

County Councillor's Monthly Report Cllr. Jacqi Hodgson - Date of Report: 2nd January 2020
County Councillor for Totnes & Dartington
(incl. Harberton, Harbertonford, Staverton, Landscope & part of Berry Pomeroy)
District Councillor for Dartington & Staverton

Key Issues Devon County Council:

DCC Full Council 5th Dec.'19. The Leader was presented with a petition of 120 signatures was received from a resident of Bideford regarding the speed on an unclassified rural road at Yeo Vale, Littleham, Bideford, requesting that the criterion for deciding the speed limit on the road be reconsidered in light of the road's characteristics. The Leader and relevant Cabinet Members also provided written responses to twelve questions submitted by Members of the Council relating to workforce challenges in the domiciliary care market, the Council's 'Proud to Care' campaign and innovative approaches to alleviate current issues, nurseries and schools in Devon in budget deficit, meetings with the Regional Schools Commissioner and agenda topics, integration and inclusion in schools for children with disabilities, representations to the DfE regarding Free Schools, Government support for electrification of railways in the South West and investment in the Okehampton line for economic potential and to address the climate emergency, the meaning and importance of International Women's Day (March 8th) and how the Council would mark and celebrate the day, consultation regarding school crossing patrols at Yeo Valley School and at Ashleigh Road School, progress on flood alleviation measures for Barnstaple especially in the Pilton Park area, direct rail services from Barnstaple to London, retention and recruitment of health and care workers in the County and measures to address those issues, increases in school funding and the league table in Devon of funding per pupil.

HOSW - LEPA report referred from Cabinet regarding the governance and budgetary arrangements of The Heart of South West's (HOSW – which includes and oversees the Local Enterprise Partnership -LEP- programmes, projects and budgets) Joint Committee governance arrangements. The report which was approved is at this link:

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s28782/Joint%20Committee%20Governance%20Arrangements%20CX1901%20-%20Cabinet%2009102019.pdf>

Climate Emergency: Further to my motion originally proposed to FC in October 2019, DCC agreed to revise their original 2050 date to: Declare that the Authority will be carbon neutral by 2030 through:

- Corporate Carbon Footprint: Reducing its 2012/13 corporate carbon footprint by 70% by 2030
- Retaining its existing target to source 30% of its energy requirement from renewable sources by 2030 Incrementally increasing the percentage of the remaining carbon footprint that is offset, from 5% in the current year to 100% by 2030 Supply Chain Carbon Footprint
- Engaging with contract providers to reduce carbon emissions from their operations and offset the remainder by 2030. As a first step, engage the ten highest-value contract providers.
(b) Delegate Authority to the Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health, Transportation and Environmental Services and the Environmental Performance Board to incorporate these principles into a revised Energy and Carbon Strategy.

The full report is available at this link:

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/s28783/Revised%20Energy%20and%20Carbon%20Strategy%2009102019%20Cabinet.pdf>

The other motion I put before DCC FC in October to extend the Climate Emergency to include an Ecological Emergency was declined as it was considered that this was already incorporated into the Climate Emergency response; however I contested this on the basis that the response to the climate emergency would not include loss of habitat, impact on pollutants and human practices all of which have a considerable impact on biodiversity and habitat loss. The vote was lost.

South Hams District Council – key issues:

Full Council (19.12.19) At this meeting the following key decisions were taken:

To approve the Council's commercial investment strategy (see extract of Appx A at end of this report). The main thrust of this was *"Opportunities exist for South Hams to invest, off market, in shovel ready renewable energy generation assets (large-scale solar) which will deliver multiple benefits of*

- *attractive investor return*
- *directly linked to tackling climate change targets and the authority's low carbon agenda*
- *providing a "hedge" against forward energy price rises*
- *the opportunity to generate enhanced financial returns in the future from "bolt on" energy storage*

The pursuit of such opportunities required the Authority to amend its Commercial Investment strategy, its Investment Strategy (a treasury management function) and its Capital Strategy to include the renewable energy sector. "

It was agreed to consult on the introduction of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). CIL is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008, as a tool for local authorities to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of their area. It

came into force through the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. Development may be liable for a charge under CIL if the Local Planning Authority has formally adopted a Charging Schedule. A Charging Schedule sets out how much money is payable per square metre of qualifying development.

