receive a report from the Head of Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement.
- 8 **Establishment Report** (*Pages 23 - 54*)
To receive a report from the Head of People, Performance and Waste.
- 9 **Whistleblowing Annual Update**
To receive a verbal update from the Head of People, Performance and Waste.
- 10 **How Devolution may affect Mid Devon District Council** (*Pages 55 - 68*)
To receive a report from the Chief Executive regarding Devolution in our area and adjacent areas.

11 **Work Programme** (Pages 69 - 92)

To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the committee's future consideration, taking account of:

- a) Any items within the Forward Plan for discussion at the next meeting;
- b) Suggestions of other work for the committee in 2025/26.

Stephen Walford
Chief Executive
Friday, 7 February 2025

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

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 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.

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MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 13 January 2025
at 5.00 pm

Present

Councillors

L G J Kennedy (Chair)
G Westcott (Vice-Chair), D Broom,
E Buczkowski, G Czapiewski, M Farrell,
C Harrower, B Holdman, L Knight and
S Robinson

Apologies

Councillors

A Cuddy and R Roberts

Also Present

Officers:

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Maria De
Leiburne (Director of Legal, People & Governance
(Monitoring Officer)), Dean Emery (Head of Revenues,
Benefits & Leisure), Simon Newcombe (Head of Housing &
Health), Paul Deal (Head of Finance, Property & Climate
Resilience), Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager)
and David Parker (Democratic Services & Policy Research
Officer)

Councillors

Online

J Buczkowski, L J Cruwys, S Keable, J Lock and J Wright

69 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (0:04:11)

Apologies were received from Councillors A Cuddy and R Roberts.

70 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (0:04:28)

No Interests were declared under this item.

71 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0:04:47)**

Paul Elstone:

Housing Rents.

Question 1

There is important information missing from the text of the Housing Rents report, which by now should now be readily available.

When was this rent calculation error made?

Question 2

The actions timetable, item 10, shows that initial letters have been sent to tenants, split between Overs and Unders so the numbers must be known.

How many overcharged tenancies are there?

Question 3

How many undercharged tenancies are there?

Question 4

The actions timetable, item 7, shows that the modelling of over and under charges has been completed at summary level. Given that a figure of £1.8 million has been provided for overcharges.

What is the summary gross financial figure for undercharges to date?

Question 5

The actions timetable, item 8, shows the modelling of the aggregate potential impact on the Housing Revenue Account has been completed. What is the financial loss in terms of the incorrect and lower rent revenue for this current financial year?

Capital Programme.

Question 6

I have repeatedly challenged the grossly excessive cost being paid by this Council for the ZED PODs projects. My challenge has previously been dismissed including by Cabinet Members.

I believe the source of the Cabinet Members information to be substantially incorrect.

I recently made a Freedom of Information (FOI) Request. This after the numbers shown in the HRA Capital Project budget sheet did not add up. The FOI response fully validated my cost challenge.

The HRA budget sheet for Fir Close Willand previously seemed to suggest that the total project cost was £140,000. A figure recently increased to £170,000. However, the FOI response states that the current Fir Close project spend amounts to be a massive £251,000.

This equates to an exorbitant total development cost of over £6,780 pounds per square metre.

Putting that figure into perspective the total development cost inclusive of all design, construction and land purchase cost for and I quote, the “*magnificent eco-friendly homes*” at Haddon Heights, Bampton. Homes built by 3 Rivers and being marketed by this Council, equates to circa £ 2,980 pounds per square metre or well under half of the ZED PODs development cost.

In closely examining the Capital Programme budget sheet it can be seen that there are no line entries showing the full project historic spend to date.

Also, the original and revised total cost estimates and for each project.

Only spend forecast over the budget period is shown.

All this leading to erroneous project cost information being available to Council Members on which to base decisions.

Will this Scrutiny Committee ensure this information is provided in project budget sheets going forward this in full support of good project cost management?

The Chair thanked Mr Elstone for his questions and stated that he would receive a reply in writing within ten working days.

72 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0:09:04)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2024 were **APPROVED** as a correct record by those who were present at that meeting and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

73 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (0:10:19)**

The Chair gave his thanks to the Vice Chair for so ably handling the previous two meetings whilst he had been unavailable.

74 **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET (0:10:32)**

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet on 7 January 2025 had been called in.

75 **2025/26 BUDGET REVIEW (0:10:46)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a *report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151).

The following was highlighted in the report:

- The documents before the Committee were the three recent reports that had been presented to Cabinet.

- The various versions of the budget updates had been through the Policy Development Groups.
- The informal Budget Briefing to Members had been useful and was something the Council would repeat.
- The Scrutiny Committee were now being asked to fulfil their legislative function of reviewing the whole budget process, review the recommendations that had previously been made and make any recommendations that the Scrutiny Committee thought appropriate to the Cabinet meeting to be held on 4 February 2025.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) showed a balanced budget for the financial year 2025/26.
- The Capital Programme for the financial year 2025/26 was also balanced.
- The General Fund was £450,000 short of being in a balanced position. That figure had grown following the funding settlement received from Central Government prior to Christmas. The largest contributor to the shortfall was the confirmation from the Government that the National Insurance Compensation Scheme would not compensate the Council by as much as had been previously alluded, that item had probably added £300,000 to the shortfall and would impact the HRA as well.
- Additional Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding of approximately £927,000 was announced just before Christmas which assisted the Council.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- The figure mentioned for EPR funding was a provisional sum and was for one year only. After that it would be subsumed into whatever Medium Term Funding agreement that would be offered from 2026/27 onwards.
- The funding floor was another value that might only last for one year. The funding floor was there to ensure that no council received less in cash terms than they had received the previous year.
- Internal borrowing from funds to help manage the Council's General Fund expenditure in the short term.
- The Treasury Management report showed the Treasury activities for the future financial year. That report went to the Cabinet and Full Council.
- Once the compensation amount for National Insurance was known, the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) would notify all Members of it and what it meant for this Council. For the moment, based on the formula that the Government provided, it was felt that the cost to the Council would be one third of the overall cost of the National Insurance change.

There was nothing the Scrutiny Committee wanted to feedback to the Cabinet.

Note: *report previously circulated.

76 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT - ANNUAL REPORT (0:21:26)

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a *report from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer).

The following was highlighted in the report:

- In August 2024 the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office completed its three yearly review which had been very positive.
- The Policy remained the same and no amendments had been made to it.
- The Council had not used its powers under the act since March 2014.

There were no questions from Members.

Note: *report previously circulated.

77 HOUSING RENTS (0:23:069)

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** a *report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151).

The following was highlighted in the report:

- The report before Members was a replica of the report that was presented to Cabinet as a progress update on what the Council had been doing since identifying the error.
- The Council were working with third parties such as Churches Housing Action Team, Involve, Citizens' Advice Bureau etc. as they worked with a lot of the Council's housing tenants.
- The Council was keen to ensure that they looked after their tenants throughout the whole process.
- The correction would take months or potentially longer to sort out.
- The actions that had been taken to correct the error were listed in the report.
- Other Housing Associations had made similar errors previously and the Council were talking to them to learn from their experience.
- The Council in dealing with the correction were liaising with the Benefit Service and specifically with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). So far the Council had received a lot of generic advice from the DWP Office but were awaiting technical advice on, for instance, how far back the Council had to go back in the benefits system and how they were expected to collect it. The Council was issuing joint communications with the DWP wherever possible.
- The operational tracker system owned by the Leadership Team where all actions were monitored and progress was reported. This was additional to the weekly officer and team meetings.
- Meetings had been taking place with the Regulator for Social Housing.
- The Council had consulted its external auditors and because the error spanned the period from 2023 to 2024 the Council had entered a provisional figure of £1,500,000 for the six years' worth of backdated payments. Advice had been received from King's Counsel that the Council should go back as far as six years for the correction.

- Weekly meetings were held to update the Cabinet Members for Housing and Finance.
- It was a large administrative task that was important to get right and was complicated by the need to net down any refunds to take into account any rent write offs, service charges or anything else that may have happened in the past.
- It was likely that the repayments were structured to be made in tranches based upon complexity and liaising with the DWP.
- There were some vulnerable tenants who would need assistance with how to deal with what may be a large refund.

Discussion took place with regard to:

- How did the error continue for six years? The setting of housing rents was quite a complicated process and a manual error had been made in a spreadsheet about a decade ago that had gone unnoticed and just rolled over. All annual updates that had been checked by finance and housing teams had been done correctly but the teams had been updating an incorrect base that had not been picked up. Eighteen months ago new external auditors (Bishop Fleming) were appointed and the Council had a change of Finance staff and a new housing accountant. Both of them had a look at the system and went right back and when the error became apparent flagged up the problem.
- As soon as the Council became aware of the error they referred themselves to the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH).
- The Housing Tenants had initially been split into two categories, those that had overpaid their rent and those that had underpaid their rent.
- Did everyone on the current rate know that if their tenancy changed that they would go onto a new rate?
- Those that had underpaid their rent would not be charged for the underpayment and they had been told that they would remain on that charge until their tenancy changed.
- Those that had been overcharged had been told that some money would be due back to them but that it was now a question of how much that was and netting off whether there were adjustments that needed to be made. Those that had been historically overcharged were now on the correct rent to avoid compounding issues.
- The Council was taking care with how and when they communicated with those residents to make sure that they were not left worrying.
- The RSH very much welcomed the fact that the Council had taken the proactive step of referring themselves.
- How were vulnerable tenants being treated and had the Council identified all the tenants that should be treated as vulnerable? The Council had their own record of tenants that they believed were vulnerable. The Council were working closely with their Neighbourhood Officers who knew the estates and their tenants.
- The Neighbourhood Officers either had formal or anecdotal information around vulnerabilities. In that context, the Council were particularly interested in those with an addiction where a sudden influx of money could be problematic. So it was about identifying those individuals but also comparing the Council's records with DWP records because they had their own information around vulnerability. In some cases it would be worth the Council suggesting to the

tenant that they used the refund for something like making payments for them or offsetting the refund against another bill. The Council was trying to do something constructive that would prevent a large sum of money suddenly becoming something of an attraction.

- Once the Council had the output figures in terms of who was owed what, a threshold would be set and those vulnerable tenants above the threshold would be engaged with including offering a face to face conversation.
- How did the sum of money to be refunded affect the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)? A provision of £1,500,000 had been made in the 2023/24 accounts which would significantly reduce the HRA general balance which was effectively their cash reserve, normally set at £2million. The effect would be that the reserve would be reduced to £500,000. Over the next three or four years the Council would budget to replenish those reserves back to £2million. If it became necessary the HRA contained other reserves which could be borrowed from. The financial health of the HRA was still strong.
- In order to avoid a similar error happening in the future, the officers had now agreed a process where at least three officers were involved in test checking any of the data that went into the calculation of housing rents.

The Chair thanked the staff and Officers for the work that had gone on to correct this error and the work that was still to be done.

Note: *report previously circulated.

