

Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group

**Tuesday, 25 November 2025 at 5.30 pm
Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton**

**Next ordinary meeting
Tuesday, 10 March 2026 at 5.30 pm**

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

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

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 322 785 308 547

Passcode: RK6Fi7QW

Membership

Cllr B Fish
Cllr G Cochran
Cllr C Adcock
Cllr G Czapiewski
Cllr A Glover
Cllr C Harrower
Cllr A Stirling
Cllr G Westcott

A G E N D A

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

- 1 Apologies and substitute Members**
To receive any apologies for absence and notices of appointment of substitute Members (if any).

- 2 **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.
- 3 **Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct**
To record any interests on agenda matters.
- 4 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** *(Pages 7 - 32)*
To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on 23rd September 2025.
- 5 **Chair's Announcements**
To receive any announcements that the Chair may wish to make.
- 6 **Draft General Fund Budget for 2026/2027 (Version 2)** *(Pages 33 - 40)*
To receive a report from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) presenting an update on the 2026/27 Budget and to trail the emerging Capital Programme covering the period 2026/27 to 2030/31.
- 7 **Performance Dashboard Quarter 2** *(Pages 41 - 42)*
To receive the performance dashboard for Quarter 2 from the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager.
- 8 **Section 106 Governance** *(Pages 43 - 50)*
To advise Members of the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group of progress made in implementing the revised S106 Governance arrangements, as approved by Cabinet in November 2024, and to fulfil the requirement that the governance framework return to this group within 12 months for oversight.
- 9 **North Devon Railway Development Alliance** *(Pages 51 - 58)*
This report introduces to Members the work of the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance (NDRDA) to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for significant capital investment in the North Devon Line (NDL) between Exeter and Barnstaple.
The report requests consideration of The Council becoming a member of this alliance (NDRDA), and for Cabinet to consider a financial contribution towards the cost of the next NDRDA Annual Convention to be held in Mid Devon.
- 10 **Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Update** *(Pages 59 - 66)*
To receive an update from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and the Climate sustainability Officer.

11 **Planning Summary Report** *(Pages 67 - 72)*

To receive a summary of activity undertaken in relation to planning matters during the last quarter.

12 **Identification of Items for the Next Meeting**

Members are asked to note that the following items are already identified in the work programme for the next meeting:

- Performance Dashboard for Q3
- Motion 608 – Anaerobic Digester Plants
- Climate and Sustainability Update
- Planning Summary Report
- Chair's Annual Report for 2025/2026

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

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.

This page is intentionally left blank

MINUTES of a MEETING of the PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 23 September 2025 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors: B Fish (Chair)
G Cochran (Vice-Chair), C Adcock,
G Czapiewski, C Harrower, A Stirling and
G Westcott

Apologies

Councillor: A Glover

Also Present

Councillor: S Keable

Also Present

Officers: Richard Marsh (Director of Place & Economy), Paul Deal (Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience), Jason Ball (Climate and Sustainability Specialist) and Angie Howell (Democratic Services Officer)

Councillors

Online: E Buczkowski, G Duchesne, L G J Kennedy and D Wulff

Officer Online: Tristan Peat (Forward Planning Team Leader)

21 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (00:03:22)

Apologies were received from Cllr A Glover.

22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (00:03:34)

The following questions were received from members of the public:-

Andrew Moore (which the Chair read out) – Regarding Agenda Item 8

My thanks to the PDG for responding to the questions raised at the last meeting. I am reassured that the Council continues the pragmatic investment strategy adopted by the S151 Officer and previous administration.

The Climate Change Committee is cited. However, it is widely recognised as untrustworthy, except by those with blind adherence to climate alarmism. It is populated by advocates of the 'green agenda' with vested interests in green businesses. It determines government policy without democratic control. It's lost touch with reality - actual floating offshore wind prices are 7 times the CCC's naïve figures. The Met Office is also cited, yet it too has been discredited. It's used unscientific methods to create a false narrative of temperature change. 80% of its measurement sites are Cat 4 and 5 with potential errors of up to 5 degrees. It's fabricated temperature records where none exist.

You say, 'The scale and the pace of the problem can be overwhelming.' That is categorically untrue, and the public are increasingly 'not buying it'. There is increasing evidence that many of the cited calamity events are within normal tolerances. Recent studies show that CO2 levels lag temperature - other forces are also at play. Modelling often sensationalises with extreme scenarios, even assuming mankind really understands something as complex, large and non-linear as the climate. The heart of my question was whether there is any real point in pursuing a 'Net Zero' strategy, let alone even increasing core budget as proposed. It is a weak response to state that Plans and Strategy documents are in place, and that's that. Serious questions are now being raised about the veracity of the CO2-driven climate change narrative. For a PDG not to consider these is complacent. I note that from the Update Report after 7 years of effort, the total reduction for MDDC is 361 tCO2, just 2%. It's even gone up in the past 12 months and is now above the average for that same period.

Question 1

Can you please advise how much the Council has spent on its Climate Emergency initiative over 7 years (in direct and external funding including routine work and projects)?

Question 2

Given the questions around the climate change narrative, MDDC's negligible contribution, that expenditure is having little effect, and with a big forecast financial shortfall, wouldn't public money be better spent on community work / grants with an immediate and tangible benefit?

Question 3

Will this PDG amend planning guidance to prioritise food security, the natural environment, and the beauty of Mid-Devon over conflicting solar and wind development proposals?

Question 4

Will this PDG commission a study into the evidence counter to the standard climate change narrative better to inform its strategy for the future?

Sarah Coffin - Regarding Agenda Item 9

As stated in the officer's report Farm-fed Anaerobic Digesters (those under Mid Devon control) can have either negative or beneficial impact, dependent on three fundamental operational principles:-

1. Sustainable access to appropriate land to provide sufficient crop feedstock and provide safe spreading of manures and approx. 90% digestate residue, as a benefit fertiliser in accordance with WRAP/EA Rules and restrictions. Otherwise they are classed as “waste” and require more costly disposal.
2. Sufficient secure storage of odorous feedstocks and manures/digestate to reduce emissions to air and pollution of soil and water utilising the best available techniques.
3. All industry and commerce has to be commercially viable to maintain its existence, however those that are supported by public money and purporting to be “green energy” are required to also prove they are “renewable and sustainable” in an environmentally beneficial way. I respect suggest there can be no integrity in such similar future projects, without serious assessment and full consideration of past failings as described in Motion 608.

Question1

Can I therefore request that whichever of the stated options Members choose it will include consideration of the following for all large/industrial livestock/energy projects:-

- a) Increased use of the already existing S106 or similar legal agreement, whereby approved applicants confirm acceptance and the capacity to comply with all approved planning material and mitigating conditions, as well at WRAP/EA Farming Best Practice Rules and restrictions.
- b) Identify and evidence showing all land versus seasonal or business let third party lands. Particularly relevant given the 2025 legal precedent set via 3 court cases: NFU v Hertfordshire Council & Ors EWHC 536 (Admin); Methwold Borough Council West Norfolk Refusal of Industrial Factory Chicken and Pig farms (citing UK Supreme Court ruling Finch v Surrey County Council) establishing the need for LPAs to fully account for both direct and indirect climate emissions; finally R (Caffyn) v Shropshire Council EWHC 1497 (Admin) Mr Caffyn’s successful claim that Council approval for £200k intensive poultry unit had failed to lawfully assess the full in-combination effects of manure and digestate spreading on third party lands.
- c) Full inclusion of all relevant historical Scrutiny Committee reports (2017/18) relating to Anaerobic Digester complaints.

Nick Govier - Regarding Agenda Item 9

As part of the Full Council meeting on 23 July the decision from that meeting confirmed in the minutes was for the motion to be referred to this Committee before returning to Full Council. The initial recommendations which this Committee is seeing this evening as part of those minutes. It also stated, and I quote the questions received from the member of public would be considered at the Planning, Environment and Sustainability PDG.

Question 1

Can this Committee please confirm that all attendees have seen those questions raised by the member of public? Have they been circulated in advance and will they be considered as part of the recommendation contained in option 3 including how they will be incorporated in the scope of any further document.

Turning to the recommendation, I am not naïve to the challenges of funding and resource capacity, which have been outlined in the paper and also how any developed document can only provide guidance as opposed to defined policy.

Question 2

Can I ask this Committee to ensure that any such document developed incorporates the following:- How we develop subject matter expertise in the planning function for assessing future and existing AD applications to reflect the disproportionate share of AD plants located in Mid Devon. This will negate the need for ongoing consultancy costs to review such cases.

Question 3

What knowledge and training investment can be recommended for a small cohort of planning officers? This can be sourced locally in view of the highly respected expertise in Devon in AD plants all located within close proximity to this building.

Question 4

How can the applicant be mandated to support future AD applications by bringing greater transparency to the complete view of net zero impacts when submitting any future AD applications.

Paul Elstone - Regarding Agenda Item 9

Motion 608 references a report prepared in France and which found that only 30% of AD's tested were providing green and sustainable energy. Of the AD's currently in operation in Mid Devon only one is producing green and sustainable energy. It is an on farm AD producing just 80Kw per hour of electricity. It's primary feedstock being cow slurry. The 2 largest industrial sized ADs are producing around 1 mega watt per hour of electricity. This being 100% over planning consent and with maize as the primary feedstock. They are growing energy crops to produce electricity to the grid using combined heat and power units running at around 38% efficiency.

Question 1

Will this Committee recognise that these are the very worst types of AD's and which the French report identifies as not green and therefore not sustainable.

AD's that require very particular consideration in any planning policy etc? This Council is very proud of its green and sustainability credentials. Be it recycling rates, net zero social homes, leisure centre energy consumption reduction, solar panel installations.

Question 2

Does this Committee fully appreciate that in a strike of a pen and in approving certain types of anaerobic digester installations and even worse the increase in power generation and resultant feedstock requirements for existing and industrial sized AD plants that all the MDDC CO2 emission savings will be negated and perhaps a hundred times over?

Therefore I would suggest that this Committee needs to access the best of technical expertise it can when deciding on the best way forward in support of its green agenda. Expertise which is available in the public realm.

Expertise with relevant Doctorates and Masters Degrees. Expertise that would come free of charge. Expertise that will relieve a time burden on officers and save MDDC cost.

Question 3

Will this Committee please fully develop this option?

The current planning approvals concerning anaerobic digesters are highly reliant on planning condition compliance. History over the last 8 plus years has shown that planning conditions are being totally ignored and without any meaningful enforcement. A list of condition breaches and based fully on evidence follows.

1. AD' exporting over twice as much electricity as the planning conditions allow. Over 1000kw per hour as opposed to 500. Even reporting different production to MDDC and OFGEM. If this condition alone was enforced much of the abuse would be controlled.
2. Feedstock and digestate tonnages far greater than consent.
3. Feedstock supplied from and digestate spread in locations not approved.
4. Failure to comply with agreed traffic routes.
5. Failure to provide correct weigh bridge data.

There are 12 separate planning condition breaches but time prevents me from completing.

Question 4

Will this Committee recognise that it now has the opportunity to put much of these abuses to rights?

The Chair stated that as the questions had not been received in advance, written responses would be provided within 10 working days and attached to the minutes.

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT (00:19:39)

No interests were declared under this item.

24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (00:19:57)

The minutes of the last meeting held on 29 July 2025 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

25 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (00:20:26)

The Chair had no announcements to make.

26 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD Q1 (00:20:32)

The Group were presented with, and **NOTED** the Performance Dashboard for Quarter 1 2025/26.

The overall performance was presented in a pie chart which combined the RAG ratings (Red/Amber/Green). The indicators were presented with the current performance and the annual target to indicate whether or not the Council were on track to meet its target.

