

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **CABINET** held on 1 April 2025 at 5.15 pm

Present

Councillors

L Taylor, S J Clist, J Lock, N Bradshaw,
J Buczkowski, G Duchesne, S Keable,
J Wright and D Wulff

Also Present

Councillor(s)

E Buczkowski

Also Present

Officer(s):

Andrew Jarrett (Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Officer),
Maria De Leburne (Director of Legal, People &
Governance (Monitoring Officer)), Richard Marsh (Director
of Place & Economy), Dean Emery (Head of Revenues,
Benefits & Leisure), Matthew Page (Head of People,
Performance & Waste), Lisa Lewis (Head of Digital
Transformation & Customer Engagement), Simon
Newcombe (Head of Housing & Health), Tristan Peat
(Forward Planning Team Leader), Sam Barnett (Housing
Initiatives Officer) and Laura Woon (Democratic Services
Manager)

Councillors

Online

G Czapiewski, L Knight and S Robinson

Officers Online

E Girling (Senior Information Officer), C Oliphant (Housing
Policy Officer) and S Richardson (Customer Engagement
Coordinator)

155. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received.

156. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Paul Elstone

Question 1:

My first question relates to an error in the minutes of the previous Cabinet Meeting.

Why has the Council failed to publish the written answers to the questions I asked at the last Cabinet meeting? This in compliance with the Constitution?

Question 2:

On examining the newly published Transparency Code data on the Council Website it shows that the MDDC Social Housing stock to be around 2,900 properties.

Given that it is understood that the tenants of around 1200 properties have been overcharged rent and that the tenants of around 1600 properties have been undercharged rent. This effectively means just about every MDDC social home property has been subject to an incorrect rent being applied and going back to 2002.

The public are being told that the rent calculation mistake was due to an averaging error being made and related to property valuations.

Was this error due to a single average property value being used when completing the rent formula calculation in 2002, with the same valuation being applied to every MDDC social property irrespective?

If not, what was the precise error?

Question 3:

Very precisely what was average property value used when setting the social housing rents in 2002?

Question 4:

Has the identified rent error required this Council to undertake a complete revaluation of all of its 2900 social home properties?

Question 5:

As additional social homes have been added to the MDDC social homes portfolio and since 2018 have they also suffered from the same rent calculation error?

Question 6:

Are there any affordable rent homes rentals impacted by the rent calculation error?

Question 7:

If so, how many?

Question 8:

We are told that all the revised rent calculations are now complete. On this basis what is the full amount of the rent overcharges going back to 2002?

A ballpark figure will do.

Question 9:

What is the full amount of the undercharges going back to 2002?

A ballpark figure will do.

Question 10:

Has this Council been able to identify if any Council or for that matter any Housing Association has made the exact same housing rent calculation error?

Question 11:

If so, can you please provide full details?

The Leader stated that Mr Elstone would receive a written response to his questions in the usual way.

Later on in the meeting the Leader responded to Mr Elstone's question 1 with the following:

The Leader apologised by stating that although the responses were sent to him within the time frame, the system was not updated on the website, however he confirmed that they had now been published as a supplementary agenda item.

157. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

At item 18 Cllr S Clist declared he had a other registerable interest in that he knew the letting agent company in regards to personal business dealings and would abstain from voting on this item.

Members were reminded of the need to make declarations of interest where appropriate.

158. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 March 2025 were **APPROVED** as a correct record and **SIGNED** by the Leader.

159. **COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK POLICY**

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement on the Complaint and Feedback Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The Complaints and Feedback policy (Appendix 1) was last reviewed in 2024.
- The policy sets out the standards and response timescales that customers would expect when providing feedback to the authority. It also provided standards for staff in dealing with complaints and feedback received.
- As a result of discussions at the Scrutiny Committee on the Annual Complaints report and Freedom of Information processing at the committee meetings of 25 November and 16 December respectively, the Scrutiny Committee had recommended delegating authority to the Head of Digital Transformation & Customer Engagement to amend the Complaints and Feedback policy.

Discussion took place with regards to:

- The change from the original recommendation.
- How any changes would be reported back to Members?

- What other mechanism were in place for Scrutiny Committee, such as the call-in.

