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Council

## WEST DEVON RESOURCES COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 2014

Agenda, Reports and Minutes for the meeting

### Agenda No    Item

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      Reports to Resources:
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# Agenda Item 1

## A G E N D A – RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 7<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2014

### PART ONE – OPEN COMMITTEE

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).

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### PART TWO ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ON THE GROUNDS THAT EXEMPT INFORMATION IS LIKELY TO BE DISCLOSED (if any).

If any, the Committee is recommended to pass the following resolution:

“**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting on the grounds that exempt information may be disclosed as defined in the paragraphs given in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act”.

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## **STRATEGIC RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **Reports to Members**

Members will be aware of the requirement to take account of strategic risk in decision making. This note is designed to support Members consider strategic risks as part of the assessment of reports from officers.

There are an increasing number of issues that we have a statutory requirement to take into account which affect all aspects of the Council's policies and service delivery (e.g.



Human Rights Act). There are also discretionary issues we choose to highlight in our reports (e.g. Financial Implications, and Impact on Council Priorities and Targets). Common Law duty requires Local Authorities to take into account all things they need to take into account! The Courts hearing Judicial Review applications make this their starting point in deciding whether any decision is reasonable.

Officers have a responsibility to assess the implications of recommendations to Members. Members should ensure that before making a decision they have undertaken a similar consideration relating to the risks associated with the report.

Examples of risk to be considered:-

**Statutory Requirement :**

- Equalities and Discrimination, particularly Race Equality. (Consider the impact on each of the following equality areas: Race, Religion and Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Age)
- Human Rights
- Crime and Disorder
- Health and Safety
- Employment Legislation
- Data Protection
- Freedom of Information
- Corporate activity with an impact on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and biodiversity

**Corporate Requirement :**

- Impact on Council’s Reputation
- Impact on Priorities, Cross-Cutting themes, Targets and / or Commitments
- Impact on Standing Orders / Financial Regulations
- Impact on Council’s Assets
- Financial Risks
- Compliance with National Policies and Guidance
- Impact on Sustainability

Members’ attention is drawn to the Risk Assessment section within each report. Members are encouraged to consider whether the report has satisfactorily identified all likely negative impacts and mitigating action that will be taken. Members also need to consider the opportunities presented by actions, noting that any change entails an element of risk. The challenge is to effectively manage that risk.

**RISK SCORING MATRIX**

<b>Impact/Severity</b>		<b>Target impact</b>	<b>Stakeholder impact</b>	<b>Finance impact</b>
<b>1</b>	Insignificant	Low impact on outcome & target achievement & service delivery	Low stakeholder concern	Low financial risk

<b>2</b>		Minor	Minor impact on outcome & target achievement & service delivery	Minor stakeholder concern	Minor financial risk
<b>3</b>		Moderate	Moderate outcome & target achievement & service delivery	Moderate stakeholder concern	Moderate financial risk
<b>4</b>		Serious	High impact on outcome & target achievement & service delivery	High stakeholder concern	High financial risk
<b>5</b>		Very serious	Very high impact on outcome & target achievement & service delivery	Very high stakeholder concern	Very high financial risk
<b>Likelihood/ Probability</b>		<b>Risk</b>		<b>Opportunity</b>	
<b>1</b>	Very low	Negligible chance of occurrence; has not occurred		Possible opportunity yet to be investigated with low likelihood of success	
<b>2</b>	Low	Low chance of occurrence; has occurred infrequently but within internal control		Opportunity being investigated with low likelihood of success	
<b>3</b>	Medium	Equal chance of occurrence or non occurrence; could occur more than once and be difficult to control due to external influences		Opportunity may be achievable with careful management	
<b>4</b>	High	More likely to occur than not occur; has occurred more than once and difficult to control due to external influences		Good opportunity which may be realised	
<b>5</b>	Very high	Very high chance of occurrence but not a certainty; has occurred recently		Clear reliable opportunity with reasonable certainty of achievement	

**Risk score = Impact/Severity x Likelihood/Probability**

<b>Likelihood</b>	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Impact</b>						

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## WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>7 October 2014</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2015/16 to 2018/19</b>
<b>Report of</b>	<b>Head of Finance &amp; Audit</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>All</b>

**Summary of report:** To provide a forecast of the budget situation for the year 2015/16 and a forecast for the four years to 2018/2019. The forecast is intended to provide a framework within which decisions can be made regarding the future service provision and council tax levels whilst building an approach that guarantees West Devon Borough Council's longer term viability.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The estimated budget gaps are as follows: (As per Appendix B)

2015/16	£ 597,803
2016/17	£ (756,053)
2017/18	£ 400,099
2018/19	£ 202,099

This gives a cumulative 4 year budget gap of £443,948.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It recommended to Council that:

1. Members provide a set of "minded to" views in order to guide the 2015/16 budget process with particular reference to;
  - (i) the level of council tax increase,
  - (ii) the use of New Homes Bonus to support the revenue budget,
  - (iii) the amount of Council Tax Support Grant to be passed on to Parish and Town Councils and
  - (iv) other budget savings and income generation.
  
2. The Council's policy should remain as recommending a minimum level of unearmarked revenue reserves of £750,000.

**Officer contact:**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to offer a way forward to address the 2015/16 budget gap of **£597,803** and to build an approach that guarantees West Devon Borough Council's longer term viability.

Members recommend to Council that;

- The Financial Strategy is accepted as a foundation document for the Council's budget setting process.
- The Council's policy should remain as recommending a minimum level of unearmarked revenue reserves of £750,000.

- 1.2 In February 2014 Council agreed the budget for the 2014/15 accounting year and reviewed the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the three years 2015/16 to 2017/18. Since that time the Senior Management Team (SMT) have been focusing on implementing the Transformation Programme (T18) to generate significant savings for the Council.

## 2. ASSUMPTIONS FOR FINANCIAL MODELLING PURPOSE

- 2.1 There is predicted to be a 15.37% reduction in government funding from 2014/15 to 2015/16 (see Appendix B). The Appendix is consistent with figures that have been provided through the Finance Settlement for 2015/16 and the modelling available regarding Localisation of Business Rates from data we have supplied to the Government on Business Rates returns.

The Finance Settlement (December 2013) announced the following funding position for the Council for 2014/15 and 2015/16 (figures were confirmed by the Government on 5 February 2014):-

	<b>2014/15(£m)</b>	<b>2015/16(£m)</b>
Provisional 14/15 settlement	2.960	2.477
Homelessness Prevention Funding	0.049	0.049
Efficiency Support for Services in Sparse Areas	0.054	0.054
Other items	0.105	0.101
<b>Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) (Reduction of 15.37%)</b>	<b>3.168</b>	<b>2.681</b>

- 1.2 Salaries increase by around 1% on an annual basis (Appendix A).
- 1.3 Inflation will run at 2% over the period.
- 1.4 The interest return for our investments will be 1% for 2015/16 rising to 2.75% in 2018/19. Below are the percentages advised by Sector (the Council's treasury management advisors) that Authorities should use in their financial planning for investment income assumptions:-

2015/16 – 1%  
2016/17 – 1.6%  
2017/18 – 2.25%  
2018/19 – 2.75%

- 1.5 No assumptions have been built into the financial modelling for council tax increases for 2015/16 onwards. Members' views on Council Tax increases are sought as part of this report. Therefore the financial modelling in Appendix B assumes a Band D council tax of £204.50 (the current Band D council tax for 2014/15).
- 2.6 Members will appreciate that capital spending has an impact on revenue. As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy it will be necessary to review the level and phasing of schemes within the Capital Programme (Section 8). At this stage no assumptions have been made. A detailed three year Capital Strategy and Capital Programme is in the process of being prepared for the December Resources meeting which will form part of the Budget Proposals for 2015/16. The Strategic Asset Review will inform the three year Capital Strategy. Again no assumptions have been made at this stage but will be built into the forecast once decisions are reached on the scale of the asset disposal/investment programme.
- 3. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME 2018 (T18)**
- 3.1 In response to the unprecedented scale of financial challenges that this Council faces, Members have approved (Council Minute CM49, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013) an innovative Transformation Programme (T18) which requires an investment budget of £1.9 million, to deliver annual recurring revenue savings of £1.3 million.
- 3.2 This builds on the success of our shared services partnership with South Hams District Council and will see both Councils pioneering a new operating model for local government. The shared services programme with South Hams has generated shared services savings of £7.7million across both Councils since 2007 (with the West Devon share being £3.6 million).
- 3.3 The T18 Programme is viewed as the primary driver to achieve the savings required over the next few years. The programme is currently being designed to deliver a long term organisational vision which we anticipate will remove the need to deal with the budget gap through an annual service and financial planning process.
- 3.4 The T18 Programme is intended to drive out significant efficiencies so that a position can be reached whereby annual budget reductions are minimised and the Council is placed on as firm a footing as possible, notwithstanding the national uncertainty about economic growth and the future funding model for local government.
- 3.5 The Transformation Programme will not only deliver savings of 23% of our net revenue budget for both Councils, it will also create a new model to allow several Councils to share services whilst retaining their individual identities. This model can be easily used in other parts of the country and is scalable in its application.
- 3.6 The Council has received very good news. Our expression of interest to the Transformation Challenge Award to DCLG has met the assessment criteria and has been accepted.

- 3.7 We now have to develop a full bid by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 which, if successful, could see an award being made as early as November. Our expression of interest asked for £700,000 of Government funding to help fund our transformation programme which will deliver our new operating model. We also asked for a further £400,000 should Torridge District Council join our model. Member meetings took place throughout September to enable us to share information about this possibility.
- 3.8 A summary of the savings and investment required for the Transformation Programme (T18) is shown below:

<b>WDBC</b>	<b>2014/15 million</b>	<b>2015/16 million</b>	<b>2016/17 million</b>	<b>2017/18 million</b>	<b>2018/19 million</b>
<b>Investment costs (Total of £1.9 million)</b>	£0.778	£0.956	£0.061	£0.061	£0.040
ICT Software costs, Implementation costs, accommodation costs and staff redundancy and pension strain costs					
<b>Cumulative Revenue Savings</b>	£(0.117)	£(0.803)	£(1.237)	£(1.270)	£(1.301)
Staff savings (approx 24% of staffing base)					
New income from released surplus accommodation and reduced annual running costs					
<b>TOTAL</b>	£0.661 Net investment cost	£0.153 Net Investment cost	£(1.176) Net saving	£(1.209) Net saving	£(1.261) Net saving

The table above shows the timing of the expenditure for the investment costs of £1.9 million and shows that by 2018/19 the annual revenue savings are £1.3 million, with net savings of over £1.1 million materialising by 2016/17. The investment cost in 2014/15 of £0.661 million and in 2015/16 of £0.153 million is being financed by the £0.8 million T18 Investment Earmarked Reserve (see Appendix C schedule of Reserves – Council Minute CM49).

- 3.9 The costs have been calculated to ensure that each Council pays its own share. The Programme will be self-financing from the end of year 2 (2015/16) onwards. The payback period for the Programme is 2 years. This provides a high degree of confidence that West Devon Borough Council will remain a viable Council with the ability to continue to deliver quality services in the years to come.



- 3.10 No T18 savings from 2015/16 have yet been assumed to be available to put towards the budget gap identified for 2015/16 as these savings are primarily needed to pay for the investment costs.
- 3.11 The savings from the T18 model will mean that the Council would be able to have less reliance on New Homes Bonus to fund its revenue budget. This would release funding for investment in the Council's priorities (see 3.12) and for capital investment. The Council currently has a lack of available capital resources to meet its predicted future capital programme requirements over the next three years. The Strategic Asset Review has also identified projects which require capital investment but which would provide an income stream for the Council. These projects will form part of the Three Year Capital Strategy (see 2.7).

### **Our Plan – setting priorities**

- 3.12 The Council is preparing a new strategic plan for West Devon which will set out a vision, long term priorities and planning policies for the area to 2031. Members will shortly be starting work on shaping the Delivery Plan for Our Plan and this may impact on the Council's Budget as we move the Council towards being a Commissioning Council.
- 3.13 The first formal consultation on Our Plan was undertaken during May and June this year and we received 59 responses in total from a range of individuals and organisations. Between May and October we have been attending a number of community events and have spoken to a wide range of people to gain their views on how they would like to see the future of the area. We have been holding Single Topic Discussions with Members on key issues and several Town and Parish Workshops. We have published regular e-newsletters on key topics and publicised these to the community and stakeholders. We are using social media through YouTube, Twitter and Facebook to reach out to different groups to promote engagement on Our Plan.

## **4. OPTIONS TO MEET THE BUDGET GAP FOR 2015/16**

- 4.1 The budget gap based on the assumptions above, is predicted to be £597,803 for 2015/16, Appendix A provides the details.
- 4.2 As mentioned in 3.10 above, the budget gap of £597,803 is the position without taking into account any T18 savings in 2015/16 as these savings are primarily needed to pay for the investment costs in 2015/16.
- 4.3 **Council Tax Referendum limit** - The Localism Act introduced the power for the Secretary of State to set principles each year under which council tax increases are determined as excessive. The Minister announced that the council tax referendum threshold for 2014/15 remained unchanged from 2013/14 at 2% and did not apply to Towns and Parishes. No notification has been received on the limit for 2015/16.
- 4.4 **Income from Council Tax** - Council agreed to raise council tax by 1.9% from 1 April 2014 to £204.50 for a Band D property for West Devon Borough Council.

This amounted to a £3.81 increase on an average Band D property over a year equivalent to 7p a week. A 1% increase in Council Tax generates an extra £39,000 in extra income per annum.

- 4.5 **Council Tax Freeze Grant** - On 15 January 2014 the Government issued the guidance for the Council Tax Freeze Grant Scheme for 2014-15. It is assumed that many of these key aspects which applied in 2014-15 will also apply in 2015-16. Namely that:-
- (i) It was voluntary and that any authority which freezes or reduces their basic amount of council tax will be eligible to receive the grant (equivalent to a 1% of the basic amount of council tax – this estimated to be £43,281 for West Devon).
  - (ii) Ministers have agreed that the funding for the 2015-16 freeze grant **should** be built into the spending review baseline. This gives as much certainty as possible at this stage that the extra funding for freezing council tax will remain available.
- 4.6 **Rural Development Programme for England – Local Action 2015-2020** – There is a separate report on this agenda regarding this item. A cost pressure of £10,400 has been built into the Financial Strategy for 2015/16 onwards for 6 years.
- 4.7 **Street Naming & Numbering Policy** – On May 13<sup>th</sup> 2014 Council agreed to the introduction of charges for Street Naming and Numbering. The income generated is subject to how many properties are built and how many requests for name changes are made. An estimate of £7,500 has been built into the 15/16 budget.
- 4.8 **Income Generation** – Over the past few months the Council has explored ways to generate new income for the Council. The Income Generation Working Group have met on a number of occasions to look at ways of generating additional income. There will be a further report to Council on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014 regarding the creation of a local authority trading company, which will provide more detail.
- 4.9 In summary, the options open to Members to close the predicted **£597,803** Budget Gap in 2015/16 are:-
- i) To use New Homes Bonus in 2015/16 to close the budget gap, with a view to reversing the amount of New Homes Bonus that is used to support the Revenue Budget in 2016/17 when the savings from T18 materialise in full. There is a cumulative balance of uncommitted New Homes Bonus from the last three years of approximately £441,553 as per 5.2.
  - ii) Appendix E sets out some options for future additional savings totalling £31,025 which Members may wish to pursue.
  - iii) To use the Rural Services Grant Earmarked Reserve of £82,000 to fund the 15/16 revenue budget gap.

- iv) Members of the Senior Management Team will continue to identify options for savings and income generation over the coming months.
- v) For Members to give an early and to reach a “minded to” view on the level of council tax increase and the level of council tax support grant to be allocated to Parish and Town Councils (see 7.5).

Note – If Members were minded to increase council tax by 1.9%, this would generate approximately £74,700. A Council Tax Freeze Grant of £43,281 has already been modelled for 15/16 therefore this option would reduce the £597,803 budget gap by £31,419.

## 5. NEW HOMES BONUS (NHB)

5.1 The table below shows an estimate of New Homes Bonus for the next five years. The Chancellor has confirmed in December that no top-slice will now apply from 2015/16 onwards, following responses to the Government consultation.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
2011/12	323,920	323,920	323,920	323,920		
2012/13	568,622	568,622	568,622	568,622	568,622	
2013/14	133,255	133,255	133,255	133,255	133,255	133,255
2014/15		222,997	222,997	222,997	222,997	222,997
2015/16 – estimated 184 properties			210,631	210,631	210,631	210,631
2016/17 – estimated 329 properties				376,617	376,617	376,617
2017/18 – estimated 374 properties					428,130	428,130
2018/19 – estimated 200 properties						230,000
New Homes Bonus returned	12,203					
<b>Forecast NHB</b>	<b>1,038,000</b>	<b>1,248,794</b>	<b>1,459,425</b>	<b>1,836,042</b>	<b>1,940,252</b>	<b>1,601,630</b>

## 5.2 NEW HOME BONUS (NHB) – PROPOSED USE OF NHB

The table below shows the proposed use of New Homes Bonus:

	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Amount receivable	1,038,000	1,248,794	1,459,425	1,836,042	1,940,252	1,601,630
Less: T18 allocation (Council 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov)	(600,000)					
To fund current Revenue Budget *	(353,076)	(657,059)	(657,059)	(657,059)	(657,059)	(657,059)
To fund the Capital Programme (as per 8.1)		(555,000)	(462,000)	(462,000)	(462,000)	(462,000)
<b>Dartmoor National Park contribution (Council Feb 14 – See Note below)</b>	(18,688)	(20,362)	(8,714)	(26,981)	(111,227)	(92,870)
<b>Balance remaining (not committed)</b>	<b>66,236 Plus 27,292 from 2012/13</b>	<b>16,373</b>	<b>331,652</b>	<b>690,002</b>	<b>709,966</b>	<b>389,701</b>

\*Currently assumes use of NHB to support the revenue budget at the 14/15 level

Note - **Dartmoor National Park (DNP)** – DNP have requested a share of the New Homes Bonus to reflect new homes delivered within the park. DNP would like NHB money to be used to support a local community fund and, for example, joint work through the rural housing enabler. The New Homes Bonus legislation says that Councils are expected to negotiate with National Park Authorities to recognise their role as the sole local planning authority for their area in granting planning permissions and that the Councils should reach an agreement and split the funding from NHB at a locally determined rate.

Members considered this as part of the Budget process for 2014/15 and the following system is in place:-

- A one off payment is to be agreed on an annual basis based on actual completions.
- The allocation received by DNP are to be spent only within those parishes falling within the boundaries of the Borough Council.

- The agreed sum is transferred to an Earmarked Reserve called 'Community Investment Fund – Dartmoor National Park' and the DNP make an annual application to draw down funds as required in line with the process agreed for that fund.

On this basis the share of NHB that could be due for DNP based on completed properties (estimated for future years) is summarised below:

	<b>Payable for 12/13 and 13/14</b>	<b>Forecast for 14/15</b>	<b>Forecast for 15/16</b>	<b>Forecast for 16/17</b>	<b>Forecast for 17/18</b>	<b>Forecast for 18/19</b>
<b>Share of award</b>	18,688	20,362	8,714	26,981	111,227	92,870

## 6. EARMARKED AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES

- 6.1 The Council's policy is to retain Unearmarked Revenue Reserves of £750,000.

