

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the COMMUNITY, PEOPLE & EQUALITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 11 November 2025 at 12.30 pm**

**Present  
Councillors**

B Holdman (Chair) S Chenore (Vice Chair),  
C Connor, M Farrell, C Harrower,  
B Holdman and H Tuffin.

**Apologies  
Councillors**

D Broom and A Glover

**Also Present  
Councillor**

D Wulff.

**Also Present  
Officers**

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Maria De Leiburne (Director of Legal, People & Governance (Monitoring Officer)), Paul Deal (Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience), Simon Newcombe (Head of Housing & Health) and Lewis Dyson (Resilience Officer) and Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager).

**Councillors  
Online**

A Cuddy and J Lock.

**Officers Online**

Stephen Carr (Corporate Performance Improvement Manager).

**27 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Councillor: D Broom who was substituted by C Connor, A Cuddy (online) and A Glover.

**28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

No interests were declared under this item.

Members were reminded that interests could be declared at any point during the meeting.

**29 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

## 30 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 September 2025 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

## 31 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair had the following announcement to make:

- The Chair thanked Officers past and present for the organisation for the “Meet the Funders” event. This was held to connect local community groups, charities, and social enterprises with key funding bodies and grant providers.

## 32 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD- QUARTER 2 (00:10:58)

The Group were presented with, and **NOTED**, a slide \* showing performance information in the Community People and Equalities area for Quarter 2.

Since the Dashboard was last presented to this meeting, work had been ongoing to create a glossary. This contained all the measures used as part of the Dashboards and provided a definition for each. The definitions aimed to provide a fuller understanding of what was being measured and how. This was available on the Council's website.

The following was referred to:

- There was one Corporate Risk relating to this PDG, that being Severe Weather Emergency Recovery which was at 12 and increasing.
- Two indicators that were shown as red on the dashboard related to “Let's Talk Mid Devon”, the Communications Team were continuing to promote the use of the site and had recently launched the annual Residents Survey on the site which would hopefully encourage people to sign up and register. The team were having discussions with service areas to ensure that it was the best platform for their needs and that work would feed into future planning around the platform.
- Support VCSE sector by securing additional external funding - £51,791

Discussion took place regarding:

- The Annual target set for “Let's Talk Mid Devon” with the barriers that had been taken away was the target unrealistic. It was explained that the Corporate Plan and would go to a meeting of Cabinet to make any changes in regard to the percentages.
- The Housing support was showing as Red. Was this due to the Housing Law regulations changing? What measures were the Council taking?
- Were the postcodes of people completing the survey collected?
- The level of support for Town and Parish Council's developing their Community Emergency Plans.

Note: \* Slide previously circulated.

The Group received and **NOTED** a report\* from the Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) and in accordance with the IPCOs recommendation that the Policy was presented to Members annually.

The following was highlighted in the report:

- The directed surveillance (covert surveillance of individuals outside of residential premises and vehicles).
- Covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) (such as the deployment of undercover officers) and the acquisition and disclosure of communications data (such as telephone billing information or subscriber details).
- The powers were only ever used if the Council had obtained approval from the Magistrate's Court, and this was only for offences where the sentence would attract 6 months or more and or relate to the underage sale of alcohol or tobacco.
- The requirement from Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO), who were the Council auditors was for this Policy, to be presented annually.
- The powers available to the Council had not been used since 2014.
- There had been a three-year audit carried out in August 2024. The Inspector had been satisfied with the information provided.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The offences in the report stated sale of alcohol or tobacco, however, were drugs included within this? It was explained that the Policy referred to no alcohol and tobacco only, offences relating to drugs would be over a 6-month sentence.
- When would a statutory update be provided from government? It was explained that IPCO would update the Council quarterly which would include any statutory updates that the Council needed to be aware of.

The Group **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the Council's policy for ensuring compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) was appropriate and should remain as currently drafted.

The Group **NOTED** that the Council had not used its powers under RIPA since March 2014.

(Proposed by Cllr S Chenore and Cllr C Harrower)

**Reason for the decision:**

The use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) powers was heavily regulated and scrutinised by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office ("IPCO"). The legislation, combined with Codes of Conduct, sets the framework for the use of RIPA powers. Statutory guidance requires the Council to review the use of RIPA and the RIPA policy annually

Note: \*Report previously circulated.

#### 34 **MEETING MANAGEMENT (00:30:00)**

The Chair MOVED that he would be bring the following Agenda item:-

- (i) 9 Resilience Strategy update

#### 35 **RESILIENCE STRATEGY UPDATE (00:30:10)**

The Group were presented with, and **NOTED**, a presentation\* providing a Resilience Strategy update for the Community, People and Equalities PDG.

