



West Devon
Borough Council

A Plan for West Devon – Progress Update

Quarter 4 2021/22 (Jan – Mar 2022)



*A Plan for
West Devon*

A Plan for West Devon – Progress Update

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Introduction

Our Plan for West Devon was adopted in September 2021 and we continue to make significant progress against the actions which will contribute towards our longer term vision for the area.



This report set out our performance for the period January – March 2022 and I am very pleased that we've remained on track against the majority of actions. Our plan is ambitious and we live in times that require us to regularly adapt our services to meet external challenges (such as Covid 19).

During this period, we have also watched events unfold in Ukraine. We are already seeing far reaching impacts of this and locally we have been taking steps to step up a team to prepare our local support plan for Ukrainian guests being sponsored in West Devon.

In addition to recognising progress against our strategy, our efforts have been applauded on a national level with a Gold Award for our customer ICT improvement programme and with a Highly Commended award for our local land charges service – great work for the staff involved!

Looking ahead, we will now be focusing on year 2 of our delivery plan and opportunities coming forward for the potential of a Devon Devolution Deal with Government

Cllr Neil Jory

Cllr Neil Jory

Leader West Devon Borough Council

During this reporting period we have:-



Received a Gold Award for our online customer improvement programme and were highly commended for our local land charges service

Provided grants to 32 community led schemes supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents across the borough



Been successful in securing government funding towards a new Changing Places Facility at Made-Well in Hatherleigh

Set a balanced budget for the coming year, ensuring we can continue to provide responsive services



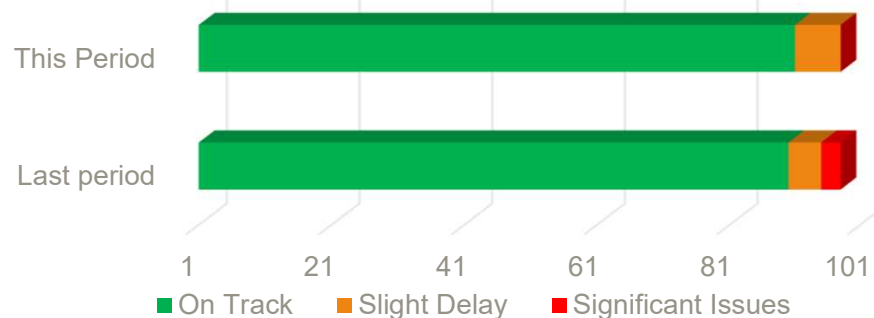
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Section 1 – Performance on a page

Status of specific actions in A Plan for West Devon



There are a total of 98 actions to be delivered within the 2021/22 delivery plan. Good progress has been made with the majority on track to deliver as planned.

Spend against approved strategy programme 2021/22

Agreed Strategy Budget 2021/22	£235,500
Spend to Date	£158,525
Forecast to year end	£158,525
Forecast Variance	(£76,975)

Overall we are on track with delivering our priorities within the agreed budget for the year. There is an underspend primarily due to delays in on-boarding new employees and maximising government grants instead of using Council reserves.

Performance against Key Performance Indicators – number of KPI's by status



Risk Management Profile – Average Risk Score across Strategic Risks

Average Strategic Risk Score <u>last</u> Period	Average Strategic Risk Score <u>this</u> period
12	12.8

The average risk score for our strategic risk register has increased very slightly, largely due to an increased risk of Covid-19 impacting on our services



Section 2 – Performance against the Council’s Priorities







Delivering on our Plan for West Devon

This section of the report sets out the performance under each of the Council’s theme areas. The themes underpin our overall ambition for West Devon.

Each year for the next three years, we have set out a number of specific deliverables in our Thematic Delivery Plan.

The table to the right sets out how many of those are currently on track, how many are slightly off track and how many are at risk of not being delivered as planned.

More detail per theme can be seen on the following pages.

