

West Devon Overview and Scrutiny Committee



West Devon
Borough
Council

Title:	Agenda														
Date:	Tuesday, 1st September, 2020														
Time:	2.00 pm														
Venue:	Remote Meeting -Skype														
Full Members:	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman Cllr Ewings Vice Chairman Cllr Kimber</p> <p><i>Members:</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Cllr Bolton</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Cllr Moyse</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Coulson</td> <td>Cllr Musgrave</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Crozier</td> <td>Cllr Ratcliffe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Daniel</td> <td>Cllr Southcott</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Heyworth</td> <td>Cllr Spettigue</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Hipsey</td> <td>Cllr Wood</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Kemp</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Cllr Bolton	Cllr Moyse	Cllr Coulson	Cllr Musgrave	Cllr Crozier	Cllr Ratcliffe	Cllr Daniel	Cllr Southcott	Cllr Heyworth	Cllr Spettigue	Cllr Hipsey	Cllr Wood	Cllr Kemp	
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Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.														
Committee administrator:	Democratic.Services@swdevon.gov.uk														

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Confirmation of Minutes** **1 - 6**
Minutes from Meeting held on 4 August 2020
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
Members are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting.

If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination, bias or interests in items on this Agenda, then please contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.
- 4. Items Requiring Urgent Attention**
To consider those items which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by the Meeting as matters of urgency
- 5. Public Forum** **7 - 8**
A period of up to 15 minutes is available to deal with issues raised by the public.
- 6. Hub Committee Forward Plan** **9 - 14**
If any Member seeks further clarity, or wishes to raise issues regarding any future Hub Committee agenda item, please contact Member Services before **5.00pm on Thursday 27 August** to ensure that the lead officer(s) are aware of this request in advance of the meeting.
- 7. Amended Draft Budget 20202/21** **15 - 32**
- 8. Draft Recovery Plan** **33 - 64**
- 9. Task & Finish Group Updates (if any)**
- 10. Annual Work Programme** **65 - 66**
- 11. Member Learning and Development opportunities arising from this meeting**

Agenda Item 2

At a Meeting of the **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held **REMOTELY via ZOOM** on **TUESDAY** the 4th day of **AUGUST 2020** at **2.00pm**.

Present: Cllr M Ewings – Chairman
Cllr P Kimber – Vice-Chairman

Cllr A Coulson	Cllr P Crozier
Cllr L Daniel	Cllr N Heyworth
Cllr S Hipse	Cllr D Moyse
Cllr R Musgrave	Cllr B Ratcliffe
Cllr T Southcott	Cllr J Spettigue
Cllr L Wood	

Strategic Leadership Team
Head of Strategy and Projects
Democratic Services Manager
Connecting Devon and Somerset
Representatives
Airband Representative
Cllr R Gilbert – Devon County Council lead
Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills

Also in Attendance: Cllrs R Cheadle, C Edmonds, N Jory, T Leech,
J Moody, C Mott and T Pearce

***O&S 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence for this meeting were received from Cllrs T Bolton and C Kemp.

***O&S 2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 June 2020 were confirmed by the Meeting as a true and correct record, subject to:

Reference page 3 Minute O&S 95 '*Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response and Draft Renewal and Recovery Plan*' discussion point (a) (i) deletion of the following sentence:

'Whilst some town and parish councils had been heavily engaged with the Borough Council, other councils had unfortunately been very passive and this had been to the detriment of their local communities.'

***O&S 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting but there were none made.

***O&S 4 PUBLIC FORUM**

The Chairman informed that no formal requests had been received in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

***O&S 5 DRAFT HUB COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**

It was noted that no prior requests had been received for updates on any future Hub Committee agenda items at this meeting.

***O&S 6 A386 TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE – VERBAL UPDATE**

The Chairman advised the meeting that she had been in contact with the Devon County Council lead Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste. In their discussions, the lead Member had confirmed that a Bid had now been submitted to the Beeching Reversal Fund and she would provide a further update when she was in a position to do so.

To ensure that the matter was kept as a high profile agenda item on the Committee Work Programme, it was agreed that the next update should be scheduled for the Committee meeting to be held on 6 October 2020.

***O&S 7 RURAL BROADBAND PROVISION**

The Chairman introduced representatives from Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) and Airband to the meeting. In addition, the Chairman also welcomed the lead Devon County Council lead Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills to the meeting.

In their respective presentations, the representatives made particular reference to:-

- the main achievements of the Programme. The representatives highlighted that the deployment of Phase 1 of the Programme was now completed and had exceeded targets. For example, this Phase had seen over 300,000 Superfast Connections to homes and businesses;
- a summary of the West Devon Borough area. Of the 27,924 homes or businesses in the area, there remained 2,378 that had still not had delivered (or planned to be delivered) Superfast Connectivity;
- take up in Phase 1 being at around 70% in the Borough area, which was higher than the national rural programme average;
- the number of Community Engagement events that had been attended by CDS representatives;
- additional coverage and funding opportunities via:

- the rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme / Community Challenge Programme;
- Gainshare;
- National Fibre Programme; and
- Commercial Operator plans;
- the Airband Programme running to December 2021 and currently remaining on schedule; and
- Airband being in receipt of nearly 25% of the total nationwide Gigabit Voucher Scheme.

During the subsequent debate, the following points were raised:

- (a) Whilst welcoming the progress that was being made in respect of Superfast provision, the meeting acknowledged that this was of scant consolation to those 2,378 homes or businesses in the area that were currently not planned to be in receipt of such Connectivity. In reply, the representatives informed that they were committed to doing all that they could for these homes and businesses;
- (b) When questioned, Members were informed that there were different means of measuring performance. However, it was widely acknowledged that the West Devon Borough area was in the bottom quartile in respect of Superfast provision. This point was widely recognised and local MPs had sent a joint letter to the Minister for Digital and Broadband provision to highlight this matter;
- (c) Representatives were keen to work alongside the Council's Rural Broadband Working Group and it was agreed that they would be invited to attend future Group meetings. The Committee felt it important to also receive regular updates and it was agreed that the best means of achieving this objectives would be discussed when considering the latest version of its draft Annual Work Programme (Minute O&S 11 below refers);
- (d) Members commented that it had become particularly apparent during the recent lockdown that Superfast provision was not only critical to homes and businesses but also for education purposes;
- (e) With regard to the voucher scheme, whilst economies of scale were an important factor, examples were cited of instances where twelve isolated properties had been able to gain connectivity. In such instances, the importance of willing landowners was often crucial;
- (f) Members noted that neither CDS or Airband had any control over the existing infrastructure provided by Openreach;
- (g) The representatives confirmed that they remained committed to Community Engagement and were more than willing to be invited to attend local town and parish council meetings.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance and informative presentations and Members looked forward to working closely with them in the upcoming months.

O&S 8 COMMUNITY FUNDING SCHEMES

The Committee was presented with a report that considered the progress of the Council's three main Community Funding Schemes: the Member Locality Fund; the Seamoor Lotto; and Crowdfunding and sought the views of Members on the effectiveness of them to date.

During the ensuing debate, reference was made to:-

- (a) the effectiveness of the Member Locality Fund. Some Members were of the view that the Fund was a very effective scheme that was straightforward to apply and not unduly bureaucratic;
- (b) a user guide to support and promote the benefits of the Schemes. In reply to a request, officers committed to producing a user guide in the upcoming weeks. It was agreed that the guide should include the ability for Members to combine their Locality Funds in order to support local community projects and useful links to other Community Grant schemes;
- (c) the Community and Partnership Funding model. Officers confirmed that the current model of Community and Partnership Funding would be further reviewed as part of the draft Recovery Plan and Budget Setting processes;
- (d) raising awareness of these Schemes. The Committee recognised the need for Members to promote the existence of each of these Schemes amongst their local Community Groups and town and parish councils;

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

1. note the success of the Community Funding Schemes during 2019/20; and
2. recommend to officers that a user guide be produced that supports and promotes the benefits of the Schemes; and
3. encourage all Members to promote the existence of these Schemes amongst their local Community Groups and town and parish councils.

O&S 9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Members were presented with a report that sought approval of its Annual Report for 2019/20.

In discussion, the Committee welcomed the Report and recognised the progress and achievements that it had made during 2019/20.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That the Committee **RECOMMEND** to the Council that the Annual Report for 2019/20 (as outlined at Appendix A of the presented agenda report) be approved.

O&S 10 TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES

The Chairman reminded the Committee that they were currently no Task and Finish Group reviews being carried out.

O&S 11 DRAFT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Committee considered the latest version of its draft Annual Work Programme for 2020/21 and, in discussion, the following updates were made:

- It was agreed that the next update on the A386/Rail projects should be scheduled for consideration at the Committee meeting to be held on 6 October 2020; and
- The Committee requested that, with effect from 6 October 2020 meeting updates from the Rural Broadband Working Group should become a standing agenda item.

O&S 12 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

The Chairman reminded the Meeting that a 2020/21 Revised Draft Budget Setting Workshop had been arranged to be held at 1.30pm on Tuesday, 25 August and all Members were encouraged to attend this important session.

(The meeting terminated at 3.55 pm)

Chairman

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PUBLIC FORUM PROCEDURES

(a) General

Members of the public may raise issues and ask questions at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This session will last for up to fifteen minutes at the beginning of each meeting, with any individual speaker having a maximum of three minutes to address the Committee.

(b) Notice of Questions

An issue or question may only be raised by a member of the public provided that they have given written notice (which may be by electronic mail) to Darryl White (darryl.white@swdevon.gov.uk) by 5.00pm on the Thursday, prior to the relevant meeting.

(c) Scope of Questions

An issue may be rejected by the Monitoring Officer if:

- it relates to a matter within the functions of the Planning and Licensing Committee;
- it is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the district;
- it is offensive, frivolous or defamatory;
- it is substantially the same as a question which has previously been put in the past six months; or
- it requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

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WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL: HUB COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

This is the provisional forward plan for the four months starting September 2020. It provides an indicative date for matters to be considered by the Hub Committee. Where possible, the Hub Committee will keep to the dates shown in the plan. However, it may be necessary for some items to be rescheduled and other items added.

The forward plan is published to publicise consultation dates and enable dialogue between the Hub Committee and all Councillors, the public, and other stakeholders. It will also assist the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in planning their contribution to policy development and holding the Hub Committee to account.

The Plan is published on the Council's website (www.westdevon.gov.uk)

The Hub Committee consists of nine Councillors. Each has responsibility for a particular area of the Council's work.

