

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **COUNCIL** held on 17 December 2025 at 6.00 pm

Present

Councillors

G Czapiewski (Chair of Council), S Chenore (Vice Chair of Council), C Adcock, M D Binks, E Buczkowski, J Buczkowski, J Cairney, S J Clist, G Cochran, C Connor, F J Colthorpe, G Duchesne, M Farrell, B Fish, M Fletcher, A Glover, C Harrower, B Holdman, S Keable, L G J Kennedy, J Lock, J Poynton, R Roberts, S Robinson, T Stanford, M Stratton, L Taylor, G Westcott, J Wright and D Wulff

Apologies

Councillors

N Bradshaw (online), D Broom, L Cruwys, A Cuddy (online), J Downes (online), M Jenkins, L Knight, N Letch, A Stirling, H Tuffin (online), A White and N Woollatt.

Also Present

Officers

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Officer), Maria De Leiburne (Director of Legal, People and Governance (Monitoring Officer)), Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager) and Tia Carmichael (Democratic Services Officer)

66 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors: N Bradshaw (online), D Broom, L Cruwys, A Cuddy (online), J Downes (online), M Jenkins, L Knight, N Letch, A Stirling, H Tuffin (online), A White and N Woollatt.

67 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Paul Elstone

Question 1:

At the last full Council meeting, I asked how many Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) officers have been dismissed for gross misconduct over the last four years. The answer given was 19. I found that number shocking. I asked the other Devon District Councils the exact same question, their answers.

East Devon- three (3)
Teignbridge- one (1)

Torrige- Four (4)
West Devon and South Ham's (combined)- eight (8)
North Devon- one (1)

A two year period 21 to 23, the latest data is being obtained.

The combined total of the six other Devon districts is less than the number of firings by this Council. This suggests that either this Council has an extremely poor recruitment process, or it has draconian employee management culture.

Recent events would suggest the latter. A committee which it would not be appropriate to elaborate on in this forum or at this moment in time.

The benchmarking data proves this Council is very much out of step with the other districts and given the far reaching consequences, especially for those families affected. Members should be asking the real reasons why.

Will the Council leader implement a comprehensive external review into the extremely high number of employee dismissals at this Council?

The Chair explained that as question 1 had not been provided in writing in the required time frame in advance of the meeting that a written response would be provided in 10 working days.

Question 2:

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services in answer to a previous question said there was, and I quote “a mis-mapped utility” this at the ZED PODS Beech Road development. A mismapped utility used to justify the extremely long delay in completing the development build out.

Can the Cabinet Member be very precise. What was the mis-mapped utility? was it water or something else and if a pipe what was the line size?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services:

South West Water (SWW)

Question 3:

Will the Cabinet Member provide a drawing showing the exact routing and location of this mis-mapped utility, a drawing that surely must be available to allow re-routing to take place?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services:

As an unmapped utility it was not shown on a map. South West Water (SWW) had now resolved this with a diverted supply and would update their mapping in due course.

Question 4:

If I read this Councils Statement of Accounts for year ending 31st March 2025 correctly. Section 50 Cash Flow shows impairment amounts have increased by over £13 million.

Can your Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk please provide a precise breakdown as to what the £13 million impairment value relates to and how much, if anything, of the impairment amount is related to 3 Rivers?

Response from the Chair of the Council:

£12.9m related to the Council's housing stock where the District Valuer had assigned a reduced level of value across a broad cross section of the stock and in addition all of the new properties built by the Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) had to be valued at Existing Use for Social Housing. No impairment figures directly related to 3 Rivers as they ceased trading before the 2024/25 financial year. For everyone's information, these accounts had now been formally reviewed and signed off by the Council's external auditors who had issued an unqualified opinion at a recent meeting of the Audit Committee.

Supplementary question:

The Cabinet Member for Housing in her response to me has not provided details on the line size as requested. Is it 3 or 4 inches?

Additionally, the Cabinet Member for Housing in her response has not said that she will provide a drawing showing the exact details of the mis-mapped utility. A drawing which must be available to this Council.

The Chair explained that as question 1 nor the supplementary question had not been provided in writing in the required time frame in advance of the meeting that a written response would be provided in 10 working days.