Overall Performance Against Actions				
Status		Total Actions Within Category	% of overall actions	Compared to previous Quarter
	This action is on track with good progress being made. There are no significant risks which require action and we are on track to deliver as planned	91	93%	
	There are some issues or risks which are requiring management but a plan is in place to bring back on track	7	7%	
	There is a significant risk that we cannot deliver this activity as planned. Regular monitoring and support from Lead Member and Senior Leadership Team is required	0	0	
	This activity is not yet due to start in the current year	0		NA/ First report
	Totals	98	100%	





Our communities and the voluntary sector have all continued to work together on supporting each other through the ongoing pandemic. While our teams continue to support this effort, I am pleased that we have continued to make good progress in delivering our plans for 2021/22 including:-

- Awarded all funding from the 68 Plymouth Road and Okehampton S106 funds to community schemes – majority of which will be actually spent in 2022/23
- Agreed to reinstate quarterly Parish Links Meetings to ensure we continue with communication between public bodies working within the area
- Continued to work on a plan for better public sector / Voluntary sector in the future – through our links with Team Devon.
- Developed an events forward plan to enable our participation in key events and also to ensure that we take steps to actively promote events



Cllr Terry Pearce

Lead Member for strengthening communities



Focus Area	Total Actions 2021/22	On Track	Slightly off track but plan in place	Risk that unable to deliver on time	Not yet due to commence
Empowering our communities to enhance their area	11	11			
Supporting the voluntary sector in responding to community needs	4	4			

Key Risks / Issues

- In the coming weeks we will be working hard to ensure we can respond to the needs of our communities that are welcoming Ukrainian refugees to the area. This will likely require a joined up approach with the voluntary sector to ensure we can meet their needs. Team Devon are already having discussions with the CVS around what this support may look like.

Focus for next Quarter

- Consider options for funding of key partners beyond the current funding arrangement – report scheduled for Hub Committee in June 2022
- Hold first of our relaunched Links meetings to continue our close working with Town and Parish Councils and ensure a unified approach to resolving local issues – early May 2022
- Launch our community events fund – April 2022



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Many of the actions within the wellbeing plan require us to work closely with partners such as Public Health, Citizens Advice, Devon County Council and others. It is pleasing that during this period we have continued to build effective working relationships across these groups with some of the key activities delivered in the past quarter being:-

- Awarded over £30,000 to 32 community led projects that are delivering projects to support the Health and Wellbeing of our residents
- Commenced discussions with Devon County Council on a co-ordinated approach to rural poverty
- Worked with Made-Well in Hatherleigh to secure government funding to deliver a new Changing Places facility to be delivered in the next 12-24 months
- Ensured continuing provision of leisure services within the borough through providing
- Adopted a new Playing Pitch Strategy for the borough



Cllr Tony Leech
Lead Member for enhancing community wellbeing



Focus Area	Total Actions 2021/22	 On Track	 Slightly off track but plan in place	 Risk that unable to deliver on time	 Not yet due to commence
Reducing Health Inequalities & rural poverty	3	2	1 (CW1.1)		
Leisure provision that meets residents needs	5	5			
Mental Health and Wellbeing	3	3			

Key Risks / Issues

- CW1.1 Rural Poverty Pilot is slightly behind track although good progress is being made with partners to scope a pilot. This action will be rolled forward for an agreed plan to be agreed in Q1 2022/23
- There is a real concern that as the cost of living impacts worsen and with the conflict in Europe, more of our residents will experience a worsening physical and mental health. Our 'Vulnerability Officer' continues to attend Health and Wellbeing alliance meetings to identify opportunities to join up support.

