

MINUTES of a MEETING of the ECONOMY & ASSETS POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held on 20 November 2025 at 5.30 pm

Present

Councillors

G Cochran (Chair)
J Buczkowski, J Cairney, M Farrell (Vice-Chair), L Knight, A Stirling and T Stanford

Apologies

Councillors

R Roberts and M Stratton

Also Present

Officers

Paul Deal (Head of Finance, Property & Climate Resilience), Matthew Page (Head of People, Performance & Waste), Adrian Welsh (Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy and Delivery), Luke Howard (Environment and Enforcement Manager), Linda Perry (Economic Development Officer) and Sarah Lees (Democratic Services Officer)

Councillors

Online

E Buczkowski, S Keable and N Woollatt

Officers Online

Darren Beer (Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces) and Laura Woon (Democratic Services Manager)

25 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Cllr R Roberts and Cllr M Stratton (who was substituted by Cllr T Stanford).

26 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following public question was received:

Nick Quinn

Agenda Item 8 - Car Parking Report

On page 24 of your papers, Recommendation 2 of this report asks this PDG to “reaffirm its previous recommendation for a 5% rise for Car Parking charges to be introduced as part of the budget setting process for 2026/2027”.

I do not know the basis for the previous recommendation, but this report is not truthful in content or accurate in describing some tariffs in Appendix 1.

Paragraph 2.1 states “pay and display tariffs have not been increased since June 2023”. That is a lie, parking tariffs were increased in June 2024, by 6.7%, and, as proof of my statement, I have brought a copy of the order which I will pass to the Chair in a moment.

Paragraph 2.3 sets out the “proposal for a 5% increase on all pay and display tariff bands”.

And paragraph 2.5 states “Appendix 1 provides comparative detail for current tariff costs and the new proposals for consideration. Please note that proposed new tariffs are rounded up or down to the nearest 10p”.

This tariff rounding, in Appendix 1, is true for short stays and long stays in the Tiverton Multi-storey, but it is not true for long stay parking in CREDITON or CULLOMPTON where the tariffs have been ‘rounded up’ to the next pound!

CREDITON and CULLOMPTON Members should be outraged as the tariffs proposed for their car parks mean the cost of a 10 hour stay would increase by 9% and a 5 hour stay would increase by a massive 16%.

Due to the inaccuracies in the body of the report and the proposed tariffs in Appendix 1, this report should be thrown out.

I ask: Will this PDG please reject this flawed Car Parking and Permit Report and request that a, fully fact-checked and accurately calculated, revised report be brought to the next meeting?

The Chair allowed Mr Quinn a supplementary question which was:

The Constitution said that if the question cannot be answered at the meeting, then written replies will be provided. The question which I asked specifically deals with this PDG dealing with this report or rejecting this report, I am assuming that that can be done at this meeting and would not require a written reply in 10 days?

The Chair confirmed that it could but only when that item was reached on the agenda and debated properly.

27 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Chair declared a personal interest in relation to the Car Parking Permit item, in that he was also the Chair of the Car Parking Consultative Group.

No other interests were declared under this item.

28 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th September 2025 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

29 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair had no announcements to make.

30 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD Q2 (00:10:00)

The Group were presented with, and **NOTED**, a slide * showing performance information in the Economy & Assets area.

The dashboard aimed to give an 'at a glance' understanding of how services were performing in terms of performance measures, finance and risk. Any measures that were also part of the Corporate Plan were listed in yellow text.

The indicators were presented with current performance, the annual target and a RAG (red/amber/green) rating to indicate whether or not the Council was on track to meet its target. Overall performance was presented in a pie chart which combined the RAG ratings for both the performance and the finance measures.

A summary of the performance position was presented as follows:

- Car parking income was showing as amber. This was mainly due to lower than budgeted permit income within the Multi Storey Car Park.
- The Pannier Market income was showing as red with income around 20% lower than the target budget.
- The Capital Slippage of projects was showing as amber. This related to six out of 22 capital projects, the main ones being the solar projects which were reaching soft market testing point. The others related to public realm and toilet enhancement where the Council was awaiting clarification from Town Councils on how they wished to proceed.