The Unearmarked General Fund Revenue Reserve balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 was £953,000 and the Earmarked Reserves balance was £1,790,000. This gave total Revenue Reserves of £2,743,000. The predicted earmarked and unearmarked reserves for 2014/15 is shown below:-.

- 6.2

	<b>£'000</b>
General Reserves balance as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	953
Earmarked Reserves	1,790
Predicted movement in Earmarked Reserves (Appendix C)	(1,190)
<b>Total Predicted Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015</b> (Unearmarked Reserves of £953,000 and Earmarked Reserves of £600,000 as shown in Appendix C)	<b>1,553</b>

- 6.3 **Specific Earmarked Reserves** - The level and commitments for each reserve are kept under review each year to make sure the uncommitted balance is adequate for its purpose. The Earmarked Reserves were reviewed as part of the year end close down and £13,000 was transferred in the general reserve of the Council. A schedule of predicted Earmarked Reserves for 14/15 are shown in Appendix C. Earmarked Reserves are predicted to be £600,000 at the end of March 2015).

## 7. OTHER BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme** – Following Council Tax Benefit being abolished, Council in December 2013 approved the implementation of a cost neutral local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2014/15. This scheme is a

discount scheme rather than a state welfare benefit and means that working age claimants will pay a minimum of 20% towards their Council Tax bill. There will be an exception hardship fund to help those claimants experiencing severe financial difficulties. (This is a separate item on this Resources Committee agenda).

- 7.2 These changes have the effect of reducing the council tax base not only for the Borough Council, but also for Town and Parish Councils, Devon County Council, The Police and Crime Commission and Devon and Somerset Fire Authority. Reductions in the Council Tax Base adversely affect a local authority's ability to raise income from Council Tax.
- 7.3 The Government is providing financial support for local authorities (Council Tax Support Grant) to assist them in dealing with the effects of the benefit changes on their Council Tax Base.
- 7.4 In the December 2013 Statement, the Minister reminded local authorities that within the funding for Council Tax Support Schemes there is an element to specifically reflect reductions in the parish tax base resulting from the introduction of Localised Support for Council Tax. He confirms that the funding is not separately identified because it is not ring-fenced. There is recognition that as caseloads change and schemes evolve, the amount that different parishes need will also change. There is also an expectation by the Government that billing authorities will continue to pass on support to town and parish councils to help mitigate any reduction in their tax base due to the local Council Tax support scheme.
- 7.5 It is therefore considered appropriate that the Council Tax Support Grant to Town and Parish Councils should reduce in line with the reduction that the Borough Council is experiencing with its Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). The Council approved a grant distribution of £103,137 for 2014-15. It is estimated that the Council's SFA will decrease by 15.37% in 2015-16 (see Appendix B).
- 7.6 Members' views are now sought on the proposal to consult with Town and Parish Councils on a 15.37% reduction to their grant for 2015-16 (from £103,137 to £87,285). This is an overall reduction of £15,852. Appendix D illustrates the effect for each Town and Parish.
- 7.7 **Tamar Valley Legacy Plan** – This is detailed in Appendix F. A cost pressure of £28,000 for 2015/16 and a further £3,000 for 2016/17 has been built into the Financial Strategy. Officers will continue to work to reduce this.

## 8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 to 2018/19

8.1 The table below shows the proposed Capital Programme for 2015/16 and projected figures to 2018/19:

	2015/2016	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Tenants Incentive Scheme (TIS)	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Village Halls and Community Projects	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000
Affordable Housing (see Note 1)	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
T18 Investment (as per Council 4 Nov 13)	100,000		-	-
Disabled Facilities Grants (see Note 2)	450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>801,000</b>	<b>701,000</b>	<b>701,000</b>	<b>701,000</b>
<b>Suggested method of funding the Capital Programme:</b>				
Government Grant funding towards Disabled Facilities Grants (see Note 2)	(239,000)	(239,000)	(239,000)	(239,000)
Less anticipated slippage on the capital programme (Capital resources)	(100,000)		-	-
<b>Potential funding from New Homes Bonus (Required to fund the Capital Programme)</b>	<b>462,000</b>	<b>462,000</b>	<b>462,000</b>	<b>462,000</b>

**Note 1** - The Council is working towards becoming self funding for Affordable Housing from commuted sum receipts (financial contributions from developers). It is anticipated that there could be sufficient commuted sums within the next two years not to require any additional capital contributions. In the above table allocations of £200K have been made for the next four years and the situation will be reviewed to ensure we have accumulated sufficient receipts to negate the need for the allocations in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

**Note 2** – From 2015/16, the funding for Disabled Facilities Grants will be from the Better Care Fund held by Devon County Council and funding will be passported to District Councils. Provisional allocations for 15/16 show an increase in contributions to £239,000. Following the recent Informal Council meeting, a briefing note on the Better Care Fund has been circulated to all Members.

8.2 As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), it is also necessary to review the level and phasing of schemes within the Capital Programme. It is important that the programme is matched with available resources and the impact on reserves and the revenue budget is fully assessed.

8.3 Consideration also needs to be given to the funding options for the 2015/16 Capital Programme. The Capital Programme is set by the Council and may be funded by sale proceeds from the disposal of assets (capital receipts), external grants and contributions, directly from revenue or from borrowing

8.4 A detailed three year Capital Strategy and Capital Programme is in the process of being prepared for the December Resources meeting which will form part of the Budget Proposals for 2015/16. The Strategic Asset Review will inform the three year Capital Strategy. Again no assumptions have been made at this stage but will be built into the forecast once decisions are reached on the scale of the asset disposal/investment programme.

## 9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 In accordance with the Council's Delegation Scheme, the Resources Committee is responsible for recommending to Council the budgetary framework. The Council is required to adopt the revenue budget.

## 10. RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 The Risk Management implications are shown at the end of this report in the Strategic Risks Template.

## 11. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

<b>Corporate priorities engaged:</b>	A balanced budget underpins the Council's capacity to delivers its corporate priorities.
<b>Statutory powers:</b>	Local Government Act 1972, Section 151
<b>Considerations of equality and human rights:</b>	A 360 degree assessment of the equality implications has been carried out and is available on request.
<b>Biodiversity considerations:</b>	None directly related to this report.
<b>Sustainability considerations:</b>	None directly related to this report.
<b>Crime and disorder implications:</b>	None directly related to this report.
<b>Background papers:</b>	Council February 2014 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2017/18
<b>Appendices attached:</b>	Appendix A – Modelling of the Financial Strategy Appendix B – Budget Pressures and Savings Appendix C – Schedule of Reserves Appendix D – Council Tax Support Grant to Town and Parish Councils for 2015/16. Appendix E – Potential future additional savings Appendix F – Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project Legacy Plan: 3 Year Forecast



## STRATEGIC RISKS TEMPLATE

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
1	Robustness of medium term financial strategy and service blue-prints	Not achieving financial savings as anticipated	5+	3	15	↔	Corporate engagement in the development of the medium term financial strategy.	Head of Finance & Audit
		External change to the national economic environment which may impact on our funding expectations. Implications of changes to the funding of local government through locally collected business rates and revenue support grant. Effect of the localisation of council tax.  Achieving anticipated income targets in the current financial climate.					Service commitment to business planning processes.  Robust horizon scanning to monitor changes in Government policy.  The Council responded to the consultation on the localisation of business rates and will carry out regular monitoring during the financial year to ascertain the effect of the new scheme on the Council's finances. (see Risk No. 2 below) Monitoring of corporate income streams and revenue budgets.	Corporate Director (TW)  Corporate Director (AR)  Head of Finance & Audit  Head of Finance & Audit
2	Income from Business Rates	The figures for income from Business Rates are best estimates at this date (the NNDR1 return forecasts Business Rates for the forthcoming year). Predictions could vary by £100,000.	5	3	15	↔	The position will be monitored by the Head of Finance and Audit.  The quarterly Revenue Budget Monitoring reports will monitor Business Rates income against projections. Any variances will be highlighted to Members at an early stage.	Head of Finance & Audit

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
		The figures are subject to volatility both from business rating appeals and the economic climate.					The Council is part of a Devonwide Pooling arrangement for business rates.	
3	Setting a lawful budget	Failure of the Council to set a lawful budget	5	1	5	↔	The Budget is compiled in accordance with best practice guidelines issued by CIPFA and the Government. The final budget report includes an assessment from the Section 151 Officer on the adequacy of the Council's reserves and the robustness of the estimates made. The budget process is laid down in the Council's Constitution. Resources Committee and Council meetings are timetabled to meet the Statutory deadlines for setting the Council Tax.	Head of Finance and Audit
4	Corporate Priorities	Failure to target budgets to service priorities	5	3	15	↔	Service priorities will be reviewed. Budget reductions include a section on their impact on council priorities and a risk assessment. Adequate levels of appropriately trained staff. Thorough planning and monthly monitoring of performance to management, quarterly to the Resources Committee.	Head of Finance and Audit

## BUDGET PRESSURES AND SAVINGS

## APPENDIX A

### WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

	BASE	Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£	£	£	£	£
<b>BUDGET PRESSURES</b>					
Triennial Pension revaluation	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Inflation on the waste collection, recycling and cleansing contract (estimate)	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Inflation on the street cleaning and public conveniences	20,000	0	0	0	0
Parish contribution to Public Conveniences	25,000	0	0	0	0
Inflation on the swimming pool contract (profiled fee)	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Investment Income	5,000	0	0	0	0
Inflation on goods and services	15,000	15,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Reduction in Housing Benefit administration subsidy	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
Civil Parking Enforcement	30,000	0	0	0	0
Increase in salaries - increments and pay and grading	75,000	0	0	0	0
Increase in salaries - pay increase at 1%	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Tamar Valley Legacy Plan (see 7.7 and Appendix F)	0	28,000	3,000	0	0
Rural Development Programme for England (See separate report on this Resources Agenda)	0	10,400	0	0	0
Workstation rental costs - payment to South Hams - this is offset by savings as shown below (T18 Council Minute CM49 - November 2013)	0	90,000	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL IDENTIFIED BUDGET PRESSURES</b>	<b>350,000</b>	<b>343,400</b>	<b>263,000</b>	<b>260,000</b>	<b>260,000</b>

## BUDGET PRESSURES AND SAVINGS

## APPENDIX A

### WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

#### SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION IDENTIFIED

	BASE 2014/15 £	Yr1 2015/16 £	Yr2 2016/17 £	Yr3 2017/18 £	Yr4 2018/19 £
Reduction on Members Allowances (Council 13 May 2014) * (see note below)	0	4,200	0	0	0
Reduction in the economy service	20,000	0	0	0	0
Grounds Maintenance saving	15,000	0	0	0	0
Savings on TIC	50,000	0	0	0	0
Actuarial revaluation savings	30,000	0	0	0	0
Savings on audit fees	0	12,000	0	0	0
New income generation from Street Name and Numbering	0	7,500	0	0	0
Savings on Ring and Ride Scheme	3,000	0	0	0	0
Reduction in provision for Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project Legacy Plan	6,000	0	0	0	0
Discretionary Rate Relief	54,910	0	0	0	0
Business Rates pooling gain	0	30,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Budget Scouring Savings	199,643	0	0	0	0
Bank Charges Reduction	0	5,000	0	0	0
Other savings identified	3,000	0	0	0	0
Reduced running costs at Kilworthy Park and additional leasing income	0	90,000	100,000	15,000	15,000
Transformation Programme savings from 2016/2017 (Council 4 November 2013)	0	0	1,076,000	18,000	37,000
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION</b>	<b>381,553</b>	<b>148,700</b>	<b>1,186,000</b>	<b>43,000</b>	<b>62,000</b>

\* Note - At Council on 13 May 2014, Members agreed the recommendation from the Independent Panel to apply a minimum size threshold to a Group (at least 8 Members) to enable a Group Leader the ability to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA).

**FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

**APPENDIX B**

Line No.	<b>Modelling for the financial years 2015/16 to 2018/19</b>	<b>Base 2014/15 £</b>	<b>Yr1 2015/16 £</b>	<b>Yr2 2016/17 £</b>	<b>Yr3 2017/18 £</b>	<b>Yr4 2018/19 £</b>
1	Base budget brought forward (line 11)	7,830,178	7,798,625	7,395,522	7,228,574	7,045,474
2	Budget pressures (as per Appendix A)	350,000	343,400	263,000	260,000	260,000
3	Savings already identified (as per Appendix A) Further Savings Identified	(381,553)	(148,700)	(1,186,000)	(43,000)	(62,000)
<b>4</b>	<b>Projected Net Expenditure:</b>	<b>7,798,625</b>	<b>7,993,325</b>	<b>6,472,522</b>	<b>7,445,574</b>	<b>7,243,474</b>
5	Localised Business Rates (SFA - see 2.1)	1,467,673	1,508,182	1,638,000	1,690,000	1,752,000
6	<b>Council Tax income</b> - No increase in Council Tax has yet been modelled into the figures shown (Taxbase 14/15 = 19,185.50)	3,923,435	3,964,335	4,005,235	4,046,135	4,087,035
7	Council Tax Freeze modelled for 15/16 - (built into the baseline thereafter)		43,281	43,281	43,281	43,281
8	Business Rates additional income	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
9	Revenue Support Grant (SFA - see 2.1)	1,700,458	1,172,665	835,000	559,000	452,000
10	Funding from New Homes Bonus	657,059	657,059	657,059	657,059	657,059
<b>11</b>	<b>Total Projected Income</b>	<b>7,798,625</b>	<b>7,395,522</b>	<b>7,228,575</b>	<b>7,045,475</b>	<b>7,041,375</b>
	<b>Budget gap per year</b>					
<b>12</b>	<b>(Projected Expenditure line 4 - Projected Income line 11)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>597,803</b>	<b>-756,053</b>	<b>400,099</b>	<b>202,099</b>

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Cumulative Budget Gap (if savings are made as predicted in the Transformation Programme)	0	597,803	-158,250	241,849	443,948
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An assumption of an additional 200 Band D equivalent properties per year has been included in the TaxBase and modelling above

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<b>RESERVES - PROJECTED BALANCES</b>				
	<b>Opening balance 1 April 2014 £000</b>	<b>Predicted spend to 31.3.2015 £000</b>	<b>Projected balance 31.3.2015 £000</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>EARMARKED RESERVES</b>				
<b>Specific Reserves - General Fund</b>				
Car Parking Repairs & Maintenance	(112)		(112)	
Waste Containers	(40)		(40)	
LABGI	(43)	43	0	
PDG (ICT) Earmarked Reserve	(11)	11	0	
Habitats Earmarked Reserve	(42)	9	(33)	Planned future use over 5 years
Landscape Maintenance	(20)		(20)	
Personal Search Fee S31 Grant	(34)		(34)	Ringfenced for Gov. Legislation
County Election	(24)	24	0	
Devon County Council - (Localism Support officer)	(4)	4	0	
RIEP - Localism Projects	(10)	10	0	
DCC - TAP funds	(4)	4	0	
DCC - TAP funds (North)	(7)	7	0	
Fifth Wave Neighbourhood Front Runners	(20)	20	0	
World Heritage Key Site	(5)	5	0	
Cannons Meadow	(24)	3	(21)	Written down to revenue annually
Millwood Homes	(15)	2	(13)	Written down to revenue annually
Young Persons Prevention officer	(10)	10	0	
Business Survey	(3)	3	0	
DCLG Business Support Scheme	(20)	7	(13)	
Inspire Anex 111	(7)	7	0	
DCC Public Health	(20)	20	0	
Rural Services Grant (RSG)	(82)		(82)	£56,969 RSG and £25,000 unused contingency budget from 13/14
T18 Investment Reserve	(800)	661	(139)	See table 3.8 in main report
Business Rates Retention Scheme	(321)	321	(0)	Will be used to offset the accounting deficit in the Collection Fund
New Homes Bonus 12/13 and 13/14	(112)	19	(93)	This is the uncommitted balance for 13/14. The recommended amount for the DNPA of £18,688 will be spent in the year.
<b>TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>(1,790)</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>(600)</b>	
<b>TOTAL UNEARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>(953)</b>		<b>(953)</b>	As per Final Accounts 2013/14
<b>TOTAL REVENUE RESERVES (EARMARKED AND UNEARMARKED RESERVES)</b>	<b>(2,743)</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>(1,553)</b>	

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**Town and Parish - Council Tax Support Grant allocation**

Parish/Town	<u>Council Tax Support Grant allocation for 2014/15</u>	<u>15.37% Percentage reduction</u>	<u>Council Tax Support Grant allocation for 2015/16</u>
Okehampton Town	24,017	3691	20,326
Hatherleigh	2,262	348	1,914
Bere Ferrers	6,400	984	5,417
Lifton	1,059	163	897
Dartmoor Forest	1,657	255	1,402
Inwardleigh	260	40	220
Tavistock	46,479	7144	39,335
Bridestowe	519	80	439
North Tawton	6,207	954	5,253
South Tawton	937	144	793
Horrabridge	2,204	339	1,865
Sampford Courtenay	436	67	369
Mary Tavy	1,084	167	917
Sourton	329	51	278
Lamerton	364	56	308
Drewsteignton	933	143	790
Northlew	528	81	447
Kelly	30	5	26
Spreyton	117	18	99
Chagford	2,032	312	1,719
Gulworthy	231	35	195
Sticklepath	198	30	167
Broadwoodkelly	136	21	115
Milton Abbot	218	33	184
Beaworthy	62	10	53
Exbourne & Jacobstowe	256	39	216
Meeth	63	10	53
Highampton	167	26	142
Bratton Clovelly	216	33	183
Iddesleigh	79	12	66
Sydenham Damerel	21	3	18
Burrator	186	29	158
Plasterdown	111	17	94
Stowford	80	12	68
Bondleigh	9	1	8
Okehampton Hamlets	385	59	326
Buckland Monachorum	1,667	256	1,411
Monkokehampton	67	10	57
Lydford	241	37	204
Throwleigh	117	18	99
Peter Tavy	249	38	210
Belstone	58	9	49
Lewdown	137	21	116
Germansweek	46	7	39
Brentor	284	44	240
Gidleigh	0	0	0
	<b>103,137</b>	<b>15,852</b>	<b>87,285</b>

This illustrative example will be sent to the Parish Clerks and the taxbase will be updated as soon as it has been set (normally December each year). This will enable Town and Parish Councils to model the effect of the grant reduction on their Precept calculation.

