

West Devon Hub Committee



West Devon
Borough
Council

Title:	Agenda
Date:	Tuesday, 22nd March, 2016
Time:	2.00 pm
Venue:	Chamber - Kilworthy Park
Full Members:	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman Sanders</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vice Chairman Baldwin</p> <p><i>Members:</i> Cllr M J R Benson Parker Cann Sampson Moody Samuel Oxborough</p>
Substitutes:	Councillors:
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:	Member.Services@swdevon.gov.uk

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests, including the nature and extent of such interests they may have in any items to be considered at this meeting.

If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination, bias or interests in items on this Agenda, then please contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

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 - 6

Minutes of meeting held 25 February 2016 (previously circulated)

5. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/16 (Cllr Cann)

7 - 18

6. Capital Budget Monitoring 2015/2016 (Cllr Cann)

19 - 30

7. T18 Budget Monitoring (Cllr Sanders)

31 - 44

9. Corporate Debt Recovery (Cllr Moody)

45 - 58

10. Communications Policy and Protocols (Cllr Sanders)

59 - 120

11. The Future of the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee (DAWRRC) (Cllr Sampson)

121 - 132

12. Procurement Strategy (Cllr Sampson)

133 - 158

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Agenda Item 4

At a Meeting of the **HUB COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the **25th** day of **FEBRUARY, 2016** at **2.00pm**

Present:

	Cllr P R Sanders – Chairman
	Cllr R E Baldwin – Vice-Chairman
Cllr M J R Benson	Cllr W G Cann OBE
Cllr J B Moody	Cllr R J Oxborough
Cllr G Parker	Cllr R D Sampson
Cllr L Samuel	

In attendance:

- Executive Director (Strategy and Commissioning)
- Lead Specialist Planning
- Case Manager Team Leader
- S151 Officer
- Senior Case Manager

Other Members in attendance:

Cllrs T G Pearce

***HC 53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies were received from Cllr R E Baldwin.

***HC 54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed but none were made.

***HC55 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2016/17**
The Chairman presented a report that sought approval of the formal council tax resolutions as set out in the presented report for 2016/17.

Some Members raised concerns over the increase in council tax proposed by West Devon Borough Council, particularly in light of current standards of service not being as high as they should. The Lead Member for Customer First responded that he understood the perception, and he was working with officers to ensure that things were being put in place to address areas of poor service. He asked that any specific problems, where possible, be reported online, as this would ensure an audit trail of the issue.

Following a discussion on service levels, a Member noted that all authorities responsible for council tax were under pressure as a result of reduced funding from central government.

It was then **RESOLVED:**

1. That it be noted that in January 2016 the Senior Leadership Team, under delegated authority from full Council, approved the Council Tax Base for the year 2016/17
 - (a) for the whole Council area as 19,733.41 in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base)(England) Regulations 2012; and
 - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish Precept relates in accordance with regulation 6 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base)(England) Regulations 2012 **(Appendix A)**

2. That the Council Tax requirement for West Devon Borough Council's own purposes for 2016/17 (excluding Parish precepts) is calculated at £4,210,912 **(Appendix B)**.

3. That the following amounts are calculated by the Council for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Localism Act 2011 **(Appendix B)**:
 - (a) £26,246,934 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish/Town Councils **(Gross expenditure including parish precepts)**.

 - (b) £20,806,717 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act **(Total income including formula grant and council tax surplus)**.

 - (c) £5,440,217

 - (d) 275.69 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act as its Council Tax

requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act) **(Council tax requirement including parish precepts).**

(e) £1,229,305

being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by the council tax base (1(a) above) in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year **(Average band D council tax for West Devon Borough Council and parishes).**

(f) £213.39

being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Precepts), referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached **Appendix C – Parish Precepts).**

being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) by the Council tax base (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates **(Band D council tax for West Devon Borough Council only).**

4. That it be noted the County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings as shown below:

Precepting authority	Valuation Bands							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Devon County Council's tax requirements	805.08	939.26	1,073.44	1,207.62	1,475.98	1,744.34	2,012.70	2,415.24
Police & Crime Commissioner's tax requirements	115.23	134.43	153.64	172.84	211.25	249.66	288.07	345.68
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority's tax requirements	53.32	62.21	71.09	79.98	97.75	115.53	133.30	159.96

5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2016/17 for each of the categories of dwellings shown at **Appendix D (total of all valuation band council taxes for West Devon Borough Council including parishes, county, police and crime commissioner and fire authority)**.
6. That the Council concluded that the basic amount of Council Tax for West Devon Borough Council for 2016/17 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992 (see calculation at **Appendix B**).

HC 56

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

(Paragraph 7 – Information relating to any action taken, or to be taken, in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime)

The Lead Hub Member for Customer First introduced the report which outlined a proposal of how the Planning Enforcement service could be resourced to more effectively handle and respond to incoming enquiries and complaints, while also working through and closing the existing backlog of open cases.

Members had a long and detailed discussion on this item and the Lead Specialist – Planning, and Case Management Team Leader, responded to a number of questions relating to process, capacity within Planning and Legal and Ward Member involvement. A major concern for Members was

that the impact of addressing enforcement cases may have a relative impact on the workload of planning officers as additional applications were brought forward. Members were advised that there was sufficient capacity within the staff to deal with any additional workload that arose as a result.

It was then **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the Planning Enforcement plan to address the backlog of cases within 12 months from 1 March 2016; and
2. That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the costs for resourcing the planning enforcement team are met from the 2015/16 predicted revenue budget underspend of £70,000 (as per Table 1 and Table 2 of the presented report).

HC 57

RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to re-admit members of the public to the meeting.

(The Meeting terminated at 3.35 pm)

Chairman

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Agenda Item 5

Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **22 March 2016**
Title: **Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/2016**
Portfolio Area: **Support Services – Cllr Cann OBE**
Wards Affected: **All**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Internal**

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

Author: **Alex Walker** Role: **Finance Business Partner**
Contact: **Tel. 01803 861345**
E-mail: alexandra.walker@swdevon.gov.uk

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Hub Committee resolves to:-

- i. Note the forecast income and expenditure variations for the 2015/16 financial year and the overall projected underspend of £60,000.

1. Executive summary

- 1) This report enables Members to monitor income and expenditure variations against the approved budget for 2015/16, and provides a forecast for the year end position.

2. Background

- 1) The Council's finance procedure rules require budget monitoring reports to be made on a regular basis to the Hub Committee as part of the Council's arrangements for budget management.

3. Outcomes/outputs

1) Budget Overview

The gross service expenditure budget for 2015/16 was set at £26 million (£7.26 million net). Actual net revenue expenditure is forecast to be £7.2 million when compared to the total budget set for 2015/16. **The table below shows a predicted under spend of £60,000 for 2015/16. At the Hub Committee meeting on 25 February 2016, it was approved to recommend to Council to fund the costs for resourcing the planning enforcement team of £53,485 from the predicted revenue budget underspend for 2015/16.**

Table 1 below provides an analysis of the projected variances against budget.

TABLE 1: 2015/16 BUDGET FORECAST

	2015/16 Budget expenditure /(income) £000	Budget variations increase/ (decrease) £000	£000	Note
APPROVED BUDGET			7,262	
Reductions in expenditure/additional income				
Car Park Income	(860)	(25)		A
Legal – Additional Income	(6)	(15)		B
Housing Benefit Recoveries	-	(45)		C
Homelessness, Aid & Advice	50	(30)		D
Revenue & Benefits – Equipment Maintenance	45	(15)		E
Waste Contract	1,402	(120)		F
Land Charges – Government Grant	-	(45)		G
Investment Income	(40)	(15)		H
Other Staffing Expenses	184	(80)		I

	2015/16 Budget expenditure /(income) £000	Budget variations increase/ (decrease) £000	£000	Note
New Governance Arrangements	28	(20)		J
Elections	55	(20)		K
Small Underspends		(20)		L
<i>Sub total of variations</i>			(450)	
Increases in expenditure/reductions in income				
Salaries and Agency Costs	-	160		M
Kilworthy Park - Additional Lettings Income	(70)	15		N
Kilworthy Park – Reduced running costs	291	65		N
Recycling Credits	(420)	60		O
Planning Application Income	(388)	60		P
<i>Sub total of variations</i>			360	
Financing: Funding to/from Earmarked Reserves				
Homelessness Prevention Reserve (HC 39)	n/a	30		
<i>Sub total of variations</i>			30	
PROJECTED OUTTURN			7,202	
PROJECTED UNDERSPEND			(60)	

Notes

- A. **Car Park Income** – Car parking income is currently higher than the target for the first ten months of 2015/16. This trend is expected to continue and income is predicted to be £25,000 above the target.
- B. **Legal Income** – Additional fees and charges income of £15,000 relating to S106 receipts.

- C. **Housing Benefit recovery of overpayments** – Additional income from the recovery of overpayments (budgeted expenditure for Housing Benefit in 2015/16 is £13 million).
- D. **Homelessness Aid & Advice** – The Council receives a Government grant towards the costs of homelessness prevention. The Council has predominantly funded homelessness costs through the Local Welfare Support Grant which has reduced the amount spent against the Government grant. The balance of £30,000 is to be set aside in an Earmarked Reserve for Homelessness to cover additional costs in the winter months in future years (HC 39).
- E. **Revenue & Benefits** – Expenditure on equipment maintenance is currently lower than anticipated and is predicted to be underspent by £15,000.
- F. **Waste Contract** – The Council's waste contract is reviewed annually and an inflationary increase is applied based on a formula which takes into account factors such as fuel prices and the average earnings index. This year the inflationary increase is -1.72% (this is calculated after the budget setting process). Therefore the inflationary cost pressure of £80,000 which was built into the 2015/16 base budget (as a provision) is not required in 2015/16. The Council is also no longer paying a green waste gate fee.
- G. **Land Charges** – A new burdens grant for Local Land Charges has been received from the Government of just over £45,000. This is a reimbursement from the Government for the costs of the national legal case regarding Land Charges. As the Council funded these costs in the 2014-15 financial year, the timing difference on this new burdens grant being received means that this is additional income in 2015-16 as the costs have been previously financed.
- H. **Investment Income** – The Council has secured a better rate for Money Market Fund investments that are used to manage day to day cash flows, and improved use of fixed term deals with the banks currently on the Council's Counterparty list. An additional income of £15,000 is expected.
- I. **Other Staffing Expenses** – There is a predicted underspend of £80,000 on staff related expenditure such as travel, subscriptions and other associated costs. Following the Council's Transformation Programme, the staffing workforce is 30% smaller with all staff roles changing to be flexible and responsible to the needs of the customer.
- J. **New Governance Arrangements** – A cost pressure of £28,000 was built into the 2015/16 budget to reflect the need for an extensive review to be carried out into the Scheme of Members Allowances. This was a precautionary estimate and has not been fully utilised, resulting in a saving of £20,000.

- K. **Elections** – An estimate of £50,000 was built into the 2015/16 budget for the cost of Elections in 2015/16. This was built into the modelling as a one off cost pressure in view of the complexity of the elections in May 2015, involving Parliamentary, Borough, and town/parish polls, in tandem with implementing changes to ward boundaries arising from the Boundary Committee’s decisions. The Council’s funding has been supported by a grant from government for the national elections resulting in only £30,000 of the £50,000 required to meet the cost.
- L. **Small Underspends** – A total of £20,000 of small underspends has been identified.
- M. **Salaries and agency costs** – There are additional staffing and agency costs of approximately £160,000 where temporary resources are being used to backfill positions across the Council and particularly within Planning. These are transition costs where temporary resources are currently being used in services until the full functionality of the new workflow system (W2) can be utilised and the T18 Transformation Programme is fully embedded.
- N. **Kilworthy Park** – The Kilworthy Park budget is projected to be £80,000 overspent due to two main factors. In the T18 Business Case it was anticipated that there would be £65,000 of reduced running costs at Kilworthy Park due to agile working, smarter use of energy and utilities and the workforce occupying less space. These savings have not yet been realised to this extent, although work has been done on re-procuring some of the utilities costs.

In addition, it was anticipated that the letting income for Kilworthy Park would increase by £15,000.

- O. **Recycling Credits** – Devon County Council has taken West Devon’s leaf sweepings and garden waste into the County contract and has ceased paying recycling credits on this material. As has been previously reported, a phasing into the DCC contract was negotiated to minimise the budgetary impact. This has resulted in a loss of income gained from recycling credits from DCC, which is largely offset by West Devon no longer having to pay gate fees for composting the materials. In addition to this, Devon County Council no longer pay community groups for recycling credits for certain materials. This payment was administered by West Devon and then claimed back from the County. Any fall in income due to this is therefore offset by outgoing payments to community groups. Members will be aware that prices for recycling have dropped with the market changing significantly due to external factors. The overall drop in income predicted is £60,000 in total.
- P. **Planning Application Income** – Planning income is expected to be under target by £60,000. This relates to planning application fees and pre-application planning advice.

4) Management Actions

The table below sets out the relevant management actions for the revenue expenditure and income variations shown above.

	Budget variations increase/ (decrease) £000	Management Action
Reductions in expenditure/additional income		
Car Park Income	(25)	Car parking charges will be frozen in 2016/17. No changes are recommended to the income target for 2016/17.
Legal – Additional Income	(15)	No management action required
Housing Benefit Recoveries	(45)	An income target of £30,000 has been built into the budget process for 2016/17.
Homelessness	(30)	Recommended to put in an earmarked reserve. Agreed in Minute HC 39.
Revenue & Benefits – Equipment Maintenance	(15)	This will be kept under review.
Waste Contract	(120)	There is a potential uplift in the cost of the waste services contract based upon the indicated requirement for an additional waste round. This has already been built into the 2016/17 budget as a cost pressure.
Land Charges – Government Grant	(45)	This is a one off grant payment.
Investment Income	(15)	The budget for 2016/17 has been increased by £5,000.
Other Staffing Expenses	(80)	The budget for 2016/17 has been reduced by £60,000 to reflect these savings.
New Governance Arrangements	(20)	This will be kept under review.
Elections	(20)	This was a one off cost pressure in 2015/16. No management action required.
Small Underspends	(20)	This will be kept under review.

	Budget variations increase/ (decrease)	Management Action
Increases in expenditure/reductions in income		
Salaries and Agency Costs	160	It is expected that this is a temporary additional cost in 2015/16 whilst the Transformation Programme is being embedded.
Kilworthy Park - Additional Lettings Income	15	The Assets team continue to maximise the best use of the lettings space e.g. Tesco recently took up 2,500 sq ft of accommodation on a temporary basis.
Kilworthy Park – Reduced running costs	65	The budget for 2016/17 has been adjusted by £45,000 to reflect the current position.
Recycling Credits	60	The income target for 2016/17 has been reduced by £90,000 to reflect market conditions.
Planning Application Income	60	This will be kept under close review. No changes have been made to the 2016/17 planning income budget.

5) Prudential Indicators

The prudential code indicators were approved in the Treasury Management Strategy report to the Audit Committee on 24 February 2015. The indicators are monitored during the year through the normal revenue and capital monitoring processes. Any exceptions are reported to the Audit Committee together with any remedial action or revision required. To date 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:

Service	Actual Income 2014/15 £'000	Income Budget 2015/16 £'000	Projected Income 2015/16 £'000	Deficit/ (Surplus) £'000	Deficit/ (Surplus) %
Car Parks	876	860	885	(25)	(2.9%)
Employment Estates	273	243	243	-	-
Land Charges*	69	93	93	-	-
Planning Applications	387	388	328	60	15.5%
Investment Income	41	40	55	(15)	(37.5%)
Recycling Credits	492	420	360	60	14.3%
TOTAL	2,138	2,044	1,964	80	

**This excludes the New Burdens grant income of £45,000.*

The decision on the level of balances and reserves is taken during the formulation of the annual budget and the medium term financial strategy. As a matter of prudence the Council has set aside various amounts in reserves to cover future liabilities and items of expenditure and these are attached as Appendix A.

7) Issues that may impact on the budget monitoring position in the next 3 months/Risks

The budget monitoring position assumes that collection rates will remain at previous levels. The unknown area is the impact that Universal Credit may have on future collection rates and arrears levels.

Universal credit is a new single benefit payment for people out of work or on low incomes which has now been rolled out in Okehampton, with the rest of West Devon following in the spring. The aim of Universal Credit is to make the welfare system simpler by replacing six benefits with one single monthly payment. Universal Credit replaces a range of benefits including Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and Housing Benefit.

For Business Rates, it has been assumed that the Council is still in a situation where it is paying a Business Rates levy. This is regularly monitored and any change to this position would be reported to Members.

8. Proposed Way Forward

1) Revenue budget monitoring will continue on a regular basis and further reports will be brought to the Hub Committee on a quarterly basis.

9. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Statutory Powers that apply to this report are the Local Government Act 1972 Section 151 and the Local Government Act 2003 Section 28.
Financial	Y	The report identifies an overall underspend of £60,000 which is 1% of the overall budget set for 2015/16 of £7.262million.
Risk	Y	<p>Budget variances – continual 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.</p> <p>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 4).</p>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
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 – Reserves.

Background Papers:

**Finance Community of Practice budget monitoring working papers
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2015/16 – HUB 01 December
2015**

Approval and clearance of report

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

RESERVES - PROJECTED BALANCES					
	Opening balance 1 April 2015 £000	Additions to the Reserve	Predicted spend to 31.3.2016 £000	Projected balance 31.3.2016 £000	Comments
EARMARKED RESERVES					
Specific Reserves - General Fund					
T18 Strategic Change Earmarked Reserve		(872)	872	0	A new reserve set up to fund T18 redundancy and pension costs.
Business Rates Retention Scheme	(321)		100	(221)	This reserve will be used to offset the balance on the Collection Fund. This relates to a timing issue on the accounting adjustments required for the localisation of business rates.
Car Parking Maintenance	(318)			(318)	
Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI)	(21)		21	0	
Habitats Earmarked Reserve	(24)		24	0	
Cannons Meadow	(21)		3	(18)	Written down to revenue annually
County Election	(24)			(24)	
Landscape Maintenance	(20)			(20)	
Fifth Wave Neighbourhood Front Runners	(50)		(5)	(55)	
DCLG Business Support Scheme	(13)		13	0	
DCC Public Health	(40)		40	0	
Devon County Council - TAP Funds	(49)		49	0	
Economic Grant Initiatives	(16)		16	0	
Flood Works	(20)		20	0	
Homelessness Prevention	-	(30)		(30)	A new reserve set up to cover additional costs in the winter months (HC39).
Other Reserves below £15,000	(86)		40	(46)	
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	(1,023)	(902)	1,193	(732)	
TOTAL UNEARMARKED RESERVES	(1,023)	(60)		(1,083)	Shown to increase by £60,000 in 2015/16, which is the predicted underspend for the year.
TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES (EARMARKED AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES)	(2,046)	(962)	1,193	(1,815)	

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Appendix B of this report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972

Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **22 March 2016**
Title: **Capital Budget Monitoring 2015/2016**
Portfolio Area: **Support Services – Cllr Cann OBE**
Wards Affected: **All**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Internal**

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

Author: **Angela Endean** Role: **Capital Accountant**
Lisa Buckle **Finance Community of Practice Lead**

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Recommendations:

1. That the Hub Committee notes the Report.

1. Executive summary

The report advises Members of the financial position as at 31st January 2016 for the purposes of budget monitoring. **All capital projects are within the individual capital budgets approved by Members. Therefore capital schemes are within budget.**

The total capital budget for 2015/16 is £1,490,292 of which £184,067 has been spent to date (Appendix A).

The capital programme is currently underspent in comparison to the budgets, due to mainly the affordable housing budget (£550,000) and the Indoor Sports and recreation facilities budget (£296,728) not being spent.

Members discussed the affordable housing budget in early 2015 and the Council took a cautious approach to spending this budget due to the financial uncertainties with the T18 Transformation Programme (as Phase 1b went live in June 2015). However this uncertainty has now passed. There is a separate report on this Hub Committee agenda regarding Income Generation opportunities and a Business Development update. This report will discuss the opportunities of how the affordable housing budget could be utilised.

There is a separate report on this agenda regarding the 'T18 Budget Monitoring report' which shows the T18 Programme is within Budget.

The Indoor Sports and Recreation facilities budget is explained in Exempt Appendix B.

There has been a reduction in the speed of delivery on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). It is predicted that there will be an underspend which will need to be carried forward to 2016/17 (£163,692 has been spent to date against a budget of £450,000).

2. Background

The capital programme for 2015/16 was approved by Council on 17 February 2015 (CM77 and RC26 refer). This report provides an update on the Capital Programme.

The budget in relation to Indoor Sports and Recreation facilities is shown at exempt Appendix B. The award of contracts is subject to the Council's procurement rules on competitive tendering and therefore the allocated budget is commercially sensitive.