Barry Warren

I ask that before the minutes of the 29 of October 2025 are approved that an amendment be made to minute 42 to accurately reflect what I said as the written draft minutes and the written record of my questions have been altered to substitute words which I did not say. The audio of the meeting records my true words.

I have tried to resolve this issue on the 17 November with the senior member of Democratic Services with an email which stated:

"I have read the draft minutes of the Full Council meeting of the 29th of October 2025 and noted that there is a significant difference between the draft minutes and what I actually said.

The published draft minutes say that I said: "Subsequent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests had resulted in the release of all the relevant invoices and named the officer who issued the orders and authorised the payments – the Head of Housing and Health."

However, what I actually said was: "Subsequent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests has resulted in the release of all the relevant invoices and named the officer who issued the orders and authorised the payments- 'Head of Housing and Health' -

The title of the post has been substituted for the name I stated - which therefore means that, in this respect, the draft minutes are inaccurate.

I know you sometimes replace names with post titles but, in this case, I was justified in naming the senior officer as the use of his name is in the public domain as evidenced in the response I received from Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) Information Management on the 26 of September 2025. A copy of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Review response explaining this is attached for information with the relevant portion highlighted for ease of reference.

Hopefully you will feel able to amend the draft minutes to show the officer's name rather than his post title at this stage to avoid my having to publicly ask for the correction of an inaccuracy when the minutes are presented for approval.

Councillors names used were correctly recorded and I ask that the words 'Head of Housing and Health' be recorded instead of the title inserted incorrectly – Head of Housing and Health. The post will remain but a different individual may hold that post in future so the correct words used are relevant.

Response from the Leader of the Council:

The draft minutes were not inaccurate. The officer you named personally, was the Head of Housing and Health, thus it had been recorded that way in the minutes. Individual officers were not named as part of council proceedings; they appear by way of job title reference as and when required. This was because authority and delegations were made to job titles, not named individuals. So, for example, when you see recommendations or decisions from council, the decision will never refer to a named officer, always a job title. Aside from pure convention, it is an important point of governance to record which Council officer did something or was delegated to do something, so that it did not appear only as a forename/surname. Because 'Joe Bloggs' if referred to in the minutes, could be anyone of significance or indeed no one of relevance, when clearly what matters was the role and function being referred to. In this instance it was the Head of Housing and Health, and as such it had been accurately recorded.

Also, within the Constitution under 'Recording of Questions and Statements by the Public' it stated: The minutes shall contain a condensed written record of questions and/or statements made by the public which accurately conveys the context. The minutes were not verbatim.

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests when appropriate.

None were declared under this item.

69 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 29 October and 26 November 2025 were **AGREED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

70 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair had the following announcements to make:

- On Remembrance Sunday, 9 November, in the morning, he attended Crediton's Remembrance Sunday service and in the afternoon, he attended Devon County Remembrance Service at Exeter Cathedral and laid a wreath on behalf of the Council.
- On the same day Cllr C Harrower, the Council's Armed Forces Champion, attended the Tiverton Remembrance Sunday service and laid a wreath on behalf of the Council.
- On Armistice Day, 11 November, at 7.45am, he passed a wreath onto the Poppy Train heading to Paddington Station in London, along with all other local authorities along the route on behalf of the Council. He also presided over the Armistice Day Ceremony in Tiverton at 11.00am.
- On the same day the Deputy Leader, Cllr D Wulff, attended a ceremony in Cullompton, and the Vice Chair of Council, Cllr S Chenore, attended a ceremony in Crediton where they both laid a wreath on behalf of the Council.
- On the 16 November, attended West Devon Borough Council Civic Service representing the Council.
- On the 1 December he attended the Army Cadet Trophy- Tiverton Army Cadets Set the Standard in ABF Cadet Revision Trophy Challenge with an unprecedented Seventh Victory.

71 PETITIONS

None received.

72 NOTICES OF MOTIONS

None received.

73 CABINET- REPORTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER AND 2 DECEMBER 2025

The Leader presented the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 4 November 2025.

1. 2025/26 Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report*

The Leader **MOVED** and seconded by Cllr S Clist:

That the recommendation of Cabinet as set out in minute 67 be **APPROVED**.