- New development that creates net additional gross internal area of 100 square metres or more, or create new dwellings, is potentially liable for this levy.
- CIL can operate alongside a s106 regime as a means to secure the necessary infrastructure to deliver sustainable development. S106 Agreements are negotiated, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, on a site by site basis to secure the delivery of infrastructure, other contributions and Affordable Housing to make that specific development acceptable.
- In areas where CIL and s106 operate CIL is used for a wider scope of infrastructure delivery whereas s106 is typically used to address and mitigate the specific impacts of the development being considered.
- CIL would be applicable in a wider area. It allows contributions to be taken from all developments, not just the larger (over 10 dwellings) sites and allows offsite contributions to be secured from development of 6 to 10 dwellings in the AONB.
- CIL must be paid, whereas s106 requirements and payments are negotiated. If the Charging Schedule includes levies that are too high it could prevent development from coming forward or compromise the ability to deliver Affordable Housing.
- If CIL were introduced the levy receipts can be spent on infrastructure that will support development. It will be at the discretion of the District Council and Town and Parish Councils to direct where the money is spent.
- A Town / Parish with an adopted (made) Neighbourhood Plan would benefit from a 25% share of levy receipts. The money would need to be spent on things associated with supporting the delivery of development or addressing its impacts.
- A Town / Parish Council can also use their CIL receipts to support the delivery of Affordable Housing, something the District is not allowed to do. Where there is no made NP the proportion of CIL receipts payable to a Town / Parish is 15%.
- CIL cannot be imposed retrospectively on any sites that already have any form of planning permission. It can't and won't, therefore, apply to the majority of the allocated sites in the TTV section of the JLP.
- It is suggested that a 'soft' introduction of CIL at this time would result in limited but important benefits. The impact would then inform the role of CIL when the JLP is reviewed.

SHDC Climate Emergency Action was approved for public consultation (closing date 31.03.20) as follows:

1. That the draft Action Plan proposal (as at Appendix 1) be adopted subject to it being:
 1. (a) Amended to comply with parts 2 and 4 of the Climate Change resolution arising from the Special Council meeting held on 25 July 2019 (Minute 29/19(b) refers);
 - (b) Forwarded to Town and Parish Councils for their comments and for such comments to be received by 31 March 2020;
 - (c) Published on the Council's Climate Change section of its website with a provision for comments from the public to be received by 31 March 2020;
 - (d) Reviewed and amended following the end of the consultation period at points (b) and (c) above. (Such amendments to be considered by the Working Group by 30 April 2020, with an updated version of the Action Plan then being submitted to the Annual Council meeting on 21 May 2020 for approval);
 - (e) Able to be monitored on an ongoing basis by Full Council at any time it considers it necessary and/or appropriate;
2. Note the content of the Council's first Greenhouse Gas Inventory (as outlined at Section 5);
3. Aim to reduce the Council's organisational carbon emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions) to net-zero by 2030;
4. Commit to working with partners through the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to aim to reduce the District of South Hams' carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 at the latest;
5. Aim for a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in the habitat value of its green and wooded public open space by 2025;

6. Request that the Climate Change and Biodiversity Working Group develop a framework for a Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy to be brought back to full Council for approval on 21 May 2020; and

7. Request that an update on progress against the adopted aims be brought back to Council on an annual basis.

I put forward the following two motions:

By Cllrs Hodgson and Rose

'That the policies and proposals of the Joint Local Plan must be reviewed as a matter of urgency, as in its present form, it conflicts with and is unable to deliver a sustainable future, in light of the recognition of the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency that South Hams District Council has declared.' **The vote was lost**

By Cllrs Hodgson and Rose

'Prior to being signed as a legally binding contract between SHDC and/or DCC and other relevant parties regarding a planning decision, a draft copy of the Section 106 Agreement will be provided to the relevant local Ward Member(s) for three days to provide an opportunity for any questions or clarification.' **With slight amendment, this proposal was approved**

LOCAL MATTERS: Highways:

I met with DCC Highways officers (02.12.19) regarding:

The roll out of the SHDC / DCC Air Quality Management Action Plan and expenditure of monies accrued for Totnes:

in particular I asked for updates on the pedestrian crossings sought at the traffic lights / junction of Plymouth Road and the By-pass. This will be looked into.

Road safety issues and parking matters in Dartington:

- Further assessments of traffic will be made regarding the request for a pedestrian crossing on the A385 from Origins to the Post Office (which should have been delivered from the development of sawmills Field east / Origins)
- The lack of pedestrian access to the bus stop on Shinner's Bridge roundabout: It was stated that there are no funds to do this
- Resident's parking in Cott Road – being progressed
- The dangerous roundabout at Webbers Yard

Gt Court Farm - Berry Pomeroy;

- No Right Turn at Weston Lane junction at True Street. The short stretch of new road that could make the right turn out of Weston Lane had been approximately assessed at costing £40,000.00. There was no resolution as to whether Baker's the developers or DCC should be asked to pay for this.
- The road surface at Weston Lane will be made good by the developer on completion of site works, drainage issues are being looked at by the Construction company.
- It was stated that this part of Berry Pomeroy is NOT in my division (it is Cllr Jonathan Hawkins division)

Traffic Speeds and the pedestrian Crossing in Harbertonford:

Under current road safety rules, this pedestrian crossing would not be permitted, certainly not the additional one being requested further around the corner or the consideration of a shared space area that (I suggested) to create a sense of village centre. The difficulties of the narrow pavement and blind bend on a major road that passes through and effectively divides a rural village are to some extent insurmountable and incompatible with safe pedestrian crossing points unless the traffic can be considerably slowed down.

