

Corporate Plan 2020-2024

Background

Mid Devon

Introduction
from Councillor Bob Deed

Wording to follow

Council Leader:
Bob Deed

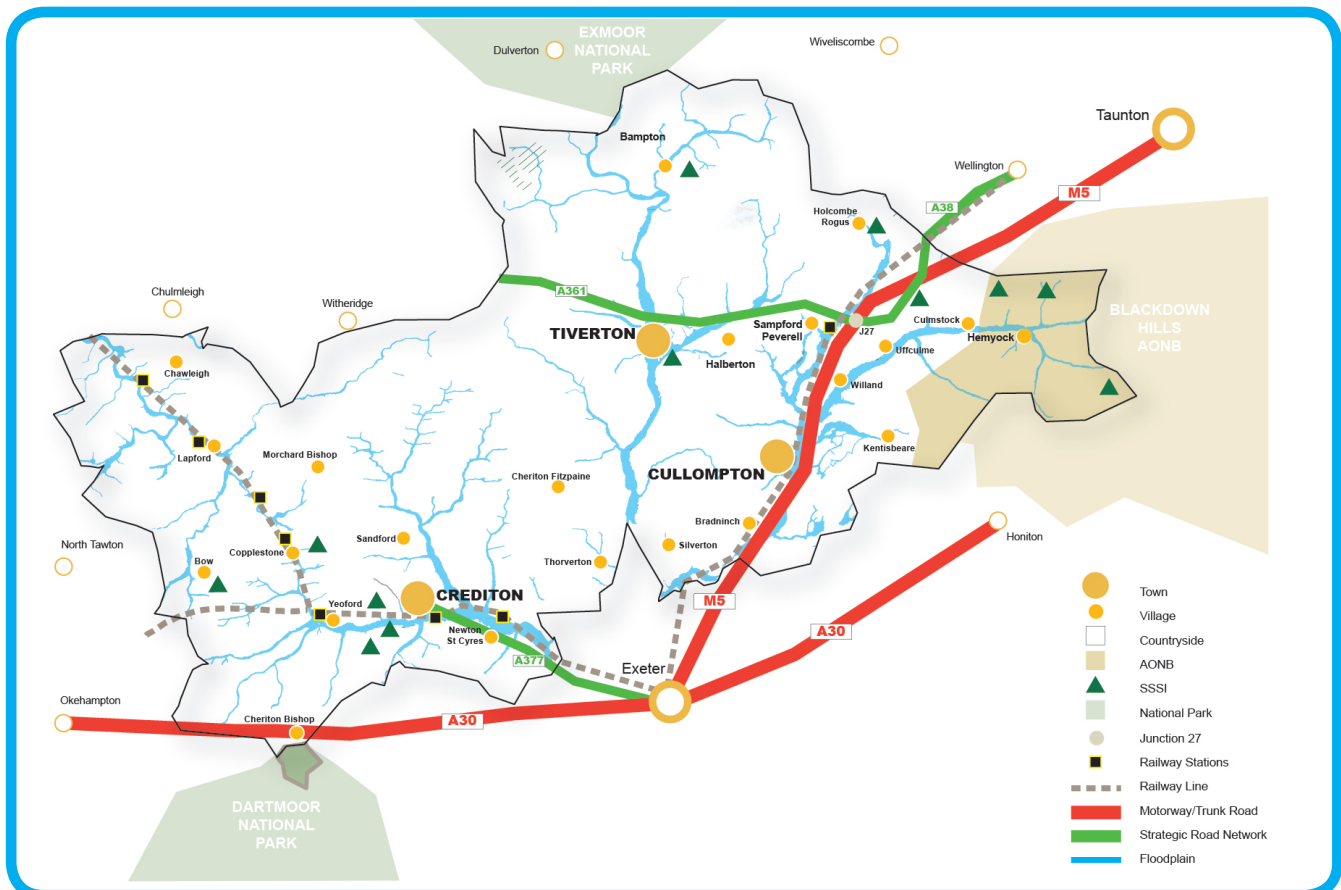


www.middevon.gov.uk

Mid Devon District Council serves a rural location covering an area of 353 square miles (914 km²) in the agricultural heartland of Devon, between Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Blackdown Hills. More than half the population of some 78,000 people is scattered in villages in the rural hinterland, with the balance divided between the three main towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton.

While it is the 23rd-largest district council in England by area, it is also the 34th-smallest by population. Our main offices lie to the north of the city of Exeter, one of the most rapidly expanding economies in the country, and as a district council Mid Devon has sought to maximise this opportunity by delivering quality growth in a high-quality environment.

