Public Document Pack



Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 18 August 2025 at 5.00 pm Phoenix Chambers, Phoenix House, Tiverton

Next ordinary meeting Monday, 8 September 2025 at 5.00 pm

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

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

To join the meeting online, click here

Meeting ID: 362 717 486 612

Passcode: Ve2ii96c

Membership

Cllr L G J Kennedy

Cllr G Westcott

Cllr C Adcock

Cllr D Broom

Cllr E Buczkowski

Cllr A Cuddy

Cllr G Czapiewski

Cllr M Farrell

Cllr C Harrower

Cllr L Knight

Cllr J Poynton

Cllr R Roberts

AGENDA

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

1 Apologies and Substitute Members

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

2 Declarations of Interest under the Code of Conduct

To record any interests on agenda matters.

3 Public Question Time

To receive any questions from members of the public and replies thereto.

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

4 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 5 - 16)

To consider whether to approve the minutes as a correct record of the meeting held on Monday 14 July 2025.

5 Chair's Announcements

To receive any announcements that the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee may wish to make.

6 **Decisions of the Cabinet**

To consider any decisions made by the Cabinet at its last meeting on 5 August 2025 that have been called-in.

7 Work Programme (Pages 17 - 36)

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

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

Stephen Walford Chief Executive Friday, 8 August 2025

Guidance notes for meetings of Mid Devon District Council

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

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

1. Inspection of Papers

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

They can also be accessed via the council's website Click Here

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

2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements

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

The Code of Conduct can be viewed here:

3. Minutes of the Meeting

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

4. Public Question Time

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

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

5. Meeting Etiquette for participants

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

For those joining the meeting virtually:

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

6. Exclusion of Press & Public

When considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act. If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the

meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed. They will be invited to return as soon as the meeting returns to open session.

7. Recording of meetings

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

8. Fire Drill Procedure

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

9. WIFI

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



MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on 14 July 2025 at 5.00pm

Present Councillors

G Westcott (Vice-Chair), C Adcock, D Broom, E Buczkowski, A Cuddy, G Czapiewski, M Farrell, C Harrower, L G J Kennedy, J Poynton and R Roberts

Apologies

Councillors S Robinson and L Knight

Also Present

Councillor L Taylor (Leader of the Council)

Also Present

Officers: Stephen Walford (Chief Executive), Matthew Page (Head

of People, Governance & Waste) and David Parker (Democratic Services & Policy Research Officer)

Councillors

Online M Fletcher, S Keable, J Lock and D Wulff

Officers Online Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151)), Richard

Marsh (Director of Place and Economy), Dean Emery (Head of Revenues and Benefits), Paul Deal (Head of Finance, Property and Climate Resilience), Dr Stephen Carr (Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager),

and Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager).

13 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllrs S Robinson and L Knight. L Knight was substituted by Cllr L G J Kennedy.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

No declarations were declared under this item.

At Item 3 (Public Questions) Cllr L G J Kennedy declared an interest that he was a Director of the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC).

15 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (0:05:00)**

Councillor Barry Warren - Chairman of Willand Parish Council:

It is appreciated that this is all at a very early stage but whatever the final decision is it would appear that Town and Parish Councils will still have a function and need some guidance please. There must be some models or guidance from such proposed unitary authorities which are already in place.

Question 1: What information is available as to the future of Town and Parish Councils after the new authorities are formed?

Response from the Chief Executive:

The process of local government reorganisation (LGR) refers to the intent, by government, to change the structure of principal councils in two-tier areas to remove county and district/city/borough councils, through the process known as unitarisation. This process does not impact on the existence of current town or parish councils, though clearly their relationship with their principal council in future will be with a different entity to those as present.

Question 2: What is the expected time scale for any changes to be implemented?

Response from the Chief Executive:

Government expects the new unitary councils in non-priority areas to be created to take effect from 1 April 2028, though clearly this will be subject to future statutory processes being achieved to enable such a timeline.

Currently Willand Parish Council lease a number of open spaces/play areas from MDDC. Plans are in place for their maintenance, refurbishment and replacement equipment as existing comes to end of life. Contingency funds are set aside for this.

