

EXECUTIVE

6 JANUARY 2025

Present:

Councillors Buscombe, Hook, Keeling (Leader), Nutley, G Taylor, Williams and Parrott

Members in Attendance:

Councillors Sanders, Radford and P Parker

Apologies:

Councillors Goodman-Bradbury and Palethorpe

Officers in Attendance:

Phil Shears, Managing Director

Martin Flitcroft, Director of Corporate Services

Amanda Pujol, Head of Customer Experience and Transformation

Graham Davey, Housing Enabling and Development Manager

Tracey Hooper, Head of Customer & Digital

Nikki Rawley, Council Tax Lead Officer - Revenue & Benefits

Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer

Christopher Morgan, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

***These decisions will take effect from 10am on Monday 13 January 2025
unless called in or identified as urgent in the Minute***

103. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader, subject to the second line of the second paragraph of Minute 92 being amended to read....*"40 properties in Devon as a whole affected."*

104. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader gave an update on devolution and local government reform, in response to the publication of the English Devolution White Paper, referring to a joint statement by the Leaders of the following Devon District, Borough and City Councils: East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge, Torridge and West Devon as follows:

"The Devon districts are fully supportive of genuine devolution of powers from Whitehall to local government.

"However, following the publication of the Devolution White Paper, and subsequent statements by the leader of Devon County Council, we would like to make it clear that we do not support the creation of one unitary council for Devon.

“Our county, including Torbay, is diverse and made up of nearly 1 million residents across urban, coastal, and rural areas. Any reform of local government in Devon should follow a period of proper consultation with residents, businesses, elected representatives, and stakeholders. Looking at the evidence, we should decide collectively what is best for our area. A single unitary council for the county risks diminishing local representation, with decision-making that is remote from the communities we serve.

“We do not support postponing the county council elections scheduled for May 2025. The government has indicated that this will only happen in priority areas who have clear and agreed plans. This is not the case in Devon, so we cannot be in the first phase of these reforms.

“We recognise that the government’s white paper sets a clear direction of travel. As Devon’s city, district, and borough council leaders, we want to work collaboratively with others in particular with our neighbouring unitary councils to agree how we respond to this. Any changes must be carefully considered, transparent, and inclusive, ensuring that residents and businesses are fully engaged in shaping the future governance of Devon.

“Our objective must be to get this right for our residents and businesses. That cannot be achieved if we make rushed decisions that have not been given the serious consideration that they deserve.”

105. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

106. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan was noted.

107. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

108. REPORT OF THE DEVON HOUSING COMMISSION

The Leader welcomed Matt Dodd from the Devon Housing Commission and David Hancock from Exeter University who gave a presentation on the findings of the Devon Housing Commission. The Commission was set up by the Devon Housing task Force to investigate the housing crisis in Devon, the acute need for more affordable housing, and means of improving the housing situation.

The full presentation can be seen at [Agenda for Executive on Monday, 6th January, 2025, 10.00 am - Teignbridge District Council](#)

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED

1. To continue dialogue with partners on the Devon Housing Commission to help deliver the recommendations contained within their report.
2. To prioritise work on delivering affordable housing and the 'Homes 4 Teignbridge' initiative (formerly known as the T100) and the Rural 5 programme.
3. To work across service boundaries including Planning to explore further options to maximise affordable housing opportunities.
4. To review the capital programme to identify further capacity for new affordable housing schemes.
5. To lobby Devon County Council for Second Homes Council Tax to be spent on Affordable Housing as was originally intended.
6. To work with the combined DCC / Torbay authority and the DTHAG (Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group) to maximise affordable housing schemes in Teignbridge.

109. DEVON AND TORBAY HOUSING ADVISORY GROUP (DTHAG)

The meeting referred to the agenda report and it was unanimously

RESOLVED

Councillor Buscombe as the Executive Member for housing and homelessness, be appointed as the Council's representative on the Devon and Torbay Housing Advisory Group.

110. INITIAL FINANCIAL PLAN BUDGET PROPOSALS 2025/26 TO 2027/28

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources referred to the agenda report which set out the initial financial plan proposals 2025/26 to 2027/28 to be published for comment over the next six weeks. The proposals included draft revenue and capital budgets for the three years 2025/26 to 2027/28. The main issues taken into account were set out at paragraph 1.2.

