

Appendix 1 - In answer to 'So what are we doing to address some of these issues?'

Here is just a flavour of what the Council is doing or will be doing over the next couple of years.

1.1 Leisure

1.1.1 Review pricing policy for lower income families:

The Council reviews the pricing for our leisure provision on a regular basis throughout the financial year. The Council has faced a number of challenges, including: recovery from the pandemic, significant increases in energy costs and the cost-of-living crisis.

The Council was also part of a pilot, run in partnership with Devon County Council, where unpaid adult carers receive free access to Mid Devon Leisure.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/councils-work-together-to-support-unpaid-carers-at-mid-devons-leisure-centres/>

1.1.2 Consider a swimming pool in Cullompton:

The Council is aware of this desire for many people in the area, however the Council has had a significant challenge to maintain the existing leisure service in its current form; an additional swimming pool in Cullompton would add to that affordability pressure.

1.1.3 More cycle paths:

The Council recently consulted on a new policy statement, which will help new developments in the district meet green credentials in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and support our move towards a net zero carbon future.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/new-policy-statement-to-support-climate-emergency/>

1.1.4 Lack of 24 hour offering, closing at 9pm is early:

The Council regularly reviews the opening hours across its leisure portfolio as well as trends of usage, to ensure it continues to offer a high level of service at the optimum time to suit all of our users. The Council has to balance operating costs with the needs of our customers.

1.2 Housing

1.2.1 More affordable housing for local people:

The Council's housing strategy plans to build over 400 new council homes across the district over the next five years. Current plans for affordable/social council homes include 70 Passivhaus homes and 14 zero-carbon modular homes. In addition, several planning applications are in the process of being submitted for 2023/24.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/mid-devon-receives-funds-for-council-homes/>

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/plans-for-affordable-homes-at-post-hill-given-the-go-ahead/>

1.2.2 Set higher standards for new build developments (houses with more outside space, electric vehicle charging points, solar panels, heat exchange heating systems):

- The Council's plans for 70 Passivhaus homes in Tiverton include plenty of parking spaces, landscaping, electric charging points and a mixture of bike lockers, cycle storage and sheds. The plans have also been designed to achieve a 10% net biodiversity gain in regards to ecological enhancement.
- The Council's planning policies are also being reviewed to ensure they consider the climate, including bio-diversity.
- The Council's modular development scheme at St Andrews in Cullompton has won or been nominated for several high profile awards.
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/zero-carbon-homes-pick-up-regional-housing-award/>
- The Council has led work on a regional level to develop new housing standards for social housing for those with neuro-diverse needs.

1.2.3 Temporary housing for the homeless:

The Council is completing feasibility studies and purchasing properties to boost its housing supply, with government support.

It has also recently completed the purchase of two properties in Tiverton which will provide multiple, single-person accommodation specifically for local homeless residents.

1.2.4 Mid Devon ASB award shortlisting:

The Council's housing service, Mid Devon Housing, has been shortlisted for a national 'Team of the Year' award, recognising its efforts to resolve community safety issues and anti-social behaviour in Mid Devon.

1.3 Climate:

1.3.1 Continue to address the issues of climate change:

The Council continues to be committed to its aim of becoming net-zero by 2030.

Notably, it has been successful in securing circa £3.4 million in funding to reduce energy consumption, moving away from fossil fuels, by significantly reducing gas usage at our leisure centres at Exe Valley, Tiverton and Lords Meadow, Crediton.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/multi-million-decarbonisation-works-begin-affecting-leisure-centre-parking/>

1.3.2 Tailored advice for residents to reduce their climate impact:

The Council has set up a climate and sustainability website to provide guidance for residents and local businesses.

<https://sustainablemiddevon.org.uk/>

1.3.3 Provide warm spaces during winter:

The Council has supported sign posting for warm spaces during the winter months that includes Tiverton Library at Phoenix House.

1.3.4 More EV charging points:

The Council is providing an increased number of electric car chargers via a joint procurement exercise with Devon County Council in select pay and display car parks in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton.

1.3.5 Plant more trees:

The Council has been planting even more trees this season to that reported in 2020. We have ambitions to plant more than 500 trees at different sites across Mid Devon in an effort to enhance biodiversity and address carbon pressures.

[Council aim to plant 500 trees across Mid Devon this season | InYourArea Community](#)

1.4 **Street Scene and Recycling**

1.4.1 Change the way recycling is stored and collected:

The Council's kerbside recycling scheme ensures only recyclable materials are collected; any non-recyclable materials are left behind and residents are made aware. Recycling rates are shown to be better by kerbside sorting, as opposed to recycling using wheelie bins.

1.4.2 More frequent recycling collections:

At a meeting of the Environment Policy Development Group on 11 October 2022, the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Climate Change advised that an options paper to introduce weekly recycling would be brought to the PDG.