RESOLVED that:

- Delegated authority be given to the Head of Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement to make minor legislative changes to the Complaints and Feedback Policy.
- That the Scrutiny recommendation to Cabinet be widened to give delegated authority to the Head of Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement to make changes to the Complaints and Feedback Policy in line with legislation and best practice.

(Proposed by Cllr J Wright and Seconded by Cllr S Clist)

Reason for Decision:

The Complaints and Feedback policy underpins the core values of the Council relating to People and Performance and outlines the process to measure its success with service delivery.

Note: *Report previously circulated

160. **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY**

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Digital Transformation and Customer Engagement on the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Quality of Living, Equalities and Public Health outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The rapid emergence of Generative AI technologies, such as Chat GPT, Gemini, and Microsoft Co-pilot had marked a profound shift in the way information was created, analysed, and consumed.
- These tools present significant opportunities for improved service delivery, enhanced communication, and greater efficiency. However, they also introduced a new category of risk that must be proactively managed.
- This Council had a clear framework to govern the use of AI responsibly and ethically across the organisation. At present, the Council had no formal policy in place, leaving a gap in guidance for staff and Members who may be using or exploring AI tools.
- The policy aimed to:
 - To safeguard Council data and services, by prohibiting the use of confidential or personal data in external Generative AI tools. This was particularly important to the Council where it held and processed vast amounts of very sensitive data every day. By using the Council's licensed Copilot tool for sensitive data where authorised to do so to ensure the data stays within the Council's control;
 - To enhance transparency and accountability, especially where AI tools were used to generate content or influence decision-making;

- To ensure human oversight remained central—no AI tool should independently make decisions about residents or services without a human in the loop;
 - To identify roles and responsibilities for AI policy compliance, including the Head of Digital Services & Customer Engagement, line managers, the ITIG Board, and others;
 - And to provide clear guidance for acceptable use, training requirements, and risk mitigation, particularly as AI tools became embedded into more software platforms.
- This policy aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan commitments to digital transformation and service excellence. It demonstrated the Council's readiness to engage with innovation—not passively, but safely, ethically, and proactively.
 - Staff would receive appropriate training on governance, ethics, and risk management in relation to AI.
 - A comprehensive risk review would be undertaken and added to the Council's risk register. The legal implications of inappropriate or unauthorised use of AI may expose the Council to risks such as data breaches, copyright infringement, or biased decision-making. Procurement procedures would be updated to include safe routes for acquiring AI-enabled tools.
 - The Council would ensure that Equalities Impact Assessments were completed where AI was used to support or automate service delivery.
 - It was important to stress that the policy included a shorter than usual review period. This was by design—reflecting the pace at which AI capabilities, use cases, and legal considerations were developing. Delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and SIRO would allow necessary amendments to be made swiftly, with full oversight through the ITIG Board.
 - While embracing the opportunities presented by AI, the Council must also recognise there were concerns as well: AI systems, especially generative models, carry risks of bias and misinformation both from human sources and through hallucinations, and they had a high environmental impact due to their energy use and supply chains.

Discussion took place with regards to:

- Concerns around mitigating the risks and being proactive enough.
- Limit to paid services with Artificial Intelligence (AI) this may narrow the benefits and limit the staff.
- How does the Council know we have the right AI for all departments?
- How would Members know the training had been suitable for the staff in their role?
- Would the policy come back to Cabinet in 6 months as it develops?

RESOLVED that:

- That Cabinet recommend to Full Council the approval of the draft AI policy.
- That Cabinet approve the delegation of the AI Policy to the Deputy Chief Executive and Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), in consultation with the IT & Information Governance (ITIG) Board, due to the necessity for ongoing

review of policy and guidance in response to the rapid advancements in technology.

(Proposed by Cllr D Wulff and Seconded by Cllr S Clist)

Reason for Decision:

The AI policy supports the delivery of the Council's commitment to improve and transform its services and ensure the public had a good understanding of Council services and that they were satisfied that the services were efficient and effective.

Note: *Report previously circulated.

161. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE Q3

The Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Head of People, Performance and Waste and the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager on the Corporate Performance Report and Performance Dashboard Quarter 3.