78 **WORK PROGRAMME (0:47:52)**

The Committee had before it and **NOTED** *the Forward Plan and the *Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

The following was highlighted:

- The Scrutiny Committee could ask for any items listed on the Cabinet Forward Plan to be brought before them.
- The Clerk mentioned the items coming to the February, March, and April 2025 meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.
- The March Scrutiny Committee Meeting would be a single issue meeting where a representative of South West Water would be present to answer questions. A list of questions would be circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee to consider and add to.
- The draft programme of work for the Scrutiny Committee for 2025/26 would hopefully be available for the meeting in February 2025.
- A Work Proposal Form submitted by Cllr S Robinson regarding Devon County Council's Highways Department and Junction 28 of the M5. It was **AGREED** to accept this work proposal and to invite the Devon County Council Cabinet Member for Highways to address the Scrutiny Committee on 14 April 2025, (proposed by Cllr S Robinson, seconded by Cllr E Buczkowski). If the County Council were by then in "Pre-Election Period", then the Cabinet Member would not be able to attend and the matter would be put back to the June meeting.

Note: *the Forward Plan and the *Scrutiny Committee Work Programme were previously circulated.

(The meeting ended at 5.53 pm)

CHAIR

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QUESTIONS – MDDC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING 13 JANUARY 2025

Paul Elstone a local resident.

My questions relate to Agenda Item 9

Housing Rents.

Question 1

There is important information missing from the text of the Housing Rents report, which by now should now be readily available.

When was this rent calculation error made?

Chairman – following the introduction of the new Social Rent formula in 2002. Further, I would like to point out that this matter (rent) was discovered by our new auditors who are independently appointed as were the previous auditors. As soon as the matter was brought to our attention the extremely complex calculations were started. This matter will take some time to correct but I must emphasise my support for the team in this difficult endeavour.

Question 2

The actions timetable, item 10, shows that initial letters have been sent to tenants, split between OVERS and UNDERS so the numbers must be known.

How many overcharged tenancies are there?

Chairman - This is an evolving calculation due to a number of complex variables (i.e. some will need to be considered against prior/current rent arrears, historic write offs and will also need to take account of tenant's benefit positions. There could even be instances where a tenant has occupied both an over an under charged property. But our most up to date calculations are circa 1,250 or 45% of our tenancies.

Question 3

How many undercharged tenancies are there?

Chairman – As outlined above, this is an evolving calculation due to a number of complex variables (i.e. some will need to be considered against prior/current rent arrears, historic write offs and will also need to take account of tenant's benefit positions. There could even be instances where a tenant has occupied both an over an under charged property. But our most up to date calculations are circa 1,600 or 55% of our tenancies.

Question 4

The actions timetable, item 7, shows that the modelling of over and under charges has been completed at summary level. Given that a figure of £1.8 million has been provided for overcharges.

What is the summary gross financial figure for undercharges to date?

Chairman – The estimated value is £2.2 million based on the same calculation methodology.

Question 5

The actions timetable, item 8, shows the modelling of the aggregate potential impact on the Housing Revenue Account has been completed. What is the financial loss in terms of the incorrect and lower rent revenue for this current financial year?

Chairman – As previously outlined, the position is evolving as we review the cases. Currently we estimate that the impact in 2024/25 will be £291k.

My next question concerns Agenda Item 7. Specifically, **Appendix 2 - Capital Programme**.

Question 6

I have repeatedly challenged the grossly excessive cost being paid by this Council for the ZED PODs projects. My challenge has previously been dismissed including by Cabinet Members.

I believe the source of the Cabinet Members information to be substantially incorrect.

I recently made a Freedom of Information Request. This after the numbers shown in the HRA Capital Project budget sheet did not add up. The FOI response fully validated my cost challenge.

The HRA budget sheet for Fir Close, Willand previously seemed to suggest that the total project cost was £140,000 a figure recently increased to £170,000. However, the FOI response states that the current Fir Close project spend amounts to be a massive £251,000.

This equates to an EXHORBITANT total development cost of over £6,780 pounds per square meter.

Putting that figure into perspective the TOTAL and I emphasise TOTAL development cost inclusive of all design, construction and land purchase cost for and I quote, the “*magnificent eco-friendly homes*” at Haddon Heights, Bampton. Homes built by 3 Rivers and being marketed by this Council, equates to circa £ 2,980 pounds per square meter or well under half of the ZED PODs development cost.

In closely examining the Capital Programme budget sheet it can be seen that there are no line entries showing the full project historic spend to date.

Also, the original and revised TOTAL cost estimates and for each project.

Only spend forecast over the budget period is shown.

All this leading to erroneous project cost information being available to Councils Members on which to base decisions.

Will this Scrutiny Committee ensure this information is provided in project budget sheets going forward, this in full support of good project cost management?

Chairman – thank you for your comments and observations I will of course ensure that our officers consider these appropriately.

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Report for: Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	17 February 2025
Subject:	Q3 Monitoring Report on the processing of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) at MDDC
Cabinet Member:	Cllr David Wulff, Cabinet member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health
Responsible Officer:	Lisa Lewis, Head of Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement n/a
Exempt:	
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report provides a quarterly monitoring report of the processing of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) at MDDC. The report was requested at the Scrutiny meeting of 16 December 2024.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. To note the monitoring report on the performance of MDDC in the processing of FOI and EIR requests.**
- 2. That the Scrutiny Committee approve the quarterly dashboard metrics table as sufficient to form the basis of regular reporting to committee.**

Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) serve to promote transparency and accountability in public authorities by granting the public access to information.

- 1.2 On 16 December 2024, the committee received a briefing report from the Head of Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement.
- 1.3 The committee requested that an Annual FOI/EIR report be created for the committee, similar to that of the Annual Complaints report. This newly created report will be scheduled at the earliest opportunity in the new municipal year as monitoring is performed over the financial year.
- 1.4 The committee also agreed that a quarterly dashboard be created with metrics of the processing of FOI/EIRs. The dashboard would show the numbers of requests, reviews and the number escalated to the ICO and how many had been upheld.

2.0 Quarter 3 2024 Monitoring

- 2.1 The KPI target for processing of requests within the 20 day deadline is 97%. We achieved 99.6% for the quarter.
- 2.2 A dashboard monitoring the processing of FOI/EIR requests for quarter 3 2024/2025 is proposed at paragraph 2.3.
- 2.3

FOI/EIR Processing – Quarter 3 2024/2025	
Number received	190
Number responded	177
Full Disclosures	95
Partial Disclosures	49
Number requested reviews	3
Number reviews responded	3
Number ICO cases received	0
Number ICO cases closed	1
ICO – Individual complainants	1
Number ICO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upheld • Partially Upheld • Not Upheld 	1 upheld

- 2.4 For clarity, the total received and responded to will never be the same, i.e. we are not seeking 100% target. The values relate to requests received and responded to during the period and given the 20 day response time there will always be those that have not met the deadline at the close of the monitoring period.

- 2.5 It is important to note that the number of partial disclosures consists of requests where exemptions are applied OR we have processed a request where we do not hold data, or the full dataset requested. The latter most commonly occur where we have received a request for information about services provided by another agency, e.g. enquiries about pothole maintenance serviced by Devon County Council.
- 2.6 Of those requests processed in the period 32 were exempt or partially exempt. 50 requests were received/processed for which we did not/only partially held information.
- 2.7 Common exemptions that were applied for the period in question can be found at Appendix 1. These are provided as context for this covering report and will *not* form part of proposed dashboard. It should be noted that the appendix is not intended to be an exhaustive list of exemptions under FOI/EIR.
- 2.8 The number of Information Commissioner Office (ICO) cases received are notifications from the ICO within the given period.

3.0 Future Changes

- 3.1 The current format of the disclosure log on the website will be updated monthly, as opposed to quarterly, from January 2025.
- 3.2 An amended disclosure log for publication via our website is being designed and will be published quarter 1 2025.
- 3.3 The annual report will be provided at the earliest opportunity in the new municipal year. This, and the schedule of quarterly reporting will be agreed with the committee clerk and be added to the forward plan for this committee.

Financial Implications - Failure to process or apply regulatory requirements to the provision of information under FOI/EIR may result in compensation claims.

Legal Implications- Failure to process or apply regulatory requirements to the provision of information under FOI/EIR may result in legal costs and enforcement action by the ICO.

Risk Assessment – Failure to process or apply regulatory requirements to the provision of information under FOI/EIR may result in reputational damage and operational impact.

Impact on Climate Change – This report and activities documented within have no impact on our climate agenda.

Equalities Impact Assessment – None. Responders to FOI/EIR requests are not provided with personal information of requestor. Requests can be made verbally or in writing according to legislation and if necessary alternative formats of information can be provided as per our Customer Standards.

Relationship to Corporate Plan – Community, People and Equalities – Involving and engaging our communities.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer
Date: 05/02/25

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leiburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 04/02/25

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh
Agreed by or on behalf of the Corporate Director
Date: 04/02/2025

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 31 Jan 2025

Cabinet member notified: yes

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

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

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lisa Lewis, Head of Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement
Email: llewis@middevon.gov.uk
Telephone: 01884 234981

Background papers: Appendix 1 – Exemptions applied for the period of reporting.

Appendix 1

Exemptions applied in period October-December 2024

Section 21 – This means that the information is available by other means, e.g. information we already publish pre-emptively or is purchased for a fee such as Land Charge searches.

Section 22 – This means information that will be published at a later date or is in the process of completion.

Section 31 – This means information that cannot be released as it could increase the risk of criminal activity or prevent law enforcement from being able to function as effectively as possible.

Section 40(2) and (EIR Regulation 13) – This is information that falls under the definition of personal data under GDPR, in these cases we need to consider the data subjects rights over the need to disclose.

Section 42 – This is information that is subject to Legal Professional Privilege. This is generally advice provided by a solicitor to the client.

Section 43 (EIR Regulation 12(5)(e)) – This is information that is commercially sensitive and would harm either the councils or a third parties commercial interests.

This only represents a small snapshot of the requests not responded to fully. The statistics below highlights how this:

Total not to provided	Number
Exempt or part Exempt	32
Either Don't hold or Partially don't hold information	50

This shows that the FOIs are generally not processed fully due to the information being either not held or partially not held, this can be because we do not collect the data or that the data falls under the jurisdiction of Devon County Council or other authorities. All Freedom of information requests need to be processed regardless of jurisdiction.

It is important to note that of the 32 refused or partially refused requests, 14 were refused due to the information already accessible or soon to be published (s21/22). Only 18 requests involved the use of exemptions that withhold the information.

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Report for: **Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Meeting:	17 February 2025
Subject:	Establishment Report
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Jane Lock, Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader
Responsible Officer:	Matthew Page – Head of People, Performance & Waste James Hamblin – Operations Manager – People Services
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Structure Chart

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

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

This report sits within the current budget and policy framework. An updated set of structure charts are provided in Appendix 1.

Recommendation(s):

That the Scrutiny Committee note the report.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the performance of our workforce.
- 1.2 These items include updates on the key establishment indicators of sickness absence, agency expenditure and turnover.
- 1.3 Focus on data and analysis continues to be a key consideration as we share and embed this across service areas through initiatives such as the quarterly

performance review report and subsequent operational meetings. Additional monthly updates are provided to the Corporate Management Team and Leadership Team on workforce data. Where possible the collection, reporting and sharing of data is being automated using our own systems.

1.4 The workforce data allows us to compare the performance and impact of vacancies, sickness, turnover, agency and overtime spend both corporately but also in particular departments. This helps us to regularly review our establishment and make sure it is fit for purpose.

