

West Devon Hub Committee



West Devon
Borough
Council

Title:	Agenda								
Date:	Tuesday, 7th March, 2023								
Time:	2.00 pm								
Venue:	Chamber - Kilworthy Park								
Full Members:	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman Cllr Jory Vice Chairman Cllr Edmonds</p> <p><i>Members:</i></p> <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Cllr Cheadle</td> <td>Cllr Ratcliffe</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Crozier</td> <td>Cllr Vachon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Leech</td> <td>Cllr Wood</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr Mott</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Cllr Cheadle	Cllr Ratcliffe	Cllr Crozier	Cllr Vachon	Cllr Leech	Cllr Wood	Cllr Mott	
Cllr Cheadle	Cllr Ratcliffe								
Cllr Crozier	Cllr Vachon								
Cllr Leech	Cllr Wood								
Cllr Mott									
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. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members are invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests and Non-Registerable Interests including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting;

3. 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 (if any)

4. Confirmation of Minutes 1 - 10

Minutes of meeting held 31 January 2023

5. Public Questions - a period of up to 15 minutes is available to deal with issues raised by the public

6. Hub Committee Forward Plan 11 - 14

7. Month 10 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 15 - 28

8. Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 (NB. Appendix A is exempt) 29 - 40

9. Write-Off Reports Q1 and Q2 2022/23 41 - 56

10. Council Tax Discretionary Policy 57 - 66

11. Housing Crisis Update 67 - 100

12. A Plan for West Devon - Year 3 Delivery Plan 101 - 140

13. Recruitment and Retention 141 - 176

Agenda Item 4

At a Meeting of the **HUB COMMITTEE** held in the **Council Chamber, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock** on **TUESDAY** the **31st** day of **JANUARY 2023** at **2.00 pm**

Present: Cllr N Jory – Chairman
Cllr C Edmonds – Vice Chairman

Cllr R Cheadle	Cllr A F Leech
Cllr C Mott	Cllr B Ratcliffe
Cllr P Vachon	Cllr L Wood

In attendance: Chief Executive
Section 151 Officer
Director of Place and Enterprise
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Manager
Assistant Director – Strategy and Organisational
Development
Deputy Section 151 Officer
Head of Housing
Head of Organisational Development (via Teams)
Head of Revenues and Benefits
Community Digital Connectivity Officer (via Teams)

Other Members also in attendance in a non-voting capacity:
Cllrs Crozier (via Teams) Southcott (via Teams),
Ewings, Kimber, Pearce, Renders Sellis (via Teams)
and Yelland (via Teams)

***HC 68/22 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for this meeting were received from Cllr P Crozier, who joined the meeting via Teams in a non-voting capacity

***HC 69/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed but there were none made.

***HC 70/22 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Hub Committee meeting held on 13 December 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

***HC 71/22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

It was noted that no Public Questions had been received in accordance with the Hub Committee Procedure Rules.

***HC 72/22 HUB COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN**

Members were presented with the latest version of the Hub Committee Forward Plan that set out items on the agenda for Hub Committee meetings for the next four months and noted its content.

***HC 73/22 MONTH 8 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2022/2023**

A report was considered that enabled Members to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budget for 2022/23 and that also provided a forecast for the year end position.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2022/23 financial year and the overall projected deficit of £85,000 (0.4% of the total Budget £7.770 million) be noted.

***HC 74/22 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2022/23**

Members considered a report that advised of the progress made on individual schemes within the approved Capital Programme, including an assessment of their financial position.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the content of the Capital Programme Monitoring Report be endorsed.

HC 75/22 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2023/24

The Hub Committee was presented with a report that outlined a series of draft revenue and capital budget proposals for 2023/24.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) In respect of the request from the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) regarding the Princetown Visitor Centre (paragraph 3.23 of the published agenda report refers), the Committee was supportive of contributing £78,500 to ensure that the facility was kept open during the summer months. However, for clarity, an addition to that part of the recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that read as follows:

‘with the proviso that this Funding be used to ensure that the Visitor Centre at Princetown is kept open until at least 30 September 2023.’

When put to the vote, the addition was declared **CARRIED**;

- (b) A Member felt that the reductions in car parking income could no longer be attributed to the COVID pandemic but was now more likely as a result of changing shopping habits which were to the detriment of the high street;
- (c) The Committee made reference to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee whereby, in recognition of increasing inflationary costs, the annual subscription for the Garden Waste Collection service should be increased to £52 per year (i.e. £1 per week).

In discussion, it was apparent that, whilst recognising the cost of living crisis, there was support amongst the Committee for this recommendation and a revised recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and when put to the vote declared **CARRIED**.

In response to a question and, in light of similar views being expressed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, it was agreed that clarity would be sought outside of this meeting over the ability to advertise and promote the service on collection vehicles;

- (d) At the invitation of the Leader, the Section 151 Officer set out the reasons behind the recommendation for the dormant company (Servaco) being closed down and Members proceeded to express their support for this proposal.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That Council be **RECOMMENDED**:

- i) to increase Council Tax for 2023/24 by £7.37 (a 2.99% increase) (This would equate to a Band D council tax of £254.00 for 2023/24, an increase of 14 pence per week or £7.37 per year);
- ii) to approve the financial pressures (as shown in Appendix A of the presented agenda report) of £1,928,800;
- iii) to approve the net contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves of £(45,567) (as shown in Appendix A of the published agenda report), including the proposed use of £150,000 from the Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve (as set out in paragraph 3.17 of the presented agenda report);
- iv) to use £150,000 of New Homes Bonus funding in 2023/24 to fund the Revenue Base Budget (as set out in paragraph 3.22 of the presented agenda report) and to allocate £78,500 of New Homes Bonus funding to the Dartmoor National Park Authority (as set out in paragraph 3.23 of the presented agenda report), with the proviso that this Funding be used to ensure that the Visitor Centre at Princetown is kept open until at least 30 September 2023;
- v) to approve the savings of £1,110,500 (as set out at Appendix A of the presented agenda report);
- vi) to approve the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's recommendation on the increase in the garden waste subscription charge from April 2023, (for the sum of £52.00 per annum) as set out in paragraph 5.3 and Appendix F of the presented agenda report;
- vii) to approve the proposed Capital Programme Proposals for 2023/24 of £910,000 and the proposed financing of the Capital Programme (as set out in Appendix D of the published agenda report) (being £700,000 from the Better Care Fund funding from Devon County Council, £160,000 from New Homes Bonus funding and £50,000 revenue funding from the Vehicles and Plant Earmarked Reserve);

- viii) that Unearmarked Reserves should continue to have a minimum level of £900,000 (as set in the Medium Term Financial Strategy in September 2022), but an operating level of a minimum of £1.25million; and
- ix) that, with effect from 31 March 2023, the Servaco dormant company (which the Council jointly owns with South Hams District Council), be closed down.

***HC 76/22 WRITE OFF REPORT 2021/22**

A report was considered that informed Members of the proposal to write-off a series of debts with a value of more than 5,000 for the period from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

In the ensuing debate, it was confirmed that the supplementary Write-Off Policy (that was to be presented to the next Hub Committee meeting to be held on 7 March 2023) would make reference to matters including when it was deemed no longer financially viable for the Council to pursue debts.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That it be noted that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £88,750.87 (as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 of the presented agenda report) has been authorised by the Section 151 Officer;
2. That the write-off of individual debts in excess of £5,000 totalling £75,438.97, (as detailed in Table 3 of the presented agenda report) be approved;
3. That, in principle, approval of a supplementary Write Off Policy, be brought to the next Hub Committee meeting (to be held on 7 March 2023) for implementation with effect from 1 April 2023, be agreed

HC 77/22 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2023-24 AND OTHER COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND PREMIUMS

Members considered a report which provided a summary of the findings of the recent consultation on changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and sought a decision on a Scheme for 2023/24.

The report also provided details of the Government's Council Tax Support Fund and the current Council Tax Discounts and any proposed changes resulting from the Levelling up and Regeneration legislation.

In the ensuing debate, particular reference was made to:

- (a) Additional monies received via an Empty Homes premium. When questioned, officers confirmed that the monies were distributed proportionately between each of the precepting authorities. Furthermore, Members noted that this matter was solely a decision for the Borough Council in its capacity as the billing authority;

- (b) the incentives (and range of options) to encourage homeowners to let their properties were both recognised and welcomed;

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the content of the report be noted;

That Council be **RECOMMENDED**:

2. to approve a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24 that as follows:
- Makes no changes to Band 1 of the current banded scheme;
 - Uplifts Bands 2, 3 and 4 by 20% (above current inflation) to take into account the Cost of Living crisis;
 - Replaces the current range of earnings disregards with a single £25.00 disregard; and
 - Makes changes to the Minimum Income Floor by adjusting the income calculation for self-employed claimants who receive carer's allowance, personal independence payments or disability living allowance.
3. that delegated authority be given to the Director of Strategic Finance, in consultation with the Lead Member for Benefits and the Head of Revenues and Benefits, to agree the uprating of working age regulations incorporated into the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with those announced by the Department for Work and Pensions;
4. that officers be instructed to take immediate steps to apply the £25.00 Council Tax Support Fund payment to the 2023/24 council tax bills of eligible council taxpayers, as announced by the Government on 19 December 2022, and bring forward proposals for a discretionary scheme in late spring 2023;
5. to adopt the Council Tax discounts as follows (with effect from 1 April 2023):
- (a) The discount for unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties is 100% for a maximum period of 1 month;
 - (b) The discount for unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties for 1 month to 2 years is zero;
 - (c) The discount for properties which are vacant and require major repair work to render them habitable is 50% for maximum period of 12 months;
 - (d) The discount for unoccupied furnished properties (second homes) is zero;
 - (e) An empty homes premium of an additional 100% is levied on properties that have remained unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least two years, but less than five years;

- (f) An empty homes premium of an additional 200% is levied on properties that have remained unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least five years, but less than ten years;
 - (g) An empty homes premium of an additional 300% is levied on properties that have remained unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least ten years or more; and
6. That, in principle, the following additional council tax premiums be applied from 1 April 2024, or earlier if allowed, subject to the required legislation being in place:
- 100% premium for properties which have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period of between 1 and 2 years; and
 - 100% premium for second homes.

***HC 78/22 HOUSING CRISIS – SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

Members were presented with a report that provided an update on the actions taken to date regarding the Housing Crisis declared by the Council in February 2022. In addition, the report also provided further information on the proposal considered at the Hub Committee meeting of 1 November 2022 to cease work on the Brentor directly delivered Affordable Housing Scheme (Minute *HC 56/22 (2) specifically refers).

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) The different Housing Need (and planning) requirements and policies between the Borough Council and the Dartmoor National Park Authority were recognised as a prohibiting factor for the Brentor scheme;
- (b) The time lag between the initial Housing Needs Survey being undertaken and the potential Brentor scheme being progressed was noted as unfortunate given that housing need was no longer sufficiently demonstrable;
- (c) The local Ward Member expressed his disappointment at the circumstances that had resulted in the Brentor scheme reaching this point. In expanding upon his disappointment, the Member emphasised the trend of young families having to leave their local parishes because they were no longer affordable to live in. As a result, the Member emphasised the importance of a strategy being adopted whereby all rural parishes were able to develop between 4 and 6 affordable properties for local residents to ensure that they remained sustainable;

It was then **RESOLVED** that

- 1. the progress made against the Housing Declaration of February 2022 be noted; and
- 2. the additional information on the Housing Need Survey undertaken for Brentor be noted and that work on a directly delivered affordable led housing scheme at Brentor be ceased.

***HC 79/22 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND & RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND**

Members considered a report seeking approval of delivery of the package of support within the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) investment plan

In the ensuing debate, the following points were raised:

- (a) With regard to recommendation 2, a Member expressed her concern regarding the proposal to suspend the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. In response, it was confirmed that this was felt to be necessary to allow the two projects to be completed within what was an incredibly tight timescale. It was also confirmed that the majority of projects would be undertaken using the Council's Procurement Framework and that very few exemptions would be needed;
- (b) A Member made reference to some of the communications and social media messaging associated with the Good Food Loop organisation. The Member felt that the lack of empathy within the messaging was unfortunate and a cause for concern given that the Council was proposing to work closely with the organisation and questioned whether contact had been made with an alternative organisation in the area. In reply, officers welcomed the contact details being forwarded of the organisation highlighted and emphasised the importance of an outcome focused approach being adopted;
- (c) Members emphasised the importance of robust governance arrangements being adopted to underpin the themes. In accepting the point, officers detailed the proposed composition, remit and timing of the Steering Group and its meetings and confirmed that project partners, the lead Hub Member and Business and Community representatives would serve on the Project Steering Groups. As these began to be developed, officers committed to consulting with the Hub Committee prior to any final decisions being taken and stated the overall intention for these to be integrated within the governance arrangements for the Plan for West Devon;
- (d) Some Members asked that consideration be given to resurrecting the Hatherleigh cycle route as part of the Active Travel Theme;
- (e) A number of Members wished to put on record their thanks for the excellent work of lead officers in accessing this source of grant funding that will bring numerous benefits to the West Devon area.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the delivery of the package of support within the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) investment plan, agreed with the Levelling-Up Department, be approved;

2. That, to meet the timetable and of the programme as set out by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to seek tenders if they would otherwise be required, be waived, and an exemption from the Rules be granted to enable a direct award of contracts to the businesses identified in Section 5 of the presented agenda report;
3. That approval be granted to the Rural England Prosperity Fund proposal being submitted to Government, which, if successful, would begin delivery from April 2023.

***HC 80/22 A PLAN FOR WEST DEVON – QUARTER 3 INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Members considered a report that set out the Integrated Performance Management report covering the Quarter 3 period. The report also highlighted the strategic risk profile of the Council, performance against key indicators and an overview of the capital programme.

In debate, reference was made to:

- concerns being raised over the negative trend of two identified risks (relating to Business Continuity and Staff Recruitment and Retention) that were set out within the presented performance management report. In response, it was confirmed that actions were being taken to manage, address and mitigate the issues related to these two risks, which included modifications to the pay and reward strategy that were designed to respond to recruitment and retention challenges; and
- In response to a query concerning when the allowance payment for those using oil based heating would be received from Central Government, it was confirmed that the latest information suggested that payments would be received during February 2023.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the progress in delivery of the Plan for West Devon thematic delivery plan and the overall strategic performance of the Council be noted; and
2. That work with lead officers be commenced to make minor amendments to the Year 3 Delivery Plans for consideration at the Hub Committee meeting to be held on 7 March 2023.

(The meeting terminated at 4.05 pm)

Chairman

(NOTE: THESE DECISIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MINUTES HC 75/22 AND HC 77/22 (Parts 2-6) WHICH ARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2023) WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE FROM 5.00PM ON

THURSDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2023 UNLESS CALLED IN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES)

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Hub Committee Forward Plan

About the Forward Plan

This is the provisional forward plan for at least four months starting March 2023. 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)

About the Hub Committee

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

- Leader of the Council – Cllr N Jory
- Deputy Leader of the Council, with specific responsibility for Resources and Performance – Cllr C Edmonds
- Lead Hub Member for Enabling Inclusive and Accessible Services – Cllr R Cheadle
- Lead Hub Member for the Economy - Cllr P Crozier
- Lead Hub Member for the Natural Environment - Cllr L Wood
- Lead Hub Member for Leisure, Health and Wellbeing - Cllr A F Leech
- Lead Hub Member for the Built Environment - Cllr C Mott
- Lead Hub Member for Communities - Cllr P Vachon
- Lead Hub Member for Housing – Cllr B Ratcliffe

Further information on the workings of the Hub Committee, including latest information on agenda items, can be obtained by contacting Democratic Services on 01803 861105 or by e-mail to democratic.services@swdevon.gov.uk

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



Forward Plan from March 2023

Portfolio Area	Report Title and Summary	Lead Member / Officer	Documents to be considered in making decision	Date of Decision	Consultees and means of consultation
Resources and Performance	<p>Title: Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to Month 10 2022/23</p> <p>Purpose: To consider a report that presents the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to Month 10.</p>	Cllr Edmonds / Lisa Buckle	Report of Section 151 Officer	7 March 2023	
Resources and Performance	<p>Title: Capital Programme Monitoring Report to Month 10 2022/23</p> <p>Purpose: To consider a report that presents the Capital Programme Monitoring Report to Month 10.</p>	Cllr Edmonds / Pauline Henstock	Report of Head of Finance	7 March 2023	
Resources and Performance	<p>Title: Write-off Reports Q1 and Q2 2022/23</p> <p>Purpose: 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.</p>	Cllr Edmonds / Lisa Buckle	Report of Strategic Lead of Finance	7 March 2023	
	<p>Title: Housing Crisis – Standing Agenda Item</p>			7 March 2023	
Leisure, Health and Wellbeing	<p>Title: Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy</p> <p>Purpose: To consider a report that seeks to consider a revised Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy.</p>	Cllr Leech / Geni Hotchkiss	Report of the Head of Revenues and Benefits	7 March 2023	
Leader	<p>Title: ‘A Plan for West Devon’ Year 3 Delivery Plan</p>	Cllr Jory / Drew Powell	Report of Director Strategy and Governance	7 March 2023	



Portfolio Area	Report Title and Summary	Lead Member / Officer	Documents to be considered in making decision	Date of Decision	Consultees and means of consultation
	Purpose: To consider a report that presents the draft Year 3 Delivery Plan for approval.				
Leader	Title: Recruitment & Retention Purpose: To consider a report that asks the Hub Committee to note the actions being taken to respond to the current recruitment and retention challenges facing the Council.	Cllr Jory / Andy Bates	Report of the Chief Executive	7 March 2023	
				11 April 2023	
Inclusive and Accessible Services	Title: Customer Access Strategy Review Purpose: To consider a progress report on the Council's Customer Access Strategy.	Cllr / Steve Mullineaux	Report of the Deputy Chief Executive	Mid 2023	
Leader	Title: Draft Annual Report of Achievements Purpose: To consider a report that presents the Council's draft Annual Report of Achievements for 2022/23	Cllr / Neil Hawke	Report of the Head of Strategy and Projects	June 2023 (Date TBC)	
Built Environment	Title: Planning Improvement Plan – Six Month Progress Review Purpose: To consider a six-month progress review into the Planning Improvement Plan.	Cllr / Ali Wagstaff	Report of Assistant Director Planning	June 2023 (Date TBC)	
Inclusive and Accessible Services	Title: Customer Journey Purpose: To consider a report that provides an update on the Customer Journey.	Cllr / Steve Mullineaux	Report of the Deputy Chief Executive	July 2023 (Date TBC)	

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Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **7 March 2023**

Title: **Month 10 Revenue Budget Monitoring
2022/2023**

Portfolio Area: **Performance & Resources – Cllr C Edmonds**

Wards Affected: **All**

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

Date next steps can be taken: **N/A**

Author: **Pauline Henstock** Role: **Head of Finance Practice
and Deputy S.151 Officer**

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

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Hub Committee RESOLVES to NOTE the forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2022/23 financial year and the overall projected deficit of £35,000 (0.5% of the total Budget £7.770 million). This is very close to a break-even position.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report enables Members to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budget for 2022/23 and provides a forecast for the year end position.
- 1.2 The gross service expenditure budget for 2022/23 was set at £24 million (£7.770 million net). This report identifies a projected deficit of £35,000 which is 0.5% of the overall Budget set for 2022/23 of £7.770 million. This is a slight improvement from the overall budget monitoring position reported at Month 8, when a deficit of £85,000 was forecasted due to an increase in Investment Income.

2. Background

2.1 Regional and national context

2.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has drawn into sharper focus the financial challenges faced by Local Authorities which have existed for some years. There remains outstanding a number of Local Authority Government reviews into Local Authority funding to reset the way local Councils are funded and the mechanism for the distribution of funding.

2.3 Financial Monitoring arrangements

2.4 The Council's financial procedure rules require that reports must be made on budget monitoring on a regular basis to the Hub Committee as part of the Council's arrangements for budget management.

3. Outcomes/outputs

3.1 **Budget overview** - Table 1 below provides an analysis of the projected variances against budget.

TABLE 1: 2022/23 BUDGET FORECAST

	2022/23 Budget expenditure /(income)	Budget variations		£000	Note
	£000	%	£000		
APPROVED BUDGET				7,770	
Reductions in expenditure/additional income					
Customer Service & Delivery					
Recycling income	(325)	74%	(240)		A
Garden Waste income	(245)	12%	(30)		B
Trade Waste income	(15)	200%	(30)		C
Savings on staff and Member travel and expenses	91	33%	(30)		D
Housing benefit overpayment recoveries	n/a	n/a (no budget)	(60)		E
Place and Enterprise					
Employment Estates income	(378)	8%	(30)		F
Homelessness prevention costs	93	65%	(60)		G
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure					
Investment Income	(25)	2240%	(560)		H
Sub total of variations				(1,040)	
Increases in expenditure/ reductions in income					

Customer Service & Delivery					
Pay award	90	267%	240		I
ICT Support Contracts	483	10%	50		J
Waste contract inflation	80	144%	200		K
Additional waste contract costs	1,650	22%	370		L
Waste, recycling and cleansing contract – increase in number of properties	2,476	4%	110		M
Place and Enterprise					
Car Parking Income	(1,147)	10%	110		N
Governance & Assurance					
Planning income	(473)	37%	175		O
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure					
Sub total of variations				1,255	
Application of Government Grants					
Homelessness Prevention Grant	n/a	n/a (no budget)	(180)	(180)	P
PROJECTED OUTTURN				7,805	
PROJECTED DEFICIT FOR 2022/23				35	

There is projected to be an overall deficit of £35,000 when compared against the Revenue Budget set for 2022/23.

Notes

- A. **Recycling income** – income is currently anticipated to exceed the 2022/23 target by £240,000 in 2022/23, which equates to 74% of the annual income budget of £325,000.
- B. **Garden waste income** – income is currently anticipated to exceed the 2022/23 target by £30,000 which equates to 12% of the annual income budget of £245,000.
- C. **Trade waste income** - income is currently anticipated to exceed the 2022/23 target by £30,000 which equates to 200% of the annual income budget of £15,000.
- D. **Savings on staff and Member travel and expenses** – following Covid 19, it is currently anticipated that a saving of up to £30,000 could be achieved in 2022/23.
- E. **Housing Benefit overpayment recoveries** – it is currently anticipated that income from Housing Benefit overpayment recoveries of £60,000 will be achieved in 2022/23. The budget was reduced to zero in 2021/22 following the introduction of DWP Real Time Information referrals and the expectation that recovery will reduce year on year as collection becomes more difficult.

- F. **Employment Estates income** – employment estates income is currently projected to be over budget by £30,000 in 2022/23 due to high occupancy rates and regular rent reviews.
- G. **Homelessness Prevention Costs** – homelessness prevention costs are currently anticipated to be underspent by £60,000 in 2022/23.
- H. **Investment income** – investment income is currently anticipated to be up by 2240%, which equates to additional income of £560,000 in 2022/23. The latest forecast is projecting investment income of £585,000 in 2022/23. This follows the recent increases in interest rates as the Bank of England (base rate is currently 4.0%) looks to tackle surging inflation.
- I. **Pay award** - the impact of the proposed employer’s pay offer for 2022/23 of £1,925 on all NJC pay points, is significantly higher than the current budget provision of £90,000 (3%). The proposed pay award will result in additional salary costs of approx. £240,000.
- J. **ICT Support Contracts** - There are additional costs in respect of ICT support contracts mainly due to,
- Above inflation increases, e.g. Microsoft Licensing
 - Additional costs for new licenses, laptops and accessories due to an increase in the number of users on our network
 - The acquisition of remote diagnostics software as a result of the increase in remote working
 - Disability Access legislation for the website has required the purchase of tools for monitoring compliance and enhancing access
- K. **Waste contract inflation** - the impact of the current rate of inflation for 2022/23 (12.2%) is significantly higher than the current budget provision of £90,000 (3%). This will result in additional contract costs of £200,000 in 2022/23. Contract inflation is based on the latest published indices for fuel inflation, wage inflation and consumer price index (CPI).
- L. **Waste and Recycling** – there are additional costs in 2022/23 relating to the uplift in the waste and recycling contract sum, effective from 1 July 2022. Further detail is set out in the Hub Committee report of 12 July 2022, ‘Waste and recycling services contract update’.
- M. **Waste, recycling and cleansing contract – increase in number of properties** - it is anticipated that there will be an uplift in the waste collection, recycling and cleansing contract costs of £110,000 in 2022/23 to reflect the increase in the number of properties across the Borough over the last two financial years. The number of properties has increased from 26,140 in March 2021 to 26,679 in October 2022. Going forward an annual cost pressure for additional properties of £50,000 has been built into the base budget for 2023/24.

- N. **Car Parking income** – There is a projected loss of car parking income of £110,000 in 2022/23 out of total budgeted income of £1,147,000 (10%). Even though tariffs were increased by 4% in March 2021, Covid continues to have an impact on income. Town centre car parks have not made a full recovery as expected. A shift to online shopping is also thought to have had an impact on car parking income levels. The income target has been reduced in the 2023/24 budget by £150,000.
- O. **Planning income** – a planning income shortfall of £175,000 is currently anticipated for 2022/23. However, this is a volatile area which can be very difficult to forecast given the impact of large applications.
- P. **Homelessness Prevention Grant (Government Grant)**– as set out in the grant conditions, this Government grant is ring-fenced for 2022/23. This will be applied against costs (e.g. salary costs of the homelessness service) incurred in reducing temporary accommodation numbers and complying with the Homelessness Reduction Act.

3. Other items to be considered in the 2022/23 Budget

- 3.1 This monitoring report includes an update on the position regarding the savings and additional income that were identified in the 2022/23 budget setting process, set out in Appendix B.

4. Review of Earmarked Reserves

- 4.1 The Council annually undertakes a review of the level of its Earmarked Reserves as part of the budget setting process. Budgeted contributions to and from Earmarked Reserves were part of the 2022/23 Budget reports. In addition a report on Earmarked Reserves was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee on 22 November 2022.
- 4.2 A schedule of Earmarked Reserves is attached at Appendix A, which shows Earmarked Reserves have a projected balance of £7.778 million at 31 March 2023 currently.
- 4.3 The Council's level of Unearmarked Reserves currently stands at £1.490 million. The deficit of £35,000 would go into Unearmarked Reserves at the year end, in accordance with normal accounting practice. This gives a predicted year end balance at 31 March 2023 of £1.455 million for Unearmarked Reserves.

5. Prudential Indicators

- 5.1 The prudential code indicators were approved in the Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategy report to the Council on 5 April 2022. The indicators are monitored during the year through the normal revenue and capital monitoring processes. All Treasury Management limits have been adhered to.

6. Income and Reserves

Income monitoring is an integral part of financial management. Current income forecasts are as follows: Income monitoring is an

integral part of financial management. Below shows the current income (surpluses)/shortfalls already experienced for April 2022 to January 2023. The table also shows the latest 2022/23 projections for the major streams of income.

Service	Deficit/ (Surplus) April – January 2023 £'000	Projected Income 2022/23 £'000	Income Budget 2022/23 £'000	Deficit/ (Surplus) £'000	Deficit/ (Surplus) %
Car Parking	110	(1,037)	(1,147)	110	10%
Planning Applications & Advice	147	(298)	(473)	175	37%
Employment Estates	(20)	(407)	(377)	(30)	(8%)
Garden Waste	(20)	(275)	(245)	(30)	(12%)
Trade Waste	(30)	(45)	(15)	(30)	(200%)
Business Rates Pooling Gain	-	(200)	(200)	-	-
Licensing	-	(114)	(114)	-	-
Interest & Investment Income	(298)	(585)	(25)	(560)	(2240%)
Local Land Charges	4	(95)	(95)	-	-
Recycling Income	(200)	(565)	(325)	(240)	(74%)
TOTAL	(307)	(3,621)	(3,016)	(605)	(20%)

7. Management Actions

- 7.1 The table below sets out the relevant management actions for the revenue expenditure and income variations shown above. It is best practice for the Council to state whether there are any corrective actions that need to be taken for the variances identified in 2022/23.