Leader – Cllr Neil Jory

Deputy Leader – Cllr Lois Samuel

Lead Member for Environment – Cllr Caroline Mott

Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing – Cllr Tony Leech

Lead Member for Enterprise – Cllr Ric Cheadle

Lead Member for Communities – Cllr Terry Pearce

Lead Member for Customer First – Cllr Jeff Moody

Lead Member for Resources and Performance – Cllr Chris Edmonds

Lead Member for Homes – Cllr Debo Sellis

Further information on the workings of the Hub Committee, including latest information on agenda items, can be obtained by contacting the Democratic Services Section by e-mail to democratic.services@westdevon.gov.uk

All items listed in this Forward Plan will be discussed in public at the relevant meeting, unless otherwise indicated

Portfolio Area	Report Title and Summary	Lead Member / Officer	Documents to be considered in making decision	Date of Meeting	Consultees and means of consultation
Council	Title: Recovery Plan to the Covid-19 Crisis Purpose: to consider the recommendations of the Joint Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Development Management Committee on the draft Recovery Plan	Cllr Jory / Drew Powell	Report of the Director of Governance and Assurance	15 Sept 2020	To be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 Sept 2020
Council	Title: Amended Draft Budget 2020/21 Purpose: To consider a report that presents an amended budget for 2020/21 in light of the impact of Covid-19	Cllr Jory / Lisa Buckle	Report of the Section 151 Officer	15 Sept 2020	To be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 1 Sept 2020
Council	Title: Write Off Report for Quarter 4 2019/2020 Purpose of report: The Council is responsible for the collection of: Housing Rents, Sundry Debts including Housing Benefit Overpayments, Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates. The report informs members of the debt written off for these revenue streams.	Cllr Edmonds / Lisa Buckle	Report of S151 Officer	15 September 2020	
Council	Title: Commercial Investments Update Purpose: to update the Council on any commercial investment opportunities	Cllr Jory / Chris Brook	Report of Director of Place and Enterprise	15 September 2020	
Environment	Title: 3 weekly waste update Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the 3 weekly waste trial	Cllr Mott / Jane Savage	Report of Head of Contracts and Commissioning	15 September 2020	

Portfolio Area	Report Title and Summary	Lead Member / Officer	Documents to be considered in making decision	Date of Meeting	Consultees and means of consultation
Homes	Title: Empty Homes Premium Purpose of report: To consider an increase to the Council Tax premium on properties that have been empty for over two years	Cllr Sellis / Steve Henstock	Report of the Senior Specialist of Housing, Revenues and Benefits, and Customer First	15 September 2020	Consultation with various Heads of Practice
Strategic Planning / Environment	Title: Coastal Concordat Purpose of report: To outline to Members the protocol for formal processes where these are shared across administrative boundaries / responsibilities	Cllr Mott / Rob Sekula	Report of Head of Place Making Practice	15 September 2020	
Council Page 11	Title: Capital Budget Monitoring Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 Purpose of report: The report advises Members of the progress on individual schemes within the approved capital programme for 2020/21, including an assessment of their financial position	Cllr Edmonds / Lisa Buckle	Report of S151 Officer	20 October 2020	
Council	Medium Term Financial Strategy for the five years 2021/22 to 2025/26 Purpose of the report: To set the strategic intention for all of the different strands of funding available to the Council. This brings together all known factors affecting the Council's financial position and its financial sustainability, to provide a long term financial forecast.	Cllr Jory / Lisa Buckle	Report of S151 Officer	20 October 2020	
Council	Title: Revenue Budget Monitoring up to August 2020	Cllr Edmonds / Lisa Buckle	Report of S151 Officer	20 October 2020	

Portfolio Area	Report Title and Summary	Lead Member / Officer	Documents to be considered in making decision	Date of Meeting	Consultees and means of consultation
	Purpose of report: A revenue budget monitoring report to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved revenue budget for 2020/21 up to August 2020				
Strategy	Title: Housing Strategy 2021-2026 Purpose of report: To present the draft Housing Strategy to Members for comment and to recommend to commence the formal public consultation, prior to adoption from 1 st April 2021.	Cllr Sellis / Chris Brook	Report of the Director of Place and Enterprise	20 October 2020	
Homes	Title: Springhill update Purpose: To provide Members with an update on Springhill	Cllr Sellis / Dan Field	Report of Senior Specialist (Assets)	20 October 2020	
Council	Title: Write Off Report for Quarter 1 Purpose of report: The Council is responsible for the collection of: Housing Rents, Sundry Debts including Housing Benefit Overpayments, Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates. The report informs members of the debt written off for these revenue streams.	Cllr Edmonds / Lisa Buckle	Report of S151 Officer	1 December 2020	
Council	Title: Revenue Budget Monitoring up to October 2020 Purpose of report: A revenue budget monitoring report to monitor income and	Cllr Edmonds / Lisa Buckle	Report of S151 Officer	1 December 2020	

Portfolio Area	Report Title and Summary	Lead Member / Officer	Documents to be considered in making decision	Date of Meeting	Consultees and means of consultation
	expenditure variations against the approved revenue budget for 2020/21 up to October 2020				
Health and Well-being	Title: Domestic Abuse Policy Purpose: To agree and adopt the domestic abuse policy	Cllr Leech / Louisa Daley	Report of Specialist – Community Safety	1 December 2020	

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Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **1st September 2020**
Title: **Amended Budget 2020/21**
Portfolio Area: **Budget Setting Process – Cllr Neil Jory**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**
Date next steps can be taken: **Council 22nd September 2020**

Author: **Lisa Buckle** Role: **Corporate Director for Strategic Finance (S151 Officer)**

Contact: lisa.buckle@swdevon.gov.uk

Recommendations:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to recommend to the Hub Committee:-

- 1) To recommend to Council the five options set out in 5.2 totalling £501,000, in order to produce an Amended Revenue Budget for 2020-21
- 2) To note the future capacity of reserves set out in 5.8 and 5.9 which may have to be called upon to meet any future financial challenges and/or additional requirements
- 3) To recommend to Council to use £70,000 from the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve, to fund the Town Centre support initiative set out in Section 6.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Covid 19 has caused financial strain for all Councils up and down the country where Councils find themselves being caught in a 'perfect storm'. Councils have to manage both the increased costs of coping with Covid19 and supporting vulnerable people in the community and the loss of key income streams such as car parking income and council tax income.

- 1.2 The factors affecting the Council's finances are issues affecting the whole Local Government sector. The Council is well-placed to meet the financial challenges arising from Covid19, due to its prudent financial management over previous years.
- 1.3 Due to the rapidly changing financial position, the Council is now undertaking monthly revenue budget monitoring reports (as opposed to quarterly). The latest revenue budget monitoring report for Month 3 (end of June) predicts a budget shortfall of £0.501 million for 2020/21. This equates to 6.9% of the overall budget set of £7.212 million. The options set out in 5.2 are being proposed, in order to produce an Amended Budget for 2020-21.
- 1.4 This figure will change throughout the financial year as more information comes to light on items such as the collectability of outstanding debt and arrears and how income streams have been affected by the pandemic.
- 1.5 This position is after taking into account the £0.585 million Government grant already received for Covid-19 and the estimated £0.453 million Government funding that the Council is anticipating towards income losses on sales, fees and charges (the Government 'income guarantee scheme'). More detail on this is in section 3.10.
- 1.6 This forecast shortfall is based on a range of assumptions which have been made as to how much the income streams of the Council could be affected by Covid19. Projections could improve and it is difficult to predict as we don't know how quickly things will bounce back. We will be monitoring our finances on a monthly basis and as actual figures emerge, we will refine these figures and our assumptions.
- 1.7 Financial Stability is one of the themes within the Recovery and Renewal Plan which is a separate agenda item on this Committee agenda. The action plan, setting out the areas being progressed and the timescales within which this will take place, is set out in Appendix 1 of the Recovery Plan. Following consideration of the Renewal and Recovery Plan in the Summer, the Action Plan for the Financial Stability Theme was updated and agreed by the Financial Stability Review Group (FSRG) on 18 August 2020.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 18 February 2020, the Council approved the Revenue Budget for 2020-21 of £7.21 million. During March 2020, the Covid 19 pandemic started to affect the finances of Councils up and down the country. Income Losses in April, May and June totalled £474,000 from areas such as car parking income, planning income, rental income and the business rates pooling gain.

- 2.2 Prudent financial management in the past has meant that the Council was in a relatively healthy position financially before the pandemic hit. Since 2010, we have had to redesign our services to balance the books. We have done this by sharing a single workforce with South Hams District Council, generating an ongoing annual saving of £2.2 million for West Devon and by reducing our staffing levels by 30% through our Transformation Programme.

3 LATEST REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING POSITION

- 3.1 The latest revenue budget monitoring report for Month 3 (end of June) predicts a budget shortfall of £0.501 million for 2020/21. This equates to 6.9% of the overall budget set of £7.212 million. In this report, assumptions have been made as to how much the income streams of the Council could be affected by Covid19. For example for car parking losses, the report assumes a 40% drop in income levels from 1st July 2020. Projections could improve and it is difficult to predict as we don't know how quickly things will bounce back. We will be monitoring our finances on a monthly basis and as actual figures emerge, we will refine these figures and our assumptions.
- 3.2 The shortfall predicted will change throughout the financial year as more information comes to light on items such as the collectability of outstanding debt and arrears and how income streams have been affected by the pandemic.
- 3.3 The unprecedented nature and scale of the Covid19 pandemic has resulted in severe financial pressure on every Local Authority. Councils are still under a legal obligation to manage their finances to ensure that they provide best value whilst not operating with an overall budget deficit.
- 3.4 Section 30(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires precepting authorities to set a balanced budget on an annual basis. A Council's budget must be "balanced", meaning that Councils must ensure that their planned spending can be met by taxation, grants and other income raised in the year, or by the use of their reserves.
- 3.5 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council's Chief Finance Officer (known as the S151 Officer), to report to Full Council on the robustness of the Council's budget and the overall adequacy of its reserves.
- 3.6 Balancing the Council's Budget has become more challenging over the years as the demand for services and the reduction in government grant funding via the austerity programme has reduced the financial flexibility of Councils.

- 3.7 Each month, Councils complete a national return that informs the Government of how much COVID-19 is affecting the finances of Councils. The point has been made that these income losses have had a much bigger impact (in proportion to Net Budgets) on District Councils, than they have on County Councils and Unitaries.
- 3.8 A lobbying letter from South West Councils was sent to the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP (Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government). This letter set out that the latest Government returns to MHCLG showed a financial challenge to South West Councils of over £1 billion across the region.
- 3.9 The Society of District Council Treasurers (SDCT) has engaged Local Government Futures (who are specialists in the field of Local Government Finance), to put together evidence to show the losses experienced by District Councils. This will then be used for the purpose of lobbying the Government for further funding for District Councils. In a letter from the Chairman of the District Councils' Network to the Chancellor, the financial needs of District Councils were set out, as well as stating that no part of the public sector is better placed than District Councils to catalyse and lead the recovery and that we will rise to the challenge.
- 3.10 ***On 2nd July, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP announced a new comprehensive package of support for Councils, to address spending pressures and losses in income streams. There were three central pillars of support announced:-***
- A new scheme to compensate Councils for losses of income, though not in their entirety (an 'income guarantee' scheme). Councils have to meet the first 5% of losses of all budgeted sales, fees and charges and only some categories of income are allowable under the scheme. For the categories allowed, once the 5% is deducted, the Government will reimburse 75pence in every £1.
 - An extra £500million to cover extra COVID19 expenditure costs (the Borough Council's allocation of this funding has been announced at £89,686)
 - To allow council tax and business rate losses in income to be repaid over the next 3 years of budget cycles, instead of just the next one year
- 3.11 We are very pleased that our lobbying has been successful but there is still further work to do on this.
- 3.12 The main element of the announcement is that the Government will compensate Councils for their income losses above the first 5% of their budgeted income from sales, fees and charges. Income losses above the first 5% will be compensated by the Government paying for 75 pence in every pound of the losses thereafter. This is only the income losses from sales, fees and charges and excludes any rental income and investment income.

- 3.13 This has been estimated at £453,000 for the Council based on the income shortfalls to date. Detailed guidance from the Government is awaited on this.
- 3.14 The Government announcement is below:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/comprehensive-new-funding-package-for-councils-to-help-address-coronavirus-pressures-and-cover-lost-income-during-the-pandemic>
- 3.15 On 19 March 2020, £1.6bn emergency funding was announced to help local authorities respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. On 18 April 2020, a further £1.6bn funding for local authorities was announced. On 2 July 2020, a further £500m funding for local authorities was announced as part of a new funding package for councils to address coronavirus pressures. West Devon Borough Council has received £674,444 from this £3.7bn of funding (being £585,000 from the first two tranches and £89,686 from the 3rd tranche).
- 3.16 It is recognised that Town and Parish Councils have also similarly had their finances adversely affected by the pandemic. The Council is lobbying alongside NALC (National Association of Local Councils) for a separate financial package of support for Town and Parish Councils.