2.0 Sickness Absence, Agency Expenditure and Establishment

2.1 For 2023/24 the Council had an average of 10.45 days sickness absence per full time equivalent (FTE). This compared to 10.09 days in 2022/23, 7.82 days in 2021/22 and 5.58 days in 2020/21. Figure 1 outlines sickness absence since 2020/21 and includes the first nine months of the financial year 2024/25.

2.2 Our policy expects employees to not exceed 6 days sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period. It should be noted that there will be a difference between FTE and per employee statistics. As noted on previous reports, lower sickness absence levels during the ‘pandemic years’ will reflect both the furlough scheme in place at the time and employees being able to work from home.

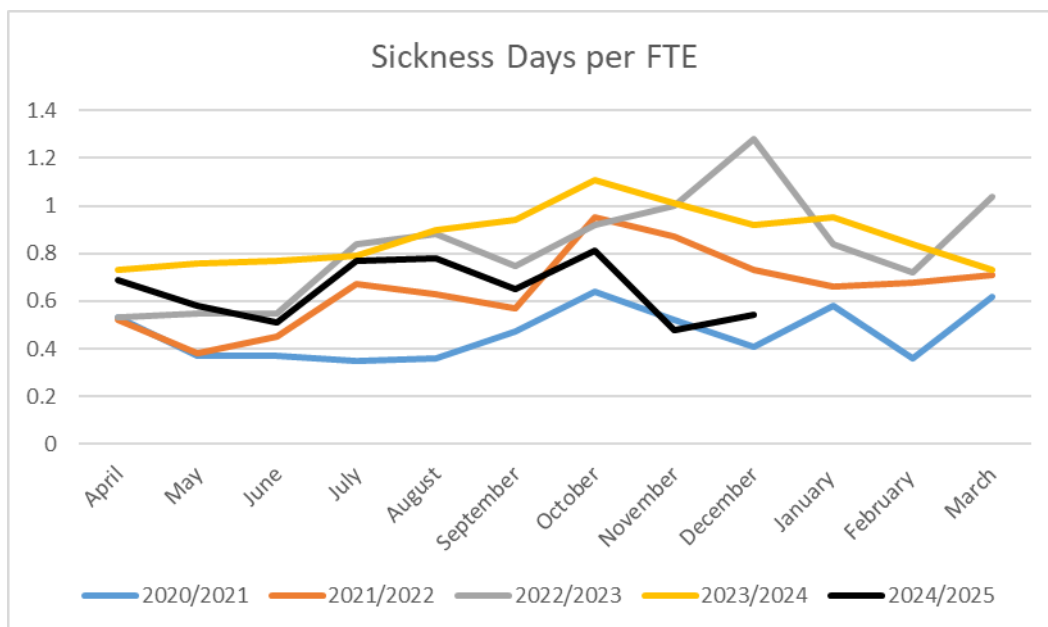


Figure 1. Sickness 2020/2021 – 2024/2025.

2.3 Sickness absence and the impacts this creates remain an ongoing challenge. The People Services department has rolled out in house training across the organisation following the updates made to the sickness absence policy. This training has been made available to employees through the

learning management system to ensure content created is readily available to existing and new line managers.

- 2.4 In the first nine months of this financial year, 5.81 days sickness absence per FTE were recorded. Acknowledging this, current projections would suggest approximately 7.75 days lost per FTE in 2024/2025. This year has seen a significant reduction in Autumn and Winter absences as shown in Figure 1, returning to levels last seen in the financial year 2020/2021. It should be noted that sickness absence meetings are the majority of our employee relations cases and has been for the last 12 months.
- 2.5 Expectations regarding sickness absence continue to be communicated through line managers, with particular acknowledgement given to the challenges brought by presentism which has nationally gained attention as the country has transitioned into longer term hybrid working practices following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.6 Dedicated flu vaccination appointments for our staff had been secured with a local provider. Whilst uptake on the offer this year was reduced compared to last year, we are minded that some staff already have free access to the jab via the NHS should they meet the criteria set.
- 2.7 January 2025 will see the return of free health checks for staff. Dates and times have been communicated to our workforce. This follows the positive feedback from the trial in 2024 and is aligned to efforts being made to prioritise the health and wellbeing of our workforce.
- 2.8 Following conclusion of the All Staff Survey in 2023, an action plan has been created focused on themes of Communication, Engagement as well as Pride and Wellbeing. This followed further feedback provided by the Impact Consultative Group and our recognised Union. Steps taken so far include; the introduction of regular all staff briefings, social events for all staff and the regular sharing of good news stories. The recent social event prior to the Christmas break generated £480 in donations for a local charity. Autumn 2025 will see the launch of the next All Staff Survey.
- 2.9 During 2023/24 the Council spent £682,789.04 on agency workers. Table 1 outlines agency spend since 2020/21. For the current financial year, we are currently tracking below spend incurred last year and final spend for this year will be confirmed in future reporting.
- 2.10 The labour market continues to fluctuate between the broader benefits and security of permanent employment and the typically higher salary and greater flexibility offered by agency work. This is particularly challenging in specialist roles. The Council continues to review benefits available to our workforce to ensure we maintain an attractive employment offer. It should be noted that figures outlined in Table 1 may vary from previous reporting due to payment terms with the providers.

Year	Agency Spend	Year On Year Change (+/-)
2020/21	£576,368.28	
2021/22	£812,248.34	+33.97%
2022/23	£1,102,933.68	+30.36%
2023/24	£682,789.04	- 47.06%

Table 1. Agency Spend 2020/21 – 2023/24

2.11 Table 2 compares the Establishment for the Council and associated costs from 2020/21 to 2023/24. The 2024/25 pay award of £1290 (or 2.5%) was finalised in October 2024, with staff having pay backdated 7 months to 1 April 2024. Strike action was not supported by union members. Feedback has been provided already to employer representatives within the pay negotiation for consideration in future settlements.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total number of employees /workers paid	697	728	765	798
Establishment FTE (Average)	422.79	426.43	430.44	443.69
Total Taxable Gross Pay	£11,515,324.63	£12,197,334.88	£13,168,855.70	£14,343,265.15
Employers NI	£1,038,135.28	£1,126,244.53	£1,277,182.95	£1,365,846.63
Employers Pension	£1,832,713.73	£1,938,973.16	£2,093,547.57	£2,585,379.63

Table 2. Establishment 2020/21 – 2023/24

2.12 The year on year increase in ‘Total Taxable Gross Pay’ outlined in Table 2 reflects the increased FTE, each year’s pay award made as well as the yearly incremental increase. It should be noted that the overall yearly payroll budget includes an aspect of agency staffing costs which can be used to cover hard to recruit areas e.g. Solicitors in Legal, Planning Enforcement Officers.

2.13 In October and November 2024, training focused on Recruitment, Interviewing and Selection was rolled out in response to employees specifically requesting this. Attendee feedback has been positive and new tools to assist with tasks such as candidate shortlisting have been shared.

- 2.14 Learning Partnerships, a collaborative group of staff from different services to review learning and workforce planning across the Council, has been created. Regular meetings are underway and feedback is being shared with management teams on insight and action being proposed.
- 2.15 The Council and staff received recognition in October 2024 at the annual South West Challenge. Three teams made up of staff from across our service areas represented Mid Devon District Council and competed against other South West local authorities. The teams performed exceptionally well, being shortlisted for all award categories and finishing as the best placed authority in one category.

3.0 Turnover

3.1 Turnover for 2023/24 was 17%. This compares to a turnover of 19.49% in 2022/23, 21.25% in 2021/22 and 14.23% in 2020/21. Figure 2 shows turnover at the Council since 2020/21 and includes the first nine months in the financial year 2024/25.

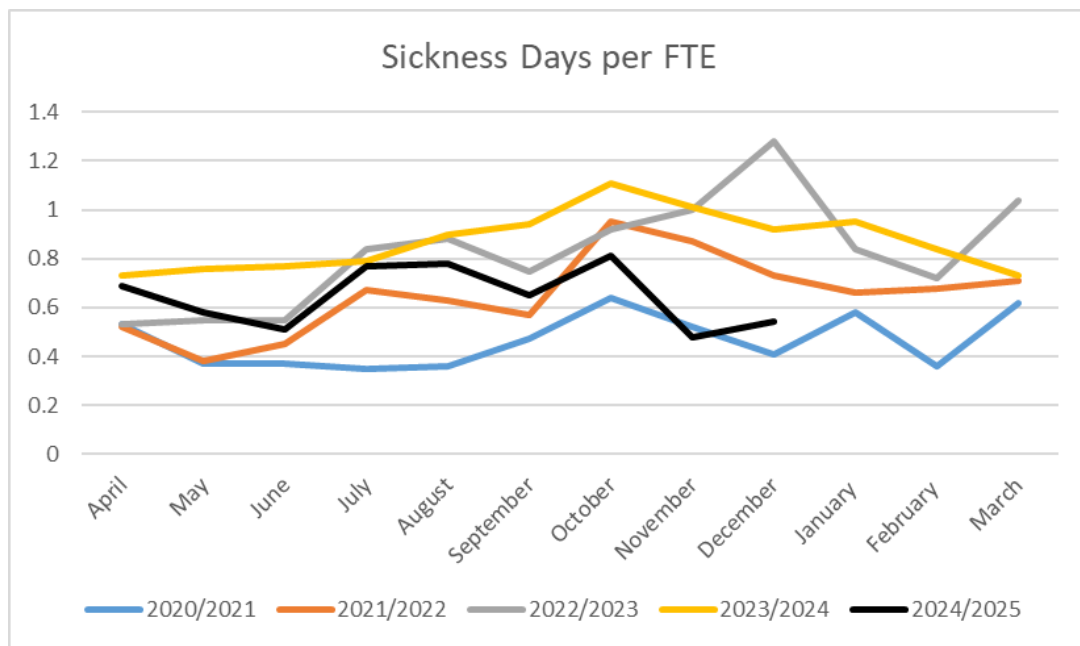


Figure 2. Turnover 2020/21 – 2024/25.

- 3.2 In the first nine months of 2024/25, turnover totalled 13.55%. Acknowledging this, current projections would suggest we end 2024/25 with a turnover rate of approximately 18.07%.
- 3.3 Feedback from exit interviews is being shared with services to reflect on what we, both at a service and whole Council level, could consider to retain employees. Reasons cited by employees leaving the Council vary but regularly referenced includes; Career Progression, Better Salary and Benefits and Retirement.