	Budget variations overspend/ (underspend) £000	Management Action
Reductions in expenditure/additional income		
Recycling income	(240)	Additional income of £190,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Garden waste	(30)	Additional income of £60,000 is included in the 2023/24 budget proposals.
Trade waste	(30)	Additional income of £30,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Staff and Member travel and expenses	(30)	The £30,000 underspend has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Housing Benefit overpayment recoveries	(60)	An income target of £40,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Employment Estates income	(30)	Additional income of £50,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Homelessness Prevention Costs	(60)	This will be kept under close review in 2022/23.
Investment income	(560)	Additional income of £375,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Increases in expenditure/reductions in income		
Pay award	240	A budget provision of £360,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
ICT Support Contracts	50	This will be kept under close review in 2022/23.
Waste contract inflation	200	A cost pressure of £345,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Additional waste contract costs	370	A cost pressure of £400,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Waste, recycling and cleansing contract uplift – increase in number of properties	110	An annual cost pressure of £50,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.
Car Parking Income	110	The income target has been reduced by £150,000 in the 2023/24 budget.
Planning income	175	This will be kept under close review in 2022/23.
Application of Government Grants		
Homelessness Prevention Grant	(180)	Additional income of £180,000 has been built into the 2023/24 budget.

8. Options available and consideration of risk

8.1 Even at this stage it is important to note that these forecasts can change over the remainder of the year to 31 March 2023. Managers can seek out opportunities to reduce any budget shortfalls, whilst considering the risk of any adverse impact on the customer experience.

9. Proposed Way Forward

9.1 Revenue budget monitoring will continue on a regular basis and further reports will be brought to the Hub Committee each quarter.

10. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. As part of those arrangements, the Council is under a duty to monitor its budgets throughout the financial year and to take appropriate action to deal with any deterioration in the financial position revealed by the regular monitoring.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p><i>The report identifies a projected deficit of £35,000 which is 0.5% of the overall budget set for 2022/23 of £7.770 million. This is very close to a break-even position.</i></p> <p>As part of Grant Thornton’s external audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2021/2022, they will assess the arrangements the Council has in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p> <p>The outcome of Grant Thornton’s work in this area will be reported to Members at the Audit Committee meeting on 14 March 2023.</p>
Risk	Y	1) Budget variances – continual monthly budget monitoring at all levels within the Council ensures early identification of variances. Reporting to the Hub Committee provides an opportunity for Members to identify and instigate remedial action where appropriate.

		2) Resource Planning – the Hub Committee takes into account any significant issues when developing the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy. These are identified in the Management Actions section of the report (Section 7).
Supporting Corporate Strategy		The budget monitoring process supports all of the Thematic Delivery Plans within the Council’s strategic vision, ‘A Plan for West Devon’.
Consultation and Engagement Strategy		External consultation and engagement has not been undertaken with regard to this report.
Climate Change – Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		A report was presented to Council on 8 th December 2020 ‘Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan update’. In March 2021, Council approved to set up an Earmarked Reserve for £200,000 for the Recovery Plan and Corporate Strategy. Further detail is set out in the Council’s ‘A Plan for West Devon’ strategic vision.
<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 A – Schedule of Reserves (Earmarked Reserves and Unearmarked Reserves).

Appendix B – Savings/Additional income schedule

Background Papers:

None

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RESERVES - PROJECTED BALANCES					APPENDIX A
	Opening Balance 01.04.2022 £000's	Additions to Reserve 2022/23 £000's	Predicted Spend 2022/23 £000's	Closing Balance 31.03.2023 £000's	Comments
EARMARKED RESERVES					
Specific Reserves - General Fund					
Affordable Housing (Revenue)	0	172		172	This is a new reserve set up as part of the 2022/23 Budget setting process and has been created from a one off contribution from the New Homes Bonus funding in 2022/23 (£172,084).
2016/17 Budget Surplus Contingency	86			86	This is the Budget Surplus from 2016/17 which was put into an Earmarked Reserve. Commitments relate to Capital Programme funding.
Broadband Community Support	50			50	As per the report to the Hub Committee on 1st December 2020, Council approved the creation of a Broadband Community Support Earmarked Reserve, to be financed by transferring £50k from the existing Business Rates Retention Earmarked Reserve in 2020/21.
Car Parking Maintenance	534		(8)	526	There is a future commitment on this reserve in respect of Brook Street Car Park.
COVID Losses Earmarked Reserve	254			254	This reserve was set up in 2020/21 to protect against future COVID losses.
Economic Grant Initiatives	26			26	
Elections	34	20		54	
Environmental Health Initiatives	20			20	
Financial Stability	454	163		617	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. A one off contribution of £162,850 was approved as part of the 2022/23 budget (Council Feb 2022).
Flood Works	15			15	
Grounds Maintenance	78		(10)	68	This reserve holds the Grounds Maintenance in year surpluses to be reinvested back into the service.
Homelessness Prevention	244		(139)	105	This reserve has been created following underspends on Homelessness Prevention Costs. The main commitment in 2022/23 relates to the Housing restructure costs (£101k) - Hub 7/6/22 and £50k for Springhill which is projected to be spent in 2023/24.
ICT Development	25	50	(49)	26	Predicted spend in 2022/23 includes the Future IT project
Innovation Fund (Invest to Earn)	378		(74)	304	This reserve originated from New Homes Bonus funding. Commitments in 2022/23 mainly relate to Capital Programme funding including the upgrading of Hayedown Depot.
Joint Local Plan	0	25	(25)	0	Contribution to Joint Local Plan
Leisure Services	48		(25)	23	Commitments relate to Capital Programme funding.
Maintenance Fund (Estates)	361		(3)	358	
Management, Maintenance & Risk Management	418	117		535	This is a relatively new reserve set up to manage the ongoing maintenance costs of the Council's Investment Property Portfolio. The contributions to the reserve equate to 10% of the rental income on an annual basis.
Neighbourhood Planning Grants	47		(2)	45	
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	506	352	(352)	506	The NHB allocation for 22/23 is £352,084. Projected spend in 2022/23 relates to £150k contribution to the base revenue budget, £30k contribution to the Capital Programme and £172,084 contribution to the Affordable Housing Earmarked Reserve. In 2023/24 there is a commitment of £193k for Springhill.
Outdoor Sports & Recreation Grants	16			16	
Planning Policy and Major Developments	146	25	(33)	138	This reserve is for all planning matters and is also required to meet appeal costs. The predicted spend for 2022/23 relates to the Planning restructure. The cost of the first three years of this restructure is to be met from additional planning income in the Planning earmarked reserve (Hub 7/6/22).
Recovery Plan and Corporate Strategy	182		(172)	10	In March 2021 the Hub Committee recommended to Council to transfer £200k of the 2020/21 projected surplus into a new Recovery Plan and Corporate Strategy Earmarked Reserve. Projected spend in 2022/23 relates to 'A Plan for West Devon' commitments.
Revenue Grants	1,417	22	(211)	1,228	This reserve comprises of government grants received for specific initiatives or new burdens and are held in the reserve for accounting purposes. A commitment of £49k in 2022/23 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. £80,000 of this reserve has been earmarked in the future to fund the Council's share (40%) of a 2 year fixed term senior role to drive customer service and operational efficiency (Hub 13/9/22 - Medium Term Financial Strategy).
Support Services Trading Opportunities	20			20	This reserve was created from external work carried out in other Councils e.g. HR work with Councils also embarking on a Transformation Programme.
Strategic Change (T18)	67			67	£32,567 has been committed as a contribution to the base revenue budget in 2023/24.
Tree Maintenance	17			17	A new reserve set up in 2021/22 to hold in year surpluses generated to reinvest back into the Tree maintenance service in future years
Vehicle Replacement	328	50	0	378	This is a new reserve set up to fund the Council's vehicle replacement programme (Council 4 Dec 2018). £50K a year is contributed to this reserve.
Waste & Cleansing Options Review	658		0	658	Detail is set out in the Hub Committee report of 12 July 2022. Future commitments include the capital work at Hayedown depot and an additional vehicle.
Other Reserves below £15,000 (combined)	42		(3)	39	
Sub Total excluding the Business Rates Reserves	6,471	996	(1,106)	6,361	
Business Rates Retention	1,087		(77)	1,010	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. In 2022/23 £75,000 has been earmarked to smooth the volatility in business rates. In addition there are capital programme funding commitments.
S.31 Compensation Grant (Business Rates)	1,631	253	(1,477)	407	This is a new reserve set up to hold the business rates S31 grants received in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to offset the business rate reliefs given to businesses during lockdown. Under current Collection Fund accounting rules, the S31 grants received will not be discharged against the Collection Fund deficit until the following year, 2022/23. This reserve is not money which is available for the Council to spend and it is important that this is not misinterpreted in the Accounts, as this is a national issue.
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	9,189	1,249	(2,660)	7,778	
TOTAL UNEARMARKED RESERVES	1,490		(35)	1,455	Note: This Unearmarked Reserve has a minimum balance of £900,000 and an operating level of a minimum of £1.25million (set by Members as part of the Budget Process). The projected deficit for 2022/23 of £35k would be funded from this Unearmarked Reserve, in accordance with normal accounting practice.
TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES (EARMARKED AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES)	10,679	1,249	(2,695)	9,233	

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Summary of Savings and Additional Income from the 2022/23 Budget Setting Process

APPENDIX B

The table below summarises the savings and additional income that were included in the 2022/23 Budget Setting process and indicates whether the saving/additional income is on track to be delivered.

	Savings and Additional Income for the 2022/23 Budget	Income/Savings Target for 2022/23 (£)	Latest Projection for 2022/23 (£)	Narrative
1`	IT FIT Project - software savings	70,000	70,000	Currently on target to achieve these savings.
2	Efficiencies gained from IT and digital communications	20,000	20,000	Currently on target to achieve these efficiencies mainly from savings on postage costs.
3	Employment Estates - additional rental income	50,000	80,000	It is currently envisaged that extra employment estates income will be £80,000 in 2022/23. This represents the income target of £50,000 and the additional income of £30,000 projected in Table 1 of the report.
4	Extra recycling income	60,000	300,000	It is currently envisaged that extra recycling income will be £300,000 in 2022/23. This represents the income target of £60,000 and the additional income of £240,000 projected in Table 1 of the report.
5	Extra planning income (to fund four planning specialists and two legal specialists) - Planning Improvement plan - Hub Committee 2 November 2021	71,000	0	There is a shortfall in planning income of £147,000 as at 31 January 2023. It is currently anticipated that this could increase further to £175,000 by the end of the 2022/23 financial year. However, this is a volatile area which can be very difficult to forecast given the impact of large applications.
	TOTAL	£271,000	£470,000	

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (applies to Appendix A only)

Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **7 March 2023**
Title: **Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/2023**
Portfolio Area: **Performance & Resources – Cllr C Edmonds**
Wards Affected: **All**

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

Author: **Clare Scotton** Role: **Principal Accountant**
Pauline Henstock **Head of Finance Practice**

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RECOMMENDATION:

It is RECOMMENDED that the Hub Committee resolves to:-

- i. endorse the contents of the Report; and**
- ii. approve budget of £35,000 in 2023/24, £10,000 in 2024/25 and £10,000 in 2025/26 for Tamar Trails Infrastructure Renewal (see appendix C). This is to be funded from the Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The report advises Members of the financial position as at 31st January 2023 for the purposes of budget monitoring.
- 1.2 A new reporting process is in place and the narrative around capital schemes previously included in this budget monitoring report will now be part of the Integrated Performance Management Update reports (the update is a separate report on this agenda). The capital budget monitoring report will purely focus on capital expenditure against budget.

- 1.3 The Council will carry out a fundamental review of all of the capital schemes within the existing Capital Programme in Summer 2023. This comprehensive review will identify schemes which have not yet proceeded and those capital projects which are not able to be proceeded with. This will dovetail with the revised arrangements for the development of the Capital Programme which will have a top down approach. The Capital Programme will be informed by the delivery of key priorities within the Corporate Strategy and will also contain capital projects that are needed to meet statutory health and safety requirements or service delivery requirements.
- 1.4 All capital projects are within the individual capital budgets approved by Members. The total approved capital budget is **£4,569,836** of which £2,006,733 has been profiled into 2022/23. **£1,585,086** of this allocation has been spent to date (Appendix A).

2. Background

- 2.1 The capital programme for 2022/23 was approved by Council on 15 February 2022 (CM58). This report provides an update on expenditure the Capital Programme.

3. S106 Deposits

- 3.1 The list of S106 Deposits are shown in Appendix B totalling **£1,495,427** as at 31 December 2022. **£127,982** has been spent on various revenue and capital projects as at this date and **£683,683** has been committed. A breakdown of these projects can be seen on Appendix B.
- 3.2 Some of these S106 Agreements have a clause within the S106 Agreement which states that the Council shall be entitled to use up to a five per cent (5%) part of the total payments and contributions payable pursuant to the provisions of the Agreement, towards the costs to be reasonably and properly incurred by the Council in monitoring compliance with the S106 Agreement and in assessing the details submitted to the Council for approval pursuant to the S106 Agreement.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 This is considered on a project by project basis as part of the project appraisal document and initial business case for each capital project.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 This is considered on a project by project basis.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		<p>Statutory powers are provided by the S1 Localism Act 2011 general power of competence.</p> <p>The capital programme is implemented in line with the Council's legal requirements, which are examined on a project-by-project basis. To date there are no undue legal concerns.</p> <p>The public interest has been assessed and it is considered that the public interest will be better served by not disclosing the information in the Appendices A and B. Accordingly this report contains exempt Information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.</p>
Financial Implications to include reference to Value for Money		<p>All capital projects are within the individual capital budgets approved by Members. The total approved capital budget is £4,569,836 of which £2,006,733 has been profiled into 2022/23. £1,585,086 of this allocation has been spent to date (Appendix A).</p> <p>It is recommended that budget of £35k in 2023/24, £10k in 24/25 and £10k in 25/26 is approved for Tamar Trails Infrastructure Renewal (see appendix C). This is to be funded from the Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve;</p> <p>The regular monitoring of the Capital Programme ensures the Council has arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.</p>

Risk		<p>The Council demonstrates that capital investment contributes to corporate priorities, provides value for money and takes account of the revenue implications of the investment. Regular monitoring of the capital programme and consideration of new pressures enables Members to control the programme and secure appropriate mitigation where problems arise.</p> <p>There is regular quarterly monitoring of the Capital Programme to Members where any cost overruns are identified at an early stage.</p>
Supporting Corporate Strategy		The Capital Programme supports all of the Thematic Delivery Plans within 'A Plan for West Devon'.
Consultation and Engagement Strategy		External consultation and engagement has not been undertaken with regard to this report.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		<p>The Council declared a Climate Change and Biodiversity Emergency on 23 July 2019 and a Climate Change Action Plan was presented to Council in December 2019.</p> <p>Further detail is set out in the Council's 'A Plan for West Devon' strategy.</p>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Safeguarding		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		This matter is assessed as part of each specific project.
Other implications		None

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Exempt Appendix A – Details of capital expenditure to 31st January 2023;
Appendix B – S106 Summary WDBC as at 31st December 2022; and
Appendix C – Tamar Trails Infrastructure Renewal.

Background Papers:

None

Process checklist	Completed
Portfolio Holder briefed	Yes
SLT Rep briefed	Yes
Relevant Heads of Practice sign off (draft)	Yes
Data protection issues considered	Yes
Accessibility checked	Yes

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Class Code	Site	Date Received	Restriction/Committed End Date	Conditions	Opening S106 Balance 2022/23 £	Received in Year 2022/23 £	Monitoring Fee Deducted 2022/23 £	Balance available to be Spent £	Total Spend to date £	Commitments £	Forecast Closing Balance £	Comments
Homes and Built and Natural Environment Delivery Plan												
Affordable Housing												
2517	9 Drakes Park Bere Alston (01994/2011)	12/01/13	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(11,500.00)			(11,500.00)	11,500.00		0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2523	6&8 Fore Street, Bridestowe(03113/2012)	02/07/2013, 15/09/2015	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(5,500.00)			(5,500.00)	5,500.00		0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2520	Land adjacent to Trescote, Bridestowe - 00465/2014	22/10/14	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(7,375.00)			(7,375.00)		7,375.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
	Land Adjoining Belle vue - 03222/2012	12/11/14	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(7,375.00)			(7,375.00)		7,375.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2539	The Beeches, Yelverton - 0302/15	22/06/17	10 Years	DNP - Affordable Housing	(20,911.90)			(20,911.90)		20,911.90	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2533	Hannaforde, The Crescent, Crapstone -01866/2011	17/06/2013 19/09/2013	None	Affordable Housing 100%	(16,300.00)			(16,300.00)	16,300.00		0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2546	Barns At Hurliditch Horn Gulworthy 00358/2010	20/06/2019	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(31,949.81)			(31,949.81)		31,949.81	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2535	The Old Post Office Highampton (00740/2014)	22/08/18	10 years	Affordable Housing	(6,121.51)			(6,121.51)		6,121.51	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2514	Melcroft, Lifton - 00546/2013	29/4/14 & 09/2/2017	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(7,375.00)			(7,375.00)		7,375.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2522	Land adj Shellsley North Tawton (02914/2012)	20/02/15	10 Years	1st & 2nd 50% Affordable Housing	(47,136.72)			(47,136.72)		47,136.72	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2521	Tricity Works, Holsworthy Road, Okehampton - 02485/2012	15/06/14	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(5,500.00)			(5,500.00)		5,500.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2512	Livaton Berns, S Tawton - 00707/2014	19/08/2015, 23/08/18	10 Years	Affordable Housing 1st & 2nd 50%	(12,878.30)			(12,878.30)		12,878.30	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2557	The Highwayman Inn, Souton (3112/16/Ful)	26/03/2021, 15/6/21, 24/12/21	10 Years	1st and 2nd Instalment of affordable housing	(87,099.66)			(87,099.66)		87,099.66	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2524	The Barton, Spreyton (01396/2014)	04/03/2015, 24/07/2015	10 years of first occupation	Affordable Housing	(71,530.17)			(71,530.17)		71,530.17	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2508	Land adj Serendipity, Tavistock - 00556/2014	15/09/17	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(8,261.15)			(8,261.15)		8,261.15	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2510	Land at 68 Plymouth Road, Tavistock - 03076/2012	21/11/17	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(12,196.61)			(12,196.61)		12,196.61	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2509	The Garage, Maudlins Park, Tavistock - 02492/2012	5/8/13 & 11/12/2019	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(5,713.00)			(5,713.00)	3,767.00	1,946.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2516	Land Adjacent to rising Hill, Tavistock - 01608/2011	19/09/13	None	Affordable Housing	(8,400.00)			(8,400.00)	8,400.00	0.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2518	Land Adjoining Brook Farm Tavistock (00692/2013)	2013 to 2014	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(7,375.00)			(7,375.00)		7,375.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2519	Land at Annan Down Park Drive, Tavistock - 01007/2013	30/02/2014, 10/07/2014	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(29,125.00)			(29,125.00)		29,125.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2503	Tanglewood, Tavistock - 01191/2013	12/11/2014, 24/04/2017	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(16,831.59)			(16,831.59)		16,831.59	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2543	Land Lower Trendle, Tavistock - 2092/16/Ful	17/07/2020 & 04/12/2020	10 Years	100% Affordable Housing Contributions	(44,221.13)			(44,221.13)		44,221.13	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2543	RO 6 Westmoor Park - 00014/2014	20/06/19	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(7,800.68)			(7,800.68)		7,800.68	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2528	Harewood House Tavistock -2232/17/FUL	09/02/21	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(164,285.01)			(164,285.01)		164,285.01	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2547	Land Rear of Rowan Cottage, Lewdown, Okehampton - 0825/11	22/11/2019 & 04/11/22	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(25,694.44)	(29,804.56)		(5,110.12)		55,499.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
70	Dell Cote Crapstone (00364/2014)	27/09/2021, 16/09/22	10 Years	Affordable Housing	(7,542.51)			(7,542.51)		7,542.51	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2584	Broomhill Barn Sampford Courtenay (00841/2014)	02/11/22	NA	Affordable Housing	(16,700.00)		835.00	(15,865.00)		15,865.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
2589	Woodcroft Hse Bwkelly (01165/2013)	13/12/22	NA	Affordable Housing	0.00	(7,875.00)		(7,875.00)		7,875.00	0.00	Contribution towards Springhill
					(692,699.19)	(37,679.56)	1,228.75	(729,150.00)	45,467.00	683,683.00	0.00	
Adapting our Built Environment												
2531	Unit 2-4 Tavistock Retail Park - 00601/2013	14/12/15	NA	Town Centre/heritage improvements.	(11,236.40)			(11,236.40)	11,236.40		0.00	
2543	Land Lower Trendle, Tavistock - 2092/16/Ful	03/05/19	10 Years	Heritage Contribution	(2,000.00)			(2,000.00)			(2,000.00)	
					(13,236.40)	0.00	0.00	(13,236.40)	11,236.40	0.00	(2,000.00)	
Growing our Natural Environment												
2561	Land at Abbey Meadows Crapstone (0147/17/OPA)	18/11/21	NA	Plymouth Sound SAC	(750.60)			(750.60)			(750.60)	
2568	2 Drake Rd Tavistock (4309/20/FUL)	07/07/2021, 28/10/21	NA	Plymouth Sound EMS	(330.92)			(330.92)			(330.92)	
2572	Abbeyleaf Milton Combe (1865/20/FUL)	29/10/21	NA	Plymouth Sound EMS	(482.99)			(482.99)			(482.99)	
2577	Gulworthy Farm (1551/20/FUL)	24/12/21	NA	Plymouth Sound EMS	(435.89)			(435.89)			(435.89)	
2583	Breckland Down Rd Tavi (3980/20/VAR)	12/01/22	NA	Plymouth Sound EMS	(1,020.41)			(1,020.41)			(1,020.41)	
2585	26 King Street Tavistock (3786/20/FUL)	10/02/22	NA	Plymouth Sound EMS	(493.64)			(493.64)			(493.64)	
2593	Challoch Crapstone (0103/21/FUL)	30/05/22	None	Plymouth Sound EMS	0.00	(1,150.29)	45.00	(1,105.29)			(1,105.29)	
2594	Trellyn Bere Alston (0454/22/FUL)	26/05/22	None	Plymouth Sound EMS	0.00	(512.91)	45.00	(467.91)			(467.91)	
2595	Barn at Willesley Milton Abbot (4077/21/PDM)	14/06/22	None	Plymouth Sound EMS	0.00	(488.46)	45.00	(443.46)			(443.46)	
2590	Lower Radaford Lamerton (2991/20/FUL)	04/07/22	None	Plymouth Sound EMS	0.00	(253.97)		(253.97)			(253.97)	
2599	Down Park House Yelverton (0083/22/FUL)	30/08/22	NA	Plymouth Sound EMS	0.00	(575.43)	45.00	(530.43)			(530.43)	
2608	Barn at Walredden, Whitchurch (2760/21/FUL)			Plymouth Sound EMS	0.00	(597.58)	45.00	(552.58)			(552.58)	
					(3,514.45)	(3,578.64)	225.00	(6,868.09)	0.00	0.00	(6,868.09)	
TOTAL Homes and Built and Natural Environment Delivery Plan												
					(709,450.04)	(41,258.20)	1,453.75	(749,254.49)	56,703.40	683,683.00	(8,868.09)	
Strengthening Community Wellbeing Delivery Plan												
Community Facilities												
2527	11366/2008/TAV - Forma Tavistock Hockey Club	28/10/13	10 years	£23,250 - Community Facility & £112,000 off-site Sports Pitch	(23,296.80)			(23,296.80)	240.00		(23,056.80)	
	11462/2008/OKE (see 13_14 schedule 11/1/2008)	17/04/13	NA	Community Facilities	(5,096.62)			(5,096.62)	5,000.00		(96.62)	
2571	Glendale, Crediton Rd Okehampton (02728/2012)	30/11/21	10 years	Community Facility	(15,538.12)			(15,538.12)			(15,538.12)	
					(43,931.54)	0.00	0.00	(43,931.54)	5,240.00	0.00	(38,691.54)	
Open Space, Sport and Recreation												
2504	Bathway Fields, N Tawton - 01037/2013	15/05/2017, 22/08/2017	10 years	Public Art £23,678.13, Refuse £1,341.20, Play £58,721.78, Playing Field £25,137.16, Community Facilities £31,288.97, Street Cleaning £7,680.16, PCT Contribution £19,010.40	(1,822.13)			(1,822.13)	1,822.13		0.00	

Class Code	Site	Date Received	Restriction/ Committed End Date	Conditions	Opening S106 Balance 2022/23 £	Received in Year 2022/23 £	Monitoring Fee Deducted 2022/23 £	Balance available to be Spent £	Total Spend to date £	Commitments £	Forecast Closing Balance £	Comments
2558	Land North of Crediton Road,Okehampton - 01089/2013	08/06/21	10 Years	Play Field Contribution	(50,420.20)			(50,420.20)			(50,420.20)	
2527	11366/2008/TAV - Forma Tavistock Hockey Club	28/10/13	10 years	£23,250 - Community Facility & £112,000 off-site Sports Pitch	(29,111.81)			(29,111.81)	9,916.56		(19,195.25)	
2537	Land Butcher park Hill - 00610/2015	20/09/2018, 28/06/2019, 14/07/2020, 03/09/22	5 Years	£147,752 - 1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th instalment of Playing Pitch Contribution (BCIS uplift to follow when triggers.3 & 4 met). £51,791 - Off-Site Play contribution	(170,537.19)	(10,358.20)		(180,895.39)	50,000.00		(130,895.39)	
2548	Land New Launceston Road - 2022/16/OPA	04/12/2019, 29/09/21, 02/03/22	10 years	50% Off Site Public open Space and play contribution	(227,612.01)			(227,612.01)			(227,612.01)	
2559	Land adjacent to Callington Road, Tavistock - 00554/2013	14/05/21	5 Years	Off-Site Play Contribution 1st Instalment	(35,114.18)			(35,114.18)			(35,114.18)	
2560	Land Adjacent to Cross Farm Lewdown (2878/16/Ful)	11/05/21	5 Years	Open Space Contribution towards the Ramps play area in Lewdown	(11,271.40)			(11,271.40)			(11,271.40)	
2571	Glendale, Crediton Rd Okehampton (02728/2012)	30/11/21	10 years	Open Space kickabout	(3,097.61)			(3,097.61)			(3,097.61)	
2586	North Rd Lifton (2323/16/OPA)	14/06/2022 & 11/11/22	None	Child Play facilities	(8,952.96)	(9,525.54)		(18,478.50)	4,300.00		(14,178.50)	
2586	North Rd Lifton (2323/16/OPA)	14/06/2022 & 11/11/22	None	Child Play facilities	(1,243.78)	(1,323.32)		(2,567.10)			(2,567.10)	
2588	Land opp Springfield Park Bridestowe (4136/19/FUL)	08/04/22	7 years	OSSR	0.00	(11,600.55)	580.03	(11,020.52)			(11,020.52)	
2589	Devonia House Yelverton (DNP 0018/20)	13/05/22	10 years	Off Site Public Open Space	0.00	(25,520.63)		(25,520.63)			(25,520.63)	
2596	Land South of Exeter Rd Okehampton (0032/18/OPA)	29/07/22	None	OSSR contribution	0.00	(74,781.48)	3,739.07	(71,042.41)			(71,042.41)	
2607	New Launceston Road, Broadleigh Park (2022/16/OPA)	23/11/22	10 years	Off-site play contribution	0.00	(26,678.75)		(26,678.75)			(26,678.75)	
					(539,183.27)	(159,788.47)	4,319.10	(694,652.64)	66,038.69	0.00	(628,613.95)	
Street Cleaning												
2504	Bathway Fields, N Tawton - 01037/2013	15/05/2017, 22/08/2017	10 years	Public Art £23,678.13, Refuse £1,341.20, Play £58,721.78, Playing Field £25,137.16, Community Facilities £31,288.97, Street Cleaning £7,680.16, PCT Contribution £19,010.40	(7,588.11)			(7,588.11)			(7,588.11)	
					(7,588.11)	0.00	0.00	(7,588.11)	0.00	0.00	(7,588.11)	
TOTAL Strengthening Community Wellbeing Delivery Plan					(583,114.81)	(159,788.47)	4,319.10	(738,584.18)	71,278.69	0.00	(667,305.49)	
TOTAL S106 DEPOSITS					(1,300,152.96)	(201,046.67)	5,772.85	(1,495,426.78)	127,982.09	683,683.00	(683,761.69)	

06 Spend as at 31/12/22 - break down of projects

Revenue			Expenditure	
S106 Agreement	Project name			
Unit 2-4 Tavistock Retail Park - 00601/2013	Tavistock TC Benches		11,236.40	
11366/2008/TAV - Forma Tavistock Hockey Club	The Robey Trust		240.00	

Tamar Trails Infrastructure Renewal

In 2006, the Borough Council committed to act as the Accountable Body for the delivery of the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project (TVMHP). This was a project predominantly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the project saw investment of over £7m between 2007 and 2012/13 to conserve and provide new access to the mining heritage of the Devon side of the Tamar Valley. The TVMHP invested at a landscape scale including provision of an extensive 25km network of trails.