4 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

- 4.1 Whilst looking to set an Amended Budget for 2020-21, the longer term position for the medium term will be borne in mind. The last Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2020 showed an anticipated Budget Gap for 2021/22 of £0.4million. The aggregated Budget Gap by 2024/25 was £1.6 million.
- 4.2 The key variables will be items such as New Homes Bonus, negative RSG, business rates and council tax collection rates and previous income assumptions around the leisure contract. In the next MTFS (being presented in October), various scenarios and modelling around these key variables will be shown and we are pressing the Government for some early announcements on things like negative RSG and NHB (or its replacement) to inform our MTFS which we are currently modelling.
- 4.3 It should be noted that the financial landscape for Councils is ever-changing and there is still a great deal of uncertainty that Councils are working with in planning their finances for the longer term, in particular the items listed in 4.2
- 4.4 Negative RSG provides a 'cliff-edge' for many Councils and it would be an untenable position to introduce this in 2021-22, when there is a need to provide stability for Councils in the current financial climate. It is accepted that this would cost the Government over £150million but it would also benefit over 160 Councils. (In 2019-20 negative RSG totalled £152.9m and affected 168 Councils).

- 4.5 Sparsely populated rural Councils also need the certainty that Rural Services Delivery Grant will be continued for 2021-22, at least at its present value of £81 million in total.

5 Options to address the Budget Shortfall of £0.5million in 2020-21

- 5.1 A Member Budget Workshop took place on 25th August, to explore all options with Members on their preferred approach to addressing the Budget Shortfall identified for 2020-21 of £0.5million. Nineteen responses were received from Members on the SurveyMonkey tool used to capture Members' views on the options.
- 5.2 Each of the below options were supported by the substantial majority of Members who expressed a view:

COVID impact on the Revenue Budget		£
<i>Budget shortfall identified for 2020-21 from the Month 3 Revenue Budget Monitoring report to the Hub Committee on 28 July 2020</i>		501,000
Options to address the budget shortfall		£
As per 5.3	Use the 3 rd tranche of COVID funding received from the Government (WDBC share £89,686)	89,000
As per 5.4	Use the New Burdens Government grant funding received for the administration of the Business Rates Grants	130,000
As per 5.5	Utilise the 2019-20 Statement of Accounts underspend	133,000
As per 5.6	Allocate the uncommitted New Homes Bonus from 2020-21 to further fund the Revenue Base Budget	69,000
As per 5.7	Reduce the capital budget for the remedial works to the Tavistock Viaduct from £100,000 to £20,000 (This capital budget was being funded by NHB which is revenue funding).	80,000
TOTAL		501,000

- 5.3 The Council has received a 3rd tranche allocation of COVID Government funding totalling **£89,686**. The funding was the Council's allocation from the £500 million of un-ring fenced grant funding from the Government, to respond to spending pressures.
- 5.4 The Council has paid out over £16 million in Business Grants and the **£130,000** is a New Burdens funding grant (un-ringfenced) from the Government to compensate Councils for the cost of administering the Business Grants on behalf of the Government.

- 5.5 The Statement of Accounts for 2019-20 were presented to the Audit Committee in July 2020 and these showed that the final outturn was an underspend against the budget for 2019-20 of **£133,000**. This underspend on last year's budget could be used to finance part of the budget shortfall in 2020-21.
- 5.6 The report to Council on 18th February 2020 setting out the Revenue Budget Proposals for 2020-21, stated that the Council's New Homes Bonus allocation for 2020-21 was £347,000 and recommended that £228,000 of this was used to fund the Revenue Base Budget for 2020-21 and £50,000 was used to fund the 2020-21 Capital Programme for affordable housing. This left an amount of **£69,000** currently unallocated. This would increase the amount of NHB used to fund the revenue base budget in 2020- 21 to £297,000.
- 5.7 Officers have reviewed the Capital Programme to identify projects that could be reduced in scope or deferred. Further professional advice was sought on the level of maintenance work required to the Tavistock Viaduct. The outcome is that the capital budget can be limited to further vegetation clearance and some drainage improvements and the budget is able to be similarly reduced to £20,000 (a reduction of **£80,000**). This capital budget was being funded by New Homes Bonus funding, which is a revenue source of funding.
- 5.8 The sixth option that was supported in the priority ranking was to use the uncommitted balance of £116,000 from the Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve. This Earmarked Reserve has a balance of £196,000, with commitments relating to the Capital Programme (£50,000), future IT procurement (£18,000) and community housing staffing (£12,000), leaving an uncommitted balance of £116,000. This reserve was originally created in 2016/17 when the Transformation Programme (T18) yielded a surplus, which was built into the base budget in future years. Although this amount is not needed to fund the Amended Budget at this point in time, it does provide an element of 'headroom' for the future if further funding should be required. It is acknowledged that the budget shortfall will be carefully monitored and will continually change as we move through the financial year.
- 5.9 The next two options that were supported in the priority ranking were to reduce Unearmarked Reserves and/or to make use of a portion of the unallocated funding in the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve. Any decision that Members subsequently take at Full Council on 22nd September in relation to additional funding for leisure, please see section 7 below, would potentially require a call on these further options. All such decisions would require difficult choices to be made.

5.10 A national pay award has just been reached which equates to a 2.75% increase from 1st April 2020. The Council had budgeted for 2% within its budget and therefore the extra 0.75% would cost an extra £33,750. This will be shown within the next revenue budget monitoring report for 2020/21 and will be reflected within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and incorporated within the budget setting process for 2021/22. This will form part of the year end outturn reported in the Council's Accounts for 2020-21.

6. TOWN CENTRE SUPPORT INITIATIVE

6.1 Working in partnership with the Borough's Town Councils, Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement District (BID), West Devon Borough Council is developing a support package for the Town Centres, with an additional £70,000 of funding.

6.2 This money is being provided on top of £20,000 of funding already made available by the Borough Council, with the aim of supporting and enabling the great work the Town Councils and BID are doing to get their town centres back on their feet.

6.3 To help boost the local economy, the Borough Councils is looking at a number of proposals to support the local economy.

6.4 These areas include:

- A Town Centre Boost Grant
- Business training, advice and support
- Marketing campaigns for the area
- Local events
- Amending some car park and toilet provision to encourage shoppers and visitors to shop on our high streets

6.5 It is recommended that the £70,000 additional funding is funded from the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve. The £70,000 does not increase the £501,000 budget shortfall which has been addressed above.

7. Leisure provision

7.1 Leisure is one of the hardest hit sectors of industry from the lockdown restrictions of the pandemic. Government mandated the closure of leisure centres in March 2020 and they had to remain closed until the announcement of an opening date of 25th July 2020.

7.2 The current Government guidance now allows Leisure Centres to reopen with restrictions in place which limit the capacity of the facilities and key guidelines around operating practices to ensure social distancing, enhancing cleaning regimes and changes in ventilation of facilities.

- 7.3 The Covid19 pandemic and a lack of central Government support have created very challenging conditions for Fusion. At a Special Council meeting on 29 July 2020, Council agreed to provide interim financial support of £97,000 to Fusion to secure positive health and wellbeing outcomes in the Borough, which were the re-opening of the Okehampton Leisure Centre (both wet and dryside) in August and the mothballing costs for the Tavistock Leisure Centre. The cost of mothballing both centres in April, May and June has also been funded by the Council at a cost of £15.3K per month. An amount of £45,900 was approved by Council to be funded from the Leisure Services Earmarked Reserve. Therefore financial support to date for Fusion has totalled £142,900.
- 7.4 At the 22nd September Council meeting, the Council will be taking a strategic decision on leisure provision for the months of October 2020 onwards, alongside the decision on the Amended Budget 2020-21 Proposals set out in this report.
- 7.5 The costs of further interim support to Fusion for the months of October 2020 to March 2021 will be set out within the 22nd September Council report and these costs are not included within the £501,000 budget shortfall identified within the recent revenue budget monitoring report and would be in addition to this. Options as to how any further support to Fusion could be financed will be set out within this Council report.
- 7.6 The Council is continuing to lobby alongside South West Councils and through the Local Government Association for a specific package of Government support for the provision of leisure facilities. The Department for Culture and Media has also put a specific request for funding to the Treasury and there may be future Government support targeted at the leisure sector but we await announcements on this.
- 7.7 Members will be aware from the previous report that decisions about the operation of the Borough's leisure centres from October 2020 to March 2021 include a range of potential additional costs from £92,000 to £292,000. These decisions will be a matter for Full Council on 22nd September 2020.

8 The Collection Fund - Council Tax and Business Rates Income

- 8.1 The Collection Fund holds all payments in and out relating to Council Tax and Business Rates. As such any losses incurred will be suffered by the Collection Fund in the year and then distributed to the Council and Precepting Authorities in future years. A large part of the reductions in income will affect the Council's financial position in 2021/22 onwards, although it does affect the cashflow position of the Council in 2020/21.

- 8.2 **Council Tax: The net collectable debt for Council Tax is £43m for 2020/21.** By June 2020, WDBC collected 28.4% of the yearly total (compares against 29.06% in 2019/20) – the 0.66% drop equates to £282,000 (WDBC share £33,800). This is how much council tax income is down by in June 2020, compared against June 2019. Collection Fund losses for Council Tax could total £1.5m for the full year 2020-21 (WDBC share £180,000).
(The collection rate was 97.71% for Council Tax in 2019-20)
- 8.3 **Business Rates: The net collectable debt for Business Rates is £4.86 million for 2020/21.** (Prior to the pandemic, this was predicted to be £10.6million and the additional NNDR reliefs for the total value of the expanded retail discount and nursery discount for 2020-21 total £6.087million).
- 8.4 By June 2020, WDBC has collected over 34% of the yearly total (compared to 31% in 2019/20). The higher collection rate is due to the impacts of the reliefs being given for retail, hospitality and leisure and timing differences of some larger payments. Business rates losses could total between £0.3million to £0.5 million and the Council's share would be 40%. No pooling gain for Business Rates has been assumed for 2020/21.
(The collection rate was 97.62% for NNDR in 2019-20)
- 8.5 Council Tax and Business Rates form a large share of the funding for the Council's budget and therefore these income streams are funding the essential services being delivered.
- 8.6 In the next Spending Review the Government will also determine what support Councils will need, to help them meet the pressures of income losses from council tax and business rates. The Government has said that they are bringing in changes to allow Councils to spread their Collection Fund losses (for losses in Council Tax and Business Rates income) over the next three years instead of over the next one year. So this will allow council tax and business rate losses in income, to be repaid over the next 3 years of budget cycles, instead of just the next one year. The Government will also agree an apportionment of irrecoverable council tax and business rate losses, between central and local Government for 2020 to 2021. More details are awaited on this from the Spending Review, to be able to understand the detail of how Councils will be supported by this.
- 9. Review of Earmarked Reserves and General Fund Reserves**
- 9.1 As part of the Budget Workshop on 25th August, the Council also undertook a review of its Earmarked Reserves through reviewing the commitments against the Earmarked Reserves, its unallocated balance and the contributions to/from Earmarked Reserves for 2020/21 also.

- 9.2 A schedule of Earmarked Reserves is attached at Appendix 1, which shows Earmarked Reserves have a balance of £4.984 million at 31.3.2020. Reserve levels will be kept under constant review.
- 9.3 The Council's level of Unearmarked Reserves currently stands at £1.1 million. As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Members have set a minimum balance for Unearmarked Reserves of £900,000, based on a risk assessment basis.
- 9.4 Legislation does not prescribe how much the minimum level of reserves should be. The Section 151 officer is tasked with recommending the minimum level of reserves required as part of the budget setting process having regard to elements of risk in the Council's finances. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the S151 officer to report on the adequacy of the Council's financial resources on an annual basis.
- 9.5 As part of the Members' Budget Workshop, an option was discussed regarding whether Members would support using up to £200,000 of Unearmarked Reserves to contribute to the 2020/21 budget shortfall and then consider a plan to replenish these funds in future years. This was supported to an extent, in that some Members said if Unearmarked Reserves are reduced, they would support reducing them at a much lower level such as £50,000 to £100,000.