3. Outcomes/outputs

Members are requested to note the following updates on Capital Projects:

Community Project Grants (previously Village Hall & Community Project Grants)

The budget for 15/16 is £59,859 with £8,245 spent to date. It is expected that the majority of the budget will be fully committed by the end of the financial year with a requirement to carry forward any underspend and committed funds to 2016/17.

Indoor Sports and Recreation facilities

The budget in relation to Indoor Sports and Recreation facilities is shown at exempt Appendix B.

Affordable Housing

The capital budget of £550,000 has yet to be spent. This budget is to support the development of affordable housing schemes.

National policies and funding strategies designed to deliver affordable housing have significantly changed in recent years with much greater reliance on the provision of affordable housing without public subsidy, primarily through the planning process. The Council is currently reviewing how housing will be delivered in the future. This will link to the work on 'Our Plan', the Council's strategic plan.

Members discussed the affordable housing budget in early 2015 and the Council took a cautious approach to spending this budget due to the financial uncertainties with the T18 Transformation Programme (as Phase 1b went live in June 2015). However this uncertainty has now passed. There is a separate report on this Hub Committee agenda regarding Income Generation opportunities and a Business Development update. This report will discuss the opportunities of how the affordable housing budget of £550,000 could be utilised.

Tenants Incentive Scheme

The Tenants incentive Scheme offers an incentive payment to tenants of Social Landlords who wish to downsize. This frees up larger accommodation for families on our housing register or in temporary accommodation.

It also prevents the spiral of debt tenants may find themselves in if they are affected by the spare room subsidy (sometimes referred to as the "bedroom tax") and cannot afford to pay increased rents or the cost of moving. A common use of the incentive payment is where older people move to a property where there are no carpets. Payments can be made to provide carpeting in the property, combating the risk of trips and falls and possible hospital admissions. A sum of £12,130 has been spent to date.

Waste Containers

This budget (£19,254) is used for the replacement of recycling containers.

Improvement Grants - Disabled Facilities Grants

The demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) continues to increase. The total number of grants completed in 2014/15 was 71 and this expected to increase to at least 80 in 2015/16. All grants are mandatory, means tested and enable people to remain living independently within their own home. Grant approvals range from simple stair lifts and level access showers through to full extensions.

The speed of delivery of DFG's has reduced during the second and third quarters of 2015/16 and, whilst demand has not reduced, the overall spend by year end may be down on previous years. The effect of this will be an increased demand in 2016/17. It is predicted that there will be an underspend which will need to be carried forward to 2016/17.

To date £163,692 has been spent against a budget of £450,000. However there is always a time delay between when applications are approved and when the physical spend occurs.

Old Mill Site, Okehampton

Officers are actively considering the future of the site and have been liaising with third parties. It is envisaged that the timeframe for a decision on the future of the site will be made within the next twelve months. It is felt prudent to retain the capital budget of £25,000 until a decision on the site has been made.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

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

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>Since there is commercially sensitive information in Appendix B regarding contract procurement, there are grounds for the publication of this appendix to be restricted, and considered in exempt session. The public interest has been assessed and it is considered that the public interest will be better served by not disclosing the information in Appendix B. Accordingly this report contains exempt Information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.</p>

Financial		<p>The total capital budget for 2015/16 is £1,490,292 of which £184,067 has been spent to date (Appendix A).</p> <p>All capital projects are within the individual capital budgets approved by Members. (Appendix A).</p>
Risk		<p>There is a risk that the Capital Programme does not meet the Council's corporate priorities in line with the Council's Asset Strategy and the opportunity to assess emerging projects, which could contribute to the Council's priorities. The mitigation is that there is a project appraisal for each proposal. This is taken into account when assessing possible implementation timescales. Complex capital programmes have a relatively long lead-in period.</p> <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>
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:

Appendix A – Details of capital expenditure to 31st January 2016
EXEMPT - Appendix B – Indoor Sports and Recreational Facilities

Background Papers:

Revenue and Capital Budget proposals for 2015/16 - Council 17 February 2015

Revenue and Capital Budget proposals for 2015/16 – Resources 3 February 2015 (RC26 refers).

Capital Budget Monitoring 2015/2016 – Hub Committee 1 December 2015

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.	Yes

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - Expenditure to 31st January 2016

	Budget 15-16	Balances brought forward from previous years	Total Budget at 1st April 2015	Expenditure to 31st January 2016	Budget remaining
Capital projects					
202004 Community Project Grants	15,000	44,859	59,859	8,245	51,614
203002 Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities		296,728	296,728		296,728
203057 Affordable Housing		550,000	550,000		550,000
203067 Tenants Incentive Schemes	36,000	9,848	45,848	12,130	33,718
203119 Waste containers		19,254	19,254		19,254
209000 Improvement Grants (Disabled Facilities Grants)	400,000	50,000	450,000	163,692	286,308
203125 Old Mill Site		25,000	25,000		25,000
203126 Contingency budget for unexpected items		43,603	43,603		43,603
Total	451,000	1,039,292	1,490,292	184,067	1,306,225
<u>To be funded by:-</u>					
Capital Receipts Reserve		484,292	484,292		
New Homes Bonus allocation	212,000	555,000	767,000		
Better Care Funding contribution for Disabled Facilities Grants	239,000		239,000		
	451,000	1,039,292	1,490,292		

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Agenda Item 7

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **22 March 2016**

Title: **T18 Budget Monitoring report –
To end of February 2016**

Portfolio Area: **Cllr Philip Sanders**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Author: **Steve Mullineaux** Role: **Support Services Group
Manager**
Lisa Buckle **Finance Community of
Practice Lead (S151 Officer)**

Contact: steve.mullineaux@swdevon.gov.uk, (01803) 861412
lisa.buckle@swdevon.gov.uk (01803) 861413

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Hub Committee:

1. Notes the progress to date on the T18 Transformation Programme.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In December 2014, the Council agreed to a revised business plan for the T18 Programme. Its aims are to deliver a new operating model in partnership with South Hams District Council which will ensure that both Councils can continue to deliver quality services for its customers and communities. An investment budget of £2.83 million was approved, to deliver annual recurring revenue savings of £1.64 million. The payback period for the Programme is 2.75 years.

- 1.2 The Transformation Programme has received the backing of Central Government and the Council was awarded £266,000 of Government funding towards the upfront investment costs.
- 1.3 ***The table in Appendix A shows that the predicted final spend (£2.770 million) is £60,000 less than the budget of £2.83 million.*** In the 2014/15 year, £1.994 million was spent of one-off investment costs. A further £574,558 has been spent in the period 1 April 2015 to 29th February 2016 as shown in Appendix A. *(Note - the last reported position to the Hub Committee was on 1 December 2015, where a £64,000 underspend against the budget was reported for the T18 Programme).*
- 1.4 With the exception of a small predicted overspend of £24,000 (3.9%) on ICT technology, implementation and project management costs, all of the categories of spend are on target when compared against the budget. There are no areas of concern to report to Members.
- 1.5 The budgeted salary savings to be delivered by the project were £160,000 in 2014/15, rising to £700,000 in 2015/16. The savings were achieved in 2014/15 and the Council is on track to make the projected salary savings of £700,000 in 2015/16, with the exception of some short term transition costs. The Revenue Budget Monitoring report for 2015/16 is also an item on this agenda and this shows that there have been short term temporary transition (staffing and agency) costs, totalling £160,000. This is further explained in the Revenue Budget Monitoring report.
- 1.6 By 2016/17, the salary savings realised will total £1.385 million. These are annual savings being delivered by the project.

2. Background

- 2.1 West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council have been shared service partners since 2007. As two of the very first Councils to share a Chief Executive, the Councils have been bold in challenging the traditional local government model and have always been at the forefront of radical change and innovation. Shared services (through sharing staff) has now yielded over £7.7 million in savings across the two Councils since 2007, with each Council generating ongoing savings of over £700,000 every year.
- 2.2 Having a successful track record of reducing costs through shared services whilst improving services, the two Councils approved a joint Transformation change programme in December 2013.

- 2.3 The Councils continue to face significant reductions in Central Government funding and the Transformation Programme will develop the financial resilience of the Councils and reduce the reliance on making annual budget reductions that inevitably impact on front line services.
- 2.4 The Councils are pioneering a new model for local government which is transferrable to other local authorities irrespective of the scale, acting as a catalyst for extending shared services, without undermining each participating Councils' democratic sovereignty.
- 2.5 The Council will provide its services in an entirely new way by becoming more flexible and customer focused using the latest technology. Services will be redesigned around our customers and communities and as a consequence all departmental silos will be removed. This will involve re-engineering over 400 business processes and sharing all of our corporate services and information technology systems. The first phase of the programme (Support Services) went live in September 2014. The main phase of the programme went live in June 2015, with a smaller phase due later in 2015/16.
- 2.6 At its heart, the transformation programme is one of cultural change. Peoples' lives are constantly changing and we must change with them. The radical transformation will be the most significant change in the way that the Councils work for more than 40 years. The Councils' non-manual workforce will be 30% smaller, with all staff roles changing to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the customer. Officers from different areas of the Councils will work within communities to improve the service for the customer and reduce the need for office accommodation.
- 2.7 The Transformation Programme is structured with a number of workstreams and progress on these is set out in Section 3.

3. Outcomes/outputs

HR Workstream

- 3.1 Following the completion of Phase 2 of the Assessments in August, the Electoral Services and Sherford Programme teams were assessed in December. The Facilities Management team will be assessed in the next quarter.
- 3.2 The Council has invested in a Performance Management software system to make sure that managers are regularly providing feedback to staff on how they are performing against both performance targets and the IMPACT behaviour framework. It is anticipated that the new system will be available from April 2016.

- 3.3 The Council continues to use the Assessment process developed during T18 to assess and appoint both internal and external candidates to any vacancies.

Accommodation Workstream

- 3.4 The accommodation project is largely finished, with the delivery of the Agile space at Kilworthy Park. Tesco recently took 2,500 sq ft of accommodation on a temporary basis and were in occupation until the end of September. This provided additional revenue to the authority along with a 5 % contribution towards the running costs of the building. Discussions are also taking place with existing tenants around increasing their occupancy space which will provide additional revenue by way of an increase in rent and service charge.
- 3.5 In the T18 Business Case, it was anticipated that there would be £65,000 of reduced running costs at Kilworthy Park due to agile working, smarter use of energy and utilities and the workforce occupying less space. These savings have not yet been realised to this extent, although work has been done on re-procuring some of the utilities costs. The savings target on reduced running costs of £65,000 has been reduced by £45,000 to £20,000 in 2016/17.

Finance Workstream

- 3.6 The table in Appendix A shows that the predicted final spend (£2.770 million) is £60,000 less than the budget of £2.83 million. In the 2014/15 year, £1.994 million was spent of one-off investment costs. A further £574,558 has been spent in the period 1 April 2015 to 29th February 2016 as shown in Appendix A. (Note - the last reported position to the Hub Committee was on 1 December 2015, where a £64,000 underspend against the budget was reported for the T18 Programme).
- 3.7 With the exception of a small predicted overspend of £24,000 (3.9%) on ICT technology, implementation and project management costs, all of the categories of spend are on target when compared against the budget. There are no areas of concern to report to Members.
- 3.8 The budgeted salary savings to be delivered by the project were £160,000 in 2014/15, rising to £700,000 in 2015/16. The savings were achieved in 2014/15 and the Council is on track to make the projected salary savings of £700,000 in 2015/16, with the exception of some short term transition costs. The Revenue Budget Monitoring report for 2015/16 is also an item on this agenda and this shows that there have been short term temporary transition (staffing and agency) costs, totalling £160,000. This is further explained in the Revenue Budget Monitoring report.

3.9 By 2016/17, the salary savings realised will total £1.385 million. These are annual savings being delivered by the project.

4 ICT Workstream

- 4.1 The ICT element of T18 programme is considerable and initially comprised of 10 distinct elements. Each project in its own right is a significant piece of work.
- 4.2 T1-Core Infrastructure - the provision of infrastructure and configuration to support the Civica application suite.
- 4.3 T2-Mobile - to deliver a solution for mobile and agile locality officers.
- 4.4 T3-GIS (Geographical Information Systems) – replace the existing GIS and enable improved self-serve using spatial data (maps).
- 4.5 T4-Web/Portal – to develop a solution that promotes ‘digital by choice’, that enables 2 way communication with our residents. It will enable citizens to ‘apply for it’, ‘pay for it’, ‘report it’, ‘book it’ and view and track any of those requests.
- 4.6 T5-Telephony – a corporate unified communications solution to aid agile working. Provide an integrated new telephony system for the Customer First contact centre.
- 4.7 T6-Back office systems migration – migrate the Waste, Planning, Land Charges, Environmental Health, Licensing, Housing back office systems to Civica APP.
- 4.8 T7-Back office system integration – to enable integration of Civica W2 with remaining back office systems e.g. Revenues and Benefits.
- 4.9 T8-Infrastructure – replacement of the corporate IT infrastructure to support agile working and provide a cost effective scalable platform.
- 4.10 T9-Members ICT – equip members with technology that will enable them to work and communicate effectively.
- 4.11 T10-Document / Image migration – to move historic documents, files and images associated with a customer or property record to the new Civica W2 system.
- 4.12 T1 and T8 are complete. All other projects remain on track for completion during February, March and early April. There is an exception to this. Contact Centre telephony (within T5) is currently anticipated to complete by end of July 2016.

Civica relationship and current performance

- 4.13 The supplier of the IT solution is Civica. The contract is a duration of 5 years.
- 4.14 The relationship with Civica has been managed through project team meetings and Civica have had a project manager on site at least one day per week since the start of 2015.
- 4.15 The single biggest concern has been the delivery of the software for the development management service, which due to the complexity of the service meant that a new back office system, the new case management system (W2) and the website had to be switched on at the same time. A key risk, that materialised was that we were unable to replicate all of these systems together in a test environment (due to cost, time and disruption to the business as usual operation) and test the processes end to end. This resulted in a significant number of issues with the customer facing element of the service (the website).
- 4.16 As project delivery has ramped up, Civica have at times struggled to provide the appropriate technical resources. This has resulted in a series of escalations to Civica's senior management from September through December, culminating in the Head of Paid Service and the Group Manager Support Services meeting with the Managing Director of Civica Digital Solutions and the Civica Group Executive Business Development Director in mid-January. During this meeting details of complaints received from members of the public, town and parish councils and members over the issues with the planning portal were presented to Civica.
- 4.17 Assurance was given by the Civica management team that they are 100% committed to delivering an IT solution that is fit for purpose and meets the council's requirements.
- 4.18 In addition to this a weekly progress call is now held between Managing Director of Civica Digital Solutions, the Head of Paid Service and the Group Manager Support Services. Civica's Managing Director of local government services and the W2 product development manager have also recently attended a workshop to review issues and agree actions and outcomes.

Business Processes and Transition Workstream

4.19 The following table highlights the new business processes that have been migrated to W2 or are ready to migrate to W2.

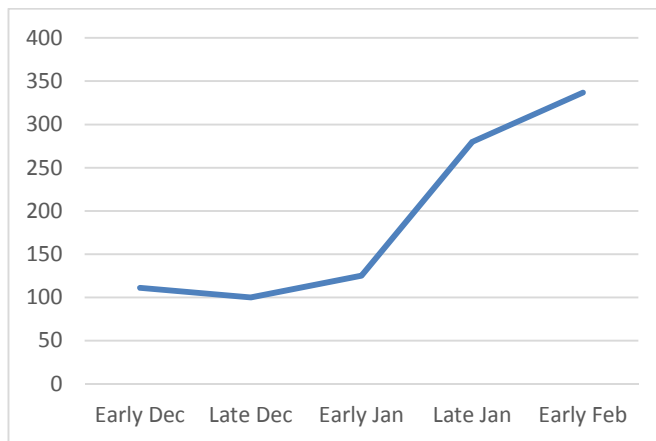
	Active	Release Ready	95% Complete (In Final Testing)	90% Complete (Awaiting signoff)
Total Priority Processes (current): 380 Of which Internal (non Customer facing): 60				
Total Processes > 90% Complete 213	73	70	30	40
DM	1	13		
Waste/Street Scene	13	10		
Council Tax/NNDR	23	16		
EH / Licencing	4	6		
Corporate/ Support Services/other	32	25		

4.20 The following table demonstrates where the benefits of the current active processes will be realised.

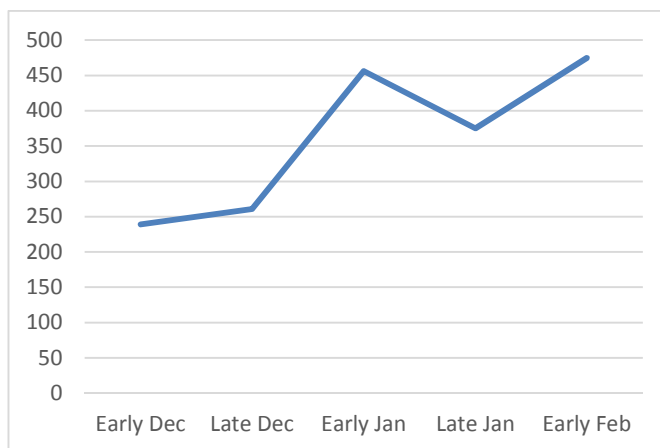
Active Processes	Customer Self Serve	Auto Workflow	Auto Customer Communication	Real-time reporting	Online Payment
73	21	73	59	10	9

4.21 Graph 4.21.1 highlights the number of web based transactions completed by customers using the 21 processes that are available on the web. It is anticipated that this will increase significantly as more processes become active. Graph 4.21.2 shows that over 1800 online accounts have been requested by customers over the same period. Both are encouraging as neither Council has begun an active 'do it online' / channel shift campaign.

Graph 4.21.1



Graph 4.21.2



Customer Workstream

4.22 The Customer Workstream relates to the engagement required with our customers to maximise the benefits of the future operating model. These benefits are both for the customer, in terms of improved customer service and greater access to on-line services and for the Authority through reduced costs.

4.23 The new customer portal has been undergoing extensive testing and went live in November. Sections 4.19 to 4.21 explain the processes going live.

4.24 The plan for how the Council interacts with its customers (the channel shift plan) is under development. This plan will help us target cheaper forms of contact such as SMS and email to those people who want and can use it, rather than trying to encourage all customers to use these types of contact.

4.25 A recent 2015 Local Government Association report on the use of technology to transform local public services has concluded that the costs of different types of transactions are as follows:-

- Face-to-face Customer Services visit: £8.62;
- A telephone call made through a Customer Contact Centre: £2.83; and
- The cost of an online website transaction: 15 pence.

5. Current issues and key risks

5.1 As previously highlighted in paragraph 4.15 the delivery of the planning customer portal has been a significant issue. This has seen a loss of functionality, poor search facilities and difficulties displaying documents. Following a workshop with the Civica product and development team, a plan has been agreed with Civica with a number of 'quick fixes' implemented. It should be noted that a Member was present and gave detailed examples of the issues experienced by Members, town and parish councils and customers. Civica anticipate delivering their new solution by the end of February for us to carry out comprehensive testing before deployment. Members will be invited to participate in this testing phase.

5.2 Recruitment into a number of technical roles within IT has been problematic, however this has now been completed for all key IT specialist roles.

- 5.3 The capacity of the organisation to maintain business as usual service as well as be available for training and testing in new processes and systems is a risk that has materialised and is a key issue. This has resulted in continued delays in the programme roll-out of technology and processes.
- 5.4 To minimise the risk of further project slippage, the following measures are in place:
- Lesson learned from the planning portal deployment are now in place for future deployments. These include more comprehensive testing and involvement of key stakeholders (Members etc.).
 - Weekly reviews now take place with Civica at both operational and senior management level.
 - The Support Services Group Manager reports progress weekly to the senior leadership team.
 - The Member for Support Services is briefed.
 - A weekly review takes place with the project team.
 - A review now takes place 3 times a week with the process delivery team to ensure there are no blockages to processes moving into an active state.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council has delegated to the Hub Committee to monitor the budget monitoring position of the Transformation Programme.
Financial	N	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The finances of the programme are set out in Section 3.6 to 3.9.
Risk	Y	See Section 5.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	This report updates Members on the opportunity for developing improved access to a range of Council services and meeting a wide range of customer needs.
Safeguarding	N	This report updates Members on the opportunity for developing improved access to a range of Council services and meeting a wide range of customer needs.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	None
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	This report updates Members on the opportunity for developing improved access to a range of Council services and meeting a wide range of customer needs.
Other implications	N	None

Supporting Information

Appendix A – Financial Summary

Hub Committee – 1 December 2015 – T18 Budget Monitoring report –
Quarter 2, 2015/2016

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

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Expenditure Category	2014-2015 T18 Actual Expenditure	2015-16 Actual Expenditure to 29th February 2016	2015-16 Expenditure predicted for March 2016	Future financial years predicted expenditure (16/17)	Total Predicted Expenditure for the T18 Programme	Comparison to the Total T18 Budget (One-off Investment costs)	Notes
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(Columns A to D)		
	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	
Revenue Expenditure							
ICT technology, implementation, workstream development and project management	298,586	320,540	21,000	-	640,126	615,750	Note 1
ICT workstation costs and infrastructure	111,373	34,795	-	-	146,168	155,000	Note 2
Training and Accommodation	36,055	30,231	-	-	66,286	97,000	Note 3
Implementation and design of the future operating model	143,875	540	2,500	-	146,915	175,000	Note 4
Redundancy and Pension Strain costs	1,311,698	91,477	5,000	95,400	1,503,575	1,520,000	Note 5
Contingency	0	96,975	15,000	63,025	175,000	175,000	Note 6
Capital Expenditure							
ICT Software	92,250	-	-	-	92,250	92,250	Note 7
TOTAL	1,993,837	574,558	43,500	158,425	2,770,320	2,830,000	

Summary - Apart from a small amount of costs which will be paid out in future financial years, the majority of the T18 expenditure (one-off investment costs) is predicted to have happened by the end of the financial year 2015-16. The table above shows that the predicted final spend (£2.770 million) is £60,000 less than the budget of £2.83 million.