The trails are permissive trails (not part of the Public Rights of Way network) established by a variety of leases between the Borough Council and landowners for a 30 year period (expiring 2038) which were initially agreed to secure the funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. For many of these trails, the Borough Council has ultimate responsibility for the trail and infrastructure maintenance as dictated by the lease terms.

To date the Borough Council has been spending around £15,000 per annum on monitoring, repairs and maintenance.

Timber infrastructure along the trails has now been in situ between 10-15yrs and items are failing which is as to be expected for timber within this environment, such that one trail (Bedford Trail) has recently been closed due to being unsafe.

It is likely that various timber infrastructure will fail over the next 5 years as the midpoint of the legacy is reached. As leaseholder and upholding funding contract commitments, the Borough Council is required to ensure safe access to the Trails. Given the nature of failure of timber infrastructure, this goes above usual repairs and maintenance and requires capital spend on infrastructure renewals.

A number of pieces of failed/failing equipment on the Bedford Trail are critical to safe passage along the trails, including steps, boardwalk bridges, post and cable fences, and renewal of these will be essential before this trail can be reopened.

It is therefore recommended that Members approve the following addition to the Capital Programme to be financed from the Budget Surplus Contingency Reserve.

Financial year	Budget
2023/24	£35,000
2024/25	£10,000
2025/26	£10,000
Total cost	£55,000

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Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **7 March 2023**
Title: **Write-Off Report Q1 and Q2 2022/23**
Portfolio Area: **Performance & Resources – Cllr Edmonds**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:

Author: **Lisa Buckle** Role: **Section 151 Officer**
Contact: **lisa.buckle@swdevon.gov.uk**

Recommendations:

That the Hub Committee:

- 1. notes that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Section 151 Officer has authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £81,644.55 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2;**
- 2. approves the write off of individual debts in excess of £5,000 totalling £45,884.15 as detailed in Table 3; and**
- 3. adopts (with effect from 1 April 2023) the Council Tax, Non-Domestic rate (Business Rates) and Housing Benefit overpayments write-off policy, attached at Appendix A.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for the collection of Sundry Debts including Housing Benefit overpayments, Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates.
- 1.2 The report informs members of the debt written off for these revenue streams. Debts up to the value of £5,000 can be written off by the s151 Officer, under delegated authority. Permission needs to be sought from the Committee to write off individual debts with a value of more than £5,000.
- 1.3 This report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022, with the total West Devon Borough Council debts to be written off

being £125,528.70. The primary reason for this increase is due to individuals and businesses using insolvency measures as a way of discharging their indebtedness.

- 1.4 At its meeting on 31 January 2023, the Hub Committee gave agreement in principle to the establishment of a supplementary write-off policy to be brought to the next meeting of the Hub Committee. The proposed write-off policy, which will be effective from 1 April 2023, is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.5 Officers are also recommending that write-off reports presented from 1 April 2023, will be in a slightly different format. At present, the report details debt written off during a quarter regardless of the financial year to which it relates.
- 1.6 One of the key outcomes of the Revenues and Benefits Service Review is the improvement of collection rates for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates. By reporting write-offs by financial year, there will be clearer reporting of what proportion of debt is written off in year in relation to the overall yearly collection rate.
- 1.7 We will also compare collection performance against shire districts as this will give a better benchmark of how performance compares to similar local authorities.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's sound financial management arrangements underpin delivery of all the Council's priorities, including the commitment to providing value for money services and this report forms part of the formal debt write-off procedures included in these financial arrangements.
- 2.2 The writing off of debt which is irrecoverable is recognised as good practice by the Department of Housing, Levelling Up and Communities, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Department for Work and Pensions. Debts are only considered for write off after taking all possible steps to collect. It is important that processes and procedures are frequently reviewed to ensure maximum effectiveness in debt collection and recovery.
- 2.3 Whilst it is recognised that the majority of income owed to the Council will be successfully billed for and collected, there are a variety of reasons why debt will become irrecoverable and needs to be written off. Debts will only be recommended for write off once all options to recover and enforce them, as allowed for by the relevant legislation, have been exhausted.
- 2.4 When it is certain that the debts are irrecoverable or the cost of recovery would outweigh the benefit, debts should be written off

following appropriate review and authorisation and with reference to the proposed write-off policy. A full audit trail should be retained.

- 2.5 The Council has a reasonable track record for collecting debt. The Council's collection rate for 2021/22 was 97.8% which is 1.9% higher than the national average of 95.9%. The Council's collection rate for Business Rates was 93.7% which is below the national average of 95.5%. This compares to collection rates for 2020/21 which were 97.3% for Council Tax and 91.5% for Business Rates
- 2.6 Collection rates for the 2022/23 financial year are on track and any debts outstanding for previous financial years continue to be pursued.
- 2.7 Debts are recovered in accordance with the Council's Recovery Policy which is published on our website.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 In accordance with good financial management principles, the Council makes appropriate bad debt provision for the revenue streams detailed in this report. This provision recognises that a proportion of the Council's debts will prove irrecoverable and ensures that the value of debtors within the Council's accounts is a fair reflection of the amount that will eventually be recovered.
- 3.2 All debts, taxes and rates within the service's control are actively pursued, and in most instances are collected with little difficulty. In cases where payment is not received on time, a reminder will be issued promptly to the debtor. If this fails to secure payment, a final reminder and/or a summons will also be issued and if necessary the debt passed to an appropriate collection agent such as the enforcement agents or the Council's legal team order to secure payment.
- 3.3 Sometimes, however, if the debtor is having difficulty making the payment, special arrangements are used to effect recovery, and this may mean extending the period of time to collect the debt.
- 3.4 In some cases pursuit of an outstanding debt is not possible for a variety of reasons, such as bankruptcy or liquidation and such cases with arrears under £5,000 can be written off by the Section 151 Officer under delegated authority. Cases where the debt exceeds £5,000 must, however, be approved by the Committee prior to the debt being written off.
- 3.5 A record is kept of debts written off, together with the reason for doing so, so that if there is a realistic chance of recovery in the future a debt may be resurrected and pursued again.
- 3.6 The service has access to Experian's Citizenvue database which is currently the most reliable means of tracing absconded debtors.

Each case is checked against this system before a decision is taken to write-off the debt. A periodic review of write-offs against this system may also be carried out to resurrect debts where appropriate.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 The Hub Committee can either approve the debt being written off or not. Should the write-off of an individual debt not be approved, it will remain on the appropriate system as an outstanding balance. In cases of insolvency there is no option available to the Council, but to stop any action to collect the debt
- 4.2 If debts remain on the system, it may result in additional time and cost spent pursuing the debt when there is no realistic prospect of recovery. This is an inefficient use of the Council's staffing resources.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 The Hub Committee approves the write off of individual debts in excess of £5,000 as detailed in Table 3.
- 5.2 The Hub Committee notes the debts under £5,000 approved for write-off by the Section 151 Officer as detailed in Tables 1 and 2.
- 5.3 The Hub Committee approves the Council Tax, Non-Domestic rate (Business Rates) and Housing Benefit overpayments write-off policy which will come into force from 1 April 2023.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		<p>The relevant billing, collection and recovery processes are governed by statutory provisions linked to the type of debt. Debts will be written off in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the attached write off policy and any legislation relevant to the type of debt. All relevant enforcement remedies will be pursued before a recommendation to write off is made.</p> <p>The relevant powers for this report are contained within the following legislation;</p> <p>Section 151 Local Government Act 1972 Section 44 Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Non Domestic Rate) Section 14 Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Council Tax)</p>

Financial implications to include reference to value for money		<p>A clear process for the writing off of irrecoverable debt represents effective financial management practice. To continue to pursue debt when it is no longer cost effective to do so is an inefficient use of resources.</p> <p>Provision for bad debts is made in the Council's accounts.</p> <p>The Committee notes that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Section 151 Officer has authorised the write-off of individual Council debts totalling £81,644.55 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Committee approves the write off of the debt in excess of £5,000 for £45,884.15, as detailed in Table 3.</p> <p>The total debts to be written off are £127,528.70.</p>
Risk		<p>The Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate (Business Rates) and Overpaid Housing Benefit write off policy will provide assurance regarding controls and the operational process in recovering debt. It should be recognised, however, that due to the volume, value and nature of annual debt due to the Council there will always be irrecoverable amounts which will be recommended for write off once all enforcement remedies have been exhausted. A provision for bad debts is made in the Councils' accounts.</p> <p>The debt recovery policy and the proposed write off policy and supporting procedures are in place to minimise risk.</p>
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Delivering efficient and effective services.
Consultation & Engagement Strategy		There is no requirement to consult, however engagement has taken place with service leads and other relevant parties across the Council.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		No direct carbon/biodiversity impact arising from the recommendations
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		<p>All enforcement action that is taken prior to this point is undertaken in accordance with legislation and accepted procedures to ensure no discrimination takes place.</p> <p>The Council's approach to dealing with debtors remains fundamentally unchanged, however</p>

		through formalising the policy and procedures we will be better able to engage with debtors who may potentially have tried to ignore their debts.
Safeguarding		None
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None
Other implications		A bad debt provision is built into the financial management of the Council.

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Table 1 – Council debt under £5,000 written off by the Section 151 Officer

Table 2 – Non-Domestic Rate debt under £5,000 written off by the Section 151 Officer

Table 3 – Summary of items over £5,000 where permission to write off is requested

Table 4 – National & Local Collection Statistics re 2021/22 Collection Rates

Table 5 – Quarterly income in 2021/22 relating to all years

Table 6 – Previous Year Write Off Totals

Appendix A - Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate (Business Rates) and Housing Benefit Overpayments Write-Off Policy

Background Papers:

None

TABLE 1 SUMMARY OF WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL DEBT UNDER £5,000 WRITTEN OFF BY S151 OFFICER

TYPE OF DEBT	REASON FOR W/OFF	Financial Year 2022/23		Totals for Comparison purposes			
		Quarters 1 & 2		Equivalent Quarters 2021/22		Grand Total 2021/22	
		Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount
HOUSING BENEFIT	Overpaid Entitlement	6	2360.66	7	1,282.15	8	4,239.44
	Insolvency / Bankruptcy	-	-	3	5,586.14	3	5,586.14
	Deceased	3	413.53	3	1,910.98	4	2,505.49
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Absconded	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Not Cost Effective to Pursue	6	17.13	3	21.75	7	54.20
	Uncollectable Old Debt	15	4,698.50	2	38.05	17	2,964.93
Total		30	7,489.82	18	8,839.07	39	15,350.20
COUNCIL TAX	Absconded	2	990.75	-	-	4	4,803.01
	Insolvency / Bankruptcy	42	65,726.51	19	28,931.20	53	63,622.75
	Deceased	1	971.10	3	1,154.70	8	3,918.87
	Other (inc. CTR overpayment)	-	-	-	-	5	2,060.65
	Small Balance	39	1,411.60	4	13.72	116	15,827.66
	Uncollectable Old Debt	-	-	3	4,969.95	150	11,433.36
Total		84	69,099.96	29	35,069.57	336	101,666.30
SUNDRY DEBTS	Small Balance	1	0.36	-	-	-	-
	Insolvency / Bankruptcy	-	-	3	528.40	6	3,528.37
	Unable to pursue	-	-	3	120.00	3	120.00
	Uncollectable Old Debt	4	669.91	11	795.07	11	795.07
	Absconded	-	-	8	4,908.43	8	4,908.43
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		5	670.27	25	6,351.90	28	9,351.87
Grand Total		119	77,260.05	72	50,260.54	403	126,368.37

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**Breakdown of Absconded Council Tax Debt
(Some cases have debts over more than one year)**

Year	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14	Pre 2013/14	Total
Value		175.55			472.90	342.30						990.75
Number		1			1	1						

TABLE 2 SUMMARY OF NON DOMESTIC RATE DEBT UNDER £5,000 WRITTEN OFF BY THE S151 OFFICER

TYPE OF DEBT	REASON FOR W/OFF	Financial Year 2022/23		Totals for Comparison purposes			
		Quarters 1 & 2		Equivalent Quarters 2021/22		Grand Total 2021/22	
		Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount
NON-DOMESTIC RATE	Insolvency / Bankruptcy	4	4,384.50	-	-	7	11,988.32
	Absconded	-	-	-	-	1	654.71
	Deceased	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Small Balance	-	-	1	2.19	2	2.20
	Uncollectable Old Debt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		4	4,384.50	1	2.19	10	12,645.23

TABLE 3 SUMMARY OF ITEMS OVER £5000 WHERE PERMISSION TO WRITE OFF IS REQUESTED

Page 48 TYPE OF DEBT	REASON FOR W/OFF	Financial Year 2022/23		Totals for Comparison purposes			
		Quarters 1 & 2		Equivalent Quarters 2021/22		Grand Total 2021/22	
		Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount
NON-DOMESTIC RATE	Insolvency / Bankruptcy	-	-	1	12,357.71	6	72,101.90
	Absconded	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Deceased	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	-	-	1	12,357.71	6	72,101.90
HOUSING BENEFIT	Insolvency / Bankruptcy	1	14,443.41	-	-	-	-
	Absconded	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Deceased	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Overpaid entitlement	-	-	-	-	2	25,542.17
Total	1	14,443.41	-	-	2	25,542.17	
COUNCIL TAX	Insolvency / Bankruptcy	3	31,440.74	-	-	-	-
	Absconded	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Other (inc. CTR overpayment)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3	31,440.74	-	-	-	-	
SUNDRY DEBTORS	Insolvency / Bankruptcy	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Absconded	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Grand Total		4	45,884.15	1	12,357.71	8	97,644.07

TABLE 4 NATIONAL & LOCAL COLLECTION STATISTICS RE 2021-22 COLLECTION RATES

Total amount collected in 2021-22 relating to 2021-22 financial year only (net of refunds relating to 2021-22)

	Council Tax			Non Domestic Rates		
	Collectable Debit i.r.o. 21/22 - £000s	Net Cash Collected* i.r.o. 21/22 - £000s	Amount Collected i.r.o. 21/22 - %age	Collectable Debit i.r.o. 21/22 - £000s	Net Cash Collected* i.r.o. 21/22 - £000s	Amount Collected i.r.o. 21/22 - %age
All England	35,341,791	33,875,551	95.9	21,752,276	20,776,450	95.5
Shire Districts	14,763,647	14,353,248	97.2	6,346,459	6,156,706	97.0
East Devon	126,747	125,322	98.9	27,482	26,760	97.4
Exeter	76,883	74,209	96.5	58,968	57,946	98.3
Mid Devon	63,679	61,560	96.7	12,500	12,322	98.6
North Devon	74,340	72,028	96.9	24,152	23,538	97.5
Plymouth	145,806	141,062	96.8	68,823	67,719	98.4
South Hams	83,346	81,964	98.3	23,611	23,170	98.1
Teignbridge	105,041	102,860	97.9	23,804	23,563	99.0
Torbay	94,060	89,590	95.3	23,111	20,908	90.5
Torridge	51,510	50,250	97.6	8,900	8,761	98.4
West Devon	45,967	44,955	97.8	8,246	7,724	93.7

* Net Cash Collected is total 2021-22 receipts net of refunds paid, in respect of 2021-22 only

TABLE 5 QUARTERLY INCOME IN 2021-22 RELATING TO ALL YEARS

Total amount collected in 2021-22 relating to any financial year (net of all refunds made in 2021-22)

	Council Tax Net Cash Collected* £000s	Non Domestic Rates Net Cash Collected* £000s
Quarter 1 - Receipts collected between 1 st April – 30 th June	13,336	2,352
Quarter 2 - Receipts collected between 1 st July – 30 th September	12,349	1,688
Quarter 3 - Receipts collected between 1 st October – 31 st December	13,193	2,372
Quarter 4 - Receipts collected between 1 st January – 31 st March	6,832	1,437

* Net Cash Collected is total receipts in 2021-2022 net of refunds paid, irrespective of the financial year (previous, current or future years) to which they relate

TABLE 6 PREVIOUS YEAR WRITE OFF TOTALS

		2021 - 22	2020 - 21	2019 - 20	2018 - 19	2017 - 18	2016 - 17
HOUSING BENEFIT	Under £5,000 cases	15,350.20	12,990.50	104,270.24	75,961.02	117,461.11	28,341.72
HOUSING BENEFIT	£5,000 or over cases	25,542.17	-	44,375.04	12,721.09	17,126.57	15,685.10
Total		40,892.37	12,990.50	148,645.28	88,682.11	134,587.68	44,026.82
COUNCIL TAX	Under £5,000 cases	101,666.30	59,240.80	83,123.43	52,827.04	85,818.34	85,498.82
COUNCIL TAX	£5,000 or over cases	-	11,540.15	5,242.92	-	27,458.04	-
Total		101,666.30	70,780.95	88,366.35	52,827.04	113,276.38	85,498.82
SUNDRY DEBTS	Under £5,000 cases	9,351.87	28,284.38	4,006.46	16,145.70	85,064.24	15,895.01
SUNDRY DEBTS	£5,000 or over cases	-	11,643.35	6,759.59	-	-	-
Total		9,351.87	39,927.73	10,766.05	16,145.70	85,064.24	15,895.01
NON DOMESTIC RATES	Under £5,000 cases	12,645.23	13,710.69	16,130.13	9,704.04	8,876.14	10,517.74
NON DOMESTIC RATES	£5,000 or over cases	72,101.90	-	123,504.56	38,251.60	7,561.62	29,217.16
Total		84,747.13	13,710.69	139,634.69	47,955.64	16,437.76	39,734.90
GRAND TOTAL		236,657.67	137,409.87	387,412.37	205,610.49	349,366.06	185,155.55

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**West Devon
Borough
Council**

Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate (Business Rates) and Housing Benefit Overpayments Write-Off Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the procedure to be followed when writing off irrecoverable amounts of Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate (Business Rates) and Housing Benefit overpayments.
- 1.2 Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (as amended by subsequent regulations) bad debts should not be written off without approval of the responsible financial officer or such member of staff who is nominated by them for this purpose. There is no equivalent requirement for credit balances, although it is prudent to write them off on a regular basis.
- 1.3 Both internal and external audit need to be satisfied any write off policy is both robust and transparent. At the same time, there needs to be a mechanism for reporting write offs through Members. A debt should only ever be written off in accordance with a policy agreed by Members.
- 1.4 Officers are required to take robust action to collect all debts, however in some cases this might not be possible and debts do become irrecoverable. Where a debt is deemed to be non-recoverable (or a credit non-refundable) it needs to be identified at the earliest possible opportunity and properly dealt with in accordance with the financial regulations.
- 1.5 Writing off irrecoverable items represents good financial management. It allows officers to concentrate on recoverable debts and ensures that the level of debtors/arrears within the accounts is accurate and represents a true and fair view of the Council's financial position.
- 1.6 Any debt written off can be reinstated at a later date if there is a fresh opportunity to recover all or part of the debt.

2. Policy objectives

The Council's debt write-off policy has the following objectives:

- To promote a fair and consistent approach to the writing off of debt across the Council.
- To enable debts to be written off in a timely and efficient manner.
- To provide a framework that sets the criteria for writing off debt.
- To ensure that action is appropriate to the level of debt and maximises the use of resources.

3. Reasons for write-off

3.1 Every effort will be made to recover a debt owed to the Council before it is considered for write off. This includes using tracing agents, visiting the property, contacting occupiers and owners and cross-referencing against internal databases. Only where all recovery action has failed is a debt regarded as irrecoverable.

3.2 This policy covers West Devon Borough Council's policy and approach in the following areas:

- Remission by the magistrates' court
- Imprisonment
- Insolvency
- Unenforceable debts
- Other write-off situations
- Credit balances
- Housing benefit overpayments

4. Remission by the magistrates' court

4.1 If the magistrates' court finds that the failure to pay council tax or Non-Domestic Rates is not due to either wilful refusal or culpable neglect, the debt can be remitted. Remission may in full or in part and the debt becomes irrecoverable. Even though a debt or debts may be remitted, liability for future years will continue. Following the decision of the magistrates the write-off will be processed on the debtors' account and we will store a copy of the Court Remission Sheet in our document management system.

5. Imprisonment

5.1 If a debtor is committed to prison for non-payment of council tax or non-domestic rates the debt has to be written off once the term of imprisonment has been served. No further recovery action can be taken with regard to the relevant amount as the enforcement process has come to an end. Liability for future years will continue.

6. Bankruptcy

- 6.1 Upon notification of a bankruptcy, a proof of debt will be completed for the outstanding debt that is due at the date of the bankruptcy order and submitted as a claim to the trustee in bankruptcy. In the event of payment being received in full or in part from the bankrupt's estate, this will be credited to the relevant account.

7. Individual Voluntary Arrangement

- 7.1 A voluntary arrangement is an alternative available to a debtor where they wish to avoid a bankruptcy order. The debtor makes an offer to all creditors, which is less than the outstanding debt, and agrees that it will be paid over a period of time in full and final settlement. If 75% (in value) of creditors agree to the offer, an insolvency practitioner will be appointed to administer the voluntary arrangement. If payment is received in full or part, the money will be credited to the account with the balance being written off.

8. Liquidation

- 8.1 Liquidation may either be compulsory or voluntary. Upon notification that a company has gone into liquidation, a proof of debt will be submitted for the outstanding debt due at the date of the winding up order and submitted as a claim to the liquidator. In event of payment being received in full or in part, this will be credited to the account with the remainder being written off.

9. Company has ceased trading

- 9.1 Limited companies may cease to trade on the grounds of having no assets to pay outstanding and/or on-going debts. There is no formal winding-up process which have both a cost and legal implications. The Council could take steps to put the company into compulsory liquidation which is costly and is unlikely to secure payment.
- 9.2 In these circumstances, and if an enforcement agent has failed to recover the monies due or identify assets on which to levy distress, it is recommended that the debt is written off.

10. Debt Relief Order

- 10.1 Debt Relief Orders are a way a person can deal with their debts if they can't afford to pay them. It means the debtor doesn't have to pay certain kinds of debt for a specified period (usually 12 months). At the end of the DRO period, the debts included in it will be written off ('discharged').

11. Statute barred debts

- 11.1 Certain debts will become uncollectable if a summons is not issued within 6 years of a demand notice being issued and therefore the debt must be written off.

12. Death of a debtor

- 12.1 In the majority of cases the debt remains collectable either from a joint liable person or the debtor's estate. In certain circumstances it is not possible to collect the debt and it will be written off. This is usually where there are no assets or where the debtor dies intestate.
- 12.2 If there are assets and the executors fail to make payment to clear the debt we can take separate action to recover the debt through civil enforcement proceedings.

13. Debtors who cannot be traced

- 13.1 There are occasions when debtors abscond from a property leaving debts. In all cases every effort is made to locate the debtor. This includes:
- A check of records using internal and external tracing tools;
 - A visit to the property if it is cost effective to do so; and
 - Passing the debt to an enforcement agency to see if they are able to trace the debtor
- 13.2 If the debtor cannot be traced there is no alternative but to write-off the debt, however debts will be reviewed every 6 to 12 months in case any further information has come to light which means they can be collected.

14. Debts which are uneconomical to collect

- 14.1 Enforcement action is taken in respect of debts of more than £77.50 (subject to annual review). Where debtors are no longer in the local area, it is considered uneconomic to pursue these small balances and the debts are written off on an annual basis. If the debtor returns to the borough, the write-off will be reversed and recovery action will continue.

15. Court, enforcement agent and other costs

- 15.1 When the debt is being written off for one of the reasons above, legal fees and costs incurred in recovering the debt need to be written off separately as their accounting treatment is different.
- 15.2 There are a small number of cases which may be taken to court and the debt passed to enforcement agents before it transpires that the liability is incorrect, but the Council was unaware at the time the action was taken. In correcting the liability it may be necessary to cancel costs and other fees depending on the individual circumstances of the case.

16. Miscellaneous

- 16.1 The Council has some debts which it is unable to pursue for other reasons, such as it not being in the public interest or due to local authority error. These will be exceptional in nature and approved by the Director of Strategic Finance with full details of the reason for the decision held on file.

17. Credit balances

- 17.1 There will be instances where an account is closed and a credit balance remains on the account. If it has not been possible to refund the credit (for example because a forwarding address is not known) the credit will be written off after a period of 9 months has elapsed.

18. Housing benefit overpayments

- 18.1 In certain circumstances it may not be practical or appropriate to recover an overpayment. In those cases, consideration will be given to the non-recovery or write-off of the debt.

18.2 Non-recoverable write offs – local authority error

As part of the claim assessment process, housing benefit overpayments caused by local authority error are identified.

The decision as to whether they are recoverable or not is made using guidance contained in the housing benefit regulations. This considers whether the claimant could not, at the time of the payment or notification of payment reasonably be expected to realise they had been overpaid. If they could not, the overpayment is not legally recoverable and will be classed as non-recoverable.

18.3 Non-recoverable write offs – DWP error

Overpayments will be classified as DWP error as part of the claim assessment process if the DWP have confirmed that they are responsible for the overpayment. In these circumstances the debt will be written off.

19. Bad debt provision

- 19.1 The Director of Strategic Finance (Section 151 Officer) must ensure there is adequate provision for bad debts, in accordance with the relevant CIPFA Code of Practice.

- 19.2 Debts should be reviewed on a timely basis with effective recovery methods applied. Where debts are irrecoverable, suitable evidence should be provided and retained to justify the write-off of the debt.

20. Processing a write off request

- 20.1 This is covered by separate staff procedure notes and by using appropriate computer system transaction codes so that the reason for write-off can be identified and monitored.

21. Management checks

- 21.1 Management controls are in place to ensure that debt is only written off in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

21.2 Debts up to the value of £5,000 can be written off by the Section 151 officer, under delegated authority. Permission needs to be obtained from the Hub Committee to write-off individual debts over £5,000.

22. Policy Review

22.1 The implementation and effectiveness of this policy and its supporting procedures will be checked and monitored by the Head of Revenues and Benefits and associated management team.

22.2 The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains valid, effective and relevant.

Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **7 March 2023**
Title: **Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy**
Portfolio Area: **Cllr Edmonds – Council Tax**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken:

Author: **Geni Hotchkiss** Role: **Head of Revenues and Benefits**

Contact: **geni.hotchkiss@swdevon.gov.uk**

Recommendations:

That the Hub Committee:

- 1. grant approval to implement the Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy, attached at Appendix A, from 1 April 2023; and**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Director of Strategic Finance (S151 Officer) to agree awards of a Council Tax Discretionary Discount, which have been recommended for authorisation by the Principal Revenues Officer, in consultation with the Head of Revenues and Benefits.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 gives billing authorities (those responsible for the billing and collection of council tax) the discretionary power to reduce, or further reduce, the amount of council tax a person is liable to pay.
- 1.2 This discretion is in addition to various statutory reductions, discounts and disregards contained in Council Tax legislation. The power is applied in exceptional and extenuating circumstances, such as a fire or flood making a property uninhabitable, and will normally be for a short period of time.
- 1.3 The Council agreed a Council Tax Discretionary Discount and Reduction Policy in September 2015. It is good practice to review policies at appropriate intervals and, due to the current cost of

living crisis, it is also an appropriate time to review and refresh the policy and provide a clear framework for discretionary decisions.

- 1.4 This policy is separate to the Council's Exceptional Hardship Fund which continues to provide additional support to residents receiving Council Tax Reduction due to low-income, but who are nonetheless still experiencing financial hardship.

2. Background

- 2.1 Councils have the discretion to award Council Tax discounts of up to 100% of the amount of Council Tax due. Discounts can be awarded on an individual basis or in respect of specific class of property or council taxpayer.
- 2.2 Applications for discretionary discounts must be considered on their individual merits and should only be made in exceptional circumstances. The cost of any discount awarded is met from the Council's General Fund.
- 2.3 It is not considered that there will be many applications for a Council Tax Discretionary Discount as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme supports those residents on low incomes. It is envisaged that the number of cases considered under this policy will be in single figures in each financial year (e.g. less than 10 cases per year). This policy is also supplemented by the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Fund which can be used to assist those residents who are in receipt of Council Tax Reduction, but are still experiencing financial hardship.
- 2.4 In order to ensure that a consistent approach is taken towards the award of discretionary council tax discounts, it is proposed that the policy attached at Appendix A is adopted with effect from 1 April 2023.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 The introduction of an updated Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy means the Council will have a clear policy framework for exercising discretionary powers in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner.
- 3.2 It will provide certainty for residents in that the Council will consider applications for additional help with paying their council tax in a time of crisis or other significant event.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to implement a Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy, however in doing so the Council would be subject to reputational damage.