Question 3: Is there any idea as to what will happen to the Leases?

- (a) Will they continue for the full term?
- (b) Should either side cancel the Leases now to stabilise the position?
- (c) What is likely to happen to Land wholly owned by the Parish Council?
- (d) Will District Council 'gift' or sell land to Town or Parish Councils for a nominal sum?

Response from the Chief Executive:

All existing contracts entered into by current councils will be automatically transferred to the new council, through a process known as contract novation. Local authorities often have long-term contracts for the provision of services (sometimes running to decades), and it is not the case that existing leases should be cancelled to provide stability – stability of continuance is the default position during any change, although clearly once the new councils are in existence, any contract negotiation at that point

onwards would be with the new council. Land wholly owned by the parish council will continue to be wholly owned by the parish council. Any decisions on assets made before the change order is implemented, will continue to be a decision of the preexisting asset holder (the District Council), and policy decisions will be taken by councils in the normal way.

Currently Willand Parish Council cut all the roadside verges within the Parish and they receive a financial grant which covers a good proportion of the cost from Devon County Council.

Question 4: Will such arrangements continue?

Response from the Chief Executive:

There is no reason why this would not continue assuming multi-year agreements are in place. However, as outlined in a previous response, any negotiations with 'the highway authority' after the commencement date (expected on 1 April 2028) will be with the successor council as the county council will no longer exist.

Question 5: Is there any advice or indications which can be conveyed to Town and Parish Councils to assist with their planning for the practicalities of the future?

Response from the Chief Executive:

It is suggested that town and parish councils continue to liaise with their representatives in the Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC) and make the most of opportunities to engage in the process through the current survey and particularly through the statutory period of consultation, likely due springtime of 2026, where all viable proposals will be formally consulted upon. One inevitable outcome from this LGR process is that towns and parishes will be dealing with much larger councils than that of today. How the new councils support their towns and parishes to deliver at neighbourhood level and to thrive with, and for, their communities, will be a challenge that has to be met in order that residents see positive outcomes of this desired shift to larger, single-tier units of local government.

16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (0:15:13)

There was an amendment to Item 5, Chair's Announcements, fourth bullet point where the words ", until the Unitary Authority was in existence." were added so that it read 'Tasks that now resided with the County Council would need to be appropriately shared between Unitary Authorities that were to be created – whilst still ensuring that the existing District Council carried out their duties to the best of their abilities, until the Unitary Authority was in existence.'

Following the addition of the amendment, the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 9 June 2025 were approved as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

Under Item 11 of the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2025 'Value for Money and Best Practice in Mid Devon Housing Modular Social Housing and Delivery

Report', Councillor G Czapiewski wanted it noted that he had made the point that using prisoner effort in the construction of Modern Methods of Construction in Modular Homes, added social value nationally and that it and other value adds, quantified in grants awarded, needed to be explicit and referred to directly in proposals to councillors as they aided in decision making.

17 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair had no announcements to make.

18 **DECISIONS OF THE CABINET**

The Committee **NOTED** that none of the decisions made by the Cabinet at its meetings on 17 June 2025 and 8 July 2025 had been called in.

19 ANNUAL CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25 (0:20:56)

The Committee received and scrutinised the performance indicators and information received in the *Annual Corporate Performance Report 2024/25.

The following was highlighted:

- The report provided performance information for the 2024/25 financial year. The report and the accompanying appendices were structured according to the five themes in the Corporate Plan.
- Section 2 of the covering report provided performance analysis on a theme by theme basis, with the focus on the Corporate Plan performance indicators.
- Further information on performance against the Aims and Objectives detailed in the Corporate Plan was provided in Appendix 1 to 5.
- Appendix 6 contained the performance dashboards for quarter 4. These contained 100 measures highlighting how services were performing across the Council. Those indicators that were part of the Corporate Plan were highlighted in yellow text.
- The Performance Dashboards had also been reviewed by the relevant Policy Development Groups (PDGs) and the Planning Committee.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The Community Risk Register was under development and not yet published.
 The final draft had been completed and was circulating to the service specific leads to identify what mitigating actions the Council could take.
- The Council were represented by its Resilience Officer on a regional working group on Emergency Hubs which was led by the Devon Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum. The region were aiming to follow a consistent approach that met the needs of the responder agencies and provided the whole society resilience that was intended by creating an Emergency Hub. Locally, little had happened regarding Emergency Hubs as the Council were waiting for the common operating procedure before introducing the plan to communities.
- Householder Planning Applications, where the target was 70% of applications determined within 8 weeks in line with the Government threshold. A local