Focus for next Quarter

- Receive report on the mental health and wellbeing for young people delivered during the summer and work with partners to consider the plan for the coming financial year
- Work with the Community Mental Health Framework (CMHF) to assist design and implementation of services and ensure we understand how the Council services can fit
- Work with partners at Public Health to identify an appropriate location for a pilot rural poverty scheme



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During this period, Council formally declared a Housing Crisis within the Borough in recognition of the struggles to access suitable homes. In declaring a crisis, we have also worked quickly to scope out our high level response and begin to shape an action plan. We have also:

- Carried out a public consultation on our draft homelessness strategy 2022/2027
- Prepared draft tender documents for the construction of Spring Hill (homelessness accommodation)
- Taken steps to plan our support for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme – working alongside Team Devon for a joined up approach.
- Formulated our year 2 housing strategy (Better Homes, Better Lives) delivery plan for consideration by Members in April
- Presented evidence to a parliamentary inquiry which show why West Devon believe some unscrupulous landlords are exploiting the exempt accommodation benefits system.



Cllr Barry Ratcliffe
Lead Member
for improving
homes



Focus Area	Total Actions 2021/22	On Track	Slightly off track but plan in place	Risk that unable to deliver on time	Not yet due to commence
Housing for Place	3	3			
Housing for People	6	5	1 (IH1.5)		

Key Risks / Issues

- Having declared a Housing Crisis, it is important that our capacity meets our ambition. Our Head of Housing is currently considering the best way to structure the team to support this response and will set these proposals out in due course.
- Action IH1.5 is slightly off track in respect of Design and costing a package of support for HMO Management and promoting it to landlords. We will roll this action forward to 2022/23

Focus for next Quarter

- Adoption of our homelessness strategy for the next 5 years
- Support 'Homes for Ukraine' sponsors and families
- Further developing our intelligence to inform future policy and decision making
- Scope and schedule housing needs surveys for Princetown and North Tawton for 2022





The past quarter has continued to be challenging for many businesses within the Borough and shortly before Christmas Government announced additional grant schemes to support those hit hardest. That said, while taking steps to ensure we can efficiently deliver these grants to businesses, we've made good progress against our delivery plan including:-

- Concluded our programme of EU funded high street and visitor economy support measures which has seen an investment of around £80,000 in a wide range of schemes including promotion of West Devon as a whole and not just our high streets.
- Awarded £207,693 to local businesses and groups for projects that will make a positive impact on the economy in West Devon through our Community Recovery Fund
- Commissioned a survey of Okehampton businesses and, as a result, made a recommendation to Okehampton TC to create a BID
- Commenced discussions around 11 prospective Town Centre Travel Hubs, led by Dartmoor National Park, including Okehampton, Tavistock, Yelverton and Princetown



Focus Area	Total Actions 2021/22	On Track	Slightly off track but plan in place	Risk that unable to deliver on time	Not yet due to commence
Promote Destination West Devon	8	8			
Helping West Devon Towns and Businesses thrive	7	7			
Respond to opportunities to enhance the economy	2	2			

Key Risks / Issues

Two activities we're previously reported as 'Risk that unable to deliver on time' :-
 TE1.4 – Eco-Museum. This was subject to being awarded funding through the Community Renewal Fund. Plans have been revised and the team are now working towards re-submitting the bid to the next funding round – for which we are currently 'on-track'
 TE1.11 – West Devon Transport Hub. This was subject to being awarded funding through the Levelling up fund Tranche 1. Having been unsuccessful, the team have received constructive feedback and have revised plans to resubmit in the next funding window – for which we are currently 'on-track'

Focus for next Quarter

- Enhancing engagement with the farming community in respect of our Digital connectivity ambitions
- Progress preparatory work in respect of the Eco-Museum bid to Community Renewal Fund second round
- Commence work to submit a bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – anticipated to open for applications in June



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Good progress is being made on delivery of the specific actions within the year one delivery plan for Natural Environment (in addition to all of the actions within our specific Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan). During this period we have:-

- Launched a campaign encouraging uptake of our garden waste collection scheme
- Commenced a consultation (across the Joint Local Plan area) on climate change measures for all new developments
- Progressed plans for Land near Yelverton and Horrabridge which could be in line for natural woodland regeneration
- Promoted our £600,000 scheme to reduce home energy consumption in West Devon through awarding of Green Home Grants
- Advertised a post for dedicated resource to progress our plans around EV Fleet.