<https://democracy.middevon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=1710&Ve r=4>

1.4.3 Enforcement for dogs:

On 7 October 2021, the Council introduced a new Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for a duration of 3 years in order to ensure that dogs are kept under proper control in Public Spaces, as well as to tackle dog fouling.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/dogs/public-space-protection-order/>

1.4.4 Tackle ASB:

There has been a significant increase regarding enforcement of fly typing, littering and dog fouling, with a large number of abandoned vehicle cases also being addressed and resolved.

1.4.5 Provide more car parking:

The Council has 19 Pay and Display / amenity car parks across the district.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/car-parking/>

1.4.6 Maintain overgrown footpaths, verges, etc.:

The Council's in-house Grounds Maintenance team have a regular maintenance regime in place. However, footpaths and verges around the district are generally managed by Devon County Council. Our Customer First team assist with ad hoc enquires.

1.4.7 Re-open all public toilet facilities:

The Council has transferred a number of public conveniences across to town and parish councils to ensure that they continue to be operational. Tiverton Town Council has a partnership arrangement for the upkeep of conveniences in the town.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/public-toilets/>

1.4.8 Three-weekly waste collection pilot and rollout:

Following a pilot of the scheme in the summer, the Bin It 1-2-3 scheme launched across the district on 10 October 2022. The scheme saw a change in non-recyclable waste collections, from fortnightly to three-weekly, with more than 35,000 wheelie bins delivered.

The change allowed the Council to achieve a number of environment benefits, including: reduce its carbon footprint, increase recycling rate, increase amount of food waste collected and decrease the amount of non-recyclable waste collected.

For information on the first quarter performance of the scheme, see:

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/bin-it-123-service-sees-improvements-in-recycling-rates-for-mid-devon/>

2.1 Planning

2.1.1 New planning charges:

The Council introduced new charges in Planning (Development Management) to reduce the overall level of council tax subsidy the service requires and ensure the best levels of service can be provided to customers.

2.1.2 Neighbourhood Plans adopted:

We successfully supported the progression and adoption of Neighbourhood Plans for Crediton and Tiverton – supporting residents in their role as place-guardians.

2.1.3 District growth:

The Council continued to promote the development of key growth projects and infrastructure projects to serve the district, for example: the re-opening of Cullompton railway station continues to progress and is targeted for service by May 2025.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/government-announces-support-for-new-train-stations-at-cullompton-and-wellington/>

2.1.4 Economic Development:

The Economic Development team has led on various initiatives to support economic growth and vitality, including: running several successful jobs fairs, promoting shopfront grants within the Cullompton Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and securing further grant funding for economic development activities within the district.

2.1.5 Building Control partnership with North Devon DC:

NMD Building Control, a partnership between Mid Devon and North Devon District Council's continues to perform exceptionally well, delivering excellent service provision to users across the NMD partnership area.

3.1 Member Relations

Members have helped identify and raise concerns from residents of areas for improvement and attention, in relation to three-weekly bin collections as well as environmental enforcement (dog fouling, fly-tipping, litter, etc.).

3.2 Human Resources

3.2.1 Management Improvement:

Human Resources have designed and delivered a number of modules for line managers to increase confidence and capability in addressing key issues.

3.2.2 Internal Engagement:

The Council has significantly increased employee participation regarding the direction of its future. Human Resources also maintain a formal union relationship with Unison and run a staff consultative group, both of which meet regularly.

3.2.3 Apprenticeships:

The Council has installed talent pipelines to bring in new employees, which includes growing the number of Apprenticeships on offer.

3.2.4 Employer of the Year:

In June 2022, the Council was awarded Petroc's Employer of the Year award, which recognises the work the Council has undertaken with its apprenticeship scheme, mentoring, career advice and engagement with school leavers, as well as its work upskilling its current workforce.

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/council-scoops-petroc-s-employer-of-the-year-award/>

3.3 Internal

A new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is scheduled to go-live for summer 2023.

4.1 Finance

4.1.1 Invest in areas other than Tiverton:

Circa £35m of social housing development is planned to begin in 2023/24 outside of Tiverton. Circa £27m of social housing development is planned to begin in 2023/24 within Crediton or Cullompton. 154 units of social housing development is planned to begin in 2023/24 within Crediton or Cullompton.

4.1.2 Financial Support Summary:

Positive Action/Scheme	Households Helped	£	Help Given
Household Support Fund 2 & 3	2,390	£342,569	Energy and food vouchers
Council Tax Energy Support Scheme	21,292	£4,372,350	Financial help paid out to help with increases in energy costs
Exceptional Hardship	34	£12,737	Financial help with Council Tax
Discretionary Housing Payment	104	£46,121	Financial help with shortfall in rent
Council Tax Reduction	3,680	£3,839,196	Financial help with Council Tax
Total	27,500	£8,612,973	

4.2 Revenues & Benefits

The service has carried out training and created two additional posts to help with customer queries. Below are some figures from 2022/23.

SMS (text messages issued)	13,448	Helpful messages to customers - could be a reminder about arrears or a link to an application on the website
R&B CTAX & Business Rates Self Service Portal	6,949	Customers using the portal to change their Council Tax records rather than write in or phone
Self Service Benefits	1,139	New claims and change in circumstances where a customer used their self-service account
Total Transactions	21,536	