- target had been considered but had not been changed for the consistency of reporting.
- Capital slippage 22%, target 0% this was because two of the nine projects had slipped. One was the Building Management System at Phoenix House was currently being scoped and the other one was the Cullompton Relief Road, which was now well underway after securing funding.
- As part of the budget process, an aspirational £0 budget was set for the use of agency staff in Corporate Services. In 2024/25 it had been challenging to recruit in key areas such as Finance and Legal which therefore required agency staff to fill those critical roles costing £200k.
- In the drive towards Net Zero how much attention were the procurement team
 giving to the Council's own anti-slavery requirements? Should the spend be
 brought within the UK to ensure that slaves were not used in the supply chain?
 The Council focussed on modern slavery but the slavery outlined could be
 tackled through the Council's procurement processes. An answer would be
 provided to the Councillor asking the question following the meeting.
- The Homes Dashboard showed a figure for unoccupied and unfurnished empty homes across the district including those in the private sector to explain the implications it had for pressures on housing in the district and by extension the Council's homelessness team. The Homes PDG Performance Dashboard (HRA) had a measure entitled 'MDH Housing stock occupancy rate' which showed 97.5% and therefore 2.5% voids. – That meant that out of 3000 homes, approximately 75 were voids.
- National Non-Domestic Rates were otherwise known as Business Rates and 99.83% of those rates due were collected. The Economic Development team were aware of the empty properties that would attract a Business Rate. A large proportion of those properties were listed buildings where the owners received 100% relief and so there was no incentive (in the way of business rates) for the business to expand.
- The Council set its own target for the collection of business rates. Of the rates collected, 50% went to Central Government, 40% to the Council, 9% to the County Council and 1% to the Fire Service. However, the Council were a tariff authority, which meant that they had to pay further monies back to the Government which left the Council with a comparatively small amount of money.

Note: Report previously circulated.

20 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT (0:44:20)

The Committee received and **NOTED** a verbal Annual Report from the Leader of the Council.

The following was highlighted:

 Over the past two years (2023/24 and 2024/25) the Council had seen the satisfaction of their residents increase, up to 52% in the most recent survey an increase of 11% on that recorded in 2023/24, and residents who felt well informed about the Council was up to 60% - an increase of 15%.