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**Potential Additional Savings for 2015/16**

<u>Analysed by type of expenditure</u>	<u>Amount</u>
General office	1,900
Staff expenses	5,375
IT expenses	1,900
County Wide initiatives	6,600
Professional Services	5,000
Increased income opportunities	5,250
Supplies and Services	3,750
Other small savings	1,250
<b>TOTAL POTENTIAL SAVINGS</b>	<b><u>31,025</u></b>

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## TAMAR VALLEY MINING HERITAGE PROJECT LEGACY PLAN: 3 YEAR FORECAST

<b>2012 Forecast</b>		<b>13/14</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	Trail rents	32,425	35,075	36,092	36,092
	Monitoring/management	11,715	11,875	11,875	11,875
	Marketing	4,200	6,000	6,000	6,000
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>48,340</b>	<b>52,950</b>	<b>53,967</b>	<b>53,967</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	AONB support grant	(5,000)	(5,000)	(0)	(0)
	Lease and rental income	(13,500)	(14,500)	(16,750)	(17,750)
	Car park income	(13,500)	(21,500)	(33,500)	(34,000)
	Education and events	(140)	(750)	(1,000)	(1,500)
	Publications	(200)	(200)	(300)	(400)
	Memberships	(1,500)	(2,000)	(2,500)	(3,000)
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(33,340)</b>	<b>(43,950)</b>	<b>(54,050)</b>	<b>(56,650)</b>
<b>Shortfall/surplus</b>		<b>15,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>(83)</b>	<b>(2,683)</b>

<b>2014 Forecast</b>		<b>13/14</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>
		<b>Actual</b>			
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	Trail rents	40,310	37,350	39,250	40,250
	Monitoring/management	11,950	11,950	11,950	11,950
	Repairs and maintenance	0	5,000	5,000	5,000
	Marketing	10,880	9,000	6,000	6,000
	Publications commissions	230	230	230	230
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>63,370</b>	<b>63,300</b>	<b>61,450</b>	<b>62,450</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	AONB/DCC grants	(12,000)	(5,500)	(2,500)	0
	Lease and rental income	(9,580)	(12,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)
	Car park income	(9,540)	(13,230)	(13,300)	(14,300)
	Education and events	0	(500)	(750)	(1,000)
	Publications	(800)	(800)	(800)	(800)
	Memberships	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(31,920)</b>	<b>(32,030)</b>	<b>(29,350)</b>	<b>(28,100)</b>
	<b>Budget contribution</b>	<b>(15,000)</b>	<b>(9,000)</b>	<b>(9,000)</b>	<b>(9,000)</b>
<b>Shortfall</b>		<b>16,450</b>	<b>22,270</b>	<b>23,100</b>	<b>25,350</b>
<b>Shortfall without additional actions</b>			<b>25,770</b>	<b>28,350</b>	<b>31,350</b>

## TAMAR VALLEY MINING HERITAGE PROJECT LEGACY PLAN:

## 3 YEAR FORECAST

**Background**

In April 2006 (Minute CM118), the Borough Council agreed to continue to act as the Accountable Body for the delivery phase of the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project (TVMHP) and set aside match funding to support its delivery.

In November 2012 a report was presented to this Committee outlining the ongoing legacy implications for the Borough Council following the expected completion of capital works in March 2013.

At that time it was anticipated that there would be a cumulative deficit of about £35,000 over 3 years before the project achieved sustainability. The outturn (actual figures) for 2013/14 was a deficit of £16,450.

The tables above show a comparison of the 2012 Forecasted figures and the 2014 Forecasted figures.

Officers have identified some actions that could be taken such as developing an “Active Tamar” bid to the forthcoming Greater Dartmoor LEAF programme which would:-

- a) Provide a range of family trails and activities
- b) Add a single track mountain bike course
- c) Provide more underground exploration and wildlife experiences in and around the trail centre.

This has the potential to increase car parking income by £2,500 to £3,000.

A cost pressure of £28,000 in 2015/16 and a further £3,000 in 2016/17 has been built into the Financial Strategy for the 2014 Forecasted figures. Officers will continue to work to reduce this.

## WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Resources Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Council Tax Reduction</b>
<b>Report of</b>	<b>Customer Service Manager</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>All</b>

**Summary of report:**

The Council is required to consider the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 by 31 January 2015. On the basis we are only half way through the first year of operation, it's still too early to measure the full customer and financial impact and therefore it is considered appropriate to continue with our existing scheme. This approach is in-line with the other Devon Authorities.

**Financial implications:**

The Government funding (Settlement Funding Assessment, SFA) received from Central Government will be reduced by over 15.37% for 2015/16. Council Tax Reduction funding is included within the SFA. The scheme is designed to be cost neutral and covers the shortfall in funding of approximately £442,000.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To recommend to Council:

1. To agree to continue with the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2015/16; and,
2. For delegated authority to be given to the Head of Finance and Audit, in consultation with the Leader, to make amendments to the policy document to take account of any further changes in law, government guidance or policy that require urgent amendment.

**Officer contact:** [kate.hamp@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:kate.hamp@swdevon.gov.uk), 01803 861104

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 As part of the wider Welfare Reform agenda Council Tax Benefit was abolished from April 2013. It is now the responsibility of the billing authorities to design and agree their own local schemes on an annual basis. The local scheme is called

Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and is classed as a council tax discount rather than a state welfare benefit.

- 1.2 In 2014/15 the Council took the decision to adopt a cost neutral scheme meaning that all claimants were required to pay a contribution towards their Council Tax. The scheme introduced:
- **80% maximum liability restriction** meaning that working age claimants paid a minimum of 20% towards their Council Tax bill.
  - **A property valuation band D restriction** meaning that working age claimants living in larger properties did not receive greater levels of support than those living in small properties
  - **An exceptional hardship fund** to help those claimants experiencing severe financial difficulties
- 1.3 Pensioners continue to be protected from receiving any reduction to their current entitlement and will remain under a national scheme as prescribed by legislation for 2015/16.
- 1.4 Any changes to the scheme for 2015/16 would mean having to go out to consultation at a time when the full impact of our existing scheme is not known.
- 1.5 Any risk associated with the local schemes is shared by all the major precepting authorities through the impact on the Council Tax Base.

<b>Share of the Council Tax bill for 2014/15</b>	<b>% 2014/15</b>
West Devon Borough Council	12.4%
Devon County Council	69.3%
Police and Crime Commissioner	10.1%
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue	4.7%
Town & Parishes	3.5%

## **2. THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY SO FAR**

- 2.1 In February 2014 we sent personalised letters and a leaflet to all the working age customers affected by the changes. This also provided an indicative figure of the amount they would need to pay from 1 April 2014. This letter also encouraged customers to contact us to discuss an instalment plan and payment options.
- 2.2 The recruitment of a Recovery Officer on a fixed term contract, funded by all the major preceptors as a result of a successful business case, allowed us to act proactively and follow up the letter with a phone call. Here we explained anything that the customers may be unsure about and set up a Direct Debit if the customer was agreeable.
- 2.3 The business case also allowed us to increase the independent money advice service provided by Encompass in order to support customers affected by these changes and in turn protect the Council Tax collection fund.



- 2.4 In March 2014, Council Tax bills and Council Tax Reduction letters were sent to all customers.
- 2.5 All Customer Service Officers were trained to provide basic guidance and signposting to customers if they contacted us over the phone. Further information was also provided to customers on our website.
- 2.6 Those customers who told us that they were unable to pay were referred to Encompass for money advice specific to their circumstances by carrying out an income and expenditure exercise. This information then allowed us to consider if the customer was eligible for the Exceptional Hardship Fund.
- 2.7 The Exceptional Hardship Fund forms part of the scheme and provides a safety net for those customers most in need. The fund is financed through the collection fund so it is paid for proportionately by all major preceptors.
- 2.8 Situation as at the end of August 2014:
- 35% of our working age customers receiving Council Tax Reduction are paying their bill by Direct Debit
  - We have made 2162 outbound proactive calls and sent 496 letters to customers to provide advice and to chase payment. We have attempted to make telephone contact with all customers prior to any formal recovery action being made.
  - We have issued 197 summonses for non-payment of Council Tax to customers receiving CTR. Of these 43 have set up a special arrangement to clear the debt and 15 have paid in full.
  - We have received 174 applications for Exceptional Hardship. Of these 23 have received full support and a further 48 have received a partial award. 37 did not qualify and 13 withdrew or failed to engage. The remaining applications are still awaiting assessment. Total awards currently stand at £13,109.29 which has been paid for proportionately by all the major preceptors.
  - Increased recovery action has led to an increase in the number of inbound Council Tax calls which are dealt with by the Customer Service Team.
  - Council Tax collection rates are being maintained and are currently only 0.4% below last years figure. Collection rates for 2013/14 were 97.7%.
- 2.9 The number of customers that have reached liability order stage is currently relatively low as an overall percentage of working age customers impacted by the scheme. However we are only half way through the year and this position could change as customers who have been paying start to default with their instalments.
- 2.10 Further information on the impact of the scheme can be found in the equality impact assessment (appendix A). The results of which do not identify any

disproportionate impact on any groups. By retaining the key elements of the council tax benefit rules within the scheme and the introduction of the Exceptional Hardship Fund we have continued to ensure that vulnerable groups are identified and protected.

## 2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 From 2014/15 funding for Council Tax Reduction has been included within the overall local government funding grant. West Devon Borough Council therefore decides how much funding is available to support the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
- 2.2 The aim of the local scheme was for it to be 'cost neutral'. By this we mean that the level of Government grant would equal forecasted Council Tax Reduction expenditure for 2014/15. Our scheme was modelled on the basis of expenditure coming out at circa £3,349,212. We have been closely monitoring this to ensure we are not creating significant over/under spend on the collection fund. The table below sets out the cumulative expenditure at the end of each month:

<b>2014/15 As at end of:</b>	<b>Pensioner award cumulative total £</b>	<b>Working Age award cumulative total £</b>	<b>Annual award cumulative total £</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>£1,975,114.83</b>	<b>£1,386,749.20</b>	<b>£3,361,864.03</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>£1,970,851.52</b>	<b>£1,391,781.08</b>	<b>£3,362,632.60</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>£1,966,240.23</b>	<b>£1,396,037.99</b>	<b>£3,362,278.22</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>£1,958,474.88</b>	<b>£1,409,805.09</b>	<b>£3,368,279.97</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>£1,962,835.78</b>	<b>£1,418,868.21</b>	<b>£3,381,703.99</b>

The above figures are the cumulative total at the end of each month that has been awarded in council tax reduction. The awards are given upfront for the whole of the year.

- 2.3 It is normal that expenditure will fluctuate slightly throughout the year. Actual Predicted Expenditure of £3,381,704 for 2014-15 (predicted cumulative award as at the end of August 2014) is currently slightly higher than the forecasted figure of £3,349,212 (see 3.2). Therefore officers are confident that the difference between forecasted and actual figures as at the end of the financial year will be minimal. The modelling carried out last year which informed the decision to adopt the current scheme is proving to be consistent with what is happening since the Council Tax Reduction Scheme went live.
- 2.4 All Devon authorities are recommending to retain their existing schemes for 2015/16, which means they are not making any changes (Appendix B). All authorities, bar Teignbridge have a cost neutral scheme very similar in design to West Devon.
- 2.5 The practicalities of changing our scheme would mean having to go out to consultation. This would need to be done at a time when we still don't fully know the impact on our customers or how much we will actually collect within the year as we are only half way through the financial year. The forecasted expenditure for the next financial year still means that the estimated cost of the scheme is still within the level of Government funding and therefore it makes sense to retain our existing scheme.

### 3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND STATUTORY POWERS

- 3.1 Clause 34 of the Welfare Reform Bill provides for the abolition of Council Tax Benefit from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 and introduces the Local Council Tax Support schemes to be administered by Local Authorities.
- 3.2 If no local CTR scheme is adopted by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015 the Council will be bound to continue with the scheme adopted in 2014/15.

### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Government funding (Settlement Funding Assessment, SFA) received from Central Government will be reduced by over 15.37% for 2015/16. Council Tax Reduction funding is included within the SFA. The scheme is designed to be cost neutral and covers the shortfall in funding of approximately £442,000. Based on current calculations (see 3.2 and 3.3) officers are confident that the difference between actual and forecasted figures as the end of the financial year will be minimal. The modelling carried out last year which informed the decision to adopt the current scheme is proving to be consistent with what is happening since the Council Tax Reduction Scheme went live.

### 5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Risk Management implications are shown at the end of this report in the Strategic Risks Template.

### 6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

<b>Corporate priorities engaged:</b>	Community Life, Economy
<b>Considerations of equality and human rights:</b>	<i>In deciding to retain the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015, the Council has considered and is of the opinion that no transitional provisions are required. The Council will, for 2015/16, maintain a fund for those taxpayers who experience exceptional hardship.</i>  An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed scheme.
<b>Biodiversity considerations:</b>	There are no biodiversity considerations to this report
<b>Sustainability considerations:</b>	Financial considerations have been factored into the long term sustainability of the scheme.
<b>Crime and disorder implications:</b>	There are no crime and disorder considerations to this report.
<b>Background papers:</b>	Welfare Reform Act 2012
<b>Appendices attached:</b>	Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment Appendix B – Devon wide schemes for 2015/16

## STRATEGIC RISKS TEMPLATE

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
1	Financial Modelling	Scheme does not meet reduction in funding creating shortfall to be met by Preceptors	5	2	10	↔	Extensive financial modelling has been undertaken	
2	Agreement on scheme	Failure to agree a scheme by 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2015	1	2	2	↓	Failure to agree will mean the Council is bound to continue with scheme adopted for 2014/15	
3	Financial	Detrimental impact on collection rates	5	2	10	↔	Business case in place with all preceptors agreeing financial support to fund extra resource to undertake early intervention and money advice. 2014/15 rates are looking good.	Kate Hamp
4	Financial	Future funding reductions could mean that the proposed scheme will not remain fit for purpose	5	4	20	↑	Annual review and close monitoring of announcements and national forums.	
5	Financial	Impact on wider economy and most vulnerable	5	3	15	↔	Business case in place with all preceptors agreeing financial support to provide Exceptional Hardship Fund to assist those in extreme financial need.	

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Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔

# Equality Impact Assessment – West Devon Borough Council

## Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2014/15

Lead Officer	Darren Cole – ICT & Customer Services Manager
Service	ICT and Customer Services
Proposed change to service	Develop a revised Council Tax Reduction scheme for April 2014
Reason for the service change	<p>The Council Tax Benefit scheme was abolished by the Welfare Reform Bill from April 2013. This was replaced with a local Council Tax Reduction scheme. The Council implemented a Council Tax Reduction scheme which was very similar to the previous Council Tax Benefit system. The only change applied was to abolish Second Adult Rebate claims for working age claimants. The shortfall in funding was covered by council tax technical reform changes rather than reducing the level of support provided in Council Tax Reduction.</p> <p>The Council's overall budget has been cut by Central Government with further cuts expected over the following two years. It will be for local councils to determine how to manage the funding gap and any cuts should be made to the current Council Tax Reduction scheme for working age customers.</p> <p>There are strict guidelines from the Government to ensure support for pensioners will remain at the same level as now and will be delivered through a national framework of criteria and allowances.</p> <p>West Devon Borough Council will need to design a new policy. The scheme must be in place by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014 failure to do so will result in the Council having to continue with the existing scheme which does not produce any savings.</p>
Information about users , research or other evidence	<p>West Devon has the option of not changing the scheme and therefore allowing the shortfall to be taken from the General fund, and ultimately the tax payers, or designing a revised scheme which incentivises work and supports the benefit welfare reform</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a new Local Council Tax Reduction scheme .The preferred option would be to continue a means tested scheme aimed at helping those with greatest need. This would be similar to current Council Tax Benefit. To avoid passing on the cost of the reduction to taxpayers further changes would need to be applied Changes being considered under the proposed scheme:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Calculating award based on % of maximum eligible council tax e.g. 75%</li> <li>b) Property Band D restriction</li> <li>c) Reduction of capital limit from £16,000 to £6,000</li> <li>d) The creation of a exceptional hardship fund to help those most in need</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>2. Do nothing</p> <p>a) Continue with the current scheme as agreed for 2013/2014. With no transitional funding from central government and a 1% welfare benefit uprating which would leave a significant gap in funding.</p> <p>b) Bridge the funding gap through a reduction in spending in other areas which could impact on front line services.</p> <p>c) By doing this, the projected budget for 2015/16 would require the implementation of a severe scheme from day 1 allowing customers no time to adjust their finances.</p>									
<p>Stakeholder consultation and involvement</p>	<p>Following publication of the draft scheme, a formal consultation period ran between 12<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and 7th October 2013. General awareness was raised via press releases and a series of outreach events run by West Devon Connect. An online questionnaire was available on our website throughout the consultation.</p> <p><b>Current Council Tax Benefit Claimants</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="488 837 1482 958"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Pensioners (exempt)</th> <th>Working age</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number of claimants</td> <td>2067</td> <td>1968</td> </tr> <tr> <td>%</td> <td>51%</td> <td>49%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Other stakeholders were consulted</b> via general publicity and mail to explain basic outline and directing them to online consultation, draft scheme documents, drop in sessions, permanent displays in council offices, press releases giving and other engagement events and forums. These stakeholders included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future benefit claimants</li> <li>Residents of West Devon</li> <li>Housing organisation</li> <li>Landlords</li> <li>Community groups and voluntary sector</li> <li>Precepting authorities</li> <li>Staff and Members</li> </ul>		Pensioners (exempt)	Working age	Number of claimants	2067	1968	%	51%	49%
	Pensioners (exempt)	Working age								
Number of claimants	2067	1968								
%	51%	49%								

**Impact of change- Who will be affected. How the change will impact on equality groups . Any positive and negatives impacts of the changes on users. Actions taken to avoid or lessen any negative impacts**

**As caseload data is continually changing analysis and effects will continue**

As at July 2013 there were a total of 24,792 properties liable for Council Tax in West Devon.

16 (%) were receiving Council Tax Reduction of these 1968 working age households would receive less entitlement towards their Council Tax Bill

The changes being considered affect Working Age only. By applying a standard deduction across all working age claimants the impact of the cuts are minimised.