- 3.4 Alongside fourteen apprenticeships across the Council, we continue to support Mid Devon residents with work experience. We have already been contacted by students from different educational providers for work experience in 2025, with 15 due to join our services to gain insight into working life at the Council. We continue to use our apprenticeship levy funds to support the development of our employees whether this is in the form of those joining us as an Apprentice or upskilling existing employees.
- 3.5 The latest round of appraisals at the Council concluded in December. A core theme of the process for this year will be to ensure we embed the new Corporate Plan within the objective setting process so that all employees can understand how they contribute to the strategic direction of the Council.
- 3.6 We continue to work with other authorities to understand how our performance compares. A new online subscription will provide data to us on key workforce metrics of other authorities. Insight from this is expected from April 2025 onwards.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 4.1 Work will continue to review our establishment and staffing budget. Greater insight from data and analysis will support services to analyse their service needs. Although we have strengthened our understanding and analysis of how our projected establishment and actual workforce compare, there is further work to do to ensure we are effectively resourced right across the Council.
- 4.2 Whilst sickness absence and therefore the impact from sickness absence appears to be reducing, it is important that we do not lose sight of the need to address absence with timely management interventions. Similarly, the reduction in agency spend should not be taken lightly and efforts, such as the regular review of vacancy need within the Council, is required to ensure we manage what is within our gift.
- 4.3 Acknowledging the next All Staff Survey will be rolled out later this year, it is important that the associated action plan remains in place and monitored.
- 4.4 Following experiences in recent years, it is important that feedback from staff impacted by the delayed pay award is provided back to those involved in the negotiations. This can both support staff with the immediate impact from the cost of living rises seen in recent years, as well as, reduce the potential impact of industrial action.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

In accordance with Article 14 of the Constitution.

Risk Assessment

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

Impact on Climate Change

No climate change issues are highlighted in this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Considerations are given to specific policy and decisions with regards to equality impact assessments.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

This report highlights the Establishment figures and supports our aim to reduce costs without affecting service quality and continuity, as well as, being an employer of choice in the Mid Devon area.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer
Date: 05/02/25

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 04/02/25

Chief Officer: Richard Marsh
Agreed by or on behalf of the Corporate Director
Date: 04/02/25

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 31 Jan 2025

Cabinet member notified: yes

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

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

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste
James Hamblin, Operations Manager – People Services

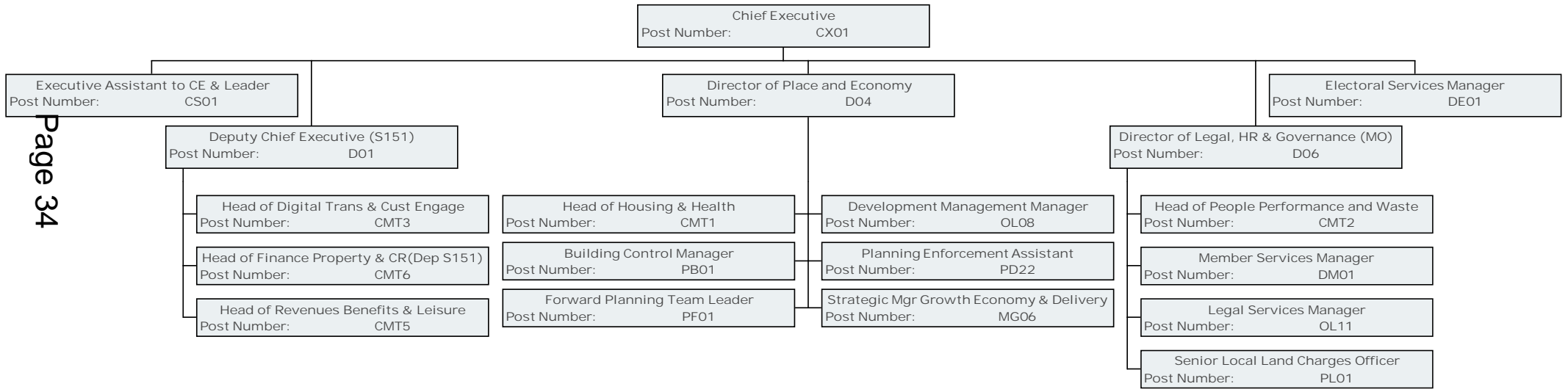
Email: MPage@middevon.gov.uk
JHamblin@middevon.gov.uk

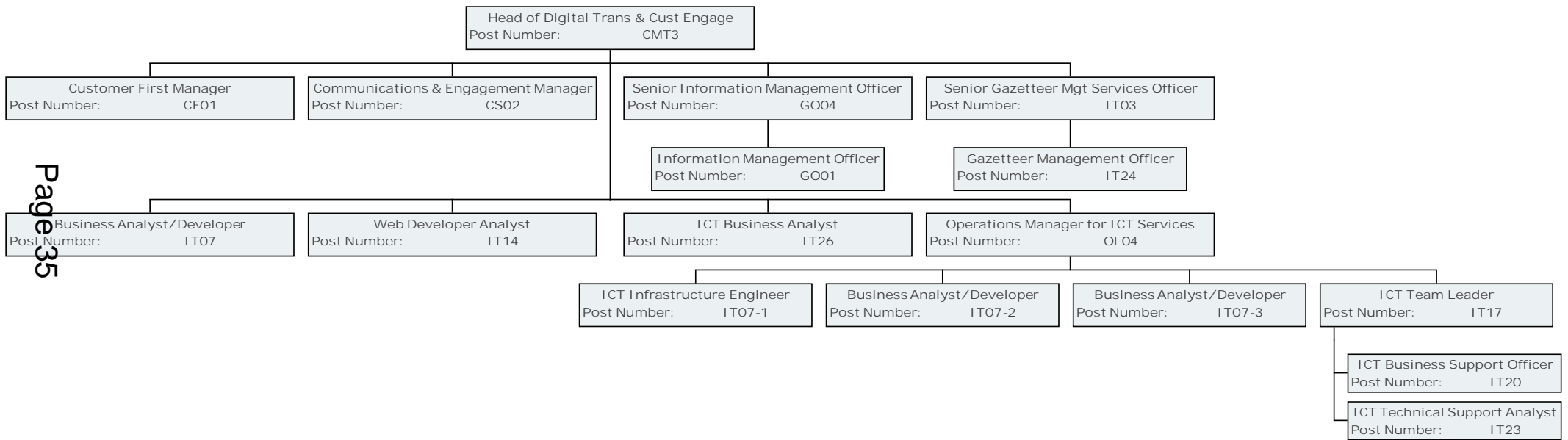
Telephone: 01884 234919
01884 234203

Background papers: Previous Establishment Reports taken to Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and PDG's

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Customer First Manager
Post Number: CF01

Customer Services Team Leader
Post Number: CF02-1

Customer Services Team Leader
Post Number: CF02-2

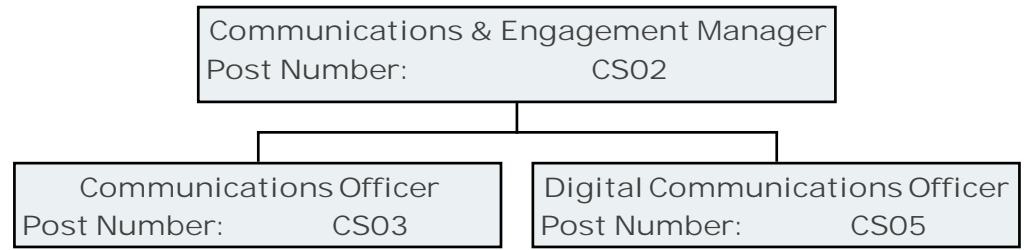
Customer First Project Support Officer
Post Number: CF09

Customer Services Officer
Post Number: CF04

Customer First Officer (Central Admin)
Post Number: CF06

Customer First Officer (Phone Team)
Post Number: CF07

Customer First Officer (Phone Team)
Post Number: CF07-1



Head of Finance Property & CR(Dep S151)
Post Number: CMT6

Corporate Projects Officer
Post Number: HP25

Climate and Sustainability Specialist
Post Number: HP27

Operations Manager Property Services
Post Number: OL06

Operations Manager for Finance
Post Number: OL12

Systems Accountant
Post Number: FA09

Finance Business Partner
Post Number: FA21

Finance/Creditors Officer
Post Number: FA06

Finance/Creditors Officer
Post Number: FA06-1

Finance/Creditors Officer
Post Number: FA06-2

Finance/Exchequer Assistant
Post Number: FA07

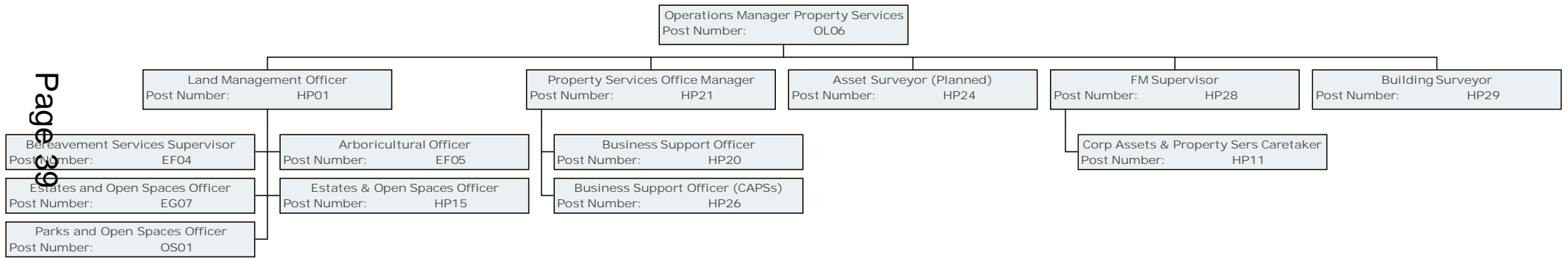
Finance/Exchequer Assistant
Post Number: FA07-1

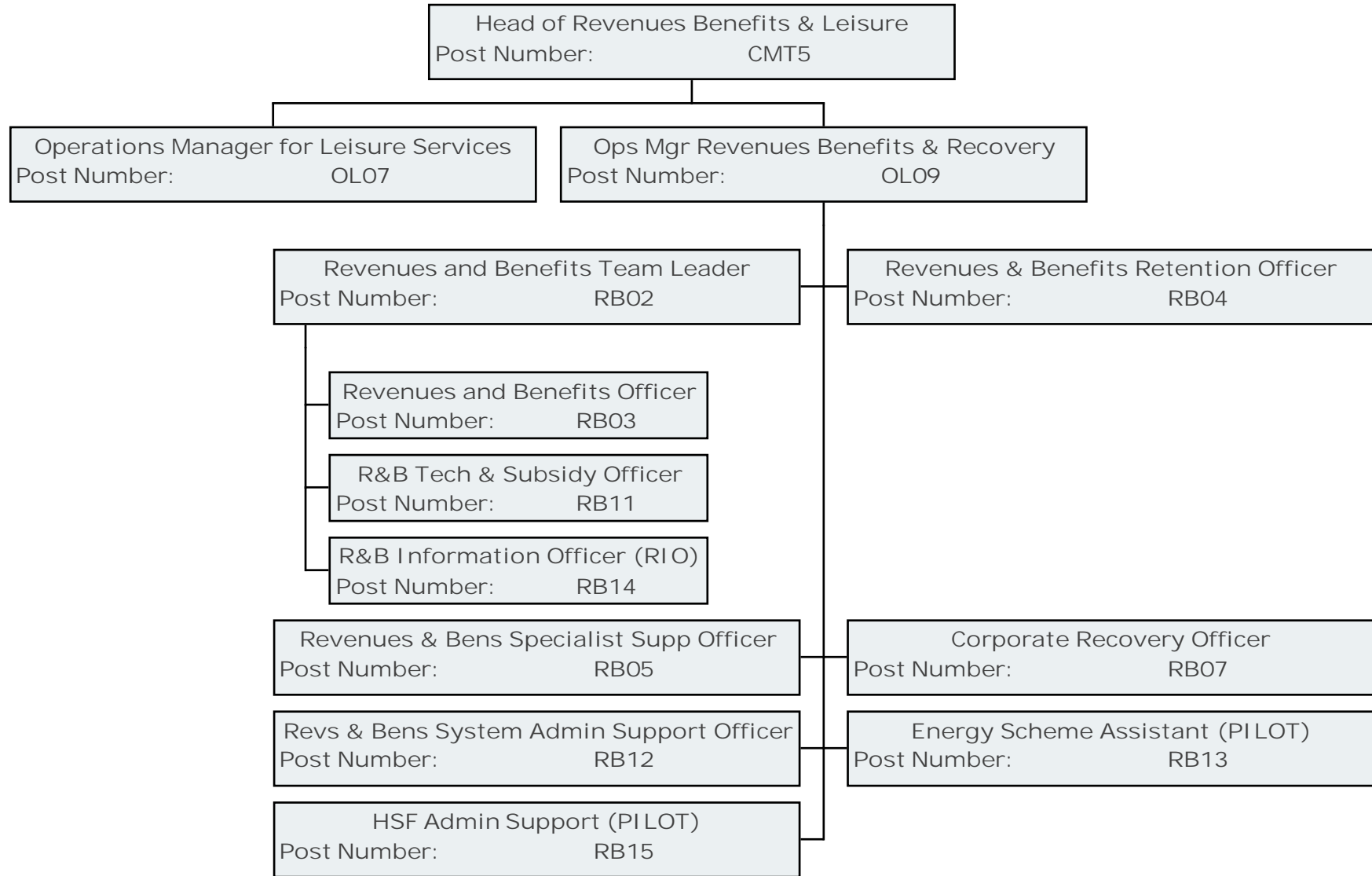
Procurement and Contracts Officer
Post Number: FA11-1