Meeting with DCC Director of Services for Highways and Infrastructure Meg Booth and senior officer for Highways Dave Black (10.12.19) regarding:

The Divisional annual budget for highway repairs: it was agreed that maintenance is falling behind due to lack of finance, and the problems, particularly for rural roads that this causes. At present there is no additional income anticipated that could assist with this. However not all repairs are reactive, some are maintenance.

Neighbourhood support. Highways officer Alan Martin can be contacted as needed to provide additional support

Highway speeds and safety issues: It was agreed that there will be some investigation into possible finance for the pedestrian crossing at **Dartington** (by the Post Office), that further assessments will take place at **Harbertonford** regarding traffic issues; the PC to be requested to indicate the main days and times during the week that are particularly significant and assessments are likely to be carried out after January.

Totnes Travel Partnership. (mtg. 16.12.19) A total sum of £70,000.00 for the **Green Travel Coordination role** (£50,000) and project seed monies (£20,000) was finally agreed between DCC Highways officer and Baltic Wharf / TQ9 at this meeting. The Green Travel Coordinator role will be managed by Totnes Town Council over a period of two years. This role and projects from it will benefit not only the new residents at Baltic Wharf but also the wider town.

Totnes Connection Hub and Homeless people in Totnes

2019 and particularly the Christmas period was marked by an extraordinary response in Totnes and environs towards supporting local people in need of help from the food bank, and those in need of a home. Before the holiday closures commenced I sought an update from one of the team at the Connection Hub so that the TC could be informed of the situation and arrangements in place in case of any urgent call or severe weather over the holiday period. I was delighted to receive the following reports:

- The Food Bank at the Totnes Connection Hub has been amazingly supported this year with more food and Christmas presents for children being donated this Christmas than they have had before. Print and Design on the Industrial Estate near the Hub arranged for children's presents to be wrapped so they have been able to give out gifts as well as food. Families and individuals were given three weeks of food and Christmas goodies to cover the Christmas period (the Food Bank opened again on NYE). Food in Community (project) donated fresh veg from Riverford.
- The changes to the way it has run has meant that many vulnerable families and vulnerable individuals have felt able to come and seek help – both from the food bank and with regard to benefits admin. Hot drinks and pastries are shared out while admin and food bank work is processed and very generous packed lunches are made to order. However, the work is very client based – people need a lot of help accessing UC and sorting out housing. The amount of people they have been able to help has shot up now they are able to focus on these issues more. However, everyone is a volunteer and they are looking for more helpers in the New Year.
- The Hub will be starting a Boutique Clothing Bank in January so that they can give people the clothing they actually need rather than having to wade through piles of donations.
- The Housing First Policy of SHDC and the appointment of Rough Sleeper Navigators (and the fact that the Hub works very closely with them) – plus our PCSO Jason has meant that homelessness in Totnes has dropped dramatically this year. The official rough sleep count on 11th November was 1. Jason touches base regularly with this person, but as yet he still won't fully engage.
- Our street people still pop into Totnes - they have a community of sorts with each other, and though they may be drinking on Vire Island, they are not homeless. Some individuals have also made many friends at Totnes United Free, but there is a long way to go.
- The big issue for Street Pastors is that predatory adults are seeking to target our young people with drugs. The Caring Town idea of a Totnes Town Police Partner through whom info could be shared directly could help here, especially if it is focussed around the safety of our young people. An established post such as this would have standing with the police. Parents may be happy to share their concerns and information via this person. Concerned adults have reported to Street Pastors about drug exchange/dealings they have witnessed happening around village halls involving young people – but where do you take the information safely to, to know that it will be acted on very quickly. The police partner may be the answer.
- There has been a very positive and widespread response to the Christmas Card that was sent out to all the residents of Totnes on behalf of the town Council by myself as mayor. This was to address loneliness that many individuals can experience especially around Christmas. It was distributed via the Totnes Directory. It has been suggested that this should become a Mayoral tradition.