Cllr Lynn Daniel
Lead Member
for growing
our natural
environment



Focus Area	Total Actions 2021/22	On Track	Slightly off track but plan in place	Risk that unable to deliver on time	Not yet due to commence
Working towards net zero	4	3	1 (NE1.1)		
Making the best use of our incredible natural environment	6	6			

Key Risks / Issues

NE1.1 - Work progresses on the EV fleet replacement but a lack of existing EV charging infrastructure, limited range of some EV's and the large area covered by some vehicles represents a challenge in terms of ensuring that service delivery remains efficient with an EV fleet. The lead officer has also been required to support another key area of the Council and as such we are recruiting (via secondment) a replacement.

Focus for next Quarter

- Continue work in supporting nature mapping to support the development of Nature Recovery Strategies
- Appointment of officer to lead the delivery of the EV fleet replacement (NE1.1)



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During this quarter, we've spent much time considering how we can improve our Council Planning Service to better support the built environment in to the future. This has consisted of the Planning Advisory Service working with our officers to recommend and implement changes to our processes and already increasing our planning officer capacity by recruiting additional staff which will ultimately improve our customer experience.

- Conducted surveys of Okehampton businesses on their views of a Business Improvement District or Chamber
- Approved an increase in capacity within our Planning Team as part of our ongoing Planning Improvement Plan
- Developed a planning service charter setting out what you can expect when engaging with the planning team and also begun to take steps to simplify the process by recommending that we adopt a Local Validation list



Focus Area	Total Actions 2021/22	On Track	Slightly off track but plan in place	Risk that unable to deliver on time	Not yet due to commence
Celebrating our heritage and ensuring its protected	4	3	1 (BE1.1)		
Planning infrastructure for the future	4	4			

Key Risks / Issues

- BE1.1 – there have been delays with appointing a dedicated resource to support the review of Conservation Area Plans. We are now proposing to advertise and recruit in early 2022/23 – this action is therefore carried forward to the second year plan.
- Previously we reported BE1.8 (Ability to deliver on Okehampton Transport Hub) as Risk due to unsuccessful outcome of bid submission. There are however future funding rounds and we are pleased to have secured a meeting with Government to understand why our initial bid was not accepted. Plans have therefore been revised and we consider this brings it back on track

Focus for next Quarter

- Progress Milton Abbot, Chillaton and Kelly Neighbourhood Plan Referendums
- Recruitment of dedicated officer to support Conservation Area Appraisals







Over the past couple of years, how our customers access our services has changed (much of which was forced by Covid-19 restrictions closing our receptions). During the last quarter we have:-

- Carried out a public consultation seeking your views on our homelessness strategy
- Reviewed our customer service functions and develop a draft set of recommendations which Members and Officers will be working through in more detail in the coming weeks.
- Begun work to develop a framework for our future customer access strategy
- Recommended that we adopt a Planning Charter setting out clearly what our customers can expect when interacting with the Council
- Had our online accessibility recognised by winning a gold award for customer transformation at the iESE awards and being highly commended for providing an effective Land Charges Service – voted on by our customers



Cllr Ric Cheadle
Lead Member for delivering inclusive and accessible services



Focus Area	Total Actions 2021/22	 On Track	 Slightly off track but plan in place	 Risk that unable to deliver on time	 Not yet due to commence
Being a listening and accessible Council	10	9	1 (IA1.2)		

Key Risks / Issues

Action IA1.2 – Our work to develop a customer access strategy has been delayed and we therefore propose rolling this action forward in to Year 2 of the delivery plan – and for a customer access strategy to be adopted by June.