A brief discussion took place regarding the negotiations which had been taking place with both Town Council's in Tiverton and Crediton for the future provision of toilets. These had been ongoing for some time but unfortunately there had not been any progress in terms of which toilets or how the provision would be taken forward. It was possible with impending Local Government Reorganisation that Town Council's would need to take on more responsibility for this area but at this stage much was still unknown. This had been the general topic of the State of the District debate earlier this year in terms of engaging with Town and Parish Council's on the assets that the District Council currently owned but which Town and Parish Council's were interested in getting involved with in terms of their operation going forwards.

Note: * Slide previously circulated.

31 DRAFT GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR 2026/2027 (00:15:00)

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Deputy Chief Executive (S151) presenting an update on the 2026/27 Budget and the emerging Capital Programme covering the period 2026/27 to 2030/31.

The following was highlighted within the report:

- This was only a very brief budget update since clarification from central Government was still needed. The forecasted position based on a number of assumptions was presented to the last meeting, no greater detail had been received from central Government since then. The autumn statement was due on the 26th November 2025 and that would give, at a very high level, national indications of where funding would go but not at a local authority level. The Council would have to wait until the Local Government Finance Settlement in December for that. Budget proposals had been presented and supported by this Group in September 2025. All the green recommendations were approved subsequently by the Cabinet. The Cabinet was currently awaiting clarification on the amber proposals before reaching a decision.
- In terms of the Capital Programme where there were new proposals or changes to the existing scheme, these were shown in Appendix 1.

Discussion took place regarding:

- Currently, this was the last scheduled opportunity for the Policy Development Group to comment on the budget proposals for 2026/2027. Considerations would be taking place in the near future to determine the best way to seek Member engagement regarding next year's budget before the necessary deadlines and this may need to be by way of an all-Member briefing. This was yet to be determined.
- Clarification was sought as to the position on Section 106, development money and how this was used within capital projects? It was confirmed that how projects were funded would be shown in the February committee reports. Section 106 monies were important as the Council did not receive any capital grant from Government. It was largely used to fund initiatives such as play parks.
- Were there any revenue implications on the capital projects or were they just things the Council needed to do to maintain or improve its assets? What would be the impact on the revenue budget of taking those initiatives forward? It was explained that largely speaking there were no revenue impacts, but some things, for example ICT where the Council had additional licences would have a knock-on impact but very few of these were asset replacements.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

32 CAR PARKING AND PERMIT PROPOSALS 2026/2027 (00:20:00)

The Group had before it a report * from the Head of People, Performance and Waste and the Environment & Enforcement manager recommending proposals from the Car Parking Consultative Group for future changes to both pay and display as well as permit parking within Mid Devon District Council car parks for the financial year 2026/2027.

The following was highlighted within the report:

- The Head of People, Performance and Waste commenced his introduction to the report by responding in full to the questions from Mr Quinn. In response to

Mr Quinn's claim that the last introduction of new tariffs was the 1 June 2024 and not 1 June 2023 the Head of People, Performance and Waste confirmed that the public questioner was correct. The last rise was in June 2024 and not June 2023. The Head of People, Performance and Waste corrected the record for this change and also acknowledged that some of the proposed changes were incorrect due to being raised to the nearest £1 rather than the nearest 10p. The Head of People, Performance and Waste gave the examples for Station Road, Cullompton and High Street, Crediton.