Note 1 - ICT technology, implementation, workstream development and project management costs – These are the contract payments to the IT supplier for delivering the IT system and project management costs. These are predicted to be slightly over budget by £24,000 (3.9%*), mainly due to project management costs.

Note 2 - ICT workstation costs and infrastructure – This is predicted to be slightly underspent by £9,000 as the majority of workstations and infrastructure have now been purchased.

Note 3 – Training and Accommodation – The original budget was set based on the training of all staff being provided by an external supplier. By looking at the systems that needed training on, an early decision was made to carry out more of the training in-house using a 'train the trainer' type approach rather than train all staff. The budget is forecast to be underspent by £31,000.

Note 4 - Implementation and design of the future operating model – The work with IESE has now been completed and the only remaining payment forecast is £2,500 for the Phase 2 recruitment exercise. This budget is expected to be underspent by £28,000.

Note 5 – Redundancy and Pension Strain costs – This was the area of the budget which was the most difficult to predict. However the majority of the phases within the Transformation Programme have now gone live so the Council now has certainty of the majority of these costs. These were accrued for in the Accounts for 2014-15 and are reflected within the £1.311 million cost figure for 2014-15. In addition to this, an estimate has been made of the potential redundancy and pension strain costs arising from later Phases.

Note 6 – Contingency – The contingency budget is predicted to be utilised on transition costs of the Transformation Programme.

Note 7 – ICT Software – This is the software element of the contract payments to the IT supplier. This is treated as capital expenditure.

* This includes the software element of the IT contract.



South Hams District Council & West Devon Borough Council

Corporate Debt Policy

This policy sets out our approach to collecting and recovering debt owed to us by businesses and residents.

Introduction

South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council ('the Councils') are required to collect monies from both residents and businesses for a variety of reasons.

Money we collect enables us to provide important public services. Income that is not collected or takes additional effort to collect means fewer resources are available to provide our services. We will try to recover all debts owed to us. This is a fair approach to people who use services and to the majority who pay council tax and business rates on time. We will follow enforcement protocols and procedures to recover monies owed to us and signpost those people genuinely experiencing financial hardship to appropriate advice and support teams in the voluntary and community sector.

In undertaking income and debt recovery it is inevitable that we will be required to pursue the recovery of arrears from residents and businesses that may experience difficulty in paying. It is therefore important that we set out how the councils manage and collect debts to ensure consistency and best practice in such situations.

This policy identifies where responsibility for collection of different debts lie and sets out the principles and standards in relation to customer contact, recovery processes, repayments and benefit, money and debt advice. It also explains how the councils and their partners can offer help, advice and support in the management of debt for our customers.

This policy sets the framework for a consistent and sensitive approach to collecting debt whilst at the same time ensuring that the councils continue to maximise income collection.

Our approach in South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council will be fair, consistent and sensitive to individual situations. We will:

1. develop triggers and measures to provide an opportunity for early intervention and reduce the likelihood of the arrears increasing
2. implement best practice for collecting and recovering debt to the Councils
3. ensure that the debt has been raised correctly and in a timely manner

4. make sure that residents and businesses are given invoices or bills setting out the charge, the basis of the charge, methods of payment and council contact details
5. where appropriate, agree payment arrangements with customers

Our approach for avoiding debt

The Council's aims are to prevent excessive debt by promoting financial inclusion and budgeting to reduce the impact of poverty. The common approach by the councils and its partners is supporting people to budget and pay their priority debts.

A number of payment methods, including online payments, are available to make it easy for customers to pay for services.

Services will be invoiced or billed in line with statutory requirements. Where a debt remains unpaid:

1. We will signpost customers to appropriate debt advice and support agencies.
2. We recognise that certain individuals will require more sympathetic and sensitive treatment, for example in the case of recent bereavement, major illness or where the customer requires special assistance in handling their financial affairs.

Policy objectives

This policy has been developed to provide support to customers over legal or enforcement action. It strives to be firm and will use the full range of collection and recovery methods as appropriate if debts are not paid. The policy operates within the framework of relevant legislation, such as data protection, human rights and statutory regulations and other council policies and internal procedures.

Policy aims

The aims of this policy are to:

1. maximise income for South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council
2. ensure that all council tax and business rates payers' interests are protected by effective debt collection
3. encourage self-help
4. be "preventative" for example offering payment options and to signpost customers with debt issues to debt advice providers
5. be fair but firm, and ensure consistency in dealing with customers
6. protect and support vulnerable customers
7. maximise the use of discretionary funds where appropriate to assist with pressures of welfare reform and localism

Our commitment

When dealing with customers who owe money to us we will:

1. treat all customers fairly and objectively
2. ensure that there is no discrimination against customers because of their race, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, religious belief, gender, marital status, sexual orientations, age or disability
3. encourage customers to make early contact with us about any debt-related matters
4. use Plain English in all correspondence
5. assist with communication needs where appropriate, including translation and interpreting services
6. co-ordinate all our correspondence to avoid duplication and reduce costs; ensuring that correspondence with customers refers to and deals with all or similar accounts outstanding, so as to consolidate the debts and clarify the total amount owed, and offering options for payments (not including Sundry Debts)
7. promote advice and support services available
8. set out our charges clearly

Accessing advice and support

The councils will advise individuals and/or businesses as to the range of discounts, reliefs and reductions available at both the time an account is issued and in subsequent communications. This information is also available on both Councils websites.

Staff in direct contact with customers will signpost them as to where they can obtain advice on benefits and debt matters appropriate to their needs.

We will ensure that all written communications use Plain English as the standard wherever possible. We will explain complex terminology when it is required to be used by law. All documents will be issued in a timely manner, in accordance with any statutory timescales. The legal options open to the councils in collecting debts and the customer in paying debts will be explained, taking into account the stage of recovery achieved.

We will assist people with language and communication needs by offering translation, interpreting and other services when required.

Assessing ability to pay

In pursuing debt recovery, the council will act in accordance with statutory regulations and guidance. It is imperative that the council's approach to debt recovery is responsible and responds to the financial and social vulnerability of residents and business owners.

The councils will take into account individual circumstances and the financial and economic climate that we are operating in.

We take a common approach in assessing a customer's whole financial position (by taking into account all of their expenditure and income) to assess their ability to pay. Where instalment arrangements can be entered into, the repayment rate will be based on a proportion of the customer's disposable income and realistic arrangements will be entered into for the repayment of debts in preference to legal action.

Customer who have single or multiple debts owed to the councils will be offered the opportunity of independent debt advice.

Our recovery

We will look to charge for services by invoice or bills in line with statutory requirements which may be through instalment plans or arrangements.

At each stage of the recovery process, customers are signposted to debt advice providers in the voluntary sector.

Where the debt remains unpaid or if instalment plans or arrangements are broken we will follow the appropriate statutory recovery process dependent upon the type of debt.

If the debt has not been recovered through internal recovery methods then, dependent on the type of debt, we may instruct bailiffs or debt recovery companies to recover the debt on our behalf. County Court bailiffs may also be instructed, when appropriate, by HM Courts and Tribunal Service.

Consideration will be given to the vulnerability of a customer before we instruct a bailiff or debt recovery company and if we become aware of a vulnerable person once the debt has been passed to a bailiff or debt recovery company we will withdraw and bring the debt back to the council.

Once a debt has been passed to a bailiff or a debt recovery company the customer may incur further costs.

Complaints

We have a Complaints Procedure and any customer that feels dissatisfied with how they have been treated may register their complaint in accordance with that procedure. Copies of this document (and other documents referred to in this Policy) are available upon request by writing to either:

- South Hams District Council, Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes TQ9 5NE or telephoning 01803 861234 or via the Council's website at www.southhams.gov.uk or,

- West Devon Borough Council, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, Tavistock PL19 0BZ or, telephoning 01822 813600 or via the Council's website at www.westdevon.gov.uk.

All our publications are available in alternative formats, such as large print or a language other than English. Please contact us using the above contact details or email:

customer.services@southhams.gov.uk or,
customer.services@westdevon.gov.uk.

The corporate complaints procedure provides the Council with the opportunity to investigate and, where appropriate, provide a remedy in circumstances where the Council is alleged to have been guilty of "maladministration" which has caused injustice (and where there is no other reasonable avenue available to the complainant to appeal or seek redress).

It is important to note, however, that the corporate complaints system cannot entertain objections against the merits of a decision which has been properly taken and which the complainant does not agree with.

In the event that the complainant remains dissatisfied after the Council has investigated the complaint, the complainant may refer his/her complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, who is independent of the Council, but will not consider a complaint where more than 12 months has elapsed since the alleged act/omission.

NB: Some complaints in respect of certain debt matters are also supported by specialist or independent bodies e.g.: The Appeals service, The Housing Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsman. Details of these bodies together with any external referrals will be provided to customers by the team dealing with the complaint.

Rights of Appeal

There are a number of ways in which people can appeal about decisions the Council may have taken:

Valuation Tribunal: For people who believe the Council has acted incorrectly on a Council Tax billing matter.

Magistrates Court: For people who are aggrieved by the recovery process for Council Tax, Fixed Penalties and Non-Domestic Rates and for Business Improvement District Levy payers or payers who believe the Council acted incorrectly on a billing matter.

Appeal Tribunal: For decisions made on Housing Benefit claims

How we will meet the Policy

The councils will take steps to:

1. Give early advice to the customer on repayment options and where to get assistance with debt problems.
2. Make all advice on how and where to pay clear and simple.
3. Raise awareness of a debt as quickly as possible and take action when it says it will if the amount remains unpaid.
4. Raise the implications for non-payment – review all reminders and letters periodically, change type face, font, printing and paper colours, if required to heighten the impact.
5. Review each case individually, taking into account the known circumstances of that customer, if possible and endeavouring to find a remedy before taking any proceedings.
6. If an account remains unpaid then advise the customer what will happen and let the customer know which organisation or agencies can advise them and how they can get in touch with them.

Protecting the Councils from Late Payment

The councils are supported by current UK and EU legislation to recover any amounts expended in recovering overdue amounts from debtors who unnecessarily avoid or delay payment. Examples of these fees are: late payment charges, Court action fees, Enforcement Agent' fees, interest and these may be charged to the debtor's account. The aim of the legislation is to reimburse the councils costs in taking debt recovery action, prevents the citizens of the Borough having to bear the costs of recovering debt from this minority of customers and also acts as a deterrent against deliberate or malicious non-payment.

The relevant legislation relating to recovering these charges shown below along with links to obtain further information;

DIRECTIVE 2011/7/EU ON COMBATING LATE PAYMENT IN COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/late-payment-directive-user-guide-to-therecast-directive>

Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/20/section/2>

Local Government Act 1972

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/111>

Local Government Finance Act 1992

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/contents

Local Government Act 2003

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/26/section/93>

Localism Act 2011

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/section/3/enacted>

Traffic Management Act 2004

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/18/pdfs/ukpga_20040018_en.pdf

Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2013 (comes into effect 6.4.14)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1894/made>

If further or outside advice is needed

Some people or businesses may require the assistance of one of the following:

Homemaker Southwest – for personal debt and housing advice

Tel 01392 686752

www.homemakersw.org.uk

The National Debt Line

Tel 0808 808 4000

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

The Citizens Advice Bureau – for personal debt and housing advice

Tel 0844 826 9713

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Age UK for independent advice on benefits / financial concerns

Tel 0800 169 6565

www.ageuk.org.uk

How we will take Recovery Action

The following table sets out the various collection pathways for the major debt topics within the councils debt portfolio's, however it should be noted that the councils operate many of their recovery pathways in cooperation with private and public partners to rationalise services and achieve efficiency.

As such the councils retain their options to utilise collection and enforcement agents from both the private sector and the courts to carry out associated or appropriate enforcement actions on behalf of the councils to prevent or mitigate the need to escalate debts along the collection pathway shown below.

Corporate Debt Portfolio: Collection Pathways.

<u>Type of Debt</u>	<u>Charging Method</u>	<u>*Default Collection Pathway</u>	<u>Appeals</u>	<u>Option of Final Resort (Persistent/deliberate Default)</u>
Council Tax	Annual Bill	Magistrates Court	To the Valuation Appeals Office.	Fine and/or custodial sentence
Sundry Debt	Invoice	Magistrates/County Court	High Court	Bailiff/custodial sentence
NNDR	Annual Bill	Magistrates Court	To the Valuation Appeals Office.	Fine and/or custodial sentence
Housing Ben O/payments	Invoice	County Court	To the Tribunal and Appeals Service	Deducts from wages/bens...

- Action following the exhaustion of all prescribed/standard recovery efforts e.g. after written, electronic, verbal contacts and reminders have failed to illicit a sustainable payment response from the debtor.

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Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **22 March 2016**
Title: **CORPORATE DEBT RECOVERY POLICY**
Portfolio Area: **Customer First – Cllr Moody**
Wards Affected: **All**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: **Overview & Scrutiny (Internal) Committee**

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

Date next steps can be taken:
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision)
Recommendations will be considered by the Council at its meeting on 5 April 2016.

Author: **Isabel Blake** Role: **Community of Practice Lead Specialist Housing, Revenues & Benefits**

Contact: **01822 813551/ Isabel.Blake@swdevon.gov.uk**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Hub Committee RECOMMEND to Council the adoption of the Joint Corporate Debt Recovery Policy.

1. Executive summary

- 1) This draft policy (Appendix 1) sets out the approach that West Devon Borough Council will take to recover monies owed to them by both residents and businesses.
- 2) This policy document brings together all former departmental debt recovery action and sets out the Council's debt recovery practices in one generic document. Underneath this will be individual service specific operational guidelines, however it is intended by having one published policy that both residents and customers will have clear expectations of how their case will be treated. It will also ensure that staff follow one policy jointly across both Authorities, and in the

interests of equality and accountability the Councils following due process.

2. Background

- 1) South Hams & West Devon are required to collect monies from both businesses and residents for a variety of reasons. Monies we collect enables us to deliver our core services and in the current climate it is more important than ever that every effort is made to collect all debts owed to us. It is also a fair and reasonable approach to the majority of people who do pay their debts to us on time.
- 2) It is important that the Council has a clear and robust policy, with operational guidelines underpinning it so that any effort to take recovery action is done so in a fair and proportionate way and following a clear policy guideline.
- 3) Whilst maximising debt recovery is important, it is equally important to promote financial inclusion and to safeguard people wherever possible from excessive debt. It is for this reason we have built in signposting to debt advice and support agencies and will give staff the tools to do this in a meaningful way.
- 4) If this policy is adopted it is intended to publish on our website, setting out to all our businesses and residents the Council's approach to debt recovery.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 1) The timing of this new policy coincides with the beginning of a new financial year and all action we take going forward (and in retrospect looking at outstanding debt) will be in accordance with this policy.
- 2) This policy is part of the ongoing project to look at outstanding corporate debt and to recover where possible any monies owed.
- 3) It is anticipated that adoption of this corporate policy will help prevent debts, by taking early and robust action.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 1) A corporate debt recovery policy is essential for the Council and will ensure transparency, equality and consistency in the way we recover debt.
- 2) It is possible that the Council could continue as is, with each service area taking varying recovery action to recover debt associated with their own service. This clearly is inconsistent, is confusing for both staff, residents and businesses and is open to challenge.
- 3) Each Community of Practice has been involved with the preparation of the debt recovery policy, and feedback has been positive. A corporate wide approach is welcomed, with the understanding that there will be some operational differences depending on the nature of the debt.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 1) It is recommended that Hub Committee recommend to Council the adoption of the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>The Council has various powers under which it can recover monies due to it, which are considered in relation to the recovery of specific debt.</p> <p>This is a new policy which requires consideration and formal approval by Members.</p>
Financial	Y	<p>The largest income stream that the council collects is that of council tax and business rates. In 2015/16 the collectable debt is £34.0 million for council tax and £10.9 million for business rates. The Council's collection rates are above the national average as detailed below.</p> <p>In 2014/15 the Council collected 97.6% of council tax, the national average was 97.0%. For business rates 98.3% was collected, the national average was 98.1%</p> <p>Regular quarterly reports are presented to the Hub Committee on write offs of debt. In addition to council tax and business rates, the council also collects Housing Benefit debt and sundry debts</p>
Risk	Y	<p>If the Council continues as is, with old departmental variation on the collection of debt there is an increased exposure to risk of challenge which will have both a financial and reputational risk to the Council.</p> <p>Without a corporate debt recovery policy the Council may miss opportunities to act early and in accordance with a published procedure which may impact on the success in recovering debts owed.</p>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	This policy has a positive or neutral impact on all protected characteristics and.
Safeguarding	Y	There are no safeguarding implications directly related to this policy, however having inbuilt financial inclusion criteria will to the Council's best ability actively support people struggling with debt.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of our debt recovery action can ultimately result in a custodial sentence. This is only when all other action has been exhausted and is

		ultimately sanctioned by the courts. The approach this policy outlines and the action taken prior to this should minimise instances of this.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Y	The inbuilt financial inclusion criteria promotes Health, Safety & Wellbeing.
Other implications		

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft Debt Recovery Policy

Background Papers:

None

Communications Protocols and Policies Report March 22 2016

Report to: **West Devon Borough Council Hub Committee**

Date: **22 March 2016**

Title: **Communications Protocols and Policies**

Portfolio Area: **Communications**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

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

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

Author: **Lesley Crocker** Role: **Lead Specialist Communications and Media**

Contact: 01803 861321 / 07816143034
Lesley.crocker@swdevon.gov.uk

Recommendations:

That the Hub RECOMMEND to Council that:-

1. the joint Communications and Social Media Policies (as attached at Appendix A) be adopted for West Devon Borough Council; and
2. the protocols in the revised Communications protocol January 2016 be acknowledged and adopted.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Currently the joint Communications Team for South Hams and West Devon do not have an adopted Communications or Social Media

Communications Protocols and Policies Report March 22 2016

Policy or a protocol document setting out how the Councils should communicate with their audiences.

- 1.2 Good Local Authority communication should be open and transparent, fair and lawful and these protocol and policies will enable the Communications Team to support the Officers and Members to ensure that this happens.
- 1.3 All of our communications activities are governed by the Local Government Acts 1972 and 1986 as well as the updated Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in March 2011.
- 1.4 These documents provides us with a framework to ensure proper use of public funds for publicity in accordance with the code.
- 1.5 Good communication is the responsibility of all of the employed Officers and elected Members of both Councils; all of their activities are underpinned and supported by the shared Communications Team whose primary function is to communicate the business of the Councils and these policies and protocols will give them the framework through which to work.

2. Background

- 2.1 It is considered best practice to have one central point of control for all communication activities and this function is run by the Communications Team.
- 2.2 To ensure consistency of message and to minimise risk to our reputation and increase the understanding of our messages to all our audiences, this Communications Protocol and associated policies sets out how both Councils will interact with the media, the public and Officers.
- 2.3 It contains the guidelines for best practice from the communications industry and the government, and notes the laws which govern what we do and how we operate.
- 2.4 Without these protocols and policies in place there is the risk that we will not engage with our residents, our messages will get confused and our reputation will suffer.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 These protocols and policies will enable us to reinforce and communicate the vision, themes and objectives of the Council in the best possible way using all of the channels at our disposal in line with best practice and the law.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 The protocols and policies included have been written with knowledge from some of the country's best advisors on best practice in local government communications.
- 4.2 This includes the latest thinking on some of the changing technology and how we can embrace all new media channels while abiding by the law and protecting our reputation. Having consulted with Officers and elected Members, there is an urgent need to put some guidelines in place for communications which would enable Officers to have a framework in which to operate, and particularly with social media, to give them the confidence to know they are not going to do anything wrong.
- 4.3 There have also been a few instances recently where information and stories have appeared in the press, which have not been very helpful for Officers and Members as the information supplied by an individual has not been correct.
- 4.4 By coming through the Communications Team, we can ensure that this doesn't happen, and these policies and protocols will enable us to do this.
- 4.5 The need to have these policy and protocol frameworks in place is particularly important in times of emergency, when the Communications Team will have to respond to a situation quickly and accurately. With a framework in place for everyone to adhere to in a time of emergency we can ensure that the messages given out to the public will be clear, accurate and appropriate.
- 4.6 **Best Practice guides:**
Local Government Communications resources:
<http://www.lgcomms.org.uk/resources/resource-library>
- 4.7 **Local government Association:**
<http://www.local.gov.uk/communications-support>
- 4.8 **Government Communication Service Guidance:**
<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance>

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1 Once adopted, it will be the role of the Communications Team to ensure that communications protocols get cascaded through the organisation and are adopted and adhered to by all of the Officers and Members.
- 5.2 One of the primary channels that we would be using to do this is the Communications Champions, which involves representatives

Communications Protocols and Policies Report March 22 2016

from every area of work, who will be taking on a number of roles and responsibilities in communications.