Further analysis of Equality strands are;

AGE	Positive	Negative																
<p>Profile data available from current CTB claims. This covers all people in the CTB household</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>0-15 yr old</td> <td>1804</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16-17</td> <td>213</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18- 24</td> <td>520</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-34</td> <td>757</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35-49</td> <td>1250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-64</td> <td>1209</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65 and over</td> <td>2390</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>8143</b></td> </tr> </table>	0-15 yr old	1804	16-17	213	18- 24	520	25-34	757	35-49	1250	50-64	1209	65 and over	2390	<b>Total</b>	<b>8143</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of pension age are protected and will not be subject to change under the new scheme.</li> <li>• Could incentivise customers back into work.</li> <li>• Earnings disregards will be in applied when calculating income.</li> <li>• Customers moving into work extended periods will exist to help transition into work</li> <li>• Support will be provided by a dedicated advisor in money management and maximising customer’s income. Ensure customer has claimed all available council tax discounts, exemptions and disabled band reductions. Proactive monitoring of council tax payments through our recovery procedures to identify cases where additional support may be required. This may include setting up payment arrangements which are tailored to customer’s individual circumstances</li> <li>• Our scheme has an Exceptional Hardship fund that provides a safety net so that additional support can be provided for those in exceptional need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme will discriminate on the grounds of age because of Central Government requirement to protect pensioners. The national pensioner scheme treats them more favourably because allowances are more generous.</li> <li>• Working age people in this group who currently receive CTR will have extra Council Tax to pay.</li> <li>• For some customers this will be the first time they have had to make any contribution towards their council tax.</li> </ul>
0-15 yr old	1804																	
16-17	213																	
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25-34	757																	
35-49	1250																	
50-64	1209																	
65 and over	2390																	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8143</b>																	

DISABILITY	Positive	Negative
<p>Profile data available from current CTB claims. In this instance person is defined as disabled if they are in receipt of Disability Living allowance</p> <p>Members of CTB household</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Benefit income will be disregarded when calculating entitlement.</li> <li>• Higher allowances will be awarded in the calculation of support for those receiving disability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>All</u> working age people in this group who currently receive CTR will have extra council tax to pay.</li> <li>• For some customers this will be the first time they have had to make any</li> </ul>

<p>Under 18 = 69 Over 18 = 960</p>	<p>benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support will be provided by a dedicated advisor in money management and maximising customer's income. Ensure customer has claimed all available council tax discounts, exemptions and disabled band reductions.</li> <li>• Proactive monitoring of council tax payments through our recovery procedures to identify cases where additional support may be required. This may include setting up payment arrangements which are tailored to customer's individual circumstances</li> <li>• Our scheme has an Exceptional Hardship fund that provides a safety net so that additional support can be provided for those in exceptional need</li> </ul>	<p>contribution towards their council tax.</p>
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MARITAL STATUS, family circumstances or caring responsibilities	Positive	Negative
<p>Single person Household. Couple with no children Families with children Household with Carer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher allowances will be awarded in the calculation of support for carers</li> <li>• The scheme builds in additional premiums for households with children as Child Benefit and child maintenance is disregarded</li> <li>• Support will be provided by a dedicated advisor in money management and maximising customer's income. Ensure customer has claimed all available council tax discounts, exemptions and disabled band reductions.</li> <li>• Proactive monitoring of council tax payments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All people in this group who currently receive CTR will have extra Council Tax to pay.</li> <li>• For some customers this will be the first time they have had to make any contribution towards their council tax.</li> <li>• Families in large properties may have the difference between their larger property banding and a Band D to pay as well as an extra 25% contribution to their council tax payments</li> </ul>



	<p>through our recovery procedures to identify cases where additional support may be required. This may include setting up payment arrangements which are tailored to customer's individual circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our scheme has an Exceptional Hardship fund that provides a safety net so that additional support can be provided for those in exceptional need</li> </ul>	
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SEX(gender )	Positive	Negative
<p>Sex (gender ) for Household</p> <p>4511 are female 3632 are male</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme will not treat people of either sex any differently</li> <li>• No changes have been made to the treatment of Income and savings of women expecting children</li> </ul>	<p>All people in this group who currently receive CTR will have extra council tax to pay.</p>

Race/Ethnicity Religion/Belief Sexual Orientation	Positive	Negative
No CTR data held for these	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme will not treat people in these groups any differently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All people in this group who currently receive CTR will have extra council tax to pay.</li> </ul>

General	Positive	Negative
Change 1a. Reduce maximum Liability to 75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage some households to move to smaller, more affordable accommodation</li> <li>• Incentivise customers to try and locate work or extra hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All working age will have extra council tax to pay.</li> <li>• Customers in rented accommodation and in receipt of housing benefit may have already been affected by welfare reform changes made in April 13.</li> </ul>
Change 1b. Band D Property Band Restriction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scheme will not be contributing to the cost for customer who choose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could impact households with a large number of family members</li> </ul>

	<p>to live in larger properties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The scheme is consistent with benefit welfare changes such as size criteria, benefit cap and local housing allowance.</li> </ul>	
Change 1c. Reduction of capital limit from £16,000 to £6,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those people with money in reserve pay more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Penalises those who have acquired savings</li> <li>Substantial decrease from £16,000 to £6,000. Reducing the limit by a lesser amount does not realise any significant saving.</li> <li>Penalises those who are trying to save for retirement or to keep the family afloat during difficult times.</li> </ul>
Change 1d. The creation of a exceptional hardship fund to help those in financial need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will ensure there is funding available for those experiencing temporary hardship.</li> </ul>	

#### Submissions from Interested parties ;

Consultation exercise will give further details

Community and Voluntary organisations were invited to respond.

General publicity for all residents e.g press releases, West Devon Connect sessions, static displays, website.

#### Issues and Recommendations

From April 2013 Council Tax Reduction is a local scheme and therefore the council must agree a scheme each year by council by 31<sup>st</sup> January.

Funding for Council Tax Reduction is now included within the business rate retention formula grant.

The Government have decided that pensioners must be protected and have regulated the approach in calculating future support for them. Therefore any local scheme will impact on working age claimants only.

West Devon have consulted with Devon County Council, the Fire and Police as major preceptors and they have been unable to fund the shortfall therefore the support for working age claimants would need to be reduced

To protect the most vulnerable West Devon will have some kind of vulnerability/hardship fund to act as a safety net. This would allow for individual circumstances to be taken into account when appropriate.

A full evaluation of responses from the consultation will be carried out before the final scheme is agreed

From April 2014 the effects of the final scheme will need to be carefully monitored and any negative

effects minimised

**Action Plan & Review.**

October 2013	Full evaluation of responses from consultation to be carried out
December 2013	Results from consultation and options for final scheme will be considered by Members
April 2014 onwards.	Once final scheme in place further monitoring will be required to minimise any negative effects. Procedures for assisting customers who have problem paying shortfall may need to be revised Scheme and funding will need to be fully reviewed and agreed for 2015/16

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AGENDA ITEM <b>7</b>
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## WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM <b>7</b>
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<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Write Off Report</b>
<b>JOINT REPORT OF</b>	<b>Head of Finance &amp; Audit Customer Service Manager</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>All</b>

**Summary of report:**

The Council is responsible for the collection of: Sundry Debts including Housing Benefit Overpayments, Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates.

The report informs members of the debt written off for these revenue streams. Debts up to the value of £5,000 being written off by the Head of Finance & Audit, under delegated authority. Permission needs to be sought from the Committee to write off individual debts with a value of more than £5,000.

This report covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

**Financial implications:**

West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £113,637.28 to be written-off.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Committee notes that, in accordance with Financial Regulations, the Head of Finance & Audit has authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £43,045.56 as detailed in Tables 1 and 2.

The Committee considers the write off of individual debts in excess of £5,000 as detailed in Table 3.

**Officer contact:**

Lisa Buckle: Tel ext no.3644 e-mail [lisa.buckle@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.buckle@swdevon.gov.uk)  
 Kate Hamp: Tel ext no. 1104 e-mail [kate.hamp@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:kate.hamp@swdevon.gov.uk)

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council's sound financial management arrangements underpin delivery of all the Councils priorities, including the commitment to providing value for money services.
- 1.2 This report forms part of the formal debt write-off procedures included in these financial arrangements.

- 1.3 West Devon Borough Council's collection rates for 2013/14 were; Council Tax 97.7% & Business Rates 99.2%

## **2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 2.1 In accordance with good financial management principles the Council has, for the revenue streams detailed in this report, made a total bad debt provision of £1,116,512. This provision recognises that a proportion of the Authority's debts will prove irrecoverable and ensures that the value of debtors within the Authority's accounts is a fair reflection of the amount that will eventually be recovered. The total collectable debt for Council Tax is £32.7 million and for Business Rates is £10.9 million.
- 2.2 All debts, taxes and rates within the Service's control are actively pursued, and in most instances are collected with little difficulty. Sometimes, however, special arrangements are needed to effect recovery, and this may mean extending the period of time to collect the debt or ultimately instigating enforcement proceedings and then using Civil Enforcement Agents to secure payment.
- 2.3 In some cases further pursuit of the debt is not possible for a variety of reasons, such as bankruptcy or liquidation and such cases with arrears under £5,000 are written off by the Head of Finance & Audit under delegated authority. Cases where the debt exceeds £5,000 must, however, be approved by the Committee prior to the debt being written off.
- 2.4 A record is kept of debts written off, together with the reason for doing so, so that if there is a realistic chance of recovery in the future a debt may be resurrected and pursued again.
- 2.5 The Service has access to Experian's Citizenview database which is currently the most reliable means of tracing absconded debtors. Each case is checked against this system before a decision is taken to write off the debt. A periodic review of write offs against this system may also be carried out to resurrect debts where appropriate.

## **3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The relevant powers for this report are contained within the following legislation;

Section 151 Local Government Act 1972

Section 44 Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Non Domestic Rate)

Section 14 Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Council Tax)

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £113,637.28 to be written-off.

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

<b>Corporate priorities engaged:</b>	Economy; Homes; Community Life
<b>Statutory powers:</b>	Section 151 Local Government Act 1972 Section 44 Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Non Domestic Rate) Section 14 Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Council Tax)
<b>Considerations of equality and human rights:</b>	All enforcement action that is taken prior to this point is undertaken in accordance with legislation and accepted procedures to ensure no discrimination takes place
<b>Biodiversity considerations:</b>	None
<b>Sustainability considerations:</b>	A bad debt provision is built into the financial management of the Authority
<b>Crime and disorder implications:</b>	None
<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>Appendices attached:</b>	Tables 1, 2 & 3

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
1	Reputation	Any risk to reputation is managed carefully by prompt recovery of amounts due wherever possible.	3	2	6	↓	This risk is also mitigated by taking a balanced view and ensuring that resources are not expended on debts which are not cost effective to pursue	Customer Service Manager
2	Write Off	The obvious risk of debtors subsequently being able to pay a debt which has been written off is mitigated by the activity outlined in issues for consideration.	2	1	2	↔	Any individual debt exceeding £5,000 is referred to members for consideration prior to write-off which accords with Financial regulations.	H of F & A

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔

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**TABLE 1 SUMMARY OF WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL DEBT UNDER £5,000 WRITTEN OFF BY THE HEAD OF FINANCE**

TYPE OF DEBT	NUMBER OF CASES	REASON FOR W/OFF	Financial Year 2014/15			Totals for Comparison purposes			
			Quarter 1	Cumulative Total		Equivalent Quarter 2013/14		Grand Total 2013/14	
			Amount (£)	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount
<b>HOUSING BENEFIT</b>	12	Overpaid Entitlement	8,241.99	12	8,241.99	14	3,892.27	79	38,752.41
	2	Bankruptcy/DRO/IVA etc.	3,067.36	2	3,067.36	1	1,292.34	4	3,048.66
	-	Deceased	-	-	-	1	195.00	7	4,657.69
	-	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	Absconded	1,766.56	2	1,766.56	-	-	3	1,190.58
	1	Not Cost Effective to Pursue	1.00	1	1.00	-	-	2	14.72
	6	Uncollectable Old Debt	915.54	6	015.54	-	-	3	651.90
Total	23		13,992.45	23	13,992.45	16		98	48,315.96
<b>COUNCIL TAX</b>	28	Absconded	2,649.52	28	2,649.52	11	3,230.58	69	12,957.87
	17	Bankruptcy/DRO/IVA etc.	15,686.17	17	15,686.17	4	5,943.64	12	13,044.53
	2	Deceased	92.76	2	92.76	3	715.18	9	2,279.01
	5	Other	1,688.08	5	1,688.08	2	1,582.17	9	3,748.14
	51	Small Balance	1,218.10	51	1,218.10	18	234.69	56	1,356.41
	-	Uncollectable Old Debt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1	Receivership	1,108.21	1	1,108.21	-	-	-	-
Total	104		22,442.84	104	22,442.84	38	11,706.26	155	33,385.96
<b>SUNDRY DEBTS</b>	-	Small Balance	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.30
	-	Bankrupt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	Not Cost Effective to Pursue	-	-	-	-	-	1	72.07
	-	Uncollectable Old Debt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	Absconded	-	-	-	-	-	4	436.72
	-	Other	-	-	-	-	-	1	309.00
Total	-		-	-	-	-	-	7	818.09
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>127</b>		<b>36,435.29</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>36,435.29</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>17,085.87</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>82,520.01</b>

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

Year	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05	2003/04	Total
Value	481.35	579.70	631.44	124.88	-	550.66	59.85	221.64	-	-	-	2,649.52
Number	10	10	6	4	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	35

**TABLE 2 SUMMARY OF NON DOMESTIC RATE DEBT UNDER £5,000 WRITTEN OFF BY THE HEAD OF FINANCE**

TYPE OF DEBT	NUMBER OF CASES	REASON FOR W/OFF	Financial Year 2014/15			Totals for Comparison purposes				
			Quarter 1		Cumulative Total		Equivalent Quarter 2013/14		Grand Total 2013/14	
			Amount (£)	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount	
NON-DOMESTIC RATE	1	Bankruptcy/DRO/IVA/CVA etc	282.83	1	282.83	-	-	4	942.56	
	1	Absconded	464.29	1	464.29	-	-	8	7,580.30	
	1	Deceased	3,003.89	1	3,003.89	-	-	2	2,728.83	
	3	Liquidation	1,189.26	3	1,189.26	-	-	14	15,382.97	
	1	Other	502.00	1	502.00	-	-	4	1,171.37	
	-	Small Balance	-	-	-	-	-	1	5.43	
	-	Uncollectable Old Debt	-	-	-	1	1,031.14	1	1,031.14	
	2	Administrative Receivership	1,168.00	2	1,168.00	1	3,564.59	2	6,252.88	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>6,610.27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6,610.27</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4,595.73</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35,095.48</b>	

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

TYPE OF DEBT	NUMBER OF CASES	REASON FOR W/OFF	Financial Year 2014/15			Totals for Comparison purposes				
			Quarter 1		Cumulative Total		Equivalent Quarter 2013/14		Grand Total 2013/14	
			Amount (£)	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount	Cases	Amount	
NON-DOMESTIC RATE	1	Liquidation	18,128.27	1	18,128.27	-	-	2	20,312.20	
	-	Administrative Receivership	-	-	-	-	-	1	18,570.21	
	-	Absconded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	3	Bankruptcy/DRO/IVA/CVA etc.	31,346.48	3	31,346.48	-	-	-	-	
	1	Deceased	15,851.37	1	15,851.37	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>65,326.12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>65,326.12</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>38,882.41</b>	

<b>HOUSING BENEFIT</b>	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>COUNCIL TAX</b>	1	Bankruptcy/DRO/IVA etc.	5,265.60	1	5,265.60	-	-	1	15,940.10
	-	Absconded	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1		5,265.60	1	5,265.60	-	-	1	15,940.10
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>70,591.72</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>70,591.72</b>	-	-	<b>4</b>	<b>54,822.51</b>

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AGENDA ITEM <b>8</b>
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## WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM <b>8</b>
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<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Rural Development Programme for England – Local Action 2015-2020</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Economic Development Officer</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>All wards in West Devon</b>

**SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

This report seeks to put in place arrangements that will enable effective delivery of approx. £2.2 million of external funds covering West Devon and parts of South Hams and Teignbridge for the period 2015-2020 under the Community Led Rural Development Programme for England. This community led programme is known as the Greater Dartmoor Local Enterprise Action Fund (LEAF)

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

1. A contribution of £10,400 (£16,400 less current budget £6,000) per annum for 6 years and totalling £62,400 is required from each of the three local authorities together with a lesser contribution of £6,900 per annum from the National Park in order to deliver both programmes. The Programme predicts a return of investment in excess of £4 million for £62,400 sought from West Devon Borough Council.
  
2. A cost pressure of £10,400 has been shown in the financial strategy for 2015/16.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Members of the Resources Committee agree an annual contribution of £16,400 (Current £6,000 plus an additional £10,400) a year for 6 years, totalling £62,400 towards the costs of programme management and administration and project development from unearmarked reserves.

**OFFICER CONTACT:**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

### **RDPE - Local Action 2007 – 2013**

- 1.1 During the 2007 – 2013 programme, the Greater Dartmoor LEAF brought in excess of £1.6m European funding to the area to support projects that were focused on:
- Creating and growing businesses
  - Innovative service provision
  - Bringing greater benefits from our unique environment
- 1.2 In total, over 200 projects were funded, and achieved the following results:
- Created over 60 full time jobs
  - Supported over 550 businesses
  - Provided over 750 free/subsidised training courses
  - Attracted over 5,000 additional tourists
  - Provided new/improved facilities for 28 communities 65
- 1.3 Please refer to Annex B – a list of LEAF projects supported 2007 – 2013.
- 1.4 In addition to the European funding, a further £3.2 million of match funding was generated, the majority from the private sector. The final total overall project value exceeded £4.8 million pounds.
- 1.5 The programmes were run through a partnership with South Hams District Council as accountable body (responsible for financial probity and contract holders for the programmes), the DR Company as delivery body (responsible for management and administration) and groups of local volunteers as management teams for each programme (responsible for making decisions about how to invest the funding locally).
- 1.6 The programmes worked to exacting European and national audit standards, with detailed, rigorous procedures for the responsible management and disbursement of the funds to local projects that matched onto the Local Development Strategies.
- 1.7 The programme was recognised as one of the most successful Local Action Groups nationally (out of 64), being awarded with additional funding from Defra in recognition of this good performance.

### **RDPE - Local Action Transition Period 2014**

- 1.8 Funding of £35,000 was secured to develop two new local development strategy (LDS) covering the LEAF area which have been submitted to Defra to bid for RDPE – Local Action funding. Please refer to Annex C which illustrates revised programme areas using parish boundaries. This includes reference to the adjoining South Devon coastal LAG which covers parts of South Hams and Teignbridge not covered by the GD LEAF programme. The two LAGs are jointly administered by South Hams as the Accountable Body and The DR Company in terms of programme management.

- 1.9 DEFRA has given the following guidance regarding the total amount of funding that could be made available:

	LEAF	
Min	£	1,853,000
Ave	£	2,184,000
Max	£	2,623,000

- 1.10 DEFRA have also indicated that we should use the average figure for budgeting purposes, which would provide a total budget of £3.8m across the two programmes.

- 1.11 The calculation for funding Local Action Groups is based on the information below:

Basic minimum budget (calculated to ensure all LAGs sustainable) + top up budget:

- 15% based on rural population
- 20% based on rural density\*
- 50% based on GVA compared with England average
- 15% based on sparse coverage\*

\* ONS definitions of density and sparsity are used for this formula

#### **Transition Period Timescales:**

- Consultation with the business community took place between June and July to inform the development of a local development strategy.
- The local development strategy has been written, approved by the LEAF and signed off by the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership during August.
- The Local Development Strategy was submitted to Defra on the 5<sup>th</sup> September.
- DEFRA will make a decision during the Autumn of 2014
- The programme starts January 2015
- Funding for projects commences January 2015

#### **Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP)**

- 1.12 The LEP has submitted plans to Defra for spending a European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) allocation of approx. £15.5 million. This is a separate funding allocation. It is important that the LEP activities and the LAG/LEAF activities are complementary.

#### **Overarching Aim**

- 1.13 To deliver economic growth in rural areas, through job creation, business growth and improved productivity – using Leaders (known as the RDPE - Local Action programme) six policy priorities

#### **Specific Objectives**

- 1.14 70% of project funding has to be delivered directly in support of jobs and growth. However, it is expected that every project a LAG approves must

demonstrate it has a benefit to the rural economy. Specific objectives are:

- Support for Increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises including, farm diversification
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activity
- Support for Increasing forestry productivity

## **2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

2.1 South Hams District Council (SHDC) has agreed to continue as an Accountable Body for the programme.

- SHDC has a proven track record of sound management and administration
- A single Accountable Body for both the LEAF and LAG entity ensures greater efficiency and best value for money

2.2 The Delivery Body for the previous LEAF programme was the DR Company. A procurement process will be undertaken by the Accountable Body at the end of 2014 to ascertain the next Delivery Body.

## **3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 Under section 2 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has general powers of competence to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area.

3.2 The report is being brought to Resources Committee so that Members are aware of the future implications for the Council in making this bid.

3.3 A contract between the accountable body, a delivery body, South Devon Coastal Local action Group/Greater Dartmoor Local Enterprise Action Fund to be put in place.