Focus for next Quarter

- Consider the outcome of the customer contact review and recommendations from that.
- Publish a public report on Council achievements during the year
- Scope, with the Lead member, a Residents Satisfaction Survey for roll out in Summer 2022



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Work has continued on delivering our ambitions for enabling our residents to do as much as possible online and to ensure that all of our staff are supported to deliver the best possible service to our residents. During this quarter we have:-

- Set a balanced budget for the Council for the year ahead – ensuring that we can continue to provide responsive services
- Continued work on testing a new planning online system
- Implemented our new 'one view of the customer' system enabling integration between phone and online transactions
- Following a review of our Revenues and Benefits service, commenced recruitment for a new Head of Service to drive forward our service improvement plans
- Worked collaboratively with other Devon Councils through 'Team Devon' to draft proposals to Government for greater powers to be devolved to us.



Cllr Chris Edmonds
Lead Member
for maximising
our resources

Focus Area	Total Actions 2021/22	On Track	Slightly off track but plan in place	Risk that unable to deliver on time	Not yet due to commence
Value for money of existing services	5	4	1 (R1.1)		
Finance fit for the future	13	12	1 (R1.6)		

Key Risks / Issues

- Action R1.1 - There have been delays to the go-live of our new planning portal and back office system. We have mitigated this by extending the current contract with our current provider by 12 months. This has been funded from the project contingency budget.
- Action R1.6 - We had anticipated that the Government would give Local Government a 3 year finance settlement however this has not been the case and so uncertainty remains about funding beyond next financial year.

Focus for next Quarter

- Seeking agreement from Council on the 2022/23 budget
- Finalising new KPI's for managing service performance for April 2022
- Subject to acceptance of proposals, commence dialogue with Government on a 'Devon Deal'



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Section 3 – Programme Spend

Ensuring that we make the best use of the funding available to us

Alongside the adoption of our Plan for West Devon, we have developed a Thematic Delivery Plan which includes resourcing requirements over and above our business as usual services. This section sets out the financial performance against the agreed Strategy budgets.

Theme	Agreed Budget 2021/22	Spend to Date	Forecast spend to year end	Notes
Communities	£0	£0	£0	
Community Wellbeing	£10,000	£11,102	£11,102	Mental Health Support for young people during August / Sept 2021 – awaiting impact report. Slight overspend but covered within existing budgets.
Homes	£30,000	£7,306	£7,306	Delays in recruiting officer however this is reserve funded and therefore can be carried forward with no impact on Council ‘bottom line’
Economy	£152,000	£116,617	£116,617	Currently forecasting an underspend due to utilising the increased funding received through the Governments Welcome Back Fund & delays in on-boarding staff resource.
Natural Environment	£27,500	£7,500	£7,500	Feasibility study (APSE) of renewable energy on Council land. £20,000 of this budget was unearmarked for specific purposes and can carry forward)
Built Environment	£0	£0	£0	
Inclusive Services	£0	£0	£0	
Resources	£16,000	£16,000	£16,000	Cost for implementation of new HR /Payroll system –work underway. Note that this is only the element of funding identified within the strategy – additional capital funding is secured within existing years budget.

While we’re forecasting an underspend against programme activities, this funding is in reserves and so there will be no impact on the Councils bottom line. This funding will remain allocated to deliver actions that are now carried forward to Year 2 of the delivery plan.