- The Council was trying new ways to work with their communities such as through the 'Let's Talk Mid Devon' platform, and working closer with their town and parish councils –through initiatives such as the State of the District debate, creating a new Cabinet position with responsibilities for Parish and Community Engagement, and developing community resilience plans in partnership with the towns and parishes.
- The Council had supported all 1,573 households who came to them experiencing homelessness in the past two years.
- Tenant satisfaction was strong and improving. Overall tenant satisfaction was up to 70%. 79% of tenants were satisfied that their homes were safe, and 72% of tenants were satisfied with the overall repairs service.
- The Council were building award winning, affordable, and energy efficient homes – helping to tackle the challenges of the housing crisis and the climate crisis
- The Council had advanced towards the top 5% of national performance for their recycling rate and reduction in residual tonnage (their 57.9% recycling rate put the Council 11th out of 197 District authorities and they were 9th for residual tonnage reduction). The Council was recognised nationally by The Office for Local Government for having one of the fastest increases in recycling rates nationally and were shortlisted for the National Local Government Chronical award for Environmental Services. Further options for additional recycling streams would be considered in the autumn following the successful Pots and Pans trial and the planned trial for recycling nappies and sanitary products.
- A £33.5 million funding package was signed, for the Cullompton Relief Road, in February 2025, with works due to start in 2026. This vital piece of long awaited infrastructure would be key to unlocking future development for the town. This, coupled with the recent announcement on the railway station, highlighted the hard work of Members and officers in bringing both of those initiatives forward.
- Over £1.8 million in funding had been secured over the past 2 years to support economic projects in the district, such as the delivery of the Tiverton Work Hub.
- Decision making on planning applications within Mid Devon continued to significantly exceed national targets, whilst the Council's record of defending appeals against their decision making remained high reflecting sound justified decision making.
- The Council were 11th nationally in 2023/24, and up to 2nd in 2024/25 (99.83%) for the collection of Business Rates.
- The Council supported the vulnerable in the community, with around £550,000 paid out in food vouchers and energy vouchers via the Housing Support Fund.
- The Council's Leisure service had undergone a full rebrand to Active Mid Devon. It had reduced its operating costs by circa £560,000, and they now had memberships at an all-time high, at around 7,000 members.
- The Council was supporting care leavers, carers, and low-income households with free and discounted memberships. The efficiency of the Council's leisure centres had been further improved (through winning further grant funding), whilst improving the interior of the sites too, with accessible toilets installed and major energy efficient upgrades.

- The Council continued to expand their network of EV chargers to support the transition to electric vehicles in the district, whilst also planting trees and increasing the biodiversity of the district.
- The Council had reduced agency spend, and seen staff turnover and sickness rates both decrease.
- All of this, and more, had been done whilst setting balanced budgets without the need to draw on reserves.
- The recent issues with travellers at Cullompton causing the extended leisure centre closure caused understandable concern. However, the Council were working closely with Devon County Council to find solutions and they were reviewing how they could protect their sports centres and car parks for the future.
- The Council was pressing the Department for Transport for clarity with regard to Junction 28 improvements.
- The Government's decision to raise the District's housing targets by over 60% had fundamentally changed the landscape for this and most local planning authorities in England. As a result, the Council was working on a new Local Plan to meet the new targets.
- There were ongoing discussions around the local government review, the Council continued to work collaboratively with other Councils across Devon toward the 4-5-1 proposal.
- The State of the District Debate was successful last year and this year's debate on Wednesday 17 September 2025 would focus on Local Government Reorganisation.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Whether funding would arrive to allow students to be able to study A-levels within the District rather than having to travel outside of it for their education.
- The three Councils across the County that were not supporting the 4-5-1 proposal, were Exeter City, Plymouth Unitary Authority and Devon County Council. Over the next few days Devon County Council were considering their position following the recent elections.

21 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION (0:58:27)

The Committee received and **NOTED** an *update from the Chief Executive on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution.

The following was highlighted:

- The report set out the how the process started and the background context and the progress that had been made since the initial plan was submitted to the Government.
- The report covered some of the policy positions and the practicalities while a lot of the pieces were still in flux.
- Clarity was being sought by Town and Parish Councils regarding the impact of LGR.

- Whilst some councils were working collaboratively, some were not because this was a competitive process. This made partnership working more challenging than normal.
- The Government had made it clear that they would not revise the deadline and that it was their intent to make sure that LGR happened everywhere in England.

Discussion took place regarding:

- The final proposal had to be submitted by the end of November 2025. The Government would then reflect upon the responses it received and go out to consultation in spring 2026. The indicative timetable that had been received was that the Government would make a decision in summer/autumn 2026. In recent times the Government had suspended local elections, however, elections would need to be held in 2027 for the new shadow authority.
- Having a majority in favour of one proposal would hold minimal weight with the Government. However, it was expected that the majority would coalesce around the proposal that was most compelling and credible, showing how the proposed authorities would exist and deliver better outcomes in future, for the grouping that the league described.
- In relation to Towns and Parishes, would their model need to change? (Would they need more time commitment, allowances, payment and certified training?) There was likely to be an opportunity for those Town and Parish Councils who wanted to take on more and become more involved. All of the proposals were going to have to give some constructive thought as to how they engaged with the community at local level. Clearly, existing towns and parishes were going to be a really good way to start that conversation and continue it going forward.
- LGR had different phases; the current report explained what had happened
 and where the County was at present with a view to giving some reassurance
 and confidence that the Council were on track to achieve what the Council
 voted for, which was to get the proposal submitted. The role of scrutiny at the
 moment was to ask was the Council on track to get this done?
- The risk log at the moment was concentrating on, 'Were the Council going to get this done and submitted now?'
 There was a wider risk log around capturing the risks of implementation, which was a secondary phase because the Council were having to make those changes incrementally.
- Collaborative Data Sharing had been difficult both in terms of the sheer quantity of information and data that councils held. Plymouth had agreed to host a data repository and the steering group had scoped out all the data streams that were going to be required from all 11 councils.
 The league were in the process of populating the repository, there was a commitment to get all that data in place by the end of July.
- The Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider forming a working group, particularly as the project moved to the stage where those involved were talking about what implementation looked like. Scrutiny Committee would be there to scrutinise the process as the Council transitioned through the next phase.

- With regard to convergence of systems. The focus for day one would be, was it safe and legal? Was the Authority a legal entity and had the Authority stood up the things that needed to be stood up in advance to continue to maintain and operate safe functions on that day. Having transitioned from one set of organisations to another, the process of convergence was one that came after vesting day and continued sometimes for years. IT systems were a challenge to converge, but there were plenty of reports that actually cultural convergence was just as challenging. The group were sighted on these things. What the group were doing at the moment was collaborating across councils. They would be utilising the funds that Government had made available and getting the proposal submitted. When it came to the implementation phase there would be a complete project team. By that point in time, the group of councils would no longer be competing against different proposals, the Secretary of State and Government would have made a decision. Therefore the task then, would be to come together as the 11 Councils and make it happen.
- Learning from others' past experiences of LGR: Firstly, the group were utilising
 national case studies as developed by their professional groupings, the District
 Council's network, had helped on a few areas of best practice. The Local
 Government Association were hosting a local government reorganisation
 information and best practise repository which detailed a lot of experiences to
 learn from.
- There was the clear political intent of this government to see LGR through.
- With regard to the size and scale of the proposed Unitary Authorities, there were ways of mitigating the geographical dispersal of an area by the use of area boards in a large unitary. At present, Councillors were required to be present to vote and the commuting time could well be over three hours, was that the best use of Councillor's time? The 4-5-1 proposal had been voted on at Full Council and it was not envisaged to take that decision back to Full Council again. Had thought been given to the allowance of remote attendance being a condition for the participation of Councillors? Nearly every area in the country had pushed back against the Government saying that they were a special case. Ultimately the decision as to the make-up of the new Authority would be a decision for the Secretary of State. The longer travel times were of concern to Councillors and members of the public who had expressed concerns around the accessibility of democracy. No consideration had been given at present to where the various Council functions would be based. All proposals would need to demonstrate how they could be responsive to local community need. There was no one perfect way to do that, but one could pretty much guarantee that all proposals would be trying to find ways to demonstrate that the advantages of economies of scale could be balanced off with local provision in some way, shape or form, whether that was through; community boards, area committees or clustering of parish councils into neighbourhood areas.
- A new Unitary Authority was unlikely to take all of the services that were currently provided by some of the districts, especially a lot of the discretionary services.

- The distance to travel would probably necessitate the new Authority having to have its meetings in the day time which would then exclude a significant number of people putting themselves forward to be Councillors.
- LGR was likely to take away a lot of representation from our community.
- A much smaller Unitary Authority, particularly in an area of rural deprivation, was likely to run into financial difficulties.
- There was funding made available from Central Government of £7.6million to support councils across England in developing these proposals, however, that money was to be divided between 21 areas, each with a number of districts alongside the County Council and with some smaller Unitaries in that space. In Devon there were 11 Councils which would split the amount allocated to Devon equally which meant that Mid Devon would receive £34,000 to develop the proposals. When reports were needed, the local councils would work together to commission those reports in order to achieve economies of scale and save costs. It was the intention of the Chief Executive and the Leader that only the funds made available from Central Government be used for this exercise. The £34,000 received from Central Government was just for this phase to support the production of the proposals to get submitted by 28 November 2025.