- 5.3 These Officers will act as champions in each of their work area to ensure that these policies and protocols become the norm for how we communicate.
- 5.4 All of the Councils’ communications activities will be guided by the Council’s visions, themes and priorities and the terminology and language that we use must have a golden thread back to the Council’s plans.
- 5.5 In order to deliver these messages and themes to all audiences in the best manner, it is essential that the business of the Council is communicated through the communications team. The Communications team can guide, advice and support the Officers and Members to ensure those priorities and themes are embedded in what and how we communicate.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	<p>The implications of not agreeing this protocol and associated policies are that we will not be delivering the best communications service to customers and Officers and will be unable to effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote, managing and protecting the reputation of both councils • Publicise, the services, achievements and aspirations of the councils to residents, businesses, local communities and partners • Identify risks to our reputation and advice on actions to mitigate against any damage • Facilitate good communications practices across both councils • Create and support a Communications Champions group within the councils comprising of Officers from all areas of council work and service delivery • Monitor all media and sharing the information for a greater understating of key issues and a better understanding of public opinion, ensuring key Officers are aware of published media articles • Align all of both Councils’ communications activities with the corporate purpose, themes and objectives of both councils.
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Communications Protocols and Policies Report March 22 2016

Legal/Governance		<p>All of our communication activities are governed by the Local Government Acts 1972 and 1986 as well as the updated Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in March 2011.</p> <p>This provides us with a framework to ensure proper use of public funds for publicity. The code sets out seven key principles and these MUST be adhered to at all times.</p> <p>A copy of the Code of Recommended Practice is available here.</p> <p>Other legislation also has a bearing on communications activities of both Councils and these include the Data Protection Act 1998 (individuals rights over personal information), the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the right to obtain information held by public authorities) and the laws of defamation – slander (the spoken word) and libel (written). Copyright Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, Equalities Act 2010.</p>
Financial		<p>The protocols and policies attached to this report are not asking for any additional funding.</p>
Risk		<p>There is a much greater risk of this protocol and policy not being adopted, than adopting it. At the moment there are no policies or protocols governing our communications activities and Officers and Members do not have a framework through which to communicate with our audiences.</p> <p>This protocol and policies provides a guide and set of principles to work by, which have been written with the aim of protecting the reputation of the Councils and providing us with the framework to deliver much improved communications to customers.</p>
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		<p>The services we provide are for the benefit of all citizens of the United Kingdom. No user should be excluded on the basis of disability. To do so would breach the Equality Act 2010.</p>
Safeguarding		<p>All Communications activities need to be mindful of Safeguarding issues relating to vulnerable groups and young people.</p>

Communications Protocols and Policies Report March 22 2016

		And nothing in this policy should breach or compromise the other policies of the council including safeguarding.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		
Other implications		

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Only include appendices if the information is needed to make the decision but cannot be put within the report, such as a strategic plan or corporate policy.

Communications Protocol Document
Communications Policy
Social media Policy

Background Papers:

[under provisions of the Local Government Act 1972]

Best Practice guides:

Local Government Communications resources:
<http://www.lgcomms.org.uk/resources/resource-library>

Local government Association:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/communications-support>

Government Communication Service Guidance:

<https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance>

Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recommended-code-of-practice-for-local-authority-publicity>

Approval and clearance of report

Communications Protocols and Policies Report March 22 2016

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

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West Devon
Borough
Council

COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOLS 2016

Contents

THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM	4
Who are we? What do we do? How do we work?	4
THE COUNCILS' PURPOSE, THEMES AND OBJECTIVES	5
THE LAWS GOVERNING WHAT WE DO	5
OUR AUDIENCES	6
MEDIA PROTOCOL	7
Best Practice	7
Responding to a media request from the Press Office	9
When Members are asked to speak on behalf of their Council	9
Which Elected Members should speak on behalf of their Council?	10
South Hams District Council:	10
When should Officers speak on behalf of their Council?	11
Communications Champions	11
Statements and press releases	11
Photographs	12
Use of Embargoes	13
Where are our press releases sent?	13
Targeting Audiences	14
Media Monitoring	14
Copying – The Law	15
Bad News Stories	16
Negative Letters in the Media	16
PUBLIC MEETINGS	17
The councils ask that the press and public:	17
COURT CASES	18
BRANDING	18
PLAIN ENGLISH	18
PURDAH – PRE-ELECTION PERIOD	19
SOCIAL MEDIA	20
What we mean by Social Media	20
Social Media Guide	21
Using social media at work	22
Using social media outside work	23
Use by Members	23
Social Media Principals	24

Using Social Media during Council meetings	25
Campaigns – Promoting the work of the councils	26
Service Delivery – demonstrating and supporting the services that we provide	26
Networking and sharing – supporting partners and other government	26
Retweeting comments by Elected Members	27
Promoting and sharing - Becoming Broadcasters	27
COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL IN AN EMERGENCY	28
Overview	28
Reputation	28
Our Role	28
Council Direction	29
Emergency Situations	29
SWOT Analysis	30
Objectives	30
Audiences	31
Protocols	31
Messaging	31
Suggested holding statement:	32
Further suggested messaging:	32
Sympathetic response from the Council Leaders	32
The Emotional Response	33
Recycling and Refuse in Bad Weather	33
Website	33
APPENDIX A - Member Responsibilities	34
APPENDIX B – Photographic Consent Form for children and adults	40
.....	40

THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Who are we? What do we do? How do we work?



Lesley Crocker
Lead Specialist



Karla White
Specialist



Vicky Croughan
Case Manager

We operate a shared service Communication Team between South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils.

Good communication is the responsibility of all of the employed Officers and elected Members of both Councils, it is underpinned and supported by the shared Communications Team whose primary function is to communicate the business of the councils as defined in the corporate strategy 'Our Plan', the councils themes, objective and annual delivery plan.

We will achieve this by:

- **Promoting**, managing and protecting the reputation of both councils
- **Publicising**, the services, achievements and aspirations of the councils to residents, businesses, local communities and partners
- **Identifying** risks to our reputation and advice on actions to mitigate against any damage
- **Facilitating** good communications practices across both councils
- **Creating and supporting** a Communications Community of Practice within the councils comprising of officers from all areas of council work and service delivery
- **Monitoring** all media and sharing the information for a greater understating of key issues and a better understanding of public opinion, ensuring key staff are aware of published media articles

All of our activities will be fully aligned with the corporate purpose, themes and objectives of both councils.

THE COUNCILS' PURPOSE, THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

The work of both councils sits under the corporate plan "Our Plan" and is cascaded through the annual delivery plan.

The Corporate Plan - OUR PLAN:

Council:	South Hams	West Devon
Purpose	To Create Vibrant Towns and Villages and enhance the quality of life for all	To Create Thriving Towns and Villages and enhance the quality of life for all
Themes	Our Wellbeing	Our Wellbeing
	Our Communities	Our Communities
	Our Homes	Our Homes
	Our Economy	Our Economy
	Our Infrastructure	Our Infrastructure
	Our Environment	Our Environment
	Our Heritage	Our Heritage
	Our Resources	Our Resources

THE LAWS GOVERNING WHAT WE DO

All of our activities are governed by the Local Government Acts 1972 and 1986 as well as the updated Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in March 2011.

This provides us with a framework to ensure proper use of public funds for publicity.* The code sets out seven key principles and these **MUST** be adhered to at all times.

Local Authority publicity **MUST**:

1. be lawful
2. be cost-effective
3. be objective
4. be even-handed
5. be appropriate
6. have regard to equality and diversity
7. be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.

The code **DOES** allow our councils to:

- **Increase** public awareness of Council services and functions,

- **Let** local people and other stakeholders have a real and informed say about issues that affect them,
- **Explain** to electors and ratepayers the reasons for policies and priorities factually and objectively,
- **Improve** local accountability.

It **DOES NOT** allow our councils to:

- **Publish** any material that, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.
- **Issue** press releases that explain party political differences.

These restrictions **do not** apply to press releases issued by individual councillors or their political parties.

A copy of the Code of Recommended Practice is available [here](#).

Other legislation also has a bearing on communications activities and these include the Data Protection Act 1998 (individuals rights over personal information), the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the right to obtain information held by public authorities) and the laws of defamation – slander (the spoken word) and libel (written). Copyright Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Equalities Act

*Publicity is defined in section 6(4) of the 1986 Local Government Act as “any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public or a section of the public.”

OUR AUDIENCES

Our audiences are everyone with whom we communicate and that could be through any medium or channel. They include:

- Staff
- Elected Members
- Residents
- Businesses
- Partners
- Neighbouring Authorities
- MPs
- Professional peers and other authorities

Letting customers know what their councils are doing for them, what they get for their money and who’s responsible for the services they use, underpins what good local government communication is all about.

It is the function of the Communications Team to explore all channels for better and more effective communication and the media plays a vital role in this.

Broadcasters, publishers, the internet and social media can all help win public support. But our good reputation can unravel just as quickly if we’re at the centre of a bad news story which is running out of control. That’s where managing our media relations can prove most effective to help us uphold and improve our reputations.

For that reason the Communications Team are issuing this Communications Protocol.

This protocol lays down a set of procedures for both councils – Members and Officers - to give clarity and accountability to how we work.

If every Officer and Elected Member follows this media protocol we can ensure that we are following good communications principals:

PRINCIPALS OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

We are **customer focused**, informative and positive in our external communications, actively promoting local democracy, and involving our residents and businesses in decision making.

The messages we send are **consistent, accurate, clear and timely** and in keeping with both councils' strategic goals and aspirations.

We provide a **professional, fair and efficient service** to our media where we will be open, honest and proactive. The councils are committed to open government and a positive working relationship with the media.

We **protect the reputation** of the councils, the Officers and the Members, by supporting them and equipping them with the most up to date information.

That our communication is legal and adheres to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

If you need any advice on these guidelines, please contact Lead Communications Specialist Lesley Crocker on 01803 861321 / /07816143034 or email Lesley.crocker@swdevon.gov.uk

MEDIA PROTOCOL

Best Practice

South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils Communications Team perform the function of a centralised press office.

All press releases, statements and photograph calls concerning the business of the councils should be arranged and issued by the Communications Team.

All media will be advised that if they want a comment or statement about matters relating to the business of the councils, they must come through the Communications Team.

There is one main communication protocol that all members and officers should adhere to:

If approached by the media for a statement or comment concerning the business of the councils, all officers and elected members **MUST** inform the press office or a member of the communications team **BEFORE** issuing a statement.

01803 861321, 01803 861156, 01803 861429

press.office@swdevon.gov.uk

Providing one central point of contact for all media is recognised as **best practice**.

By operating in this way, messages can be pre-arranged, we can ensure that information is consistent and we can offer advice support and protection to everyone concerned.

The Communications Team may receive several media calls a day and we liaise with Officers and Members to provide a response. Responding to a journalist immediately does not allow breathing space to consider the reply or to check facts and determine the best course of action.

We may also receive requests to record radio and/or TV interviews. In every case the Communications Team will liaise with the media, Elected Members and relevant Officers. Every media enquiry will be used as a positive opportunity to get our positive messages across to the public.

Nothing in this protocol precludes Members or political groups from speaking to or contacting the media. Members must however make it clear on whose behalf they are speaking:

- **Officially as an elected Member of the South Hams District or West Devon Borough Council** -the Communications Team should be informed before the communication takes place, to ensure members are fully briefed and supported
- **Officially on behalf of their particular political group** -the Communications Team cannot aid or assist with this communications, we must remain politically neutral
- **Personally as a Ward or Borough Councillor** – Speaking freely to the press about matters arising in a ward or borough is naturally part of what makes a Councillor a spokesperson for the people they represent, and the Communications Team would not want to do anything that prevents this from happening. However, when Councillors speak to the press about the business of their Council within their ward, they are advised to seek advice from the Communications Team to ensure that they have the latest information. This could include the latest information on Council processes and responsibilities, an update on a particular issue or a press statement issued by a partner organisation on the same subject. The role of the Communications Team in this respect is to support the Ward Members and to ensure that they give out factually correct information. If they find themselves speaking at a meeting where the press are present, they can offer the press the communications contact number or contact the team after the meeting to let us know and we will be able to offer the journalist an official Council statement, which they can use alongside the comments that the Ward Member has made.

Responding to a media request from the Press Office

All media queries are subject to deadlines. By missing a deadline, a story may appear without a Council comment – it won't wait or go away and our reputation could suffer. It is best if we can respond as quickly and openly as possible as this can influence stories before they are fully written.

If a Communications Officer contacts you with a media query, please return their call or email as a matter of priority, and as soon as possible. Give the Communications Officer all the facts or as much information as possible. Any press query is an opportunity to achieve a balanced and fair story. At the very least it is an opportunity for damage limitation.

Once the Communications Officer has all the information, a statement will be drafted and will be approved by the relevant senior Officers and/or Members before it is sent out to the media.

No Statements will be issued unless they have approval and all relevant officers and Members (Portfolio Holder and Ward Members concerned) will receive a copy of the statement that has been issued.

When Members are asked to speak on behalf of their Council

When the Communications Team receives a request for an interview or statement for an Elected Member or when a situation arises which requires a Member to respond to a media enquiry, the Communications Team will complete the following steps:

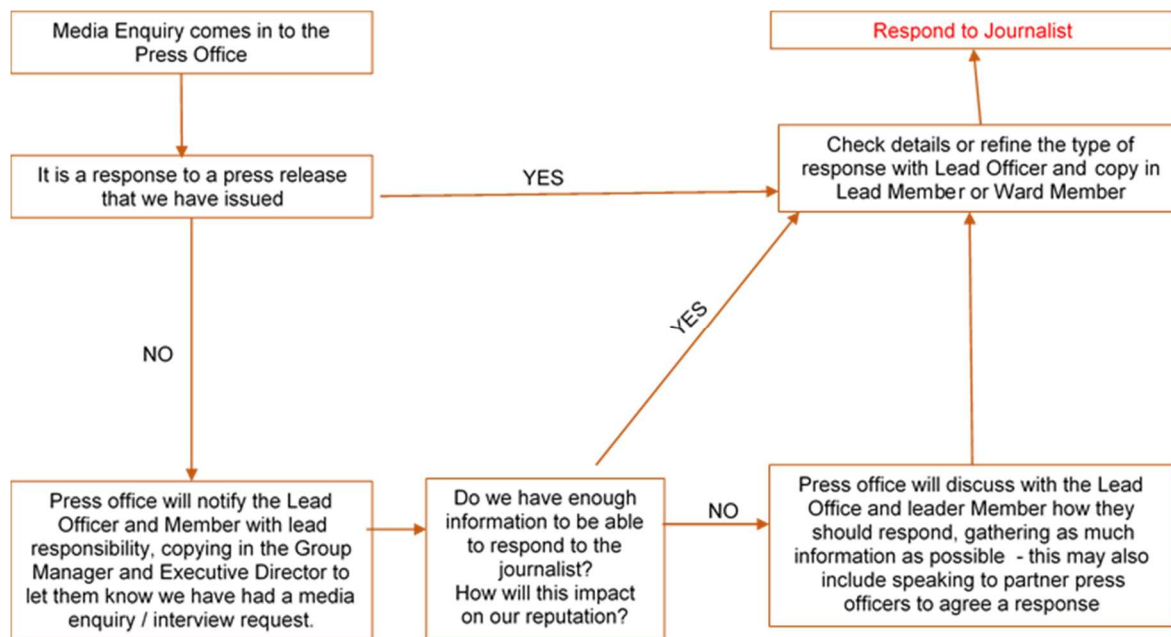
Inform the Officer, Lead Member and Ward Member and Leader – if the issue is political in nature or is likely to have a big impact on the reputation of the council.

Liaise with the relevant officers to create a brief/gather the latest information, prepare a statement, press releases or quote on behalf of the Elected Member

Fully **brief** the Member and inform them of all of the facts of the situation, in the case of an interview this should be a written brief

Advise and support them with their response, this could be drafting their quote or response

Ensure that the Leading Officer and the Elected Member are happy with the response, brief or statement before it is issued / broadcast or the interview is conducted



If the Elected Member wishes to make a party political statement, the Communications Team are not able to assist them.

All press releases / statements, even those issued on behalf of an Elected Member, must be signed off and approved by at least the Specialist, or Leading Officer, who has all of the technical information, and if required the Group Leader or Executive Director.

The Press Office will always notify:

- Lead officer or COP Lead or specialist in the area of work – it may be one person
- Copying in the Group Manager and Executive Director for that group
- They will also notify the Ward Member and the Lead Members
- Copying in the Leader of the Council and the Lead for Communications – May be the same person

Which Elected Members should speak on behalf of their Council?

South Hams District Council:

The Leader, Deputy Leader, Chairman, and Executive Member can be called upon to respond to the media on corporate and major issues.

South Hams Executive Portfolio Holders may be asked to respond on specifics in their portfolio area.

West Devon Borough Council:

The Leader, Deputy Leader, Mayor and Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs can be called upon to respond to the media on corporate and major issues.

Lead Members may be called upon to respond to specifics concerning the portfolios in which the lead.

See APPENDIX A For a list of member responsibilities.

When should Officers speak on behalf of their Council?

Wherever possible, the spokesperson for the Council should be an Elected Member, but occasionally the Executive Directors, Group Managers and Specialists may be required to respond to the media on projects and initiatives they have a direct involvement in. This will usually be to answer questions of fact and provide technical information about their areas of expertise.

Any officer asked to carry out a media interview will be fully briefed by the Communications Team. The relevant Council Leader will be kept fully informed if an officer is asked to respond to the media.

Officers should not speak to the media about the business of the Council without speaking to the Communications Team.

This includes all forms of media and social media – see social media policy

Communications Champions

There is a new Communications Champions group. The remit and drive of the group is to view communications in a strategic way, to prepare and plan for issues and situations that arise and to ensure that the communication underpins and supports the purpose, themes and objectives of both councils.

This groups should work alongside IT, Design and Web Development to, where possible, plan and programme work, to maximise all available channels in a sensible timeframe.

Members of the group will be fluid, with Specialists and Project Officers who have taken responsibility for communication in their area of work, joining and leaving the group when appropriate.

It is the responsibility of these nominated Specialist or Project Officers Communications Champions to tell the Communications Team about stories and opportunities for positive communications or issues that might be arising and to feed into the councils' communication plans.

There will be instances when communication is reactive and statements or press releases are required in response to a situation or matter arising, but where possible all communications should be pre-planned, part of a campaign, initiative or corporate drive directly linked to the purpose, themes and objective of one of the councils.

It is the responsibility of the Communications Team to support, advise and assist the nominated Communications Champion, to help them with all of their communications needs, both internally and externally.

Statements and press releases

It is important to distinguish between a statement and a press release.

A STATEMENT: is sent to a media organisation in response to a question they have asked. A statement is put together by the Communications Team, liaising with relevant Officers and Members. It is not placed on the website.

A PRESS RELEASE: is a ready-made news article produced by the Communications Team which is provided as a basis, but more often used in its entirety, for a story in our local media. The press release can be anything from promoting a service initiative to explaining a decision made by one of the councils.

The Communications Team is responsible for collating, writing and issuing all press releases on behalf of each Council.

Press releases should contain the following information:

Date of issue or release

A clear **headline** which says it all

A simple line or **statement** which explains the headline

A **quote** from the appropriate Elected Member – as few quotes as possible

Information and detail which explains the reasons for the press release

A clear **message or call to action** – why are we telling you this now

Notes or further information for Editors

Communications Team **Contact details**

When they write a press release the Press Office will always notify:

- Lead officer or COP Lead or specialist in the area of work – it may be one person for approval and get approval of those who are quoted
- Copying in the Group Manager and Executive Director for that group
- They will also notify the Ward Member and the Lead Members
- Copying in the Leader of the Council and the Lead for Communications – May be the same person
- All press releases issued will be copied to all elected Members

Photographs

Photographs to illustrate a press release are also important, particularly as the article is more readily used in our local media if a photograph is available. A good photograph can add impact to a story and sometimes even makes the difference between whether the article is used or not.

Most publications will not print an amateur shot so it is advisable to contact the Communications Team who can help with some photographic work.