The following was highlighted within the report:-

- The performance dashboard for Q1 aimed to give an understanding of how services were performing that related to this Policy Development Group (PDG).
- In terms of performance, finance and risk, any measures that were also part of the Corporate Plan were listed in yellow text.
- Electric car charging points installed across Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) were showing as Red at this point in the year.
- There were no electric car charging points installed in quarter 1 however in 2024/2025 6 new charging points were installed which was ahead of the annual target for that year (effectively +2 in hand).
- Discussions were taking place with a provider to upgrade the infrastructure that was based at the Council's Leisure Centres in terms of charging points there.
- The projected capital outturn was also showing as Red. This was spending in terms of the Cullompton Relief Road which had slipped from the initial forecast however the project was well underway and construction was due to start in 2026/2027.
- There were also small contributions into the land drainage project which the Environment Agency would lead on and those had slipped.
- The capital slippage of overall projects was also showing as Red as all 3 projects had slipped.
- Building control income which was projected as Amber was slightly below forecast which was due to the current economic conditions which had been the case in this service in the last 18 months.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Whether there were any electric charging points for social housing? It was explained that this indicator was from the General Fund infrastructure whereas electric charging points for social housing would fall within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). However this data could also be reported.
- When would the additional electric charging points be installed and where would they be placed as it was important to ensure they were spread out across the District. It was explained that due to an additional 2 charging points which were installed last year this meant that 2 more were left to be installed. Tiverton Pannier Market would be installed next followed by West Exe South and Crediton High Street Saviours Way. There was another scheme in hand which would be initiated soon through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (LEVI). There would be slower chargers in residential areas which would balance out the rapid chargers in

core car parks and additional rural installations. Public charging points at the Council's Leisure Centres were also being upgraded.

- Whether the Grand Western Canal would have electric chargers installed. It was confirmed that this was not the Council's asset. However questions would be asked to see if there were any plans for that.

Note: * Performance Dashboard previously circulated

27 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (00:28:17)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) presenting the updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which covered the period 2025/26 to 2028/29 for the General Fund (GF) and considered initial savings options.

The Head of Finance, Property and Climate Resilience presented the report and the following was highlighted:

- The MFTP was different this year to that in previous years due to a raft of changes that were expected in terms of funding from 2026/2027.
- It also reflected the longer term restrictions placed upon the Council by the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- A projected shortfall could not be provided as there was no knowledge of where funding might be next year.
- However, there were a range of shortfalls based on the information that the Council did have from the government which were between £1m and £3m for next year.
- The Chancellors statement which was normally expected at the end of October 2025 would now be delayed until November 2026.
- The Government's Cabinet reshuffle and the loss of the Cabinet Minister for the Council's sector could also have a potential impact.
- This could mean significant changes for the level of funding and the priorities that the Government may have.
- The Council had an obligation to balance the budget in the normal way as was required by statute, this meant not relying on reserves, optimising income where necessary and diverting money to ensure that services were protected and ensured that capital spending delivered the best value for money.
- Given the timescale of the shortfall and the restricted timeframe in which to tackle it, it was likely that the Council would need to draw on reserves in order to help balance the 2026/2027 budget.
- Appendix 2 in the report identified the pressures and Appendix 3 the savings for the Group to consider.
- The Green and Amber options were officer recommendations. Options shown as Red were doable but came with implications.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- The pressures of additional agency costs.
- The baseline budget for climate change.

- Whether fees were set nationally. It was explained that the Government set the level of statutory fees nationally. The Council set the discretionary fees.
- The reduction of Section 106 monitoring fees and whether this would mean receiving less money or proportionately less per house which would affect the quality of the facilities being provided. It was explained that the Council would seek as much money as possible however contributions were subject to a viability assessment. There may be a lower contribution across the whole development globally which would also then break down to individual units. This would mean a potential reduction in terms of contributions.
- The concerns regarding Section 106 finance and the Group being uncomfortable with the underlying assumptions.
- Whether Section 106 Monitoring could be considered further due to a reduction of income putting pressure on the quality of facilities being provided to residents. The Director of Place and Economy explained that that Council would have to take a view in terms of where it chose to spend the Section 106 contributions to ensure the best outcomes were derived and money was spent to offset pressures associated with development. He confirmed that along with the Head of Finance, Property and Climate Resilience he would look further into the technical details and that would be reflected in any future reports.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that:-

- (i) It notes the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group's questions and concerns regarding the reduction of Section 106 Finance and that it considers this further in light of the comments made.
- (ii) The budget proposals as set out in the Appendices 2 and 3 be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr G Czapiewski and seconded by Cllr C Harrower)

Reason for the decision

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

Note: * Report previously circulated.

28 **CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE (00:52:28)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED** a report* from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

As the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change was unable to attend the meeting, the Chair updated the Group on her behalf as he was also the Chair of the Net Zero Advisory Group.

The following was highlighted within the report:-

- The Council would now be collecting pots and pans across the whole district.
- There had been a mixed picture with regard to the carbon footprint particularly in respect to housing renovations and upgrades.
- There had been a fantastic response from the first informal online Forum with supporting workshops, where over 30 stakeholders attended including farmers and educators where ideas and support was exchanged.
- The Climate and Sustainability Specialist would be attending the Big Green Fair on Saturday in Crediton where home energy and retrofit advice would be available.
- Work with Dart Valley Farmers was ongoing for an event in November 2025.
- Partnership work with the Blackdown Hills National Landscape would engage stakeholders around natural flood management and climate adaption.
- The 2024/2025 carbon footprint result was 2% higher than the previous year which was mainly due to the climate change impacts linked to spending for example the rise in construction spending.
- Emissions had been successfully cut by investing to decarbonise the Tiverton and Crediton Leisure Centres.
- Social housing had a significant lower carbon footprint.
- Net emission for elements in the Councils direct control which comprised of the Council offices, facilities, transports and offsets contributed just under 9% of the 2024/25 overall total.
- The 1,589 carbon dioxide figure for 2024 was circa 35% which was lower than the 2,427 figure for 2028/2029 baseline (almost 840 carbon tonnes less).
- Reductions since 2018/2019 came from Council offices and facilities from 1098 to 705 carbon tonnes.
- Since 2018/2019 fleet impacts had changed although the Council now served circa 2500 more households.
- Rapid progress had been made to replace social housing with 48 net zero new build homes due to be in place by the end of the year. The procurement of those construction projects would make a climate impact on the 2025/2026 carbon footprint. The investment would reduce the Council's annual carbon footprint by approximately 136 tonnes per year.
- A broad range of support had been given to businesses to promote the Green Enterprise Grants alongside free advice for Mid Devon farmers.

The Chair thanked the Climate and Sustainability Specialist and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change for all their hard work.

Discussion took place with regard to:-

- The decarbonised Leisure Centres and how the heat pumps worked. It was explained that by decarbonising, centres had moved away from fossil fuel for heating, however more electricity was being used to drive heat pumps to replace that (capturing heat to warm the centres and extracting heat to cool the centres as required). The Council purchased “green electricity” (with REGO certificates) in addition to power from its own solar panels, and energy was being used in a more efficient manner. This meant that the Council was cutting its carbon footprint.
- Property Services planned to upgrade building energy management systems at Phoenix House so it could be run more efficiently. It was explained that a stage by stage project shopping list was being put together and those costs would be covered under the Capital Programme.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

29 **MOTION 608 - ANAEROBIC DIGESTER PLANTS**

The Group had before it a report * from the Director of Place and Economy to discuss options available to Members around the production of further (supplementary) planning policy or guidance in relation to the development of Anaerobic Digester (AD) Plants within Mid Devon.

Prior to the presentation the Director of Place and Economy wished to comment on some of the questions raised earlier and stated the following:-

- The questions raised highlighted and reinforced some particular points which were useful and helpful in terms of informing the choices that the Council made moving forwards in developing its understanding and knowledge of AD plants and what the Council could do in terms of supporting effective management and operation of them in terms of procuring additional guidance and advice.
- References to case laws would also be taken on board and the Environment Agency restrictions.
- It was helpful to officers to have an understanding of what fell within the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency and how they managed it.
- The Director of Place and Economy confirmed that he had been mindful of the questions posed and supporting documents presented at the Full Council meeting and that they were considered when drafting the report. He also confirmed that these would carry forward into any further work that the Council commissioned.
- A site visit for Members of the Group may be useful to understand how AD's operated and could provide continuous learning, understanding and appreciation of how AD plants operated.
- The Council was guided by procurement requirements when selecting and appointment consultants.
- With regard to planning enforcement he could confirm that in the last 12 months a total of 18 Notices had been served. The Council were taking a proactive stance in terms of planning enforcement and seeking to address high risk breaches when they occurred.

The following was highlighted within the report:-

- The report was in response to a Motion that was brought before Full Council in July 2025 by Cllr G Westcott.
- It set out various points to note and sought approval for Planning Officers to prepare a supplementary planning document outlining conditions under which any further applications for anaerobic digester plants or the extension of existing plants would be acceptable and contributed to the goals for climate change mitigation as well as planning conditions that may be required to ensure that contribution was realised.
- An amendment was carried to refer the Motion back to this Policy Development Group (PDG) to review and discuss prior to it going back to Full Council for further review.
- There were 4 options available to Members. Officers had recommended Option 3 (a broad AD advice note) to the Group as this gave the Council an opportunity to provide some further understanding whilst not having the challenges of cost and time of seeking to provide a Supplementary Planning Document which would have limited weight.
- If the Group were minded to approve the recommendations, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration would be asked to instruct officers to scope out further work and report back to this PDG prior to any onward decision making.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- Whether officers had the capacity to carry out the work or would the work be outsourced and if so was there any financial allowance for that? It was explained there was no financial or officer allowance for any of the work. Option 3 would place an additional demand on officer's time in terms of procuring and having oversight of a piece of work which would need to be factored in for an already depleted team having to do further work. However the Council would be looking at an external consultant to seek professional advice and to carry out the bulk of the work to minimise the impact on officers. The Council would follow appropriate procurement regulations and requirements and to fully explore where that advice came from to secure best value of public funds.
- The concerns from members of the public with regard to traffic congestion, safety of very large vehicles trying to pass each other on roads, the danger for pedestrians and that routes for heavy vehicles were not always being observed.
- Whether more information could be provided in planning applications for anaerobic digester plants which could give Planning Officers or the Planning Committee the ability to decide whether a new capacity would conform to what was already in the Local Plan or not. It was explained that the Council needed to have a policy basis for any decision making and the capacity and technical competency on behalf of officers to understand what they were being presented with. In terms of future plan making, anything that the Council understood now would be helpful in supporting future policies in the new Local Plan and that would be taken on board.
- The possibility of gathering metric data with regards to anaerobic digester plants and information regarding energy generated.

- An approximate costing for the budget required for the study. It was explained that although his figure could not be confirmed at the moment a reasonable assessment of the likely cost could be £10,000. The report to the next meeting of the PDG would include the clarity of costing.
- Collaboration with other local authorities, organisations and academic bodies and to include that within the recommendations.

It was **AGREED** that a site visit to an AD Plant (outside of Mid Devon District) would be organised by the Director of Place and Economy.

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED**:-

1. To note that the Planning Policy relevant to Anaerobic Digesters is provided through the adopted Local Plan and that further/new policy cannot be introduced through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);

2. That the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration is asked to instruct officers to engage suitably qualified consultants in discussion to determine what could be contained within an advice/guidance note to inform Council work relating to Anaerobic Digester plants, the cost for the production of such an advice note, scope for collaboration with other authorities/institutions and the timetable for completion, and;

3. Once complete, the Cabinet Member of Planning and Economic Regeneration is asked to ensure this information is presented to the Policy Development Group for review and consideration prior to making any recommendation back to Full Council, via the Cabinet.

(Proposed by the Chair)

Reason for the decision

As set out in the report.

Note *Report previously circulated.