The Head of People, Performance and Waste outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The Corporate performance report related to performance up to December 2024 and was structured into the five themes within the Corporate plan.
- Corporate Plan priorities and targets were managed and scrutinised on a regular basis using appropriate performance indicators as detailed in this report.
- The Policy Development Groups (PDGs), Planning committee and Cabinet received Performance Dashboards quarterly. These Dashboards presented performance, finance, and risk information together to enable simultaneous consideration of these related aspects.

Discussion took place with regards to:

- Could the feedback from the PDGs be included within the report to Cabinet in the future?

Reason for Decision:

The Council had a duty to understand its residents, user groups and customers. Customer feedback (e.g. complaints) could help the Council identify any groups of people who may potentially be experiencing a less satisfactory level of service.

Note: *Report previously circulated.

162. CORPORATE RISK REPORT

The Cabinet had before it and **NOTED** a report * from the Head of People, Performance and Waste and the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager on the Corporate Risk Register.

The Head of People, Performance and Waste outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The corporate risks were presented on a risk matrix (heat map), Appendix 1. Information on each risk was presented in a standard template, Appendix 2.
- These risks had been determined by the Council's Leadership Team in consultation with Corporate Managers and other council officers.

Discussion took place regards to:

- CR2- Cyber Security given the high risk rate of 20, do we have any reassurance that the internal team was fully resourced to manage incident in partnership with the provider?
- CR19- Devolution, the risk rate was 20, how confident were the Council that Members, staff and residents were being kept informed of the democratic legitimacy of future proposals.

Reason for Decision:

Risk management was an integral part of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements and there was a statutory responsibility under the Account and Audit Regulations (2015) to put in place risk management arrangements.

Note: *Report previously circulated.

163. SINGLE EQUALITIES SCHEME AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVE

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of People, Performance and Waste and the Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager on the Single Equalities Scheme and Equality objectives.

The Cabinet Member for People and Development and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The Equality Objectives for 2025/26 were arranged by six themes, and proposed measurement was provided in parentheses. They had been discussed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group and reviewed by Leadership Team.
- Progress to meet the Council's Equality Objectives would continue to be monitored by the EDI Group and be reported annually to the Community, People and Equalities PDG. Progress to meet the Council's Equality Objectives in 2024/25 was detailed at Appendix 2.

Discussion took place with regards to:

- Adjusting the equality objective relating to financial drop in sessions for tenants to an annual cost of living event, how would the Council encourage the engagement for this?
- There was currently no impact on climate change but things may need to be considered in the future.
- Concerns around the 4.74% of Mid Devon housing reporting of damp and mould.

- The issues with damp and mould was to do with ventilation.
- To be clearer on the young carers discounts for leisure services.

RESOLVED that:

- The Single Equality Scheme together with the Equality Objectives for 2025/26 as recommended by the Community, People and Equalities Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr J Lock and Seconded by Cllr G Duchesne)

Reason for Decision:

The Single Equality Scheme contributed to the Council complying with the Equality Act (2010). Failure to adopt Equality Objectives or to collect relevant data could lead to the Council being in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

Note: *Report previously circulated.

164. REPLACEMENT PVCU DOUBLE GLAZED UNIT / ENTRANCE DOORS

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Health on the Replacement UPVC Double Glazed Unit / Entrance Doors.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The results for the tendering of the Replacement UPVC Windows and Doors programme 2025–2030 for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties and to confirm the award of the contract.

RESOLVED that:

- The Replacement UPVC Windows and Doors Contract for HRA Properties 2025 - 2030, be awarded to Anglian Building Products
- Delegated authority be granted to the S151 Officer (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services) to complete the associated Replacement UPVC Windows and Doors Contract for HRA Properties 2025 – 2030.

(Proposed by Cllr S Clist and Seconded by Cllr J Buczkowski)

Reason for Decision:

The budget for the works was £400,000.00 per annum. Capital investment in the MDH stock would result in a lower revenue cost in the coming years, which would enable the repairs service to operate more effectively and manage future maintenance costs.

Note: (i)*Report previously circulated.

(ii) * Cllr N Bradshaw abstained from voting.

165. WILLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Director of Place and Economy on the Willand Neighbourhood Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The outcome of a recent local referendum held for the Willand Neighbourhood Plan and the need for the Council to make a decision about the adoption of this plan.
- The Willand Neighbourhood Plan was subject to a local referendum held on Thursday 27th February 2025, at which persons eligible to vote in the neighbourhood plan area (Willand Parish) were asked the following question:

“Do you want Mid Devon District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Willand to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

The result of the referendum was as follows:

Ballot papers	Votes Recorded
Number cast in favour of a Yes	269
Number cast in favour of a No	29
Number of spoilt ballot papers	1
Total number of votes cast	299
Electorate: 2,793	Turnout: 10.7%

- Since 90% of voters who voted were in favour of the Willand Neighbourhood Plan, the plan had become part of the statutory development plan for the area. It had attained the same legal status as a local plan (and other documents that form part of the statutory development plan). Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies of the Neighbourhood Plan would be used alongside policies in the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan, and the Devon Minerals and Waste Plans, to help guide planning applications submitted to the Council for determination in the Willand area and the decisions made on these.
- The Council must now formally adopt the Plan as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum is held, and not later than 8 weeks from that date. The Council may refuse to make the Plan if it considers that making it would be a breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any remaining EU obligations or any human rights obligations. Council officers hold the view that the making of the Plan would not breach these obligations (as set out within the Council’s Decision Statement). The Council must decide whether to make, or refuse to make, the Plan.
- There was no opportunity at this stage to seek to amend the contents of the plan or make further representations to it.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends to Council that:

- The Willand Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 1) is ‘made’ (adopted) and brought into force as part of the statutory development plan for the Willand area.

- The Willand Neighbourhood Plan Adoption Decision Statement (Appendix 2) is published to meet the publicity requirements in the Regulations.

(Proposed by Cllr S Keable and Seconded by Cllr S Clist)

Reason for Decision:

There were no direct financial implications from adopting the Willand Neighbourhood Plan. However, the process leading to the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan has had financial implications. The costs of support in terms of advice and technical support, examination and referendum must be met by the Council.

Note: *Report previously circulated.

166. HOUSING RENT ERROR UPDATE REPORT

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) Officer and the Head of Housing and Health on the Housing Rent Error update report.

The Cabinet Member for Governance, Finance and Risk outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The report provided a comprehensive update on the ongoing work to address the historic housing rent setting error.
- He emphasised that this was a live and active project.
- Since it first came to light, it had been subject to significant scrutiny not only by Cabinet in December, but also through detailed review by both the Homes Policy Development Group and the Audit Committee.
- The corrective work had progressed well, with external assurance received, refunds were now being calculated and a clear strategy was in place for reviewing historic possession cases.
- However, as the report outlined, there were still elements that remained dependent on external factors, particularly the Department for Work and Pensions, which meant that this work would continue to evolve.
- The Council was committed to transparency and accountability and further updates would be brought back to Cabinet.
- The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to acknowledge the professionalism and the unwavering dedication of Officers in handling this extraordinary situation.
- It was not only the Senior Leadership Team and the Heads of Service present this evening, but the collective effort across the entire organisation that was driving the Council to resolve this matter, their commitment ensured that the Council got the resolution right.
- He was grateful for their hard work and diligence.

RESOLVED that:

- That Cabinet note the tasks that had been further progressed in order to correct this situation.
- The overarching approach to the review of historic MDH possession proceedings (evictions) where rent overpayments were made as set out in section 2 of this report as recommended by the Homes Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr J Buczkowski and Seconded by Cllr J Lock)

Reason for Decision:

The activity of MDH was funded through the HRA. The HRA was ring fenced and subject to specific financial controls. Significant financial modelling had been undertaken in order to reach some of the key decisions being put forward in the Cabinet report in December 2024.

Note: *Report previously circulated.

167. MID DEVON HOUSING TENANT MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Health on Mid Devon Housing (MDH) Tenant Management Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The MDH Tenancy Management Policy had been reviewed and amended due to the Cabinet decision to end the use of Flexible tenancies. It was last reviewed in 2022 and therefore not many changes were required. The revised Tenancy Management Policy removed any reference to Flexible tenancies.