Please do be aware of taking photographs of children and young people. Formal permission must be sought from the parent or guardian responsible for the child/young person. With older children (16 - 18 year olds) it is good practice to seek their permission directly as well as asking their parent or guardian. Consent forms are available in **Appendix B**.

When planning a press release or campaign it is the responsibility of the Specialist or project officers to give the Communications Team as much information as possible. They could even prepare the content of the press release.

In some cases it may be appropriate for both a Member and an Officer to be quoted. In such instances the Officer should be quoted purely to provide operational information or to clarify a technical or legal point, while Members would give a policy view. There are a few instances where the media release is only aiming to provide a brief announcement and no quote is needed. The Communications Team will decide what is appropriate here.

All press releases sent out by the councils to our media will be copied to all relevant Elected Members, Specialist and Group Managers. The press release will be placed on our websites, Facebook and Twitter. They should also be shared with Customers Services and Customers Service in the Community Engagement Officers, who are speaking to the public on a daily basis.

Use of Embargoes

Embargoes will only be used when considered essential:

When news releases **are linked** to an event or specific date,
When an issue of **confidentially** requires it; or
When it is required by a **third party**.

Note: Embargoes are not legally enforceable and are set by a general local agreement between the Council and the media. Please inform the Communications Team of any instances of an embargo being broken.

Where are our press releases sent?

Press releases from the councils are emailed to various groups of media depending on the topic. We have links to dozens of different media outlets including broadcasting, publishing and internet news pages.

Local - Local weekly media will generally cover stories relevant to people living and working in their distribution areas.

County and regional – This includes newspapers such as the Western Morning News and Plymouth Herald, the regional radio and television broadcasters such as Radio Devon, BBC Spotlight and ITV Westcountry. News agencies, such as Apex and the Press Association, also gather information on ‘local’ stories and make the facts and comments available for regional and national media.

National – This includes all national newspapers, all BBC radio and television, ITV (including Channel 4 and Channel 5 news) and national independent radio news.

Specialist and Trade Publications – We sometimes generate news about specialist activities such as Building Control and Environmental Health and we may want to target very specific magazines or specialists with the information. Publications with an interest in local government include the Municipal Journal and Local Government Chronicle.

Internet publishers – Online services are a rapidly growing and changing sector of the media and we send our news to various e-newsletters and online organisations.

When a communications plan is completed for a specific story, the Communications Team will work with the Communications Champion to identify specific publications that they would like to target or interest group that they would like to reach.

Targeting Audiences

If there is an occasion where we can increase the reach of our messages by also issuing press releases to local parishes, parish magazines, Facebook group editors and target locally specific messages to reach certain communities the Communications Team will issue the release to those specific groups of people.

As part of the communications planning, the Communications Champions will be encouraged to think about their audiences and how we can use all of the technology at our disposal including the Experian Data to target our messages to reach specific demographics and groups of people. This work will help inform when and where the press releases get issues.

Media Monitoring

The Communications Team perform a media monitoring service. The remit of this function is to ensure that the relevant Officers and Members of the Council are kept fully informed of local issues and the coverage that the Council is receiving in the press.

Media Monitoring can also shed light on public mood and opinion and inform us what issues our customers are concerned about.

Very often national press stories become local ones, with the local press looking for the local angle on a national story.

It is best practice for Communications Teams to have a good understanding of how the local and national press operate, what sort of stories they are interested in and what sort of coverage they give.

The South Hams and West Devon Communications Team have Google Alerts set up for key words, which capture most of the national press and local stories that will be of interest the both councils.

The Communications Team's monitoring consists of:

Periodically throughout the day we checking the internet for:

- Local / Regional / National News

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA / gov announcements • Social media
<p>Reading the local Daily Papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plymouth Herald • Western Morning News
<p>Reading the Local Weekly Papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wed – Totnes Times and South Devon and Plymouth Times • Thur – Tavistock Times Gazette and Okehampton Times / Herald Express • Fri – Dartmouth Chronicle – Kingsbridge & Salcombe Gazette / Ivybridge and South Brent Gazette
<p>Reading the Trade Papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MJ – weekly - Thursdays • Local Government News - Monthly • Planning and regeneration – Vicky to find out - Monthly • Local Government Chronicle - Monthly
<p>We also monitor the local broadcast television and radio</p>

We now have a license which enables us to copy and share some of that content with Officers and Members, but there are restrictions.

BEFORE you copy any printed material please **speak to the Communications Team**

Copying – The Law

Copyright protects authors of original work. It gives them the right to control the way their work is reproduced and to charge for permission to do so.

Copyright is protected by laws dating back to the 1709 Statute of Anne. This introduced two concepts that are still enshrined in law: that an author owns the copyright of their work and that there should be a fixed term of protection for published works.

The current copyright law in the UK is The Copyright Designs & Patents Act 1988, and its amendments. The Act protects the investment of time, money and effort by people who create original pieces of work. It also makes it an offence to copy without permission.

South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils now have a Newspaper Licencing Agency Media Access Licence, this enables us to photocopy some publications and newspapers:

The Newspaper Licencing Agency (NLA) is a Collective Management Organisation (known as a CMO) based in the UK which licenses the copying and use of extracts from publications protected by copyright.

NLA plays an important role in the publishing industry acting on behalf of publishers in licensing the copying of extracts from newspapers, magazine and specialist titles

We have purchased a basic license which enable us to copy from up to 10 regional titles and share that content with Officers and Elected Members of the councils. For all content which is web based, which includes national titles, we are allowed to share a URL link to a specific web page as long as we don't copy the exact wording from the article in the text which accompanies the link.

South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils also have a license from the Copyright Licencing Agency, this enables us to reduce the risk and potential cost of copyright infringement. This requirement applies to any organisations in the business, education, public or charitable sector.

A CLA license is the only way to get blanket clearance that enables us (within limits) to copy what you want, when you want, rather than having to obtain permission from the copyright owners each time.

A CLA License permit copying from most titles published in the UK and over 30 other international territories, but it doesn't cover newspapers.

The Copyright Licensing Agency Limited (CLA) is a licensing body as defined by the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988.

CLA was set up in 1983 and is owned by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society Ltd. (ALCS) and the Publishers' Licensing Society Ltd. (PLS) to perform collective licensing on their behalf.

Bad News Stories

Our policy is for mistakes to be acknowledged and apologised for 'on behalf of the Council' where appropriate and where we are able to do so following discussions with the Executive Directors and/or Leader in conjunction with the Lead Specialist.

There are times where the media coverage of a particular issue is incorrectly reported. After discussion with the Communications Team, Executive Directors and Lead Specialist, contact should be made with the media concerned to redress the balance.

If we still believe following reports are unfair or not based on fact a complaint should be made to the Press Complaints Commission at www.pcc.org.uk

Negative Letters in the Media

It is important that we take a realistic approach to negative letters that appear in the media. All too often the Council can become involved in responding to letters which can become counter-productive and time consuming.

If a letter is factually incorrect it is important that we usually try to respond to set out the correct facts. There should be a discussion between the Elected Member, Lead Specialist and Communications Team and a suitable reply sent.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Transparency and openness should be the main principal behind everything the councils do. In 2014 the Government introduced new rights by the Openness of Local Government Bodies 2014, which would enable members of the public to know how decisions are made: [Open and Accountable Local Government August 2014](#)

These rights allow members of the public including citizens and professional journalists to:

Use modern technology and communication methods such as **filming, audio-recording, blogging and tweeting** to report the proceedings of the meetings of their councils and other local government bodies

See information relating to significant decisions made outside meetings by officers acting under a general or specific delegated power.

The new guide provides practical information that will help the public to exercise their new rights under the regulations, and what they should expect from their councils and other local government bodies.

The councils ask that the press and public:

- **Let us know** if you wish to film or audio-record so we can make any necessary and reasonable arrangements to allow this
- **Not to use** any flash photography or unnecessary movement that might disrupt the meeting
- **Note that** the Chairman of the meeting has the power to ban or limit filming at any time if s/he believes there is a risk of it changing the democratic process of the meeting
- **Observe the rules** which say that no spoken commentary is allowed during the meetings (which would be disruptive to the order of the meeting).
- **Be aware** that while those attending meetings are thought to have agreed to the filming, recording or broadcasting of meetings, those exercising the rights to film, record and broadcast must respect the rights of other people attending under the Data Protection Act 1998.
- **Not to edit** the film or recording in a way that could lead to **misinterpretation of the proceedings**, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes editing an image

or view that may ridicule or show a lack of respect towards those being filmed or recorded.

COURT CASES

The councils will occasionally launch prosecutions and will want to use successful results of court cases to deliver a message to the public.

Let the Communications Team know ahead of a possible court case or sentencing so that we are in a position to bring cases to the media's attention.

Doing so allows the media to attend and could result in greater coverage of the case. If the media is unable to attend we may be able to do so ourselves.

Great care needs to be taken in producing press releases about court hearings.

The information should stick purely to the facts, and media law prevents newspapers and broadcasters from carrying any court proceedings unless they meet a very tight timeframe.

It's important to seek advice from the Communications Team as soon as you are aware of a court hearing.

BRANDING

Research suggests that customers paying Council Tax, link the services they receive with the regular use of our branding - in this case our logo – whether it be on a parking pay and display machine, on a board promoting affordable housing or in an advert. Our corporate logos must be used appropriately.

All uses of the councils' branding (other than in council produced templates and documents, where the style has already been set and approved) should be approved by the Specialists in the Design Team before any material is printed.

The Communications Team and the Design Team will produce a set of brand guidelines that all staff should follow along with a style guide to support a culture of consistent use of the English Language.

PLAIN ENGLISH

Both councils have adopted a policy of using plain English wherever possible, as best practice for reaching and communicating effectively with all customers.

Where possible all information produced on behalf of the councils should be written in plain English. This does not mean dumbing down or patronising our customers. It is about making sure that our use of language doesn't stop people from understanding what we are saying to them

Once published, all staff and Elected Members will be encourage, supported and trained in how to apply the style guide and use plain English guides produced by the Communications Team.

Plain English means:

Stop and think. Before you start writing make sure your points are in a logical order

Use Short words. Long word will not impress customers

Use **everyday language** that is easy to understand

Be **concise** and to the point

Avoid technical terms and jargon unless they are essential

Use correct **grammar and punctuation**

Use 15 to 20 words - keep your sentences short

PURDAH – PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

All Officers and Elected Members need to be aware of the rules governing communications during a pre-election period.

The pre-election restrictions are governed by Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986¹, as amended in 1988².

Essentially councils should “**not publish** any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.”

During the Purdah period, councils should:

- **Not issue any publicity** which seeks to influence voters
- **Consider** suspending hosting third party material or closing public forums if these are likely to break the codes of practice.
- **Not publish any publicity on controversial issues** or report views on proposals in a way which identifies them with individual councillors or groups of councillors.
- **Not generate publicity** relating to individuals involved directly in the election unless expressly authorised by statute.

Councils are allowed to publish factual information which identifies the names, wards and parties of candidates at elections.

For more information and guidance contact the Communications Team.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications brings opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure we balance this with our reputations.

We have a duty to promote equality and eliminate discrimination and the use of social media will bring greater opportunities for us to do this. Social media can help us to engage and communicate with a wider audience and give us a better understanding of our communities and their needs.

What we mean by Social Media

Social media is any web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way. This includes blogs, message boards, social networking websites (such as Facebook and Twitter), content sharing websites (such Flickr and YouTube) and many others

Expressing – Wikis, blogs, forums (important for monitoring and gaging public opinion)

Networking – Interest group and communities of people who share the same interest but might not live in the same area

Sharing - Images, videos and other content, a place to find information you are interested in

Gaming – Community of interest and competition

Socialising – Staying in touch, sharing information and common interest groups

The list of applications for social media is ever growing and changing, and it is the job of the Communications Team to stay in touch with the latest development and follow best practice for Local Authorities.

The risks of using social media have been explored and guidance put in place to mitigate against those risks.

Risk	Mitigation
Damage to the reputation of the councils – This could be through postings/photographs of staff, members or third parties pretending to represent the council.	The councils' main corporate social media sites are controlled and managed by the shared Communications Team who have specific experience in using social media and are fully aware of the risks and issues. A number of other Officers also use social media and have been given training and support by the Communications Team and now also use the Our Plan social media and CS.

	All training support and guidelines and policies for these sites will be set by the Communications Team
Level of monitoring – The Council can currently only monitor its social media sites during office hours.	Where appropriate, the councils will include a disclaimer on their social media sites which set out the parameters for use and control.
Virus or other malicious software infection – This could include infection from social media sites into the councils' ICT systems or hacking of council's social media accounts.	The councils have strong anti-virus and malware protection on PCs.
Disclosure of confidential information or breach of data protection – Either deliberately or inadvertently through information/photographs posted.	The councils will remove libellous, offensive or defamatory posts at the earliest opportunity. Strong passwords must be used when creating social media sites for the councils and changed every three months.
Breach of Safeguarding – Either regarding children, young people and vulnerable adults who may use social media.	The councils' main corporate social media sites are monitored on a daily basis by the Communications Team. Those using social media on behalf of the councils are aware of the safeguarding issue relating to vulnerable groups and are familiar with the advice and guidance provide at www.devonsafeguarding.org

Social Media Guide

The councils' use of social media will comply with the **laws of libel, copyright and data protection**.

Social media content is subject to the same rules of **fairness, openness and transparency** as the councils' uses in all their communications.

Social media should **NEVER** be used in a way that breaches any of the councils' other policies.

During times of major incident, emergency or crisis, social media should be employed **as a key tool** for keeping communities informed.

All complaints made via social media should be diverted back through the Customer Call Centre to ensure that they go through the single work flow and are recorded in the same way as all other complaints.

Social media use by the councils should concentrate **on facts**. The councils' official social media sites will not be used for political gain or campaigning.

The councils will be aware of **safeguarding issues** regarding children and vulnerable adults when using social media.

The councils will be aware of potential problems like **cyber-bullying** and other online anti-social behaviour.

When dealing with errors or controversial comments about them, the councils will **not remove** criticism unless it contains swear words etc. Instead, responses will concentrate on correcting factual errors and responding to legitimate criticism.

Derogatory or offensive comments will be removed from official Council social media sites.

Personal details like home addresses or **personal phone numbers will not be given out** on the councils' social media sites.

Photographs of people will only be used when all individuals pictured have given permission, in advance.

Using social media at work

Both councils encourage employees to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media as part of their work. It is an important part of how the councils' communicate with their residents. This is subject to the councils' existing rules on the appropriate use of ICT equipment and systems.

Employees may contribute to the councils' social media activities (in liaison with the Communications Team). Employees must be aware at all times that, while contributing to the councils' social media activities, they are representing the organisation. Staff using social media as part of their work must adhere to the following rules:

Rules for using social media at work:

Use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the organisation in the public sphere

Obtain permission from a manager before embarking on a public campaign using social media and work with the Communications Team to deliver it.

Staff and Members should only use social media accounts which have been corporately set up in the councils' names.

Be aware of and follow the councils' guidelines for using social media

Be aware of and follow the councils' Communications Protocol

Follow the staff code of conduct in their use of social media and be aware that breaches will result in disciplinary procedure

Always use #SHDC or #WDBC, this will enable people to follow each council on one single thread – if we are successful at promoting this # we can explore more

Using social media outside work

If staff use social media in their personal lives it must be separate from the councils' official sites. Employees are allowed to say that they work for the councils, but if they do we would advise that their personal social media profile should include a statement along the following lines:

"The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council."

Staff should not engage in any social media activity which would bring the councils into disrepute.

By working for the councils, staff should realise that sometime they are in a privileged position of having access to politically, financially and personally sensitive information.

Where we would encourage all staff to share the information coming from their Council, with their wider networks, both personal and professional, they should **ONLY** share information which has come from an **OFFICIAL COUNCIL** social media channel **FIRST**.

Releasing any information about the official business of the councils before it has been publically announced, could have serious consequences, therefore we ask all staff with social media accounts outside of work to follow these rules.

Rules for using social media outside of work – staff should:

Not breach the confidentiality of the councils or individuals related to the councils

Not to discuss the councils' internal workings

Not to breach copyright and data protection laws

Follow the staff code of conduct in their use of social media and be aware that breaches will result in disciplinary procedure

Use by Members

Members should be familiar with this guidance on Social Media and the Council Communications protocols. They should ensure their use of social media does not put the councils' information and security systems at risk, or damage the reputation of the councils.

It is recommended that Members also include a statement on their social media profiles along the lines of:

"The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council."

Elected Members can also sometimes be in a privileged position where they have access to information which has not yet been made publically available and they too should follow these rules.

Rules for using social media outside of the Council – Members should:

- Not breach the confidentiality of the councils or individuals related to the councils
- Not to discuss the councils' internal workings
- Not to breach copyright and data protection laws

Much of the behaviour expected of Members using social media is covered in the Members' Code of Conduct and is covered in this policy. Below are some extra guidelines for Councillors to consider for the use of social media.

Social Media Principals

The Councilors, Officers and the Council itself will use social media in distinct ways. However, there is a set of universal principles that are useful to keep in mind.

- **Be human:** be approachable in your language and tone; behave online as you would in person
- **Be engaging:** respond to questions and join in when you can move the conversation on or help
- **Be professional:** remember that you represent your council, so be aware of how your public voice comes across
- **Share and attribute:** you can share what others have posted but it is polite to acknowledge and attribute where this has come from
- **Go to where your audience is:** if the section of the population you want to connect with is on a particular platform, forum or group, join it
- **Content is king:** by creating sharable and engaging content you can contribute to the conversation and be heard
- **Be authentic:** don't pretend to be something you are not
- **Be strategic:** plan ahead – who do you want to engage with, why and how? What do you want to achieve?
- **The internet is forever:** be aware that what you post now could be found in years to come

Social Media can be used to achieve a wide variety of communication outcomes, some of them are listed below:

How could we use Social Media?	Support the business community		
Promoting campaigns	Listening	Reporting	Responding
Keep up to date with news from Central Government			
Retweeting messages from councillors	Share pictures		
Promoting services of council	Consulting	Support tourism / economy	
Keep up to date with national news	Promoting what councillors do		
Promoting the area	Share videos	Keep up to date with funding	
Instant emergency planning and messaging	Helping communities		
Staff and councillors can all help through their networks	Promoting communities		
Sharing news	Help with channel shift		

Using Social Media during Council meetings

In 2014 the Government introduced new rights by the Openness of Local Government Bodies 2014, which would enable members of the public to know how decisions are made: [Open and Accountable Local Government August 2014](#)

We would encourage the use of social media during the meeting to bring the discussions to a wider audience in accordance with these new rights..

Handheld devices and laptops are permitted (indeed encouraged) for use during meetings to allow environmentally friendly and effective communication. The use of such devices is intended to improve communication during meetings – not to interrupt or distract anyone taking part.

Please Ensure the volume on all electronic devices is turned to ‘mute’.

Councillors’ tweets/blogs during council meetings should refer to the discussions which are taking place at the meeting - tweeting/blogging about other subjects will show the public and other attendees at the meeting that you are not engaging properly in the meeting.

Councillors have a responsibility to take council business seriously and it is not appropriate for members to use social media to tease or insult other Members. The councils’ residents expect debate and to be informed about council business, not witness petty arguments.

Please use and encourage your followers to use the hashtag #SHDC or #WDBC when tweeting about the business of the councils, this will enable us to track and monitor our reach and give customers a way of following what is going on.

Campaigns – Promoting the work of the councils

All Communications Champions will be encourage to start thinking about their communications as a whole campaign and with that to consider who their social media audiences area, what # they use and how we want to interact with them.

Social Media should not be viewed as a tag on, but as an essential communication tool, nor should it be viewed as the answer to all communications challenges, it is just part of any campaign.

All social media should be outcome focused with a specific purpose or call to action, what is it that we want the customer to do and why should they do it?

When planning a social media campaign all Officers should consider these three rules:

Create it – campaign led social media, focused with a call to action
Promote it – can't just publish and expect people to follow
Measure it – how will you know if it is successful?

Service Delivery – demonstrating and supporting the services that we provide

In addition to supporting the work of the councils by using social media to share the press release that are issued, Social Media can be used to promote the specific work of service areas, such as Localities or Waste and Recycling.

All services, should be encouraged as part of their individual communications plan, to think about how they can use social media to promote the work they do.

Networking and sharing – supporting partners and other government

Second Tier Local Authorities play a vital role in the sharing of information and the support of County Councils and other government agencies.

The Communications Team in collaboration with the Communications Champions will decide when the councils should be retweeting and supporting the campaigns, initiatives of our partners, what messages are relevant for our audiences and when they support the business of the councils, this may include supporting the social media for partnerships and partners such as:

- Community Safety Partnership
- Local Resilience Forum
- Devon County Council
- Environment Agency
- Food Standards Agency

- Emergency Services

Retweeting comments by Elected Members

Often the work of elected member reinforces the business of the council, such as attending events, or community projects that have been supported, funded or set up by the Council.