10. Spending Review and Business Rates Retention

- 10.1 The Government has also confirmed that the Review of Relative Needs and Resource and 75% business rates retention will no longer be implemented in 2021-22. This was to enable Councils to focus on meeting the immediate public health challenge posed by the pandemic.
- 10.2 The Chancellor has confirmed that the 2020 Spending Review will be finalised this Autumn and will cover the years 2021/22 to 2023/24.
- 10.3 Auditing regulations for the Council's accounts has also been changed. There have been amendments to the statutory audit deadlines for 2019/20 for all Local Authorities, meaning that the deadline for final, audited accounts has been extended to 30 November 2020.

11. Options available and consideration of risk

- 11.1 The financial forecasts are based on a number of assumptions including the level of income losses and support from the Government. In addition there are a number of uncertainties that could affect the financial position either now or in the future. These include whether there is a second wave and additional restrictions imposed.

12. Proposed Way Forward

12.1 Members are recommended to recommend to the Council in September to approve the options outlined in Section 5.2 for balancing the Council's Amended Budget for 2020-21.

13. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Local Government Finance Act 1992 places a legal requirement on Council to approve not only the budget but also any changes to the budget proposed during the year. Council has a legal duty to ensure that the budget is balanced and that any changes to the budget are fully funded.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>The budget monitoring report identifies an overall predicted shortfall of £0.501 million which is 6.9% of the overall budget set for 2020/21 of £7.212 million, due to the current pressures on the Council's income targets due to the Covid 19 situation and extra expenditure incurred.</p> <p>Following a Members' Budget Workshop on options for setting an Amended Budget for 2020-21, it is proposed to Council in September to approve the options set out in 5.2 totalling £501,000, in order to produce an Amended Revenue Budget for 2020-21,</p> <p>It is also proposed as part of this report, to use £70,000 from the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve, to fund the Town Centre support initiative set out in Section 6.</p>
Risk	Y	See 11.1
Supporting Corporate Strategy		The budget monitoring process supports all six of the Corporate Strategy Themes of Council, Homes, Enterprise, Communities, Environment and Wellbeing.
Climate Change – Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		None directly arising from this report.
<i>Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications</i>		

Equality and Diversity		None directly arising from this report.
Safeguarding		None directly arising from this report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None directly arising from this report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None directly arising from this report.
Other implications		None directly arising from this report.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Earmarked Reserves

Background Papers:

Hub Committee – 28th July 2020 - Month 3 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021

Special Council – 29th July 2020 – Fusion Interim Support

Approval and clearance of report

Process checklist	Completed
Portfolio Holder briefed	Yes
SLT Rep briefed	Yes
Relevant Exec Director sign off (draft)	Yes
Data protection issues considered	Yes
If exempt information, public (part 1) report also drafted. (Committee/Scrutiny)	N/A

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West Devon Earmarked Reserve Balances (totalling £4,984,000)

APPENDIX 1

	31.3.2018	31.3.2019	31.3.2020	Annual Reserve Contribution originally budgeted for 20/21	Notes
	£000	£000	£000	£000	
16/17 Budget Surplus Contingency	434	375	196		This is the Budget Surplus from 2016/17 which was put into an Earmarked Reserve. Commitments in 2020/21 totalling £80k relate to the Capital Programme £50k, Future IT Procurement £18k and Community Housing Staffing £12k
Business Rates Retention Scheme	509	492	904		This relates to a timing issue on the accounting adjustments required for the localisation of business rates. This reserve also deals with any volatility in Business Rate income e.g. due to appeals.
Cannons Meadow	13	11	8		This reserve contains a commuted sum to be written down to revenue annually over 10 years (£2.7k per annum)
Car Parking Maintenance	386	417	464		The commitments relate to Brook Street Car Park, Council Owned Asset Investment & Development £20k (minute ref HC4) and Grounds Maintenance £30k (Hub 10/9/19)
CLG - Assets Community Value	8	0	0		Balance reallocated to ICT Development Reserve as part of the review of earmarked reserves by the Financial Stability Review Group in October 2018
Community Housing Fund	243	152	0		This reserve was fully utilised in 2019/20
Elections	24	24	0	20	This reserve was fully utilised in 2019/20 to fund the cost of District Elections. £20K a year is contributed to this reserve.
Environmental Health Initiatives	20	20	20		£2,000 has been committed in 2020/21
Financial Stability	0	267	454		This reserve was created in 2018/19 from the Business Rates Pilot funding. This funding was set aside to assist to smooth out future years' funding variations or reductions, in particular any changes from the Fair Funding Review.
Flood Works	15	15	15		Nil commitments

Grounds Maintenance	49	0	0		Balance reallocated to ICT Development Reserve as part of the review of earmarked reserves by the Financial Stability Review Group in October 2018
Habitats	10	8	3		An annual commitment of £2,500 relates to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre.
Homelessness	95	115	115		This reserve has been created following underspends on Homelessness Prevention Costs in previous years.
ICT Development	30	76	66	25	The commitments in 2020/21 totalling £75k mainly relate to the New IT Procurement, Hub Cttee Jan 20 Min Ref HC73 (£65k). £25K a year is contributed to this reserve.
Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn)	724	453	432		Commitments totalling £187k mainly relate to the upgrading of Hayedown Depot
Invest to Save	27	12	12		£7.5k is committed in 2020/21 for Council Owned Asset Investment and Development
Joint Local Plan	0	30	20		This is a new reserve for Joint Local Plan Funding, there are commitments to fund staffing costs.
JSG Future Options	11	5	5		Nil commitments
Landscape Maintenance	5	0	18		Balance reallocated to ICT Development Reserve as part of the review of earmarked reserves by the Financial Stability Review Group in October 2018
Leisure Services	231	231	204		The reserve is all fully committed. Commitments include Capital Programme Funding and Fusion leisure monthly support (for April, May and June) of £45,900 and Fusion leisure monthly support (for July, August and September) of £97,000.
Localism Support	5	5	14		This reserve includes an underspend of £9.4k from the Members Sustainable Communities Locality Fund in 2019/20. No commitments have been identified to date
Maintenance Fund	223	196	170		Maintenance Fund for all assets.
Maintenance, Management & Risk Mitigation	0	88	190		This is a new reserve set up to manage the ongoing maintenance costs of the Council's Commercial Property Portfolio. The contributions to the reserve equate to 10% of the rental income, this is anticipated to be a further £119k in 2020/21.

Millwood Homes Reserve	15	0	0		Balance reallocated to ICT Development Reserve as part of the review of earmarked reserves by the Financial Stability Review Group in October 2018
Neighbourhood Planning Grants	47	42	16		This reserve funds Neighbourhood Planning Specialists
New Burdens CLG	3	0	0		Balance reallocated to ICT Development Reserve as part of the review of earmarked reserves by the Financial Stability Review Group in October 2018
New Homes Bonus	225	291	401		£347k will be received in NHB grant in 2020/21. Commitments include a £228k contribution to the base revenue budget and funding of the Capital Programme
Outdoor Sports & Recreation	18	18	18		Nil commitments
Planning Enforcement	5	5	5		Nil commitments
Planning Policy & Major Developments	44	104	122	25	This reserve is for all planning matters and is also to meet appeal costs. £25K a year is contributed to this reserve.
Public Health	6	6	6		This reserve balance is committed to fund the cost of an Environmental Health Student (12 month post)
Revenue Grants	220	422	508	-32.5	This reserve comprises of government grants received for specific initiatives or new burdens and are held in the reserve for accounting purposes. The annual contribution of £32,500 from this reserve relates to the funding of three housing posts which were made permanent in the 2020/21 budget process and are funded from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.
S106 Monitoring	19	8	0		This reserve funds the cost of an officer to oversee the administration of S106 deposits and how they are spent. It was fully utilised in 2019/20.
Strategic Change	287	234	67		Commitments totalling £60,000 relate to £50,000 for the capital requirement of the Public Toilets pay on entry review (HC.19) and £10,000 for Kilworthy Park marketing.
Support Services Trading	8	8	8		Nil commitments
Town Teams & Economic Grant Initiatives	23	23	23		A commitment of £14k in 2020/21 mainly relates to the Reopening High Street Grants - COVID 19 (£10k)

Vehicles Replacement	0	0	396	50	This is a new reserve set up in 2019/20 to fund the Council's vehicle replacement programme for the waste fleet. This reserve is fully committed. £50K a year is contributed to this reserve.
Waste & Cleansing Options Review	28	163	104		A commitment of £14k in 2020/21 relates to three weekly collection trial costs (Hub 4 June 2019)
World Heritage Key Site	5	0	0		Balance reallocated to ICT Development Reserve as part of the review of earmarked reserves by the Financial Stability Review Group in October 2018
	4,015	4,316	4,984	87.5	TOTAL

Report to: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **1 September 2020**

Title: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Recovery and Renewal Plan Development Update**

Portfolio Area: **Council – Cllr Neil Jory (Leader)**

Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Recommendations to the Hub Committee meeting to be held on 15 September 2020**

Authors: **Drew Powell** Role: **Director of Governance and Assurance**
Andy Bates **Chief Executive**

Contact: **01803 861240 email: drew.powell@swdevon.gov.uk**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee RECOMMEND to the Hub Committee to:

- 1. Note the Council’s continuing response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic;**
- 2. Note the outputs of the Member Workshops as detailed in Appendix 1;**
- 3. Note progress on the development of the Recovery and Renewal Action Plan (‘the Plan’) as detailed in Appendix 1;**
- 4. Delegate authority to the Group Leaders, in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to nominate Members to serve on the Task and Finish Groups (as set out at Section 8.4 below);**
- 5. Take into account the conclusions of this Committee on the Plan; and**

6. Request that a further update on progress against development and delivery of the Plan be brought back to the Overview and Committee at its meeting to be held on 10 November 2020.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on 23 June 2020 (minute O&S 95 refers) detailing the Councils vital role in responding to the global Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.
- 1.2 The report also identified the need to take a strategic approach to recovery to ensure that we learn from the response, understand the new challenges we face and emerge as an organisation that is fit for purpose and financially sustainable.
- 1.3 Members considered a high level framework that set out the key areas to be explored focussing on operational (internal) actions and strategic (external) opportunities and challenges with a recognition that there is clearly a cross over between these areas.
- 1.4 The Committee recommended a range of areas for future consideration and at the meeting of the Hub Committee on 30th June (minute *HC 82 refers) it was resolved to hold a series of Member workshops, based on the amended framework, to consider these areas further.
- 1.5 Now that the workshops have been concluded, the next stage is to determine the best way to implement and/or develop the proposals that Members have generated.
- 1.6 The draft Action plan is based on all of the outputs of the workshops and therefore there will need to be a rationalisation process whereby the proposals are prioritised in terms of impact and cost.
- 1.7 It is important to stress that whilst in emergency planning terms, we have essentially moved from 'response' phase into 'recovery', the very real risk of a second peak or a local outbreak remains.
- 1.8 At this stage, we still do not know what the 'new normal' will look like. A range of indicators around the economy and employment point towards a very challenging time and the only thing that is clear at this stage is that there is no consensus or clarity, but that there will need to be a phased approach to recovery which is, where possible, evidence-led. It is also clear that whilst the Council's role will be vital, the key will be to work with a range of partners locally and regionally.
- 1.9 Financial Stability is one of the themes within the Recovery and Renewal Plan and Section 9 sets out the areas being progressed and the timescales within which this will take place. During September 2020, the Council will be recommended to set an Amended Budget for 2020/21 taking into the account the impact the pandemic has had on

the Council's finances. A separate report is on this Committee agenda regarding proposals for the Amended Budget. In October 2020 a report will be presented to Members on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2021/22 onwards which will look at the Council's financial position over the next five years.