The costs of implementation were of a completely different order of magnitude. The firm expectation was that councils would have to fund all of the transition themselves.

- The role of the local Members of Parliament was to use their 'soft power' and influence, and speak in support of the local councils when questioned.
- Following the move to Unitary authorities would more money and resources be available for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision? It would be the task of the current councils to make sure that the successor councils were safe and legal on day one. Obviously there were services that were delivered in a certain way at the moment and some of those services were delivered really well, while some of them were delivered in ways that could be improved. All such proposals that would come forward would no doubt be seeking to convince Government that if they agreed to that proposal, that, that would be the way to improve local services.

Note: *Update previously circulated.

22 WORK PROGRAMME

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

The changes to the work programme for the meetings in September were explained to the Committee.

Two work proposals were considered:

- National Planning Policy Framework and the Council's 5 Year Housing Plan was included in the work plan for after the summer.
- Extending / Enriching Apprenticeship Opportunities at the Council would be included in the Establishment Report that would be coming to the Scrutiny Committee on 8 September 2025.

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

(The meeting ended at 7.03 pm)

CHAIR



MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL - NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS



July 2025

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

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
August 2025					
Waste and Recycling Options- Pots and Pans trail	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group Cabinet	23 Jun 2025 5 Aug 2025	Luke Howard, Environment and Enforcement Manager	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
2025/26 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 1	Cabinet	5 Aug 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Draft Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group	29 Jul 2025	Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change	Open
	Cabinet	5 Aug 2025			

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
September 2025					
MDDC202504-001- ASHP 2 ASHP upgrades 2025/26 - 2027/28	Cabinet	2 Sep 2025	Stephen Bennett, Building Surveyor	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
HRA & SEA Screening & Praft Area B Masterplan for Stage 2 public consultation	Cabinet	2 Sep 2025	Christie McCombe, Area Planning Officer	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
₩TFP Report	Cabinet	2 Sep 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Purchase of waste bins and containers'	Cabinet	5 Aug 2025	Darren Beer, Operations Manager for Street Scene	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
Data Protection Policy	Cabinet	2 Sep 2025	Lisa Lewis, Head of Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement	Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Freedom of Information (FOI) & Environment Information Regulations (EIR) Policy	Cabinet	2 Sep 2025	Lisa Lewis, Head of Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement	Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health	Open
October 2025					
-Gar Parking Report മറ്റ ര ര പ	Cabinet	7 Oct 2025	Luke Howard, Environment and Enforcement Manager	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Bin It 123 - next steps and additional recycling To discuss the next steps in relation to Bin-It 123 and any additional recycling proposed.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group Cabinet	15 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025	Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
PSPO Alcohol Prohibition To recommend a PSPO in regards to Alcohol Prohibition.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group	15 Sep 2025	Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
	Cabinet	7 Oct 2025			
Tenancy Agreement	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	9 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Leisure Pricing Strategy To receive a revised draft leisure Pricing Strategy for 2026.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group Cabinet	15 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025	Dean Emery, Head of Revenues, Benefits & Leisure	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Fully exempt Contains commercially sensitive information.
Unauthorised Encampment Policy To consider the report	Cabinet	7 Oct 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
MDH Mobility Scooter in Flats Policy (NEW) To receive and approve the new MDH Mobility Scooter in Flats Policy which sets out the conditions under which tenants and their visitors may use	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet Council	9 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025 29 Oct 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Economic Strategy 2024 - 2029	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group Cabinet	18 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025	Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
Destination Management Plan for Mid Devon ບ ຜ ວ	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group Cabinet	18 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025	Adrian Welsh, Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
Asset Management Plan To receive the revised Asset Management Plan.	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group Cabinet	18 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Play Area Inspection Policy To receive and approve the revised Play Area Inspection Policy.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group Cabinet	15 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Corporate Risk Report	Audit Committee Cabinet	30 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025	Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager	Leader of the Council	Open
Corporate Performance Q1 Day Ge 22	Cabinet	7 Oct 2025	Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager	Leader of the Council	Open
Draft Budget Report 2026/2027	Cabinet	7 Oct 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Memorial Benches and Memorial Trees Policy (NEW) To receive a new Policy pertaining to Memorial Benches and Memorial Trees.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group Cabinet Council	15 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025 29 Oct 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open