3.4 Un-earmarked reserves over £30,000 (which it will be after 6 years) needs to be approved by Resources Committee. (Financial regulations Section 6)

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 A contribution of £10,400 (£16,400 less current budget £6,000) per annum for 6 years and totalling £62,400 is required from each of the three local authorities together with a lesser contribution of £6,900 pa from the National Park in order to deliver both programmes. This represents a proportionate amount to the benefit expected to be delivered to each local authority area.

4.2 Funds are available through unearmarked reserves.

4.3 South Hams District Council agreed to be the Accountable Body for the previous two programmes and is prepared to perform this role again, achieving a significant efficiency saving.

4.4 The Accountable Body takes responsibility for the legal and financial management of the grant disbursed to the programmes. As the organisation receiving the funding, the accountable body is therefore responsible for putting



in place an audit trail, overseeing contract management with suppliers and ensuring that the projects has sufficient cashflow.

- 4.5 It is the Accountable Body's role to ensure that proper and effective Governance is in place, overseeing the allocation and spend of external funding streams.
- 4.6 The costs to the accountable body is approximately £17,500 per year which would be met through the management and administration budget allocated to the programme.
- 4.7 December 2013, DEFRA announced that the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will become an 'Expert centre' responsible for processing all Common Agriculture Payments (CAP) which would include payments currently delivered by the Rural development programme for Local Action. It is therefore likely that during the programme the responsibility for processing the payments will transfer to the RPA.
- 4.8 Each project within the programme will have a specific amount of money allocated to it. Should any of the projects exceed its allocation of funding, this would have to be met by the funding applicant themselves, not by the accountable body. Any further risk to the Accountable Body is mitigated by the fact that the funding is paid retrospectively on receipt of invoices and evidence of delivery.
- 4.9 In terms of financial benefits, the opportunity exists to benefit from £3,819,000 across the two programmes over the 5 years to 2020 to support eligible projects with an estimated overall value in excess of £9 million.
- 4.10 Further EU funding is likely to become available as the programmes progress, and will be awarded to the programmes performing most effectively. The local partnerships running these programmes have an excellent track record and plan to benefit from this opportunity.

## 5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The risk management implications are as set out in Annex A attached to this report.

## 6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

<b>Corporate priorities engaged:</b>	Economy, Environment and Community
<b>Considerations of equality and human rights:</b>	N/A
<b>Biodiversity considerations:</b>	N/A
<b>Sustainability considerations:</b>	This programme will contribute too a more resilient and sustainable business environment, focused on jobs, growth and productivity within the rural economy

<b>Crime and disorder implications:</b>	None
<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>Appendices attached:</b>	Annex A – Strategic Risk Assessment Annex B – GD LEAF Projects 2007 – 2013 Annex C – GD LEAF Boundaries Map

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 This programme presents an opportunity to maximise an external funding, whilst meeting a Council priority within the Economy Delivery Plan and contributing towards the development of a resilient and vibrant local economy.
- 7.2 This funding would also lever additional financial contributions from other sources to the extent that the total value of projects to be supported is expected to be in excess of £4 million. **Every £1 spent by the Council in the previous programme attracted £133 project value.**

## STRATEGIC RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Score 20-25: very high; 12-19: high; 8-12; medium; &lt;8: low

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status			Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel		
1	Local Authority Contributions	Failure to approve contributions leading to loss of funds/opportunity to continue highly effective partnership delivery of projects and programme	5	2	10	↔	<p>Other authorities would have to consider delivering the programme without this support.</p> <p>A reduced contribution may be possible but may result in reduced support for projects and reduced impact.</p> <p>Close partnership working would need to be achieved in any event.</p>
2	Programme Delivery	Lack of project ideas and capacity to deliver/opportunity to deliver a range of projects which are ready to commence and will be realised throughout the lifetime of the programme with significant impact on the viability of the local economy.	4	2	8	↔	<p>Currently there is a long list of projects keen to apply for these funds, but should this dry up then there would need to be additional promotional and capacity building activity with associated costs.</p>
3	Officer capacity in view of other work pressures, as well as the capacity of partners	Focused approach to work load. This project would be delivering key actions within the Economy Delivery Plan & adding value to the wider local economy.	4	2	8	↔	<p>Capacity remains limited but has been effective throughout the last programme and with no further reduction in staffing levels, in particular in the early phases, then a similar high level of delivery can be anticipated.</p> <p>Without it further expertise would need to be acquired at a significant cost or again the programme may fail to deliver effectively.</p> <p>This could lead to reduction of funds and a lost opportunity to apply for additional funds later in the programme.</p>



**Annex B GD LEAF Projects 2007 - 2013**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>	<b>LAG Cont.</b>
West Devon Business Information Point	Business Improvement through Skills Training	Training businesses to help them get through recession ..	£ 102,649	£ 38,947
Drakes Dartmoor Group (DDG)	Connecting the Drakes Trail	Promoting the Drakes Trail to visitors via the Drakes Dartmoor Group	£ 31,407	£ 13,407
Moretonhampstead Development Trust	Moretonhampstead Old School Re-development	Preparatory work for the renovation of an old school into community facilities	£ 43,337	£ 25,000
The Spreyton Village Shop Association	Spreyton Village Shop	To provide a sustainable, accessible retail outlet for the village of Spreyton	£ 98,240	£ 43,455
Food and Drink Devon	Food and Drink Development	To create a network of Food and Drink sector businesses in the Greater Dartmoor LEAF area	£ 76,560	£ 37,792
Dartmoor Circle	Sustainable Dartmoor	Write a business plan to create sustainable economy in DNP, incl reducing carbon emissions	£ 30,349	£ 14,949
High Moorland Community Action Ltd	Princetown Village Centre	To provide the local community with a range of facilities and new services via the Village Centre	£ 15,865	£ 8,424
Friends of the Wharf	Taylor Made	A cultural festival based in Tavistock based on John Taylor, a former mining engineer	£ 8,916	£ 4,793
Bere Alston Regeneration Partnership Limited	Bere Alston Community Regeneration Hub	Extension to existing Parish hall to act as multi-purpose facility	£ 470,127	£ 99,940
Community Council of Devon (CCD)	Women Do Business	Business support tailored for women	£ 99,402	£ 54,422
Northlew Community Broadband Project	Northlew Community Broadband	Development and procurement of broadband service to Belstone and Northlew	£ 90,748	£ 37,367
Ashburton Co-operative Transport	Moorcar car club	To set-up a new car club in Totnes and employ a part-time co-ordinator to recruit members	£ 73,637	£ 32,816
Bridford Parish Council	Bridford Playing Field	Play facilities for children	£ 31,440	£ 12,000
Ramblers' Association - Devon Area	Dartmoor Way	Consolidating and marketing the footpath and cycling routes around the perimeter of Dartmoor	£ 10,850	£ 5,000
Devon Association for Renewable Energy	Transformation Trails	Facilitation of site visits for businesses intending to take up renewable energy options	£ 10,219	£ 4,979
Ashburton School Feast Ltd	EaT Dartmoor on-line training	Web based training project for restaurants, schools and other caterers around Dartmoor	£ 66,953	£ 46,383
Devon Wheels to Work	Wheels to Work	To provide individual transport solution to enable people to access employment	£ 42,575	£ 40,000
Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World	Art, Ecology and the Economy	To encourage local creative arts businesses to find innovative solutions to environmental challenges	£ 23,090	£ 10,420
Milton Combe Village Hall	Milton Combe Village Hall	Refurbishment of Kitchen,Electrical Installation & Disabled Toilet facilities	£ 21,251	£ 7,652
South Brent Village Hall	South Brent Village Hall - Audio/visual Developme	Audio/visual development project To enhance life experience for the people of South Brent and small	£ 29,837	£ 4,902
Brentor Village Hall	Brentor Village Hall Refurbishment Phase 1	The first phase of the redevelopment of the Hall	£ 178,550	£ 9,469
Hatherleigh Allotments	Hatherleigh Allotments	Allotments at Fishleigh Farm	£ 7,971	£ 3,950
Global Action Plan	Industrial Estate Renewable Energy Clusters	Working with Industrial Estates in the GDLEAF area re: renewable technology & reducing energy use	£ 23,952	£ 10,351
Ashburton Heritage Centre	Ashburton Heritage Centre	The provision of very wide ranging community activities for individuals and groups, schools, college	£ 15,196	£ 7,950
Tamar Valley AONB	Tamar Valley Mountain Bike Development Project	To develop the Tamar Valley as a nationally renowned destination for downhill mountain biking.	£ 109,500	£ 56,000
Bratton Clovelly School Room Charity	Bratton Clovelly School Room	Installation of PVs, insulation, secondary glazing and underfloor heating in this community facility	£ 28,590	£ 7,500
Chudleigh Knighton Village Hall Committee	Refurbishment of Chudleigh Knighton Village Hall	Refurbishment of the village hall	£ 127,380	£ 20,000

**Annex B GD LEAF Projects 2007 - 2013**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>	<b>LAG Cont.</b>
Totnes Development Trust	Totnes Healthy Futures	The project will use a small redundant site to feature raised beds for people with disabilities	£ 16,341	£ 7,341
Old Schoolroom, Monkokehampton	The Old School Room, Monkokehampton	To install a new kitchen and provide full insulation for this Monkokehampton community facility	£ 18,135	£ 9,602
Exbourne & Jacobstowe Community Association Ltd	Burrow	A showpiece community shop, café and Post Office which will provide a broad range of services	£ 311,856	£ 52,791
Bratton Clovelly Parish Hall Renewable Energy Proj	Bratton Clovelly Parish Hall RE Project	To install an Array of Solar PVs, etc	£ 24,958	£ 10,000
Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust	Dartmoor Pony Visitor/Education Centre	Building a visitor/education centre at Parke to promote the Dartmoor Pony	£ 146,500	£ 60,334
Hatherleigh Community Centre	Hatherleigh Enhancements - Raising the Bar (HERB)	Upgrade kitchen, install bar and additional resources to improve commercial usage	£ 20,006	£ 10,000
New Life Church	Refresh Community Cafe	Cafe for youth, mothers with young children, elderly etc with audio / IT facilities	£ 120,802	£ 20,000
Dartmoor Partnership Ltd	Active Dartmoor	Development of Dartmoor website as the source of all things active	£ 119,435	£ 70,286
Totnes and District Preservation Trust	Heath's Garden	Transform public landscape garden	£ 115,060	£ 10,630
Devon Renaissance	Tavistock Business Improvement District	Establishment of a business improvement district (BID) covering Tavistock town centre	£ 43,829	£ 23,650
Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World	Fibres and Fashion Sustainable Approaches	To promote and link up local farmers, fibre producers and designer/makers	£ 36,950	£ 14,500
Delimann	Online Deli	To have funds to create the best possible commercial e-commerce site	£ 12,450	£ 6,225
West Devon Business Information Point	BIST Phase II	Phase II of a pilot project to assist businesses to grow	£ 161,930	£ 94,840
William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust	Ecoblock Surface	To provide a permanent, load bearing surface suitable for a variety of uses	£ 20,068	£ 10,500
Westcountry Spice Co	Sauce and Sachet Development	To develop and promote new products for export	£ 16,470	£ 6,120
Redhouse Gifts	Redhouse Gifts Shop Improvement	To revamp website, purchase racking system and equipment to improve product promotion	£ 3,655	£ 1,828
Bionova Recycling Limited	Reflex	New equipment and installation of new technology, product testing etc.	£ 42,624	£ 20,000
The Globe Inn	Globe Weddings	Improve business by offering a complete civil wedding package	£ 11,812	£ 5,906
Higher Fingle Farm	Le Confit Anglais	Proposing to market a new range of products, make an additional room and purchase equipment etc.	£ 2,305	£ 1,399
Rockin' Beads LTd	Creation of E-commerce & web based tutorials	Commission an e-commerce website to allow on-line sales plus for business growth new systems needed	£ 16,195	£ 9,758
Calder Originals	Communications Development - Calder	To raise profile through web development of high value violin & guitar cases	£ 10,000	£ 5,000
Continental Crumbs	Moving into New Business Unit - Continental Crumbs	To enable growth need to move into a business unit/equipment for new unit	£ 12,527	£ 6,773
Farmhouse Kitchen, Tavistock Ltd	FKT LTD Expansion	Purchase of essential equipment for running of business and future business	£ 3,201	£ 1,600
Down to Earth	Down to Earth	The purchase of new equipment to help with increased sales	£ 17,950	£ 6,675
Loweraish Caravan Site	Loweraish Renewable	To make site 100% renewable - installation of new equipment	£ 46,279	£ 20,000
Anahat Energy Limited	Anahat Energy Wind Power Development Software	To invest in the development and support of Anahat Energy's capacity to deliver wind energy projects	£ 3,960	£ 1,969
Harford Bunkhouse	Harford Bunkhouse	To renovate the farm buildings to convert to bunkhouses	£ 59,800	£ 19,988

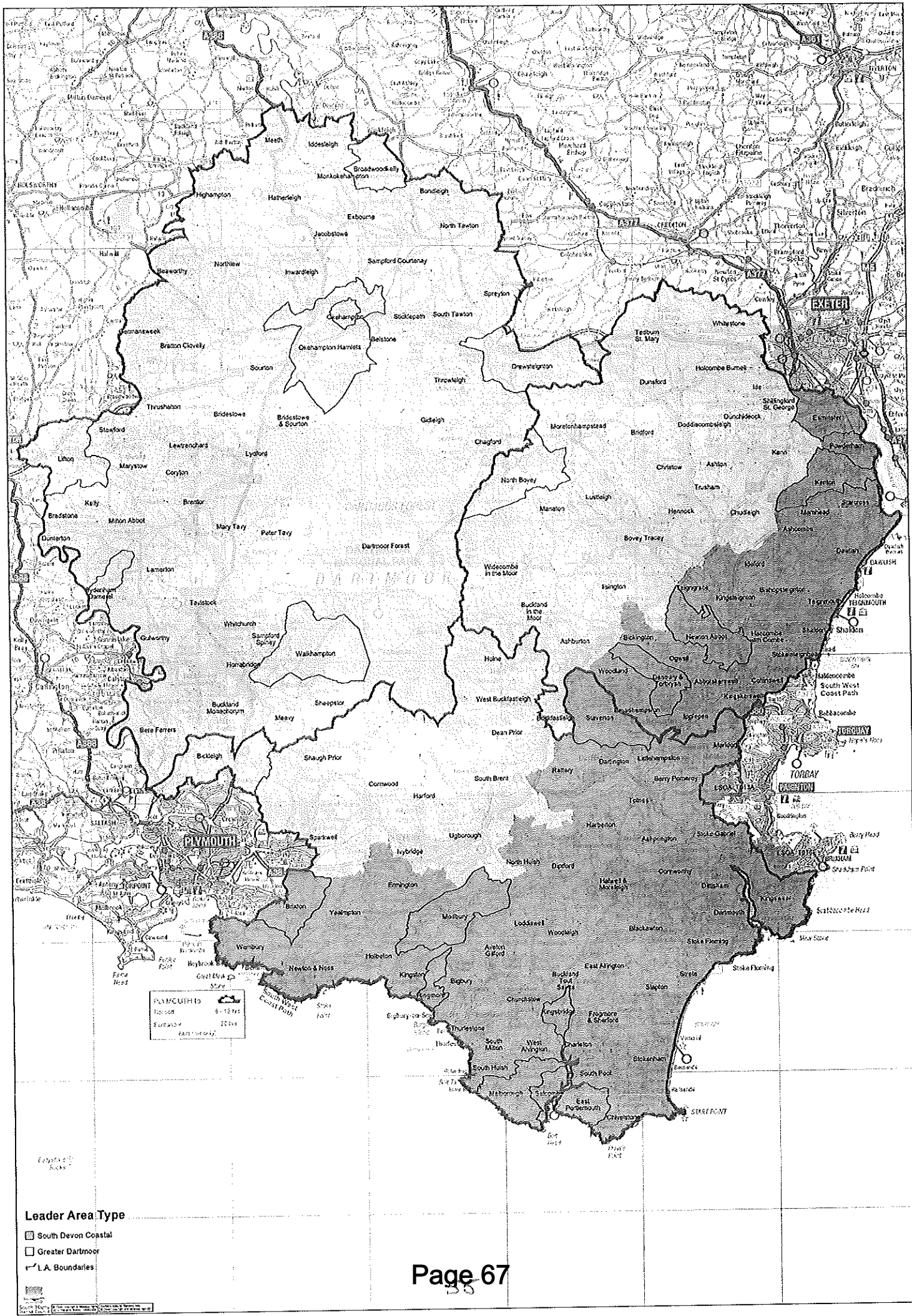
**Annex B GD LEAF Projects 2007 - 2013**

Applicant	Project Title	Description	Project Cost	LAG Cont.
Totnes Town Council	Totnes Civic Hall Energy Saving	To improve this community facility by making the building more energy efficient, more comfortable an	£ 10,510	£ 4,414
The Robey Trust	Education, Training & Community Mtg Room (Robey)	Create a neat, clean well-furnished meeting room	£ 19,728	£ 9,864
Hogs Bottom Garden Delights	Hog's Bottom Premises Expansion	To support expansion of the business	£ 10,682	£ 5,339
Little Bidlake Farm	Bidlake Wedding Gazebo	To expand the current business	£ 13,867	£ 6,910
Throwleigh Parochial Church Council	Provision of Public Toilet Facilities at Throwlei	Project is redevelopment of disused boiler house attached to church to provide toilet facilities	£ 19,308	£ 8,608
Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World	Wool Directory	To establish a greatly improved connection between wool producers, users and services in the GD area	£ 12,209	£ 5,100
Bickleigh Parish Council	Woolwell Centre Community Access Project	Aims to improve access to Community Centre & surrounding landscape	£ 85,000	£ 20,000
Dartington Village Hall Association	Rewiring of Village Hall etc - Dartington	The aim is to bring the hall up to the 21st Century standards whilst retaining its charm	£ 7,789	£ 4,174
Ashburton Heritage Centre	St Lawrence Chapel & Heritage Centre - Landscape	To create an attractive & welcoming flexible space for various community activities	£ 21,430	£ 9,000
Okehampton Community Recreation Association (OCRA)	Okehampton Sports & Activity Hub	To build a Community Sports & Activity Hub Pavilion that delivers much needed services	£ 590,934	£ 19,999
West Devon Business Information Point	Okehampton Supply Chain Research	Researching the impact of job losses on the Supply chain within Okehampton	£ 3,250	£ 2,750
Okehampton BID Association	Okehampton Business Improvement District	Planning a Business Improvement District proposal for voting in Okehampton	£ 51,000	£ 21,000
Westward Pathfinder	Okehampton Pathfinder to Work	Work Club based at the Ockment Centre to help people to find work	£ 7,240	£ 6,240
Anahat Energy Limited	Energy Efficiency Development	Providing affordable air ventilation reduction & thermal imaging services advice	£ 11,096	£ 5,000
Forest Fuels	Forest Fuels ESCo Business	We believe that there is a short window of opportunity to sign-up with customers and take advantage	£ 16,000	£ 5,000
Moretonhampstead Development Trust	Green Hill Arts - Ensuring Impact	To grow the business thru marketing & promotion activities launching a new product - an Arts Centre	£ 23,000	£ 5,000
The Okey Cokey	The Okey Cokey Children's Indoor Soft Play Centre	To buy catering/kitchen equipment to produce home cooked, healthy local food	£ 6,265	£ 3,133
West Devon Citizens Advice Bureau	Money Works Ahead	Extending the CAB service to include financial advice to families in economic difficulty	£ 6,651	£ 4,348
Dartmoor on Horseback	Dartmoor Equestrian Tourism	Developing new markets for horse riding holidays on Dartmoor	£ 11,000	£ 5,000
Bigbury Mint	Purchase of Conveyor Furnace (Bigbury Mint)	Purchase a new conveyor furnace to improve the manufacture of medals	£ 36,538	£ 9,297
Teignbridge District Council	Start Up Growth Support	To address the gap for one to one business support for start up businesses in GD area	£ 9,025	£ 5,589
SUSTRANS	The Dartmoor Way Cycle Route	To create circular routes around the moor for walking and cycling	£ 45,968	£ 23,998
Buckfast Organic Bakery	Clive's Pies - Gluten Free Twin Pack	To expand the business and recruit a Sales Marketing Manager to spearhead the new sales initiative	£ 40,310	£ 20,000
Devon Renaissance	Assistance for Businesses and Communities	Project development and capacity building for small grants funds		£ 61,448
Ruby Country Partnership Ltd	Ride the Ruby Country	Multi use trails	£ 209,706	£ 41,249
Aune Head Arts (AHA)	Wordquest	Literary trail map for Devon		£ 7,500
DR	Young Business Growth	Project will provide multi faceted support, funding, mentoring & business advice to young people	£ 108,389	£ 49,063
Stone Lane Gardens	Improved access at Stone Lane Gardens	Funding towards costs of improving access to arboretum which has National Collection status	£ 3,511	£ 1,756