- 1.10 In conjunction with the budget, the Senior Leadership Team have reviewed and are monitoring the staffing establishment to enable a degree of flexibility in the allocation of resources to the priorities emerging from the action plan.
- 1.11 This report summarises what continues to be a highly effective response to the challenges of the pandemic, details key recovery actions already complete or underway and proposals to develop and implement the first iteration of our long/medium term recovery and renewal plans.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic has impacted the lives of everybody in our Borough. The response has by necessity been large-scale and complex involving all sectors of the community from the Government through to individual volunteers.
- 2.2 The pandemic continues to have a significant impact in numerous ways including the tragic loss of lives, major disruption to education and, as yet, unmeasured economic shock.
- 2.3 Nationally, cases are reducing, whilst globally the rise in cases is a major cause for concern and a vaccine, if it is ever developed, will take a considerable time to roll-out.
- 2.4 At the time of writing this report, the number of cases within the area is thankfully very low and we are working with Devon County Council Public Health, as the lead authority, to develop the Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) which will facilitate the response to any future local outbreaks.
- 2.5 The Council continues to play a key role, alongside partners, in both response and recovery to the short, medium and long term impacts of the pandemic and in the implementation of a range of essential support for individuals, the wider community and business.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 This report sets out a summary of the Council's continuing response and proposals to develop and implement the first iteration of the Recovery and Renewal Plan.

4. Preparation for future outbreaks

- 4.1 The Council's preparation for the pandemic was thorough and, although not tested by large amounts of absence, the operational response was largely effective. Members' views on the response were gathered through the report to this Committee on 23 June and further developed through the workshops detailed later in this report.
- 4.2 In order to help prepare for a second peak or a local outbreak, a short 'lessons' learnt review has been undertaken. This focussed primarily around operation of the Incident Management Team; the officer team who managed the operational response phase.
- 4.3 As a result a number of actions have been implemented. These include a review of Service based Business Continuity Plans and introducing the principle of a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) to support operational decision-making and to add capacity and resilience.
- 4.4 The SRO principle allows autonomy and responsibility for making operational decisions to be passed to suitably qualified and experienced officers during, in this case, the acute response phase of an incident.
- 4.5 With a clear shift from central government towards managing outbreaks locally, the Council have been working in partnership with the Director of Public Health at Devon County Council to prepare the Local Outbreak Management Plan and a number of standard operating procedures for dealing with localised outbreaks should they occur.
- 4.6 The Local Outbreak Management Plan will be tested with a series of multi-agency exercises that the Council will also participate in.
- 4.7 The Council's Environmental Health and Licensing team continue to respond to complaints regarding COVID-19. The Team provides support to businesses regarding COVID-19 secure precautions and has a key role in its responsibility to protect public health at a local level. The team also stands ready to assist in a wider public health response if required.

5. Member Workshops

- 5.1 During July, a series of workshops, led by Members of the Hub Committee, were held to enable the wider membership to consider, debate and propose what should be included through the Recovery and Renewal process.
- 5.2 The Workshops were grouped around the themes set out in the framework;
 - Residents, Communities and Partnerships
 - Place and Environment
 - Business and Economy
 - Governance and Communications
- 5.3 The outputs, which were captured at the end of the meetings and fed back to attendees, have been collated and the Action Plan has been built around these – see Sections 7 and 8.

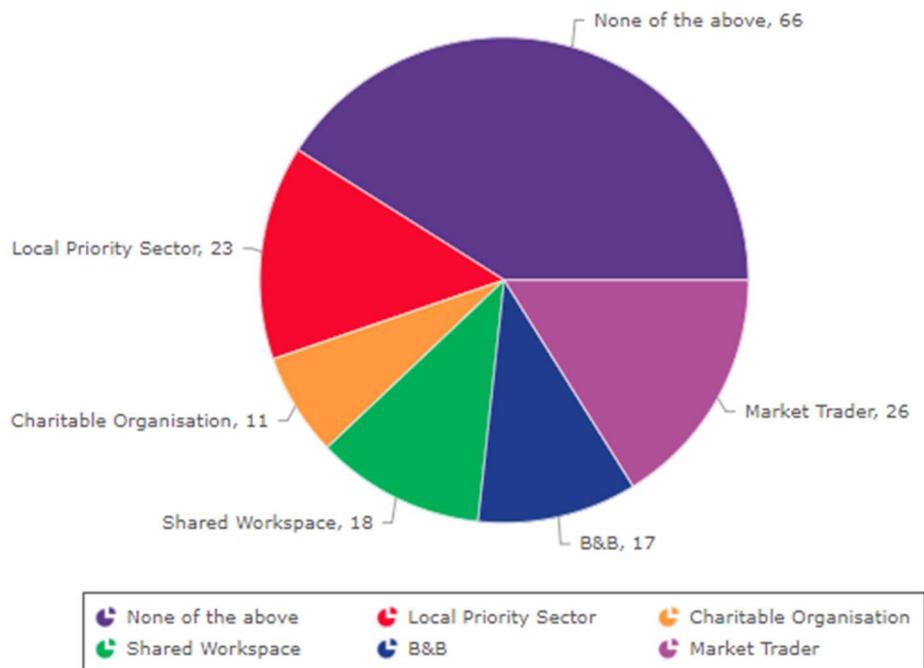
- 5.4 Members will see that these range from individual specific actions to higher level strategic issues and across a range of timescales. The outputs have been grouped where possible into related areas to populate the Action plan.
- 5.5 It is recognised that development of an effective plan takes time and careful consideration to ensure that finite resources are focussed on the right issues. However, it has been equally important for the Council to continue to actively support response and recovery within the wider community.

6. Ongoing Response and Recovery Activity

- 6.1 The gradual relaxation of lockdown measures has enabled the Council to support the wider community whilst continuing to provide essential services.
- 6.2 The duration of remaining COVID restrictions is hard to gauge and will be dependent on local, national and, to an extent, global rates of infection. The Council will continue to follow guidance and support the community and business to do the same wherever it can.
- 6.3 What is clear is that demands on services have already changed in many areas with for example an increase in people holidaying locally and demand for support to vulnerable sectors of the community
- 6.4 Some of the changing need has resulted in refocussing service provision whereas others are entirely new areas of work arising from Government initiatives or new demands within the community. The following are just a few examples of the work that is ongoing to manage the response and support recovery.

Support for Businesses and the Economy

- 6.5 There has been a clear focus on supporting some of the businesses that missed out on support from the first tranche of Government grants where over £16 million was paid out to over 1,400 businesses.
- 6.6 Based on the guidance and in line with local priorities, 161 businesses have been supported through the Council's Discretionary Business Grants scheme (as at the middle of August), with a split by sector as detailed in Graph 1 below. Payments to date have totalled £638,000. Final payments have to be made by the end of September 2020, by when, the total Government allocation of £870,500 for the scheme will have been paid out in support for businesses.
- 6.7 Graph 1 – Discretionary Business Grants by Sector



- 6.8 The Council’s organisational operating model, coupled with the staff behavioural framework has again proven highly effective in delivering this new work in a timely manner.
- 6.9 The additional resource required to deliver the work was recognised by the Government and a new burdens, un-ringfenced grant payment of £130,000 was received in recognition of the administrative cost.
- 6.10 Managers have been able to flex and move resources around the organisation to deal with this new demand; a clear benefit of our flexible operating model. As a result, this grant payment may well be available to help reduce part of the overall budget deficit arising from the pandemic as a whole.
- 6.11 In addition, the business grants regime has created an additional increase in the workload around general business rates work with more businesses, changes in uses and names being reported to us. We continue to resource this area as we are keen to ensure that the collection fund and the collectable debt is as accurate as possible to maximise income for the Council and other preceptors.
- 6.12 On a wider scale we are keen to jointly develop a package of measures to support the local economy, with a particular focus on town centres.
- 6.13 We consider that in doing so, and by working in collaboration with stakeholders from the business community, we will have greater impact than if we work in isolation.

- 6.14 In view of this and following informal consultation with our partners from Okehampton Town Council, Tavistock Town Council, Business Information Point (BIP), Business Improvement District (BID) and Tavistock Chamber of Trade, a comprehensive package of support has been developed, which subject to approval, covers, for example;
- 'Town Centre Boost' Grants
 - Direct Business support – eg advice, 'pop-up' business school
 - Streetscene improvements
 - Car Parking suspensions/changes
 - Re-opening of toilets during the peak summer period
- 6.15 Associated with this, as lockdown measures have been relaxed, hospitality businesses, a key sector for the local economy, were faced with a number of challenges. How they can open, comply with the social distancing restrictions and remain viable.
- 6.16 With the Government's clear message being to support businesses coming out of lockdown, the Council recognised its important role in terms of Licensing alongside its role as a landowner.
- 6.17 For pubs, restaurants and cafes in particular a key factor was maximising the available floor space to trade from and businesses were actively encouraged to seek permission for extended (or new) street based seating areas (street cafes) outside premises.
- 6.18 To support this a number of initiatives were implemented;
- Webinars on the new national guidance for the retail and licensed sectors were attended by over 100 local businesses and very well received.
 - A quicker and easier procedure introduced to allow temporary changes to premises licences through minor variation applications
 - A simplified procedure for issuing licences to utilise our own land
 - Localities visits to major towns to show support for local business and monitor compliance

Residents, Communities and Partnerships

- 6.19 Demand for services within Benefits had increased significantly during the pandemic. By way of example, in February 2020, we received 50 new applications for housing benefit, in March 2020 this increased to 176. Whilst this number has reduced, we are still not yet at pre-pandemic levels.
- 6.20 The Team are proactively identifying people who, because of changes to their income, needed to claim housing benefit to offer them assistance through our discretionary housing fund. This serves to prevent homelessness and evictions in the future. We were among the

first councils in Devon to pay the £150 council tax reduction to those on the lowest income.

- 6.21 Work with DCC on our joint local welfare support COVID fund continues with over £3k paid out in emergency hardship grants. In addition we have extended our money advice service temporarily for those who require assistance.
- 6.22 We approached the Government about varying grant funding for our temporary accommodation support worker funding and, as a result, have been able to extend the post until March 2021. Whilst there is still a ban on evictions this is set to be relaxed and the demand for housing advice & homeless services is yet to be known.
- 6.23 Dialogue with our community cluster groups has been maintained in most areas. Additionally there have been a series of community meetings set up which we continue to support.

7. Recovery and Renewal Action Plan

- 7.1 Moving from response to recovery and renewal takes careful planning to ensure that finite resources are used in the most efficient way. The situation remains ever changing and future plans have to be linked directly to those of other partners and with an eye on changing Government guidance.
- 7.2 Through the workshops detailed above, Members have generated a range of actions and ideas to support the following high level objectives within the Recovery and Renewal Framework;
 - The delivery of services that are focussed to meet the needs of customers, community and business are restored where appropriate.
 - The immediate and longer term financial sustainability of the Council.
 - That Members are engaged with decision making in an appropriate way through local democratic governance.
 - The principle of 'Build Back Better' is followed and that opportunities to learn and become more efficient and effective are realised wherever possible.
- 7.3 Whilst some actions maybe straightforward and deliverable within existing budgets others will require further investigation and development to determine whether they are appropriate, viable and achievable. Alongside this a there are a range of questions that need to be considered including;
 - What is the relative priority of the proposal?
 - What degree of influence does the Council have?