- Cllr Woollatt later identified that a similar error had occurred for Wellbrook Street, Tiverton and the Head of People, Performance and Waste acknowledged this mistake and likewise corrected the proposed rates on record.
- The Head of People, Performance and Waste apologised for the above mistakes to both the public questioner and the committee and confirmed these would be corrected before being sent on to Cabinet.
- The Head of People, Performance and Waste then introduced the substance of the report. In terms of looking at the package of measures that were being presented this paper set out proposed fees and charges for car parks and permits for the upcoming 2026/2027 financial year. These were intended to be bought in from the 1st of April 2026. These proposals had all been carefully considered and put forward by the Car Parking Consultative Group. This group comprised of a collection of business and community representatives across the district who provided feedback and input to ensure proposals were properly considered and reflective of community views before they came to the Policy Development Group.
- There had been three key considerations in making these proposals. First, that they were logical and worked for both businesses and communities in the district. Secondly, consideration was given to the cost of living pressures being experienced by residents and thirdly that they took account of the financial pressures being placed on the Council, including funding and inflation. The group had put forward three main sets of proposals for consideration. First, that car parking fees were raised by 5%. There had been no rise in car parking fees since the 2024 financial year. The rise on the 1st of June 2024 had reflected inflation during that year. Inflation was projected to rise by at least 5.7%. The increase in costs for the parking service were considerable and included the cost of patrolling car parks and the increase in National Insurance tax on employees, supply costs and maintenance. The Consultative Group carefully considered a range of different options and came to the conclusion that a 5% rise across the board was the fairest way of addressing the inflation issue. This decision had been agreed in principle by this Group back in June but was being reiterated as it was being brought with a package of other measures that the PDG was being asked to consider.
- Feedback supported a need and desire to expand permit options to include a sole day permit option.
- Further research was also to be undertaken around different permit options that could encourage further take up of spaces in the Multi Storey Car Park and this work would come back to the PDG.
- In terms of the day permit charges, there was an error in the paperwork. A correction was needed to show that, in Appendix 2, an annual day permit, would be offered at £331. It would also be offered at a half yearly rate of at £180, quarterly at £100 and monthly at £33.

- Finally, representatives from Crediton and Cullompton had asked for an additional three days of free parking during the year to support local events. The Council did currently offer five free car parking days to residents during November and December to support Christmas shopping initiatives. The Car Parking Consultative Group had requested these additional days as an extension to the existing Christmas offer.

The Group then received a presentation which supported the information provided at this meeting and detailed the work which had taken place prior to the recommendations coming forward.

Discussion took place regarding:

- It was felt that Tiverton was benefitting from the car parking permit proposals more than Crediton and Cullompton and there needed to be parity across the whole district including the offers made to market traders and potential business permits. It was confirmed that the Car Parking Consultative Group had looked at this and would be exploring it further.
- Officers were thanked for providing the necessary corrections and the public questioner indicated that he was satisfied a corrected report would be going forward to the Cabinet for approval.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that:

1. It reviews the proposals initially made by the Car Parking Consultative Group regarding car permits and the considerations of the Economy and Assets Policy Development Group and approves:
 - The reintroduction of a day permit option for car park users. This to be available to use for all residents across the District.
 - To receive a further report from the Car Parking Consultative Group, to be first considered by the Economy and Assets PDG, regarding new ideas and proposals in relation to new potential parking permits that could be used in car parks across the District.
 - This to include the development of proposals around a new business permit for the Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP), Tiverton and to offer a potential reduction in the cost of permits located on level 1 of the MSCP, as highlighted in this report.
 - Future consideration be given by the Car Parking Consultative Group to extend free parking for market traders to other market towns.
2. A 5% rise for Car Parking charges to be introduced as part of the budget setting process for 2026/2027. This has been proposed by the Car Parking Consultative Group and then carefully considered by the Economy and Assets PDG.
3. The granting of additional free parking days for Crediton and Cullompton Town Councils to designate as they see fit to support their town centre activity.

(Proposed by Cllr J Buczkowski and seconded by Cllr L Knight)

Reason for the decision

The report proposes measures to generate additional income to support the delivery of parking services for the Council. It also aligns with the Corporate Plan to deliver sustainable parking options within communities. Therefore, supporting economy and growth within the district.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

33 MID DEVON OFF STREET PARKING PLACES ORDER (00:45:00)

The Group received a report * from the Head of People, Governance and Waste and the Environment and Enforcement Manager considering recommendations to the Cabinet that the Mid Devon (Off Street Parking Places) Order 2016 (the “OSPPO”) be amended.