- 4.2 Further, Councils have been heavily criticised by the Valuation Tribunal Service for not having a Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy, including in the 'landmark' case of SC V East Riding of Yorkshire Council (2014). It is therefore recognised best practice to have a clear policy framework for assessing applications for a Council Tax Discretionary Discount.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 The Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy be agreed to ensure that the Council exercises its discretionary Council Tax powers in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		The Council is able to award discretionary council tax discounts under Section 13A 1 (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		<p>Discretionary awards made under Section 13A 1 (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 are funded wholly by West Devon Borough Council.</p> <p>It is not considered that there will be many applications for a Council Tax Discretionary Discount as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme supports those residents on low incomes. It is envisaged that the number of cases considered under this policy will be in the single figures in each financial year (e.g. less than 10 cases per year).</p> <p>The Principal Revenues Officer will determine all Section 13A (1) (c) applications in consultation with the Head of Revenues and Benefits, with the decision being referred to the Director of Strategic Finance for authorisation.</p>
Risk		<p>The Council is able to award discretionary council tax discounts under Section 13A 1 (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.</p> <p>By having a policy we are clear on the types of circumstances in which officers can exercise their delegation to award such discounts. The adoption of a policy framework reduces the risk of appeals following a refusal to award a discount.</p>
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Supporting the Council's response to the cost of living crisis.

Consultation & Engagement Strategy		There is a statutory requirement to consider applications for Council Tax Discretionary Discounts and therefore no consultation is required.
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		There are not considered to be any Climate Change impacts associated with the recommendations in this report.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		The consideration of applications for a council tax discretionary discount will ensure that the Council meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
Safeguarding		None as a direct result of this report, however the Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy may help keep vulnerable children and adults safe.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None as a direct result of this report, however the Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy may help to reduce crimes such as domestic violence.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		Financial wellbeing is crucial to the lives of our residents and the recommendations in this report are designed to support this.
Other implications		None.

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A - Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy



West Devon Borough Council

Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy has been agreed by the Council to assist all residents liable for Council Tax who may be experiencing financial hardship or distress.
- 1.2 This policy is intended to provide temporary assistance to Council Tax payers to help reduce their Council Tax liability in exceptional circumstances and the operation of the policy is at the discretion of the Council.

2. Legislative Powers

- 2.1 Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 allows the Council to reduce the amount of council tax payable. It can be considered for individual cases or the Council may determine classes of case in which the council tax liability is eligible for reduction.
- 2.2 Council Tax Reduction is considered under Section 13 A (1) (a) and (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which requires the Council to have a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The purpose of the LCTRS is to provide means tested financial support to residents on a low income to meet their council tax liability. Details of West Devon Borough Council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme and application form can be found on our website.
- 2.3 Section 13A (1) (c) allows the Council to consider reducing the amount of council tax payable for individuals or classes, even if they have already had a reduction under Section 13A (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

3. Statement of policy objectives

- 3.1 The purpose of the policy is to specify how the Council will exercise this discretionary power and to set out the factors that will be considered when making a decision on whether to award a council tax discretionary discount or not.
- 3.2 The main objective of a council tax discretionary discount is to offer short term financial assistance to council tax payers who are experiencing exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its own merits and all council tax payers will be treated fairly and equally.
- 3.3 The award of a council tax discretionary discount through this policy is intended as a short term emergency measure and is not intended to cover the shortfall between Council Tax and entitlement to Council Tax Reduction, or any other reduction, on a long term basis. Residents receiving Council Tax Reduction can apply for additional support through the Council's Exceptional Hardship Fund.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 The Council will only consider using its powers to reduce council tax liability for an individual council tax payer or class of council tax payer in exceptional circumstances, because the full cost of the discount is borne by West Devon Borough Council.

5. Application process

- 5.1 The application must be made by the person liable to pay council tax or someone the applicant has given clear authorisation to act on their behalf.
- 5.2 The Council may request any reasonable evidence in support of an application including, and not restricted to, the following:
- The amount of discount being requested (i.e. for a full or part year's council tax);
 - The reason for the application;
 - The period of time the discount is to cover;
 - Steps that have been taken to meet and mitigate the council tax liability;
 - Individual needs and circumstances;
 - Reasonable support evidence in support of the application. This may include, but is not limited to the following:
 1. Income and expenditure statements.
 2. Any help which may be available to applicant from other sources.
 3. Any other information in support of the application.

6. Decision making process

- 6.1 Whilst the discretionary discount policy is, by definition, 'discretionary', the Council has a duty to make decisions in accordance with recognised principles of good decision making i.e. administrative law, and in particular to act fairly, reasonably and consistently.
- 6.2 The Principal Revenues Officer will determine all Section 13A 1 (c) applications in consultation with the Head of Revenues and Benefits, with the decision being referred to the Director of Strategic Finance for authorisation.
- 6.3 Each application will be considered on its own merits, however in assessing the application the Council will take into account the following:
- The shortfall between income and expenditure;
 - Any steps taken by the applicant to resolve their situation prior to application;
 - The household, financial and medical circumstances of the applicant, their partner and any other persons in the household;
 - Any household savings or capital;
 - Any special reasons why the applicant needs to occupy the dwelling in respect of which the liability arises;
 - The impact of council tax arrears for the applicant and their household due to vulnerability by reason of age, sickness or disability;
 - Any actions being taken by the applicant to improve or change their financial or personal situation;
 - Any other special circumstances brought to the attention of the Council.
- 6.4 All other possible discounts, including council tax reduction in cases of financial hardship, must have been applied for and awarded before the application will be considered.
- 6.5 A council tax discretionary discount will not be awarded where the amount outstanding is subject to committal proceedings.
- 6.6 Any decision will take into account the interests of all council tax payers in the West Devon borough as the discount is wholly funded by the billing authority.
- 6.7 Discounts will generally be made from the date the Council received the application, however the Council will backdate discounts agreed under this policy if it is considered fair and reasonable to do so.

7. Government schemes

- 7.1 As part of the response to the Cost of Living crisis and other significant national events, the Government may require Councils to provide support to residents with their council tax bills through the use of S13A discretionary powers.
- 7.1 Where a reduction relates to a government scheme, the eligibility criteria for the scheme will be as defined by Government. Where further local discretion

is allowed, it will be defined by the Council for that specific purpose. All discretionary decisions are made at the absolute discretion of the Council.

8. Amount of discount

- 8.1 The Council will determine how much to award based on the applicant's circumstances and each application will be assessed on its own merits.
- 8.2 Any discount awarded is entirely at the Council's discretion.
- 8.3 The maximum amount of relief to be awarded will be no more than the amount of council tax outstanding after all other discounts have been awarded. As this is a discretion which is only exercised in exceptional circumstances, this will be a 'one-off' payment.
- 8.4 The discount will be granted by crediting the value to the council tax account, reducing the amount payable. Applicants will not receive a cash or any other type of payment.

9. Notification of decisions

- 9.1 The Council will notify the applicant in writing of the outcome of their application within 21 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision.
- 9.2 Where the application is successful, the applicant will receive notification of:
 - The amount of the discount;
 - Any steps the applicant should take or conditionality attached to the award;
 - The start and end date of the discount;
 - Their duty to report any change of circumstances that may affect the award;
 - The recoverability of any award.
- 9.3 Where an application is not successful, the applicant will be notified of the procedure to be followed if they disagree with the decision.

10. Review of Decision

- 10.1 Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, there is no right of appeal against the Council's use of discretionary powers. However, the Council will accept an applicant's written request for a further review of its decision, if it is made within one month of the date of notification of the decision.
- 10.2 The request for review will be considered by a person other than the person who made the original decision. They will consider whether the applicant has provided any additional information against the required criteria that will justify a change to the original decision.
- 10.3 If the review concludes not to revise the original decision, this decision is final and may only be challenged by way of an appeal to the Valuation Tribunal or by judicial review.

11. Fraud

- 11.1 If the Council becomes aware that the information contained in the application was incorrect or that relevant information was not declared, either intentionally or otherwise, the Council will seek to recover the value of any award made as a result of that application. The award will be removed from the council tax account and any resulting balance will be subject to the normal methods of collection and recovery which may incur additional costs.
- 11.2 The Council is committed to the fight against all forms of fraud. Any applicant who attempts to claim a Section 13A discount may have committed an offence under the Fraud Act 2006. If the Council suspects that fraud may have occurred, the matter will be investigated and could lead to criminal proceedings.

12. Policy Review

- 12.1 The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains valid, effective and relevant.

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Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **7th March 2023**
Title: **Housing Crisis Update**
Portfolio Area: **Homes – Cllr Barry Ratcliffe**

Wards Affected: **all**

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

Date next steps can be taken:

Author: **Isabel Blake** Role: **Head of Housing**
Laura Wotton **Head of Assets**

Contact: **01822 813551**/email: Isabel.blake@swdevon.gov.uk
Laura.wotton@swdevon.gov.uk

RECOMMENDATION

That the Hub Committee:

- 1. Approves the use of up to £1.4m from the Government’s Local Authority Housing Fund and Homes for Ukraine funding allocations for the purchase of up to 5 properties;**
- 2. Authorises the Head of Assets, in consultation with the Head of Housing and Section 151 Officer, to identify within the available funding, up to 5 suitable properties and to take the necessary steps for the Council to purchase those properties;**
- 3. Subject to positive pre-planning application discussions, authorises the Head of Assets to prepare and submit a full planning application for the conversion and use of 20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock as temporary accommodation with at-risk costs of up to £30,000 being financed from the Homeless Prevention winter pressure grant; and**
- 4. Notes the progress on Springhill, Tavistock and Wonnacotts Road, Okehampton.**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report recommends acquiring up to 5 properties under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) providing accommodation for those displaced by the conflict in Afghanistan and Ukraine.
- 1.2 The LAHF provides 40% or 50% (depending on number of bedrooms) of funding to the Council and it is recommended that the Council uses funding from the Homes for Ukraine funds held by it and, subject to successful negotiations, by Devon County Council. No borrowing or other Council funding is required.
- 1.3 The report also considers the proposed conversion of 20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock for use as much needed temporary accommodation. Then, subject to the outcome of the pre-planning application, proceeding with a full planning application using funding from the Homeless Prevention winter pressure grant.
- 1.4 Finally, the report updates the Hub Committee with an update on the Wonnacotts Road and Springhill site preparation works.

2. Local Authority Housing Fund - Background

- 2.1 In December 2022, the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities released a prospectus (Appendix 1) regarding a £500 million capital funding opportunity known as the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF).
- 2.2 The fund aims to alleviate housing pressures on local authorities arising from conflict in Afghanistan and Ukraine. As part of this government's humanitarian response to these crises, over 170,000 people have been welcomed to the United Kingdom. This has unavoidably created additional demand for housing at a time when local authorities are already under strain.
- 2.3 The funding offer, made to selected Local Authorities of which West Devon was one, came with an allocation of 40% of the lower quartile of up to 8 properties in the Borough with 1-3 bedrooms. This equates to a total allocation of £811,712 subject to the number of properties purchased.
- 2.4 Further funding is available for larger properties of at least 4 bedrooms at 50% of the purchase price. This is part of the requirement of the funding allocation and the sum available for this is a further £204,395. This funding element can be progressed independently of the 8 properties. However providing a larger property is a prerequisite of accessing the balance of funding for the 1-3 bed homes.
- 2.5 Participation in the scheme is optional for Local Authorities who must fund the balance of the purchase. In the case of

West Devon this balance for 9 properties would equate to £1,421,936 if it were to purchase the maximum of 9 properties. It is therefore recommended in this report to consider purchase options for up to 5 properties, which dependent on agreement with Devon County Council, would not require additional funding or borrowing from the Council outside of Homes for Ukraine funding.

- 2.6 Neither Homes England grant funding nor Right to Buy capital receipts can be used to fund the purchase of the properties. However, Section 106 affordable housing contributions can be used, as can Local Authority Reserves or Public Works Loan Board borrowing.
- 2.7 LAHF is an opportunity for Councils to purchase property, in the first instance for a cohort of Ukrainians where there is already a homeless duty following placement breakdown, and to support Afghan families who are in the UK and currently residing in bridging hotels.
- 2.8 When the property is no longer required by the intended cohort, the Council can use the property to meet its housing need and will retain ownership of the asset in perpetuity.
- 2.9 Having reviewed the funding available to the Council, it is recommended to support the Government proposal and match fund the purchase of up to 5 properties utilising:
 - The bridging element of the West Devon allocation of LAHF funding to purchase 50% of a larger property (4-bed)
 - The main element of the West Devon allocation of LAHF funding to purchase 40% of the other property portfolio.
 - funding from the Homes for Ukraine fund and, part of the contingency Homes for Ukraine funding held by Devon County Council (subject to agreement with DCC) up to a combined total of £1.4million.
- 2.10 The properties are yet to be identified but it is likely they will be in the major settlements, close to public transport and other amenities. This is essential for Ukrainian and Afghan households and also for other homeless households where the Council has a duty to offer temporary accommodation.
- 2.11 **West Devon House Purchase Funding Model Example**
- 2.12 This shows an example based on a portfolio of 5 properties (1X4 bed, 1 x3bed and 3 x2 bed) advertised on the open market on 16th February 2023. It is recommended this is the maximum number of properties in the varying sizes that the Council can afford within the parameters of the scheme and without additional borrowing. It relies on a number of assumptions and it must be noted that the size, type and number of properties may change by the time we are in a

position to purchase. Assumptions are based on property on the open market as of 16th February 202. The recommendation to approve the spend of up to £1.4m in this report reflect the multiple variables for delivery.

Portfolio cost is likely to be (A) for the purchase of up to 5 properties	£1,368,000
Government Grant – LAHF (40% of 2/3 bed + 50% 4 bed) (B)	£610,251
The Council’s proportion to fund (A-B=C)	£757,749
To be funded by:-	
Homes for Ukraine fund capital available for use (D)	£545,124
DCC contingency funding required subject to negotiation (E)	£212,625

Table 1 example figures for the acquisition of 5 properties

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal recommended to the Hub Committee is for the purchase of up to 5 new properties (not more than 10 years old), using:
- Part of the West Devon allocation of LAHF funding,
 - funding from the Homes for Ukraine fund,
 - part of the contingency Homes for Ukraine funding held by Devon County Council
- 3.2 The modelling for purchase is predicated on utilising a proportion of the Homes for Ukraine contingency fund held by Devon County Council. The County are supportive in principle of the proposals within this report however the funding is subject to ongoing negotiation.
- 3.3 Homes will be offered on non-secure tenancies only. This prevents security of tenure or right to buy provisions, so ensuring the properties remain permanently available for temporary housing. The management of these homes will be provided by Seamoor Homes, who already have experience with accommodating refugees.
- 3.4 The purchases will provide the Council with a portfolio of self-contained accommodation for future use as temporary accommodation and enable the Council to discharge its statutory homeless duties.

3.5 There is a Government expectation that to secure the funding allocation, monies will be committed by November 2023. The ability to realise this opportunity will be dependent upon the following:

- The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities by 15th March 2023,
- The availability of suitable housing stock in the Borough,
- Successful negotiation on the Homes for Ukraine contingency funding held by Devon County Council
- Ability to agree acceptable terms with vendors in a timely manner and Exchange contracts on properties prior to November 2023.

4. 20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock - Background

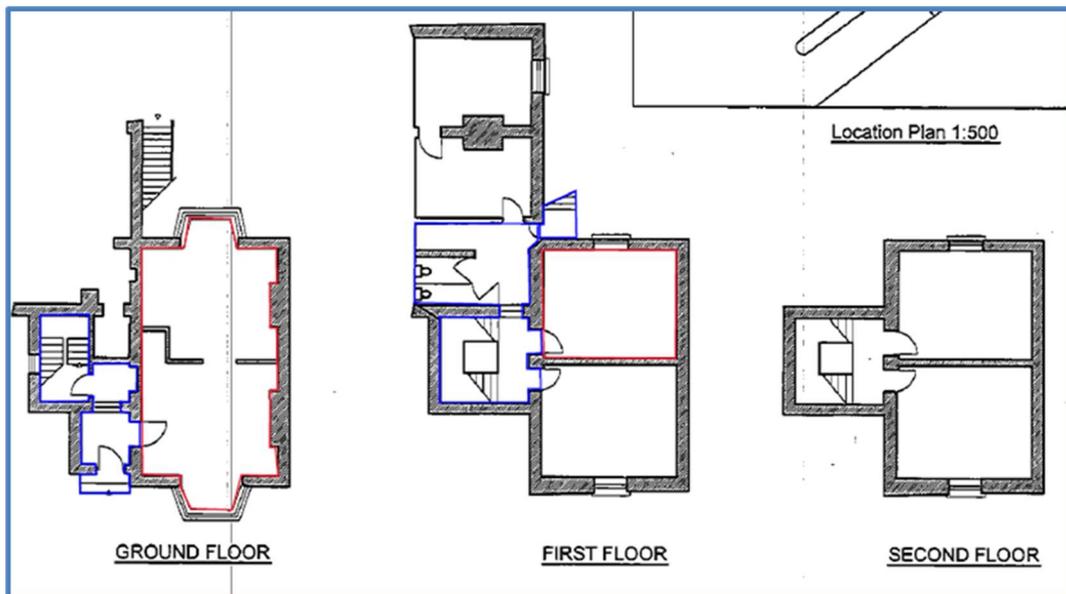
4.1 The Council own 20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock. This property which was originally a pair of semi-detached houses, was built in the early 1900's with accommodation over 4 floors, including a basement. Historically, it appears the property was let as 3 separate flats.





4.2 The property provides small, poor-quality offices with limited headroom. Over the last 5 years, it has been advertised consistently on Rightmove and the Council's website but has remained underoccupied and for the last two years has only had one tenant.

4.3 The existing layout is shown below.



4.4 It was therefore identified as unviable for continued letting as office accommodation, particularly as the Council has other vacant office space in Tavistock for example at Kilworthy Park.

4.5 In addition to the existing office space, there is an adjoining space, previously used as the Bus Station kiosk which is currently unoccupied.

4.6 Discussions therefore commenced ahead of any disposal to consider whether the Council had a continued need for the

building and an opportunity was identified to retain 20 Plymouth Road and convert to residential accommodation, to support local housing need, particularly for temporary housing.

5. Housing need

- 5.1 There has recently been an increase in the amount of time it takes to source suitable long-term accommodation for those requiring it. This has led to an increase in the amount of time applicants are staying in our temporary accommodation from an average stay of 33 nights in B&B and 78 in self-contained accommodation in 21/22 to an average of 64 nights B&B and 113 in self-contained accommodation in 22/23 (to date).
- 5.2 Temporary accommodation costs are predominantly met through the housing benefit claims made by applicants. The maximum subsidy we can claim from the DWP for single person (inc. couples) accommodation is £98.08 a week. The cost of spot purchased B&B averages at £57.93/night or £405.51/week (2021-22 average). The resulting shortfall is met by WDBC.
- 5.3 The redevelopment of Plymouth Road will enable us to meet our temporary accommodation requirements while turning a cost into a self-sufficient asset.

6. Potential Residential Conversion

- 6.1 Architects have been appointed to provide a preliminary feasibility study outlining various options for the conversion of the property.
- 6.2 From this, a three flat conversion of the main property to 2 x 1 Bed and 1 x 2 Bed flat was selected as being the most suitable conversion of the premises. This maximises available accommodation to meet housing need and represents a cost-effective solution working within the existing parameters of the building.
- 6.3 Also included within the pre-application submission, was the possible conversion of the previous Bus Station kiosk/waiting room to a 1 x 1 Bedroom flat. Any future conversion of the kiosk would be subject to consideration of other potential operational requirements. The proposed layout is attached at Appendix 2.

- 6.4 Initial planning advice confirmed a planning application would be required to secure a change of use from commercial to residential. The main policy restraint is DEV14 (Maintaining a flexible mix of employment sites):

A flexible supply of employment land and premises will be maintained to support investment and expansion of existing businesses as well as for the inward investment of high-value businesses, particularly but not exclusively those involved in the marine sector, advanced manufacturing and knowledge based industries. The following provisions will apply:

- 1. Change of use of existing employment sites (including vacant sites whose lawful use is for employment purposes) will only be allowed where the following applies:
 - i. The proposal is specifically provided for by the local plan to deliver wider strategic objectives, or*
 - ii. There are overriding and demonstrable economic, regeneration and sustainable neighbourhood / communities benefits from doing so, or*
 - iii. There is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for employment use in the future.**

- 6.5 Accordingly, a pre-planning application was prepared and submitted on 20th January 2023. An initial site visit is scheduled for early February 2023.
- 6.6 Alongside this a structural assessment of the building has been carried out to assess the existing condition and review the implications of the proposed options and their feasibility.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1 Await the outcome of the pre-planning application, anticipated by the end of 22/23 Q4.
- 7.2 In the event of a positive response relating to the proposed conversion to residential accommodation, commission the preparation of a full planning application based upon the proposed layout (or revised subject to the pre-planning advice).
- 7.3 Estimated costs to complete the planning application, to include required surveys is circa £30,000 (including any works to date). This would be at risk spend and can be financed from the Homeless Prevention (inc. Winter Top Up) government funding.
- 7.4 It is anticipated a planning application will be made in Q 1 2023/24, with a full report to Hub Committee reporting on outcomes to be brought in Q 2/3 2023/24.

8. Springhill Update

- 8.1 Following the approval of the recommendations contained within the October Housing Hub Committee Report, a Pre-Construction Services Contract was entered into with a preferred contractor.
- 8.2 The Council are currently working with the contractor to review the design and develop a final construction cost. Should the cost be deemed acceptable and approved at full Council it is the intention to immediately enter the final construction contract.
- 8.3 Officers are likely to have the results and the construction cost in March 2023. An update to Hub Committee will follow.

9. Wonnacotts Update

- 9.1 Further to the October Hub Committee report, officers continue to progress the plan to bring forward the development of the site at Wonnacotts Road, a site in its ownership in Okehampton.
- 9.2 An architect has been engaged to inform on site constraints and produce a massing plan to establish baseline viability and inform the pre-planning application process.
- 9.3 This work is due to complete in Q1 of 23/24 with an update to Hub Committee to follow. This will report on feasibility and potential delivery options for example, whether the Council delivers the scheme itself or works with a Registered Provider.
- 9.4 It is anticipated that a business case will be presented to members in Q3/4 of 23/24.

10. Report Conclusions

- 10.1 This report brings forward recommendations on a number of positive interventions to support the Housing Crisis:
 - Securing 40% Government funding and utilising Homes for Ukraine monies to purchase up to 5 properties for people displaced by the conflict in Ukraine and Afghanistan in the first instance whilst remaining a Council asset and creating an income from the rental element of the properties on a permanent basis.
 - If the planning application is successful and the Council is able to deliver 4 units of temporary accommodation at 20 Plymouth Road, the Council will be transforming an underused building into much needed housing for vulnerable people in the Borough, so avoiding the need for costly and disruptive pay per night accommodation.

- On-going work at Springhill and Wonnacotts further supports the Council's ambition around our priority of housing whilst recognising the complexities of both sites.

11. Implications

Implications	Relevant Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The property portfolio through LAHF will create a Landlord/tenant relationship with any occupants. Because the properties will be offered as temporary accommodation on Licenses or non-secure tenancies the Council the risk of an occupier establishing a right to buy will be minimised.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>The Council is unable to commit to the full allocation of 9 properties through LAHF as there are current funding commitments towards Springhill.</p> <p>The Homes for Ukraine funding is not ringfenced and therefore can be utilised for capital expenditure projects. The alternative for placement breakdown is temporary accommodation on a pay per night basis (Bed & Breakfast). This funding gives an opportunity to fund the purchase of self-contained accommodation with long term use for the Council.</p> <p>The proposal recommended to the Hub Committee is for the purchase of up to 5 new properties (not more than 10 years old), using part of the West Devon allocation of LAHF funding, funding from the Homes for Ukraine fund and part of the contingency Homes for Ukraine funding held by Devon County Council as set out in 2.12.</p>
Risk		<p>The purchase of up to 5 properties through the LAHF within the timescales set out by Government is a significant project. The fund makes a further £20k available per property to assist in conveyancing, legal work, furnishing, floorings and white goods, which whilst reducing the risk does not alleviate it completely with the number of external factors influencing progression.</p> <p>Project management and a government requirement for 2 monthly returns will further manage this risk.</p>

Supporting Corporate Strategy		Homes
Climate Change - Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		The purchase of new residential units will increase our operational carbon emissions, as buildings we will own, but not directly occupy, an increase will be found in our 'scope 3' emissions for electricity (and gas if available) arising from occupier use. Whilst these new buildings will need to be decarbonised if we are to reach our climate emergency declaration aims to become net zero as an organisation by 2030, its important to be aware of emissions forecasts up to 2030. Whilst the emissions factor for gas is largely unchanged (as gas will always emit CO2) the total emission factor for electricity is forecast to be 0.089 kg CO ₂ e/kWh by 2030 (down from 0.267 kg CO ₂ e/kWh currently). This effectively means under a "do nothing" approach, emissions from any electricity consumption will fall by 71% between the most recent year of data and 2030. We haven't been able to calculate the emissions additions associated with these buildings as information isn't available to do this. However, as the building will add to our overall emissions by virtue of increase gas and electricity consumption, based on future grid decarbonisation forecasts, the likely cumulative effects of electricity emissions will fall naturally over time. Works instead will need to focus on moving properties off gas.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		None directly as a result of this report
Safeguarding		None directly as a result of this report
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		As the accommodation will be utilised by Ukrainian, Afghan and other vulnerable homeless households we will work with the police and the Community Safety Partnership to ensure purchase of properties are in safe locations
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		The LAHF opportunity represents an opportunity for the Council to offer self-contained accommodation, in sustainable locations to households who would otherwise need to access pay nightly accommodation, lacking cooking or laundry facilities or holiday lets, at not only significant cost to the taxpayer but at detriment to the health and wellbeing of the household, including any children.

Other implications		
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Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities prospectus regarding a £500 million capital funding opportunity known as the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF); and

Appendix 2: 20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock Proposed Residential Conversion Floor Plan

Background Papers:

Local Authority Housing Fund prospectus and guidance



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Local Authority Housing Fund

Prospectus and Guidance

December 2022
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

1. Introduction

Earlier this year the United Kingdom took the historic decision to welcome tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing the invasion of their homeland. Since then, and thanks to the generosity of the British public, more than 150,000 Ukrainians have been welcomed into homes and communities under the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family schemes. We have also welcomed around 23,000 Afghans who worked alongside the UK Government and risked their lives alongside our Armed Forces, as well as people who assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan.

Local authorities play a vital and integral role in welcoming and integrating recent visa-scheme arrivals to the UK. It is thanks to the hard work of so many in local government, and the wider public sector, across all parts of our country that we have been able to welcome so many people to safety. The Government is introducing further support to help our guests from Ukraine and those who arrived from Afghanistan to find their feet, including local help to find suitable private rented accommodation; assistance via the Department of Work and Pensions to access benefits, skills training and gain employment; and signposting and access to charities and mental health providers. This is backed up by the tariff that authorities receive for each Homes for Ukraine guest arriving in their area; the Afghan Resettlement Schemes to support integration; and additional funding specifically for education and healthcare in the first year of arrival on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

To assist local authorities further, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is introducing a £500 million capital fund – the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) – for local authorities in England to provide accommodation to families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes. Local authorities who have welcomed arrivals are facing challenges in securing settled accommodation for these households, which unless alleviated will further impact existing housing pressures. LAHF will help them to address these immediate pressures as well as build a sustainable stock of affordable housing for the future.

This prospectus sets out the objectives for the fund, what local authorities can spend the grant on, defines the cohort eligible, and the process we will follow for allocating grants to local authorities.

2. Purpose of the fund

The Local Authority Housing Fund is a £500m capital grant fund in financial years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 to support selected local authorities in England to obtain and refurbish property in order to provide sustainable housing for those unable to secure their own accommodation who are here under the following schemes: Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) (collectively referred to as the Afghan Schemes), Ukraine Family Scheme, the Homes for Ukraine and the Ukraine Extension Scheme (collectively referred to as Ukraine schemes). A full definition of the eligible cohort is at section 3.2.