Mid Devon District Council is a progressive council committed to providing high quality and sustainable services, creating an environment where communities and businesses can flourish and grow together.



Our Plan, Aspirations and Approach to Sustainability

This document sets out to share with you our plans and ambitions for the next four years. It also shows how these priority areas of work are funded and how they each support our pledge to tackle climate change at a local level.

Within this document you will see the keys areas of work the Council aspires to deliver over the next four years, but also how each of these priorities can be delivered in a way that also supports our focus on sustainability, be it through creating: sustainable and prosperous communities, a sustainable planet or by encouraging sustainable participation.

We have also set out how the Council's work will be funded over the next four years, shared the achievements the Council has made over the previous four years through our existing Corporate Plan (2012-2016) and highlighted the values our staff work towards when delivering these priorities.

Our Corporate Plan is a document which sets out what we want to achieve in the district to support and enrich our communities and businesses and the environment we are in. Our Corporate Plan for 2020-2024 retains the four key priority areas that were identified in 2016 and for the next four years our elected members and officers will work together to ensure these areas continue to be the focus of our work.

These strands are:

Homes

Environment

Community

Economy





In 2019 Mid Devon District Council joined other local authorities in the county and became part of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, following Devon County Council's declaration of a climate emergency.

Members also voted unanimously to sign the Devon Climate Declaration and the Council is now a formal partner in the process to produce a county-wide carbon plan.

By pledging our support to tackling climate change and cutting carbon emissions the Council has agreed to look at the way it supports our people and environment to ensure we encourage and support projects that are sustainable long into the future.

Throughout each of the four priority areas within our corporate plan there is now a strong emphasis on local-level sustainability.



For each of our Corporate Plan priority strands the Council will ensure Mid Devon is working towards:

Sustainable and prosperous communities



Our villages and towns need affordable housing for local people.

We aim to build more social rented housing and housing for purchase that is truly affordable. We seek to bring higher skill and better paid jobs to the district, promoting economic development and greater economic diversity. Local businesses need incubation space, grow-on space, and places to expand - and digital businesses need the capability and capacity to work from home as well as a business park.

Long distance commuting will have to drastically reduce in future to deliver on our carbon objectives, and we will support people seeking to lead a more 'local' life; living, working, eating, shopping, and spending locally. We aim to ensure that new housing and commercial developments support and are consistent with the Council's policies on Climate Change.

These objectives will be achieved by encouraging and, where necessary, intervening in the market to deliver the jobs and sustainable communities, and by working in partnership with statutory and non statutory bodies to win the resources we need.

A sustainable planet



Rural Devon is a great gift to us and the planet. We will challenge the suburbanisation of the countryside while encouraging growth in locations that provide low carbon homes for our children, our relatives, our colleagues and the communities of tomorrow. This will sit alongside the economic opportunities of greater digital connectivity in rural areas, our support for clean growth industry sectors, and a thriving agricultural industry that showcases sustainable food-to-fork practices and low food-miles to market.