**Annex B GD LEAF Projects 2007 - 2013**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Project Cost</b>	<b>LAG Cont.</b>
The Tavistock Enterprise Hub	Tavistock Enterprise Hub	To provide affordable and accessible workspace to small businesses and community groups in Tavistock town centre.	£ 29,421	£ 12,605
Soil Association	School Farmer' Market Pilot	Funding to pilot two Schools Farmers Market in the GF LEAF area	£ 7,559	£ 3,779
BIP	Okehampton Work Hub	To covert an office at Okehampton Business Centre into a work hub	£ 7,533	£ 3,767
The Provenance Company	Twool	Twool is twine produced from Whiteface Dartmoor Sheep - funding towards costs of developing new website and marketing activity	£ 14,577	£ 7,098
Creative Laser Cutting Ltd	Creative Laser Cutting	Creative Laser Cutting will produce products that are made using a Laser Cutter. This will include product design, creation and sale of products made via Laser Cutting machinery	£ 6,300	£ 3,150
Dartmoor Partnership Ltd	Dartmoor Activity Holidays	Together with stakeholder groups this project will launch and deliver a focussed and dedicated sales promotion programme that will generate revenues for local activity providers	£ 20,000	£ 10,000
North Dartmoor Search & Rescue Team	N.D.S.R Purchase of Specialist Equipment & Expansion	Purchase of search and rescue equipment and training new members	£ 18,590	£ 9,295
Okehampton Community & Recreation Association	OCRA Phase II	Fitting out of the Hub Pavilion in order to achieve the objectives of the building and to make it sustainable	£ 42,000	£ 20,000
West Devon BC	Start Up Growth Support II	To address the gap for one to one business support for start up businesses and existing businesses wishing to diversify in the Greater Dartmoor area.	£ 9,175	£ 7,201
Buckfast Organic Bakery Ltd	Clive's Pies - Export and Holland and Barrett (UK) Frozen Packaging	To commission packaging designs, which will be fully European market compliant, fund the initial print run and purchase the necessary box gluing machine.	£ 49,865	£ 22,244
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>£ 4,869,114</b>	<b>£ 1,635,500</b>





**Leader Area Type**

-  South Devon Coastal
-  Greater Dartmoor
-  L.A. Boundaries

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<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>DATE</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2014
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Scheme; Section 106 funds contribution</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Head of Planning, Economy and Community</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>Tavistock Wards</b>

**Summary of report:** Following the Stage 2 approval of the Tavistock THI Scheme in September by the Heritage lottery Fund (HLF) it is now essential to secure the funding package to allow the scheme to start. This report identifies funds which are available through the Section 106 agreement with Marchfield Properties which may assist this scheme and proposals by the Tavistock Business Improvement District Company for the introduction of a pay-on-exit scheme for Bedford Car Park. It asks members to consider setting these funds aside for these public realm works in the town centre.

**Financial implications:**

Up to £70,000 has been agreed to be provided by Marchfield Properties Ltd as a contribution towards “Town Centre Improvements” prior to the occupation of the supermarket development in Plymouth Road, Tavistock, together with up to £15,000 for signage improvements in association with the “Townscape Heritage of Tavistock”.

The Borough Council will shortly be in receipt of these funds and therefore in a position to decide how they might be utilised.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that Members agree:

1. To set aside up to £40,000 from the “Town Centre Improvements” contribution under the Section 106 Agreement with Marchfield Properties Ltd as a contribution towards public realm works under the Tavistock THI Scheme and
2. To set aside a further £15,000 from the “Townscape Heritage Contribution” towards signage improvements in Tavistock town centre relating to the townscape heritage.
3. That up to £30,000 be set aside as a contribution towards the pay-on-exit scheme for the Bedford Car Park in Tavistock but

4. In the event of the Pay-on-exit scheme for Bedford car park, not going ahead within the timescale of the current Tavistock Business Improvement District scheme, then the remaining £30,000 under the “Town Centre Improvements” be made available as a further funding contribution towards the Tavistock THI Scheme.

**Officer contact:**

Robert Plumb, Economic Development Officer at [rplumb@westdevon.gov.uk](mailto:rplumb@westdevon.gov.uk) or 01822 813620

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**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Borough Council endorsed and set aside the necessary match funding to support the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Scheme Stage 1 and 2 bids in October 2012 (RC 20) and February 2014 (CM74). Then in April 2014 this committee agreed to adopt the revised Tavistock Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plans (RC 45) and the Tavistock Public Realm Strategy (RC 46).
- 1.2 As part of the Stage 2 bid up to £50,000 was identified as being required to be drawn down from the Section 106 funds should such funds be made available.
- 1.3 In February 2014 Marchfield Properties Ltd entered into a Section 106 agreement with the Borough Council regarding the proposed supermarket development in Plymouth Road.
- 1.4 In this agreement up to £70,000 was set aside for “Town Centre Improvements” which included “... contributions towards the cost of public realm improvements within the town centre, which may include improvements to the Bedford car park on Canal Street.”
- 1.5 Meanwhile, the Tavistock Business Improvement District (BID) Company has been exploring, with Borough Council officers, the possibility of installing a pay-on-exit scheme for the Bedford Car Park.
- 1.6 A further £15,000 was set aside for “the Townscape Heritage Contribution” which was “...a contribution towards town centre signage improvements forming part of the initiative of the Council to inform the public about the townscape heritage of Tavistock”
- 1.7 On the commencement of development and before the occupation of the supermarket these sums become payable to the Borough Council. The current understanding is that development is due to commence shortly.
- 1.8 The following report therefore outlines options for the use of these funds and recommends how they might be allocated.

## **2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 2.1 The Tavistock Townscape Heritage Partnership (TTHP) has guided the THI bidding process throughout the current round. The Partnership includes both officer and member representation from all the three local authorities, including the Borough Council.
- 2.2 In approving the Stage 2 bid the HLF asked for further clarification on how the remaining match funding would be secured and therefore members are asked to consider whether or not they can support an allocation of at least £50,000 to help support the implementation of the THI scheme.
- 2.3. As indicated above the “Town Centre Improvements” element of the Section 106 funds could be used for this purpose, however it is understood that the Tavistock BID Company would like to draw down up to £30,000 to support their proposal for a pay-on-exit scheme for the Bedford car park. Furthermore, improvements to the car park are expressly referred to in the agreement with Marchfield Properties.
- 2.4 The likelihood of such a scheme going ahead is still in doubt, due to the overall capital costs and ongoing revenue implications for the Borough Council. In addition the BID Company has only 12 months more to run under the current arrangements. It is therefore possible that the pay-on-exit scheme will not go ahead as currently proposed.
- 2.5 Hence, it is suggested that the £30,000 contribution towards the pay-on-exit scheme is set aside for the time being but should this prove unviable, then the full £70,000 could be utilised to support the THI scheme (as outlined in the Stage 2 bid).
- 2.6 In addition, up to £15,000 is available for Townscape Heritage contributions. This is intended to be used for signage improvements and could support both the THI scheme and the signage improvements being carried out by Devon County Council and the BID Company.
- 2.7 All these works will require specific schemes to be drawn up and where appropriate may need to be referred back to the Borough Council and others for detailed approval. All such schemes will be required to conform to the approved Management Plan and Public Realm Strategy.

## **3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence to do anything an individual can do subject to any statutory restrictions.
- 3.2 In January 2014 Marchfield Properties Ltd entered into a Section 106 agreement with the Borough Council regarding the proposed supermarket development in Plymouth Road.

- 3.3 In this agreement up to £70,000 was set aside for “Town Centre Improvements” which included “... contributions towards the cost of public realm improvements within the town centre, which may include improvements to the Bedford car park on Canal Street.”
- 3.4 A further £15,000 was set aside for “the Townscape Heritage Contribution” which was “...a contribution towards town centre signage improvements forming part of the initiative of the Council to inform the public about the townscape heritage of Tavistock”
- 3.5 These sums become payable on the commencement of development and before the occupation of the supermarket.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Up to £70,000 has been agreed to be provided by Marchfield Properties Ltd as a contribution towards “Town Centre Improvements” prior to the occupation of the supermarket development in Plymouth Road, Tavistock, together with up to £15,000 for signage improvements in association with the “Townscape Heritage of Tavistock”.
- 4.2 The Borough Council will hold these funds and is in a position to decide how they are utilised. They may not be used for any other purpose and will not impact on other financial matters.

#### **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The risk management implications are as set out in Annex A below

#### **6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

<b>Corporate priorities engaged:</b>	Environment, Economy and Community Life
<b>Statutory powers:</b>	Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011
<b>Considerations of equality and human rights:</b>	N/A
<b>Biodiversity considerations:</b>	These are considered as part of the management plan review
<b>Sustainability considerations:</b>	These are considered as part of the management plan review and the separate sustainability analysis completed by Cornwall Council
<b>Crime and disorder implications:</b>	N/A
<b>Background papers:</b>	Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal review; February 2014 Tavistock Conservation Area Management Plan review; February 2014 Report to Full Council February 2014 Tavistock THI Scheme Report to Resources Committee on the Review of

	<p>The Tavistock CA Character Appraisal and Management Plan April 2014 Report to Resources Committee on the Tavistock Public Realm Strategy April 2014</p>
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## STRATEGIC RISK ASSESSMENT

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status			Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel		
1	Reputational risk	Not spending available funds appropriately/Opportunity to support regeneration initiatives in Tavistock  S106 monies not forthcoming	3	2	6 ↔	Schemes are in the pipeline, as outlined in the report, to spend these monies and have been approved in principle by the Borough Council.  Resources are now available within the THI scheme to bring these proposals to fruition  The S106 monies are not needed until year 3 of the project. Therefore the Tavistock Town Heritage Partnership would have time to build in a contingency plan to make up the shortfall. WDBC is not responsible for finding additional monies should the S106 not be forthcoming but as part of the Tavistock Town Heritage Partnership would assist in finding alternative funds.	Head of PEC
2	Legal risk	Failure to meet legal obligations set out in the Section 106 agreement	3	2	6 ↔	Should these schemes prove unviable officers will work with partners to bring forward alternative proposals	Head of PEC
3	Financial risk	Ongoing cost of maintaining infrastructure	3	2	6 ↔	Investment in improvement works should reduce maintenance costs. Officers will need to work with the other local authorities to ensure ongoing maintenance costs are addressed.	Head of PEC

Risk Score 20-25: very high; 12-19: high; 8-12; medium; <8: low

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔



## Annex B: 3 Year Forecasts

<b>2012 Forecast</b>		<b>13/14</b> <b>£</b>	<b>14/15</b> <b>£</b>	<b>15/16</b> <b>£</b>	<b>16/17</b> <b>£</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	Trail rents	32,425	35,075	36,092	36,092
	Monitoring/management	11,715	11,875	11,875	11,875
	Marketing	4,200	6,000	6,000	6,000
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>48,340</b>	<b>52,950</b>	<b>53,967</b>	<b>53,967</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	AONB support grant	(5,000)	(5,000)	(0)	(0)
	Lease and rental income	(13,500)	(14,500)	(16,750)	(17,750)
	Car park income	(13,500)	(21,500)	(33,500)	(34,000)
	Education and events	(140)	(750)	(1,000)	(1,500)
	Publications	(200)	(200)	(300)	(400)
	Memberships	(1,500)	(2,000)	(2,500)	(3,000)
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(33,340)</b>	<b>(43,950)</b>	<b>(54,050)</b>	<b>(56,650)</b>
<b>Shortfall/surplus</b>		<b>15,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>(83)</b>	<b>(2,683)</b>

<b>2014 Forecast</b>		<b>13/14</b> <b>Actual</b>	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	Trail rents	40,310	37,350	39,250	40,250
	Monitoring/management	11,950	11,950	11,950	11,950
	Repairs and maintenance	0	5,000	5,000	5,000
	Marketing	10,880	9,000	6,000	6,000
	Publications commissions	230	230	230	230
	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>63,370</b>	<b>63,300</b>	<b>61,450</b>	<b>62,450</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	AONB/DCC grants	(12,000)	(5,500)	(2,500)	0
	Lease and rental income	(9,580)	(12,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)
	Car park income	(9,540)	(13,230)	(13,300)	(14,300)
	Education and events	0	(500)	(750)	(1,000)
	Publications	(800)	(800)	(800)	(800)
	Memberships	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(31,920)</b>	<b>(32,030)</b>	<b>(29,350)</b>	<b>(28,100)</b>
	Budget contribution	(15,000)	(9,000)	(9,000)	(9,000)
<b>Shortfall</b>		<b>16,450</b>	<b>22,270</b>	<b>23,100</b>	<b>25,350</b>
<b>Shortfall without additional actions</b>			<b>25,770</b>	<b>28,350</b>	<b>31,350</b>

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## Annex C

### TVMHP income generation and cost saving options

Options	Cost	Saving/Income	Department Lead	Comment
A more effective layout of the car parking to maximise income at busy times (week-ends over the summer months).	£3,500 One off cost	£1,500-£2,000 pa Increased car park income	NERTS ES	This is an invest to save argument. Whilst there would be an initial capital outlay it is envisaged costs would be recouped in future years.
Developing an “Active Tamar” bid to the forthcoming GD LEAF programme, which would a) provide a range of family trails and activities, b) add a single track mountain bike course and c) provide more underground exploration and wildlife experiences in and around the trail centre.	£6,000 pa Staff time	£2,500-£3,000 Increased car park income	PEC	The £6,000 cost would met by reappportioning existing marketing funds. This would represent good value for money as it will extend the offering, encouraging more visitors, which in turn will increase car parking revenues, whilst drawing down at least 50% of the costs from the GD LEAF.
Work with the World Heritage Site “Experience Heritage” project and the AONB to increase the use of the training room and other educational activities in and around the Trails Centre.	-	£500-£1,000 Increased conference room income	AONB	Part of the service level agreement on the trail centre allows up to 100 days up to £25 per half day to be used by AONB/West Devon. Increased usage will generate additional income to the TVMHP budget.
<b>TOTAL SAVING/COST SAVING IF ALL RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED</b>				<b>£6,000</b>

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<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2014</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Application to designate Neighbourhood Plan Areas.</b>
<b>Report of</b>	<b>Strategic Planning Officer/Affordable Housing Officer</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>Milton Ford, Bridestowe and Buckland Monachorum</b>

**Summary of report:**

The following areas have submitted an application to the Council to designate a plan area in respect of preparing a neighbourhood plan.

- Milton Abbot Grouped and Kelly Parishes
- Bridestowe & Sourton Parishes
- Buckland Monachorum Parish

The applications have been advertised for six weeks during which comments were invited about whether the plan area is appropriate.

The Council has not received any objections to the designation of the plan areas which have been proposed.

**Financial implications:**

The financial impact of the assessment should be cost neutral due to the Council being able to claim back any associated costs as detailed in section 4 and below.

Where applications for plan areas are successful, the Council and individual parishes can apply for financial support from the Government to recognise the costs in assisting in the preparation of neighbourhood plans. More details are provided in Section 4.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that:

1. Members approve the designation of the Plan Areas for the purposes of preparing the Neighbourhood Plans; and.
2. Members support any future applications for financial support from central government to help cover the costs of the Local Authority associated with preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

**Officer contact:**

Alex Rehaag – Strategy & Enabling Officer  
01822 813722

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**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Localism Act and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) both came into effect in 2012. These encourage and support communities to prepare plans for their area.
- 1.2 The Council has adopted a Community-Led Planning Protocol which provides clear information on the procedures that will guide the neighbourhood planning process following the designation of a plan area at the local level.
- 1.3 The first step in the neighbourhood planning process is to designate the area which the plan will cover. This requires communities to make an application to the Borough Council. The application is subject to a six week consultation period where those who live, work or carry out business in the area are invited to comment on whether the proposed area is appropriate. There are other opportunities in the neighbourhood planning process to put forward ideas about what the plan should contain.
- 1.4 This Committee report considers three applications to designate plan areas in the following areas for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan: Buckland Monachorum; Bridestowe and Sourton; and Milton Abbot Grouped Parish with the parish of Kelly. They are each to be assessed against the following five criteria set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Protocol:

Criteria
1. The applicant is an appropriate body with responsibility for leading the plan process (i.e. a town or parish council)
2. Terms of Reference for the group have been prepared and signed by all members of the group
3. The proposed area is suitable and reasons have been adequately demonstrated if it does not follow the boundaries of existing parishes
4. The area does not overlap any other designated neighbourhood area
5. The plan area does not prejudice other neighbourhood areas coming forward in the future

- 1.5 The applications for Buckland Monachorum and Bridestowe and Sourton will also be considered by Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) as the areas fall within both West Devon Borough Council and DNPA planning authority's areas. These reports will be decided through delegated authority at DNPA.

## 2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

### Milton Abbot Grouped Parish and Kelly Plan Area

- 2.1 Following discussions between the Parish Councils it was felt that it was appropriate to prepare a neighbourhood plan for the area which included all areas within the Milton Abbot Grouped Parish and Kelly Parish. This designation will allow the areas included within the application to respond to the needs and aspirations of the wider community. As such, this application has been made to formalise the designation as required by the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
- 2.2 The application was submitted to the Borough Council in August 2014 to designate the area that they intend their neighbourhood plan to cover. This area covers the extent of the parish boundary and can be viewed in **Appendix A**.
- 2.3 The application is accompanied by a Terms of Reference for the group that will be responsible for leading the process. This group has been endorsed by the relevant parish councils. The Terms of Reference for the group can also be viewed in **Appendix A**.
- 2.4 The application has been displayed throughout the area through the use of pink site notices and the opportunity to comment on the proposed designation has been publicised on the Parish Council website ([www.chillaton.net](http://www.chillaton.net)), and on the Borough Council's website ([www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk)).
- 2.5 The Council received six representations during the consultation period from Mid Devon District Council, Network Rail, the Highways Agency and Natural England. None of these bodies object to the proposed plan area.
- 2.6 As such, it is considered that the plan area is appropriate and can be designated for the purposes of preparing a neighbourhood plan for the Milton Abbot Grouped and Kelly Parish areas.