As well as helping to fulfil the UK's humanitarian duties to assist those fleeing war, this fund will reduce the impact of new arrivals on existing housing pressures and ultimately create a lasting legacy for domestic households by providing a new and permanent supply of accommodation for local authorities to help address local housing and homelessness pressures. We expect up to 4,000 properties would be provided through this fund.

Local authorities will be allocated capital funding under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 on the basis of a formula. Delivery targets will be based upon this funding allocation, estimated by a blended grant per property model. Local authorities will determine the most effective means to deliver the fund objectives in their area.

The grants will be non-ringfenced and we will sign Memoranda of Understanding with all local authorities receiving funding to set out our shared expectations for how the fund should be delivered.

Local authorities in scope of the funding formula for this fund will be contacted with their indicative allocation and asked to return a proposal on how they would deliver this accommodation in line with fund objectives outlined below.

2.1 Fund Objectives

The fund aims to alleviate housing pressures on local authorities arising from recent and unforeseen conflicts in Afghanistan and Ukraine. As part of this government's humanitarian response to these crises, we have welcomed over 170,000 people to the United Kingdom. This act of generosity has unavoidably created additional demand for housing at a time when local authorities are already under strain.

The objectives of the fund are to:

- Ensure recent humanitarian schemes (Afghan and Ukraine schemes) which offer sanctuary, via an organised safe and legal entry route, to those fleeing conflict, provide sufficient longer term accommodation to those they support.
- Support areas with housing pressures which have generously welcomed substantial numbers of Ukrainian refugees so that these areas are not disadvantaged by increased pressures from these arrivals on the existing housing and homelessness systems.
- Mitigate the expected increased pressures on local authority homelessness and social housing resources which arise from the eligible cohort (as defined at section 3.2 of the fund's prospectus) as sponsorship/family placements/bridging accommodation arrangements come to an end by increasing the provision of affordable housing available to local authorities to support those in the cohort who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or in bridging accommodation;
- Reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs;

- Deliver accommodation that as far as possible allows for the future conversion of housing units to support wider local authority housing and homelessness responsibilities to UK nationals (i.e. after usage by this cohort ends);
- Utilise accommodation solutions to enable effective resettlement and economic integration of the eligible cohort.
- Reduce impacts on the existing housing and homelessness systems and those waiting for social housing.

3. What the funding can be used for

Within the framework of the purpose and objectives of the fund set out above, we want to provide local authorities with as much flexibility as possible to shape local delivery according to circumstances in each area. The guidance provided in this document is intended to support this. Local authorities will need to be satisfied that their specific plans are lawful and deliverable.

This fund will pay capital funding in two tranches, to be spent in financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24. Local authorities cannot combine this fund with the Affordable Homes Programme or Right to Buy receipts. There is no revenue funding available. Local authorities will have their own processes in place to determine the accounting treatment of revenue costs directly attributable to capital works. It is for local authorities to determine whether it is appropriate to capitalise any revenue costs and their accounting teams should ensure that the accounting treatment adopted is deemed compliant with the code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting.

The basic model assumes stock acquisition. In practice this could include, but is not limited to:

- Refurbishing and/or converting local authority-owned residential or non-residential buildings, including defunct sheltered accommodation;
- Acquiring, refurbishing and/or converting non-local authority owned residential or non-residential buildings, including bringing empty or dilapidated properties back into use;
- Acquiring new build properties 'off-the-shelf', including acquiring and converting shared ownership properties;
- Developing new properties, including developing modular housing on council-owned sites, and;
- Working with and supporting other organisations who want to offer accommodation for this cohort.

Ultimately, local authorities may choose the most appropriate delivery mechanism to achieve the fund's objectives, and to bring on stream the accommodation as quickly as possible.

While local authorities will take the lead in their areas, this does not mean the above activities must be all be undertaken by local authorities. We expect local authorities to work closely with their housing association partners who stand ready to assist and, in

some cases, may be the most appropriate delivery vehicle to achieve the fund objectives. Housing association stock, development, and disposals pipelines could be instrumental in assisting local authorities to deliver this fund, as could their expertise and capacity for stock purchase, management and wraparound support.

Local authorities may choose to acquire properties in their own area or work with neighbouring authorities to acquire properties in their region; it is left to each local authorities' discretion whether collaboration of this kind would be an appropriate route although we would encourage collaboration where possible.

Local authorities should consider the needs of the cohort in their area when determining the size of properties to acquire. Our expectation is that the vast majority of properties acquired will be family sized homes (2-4+ bedrooms).

There are 182 local authorities, plus the Greater London Authority (GLA), eligible for funding. Eligible local authorities will receive an allocation email, which will set out the funding amount and the minimum number of units the LA needs to deliver with this funding. Local authorities or their partners are expected to fund the remainder of the costs, examples include but are not limited to funding from capital receipts, revenue, borrowing or funding by a partner.

Local authorities will be expected to manage this fund within their normal budgetary guidelines, with confidence that any budgeting decisions can be justified to their auditors. We will ask Section 151 officers to agree this with the department via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); further details can be found at section 4.

It is expected that all homes delivered through this fund will be affordable/low-cost housing to support wider local authority housing and homelessness responsibilities for the remainder of their lifetime. If properties are disposed of, they will be subject to the Recycled Capital Grant regulations. Funding provided under this fund is for whole-life housing costs and local authorities are expected to use the funding in line with the fund objectives outlined in 2.1. It is up to local authorities to determine the precise rent level and tenure of homes in line with the fund objectives. This could include social rent, Affordable Rent, or a discounted private rent.

3.1 Ambition for housing those in bridging accommodation

There are around 9,200 people currently living in Home Office bridging accommodation who are being resettled via the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. This fund aims to support local authorities to help move more households out of bridging accommodation. Each of the 182 local authorities, plus the Greater London Authority on behalf of London boroughs, in scope for grant funding will be expected to increase their number of pledges to support people under the Afghan resettlement schemes through the usual process (by notifying their Strategic Migration Partnerships) and will be set an ambition for the number of homes to acquire specifically for housing those currently in bridging accommodation. This will be for larger homes (four or more bedrooms), given the average family size of those in bridging accommodation, and the number of properties will be determined by the population size of the local authority. The funding allocation

includes a specific element for the acquisition of larger properties for this cohort. However, local authorities can also use the main element of their funding allocation to move smaller families out of bridging accommodation into smaller homes with fewer than 4 bedrooms in addition to their allotted target for larger homes.

For this fund, we expect all local authorities in scope for funding to deliver their allocation of 4+ bedroom homes for those in bridging accommodation, and local authorities will be asked as part of the validation process whether they are able to deliver those additional units.

If local authorities do not increase their pledges and do not commit to provide sufficient larger homes to this cohort (or if the GLA commits to provide fewer than its targeted amount within London), then their provisional allocation (both the bridging and main element) will be reallocated.

3.2 Cohort Definition and Eligibility

Given the objectives of the fund, those eligible for the housing are those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or who live in unsuitable Temporary Accommodation (including bridging accommodation) and who also meet the below definition.

Those on the:

- Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (including eligible British Nationals under this scheme) (ACRS),
- Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- Ukraine Family Scheme (UFS),
- Homes for Ukraine (HFU),
- Ukraine Extension Scheme (UES)

For those not in bridging accommodation, the local authority does not have to have accepted a Housing Act 1996 Part 7 homelessness duty in respect of the household for the household to be eligible, but the local authority should satisfy themselves that the household is already or would otherwise be homeless or at risk of homelessness if this accommodation was not available.

3.3 Matching households with properties

It will be up to local authorities to decide how to deliver and manage this fund locally. The accommodation funded through this fund should increase the housing available for the cohort outlined in section 3.2.

In addition to the eligibility criteria above, the local authority should make reasonable endeavours to prioritise households based on who is most in need when matching eligible households with properties. Beyond this, local authorities may use any lawful route that allows them to deliver this fund to cater for the needs of their area. They may wish to use their experience from the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Fund or use the same assessment and prioritisation process as for mainstream social housing stock.

Some examples of options for matching eligible households to properties include:

- Using, amending or putting in place a Local Lettings Policy to allow homes to be allocated by local authorities, or nominated to housing associations, to eligible applicants of a particular description. This is allowed under the Housing Act 1996 (section 166A(6)(b))
- Letting accommodation through a local authority owned housing company.

This is not exhaustive and depending on how local authorities are delivering the fund, they may identify other legal ways for matching households with properties.

For the larger homes acquired to enable households to move out of Home Office bridging accommodation, we would encourage local authorities to use their relationships with each other, their Strategic Migration Partnerships and with staff in bridging hotels to identify and match families to suitable properties. This is to increase the chances of successful matches, as we recognise that local resettlement leads are well-placed to use local intelligence on households in their regions to identify suitable matches and reduce the chances of refusals as much as possible. Local authorities can indicate a preference for a specific family to be matched to a property they have acquired on the ARAP/ACRS property offer form. Alternatively, if a local authority is unable to identify a specific family in a bridging hotel, the local authority can put forward properties (via their Strategic Migration Partnership) to be centrally matched by the Home Office. As mentioned above, we expect local authorities to increase their pledges for the Afghan resettlement schemes beyond their existing pledge amount to reflect the acquisition of these new properties.

3.4 Tenancy Duration and social housing legacy

Given this fund aims to create a lasting supply of affordable housing for the general population (see fund objectives at section 2.1), we expect this stock to become available to support wider local authority general housing and homelessness responsibilities after the immediate needs of the eligible cohort have been addressed.

As the housing landscape in each area and the circumstances of eligible households vary, we will not mandate local authorities to apply a fixed tenancy duration for housing funded through the fund, though in many cases this may be appropriate.

4. Funding Allocations and Delivery

4.1 Initial allocation of funding

The initial funding offer will be determined and offered to the 182 local authorities and Greater London Authority in England, who are deemed to have the greatest need for this funding based on a formula. A formula will be used to identify the total allocation to those local authorities in scope for funding across the duration of the fund.

Local authorities are given an overall ranking based on several sets of data. This combines their relative ranking in terms of the number of Ukrainian arrivals per 1000 population and their relative ranking in terms of the level of housing pressure (which includes Private Rented Sector rents in relation to income, unemployment rate, number of households in Temporary Accommodation (TA) per 1000 households and

number of households on local authority waiting lists per 1000). This data is used because in the areas of highest housing pressure, it will be most difficult for refugees/arrivals to find housing, and therefore the risk of homelessness will be higher. The capacity of local authorities to respond in these areas will also be more limited because of the shortage of housing and associated higher housing costs. The Ukrainian arrivals data is used in this ranking to reflect the sudden and additional pressure from a rapid increase in the number of arrivals of people fleeing war, which is a different magnitude to the number of refugee arrivals in recent years. Numbers in bridging accommodation in each local authority is not used because of the policy objective to move Afghans out of bridging accommodation into local authorities across the country.

An initial indicative allocation will then be offered to each local authority, working from the most pressured local authority down, on the basis of:

- A fair share requirement to accommodate families in bridging accommodation, based on a per capita distribution for those local authorities in scope of funding and a grant per property set at 50% of the estimated average lower quartile 4+ bed property price plus an allocation of £20k per property (to allow for refurbishment/other costs)
- Distributing the remaining budget based on a ratio of 1 home per 20 Ukrainian arrivals, which is then costed at a grant per property of 40% of the estimated average lower quartile property price (plus £20k per property for refurbishment/other costs)
- The model distributes funding down the list of local authorities (ranked based on Ukrainian arrivals and housing pressure) until the budget is expended, resulting in 182 local authorities (plus the GLA) being in scope for funding.

In addition, several caps are put in place for the initial allocation to help support deliverability, to minimise inflationary impacts and to ensure all parts of the country receive some support. These are:

- a. constraining the initial London allocation to reflect an achievable delivery target in the capital's highly constrained housing market;
- b. capping the allocation per region at 25% of the total fund spend; and
- c. capping the allocation to any single local authority at 30 homes.

4.2 Funding split between financial years

The local authorities who are identified by the formula as eligible for funding will be contacted directly with an indicative offer of their total allocation. Authorities will be asked whether they will be able to spend this allocation to deliver the outlined number of homes, in accordance with the details set out in this prospectus (and if not, what they could deliver). Local authorities will also be asked whether they can deliver more than the allocation using the same grant per property (detailed at 4.3).

Funding will be paid in two tranches representing 30% and 70% of the local authority's allocation agreed in the MOU. We expect that the first tranche of funding will be paid in February/March 2023 – depending on when the MoU is agreed.

The second tranche of funding will pay 'the balance' of the local authority's allocation. There will be two predetermined tranche payment dates; the first at three months and the second at five months from the tranche one payment. Dates will be confirmed as part of the MOU process. To receive the second tranche payment the local authority must have spent at least 60% of the tranche one payment delivering on the objectives of the fund, which we will ask the local authority to declare to us at progress 'checkpoints'. Local authorities do not need to wait until receiving the second tranche of payment before spending more than their tranche one payment given 'the balance' will be paid following the checkpoint when they have spent 60% of their tranche one payment.

We will also ask local authorities about the number of property purchase offers they have made, how many of those offers have been accepted, and how many contracts they have exchanged, for example. To monitor delivery, we will ask for these progress updates at each funding checkpoint, regardless of whether the local authority has reached the 60% spending threshold.

We anticipate that any additional funding agreed via the reallocations process will be paid at the same time as the second tranche payment, with an update to the MOU following the reallocations process to reflect this additional funding. Where there is no direct allocation already in place (eg London councils) new MoU arrangements may be created.

4.3 Grant Rate and Eligible Spend

Allocations to each council have been calculated as follows:

- For the "main element", the amount of grant per property is calculated as 40% of the average lower quartile property price in the council area (or for London, 40% of the average lower quartile property price in Greater London). A further £20k per property is then added to account for other costs (including refurbishment).
- For the "bridging element" (i.e. 4+ bedroom houses) the amount of grant per property is calculated as 50% of the estimated lower quartile property price for a 4+ bedroom property in the council area (or for London, 50% of the estimated lower quartile property price for a 4+ bedroom property in Greater London). A further £20k per property is then added to account for other costs, including refurbishment.

Grant rates and Eligible Expenditure for Main and Bridging Elements

It is expected that councils will use their best endeavours to acquire the target number of units and to achieve value for money. The average grant per property rate should not exceed the maximum described below but the grant per property for individual

purchases can be higher. It is recognised that the grant will not meet all of the acquisition costs and so there is an expectation that the council, or its partners, will provide the remainder of the funding required.

The maximum average grant per property rate (for the portfolio of properties, not individual purchases) for the “main element” is 40% of the costs the council charges to its capital budget plus £20k per property. Eligible costs funded by the 40% and the 20k per property could include the purchase price, stamp duty, surveying, legal and other fees, refurbishments, energy efficiency measures, decoration, furnishings, or otherwise preparing the property for rent and potentially irrecoverable VAT incurred on these items. Councils should ensure they comply with the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting when deciding eligible costs.

The maximum average grant per property rate (for the portfolio of properties, not individual purchases) for the “bridging element” is 50% of the costs the council charges to its capital budget plus £20k per property. Eligible costs funded by the 50% and the 20k per property could include the purchase price, stamp duty, surveying, legal and other fees, refurbishments, energy efficiency measures, decoration, furnishings, or otherwise preparing the property for rent and potentially irrecoverable VAT incurred on these items. Councils should ensure they comply with the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting.

In some cases, the amount of money provided by the grant per property may equate to an intervention rate higher than the maximum set out above - for example if the local authority is focussing on smaller homes, such as 2 bedrooms, because these better suit the needs of the eligible cohort in the area or constitute the majority of the available stock to purchase. If this means the grant rate equates to more than the maximum, the local authority is expected to acquire more units with this funding than the estimated minimum (or outline in the MOU process that less funding is needed to deliver the number of units outlined in their allocation) in order to ensure value for money and not exceed the maximum grant rate.

During the validation process, if local authorities ask to deliver fewer units than allocated, then their funding allocation will be reduced, maintaining the same grant per property rate.

Eligible Expenditure for Improvement Budget

The costs of obtaining a property are not the only costs councils may incur. They may also need to fund things like refurbishments, energy efficiency measures, legal costs, decoration, furnishings, or otherwise preparing the property for rent. We have included an un-ringfenced capital budget of £20,000 per property to account for this. This is a notional amount for the purposes of allowing for these costs in our formula. Councils can choose how much of the grant is to be spent on each individual property. For instance, it may choose to spend £10,000 on one property and £30,000 on another.

Example “main element” allocation

A local authority is allocated £380,000 to deliver 5 main element units plus £20k per unit nominally for refurbishment costs. In total it receives £480,000.

The local authority identifies 5 properties and the costs of obtaining and preparing them for rent:
Property 1: £220,000 capital cost
Property 2: £220,000 capital cost
Property 3: £240,000 capital cost
Property 4: £190,000 capital cost
Property 5: £230,000 capital cost
Total price: £1,100,000
The local authority uses the £100,000 it received nominally for refurbishment costs, leaving £1,000,000.
The £380,000 main element allocation equates to 38% of the remaining capital cost and is therefore within the 40% maximum average grant rate.
The council funds the remaining costs from other sources.

4.4 Validation forms

Eligible local authorities will have been emailed an indicative allocation offer email, a draft MOU, and a validation form. This email outlines the local authority's indicative allocation. Receipt of the initial indicative allocation email and completion the validation form is not a commitment to providing funding or a commitment by a local authority to receive and spend funding. Final allocations will be confirmed in writing following the department's review of the form(s) as outlined in this section. This does not prejudice a local authorities' right to not sign a Memorandum of Understanding.

We will ask all local authorities to submit the validation form no later than 25 January 2023 to confirm if they are willing and able to participate. This helps us understand which local authorities do not wish to take up this funding, how many units local authorities are willing to deliver and allows us to begin reallocating funding.

The validation form will ask local authorities to cover the key details of their delivery proposal; this will then be assessed and validated by the department.

In the validation form we will ask for information on:

- The number of homes that the local authority plans to acquire as part of this fund including the number of 4+ bedroom homes for families in bridging accommodation
- Delivery approach
- Project milestones
- Risks and barriers to delivery

A copy of the validation form questions is attached at Annex A. Validation forms must be submitted via [this page](#) no later than midday 25 January 2023. These will be reviewed and responded to as they are received, and we intend to respond to all forms by 15 February 2023.

After submitting your validation form, please send your completed and signed Memorandum of Understanding by email to the Local Authority Housing Fund Team via LAHF@levellingup.gov.uk <mailto:LAHF@levellingup.gov.uk>. The template MOU is [here](#), which are the standard terms that will be agreed with every local authority, and

the text of which is non-negotiable. If you are delivering the full allocation, complete the MOU using the numbers from your allocation email. If you are agreeing to deliver a lower number of units than your allocation, to complete your MOU, calculate the funding amount for your specified number of units, using the grant per property rate set out in your allocation email – further detail is included in the blank MOU.

We encourage local authorities to return their validation form and MOU as soon as they can as we may be able to work faster with those who agree to the terms of the programme and return their validation forms and MOU earlier. Any reallocations will be calculated and communicated by the end of March 2023.

Given that this is not a bid-based fund, proposals will be assessed acknowledging that accountability for delivery rests with the local authority. The questions have been designed to identify local authorities who would be unwilling or unable to deliver the fund. The assessed section of the validation form will consider responses regarding:

- The proposed scale of delivery relative to the indicative allocation
- Whether delivery plans meet fund objectives
- Confirmation that the local authority is content with formal reporting requests every 2 months
- Confirmation that the Section 151 Officer or Deputy Section 151 Officer has signed off the proposal

We will confirm by end of March 2023 any additional funding available to the local authority following a reallocations process based on validation form data.

If we have any queries on the answers provided in the validation form, we will contact the local authority directly.

4.5 Reallocation

During the validation process, local authorities will be asked whether they can deliver more than their initial allocation.

If in the validation form stage local authorities state they are unable to deliver the units allocated to them across the duration of the fund, the funding for the units they say they will be unable to deliver will be reallocated to other local authorities (including directly to London councils). This reallocation will be based on a process aligned with the fund objectives in 2.1, taking into account need and deliverability. If additional funding is available for local authorities who have told us they can deliver more than their initial allocation, we will contact them to confirm any further funding offer and to agree an update to the MOU to reflect this additional funding.

If a local authority misses the deadline for submitting their validation forms, they are unlikely to receive funding at tranche one. Whether it is still possible to provide them with any funding will depend on when we receive the necessary details from them and the progress of the reallocations process (including the amount of money left to reallocate). We ask that local authorities who foresee a difficulty in working to the

communicated deadlines get in touch with the Local Authority Housing Fund Team as soon as possible.

If money remains after allocating additional funding to the local authorities that have said they can deliver more across the two years of the fund, then the list of local authorities may be expanded beyond those in receipt of initial allocations.

If a local authority is allocated additional funding as part of the reallocation process, this will be paid together with the baseline funding amount for year two (agreed as in the original signed Memorandum of Understanding). As with the tranche two payment, this additional funding will be subject to the local authority having spent at least 60% of their tranche one payment at the 'checkpoint' before the tranche two payment. Where there is no pre-existing direct agreement (as would be the case with individual London councils), new agreements would be made.

The allocations for the "main element" and "bridging element" will be treated separately for reallocations, and so "bridging element" funding will not be reallocated to deliver more 'main element' properties. This is to avoid undermining the number of properties delivered for those in bridging accommodation.

4.6 How grants will be delivered

This fund will operate only in England and funding will be allocated direct to local authorities under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The funding will be allocated to the appropriate district council or unitary authority. Initial allocations for London will be made via the Greater London Authority. Further allocations may be made directly to London councils.

We will contact local authorities directly with their indicative allocation based on the formula outlined above.

4.7 Payment process

Payments will be made in the form of grants under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and paid as two instalments, on agreement of an MOU between the local authority and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Once we have contacted local authorities to confirm their final allocation, we expect local authorities to obtain any further necessary clearances to enter into a MOU with the Department based on the information they provided in the validation form. Funding will then be distributed to the local authority following the signing of the MOU.

For local authorities allocated any additional funding via the reallocations process, prior to payment of any additional funding there will be an update to the MOU agreed to reflect this additional amount, and this will be paid alongside the tranche two funding.

Tranche one payments will be made in February/March 2023 depending on the date the MOU is agreed. Payments for tranche two will be paid in May and July 2023 respectively, dependent on when the local authority's spending on this fund surpasses 60% of their tranche one payment.

Given the urgency of delivery we expect all local authorities to show flexibility in how they apply their approvals processes in order to participate in this fund. All MOUs should be signed ahead of the first tranche of payments. Local authorities will ultimately be responsible for delivery and ensuring value for money of the allocation they have received.

4.8 Fraud Risk Assessments

Local authorities shall be responsible for ensuring that fraud is a key consideration in all spend activity and that the following minimum standards are met:

- Follow the [Grants Functional Standards on Fraud Risk Assessment](#) (FRA) – pages 15-19;
- Undertake FRAs at an appropriate level to each individual project dependent on risk;
- Ensure that this spend is undertaken in accordance with effective authority fraud prevention policy and procedure, and via engagement with your organisations' specialists in this area;
- Ensure that relevant evidence and data to prevent fraud is gathered as part of due diligence undertaken ahead of releasing funds;
- Implement reporting and monitoring requirements that will identify irregularities or issues in use of funds which can be investigated further;
- Store and file all work undertaken on FRA in the event of any issues or audit requirements.

4.9 Due Diligence

Local authorities shall be responsible for ensuring that proportional due diligence is applied to all this fund spend and that the following minimum standards are met:

- Follow the [Grants Functional Standards on Due Diligence](#) – pages 20-24;
- Undertake due diligence at an appropriate level to each individual project dependent on risk;
- Ensure that due diligence is undertaken in accordance with effective authority rules and procedures through authorities' teams specialising in this area;
- Ensure that key areas of due diligence identified for projects in which local authorities invest are reported on and monitored throughout the term of delivery;
- Store and file all work undertaken on due diligence in the event of any issues or audit requirements.

4.10 How we will monitor performance and delivery

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be detailed in MOUs with local authorities and will be based on the fund objectives outlined at section 2.1.

Every two months, local authorities will provide a mix of quantitative and qualitative summary updates to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to track against agreed delivery milestones. The reports will be due every two months until delivery is completed, with the dates specified in the MOU.

We will ask for the following information either as part of ongoing monitoring and/or as part of evaluation of the fund:

- Offers accepted, including bedroom size and whether these are part of the “main” or “bridging” element of the funding;
- Number of properties where contracts exchanged, including bedroom size;
- Number of properties occupied, including bedroom size;
- Number of families housed, including which resettlement programme they belong to;
- Number of individuals housed, including which resettlement programme they belong to;
- Total expenditure (including grant and other funding);
- Total committed spend (including grant and other funding);
- Government grant used;
- Overall assessment (RAG rated) of whether delivery is on track.

Future evaluation requests

We will conduct an evaluation of the fund near the end of the monitoring period. To understand how the fund is being delivered in further detail, we will ask local authorities for the following information:

- How properties have been sourced (e.g. through stock acquisition or another delivery route);
- Breakdown of households housed by previous housing situation, e.g. emergency accommodation/temporary accommodation;
- Tenancy duration;
- Rent levels;
- Number of additional pledges made to provide housing for those in bridging accommodation;
- Number of properties obtained outside the local authority’s area, if applicable, and where these are located.

We expect that local authorities will respond to any reasonable additional requests from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support any retrospective assessment or evaluation as to the impact or value for money of the fund. We will expect the authority to, at minimum, monitor spend, outputs and outcomes against agreed indicators and keep this information for at least 5 years.

We may also ask for details about how the acquired properties are being used, for example if they are still publicly owned and if they have become part of the social housing or affordable stock. This will require local authorities to maintain address-level data. This is for us to examine the legacy impacts of the fund.

4.11 Next steps and important dates

- Local authorities who have been identified as eligible for funding will be sent a link to a validation form, to confirm their interest in participating, and to set out how they intend to deliver this fund. Submissions will be reviewed as they are received and therefore forms submitted earlier may receive an earlier response.
- Local authorities must submit their validation form by 25 January 2023 via this [link](#). Forms will only be accepted submitted by the link above. After submitting their validation forms, we encourage local authorities to email their signed MOU as soon as possible.
- In the event we have any clarification questions about the contents of a validation form, we will contact the local authority directly for further detail.
- If a validation form is accepted, we will make best endeavours to contact the local authority to confirm their allocation by 15 February 2023. We will be prepared to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with local authorities as soon as they have received the appropriate internal clearances. We expect local authorities to have signed this no later than 1 March 2023 but will work flexibly with local authorities.
- Tranche one of funding is due to happen in February/March 2023 (depending on the date the MOU is agreed), tranche two is due to happen in May or July 2023, dependent on when the local authority's spending on this fund surpasses 60% of their tranche one payment as reported during the monitoring and evaluation windows.
- Local authorities will be asked to complete a monitoring return every two months on the basis as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding and we will discuss any concerns about delivery with local authorities directly. The final monitoring return is scheduled to take place in November 2023, however we will expect monitoring returns to be completed until delivery is complete. We expect to carry out an evaluation from December 2023.
- For any questions about this fund please contact LAHF@levellingup.gov.uk.

Annex A – Validation Questions

Overview

The Local Authority Housing Fund will provide up to £500 million in capital grants to help councils obtain additional housing to accommodate the defined eligible cohort at risk of homelessness or living in bridging accommodation.

Councils' funding offer has been allocated on the basis of a formula, taking into account housing pressures and the number of recent Ukrainian arrivals.

This form applies to eligible councils in England only.

The validation form will be split into two parts, assessed and non assessed additional questions.

If you need to edit or revisit any sections of the validation form you will need to use the browser back button. Be aware that if you use the browser back button, the screen that you are currently viewing will not be saved.

Once you have submitted your validation form you will not be able to edit your response.

Please keep a copy of your answers for future reference.

After submitting your validation form, please send your completed and signed Memorandum of Understanding by email to the Local Authority Housing Fund Team via LAHF@levellingup.gov.uk.

Validation Questions

1. Are you willing and able to participate in the Local Authority Housing Fund programme?
 - Yes (form proceeds to question 3)
 - No (form proceeds to question 2)
2. Please provide further details of why you are not willing or able to participate in the programme (form proceeds to end).
3. Does the proposal you outline in this form meet the fund objectives outlined below? (Please note this is requirement of the fund and if not agreed you will not be able to participate in the fund.)
4. For the "main element" of the fund, how many homes can you acquire by 30th November 2023 (this is a target date, payments will be honoured assuming delivery within financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24)?