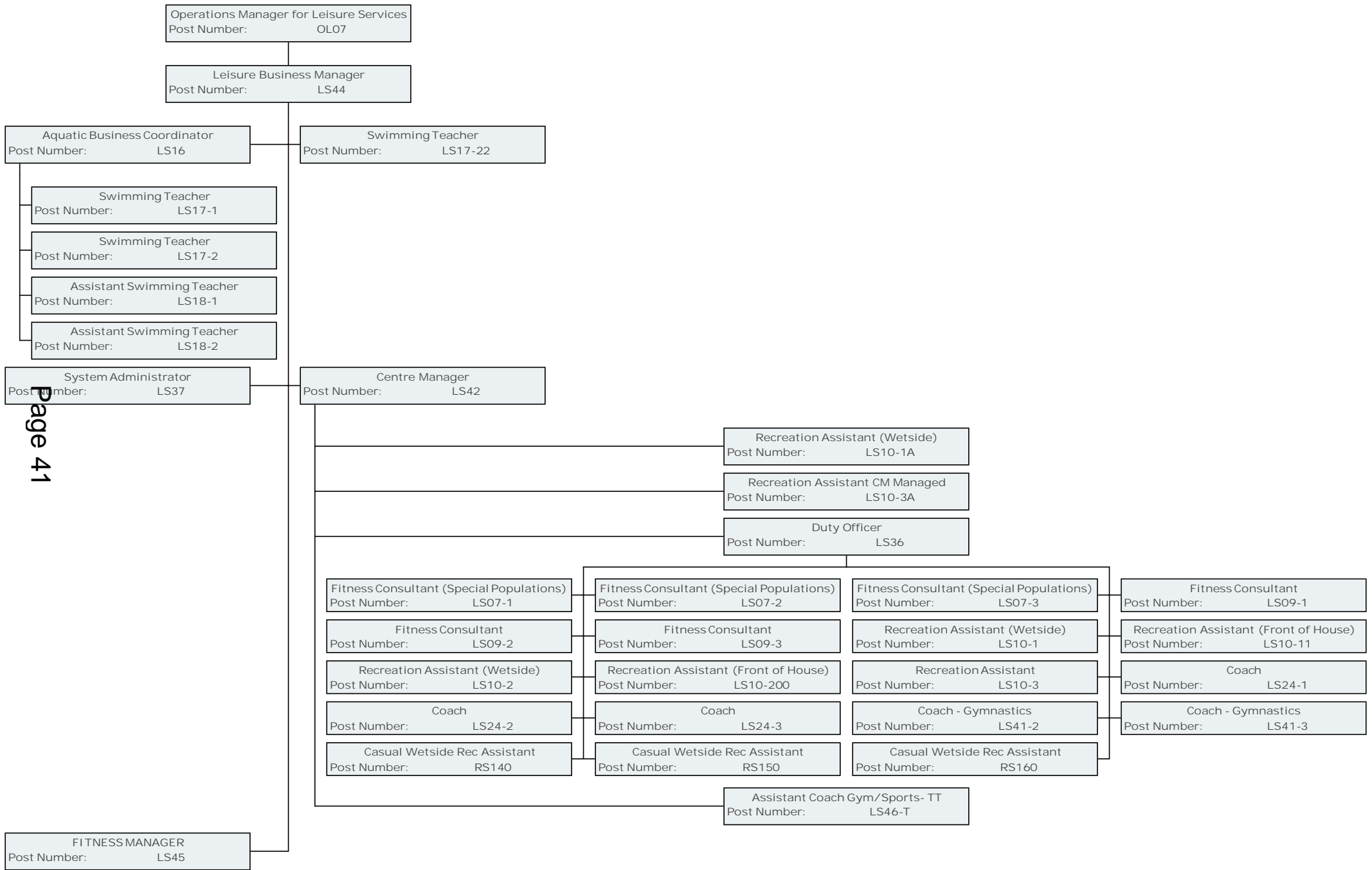
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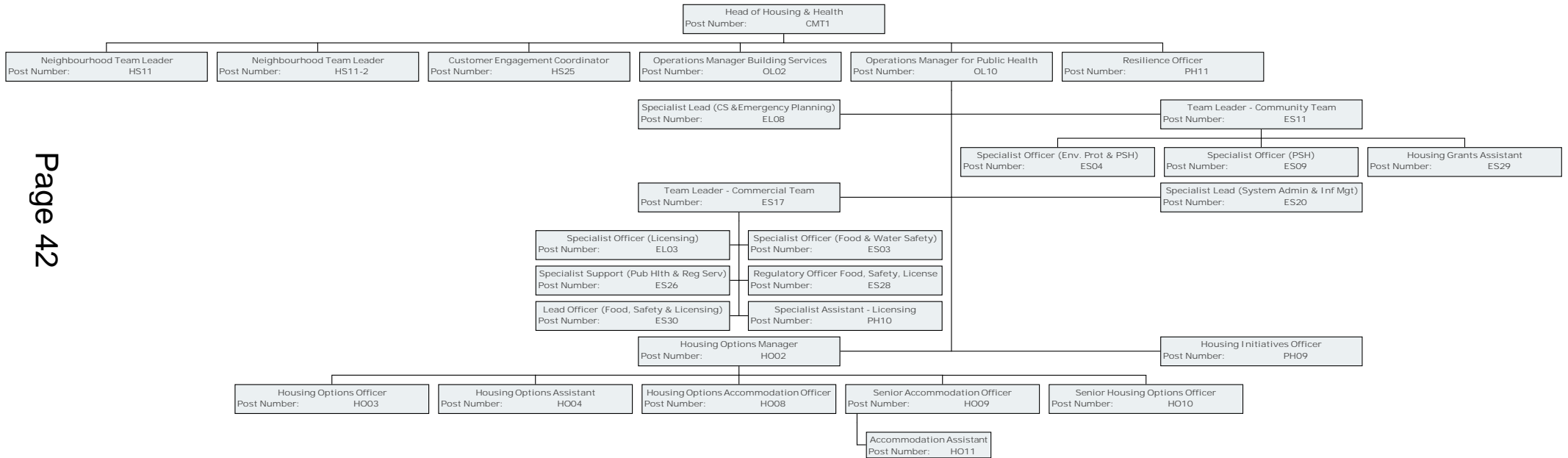
Corporate Procurement Officer
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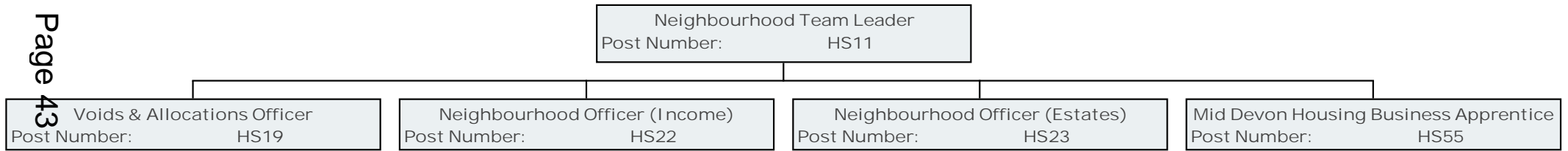
Finance Business Partner
Post Number: FA21-1