The council tax base 2025/26 approved by Audit Scrutiny Committee on 18 December 2024 was shown at appendix 2. The council tax is proposed to increase by 2.99% (£5.87 for a Band D property).

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED

Comments be invited on the agenda report budget proposals.

111. WORKING AGE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME (WACTR) 2025/26

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources referred to the agenda report which:

- Provided an update on the current consultation for proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme.
- Recommended using existing provisions within the scheme to uplift the income thresholds to reflect the Government's annual uprating of primary benefits.
- Sought approval for the scheme to be recommended for adoption by Council for the year 2025-6.

It was unanimously

RECOMMENDED to Council:

To include the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and approve for the year 2025-26 scheme that the income bands are changed in line with the annual uprating to primary welfare benefits.

112. UPDATE ON FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND PROJECT

The Executive Member for Environmental Services updated the meeting as follows:

Queen Street Enhancement

Progress Overview

- The enhancement works on Queen Street are progressing as planned, with substantial completion of major works at Courtenay Street. Phase 4, covering the stretch between Albany Street and Devon Square, currently ongoing.
- Key improvements include widened pavements, enhanced accessibility, and traffic restrictions designed to create a safer and more welcoming public space for residents and visitors.

Seasonal Adjustments

- Construction activities were paused from November 30, 2024, to January 2, 2025, to accommodate the Christmas shopping period. This decision supported local businesses and ensured unimpeded access for shoppers during a critical trading period.
- Newton Abbot's car parks experienced high levels of activity during December. Data on town footfall and the impact on businesses is pending and will be reported as soon as it becomes available.

Current and Upcoming Works

- Post-holiday work has resumed, focusing on the installation of raised pedestrian tables and a zebra crossing near the War Memorial.

- In February, the installation of trees and additional greenery will commence, complemented by the addition of surface planters featuring Juneberry trees. These enhancements aim to prepare the area for the integration of hanging baskets in the spring and summer seasons.
- Feedback regarding the improved pedestrian experience has been positive, and further updates on business performance will be shared in due course.

Market Hall and Market Square Redevelopment

Project Status

- Preparatory works began on November 25, 2024. To support local businesses during the December festive season, heavy demolition activities were deferred until January 2025.

Project Timeline

- Work will restart in January 2025 and will continue throughout the year. The redevelopment remains on schedule, with completion anticipated by spring 2026.
- National market specialists will be consulted to provide strategic guidance for the long-term management and success of the Market Hall and Market Square.

Objectives

This redevelopment project seeks to establish the Market Hall and Market Square as a central focal point for Newton Abbot. The enhancements will attract visitors and bolster the local economy, contributing to the town's overall revitalisation.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF)

Funding Secured

- A grant of £30,000 has been successfully secured through collaborative efforts involving TDC, local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and Newton Abbot Town Council (NATC).
- The funding will be utilised to strengthen Newton Abbot's economic resilience and promote sustainable growth initiatives.

Conclusion

The Future High Street Fund Queen Street and Market Hall projects are advancing as planned, delivering transformative improvements to Newton Abbot. These efforts are enhancing accessibility, providing vital business support, and fostering the creation of a vibrant, thriving town centre. All projects remain on track to achieve their objectives.

Bradley Lane Development

Strategic Importance

- The Bradley Lane site is a key component of Newton Abbot's regeneration strategy, addressing critical housing and infrastructure needs for the town and the wider district.

Progress and Challenges

- Preparatory work on the site will commence on January 6, 2025, in accordance with the delegated authority granted by Full Council in July 2024. This timeline ensures compliance with legal requirements while maintaining project momentum.
- A Judicial Review "pre-action protocol letter" has been received from solicitors acting on behalf of SAVE. The legal team is currently reviewing this matter, and further updates will be provided as necessary.

Environmental Considerations

- A revised application for a bat house has been submitted following the withdrawal of the initial application. The new location, to the west of Bradley Lane, mitigates restrictions posed by utility installations at the original site.

Looking Ahead

- Despite these challenges, the Bradley Lane development remains a pivotal opportunity to deliver much-needed housing and infrastructure while supporting the local economy. Regular updates will be provided as the project progresses.

113. FOR INFORMATION - INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISIONS

The Executive Member decisions were noted.

CLLR R KEELING
Leader

The meeting started at 10am and finished at 11.22am