

Key Issues Devon County Council

Childrens' Services: At the Children's Scrutiny meeting on 26.11.18 officers presented reports on the challenges they work with delivering these services with rising demand and more referrals in a climate of austerity. Although the department works within a budget, it is forecast to overrun by over £9.9M by the end of the financial year (April'19).

This includes £6.5M overspend in **Children's Social Care**. Placements continue to be the main budget pressure, plus Disabled Children's short breaks, staffing and the Atkinson Secure Children's Home. £1M of expenditure relates to an agreed Service Improvement Plan. The level of need for Children's Services has continued to rise, there simply isn't enough of the right provision for children who have very complex needs. (2 years ago DCC had 38 children Looked After in residential placements at a cost of £6.2M, in 2018/19 DCC are forecasting this will rise to 55 children Looked After at a cost of £11.7M, i.e. a 45% increase and an almost 100% increase in costs. There is a similar report from supported accommodation for 16+, where costs have increased from £2.7M to £6.1M, an increase of 126%.

Education & Early Help: Education budgets are split between 2 funding streams; the **General Fund** which covers the majority of the statutory responsibilities including transport, and the **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)** which (is ring-fenced) provides funding for schools, early years settings and children with special needs. The General Fund is anticipating a small overspend, which will balance by the end of the year if the expected additional fund from central government is allocated. The transport budget remains the highest risk as transport costs within the large rural county are significantly higher than urban areas; this has been made more difficult by rising inflation costs. The overspend anticipated is £171,000 which includes efficiencies that are putting increased pressures on staff. The Dedicated Schools Grant has faced an exponential rise in the number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans which has not been matched with additional funding. There has also been a 23% rise in the volume of learners in the independent sector from 2016-2018, leading to a £2.3M increase in costs. Special school investment over the past 3 years has seen the number of Maintained Special School Places increase by 18.7%. Overall these increases have amounted to a DSG projected overspend of £3.2M for this year.

At the **Childrens' Scrutiny workshop** Councillors were presented with the THRIVE model of combining social and health care for children. The focus is on safety over and above other elements of care and treatment and includes greater emphasis on how to get young people and communities build on their own strengths. Dartington Social Research Unit carried out an investigation into 6,000 children around the Bay. This study showed that the main investment of funding needs to be in high end care for both consequences and treatment, as well as prevention. Questions were raised about the transition at age 16 from children to adult services, investment is now being made into this period to ensure continuity. 2 on-line resources were discussed: You Tube clip: Joe's Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNw-qbhgr9I&t=81s> Public Health England paper: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575632/Mental_health_of_children_in_England.pdf

Devon Flood Risk Management Strategy Update. The Flood and Coastal Risk Management team are interested in suggestions for new areas that b potential candidates for future Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes. Additionally, DCC are currently building a base of NFM projects across Devon and would welcome information about projects that could be added to this database. They offer advice on best practice to reduce flood risk on land. More at this link: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/floodriskmanagement/local-flood-risk-management-strategy/>

LOCAL MATTERS

South Hams HATOC meeting 23.11.18

A site visit was held in Dartington for the Committee prior to the committee meeting. HATOC Members met with Parish Councillors, Highways Officers and myself to go through a number of local measures that had been drawn together to be considered on a village centre basis around the Shinnars Bridge roundabout:

- New Pedestrian Crossing crossing over A385 between Origins and the Post Office
 - Relocation of inaccessible bus stop on roundabout
 - Increased visibility through art works on small roundabout at Origins / Higher Tweedmill
 - Repainting of white line to demark pedestrian walking space on Cott Road
 - Need for reduced speeds and rat runners on rural back roads; request for traffic calming measures and Quiet Lane status
 - Request for 20mph speeds on rural roads and all main roads passing through village centre
 - Request for Residents' parking 'mini' scheme for Shinnars Bridge and Speedwell Cottages in Cott Road
- (due to extremely wet weather conditions the planned tour of viewing points and places was abandoned)