RESOLVED that the updated Mid Devon Housing Tenancy Management Policy and Equality Impact Assessment contained in Annex A and B respectively as recommended by the Homes Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr S Clist and Seconded by Cllr J Lock)

Reason for Decision:

Homes and social housing were a clear priority within the Corporate Plan. The Council would work closely with its tenants to ensure they felt safe, secure and happy in their homes. A key part of this was by having an open, transparent and effective tenancy management approach as set out in this policy.

Note:* Report previously circulated.

168. VARIATION TO STANDARD MID DEVON HOUSING TENANCY AGREEMENT

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Health on the Variation to Standard Mid Devon Housing Tenancy Agreement.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The current Tenancy Agreement was launched in 2016 and was due for a review. However, as the Cabinet approved the Homes PDG recommendation that the use of Flexible Tenancies be halted further changes were required to the Tenancy Agreement to reflect this change and therefore there was a requirement to undertake a broad review of the agreement now.

- In addition to the above, many of the MDH Policies had been reviewed and updated in line with recent legislation changes and the introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The changes made were also not reflected in the current 2016 Agreement.

RESOLVED that the procedure for the variation of tenancy conditions and updating the standard Tenancy Agreement, including formal consultation with tenants, commence in line with the Housing Act 1985 (sections 102 & 103 as recommended by the Homes Policy Development Group be approved.

(Proposed by Cllr S Clist and Seconded by Cllr S Keable)

Reason for Decision:

Homes and social housing were a clear priority within the Corporate Plan. The Council would work closely with its tenants to ensure they felt safe, secure and happy in their homes. It was also important that the obligations on tenants and MDH as the landlord were clearly defined and this was where an up to date, clear standard Tenancy Agreement was important.

169. **Downsizing Work Group Report**

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Health on the Downsizing Work Group Report.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The Homes PDG established a Downsizing Incentives Working Group to investigate potential incentives that might encourage tenants to move from larger properties. The group was tasked with gathering tenants' perspectives on desirable incentives and providing recommendations for an incentive scheme.

Discussion took place with regards to:

- The number of people on bands A to C had increased and large properties within the Mid Devon area.
- If there was any work that was around helping people to move on and to move out of properties and would this opportunity be there for young families?

RESOLVED that:

That the Downsizing Incentives be developed by Officers and added as an addendum to the Allocations Policy with the following provisions:

- A maximum financial incentive of £1,000 for tenants downsizing by one bedroom.
- A maximum financial incentive of £2,000 for tenants downsizing by two or more bedrooms.
- Tenants could use the financial incentive to offset any recharges they might owe on their current property or to cover costs for moving, new carpets and/or

re-decoration in their new property. If no recharges are owed, they would receive the full incentive amount to use at their discretion.

- A direct let option for existing tenants to allow MDH to consider downsizing moves into newly void properties in specific circumstances in accordance with wider allocation policy.
- A communication plan including targeting of hard-to-reach tenants.
- One-to-one support for completing Devon Home Choice applications if relevant.
- A 12-month pilot scheme, followed by a review to assess the scheme's success and determine next steps.

As recommended by the Downsizing Working Group and the Homes Policy Development Group.

(Proposed by Cllr S Clist and Seconded by Cllr S Keable)

Reason for Decision:

The proposed incentives would affect the HRA. Any costs associated with the recommendations in this report that were not covered by savings elsewhere or existing staffing budgets would need to be drawn from the HRA Minimum Working Balance.

Note:* Report previously circulated.

170. HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Health on the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The Government had published the 2023 Housing Delivery Test results. The Housing Delivery Test was an annual measurement of housing delivery (i.e. completions) against targets for each Local Authority. The result for the Council was 86%. The result was calculated for a three year period 2020 to 2023. As delivery was below target and below 95% the Council was now required to prepare a Housing Delivery Test Action Plan to detail what it intends to do to address this under-deliver.
- The Action Plan detailed what were the barriers to the early commencement of housing development in the district and provided an explanation for these. It also identified 18 'actions' the Council would take to help improve the delivery of new homes.
- The Planning Policy Advisory Group was consulted on the draft Action Plan on 19th March and had endorsed the actions that were included in it and the recommendations in this report.
- There was no requirement for the Council to consult on the Action Plan. However, the Council would continue to engage with the development industry through the planning process, including the recent call for sites and also through the determination of planning applications.
- If the Action Plan was approved it would be published on the Council's website and made available to the public. The Action Plan would be kept under review

in light of future Housing Delivery Test results being published by the Government.