Note: if you can deliver fewer than your initial allocation, your funding will be scaled down proportionally to reflect the number of homes, based on the grant per property outlined in your allocation email. If you state you can deliver more homes at this grant rate than your initial allocation, we will progress with the MoU using your initial allocation and following reallocation process, we will

confirm whether any additional funding is available to enable you to deliver more than your initial allocation.

All delivery proposals in this section should be based on the policy in section 2.1 of the prospectus and the grant per property set out in your allocation email.

5. For the "bridging element" of the fund, how many 4+ bedroom homes can you acquire by 30th November 2023 (this is a target date, payments will be honoured assuming delivery within financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24)?

Note: if you can deliver fewer than your initial allocation, your funding will be scaled down proportionally to reflect the number of homes, based on the grant per property outlined in your allocation email. If you state you can deliver more homes at this grant rate than your initial allocation, we will progress with the MoU using your initial allocation and following reallocation process, we will confirm whether any additional funding is available to enable you to deliver more than your initial allocation.

All delivery proposals in this section should be based on the policy in section 2.1 of the prospectus and the grant per property set out in your allocation email.

6. Do you agree to provide progress reports every 2 months until delivery is completed including Management Information (MI) and reporting against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as detailed in the prospectus?

(Please note this is requirement of the fund and if not agreed you will not be able to participate in the fund.)

7. Has your Section 151 Officer or Deputy S151 Officer approved this submission?

(Please note this is requirement of the fund and if not agreed you will not be able to participate in the fund.)

Additional non-assessed questions

The next set of questions are not assessed and will be used by the department to aid policy development and evaluation design only.

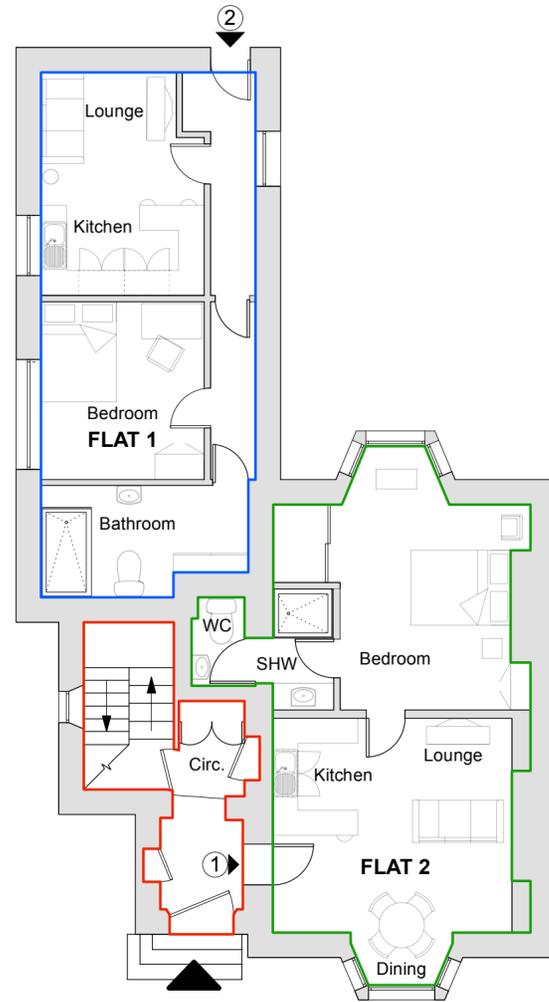
1. If the number of "main element" properties you can deliver is fewer than your allocated number, please outline the reasons for this.
2. If the number of 4+ bedroom "bridging element" properties you can deliver is fewer than your allocated number, please outline the reasons for this.

3. How do you plan on delivering your proposed/target number of homes?
Please provide details of the type of stock you plan to acquire, noting the non-exhaustive list of examples provided in section 3 of the programme prospectus.
4. If your chosen delivery plan will add to existing housing in your area, please provide an estimate of the number of new homes.
5. Please provide your key milestones for delivery, including decision making timelines.
6. Based on the indicative approach(es) identified in your delivery plan above, please provide a brief overview that shows a financial projection of how and when the budget will be spent versus the timescales / number of homes to be acquired.
7. How do you intend to fund your contributory share required to secure your proposed/target number of homes? (e.g. from capital receipts, revenue, borrowing or funded by a partner?)
8. What are the key risks for delivery and how do you intend to mitigate them?
9. If this programme continued into future years using the same or a similar approach, (e.g. assuming launch in late 2023 and running for the following 12 months), how many homes could you deliver in this time period?

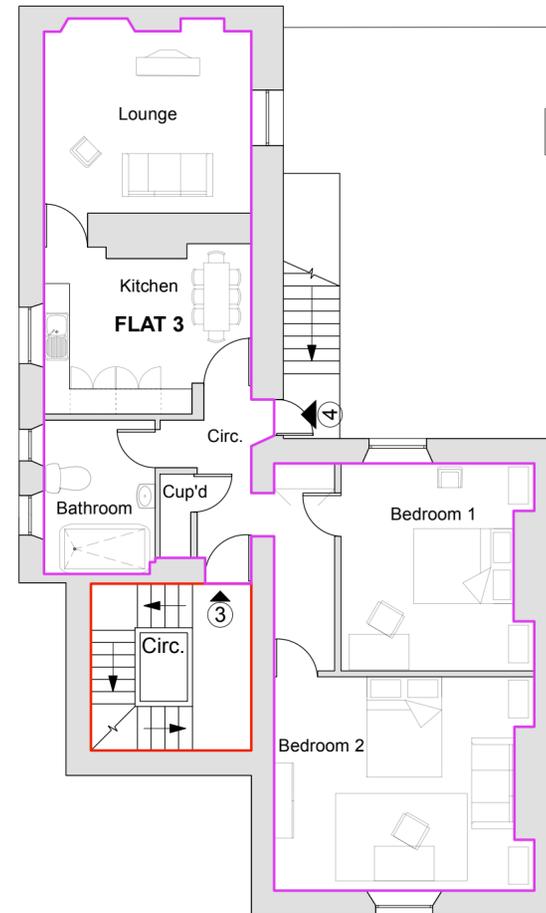
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NOTE: Flat 1 (existing bus kiosk) to be surveyed at stage 3 and prior to planning

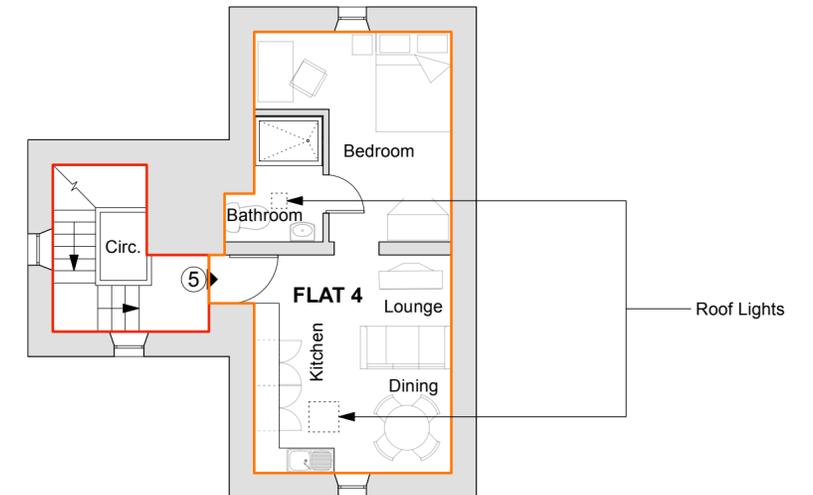
Schedule of Accommodation								
FLAT	Gross internal floor area	Kitchen	Dinning	Lounge	Living Area	Bedroom 1	Bedroom 2	Bathroom
Ground Floor								
1	43.95m ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	18.76m ²	14.99m ²	N/A	8.51m ²
2	48.52m ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	23.09m ²	18.80m ²	N/A	5.27m ²
First Floor								
3	88.76m ²	12.80m ²	16.22m ²	N/A	N/A	15.12m ²	21.31m ²	6.80m ²
Second Floor								
4	36.37m ²	N/A	N/A	N/A	17.66m ²	13.47m ²	N/A	5.46m ²
Circulation								
	Ground Floor - 13.20m ²	First Floor - 10.70m ²		Second Floor - 8.10m ²				



Proposed Ground Floor
1:100



Proposed First Floor
1:100



Proposed Second Floor
1:100



SCALE BAR @ 1:100



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Project
**Conversion at
20 Plymouth Road, Tavistock**
Client
South Hams District Council

Scale Paper Size Filename
1:100 A2

Rev Date By Ap Note

Drawing Title
**PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS
OPTION 1**

Project Number Drawing Number - Revision
220894 AL(0)02

Date Drawn Checked Status
04/01/23 DG AW CONCEPT

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Agenda Item 12

Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **7 March 2023**
Title: **A Plan for West Devon – Year 3 Delivery Plan**
Portfolio Areas: **Cllr Neil Jory – Leader**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Author: **Neil Hawke** Role: **Assistant Director Strategy & OD**

Contact: **Email: Neil.Hawke@swdevon.gov.uk**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Hub Committee RECOMMEND to Council to approve the minor amendments to the Year 3 Plan for West Devon delivery plans as set out in Appendix A.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 West Devon Borough Council adopted its Plan for West Devon Strategy in September 2021 along with three year detailed delivery plans.
- 1.2 Progress against these plans has been monitored through Thematic updates to Overview and Scrutiny and Quarterly Integrated Performance Management reports to Hub.
- 1.3 Progress has also been monitored through frequent meetings of Thematic Advisory Groups.
- 1.4 As we are now at the end of the second year delivery plans, there is an opportunity to make minor amendments to the plan to reflect changes to our priorities.
- 1.5 This report sets out an updated year 3 delivery plan for the Strategy (Appendix A).

2. Background

- 2.1 In September 2021, Council adopted its Plan for West Devon strategy setting its ambitions for the West Devon area and for its services.
- 2.2 The strategy is underpinned by detailed 'Thematic Delivery Plans'. This plans set out the key deliverables for the years 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- 2.3 Ensuring that the 2023/24 delivery plans are updated means that following the local elections in May 2023, Council has sufficient time to consider its priorities for the next 4 years. This approach of ensuring a 12 month cross over of Council term ensures that we are always delivering on activities aligned to a Council approved strategy.
- 2.4 There have been many changes to the Councils operating environment since September 2021 and Council have considered a number of matters which result in minor amendments to the delivery plan including:-
 - Securing UK Shared Prosperity funding
 - Responding to the Cost of Living crisis and the increasing costs impact on some of our specific actions within the plan
 - Adapting support to offer safe homes to Ukrainians
- 2.5 All of these matters have been the subject to reports and agreed recommendations to Council.
- 2.6 Where there have been delays to projects in 2021/22, it is important that these actions are carried forward to 2022/23 to ensure that they continue. These are clearly highlighted in the Year 3 delivery plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Hub consider the updated delivery plans as set out in Appendix A to this report for Year 3 of the Plan for West Devon and recommend adoption by Council.

4. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Plan for West Devon Strategy has been adopted by Council as our strategic guiding document. As such, ensuring that Council consider the minor amendments is required.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	This report does not have any budget requirements outside of the approved council budget.
Risk	N	The risk arises in not agreeing the Year 3 delivery plan.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		All
Equality and Diversity		No direct implications
Safeguarding		No direct implications
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		No direct implications
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		No direct implications
Other implications		No direct implications

Appendices:

Appendix A – A Plan for West Devon Year 3 Delivery Plan

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Thematic Delivery Plan Year 3 / 2023-24

(Contains minor updates to Sept 2021 Version)

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A Plan for West Devon



Introduction

A Plan for West Devon is our 20 year vision for the Borough. This document, our Thematic Delivery Plan, turns our vision and themes into specific and measurable action for the next three years.

The delivery plan is by no means all that we will do, and our plans will be kept under regular review to ensure that they respond to opportunities and address challenges as they arise.

We must also be clear that many of the actions within this plan cannot be delivered by West Devon Borough Council alone. We must work with partners and ensure we support each other in making a positive difference for the residents of West Devon.

Also within this document, we set out an overview of our Performance Management Framework. This details how we will ensure that A Plan for West Devon guides our decision making and prioritisation of resources.

This is an updated delivery plan for the third year of the plan and removes those activities that have been completed in year 1 and 2.



Achieving our vision

To support us in achieving our vision, we have aligned our actions to a number of themes.

Each theme will be led by a Councillor from the Hub Committee who will be supported by a cross-party Advisory Group of Councillors.

In the coming pages, we set out our Thematic Delivery Plans for each area.



Strengthening our communities

An area that our communities can be proud of



Enhancing community wellbeing

Every resident is able to live a healthy and active life



Improving homes

Every resident has access to a quality and safe home



Maximising Council resources

Making the best use of our resources



Stimulating a thriving economy

A Borough that attracts high quality employment opportunities and space for business to grow



Growing our natural environment

An environment where people and nature thrive together



Adapting our built environment

Planning for the future, celebrating the past



Delivering inclusive and accessible services

A listening, accessible and caring council

Summary of Actions delivered 2022-23

A full overview of achievements for 2022/23 will be published in June 2023 in our Annual Report, but a summary of some actions completed during this year is below.

 <p>Strengthening our communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed a further two years of funding for key partner organisations such as Citizens Advice, CVS and Community Transport (SC1.1) • Reinstated Town and Parish Links Meetings (SC1.3) 	 <p>Growing our natural environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planted 28 trees at Bishopmead in Tavistock and secured funding for a further 70 trees for Monkmead, Bishopmead and The Meadows (NE1.5 and 1.9) • Launched a Nature Recovery Map (NE1.8)
 <p>Enhancing community wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered one off grant scheme supporting xx community organisations to deliver Health and Wellbeing Projects (CW1.2) • Commissioned Mental Health Assemblies for 5 schools in West Devon (CW1.6) 	 <p>Adapting our built environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted in the making of xx Neighbourhood Plans (BE1.6) • Delivered investment in Tavistock Guildhall Centre and experience (BE1.3) • Successful bid for funding for rail enhancements in the Borough including Okehampton (BE1.8)
 <p>Improving homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved our target of 300 homes in the JLP area (IH1.1) • Submitted planning application for self contained apartments in Tavistock for people who are homeless (IH1.6) 	 <p>Delivering inclusive and accessible services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted a customer charter and access strategy setting out what customers can expect (IA1.1&IA1.2) • Carried out (with JLP) a consultation on West Devon as a Place (IA1.4)
 <p>Stimulating a thriving economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured £1m investment for business support • Concluded the Welcome Back project of Town Centre activities (TE1.2) 	 <p>Maximising Council resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a new Performance Management system (R1.2) • Set a balanced budget for 2023/24 (R1.5) • Carried out three key service reviews to ensure they remain customer responsive (R1.3)



Strengthening Communities

Focus Area – Empowering our communities to enhance their area

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
SC1.1 Maximising grant funding opportunities including for play parks, playing pitches and other community facilities	2023/24	Develop a promotional and marketing scheme for Seamoor Lotto to ensure that community groups maximise the benefit of the platform (CF from 21/22)	Increase in funding raised for good causes / Additional 50 players a year		£2,000 a year marketing budget	Gatherwell Lotteries	Neil Hawke
		Review the community project grants funding scheme, allowing for three funding application windows each year to ensure funding distributed across the area. (Clarity on action)	Implement new process and promote it to Councillors in June / July 2023		£25,000 community projects budget		Dilys Lord
		Provide each funded Key Partner with opportunity to report on progress of schemes to Overview and Scrutiny (Clarity on action)	Each key partner allocated date on O&S agenda		NA	CA, CVS, Community Transport, OCRA	Neil Hawke

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
SC1.2 Provide a visible and responsive localities service	2023/24	Promote the work of localities through a series of briefing sessions for Members post May elections	Regular updates on social media to highlight activities of the team		Core	Town and Parish Councils	Head of Operations
		Review and consider expectations and requirements for the Localities service Promote work of localities to Town and Parish Councils and Public through social media and other resource	Agree promotional campaign				



Strengthening Communities

Focus Area – Empowering our communities to enhance their area

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Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
SC1.3 Reinstating Town and Parish Links Meetings	2023/24	Develop and deliver a West Devon Connects local conference for Town and Parishes and other key partners to meet face to face (New action)	A well attended event held – Autumn 2023		Core		Catherine Bowen
		Devon County Council Budget Engagement meeting to be held for Towns and Parishes (New action)	A budget engagement webinar held Dec – Feb 2023/24				Kathy Hoare
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
SC1.4 Supporting and promoting events across the Borough	2023/24	Award funding for Kings Coronation events scheme – launched in 2022/23	Scheme funding awarded		£15,000		Neil Hawke
		Plan and attend a series of events across the Borough to represent the Councils (new action)	An agreed series of events that the Council will be represented at		None		Localities



Strengthening Communities

Focus Area – Supporting the voluntary sector in responding to community needs

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing/Approved)	Key Partners	Officer
SC1.5 Develop a plan for supporting our voluntary sector partners in the future	2023/24	Engagement with West Devon CVS to identify further opportunities to support the voluntary sector	Attendance at Health and Wellbeing Alliances by a suitable WDBC officer		£3,000 - Budget for supporting training and development sessions	West Devon CVS	Neil Hawke

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing/Approved)	Key Partners	Officer
SC1.6 Ensure the Council is represented at key existing partnerships / community groups	2023/24	Implement clear reporting mechanism for members of outside bodies to report back to all Members on activities (New action)	Process agreed, updates regularly shared		Core		Darryl White
		Key partner agencies are invited to join the Communities Advisory Group to aid discussions	Discussion with DCC with them regularly attending Communities Advisory Groups		Core		Neil Hawke



Strengthening Community Wellbeing

Focus Area – Reducing Health Inequalities and Rural Poverty

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Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resource New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
CW1.1	2023/24	Co-ordinating partners to deliver a targeted rural poverty pilot	Delivery of rural poverty project - we will focus on working with the community to understand the issues and what is working well, building on existing assets and good work to help provide support where required (CF from 22/23)	Deliverables may include; number of people given advice , training, education via referral. Wider reduction of health inequalities. Installation of fuel poverty measures. Qualitative stories regarding improving residents situations		£22,500 agreed through strategy	CAB / DCC / Ian Luscombe
		Delivery of Cost of Living Action Plan (New action)	Delivery of specific actions from cost of living action plan https://mg.swdevon.gov.uk/documents/s29222/Cost%20of%20Living%20Response%20Plan%20V3.pdf			Geni Hotchkiss Issy Blake Ian Luscombe	

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resource New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
CW1.2	2023/24	Launch a short-term grant scheme for voluntary sector to implement projects supporting Health and Wellbeing	Promote the support available through community groups that were awarded funding in the January 2023 Cost of Living Response plan grant fund			CVS/ Health and Wellbeing Alliances	Neil Hawke

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resource New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
CW1.3	2023/24	Delivery of projects to enable residents to continue to live safely within their homes	Provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's), Domestic Violence and homelessness prevention interventions . This includes working with partners to look at the whole system and where we might be able to help unblock issues		Better Care Fund allocation	DCC	Dave Sexton/ Isabel Blake



Strengthening Community Wellbeing

Focus Area – Ensuring Leisure Provision meets the needs of residents

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resource New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
CW1.4		Closed - No longer required – Playing Pitch strategy adopted – delivery set out under CW1.5					

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resource New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
CW1.5	2023/24	Provision of high-quality and accessible leisure services	Ensure s106 funds for sports and play facilities are allocated and schemes delivered		£111,252 as at 31/03/2021 (note subject to reprofiling)		Alexis Huggins
			Continue to work with Leisure Providers to maximise participation in sport and leisure at sites.	Increased participation and improved quality feedback including through the delivery of playing pitch strategy.		Leisure providing Partners	Jon Parkinson



Strengthening Community Wellbeing

Focus Area – Promote a positive approach to mental health and wellbeing

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Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resource New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
CW1.6	2023/24	Support the provision of support for mental health schemes in operation across the Borough	<p>Number of sessions delivered by Youth Mental Health Foundation with positive feedback from schools</p> <p>Promote support available through Community Safety Partnership Schemes such as the Lets Talk programme (added)</p>		£10,000	<p>Youth Mental Health Foundation</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership</p>	Ian Luscombe / Isabel Blake
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resource New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
CW1.7	2023/24	<p>Work with partner organisations to ensure we are fully engaged with developments of the Integrated Care System (new action)</p> <p>Promote mental health and wellbeing support through our online support directory</p>				DCC/Voluntary Sector / NHS	Ian Luscombe / Isabel Blake



Improving Homes

Focus Area – Housing for Place

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
IH1.1 Deliver local homes that meet the needs of local people	2023/24	Support the delivery of new homes across the Thriving Town and Villages JLP area each year	A cumulative 300 new homes by end of 2023/24		Core funding	Registered Provider's & Developers	Isabel Blake
Page 115 IH1.2 Work with Devon County Council to support people to live independently – identifying opportunities for specialist, purpose-built accommodation	2023/24	Scope in detail local need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate best practice nationally Establish a forum for potential residents and their carers so they can influence future housing design. Consider funding opportunities through Better Care Fund, Homes England Joint ventures with charities or 3rd sector (continued from 2022/23) 	Good quality accommodation and a range of suitable options for those requiring support to live independently. Regular and informative engagement and involvement with our residents and their carers who require support to live independently.		Core funding	DCC, RP's	Isabel Blake
		Wonnacotts Progress an affordable led housing scheme at a Council owned site at Wonnacotts Road in Okehampton, with the purpose of providing both general needs accommodation and supported housing for vulnerable adults. (action added)	Project underway with key partners			DCC	Isabel Blake
		Plymouth Rd Seek to bring forward up to 4 units of accommodation at a Council owned building at Plymouth Road Tavistock for local people in need reducing the reliance on pay nightly accommodation. (action added)	Project underway				Isabel Blake
		Local Authority Housing Fund Engage with central Government on how to support the Local Authority Housing Fund to meet the housing needs of refugees.	Project scoped				Isabel Blake



Improving Homes

Focus Area – Housing for Place

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
IH1.3 Develop our understanding of housing need and implement plans for responding	2023/24	<p>Develop a mechanism to clearly justify the need for the following tenures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Rent • Social Rent • Discount Market Sale – the councils need to develop an internal application process to enable applicants to register an interest. • Shared ownership Private rent • Self Build <p>This will support new build opportunities and re-development opportunities as well as supporting neighbourhood Plans and community led initiatives</p>	<p>To match aspiration and need to housing delivery. Result is a decline in demand and number of applicants on the housing registers. Will ensure we are making the best use of our housing stock. that housing need by type and tenure can be identified by the end of the Housing Strategy and a review of all areas programmed in for the next 5 year strategy.</p>	<p>£30,000 - additional capacity to deliver feasibility and for WD</p>	<p>Neighbourhood planning funding potential use of Capital programme if the council wishes to streamline the process</p>	DCC, RP's	Alex Rehaag



Improving Homes

Focus Area – Housing for People

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer
IH1.4 Promote and support energy efficiency in homes	2023/24	Energy efficiency improvements through HUG 2 (subject to securing funding)	Maximise spend in area Number of interventions TBC		Existing		Dave Sexton



Improving Homes

Focus Area – Housing for People

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer
IH1.5 Promote the best use and improve quality of existing housing	2023/24	Develop a process to identify hot spot areas of complaints within the existing stock for both ASB and stock condition (ongoing from 22/23)	achieve a shared data base with our RP partners to high light issues and look at trends. For ASB Local Lettings Plans to be used. For stock condition complaints need to link with RP planned maintenance programmes		Core	Registered Providers Devon CC	Cassandra Harrison
		Develop HMO promotional campaign to engage with owners	Campaign developed and launched by April 2022		Core		
		Interrogate new Census data to predict future housing trends and needs	Analysis complete by December 2022		Core		Sophie Cobbledick
		Work with our Registered Provider partners to identify and improve issues within their stock particularly regarding damp and mould (clarity added)					Sophie Cobbledick
		Continue to work with our partners to seek redevelopment opportunities to enhance the current housing stock and to meet the needs of residents. Establish a programme for potential redevelopment where stock condition is causing issues for re-lets (ongoing from 22/23)	Agreed programme				



Improving Homes

Focus Area – Housing for People

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer
IH1.6 Deliver on our plans for self contained apartments in Tavistock to support people who are homeless	2023/24	<p>Complete construction Handover for first tenants</p> <p>Work with cost consultants to understand costs and business case for Members to consider</p> <p>Develop a temporary accommodation reduction strategy to reduce the reliance on pay per night accommodation</p> <p>Action carried forward from 22/23 – now subject to above additions Award construction contract commence construction</p>		TBC subject to costings			Dan Field Isabel Blake



Stimulating a thriving economy

Focus Area – Promoting Destination West Devon

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.1	2023/24	Develop a West Devon Visitor Economy Plan	Support activities to enhance then visitor economy in West Devon		Core Placemaking Team	Town Councils, Chambers, Trade Associations and Destination Management Organisations	Nita Jarram

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.2		Support place-based public realm enhancement in West Devon	Close –these actions related to the Welcome Back Fund which has now concluded.				

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.3	2023/24	Promote active travel, cycling, horse riding and walking routes across West Devon	Delivery of Active and Inclusive Travel strand of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (action added) A local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan A suite of active and inclusive travel projects Contribution of funding for active travel elements of West Devon Transport Hub		UKSPF Project Officer funded through SPF		Gemma Bristow

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.4		Progress plans for an ecomuseum across West Devon	Action closed – required securing of government funding which was unsuccessful. Promotion of the area will be picked up through action TE1.1 (Development of marketing strategy) Activities that will contribute towards an ecomuseum will continue to be delivered through other Actions, and will enable a bid to be pulled together, should a future funding stream be identified.				



Stimulating a thriving economy

Focus Area – Promoting Destination West Devon

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.5 Champion Improved Digital (Broadband and Mobile Phone) Connectivity across West Devon	2023/24	Continue to engage with suppliers and understand future rollout plans and provide ad-hoc support for community broadband champions.	Well informed and active digital champions		£18,900 from Business rates admin grant	Local Government Association, Connecting Devon and Somerset, Devon County Council	Gemma Bristow



Focus Area – Helping West Devon Towns and Businesses Thrive

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Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resource Existing	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.6 Offer business advice services for existing, expanding and new businesses	2023/24	Commission services of agencies and local providers to reach out to businesses across the borough	An agreed arrangement with local providers	£30,000	Core	Rural Services Network, Business Information Point, Chambers, DR Company	Chris Shears
		Deliver of Wider Business Support and Consultancy strand of UK Shared Prosperity projects (action added)	Businesses supported to develop bespoke carbonisation plans				Chris Shears
			Study of construction sector capabilities to deliver low carbon projects				
		Project to support community energy groups				DLUC, others TBC	



Stimulating a thriving economy

Focus Area – Helping West Devon Towns and Businesses Thrive

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.7		Remain prepared to respond to any future government business grants	This action is closed following the completion of Covid-19 business support grants. Responsiveness to other business grants will be picked up under respective actions.				