30 **PLANNING SUMMARY REPORT**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED** a report* from the Director of Place and Economy summarising activity undertaken in relation to planning matters.

The following was highlighted within the report:-

- The Council were continuing to have a good market share within Building Control
- Development Management were performing well despite the challenging macroeconomic situation and building landscape.
- Planning Enforcement was making headway in terms of taking a proactive stance in seeking to address planning enforcement breaches and matters generally within the district.

Discussion took place regarding:-

- Clarity with regard to the new National Planning Policy Framework. It was explained that information was imminent and that updates would be provided to Members when it became available.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

31 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The Committee had before it, and **NOTED**, the items identified in the work programme for the next meeting.

The Chair confirmed the following would be considered at the next meeting of the PDG:-

- S106 Governance Framework update
- Performance Dashboard for Q2
- Draft budget (Round 2)
- Climate and Sustainability Update
- Planning Summary Report

The Director of Place and Economy informed the Group that a report for the North Devon Railway Development Alliance would also be presented at the next meeting for Members to consider.

The Climate and Sustainability Specialist informed the Group that a report would be presented to the PDG reviewing the Terms of Reference for the Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG).

(The meeting ended at 7.25 pm)

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank

Name of Person Submitting Question	Questions
Andrew Moore	<p>My thanks to the PDG for responding to the questions raised at the last meeting. I am reassured that the Council continues the pragmatic investment strategy adopted by the S151 Officer and previous administration.</p> <p>The Climate Change Committee is cited. However, it is widely recognised as untrustworthy, except by those with blind adherence to climate alarmism. It is populated by advocates of the 'green agenda' with vested interests in green businesses. It determines government policy without democratic control. It's lost touch with reality - actual floating offshore wind prices are 7 times the CCC's naïve figures. The Met Office is also cited, yet it too has been discredited. It's used unscientific methods to create a false narrative of temperature change. 80% of its measurement sites are Cat 4 and 5 with potential errors of up to 5 degrees. It's fabricated temperature records where none exist.</p> <p>You say, 'The scale and the pace of the problem can be overwhelming.' That is categorically untrue, and the public are increasingly 'not buying it'. There is increasing evidence that many of the cited calamity events are within normal tolerances. Recent studies show that CO2 levels lag temperature - other forces are also at play. Modelling often sensationalises with extreme scenarios, even assuming mankind really understands something as complex, large and non-linear as the climate. The heart of my question was whether there is any real point in pursuing a 'Net Zero' strategy, let alone even increasing core budget as proposed. It is a weak response to state that Plans and Strategy documents are in place, and that's that. Serious questions are now being raised about the veracity of the CO2-driven climate change narrative. For a PDG not to consider these is complacent. I note that from the Update Report after 7 years of effort, the total reduction for MDDC is 361 tCO2, just 2%. It's even gone up in the past 12 months and is now above the average for that same period.</p>

Question 1

Can you please advise how much the Council has spent on its Climate Emergency initiative over 7 years (in direct and external funding including routine work and projects)?

[Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG](#)

Over the period 2018/19 to 2024/25, the Council has spent £4,231k in total on a range of projects including Solar PV and Battery Storage (BESS), Air Source and Ground Source Heat Pumps (ASHP and GSHP), Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Units, and replacing some of our vehicle fleet with Electric Vehicles (EV).

Across that same period, the Council has successfully bid for external funding totalling £2,807k through Salix / Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, in relation to the Solar PV and ASHP / GSHP at the leisure centres.

Therefore, the net spend is £1,424k on direct projects that have contributed to reducing our carbon footprint in line with the agreed Climate Emergency initiative.

The Council also spends an element of its base budget improving our operational efficiency and the service we provide to residents and customers, which also benefits our carbon footprint. For example replacing aging boilers, windows etc within our housing stock to improve living standards for our tenants. This is something we would be expected to do as a prudent local authority and is therefore not included within the figures reported above. This is demonstrated by £1,067k of the above direct MDDC contribution being spent on further Solar PV and the move to EV. £748k of that spend on Solar PV was committed to before the agreement to the Climate Emergency initiative.

Saving money is the most immediate and tangible benefit of the Council's investments to improve energy efficiency, install solar power and move to cleaner energy tech, such as at our leisure centres - where such projects serve our communities well by helping to secure a bright future with financially stable leisure services, reducing the burden on the leisure membership and wider taxpayer.

	<p>Benefits to local residents and customers, better living standards for our tenants, and healthy homes are top priorities; the best choices for our residents are also good for the environment e.g. local air quality. So it would be simplistic and misleading to suggest that any works that reduce greenhouse gases solely belong to a net zero policy.</p> <p>The majority of elements in the Council's carbon footprint are not within our direct control and are therefore very difficult to alter. As highlighted within the update report on today's agenda (23 September 2025) over the timeframe since the declaration of the climate emergency, the Council has reduced the impact of elements within our control by 35% and we have affordable plans to reduce it further.</p> <p>By seeking to reduce energy cost volatility, the Council's spend-to-save decisions have supported good value, financial stability and excellent service delivery.</p> <p><u>Question 2</u></p> <p>Given the questions around the climate change narrative, MDDC's negligible contribution, that expenditure is having little effect, and with a big forecast financial shortfall, wouldn't public money be better spent on community work / grants with an immediate and tangible benefit?</p> <p>Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG</p> <p>The Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group (PES PDG) considers budget setting on an annual basis and makes recommendations to Cabinet. Budget decisions are the remit of Cabinet.</p> <p>Thank you for recognising the success we have had in securing the majority of the funds spent through external sources and that the Council has a pragmatic investment strategy.</p>
--	--

	<p>Certainly the Council recognises there is great value in spending money on community grants, with <u>Strategic Grants</u> seeking to support the excellent work of organisations such as Churches Housing Action Team (CHAT), Citizens Advice, Mid Devon Mobility, Involve – Voluntary Action in Mid Devon, Tiverton Museum of Mid Devon Life, Tiverton Tourist Information Service (primarily with economic, social and health benefits) and Grand Western Canal (with similar benefits and additionally supporting the conservation of active travel and cultural and natural heritage).</p> <p>Ensuring that residents are able to get information and advice through locally-delivered services and are helped to access local cultural, leisure activities and opportunities helps to reduce travel pressures and boosts co-benefits e.g. shared community transport helps community wellbeing and lessens road congestion - less air pollution is good for health, and connection to green spaces promotes active lifestyles.</p> <p>Projects recommended by the PES PDG include the delivery of Green Enterprise Grants that have enabled local small and medium sized enterprises to save energy and money, and can help resilience against energy price volatility.</p> <p>The Council is also working in partnership with organisations that have excellent track record in community engagement around farming, food and the living landscapes on Mid Devon e.g. <i>Connecting the Culm</i> - a project run by the team at the Blackdown Hills National Landscape, who work closely with farmers, foresters and other stakeholders.</p> <p><u>Question 3</u></p> <p>Will this PDG amend planning guidance to prioritise food security, the natural environment, and the beauty of Mid-Devon over conflicting solar and wind development proposals?</p> <p>Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG</p> <p>Planning guidance is outside the remit of the PES PDG.</p>
--	---

	<p><u>Question 4</u></p> <p>Will this PDG commission a study into the evidence counter to the standard climate change narrative better to inform its strategy for the future?</p> <p><u>Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG</u></p> <p>The Council has used independent advice and evidence to inform its work e.g. Local Plan policies and had provided links to academic papers and independent data in its Climate Change Strategy. The PDG was interested to know whether you cited academic sources to support your assertions.</p> <p>Responding to address climate change is democratically mandated and has popular support. <u>Our Residents' Survey 2024</u> showed 81.3% of residents felt it was fairly or very important for the Council to tackle climate change. At the same 23 September PDG meeting where your questions were presented, three other members of the public presented questions with a different perspective and spoke of concerns about greenhouse gas pollution and other impacts of practices around waste and energy.</p>
Sarah Coffin	<p>As stated in the officer's report Farm-fed Anaerobic Digesters (those under Mid Devon control) can have either negative or beneficial impact, dependent on three fundamental operational principles:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable access to appropriate land to provide sufficient crop feedstock and provide safe spreading of manures and approx. 90% digestate residue, as a benefit fertiliser in accordance with WRAP/EA Rules and restrictions. Otherwise, they are classed as "waste" and require more costly disposal. 2. Sufficient secure storage of odorous feedstocks and manures/digestate to reduce emissions to air and pollution of soil and water utilising the best available techniques.

	<p>3. All industry and commerce have to be commercially viable to maintain its existence, however those that are supported by public money and purporting to be “green energy” are required to also prove they are “renewable and sustainable” in an environmentally beneficial way. I respect suggest there can be no integrity in such similar future projects, without serious assessment and full consideration of past failings as described in Motion 608.</p> <p><u>Question1</u></p> <p>Can I therefore request that whichever of the stated options Members choose it will include consideration of the following for all large/industrial livestock/energy projects:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increased use of the already existing S106 or similar legal agreement, whereby approved applicants confirm acceptance and the capacity to comply with all approved planning material and mitigating conditions, as well at WRAP/EA Farming Best Practice Rules and restrictions. b) Identify and evidence showing all land versus seasonal or business let third party lands. Particularly relevant given the 2025 legal precedent set via 3 court cases: NFU v Hertfordshire Council & Ors EWHC 536 (Admin); Methwold Borough Council West Norfolk Refusal of Industrial Factory Chicken and Pig farms (citing UK Supreme Court ruling Finch v Surrey County Council) establishing the need for LPAs to fully account for both direct and indirect climate emissions; finally R (Caffyn) v Shropshire Council EWHC 1497 (Admin) Mr Caffyn’s successful claim that Council approval for £200k intensive poultry unit had failed to lawfully assess the full in-combination effects of manure and digestate spreading on third party lands. c) Full inclusion of all relevant historical Scrutiny Committee reports (2017/18) relating to Anaerobic Digester complaints. <p>Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG</p> <p>The information contained within the public question/statement will be noted and addressed, where possible, through the further work to be commissioned.</p>
--	---

Nick Govier	<p>As part of the Full Council meeting on 23 July the decision from that meeting confirmed in the minutes was for the motion to be referred to this Committee before returning to Full Council. The initial recommendations which this Committee is seeing this evening as part of those minutes. It also stated, and I quote the questions received from the member of public would be considered at the Planning, Environment and Sustainability PDG.</p> <p><u>Question 1</u></p> <p>Can this Committee please confirm that all attendees have seen those questions raised by the member of public? Have they been circulated in advance and will they be considered as part of the recommendation contained in option 3 including how they will be incorporated in the scope of any further document. Turning to the recommendation, I am not naïve to the challenges of funding and resource capacity, which have been outlined in the paper and also how any developed document can only provide guidance as opposed to defined policy.</p> <p>Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG</p> <p>Members would have full access to public questions raised at the Full Council meeting. These questions will be considered in progressing further work relating to AD plants.</p> <p><u>Question 2</u></p> <p>Can I ask this Committee to ensure that any such document developed incorporates the following:- How we develop subject matter expertise in the planning function for assessing future and existing AD applications to reflect the disproportionate share of AD plants located in Mid Devon. This will negate the need for ongoing consultancy costs to review such cases.</p> <p>Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG</p> <p>The question/statement is noted. It is intended that any additional document produced will be useful to all Council officers in dealing with AD plants.</p>
-------------	---

	<p><u>Question 3</u> What knowledge and training investment can be recommended for a small cohort of planning officers? This can be sourced locally in view of the highly respected expertise in Devon in AD plants all located within close proximity to this building.</p> <p>Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG</p> <p>It is intended that any additional information/guidance developed will be available to all Council officers – thereby supporting upskilling and knowledge development in relation to AD plants.</p> <p><u>Question 4</u> How can the applicant be mandated to support future AD applications by bringing greater transparency to the complete view of net zero impacts when submitting any future AD applications.</p> <p>Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG</p> <p>The LPA cannot introduce new planning policy or requirements in relation to AD plants through any supplementary planning document or guidance note, however the Authority can and will consider how applicants can be encouraged and supported in providing greater transparency in relation to any proposals/applications.</p>
Paul Elstone	<p>Motion 608 references a report prepared in France and which found that only 30% of AD's tested were providing green and sustainable energy. Of the AD's currently in operation in Mid Devon only one is producing green and sustainable energy. It is an on farm AD producing just 80Kw per hour of electricity. It's primary feedstock being cow slurry. The 2 largest industrial sized ADs are producing around 1 mega watt per hour of electricity. This being 100% over planning consent and with maize as the primary feedstock. They are growing energy crops to produce electricity to the grid using combined heat and power units running at around 38% efficiency.</p>

Question 1

Will this Committee recognise that these are the very worst types of AD's and which the French report identifies as not green and therefore not sustainable.