Section 4 – Key Service Performance

Ensuring that our services meet the needs of our residents and businesses



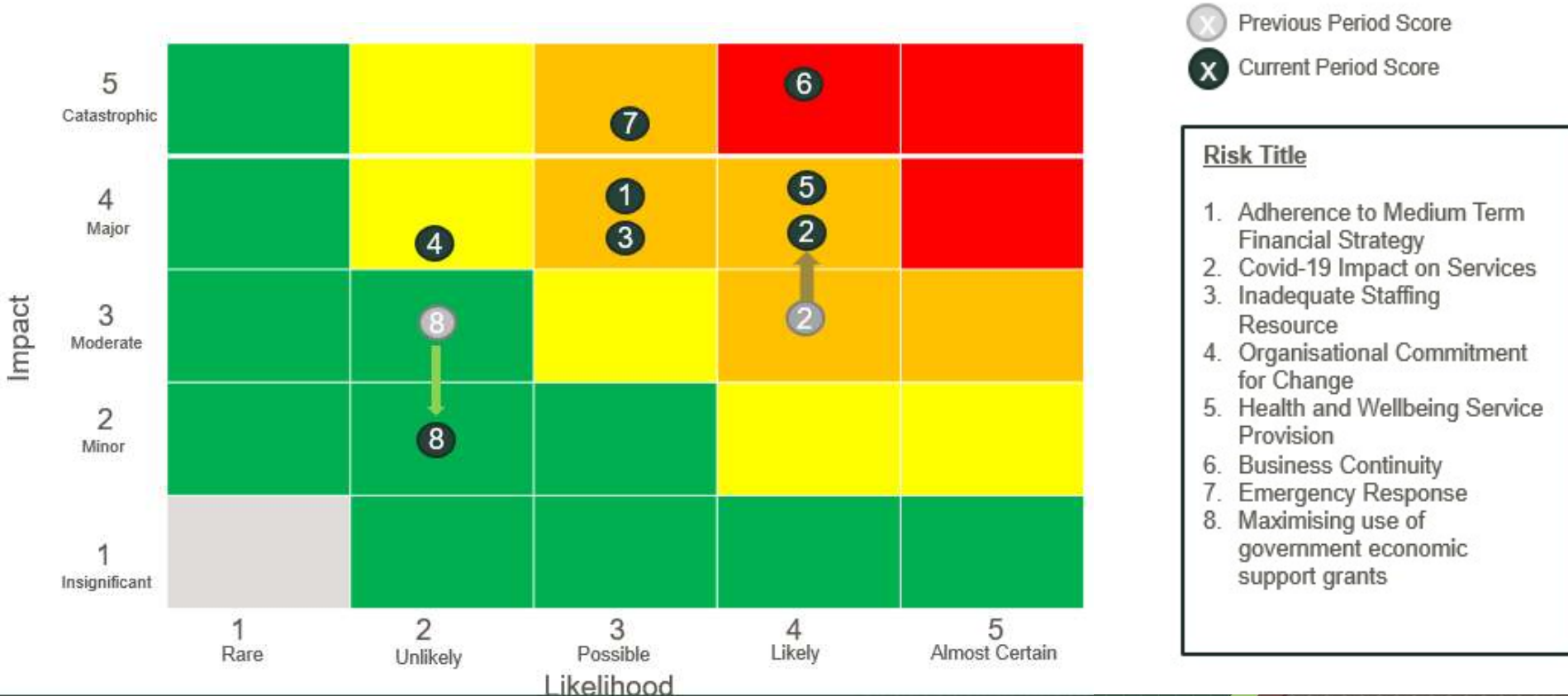
The following section sets out how we are performing in some of our key service areas. These measures are deemed to be important in supporting our delivery of key activities within A Plan for West Devon.

We are currently reviewing the KPI's with a revised set proposed to Hub Committee alongside this report.



Section 5 - Strategic Risks March 2022

The following section sets out an overview of the current strategic risks and on the following pages we provide detail for those that are within the 'Red' scoring. Each Council service area has their own risk register and where a risk reaches a level that it can no longer be managed by that service area alone, it escalates to the Strategic Risk Register.



Risk Title: (6) Business Continuity 

What is the risk? The risk is that we do not develop and keep maintained robust processes to ensure business continuity in the event of a significant event occurring, e.g. Failure to ensure the continuous availability of critical IT systems leading to inability to deliver key council services.

What is causing the risk? Developing and maintaining robust Business Continuity Plans requires significant and sustained focus. During Covid-19 response, the Councils risk profile has changed as we have relied much heavier on working in different ways (for example more staff working from home the majority of time) and with significant pressures being placed on some of our key delivery partners/ contractors. Work is required to update our BCP's to the changing environment that we are operating in.

While we would typically see our Business Continuity risk score reduce at this point of the year (due to decreased risk of storms and seasonal flu workforce impacts), we are currently seeing a significant increase in Covid cases across Devon and this is beginning to impact our staff with a number of staff currently

What is the level of risk?