	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Audit Committee Cabinet	30 Sep 2025 4 Nov 2025	Dean Emery, Head of Revenues, Benefits & Leisure	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Cabinet	4 Nov 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Cabinet	4 Nov 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
Cabinet Council	4 Nov 2025 17 Dec 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Cabinet	4 Nov 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
	Cabinet Cabinet Cabinet Cabinet Cabinet Council	Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Cabinet 17 Dec 2025	Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Benefits & Leisure Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk Cabinet 4 Nov 2025 Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk Cabinet Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance And Risk Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance Finance, Property & Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
MDDC Council Tax Rebate Policy	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group Cabinet	11 Nov 2025 2 Dec 2025	Fiona Keyes, Operations Manager for Revenues Benefits & Recovery	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	
Tenancy Strategy To receive the revised Tenancy Strategy	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	18 Nov 2025 2 Dec 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Strategic Grants Review 2025 To consider requests from external organisations for grants.	Cabinet	2 Dec 2025	Zoë Lentell, Economic Development Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement	Open
Draft Budget Report 2026/2027	Cabinet	2 Dec 2025	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Corporate Performance Q2	Cabinet	2 Dec 2025	Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager	Leader of the Council	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Housing Strategy To receive the revised Housing Strategy.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	18 Nov 2025 2 Dec 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Corporate Risk Report	Cabinet	2 Dec 2025	Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager	Leader of the Council	Open
Gorporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy To consider the report.	Community, People & Equalities Policy Development Group	11 Nov 2025		Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health	Open
Laurena 0000	Cabinet	2 Dec 2025			
January 2026					
Shopfront Enhancement Schemes To receive a report setting out the Shopfront Enhancement	Economy & Assets Policy Development Group	27 Nov 2025	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
Scheme for approval.	Cabinet	13 Jan 2026			

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Infrastructure Funding Statement	Planning, Environment & Sustainability Policy Development Group	25 Nov 2025	Richard Marsh, Director of Place & Economy	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
	Cabinet	13 Jan 2026			
Draft Budget Report 2026/2027 ເດ ຕ	Cabinet	13 Jan 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Rees and Charges Report	Cabinet	13 Jan 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
February 2026					
Pay Policy Report	Cabinet	10 Feb 2026	James Hamblin, Operations	Leader of the Council	Open
	Council	18 Feb 2026	Manager for People Services		
Draft Budget Report 2026/2027	Cabinet	10 Feb 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property &	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance	Open
	Council	18 Feb 2026	Climate Resilience	and Risk	

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
2025/26 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet	10 Feb 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2026/27	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
on N2026/2027 Capital Strategy Tahd 2026/2027 Capital Programme	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
Establishment Report	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	James Hamblin, Operations Manager for People Services	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
Policy Framework	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	Laura Woon, Democratic Services Manager	Leader of the Council	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Business Rates Tax Base	Cabinet Council	10 Feb 2026 18 Feb 2026	Paul Deal, Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience	Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk	Open
March 2026		1	I		
Praft Vision and Spatial Options	Cabinet		Tristan Peat, Forward Planning Team Leader	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration	Open
April 2026					
Domestic Abuse Policy (NEW) To receive a new policy in relation to Domestic Abuse in MDH properties.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet Council	17 Mar 2026 7 Apr 2026 22 Apr 2026	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Data Policy (NEW) for MDH To receive the new Data Policy for Mid Devon Housing	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet Council	17 Mar 2026 7 Apr 2026 22 Apr 2026	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Single Equalities Policy and Equality Objective To consider the report.	Cabinet	7 Apr 2026	Matthew Page, Head of People, Performance & Waste, Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager Cabinet Member f People, Developme and Deputy Leade		Open
Corporate Recovery Policy Ge 20	Audit Committee Cabinet	31 Mar 2026 7 Apr 2026	Dean Emery, Head of Revenues, Benefits & Leisure		Open
Corporate Risk Report	Cabinet	7 Apr 2026	Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager	Leader of the Council	Open
Corporate Performance Q3	Cabinet	7 Apr 2026	Dr Stephen Carr, Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager	Leader of the Council	Open