AD's that require very particular consideration in any planning policy etc? This Council is very proud of its green and sustainability credentials. Be it recycling rates, net zero social homes, leisure centre energy consumption reduction, solar panel installations.

[Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG](#)

The point made is noted.

Question 2

Does this Committee fully appreciate that in a strike of a pen and in approving certain types of anaerobic digester installations and even worse the increase in power generation and resultant feedstock requirements for existing and industrial sized AD plants that all the MDDC CO2 emission savings will be negated and perhaps a hundred times over?

Therefore I would suggest that this Committee needs to access the best of technical expertise it can when deciding on the best way forward in support of its green agenda. Expertise which is available in the public realm.

Expertise with relevant Doctorates and Masters Degrees. Expertise that would come free of charge. Expertise that will relieve a time burden on officers and save MDDC cost.

[Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG](#)

The purpose of this report is to consider how the Council is best positioned to secure further guidance/advice in relation to AD plants. Any additional information to be produced for the Council by external consultants will necessarily be sought from suitably qualified individuals/organisations and will be procured in accordance with public sector procurement regulations.

Question 3

Will this Committee please fully develop this option?

The current planning approvals concerning anaerobic digesters are highly reliant on planning condition compliance. History over the last 8 plus years has shown that planning conditions are being totally ignored and without any meaningful enforcement. A list of condition breaches and based fully on evidence follows.

1. AD' exporting over twice as much electricity as the planning conditions allow. Over 1000kw per hour as opposed to 500. Even reporting different production to MDDC and OFGEM. If this condition alone was enforced much of the abuse would be controlled.
2. Feedstock and digestate tonnages far greater than consent.
3. Feedstock supplied from and digestate spread in locations not approved.
4. Failure to comply with agreed traffic routes.
5. Failure to provide correct weigh bridge data.

There are 12 separate planning condition breaches but time prevents me from completing.

[Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG](#)

The Council is active in Planning enforcement matters and take planning breaches seriously. The LPA is aware of concerns regarding the operation of some AD plants but is unable to comment on specific live cases or issues.

Question 4

Will this Committee recognise that it now has the opportunity to put much of these abuses to rights?

[Response from the Chair of the Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG](#)

The Council is limited in its ability to introduce new planning policy in relation to AD plants. The production of a consolidated guidance note will therefore support officers and members in decision making and ensure that relevant information can be considered when dealing with AD plants within the district.

This page is intentionally left blank



**Report for: Planning, Environment & Sustainability
Policy Development Group**

Date of Meeting: 25 November 2025

Subject: 2026/27 Draft Budget Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr John Downes – Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance
and Risk

Responsible Officer: Andrew Jarrett – Deputy Chief Executive (S151)

Exempt: N/A

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: Appendix 1 – Emerging 2026/27 – 2030/31 Capital Programme

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To present to Members an update on the 2026/27 Budget and to trail the emerging Capital Programme covering the period 2026/27 to 2030/31.

Recommendation(s):

That Members of the Policy Development Group:

1. Note the update on the 2026/27 Budget for the General Fund, noting there remains little clarity on the financial settlement currently and that this is likely to require additional ad hoc updates as and when greater information is known, particularly following the announcement of the Local Government Finance Settlement;
2. Consider and comment on the emerging Capital Programme covering the period 2026/27 to 2030/31 within Appendix 1.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the September meeting, the first draft MTFP covering the period 2026/27 to 2028/29 for the General Fund was presented, estimating a funding shortfall for

2026/27 within the range £846k to £3,350k, due to the significant uncertainty surrounding future funding streams.

- 1.2 The PDG discussed a range of budget options that could help mitigate the budget shortfall, considering the Red, Amber, Green risk level applied to them by officers, as follows:

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

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

Green – indicates a saving that is recommended by officers – previously approved.

- 1.3 The PDG recommended to Cabinet the Green and Amber budget proposals but raised concerns about S106 Monitoring Fees. This was a Green Budget pressure and actually provided additional budget and therefore was recommended by officers.
- 1.4 On 07 October, Cabinet agreed the Green Budget Options summing to a net pressure of £974k (£1,325k pressures and £351k savings). Based on the original assumptions, this increases the current projected funding shortfall to a range of £1,820k to £4,324k.
- 1.5 The 04 November Cabinet were recommended to give tacit approval as a budget planning assumption to the recommendations of the Policy Development Groups (PDGs) – which will see a £100k pressure related to planning appeals, offset by a £100k of further Amber savings through greater fee income.

2.0 2026/27 Budget Update

- 2.1 As Members are aware, there is very little clarity available on the future funding decisions for the Local Government Sector. Since the previous PDG meeting, this position has not improved with no further announcements received. Potentially, a policy note could be published shortly that might provide more clarity on the direction of travel, but this has not been received at the time of publishing this report. This will not provide clarity on individual authority funding.
- 2.2 The Autumn Budget is set for 26 November which means any settlement announcement is going to be later than previously advised which will result in the detail at local authority level potentially being announced later than anticipated. In addition to this challenge, changes in key senior ministerial positions are also likely to potentially build further uncertainty and delay into these announcements.
- 2.3 Further updates will be brought forward as necessary and available, and further budget options will be investigated and proposed for consideration over the next few months in the run in to setting the 2026/27 budget in February 2026.
- 2.4 However, because of the lack of clarity and timeframe to react, it is highly likely that some level of draw from reserves may be required, and a full review of Earmarked

Reserves will be necessary to see what can be realigned, and whether a minimum balance of £2m in General Reserves can be maintained.

- 2.5 There clearly remains a significant budget shortfall in 2026/27 for the General Fund. The Council has a legal requirement to set a balance budget and needs to ensure its overall costs are affordable i.e. they can be funded through income and planned short-term use of reserves.

3.0 2026/27 – 2030/31 Capital Programme

- 3.1 The Capital Programme includes new bids for capital funding to support new programmes as well as updates to 'rolling' approvals from current and prior year's Capital Programmes.
- 3.2 The draft Capital Programme has been reviewed/challenged by the Corporate Strategic Asset Advisory Group (CSAG) prior to being proposed. The final programme being brought forward for approval in February.
- 3.3 Generally, the bids are restricted to replacement equipment, largely based upon health and safety requirements in the leisure centres, new ICT kit, income generation schemes, economic regeneration schemes or invest to save bids.
- 3.4 **Appendix 1** provides a summary of the new bids received for the new 2026/27 – 2030/31 Capital Programme from General Fund services reporting through to this PDG. In February, Members' will be asked to approve the Year 1 programme and note the indicative future years. Members are asked to consider and comment on these bids, feeding into the development of the programme.
- 3.5 In terms of associated funding, a prudent forecast of capital receipts is factored into the model, with no major asset sales anticipated. Similarly, prudent assumptions are included for the availability of Capital Grant to help mitigate some of the proposed costs. If additional receipts are generated, or grant received, the capital prioritisation list could be revisited to bring forward new schemes into the programme or decrease any borrowing requirement.
- 3.6 Currently any revenue contribution to the Capital Programme is limited to funding held within Earmarked Reserves (i.e. Sinking Funds). Ultimately, any outstanding funding requirement after utilising revenue contributions, reserves and any external funding sources will need to be funded through Prudential Borrowing. This will be refined and updated as we move through the MTFP timeframe.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The potential significant General Fund budget shortfall remaining if only Green and Amber options are agreed, or if option 1c (the estimated budget gap of £3.446m as per the 7/10/25 Cabinet report) becomes reality, is a significant challenge and the identification of further budget reductions is critical to balancing the budget for 2026/27 and indeed future years.

- 4.2 Whilst every effort will be made to identify efficiency savings, given the scale of the likely funding reductions it is unlikely that a sufficient level can be identified to fully balance the 2026/27 budget without significant implications on service provision. Also, there is an extremely limited timeframe available between finalisation of the funding settlement and setting the budget for 2026/27. This may require additional information being presented to members either late or outside of the standard committee papers process.
- 4.3 The MTFP will continue to be updated to ensure it is a live document. It is subject to amendment and review by Leadership Team and Members and will provide a clear guide prior to commencing the annual budget setting process in future years.
- 4.4 To conclude the statutory budget setting process, updates to the draft budget position will be brought as and when greater clarity emerges in the run up to the budget being agreed at Full Council on the 18 February 2026. During this period Officers will continue to identify and examine further savings possibilities that can reduce the longer-term budget gap.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

Risk Assessment

The MTFP makes several key financial assumptions based on a sensible/prudent approach, taking account of the most up to date professional advice that is available. These continue to be kept under review and updated where necessary.

Impact on Climate Change

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

Equalities Impact Assessment

No implications arising from this report.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

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

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

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

Date: 12.11.25

Performance and risk: Dr Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 11 November 2025

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Andrew Jarrett – Deputy Chief Executive (S151)

Email: ajarrett@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 234242

Background papers:

- 2025/26 Budget
- 2025/26 Qtr. 1 Budget Monitor
- 2025/26 Qtr. 2 Budget Monitor
- 2 September Cabinet report – 2026/27 – 2028/29 MTFP
- 7 October Cabinet report – 2026/27 Budget Update
- 4 November Cabinet report – 2026/27 Budget Update