- Are better placed partners already doing this?
 - Can we afford to do this?
 - Does the proposal support the high level objectives?
- 7.4 The Action plan at Appendix 1, sets out the first iteration of how the proposals put forward by Members can be developed and, where appropriate, implemented and by whom.
- 7.5 As a follow up to the Workshops, Members suggestions were circulated to staff who have come forward with some excellent ideas, especially relating to operational performance efficiency, and these will be fed into the process where relevant. Examples include undertaking a skills audit to support future response, utilising online consultation platforms and the use of 'influencers' to support our media campaigns.
- 7.6 Members will note that there are a range of options including linking the work to partners through, for example, the 'Team Devon' Recovery Prospectus which primarily relates to economy, business and employment or the Devon Carbon Plan.
- 7.7 Reference to 'Team Devon' relates to the collaboration of all Devon Councils who, in the response to COVID-19, are working together to develop action plans and specific deliverables.
- 7.8 Other work maybe better linked to existing or emerging Council initiatives including the Climate Change and Biodiversity or Housing strategies and this is proposed where relevant.
- 7.9 There are however some key themes and areas that will require detailed investigation and development.

8. Key Areas for Development

- 8.1 Some common themes for further development have emerged through the workshops and it is proposed that, in order to investigate these further, established or new Member Task and Finish and/or Working groups are utilised.
- 8.2 The establishment of Task and Finish Groups is a function of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If Members are minded to support the establishment of the proposed Task and Finish Groups, in light of the tight timescales, it is proposed that their membership be delegated to the two Group Leaders, in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 8.3 Members will recognise that finance is reported to all Members through the monthly budget monitoring reports, the setting of the budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and therefore a separate workshop as part of the Recovery and Renewal Plan was deemed unnecessary. However, as finance underpins the whole plan, it is included as a separate heading within the Action Plan and as a theme below. As part of the finance theme, an Amended Budget for

2020/21 is being set by Council by the end of September 2020. A Member Budget Workshop was held on Tuesday 25th August to consider options for the Amended Budget for 2020/21 and was well attended.

8.4 The proposed Vehicles for Development of the Key Themes are:

Theme	Proposed Vehicle	Status	Scope
Engagement and Consultation	Task and Finish Group	To be set-up	To be agreed
Localities and Clusters (Community Response Team)	Task and Finish Group	To be set-up	To be agreed
Accommodation	Accommodation Strategy Working Group	Reconvene	To be reviewed
Governance	Political Structures Working Group	In operation	To be agreed
Business Engagement	Economy Working Group	In operation	To be agreed
Finance	Financial Stability Review Group	In operation	Agreed – refer to Action Plan.

8.5 The proposals set out above will allow these important areas of work to be developed by Members with dedicated support from Officers. It is proposed that each Group will operate within a similar framework in terms of meeting frequency and timescale to ensure that proposals can be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on 10 November 2020.

8.6 Member's views on the Action Plan and the proposal to investigate and develop the key areas are welcomed before their onward consideration by the Hub Committee at its meeting to be held on 15 September 2020.

9. Links to the Amended Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

9.1 COVID-19 has caused financial strain for all Councils up and down the country where Councils find themselves being caught in a 'perfect storm'. Councils have to manage both the increased costs of coping with COVID-19 and supporting vulnerable people in the community and the loss of key income streams such as car parking income and council tax income. The factors affecting the Council's finances are issues affecting the whole Local Government sector.

- 9.2 Financial Stability is one of the themes within the Recovery and Renewal Plan. The action plan, setting out the areas being progressed and the timescales within which this will take place, is set out in Appendix 1. Following consideration of the Renewal and Recovery Plan in the Summer, the Action Plan for the Financial Stability Theme was updated and agreed by the Financial Stability Review Group (FSRG) on 18 August 2020.
- 9.3 During September 2020, the Council will be recommended to set an Amended Budget for 2020/21 taking into the account the impact the pandemic has had on the Council's finances. The latest revenue budget monitoring report for Month 3 (end of June) predicts a budget shortfall of £0.501 million for 2020/21. This equates to 6.9% of the overall budget set of £7.212 million. A separate report is on this Committee agenda regarding proposals for the Amended Budget for 2020/21.
- 9.4 In October 2020, a report will be presented to Members on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2021/22 onwards which will look at the Council's financial position over the next five years.
- 9.5 It should be noted that the financial landscape for Councils is ever-changing and there is still a great deal of uncertainty that Councils are working with in planning their finances for the longer term. The large areas of unknowns are around New Homes Bonus funding, Negative Revenue Support Grant (the Council no longer receives any core Government grant) and future allocations of Rural Services Delivery Grant. We are making the point to the Government that we must know what is happening to these key areas by this September, so that we can plan confidently for our finances for the future.
- 9.6 Prudent financial management in the past has meant that the Council was in a relatively healthy position financially before the pandemic hit. Since 2010, we have had to redesign our services to balance the books. We have done this by sharing a single workforce with South Hams District Council, generating an ongoing annual saving of £2.2 million for West Devon and by reducing our staffing levels by 30% through our Transformation Programme.
- 9.7 The Council will continue to lobby the Government so that we receive the appropriate level of funding. Each month, Councils complete a national return that informs the Government of how much COVID-19 is hugely affecting the finances of Councils. The point has been made that these income losses have had a much bigger impact (in proportion to Net Budgets) on Borough Councils, than they have on County Councils and Unitaries.
- 9.8 A further lobbying letter from South West Councils was sent to the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP (Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government) on 30th June 2020. This letter set out that the latest Government returns to MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government) showed a financial challenge to South West Councils of over £1 billion across the region.

9.9 On 2nd July, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP announced a new comprehensive package of support for Councils, to address spending pressures and losses in income streams. There were three central pillars of support announced:-

- A new scheme to compensate Councils for losses of income, though not in their entirety (an 'income guarantee' scheme). Councils have to meet the first 5% of losses of all budgeted sales, fees and charges and only some categories of income are allowable under the scheme. For the categories allowed, once the 5% is deducted, the Government will reimburse 75pence in every £1.
- An extra £500million to cover extra COVID19 expenditure costs (the Borough Council's allocation of this funding has been announced at £89,686)
- To allow council tax and business rate losses in income to be repaid over the next 3 years of budget cycles, instead of just the next one year

9.10 We are very pleased that our lobbying has been successful but there is still further work to do on this as even with the support package announced, the Borough Council is still predicting a budget shortfall of £0.501 million for 2020/21 and this figure will change throughout the financial year as more information comes to light on items such as the collectability of outstanding debt and arrears and how income streams have been affected by the pandemic.

9.11 In a letter from the Chairman of the District Councils' Network to the Chancellor, the financial needs of District Councils were set out, as well as stating that no part of the public sector is better placed than District Councils to catalyse and lead the recovery and that we will rise to the challenge.

10 Proposed Way Forward

10.1 The draft Action Plan sets out how the Council, or its partners, will either action or investigate, develop and, where relevant, implement the proposals arising from the Member Workshops.

10.2 The work will continue to be led by Members of the Hub under the themes set out in the Strategic Framework.

10.3 In addition this report sets out the proposed vehicles (Task and Finish or Member Working Groups) for developing each of the new key themes that have emerged through the Member Workshops and the development of the Action Plan.

10.4 The outputs and recommendations from the relevant Groups will then be reported back to Members along with an update on progress on the wider Action Plan in line with following timeline;

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 November 2020

- Hub Committee – 1 December 2020

- 10.5 Looking further ahead, the Council adopted its Corporate Strategy on 22 May 2018 prior to the end of the previous administration. As a result of the pandemic it can be argued that the context and landscape within which we now operate has fundamentally changed.
- 10.6 Whilst elements of the Strategy clearly remain relevant and vitally important moving forward, the recovery and renewal process has identified new emerging challenges and priorities and the Council may consider that developing a new Corporate Strategy from May 2021 would be an appropriate way forward.

11 Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>As a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 the Council has a duty to plan and prepare a response to an emergency or provide support to those who do.</p> <p>The 'Response' phase is primarily led by the police whilst the 'Recovery' phase is led by the Local Authority which, for Devon as a whole, will be Devon County Council</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		<p>The Action Plan for the Recovery and Renewal Plan will be assessed to determine the cost and resources required to deliver the Action Plan in the short term, medium term and longer term. This will form part of the reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2020 and the Hub Committee on 1st December 2020.</p> <p>Financial Stability Theme</p> <p>Financial Stability is one of the themes within the Recovery and Renewal Plan and Section 9 sets out the areas being progressed and the timescales within which this will take place. By September 2020, the Council will set an Amended Budget for 2020/21 taking into the account the impact the pandemic has had on the Council's finances. The latest revenue budget monitoring report for Month 3 (end of June) predicts a budget shortfall of £0.501 million for 2020/21. This equates to 6.9% of the overall budget set of £7.212 million. A separate</p>

		<p>report is on this Committee agenda regarding proposals for the Amended Budget for 2020-21.</p> <p>In October 2020 a report will be presented to Members on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2021/22 onwards which will look at the Council's financial position over the next five years.</p> <p>The action plan, setting out the areas being progressed and the timescales within which this will take place, is set out in Appendix 1. Following consideration of the Renewal and Recovery Plan in the Summer, the Action Plan for the Financial Stability Theme was updated and agreed by the Financial Stability Review Group (FSRG) on 18 August 2020.</p> <p>Value for Money The Value for Money conclusion issued in 2020 by Grant Thornton (external auditors) will include considerations in respect of service continuity and the COVID19 Recovery Plan.</p>
Risk		<p>A number of risks need to be highlighted: Failing to respond to the pandemic is likely to have long term impacts on the council and the community it serves.</p> <p>Moving focus from response to recovery too early may result in a lack of capacity to deal with the acute impacts of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of residents with in our community.</p> <p>Failing to prepare appropriately for recovery could significantly increase the adverse impacts of the pandemic on individuals and business within our community.</p> <p>Acting in a disproportionate manner and directing resources away from other key service areas may have adverse impacts in a number of areas including delivery of statutory services, customer satisfaction, vulnerable people and the financial sustainability of the organisation.</p>

Supporting Information

Appendix 1

Draft Recovery Plan September 2020

Theme 1: Businesses and Economy

Hub Lead: Cllr Ric Cheadle

Action	What are we (or partners) already doing / proposing to do	Proposed way forward for WDBC	Timescales	Responsible – Team/Group /Strategy	
Ensuring that we support the skills and training needs of local businesses	1.1 Consider the role that the Council can play in encouraging the sharing of best practice	Online Pop up business schools delivered	Develop a plan for future business support training (including further pop up business schools)	Short term	Business Forums
	1.2 Explore opportunities for Enterprise Hubs to encourage sharing of best practice and networking	a) Team Devon will look to extend the Devon Workhubs programme, securing £1m to build on the existing network and enable rural communities and smaller towns to grow their own local service provision	Engage with Team Devon and HOTWS LEP to ensure West Devon benefits from the Work Hub programme	Medium term	Business Forums
	1.3 Develop a strategy for supporting businesses to adapt skills for the future	a) Team Devon will engage additional staff resources to support Agriculture, Food and Drink producers to diversify and access new markets. Additionally £1m of additional resources will be sought in order to support reskilling of those leaving tourism, retail and other hard hit sectors	Monitor and ensure (through our Team Devon links) that local businesses benefit from the available support	Medium term	Recovery Management Team
		b) Team Devon will develop a grant scheme to support projects that look to extend the Tourism season and reinforce local supply chains	Ensure that we promote and support applications from businesses within West Devon	Short term	Recovery Management Team
		c) Team Devon will look to maximise Devon’s sustainable agriculture and food potential	West Devon will explore how Planning Policy can support enterprise through, for example, diversification of agriculture ¹	Medium term	Development Management
		d) Team Devon exploring options for grants of £5,000 to support adaption costs for tourism sector (initially from Kick Start fund)	Promote the scheme to businesses within our area	Short/Medium	Business Forums
		e) Team Devon – implementing a regional certification scheme on opening safely	Promote scheme to local businesses	Short term	Environmental Health

¹ For Example 8.9.6 of <https://heartofswlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/SWNFU-Growing-a-resilient-profitable-and-strong-SW-agricultural-sector-post-C19-May-2020-Final-.pdf>