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.8	2023/24	Deliver an Inward Investment Campaign aimed at attracting new businesses to West Devon	Continue work on progressing sites within the JLP and contacting land owners to discuss their own ambitions for their allocated employment spaces.		Core	JLPs , Land Owners	Chris Shears

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer	
TE1.9	2023/24	Continue to support Business Improvement forums within the Borough	Enhanced links between Tavistock BID Board and WDBC (including working with BID on the #MyPlace campaign)	Improved monitoring of BID project delivery	£2,000 BID Levy fee	In-kind contribution toward Levy collection to be reviewed annually	Tavistock BID Board, Tavistock Town Council	Nita Jarram
	2023/24		Conclude and evaluate consultation with Okehampton businesses on formation of BID/ Chamber and if supported, commence implementation	Creation of the new business improvement organisation		£20,000 for formation of BID or Chamber	Okehampton Town Council, Businesses	Chris Shears

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources Bid TBC	Resources (Existing/Approved)	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.10		Establish a new business forum within Okehampton	Closed -Action now merged with TE1.9				



Stimulating a thriving economy

Focus Area – Responding to opportunities to enhance the economy

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer
TE1.11 Deliver a West Devon Transport Hub through the Government Levelling Up Fund	2023/24	Support the delivery of Okehampton Transport Hub (delivery led by DCC) Action added now funding secured	Bid submitted, funds received and delivery commenced	Potential for additional resource in 24/25	£13m – secured through UKSPF & core resources	Devon County Council, Network Rail, Okehampton Town Council	Chris Brook

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources Existing	Key Partners	Officer
E1.12 Submit a bid to the Rural England Prosperity Fund	2023/24	A bid submitted and funding secured for small business support in rural areas (action added)	Bid submitted, funds received and delivery commenced	TBC to support delivery		DLUC, Business	Chris Brook



Growing our Natural Environment

Focus Area – Working towards Net Zero

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Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
NE1.1 Phased conversion of our environmental management fleet to a greener fleet	2023/24	Feasibility study and Forward Fleet Plan developed. Improved Infrastructure in Depots to help facilitate transition to an EV fleet. Consider transition toward electric based ground maintenance equipment	Feasibility study and Forward Fleet Plan produced		Core £6,000		Adam Williams
		Commence delivery of full EV fleet	Full EV fleet	Likely additional resource need			Adam Williams
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
NE1.2 Increasing availability of electric charging points across the borough	2023/24	Continue with progressing of existing EV installation projects				Devon County Council	Emma Widdecombe
		Adopt EV Strategy for the Borough (new action added) Monitor new funding opportunities			Core		
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
NE1.3 Carry out a feasibility study of renewable energy schemes on our Council land	2023/24	Deliver recommended and approved outcomes for Leisure centre schemes	PV for Leisure Centres installed and heat decarbonisation plans produced	New staff requirement / additional support need £ TBC for leisure centre heat decarbonisation			Laura Wotton
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
NE1.4 Promote recycling and reduction of waste (at source) to our residents	2023/24	Review annual communications plan for Waste and Recycling Services including promotion of garden waste subscriptions, highlighting recycling at key times such as Christmas etc			Core	FCC Environment	Sarah Moody



Growing our Natural Environment

Focus Area – Making the best use of our incredible natural environment

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
NE1.5 A 10% increase in biodiversity on Council land	2023/24	Delivery new GM specification – looking at starting to review Council land to look at areas suitable to relax cutting regimes	Securing 10% increase in biodiversity by 2025		Core	Rob Sekula
NE1.6 Support delivery of a mix of woodland, on street trees, wooden habitat corridors and hedgerows through the Plymouth and South Devon Forest	2023/24	Delivery of 23/24 planting schemes and ongoing engagement with landowners	Trees planted		Core	Rob Sekula
NE1.7 Support Nature recovery through larger wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors and Nature preservation schemes	2023/24	Support the development of the Devon Tree Strategy (New action)	Increased wildlife and wildflower schemes across West Devon		Core	DCC Rob Sekula
NE1.8 Map our ecosystems, species, waterways and other natural capital to better inform future land use		Action Closed – Nature Map now live				
NE1.9 Work with partners to promote tree planting within the Borough	2023/24	Promote existing and new schemes to TAPCs. Apply ourselves, and facilitate community applications for tree planting on WDBC sites	Number of trees planted			Rob Sekula



Growing our Natural Environment

Focus Area – Making the best use of our incredible natural environment

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
NE1.1 0		Work with key landowners and partners including Tamar Valley AONB, Dartmoor National Park, National Trust, English Heritage, West Country Rivers and the Biosphere	Action closed – covered by deliverables under NE1.7				



Adapting our built environment

Focus Area – Celebrating our heritage and ensuring its protected

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
BE1.1 Commission and manage Conservation Area Plans	2023/24	Continue a review of all West Devon Conservation Area Management Plans Support and Promote WHS	Three appraisals completed	£25,000 for a post within the Placemaking team			Alistair Wagstaff

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
BE1.2 Support the promotion of parishes surrounding the UNESCO World Heritage Site		Now covered by BE1.1 and within the marketing plans under the Economy Theme					

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
BE1.3 Support the Tavistock Guildhall Visitor Centre and Experience		Action closed					

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources Bid New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
BE1.4 Celebrate Culture and Heritage to enhance West Devon Towns		Close action – specific promotional activities undertaken through the Welcome Back Fund which has now ended.					



Adapting our built environment

Focus Area – Planning Infrastructure for the Future

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources Bid TBC	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
BE1.5 Delivery of the Joint Local Plan	2023/24	Plan for review of the Joint Local Plan	An agreed plan	Bid TBC	Core	Plymouth City Council & SHDC	Jo / AW
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
BE1.6 Support Neighbourhood Plans	2023/24	Continue campaign to encourage Parish Councils to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. Continue assistance to active Neighbourhood Plan Groups.	Assist development of 3 Neighbourhood Plans by end 2023/24 and commence the renew of plans that require renewal or modification		Core	Parish and Town Councils	Alistair Wagstaff
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources Bid TBC	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
BE1.7 Support key road corridor and travel gateway improvements including integrated cycling and walking	2023/24	Support plans to generate a West Devon cycling plan in tandem with South West Active Travel forum and to feed upwards into the county-wide Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCEWIP)	Progressing of a plan		UKSPF	DCC, TAPC's	Gemma Bristow
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources Bid TBC	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
BE1.8 Support Improvement to local rail connectivity and links including Tavistock with Plymouth and Okehampton with Exeter	2023/24	Commence planning and delivery of Okehampton Transport Hub following award of UK Shared Prosperity Funding (Action updated following securing funds)	Delivery underway		UK Shared Prosperity Funding	Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, road and rail operators	Chris Shears



Listening and Accessible Council

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	By	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Officer
IA1.1 Set out clearly what you can expect from us by developing a customer charter		Action Closed – Charter published on the website – March 2023					

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	By	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
IA1.2 Enabling you to access all council services online where you can, but developing plans for how those not online can access services they need		Action closed – ensuring that our customers can access the services they need is ongoing through business as usual activities. We have implemented a number of measures including localities providing home visit service for customers who are not able to interact online or on the phone. Considered by members in November 2022.					



Listening and Accessible Council

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	By	Measures of Success	Resources New	Resources (Existing)	Officer
IA1.3 Actively seek your views when developing proposals by delivering on our consultation and engagement strategy	2023/24	Design and deliver training for our councillors to enhance their engagement with our communities (cf 22/23)	September 2023	Well attend training		Core	Darryl White
		Scope out a refreshed Councillor intranet with key resources for them to use (Cf 22/23)	May 2023	Refined scope for Member Intranet agreed		Core	Michelle Pierce/ Darryl White

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	By	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
IA1.4 Ask you how we are doing, by carrying out an annual residents satisfaction survey focusing on West Devon as a place	2023/24	Design residents satisfaction survey	Summer 2023	Agreed series of questions	£5,000		Neil Hawke
		Delivery of residents satisfaction survey	Late summer / Autumn	Satisfaction survey undertaken			

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	By	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
IA1.5 We will ensure that our elected Members are safe and accessible and have the knowledge required to help you where needed	2023/24	Deliver Councillor Induction programme	May/June 23	Satisfaction survey after induction		Core	Darryl White



Maximising Council Resources

Focus Area – Value for Money of Existing Services

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Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
R1.1 Implement our new customer focused system to enable our customers to engage with us both online and on the phone easily	2023/24	Improved website and customer access. We will build a new open-source web platform that will bring together the various current Council websites in to one place making it easier for our customers to find what they need. It will bring together the existing web site, consultation portal and media streaming library into one site. (CF from 2022.23 as ongoing)	Full transition to new website by March 2024		FIT programme and core	Jim Davis
		Improve working efficiently and effectively for our employees, ensuring they have the tools to meet customer needs while also realising financial benefits for the Council To make best use of the tools we have in place to work more productively, more efficiently and more collaboratively	Emphasise the use of Office 365 and Teams collaboration tools. Provide training material.		Core	Mike Ward

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
R1.2 Ensure we manage the Councils performance effectively	2023/24	Quarterly reports to Hub and Six monthly reports to Overview and Scrutiny Continue to embed the Councils Performance Management framework including a revised Risk Management approach			Core Performance Board	Neil Hawke

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
R1.3 Carry out reviews of services in order to improve the customer experience	2023/24	Deliver service reviews where required including Implementing Revenues and Benefits Service changes Implementing a review of Localities functions	Successful and timely service reviews - ensure reviews are delivered within the approved timescale		Core	Geni Hotchkiss Operations Manager



Maximising Council Resources

Focus Area – Finance Fit for the Future

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
R1.4 Manage and Support our employees to deliver the best possible service	2023/24	Deliver on projects as set out in our Organisation Development Plan	An agreed plan in place and being delivered		Core	Catherine Bowen / Heads of Service
		Review individual employee progress and set new objectives for coming financial year	All employees to have an active objective setting process by May 2023			Heads of Service

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing/Approved)	Officer
R1.5 Secure the financial Sustainability of the Council	2023/24	Deliver budget workshops for Councillors to ensure that all Councillors in the next term understand the financial position (New action)	100% Councillor attendance at workshop			Lisa Buckle
		Plan our budget engagement process with key stakeholders for Jan/-Mar 2024	An agreed engagement plan with survey questions for businesses.		Core	Pauline Henstock

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing/Approved)	Officer
R1.6		Closed – merged with action R1.5 as ensuring annual budgets meet requirements is a key part of our longer term financial planning				



Maximising Council Resources

Focus Area – Finance Fit for the Future

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
R1.7 Identify opportunities to spend more locally	2023/24	Deliver on our procurement strategy pledge to identify areas to increase local spend	Increased local spend		Core	Neil Hawke
		Plan and hold local supplier development sessions - delivery of a 'Meet the Buyer' day for the Council	Well attended local supplier sessions		£5,000	Rosie Wilson

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Officer
R1.8 Work across Devon to increase efficiency and share services where it means you get a better service	2023/24	Regular attendance at meeting of Devon Leaders and Chief Executives and Team Devon (focused meetings of all Devon Councils) to promote more opportunities			Core	Andy Bates
		Continue to participate in Devon Procurement Champions group and analyse other Councils procurement pipelines in order to identify opportunities for joint procurements	Pipeline of opportunities in place by September 2023		Core	Neil Hawke



Maximising Council Resources

Focus Area – Finance Fit for the Future

Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
R1.9 Lobbying for fairer funding for rural services	2023/24	Regular engagement with Rural Services Network to identify opportunities to maximise our voice	Share Ideas from the Rural Services Network seminar to the Resources Advisory Group to assist our financial planning		Core	Rural Services Network	Lisa Buckle
		Utilise analysis undertaken by Rural Services Network to support our lobbying of MP's on rural issues.	Include analysis within our responses to Government consultations		Core	Rural Services Network	Lisa Buckle
Action	Year	Specific Deliverables	Measures of Success	Resources (New)	Resources (Existing)	Key Partners	Officer
R1.10 Assess suitability of all Asset Base and Council owned property	2023/24	Continually review all Council assets	Identify opportunities for further investment or disposal opportunities (or change of use such as Kilworthy Park, Tavistock)		Core		Laura Wotton

How will we monitor progress?

Good business planning and effective performance management at the Council are strongly linked. Our strategic priorities and plans identify the objectives that we aim to deliver, with our performance management framework providing the mechanism for how we achieve these objectives and how we monitor progress.

Page 135
A Plan for West Devon sets out what the Council will be doing over the next three years to support the wellbeing and prosperity of residents, support our economy and to deliver efficient council services.

The thematic delivery plans as set out in this document will be embedded across the Council and monitored closely to ensure we deliver what we say we will.

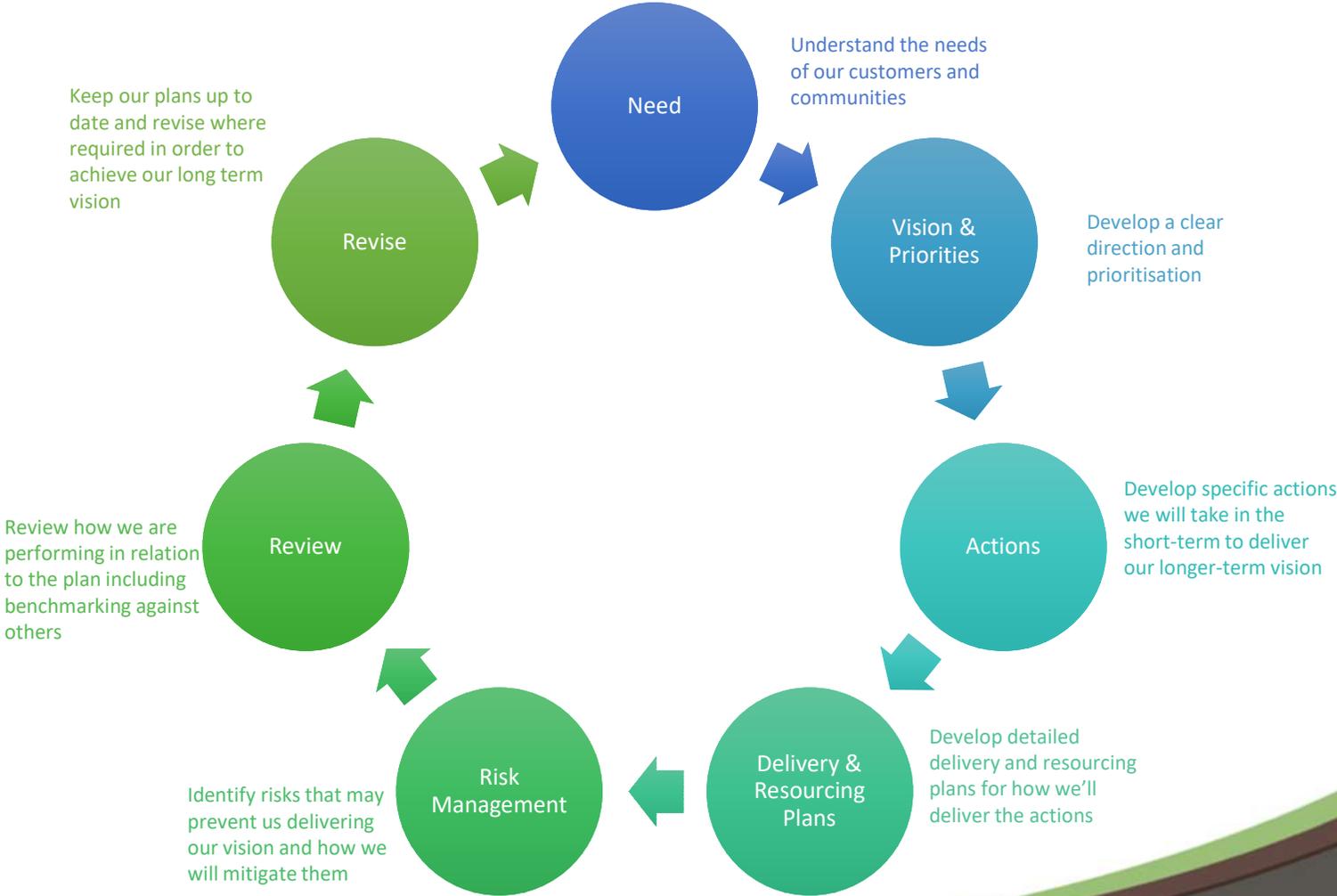
The following pages set out at a high level how we will ensure we manage delivery of our plans.



Performance Management Framework: **Key elements**

We'll keep our plans relevant and manage delivery of them by ensuring we follow these steps.

Page 136

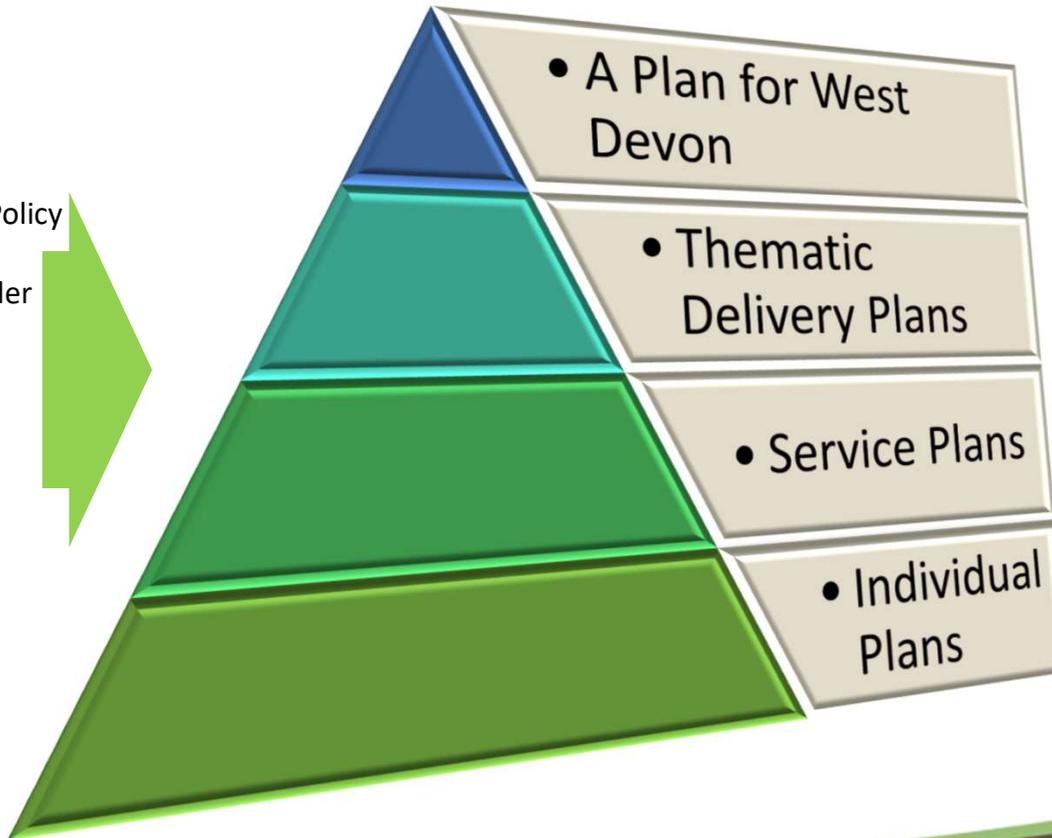


Performance Management: The Golden Thread

From Strategic priorities to individual targets

What shapes our plans?

- Research & Intelligence
- Consultations
- Legislation & Government Policy
- Partner and other stakeholder plans
- The budget available to us
- Risk Assessments



How will we know we're succeeding?

- Residents and customer feedback
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviews
- External assessments
- Performance and financial monitoring
- Benchmarking against other Councils
- Annual appraisals for staff members

Performance Management

Roles and Responsibilities

A Plan for West Devon

Contain

- Longer term vision for the area
- Our top priorities

Accountable: Leader, Chief Executive, SLT

Quarterly SLT & Hub Review Meetings

Thematic Delivery Plans

Contain

- Detailed plans for how we'll deliver the vision
- Resourcing

Accountable: Lead Councillor (and Advisory Group) and Officer Theme Lead

Monthly Progress updates in Pentana / Schedule of Updates to Hub/O&S

Service Plans

Contain

- Business as usual
- Improvement projects
- Key Performance measures for team

Accountable: Head of Service

Regular Service Performance Discussions with HoS and Teams

Individual Plans (Appraisals)

Contain

- Task and Behavioural objectives
- Individual performance measures
- Development Objectives

Accountable: Individual

Annual Appraisal Cycle
Regular 1:1's

• A Plan for West Devon

• Thematic Delivery Plans

• Service Plans

• Individual Plans

A Plan for West Devon

Performance Management

Strategy Performance Management reporting

The following sets out the annual reporting arrangements for monitoring progress against the Thematic Delivery Plan

Hub Committee	Full Council	Overview and Scrutiny	Audit Committee
<p>Progress meetings between Lead Members & Lead Officers to monitor progress - Monthly</p> <p>Update report on progress against overall strategy delivery and opportunity for Hub Leads to make minor changes - October /November</p>	<p>Adoption of next years Delivery Plans (Covering report will also include an update on overall performance from Hub) - Dec / January</p>	<p>Lead Member update report – 1 theme per meeting</p> <p>Report on operational KPI's – Quarterly</p>	<p>Update and consideration of Strategic Risks – aligned to themes - six monthly</p>
<p>Consider Annual Report (aligned to themes) and recommend to Full Council - June /July</p>	<p>Consider Annual Report on performance aligned to theme delivery – June /July</p>		

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Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **7 March 2023**
Title: **Recruitment and Retention**
Portfolio Area: **Leader of the Council – Cllr N Jory**

Wards Affected: **All**

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

Date next steps can be taken: Immediately following this meeting.
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision)

Author: **Andy Wilson** Role: **Head of Human Resources**

Contact: **01803 861154: andy.wilson@swdevon.gov.uk**

Recommendations:

That the Hub Committee:

- 1. Notes the action taken to respond to recruitment and retention challenges set out in paragraphs 2.4 to 2.9 of the report; and**
- 2. Considers the independent report on senior officer pay presented by the Local Government Association and makes such recommendations to Council as it considers appropriate in respect of the proposed revised pay and grading structure for the Senior Leadership Team, as set out in paragraph 3.2.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Council is currently experiencing recruitment and retention challenges. In February 2022, the Council introduced a market supplement policy that enables an enhancement to be made to the salary of certain roles in accordance with specified qualifying criteria. All enhancements are initially for a period of 2 years and are kept under review. The Council also undertook a job evaluation exercise on all principal professional and technical roles (level 4) and, with a new criterion that looked at the difficulty in attracting candidates for vacant roles and retaining existing employees. As a

result, it is proposed to implement a new pay band for senior, professional and technical roles (level 4B) and slight changes at the top of the salary range for senior and principal officers at Levels 5 and above.

- 1.2 In response to the challenges, the Leader commissioned the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a review of comparative salaries for chief executives and directors across a range of comparable local authorities. The independent review found that the remuneration levels were below the average for comparable roles and recommended a revised pay and grading structure.
- 1.3 It is recommended that the Hub Committee considers the report and recommends the adoption of the proposals on a revised pay and grading structure for the senior leadership team to Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council is currently experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties, particularly in technical and professional roles at senior and principal officers at level 5 and above.
- 2.2 The labour market has undergone significant changes following the pandemic, with much more widespread opportunities for remote working. As a result, the jobs market for a number of key roles is much more competitive than in the past with professionals able to work remotely for national or regional businesses, rather than being confined to employers within the typical 50 mile (1 hour) commuting distance.
- 2.3 Local government is facing particular challenges with recruitment and retention, which are further stressed by the differential in pay awards between the private sector and public sector. The Office for National Statistics reports that in the 10 months up to October 2022, the average wage growth in the public sector was 2.7% compared to 6.9% in the private sector.
- 2.4 In response, as part of its wider pay and reward strategy, the Council adopted a market supplement policy. This was designed to attract candidates to vacancies in positions that are hard to fill, and to help retain existing staff in senior technical and professional roles that are critical to maintaining service delivery and would be hard to replace. The policy had some success, but significant recruitment and retention challenges remained, particularly amongst key roles, such as planners and lawyers.
- 2.5 Alongside and to inform the introduction of the market supplement policy, the Head of Human Resources carried out a study of comparative salaries in roles across Devon district councils. This identified clearly that the Council is paying officers in these roles less than neighbouring authorities.

- 2.6 As a result, and following a job evaluation exercise, SLT intend to adopt a revised pay and grading structure that will introduce a new grade of L4B to increase the pay for principal officers in roles identified as being particularly challenging to recruit to. In addition, there will be a slight increase to the pay for officers at the top of their grade at L5, L4 and L3, designed as a reward and retention measure. The revised pay structure is due to take effect from 1 April 2023 and is within the budget agreed by council for the revenue budget in 2023-24 and within the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 2.7 The recent staff survey, while reasonably positive, highlighted employees had particular concerns around pay. The changes to pay and grading identified above are also intended to demonstrate a positive response to the genuine concerns of staff facing cost of living pressures. Alongside this a comprehensive organisational development plan is being developed to ensure that the Council makes the best 'employment offer', with an end-to-end approach covering recruitment, training and development, talent management and progression, to make us an employer of choice. The organisational development plan is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.8 The 2022 national pay award raised every point within the Council's pay structure by the equal amount of £1925pa. This approach agreed nationally with the trade unions addressed the pay challenges faced by the wider local government sector at the lower end of the pay structure, with the increase amounting to a nearly 10% increase on the Council's entry point for a business support officer. It did not however significantly address the difficulties faced by the Council in recruiting and retaining senior professional and technical officers, or senior leaders.
- 2.9 In the face of wider recruitment and retention challenges, the Leader commissioned the Local Government Association to carry out an independent report to benchmark senior pay against a range of comparative local authorities. All based on pay data for 2020-21.
- 2.10 The salaries of officers up to and including Directors are the responsibility of the Chief Executive acting as the Head of Paid Service. However, the salary of the Chief Executive is a decision to be taken by Full Council upon the recommendation of the Leader after taking appropriate advice.
- 2.11 The independent report compares current salary arrangements with those at a select group of councils nationally which share a senior management team and staffing structures, and by comparing the relative salaries of the Chief Executive and Directors across the districts in Devon. The Report is appended at Appendix B.
- 2.12 The report identifies the additional and specific critical thinking challenges and complexities for a chief executive and senior teams operating in joint management and shared services arrangements.

- 2.13 In early 2023, the results of a further survey of the salaries of chief executives in local authorities with shared arrangements was carried out. The report confirmed the findings of the LGA report and illustrated that the Council's pay for the Chief Executive is below the market rate, which has a mean pay range of £141,250 to £150,866.
- 2.14 At the same time recruitment and retention exercises undertaken in other Devon districts mean that the salary range for directors has increased in some, with near neighbours now offering a pay range up to £97,000 and £99,000 p.a. respectively.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1. The LGA report looks at:
- the salaries of chief executives in the 26 district councils nationally that have a joint chief executive shared between two councils
 - the comparative salaries across Devon district chief executives
 - the comparative salaries of Devon district chief executives expressed per 1,000 of the population served by the council.
 - the comparative salaries of Devon district directors.
- 3.2. The LGA report shows that the salaries of the chief executive and directors are out of line with national pay levels and concludes by making the following recommendations:
- adopt a three-point scale for the chief executive of £135,000, £140,000 and £145,000
 - adopt a 3-point scale for directors of £85,000, £90,000 and £95,000
- 3.3 The cost to West Devon Borough Council of implementing the LGA's recommendations would be £14,560 based on appointment to the bottom of the scale. This sum is already allocated within the council's agreed budget for 2023-24 and MTFS.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 The independent LGA report identifies the significant challenges in the labour market for senior officers in local government, especially in respect of our ability to recruit and retain the talents needed to meet our ambitions now and into the future for a residents, communities, and businesses.
- 4.2 To address the risk, it is the independent advice of the LGA that Council adopts a revised pay and grading structure.
- 4.3 Both councils have a shared workforce and fully integrated systems and processes. The medium-term financial strategy and budget reports to both councils sets out that both councils have benefited annually to the tune of £6 million between them by the efficiencies and financial gains resulting from a shared single workforce.

4.4 There are additional benefits in terms of the range of specialist roles the councils can retain as a result and the resilience provided. At the same time particularly for officers in senior roles there is the added complexity of working for two councils simultaneously which make the roles more demanding and challenging than working for a single council. This also increases the risk around recruitment and retention as officers working for two councils face specific challenges concerning competing priorities and a political decision making and operating context that require a higher skill set.

5. Proposed Way Forward

5.1. The Hub Committee is asked to consider the LGA Report and recommend the revised pay and grading structure for the senior leadership team to Full Council.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the Council to appoint a Head of Paid Service and to provide sufficient staffing resources needed to allow him/her to perform his/her duties
Financial	Y	<p>The revised pay and grading structure is due to come into effect from 1 April 2023 and is fully funded within the budget agreed by Council for the revenue budget for 2023-24 and the Council's medium-term financial strategy (MTFS)</p> <p>For staff currently on NJC grades, the combined effect of the national pay award, increments for those staff not at the top of scale, and the revisions to the grade structure at levels L5 to L3 will ensure that the minimum pay increase staff receive effective from 1 April 2023 (compared to April 2022) and prior to the addition of the national award is 6.0%.</p> <p>The cost of the senior pay proposals if agreed would be split between West Devon and South Hams on a 50:50 basis, with each council's share being £14,560 including salaries and on-costs. These costs are covered by the Council's revenue budget for 2023-24 and MTFS.</p>

Risk	N	The independent report identifies that the Council risks losing its talent in the challenging current labour market for senior officers The latest quarterly performance management report identifies that recruitment and retention is one of two key strategic risks with business continuity being the other. The proposals in this report are aimed at mitigating those risks
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	There are no equality or diversity implications associated with the report.
Safeguarding	N	There are no safeguarding implications associated with the report.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	There is no positive or negative impact on crime and disorder reduction associated with the report.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	There are no Health, Safety and Wellbeing implications associated with the report.
Other implications	N	There are no other implications associated with the report.