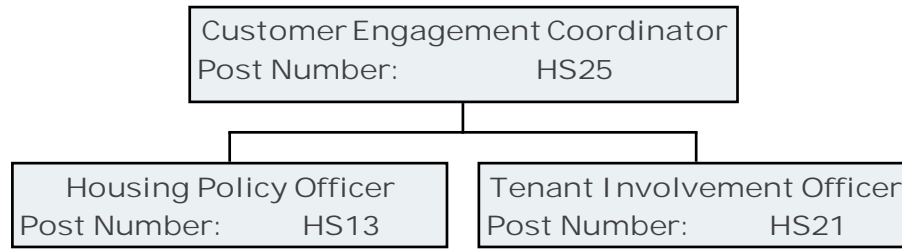


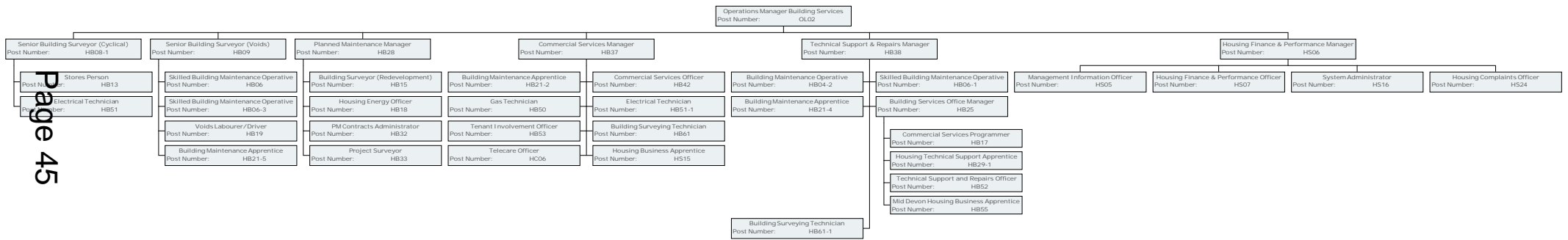












Development Management Manager
Post Number: OL08

Area Team Leader
Post Number: PD03-1

System Administrator
Post Number: PD13

Area Planning Officer Major Projects
Post Number: PD15

Senior Planning Enforcement Officer
Post Number: PD23

Area Team Leader
Post Number: PD03-2

Area Planning Officer
Post Number: PD14

Planning Apprentice
Post Number: PD21

Principal Planning Officer
Post Number: PD04

Principal Planning Officer
Post Number: PD04-1

Principal Planning Officer
Post Number: PD04-2

Planning Officer
Post Number: PD05

Planning Officer
Post Number: PD05-1

Planning Support Officer
Post Number: PD09

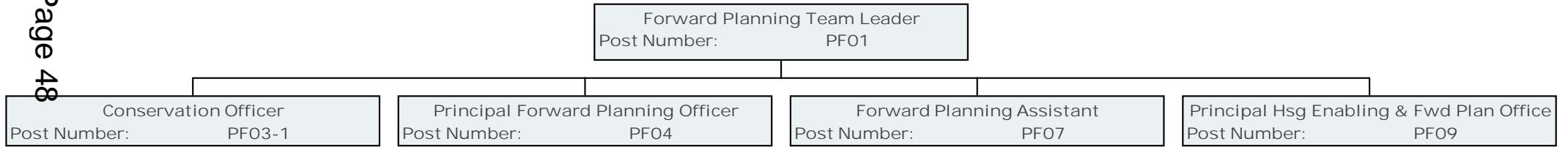
Validation Technician
Post Number: PD10

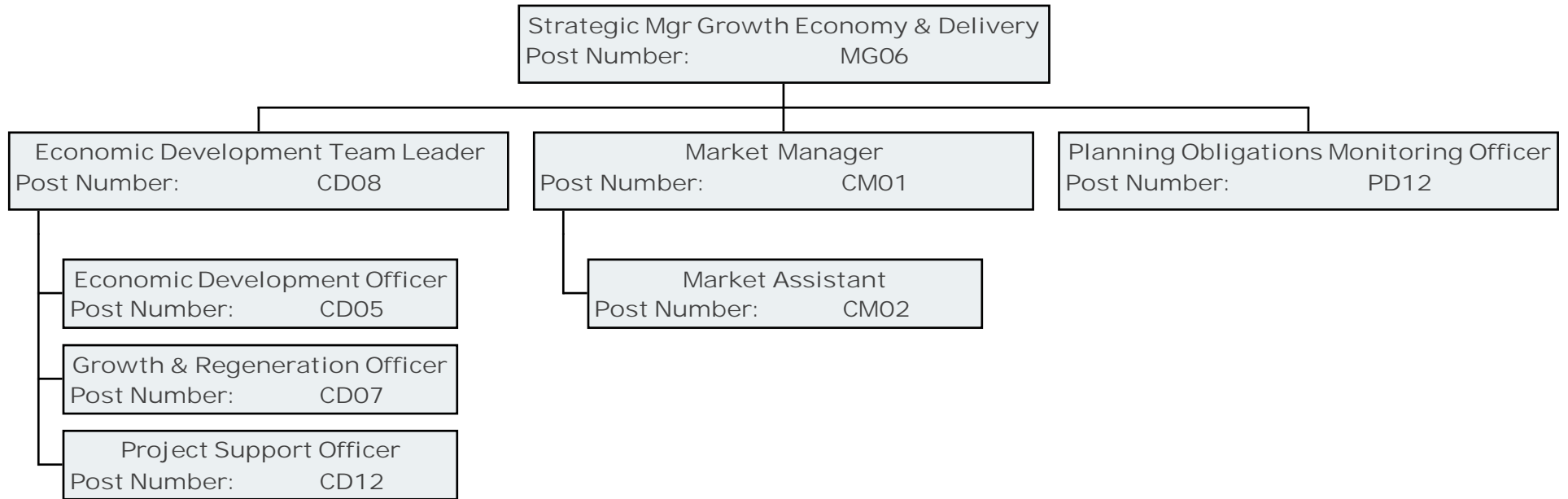
Conservation Officer
Post Number: PF03

Building Control Manager
Post Number: PB01

Principal Build Cont Officer- EXTERNAL
Post Number: PB08

Technical Support Team Leader
Post Number: PB07





Head of People Performance and Waste
Post Number: CMT2

Operations Manager HR
Post Number: HR26

Operations Manager SS & OS
Post Number: OL01

Ops Mgr for Performance & Gov & H&S
Post Number: OL05

Payroll, Coordinator and Systems Manager
Post Number: PP01

Payroll and Systems Support Officer
Post Number: PP02

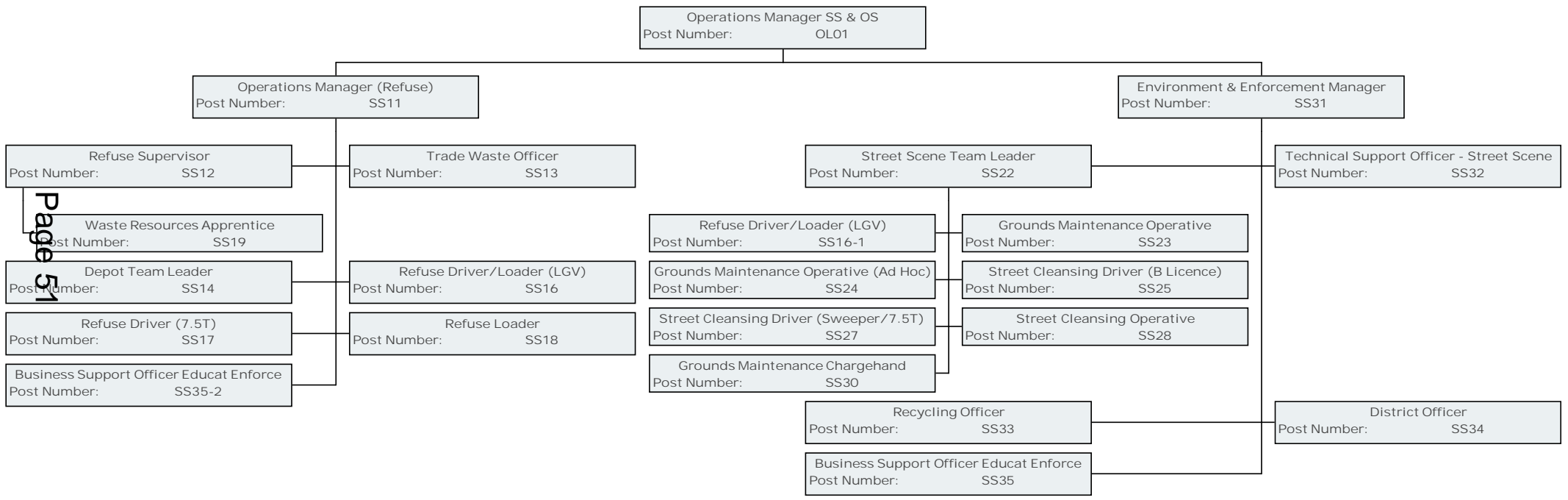
People Services Coordinator
Post Number: PP03

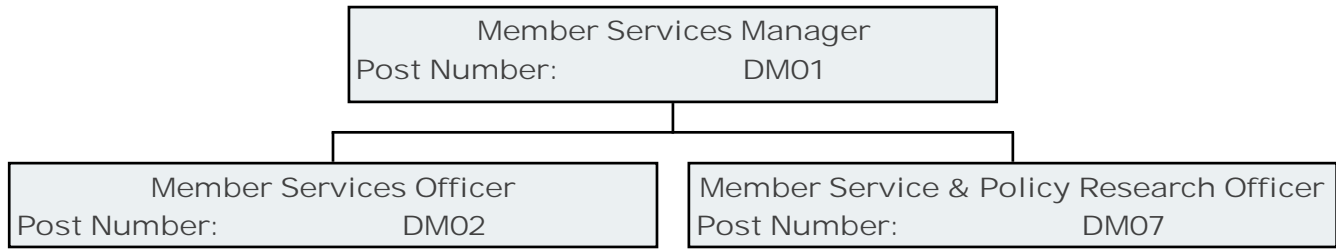
People Services Office Apprentice
Post Number: PP07

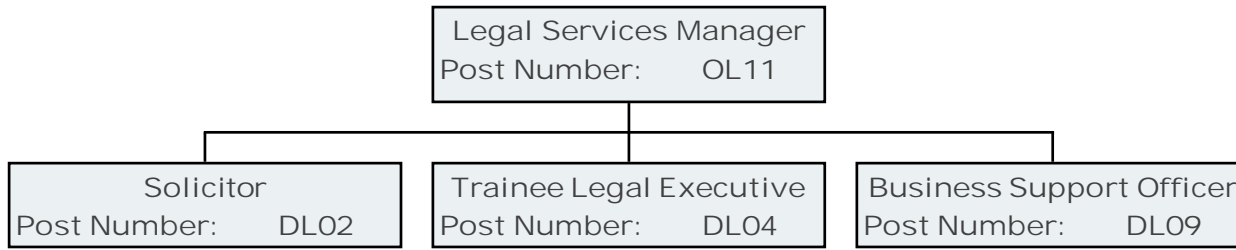
Health and Safety Officer
Post Number: PP04

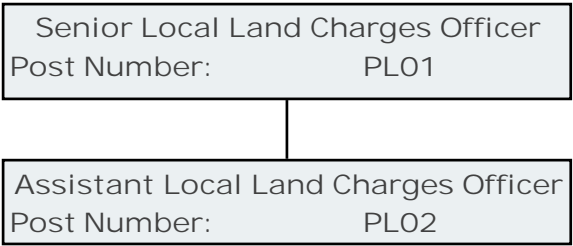
HR Business Partner
Post Number: PP05

HR Advisor
Post Number: PP06









Electoral Services Manager
Post Number: DE01

Electoral Services Assistant
Post Number: DE02



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Report for: Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	17/02/25
Subject:	How Devolution may affect Mid Devon District Council
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Luke Taylor, Leader
Responsible Officer:	Stephen Walford, Chief Executive
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Minister’s letter to Leaders 05/02/25

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

At its recent meeting, the Scrutiny Committee requested a paper on how Devolution may affect Mid Devon District Council, in order that it might ‘prepare for proposals regarding devolution in our area and adjacent areas’. This paper responds to that request with the information known at the current time.

Recommendation(s):

1. **That members note the report and make any such recommendations to Cabinet as they feel appropriate.**

Section 2 – Report

- 1.0 The Leader presented a report to an extraordinary meeting of council on 8th January 2025 to consider the matters of immediacy at that point in time; namely the proposal to join the national ‘priority programme’, which would have resulted in the scheduled elections for Devon County Council being postponed. The introductory context for that report remains relevant and is covered below, albeit that circumstances have moved on in the weeks following that meeting, and it is this additional detail that is laid out for scrutiny to consider in the remainder of this report.
- 1.1 Members will all be aware of the longstanding government commitment to devolution. Over a number of years different governments have sought to devolve limited decision-making powers in return for the introduction of administrative structures that best meet the needs of government by way of accountability at sub-regional level. Most recently, this has culminated in the

approval of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA), which will be formally created shortly.