### Buckland Monachorum Parish

- 2.7 The Parish Council felt that it was appropriate to prepare a neighbourhood plan for the area covering the whole of the parish. This would allow the 5 areas within the parish which are included within the application to respond to the needs and aspirations of the community. As such, this application has been made to formalise the designation as required by the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
- 2.8 Buckland Monachorum Parish lies within the West Devon and Dartmoor National Park Authorities planning area and as such the application has also been made to DNPA. This will be considered by delegated authority now the consultation period has closed.

- 2.9 The application was submitted to the Borough Council in August 2014 to designate the area that they intend their neighbourhood plan to cover. This area covers the extent of the parish boundary and can be viewed in **Appendix B**.
- 2.10 The application is accompanied by a Terms of Reference for the group that will be responsible for leading the process. This group has been endorsed by the relevant parish councils. The Terms of Reference for the group can also be viewed in **Appendix B**.
- 2.11 The application has been displayed throughout Yelverton, Milton Coombe, Crapstone, Buckland Monachorum and Clearbrook areas through the use of pink site notices and the opportunity to comment on the proposed designation has been publicised on the Parish Council website as well as at various events within the parish and on the Borough Council's website ([www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk)).
- 2.12 The Council received seven representations during the consultation period from NHS England, Network Rail, Natural England, English Heritage, Tavistock Town Council (as an adjoining area), Police Liaison and The Highways Agency. None of these bodies object to the proposed plan area.
- 2.14 As such, it is considered that the plan area is appropriate and can be designated for the purposes of preparing a neighbourhood plan for the Buckland Monachorum Parish.

### **Bridestowe & Sourton Parishes**

- 2.15 Bridestowe & Sourton Parish Councils have applied to designate a neighbourhood planning area. The Parish Councils felt that this was the most appropriate way to respond to the needs and aspirations of their communities (previously the Parish Councils had looked at preparing a community plan). As such, this application has been made to formalise the designation as required by the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.
- 2.16 Sourton Parish sits within the West Devon and Dartmoor National Park Authorities planning area, therefore the application has also been made to DNPA. This will be considered by delegated authority now the consultation period has closed.
- 2.17 The application was submitted to the Borough Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority in August 2014 to designate the area that they intend their neighbourhood plan to cover. This area covers the extent of the parish boundary and can be viewed in **Appendix C**.
- 2.18 The application is accompanied by a Terms of Reference for the group that will be responsible for leading the process. This group has been endorsed by the relevant parish councils. The Terms of Reference for the group can also be viewed in **Appendix C**.



- 2.19 The application has been displayed throughout the areas of Bridestowe and Sourton through the use of pink site notices and the opportunity to comment on the proposed designation has been publicised on the Parish Council's websites and on the Borough Council's website ([www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk)).
- 2.20 The Council received five representations during the consultation period from Natural England, Network Rail, South West Water, Police Liaison and The Highways Agency. None of these bodies object to the proposed plan area.
- 2.21 As such, it is considered that the plan area is appropriate and can be designated for the purposes of preparing a neighbourhood plan for the Bridestowe and Sourton Parishes.

### **3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Localism Act, National Planning Policy Framework and West Devon's adopted Core Strategy all make provision for communities to prepare plans that influence planning and development in their area.
- 3.2 This application is also made in accordance with the Council's adopted Community-Led Planning Protocol.
- 3.3 The "*Town and Country Planning, England, Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012*" set out the procedures which govern the processes of neighbourhood planning.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The financial impact of the assessment should be cost neutral due to the Council being able to claim back any associated costs as detailed below.
- 4.2 Once neighbourhood plan areas are designated, the Council can apply for financial support from the Government to recognise the authority's costs in assisting in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.3 For member's information, the government has set out a programme of financial support for neighbourhood planning for 2014/15 for local authorities. The authority is able to claim for financial support for up to 20 designations during the financial year 2014/15. There are various payment stages to reflect the work involved. These are as follows:
- The first payment of £5,000 will be made following designation of a neighbourhood plan area (payment cap of 20 designations per year).
  - A second payment of £5,000 will be made when the local planning authority publicises the neighbourhood plan prior to examination.
  - The third payment of £20,000 will be made on successful completion of the examination and any other further steps that may be needed for the plan to come into legal force, including referendum.
- 4.4 The government has also made a separate funding stream available for communities to be able to access direct support or grant arrangements for up to

£7,000 to help them produce their plan. The Parish Councils have each applied for initial funding from Locality to assist with the preparation of their plan. It is anticipated that further funding will be made available to cover relevant costs in the future. The current funding available to these communities has to be spent by December 31<sup>st</sup> 2014.

- 4.5 Whilst these are the current arrangements at the time this report was prepared, the arrangements may change in the future. The Committee will be advised at future meetings of any changes.

## 5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Risk Management implications are shown at the end of this report in the Strategic Risks Template.

## 6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

<b>Corporate priorities engaged:</b>	All
<b>Statutory powers:</b>	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Localism Act 2011 Town and Country Planning, England Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
<b>Considerations of equality and human rights:</b>	This report seeks to ensure that communities are enabled to prepare community-led plans for their areas and that the process undertaken is fair, transparent and inclusive for everyone.
<b>Biodiversity considerations:</b>	There are no direct biodiversity implications arising from the report.
<b>Sustainability considerations:</b>	The designation will enable the community to prepare a plan to secure a sustainable future for the area.
<b>Crime and disorder implications:</b>	There are no proposals contained within this report which have direct crime and disorder implications to consider.
<b>Background papers:</b>	Community-Led Planning Protocol
<b>Appendices attached:</b>	Appendix A Milton Abbot Grouped and Kelly Parishes Neighbourhood Plan – Application form, Map and Terms of Reference Appendix B Buckland Monachorum application form, map and terms of reference, Appendix C Neighbourhood plan, map and terms of reference for Bridestowe and Sourton.

## STRATEGIC RISKS TEMPLATE

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status				Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
1	Lack of plan to guide local development initiatives in the proposed designated areas.	If the plan area is not designated then the communities within the proposed designated areas cannot progress work on its plan. Without a plan in place, decisions relating to development in the Bere Peninsula will defer to national and Borough-level planning policy.	2	2	4	↑	Approve the designation of the plan area	Strategic Planning
Page 85	Designated areas do not include parts of the parish within the Dartmoor National Park	Two of the designated areas include parts of the parish which are within the Dartmoor National Park and which are governed by a separate planning authority. This means that the Neighbourhood Plans will need to be consistent with two different planning frameworks and appropriate administrative arrangements will need to be made. However, not including the whole area could affect the ability of the Neighbourhood Plan to effectively address planning issues which affect the area as a whole.	3	3	6	↑	Approve the designation of the plan area	Strategic Planning

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ⇄

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## APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council and Kelly Parish Council have applied to West Devon Borough Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for their area. This plan will consider how and where future development could take place in the Parish. Before any work on preparing a plan can begin, the area that the plan will cover needs to be decided.

We are asking for your thoughts on whether the proposed plan area is appropriate. If the area is approved, there will be an opportunity for you to get involved in what you would like to see in the plan.

**Only comments relating to the designation of the plan area can be considered at this time.**

The area within the red line is proposed:

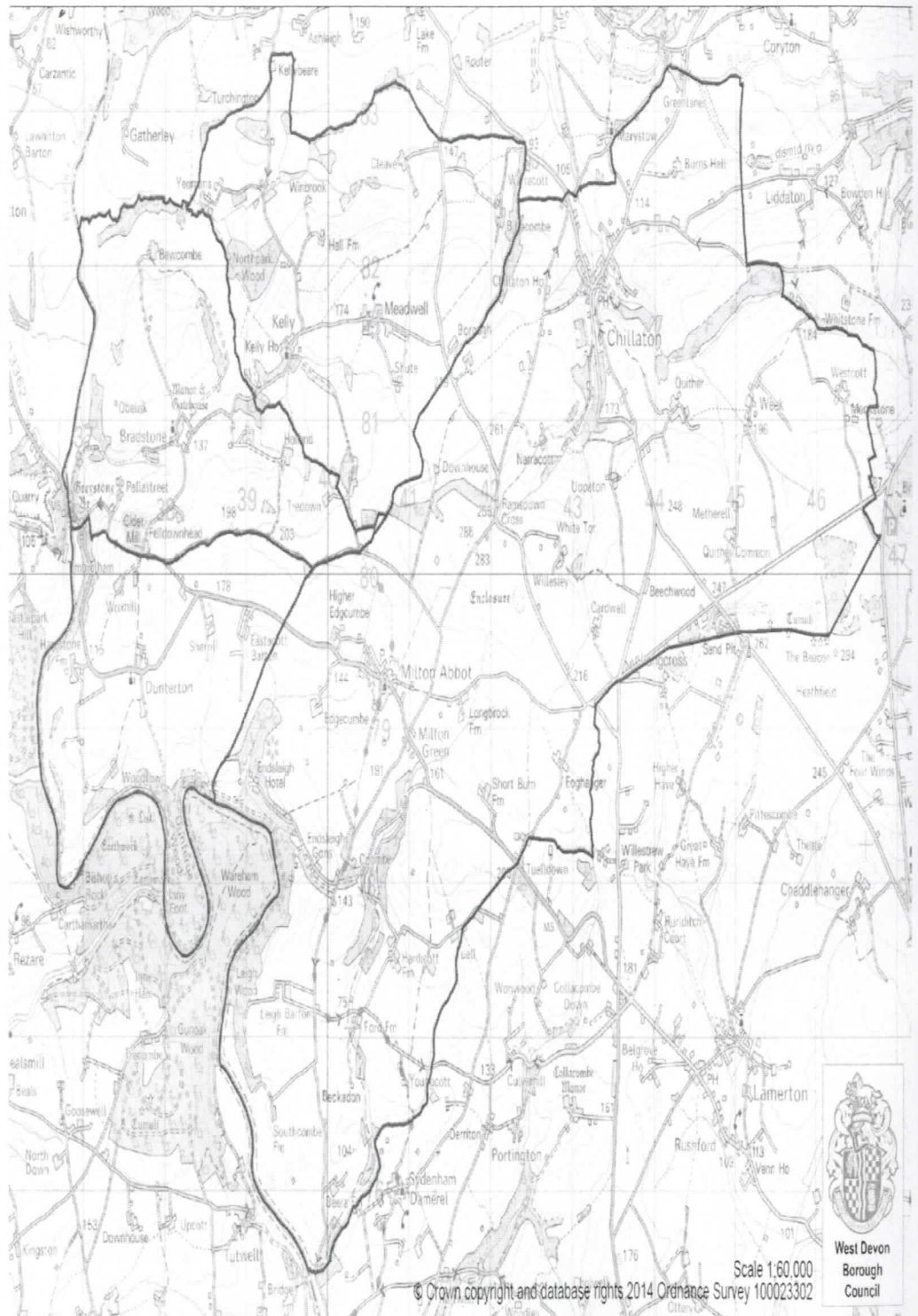
To view the plan area application please visit [www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk) or contact the Council's Strategic Planning Team for more information.

The deadline for receiving comments on the proposed plan area is **29<sup>th</sup> September 2014**.

Any comments should be sent to:

Strategic Planning, West Devon Borough Council,  
Kilworthy Park, Tavistock,  
PL19 0BZ or email

## Milton Abbot, Kelly, Bradstone & Dunterton Parishes



[strategic.planning@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.planning@swdevon.gov.uk)



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

## Application Form for Designation of Plan Area

<b>Name of Applicant</b> <i>(this must be a Parish or Town Council)</i>	MILTON ABBOT GROUPED PARISH COUNCIL
<b>Contact Details</b> <i>Please supply contact details of project lead</i>	Name: H. J. ASBRIDGE Address: LAUREL COTTAGE CHILLATON LIFTON PL16 0HS Email: howardasbridge@btinternet.com Telephone: 01822 860378
<b>Name of proposed plan area</b>	MILTON ABBOT, CHILLATON AND KELLY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
<b>Map of proposed plan area</b>	<i>Please supply a separate map showing the boundaries of the proposed plan area</i>
<b>Statement confirming why the proposed plan area is appropriate</b>	<i>Please explain why the proposed plan area is an appropriate designation</i> Attached
<b>Type of plan proposed</b>	<i>Please circle</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> Neighbourhood Development Plan <input type="radio"/> Neighbourhood Development Order <input type="radio"/> Community Right to Build Order <input type="radio"/> Community Plan <input type="radio"/> Plan-It Lite
<b>Group Terms of Reference</b>	<i>Please supply a separate sheet detailing the Group's Terms of Reference</i>

Please return to the Strategic Planning Team, West Devon Borough Council, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, PL19 9JL



## **MACK Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group – Terms of Reference**

### **Name of Group**

Milton Abbot, Chillaton and Kelly [MACK] Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

### **Purpose of the Group**

To prepare a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for the MACK area, for consideration by Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council

### **Objectives of the Group**

To act as a focus for community involvement in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the MACK area.

To engage with all relevant stakeholders in the area.

To identify future housing and employment needs.

To consider any other factors that contribute to the maintenance of successful communities in the MACK area.

To have regard to the special character of the MACK area and identify any appropriate measures needed to protect and enhance it.

In the light of the above, to produce a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for the MACK area that:

1. Accords with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and West Devon Borough Council's Local Plan policies.
2. Identifies suitable sites for any necessary development.
3. Supports the sustainable development of local communities in the MACK area and enhances the quality of life that they enjoy.

### **Membership and Governance**

#### Membership:

1. The Steering Group will consist of three parish councillors, one of whom will be appointed by the Parish Council to chair its meetings, and up to six local residents.
2. There will be a Vice-Chair, who will be appointed by the Steering Group and may be a local resident.
3. The Ward Member may attend meetings of the Steering Group, in an advisory capacity, should he or she so wish.

#### Role of Members:

1. To contribute to a collective vision of how the Neighbourhood Plan should address individual issues.
2. As agreed by the Steering Group, to carry out individual assignments and report back.

3. No individual member has the ability to act on behalf of the Steering Group, unless specifically authorised to do so.

Replacement/additional Members:

1. The Steering Group may co-opt additional members who are not parish councillors, should they deem it appropriate at any time.
2. The Parish Council may change its representation on the Steering Group at any time providing the total number of parish councillors does not exceed three.

Declarations of Interest:

1. Every member of the Steering Group will be required to make it known if they have a personal or pecuniary interest in any matter under discussion and any such notifications will be recorded.
2. To avoid members with specialist or other knowledge of an issue being prevented from contributing to a debate thereon, a declaration of an interest of any kind will not restrict the right of the declarer to speak.
3. A personal interest will be taken to be an interest over and above that of any local resident in a community that would generally be affected by the issue concerned.
4. Members declaring an interest will not take part in any formal voting on the matter in question.
5. As the Steering Group is not a local government body, any particular restrictions or obligations that would normally apply to parish councillors attending a parish council meeting will not apply.

Voting Arrangements:

1. The quorum of the Steering Group is four members.
2. Any member has the right to ask for a formal vote on any matter being determined by the Steering Group.
3. Voting is by a show of hands, with the Chair having a casting vote.
4. In the absence of a request for a formal vote, decisions will be taken by a clear consensus of those present, such decisions to be summarised by the Chair before moving to the next item of business.

Decisions to be referred to the Parish Council:

The Steering Group is authorised to take whatever action it deems necessary, within its terms of reference and budget, to prepare a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for consideration by the Parish Council. However, to avoid any potential conflict between the Parish Council and the Steering Group at the end of the process, progress reports will be made to every meeting of the Parish Council.

Conflict resolution:

1. If, on receiving a progress report, the Parish Council considers that it would be unable to support a particular element of the Steering Group's proposals, if it remained in the final draft Plan, it shall so inform the Steering Group and indicate its preferred approach. If that cannot be accommodated by the Steering Group, it then has the ability to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council in order to resolve the issue. If agreement cannot then be reached, the Parish Council may then direct the Steering Group as to how it should proceed.



2. The Parish Council is the agency responsible for the delivery of a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for the whole of the plan area, including the Parish of Kelly. As such, it will arrange for the final draft plan to be considered by a Kelly Parish meeting, if that is requested. Should there be a difference of opinion between the two agencies regarding a matter that specifically affects Kelly Parish, then the views of Kelly Parish will prevail, unless in the opinion of the Strategic Planning Officer providing support to the Plan process, that view would prejudice the ability of West Devon Borough Council to approve the draft Plan as a whole.

#### Reporting and Feedback:

1. Progress reports to every meeting of the Parish Council.
2. Steering Group reports and Minutes to be placed on a dedicated website.
3. Facebook page to encourage feedback.
4. Public meetings either focussing on specific issues or reporting on progress to date and obtaining feedback.
5. Identification of 'off-line' residents and provision of either printed alternatives or 'web buddies' to share on-line access.

#### Resources and Finance:

1. Locality will be requested to fund input from an external consultant during the initial phase of the development of the Plan, plus venue hire, publicity and other expenses incurred before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.
2. If the Steering Group determines that it needs additional finance, then a further application would be made if new funds were available in 2015. If not, then a request would be made to the Parish Council, but it is not anticipated there would be a need for any significant external paid input in 2015.

#### Monitoring and Review:

Progress in implementing the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be the subject of an annual review by the Parish Council.

## APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

Buckland Monachorum Parish Council has applied to West Devon Borough Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for their area. This plan will consider how and where future development could take place in the Parish. Before any work on preparing a plan can start, the area that the plan will cover needs to be decided.

We are asking for your thoughts on whether the proposed plan area is appropriate. If the area is approved, there will be an opportunity for you to get involved in what you would like to see in the plan.

**Only comments relating to the designation of the plan area can be considered at this time.**

The following area is proposed:

Buckland Monachorum Parish with Dartmoor National Park



To view the plan area application please visit [www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk) or contact the Council's Strategic Planning Team for more information.

The deadline for receiving comments on the proposed plan area is **15<sup>th</sup> September 2014**.

Any comments should be sent to:

Strategic Planning, West Devon Borough Council, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, PL19 0BZ or email [strategic.planning@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.planning@swdevon.gov.uk)

**Or**

Jo Rumble  
Communities Officer  
Dartmoor National Park Authority  
Parke, Haytor Road  
Newton Abbot  
Devon, TQ13 9JQ  
[jrumble@dartmoor.gov.uk](mailto:jrumble@dartmoor.gov.uk)

**Please note:** Any comments made about the proposed plan area cannot be treated as confidential and may be made publicly available at both the Council and Dartmoor National Park Authorities offices and on the websites. Your personal information will be held securely by West Devon Borough Council for the above

## Buckland Monachorum Neighbourhood Plan

### Draft Terms of Reference

#### Purpose of the Group

The purpose of the Buckland Monachorum Parish Neighbourhood Plan Planning Group (BMPNPPG) is to co-ordinate the production of the Parish of Buckland Monachorum Neighbourhood Plan (PBMNP).

#### Objectives of the Group

The Group has agreed to produce a plan which, inter alia, covers:

The Parish's residential housing needs and how these should be met.

How the needs of the local economy within the Parish will be met

How the Parish's environment will be enhanced and, where necessary, protected

How local services will be optimised for those living in the Parish.