Title of report and summary of decision	Decision Taker	Date of Decision	Officer contact	Cabinet Member	Intention to consider report in private session and the reason(s)
Customer Care Policy To receive the revised Customer Care Policy.	Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group Cabinet	23 Mar 2026 7 Apr 2026	Lisa Lewis, Head of Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement	Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement	Open
Tenancy Fraud (NEW) To receive and approve a new colicy in relation to Tenancy Fraud.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet Council	17 Mar 2026 7 Apr 2026 22 Apr 2026	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open
Aids and Adaptations policy To receive a report updating and reviewing the Aids and Adaptations Policy.	Homes Policy Development Group Cabinet	17 Mar 2026 7 Apr 2026	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health	Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property and Deputy Leader	Open

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2025-2026



Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
18 August 2025				
8 September 202	5			
	Whistleblowing - 6 month update To receive the report		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Matthew Page	
Page	Establishment - 6 month update To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Matthew Page, James Hamblin	
<u> </u>	Community Safety Partnership To consider the report.		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Simon Newcombe	
	Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Verbal update on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution if there is anything to report.		Chief Executive David Parker	
	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments		
29 September 2025						
	Devon Highways - Junction 28 of the M5 Invitation to the Devon County Council Member for Highways to address the Scrutiny Committee regarding progressing work on Junction 28 of the M5.		Director of Place and Economy David Parker			
	S106 Review To receive a report explaining the procedure and processes that the Council went through and append the December 2024 Infrastructure Funding List		Director of Place and Economy Elaine Barry			
Page (Housing Repairs and Maintenance		Director of Place and Economy Simon Newcombe			
8	Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Update on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution following the report over the Summer		Chief Executive David Parker			
	Review of Responses and Actions from South West Water To review Actions taken by South West Water in response to questions asked of them on 17 March 2025		Director of Place and Economy David Parker			

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
20 October 2025				
	Freedom of Information Dashboard for 2025/26 Quarters 1 & 2. To receive the Freedom of Information Dashboard		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Lisa Lewis	
Page	Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Update on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution following the report over the Summer		Chief Executive David Parker	
<u>ယ</u>	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
17 November 202				
	Annual Report of Complaints and Compliments To consider the report.		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Lisa Lewis	May move to 20 October 2025

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
15 December 202	25			
	Interim Corporate Performance report to Quarter 2 To consider the report.		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Dr Stephen Carr	
Page 34	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
26 January 2026				
	Budget Update To consider the initial draft 2026/2027 Budget and options available in order for the Council to set a balanced budget.			
	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Annual Report To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Maria De Leiburne	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
23 February 2026				
	Freedom of Information Dashboard for 2025/26 Quarter 3 To receive the Dashboard		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Lisa Lewis	
Page 3	Whistleblowing Annual Update To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Matthew Page	
Si Oi	Establishment Report To consider the report.		Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) James Hamblin, Matthew Page	
	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Theme	Officer Responsible	Comments
16 March 2026				
	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	
20 April 2026			1	
Ū	Freedom of Information Dashboard for 2025/26 Quarter 4 To receive the Information Dashboard		Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Lisa Lewis	
36	Scrutiny Chair's Annual Report To receive a report from the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee on the work the Scrutiny Committee has conducted over the last year.		David Parker	
	Work Plan To review the existing Work Plan and consider items for the Committee's future consideration including a) Any items within the Forward Plan, b) Suggestions for future work.		David Parker	