Outcomes of SH HATOC Meeting – items relevant to Totnes & Dartington division

- **Pedestrian Crossing with pedestrian lights at A381/Plymouth Road traffic lights – north side.** Residents from The Paige Adams / Colla Park/ Follaton area of Totnes presented a petition requesting pedestrian crossing and lights at this busy junction. This would enable pedestrians who use the footpath that leads to the A381, particularly children and families walking to school to cross safely to town and back. The mother of a boy who was hit at this junction a few weeks ago also spoke at the meeting. It was agreed that this would be looked at by officers and brought back to next SH HATOC.
- **Residents' Parking scheme at Gidley's Meadow Dartington.** Further to a survey I personally carried out in Gidley's Meadow Dartington in response to requests from residents, I requested a Resident's parking scheme to be implemented there. 62% of the households surveyed responded, with 72% of those saying they would like a residents parking scheme. Many of the respondents complained about parking from the various businesses at the Webbers Yard and Lascaze employment centres adjacent. This was not considered a priority, but could be looked into.
- **Totnes Rainbow Crossing.** Highways officers reported on a site meeting they had held with Totnes Rainbow Crossing Action Group and myself in October. They had discussed various options for sites and due to safety concerns regarding confusion for drivers and pedestrian regarding the legal status of a multi-coloured pedestrian crossing, which would not conform with current highways specifications, they had recommended the use of Totnes Civic Square as a suitable site. I reported to the meeting that further to this, discussion with the Town Clerk had raised concerns regarding new plans underway to refurbish the Civic Square where a rainbow might jar with the proposed designs and therefore the group had subsequently considered the 26m of High Street adjacent to the Civic Square for a wavy line rainbow crossing / art work could be more suitable and potentially acceptable regarding safety as the traffic is slower there. Concerns regarding safety on the highway were further raised by the committee who agreed that the Civic Square was the best site option.
- **Littlehempston – Totnes Cycle & Pedestrian route.** Highways officers reported back on correspondence they had had with South Devon Railway which had stated that their trustees would not meet with DCC officers, Councillors or parish Councillors to discuss the route that would involve the bridge that went over the River Dart that they own and use for access to their SDR Station at Totnes. It was outlined at the meeting between myself and Cllr Jonathan Hawkins (who represents Littlehempston), that this would be a priority measure to reduce traffic on the A385 in Totnes. James Kershaw, Environmental Health Officer for SHDC explained that funding is available from the A385 Air Quality Management Action Plan for Totnes that could contribute to the costs. A meeting had therefore been set up for January for Councillors to meeting with Highways Officers, Parish Councillors and to which Meg Booth, Director of Services at DCC for Infrastructure had been invited to attend and try to decide a way forward.
- **SHDC Air Quality Management Action Plan.** James Kershaw, SHDC Env Health Officer reported back on discussions about the Totnes Air Quality Action Plan. He informed the committee of the new Totnes Travel Partnership and said he would be delaying final publication of this Action Plan until next April to allow time for Totnes TC and the new partnership to review the schedule of transport schemes so that they could be prioritised and where appropriate supported with A385 funding.
- **Dartington Site Visit Report.** A member of Dartington Parish Council outlined the issues that had been discussed earlier at the site visit and presented the traffic survey that volunteers in dartington had carried out with the Parish Council. This confirmed the high level of 'Rat Runners' cutting through Cott Road to avoid the A385 congestion. DCC Officers responded with the outcomes of traffic surveys they had carried out which broadly agreed with the PC findings and showed that about 25% of vehicles from the A385 cut through Cott Road. The Chairman confirmed the following had been proposed:
 - Funding would be sought for the Pedestrian crossing between Origins and the Post Office
 - The white line on Cott Road for pedestrians would be painted by DCC – at their expense
 - Narrow art work can be installed on the roundabout between Origins & Webbers Yard – at PC expense
 - Signage to direct traffic to select lane at Shinnars Bridge roundabout from Totnes (to help pedestrians) would be installed
 - A Residents' parking scheme for 6 cottages at Cott Road as requested would be drawn up.
 - 20mph could be looked at once the DCC Task Group had reported back (due next Spring)
 - Traffic calming could be looked at Longcause where it tends to speed up.
 - A letter would be sent to Dartington Hall Trust regarding their offer to provide a safe pedestrian link from their shops to the bus stop on the roundabout
 - Quiet Lanes are not supported by DCC and are therefore not a legal entity on the public highway
 - Dartington had been prioritised for funding for Traffic Management improvements, this would be discussed next year but could include signage and structures to indicate entry to a rural village centre and would assist with reducing traffic speeds and improving safety.

A member of the public in attendance requested that a pedestrian crossing at Huxhams Cross to link the bus stops with the residents across the busy A384 was needed for public safety. It was agreed that this would be looked into.

I informed the Chairman that **Harberton Parish Council** had requested a similar village centre approach to pedestrian safety and traffic management would be welcome in Harberton Village Centre too.