#### Membership & Governance

Membership: The Parish comprises 5 villages: Buckland Monachorum, Crapstone, Clearbrook, Milton Combe and Yelverton. Part of the Parish lies within Dartmoor National Park, the remainder within the Borough of West Devon. There will be 6 groups; one from each village and a central Co-ordinating Group (BMPNPPG). Membership of the 'village' groups will be drawn from residents of the respective village and each will be supported by a Parish Councillor. The Chair of each 'village' group will also be a member of the Co-ordinating Group and other members of the co-ordinating group will be representatives from:

WDBC  
DNP  
BMPC  
AONB

together with specialist input as and when required. Within each group there will be individuals who attend to each of the 4 elements of the plan (as indicated above). Each 'village' group will elect a Chairperson and a Secretary and draw up terms of reference compatible with those of the Co-ordinating Group. The Co-ordinating Group has a Chairman and Secretary.

Governance: The groups will adopt the governance used by the Parish Council and the Parish Clerk will be available to all groups to advise on matters of governance.



## **Reporting & Feedback**

Minutes of each of the group's meetings will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Co-ordinating Group and reports from each village group will be made, by the village's representative, to the Co-ordinating group each time it meets. These representatives will provide feedback to the village groups of any decisions taken by the Co-ordinating Group. In time, a web based information system will be developed but until then, minutes of the groups will be posted on the Parish website.

## **Resources & Finance**

The Parish Council has set aside funds for the Plan but other funding routes will be explored through WDBC (and elsewhere)

## **Monitoring & Review**

Regular Reviews with the principal stakeholders (WDBC & DNP) will be scheduled to ensure the production of the Plan is co-ordinated with those being drawn up by the other planning authorities.

## **Statement on why the proposed plan area is appropriate**

A public meeting, to which every resident within the Parish was invited, outlined the merits of producing a Neighbourhood Plan covering the area encompassing the current Parish boundary and received broad agreement. A second meeting, to which all those who offered to help in the Plan's production were invited, discussed options and also concluded that the current Parish boundary would be an appropriate one to select.

As one of the Plan's principal objectives is to consider development, and the Parish Council also has this responsibility (exercised through its planning committee) it was logical to choose the same boundary of operation.

We considered the potential conflict between WDBC and DNP (given that the Parish falls within both Authority's jurisdiction) but have been assured (by both) that they will positively co-operate with us (and each other) in the production of the Plan.

Finally, as each of the five villages is represented by Parish Councillors on the Parish Council, we considered that the complex task of co-ordinating the unique needs of five villages is well understood by the current Council and setting up a different boundary would cause unnecessary confusion.

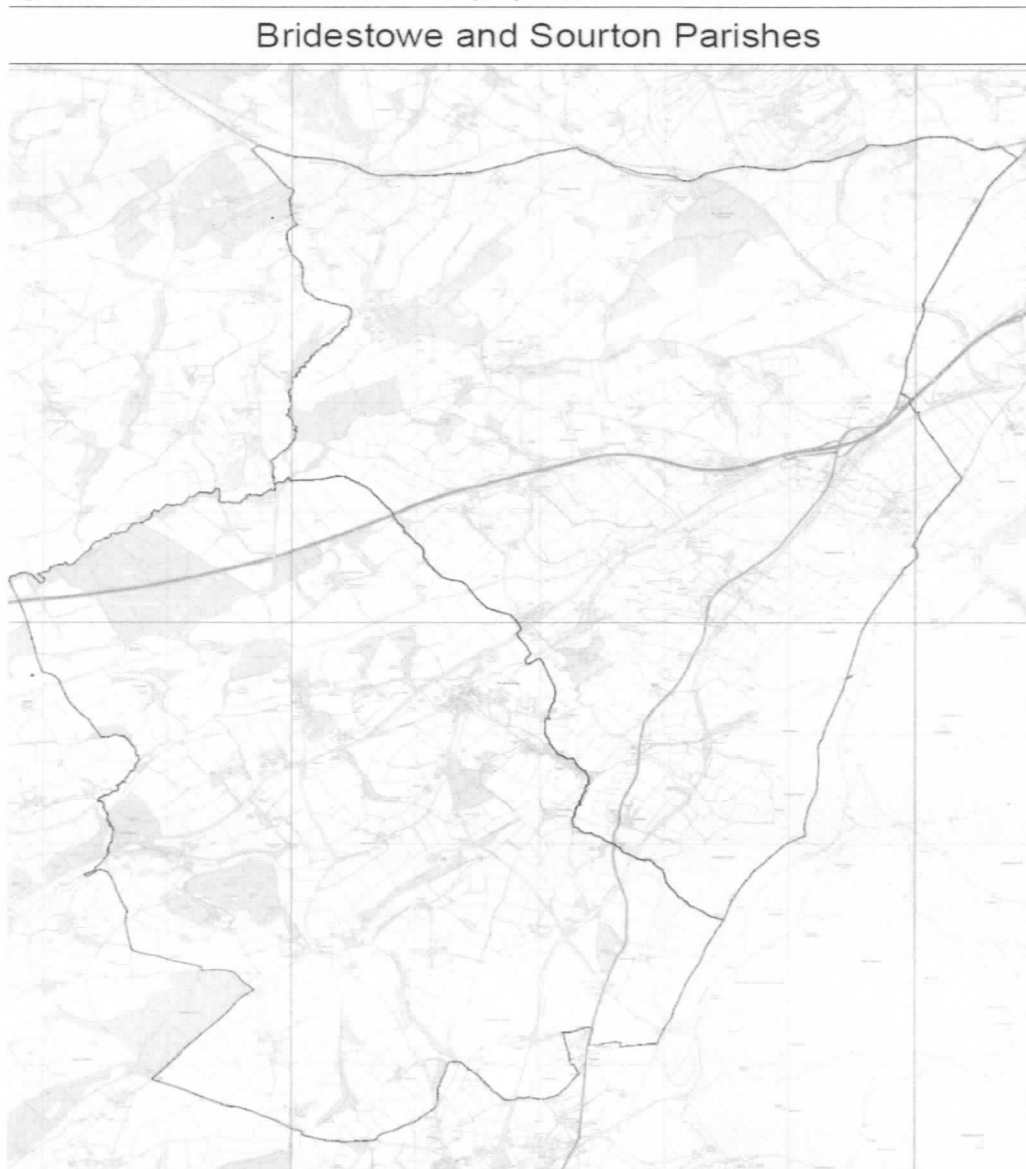
## APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

Bridestowe and Sourton Parish Council's have applied to West Devon Borough Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for their areas. This plan will consider how and where future development could take place in the two Parish's. Before any work on preparing the plan can start, the area that the plan will cover needs to be decided.

We are asking for your thoughts on whether the proposed plan area is appropriate. If the area is approved, there will be an opportunity for you to get involved in what you would like to see in the plan.

**Only comments relating to the designation of the plan area can be considered at this time.**

The following area included within the red line is proposed:



To view the plan area application please visit [www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk) or contact the Council's Strategic Planning Team for more information.

The deadline for receiving comments is Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

Any comments should be sent to:

Strategic Planning, West Devon Borough Council, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, PL19 0BZ or email [strategic.planning@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.planning@swdevon.gov.uk)

Or

Jo Rumble, Communities Officer, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Parke, Haytor Road, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 9JQ or email [jrumble@dartmoor.gov.uk](mailto:jrumble@dartmoor.gov.uk)



# Group Terms of Reference



West Devon  
Borough  
Council

## Name of Group

Bridestowe & Sourton Neighbourhood Plan Group.

## Purpose of the Group - What is the main aim of the Group?

The prime functions of the group is to oversee the drawing up of a Neighbourhood Plan for Sourton and Bridestowe parishes and ensure high levels of community engagement that in turn maximises the potential for support at a local referendum.

## Objectives of the Group - What is the Group hoping to achieve? – Key Outputs

- \* To formulate a questionnaire and carry out research and consultations by means of a survey across the two parishes. Questionnaire is almost completed.
- \* Develop a timetable and strategy (project plan) for undertaking the Neighbourhood Plan.
- \* Co-ordinate community consultation activities.
- \* Gather and collate evidence about the geographical area covered by the plan.
- \* Use evidence collected including consultations, to prioritise and develop the plan.
- \* Oversee the drafting and finalising of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

## Membership and Governance

Who are the Members of the Group?

What are the roles and responsibilities of individual Members?

- \* Group membership is open to residents of the parishes of Bridestowe & Sourton. Active membership of the group includes parishioners and members of the two parish councils.
- \* Members of the group cannot take fees or an honorarium or share in the assets of the group.
- \* Because both Bridestowe & Sourton are covered by two planning authorities, WDBC and DNP, advice will be sought from both bodies.
- \* The group will adopt governance as used by the two parish councils. Both parish clerks will advise the group on matters of governance.

What arrangements are in place for bringing in replacement and/or additional Members?

- \* Residents of the two parishes are welcome to join the group. Membership remains open and the community are actively encouraged to participate in all activities.

How will declaration of interests be managed?

- \* Whilst members of the group may represent a particular group in the community, they recognise that their role is to move the plan forward in a way that benefits the whole community.
- \* Members of the group will recognise and declare any potential conflicts of interest.

If voting is required, what voting arrangements are in place?

At group meetings there is a quorum of six. Voting is by a simple majority/Chair has casting vote.

Which decisions will be referred to the parish/town council?

Approval of draft plan prior to publication and submission to the LPA.

What procedures are in place for dealing with conflict resolution?

Any contentious issues to be resolved by public consultation. Final decisions to be made by Bridestowe and Sourton Parish Councils.

## Reporting and Feedback

How will the Group share information with the community?

- \* The group has established information sharing practices whilst drawing up a parish plan questionnaire.
- \* The monthly Bridestowe/Sourton newsletter informs residents of progress of the plan and advertises meetings.
- \* Procedures for presentations of the parish plan at local public events are well established.
- \* Publicity/minutes for the group will be published on the Bridestowe web site.
- \* A mailing list of those residents interested has been initiated.

How will minutes of meetings and feedback from events/consultations be recorded and made available?

- \* Minutes of all meetings are circulated to the parish clerks of both Bridestowe & Sourton.
- \* The Neighbourhood Plan is an item on all Bridestowe & Sourton PC meeting agendas.
- \* The minutes of the PC meetings are posted on noticeboards and on the Bridestowe web site.

## Resources and Finance

How will the project be funded?

- \* Finance for the Parish Plan has already been received from both parish councils, Dartmoor National Park, WDBC and DCC. This is transferable to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- \* Further financial support is likely to be required to meet the cost of consultants and professional drafting fees. Application will be made for government funds that are available to support Neighbourhood planning.
- \* Currently Bridestowe Parish Council holds the group's funds and any transactions by the group are approved at group meetings.

Are any additional resources required?

- \* It is not possible to say for certain at this early stage. However volunteer expertise can be readily drawn upon.

## Monitoring and review

How will the plan be monitored?

- \* The project plan will include provision for regular periodic review with all stakeholders, to be scheduled as the plan progresses.
- \* Both Parish Councils currently review progress of the Parish Plan at bi-monthly meetings. This is continuing as the Neighbourhood Plan evolves.



# Agenda Item 3

At a Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **TUESDAY** the 7<sup>th</sup> day of **OCTOBER 2014** at **2.00pm**

**Present:** Cllr P R Sanders – Chairman  
Cllr R E Baldwin – Vice-Chairman  
Cllr S C Bailey Cllr W G Cann OBE  
Cllr T J Hill Cllr A F Leech  
Cllr J R McInnes Cllr T G Pearce  
Cllr P J Ridgers

**Substitute:** Cllr A Clish Green for Cllr C R Musgrave

**In attendance:** Cllr M J R Benson Cllr L J G Hockridge  
Cllr D M Horn

Executive Director (Communities)  
Head of Finance and Audit  
Customer Services Manager  
Economic Development Officer  
Strategic Planning Officer  
Member Services Manager

## **\*RC 9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C R Musgrave for whom Cllr A Clish Green substituted, and Cllr E H Sherrell.

## **\*RC 10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be discussed and the following were made:

Cllr Baldwin declared a personal interest in Item 10: 'Application to Designate Neighbourhood Plan Areas' (Minute RC 17 refers) by virtue of being the local Ward Member for Milton Ford. He remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote.

Cllr Bailey declared a personal interest in Item 9: 'Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Scheme: Section 106 Funds Contribution' (Minute RC 16 refers) by virtue of being a Director of the Tavistock BID. She remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote.

Cllr Pearce declared a personal interest in Item 8: 'Rural Development Programme for England – Local Action 2015-2020' (Minute RC 15 refers) by virtue of being a member of the management committee of the Greater Dartmoor LEAF. He remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and vote.

**\*RC 11**

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 15 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record.

**RC 12**

**REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2015/16 TO 2018/19**

The Chairman introduced a report that provided a forecast of the budget situation for the year 2015/16 and a forecast for the four years to 2018/19. The forecast was intended to provide a framework within which decisions could be made regarding the future service provision and council tax levels whilst building an approach that guaranteed West Devon Borough Council's longer term viability.

During discussion the following points were made:

- One Member queried why some staff had not taken up the positions offered to them. In response, the Chairman advised that one of the Executive Director positions had been offered to a member of staff who had subsequently decided not to accept the position for personal reasons. A number of discussions had been held with South Hams District Council on how to proceed and a further meeting would be held next week. In response to a further query as to whether additional costs would be incurred the Chairman advised that if an advertisement were placed, then there would be an additional cost, as indeed there would be if iESE was involved in the recruitment process;
- A Member queried whether there had been an impact on projected savings as a result of the number of staff who had already left the organisation and the consequent cost in terms of redundancies. The Chairman responded that it was always recognised that redundancy costs would be difficult to predict in advance but that it was still expected that projected savings would be made within three years;
- The Head of Finance and Audit updated Members on the Council Tax Support Grant and explained how changes to the benefit scheme affected the council tax base;
- A number of Members stressed the importance of innovative ways of generating income and how ideas could be forwarded to the Working Groups at both Councils;
- In discussing the level of council tax increase, Members would give a minded to view at this meeting on the understanding that a final decision would not be made until the New Year.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to consider the following 'minded to' views in order to guide the 2015/16 budget process:

- (i) The level of council tax increase should not be above 1.9%;  
The use of New Homes Bonus to support the revenue budget be agreed (final amount to be agreed as part of the budget process);

The amount of Council Tax Support Grant to be passed on to Parish and Town Councils should be reduced by the same amount that the Borough Council's Government Grant is reduced by (currently predicted to be 15.37%); and  
Other budget savings and income generation to be looked for and considered;

- (ii) The Council's policy should remain as recommending a minimum level of unearmarked revenue reserves of £750,000.

### **RC 13 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION**

The Chairman presented a report of the Customer Service Manager that considered the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16 by 31 January 2015 and requested a recommendation to Council.

Members were happy to support the proposal but asked that Members be notified of any changes that were made. The Leader confirmed that any significant changes would be the subject of a further report to the Resources Committee.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED**:

1. To agree to continue with the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2015/16; and
2. That delegated authority be given to the head of Finance and Audit, in consultation with the Leader, to make amendments to the policy document to take account of any further changes in law, government guidance or policy that require urgent amendment.

### **\*RC 14 WRITE OFF REPORT**

The Chairman presented a report that outlined how the Council was responsible for the collection of Sundry Debts including housing benefits overpayments, Council Tax and national Non-Domestic Rates and informed Members of the debt written off for these revenue streams. Debts up to the value of £5,000 being written off by the Head of Finance and Audit, under delegated authority. Permission was sought from the Committee to write off individual debts with a value of more than £5,000. The report covered the period 1 April 2014 to 20 June 2014.

Members raised concerns at the level of overpayments that had been written off. The Customer Services Manager explained how the overpayments could arise. Following further discussion, it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to receive a report that gave more detailed information in respect of overpayments.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) In accordance with Financial Regulations, the Head of Finance and Audit had authorised the write-off of individual West Devon Borough Council debts totalling £43,045.56 as detailed in Table 1 and 2 of the presented report be noted; and
- (ii) Authority to write off individual debts in excess of £5,000 as detailed in Table 3 of the report be granted.

**\*RC 15 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND – LOCAL ACTION 2015-2020**

The Chairman presented a report that sought to put in place arrangements that will enable effective delivery of approx. £2.2million of external funds covering West Devon and parts of South Hams and Teignbridge for the period 2015-2020 under the Community Led Rural Development Programme for England. This community led programme was known as the Greater Dartmoor Local Enterprise Action Fund (LEAF).

A Member noted that particular businesses had benefited from the previous programme but the Economic Development Officer was able to confirm that the appropriate checks were in place. It was also noted that the new Programme focused on the growth agenda which would deliver economic growth in rural areas through job creation, business growth and improved productivity.

It was then **RESOLVED** that Members agree an annual contribution of £16,400 a year for six years, totalling £62,400 towards the costs of programme management and administration and project development from unearmarked reserves.

**\*RC 16 TAVISTOCK TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE (THI) SCHEME; SECTION 106 FUNDS CONTRIBUTION**

The Chairman presented a report that, following the Stage 2 approval of the Tavistock THI Scheme in September by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), outlined how it was now essential to secure the funding package to allow the scheme to start. The report identified funds that were available through the Section 106 agreement with Marchfield Properties which may assist this scheme and proposals by the Tavistock Business Improvement District Company for the introduction of a pay-on-exit scheme for Bedford Car Park, the funds to be set aside for public realm works in the town centre.

Members discussed the merits of a pay-on-exit car park that retailers felt would enable visitors to enjoy their stay in Tavistock without rushing back to their cars before their ticket expired. However, there was a significant cost to having a barrier for a pay-on-exit car park, and a member of staff would be required in case the barrier jammed. An alternative proposal was an all day ticket price, which should result in the same levels of income as the car park currently generated.

A Member noted that the existing barriers currently prevented people coming into and utilising the car park for evening events. The Committee agreed that this matter should be investigated.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

1. Up to £40,000 be set aside from the 'Town Centre Improvements' contribution under the Section 106 Agreement with Marchfield properties Ltd as a contribution towards public realm works under the Tavistock THI Scheme;
2. A further £15,000 be set aside from the 'Townscape Heritage Contribution' towards signage improvements in Tavistock town centre relating to the townscape heritage; and
- 3a. Up to £30,000 be set aside as a contribution towards the pay-on-exit scheme for the Bedford Car Park in Tavistock but that
- 3b. In the event of the Pay-on-exit scheme for Bedford car park not going ahead within the timescale of the current Tavistock Business Improvement District scheme, then the remaining £30,000 under the 'Town Centre Improvement' be made available as a further funding contribution towards the Tavistock THI Scheme.

**\*RC 17**

#### **APPLICATION TO DESIGNATE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREAS**

The Chairman introduced a report that outlined how the following parish councils had submitted an application to the Council to designate a plan area in respect of preparing a neighbourhood plan:

- Milton Abbot Grouped and Kelly Parishes
- Bridestowe and Sourton Parishes
- Buckland Monachorum Parish

The applications had been advertised for six weeks during which comments were invited about whether the plan areas were appropriate.

It was then **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Members approve the designation of the Plan Areas for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan; and,
- (ii) Members support any future applications for financial support from central government to help cover the costs of the Local Authority associated with preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

(The Meeting terminated at 3.20 pm)

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