The following was highlighted:

- The Risk Management covered Emergency Planning Recovery and Emergency Response
- The Local Community Risk Register containing risks identified by local community to be noted at the March Community PDG.
- Core Plans, these were new and included the following; roles and responsibilities, action cards, new templates with consistent terminology and an introduction of the tactical response team.
- Each Council department had or will have a Business Continuity Plan in place to be used if an emergency was to occur.
- Business continuity examples that had happened previously such as power outages, unauthorised encampment and Carlu Chipper theft along with Major Incident examples such as Severe Weather and M5 Vehicle Fire.
- There has been a lot of training/exercises completed by MDDC officers including Tactical, TCC Familiarisation, Exercise Pegasus with more to come such as internal exercises and Recovery training.
- Lessons learnt were to be completed with a new template that had been created and was a standing item to be discussed at monthly service management meetings as required.
- A Community Hub working group had been set up by the Local Resilience Forum to provide support for Town and Parishes to build the Resilience for the future. Guide will be published next year along with the Resilience Officer push to attend Parish/Town meetings to discuss.
- Next Steps- An update on the Local Community Risk Register and the Resilience Strategy would be provided to the Group in March 2026 and an all Member briefing on this subject would be scheduled.

Discussion took place regarding:

- What would happen if there was an IT attack and there was no access to computers/power? It was explained that was difficult to answer due to the complexity of what could occur, however, there was a joint plan with Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum, in addition to each MDDC Business Continuity Plans covering various impacts which includes loss of power and loss of IT.
- The access through Tiverton when the M5 was closed due to an accident which resulted in the bridge at Bickleigh being used, what measures were in

place to safeguard the bridge? It was explained about the Category 1 responders who would liaise directly with Highways and Devon County Council, the Head of Housing and Health who would report back the Group's concerns.

- The Emergency Planning page on the website, one of the links was broken and the documents to download were out of date. It was explained that the review of the website was to take place in the new year, however, the broken links would be removed before then.

Note: Cllr M Farrell arrived at this item.

## 36 **STRATEGIC GRANT REVIEW 2025 (01:04:05)**

The Group had before it, a report\* from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) presenting the Strategic Grants renewal grant funding for external agencies for a 3-year period (2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29) with a forward recommendation to Cabinet.

The Deputy Chief Executive (S151) presented the report and the following was highlighted:

- The Council valued the role of the community and voluntary sector in providing key services to the community, meeting the needs of Mid Devon residents, particularly the most vulnerable, and helping to deliver the Council's Corporate Objectives.
- The report attempted to provide both security and continuity of funding provision to key Strategic groups that provided a strong level of complimentary service provision with a number of services and areas of Council activity.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Would the Council consider a local Charity called "Unite", this Charity supported young carers that provided care for adults. It was explained, given the Council's financial forecast that in section 2.4 the Group could support other Local Charities if they wish however the total amount of £120,225 would have to remain the same.
- The funding amounts were different between organisations that the Council supported.
- Some of the organisations charge for admission and therefore received a level of income.
- For the Group to work closely with their Town and Parish Councils.

**RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that:

1. A Strategic Grant funding programme of £120,000 per annum be approved for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29.
2. The Grant continues to be allocated to individual organisations as set out within Table 1 (contained within the report) for 2026/27 with 2027/28 and 2028/29 to be confirmed.

(Proposed by Cllr S Chenore and seconded by Cllr C Connor)

Note:

- (i) Report previously circulated.
- (ii) Cllr A Cuddy declared a personal interest in that he was business owner.
- (iii) Cllr C Connor declared a interest as she was a Member of Devon County Council who also provided funding to some of the organisations.
- (iv) Cllr Ben Holdman **ABSTAINED** from voting.

### 37 **2026/27- DRAFT BUDGET (01:24:30)**

The Group had before it and **NOTED** a report\* from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) presenting the Draft Budget for 2026/2027

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

- The Group was advised that there was very little clarity available on the future funding decisions for the Local Government Sector. Since the last meeting of this PDG, this position had not altered as no further announcements received.
- The Group recommended to Cabinet the Green proposals were approved and noted the Amber pressures to make a decision once the position was known.
- Cabinet noted the Groups recommendation of the Red saving option to cease the Strategic Grants which was considered at the previous item on this agenda.
- 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 committee.
- Generally, the bids were 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.

Discussion took place regarding:

- There was a replacement of the Woodchipper, what would happen to the old equipment of the Council? It was explained that it would depend on what condition that piece of equipment was in. The council may sell it or otherwise it would be scrapped.
- The costing of the replacement for the CCTV would this include a replacement of the whole system or parts of it. It was explained that it included the whole system.

Note: Report previously circulated.

### 38 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The items listed in the Work Programme for the next meeting were **NOTED**.

In addition to this, the following was requested to be on the agenda for a future meeting of the Group:

- The Police would be invited to the March meeting.

(The meeting ended at 14.03pm)

**CHAIR**