The Communications Team **CAN** retweet a message posted by an Elected Member, which promotes this activity as long as it:

is **NOT** politically motivated, **DOES** relate directly to the business of the council and **DOESNOT** break the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in March 2011.

Promoting and sharing - Becoming Broadcasters

One of the key features of Social Media is that it is instant, journalist no longer hold stories of wait for publication deadlines, they can now publish a story immediately online. The same is true of the citizen journalist, the member of the public who is witness to an event, meeting or news worthy story.

By rely entirely on the publication of a weekly newspaper could see our councils as viewed late with their news, we need to respond to breaking news instantly, broadcasting our stories for ourselves or we could be viewed as, not responding in a timely way to the residents as and when things happen.

This does not mean however that the councils need to respond in haste to emerging situations. Communicating facts is not the same as communicating an opinion.

During and incident, meeting or emergency situation, via the councils' corporate social media channels, the Communications Team:

CAN post factual information

“we know that there has been an incident and we will keep you informed”

“the Planning committee have approved 80 new homes at x”

CAN quote an Elected Member who has spoken during a public meeting.

“Cllr x said the plans were outstanding example of a modern development”

Will **NOT** enter into the debate or post a council opinion that has not been pre-approved

All rules of the Code of Recommended Practice still apply

One of the key features of Social Media is that it is instant, journalists don't often hold stories or wait for publication deadlines, and they publish immediately online.

COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL IN AN EMERGENCY

Overview

Communication is not just the responsibility of the Communications Team, and at no time is this more important than in a crisis situation.

Every member of staff need to be aware of the emergency communications plan, who is leading it, what channels are being used and what impact it has on what they do next.

Crisis situations no longer break just on the traditional media, we also have to think about the local resident communicators, who post pictures, videos and make comments that get shared quickly around communities. Can we also encourage them to help us spread and share our messages when a crisis hits?

Reputation

If we were to find ourselves in a crisis situation where we are worrying about communications, it is too late.

Even the very best reputations can be damaged by single incidents and the impact of extreme weather on local communities can shape views about councils and their partners.

Over the last few years, the UK has been open to an increasing number of extreme weather events from flooding, to wind and storms, snow and extreme heat.

These can have a major impact on local communities, both at the time of the incident and in the longer-term. As well as the impact on people and their families, the effects of extreme weather can also impact on local businesses and local economies. In extreme cases, such as during a storm or during periods of excessive heat, this can result in loss of life.

Our Role

During extreme weather, the most important role a council can play is to provide local leadership – the way we respond during such incidents can define places and local areas for years to come.

How a council responds during such periods can also impact on reputation and how much our residents trust us.

How councils actually deal with such events, and provide information to residents has helped to restore and indeed improve the reputation of local government.

Although in extreme cases the emergency services will take the lead on dealing with any incident, often declaring it a 'major incident', councils have a wider leadership role both in preparing for extreme weather and preparing their communities, dealing with the incident as it happens and the aftermath – the 'clear-up'.

Planning in advance will enable us to move fast when a situation does occur and speed can prevent more damage, protect our reputation and ultimately save lives.

Council Direction

This plan is to be delivered by the South Hams and West Devon Communications Team with support from all Council Officers and Elected Members of the Council.

As second tier local authorities, South Hams and West Devon are not responsible for all functions and duties, which a unitary council would be, but they can help to signpost residents to the County Council and provide a leadership role allowing residents to find the most appropriate information from the right source.

At a time of crisis our residents need to trust us to deal with the situation quickly and effectively.

At a time of crisis or major incident our direct responsibilities are likely to include:

- Environmental Health support
- Providing safe and secure communities and homes
- Emergency community support and rehoming
- Signposting people where to go for help – Police – Environment Agency etc.
- Demonstrating what help is available
- Providing local out of hours services

Emergency Situations

Here is a list of some of the types of incidents that might arise in South Hams and West Devon and our responsibilities:

Building Control and dangerous structures

Coastal Path collapse and closure

Business related accident / explosion / major incident

South Hams Assets

Extreme weather events that lead to flooding and isolated communities

Waste and recycling

Extreme weather which might prevent collections

Housing Needs

Fire, flooding or major incident which required emergency rehoming of residents

Environmental Health

Food / health / illness outbreak

Other Council Responses

Costal Pollution incidents

Terrorist attack

Road Traffic Incident which causes A38 to be closed and impacts on surrounding communities

SWOT Analysis

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been identified for communicating the delivery of this project:

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
We have a council wide Emergency Plan and rota in place. We are part of the Devon-wide Warning and Informing Group.	Because of T18 our website and communications plans are not up to a good enough standard yet. We are implementing the winter preventative messaging a little too late this year, due to staff changes.	By devising the plan from scratch we have an opportunity to redesign how we deliver emergency messages. Social media is continuing to grow and more councillors and staff are now using it. Can we use it better in a time of crisis? Many of the Parishes now have emergency plans – this is an opportunity to help them take responsibility for their own community. How can we support them with this?	Extreme weather and coastal communities, and rural communities Coastal pollution. Terrorist attack. Fire, flooding or major incident which required emergency rehoming of residents. Nuclear disaster at Devonport.

Objectives

To complete a detailed communication plan that can be acted upon quickly in the event of a crisis and to provide a framework for all of the communications activities that stem from it.

We need to know what we need to tell to who and when – who is leading on the messaging and who is delivering the messaging? We need to know where our audiences are and how best to reach them in the most timely and constructive way.

Audiences

Here is a list of our primary audiences and stakeholders, the people who need to be our priority when it comes to emergency messaging:

- **Residents**
- **Elected Members**
- **Council Staff**
- **Local stakeholders and partner organisations**
- **Media**
- **Neighbouring councils and the County Council**

Protocols

Once the duty member of the Communications Team is made aware of the crisis or incident they must assess the situation and decide who to contact.

It is the responsibility of the communications team to be the Council's central point for all media during a crisis or major incident.

Their role is to link with the partner organisations and agencies involved to ensure consistent messaging is going out to residents and in many cases, just to signpost residents to the most appropriate services or person who can help them.

Although major situations can be very chaotic and emotional for the residents, the Communications Team should always be mindful of their professional position and the reputation of the council and should not say anything about the circumstance of the incident to the press unless it has been approved by the Senior Officer and Lead Member.

Their role is also to make sure that everyone who should know, does know what is going on and to assist the Duty Officer and member of SLT with cascading information, where appropriate.

They are also responsible for updating all identified channels of communications swiftly with clear factual information, which includes the website and social media.

Messaging

As an incident unfolds it is important not to jump to conclusions and say too much, keep the messaging supportive, helpful and issue a holding statement quickly so that residents are aware that the council is dealing with the matter.

Suggested holding statement:

The council has invoked its emergency plan and is working to ensure residents are kept safe and well. For up-to-date information, please go to our website at www.XXXXXX.gov.uk, follow us on twitter @XXXXXX, listen to local radio stations and you can call us on XXXXX XXXXXX. Once we are able to provide more information, we will update you.

Further suggested messaging:

Vulnerable people – what support the council is providing to vulnerable adults who might be most affected.

Advice on travel – signpost to DCC / AA / Met Office.

Public services - open/closed - leisure centres / community halls.

Securing properties – what your residents should do to protect or secure their houses or businesses.

Business continuity – what the council is doing to support local businesses - are they still open during the incident.

Further information – contact details for residents wanting more information or help.

The holding statement and official council position

This should always come from a “spokesperson” from the council said: “The council has evoked its emergency plan...” “This is where you go for more information” “we will update you”

Sympathetic response from the Council Leaders

The sympathetic but practical statement during a major incident such as:

“My heart goes out to the families whose homes have been damaged in this incident.”

“Our officers are working very hard to help during this time, we are doing all we can.”

“I am being briefed regularly on the situation,” should either come from the Leader or from the Council Member with portfolio responsibilities, depending on the scale of the incident:

In the case of a major incident, the Leader, and if not available, then the Deputy should be the spokesperson.

For a situation which occurs and requires information from a particular service area, like emergency housing needs or assets, the portfolio holder with responsibilities for that area should be the spokesperson for the Council. The areas that are most likely to be covered are... (These lists are being refined at the moment – with contact details added.)

The Emotional Response

For Ward Members, a situation might be much closer to home, and while their involvement will be key to the delivery of the Emergency Plan, they should be kept in the loop on all communications. Any comments that they make might be more emotional as they may know of people who are involved.

If the Ward Member and the Portfolio Holder are the same person, then the Leader should speak on behalf of the council.

Recycling and Refuse in Bad Weather

In the event of bad weather we need to be able to accurately and swiftly communicate to our residents and businesses any impact to our recycling and refuse collection service.

If collections are affected or are likely to be affected (i.e. a severe weather forecast has been issued) Bev Mason, Specialist Business Development (Waste Management) will alert the Communications Team as soon as they think that there is going to be an issue with collections and will keep them regularly updated with information.

The Communications Team will be responsible for sending an email message to the Senior Leadership Team, Customer Service Teams and Members in the wards that are affected and the Elected Member with Portfolio Holder responsibilities for Waste and Recycling.

The Communications Team will also update social media – Twitter and Facebook – regularly and alert broadcasters and the media of any updates.

The websites have a facility for emergency messaging on the home pages, which will need to be regularly updated by the Website Editor.

During the Christmas close-down period a standard recorded message shall be left on CST's answerphone, directing persons to website and radio coverage on any possible delays.

Website

During an emergency situation, it is the responsibility of the Communications Team to update the website. How to upload an emergency message to the website.

Contact: For further information on this protocol or advice on these guidelines, please contact The Communications Team.

Any job titles or service information contained within this protocol that changes over the next 12 months, will be updated on an annual basis.

APPENDIX A - Member Responsibilities

Member and Ward Member for:	EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR:
<p>Cllr John Tucker West Dart</p>	<p>STRATEGY AND COMISSIONING: <i>Leader of the Council</i></p> <p>Strategic vision of the council Annual Budget Our Plan Democratic Services Communications Trading Company T18 Health and Safety</p>
<p>Cllr Lyndsay Ward Modbury</p>	<p><i>Deputy Leader of the Council</i></p> <p>Partnership Arrangements Business Voice LEP Communications Council Policy</p>
<p>Cllr Michael Hicks Stoke Flemming</p>	<p>STRATEGY AND COMISSIONING:</p> <p>Local Strategic Plan Neighbourhood Plans Performance and intelligence Sherford Business Development and Income Generation Leisure Procurement</p> <p>Policy Development (e.g. Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy)</p>
<p>Cllr Hilary Bastone Dartmouth and East Dart</p>	<p>CUSTOMER FIRST:</p> <p>Development Management (including Enforcement)Development Planning Localities Customer Contact Centre Environmental Health (including Licensing) Car Parks (<i>should this be Cllr Gilbert?</i>) Housing Revenues and Benefits</p>

	<p>Land Charges Assets and Estates include s106's Capital Programme - monitor</p>
<p>Cllr Simon Wright Salcombe and Thurlestone</p>	<p>SUPPORT SERVICES:</p> <p>Finance Legal Design HR IT Audit Write offs include Data Protection FOI' Capital Programme</p>
<p>Cllr Rufus Gilbert Kingsbridge</p>	<p>COMMERCIAL SERVICES:</p> <p>Waste operational Car Parking – operational Recycling Salcombe Harbour DBC Partnership Grounds Maintenance Toilets Cleansing Dartmouth Lower Ferry Building Maintenance Facilities Management</p>
<p>Cllr Julian Brazil Stokenham</p>	
<p>Cllr Tom Holway Ermington and Ugborough</p>	
<p>Cllr Robert Vint Totnes</p>	
<p>Cllr Jacqi Hodgson Dartington and Staverton</p>	
<p>Cllr Daniel Brown Wembury and Brixton</p>	
<p>Cllr Kathy Cuthbert Ivybridge East</p>	
<p>Cllr Michael Saltern Ivybridge West</p>	<p><i>Chair of Overview and Scrutiny South Hams appointed member to the Police and</i></p>

	<i>Crime Panel.</i>
Cllr Ian Bramble Loddiswell and Aveton Gifford	<i>Chairman of Council</i>
Cllr Peter Smerdon South Brent	<i>Vice Chairman of Council</i>
Cllr Richard Foss Allington and Strete	
Cllr Ian Blackler Newton and Yealmpton	
Cllr David Horsburgh Totnes	
Cllr Nicky Barnes Woolwell	
Cllr Basil Cane Wembury and Brixton	
Cllr Rob Steer South Brent	Chairman of Develop Management (Planning)
Cllr Judy Pearce Salcombe and Thurlestone	
Cllr Trevor Pennington Marldon and Littlehempston	
Cllr Karen Pringle Ivybridge East	
Cllr Rosemary Rowe Dartmouth and East Dart	
Cllr Bill Hitchins Bickleigh and Cornwood	
Cllr David May Ivybridge West	
Cllr Keith Wingate Kingsbridge	

Cllr Keith Baldry Newton and Yealmpton	Prefers to keep Twitter account free from SHDC fed information
Cllr John Green Totnes	
Cllr Jonathan Hawkins Dartmouth and East Dart	

WEST DEVON MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Member	Lead Member for.....
Cllr Philip Sanders Buckland Monachorum <i>Leader of the Council</i>	LEADER: Strategic vision of the council Annual Budget Our Plan Democratic Services Communications Trading Company? T18
Cllr Bob Baldwin Milton Ford	DEPUTY LEADER: Commercial Development Service Delivery?? – may need more clarity Partnership Arrangements Devon Building Control Partnership Policy Development
Cllr Robert Sampson Chagford	COMMERCIAL SERVICES: Environment Services, Waste and recycling (including Waste Contract) Leisure Contract Car Parks
Cllr Robert Oxborough Tavistock and South East	ECONOMY: Business Development Businesses?? Business Voice LEP
Cllr Mike Benson	ENVIRONMENT:

Bere Ferrers	<p>Grounds Maintenance Toilets Cleansing Building Maintenance Assets AONB Public Realm Cleansing to include dog fouling</p>
Cllr Jeff Moody Tavistock North	<p>CUSTOMER FIRST:</p> <p>Customer contact Channel Shift Localities Development Management Environmental Health including Licensing Devon Building Control Partnership – Should this go to Bob?</p>
Cllr Lois Samuel Exbourne	<p>HEALTH AND WELL BEING:</p> <p>Housing DFG's Write offs Homelessness Benefits Council Tax</p>
Cllr Bill Cann South Tawton	<p>RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE:</p> <p>IT HR Finance (including Annual Budget Setting process) Legal Policy Performance Complaints Data Protection FOI's</p>
Cllr Graham Parker Tavistock and South West	<p>STRATEGIC PLANNING AND HOUSING:</p> <p>Strategic Housing Local Strategic Plan Neighbourhood plans</p>
Cllr John Sheldon Tavistock North	<i>Deputy Mayor of West Devon</i>

Cllr Julie Yelland Okehampton South	
Cllr David Cloke Burrator	<i>Mayor of West Devon</i>
Cllr Bob Baldwin Milton Ford	<i>Deputy Leader of the Council</i>
Cllr John Hockridge Bridgestowe	
Cllr Annabel Roberts Dartmoor	
Cllr Louise Watts Exbourne	
Cllr Terry Pearce Mary Tavy	
Cllr Mike Davies Okehampton North	
Cllr Debo Sellis Tavistock South East	
Cllr Jess Evans Tavistock South West	
Cllr Tony Leech Okehampton North	
Cllr Paul Ridgers Drewsteignton	
Cllr Diana Moyse Burrator	
Cllr Robin Musgrave Bere Ferrers	
Cllr Caroline Mott Bridestowe	
Cllr Ric Cheadle Buckland Monachorum	
Cllr Patrick Kimber Hatherleigh	
Cllr Kevin Ball Okehampton North	
Cllr Ben Stephens Okehampton South	
Cllr Chris Edmonds Tamarside	
Cllr Neil Jory Tavistock North	
Cllr James McInnes Hatherleigh	

APPENDIX B – Photographic Consent Form for children and adults



Photographic Consent Form



The Councils often take photographs or video film for publicity purposes. These images may appear in our printed publications, on our website, or both. We may also send them to the news media.

Before taking any pictures, we need your permission. Please circle an answer to each of the following two questions and then sign and date the form where shown.

<p>May we use your image(s), or those of your child/children if under 18, in publicity material produced by West Devon Borough Council and/or South Hams District Council, including printed publications, videos and our website?</p>	<p>Yes / No</p>
<p>We regularly send publicity material about our services, including photographs where appropriate, to the news media, especially the local press. Can we use your photograph, or your child's, in this way?</p>	<p>Yes / No</p>

Please note that websites can be viewed throughout the world, not just in the United Kingdom where UK law applies. This form is valid for five years from the date of signing.

Please print -

Name:

.....

Name of child / children:

.....

Address:

.....

Telephone N^o:

.....

Signature:.....

Date:

.....

Your details are protected by West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council under the Data Protection Act 1998

For WDBC/SHDC use only

Photographer:

Event:

Date:

Officer signature:

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy applies to all of the communication activities of the shared service between South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils.
- 1.2 Good communication is the responsibility of all of the employed Officers and elected Members of both councils, it is underpinned and supported by a shared Communications Team whose primary function is to communicate the business of the councils as defined in the corporate strategies, the councils' themes, objectives and their annual delivery plans.
- 1.3 Through the Communications Protocol (reviewed January 2016), the Communication Team will support Officers and Members and promote the best practice communication principals of this policy.

2. AUDIENCES

- 2.1 Our audiences are everyone with whom we communicate and that could be through any medium or channel. They include:
- Officers
 - Elected Members
 - Residents and prospective residents
 - Organisations and groups
 - Businesses
 - Partners
 - Neighbouring authorities
 - MP's
 - Professional peers and other authorities
 - Tourists and visitors
 - Local, regional, national and trade media
- 2.2 Letting customers know what their councils are doing for them, what they get for their money and who's responsible for the services they use, underpins what good local government communication is all about.
- 2.3 This policy will be further supported by a separate internal communications plan, which will provide Officers with a framework for how we are going to support them through communication and enable them to be able to deliver quality customer focused services. That plan will adhere to the same communication principals as laid out in this policy.

3. CHANNELS

- 3.1 South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils' communicate with residents through a wide variety of channels including, letters, face to face, over the phone, over the internet, printed material, events, through media and social media.
- 3.2 It is the intention of the councils to provide their customers with a wide variety of options, different channels through which they can interact with their council and access services when and how they wish.
- 3.3 This would include providing customers with the technology to self-serve via the internet, taking control of their interactions with council services and more opportunities to have a face to face discussion with Locality Officers.
- 3.4 In a changing digital world where new forms of communications are being continually explored, it is the responsibility of the councils Communication Team to continually review how they reach their audiences, applying the most appropriate method to the right audience at the best time to deliver the best outcome for the customer.
- 3.5 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it meets the needs of both councils and delivers on the communication goals of the councils' Priorities and annual delivery plan.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 This policy sets out to ensure that with all Council communications:

We are **customer focused**, informative and positive in our external communications, actively promoting local democracy, and involving our residents and businesses in decision making.

The messages we send are **transparent, consistent, accurate, clear and timely** and in keeping with both councils' priorities.

We provide an **open, professional, fair and efficient service** to our media where we will be open, honest and proactive. The councils are committed to open government and a positive working relationship with the media.

We **protect the reputation** of the councils, the Officers and the Members, by supporting them and equipping them with the most up to date information.

That our communication **is legal** and adheres to the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in March 2011 and other legislation as laid out in the Communication Protocol (reviewed January 2016)

5. MEDIA PROTOCOL

5.1 South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils Communications Team perform the function of a centralised press office, who have produced a Media Protocol for working with the media, it states that:

5.2 All press releases, statements and photograph calls concerning the business of the councils should be arranged and issued by the Communications Team.

5.3 All media are advised that if they want a comment or statement about matters relating to the business of the councils, they must come through the Communications Team.

5.4 If approached by the media for a comment or statement all elected Members and employed Officers should speak to the Communications Team.

5.5 Nothing in this policy or the protocol precludes Members or political groups from speaking to or contacting the media. Members must however make it clear on whose behalf they are speaking:

- **Officially as an elected Member of the South Hams District or West Devon Borough Council** - (the Communications Team should be informed before the communication takes place, to ensure Members are fully briefed and supported)
- **Officially on behalf of their particular political group** - (the Communications Team cannot aid or assist with this communications, they must remain politically neutral)
- **Personally as a Ward or Borough Councillor** - (Speaking freely to the press about matters arising in a ward or borough is naturally part of what makes a Councillor a spokesperson for the people they represent, and the Communications Team would not want to do anything that prevents this from happening. However, when Councillors speak to the press about the business of their Council within their ward, they are advised to seek advice from the Communications Team to ensure that they have the latest information. This could include the latest information on Council processes and responsibilities, an update on a particular issue or a press statement issued by a partner organisation on the same subject. The role of the Communications Team in this respect is to support the Ward Members and to ensure that they give out factually correct information)

5.6 If an elected Member wishes to make a Party Political statement, the Communications Team are not able to help them.

5.7 The Communications Team will respond to enquiries from the media on behalf of both councils in accordance with legislation and the law. It is the

Communications Team who are responsible for collating, writing and issuing all press releases on behalf of each Council.