Sustainable participation



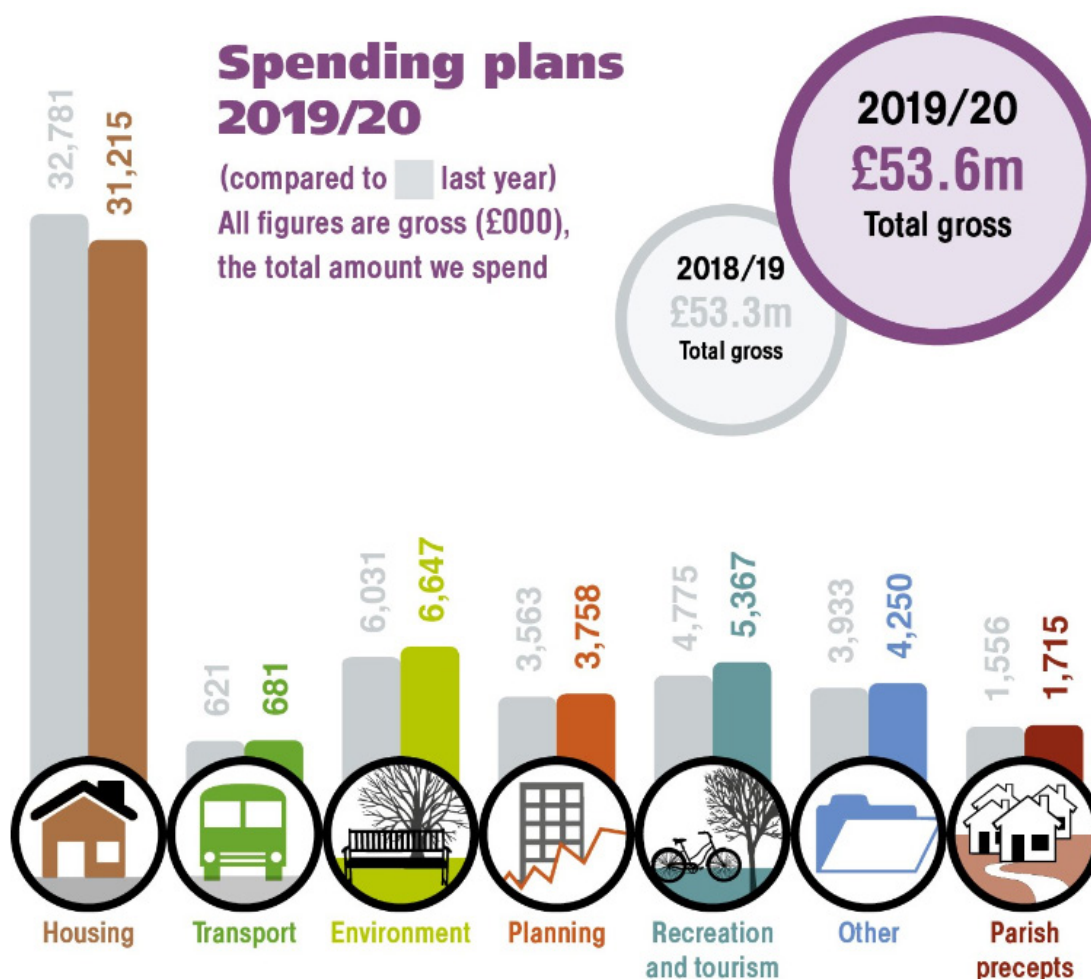
We will enable and support local decisions made by local councillors using local funds and resources aimed at local problems in our community. Working in partnership with parish and town councils, voluntary and community groups, we will seek to deliver positive outcomes where the district no longer has the means to directly commission services.

Budget

The Council's overall net annual budget (not including council housing and capital expenditure) is about £10million. Income comes from a combination of council tax, central government grant and revenue earned from providing services such as collecting trade waste and car parking charges.

Prior to the start of each financial year the Council is required to set a budget for day-to-day income and expenditure for the year. This is the revenue budget. As part of this budget setting process the council tax for the district is decided.

The Council also has a capital budget which is used for expenditure of a one-off and high value nature, such as for buying buildings or improving an asset the Council already owns. The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and not to spend more money than it brings in, so expenditure must be matched by income or existing reserves.



* Chart to be updated with figures from the approved 2020 - 2024 Medium Term Financial Plan.

Homes

Deliver more affordable housing and greater numbers of social rented homes

Work with Community Land Trusts and other organisations to deliver homes retained in perpetuity for local need



Work with landlords to ensure the high quality of homes in the private rented sector

Lobby to see the abolition of the 'Right-to-Buy' or the devolvement of discounting powers to individual local housing authorities

Promote the regeneration of our town centres by working with landlords and property developers to improve and increase the supply of quality housing

Introduce zero carbon policies for new development

Encourage the piloting of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and self-build opportunities



Use new development as opportunities to help communities to become increasingly sustainable and self-sustaining at neighbourhood level (district heating, energy use, recycling/re-use systems etc)

Work with local stakeholders to initiate delivery of the new garden village at Culm



Support and grow active tenancy engagement

Support the establishment of Community Land Trusts in partnership with parish councils and other local bodies

Environment

Encourage retro-fitting of measures to reduce energy use in buildings

Encourage hydro energy and wind power as "green" sources of energy, supply new policies and develop plans to decarbonise energy consumption in Mid Devon



Identify opportunities to work with landowners to secure additional hedgerow planting, biodiversity and reforestation

Consider promoting the designation of the Exe Valley as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Encourage new housing and commercial developments to be "exemplars" in terms of increasing biodiversity and reducing carbon use.

Increase recycling rates and reduce the amounts of residual waste generated



Explore large-scale tree-planting projects and re-wilding to enhance biodiversity and address carbon pressures

Promote sustainable farming practices in partnership with local farmers, district and county councils; including research into best practice re better soil management and animal husbandry.