Upon a vote being taken the **MOTION** was declared to have been **CARRIED**.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

2. Treasury Management Strategy Mid-Year Review Report 2025/26*

The Leader **MOVED** and seconded by Cllr D Wulff:

That the recommendation of Cabinet as set out in minute 68 be **APPROVED**.

Upon a vote being taken the **MOTION** was declared to have been **CARRIED**.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

The Leader presented the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 2 December 2025.

1. **Tax Base Calculation 2026/27***

The Leader **MOVED** and seconded by Cllr B Holdman:

That the recommendation of Cabinet as set out in minute 85 be **APPROVED**.

Upon a vote being taken the **MOTION** was declared to have been **CARRIED**.

Note: (i)* Report previously circulated.

(ii) Cllr J Buczkowski **ABSTAINED** from voting.

74 **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2025**

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 20 October 2025.

75 **COMMUNITY, PEOPLE AND EQUALITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2025**

The Chair of the Community, People and Equalities Policy Development Group presented the report of the meeting held on the 11 November 2025.

76 **ECONOMY AND ASSETS POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2025**

The Chair of the Economy and Assets Policy Development Group presented the report of the meeting held on 20 November 2025.

77 **HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2025**

The Vice Chair of the Homes Policy Development Group presented the report of the meeting held on 18 November 2025.

78 **PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

The Chair of the Planning, Environment and Sustainability Policy Development Group presented the report of the meeting held on 25 November 2025.

79 **SERVICE DELIVERY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS POLICY
DEVELOPMENT GROUP- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD
ON 24 NOVEMBER 2025**

The Chair of the Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement Policy Development Group presented the report of the meeting held on 24 November 2025.

80 **PLANNING COMMITTEE- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD
ON THE 12 NOVEMBER 2025**

The Vice Chair of the Planning Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 12 November 2025.

81 **STANDARDS COMMITTEE- REPORT OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2025**

The Chair of the Standards Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 15 October 2025.

82 **SCHEDULE OF MEETING FOR 2026/27**

The Council had before it the proposed* Schedule of Meetings for 2026/2027.

The Chair **MOVED** that the Schedule of meetings 2026/2027 be approved.

Following discussion and upon a vote being taken the **MOTION** was declared to have been **CARRIED**.

Note: * Schedule of meetings for 2026/2027 previously circulated

83 **QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 11**

To deal with any questions raised pursuant to Procedure Rule 11 not already dealt with during the relevant Committee reports.

There were no questions.

84 **SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS**

With regard to any decisions taken under Rule 16 (of the Constitution) Special Urgency taken since the last meeting. The Chair informed the meeting that no such decisions had been taken in that period.

85 **QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS**

None received.

86 **MEMBERS BUSINESS**

- Cllr C Adcock highlighted to Members the rapid progress on the new Modular Council houses that was called House Bampton. The final set of Modular homes would arrive next week. He appreciated that the wide lorries, caused some traffic disruption locally and thanked all local residents for their patience. By the Spring of 2026 the site would be clean and tidy and an asset to Bampton and would provide tenants with comfortable homes with very low heating costs for decades to come, and the location in Bampton, with its excellent local amenities.
- Cllr C Harrower thanked the young people who had attended Burma Star Gardens on Armistice day from Academies for Character and Excellence (ACE) School. One of them read a poem.
- Cllr B Holdman thanked all officers of the Council for their hard work which had been carried out with local charities.
- Cllr S Keable highlighted the following:
 - He had attended Culm Garden Village at a Sports Hub meeting. The sporting groups were positive and it had been great to see the infrastructure investment.
 - He had attended a Culm Garden Village Board meeting, it was highlighted that it was not going to hear anything on Junction 28 before Christmas, it was anticipated any announcement would now be in the new year.
 - The Devon and Somerset Metro Board had met regarding the Cullompton and Wellington Station. There would be no formal announcement about funding, the Government would be using a wide range of funding streams to enable this project to happen.
 - The Forward Plan of the Cabinet meeting at Devon County Council showed that there would be an item on the Boniface Trail (Crediton – Exeter) for walking and cycling route to help with commuters
- Cllr B Fish highlighted to Members that Tiverton Town Council would be holding a public meeting on the 9 January to discuss the pharmaceutical provision in Tiverton at 6.15pm.

(The meeting ended at 18.47pm)

CHAIR