- 1.2 The English Devolution White Paper was published on 16th December 2024. It sets out government intention with regard to policy and legislative intent, and, notably, has not sought any consultation or feedback as is usual in the steps between publishing White Papers and drafting subsequent legislation to enact policy (in this case through the English Devolution Bill expected in Summer 2025).
- 1.3 As well as discussing the government's views on devolution, public service resilience and reform, the White Paper also expressed a desire to see 'simplification' of local government arrangements under new 'strategic authorities'. The government's policy intent is clear that they wish to see these new strategic authorities covering the whole of England. It has been confirmed that the Devon and Torbay CCA would be granted 'Foundation Strategic Authority' status, meaning our area would already meet the minimum standards for devolution.
- 2.0 It is important to draw a distinction between devolution and local government reorganisation. Since the publication of the White Paper, these terms have frequently been used synonymously, but they are separate and distinct. Devolution refers to the government's stated intent to allow areas of ideally around 1.5 million people to elect a Mayor, to whom the government would make certain powers and funding available. The Parliamentary Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee heard on 28th January 2025 from a number of expert witnesses, including those that queried whether (even) this was decentralisation rather than genuine 'devolution' (available on ParliamentliveTV: [Link here](#)).
- 2.1 However, in the government's context, devolution is tied to the creation of elected Mayors, utilising powers and funding as granted to them by government. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is a separate process, and relates specifically to the ambition to 'simplify' structures under such new Mayoralities as are created as a result of devolution.
- 2.2 At its most basic, the structural changes proposed across both devolution and LGR could be described as seeking to replace the current two-tier structure of district and county councils, with a new two-tier structure of unitary councils and sub-regional strategic authorities. The latter would have a directly elected Mayor as leader, with a broad remit to drive economic growth, with powers over things like skills commissioning, strategic planning, transport and infrastructure, while all the remaining functions familiar to current councils would be the responsibility of new unitary councils.
- 3.0 Since members last debated this item at the extraordinary council meeting in January, a number of developments have taken place.

- 3.1 On 5th February, we learned that the county council elections would proceed as planned, the application by the county council to delay these being refused. This was announced by the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Local Government in a speech to parliament that included decisions on which areas across the country would form part of the 'priority programme' for devolution.
- 3.2 Later on 5th February, all council leaders in two-tier areas (and their adjacent smaller unitaries) received a letter from the Minister for Local Government, outlining the next steps in the process and the requirements for submitting reorganisation proposals. This letter is attached as Appendix A.
- 3.3 It is clear that the two meaningful deadlines for us in Devon, are the 21st March for the submission of initial plans, with full proposals being worked up over the coming months to be submitted by the 28th November 2025. It is anticipated that an extraordinary meeting of full council will be scheduled ahead of the March deadline in order to provide for council's approval to be sought for the initial submission.
- 3.4 It should be noted that there is not a choice to 'opt-out' of this process, therefore the timetable affords all councils in these areas the opportunity to present what they think would work best for their area. In Devon, this means thinking about how the current makeup of 11 authorities (8 districts, 2 unitaries and 1 county) could best be reorganised and simplified in order to meet the government's objectives around simplification of structures, more organisational resilience, and more effective and efficient service delivery tied to the public service reform agenda.
- 4.0 Over the past few weeks, a number of informal discussions have been held between council leaders to understand what, if any, consensus there may be across the Devon system of local government about what reorganisation could/should look like. This has been with a view to not only seeking maximum collaboration, but also to minimise replication and duplication when going through the government's prescribed process.
- 4.1 Estimates are that the cost of restructuring the current 11 councils in Devon into revised units that the government may find acceptable, could be between £30-50m. At this point, it is unclear where such funding will come from. Government has indicated that some limited capacity funding may be forthcoming, but there is an expectation that councils will absorb this cost from either existing budgets or from 'exceptional' use of capital (i.e. selling off capital assets with approval to utilise the receipts on revenue expenditure).
- 5.0 In terms of next steps, discussions continue apace on seeking consensus to credible reorganisation options. It is also clear at this time that there is unlikely to be one submission supported by all 11 councils, as was the government's preference. There is clearly more detail to be shared by

government and it has been indicated that chief executives and their senior teams will be invited to a webinar shortly, designed to provide further detail on the process and timelines, discuss the criteria that will be used to assess proposals, alongside sector support needs and an opportunity to ask questions. We have been told that specific discussions with each area will be set up after that.

- 5.1 Clearly, there will be a need to brief all members on timelines, process and criteria as a result of upcoming discussions with civil servants. There will also be a need to undertake rapid work alongside collaborating partners to complete our initial plan submission for the 21st March. Members will have the opportunity to discuss this at an extraordinary meeting of council, to be scheduled ahead of the submission deadline.

Financial Implications

There will be significant financial implications arising from devolution and local government reorganisation. However, none arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications

There will be legal implications arising from devolution and local government reorganisation. However, none arising directly from this report.

Risk Assessment

There will be significant risks that arise and changes to the current corporate risk register as the implications of devolution and local government reorganisation become clearer. A risk linked to this already exists on the corporate risk register (CR18).

Impact on Climate Change

There will be implications for investment in climate change and changes to operational practices arising from devolution and local government reorganisation. However, no impacts arise directly from this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Any devolution and local government reorganisation proposals will need to consider the makeup of local populations, distinctiveness and needs. Impacts on different members of society and the different needs and service provision required will be a key part of any reorganisation proposals. However, no impacts arise directly from this report.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

N/A

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

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

Date: 06/02/25

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 07/02/2025

Cabinet member notified: (Yes)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Stephen Walford, Chief Executive

Email: swalford@middevon.gov.uk

Background papers:

Appendix A – Letter to Council Leaders of 05/02/25

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Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Jim McMahon OBE MP

*Minister of State for Local Government and
English Devolution*
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Your reference:

Our reference:

To: Leaders of two-tier councils and
unitary councils in Devon

Devon County Council
East Devon District Council
Exeter City Council
Mid Devon District Council
North Devon District Council
South Hams District Council
Teignbridge District Council
Torridge District Council
West Devon Borough Council
Plymouth City Council
Torbay Council

5 February 2025

Dear Leaders

This Government has been clear on our vision for simpler, more sustainable, local government structures, alongside a transfer of power out of Westminster through devolution. We know that councils of all political stripes are in crisis after a decade of decline and instability. Indeed, a record number of councils asked the government for support this year to help them set their budgets.

This new government will not waste this opportunity to build empowered, simplified, resilient and sustainable local government for your area that will increase value for money for council taxpayers. Local leaders are central to our mission to deliver change for hard-working people in every corner of the country through our Plan for Change, and our councils are doing everything they can to stay afloat and provide for their communities day in, day out. The Government will work closely with you to deliver these aims to the most ambitious timeline.

I am writing to you now to formally invite you to work with other council leaders in your area to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation, and to set out further detail on the criteria, guidance for the development of proposals, and the timeline for this process. A formal invitation with guidance for the development of your proposals is attached at Annex A. This invitation sets out the criteria against which proposals will be assessed.

Developing proposals for reorganisation

We expect there to be different views on the best structures for an area, and indeed there may be merits to a variety of approaches. Nevertheless, it is not in council taxpayers' interest to devote public funds and your valuable time and effort into the development of multiple proposals which unnecessarily fragment services, compete against one another, require lengthy implementation periods or which do not sufficiently address local interests and identities.

The public will rightly expect us to deliver on our shared responsibility to design and implement the best local government structures for efficient and high-quality public service delivery. We therefore expect local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area to which this invitation is issued, rather than developing competing proposals.

This will mean making every effort to work together to develop and jointly submit one proposal for unitary local government across the whole of your area. The proposal that is developed for the whole of your area may be for one or more new unitary councils and should be complementary to devolution plans. It is open to you to explore options with neighbouring councils in addition to those included in this invitation, particularly where this helps those councils to address concerns about their sustainability or limitations arising from their size or boundaries or where you are working together across a wider geography within a strategic authority.

I understand there will be some cases when it is not possible for all councils in an area to jointly develop and submit a proposal, despite their best efforts. This will not be a barrier to progress, and the Government will consider any suitable proposals submitted by the relevant local authorities.

Supporting places through change

It is essential that councils continue to deliver their business-as-usual services and duties, which remain unchanged until reorganisation is complete. This includes progress towards the Government's ambition of universal coverage of up-to-date local plans as quickly as possible. To support with capacity, I intend to provide some funds for preparing to take forward any proposal, and I will share further information later in the process.

Considering the efficiencies that are possible through reorganisation, we expect that areas will be able to meet transition costs over time from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.

The default position is that assets and liabilities remain locally managed by councils, but we acknowledge that there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices. Where that is the case, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation, and Commissioners should be engaged in these discussions. We will continue to discuss the approach that is proposed with the area.

I welcome the partnership approach that is being taken across the sector to respond to the ambitious plans set out in the White Paper. My department will continue to work closely with the Local Government Association (LGA), the District Councils Network, the County Councils Network and other local government partners to plan how best to support councils through this process. We envisage that practical support will be needed to understand and address the key thematic issues that will arise through reorganisation, including managing service impacts and opportunities for the workforce, digital and IT systems, and leadership support.

Timelines and next steps for interim plans and full proposals

We ask for an interim plan to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025, in line with the guidance set out in the attached Annex. My officials will provide feedback on your plan to help support you to develop final proposals.

I will expect any full proposal to be submitted **by 28 November**. If I decide to implement any proposal, and the necessary legislation is agreed by Parliament, we will work with you to move to elections to new 'shadow' unitary councils as soon as possible as is the usual arrangement in the process of local government reorganisation.

Following submission, I will consider any and all proposals carefully before taking decisions on how to proceed. My officials are available throughout to discuss how your reorganisation and devolution aspirations might work together and what support you think you might need to proceed.

This is a once in a generation opportunity to work together to put local government in your area on a more sustainable footing, creating simpler structures for your area that will deliver the services that local people and businesses need and deserve. As set out in the White Paper, my commitment is that clear leadership locally will be met with an active partner nationally.

I am copying this letter to council Chief Executives. I am also copying this letter to local Members of Parliament and to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,



JIM MCMAHON OBE MP

Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS FOR A SINGLE TIER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in exercise of his powers under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act'), hereby invites any principal authority in the area of the county of Devon, to submit a proposal for a single tier of local government.

This may be one of the following types of proposal as set out in the 2007 Act:

- Type A – a single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned
- Type B – a single tier of local authority covering an area that is currently a district, or two or more districts
- Type C – a single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned, or one or more districts in the county; and one or more relevant adjoining areas
- Combined proposal – a proposal that consists of two or more Type B proposals, two or more Type C proposals, or one or more Type B proposals and one or more Type C proposals.

Proposals must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 to 3:

1. Any proposal must be made by **28 November 2025**.
2. In responding to this invitation an authority must have regard to the guidance from the Secretary of State set out in the Schedule to this invitation, and to any further guidance on responding to this invitation received from the Secretary of State.
3. An authority responding to this invitation may either make its own proposal or make a proposal jointly with any of the other authorities invited to respond.

Signed on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.



F KIRWAN

A senior civil servant in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

5 February 2025

SCHEDULE

Guidance from the Secretary of State for proposals for unitary local government.

Criteria for unitary local government

- 1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.**
 - a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.
 - b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.
 - c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.
 - d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.

- 2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.**
 - a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.
 - b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.
 - c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.
 - d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.
 - e) For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.
 - f) In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.

3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

- a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.
- b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.
- c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.

4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.

- a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.
- b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.
- c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.

5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

- a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor.
- b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.
- c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.

6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

- a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.
- b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.