Work with parish and town councils to promote the development and retention of parks and play areas across the district

Support community activities that improve the environment such as litter-picks, guerilla gardening, or community adoption of assets

Economy

Work with developers to secure our ambitious plans for J27 'Devon Gateway' development site

Consider acquiring or creating new business parks to accelerate economic growth, and creating new opportunities for incubator and start-up space.

Identify strategic and tactical interventions to create economic and community confidence and pride in the places we live. This includes a continued focus on Town Centre Regeneration.



Facilitate the creation of exciting new commercial opportunities within strategic developments at Culm Garden Village and Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension

Produce business plans for the creation of a commercial Economic Development function perhaps in partnership with other agencies

Explore commercial opportunities that deliver new or innovative services for customers that can generate revenue for the council

Promote zero carbon exemplar sites within commercial settings



Use car park pricing mechanism to effectively balance the needs of vehicular access with those of reducing car use

Promote the development of the farming economy and local food production. Working in partnership with farmers to develop and grow markets on the principle of reducing carbon emissions and sustainability.



Support the creation of South West Mutual Bank and seek opportunities to encourage new branches being opened in areas that aren't well-served by existing banking services providers

Develop and deliver regeneration plans for all three main towns in partnership with Town and Parish Councils

Community

Work with developers and Devon County Council to deliver strategic cycle routes between settlements and key destinations

Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon

Work with education providers to secure appropriate post-16 provision within the district to minimise the need to commute out for A/T level studies



Lobby Devon County Council and others to introduce 20mph speed limits where children play, and take opportunities to pilot car-free days/routes

Promote new, more integrated approaches to promoting good health and healthier living especially in the context of planned new developments.

Seek opportunities to address public health issues and disparities to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Mid Devon



Enable communities to deliver their own projects to reduce carbon emissions

Facilitate networking across volunteer and community groups to spread knowledge, expertise and awareness on climate issues

Work with the NHS and other health bodies to promote use of our leisure centres

Promote community involvement in Council activity by holding more meetings in the evening



Promote new approaches to rural transport in partnership with town and parish councils through the deployment of emerging technologies

Work with county, town and parish councils to identify safer walking journeys to school

Achievements

Recycling rate increased by 2.83% since 2016

£18.2million funds from the Housing Infrastructure Fund, which is designed to unlock housing delivery, was secured. £10million has been earmarked for the Cullompton Relief Road while £8.2 million will fund further junction improvements for Tiverton's Eastern Urban Extension.

A record breaking number of food hygiene interventions have been carried out across Mid Devon. 1,291 food hygiene interventions were carried out in 2018/19 compared to a previous total of 554.

£1.2million invested in an extension and refurbishment at Exe Valley Leisure Centre. A refit of the fitness studio at Lords Meadow Leisure Centre costing £185,000 was completed and a £200,000 investment in new equipment at Culm Valley Leisure Centre was made.

Finalist for the LGC (Local Government Chronicle) Driving Growth Award 2019

The Council continues to support key 3rd party organisations with strategic grants of around £75,000 per annum.

All household waste decreased by 6.23% since 2016

Our Empty Homes strategy has been hugely successful, bringing nearly 400 empty homes back into use in the past three years.

Completed 78 new social housing units

Preferred route for the Cullompton town centre relief road agreed

The Local Plan Review has progressed significantly and the examination hearings have been completed. The plan provides for sustainable development up to 2033 and contains policies for the protection and enhancement of the natural as well as built environment.

Demand for business space continues to be strong, particularly along the M5 corridor, with significant investment interest at sites in Cullompton and Willand

Our Values and Priorities

Values

The organisation has an agreed set of core values that underpin the way we work and how we fulfil our aspirations.

These values are known as the four Ps and set out what we believe should be the basis for the type of organisation we are. These values are:

People
Performance
Pride
Partnership

Words from Stephen Walford to follow

Chief Executive:
Stephen Walford



While our organisation is a place-based entity, rooted in the custodianship of a specific geographical area, it is primarily a people-focused business. Serving the democratically-elected representatives of the people, and run for the benefit of the people of Mid Devon.

Our performance as individuals and as a collective is paramount, and we expect all those working for or with Mid Devon to take pride not only in their own work, but in the way we operate and the outcomes that are achieved for our great communities.

Finally, we recognise the core value of partnership as the organisation's role increasingly changes from being a simple provider of local government services, to one where we deliver outcomes in partnership in a multi-agency way. This could be through a systemic or structural partnership with government departments, neighbouring councils, or the health sector. Or through much more local partnerships with our many town and parish councils, or community groups that seek to deliver outcomes and improvements in their area.