Likelihood of risk occurring	4 (Likely)	
Impact	Financial	5 (Catastrophic)
	Service Quality	5 (Catastrophic)
	Reputation	4 (Major)
	Legal / Regulatory	2 (Minor)
	Health and Safety	3 (Moderate)
	Morale / Staffing	3 (Moderate)

- What are we doing to reduce the risk?**
- Having two HQ locations is main mitigating factor - however an outage of power/ICT at either location would lead to a serious disruption of service.
 - Agile working further reduces reliance on two office buildings.
 - Locality workers can be despatched more easily to ensure customer engagement can be maintained during any incident.
 - Business Continuity plans have been updated - priority areas - ICT Networking - Payroll & Creditors Payments; other plans need to be made more robust – further work underway for the new year
 - Continuing to encourage staff to work from home where possible and to continue with informal Member meetings on teams to reduce chance of spreading Covid

Current Update (March 2022) West Devon was impacted by two significant and closely timed storms during this period but our services were largely unaffected. Some higher risk activities were temporarily halted during the day of Storm Eunice but quickly resumed as it passed.

While we would typically see our Business Continuity risk score reduce at this point of the year (due to decreased risk of storms and seasonal flu workforce impacts), we are currently seeing a significant increase in Covid cases across Devon and this is beginning to impact our staff with a number of staff currently having Covid. Many continue to work from home but we will continue to monitor the impact. As a result we have taken the decision to delay our in person staff briefings (which would have been the first in over two years), and continue to encourage individuals to demonstrate caution when on Council duties.

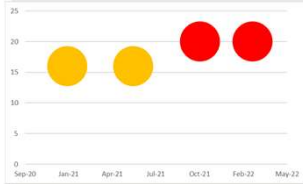
Overall Scoring

Risk Score (Current)



Likelihood 4 x Impact 5




































Risk Score History



Risk Direction



Next Steps

January	February	March	April	May	June
<p> 6thth Jan Resources Advisory Group</p> <p> 10th Jan Environment Advisory Group</p> <p> 11th Jan Homes Advisory Group</p> <p> 18th Jan Built Env Advisory Group</p> <p> 25th Jan Inclusive Services AG</p>	<p> 1st Feb Quarter 3 Integrated Performance Management Report (Oct/Nov/Dec)</p> <p>Hub</p> <p> 1st Feb – Wellbeing AG</p> <p> 8th Feb – Community AG</p> <p>  15th Feb Wellbeing Thematic Update</p> <p>O&S Environment Thematic Update</p>	<p>Audit Plan for West Devon Strategic Risk Update</p> <p> 8th March Economy Advisory Group</p> <p> 22nd March Economy Thematic Update</p> <p>O&S</p>	<p> 12th April Quarter 4 Integrated Performance Management Report (Jan- March)</p> <p>Hub</p> <p> 19th April Homes Advisory Group</p> <p> 26th April Homes Thematic Update</p> <p>O&S</p>		<p> Annual Report of Achievements 2021/22</p> <p>Hub</p> <p> Inclusive Services Advisory Group</p> <p> Inclusive Services Thematic Update</p> <p>O&S</p>
July	August	September	October	November	December
<p> Quarter 1 Integrated Performance Management Report (Apr- Jun)</p> <p>Hub</p> <p> Built Env Advisory Group</p> <p> Built Env' Thematic Update</p> <p>O&S</p>	<p>Advisory Group workshops - Refine 2022/23 Delivery Plans       </p>	<p>Audit Plan for West Devon Strategic Risk Update</p>	<p> Community Advisory Group</p> <p> Community Thematic Update</p> <p>O&S</p>	<p> Quarter 2 Integrated Performance Management Report (Jul- Sept)</p> <p>Hub</p> <p> Efficient Services Advisory Group</p> <p> Efficient Services Thematic Update</p> <p>O&S</p>	<p> Environment Advisory Group</p> <p> Environment Thematic Update</p>