Discussion took place with regards to:

- That 2800 homes that had been approved and over 1200 still unimplemented, was this a failure to build?
- Concern regarding the suggestion that the Council should consider alternative 10 years or even payments in lieu when affordable housing became a barrier to delivery.
- Given the scale of unimplemented permissions, what levers, legal, financial or policy based could the Council realistically use to encourage or require developers to build?
- What safeguards would be in place to ensure that flexibility on affordable housing didn't undermine the Council's commitment to those in housing needs?
- What was the plan if developer engagement in the proposed round table discussion was limited or non-existent?
- How many of the 1251 were actually targeted at social housing?
- If any other consideration had been given to indirect implications on climate change and biodiversity in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan targets, climate strategy and action plan and the Council's biodiversity duty, because this was going to have an enormous impact on the district in forthcoming years.

RESOLVED that the Mid Devon Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (Appendix 1) be approved and that this be published on the Council's website and made publicly available.

(Proposed by Cllr S Keable and Seconded by Cllr S Clist)

Reason for Decision:

There were no direct financial implications from approving the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan but there could be indirect financial implications arising from undertaking supporting work and associated with wider planning decision making (i.e. in defending against any planning appeals).

Note:* Report previously circulated.

171. TENANT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Health on the Tenant Involvement Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- Under the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, Registered Providers (RPs) must take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered.

RESOLVED that the updated Mid Devon Housing Tenant Involvement Strategy and Equality Impact Assessment contained in Annexes A and B respectively as recommended by the Home Policy Development Group be adopted.

(Proposed by Cllr S Clist and Seconded by Cllr J Lock)

Reason for Decision:

Homes and social housing were a clear priority within the Corporate Plan. The Council would work closely with its tenants to ensure they felt safe, secure and happy in their homes. The Council would monitor and continue to improve overall tenant satisfaction and work with its tenants through engagement events and the broader Tenant Involvement Strategy. This would ensure they were informed and had clear opportunities to comment on and shape the housing service they received.

Note:* Report previously circulated.

172. ACCESS TO INFORMATION- EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

The Leader stated that discussion with regard to the next item, required Cabinet to pass the following resolution to exclude the press and public having reflected on Article 12 12.02 (d) (a presumption in favour of openness) of the Constitution. This decision was required because consideration of this matter in public would disclose information falling within one of the descriptions of exempt information in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The Cabinet decided, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption, outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That under S100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the next item, for the reason set out below:

Information under paragraph 3 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding that information).

(Proposed by the Chair).

173. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROJECT

The Cabinet had before it a report * from the Head of Housing and Health on the Temporary Accommodation project.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services and Deputy Leader outlined the contents of the report with particular reference to the following:

- The Council had a duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households in certain circumstances. Ideally, households were placed into self-contained accommodation pending further assessment, but, due to a limit on available housing and the number of presentations being received each year, it was necessary to place households in hotel accommodation.

- The current Housing Strategy 2020 - 2025 aimed to reduce the use of hotels as temporary accommodation through the provision of own stock housing solutions. This aspiration was confirmed by Government priorities, and guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) indicated that local authorities must strive to provide those presenting as homeless with more appropriate temporary accommodation options.

RESOLVED that Cabinet pursues the purchase of the empty property identified in Part II Annexes A - F of the report for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation.

(Proposed by the Leader of the Council)

Reason for Decision:

The LAHF R3 allocation would cover a significant proportion of the cost of the project, however the Council would need to fund the remaining balance. Further clarification would be required with the Finance service and lead accountants on how this could be funded with several options around capital reserves or capital borrowing (internal or external).

Note: * (i) Report previously circulated.
(ii) Cllr S Clist abstained from voting.

174. **NOTIFICATION OF KEY DECISIONS**

The Cabinet had before it, and **NOTED**, the Notification of Key Decisions *

The Clerk identified the changes that had been made to the list since it was published with the agenda.

This included the following:

- The Air Quality Action Plan had been removed from the forward plan as it had been through the necessary process of the Policy Development Group and the report was for noting.

Note: * Key Decisions previously circulated.

(The meeting ended 19.39pm)

LEADER