5.8 Where ever possible the spokesperson for the Council should be an Elected Member of the Council but occasionally the Executive Directors, Group Managers and Specialists may be required to respond to the media on projects and initiatives they have a direct involvement in. This will usually be to answer questions of fact and provide technical information about their areas of expertise.

5.9 Officers should not speak to the media about the business of the Council without speaking to the Communications Team.

5.10 When taking photographs or videos to support a communications, all Officers should be aware that when the story involves taking photographs of children or young people, formal permission must be sought from the parent or guardian responsible for the child/young person. With older children (16 - 18 year olds) it is good practice to seek their permission directly as well as asking their parent or guardian. Before the image can be used a consent form must be provided.

5.11 If there is an occasion where we can increase the reach of our messages by also issuing press releases to local parishes, parish magazines, Facebook group editors and target locally specific messages to reach certain communities the Communications Team will issue the release to those specific groups of people.

5.12 As part of the communications planning, the Communications Champions will be encouraged to think about their audiences and how we can use all of the technology at our disposal including the Experian Data to target our messages to reach specific demographics and groups of people. This work will help inform when and where the press releases get issues.

5.13 Mistakes should be acknowledged and apologised for 'on behalf of the Council' where appropriate and where we are able to do so following discussions with the Executive Directors and/or Leader in conjunction with the Lead Specialist.

5.14 There are occasions where the media coverage of a particular issue is incorrectly reported. After discussion with the Communications Team, Executive Directors and Lead Specialist, contact should be made with the media concerned to redress the balance.

5.15 Embargos should only be used when news releases **are linked** to an event or specific date , when an issue of **confidentially** requires it; or when it

is required by a **third party**

- 5.16 With negative stories in the media the councils take a realistic approach correcting matters of fact only and not getting embroiled in a public debate.

6. PUBLIC MEETINGS

6.1 In 2014 the Government introduced new rights by the Openness of Local Government Bodies 2014, which would enable Members of the public to know how decisions are made

6.2 The councils' support the principal of transparency and openness and the new rights which allow use of modern technology and communication methods such as **filming, audio-recording, blogging and tweeting** to report the proceedings of the meetings of their councils and other local government bodies.

7. THE LAW

7.1 All Communication must be lawful the following laws may apply to the communications activities of both councils.

7.2 All of our activities are governed by the Local Government Acts 1972 and 1986 as well as the updated Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in March 2011. A copy of the Code of Recommended Practice is available [here](#).

7.3 It states that Local Authority publicity **MUST**:

- be lawful
- be cost-effective
- be objective
- be even-handed
- be appropriate
- have regard to equality and diversity
- be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.

7.4 Other legislation also has a bearing on communications activities and these include the:

- Data Protection Act 1998 (individuals rights over personal information),
- the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the right to obtain information held by public authorities)
- laws of defamation – slander (the spoken word) and libel (written).
- Copyright Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Communications
Team:

01803 861321, 01803 861156, 01803 861429

press.office@swdevon.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social media is any web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way. This includes blogs, message boards, social networking websites (such as Facebook and Twitter), content sharing websites (such as Flickr and YouTube) and many other

2. PRINCIPALS FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

2.1 Councilors, Officers and the council itself will use social media in different ways. However, there is a set of universal principles that are useful to keep in mind.

- **Be human:** be approachable in your language and tone; behave online as you would in person.
- **Be engaging:** respond to questions and join in when you can move the conversation on or help.
- **Be professional:** remember that you represent your council, so be aware of how your public voice comes across.
- **Share and attribute:** you can share what others have posted but it is polite to acknowledge and attribute where this has come from.
- **Go to where your audience is:** if the section of the population you want to connect with is on a particular platform, forum or group, join it.
- **Content is king:** by creating sharable and engaging content you can contribute to the conversation and be heard.
- **Be authentic:** don't pretend to be something you are not.
- **Be strategic:** plan ahead – who do you want to engage with, why and how? What do you want to achieve?

The internet is forever: be aware that what you post now could be found in years to come

3. CORPORATE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

3.1 The councils' use of social media will comply with the **laws of libel, copyright and data protection.**

3.2 Social media content is subject to the same rules of **fairness, openness and transparency** as the councils' uses in all their communications.

3.3 Social media should **NEVER** be used in a way that breaches any of the councils' other policies.

3.4 During times of major incident, emergency or crisis, social media should be employed **as a key tool** for keeping communities informed.

3.5 All complaints made via social media will be diverted back through the Customer Call Centre to ensure that they get entered onto the single workflow and are recorded in the same way as all other complaints.

3.6 Social media use by the councils should concentrate **on facts**. The councils' official social media sites will not be used for political gain or campaigning.

3.7 When dealing with errors or controversial comments about them, the councils will **not remove** criticism unless it contains swear words etc. Instead, responses will concentrate on correcting factual errors and responding to legitimate criticism.

3.8 **Derogatory or offensive** comments will be removed from official Council social media sites.

4. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR WORK

4.1 Both councils encourage employees to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media as part of their work. It is an important part of how the councils' communicate with their residents. This is subject to the councils' existing rules on the appropriate use of ICT equipment and systems.

4.2 Employees may contribute to the councils' social media activities (in liaison with the Communications Team). Employees must be aware at all times that, while contributing to the councils' social media activities, they are representing the organisation. Officers using social media as part of their work must adhere to the following rules:

- Use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the organisation in the public sphere
- Obtain permission from a manager before embarking on a public campaign using social media and work with the Communications Team to deliver it.

- Officers and Members should only use social media accounts which have been corporately set up in the councils' names.
- Be aware of and follow the councils' guidelines for using social media
- Be aware of and follow the councils' Communications Protocol
- Follow the Officers code of conduct in their use of social media and be aware that breaches will result in disciplinary procedure
- Always use #SHDC or #WDBC, this will enable people to follow each council on one single thread – if we are successful are promoting this # we can explore more

5. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

5.1 If Officers use social media in their personal lives it must be separate from the councils' official sites. Employees are allowed to say that they work for the councils, but if they do we would advise that their personal social media profile should include a statement along the following lines:

"The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Council."

5.2 Officers should not engage in any social media activity which would bring the councils into disrepute.

5.3 By working for the Councils, Officers should realise that sometime they are in a privileged position of having access to politically, financially and personally sensitive information.

5.4 Where we would encourage all Officers to share the information coming from their Council, with their wider networks, both personal and professional, they should **ONLY** share information which has come from an **OFFICIAL COUNCIL** social media channel **FIRST**.

6. PUBLIC MEETINGS

6.1 In 2014 the Government introduced new rights by the Openness of Local Government Bodies 2014, which would enable Members of the public to know how decisions are made: [Open and Accountable Local Government](#)

August 2014

6.2 We would encourage the use of social media during the meeting to bring the discussions to a wider audience in accordance with these new rights.

6.3 Handheld devices and laptops are permitted (indeed encouraged) for use during meetings to allow environmentally friendly and effective communication. The use of such devices is intended to improve communication during meetings – not to interrupt or distract anyone taking part.

6.4 **The volume on all electronic devices is turned to ‘mute’.**

6.5 Councillors’ tweets/blogs during council meetings should refer to the discussions which are taking place at the meeting - tweeting/blogging about other subjects will show the public and other attendees at the meeting that you are not engaging properly in the meeting.

6.6 Councillors have a responsibility to take council business seriously and it is not appropriate for Members to use social media to tease or insult other Members. The councils’ residents expect debate and to be informed about council business, not witness petty arguments.

6.7 The use of hashtag #SHDC or #WDBC when tweeting about the business of the councils is encouraged, this will enable us to track and monitor our reach and give customers a way of following what is going on.

7. RETWEETING COUNCILLORS

7.1 Often the work of elected member reinforces the business of the council, such as attending events, or community projects that have been supported, funded or set up by the Council.

7.2 The Communications Team **CAN** retweet a message posted by an Elected Member, which promotes this activity as long as it: is **NOT** politically motivated, **DOES** relate directly to the business of the council and **DOESNOT** break the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in March 2011.

8. NETWORKING AND SHARING

8.1 Second Tier Local Authorities play a vital role in the sharing of information and the support of County Councils and other government agencies.

8.2 The Communications Team in collaboration with the Communications Champions will decide when the councils should be retweeting and supporting the campaigns, initiatives of our partners, what messages are relevant for our audiences and when they support the business of the councils,

Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Communications Team:

01803 861321, 01803 861156, 01803 861429

press.office@swdevon.gov.uk

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Report Template

Report to: **Hub**
Date: **22 March 2016**
Title: **The Future of the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee (DAWRRC)**
Portfolio Area: **Cllr R F D Sampson Commercial Services**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

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

Date next steps can be taken: Council Meeting on 5 April 2016

Author: **Jane Savage** Role: **Lead Specialist Waste Strategy (Strategy & Commissioning)**

Contact: **01822 813657**
jane.savage@swdevon.gov.uk

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee recommends to Council:

1. Support for the proposal to wind up the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee
2. To agree to the establishment of the joint Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee on the draft terms of reference set out in the Operating Rules attached at Appendix 1. and that any significant changes to the terms of reference be brought back to Council for further approval
3. To agree that the Lead Hub Member for Commercial Services be appointed as the West Devon member of the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee, and that a named substitute, with full voting rights, will attend in the absence of the Lead Hub Member for Commercial Services
4. That any changes considered necessary to the terms as highlighted are delegated to the Lead Specialist Waste Strategy (Strategy & Commissioning) in consultation with the Lead Hub Member for Commercial Services

Report Template

1. Executive summary

1.1 This Report outlines proposals to wind up the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee and replace it with a new joint Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee.

1.2 The Devon Authorities have worked together since the setting up of a working party in 1990 to coordinate waste recycling. A Joint Recycling Committee was subsequently replaced by the existing Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee (DAWRRC) in November 1999.

1.2 DAWRRC is made up of members from all the Devon District Councils, the County Council and Torbay Council. The Committee has worked on a number of on-going initiatives including the Waste Management Strategy for Devon and subsequent publications, the 'Don't let Devon go to waste' campaign, the Schools Waste Education Strategy, and successful bids for over £10million from Defra, BIS, DCLG and WRAP.

1.3 Joint working has helped to increase Devon's recycling rate and in 2010/11, Devon was the top recycling county in the country.

1.4 Recently the Executive Waste Board for Devon has attempted to further progress partnership working and realise efficiencies by working in a more unified way. However, whilst it was not possible to form a formal partnership, the desire to work closer together on more strategic waste issues remains, particularly with the need to deliver further identified savings whilst maintaining or improving performance.

1.5 At the DAWRRC meeting on 20th October 2015, it was resolved that the proposals to develop a new strategic waste management joint committee to replace DAWRRC be supported to release the savings identified and improve recycling rate.

1.6 A report was taken to Devon County Council's Procedures Committee on 9th February 2016 which resolved that the County Council be recommended to approve the winding-up of the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee and the establishment of a new Devon Authorities Strategic Waste (Joint) Committee. It acknowledged that the new Committee should only pursue partnerships in ways that do not undermine best practice by individual councils.

1.7 The new Committee will be a formal joint Committee set up under s101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and will have a West Devon member appointed (together with a named substitute) to represent the Council. Each Council represented on the proposed Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee will appoint one member per authority who will have full voting rights on the Committee.

1.8 The proposed draft terms of reference for the new Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee are attached at Appendix 1 and will be reviewed and agreed by the new joint committee. Any substantial changes to the proposed arrangements will be brought back before Members for approval.

Report Template

1.9 It is proposed that the County Council will be the Administering Authority for the Committee in terms of governance (including administration, legal and financial implications and advice).

1.10 The proposal is supported by the Devon Local Government Steering Group.

2. Background

2.1 The Devon Authorities have worked together since the setting up of a working party in 1990 to coordinate waste recycling. A Joint Recycling Committee which was first established in 1992, was subsequently replaced by the existing Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee in November 1999.

2.2 The Committee is made up of members from all the Devon District Councils, the County Council and Torbay Council, and has worked on:

- The Waste Management Strategy for Devon, first published in 2005.
- The Waste and Resource Management Strategy for Devon Review, published in 2013 & Action Plan.
- The 'Don't let Devon go to waste' campaign which has raised awareness and encouraged residents and visitors of Devon to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste via a mix of media including TV, radio, website, social media, roadshows, door stepping, bus advertising, adshels, bill boards, posters and leaflets.
- The Schools Waste Education Strategy, first published in 2003, and the implementation of a range of initiatives in schools including workshops, theatre groups, waste audits and action plans, recycling schemes, composting schemes, visits to sites, website resources and a yearly waste summit.
- Joint contracts for the sale of paper, glass, textiles and bulk haulage enabling consistent and high material buy in rates.
- Successful bids for over £10million from Defra, BIS, DCLG and WRAP.
- Support for the Community Sector in the form of Funding of the Devon Community Recycling Network Coordinator and the Devon Community Composting Network Coordinator and their assistants.
- Funding through Re-use credits of the Devon Furniture Forum groups.

2.3 Joint working has helped move Devon's recycling rate from 2% to 55% and in 2010/11 Devon was the top recycling county in the country.

2.4 Over the last two years attempts have been made through the Executive Waste Board for Devon to further progress partnership working and realise efficiencies by working in a more unified way. The group, assisted by some consultancy funded business analysis, explored the possibilities of working through a Joint Waste Partnership or delivering a more unified service through other methods such as procurement, cluster working, and aligned collections.

2.5 However, whilst it was not possible to form a formal partnership, the desire to work closer together on more strategic waste issues remains, particularly with the need to deliver further savings whilst maintaining or improving performance. The consultant employed to help develop the working model was clear that at least 50%

Report Template

of the potential savings to be gained from working as a formal Joint Waste Partnership could be achieved without a formal partnership being in place. The recycling rate could also be increased by authorities following an “aligned collection regime” option (weekly food waste, weekly recycling, fortnightly residual collection and charged for garden waste).

2.6 At the DAWRRC meeting on 20th October 2015, it was resolved that a new strategic waste management joint committee would be developed to replace the DAWRRC and that the new committee be called the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee.

2.7 A report was taken to Devon County Council’s Procedures Committee on 9th February 2016 which resolved:

(i) that the County Council be recommended to approve the winding-up of the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee with immediate effect and the establishment at the Council’s Annual Meeting in 2016 of a new Devon Authorities Strategic Waste (Joint) Committee with the proposed membership, operating rules and terms of reference, acknowledging the assurance given by the Cabinet Member that the suggestion that the new Committee should only pursue partnerships in ways that do not undermine best practice by individual councils would be taken into account in its work;

(ii) that notwithstanding the proposed Joint Committee will operate under the County Council’s Procedure Rules (Standing Orders), including the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste be asked, in consultation with the Senior Waste Officer Group, to clarify and codify the role of all constituent authorities in scrutinising the work of this Committee.

3. Options available and consideration of risk

3.1 Whilst DAWRRC has played a significant role in developing and promoting waste minimisation and recycling initiatives, it is recognised that its remit has been somewhat limited with regard to wider strategic work issues. It is therefore considered that it would be timely now to revisit the purpose and role of the current Committee to ensure that more strategic waste management committee is provided; it is correspondingly suggested that the current Committee be wound-up and replaced by a new body with new working practices/operating principles and terms of reference to reflect those wider, more strategic, aims and objectives.

3.2 Such that items which could be taken to a new Committee could include:

- Joint procurement e.g. of vehicles, bins and in-cab technology.
- Joint materials contracts – on new materials e.g. card and mixed plastics.
- Proposed waste service changes.
- Behavioural change strategy for Devon.
- Mechanism for sharing savings between County and District Councils.
- Organic waste strategy for Devon.
- Collection and disposal of Healthcare waste.

The scope of the new Committee will be discussed at the Devon Environmental Managers’ Group and clarified at the first Committee meeting.

3.3 The proposed name of the new committee is the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee and it would take ownership and be responsible for developing and implementing the Resource and Waste Management Strategy for Devon Action Plan.

Report Template

3.4 The alternative would be for West Devon to withdraw from membership. However, this would make West Devon more isolated in terms of access to savings brought about by economies of scale through joint ventures with the other Devon Authorities. Without a single waste committee with delegated powers to deliver a joined up strategic approach to waste collection and disposal across the geographical area of Devon, opportunities may be lost though less effective services and there is the potential for duplication of effort and expenditure, obviating economies of scale.

4. Proposed Way Forward

4.1 It is proposed that the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee be developed which would enable a more strategic approach to be taken with regard to both waste collection, treatment and disposal operations, as well as strengthening demand management and waste prevention measures. This should lead to efficiencies in service delivery and overall savings to the public purse.

4.2 This fits with the following corporate priorities:

Excellent Customer Services
Environment

5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	It is proposed to set up a formal joint Committee under the Local Government Act 1972 which can only be approved by Council. Draft operating rules and terms of reference are attached in Appendix 1 and these will be finalised by the new Committee (with any substantial amendments being brought back to this Council). It is proposed that each Partner Authority will elect their Cabinet / Executive/ Committee Member with a waste portfolio/remit to sit on the Committee with one vote per authority.
Financial	Y	The current DAWRRC budget stands at £188,644. This is made up of top slice of the recycling credits paid by the County Council to the District Councils, and includes additional contributions from Devon County Council and Torbay Council. This budget could be reviewed as part of the remit of any new Joint Committee. West Devon's current commitment is around £5,500.
Risk		Not all Devon District Councils may elect to join.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		None
Safeguarding		None
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None

Report Template

Other implications		None
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Supporting Information

Appendices: Operating Rules and Terms of Reference for the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee

Background Papers: None

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

Report Template

Report to: **Hub**
Date: **22 March 2016**
Title: **The Future of the Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee (DAWRRC)**
Portfolio Area: **Cllr R F D Sampson Commercial Services**

Wards Affected: **All**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

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

Date next steps can be taken: Council Meeting on 5 April 2016

Author: **Jane Savage** Role: **Lead Specialist Waste Strategy (Strategy & Commissioning)**

Contact: **01822 813657**
jane.savage@swdevon.gov.uk

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee recommends to Council:

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Excellent Customer Services
Environment

5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
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Risk		Not all Devon District Councils may elect to join.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		None
Safeguarding		None
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		None
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		None

Report Template

Other implications		None
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Supporting Information

Appendices: Operating Rules and Terms of Reference for the Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee

Background Papers: None

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

Implementation of the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2015-18

Report to: **Hub Committee**

Date: **22 March 2016**

Title: **Implementation of the Devon Districts
Procurement Strategy 2015-18**

Portfolio Area: **Commercial Services, Cllr Sampson Lead
Member for Commercial Services**

Wards Affected: **Which Wards/all**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: N/A

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

Date next steps can be taken: N/A

Author: **Carly Wedderburn** Role: **Corporate Procurement
Officer**

Contact: **01626 215120 /
carly.wedderburn@teignbridge.gov.uk**

Recommendations:

1. To formally adopt the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2015-18 and implement the contents therein.
2. To establish a Member Champion for Procurement, as per output 21 under Theme C: Leadership.

1. Executive summary

1.1 The District Authorities of East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council, North Devon District Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Torridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council have been working collaboratively on the delivery of a Devon Districts Procurement Strategy since 2010.

Implementation of the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2015-18

1.2 This report proposes the formal adoption of the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2015-18 as set out in Appendix A to this report.

2. Background

2.1 The District Authorities of East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council, North Devon District Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Torridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council have been working collaboratively on the delivery of a Devon Districts Procurement Strategy (the "Strategy") since 2010 when the first Strategy was introduced. This ran until 2013 after which time the Devon Districts agreed to review the successes of previous strategy with a view to decide the route forward.

2.2 Some of the districts decided to adopt it alongside their own authority specific strategy whilst others, West Devon included, took it as their only strategic document and used it to feed into their own Procurement Work Plan or Improvement Plan which supported the specific Authority's corporate objectives.

2.3 Performance against the Procurement Improvement Plan agreed was monitored by the Districts, but on reflection it was felt that many of the performance indicators were too specific and with each authority having different corporate objectives, they were not all able to achieve the targets which had been set. As such it was agreed to set a new strategy that addressed these issues.

2.4 Whilst the Districts were planning to write a new strategy the Local Government Association ("LGA") announced that it would put in place a new National Procurement Strategy ("NPS"), which was formally published in 2014 and this new District strategy seeks to align with those themes which have been set out within the NPS.

2.5 The timing of the completion of the Strategy coincided with a change to the legislative landscape within which public procurement is set. The UK government published the Public Contracts Regulations on the 26th February 2016 and this Strategy gives due regard to that legislation. Also considered is the Equality Act, Social Value Act and the Transparency code which have come into force since the last strategy.