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Action	What are we (or partners) already doing / proposing to do	Proposed way forward for WDBC	Timescales	Responsible – Team/Group /Strategy
Ensuring that we engaging with Businesses to understand the challenges they are facing and the support they require	1.4 Engage with existing businesses to understand what support they require	a) Capacity of the Place and Enterprise team increased with the for creation of an Economic Development Officer post as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process	Short term	Recovery Management Team
			Short term	Business Forums
			Medium term	Business Forums
		d) We have renewed our contract with Business Information Point for 2020/21 to provide support and advice to existing businesses that are considering establishing in West Devon	Short term	Business Forums
		e) Team Devon will aim to secure £600,000 of additional business support capacity across Devon	Medium term	Recovery Management Team,

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Developing our tourism offer	1.5 Encourage a Devon wide approach to tourism.	a) Team Devon are establishing an enhanced business support offer for the Tourism Sector	Promote the support that is available through our re-established Business Forums (see 1.4C)	Medium term	Business Forums
			Develop the West Devon Place narrative	Medium term	Recovery Management team
	1.6 Identify and ensure that key infrastructure is in place in order to encourage tourism	a) Team Devon will develop a sustainable tourism, hospitality and leisure support package which will include accessible tourism, activity, culture and wellness tourism		TBC	
Ensuring adequate Infrastructure	1.7 Lobby for better Broadband to enable diversification of business in West Devon – including increased homeworking	a) Team Devon will work with communities to maximise the Rural Gigabit Voucher Programme and local Mobile Boost Voucher schemes in addition piloting new solutions where poor coverage remains	Monitor at this stage and when launched, consider how we can support applications from within West Devon	Medium term	Recovery Management Team
		b) WDBC have supported a bid from Plymouth City Council to connect public buildings across the Borough – this will increase potential for better broadband for residents / businesses	Continue to work with PCC to ensure the benefits of the scheme are realised	Medium term	Head of IT Practice
	1.8 Understand from our businesses what infrastructure they need in place for the ‘new normal’		Discuss with businesses through the actions set out in 1.4b to inform an infrastructure plan	Short term	Business Forums
Regeneration and Commercial	1.9 Consider how we attract and retain businesses in West Devon	We have begun talking to Town Councils to jointly consider options.	a) Consider a West Devon ‘Backing Business Campaign b) Lead the development of ‘Buy Local’ Campaigns	Medium Term	Business Forums
	1.10 Engage with other partners including Western Power, South West Water etc to understand the impact of Covid-19 on their plans for West Devon	Team Devon will engage with Western Power distribution to enable smart energy management infrastructure and renewable energy generation through upgrading the national grid network	Engage with Team Devon to ensure that West Devon is represented in lobbying of Government	Medium term	Recover Management Team

Theme 2: Place and Environment

Hub Lead, Cllr Neil Jory

Action	What are we (or partners) already doing	Proposed way forward for WDBC	Timescales	Responsible – Team/Group /Strategy	
Built Environment	2.1 Raise awareness of Community and Affordable Housing Schemes	a) Housing Strategy being developed which will include Community and Affordable Housing	Strategy to be adopted by Council	Short term	Housing Strategy Project Team
			b) Arrange a Member Workshop to specifically raise awareness of support available in delivering Community and Affordable Housing Schemes	Short term	Housing Strategy Project Team
	2.2 Consider if there is potential for a new village in West Devon – maybe near the A30 in order to reduce pressure on existing villages and town developments.		a) Consider options and viability	Medium/Long	Development Management
	2.3 Develop plans to support our future highstreets : Seek views of retailers on what they consider the future high street experience could be	a) Team Devon are pursuing up to £15m funding for regeneration projects within Town's which will contribute to the visitor economy in 8 rural and coastal locations	WDBC to engage with Team Devon and Town Councils to ensure that Towns within the Borough are in the best position to access this funding.	Short term	Recovery Management Team
			b) Ensure that WDBC Officer resource is available to support Towns in any application / bid process	Short term	Recovery Management Team
		c) Team Devon will seek investment to facilitate city/town centre living with an initial investment in development of vacant high street property in 3 pilot locations	Ensure that if considered appropriate, we bid for pilot funding for a West Devon town	Short term	Business Forums
	2.4 How do we encourage more shared spaces in our highstreets ? Costly to develop but can do in small parts. Also a Devon wide approach to marketing our highstreets	a)Team Devon will facilitate the safe use of public spaces through effective licencing and planning to encourage market traders to bring in activity and animate places	Ensure that our planning and licencing approach support the Team Devon proposals	Short/medium term	Recovery Management Team

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		b) Team Devon will Lobby MP's re licencing changes for use of public spaces	Provide local lobbying of MP's aligned to Team Devon approach	Short term	Leader /Council
			c) Link in to action 1.2 to encourage Workhubs in empty high street spaces		
	2.5 Explore the potential of public wifi access in our town centres		a) Discuss potential with key public broadband providers and link in with action 1.7a	Medium / Long term	Business Forums
Natural Environment	2.6 Take a lead role in encouraging other organisations to also build back in a more sustainable way.		a)Develop a Sustainable Business awards scheme b)Promote best practice through business newsletters etc	Medium term	Climate Change Working Group
	2.7 Consider how the Council can protect wildlife corridors and rewilding brownfield sites		a) Include Nature recovery as part of future JLP review	Medium term	Climate Change Working Group
			b) Develop a plan to link in to organisations already working within this area – for example RSPB working on Environmental Land Management Scheme	Short term	Climate Change Working Group
			c) Take the lead in allowing more Council sites to become wildflower sites which would also reduce maintenance. Encourage TAPCs to do the same	Medium term	Climate Change Working Group
	2.8 Develop a different type of tourism – Wildlife Tourism	a)Team Devon will take action to support the development of a clean, sustainable economy through: - Development of a sustainable/ green growth toolkit	Ensure that Team Devon plans are reflected in our Climate and Biodiversity action plans	Short term	Climate Change Working Group
	2.9 Promote roof and window gardening for those without traditional garden spaces		Include under the 'Behaviour Change' strand of Climate Action Plan	Medium term	Climate Change Working Group
Active Travel	2.10 Take a lead in encouraging people to maintain the positives from lockdown – less travel, more exercise etc.	a) Team Devon clean and sustainable economy actions - Development of a bespoke business support offer 'Go Green' grants to reduce carbon footprints etc	Raising profile of available grants to West Devon businesses	Medium term	Climate Change Working Group
	2.11 Influence the development of active travel schemes within West Devon	a) Team Devon will seek government support of £1.83m for a comprehensive and future proofed	Develop an understanding of schemes already underway in	Medium term/ depending on	Climate Change Working Group

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		electric vehicle and shared mobility infrastructure network across 58 of Devons communities with a population of over 1,100	the area for example options around the A386/Rail/Cycle link. Increase the possibility of schemes being funded within West Devon by actively supporting them	grant scheme funding	
	2.12 Identify ways to promote more sustainable transport means	Climate Action plan sets out a number of actions around promoting sustainable travel	Develop a campaign to promote sustainable travel (look at the Lake District ‘See Moor’ campaign) Link to work on our Place narrative	Medium term	Climate Change Working Group
			Talk to TAPC’s to identify opportunities to promote more cycle parks and routes across West Devon	Medium Term	Climate Change Working Group
			Take an active role in promoting car sharing, particularly during winter months when active travel is less of an option	Medium term	Climate change working group

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Theme 3: Residents, Communities and Partnerships

Hub Lead Cllr Debo Sellis, Cllr Tony Leech, Cllr Terry Pearce

Action	What are we (or partners) already doing	Proposed way forward for WDBC	Timescales	Responsible Team/Group /Strategy	
Local Knowledge and expertise	3.1 Improve awareness of the support available from the Council and partners		a) Undertake mapping of support and partner organisations across West Devon to ensure we have a good understanding of who provides what support and how we can work better together	Medium term	Recovery Management Team
		b) We have maintained the Covid-19 'Support' pages which can be expanded for non-covid-19 support	Build on the Covid-19 support page approach to develop a long term support page	Medium term	Recovery Management Team
			c) Develop briefings / resources for our Town and Parish Council Colleagues on support available	Medium term	Recovery Management Team
	3.2 Improve data sharing in order to improve support to our residents	a) A number of new Data Sharing agreements were agreed through Covid-19 in order to ensure that support could be provided to the most vulnerable	Carry out a review of our privacy notices to ensure that when we capture personal data, we are clear what we will do with it	Ongoing	Data Protection Officer
3.3 Explore opportunities to share best practice from Covid-19 response	a) Members have been asked to share their experiences with officers so that this can be shared with all Members	Bring together foodbanks for a webinar to understand issues and consider longer term support plans	Short term	Recovery Management Team	
Involving our residents	3.4 Ensure that we engage with our residents and partners at the right stage in developing proposals		Consider an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish to consider the development of Consultation and Engagement principles	Short term	O&S Consultation and engagement T&F
			To include our relationships with Town and Parish Councils, and A recognition of issues of community interest and how they are best consulted upon and communicated		

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Supporting Future Resilience	3.5 Develop plans for how we harness and support the successful community response demonstrated through Covid-19	Team Devon are currently developing their response to any local lockdowns. WDBC is an active participant in these discussions.	Carry out a Covid-19 Lessons Learnt with key stakeholders including community groups and other responders (foodbanks etc)	Short term	Recovery Management Team	
			Engage with partners such as CVS and CAB to develop plans for future support	Medium / Long term	Localities and Clusters T&F	
			Consider developing a resilience network across West Devon to share key messages and support requests	Medium / long term	Localities and Clusters T&F	
			Encourage Town and Parish Councils to update emergency plans including considering details of volunteers	Medium term	Recovery Management Team	
		Discussions commenced with CVS on how we could jointly identify and promote funding opportunities to Community Groups to support their sustainability	Develop simple processes and resources to promote available funding to community groups	Short term	Community Clusters	
	3.6 Develop the Councils Community Response function in to a longer term solution to support local responses to issues	a) We will continue to maintain a core function that can be ramped up to support any local outbreaks. Currently this is limited to monitoring local issues through the Incident Management Team				
			b) Update the remit of the Localities Task and Finish Group to consider how we can best integrate this into a refreshed longer term function	Immediate	Council	

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Theme 4: Service Recovery & Redesign

Hub Lead, Cllr Caroline Mott & Cllr Jeff Moody

Action	What are we (or partners) already doing	Proposed way forward for WDBC	Timescales	Responsible – Team/Group /Strategy	
How will we resource activities included within this plan	4.1 Consider the Accommodation Strategy in light of revised requirements for the future.	Work has been ongoing to ensure that we maximise the use of accommodation at KP	Accommodation Working Group to be re-established to consider our future accommodation requirements and any joint opportunities with South Hams (link in to developing Customer Access Strategy 4.4)	Short term	Accommodation Working Group
		We're continuing to ensure we support the health and wellbeing of staff working remotely.	Review policies and procedures to ensure they remain fit for purpose Exploring and adjusting the balance between virtual and physical ways of working	Ongoing	HR / Business Managers
	4.2 Review Strategic Capacity to deliver our future priorities.	Business Managers have undertaken a review of how we adapted service delivery during the initial Covid-19 response in order to identify any future opportunities.	As Members priorities are developed from each of the themes, we will firm up resourcing and delivery plan.	Short term	Business Managers
			Recognise the impact of Covid-19 on individual service areas and ensure that we take a data driven approach to design responsive services	Ongoing	Business Managers

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			Monitor ongoing benefits delivered through the implementation of our Future IT platform and consider where this could enable a reprioritisation of resource	Short /medium	Business Managers & Customer Improvement Manager
	4.3 Develop ways for Members to engage with local communities and businesses with a clear route to report back any concerns or ideas	We continue to provide scaled back community cluster support as a route to identify and manage local issues	Consider this following the development of Consultation and Engagement Strategy	Medium term	Consultation and Engagement T&F
How do we change the ways that we work and interact with the public	4.4 Enable our customers to engage with us easily when required	We have begun implementing a new online platform for customers to engage with us easier (Future IT Programme). New processes will begin rolling out in September 2020.	We will develop a Customer Access Strategy that sets out the future contact channels given the new IT and the work of the Accommodation Working Group	Medium term	Recovery Management Te
		An updated Localities Strategy was due to be developed pre-covid-19 but has been delayed	Widen the scope of the Localities Task and Finish to explore how we build on the work of the community clusters formed to support our Covid-19 response, including outreach and services for vulnerable people	See 3.6	See 3.6