Developing proposals for unitary local government

The following matters should be taken into account in formulating a proposal:

Boundary Changes

- a) Existing district areas should be considered the building blocks for your proposals, but where there is a strong justification more complex boundary changes will be considered.
- b) There will need to be a strong public services and financial sustainability related justification for any proposals that involve boundary changes, or that affect wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, due to the likely additional costs and complexities of implementation.

Engagement and consultation on reorganisation

- a) We expect local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area to which this invitation is issued, rather than developing competing proposals.
- b) For those areas where Commissioners have been appointed by the Secretary of State as part of the Best Value Intervention, their input will be important in the development of robust unitary proposals.
- c) We also expect local leaders to engage their Members of Parliament, and to ensure there is wide engagement with local partners and stakeholders, residents, workforce and their representatives, and businesses on a proposal.
- d) The engagement that is undertaken should both inform the development of robust proposals and should also build a shared understanding of the improvements you expect to deliver through reorganisation.
- e) The views of other public sector providers will be crucial to understanding the best way to structure local government in your area. This will include the relevant Mayor (if you already have one), Integrated Care Board, Police (Fire) and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority, local Higher Education and Further Education providers, National Park Authorities, and the voluntary and third sector.
- f) Once a proposal has been submitted it will be for the Government to decide on taking a proposal forward and to consult as required by statute. This will be a completely separate process to any consultation undertaken on mayoral devolution in an area, which will be undertaken in some areas early this year, in parallel with this invitation.

Interim plans

An interim plan should be provided to Government on or before **21 March 2025**. This should set out your progress on developing proposals in line with the criteria and guidance. The level of detail that is possible at this stage may vary from place to place but the expectation is that one interim plan is jointly submitted by all councils in the area. It may be the case that the interim plan describes more than one potential proposal for your area, if there is more than one option under consideration. The interim plan should:

- a) identify any barriers or challenges where further clarity or support would be helpful.
- b) identify the likely options for the size and boundaries of new councils that will offer the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, along with indicative efficiency saving opportunities.
- c) include indicative costs and arrangements in relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.
- d) include early views as to the councillor numbers that will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of your cities, towns, rural and coastal areas, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.
- e) include early views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.
- f) include a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with your further plans for wide local engagement to help shape your developing proposals.
- g) set out indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team as well as any arrangements proposed to coordinate potential capacity funding across the area.
- h) set out any voluntary arrangements that have been agreed to keep all councils involved in discussions as this work moves forward and to help balance the decisions needed now to maintain service delivery and ensure value for money for council taxpayers, with those key decisions that will affect the future success of any new councils in the area.

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS

February 2025



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)
February 2025					
Halberton- Car Parking Spaces revision to off street parking order	Cabinet	4 Feb 2025	Luke Howard, Environment and Enforcement Manager	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
Update on future EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging)	Cabinet	4 Feb 2025	Darren Beer, Operations Manager for Street Scene	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
Devon Housing Commission Report To receive the Devon Housing Commission Report.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	19 Nov 2024 10 Feb 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open

Agenda Item 11

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)
2025/2026 Draft Budget Report	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2025 19 Feb 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Business Rates Tax Base	Cabinet Council	4 Feb 2025 19 Feb 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Regulation of Investigatory Powers	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 Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health.	Open
March 2025					
Domestic Drainage Works Contract 2025-2029	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	Mike Lowman, Building Services Operations Manager	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)
Works Agreement for the Measured Term, Internal Painting Contract 2025-2029	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	Stephen Bennett, Building Surveyor	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Part exempt
Mid Devon Residents Survey 2024	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Leader of the Council	Open
Policy Framework	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	Laura Woon, Democratic Services Manager	Leader of the Council	Open
Establishment Report	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	James Hamblin, Operations Manager for People Services	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
Pay Policy Report	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	James Hamblin, Operations Manager for People Services	Leader of the Council	
Unpaid Carers access to Leisure	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	Andy Mackie, Leisure Services Manager	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	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)
The Council's Insurance tender	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	Claire Gillard, Accountant		
2024/2025 Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Local Development Scheme	Cabinet	4 Mar 2025	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
Tenancy Options Waste Services– Carlu Close To consider the future of the tenancy at Carlu Close	Cabinet	28 Mar 2025	Darren Beer, Operations Manager for Street Scene	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
Right to Buy Policy (NEW) To receive the new Right to Buy Policy.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet Council	28 Jan 2025 4 Mar 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)
MDH Safeguarding Adults at Risk, Children and Young People Policy (NEW) To receive the new Safeguarding Policy for Mid Devon Housing	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet Council	28 Jan 2025 4 Mar 2025 23 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
April 2025					
Corporate Anti Social Behaviour Policy	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group Cabinet	25 Mar 2025 1 Apr 2025		Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health	Open
Corporate Performance Q3; Corporate Risk Q3; Performance Dashboard Q3	Cabinet	1 Apr 2025	Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager	Leader of the Council	

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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)
Willand Neighbourhood Plan Page 76	Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group	26 Nov 2024	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
	Cabinet	7 Jan 2025			
	Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group	11 Mar 2025			
	Cabinet	1 Apr 2025			
Council	23 Apr 2025				
Downsizing Work Group report To receive a report from the Downsizing Working Group who were tasked by the Homes PDG to look at the options in this area.	Homes Policy Development Group	18 Mar 2025			Open
Cabinet	1 Apr 2025				
Tenant Involvement Strategy To receive the revised Tenant Involvement Strategy.	Homes Policy Development Group	18 Mar 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Cabinet	1 Apr 2025				

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)
Housing Strategy To receive the revised Housing Strategy.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	18 Mar 2025 1 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Tenancy Management Policy To receive the revised Tenancy Management Policy.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	18 Mar 2025 1 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Variation to Standard Tenancy Agreement That the Homes PDG recommends to Cabinet that the procedure for the variation of tenancy conditions in line with the Housing Act 1985 (sections 102 & 103) commence.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	18 Mar 2025 1 Apr 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Corporate Recovery Policy 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

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)
<p>Community Safety Partnership Policy To consider the report</p>	<p>Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group</p> <p>Cabinet</p>	<p>25 Mar 2025</p> <p>1 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement</p>	<p>Open</p>
<p>Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objective</p>	<p>Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group</p> <p>Cabinet</p>	<p>25 Mar 2025</p> <p>1 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health</p> <p>Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader</p>	<p>Open</p>
<p>Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Policy</p>	<p>Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group</p> <p>Cabinet</p>	<p>25 Mar 2025</p> <p>1 Apr 2025</p>	<p>Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health</p> <p>Cabinet Member for People, Development and Deputy Leader</p>	<p>Open</p>

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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)
May 2025					
Air Quality Action Plan To consider the report	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group Cabinet	25 Mar 2025 Not before 20th May 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health	Open
Contract Decision- Mid Devon Housing build, Honiton Road, Cullompton	Cabinet	20 May 2025		Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Fully exempt
Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan	Cabinet	Not before 20th May 2025	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
Housing Delivery Test Action Plan	Cabinet	Not before 20th May 2025	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	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)
June 2025					
Tenancy Strategy To receive the revised Tenancy Strategy	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	Not before 2nd Jun 2025 Not before 9th Jun 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
July 2025					
Asset Management Plan To receive the revised Asset Management Plan.	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group Cabinet	19 Jun 2025 8 Jul 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Destination Management Plan for Mid Devon	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group Cabinet	19 Jun 2025 8 Jul 2025	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)
Economic Strategy 2024 - 2029	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group Cabinet	19 Jun 2025 8 Jul 2025	Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
August 2025					
SFS (Specialist Fleet Services) Transport Contract	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group Cabinet	24 Jun 2024 27 Aug 2024	Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Part exempt
Future of Recycling - Options Paper To receive an options paper discussing the future of Recycling.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group Cabinet	24 Jun 2024 27 Aug 2024	Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	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)
Plan Mid Devon- Draft Policies and Site Options	Cabinet	Not before 31st Aug 2025	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader		Open
September 2025					
MTFP Report	Cabinet	2 Sep 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
October 2025					
Draft Budget Report 2026/2027	Cabinet	7 Oct 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
	Cabinet	4 Nov 2025			
	Cabinet	2 Dec 2025			
	Cabinet	13 Jan 2026			
	Cabinet	10 Feb 2026			
	Council	18 Feb 2026			

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)
Data Policy (new) for MDH To receive the new Data Policy for Mid Devon Housing	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet Council	Not before 9th Sep 2025 Not before 7th Oct 2025 Not before 29th Oct 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
November 2025					
Tax Base Calculations	Cabinet Council	4 Nov 2025 17 Dec 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
December 2025					
January 2026					
Fees and Charges Report	Cabinet	13 Jan 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	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)
February 2026					
Pay Policy Report	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	James Hamblin, Operations Manager for People Services	Leader of the Council	Open
Establishment Report	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	James Hamblin, Operations Manager for People Services	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
Policy Framework	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	Laura Woon, Democratic Services Manager	Leader of the Council	Open
Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2026/27	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	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)
Capital Programme 26/27	Cabinet	10 Feb 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Business Rates Tax Base	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2024-25

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
17th March 2025				
	South West Water visit To Scrutinise South West Water		Director of Place and Economy	
14th April 2025				
	Scrutiny Chairman's Annual Report To receive a report from the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee on the work the Scrutiny Committee has conducted over the last year.		Operations Manager for Legal and Monitoring David Parker	

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2025-2026

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
9 June 2025				
9.06.25	Election of Vice-Chair To elect a Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee		David Parker	
9.06.25	Start Time of Meetings To agree the start time of meetings for the remainder of the municipal year.		David Parker	
9.06.25	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
14 July 2025				
14.07.25	Freedom of Information Dashboard To receive the Dashboard		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Lisa Lewis	
14.07.25	Annual Corporate Performance Report To consider the Report		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Steve Carr	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
14.07.25	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
18 August 2025				
8 September 2025				
8.09.25	Whistleblowing - 6 month update To receive the report		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Matthew Page	
8.09.25	Establishment - 6 month update To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Matthew Page, James Hamblin	
8.09.25	Community Safety Partnership To consider the report.		Director of Place and Economy Simon Newcombe	
8.09.25	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
29 September 2025				
29.09.25	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
20 October 2025				
20.10.25	Freedom of Information Dashboard To receive the Freedom of Information Dashboard		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Lisa Lewis	
20.10.25	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
17 November 2025				
17.11.25	Annual Report of Complaints and Compliments To consider the report.		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Lisa Lewis	
17.11.25	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
15 December 2025				
15.12.25	Interim Corporate Performance report to Quarter 2 To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Steve Carr	
15.12.25	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
26 January 2026				
26.01.26 Cabinet 10.02.26	Budget Update To consider the initial draft 2026/2027 Budget and options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget.		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Paul Deal	
26.01.26	Freedom of Information Report To receive a report relating to future Freedom of Information reporting and to agree the information to be reported on a Dashboard.		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Lisa Lewis Ewan Girling	
26.01.26	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Annual Report To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Maria De Leburne	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
26.01.26	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
23 February 2026				
23.02.26	Whistleblowing Annual Update To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Matthew Page	
23.02.26	Establishment Report To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Matthew Page James Hamblin	
23.02.26	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
16 March 2026				

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
16.03.26	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
20 April 2026				
20.04.26	Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee Chair		David Parker	
20.04.26	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	