This page is intentionally left blank

Row number	Sub Area	Project Title	Description	Category of project	Operational Lead Officer	Total Project Budget Approval						Spend Profile for NEW Indicative Capital Programme					
						2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's	2028/29 £000's	2029/30 £000's	2030/31 £000's	Total £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's	2028/29 £000's	2029/30 £000's	2030/31 £000's	Total £000's
1	MDDC Depots	Twiga side arm flail	Machine replacement for GM (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					30	30					30	30
2	Other Projects	Kubota Mini Excavator (Digger)	Machine replacement for GM (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					31	31					31	31
3	Other Projects	Wood-chipper Timberwolf	Machine replacement for GM (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					22	22					22	22
4	Other Projects	Wood-Chipper Elite	Machine replacement for GM (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					23	23					23	23
5	GF Vehicles	New Vehicle Leases (replaced every seven years)	Vehicle replacement for GM (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					320	320					320	320
6	HRA Vehicles	New Vehicle Leases (replaced every seven years)	Vehicle replacement for HRA Fleet - New Leases (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer			50		488	538			50		488	538
7	GF Vehicles	New Vehicle Leases (replaced every seven years)	Vehicle replacement for Caretaking Fleet - New Leases (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					50	50					50	50
8	GF Vehicles	New Vehicle Leases (replaced every seven years)	Vehicle replacement for Street Cleansing Fleet - New Leases (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					64	64					64	64
9	GF Vehicles	New Vehicle Leases (replaced every seven years)	Vehicle replacement for Recycling Fleet - New Leases (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					2,186	2,186					2,186	2,186
10	GF Vehicles	New Vehicle Leases (replaced every seven years)	Vehicle replacement for Property Services Fleet - New Leases (replaced every seven years)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Darren Beer					50	50					50	50
11	ICT Projects	Server & Storage Hardware Refresh 2030	Replacement For Servers and Storage Area Network in Phoenix house (Disk storage)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Brian Trebilcock				-	30	30					-	30
12	ICT Projects	UPS Replacements	Replacements of Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS) - Battery backup for Servers and Switches. (7 in total 5 large 2 smaller)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Brian Trebilcock			-	30	30	-			-	30	30	-
13	ICT Projects	User Device Replacements' Refresh 30/31	On-going annual Laptop refresh program	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Brian Trebilcock					120	120					120	120
14	Leisure - Other	Exe Valley CCTV	Replace the current outdated system	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	35					35	35					35
15	Other Projects	Kingsmill/Simmons Industrial Units	Roof/Wall Sheets/Sky Lights/Facia/Gutter Replacement	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton	150					150	75	75				150
16	Other Projects	Market Walk	Removal of paparpit overhang/new porches	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton	50					50	50					50
17	Other Projects	Market Walk	Roof area replacment	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton	150					150	100	50				150
18	Other Projects	Market Walk Communal Areas	Communal Area Enhancement	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	25					25	25					25
19	Phoenix House	Wall / Window Inspection & Repairs	Curtain Walling Repairs, Deep Cleaning, Sofia Repairs & Cleaning and Masonary Repairs	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton		27				27		27				27
20	Phoenix House	Lift Upgrades / Replacement Panels	Replace obsolete control boards and general overhaul	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton		65				65		65				65
21	Phoenix House	AHU, Extracts, Control Panel, Comfort Cooling (Split Units), Ancillary TRV Pipework	Replace associated equipment	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	330					330	180	150				330
22	Phoenix House	Lighting Upgrades	Lighting Upgrades (Internal / External), Small Power Upgrades (generator point, Distribution Boards)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	339					339	339					339
23	Phoenix House	Intruder Alarm	Replacement of current system	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	40					40	40					40
24	Exe Valley Leisure Centre	Glazing, Steel Work & Timber Purlin Repairs / Treatement	Glazing, Steel Work & Timber Purlin Repairs /	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton	85					85	85					85
25	Exe Valley Leisure Centre	Swimming Pool Motorised Pool Cover	Replace pool cover	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
26	Exe Valley Leisure Centre	AHU x2	Bring into service / replace	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton		120				120		120				120
27	Exe Valley Leisure Centre	Pool Side Assets	UV, Ballast Tank, Control Panel	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton	41					41	41					41
29	Culm Valley Sports Centre	External Fabric	Fascias, Soffits, Flashing, Glazing	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	25					25	25					25
30	Culm Valley Sports Centre	Internal Fabric	Reception, Toilets, Stores & Halls	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	46					46	46					46
31	Culm Valley Sports Centre	Internal Fabric MEP	Toilets, Circulation Routes - Plumbing	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
32	Culm Valley Sports Centre	Internal Fabric MEP	Toilets, Circulation Routes - Electrical	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton	30					30	30					30
33	Culm Valley Sports Centre	Internal Fabric MEP	Toilets, Circulation Routes - Mechanical (HVAC), Split Units, Local Duct Repairs	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	25					25	25					25

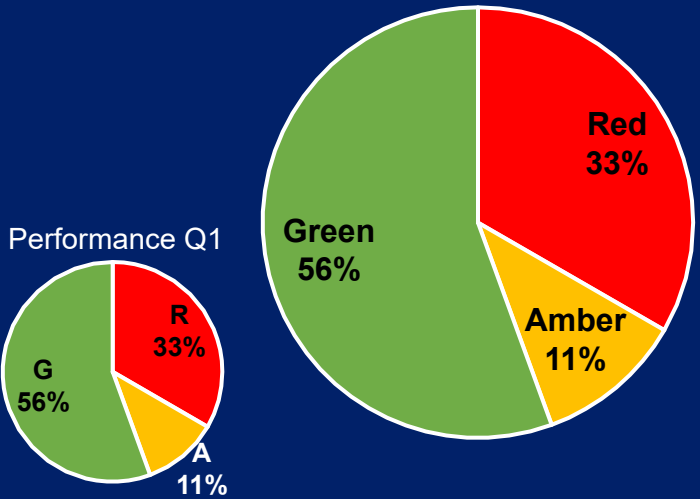
Row number	Sub Area	Project Title	Description	Category of project	Operational Lead Officer	Total Project Budget Approval						Spend Profile for NEW Indicative Capital Programme					Total £000's
						2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's	2028/29 £000's	2029/30 £000's	2030/31 £000's	Total £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's	2028/29 £000's	2029/30 £000's	2030/31 £000's	
34	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	External Fabric	Gutter Joint Replacement	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
35	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	External Fabric	Brickwork / Masonry Repairs	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
36	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	Internal Fabric	Squash Courts & Viewing Gallery	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton		44				44		44				44
37	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	Internal Fabric	Sports Hall	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton		22				22		22				22
38	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	Internal Fabric	Main Pool (Timber Ceiling)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton		35				35		35				35
39	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	Internal Fabric	Male & Female Toilets	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
40	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	Pool Side Assets	UV, Ballast Tank, Control Panel	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton		65				65		65				65
41	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	Internal Fabric MEP	Toilets, Circulation Routes - Plumbing	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	30					30	30					30
42	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	Internal Fabric MEP	Toilets, Circulation Routes - Electrical	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton	45					45	45					45
43	Lords Meadow Leisure Centre	Internal Fabric MEP	Toilets, Circulation Routes - Mechanical (HVAC)	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	62					62	62					62
44	Other Projects	Pannier Market Secure Storage	Storage and additional traders secure area	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	50					50	50					50
45	Other Projects	Pannier Market Café	Ventilation/Floor and internal walls	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	35					35	35					35
46	Other Projects	Pannier Market Roof	Parapets/roof area stone work	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton		30				30		30				30
47	Parks & Play Areas	Cullompton Skatepark	Replacement	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton		200				200		200				200
48	Parks & Play Areas	Cullompton Crossparks Play Area	Refurbishment to consolidate local provision following other closures	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	50					50	50					50
49	General Car Parks	Cullompton Station Road Car Park	Flood defence drainage improvements	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
50	Parks & Play Areas	Crediton Newcombes Meadow Jubilee Garden	Refurbishment of 1977 Jubilee Garden enhance park and seek to discourage ASB	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	25					25	25					25
51	Parks & Play Areas	Crediton Queen Elizabeths Drive Play Area	Refurbishment to retain local provision	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	75					75	75					75
52	Other Projects	Crediton St Lawrence Green	Enhancement of western gateway to town	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
53	Other Projects	Crediton Queen Elizabeths Drive/ Avranches	Reconstruction of steps to linking path between estates/ routes to school/ public transport	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
54	Other Projects	Crediton Cemetery Chapel	Refurbishment	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	20					20	20					20
55	Parks & Play Areas	Tiverton Amory Park Hardcourt	Refurbishment	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	200					200	200					200
56	Parks & Play Areas	Tiverton Westex Rec Paths	Improved access esp for those with reduced mobility	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	30					30	30					30
57	Parks & Play Areas	Parks	Replacement seating	3. Essential Asset Replacement/Enhancement	Keith Ashton	40					40	20	20				40
58	Other Projects	Closed Church Yards	Reconstruction of boundary walls	2. Health & Safety (Liability includes DFG)	Keith Ashton	150					150	150					150
59	Leisure - Other	Assisted Lifeguard Technology	Lifeguard technology at Crediton and Tiverton to improve safety and reduce cost	1. Spend to Save/Income Generation	Andy Mackie	50					50	50					50
60	Leisure - Other	Reformer Pilates equipment	Introduction of hugely popular form of pilates to grow revenue / membership sales and retention. Each reformer pilates table/unit is approx £2k, look to invest in 15 units.	1. Spend to Save/Income Generation	Andy Mackie	30					30	30					30
61	Economic Development	EUE Community Centre	Support to submit a planning application for a new community centre at the Tiverton EUE site.	4. Economic Development	Adrian Welsh	50					50	50					50
General Fund Subtotals						2,473	608	20	30	3,354	6,485	2,178	903	20	30	3,354	6,485

Performance Measures	Performance	Annual Target	RAG
Own fleet CO2e avoided (YTD)	8.67 t CO ₂ e	10 t CO ₂ e	G
Solar panel performance – corporate estate (YTD)	74 t CO ₂ e	50 t CO ₂ e	G
Electric car charger points installed across MDDC sites (YTD)	0	4	R
Householder planning applications determined within 8 weeks (Past 12 months)	99 %	70%	G
Minor applications overturned at appeal (Past 12 months)	0.5 %	10%	G

Finance Measures	Performance	Annual Target	RAG
PE&S PDG – Projected Outturn	£1,088k	£1,227k	G
PE&S PDG – Projected Capital Outturn	£4,088k	£5,219k	A
PE&S PDG – Capital Slippage % of projects (Current)	100%	0%	R
Building Control Income – Projected Outturn	(£201k)	(£251k)	R

Corporate Risk	Risk Rating (Trajectory)
Failure to meet Climate Change Commitments by 2030	15 (No Change)

Overall Performance Q2



In Focus

Annual carbon footprint reports for the Council are published on the [Sustainable Mid Devon](#) website. Net emissions for the most recent reporting year (2024/25) totalled 18,364 tCO₂e. This was 2% higher than the previous year.

Estimated emissions from the Procurement category increased by 1,370 tCO₂e compared to the previous year, mainly due to increased spend and revised emission factors. Social Housing emissions decreased by 751 tCO₂e mainly due to a lower assumed energy consumption per dwelling. Further details were reported to the PES PDG on 23 September 2025.

This page is intentionally left blank

Report for:	Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group
Date of Meeting:	25 th November 2025
Subject:	S106 Governance
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steven Keable, Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Andrew Jarrett, Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer
Exempt:	There are no exemptions within the documents
Wards Affected:	Districtwide
Enclosures:	S106 Governance Framework and Terms of Reference

Section 1 – Summary and Update for PDG

To advise Members of the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group of progress made in implementing the revised S106 Governance arrangements, as approved by Cabinet in November 2024, and to fulfil the requirement that the governance framework return to this group within 12 months for oversight.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. That Members note the contents of the report.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Background/Introduction

- 1.1 The revised S106 Governance arrangements were approved by Cabinet in November 2024 following recommendation from the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group. Approval was granted subject to four conditions, three of which were incorporated into the Terms of Reference immediately following the meeting. The fourth condition required that the governance arrangements return to this group within 12 months for review.

2.0 Implementation Progress

2.1 Following Cabinet approval, the Terms of Reference were updated to reflect the required changes to Board composition and Cabinet Member representation.

2.2 The S106 Governance Board was formally constituted following an induction session, with its first meeting held in July 2025. The Board has since met quarterly following reconciliation, in line with the governance framework.

2.3 The Board has actively engaged in overseeing and supporting the implementation of the governance framework through the following activities:

- Reviewing at-risk funds
- Monitoring projects in progress
- Considering post-reconciliation quarterly funding reports
- Supporting continuous improvement of the governance framework

While no applications have yet triggered Board-level decision-making, the Board continues to fulfil its governance role through regular oversight and engagement.

2.4 In accordance with Section 10.0 of the Terms of Reference for the S106 Governance Framework, which requires an annual review of those Terms by the Board, the following updates were agreed at its meeting on 5th November 2025:

- **Removal of Fixed Meeting Time Clause (Section 8.0)**

Clause removed: “An agenda item for the first meeting should be to agree a meeting start time to be followed throughout the year.”

Reason: To allow greater flexibility in scheduling meeting start times.

- **Addition to Standing Agenda Items (Section 9.0)**

New item added: “Report of delegated decisions made in the preceding quarter.”