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Theme 5: Communications and Governance

Hub Lead, Cllr Neil Jory (Governance) and Cllr Lois Samuel (Communications)

Action	What are we (or partners) already doing	Proposed way forward for WDBC	Timescales	Responsible – Team/Group /Strategy	
Improving communication through what we have learnt from our response	5.1 Ensure that our external communication is delivering what our customers need to know	a) We temporarily increased the frequency of Member updates and bulletins as well as other newsletters during the pandemic	Review the format of the Member bulletin and Intranet	Short term	Communications Team
			Training for services in order for informative content to be developed	Short term	Communications Team
			Provide content that can be easily shared by members on Social Media	Complete	NA
			Ask our residents and other key stakeholders what they want from the Council – via a survey or other engagement	Medium Term	Consultation & Engagement T&F

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		b) We have closer working relationships with other Devon Councils as a result of Covid-19 which means that where possible, messaging is consistent	Continue to actively participate in Team Devon, LRF comms cells and HOTSW LEP groups	Ongoing	Communications
Strengthening our community leadership voice	5.2 Develop ways in which our Members can share best practice as to how they can communicate and engage with residents	a) We have previously delivered Social Media training to Members through induction in May 2019	Arrange further Social Media training for Members (part or fully Member led)	Short term	Communications Team
		Members have led a number of community zoom calls which have been successful in understanding local issues	b)Continue with the successful Member led Zoom calls with community groups	Short term	Members
			c) Explore the potential for a Community Newsletter	Medium term	Communications Teams
	5.3 Engage with existing networks working within our communities to highlight the work of the Council		This will be defined by Consultation and Engagement Strategy (See 3.4)	Short term	Consultation and Engagement T&F
		A first draft corporate narrative was developed pre-covid19	Agree a WDBC Corporate narrative	Short term	Leader/ Hub
			To include our culture and how we want to be perceived by our community		
Using newly formed channels into communities to have conversations, consult and engage	5.4 Members can take a lead role in capturing local activities that the Council is involved in, taking photos/ videos to enable Comms to promote		Arrange Member training on Social Media including how to use it for community conversations	Short term	Communications Team
			Consultation and Engagement Strategy to be developed (See 3.4)	See 3.4	See 3.4
	5.5 Identify local influencers to reach out to residents and communities		As defined by Consultation and Engagement Strategy (See 3.4)	See 3.4	See 3.4
Strengthening our regional voice and messaging	5.6 Play an active part in the Team Devon response and recovery	This is ongoing. Officers and Leaders are already participating in Team Devon planning to ensure that our voice is reflected in final plans.	Continued engagement with HOTSW LEP, best practice sharing, horizon scanning etc	Ongoing	Recovery Management Team
			Undertake a mapping of key stakeholders we should be engaging with and a clear plan of how we will do that	Short term	Community Clusters

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			Look at how we engage with MP's LGA, DCN etc to maximise our voice	Medium term	Members
Strengthen Member engagement and development	5.7 Explore potential for Member 360 reviews / appraisals as a way to support our Member Development programme		Engage with Devon Member Development team to develop an outline proposal	Short term	Political Structures Working Group
	5.8 Include Member development opportunities from this action plan in the future programme including - Refresh on Council and Committee process – raising motions to Council etc - Social Media Engagement		Forward Plan of member training and development to be updated – consider timing of training – maybe half day formal meetings, half day training	Short term	Political Structures Working Group
			Roll out E-Learning for Members for some of the courses that need a regular refresh – Data Protection / FOI / Information Security / Safeguarding etc	Short term	Democratic Services / HR
Strengthen the decision making process	5.9 Identify ways of understanding member views when developing policy and strategy – for example online polls		Identify best practice from other Local Authorities for consideration by PSWG	Short term	Political Structures Working Group
	5.10 Ensure that the Constitution reflects current ways of working and is easier to access online		Update by Monitoring Officer and PSWG	Medium term	Political Structures / Monitoring Officer
	5.11 Consider how the public can engage with the decision making process		Undertake a review of public participation in formal meetings to ensure those that wish to, can participate.	Medium term	Democratic Services
			Look at best practice from other local authorities		
	5.12 Build on the positives of Informal Council	Informal Councils work well for free-flowing debate	Consider shorter, single topic discussions / briefings etc	Short term	Leader / Dem Services
5.13 Opportunities to strengthen scrutiny		Explore opportunities for more 'experts' to inform Scrutiny discussions using technology	Medium term	Dem Services	
Realising the benefits of	5.14 Look to build on the benefits of remote meetings (supporting our carbon neutral	Current legislation enables formal remote meetings until May 2021.	Explore range of meetings that we could continue to hold remotely , which we should aim to reinstate	Ongoing	Political Structures working Group

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remote meetings	aim and increasing ability to attend)	We continue to hold successful remote meetings.	face to face and where there is a hybrid		
		We have already begun looking at options for streaming meetings and better linking that stream to the associated papers	Officers will consider the process and technology used for participating in streaming meetings to see if any further improvements can be made or better public participation can be included	Short term	Recovery Management Team
			Consider, budget permitting, developing a reserve for the replacement of Member IT for the next Council term given the potential for more online meetings	Short term	Council via budget process
			Survey TAPC's to understand the blockers to them hosting remote meetings and if anything we can do to help overcome that	Short term	Recovery Management Team
	5.15 Understand the limitations of the Council Chamber for meetings given the likelihood for longer term social distancing		Consider future accommodation options	Short/Medium term	Accommodation Working Group
Closer Working with other Local Authorities	5.16 Identify options to develop more shared services working		Continue to engage with other Devon Local Authorities and explore options where they arise	Long term	Chief Executive / Leaders
			Explore opportunities for joint bid submissions to support our future ambitions	Medium term	Recovery Management Team
	5.17 Identify options for jointly procuring of supplies and services with other Devon Local Authorities	West Devon is already a key stakeholder in the Devon and Cornwall Procurement Group. This forum brings together procurement experts to consider Procurement activities and processes.	Undertake spend analysis to fully understand key areas of spend and synergies with other Councils	Short term	Procurement Lead Officer
		We have developed effective working relationships with other Devon Councils. Team Devon will support inclusive growth and	West Devon Procurement Officer will engage with this group and identify potential joint opportunities.	Short term	Procurement Lead Officer

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		community wealth building by bringing together anchor institutions (those large, typically public organisations) in order to maximise social gain through our procurement practices	Revised Procurement Strategy will be considered by Council Spring 2021 to include potential thoughts around increasing spend with local suppliers	Short / Medium	Head of Strategy
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Theme 6: Financial Stability

Hub Lead, Cllr Chris Edmonds

Action	What are we (or partners) already doing	Proposed way forward	Timescales	Responsible – Team/Group /Strategy	
Ensure the financial sustainability of the Council	6.1 Complete Government Returns on COVID costs and loss of income	We have been submitting returns to Government setting out the financial impacts on West Devon Borough Council	Continue to submit returns. It is hoped that the Government will act with further funding when the national picture is collated	Short term	S151
	6.2 Government lobbying for extra funding	This is underway as a joined up Team Devon approach		Short term	Financial Sustainability Review Group
	6.3 Monthly Budget Monitoring Reports	Since June we have been providing monthly budget monitoring reports to closely monitor the impact on the Council	Continue with monthly monitoring including monitoring reserves, collection rates, arrears levels and write offs	Short term	Head of Finance Practice
	6.4 Service Delivery discussions	As set out in 4.2, we continue to identify opportunities to adapt service provision	Consider what services might look like under the 'new normal' including future working practices	Medium term	Recovery Management Team
	6.5 Leisure Provision	Members have agreed support for the immediate provision of leisure facilities	Discuss future options for leisure provision	Short/Medium/Long	Recovery Management Team

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Page 62	6.6 Review of statutory vs discretionary expenditure		Undertake a review of statutory versus discretionary expenditure, to include corporate priorities	Short/Medium	Financial Sustainability Review Group
	6.7 Review of the Council's Capital Programme	Extended Leadership Team have been asked to consider the current capital programme in order to inform in-year budget discussions	Set out proposals for changes to the Council's Capital programme for members to consider	Short term	Financial Sustainability Review Group
	6.8 Revise the Medium Term Financial Strategy	Accounts outturn for 2019/20	Revise the Medium Term Financial Strategy by October 2020	Short term	Financial Sustainability Review Group
	6.9 Propose options to Councillors for an amended budget for 2020/21	Member budget workshops held – August 2020	Member workshop outputs to inform a revised Amended Budget for 2020/21	Short term	Leader
	6.10 Lobby Government for a change in some of the 'rules' for Councils		Lobby to change the accounting rules for capital repayments on borrowing and capital receipts flexibility	Short/Medium	Financial Sustainability Review Group
	6.11 Press Government for an early decision on factors affecting our 2021/22 Budget		Include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Homes Bonus Funding - Negative Revenue Support Grant - Rural Services Delivery Grant 	Short term	Chief Executive/ Leader
	6.12 Build the case for Fair Funding for rural Councils	We work closely with the Rural Services Network to build the case for our fair share of funding	Continue to work with the Rural Services Network to build the case for a fair allocation of funding	Medium Term	Financial Sustainability Review Group
	6.13 Business Rates Review		Submit evidence as part of 'national call for evidence' by September 2020	Short term	S151
	6.14 Asset Management Review		Identify opportunities for further investment and a review of existing portfolio		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assets Register - Borrowing 	ST/MT/LT	FSRG Head of Assets
	6.15 Devolution White Paper		Consider the impacts and opportunities of the following from the Devolution White Paper		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future of Local Government - Procurement 	Short/Medium	S151
				ST/MT/LT	FSRG/ Chief Executive

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			- Shared Services		
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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME – 2020/21

Date of Meeting	Report	Lead Officer
6 October 2020	Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)	
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Janice Young
	Joint Local Plan Update	Richard Grant
	Update from the Financial Stability Review Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Lisa Buckle
	Update from the Rural Broadband Working Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Steve Mullineaux
	A386 / Rail Projects Update	Chris Brook
	Ombudsman Annual Letter	Neil Hawke
	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 Report	Neil Hawke
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Janice Young
10 November 2020	Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)	
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Janice Young
	Update from the Financial Stability Review Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Lisa Buckle
	Update from the Rural Broadband Working Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Steve Mullineaux
	Community Safety Partnership – Annual Report	Louisa Daley
	Locality Service – Annual Report	Sarah Moody
	Safeguarding – Annual Update	Louisa Daley
19 January 2021	Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)	
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Janice Young
	Update from the Financial Stability Review Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Lisa Buckle
	Update from the Rural Broadband Working Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Steve Mullineaux
	Draft Budget Proposals 2021/22	Lisa Buckle
2 March 2021	Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)	
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Janice Young
	Fusion Leisure – Annual Report and Presentation	Jon Parkinson
	Update from the Financial Stability Review Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Lisa Buckle
	Update from the Rural Broadband Working Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Steve Mullineaux

13 April 2021	Task and Finish Group Updates (if any)	
	Hub Committee Forward Plan	Janice Young
	Update from the Financial Stability Review Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Lisa Buckle
	Update from the Rural Broadband Working Group (<i>standing agenda item</i>)	Steve Mullineaux

Future Item(s) to be programmed:

- Peer Review Action Plan: Progress Update;
- Planning Enforcement: Verbal Update (*Hub Committee request*); and
- IT Platform Project Update.