The following emergency helpline numbers can be used for any queries:

Severe Weather - Emergency Protocol for Rough Sleepers:

Day time: 01803 861234

Out of Hours: 01803 867034

Environmental Health – Needle pick up: 01803 846123

Anyone out in severe weather can phone (or you may phone on their behalf) and they will be given B & B for several days and up to 2 weeks whilst more permanent accommodation is sorted. The Rough Sleeper Navigators are also looking to touch base with caravan dwellers.

Totnes Skatepark: An urgent meeting was held on site (18.12.19) as knives and hammers had been found hidden in the undergrowth and leaves under the Leylandi tree next to the Skatepark in Borough Park. It was agreed that this tree also provided a screen for the skatepark from the view of the station and the public road and could therefore pose a danger to more implements such as these being brought to the park out of sight, as well as providing cover for any approaches from drug dealers to skatepark users. It was therefore agreed as an emergency measure with regard to the safety of skatepark users to fell this tree and trim back the undergrowth and therefore significantly reduce the screen to the skatepark. The tree was felled within two days. I went to the skatepark 2 days later and spoke to the young people there about the knives and hammer being found and the reason for the felling of the tree and warned them to be on their guard and report any illegal activities or similar findings to the police.

Totnes Town Council Climate & Ecological Emergency Action Plan. A meeting is being arranged for January to discuss the outputs of the Climate Emergency Planning week held in Totnes in November and the development of this into a draft Action Plan for the Town. The date will be confirmed on the TC website at this link:

Attendance at meetings etc. as elected public representative:

Sun Dec 1 st	Meeting with residents at Puddavine regarding dangerous pedestrian routes and speeds
Mon Dec 2 nd	Meeting with Highways officers to discuss issues in my division: see report above
Tues Dec 3 rd	Dartington Neighbourhood Plan mtg – preparing for Regulation 14
Weds Dec 4 th	TRAYE (Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement) project – interview for additional youth worker Staverton PC mtg
Thurs Dec 5 th	SHDC Climate Change working Group: Discussed the draft Action Plan to be put to SHDC FC prior to public consultation DCC Full Council – see report above
Fri 6 th Dec.	DCC Climate Change Emergency Group meeting: discussed the involvement and appointment of a Citizens assembly
Mon 9 th Dec.	Devon Asscn. of Local Councils' (DALC) mtg: Discussed new arrangements for incorporation into a CIO.
Tues 10 th Dec.	Meeting with DCC Director of Services for Highways and Infrastructure – see report Harberton PC Mtg
Weds 11 th Dec.	Dartington PC mtg
Fri 13 th Dec.	SHDC Waste Working Group meeting
Mon 16 th Dec.	Totnes Travel Partnership meeting regarding Baltic Wharf – see report above
Tues 17 th Dec.	Meeting with new CEO at South Devon Rural Housing Asscn (SDRHA) re; resident's issues and Brimhay site
Weds 18 th Dec.	Meeting with SHDC officers and District Councillors at Skatepark regarding safety issues – see report above
Thurs 19 th Dec.	SHDC Informal Council meeting & Full Council meeting – see report above
Fri 20 th Dec.	Meeting with Dartington Hall Trust (DHT) Chair, senior officers and SHDC Planning officer to be updated on DHT proposals and plans regarding development sites and economic recovery

Diary Dates:

Weds 15th January – Devon County Council Cabinet meeting (10.30am) and Budget meeting at 2.15pm

Weds 15th January – SHDC DM Committee meeting (start time tbc)

Weds 29th January Totnes & District Transport & Traffic Forum meeting at the Guildhall at 6.30pm

From SHDC Full Council meeting – see report above: Appendix A – Updated SHDC Commercial Investment Strategy

This strategy replaces the Council's Commercial Property Strategy which was approved on 18th July 2019.

Overall Objectives:

The Council's Commercial Investment strategy has multiple objectives as stated below:

- To support regeneration and the economic activity of the District
- To enhance economic benefit & business rates growth
- To assist with the financial sustainability of the Council as an ancillary benefit
- To help the Council continue to deliver and/or improve frontline services in line with the Council's adopted strategy & objectives
- Security and Liquidity

Desired Outcomes: The following outcomes are desired by the application of this strategy. Each acquisition or development opportunity will be assessed on its fit with meeting the objectives stated above and should deliver one or more of the following outcomes (benefits):

- ✓ Job creation or safeguarding
- ✓ Health & Wellbeing
- ✓ Town centre regeneration
- ✓ Tourism / Increased footfall
- ✓ Business rate growth
- ✓ Improved asset utilisation
- ✓ Climate change mitigation
- ✓ A minimum net yield return of 2% is targeted. However, in some circumstances, e.g. where community benefits are likely to be achieved, a lower return may be acceptable.