2.6 The economic environment, both nationally and locally, continues to require us to focus on obtaining value for money and 'doing more for less'. Although the Strategy is specific to the District Authorities, they will continue to work collaboratively with other members of the Devon and Cornwall Procurement Partnership (the

Implementation of the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2015-18

“Partnership”) to deliver the strategic objectives of the Partnership and to maximise the benefits of all partners spend with external suppliers.

3. Outcomes / outputs

3.1 The District Authorities of East Devon District Council, Exeter City Council, Mid Devon District Council, North Devon District Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Torridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council have been working collaboratively on the delivery of a Devon Districts Procurement Strategy

3.2 The four key themes contained within the Strategy are:

1. Making savings/ Addressing Financial Pressures
2. Supporting Local Economies
3. Leadership
4. Modernising Procurement

A fifth overarching outcome of collaboration is also included throughout the entire strategy.

3.3 The District Authorities have implemented a work-plan, which breaks each of the headings down in to deliverables and targets to be achieved in the period 2015 – 18 and which each Authority is responsible for implementing and monitoring. The work plan is set out in Appendix B to this report.

3.4 The District Authorities have met quarterly during the first year of the Strategy to update the work-plan with their achievements and will continue to meet on a less frequent basis once the Strategy is fully embedded within their organisations. The purpose of these meetings will be to review progress and agree any additional actions.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 Alternatives to the adoption of the Strategy are to agree a West Devon Borough Council specific procurement strategy or a joint West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council procurement strategy although there would be a negative impact on the Corporate Procurement Officer in so doing, as this is work additional to the current workload that has not been planned for.

Implementation of the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2015-18

4.2 Furthermore, the Corporate Procurement Officer is a shared officer between West Devon Borough Council, South Hams District Council and Teignbridge District Council and this would necessitate the adoption of different strategies across different authorities for whom the Officer currently works, which would inevitably increase the overall workload.

4.3 By adopting a collaborative approach this represents the most effective use of resources at the Council's disposal.

5. Proposed Way Forward

5.1 It is proposed that West Devon Borough Council adopt the Strategy alongside its neighbouring Devon District authorities.

5.2 The Strategy supports the 'Our Plan' objective of 'Our Economy' as it seeks to work better with our suppliers and support our local economy through a range of measures including providing greater access to our contract opportunities, giving due regard to social, community and environmental value in our contracts and streamlining and simplifying the procurement process where possible.

5.3 The Authority has already been able to evidence that it is working towards or has achieved a large proportion of the Strategy since it was completed in 2015, which is a positive message that can be explained to the business community. Formally adopting the Strategy will help to solidify the Authority's position on this.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Strategy sets out its approach to meeting the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and other relevant procurement legislation.
Financial	Y	There are no financial implications arising from the Strategy besides the salary costs associated with the Corporate Procurement Officer and other Officers across the Council in meeting it. These costs are already factored in to the budget and are therefore not additional to it.

Implementation of the Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2015-18

Risk	Y	As the Strategy aligns to the NPS there is a reputational risk of not adopting the Strategy and therefore the LGA's recommendations in relation to the future of procurement.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	Not applicable.
Safeguarding	N	Not applicable.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	Not applicable.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	Not applicable.
Other implications	N	

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix A - Devon Districts Procurement Strategy 2015-18

Appendix B - Devon Districts Strategy Work Plan

Approval and clearance of report

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

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DEVON DISTRICTS PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2015-2018



CONTENTS

Introduction

Background

Outcomes

1. Making Savings
2. Supporting Local Economies
3. Leadership
4. Modernising Procurement

Conclusions

Contacts

Introduction

Procurement is a key part of the government's agendas for transparency and growth. By taking a collaborative approach we can improve the quality of the goods, services and works which we purchase whilst still seeking to achieve value for money and make the savings necessary to support the austerity measures.

The Devon Districts who will be adopting this strategy are:

- East Devon District Council
- Exeter City Council
- Mid Devon District Council
- North Devon District Council
- South Hams District Council
- Teignbridge District Council
- Torrington District Council
- West Devon Borough Council.

Progress by the Districts against the Action Plan attached to this strategy will be reviewed quarterly by the Devon District Procurement Group (DDPG).

Background

The first Devon District Procurement strategy was adopted by the partners in 2010 and ran until 2013.

Some of the districts decided to adopt it alongside their own authority specific strategy whilst others took it as their only strategic document and used it to feed into their own Procurement Work Plan or Improvement Plan which supports their own corporate objectives.

Performance against the Procurement Improvement Plan agreed with the strategy was monitored, but on reflection it was felt that many of the performance indicators were too specific and with each authority having different corporate objectives, they were not all able to achieve the targets which had been set.

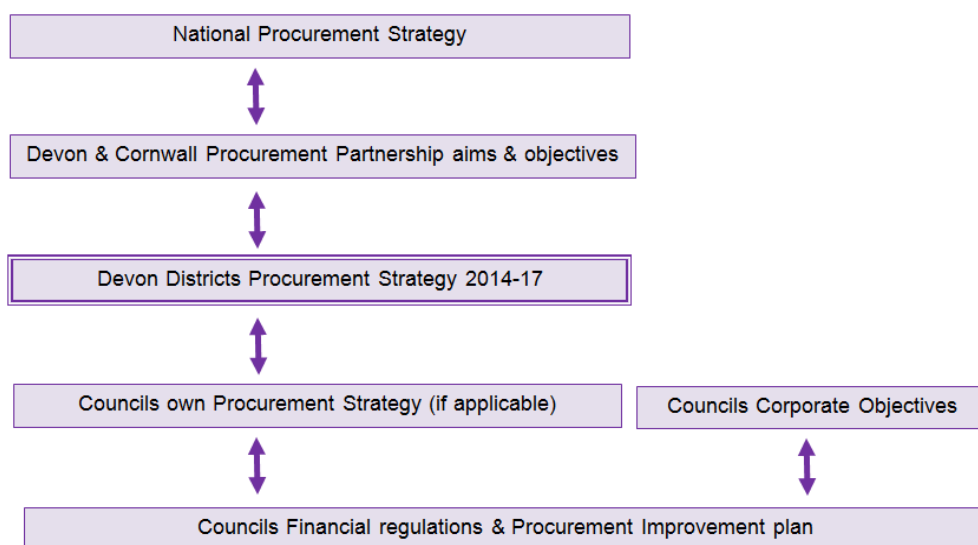
The Local Government Association (LGA) published the National Procurement Strategy (NPS) in 2014 and this new District strategy seeks to align with those themes which have been set out within the NPS.

It is also a time of change with regards the legislative landscape within which we work. The EU Procurement rules have been reformed and have now been transposed into UK law. In addition there are now below EU threshold national requirements which are also set out in UK law.

Also considered within this strategy is the Equality Act, Social Value Act and the Transparency code which have come into force since the last strategy.

The economic environment, both nationally and locally, continues to require us to focus on obtaining value for money and 'doing more for less'.

Although this strategy is specific to the district authorities, they will continue to work collaboratively with other members of the Devon & Cornwall Procurement Partnership to deliver the strategic objectives of the partnership and to maximise the benefits of all partners spend with external suppliers.



Outcomes

The 4 key themes contained within the NPS have been used to identify the outputs and their desired outcomes which will be achieved as a result of the implementation of this strategy:

1. Making savings/ Addressing Financial Pressures
2. Supporting Local Economies
3. Leadership
4. Modernising Procurement

In addition, everything in this strategy will focus on the following over-arching outcome:

5. Collaboration

Theme A – Making Savings			
With growing pressure on Councils projected budgets, achieving value for money and making savings will play a key role in addressing the deficits which are faced in the medium term financial plans of each Council.			
	Ref	Council Outputs	Outcomes
<i>Use of Frameworks</i>			
	1	Investigate suitability of existing contract and framework opportunities to meet Procurement needs before commencing own local tendering/ buying process.	Both maximum value for money and efficient use of resources are achieved through utilising existing procurement options where they are appropriate and meet the required need.
	2	Details of frameworks available through Professional Buying Organisations (PBO's) continue to be held on a central register on Huddle as a quick reference tools for procurement officers. Crown Commercial Services frameworks are accessed via http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk	
<i>Collaboration/ Partnering</i>			
	3	Councils will engage with and support the work of the Devon & Cornwall Procurement Partnership.	The partnership will continue to flourish and to provide benefits for all members as set out in their mission statement.
	4	Opportunities for sharing resources and developing contractual arrangements with neighbouring partner organisations are considered both in the management of the Procurement function and in the procurement of goods and services where appropriate.	Savings and efficiencies will be delivered through shared resources, alignment of contracts and economies of purchasing power.

<i>Contract Management</i>			
	5	Implement a consistent approach to contract management which will allow contracts across the partner organisations to be monitored.	Reporting available on contract outputs and key performance indicators.
	6	Use Contract Monitor module on ProContract to support this process electronically.	Effective use of eProcurement tools.
	7	Frameworks and collaborative contracts are monitored by the lead authority on behalf of or in conjunction with the participating authorities. Participating organisations will support this process through collection of data or provision of information to the lead authority upon request.	Streamline tender and contract management process for suppliers on how to do business with the Council.
	8	Use contract clauses to improve payment terms for suppliers and improve working conditions throughout the supply chain.	Effective use of contract clauses.
<i>Supplier Relationship Management</i>			
	9	Contracts clearly state payment terms and will ensure timely payment of monies owing.	Ensure that smaller contractors are not disadvantaged due to cash flow issues.
	10	Tender criteria will consider supply chain management where it is applicable to the contract.	Contractors will act fairly within the supply chain.
	11	Risk is integrated into the procurement process and monitored regularly. Risk management is not risk averse.	Risk management approach allows suppliers and procurers to take advantage of opportunities.

	12	Procurement risks are recorded and reported in line with this strategy and actions to mitigate risks are identified.	Clear audit trail demonstrated to back up the decision making process. Fraudulent procurement practices are mitigated against.
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Theme B – Supporting Local Economies			
All public sector organisations have an opportunity and responsibility to contribute towards the regeneration and enhancement of their local economy through their purchasing arrangements.			
Two key pieces of legislation support this approach; The Localism Act 2011 and The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. Both set out to encourage Councils to provide the maximum benefit to localism and their communities from every taxpayer pound which is spent.			
	Ref	Council Outputs	Outcomes
<i>Social Value Clauses</i>			
	13	The DDPG will establish a suite of clauses giving consideration as to how social, community and environmental value can be obtained will be defined and agreed.	Streamline approach for suppliers on how to do business with the Council.
	14	Where the contract value is in excess of the EU threshold, or in the case of lower value contracts which have a direct impact on the community, the clauses from 13 (above) will be included in all contracts.	Maximum value is obtained in terms of economic, social value and environmental criteria.
<i>Sustainability</i>			
	15	A sustainable procurement policy and guidance will be agreed between the partner authorities.	Streamline approach for suppliers on how to do business with the Council.
	16	Formal procurement processes will give timely consideration to identify the need of the contract in terms of sustainability.	Reduction of waste by making sustainable choices.

Local Supplier Engagement			
	17	Partner authorities will use the ProContract eTendering software to advertise all contract opportunities over £10,000	Access to contracts is simplified for all suppliers.
	18	Agree a suite of questions and utilise ProQuest module of ProContract to manage the evaluation of suppliers electronically.	Removal of duplication and simplification of bureaucratic processes for suppliers.
	19	Partners will work together and with the wider Devon & Cornwall Procurement Partnership to communicate to suppliers a better understanding of the way in which they do business.	Streamline approach for suppliers on how to do business with the Council.

Theme C– Leadership			
In this changing social and economic landscape, Councils need to be at the forefront of demonstrating initiative and resourcefulness to rise to the challenges that all businesses are facing.			
	Ref	Council Outputs	Outcomes
<i>Buy in from the top</i>			
	20	Procurement will be discussed and considered at a Senior Level eg. SMT through the appropriate reporting mechanisms	Procurement is recognised as strategically important by Senior Officers and Members.
	21	Appointment of a Member Champion for Procurement.	Procurement is recognised as strategically important by Senior Officers and Members.
<i>Training</i>			
	22	Within their resource and budgetary constraints, each Council will invest in development and training of staff across the organisation in relation to both Procurement and other key commercial skills such as negotiation, market awareness and costs and profit.	Councils will take a more commercial approach to procurement.
	23	Working collaboratively, (see item 3) Councils will derive value for money through joined up training opportunities and sharing of procurement related expertise, knowledge and best practice	Procurement competencies across the organisations are improved.

Embedding Legislation			
	24	Councils will publish data in line with the Transparency Code.	New opportunities are opened up for local businesses, voluntary and community sectors and social enterprises in relation to bidding for running public sector contracts.
	25	Ensure that procurement policies and procedures encompass current legislative requirements and that staff are kept up to date of any changes.	Modernisation of procurement processes and improved flexibility ensuring legal compliance.

Theme D– Modernising Procurement			
The development of a more innovative approach to Procurement will help to ensure that the Councils deliver their own contribution to the government’s modernisation agenda, the advantages of which will be seen locally and nationally.			
	Ref	Council Outputs	Outcomes
<i>Commercialism</i>			
	25	When developing contracts, Councils will seek to identify opportunities to ‘do things differently’ or to generate income.	Drive down costs in service provision and develop improved ways of working.
	26	Flexibilities set out in the new EU Directives will be maximised.	Removal of bureaucratic processes and barriers in Procurement.
<i>Supplier Innovation</i>			
	27	Time allowed for early supplier engagement to ensure that innovative approaches can be considered.	Supplier innovation demonstrated and benefits harnessed.
<i>Use of technology</i>			
	28	Through the Pro Contract User Group, Councils will support the ongoing contract management and system development in relation to the eTendering software.	Increased efficiency and productivity for both Council staff and suppliers.
	29	Councils will encourage suppliers in the use of electronic systems for all transactions as appropriate to their own organisation (p-cards, e-invoicing, eTendering).	Increased efficiency and productivity for both Council staff and suppliers.

Conclusions

By achieving the outcomes set out within this document, the Devon District Councils will ensure that they realise the maximum benefits to their organisation, and are on target to achieve the requirements put upon them within the National Procurement Strategy.

It is by working collaboratively that we will demonstrate that the ongoing contribution of the districts to both local and national agendas is a valid one.

By the very nature of this document, the commitment of the partner authorities to a shared procurement strategy demonstrates their willingness to develop and improve together in a way which benefits both the individual Councils and the communities which they serve.

Agreed by:

East Devon District Council

Exeter City Council

Mid Devon District Council

Andrew Jarrett, Head of Finance

Peter Hare-Scott, Cabinet Holder for Finance

North Devon Council

Teignbridge District Council



South Hams District Council

West Devon Borough Council

Torrington District Council

Contacts

For more information about this strategy or procurement in general, please contact:

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Organisation Name:

Theme A - Making Savings

Ref Council Outputs			Outcomes	Status Where is your organisation in terms of delivering this output? Eg. in place already, in progress, not started	Priority How important is this to your organisation in terms of your own work plans and corporate objectives?
Use of Frameworks	1	Investigate suitability of existing contract and framework opportunities to meet Procurement needs before commencing own local tendering/ buying process.	Both maximum value for money and efficient use of resources are achieved through utilising existing procurement options where they are appropriate and meet the required need.	In place where procurement activity is referred to Corporate Procurement	Low
	2	Details of frameworks available through Professional Buying Organisations (PBO's) continue to be held on a central register on Huddle as a quick reference tools for procurement officers. Crown Commercial Services frameworks are accessed via http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk		Corporate Procurement holds details of where framework agreements can be accessed from locally on internal 'Procurement Tool'	Low
Collaboration/ Partnering	3	Councils will engage with and support the work of the Devon & Cornwall Procurement Partnership.	The partnership will continue to flourish and to provide benefits for all members as set out in their mission statement.	In place	Medium
Collaboration/ Partnering	4	Opportunities for sharing resources and developing contractual arrangements with neighbouring partner organisations are considered both in the management of the Procurement function and in the procurement of goods and services where appropriate.	Savings and efficiencies will be delivered through shared resources, alignment of contracts and economies of purchasing power.	In place	Medium
Management	5	Implement a consistent approach to contract management which will allow contracts across the partner organisations to be monitored.	Reporting available on contract outputs and key performance indicators.	Not started	High
	6	Use Contract Monitor module on ProContract to support this process electronically.	Effective use of eProcurement tools	In progress (Contract Monitor module allows for monitoring of contracts but arguably not the management of them)	Medium

Contract N	7	Frameworks and collaborative contracts are monitored by the lead authority on behalf of or in conjunction with the participating authorities. Participating organisations will support this process through collection of data or provision of information to the lead authority upon request.	Streamline tender and contract management process for suppliers on how to do business with the Council.	In progress	Low
	8	Use contract clauses to improve payment terms for suppliers and improve working conditions throughout the supply chain.	Effective use of contract clauses.	In place	Low
Supplier Relationship Management	9	Contracts clearly state payment terms and will ensure timely payment of monies owing.	Ensure that smaller contractors are not dis-advantaged due to cash flow issues.	In place	Low
	10	Tender criteria will consider supply chain management where it is applicable to the contract.	Contractors will act fairly within the supply chain.	In progress	Low
	11	Risk is integrated into the procurement process and monitored regularly. Risk management is not risk averse.	Risk management approach allows suppliers and procurers to take advantage of opportunities.	Not started	Medium
	12	Procurement risks are recorded and reported in line with this strategy and actions to mitigate risks are identified.	Clear audit trail demonstrated to back up the decision making process. Fraudulent procurement practices are mitigated against.	Not started	Medium
B - Supporting Local Economies					
Social Value Clauses	13	The DDPG will establish a suite of clauses giving consideration as to how social, community and environmental value can be obtained will be defined and agreed.	Streamline approach for suppliers on how to do business with the Council.	?	High
	14	Where the contract value is in excess of the EU threshold, or in the case of lower value contracts which have a direct impact on the community, the clauses from 13 (above) will be included in all contracts.	Maximum value is obtained in terms of economic, social value and environmental criteria.	Not started	High
Sustainability	15	A sustainable procurement policy and guidance will be agreed between the partner authorities.	Streamline approach for suppliers on how to do business with the Council.	Not started	High
	16	Formal procurement processes will give timely consideration to identify the need of the contract in terms of sustainability.	Reduction of waste by making sustainable choices.	In progress	Medium
ment	17	Partner authorities will use the ProContract eTendering software to advertise all contract opportunities over £10,000 or in line with their own contract standing orders.	Access to contracts is simplified for all suppliers.	In place	Low

Local Supplier Engage	18	Agree a suite of questions and utilise ProQuest module of ProContract to manage the evaluation of suppliers electronically.	Removal of duplication and simplification of bureaucratic processes for suppliers.	CCS standard PQQ has overtaken this although this sdoes throw the ProQuest element in to question	Medium
	19	Partners will work together and with the wider Devon & Cornwall Procurement Partnership to communicate to suppliers a better understanding of the way in which they do business.	Streamline approach for suppliers on how to do business with the Council.	In place	Low
C - Leadership					
Buy in from the top	20	Procurement will be discussed and considered at a Senior Level eg. SMT through the appropriate reporting mechanisms	Procurement is recognised as strategically important by Senior Officers and Members	In progress	High
	21	Appointment of a Member Champion for Procurement	Procurement is recognised as strategically important by Senior Officers and Members	Not started	High
Training	22	Within their resource and budgetary constraints, each Council will invest in development and training of staff across the organisation in relation to both Procurement and other key commercial skills such as negotiation, market awareness and costs and profit.	Councils will take a more commercial approach to procurement.	In progress	High
	23	Working collaboratively, (see item 3) Councils will derive value for money through joined up training opportunities and sharing of procurement related expertise, knowledge and best practice	Procurement competencies across the organisations are improved.	In progress	High
Embedding Legislation	24	Councils will publish data in line with the Transparency Code.	New opportunities are opened up for local businesses, voluntary and community sectors and social enterprises in relation to bidding for running public sector contracts.	In progress	High
	25	Ensure that procurement policies and procedures encompass current legislative requirements and that staff are kept up to date of any changes.	Modernisation of procurement processes and improved flexibility ensuring legal compliance.	In progress	High
D - Modernising Procurement					

Commercialism	26	When developing contracts, Councils will seek to identify opportunities to 'do things differently' or to generate income.	Drive down costs in service provision and develop improved ways of working.	In progress	Medium
	27	Flexibilities set out in the new EU Directives will be maximised.	Removal of bureaucratic processes and barriers in Procurement.	In progress	Low
Supplier Innovation	28	Time allowed for early supplier engagement to ensure that innovative approaches can be considered.	Supplier innovation demonstrated and benefits harnessed.	In progress	Low
Use of technology	29	Through the Pro Contract User Group, Councils will support the ongoing contract management and system development in relation to the eTendering software.	Increased efficiency and productivity for both Council staff and suppliers.	In place	Low
	30	Councils will encourage suppliers in the use of electronic systems for all transactions as appropriate to their own organisation (p-cards, e-invoicing, eTendering).	Increased efficiency and productivity for both Council staff and suppliers	In place	Low