

## **Scrutiny Chairman's Annual Report – 2024-2025**

It's been a busy year for the Scrutiny Committee, with ten full meetings all with hybrid accessibility, and briefings. I was delighted to be elected Chair for this year and continued the previous Committee's way of working, that of 'critical friend' giving robust clear guidance to Cabinet, Council, officers and external bodies / organisations, both pre- and post-decision making. I stated from the outset that openness and transparency would be the watchwords of this committee and am proud to report that we have not had any reports presented in part II.

Of the varying work that Scrutiny Committee undertook we actively encouraged public participation – a key facet of local government activity. As usual, the committee deliberated and debated a wide range of topics, reaching decisions and democratically resolving to advise the various bodies engaged. The Committee remained available to scrutinise the decisions of Cabinet, Council, Officers and external organisations but none were called in.

Areas that the Scrutiny Committee has considered this year include:

- Six monthly Establishment updates
- Six monthly whistleblowing updates.
- Six monthly Corporate performance reports
- Town and Parish Charter
- Care Leaver Friendly Employer Charter
- Sale of Land that would unlock 70 Affordable Homes
- Planning Enforcement Policy Update
- Community Safety Partnership Report
- Mid Devon as a Trauma Informed Council
- Cullompton Infrastructure update
- Air Management in Cullompton and Beyond
- Mid Devon housing Voids
- Solar Panel Farms and Anaerobic Digesters – Quantity of Sites and Land Use
- Annual report of complaints and compliments
- The Impact of the Government's Proposed Changes to National Planning Policy on the Council's Priorities and Preparation of a New Local Plan
- Examination and Review of Freedom of Information Processes within Mid Devon District Council and Monitoring
- The Destination Management Plan
- Annual Report under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
- Housing Rents
- Budget Review
- How Devolution may affect Mid Devon District Council

Finally we invited representatives from South West Water to our meeting in March and scrutinised them about their policies and procedures. The meeting was well

attended by Councillors and Members of the Public and there was a frank exchange of views.

We have completed the process of scrutinising the portfolios of the Cabinet members to get a better understanding of their responsibilities and oversights. This year we heard from:

- Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement
- Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change
- Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services
- Cabinet Member for Parish and Community Engagement
- Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health

It has been a privilege and pleasure to chair the Scrutiny Committee and I am indebted to officers and members for their tireless hard work, thus making our meetings well informed. A large thank you to everyone.

Cllr Lance Kennedy (Tiverton Cranmore)

Chair – Scrutiny Committee