Reason: To improve transparency and oversight of decisions made under delegated authority, in line with the governance framework.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The Cabinet resolution in November 2024 required that the revised S106 Governance arrangements return to the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group within 12 months. This report outlines the progress made since that approval, including the formal constitution of the S106 Governance Board, its quarterly meetings, and the annual review of its Terms of Reference.

3.2 The updated Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix 1. Officers and S106 Board members will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the governance arrangements and report annually through the Infrastructure Funding Statement and other relevant channels.

Financial Implications

S106 agreements may include obligations on the developer to make a financial contribution in order to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Contributions become due at trigger points set out in the legal agreement.

Most S106 agreements also place obligations on the Council, which typically include:

- Spending contributions in accordance with the terms of the S106 agreement
- Repaying any contributions to the developer that have not been spent (or contractually committed) within the timeframe specified in the agreement (commonly ten years)

The purpose of the framework is to support efficient and timely expenditure of S106 contributions and ensure sound financial management.

Legal Implications

Planning Obligations referred to in this report are secured by legal agreement. The governance arrangements aim to ensure that S106 contributions are managed and monitored effectively, in accordance with the legally binding agreements they relate to.

Risk Assessment

The governance arrangements are designed to reduce the risk of non-compliance with legislation and to prevent ineffective management by establishing a robust and transparent system.

Impact on Climate Change

Effective governance of S106 contributions will support the delivery of projects that help mitigate the impacts of Climate Change.

Equalities Impact Assessment

This report relates to the governance framework for S106 contributions, which supports the delivery of projects, including those that improve accessibility to infrastructure and facilities. Individual projects will be subject to their own equality impact assessments.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Clear governance, prioritisation and effective project management are essential to ensure that S106 funds are used to deliver infrastructure across the District and mitigate the impacts of development. This approach contributes to the Council's priority themes: Planning, Environment & Sustainability; Community, People & Equalities; Homes; Economy & Assets.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

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

Date: 12.11.25

Performance and risk: Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 12 November 2025

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Elaine Barry, Planning and Obligations Monitoring Officer

Email: S106@middevon.gov.uk

Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager Growth, Economy & Delivery

Email: awelsh@middevon.gov.uk

Background papers:

Link to background documents:

[2025 Report to Cabinet](#)

S106 Governance Framework Adopted 2024

Mid Devon District Council **S106 Governance Board** **Terms of Reference**

S106 Governance Board Terms of Reference (ToR)

The ToR document for the S106 Governance Board:

- Sets out the purpose of the S106 Governance Board
- Sets out the expectations of the S106 Governance Board
- Sets out the decision making process
- Sets out the administration process
- Sets out the regularity of meetings

1.0 The group shall be formally known as;
The (Mid Devon District Council) S106 Governance Board

2.0 The role of the group:

- To consider and make decisions on project allocations and funding applications that meet the board's threshold for consideration and/or where there are conflicting requests for contributions
- Ensuring the District Council meets its obligations
 - a. Spending the money in accordance with the terms of the S106 Agreement
 - b. Spending the money within the stipulated timescale
- To consider regular s106 monitoring reports

3.0 Matters beyond the scope of this Board:

- Approval of Heads of Terms
- Viability assessments
- Deeds of Variation and/or other amendments to legal agreements

4.0 Composition of the S106 Governance Board

The S106 Governance Board will consist of a fixed panel of members and officers with guest members and/or officers to attend as appropriate to their ward or department. The makeup of the S106 Governance Board is as follows:

Fixed Panel

- Director of Place and Economy (Chair) (who may delegate a deputy to chair in his/her absence)
- Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer (Clerk) (Non-voting)
- Senior Officer from Planning (Development Management Manager or Area Team Leader)

Three Cabinet Members from the following:

- Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration
- Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change
- Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health
- Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement

As required

- Relevant ward member(s)
- Senior officer from department relevant to spend

The Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer encourages all board members and substitute members to obtain necessary skills to contribute to the work of the board. In the absence of a cabinet member of the board and where there will otherwise be less than 2 cabinet members present, they would find a suitable substitute that MUST be another cabinet portfolio holder and to brief them on the meeting which they are due to attend.

5.0 Decision making

The decision making process is voting, by fixed panel board members, with a majority determining decisions and the Chair having the casting vote.

When a decision needs to be made, where convening a meeting would be impracticable within the required timescales, taking account of the 5 clear days for publishing an agenda, and any consultation periods, the Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer will inform the S106 Board in writing of the matter about which decision is to be made and obtain the agreement of the S106 Board (keeping a written record of when agreement/approvals are confirmed, and how).

6.0 Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the Governance Board shall be 2 cabinet members and one senior officer from the fixed panel.

7.0 Administration

The administration function will be provided by the clerk to the S106 Governance Board and this will include;

- Calendar bookings
- Circulating agenda and reports
- Consultation processes
- Minutes
- Managing enquiries

8.0 Time, Place and Notice of Meeting

Hourly meetings will take place in person on a quarterly basis ideally after financial reconciliation of accounts has taken place.

In order to allow for effective and timely decision making on funding applications, meetings can be called by the Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer, with the agreement of the Director of Place and Economy, on an as needed basis.

The agenda and supporting documents will be sent out at least five clear working days before a meeting from the Planning Obligations Monitoring Officer to the cabinet members and officers on the board.

9.0 Standing Agenda Items

- Minutes of the previous meeting
- S106 Monitoring report
 - a. Quarterly funding updates
 - b. Review of any “at-risk” funding
- Infrastructure delivery:
 - a. Project Updates
 - b. Review of the Infrastructure List (annually)
- Report of delegated decisions made in the preceding quarter
- Consideration of any funding requests

10.0 Approval and review of ToR

ToR to be reviewed/updated annually.

11.0 Definition of terms

CIL tests	Specifically Regulation 122 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended)
Deed of Variation	A legal document that varies or modifies an existing S106 Agreement
Financial reconciliation	The process of validating S106 records against receipts held on the Council’s finance systems
Heads of Terms	The agreed obligations by infrastructure type to be included within a S106 Agreement
Infrastructure List	Document identifying infrastructure projects that can be partly or wholly funded by S106 Contributions
Project allocations	The project meeting the criteria set out in the CIL tests to which a financial contribution is legally assigned to
S106 Agreement	A legally binding agreement between a local authority and a landowner/developer under Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) containing obligations, used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, which are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
Viability assessments	Site-specific reports seeking a reduction in S106 contributions so as to make the development financially viable

Report for:	Planning, Environment & Sustainability PDG
--------------------	---

Date of Meeting:	25 November 2025
Subject:	Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager Growth, Economy & Delivery
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	Credon Boniface, Credon Lawrence, Sandford & Creedy, Taw Vale, Upper Yeo & Taw, Yeo
Enclosures:	N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report introduces to Members the work of the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance (NDRDA) to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for significant capital investment in the North Devon Line (NDL) between Exeter and Barnstaple.

The report requests consideration of The Council becoming a member of this alliance (NDRDA), and for Cabinet to consider a financial contribution towards the cost of the next NDRDA Annual Convention to be held in Mid Devon.

Recommendation(s):

The Planning Environment and Sustainability PDG recommends to Cabinet:

- 1. That Mid Devon District Council supports the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance (NDRDA) by officially joining the alliance to achieve delivery of a modernisation programme for the North Devon (Tarka) Line passenger rail services between Exeter and Barnstaple, to achieve the associated economic, social and environmental benefits for our local communities and businesses.**

2. To consider a financial contribution of £1,000 to support the third annual convention of the NDRDA scheduled for March 2026 at a location in Mid Devon.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The North Devon Line, which is also known as the Tarka Line, opened in 1851 and operates between Exeter and Barnstaple. It serves settlements between these towns including Newton St Cyres, Crediton, Yeoford, Copplestone, Morchard Road, Lapford and Eggesford in Mid Devon (as shown on the map in Appendix 1). The service is operated by Great Western Railway and in recent years patronage numbers have been increasing significantly. The service is approximately hourly, although currently not all stations are served on an hourly basis. In recent years the rolling stock has been upgraded to Class 158 diesel multiple units.
- 1.2 The Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance (NDRDA) was founded in late 2023 and formally established in 2024 at the first Annual Convention held in Bideford. Aspirations of the alliance include upgrading the current line and to investigate potential for extension of services to Bideford. Current members of the alliance include:
 - Torridge District Council
 - North Devon Council
 - Devon County Council
 - Devon & Torbay Combined County Authority
 - Various Parish & Town Councils on the line
 - Great Western Railway (GWR)
 - Network Rail
 - RailFuture (Devon & Cornwall)
 - Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership
 - Friends Of Barnstaple Railway Station
 - North Devon Line Rail Promotion Group
- 1.3 In addition to the organisations listed above there are a wide range of other active partners and stakeholders in support of the improvements to the line.
- 1.4 A second 2025 Annual Convention ([link here](#)) hosted in Barnstaple brought together local government representatives, rail industry leaders, and transport planners. Each contributed insight into the progress made, challenges encountered, and future priorities for a region whose transport infrastructure is increasingly under strain from rising demand and constrained capacity.

2.0 Strategic Outline Business Case

- 2.1 The alliance is committed to developing a Strategic Outline Business Case to assess the viability and scope of proposals. A Preliminary Strategic Business Case is being finalised by the Alliance, in alignment with a Network Rail report following the same approach as for the successful Dartmoor Line reopening. Both workstreams are targeting the Alliance's next annual Convention for presentation and discussion. The business case will be prepared to align with the requirements under the Department of Transport's Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP). This business case will also have a strategic fit with the Devon & Torbay Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) 2025-2040, adopted by Devon & Torbay Combined County Authority in July 2025, [\(link here\)](#) and Peninsular Transport Strategic Transport Priorities to 2050 [\(link here\)](#).
- 2.2 It should also be noted that the future role of the rail line has significance with regard to the review of the Mid Devon Local Plan. The Local Plan, in line with national planning policy, will be looking to encourage sustainable travel patterns wherever possible. Work is currently underway with regard to developing a settlement hierarchy for the emerging new plan, which is being informed by the recently published Government accessibility tool. This tool recognises the accessibility benefits of this rail corridor.
- 2.3 The business case objectives include:
- Increased capacity and double hourly frequency to two trains per hour;
 - Reduced Exeter- Barnstaple journey times from 75 minutes to 60 minutes;
 - Enhanced green travel and journey time competitiveness with roads;
 - Boost line reliability, resilience and reduce disruption;
 - Support to economy, jobs, tourism, housing and unlock development;
 - Improved active travel and connectivity corridors of the Taw Torridge Estuary, Okehampton, Exeter city region, Cullompton, Tiverton, Exmouth, Newton Abbott and beyond.
- 2.4 The Alliance also identifies other benefits of improving the rail line which include:
- Reducing congestion on A377 and A361;
 - Increasing labour market and skills training access;
 - Time savings valued at £11m per annum;
 - Enhances tourism and inward investment with connectivity improvements;
 - Carbon reduction through transport mode shift.

- 2.5 Key partners of the Alliance are the rail industry, as delivery will be through Great British Railways (GBR), who will replace Network Rail, bringing together the management of the rail network and passenger services under one public body. GBR will be responsible for infrastructure, planning, and operations, setting fares and timetables, and will own the network infrastructure.
- 2.6 The key interventions currently being considered are:
- Reinstatement of double track between Newton St. Cyres and Coleford Junction, via Crediton;
 - Additional passing loops between Coleford Junction and Barnstaple;
 - Signalling modernisation; and
 - Station improvements and rolling stock enhancements.

3.0 2026 Annual Convention

- 3.1 A third Annual Convention is at the planning stage with a proposal for this to be held within Mid Devon on Friday 6th March 2026. The purpose of this convention is for all the Alliance to meet as stakeholders and be updated on the progress of the business case preparation. It is anticipated that any subsequent submission to Government for funding would be in close collaboration with the Local Transport Authority.
- 3.2 An appropriate resolution to join membership of NDRDA is sought through this report. Whilst membership is free, MDDC is being requested to help fund the NDRDA, to the value of £1,000, to host the next annual convention in Mid Devon. The proposed venue is the Eggesford Fox & Hounds Hotel in Taw Vale Ward.