The following was highlighted in the report:

- These proposals would, after appropriate consultation, enable implementation of restrictions and subsequent enforcement to be conducted in the areas of Saint George's Court and Wellbrook Green in Tiverton.
- Informal discussions with the Highway Authority had been undertaken and they had indicated they would not object to the recommendations being put forward within this report.
- Residents and Ward Members had raised concerns regarding ongoing parking issues at both St. George's Court and Wellbrook Green in Tiverton. These had included impeded access and egress as well as potential obstruction to emergency service vehicles. To address these issues, the report presented this evening proposed the introduction of parking restrictions that would make contraventions in both of those areas enforceable. At present, the absence of any restrictions was contributing to the persistence of problems in those areas.

Discussion took place regarding:

- School drop-offs and pick-ups remained a problem in terms of the amount of extended time people were parked. This sort of detail would need to be worked through during the consultation.
- The number of spaces available and was this sufficient for local need?
- Concerns as to how school drops could be regulated.
- The detail was yet to be worked out. The consultation would be helpful in trying to achieve this.
- Any references to St George's Place within the report needed to be corrected to say St George's Court.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet that:

1. On being satisfied that the statutory grounds for amending and varying the OSPPO are met, as detailed in the Report, to allow and authorise the Operations Manager for Street Scene to commence statutory consultation for the following proposed amendments to the OSPPO:

- To incorporate within the OSPPO parking restrictions, as defined in the report within the area known as 'St Georges Court', in Tiverton. This includes entering into a Service Level Agreement with Tiverton Town Council (TTC) to incorporate three permit bays currently owned by them into the OSPPO to enable enforcement by Mid Devon District Council ("the Council") in respect of these bays.
 - To amend the OSPPO to incorporate 18 spaces within the area known as 'Wellbrook Green' in Tiverton for the purpose of resident only parking.
2. That Delegated Authority be granted to the Director of Legal, HR & Governance (Monitoring Officer) to draft the order amending the above OSPPO including making the necessary required minor amendments to go out to consultation.
 3. In the event that there are no material objections to the proposed amendments and variations as determined by the Operations Manager for Street Scene and Open Spaces, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery and Continuous Improvement, to then grant delegated authority to the Director of Legal, HR & Governance (Monitoring Officer) to make the order amending the OSPPO as recommended in the Report.

(Proposed by Cllr J Cairney and seconded by Cllr M Farrell)

Reason for the decision:

The OSPPO was designed to accurately reflect the Council's parking service and was a legal requirement that allowed the Council to provide such services.

The Council was at risk of not being able to enforce parking contraventions within new locations and in respect of electric vehicle parking, which could result in reputational damage for not taking appropriate action against offenders.

Note: (i) * Report previously circulated
(ii) Cllr M Farrell declared a personal interest in that he was a member of Tiverton Town Council whose premises were adjacent to St George's Court.

34 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM UPDATE REPORT (01:03:00)**

The Group had before it, and **NOTED**, a report * from the Strategic Manager for Growth, Economy & Delivery providing an update on activities carried out by the Growth, Economy and Delivery Team since the last meeting.

A presentation was provided that included the following information on projects the team had been involved with:

- Business Support through Prosper
- A 'Generative AI for everyday business tasks' event on 24 November 2025
- A packaging and waste event on 2 December 2025
- A bid writing webinar

- A 'Business Refresh' grant scheme which was being delivered through the Rural England Prosperity Fund
- Updates to the Visit Mid Devon website
- Tiverton Pannier Market Christmas events
- The team's participation at the recent 'Meet the Funders' event
- 'Filming in Mid Devon' event taking place on 28 November
- Shop/commercial front enhancement grants which was one of the team's longer term grant programmes that was available for businesses in Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton town centres
- Water wise farming event
- Work with 'Innovate UK' who covered the whole of the UK and could offer tailored business support to ambitious businesses

The team were thanked for all the work that they did with reduced resources and tight deadlines. Feedback from business regarding the help and support provided by the team had been very positive.

The Chair confirmed that he would be attending the 'Filming in Mid Devon' event on 28 November 2025.

Note: * Report previously circulated.

35 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING (01:14:00)

The items listed in the Work Programme for the next meeting were **NOTED**.

In addition to this the following was requested to be on the agenda for a future meeting of the Group:

- A report on the Tiverton Pannier Market

(The meeting ended at 6.53 pm)

CHAIR