Supporting Information

Appendix A: Organisational Development Plan

Appendix B: Chief Executive and Senior Officer Pay and Grading
(Independent LGA 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. (Cabinet/Scrutiny)	Yes/No



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South Hams and West Devon Organisational Development Plan 2023-2026



February 2023



South Hams
District Council



West Devon
Borough Council



Dear colleagues

Today we publish our Organisational Development Plan.

The Plan sets out our commitment and a long-term vision for how we will lead, manage, support and develop our employees.

It is the culmination of many months of work involving staff at all levels and from services across the councils. I would like to thank all of you who contributed to it.

The Plan covers all aspects of workforce development at an individual, service and organisational level and its actions are intended to respond to the opportunities and challenges identified in the recent staff survey. It sets out our ambition to become – *'an employer of choice'* – and among the best local government employers in the region.

The key task now is for every one of us to take responsibility for the actions in the Plan in order to fulfil our ambitions to deliver the good quality, cost effective and responsive services our residents and communities expect from us.

Andy Bates

Chief Executive

South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council

14 February 2023



Doing the right things, at the right time in the right way

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Our commitment to you



Investing

in our People: a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce

Page 150

- IP 1.1 Rewarding and recognising your contributions
- IP 1.2 Ensuring you have the skills required to succeed in your role
- IP 1.3 Ensuring you have clear direction and management / supervisory support to deliver your roles
- IP 1.4 Ensuring we understand and listen to your views and let you know how we are responding
- IP 1.5 Creating positive working environments where you support each other and work together
- IP 1.6 Ensuring you contribute to increasing the Councils' good reputation and to be Community Leaders



Planning

our future workforce and being an employer of choice

- FW 1.1 Our Managers and Leaders will be positive role models who inspire, motivate and empower you to deliver excellent services, and we will ensure you have the skills to do this
- FW 1.2 Leading, developing and maintaining a high performing workforce
- FW 1.3 Engage effectively with our councillors
- FW 1.4 Work with external partners and bodies to ensure best value for our residents
- FW 1.5 Achieving best in class at awards and national standards



Building

Leadership and Management Capacity

- LM 1.1 We will have an innovative and effective approach to Staff Recruitment and Retention
- LM 1.2 Consistent and relevant suite of HR Policies
- LM 1.3 Identifying and planning for the future needs of the Organisation
- LM 1.4 Managing talent, providing opportunities to progress within the Organisation
- LM 1.5 Promoting Equality and Diversity across the Organisation





Investing in our People: a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce

We will aim to reward and recognise our People, ensuring that they have the right tools and technology to do their job with access to appropriate training to enable all colleagues to maximise the positive impact on our overall performance.

We will ensure that our People understand the purpose of their role and the objectives of their teams.

We will know we are succeeding when:

- Our staff survey shows that we have improved the Balance of the Deal between what our staff give to the Council and the support they receive from the Council in return
- People tell us that they feel that they are fairly rewarded and recognised for their work
- We have an effective and engaged Staff Forum which informs and champions our people policies

Investing in our People: a skilled, flexible and motivated workforce

IP 1.1 Rewarding and recognising our workforce for their contributions

IP	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.1	2023/24	<p>Review our Pay and Reward Strategy to ensure that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is fair, reasonable and affordable ● addresses the recruitment challenge in key technical and professional roles ● shares the benefits of working for our organisation with our staff ● is honest about the extent to which we can address this ● reviews the comparability of local and national labour markets <p>Also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a Reward and Recognition plan with non-pay benefits that recognises and celebrates success and healthy working lives. Explore Total Reward approach (see also IP 1.4 Internal Communications Plan). ● Actively promote available rewards and benefits (current and future staff). ● Promote policies that support reward and recognition (e.g. Volunteering policy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The measures taken are reflected in the Balance of the Deal in future staff surveys. ● Highly engaged staff who are proud to be working for the Councils and act as advocates for the Organisation. ● Increased promotion and take up of rewards and recognition. ● Raised awareness through increased conversations, website and recruitment process. ● Our staff tell us that they feel their contributions are valued.
1.1	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold annual Staff Recognition Awards and encourage organisation-wide participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual face to face event inviting all staff.
1.1	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relaunch Staff Forum / Voice so that our People can contribute to and influence our future (engaging with the unions). ● Relaunch a Staff Social Group for staff social events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Active and engaged Staff Voice to emerge from OD workshops. ● Programme of Occasional talks. Proactive and regular social events for cross organisational groups that all staff have the opportunity to attend.

IP 1.2 Ensuring our workforce have the skills required to succeed in their roles

IP	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.2	2023/24	Refreshing our Learning & Development (L&D) Plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that corporate and individual L&D Plans are driven by the needs of our staff as well as those of the organisation and which builds capability L&D resources are consistent, relevant, high quality and meet the future needs of the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership of L&D professional and personal development Evidenced discussions in 121 with manager on development needs People asking if they need training or development
1.2	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolling programme of Mandatory courses for all staff (e.g. H&S, well-being, safeguarding, customer service, equality, information governance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of people completed the mandatory courses within the required time limits
1.2	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review ownership of training budgets and application process Implement local discretion for training to the Heads with a formula for allocation for each service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear ownership of training budgets and criteria for applying Staff know how to access and gain approval for training & development
1.2	May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-learning / Teams / face to face Development Programme for cross organisational issues (e.g. report writing, dealing with complaints, political awareness, volunteering, project management) and which is accessible in the appropriate format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are aware of the development programme and the opportunities in it for them Increased confidence in the skills and knowledge across the organisation reflected in service improvements and 121 feedback
1.2	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring working with partners to maximise opportunities for shared learning and development and encourage cross departmental learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced learning opportunities with others
1.2	2023/24	Build a Data Base for L&D to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feedback and learning points accessible to all staff cross departmental learning and transfer of knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have an accessible data base of courses undertaken across the organisations and their effectiveness
1.2	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a refresh and monitor the L&D programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidenced report to SLT on the number and effectiveness of L&D.

IP 1.3 Ensuring all employees have clear direction and management / supervisory support to deliver their roles

IP	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.3	January – April 2023	<p>Embed effective Performance Management (PM) across all services so that everyone knows what is expected of them, what their role is and have opportunities to talk to managers about what support and tools they need to carry out that role to the best of their ability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective setting appraisals in line with Service Plans ● Assessment against a Core Competency Framework ● Regular 121s (professional and personal development, health & well-being) ● Team meetings (face to face once a month) ● Effective guidance and training from manager ● Role profiles for all roles setting out purpose, skills, experience needed for that role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% completion of objective setting appraisal within the annual cycle ● Clear understanding between appraisal objectives and team objectives ● PM and Service updates evidence that effective appraisals and dialogues are happening across the Organisation. ● A significant increase in the number of staff who feel they have the resources and tools needed to do their job. ● Staff say that they are supported to achieve the highest standards in their work
1.3	February – May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement iTrent Performance Management Module – all staff have an effective and auditable annual objective setting and 121 cycle. Ensure that management and support is consistent across the Organisation ● Practical training for all managers on the PM module 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% completion of training for PM module by all relevant staff
1.3	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of annual objectives, and 121 process to ensure effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effective PM across the organisation and evidence of performance improvement through service plans and KPIs

IP 1.4 Make sure we understand and listen to the views of our staff, and let them know how we are responding

IP	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.4	2023/24	<p>Adopt an Internal Communications Plan to ensure that we are communicating in a really clear way using effective narratives and visuals. This will include training and awareness for all those that need it. Messaging will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● about and relevant to, our people and will support our people ● Inspirational biogs (professional or personal success stories) ● promoting growing our own stories and other achievements ● how we make member decisions happen e.g. funding successes ● about sharing good practice and collaborative working <p>Also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invest in high quality visual technology ● Media training for relevant staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All staff fully aware of the Communications Plan and targets to be integrated into all Service Plans ● Increased visibility of SLT, Heads and senior managers ● Our staff tell us that they feel informed, listened to and understand matters that affect them ● Data monitoring shows significant increase in staff awareness of communications ● The corporate reporting structure from SLT is cascaded through to team meetings, with evidenced opportunity for upwards reporting
1.4	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Staff Survey (full and pulse surveys) to listen to the views of all staff (and sharing with the Unions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surveys take place and evidenced actions on areas that need improving
1.4	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitoring & Reviewing Communications Plan to ensure that it remains relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask staff if messaging and communications has improved since the previous year

IP 1.5 Create positive working environments where our people support each other and work together

IP	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.5	2023/24	<p>Refresh the Health, Safety & Well-being framework to support our People to develop organisational capability and so that they feel well and safe at work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be clear to staff what or offer is ● Make available high quality information and interventions concerning health and well-being ● Identify budget for future support of H&W ● Pulse survey specifically on H&W staff suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All staff aware of the support available and how to access ● Promote framework and website refreshed ● Reduced absence rates for stress and anxiety (%) ● Increased involvement in council wide initiatives (staff survey, social events, occasional talks) ● Audit recommendations fully implemented
1.5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Renew commitment to Mindful Employer – raise awareness with staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff tell us that they are aware of the Commitments to Mindful Employer
1.5	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review monitor and further develop Health, Safety & Well-being framework ● Implement the Health & Safety Strategy to address all of our statutory duties 	

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IP 1.6 Ensuring our people contribute to increasing the Councils' good reputation and to be Community Leaders

IP	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Managers will consider opportunities to increase engagement with our communities through Town/Parish Councils and utilising the volunteer policy to support community schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engagement is reflected in the recognition and reward in IP 1.1 ● Increased participation in relevant community events across both areas
1.6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will actively ensure that we consider opportunities for care leavers, ex-military personnel, disabled residents and other disadvantaged groups within our communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A more diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of our communities



Planning our future workforce and being an employer of choice

We have a clear ambition to become an Employer of Choice with a recognisable branding and reputation as a great place to work.

We will have an innovative recruitment and retention policy to recruit, retain and grow talent within the Organisation.

We will also provide opportunity for growing our own through apprenticeship and graduates schemes and recognise the importance of succession planning and talent management for our future success.

We will listen to our people and improve our part of the deal so that we achieve a more balanced relationship with our staff.

We will know we are succeeding when:

- We are an Employer of Choice
- We see an increase in the number of applications and we can successfully appoint to all vacant roles
- We have an increased number of trainees and apprenticeships and clear progression plans across the organisation
- Our customer and communities tell us that we are providing a great service.

Planning our future workforce and being an employer of choice

FW 1.1 We will have an innovative and effective approach to Staff Recruitment and Retention

FW	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.1	January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implement a more effective and simplified process for approving vacancies, grade reviews/merits/ secondments / temporary posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies are filled in a timely way based on a sound business case with identified finances There is a clear, simple process for vacancies, grade reviews etc. published to all relevant staff
1.1	Feb - June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To implement a refreshed and innovative Recruitment Framework from end to end, to attract the right people to the right roles which will include: Clarity on what our offer is to applicants Tailor-made website promoting our area, the organisation, our priorities and values, our people, rewards and recognition Targeted and innovative advertising & use of social media Raising our profile with career fairs, colleges, schools, apprenticeship and graduates schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are successful in our recruitment campaigns for roles across the organisation We have reduced our staff turnover inline with our targets New staff tell us the recruitment and on-boarding process was engaging and relevant
1.1	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a refreshed and welcoming, structured end to end to On-boarding process, with a refresh of the Induction and Probation process (to include an initial face to face session and buddy system for all new starters) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback interviews with new members of staff and implement improvements Refreshed probation process used consistently across the Organisation
1.1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a transparent and evidenced based approach to workforce planning through workforce diagnostics data e.g. age profiling, male/female ratios, sickness profiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly reports to SLT Changes reflected in our recruitment practices

FW 1.2 Consistent and relevant suite of HR Policies

FW	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.2	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh our HR policies so that they reflect current ambitions and are aligned to our organisational aims, and which are consistent, relevant to those who use them, through a planned programme of review and communication. To engage the Staff Voice in this process. Consistent implementation of our HR policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned programme of review and evidence that all staff aware of what policies say.

FW 1.3 Identifying and planning for the future needs of the Organisation

FW	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.3	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify future skills requirements across all services All Service Plans will include effective workforce and succession planning Refresh and awareness of our policies such as Flexible Retirement to ensure knowledge remains within the Organisation Understand approaches being taken by other authorities in the South West and sharing knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framework for upskilling and reskilling People in place All Service Plans have a clear plan for succession planning Relevant policies refreshed and promoted to all staff

FW 1.4 Managing talent, providing opportunities to progress within the Organisation

FW	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.4	2023/24	Develop and implement a framework that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides opportunities for our people to progress through the Organisation ● Enables growing our own through apprenticeships and graduate schemes ● Explores joint training opportunities with other organisations ● Highlight success stories of our own people ● Positive recruitment of looked after children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear development pathways for keys roles ● People tell us that they feel supported in their career development ● Rolling programme for apprenticeships and graduates with accompanying training and development programme ● Increased (%) of apprenticeship and graduates ● Successful joint training where appropriate

FW 1.5 Promoting Equality and Diversity across the Organisation

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FW	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.5	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will develop and deliver an Equality and Diversity Plan with a supporting training programme to raise awareness (include in L&D Programme) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People are fully aware of our commitment to equality and diversity ● Training completed by all staff
1.5	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a set of criteria to evidence compliance with the Equality and Diversity Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Criteria set up and monitored
1.5	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation in national events supporting Equality & Diversity ● Development of a targeted recruitment campaign for care leavers – working with Devon County Council ● Career days ● Clear policies and guidance for promoting fostering, adoption ● Work towards National Equalities Standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance and publicity of participation ● IIP / Equalities standard /Times top 100 – is recognised by employees and in the sector as a good employer
1.5	2025/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achieve National Equalities Standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achieve NEC Certificate



Building Leadership and Management Capacity

We recognise that in order to deliver on our promise to our People we need to invest in our current leaders and managers.

It is important that all our Managers:

- are visible and accessible
- lead by example and are positive role models
- motivate and empower our people to deliver our services
- provide support to enable our people to deliver and grow
- are clear and frequent communicators and listeners

We will know we are succeeding when:

- Our staff tell us their Managers are doing a great job and are leading with confidence and commitment
- We have measured an increase in performance
- We are short-listed in national Good Council and Staff awards

Building Leadership & Management Capacity

LM 1.1 Our Managers and Leaders will be positive role models who inspire, motivate and empower our staff to deliver excellent services, and we will ensure they have the skills to do this

LM	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.1	February – June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will Introduce a Core Competency Framework to provide clarity and consistency about the skills and knowledge that our Heads of Service and Senior Managers need and set out how we want them to behave at work. The Competency Framework will measure the effectiveness of leadership behaviour. <p>Note: there will be core competencies for all staff with additional specific competencies for SLT, Assistant Directors, Heads of Service and Managers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of use of Competency Framework in recruitment, performance management, service delivery and learning & development Measurable improvement in service delivery and customer satisfaction Our staff tell us that managers are leading by example, and are visible role models Managers give positive feedback to their teams
1.1	May / June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and roll out a Leadership Development Programme for Heads of Service which is built on the Competency Framework to give them the tools to lead their teams with confidence and develop a corporate, consistent, responsible and strategic outlook, whilst supporting their teams and individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A visible, accessible and trusted leadership team Our staff survey says that Heads are leading with openness, confidence and commitment Our KPIs / customer feedback tells us that our Service performance has improved Evidenced team meetings, 121s and cascade of information
1.1	2023 / 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on our Managers' Development Programme for senior managers with line management responsibilities to increase their effectiveness so they are excellent people managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of initial Programme by April 2023 and progression for relevant staff through accredited course and further training
1.1	April 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out clear routes for the development of our leaders and managers including coaching, mentoring, secondment and shadowing opportunities, and peer review involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uptake of these opportunities with evidenced increased leadership qualities of our managers and leaders through appraisals and 121s

LM	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.1	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review effectiveness of Leaders and Management Development Programmes and Competencies to ensure that they continue to be effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Development programmes Reviewed Competency Framework Feedback says that their managers are leading with a clear sense of direction and leadership

LM 1.2 Leading, developing and maintaining a high performing workforce

LM	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.2	April 2023	<p>Heads of Services will drive continuous improvements in Service Delivery and will Performance Manage their teams by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> managing and delivering relevant service delivery plans and KPIs with regular reporting performance managing their Teams through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> objective setting appraisals assessment against competency framework regular 121s (including professional and personal development, health & well-being) regular team meetings (face to face once a month) motivating and empowering their teams providing guidance and training role profiles for all staff regular conversations with all team members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Management via iTrent with quarterly reports to SLT Objective setting for all staff completed by May 2023 Evidenced team meetings taking place Service updates to SLT Sharing of best practice across services Our staff tell us that they are supported in their personal and professional growth, continuous learning with the right tools to do their job well

LM 1.3 Engage effectively with our councillors

LM	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.3	2023/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political awareness – Senior managers engagement with political leaders to understand and deliver corporate strategies and priorities. ● Mentoring from SLT on how to better perform strategically and politically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive feedback from our Councillors on improved engagement and awareness

LM 1.4 Work with external partners and bodies to ensure best value for our residents

LM	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.4	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative working across the Organisation and effective working with other partners and organisations exploring other leadership initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing and building on relationships with other partners and organisations.

LM 1.5 Achieving best in class at awards and national standards

LM	Year	Specific actions	Measure of success
1.5	2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achieving the criteria in Investors in People Accreditation ● Achievement national award standards for performance, supporting people, innovation, good employer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working towards achieving and maintaining awards and accreditations



Success

We will know we are succeeding when:

- There is a more balanced relationship between the organisation and our staff
- We have addressed the current key drivers that are highlighted in staff feedback and surveys
- We can communicate with each other across the organisation effectively



And we'll monitor progress of the Plan through:

- Monthly meetings of the Strategic Delivery Board
- Keeping all staff updated through 'The Flash'
- Encouraging ideas and thoughts from you on our progress through team meetings and focus group





South Hams
District Council

www.southhams.gov.uk



West Devon
Borough Council

www.westdevon.gov.uk

Appendix B

Chief Executive and Senior Officer Pay and Grading South Hams and West Devon Councils

1. Background and Purpose

This report has been requested by the Leaders of the respective councils. It follows changes already made and others being planned, across the senior officer structure which covers both councils. These changes are set against a backcloth of significant challenge within the local and national labour market for senior officers in Local Government, especially in respect of recruiting and retaining the talent your councils require to meet their ambitions now and into the future.

Your current joint chief executive has been in post since June 2020. Since then, he has been reviewing services and realigning management arrangements to enhance capacity and capability across the Councils' shared officer team. Your Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprises a chief executive and the 4 directors reporting directly to him:

- Director – customer service and delivery (also deputy chief executive)
- Director – place and enterprise
- Director – strategic finance
- Director – strategy and governance

Given this and considering the recent regional and national job/pay developments referred to, now is an appropriate time for the councils to take stock of both its chief executive salary as well as its senior officer pay and grading structure. The LGA has been asked to provide some advice in respect of this for the council leaders to consider.

In doing so, this report compares your current arrangements with other relevant groups. At this stage that has been done by comparing the pay rates of chief executive and director salaries nationally in respect of a select group of councils who share a senior management team and staffing structure, as well as locally, by comparing the pay scales of chief executives and directors across the districts in Devon.

Having made these relevant comparisons, the report provides a commentary upon them as well as providing additional contextual background/information. Finally, it makes recommendations in the light of this for you to consider.

2. Management and Shared Services Comparisons

Joint management teams and shared services are a feature of districts in more than half of the county council areas and are recognised as an effective way of achieving cost efficiency in senior management pay while maintaining sufficient capacity and the necessary levels of technical and professional competency that may not be affordable in separate arrangements.

There are 26 district councils nationally which have a joint chief executive shared between two councils (Appendix 1). These arrangements are geographically widespread across the country from Lancashire in the North to Devon in the Southwest, East Sussex on the South Coast and Norfolk to the East.

Given the nature of such arrangements and most especially where councils, such as yours, embark on further changes, it is critical that from time to time pay rates are compared to other councils with similar arrangements to ensure these are comparable and competitive for both chief executive, corporate director level and head of service.

While the size of districts, their populations and budgets vary considerably, the management challenge of leading two councils is remarkably similar across the board.

Appendix 1 shows that joint chief executive salaries range from £120,000 to £179,000, with median pay at £139,038 p.a. and mean pay at £144,461 to £146,077 p.a. based on pay data for 2020-21.

Furthermore, the salaries of strategic directors, or equivalent roles, reporting direct to chief executives in these authorities also span a considerable range. The lowest start at £74,000 in South Hams and West Devon. The highest are Staffordshire Moorlands and High Peak at £130,489. The median pay of strategic directors is £96,804. The mean pay for the role of a strategic director or equivalent is £97,638 to £99,760.

Comparison with Chief Executives in Devon Districts (by salary and population)

Appendix 2 shows the comparative salaries across the Devon district chief executives. A quick comparison might conclude that the salary for the South Hams and West Devon Chief Executive is roughly aligned with those of the other Devon districts, however:

- It is at the bottom of the scale in terms of pay per head and,
- It does not reflect the fact that it is one postholder carrying out two jobs, rather than one

Based upon the information shown in Appendix 2 if you:

- took the median for salary/1,000 population of £899 and applied that to South Hams and West Devon, the salary would be £129,532.
- added a modest supplement, say between 10-20% to reflect the challenges and complexities of it being one job with two councils, rather than one job with one, the salary would be in the range of £132,000 to £144,000

Comparison with Director Roles

Typically, strategic directors in joint management arrangements are paid around two-thirds of the salaries of their respective chief executive. On that basis, bearing in mind the salary ranges above there is a good argument to introduce a 3-point scale for directors of £85-£90-£95k (your current posts have a 3-point increment scale already). This would also bring director's salaries into line with other Devon districts of a similar scale, which have a range from £78,090 to £95,994 and a median of £84,701 based on senior pay in 2020, as reported in the statement of accounts for 2020-21. Appendix 3 shows director pay comparisons with Devon districts of a similar scale.

Implications for Overall Senior Officer Structure and Pay

The proposals above create suitable headroom, which in turn then allow for appropriate adjustments in pay at the senior technical and professional and head of service level where pay rates for some roles are out of line with neighbouring councils and the local labour market rates, which is impacting significantly on the councils' ability to attract and retain staff in these critical roles.

In addition, there are important considerations to be made here now, both in terms of span of control and management challenge; witness the recent changes that have taken place in respect of the in-sourcing of the waste contract (and the associated increase/complexity in the councils' workforce and its demands). This will naturally have implications for the rest of the structure, especially at Assistant Director level and below. By making the changes suggested this will calibrate and set the framework for a further review of posts below the SLT, utilising the appropriate job evaluations methodologies, in line with the wider organisational changes planned for the councils.

3. Other Relevant Information/Context

The recent national pay offer for 2022/23 chief executives and other Local Government staff is a flat £1,925.

The LGC's salary tracker, published earlier this month, indicated that between February 2020-January 2022, the average salary for a new chief executive was £154,764.

Torbay Council recently advertised for a Director of Pride in Place Role (and DCX) with a salary of up to £140k, which encompassed all of the district functions. Torbay population is 134,500 so just less than combined South Hams and West Devon population

Like all councils, South Hams and West Devon has suffered recruitment and retention issues in its senior technical and professional / management roles that has impacted upon capacity and delivery. Key issues include:

- Given the relative low level of the salary for the chief executive, this means that the relative salary for your directors is equally low
- To add to the challenge, the councils are also struggling to fill roles at head of service level (reporting to directors) and at principal officer levels in professional and technical roles
- An initial analysis suggests pay levels at principal officer level, including for senior technical and professional roles, are below those of other Devon districts
- You are already looking at use of market supplements and increasing pay at these levels including creating a new assistant director level role in planning in order to remain competitive (of course this then erodes the gap on directors pay)

Therefore, there is a clear case to consider what actions you will need to take to ensure you remain competitive on pay in order that you are able to retain and/or attract people nationally to challenging roles in what is an incredibly expensive area in which to live. The conclusions and recommendations below represent a road map to help you address this.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The salary for the Chief Executive of South Hams and West Devon, when compared to relevant national and local comparisons shows that it is currently paid the lowest of all joint district chief executive posts, and likewise it is paid the lowest when compared to population figures in Devon, this despite the fact that it is one chief executive supporting two councils.

Based on uplifting the current salary for your joint chief executive (£125k), to the median would put it in the range £135k - £149k p.a.

The rest of SLT have always been on a 3 incremental salary scale footing (the top of the current grade is £79,500) – this allows for progression and rewarding performance.

In terms of something that is equitable when compared to other joint chief executives nationally and locally, and which reinforced your three-point increment approach a salary range of £135-140-- £145k with 3 equal increments, rather than a spot point, seems appropriate. This way the cost increase this created would be more manageable for the councils and would reflect time served and experience too – this is also in line with what some other authorities do.

Once the range for the chief executives pay has been set, the director and head of service roles will need to be reviewed in the light of this change.

The costings for the changes that are highlighted in the recommendations below amount to c. £30k per annum.

Recommendations

- 1) Review the salary of your joint chief executive and consider appointing to a 3-point scale £135-£140-£145k
- 2) Review the salaries of your director level posts and consider appointing a to 3 point scale from £85-90-95k
- 3) Once 1 and 2 are complete, undertake a pay review for your middle managers and senior technical and professional roles, calibrated by the chief executive and director pay recommendation, ensuring it: is undertaken utilising the relevant job evaluation tools, enables you to deliver your priorities more effectively, enhances the capacity of your senior team, is delivered within an agreed budgetary framework, rewards performance, and delivery

5. Next Steps

This report has been produced by Paul Clarke, Principal Advisor for the Local Government Association, in the South West. Paul would be very happy to discuss the report, its findings and recommendations with you. paul.clarke@local.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Salaries of District Councils with Joint Chief Executives

Council Name (County)	Salary (£) *
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (Oxfordshire)	179,348
South Norfolk and Broadlands (Norfolk)	166,714
Staffordshire Moorlands and High Peak (Staffs/ Derbyshire)	164,362
Waverly and Guildford (Surrey)	150,000
South Ribble and Chorley (Lancashire)	145,000
Lewes and Eastbourne (East Sussex)	141,123
Bromsgrove and Redditch (Worcestershire)	139,038
Wychavon and Malvern Hills (Worcestershire)	135,316
East Hampshire and Havant (Hampshire)	134,959
Cannock Chase and Stafford (Staffordshire)	134,798
Adur and Worthing (West Sussex)	134,000 – 155,000
Babergh and Mid Suffolk (Suffolk)	133,344
South Hams and West Devon (Devon)	120,000

Median pay = £139,038

Mean pay = £144,461 to £146,077

*Information taken from statement of accounts for 2020-21/ comparable pay policy statements

Notes:

- The comparative pay relates for the most part to the 2020-21 financial year
- The arrangement for Cannock Chase and Stafford is more recent – effective from 1 June 2021
- Guildford and Waverly appointed a new joint CX in November 2021
- The previous joint management arrangements have been discontinued for Breckland / South Holland and Bolsover/NE Derbyshire

Appendix 2: Devon District Chief Executives Comparisons

Information provided on salaries has been taken from the annual statement of accounts for 2020-21.

District	Salary
Torridge	£101,944
North Devon	£104,494
Mid Devon	£111,281
Teignbridge	£119,288
Exeter	£119,954
South Hams and West Devon	£120,000
East Devon	£124,385

The table below compares the Devon salaries to population figures - (£) per 1,000 population.

District	Population	£ per 1,000 pop
Torridge	68,719	£1,483/1,000 pop
North Devon	98,170	£939/1,000 pop
Mid Devon	83,290	£1,688/1,000 pop
Teignbridge	135,039	£883/1,000 pop
Exeter	133,333	£899/1,000 pop
South Hams and West Devon	144,085	£832/1,000 pop
East Devon	148,080	£839/1,000 pop

Appendix 3: Devon District Director Comparisons

Information provided on salaries has been taken from the annual statement of accounts for 2020-21.

Teignbridge - four Heads of Service reporting to the Managing Director on salaries ranging from £78,090 to £95,994

Exeter - there are six directors on £85,521

South Hams and West Devon – there are four directors up to £74,000

East Devon – four strategic directors at up to £84,701 (there is a pay review in progress)

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