Financial Implications

Membership of the alliance is free; however this report recommends that a financial contribution of £1,000 to support the third annual convention of the NDRDA at a location in Mid Devon, be found from existing budgets.

Any future capital funding for proposals identified through the business case work will be sought from Government by the NDRDA, Devon County Council and Network Rail through the DfT Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline major schemes fund.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Assessment

There are no significant negative risks identified with regard to joining the alliance; however there is potentially a risk, should the District Council not formally join the alliance, that the District's interests and those of its residents and businesses could be marginalised.

As projects develop through the Alliance they will be subject to their own risk management processes.

Impact on Climate Change

Climate change will be an underlying theme through the future work streams of the NDRDA and an important part of the Strategic Outline Business Case.

Equalities Impact Assessment

No equality issues are identified for this report at this stage. As the project goes forward it will need to consider the views from representatives from protected groups that the project has the potential to impact upon. Equality issues, such as the importance of accessibility provision for the mobility impaired will form part of the Strategic Outline Business Case.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Improvements to the North Devon rail line are relevant to the following corporate themes:

- Planning, Environment & Sustainability
- Community, People & Equalities
- Homes
- Economy & Assets

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12.11.25

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

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

Date: 12.11.25

Performance and risk: Dr Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 12 November 2025

Cabinet member notified: (yes)

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy & Delivery

Email: awelsh@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 234398

Background papers:

Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline 'A New Approach for Rail Enhancements'. DCLG prospectus locally led garden villages, towns and cities (2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-network-enhancements-pipeline>

Railfuture Website – Promotion of NRDRA 2nd Convention and supporting information (March 2025)
[NRDRA 2nd Annual Convention Promotion](#)

Map of the North Devon (Tarka) Line



(Source: Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership: Great Scenic Railways Website)

[Tarka Line](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

**Report for: Planning, Environment and Sustainability
Policy Development Group (PDG)**

Date of Meeting: 25 November 2025

Subject: Climate and Sustainability Update

Cabinet Member: Cllr Natasha Bradshaw - Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

Responsible Officer: Jason Ball - Climate and Sustainability Specialist.

Paul Deal - Head of Finance, Property and Climate Resilience.

Exempt: None

which are Exempt from publication under paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: None.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

To receive an update on the Climate and Sustainability Programme.

Recommendation(s):

1. **That the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group (PDG) notes and accepts this report as an update on the Council's Climate and Sustainability Programme, and progress on its response to the Climate Emergency.**
2. **That the Planning, Environment and Sustainability PDG tasks officers to work with the Net Zero Advisory Group and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change to draft the 2026-2028 Climate Action Plan in line with the Climate Change Strategy.**

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report emphasises activity and progress updates for brevity.
- 1.2 The Council's environmental sustainability work can be split into: **corporate** activity related to its own assets and operations; and activities to enable and facilitate **community** actions across Mid Devon.
- 1.3 Climate change actions seek to address **mitigation** (reducing greenhouse emissions) and **adaptation** (resilience to climate change risks).
- 1.4 The Climate and Sustainability (C&S) Specialist leads the development of the Council's C&S Programme, working with partners, all Councillors and colleagues and particularly with service leads, the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change.

2.0 Performance

- 2.1 [Corporate Plan Performance Indicators](#) (PI) are reported to [Cabinet](#) quarterly (Scrutiny Committee every 6 months). Quarterly [Performance Dashboards](#) share data on e.g. emissions avoided by generating solar power. Notes on achievements also [available online](#). (sustainablemiddevon.org.uk/our-plan)
- 2.2 The Council's Carbon Footprint
- 2.2.1 Annual [carbon footprint](#) reports are produced independently by the University of Exeter's Centre for Energy and the Environment (CEE) via the South West Energy and Environment Group (SWEED) and published on the [Sustainable Mid Devon](#) website. Emissions are measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). The 2024/25 Carbon Footprint was presented to this PDG [23 September 2025](#).
- The 2024/25 result was lower than the 2018/19 baseline but 2% higher than the 2023/24 footprint. That increase was principally related to impacts linked to spending, and construction spending had the most effect.
 - The progress we see fits our Climate Change Strategy's prioritised approach: focus on elements in our control; act on opportunities to invest; and influence those we do business with.
 - Net emissions for the areas in our direct control remain on a downward trend, with an overall 35% reduction since 2018/19.
- 2.3 Progress with the Climate Action Plan (CAP)
- 2.3.1 The Council's [Climate Change Strategy](#) aligns with the 2024-2028 Corporate Plan (CP). An annual [Climate Action Plan](#) (CAP) aims to deliver corporate Net Zero at the soonest opportunity. Each PDG and team must manage their remit and operations with regard to climate adaptation and mitigation.

- 2.3.2 We have made good progress on CAP delivery, and we are ahead of schedule due to early progress with Net Zero Housing.
- 2.3.3 We have added one more electric van to the fleet. Our electric vehicles save more than 21 tCO₂e annually.
- 2.3.4 In addition to recent projects to decarbonise leisure centres, we are installing heat pumps at Active Cullompton and battery storage at Active Tiverton. We plan to install more solar power at Phoenix Lane.
- 2.3.5 Table below - positive progress on the CAP at Quarter 2 end, 2025/26.

Actions, Activities, Projects	Emissions Cut, tCO ₂ e/year	Q2 25-26 Status	Progress %
Property Services (subtotal)	218		
Pannier Market LED fixtures and controls.	2	Complete	100%
Exe Valley, additional solar car ports. (Solar now replaced with battery storage .)	37	Active	
Culm Valley, new ASHP, solar.	45	Active	95%
Exe Valley gas CHP 70kW. (combined heat and power)	-50	Active #	95%
Solar Car Ports, Phoenix Lane multi storey.	146	Emerging	10%
Building Management System, Phoenix House.	38	Emerging	5%
Fleet (subtotal)	7		
Replace 1 van	2	Complete	
Replace 4 vans	5	Dropped *	
Housing (subtotal)	135		
Solid Fuel appliance removals from HRA Stock	50	Active	32%
Whole house UPVC window replacements	15	Active	40%
Internal Insulation upgrades, HRA stock	13	Active	60%
Whole roof Replacement to HRA stock	7	Active	50%
Renewable Heating installs, HRA stock	48	Active	10%
LED lighting to Bathrooms in HRA stock	1	Active	84%
Replace 22 properties with Net Zero stock (additional progress ahead of schedule)	(additional) 136	Active	35%

*Note: due to operational constraints, it was not possible to switch to electric vehicles (EV) at this time. Options are being considered to develop EV capability and avoid potential operational impacts.

#Note: installing the CHP re-introduces a fossil fuel use, but should significantly reduce electricity costs.

3.0 Community and partnership activities

3.1 Climate Change Strategy themes:

- Vibrant Landscapes at the Heart of Devon
- Climate Resilient Communities
- Healthy Homes
- Green Growth and Bright Futures
- Sustainable Services and Spending

3.1.1 Recent engagement activities, in brief:

- Letting agent workshop 18 September hosted by the Council with ECOE Advice (healthy homes theme). Support available:
 - Impartial advice and subsidised retrofit plans for landlords in Mid Devon
 - Assessments for insulation, damp and ventilation
 - Help for households experiencing fuel poverty including debt support
 - Making the most of low carbon and smart technologyMyth busting and information:
 - EPCs, energy efficiency and retrofit
 - Ventilation and cavity wall insulationPlus:
 - An opportunity for open discussion about the subjects covered
 - How to sign up for retrofit services through Energy Boost Mid Devon
- Big Green Fair at Crediton 27 September; C&S Specialist attended alongside ECOE Advice. (healthy homes)
- Monthly community clinics by partners ECOE Advice. (healthy homes theme)
- The Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change gave a talk to Sustainable Tiverton 09 October on the Climate Change Strategy.
- The new 'Connecting the Culm' community engagement project ran fun practical activities about natural flood management at Cullompton Autumn Festival 11 October. (climate resilient communities)
- Economic Development Officer and C&S Specialist promoted Green Enterprise Grants at the Council's ['meet the funder'](#) event on 22 October for community and voluntary groups. C&S Specialist helped formulate the event. (green growth and bright futures)
- A film presentation and discussion panel 11 November organised in partnership with Dart Valley farmers / nature recovery project. Attended alongside topic experts Farmer Carbon Toolkit. (vibrant landscapes theme)
- The Housing Initiatives Officer worked with DCC and other districts to promote a 12 November event to Mid Devon contractors, to encourage SME green energy skills training and growth through taking on more retrofit work. (green growth and bright futures)

- An activity session for young people on 16 November hosted at Active Tiverton and run by SASSY, part of Sustainable Tiverton. (climate resilient communities)
- 3.1.2 Community engagement continues e.g.:
- Our partnership project 'Connecting the Culm' community engagement team is building an interactive water play model to demonstrate natural flood management methods e.g. leaky dams.
 - An event on sustainable packaging, waste avoidance and recycling will be held for food and drink businesses on Tuesday 02 December 2025 at Hawke Barn near Tiverton. Run via the Prosper business support programme managed by Devon County Council on behalf of Mid Devon District Council.
 - Working with partners for a Spring 2026 event and 2026 film festival TBC.
- 3.1.3 We continue to share and promote news, activities, projects, resources and funding via social media, the [Let's Talk Mid Devon](#) engagement platform and the [Sustainable Mid Devon](#) website ([resources map](#) updated).
- 3.2 Vibrant landscapes at the heart of Devon
- 3.2.1 As approved, Devon's draft [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (LNRS) went out to public consultation online. The Council promoted this on social media.
- 3.2.2 The C&S Specialist worked with Member Services to formulate the Council's response by collating input from Cabinet, PES PDG Members and the Council's Forward Planning Team Leader.
- 3.2.3 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change prompted a special working group of the Grand Western Canal Joint Advisory Committee to ensure joined-up approach about the canal. Devon County Council's (DCC) County Ecologist attended the meeting chaired by the C&S Specialist.
- 3.2.4 The LNRS is advisory, focused on opportunities, not restrictions. The LNRS provides a guide and evidence base to inform Local Plans and decision making. It is not intended to act as a barrier to development, nor to place new restrictions on developing land or making land use changes. Guidance related to the Planning system is provided at this page: [Supporting information](#).
- 3.3 Climate Resilient Communities
- 3.3.1 The Council is working in partnership with Blackdown Hills National Landscape to support a new 'Connecting the Culm' community engagement project around climate adaptation.
- 3.4 Healthy Homes
- 3.4.1 [Energy Boost Mid Devon](#), a partnership project with charity ECOE Advice, launched in April. By the end of Q2, ECOE Advice had done 8 advice sessions

and outreach events, dealt with 101 enquiries, made 38 home visits, provided 1 Whole Home Plan, and had used £2,143 of the £15,000 Energy Efficiency Fund to help Mid Devon residents.

- 3.4.2 Events during the last quarter included the Mid Devon Show (a presence on 2 stalls, sharing with the Council and with CHAT), Uffculme Show, Crediton Farmers Market, Crediton Big Green Fair in the Square. At these events there was a large total footfall of approximately 1,500-2,000 people seeing ECOE Advice banners. Approximately 200 people were engaged in retrofit conversations, either for direct advice, or booking home visits.

3.5 Green Growth and Bright Futures

- 3.5.1 Community Team Lead, Public Health, relaunched transport efficiency advice to fleet managers via ECOstars with s106 funding. The objective is to achieve better air quality, particularly at Cullompton and Crediton.

- 3.5.2 The [Green Enterprise Grants](#) scheme offers grants £500 to £5k to help small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Mid Devon to reduce emissions.