Attendance at meetings etc. as elected public representative:

Thurs 1 st Nov.	Berry Pomeroy PC meeting
Sat 3 rd Nov.	Public consultation event at Dartington for Joint Local Plan and monitoring information about the Mobile Phone Mast in Dartington. Well attended.
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Mon 5 th Nov.	Totnes Town Council meeting
Thurs 8 th Nov.	Dartington Neighbourhood Plan – Community Charter meeting Market Place Ministries Community celebration of successes with their Homeless supports
Fri 9 th Nov.	Skatepark tenders evaluation (p1) with Totnes Skatepark group and SHDC procurement Officers Formal launch of Young Devon Youth Café at no 3 Fore Street.
Mon 12 th Nov.	Skatepark tenders evaluation (p2) with Totnes Skatepark group and SHDC procurement Officers South Devon Refugee Support Network meeting
Weds 14 th Nov.	Dartington PC meeting
Thurs 15 th Nov.	Meeting with Dartington P.Cllrs to discuss SH HATOC site meeting SHDC National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) workshop on changes to this legislation
17 th -18 th Nov.	TTT Film Festival in Totnes – very inspiring & well attended
Mon 19 th Nov.	Totnes Neighbourhood Plan meeting
Tues 20 th Nov.	Totnes Travel Partnership meeting Putting South Devon on the United Nations Education for Sustainable Futures map - Roundtable meeting to discuss.
Weds 21 st Nov.	DCC 20mph Speed Limits Task Group Meeting with Proud2be to discuss Rainbow Crossing project Totnes Women's Voices project – Premiere of audio visual presentation
Fri 23 rd Nov.	Site Meeting in Dartington Village with SH HATOC Committee South Hams HATOC – see report above
Sat 24 th Nov.	Dartington Community event with stalls on Planning & Joint Local Plan (JLP) Totnes Sharefest with Network of Wellbeing community event – excellent
Mon 26 th Nov.	DCC Children's Scrutiny Masterclass / workshop DCC Children's Scrutiny meeting – see report above Dartington Neighbourhood Plan – Steering Group meeting
Tues 27 th Nov.	Meeting with Proud2be to discuss Rainbow Crossing project
Weds 28 th Nov.	DCC DM (Planning) Committee: An extension to a large quarry at Tiverton was approved KEVICCS Foundation Governors – awards committee meeting Totnes & District Traffic & Transport Forum (T&DTTF). Discussed new schemes that will be attached to Totnes Transport Policy & Strategy. (nb this document is live and welcomes additional proposals for schemes from parishes adjacent to Totnes).
Fri. 30 th Nov.	Opening of Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship at Dartington – excellent new resource
Mon 3 rd December	Totnes Town Council: approved a motion to Declare a Climate Emergency

Thurs 6th Dec.

DCC Full Council Meeting. I placed two motions on the agenda:

Fracking: To write to the Secretary of State objecting to permitted development rights for Fracking and shale gas extraction. Calling for a UK wide ban on fracking – due to its impact on climate change.

Declare a Climate Emergency: In line with calls from the International Panel on Climate Change regarding a climate emergency and the rising extinction threats to global biodiversity as echoed at this week's United Nations COP24 meeting in Poland where Sir David Attenborough's speech this week stated we are on the verge of a catastrophic extinction of the natural world, a world we depend on for our own survival.

Although due to the clearly urgent nature of the matters proposed, these were voted by a majority against for debate and decision at this meeting, so were **referred to Cabinet** for a recommendation.

DCC Public Consultation: Devon School Admissions and Transport Consultation

A public consultation is currently being held by Devon County Council between now and 4 January 2019. This covers the following:

2020-21 Devon Normal Round Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme

2019-20 Devon In-Year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme

2020-21 Devon Education Transport Policy Pre-16 and post-16

2020-21 individual schools admissions policies for state-funded schools and academies in Devon County Council's area and including some academies in Plymouth and Torbay's council areas.

This is the annual opportunity for parents, other schools, Early Years settings and the local communities to review the admissions arrangements that are proposed and to comment on them, making suggestions for change.

The local authority policies are at <http://devon.cc/lapolicies> which also contains the existing policies for 2018 and 2019 and the schools policies are at <http://devon.cc/schoolpolicy>

The consultation is hosted at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/apply-for-a-school-place/arrangements-and-policies/2020-21-admissions-policies-consultation>

It ends on 4 January 2019 and all policies must then be determined by the end of February.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact DCC, using this email address: schoolsadmissionpolicy-mailbox@devon.gov.uk