- 3.5.3 Summary at the time of writing this report. From numerous expressions of interest, we invited 31 applicants to bid. The Decision Panel approved grant offers on 3 bids; each is estimated to save at least 1 tCO₂e annually from their carbon footprint. Total paid or offered so far: £7,248.30. The Decision Panel 11 November approved two further applications, each for £5k.

- 3.5.4 Deletti 'Phase 2' partnership. The Council will host 12 new rapid [chargepoints](#) under this scheme, owned and operated by Wenea. Status: 6 installed.

- 3.5.5 Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme. Wenea has the contract with Devon County Council (DCC). Delivery schedule details to be announced.

- 3.5.6 With Deletti and LEVI combined, we are on target to host 10 new chargepoints by 2028 as per Corporate Plan. However, at our leisure centres Instavolt has now upgraded their chargers from 6 rapid 50kW units to 3 new super-rapid models up to 160kW.

Leisure centre	Previous format	New format
Crediton	4 chargepoints. 2 units each with 1 CCS + 1 CHAdeMO.	2 chargepoints. 1x unit with 1 CCS (50kW) + 1 CHAdeMO (50kW)
Cullompton	4 chargepoints. 2 units each with 1 CCS + 1 CHAdeMO.	2 chargepoints. 1x unit with 1 CCS (160kW) + 1 CHAdeMO (60kW)
Tiverton	4 chargepoints. 2 units each with 1 CCS + 1 CHAdeMO.	2 chargepoints. 1x unit with 1 CCS (160kW by 2026) + 1 CHAdeMO (60kW).

4.0 Corporate activities

- 4.1 The C&S Specialist continues to give support to all teams and has:
- Provided NZAG secretariat support and ad-hoc support to Members.
 - Worked with the Cabinet Member to take forward actions raised by this PDG and NZAG with colleagues and partners.
 - Coordinated CAP monitoring. Maintained C&S Corporate Plan performance data, a cross-team External Funding tracker and carried out risk reviews.
 - Worked to support and brief the Corporate Management Team (CMT), service leads and others on corporate environment aims.
 - Supported reviews such as for the s106 infrastructure list.
 - Supported Service Lead meetings with climate and sustainability as a regular agenda item. Met quarterly with key operational managers to support communications, teamwork and to help prioritise actions. Shared opportunities with Members, CMT, colleagues etc.
- 4.2 Terms of Reference Review: Net Zero Advisory Group (NZAG).
- 4.2.1 NZAG has been reviewing its Terms of Reference. The next step is to provide a draft Terms of Reference to Standards Committee.

Financial Implications. The financial implications associated with this report are the overall costs of the C&S Programme, budgets linked specifically to the Council's Corporate Plan, Climate Strategy and CAP.

Legal Implications. The Council's environmental sustainability duties are underpinned by legislation e.g. [Environment Act 2021](#). All local authorities have obligations under the [Climate Change Act 2008](#) with regard to climate change adaptation (resilience) and mitigation (emission reductions). [Full Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019](#).

Risk Assessment. Progress on Performance Indicators (PI) provided separately by Performance and Risk Reports. There are 2 main risks (to the Council): 1) that the Council does not take sufficient actions to enable it to meet its Climate Emergency declaration ambitions; and 2) that the financial implications of Climate Change are not adequately measured and reflected in the Council's decision making.

Impact on Climate Change. The role of the C&S Specialist in support of the corporate officer team is central to the Council's C&S Programme by actions such as the development of strategic positions and delivery of projects through internal, community and partnership work.

Equalities Impact Assessment. There are no equality impacts associated with this report. Specific projects and policies are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. (Assessing the equality impacts of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is not only a legal requirement, but also a positive opportunity for authorities to make better decisions based on robust evidence.)

Relationship to Corporate Plan. Please refer to the Planning, Environment and Sustainability section and to the performance measures for points 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off / mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer
Date: 12.11.25

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leiburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 12.11.25

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford
Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director
Date: 12.11.25

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager.
Date: 12 November 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: Jason Ball, Climate and Sustainability Specialist: Email: JBall@MidDevon.gov.uk Tel: 01884 255255.

Background papers: Previous update provided to this [PDG](#) on 23 September 2025. For background details, please refer to previous reports, all [available online](#).



Report for: Planning, Environment and Sustainability PDG

Date of Meeting:	25 th November 2025
Subject:	Summary report on Planning matters
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Economic Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Stephen Walford, Chief Executive
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report provides a summary of activity undertaken in relation to planning matters during the last quarter.

Recommendation(s):

1. That Members note the contents of the report.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

This report seeks to provide Members with updates across a range of matters relating to Planning and Building Control.

2.0 Updates

2.1 New National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

- 2.1.1 Previous reports have outlined that further to the release of the latest iteration of the NPPF in December 2024, it remains expected that the Government will consult on a national set of ‘core’ development management (DM) policies. More recently MHCLG has indicated a consultation on draft DM Policies is expected “this year”. Additionally, we are still awaiting the Regulations to enable the new 30 month Local Plan development period as well as a final position on the use of a National Scheme of Delegation.

2.2 New Local Plan: Plan Mid Devon

- 2.2.1 Work to develop the new Local Plan (Plan Mid Devon) continues – albeit there is an important link to the announcement on national development management policies. The Government is expected to publish new regulations for plan making under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 before the end this calendar year. This will confirm the stages for preparing the local plan in the reformed system, which is expected to include a requirement for the Council to prepare a Project Initiation Document.
- 2.2.2 The Project Initiation Document will: define the scope of the local plan; identify evidence required to create a sound plan; identify any local issues likely to be relevant to the plan or environmental assessment; set out the project management, governance, risks to delivery and resourcing arrangements; and outline the approach to community and key stakeholder engagement.
- 2.2.3 It is expected there will be a requirement for a 4-month period to “notify” and “invite” early participation from the community and key stakeholders on matters that might shape the direction of the local plan (e.g. vision for growth) before a 30-month plan making timetable can commence.
- 2.2.4 The Project Initiation Document will replace the current Local Development Scheme that was approved by the Cabinet on the 4th March 2025 (minute 148) and will include a review of the local plan timetable. A new timetable will need to reflect progress made on gathering evidence and technical studies and that the Forward Planning team has been below capacity for a significant period through three vacant posts and recruitment difficulties.
- 2.2.5 A report about the Project Initiation Document and new plan making timetable will be brought to this Policy Development Group in early 2026.

- 2.2.6 The Local Plan team has appointed an interim Principal Forward Planning Officer (consultant) to support work on the new Local Plan whilst recruitment of permanent staff continues. This officer brings a wealth of experience and is already contributing to the work of the team. It is expected this interim role will be extended so that it can continue to benefit the Forward Planning team and provide a period of transition for new permanent staff to fully take up their respective responsibilities and duties.
- 2.2.7 The team has also very recently appointed two Forward Planning Assistants, who have also added capacity to the team. Recruitment to the Forward Planning Officer and Principal Forward Planning Officer roles remains in progress and it is hoped will be resolved soon through successful appointments.

2.3 Development Management Policies

- 2.3.1 The EUE (Area B) masterplan was also noted at the September Cabinet meeting. Although developments on Area B will still be bound to adhere to the adopted Tiverton EUE Master Plan SPD, this Area B masterplan will support the progression of development proposals for this area of the EUE allocation. (A hybrid planning application for Area B is anticipated to be submitted before the end of this year.)
- 2.3.2 The Council is required to renew its Infrastructure Funding Statement and publish it online by 31st December 2025. This document is refreshed annually and details what the Council expects to fund, or contribute towards, using S106 funds. A review of the Infrastructure Funding Statement is currently being undertaken shortly ahead of its presentation to Cabinet for approval prior to publication. The previously published statement can be found on the Council's website [here](#).

2.4 Development Management

- 2.4.1 Members will be aware that some staffing changes are occurring within Development Management with the departure of the former permanent DMM and one of the Principal Officers. The DMM post has been advertised internally, however at the time of drafting this process had not yet been completed. We successfully recruited internally to the vacant PPO post and have offered a permanent post to for the resultant Planning Officer vacancy. The Council's Arboricultural Officer (a post shared between Development Management and Property Services) has resigned and we are looking to recruit to replace this resource.

2.4.2 Performance within Development Management remains strong with 100% of householder applications determined within 8 weeks / agreed extension of time and no minor applications overturned at appeal. (Q2 2025/26 data.) The team managed reduce the number of live applications over the quarter from 224 to 186.

2.4.3 During Q2 application fee income has picked up against target (£422,282 at the mid-point versus annual £835k target). This picture is beginning to reflect (i) the impact of a range of increased national fees for applications, as well as (ii) receipt of the first housing applications responding to the current housing supply position.

2.5 Building Control

2.5.1 Building Control (a shared function with North Devon Council) continues to perform well, albeit with continuing resourcing challenges and pressures accruing through changes introduced through the Building Safety Act (2024).

2.5.2 Q2 data showed 95% approval of full applications within 2 months (and was on target and 78% was achieved for response within 3 weeks, 10-day response time remains below target at 18 days and is unlikely to improve given our vacant positions and inexperienced team. Partnership continues to be heavily reliant upon three Senior Inspectors for supervision and plan examination work). Despite its challenges, it maintains a strong market share at 78% set against a target of 75%. Market share of new housing completions for Q2 dropped to 18% and remains below target (40%) and is highly dependent upon the nature of developers active within the market. Forecasted outturn for 2025/26 is a surplus of £22K. A recent announcement advised that the RBCA Assent has ceased trading - this will result in a significant numbers of Initial Notices being cancelled or transferred. Transferred INS will require significant administration input from the Partnership's Technical Support Team and Cancelled Notices will create unauthorised works which will require reversion applications and our inspectors to consider enforcement action where reversion applications are not received from impacted owners.

2.5.3 Application numbers are down, and are below the same period last year, and income is also therefore below target. Again – akin to Development Management - this is reflective of a depressed housing market and low confidence within the construction/development sector as a whole. Poor trading conditions seem likely to continue.

2.6 Planning Enforcement

- 2.6.1 The Enforcement team continues with a high/active case load albeit there continues to be churn/change in the live cases as new cases are presented and officers close older/completed cases. During Q2 we served 3 enforcement notices, 3 temporary / stop notices and 4 breach of condition notices. Most recently the team were involved in a 2-day public inquiry relating to alleged tipping of material and improvements to the site access. We are currently awaiting decisions on 12 planning appeals where enforcement notices have been served.
- 2.6.2 The team continues to operate with two officers (a contractor and an assistant enforcement officer.) Multiple attempts have been made to recruit a senior enforcement officer, including with market supplements applied. However, we are currently reliant upon agency resource that comes at considerable cost to the council. Further consideration is being given as to how a more permanent resource might be secured at better value to maximise the effectiveness of council investment in enforcement activity.
- 2.6.3 In addition to this, planning officers continue to support with the resolution of live cases in order to seek to manage and reduce the caseload.

Financial Implications

Financial implications associated with this report are limited – but members are asked to note the increase in application fees is in part reflective of new housing applications responding to our housing supply position and therefore the need for the planning committee to determine proposals in accordance with the “tilted balance”.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this information report.

Risk Assessment

There are no major risks associated with this report.

Impact on Climate Change

The scope of this PDG means it has a significant opportunity to progress positive work around climate, biodiversity and other environmental/sustainability matters. Officers will work to seek to support the PDG in maximising these opportunities.

Equalities Impact Assessment

No negative equalities impacts are expected.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The work of this PDG supports a wide range of corporate objectives and the corporate plan as a whole.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Date: 11 November 2025

Statutory Officer: Maria De Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 11 November 2025

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford

Agreed by Chief Executive

Date: 11 November 2025

Performance and risk: Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 12 November 2025

Cabinet member notified: yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Stephen Walford Chief Executive

Email: swalford@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone:

Background papers: