

**Minutes for the Colyton Parish Council meeting
held Via Zoom on Monday 10th August 2020 at 7pm.**

The Chairman request that those people recording the meeting declare so and conform to Standing orders and GDPR legislation.

Present: Cllrs C Denny, H West, J Hay, C Pady, K Clifford, E Jones, R Watts, A Parr, S Real, J Gardiner and P Arnott.

Also in attendance: DCC Cllr M Shaw, EDDC Cllr H Parr and S Haines (clerk)

Members of the public: 4.

20/08/88 Welcome by Chair

20/08/89 Receipt & Approval of apologies for absence. Cllr Turner (unwell) Cllr Jarman (absent)

20/08/90 Police Report. Not received, Cllr West complained that we pay a sum of money for this service and we are not getting it. Not good enough.

20/08/91 Declarations of Interest. Cllr West declared an interest on public question time as members of the CVRA, would be speaking and he is a member.

20/08/92 Public Question time (maximum 15 minutes) A member of public spoke about the invasion of the Himalayan Balsam on the river Coly, this is an extremely invasive species and each head can contain up to 800 seeds, a group of volunteers has been gathered and they will pull up the weeds before they seed and leave them beside the river to rot (this is official guidance on how to manage the weed) they asked the PC if they would consider helping from an insurance point of view? Cllr Parr stated that it is the land owners responsibility to have adequate public liability insurance to cover volunteers doing such works, he advised the member of public to contact each land owner and check that they would be covered, the clerk will double check with our insurers if they would be covered on PC land.

A member of public spoke on behalf of the CVRA:

The meeting we all attended last October was instigated at the instruction of the Parish Council and adjourned before it commenced on the basis the SEA/HRA assessments might impact the plan policies requiring significant changes to be made and therefore there was no point in a discussion until the two assessments had been completed and any necessary amendments had been made to the plan. We would all then be able to discuss the plan in a form which reflected the results of these formal assessments rather than a plan which could be subject to change. In view of this, and with the assurance there would be ample time available to reconvene the meeting before Regulation 14 consultation commenced, we agreed to adjourn. In the event only a few fairly minor changes were required to the plan by the two assessments and a further 9 months has elapsed. This was probably the main objective of the adjournment.

That position has changed in that we are now being told that it is not possible to meet because no significant changes to the plan can now be made before the Regulation 14 consultation as this would result in a need for fresh SEA and HRA assessments. I am not convinced this is the case, given there is no real intent to make any of the amendments we have suggested, but it is a possibility.

It seems the instruction from the Parish Council to meet with us and consult properly has been deliberately ignored.

Regulation 14 is a statutory consultation process and is expressly **not** about plan making but about presenting the completed plan to the community for comment, positive or negative. This will be done through written representation, possibly through some form of carefully worded questionnaire, and all comments will then be considered by the NP Steering Group. Essentially, almost all of our comments have already been made and have, as will be claimed by the NP Steering Group, considered as part of the plan making process and rejected. The objective, to avoid any meaningful consultation with CVRA will have been achieved and the plan will then move forward to the formality of the examination stage by EDDC and an independent examiner. The last stage will be a referendum in May/June next year at which a simple majority is required for the plan to be adopted. At the Regulation 14 stage of the plan process no major alterations will be accepted as the plan making process should have ensured that there is broad agreement to all draft policies in the plan. As we still have concerns, which are well known to the NP Steering Group, in respect of some of the

draft policies and as CVRA represent a sizeable proportion of the community there is not yet broad support for the draft plan and the meeting we were promised to address this has been denied to us.

It would be standard practise in such circumstances to consult informally prior to the formal Regulation 14 process to resolve any outstanding uncertainties in respect of any policies which representative groups have raised as any significant amendments to the draft plan policies after Regulation 14 would probably result in the need for a further Regulation 14 consultation. I believe the NP Steering Group have already been advised this approach would be preferable.

Consequently, any changes of any significance will be rejected in the Regulation 14 process unless large numbers in the community raise the same concerns about a specific policy or policies. If not, concerns will be addressed, and mainly rejected, on the basis there is already broad community support to the plan policies prior to the formal consultation.

One of the problems with the NP process is that there is very little guidance or regulation in relation to what constitutes consultation during the plan making period of the process. It could therefore be claimed that the limited opportunity for CVRA to have any part in this part of the process is sufficient and I am sure that is what they will do. Very frustrating but that is where we are.

Firstly, the open day, an event at which the community could see the draft plan for the first time and make comment on very small post it labels. Given that the basic thrust of the various policies gives little cause for concern without a more detailed analysis I am not at all surprised that most people would not find major fault. However, that in no way means that the wording of the policies will not present opportunity for unscrupulous developers to exploit. Once the plan is adopted it will be the wording which is crucial not the overall intent as it is the plan which purports to represent the needs and aspirations of the community. Our concerns have always centred on the wording and not the overall intent of the various policies and that is why this form of consultation is not sufficient to address these concerns.

Secondly, the workshop was attended by an invited few who were unlikely to raise concerns.

Thirdly, our meeting was, of course, a non-event and adjourned before it started.

Finally, the representation afforded to CVRA on the Committee was not offered until after the plan policies had been formulated and is therefore symbolic only. To my knowledge there has only been one meeting since last October. In effect this gesture has been of little or no effect and our presence has simply been tolerated, not welcomed.

After much discussion Cllr West proposed that the PC should write to the NP steering group and instruct them to meet with the CVRA to discuss the plan, this will be a meeting that was promised by the steering group back in October, this was seconded by Cllr Arnott, two Cllrs voted against, 2 abstained, the rest agreed, motion carried.

a) Email from Ian Priestley Chair of CVRA to be discussed. Cllr Parr pointed out that some items brought up by Mr Priestley were not PC issues, Wetlands, Sheeps Marsh, bonfires, slurry spreading and Grammar School parking are not PC responsibilities, he did say the PC could write to the Grammar School and ask how they are planning on managing the children being dropped off and picked up with no buses when they return to school in September. Mr Priestley was grateful for the letter offer, he then pressed about the issue of a safe road crossing in Colyford, Cllr Parr agreed to put this on the main agenda for the September meeting. Cllr Hay spoke about the need for new Highway committee members, he stated that he has been on the committee for 12 years and in that time has only missed 2 meetings, he is extremely dedicated. Cllr Clifford stated that he is the other member of the committee but announced that he would like to come out of it and concentrate on other things. Cllr Jones stated that we agreed a couple meeting ago that if somebody is not able to attend a meeting then they should inform the clerk who would look for another Cllr to represent the Parish, recently a highways meeting was missed as this did not happen. Mr Priestley then asked about Cllr Jarman, he has not attended a meeting since the have been virtual and he does not send his apologies, he asked if he was still a member, Cllr Parr confirmed that he attended the Annual Parish Inspection the previous week.

20/08/93 Approval of the minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 13th July 2020. Proposed by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Pady agreed by all. Minutes approved.

20/08/94 Matters arising from the Minutes. Cllr West pointed out a few items missing from this agenda, Lishams Drain and Colyton and Colyford highway issues, Stephen Kelly to be chased, he proposed these be on the next agenda, seconded by Cllr Jones. Cllr Jones also pointed out that in the last meeting Cllr Hay was tasked with

drafting a letter to SWW and bringing it to this meeting for approval, Cllr Parr apologised and explained that Cllr Hay had bought the letter to him, he had edited it slightly and sent it on to SWW, and a reply has already been received.

20/08/95 Report from County Councillor See Appendix A Cllr Shaw explained his report has been sent out for Cllrs to read, He added that the County Council has a new scheme where highways officers will discuss with Parish and Town Councils and come up with a three year priority of jobs. Cllr Watts voiced concerns over prioritising certain roads, as they all need to be maintained, Cllr Shaw explained that this is a nationwide scheme.

20/08/96 Report from District Councillors Cllr Arnott sent his report – see *Appendix B* – he urged everybody to read it, it is very long but is a summary of 6 months’ worth of hard work and highlights what the district do. Cllr H Parr had some technical difficulties and was unable to be heard, she was invited to send her report through – see *Appendix C*. Cllr Arnott spoke on behalf of Cllr H Parr and said she may have wanted to tell the PC that there is a potential although nothing has been confirmed yet that some District Councils (EDDC included) may be deciding to back out of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

20/08/97 Highway Matters

- a) Letter received from a resident of Colyton RE concerns over speeding traffic through Govers Meadow, he has requested a speed camera along with speed humps to slow the traffic down. Another Email received from another resident echoing the same thoughts. Cllr Jones proposed this be added to the list of issues for Stephen Kelly, seconded by Cllr West. Agreed by all.
- b) Temporary prohibition of Through Traffic (Ref TTRO2035664) Wednesday 16th September – Friday 18th September Whitwell Lane, Colyford will be closed, this is considered necessary to investigate loss of water pressure.
- c) Temporary prohibition of Through Traffic (Ref TTRO2036025) Tuesday 22nd September for a maximum of five days Holyford Lane, Colyford will be closed, this is considered necessary for BT to replace pole. Cllr West stated that residents have not been informed of this.
Cllr Pady wanted to say that he has contacted Stephen Kelly requesting a site visit to Lishams Drain, he will inform the PC when he has a reply.

20/08/98 Report from Meetings Attended. Cllr Hay attended a meeting of the Football Club at the Playing Fields, they are hoping to reopen the bar this Saturday.

20/08/99 Correspondence

- a) Email – EDDC AONB Summer Update
- b) Email – The Rural Bulletin
- c) Email – EDDC Covid-19 Residential and Business updates.
- d) Email – P3 Summer Newsletter
- e) Email from EDDC – Consultations on new Pavement Licence Applications for Town and Parish Councils.
- f) Email – Devon and Cornwall Commissioners newsletter – July edition.
- g) Email reply from South West Water, further investigation is necessary. Next full meeting.

20/08/00 Finance

Minutes of the meeting held Monday 27th July (Appendix H to be noted
Accounts to be approved for payment

DD Opus Electricity 0.39 VAT 0.02 **Total 0.41 pounds.**

DD Talk talk Telephone and Broadband 35.00 VAT 7.00 **Total 42.00 pounds.**

BACS Viridor Waste management 119.90 VAT 23.98 **Total 143.88 pounds.**

BACS Tom Palmer Transporting and spreading gravel onto footpaths 150.00 VAT 30.00 **Total 180.00 pounds.**

BACS EDDC Emptying of three dog bins for 2020 – 2021 780.00 VAT 156.00 **Total 936.00 pounds.**

BACS Halcyon Landscapes Grounds Maintenance for July 501.66 VAT 100.33 **Total 601.99 pounds.**

The above accounts were approved for payment, proposed by Cllr West, Seconded by Cllr Clifford agreed by all, Cllr Pady asked if a letter of thanks could be written to the Colliers for the donation of the river gravel, as chair of Amenities it was suggested that he write the letter.

- a) Clerks leave. Discussed in committee. Proposed by Cllr Parr, seconded by Cllr Pady, agreed by all.
- b) Reimbursement to a Councillor for conference call charges incurred before the zoom account was created an amount of £16.37. Other payments to this affect have already been agreed so this must be also.
- c) RS Homes, advice from DALC. The advice was to contact DCC to see if the closure was done correctly, it seems more notice could have been given but we are most likely not going to get anywhere with this, Cllr Parr stated that although he does not regret spending this money on the bus service, we should think twice in the future as it would be unlikely that any money would be returned. Cllr Watts proposed that we regretfully stop pursuing this as it does not look like we are going to win, this was seconded by West and agreed by all.
- d) Communication from Symonds and Sampson RE Land at Stafford Cross to be noted.
- e) Quotes from tree surgeons to complete works on two trees at Road Green. To be discussed in committee.
- f) Confirmation from the Cambridge Building Society that the clerk is now named on the account.
- g) Clerk requests Wednesday 26th and Thursday 27th August off as holiday. Approved
- h) Mill Field site second survey. To be discussed in committee.

20/08/01 Planning

Minutes of the meeting held Monday 27th July – (Appendix I) to be noted

a Planning Applications

20/1168/FUL Colcombe Abbey Farm Colcombe Road Colyton - J W Voysey & Sons - Roof over cattle loafing area. Proposed by Cllr Real, seconded by Cllr Watts, agreed by all. SUPPORTED.

20/1392/FUL Bridleways Holyford Lane Colyford – Mr Hammett - Change of use of existing land (agricultural and South West Water) under the applicants ownership to domestic use for the existing dwelling (Class use C3) and for the relocation and enlargement of a new storage outbuilding. Proposed by Cllr Watts, seconded by Cllr Parr agreed by all. SUPPORTED.

20/1540/FUL Land Adjacent Borough House Swan Hill Road Colyford – Mr & Mrs Bennett - Construction of garden shed and summer house. Proposed by Cllr West, seconded by Cllr Jones agreed by all. SUPPORTED.

20/1609/FUL Lawdeshayne Farm Colyton - R C Dymond And Sons - Roof canopy to existing slurry tank. Proposed by Cllr Pady, seconded by Cllr Denny, agreed by all. SUPPORTED.

20/1247/FUL Land At Munchkins Miniature Shetland Rescue Munchkins Barn Colyton Hill Colyton – Mr Marx - Siting of 2 field shelters and retention of 4 existing field shelters for use in association with Munchkins Miniature Shetland Rescue Centre. Cllr Pady proposed we support with the condition that as this area is in an AONB the shelters are positioned sensitively and are not visible, this was seconded by Cllr Denny and agreed by all.

b Planning Decisions – to be noted

20/0934/FUL Alaska Lodge Stafford Barton Swan Hill Road Colyford – Mr Langdon - Proposed conversion and alteration of barn to form 1 residential dwelling, formation parking area and associated works – Approved with conditions.

20/0910/LBC Logshayne Farm Colyton – Mrs Broom - Retention of internal/external works to barn; insert 4 rooflights on south east elevation; 2 rooflights on north west elevation and re-plaster all internal walls at ground, first and second floors; replacement wooden doors, repairs to slate roof; replacement timber double glazed windows; replace guttering and fascia boards; replacement timber cladding on north and south elevations to form 2 units of holiday accommodation – Approved.

c Planning Correspondence

Cllr Pady informed the PC that he has been in contact with Mr Ebdon at Planning East and the Whispering Pines development will have the planting screening enforced as per the planning application.

20/08/02 Amenities

- a) Minutes from the Amenities Committee held 27th July (Appendix J) to be approved for publication. These were approved.
- b) Annual Parish Inspection. Cllr Pady thanked everybody for the turn out, he proposed that the results be discussed at an Amenities meeting that could be held after the Finance and Planning meetings on 24th Aug. Cllr Gardiner stated that a few actions were picked up as a hazard, these should be dealt with immediately. This was agreed by all. Cllr Denny requested he be allowed to do some investigation into water supply at the allotments and bring it to the next meeting. This was agreed by all. Cllr Watts requested anything John cannot do, quotes be gathered for by the next Full meeting. This was agreed by all.
- c) Willow branch in river at PMPF. Action on this will be delayed until the birds have stopped nesting, it will remain on the agenda as a reminder.
- d) Dog fouling signs received from EDDC and given to Cllr Hay for distribution. Cllr Hay has done this,
- e) Lopping of trees at the PMPF overhanging the pavement and hedge in need of cutting. Cllr Pady to approach Mr Hurford to cut the hedge at the Reece Strawbridge Centre, quote to be gathered for tree work.
- f) Reminder of John Rollings holiday 17th August – 1st September, bins will need emptying and play parks will need cleaning. Cllr Pady volunteered to empty the bins, he explained that Brian Norris usually helps him. Clerk to approach Mr Fitzpatrick to see if he will clean the play parks for £10 an hour. Cllr West informed that he has asked Mr Palmer to empty the cemetery trailer. John to remove memorial seat at the cemetery which has collapsed, the family will need to be contacted to see if they wish to purchase a replacement from East Devon.

20/08/03 Potential insurance claim on Social Club. The clerk informed the Council that the Social Club has experienced some flood damage from a leak in the roof beck in Feb/March time, the clerk is in contact with the Club and the insurance company who was covering us at the time.

20/08/04 Neighbourhood Plan update plus publication on Website. Cllr Real informed the council that the plan would be going out for consultation in September. Cllr Arnott proposed that the Parish Council be allowed to see the document before it goes out to consultation, this was seconded by Cllr Watts, one Cllr abstained and the rest agreed.

20/08/05 Public Question Time for items covered on the agenda only? Cllr Parr stated that these meetings go on far too long as it is, the public can have their say at the beginning of the meeting and there is no need for a second section. Cllr Arnott asked if other councils do this, the clerk confirmed that some do have 10 mins at the beginning and 5 mins at the end for public participation but they are very strict on it not over running. Cllr Watts proposed we do not have a second public question time at the end of the agenda, seconded by Cllr Pady, one Cllr against.

20/08/06 Communications – Accessibility Statement – Cllr Watts Cllr Watts explained that the webmaster has been working during the last couple months on the Accessibility Statement which means our website will be accessible to people of all abilities. The clerk explained that he does this by running the web pages and documents through a programme which highlights any issues which would make it harder for people of different abilities to access. From the information gained from the webmaster there is no final document to be signed off, and Cllrs would only be able to approve this if a working group got together and ran the tests themselves. Cllr Watts stated that he would confirm this with the webmaster. Cllr West reported that past minutes do not seem to be on the website, clerk to chase.

20/08/07 Reece Strawbridge Centre. Cllr Hay reported that a meeting is due to be held on Wednesday. Cllr Parr reported that a copy of the insurance document naming the PC has now been received as requested. Cllr Watts proposed that the Reece Strawbridge Centre be removed from future agendas as a continuous item and only be added if requested by the committee. This was seconded by Cllr Jones, one Cllr voted against.

20/08/08 Dolphin Street Phone Box. Cllr Clifford confirmed that he never sees anybody using the phone box, it is a shame it is not bright red and listed. It would cost the Parish Council to keep it and there is no need for it. Cllr West proposed it be removed, seconded by Cllr Jones, two voted against, two abstained, motion carried.

20/08/09 Matters to be taken into Committee. Council to go into committee to discuss clerks leave and various quotes.

20/08/10 Items brought to the CPC's attention after the agenda had been published – to be noted. Cllr West asked for information on the Kittles fund, clerk confirmed that the information would be sent out.

20/08/11 Dates of future meetings

Finance & Planning – Monday 24th August

Full CPC – Monday 14th September. (Clerk on holiday)

Meeting closed 21:40.

Appendix A

County Councillor's Report, August 2020

Stop Line Way and Cycle routes at the County's AGM County officers are continuing to work on the purchase of the land for the missing section of the Stop Line Way in Seaton Wetlands and I am in touch with them regularly about this. Funds for the purchase are in this year's budget and for the work in next year's. As I have reported before, I am disappointed that the County is unable to press ahead with the remainder of the Stop Line Way in the Axe Valley, so as to link Seaton and Axminster. In this light it was interesting that a similar issue was under the spotlight at the County's delayed AGM, held by Zoom on 23 July. My Green colleague, Cllr Jacqi Hodgson, had proposed a cycle route between Totnes and Littlehempston so as to enable a through route from Totnes to Newton Abbot. The Cabinet proposed a negative amendment, and a protracted debate ensued in which local Lib Dem and Green members attempted to move the proposal forward. I supported them and was able to mention our own issues. Although, with a large Conservative majority in the Council, the Cabinet view prevailed, cycle routes are becoming a major issue at County.

Locality Budget Most of my 2020-21 Locality Budget is still available for local community groups and parish/town councils to apply for. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/democracy/councillors-nav/locality-budgets/>

Traffic Group meeting The first online meeting of the group was held on 6 July and it seemed helpful to participants that Steve Kelly was able to check issues instantly on his computer. The next meeting will be on Zoom on 7 September and I will send out invitations nearer the time.

Black Lives Matter My Independent colleague Claire Wright, responding to 6th-formers at the King's School, has proposed a motion welcoming the protests which took place in several places in Devon around 'Black Lives Matter' and suggesting ways in which the Council could help address these. I have seconded her proposal, which will be debated in September. Axe Valley Reminiscence Project I attended a Zoom meeting on 20 July about this proposed new spin-off from the innovative 'Living Memories' project run by Brian Norris of Colyton (living-memories.net). This has potential for linking up individuals and groups in the area as well as combating isolation.

Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee I have been re-appointed to this committee for 2020-21.

Community Hospitals I am supporting a Colyford resident has launched a petition on the Government website to reopen community hospital beds: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/319223>

Appendix B

Report from District Councillor Paul Arnott August 2020

Since the new administration took over at East Devon DC at the end of May this year, the members and officers have continued to deal with the most serious crisis ever to hit the operations of councils in the United Kingdom.

As Leader of the Council, I appointed a new Portfolio Role within our Cabinet to include **Covid-19 Response and Recovery**, Cllr Jess Bailey from West Hill. Jess and the Strategic Lead officer for Corporate Services, Karen Simpkin, have now delivered a six month review of all the actions the District Council has been involved in, and I am pleased to include this document as the main body of this month's report. I hope it gives an insight into the breadth of the work achieved.

Meanwhile, I have continued to be involved in meetings of "Team Devon", involving all the district leaders and CEOs with their Devon CC equivalents, operating closely with the Police, Health Authorities and central government. The key concern must be, what happens in the event of a second spike and another lockdown? I am in no doubt that East Devon has learned an immense amount of great value, as reflected in the briefing below.

We await final confirmation from central government of funds to be disbursed to us to assist us to make up for our losses in income and increased costs, but are hopeful that by the Autumn we will have been able to settle these matters.

The below is a very long read, but if I may I do commend it to you. It gives one of the best insights available as to the work of your district council

EDDC Covid-19 response

Introduction

This report outlines details of actions taken across EDDC to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. The report also provides a high level summary of future recovery actions. A detailed organisation-wide Recovery Plan is work in progress in conjunction with Devon County Council and will be submitted to Cabinet in due course.

Our corporate response included the following:

- Trigger of the Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Plans
- Mobilisation of the Strategic Coordination Group and Tactical Coordination Group multi-agency meetings twice a week
- OPIC multi-agency meeting
- Joint working with Police, County and others on Covid responses
- Daily and weekly updates for Members

Response by Service area:

Andy Wood – Service Lead Growth, Development and Prosperity Service

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

- Reallocation of resources to support deployment of retail/hospitality/leisure, small business and discretionary grant schemes (circa £50m) working closely with Revenues and Benefits colleagues.
- Joint working with Devon authority economic development teams to develop a county wide discretionary grant framework.
- Redundancy support activity e.g. in relation to Flybe – working with DCC, DWP and the Heart of the South West LEP to support events and creation of an online jobs dashboard resource.
- Airport support – regular stakeholder engagement including DCC, LEP and BEIS to formulate package of support.
- Webinars - funded additional webinar and workshop support through Cosmic to support remote working and development of digital skills for businesses. Supporting webinars held by other organisations – Exeter Science Park series.
- Frequency of business newsletters increased from quarterly to weekly. Supported by social media, with sharing key messages through various EDDC accounts – including twitter & LinkedIn.
- Majority of staff relating to habitat mitigation and green infrastructure activity were furloughed due to inability to operate safely on site or progress projects during lock down.

Ongoing actions/future recovery actions

- Business engagement survey – identifying successful adaptations and sharing best practice. Precursor to establishing Business Ambassador programme.
- We have established a network of employment, education, skills and training providers with regard to redundancy response events - learning from the experience with Axminster Carpets.
- Support for development of Devon Business and Economic Recovery Plan – now published
- Responded to call for shovel ready projects through LEP with potential to support early delivery e.g. through future skills academy.

- Recovery planning and need for additional investment being picked up through updated Enterprise Zone implementation plan – needs to be informed by an understanding of the impacts on the commercial property market, particularly office development.
- Launch of enhanced business support programme ‘adapt and thrive’.
- Working with DCC and LEP in relation to potential for a free port designation.
- Ongoing communications e.g. newsletter (with a reduced frequency).
- All furloughed staff have now returned with revised operating procedures/risk assessments.

Additional comments

- Range of evidence suggests that the District is one of the most vulnerable nationally in terms of potential for increased unemployment as furlough ends.
- Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the Service Plan for the Growth, Development and Prosperity team – activity detailed above largely falls outside of current Service Plan.
- Focus on ensuring a green recovery rather than just a return to business as usual.

Amy Gilbert-Jeans – Service Lead Housing

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

As part of our response phase, we considered new priorities which we grouped as follows;

- Keeping residents Safe
- Protecting residents incomes and livelihoods
- Sustaining Critical Services
- Supporting Communities and Recovery

Ongoing actions/future recovery actions

- Every part of response phase for housing has had to continue throughout the additional recovery work.
- We have created a Housing Recovery Plan as a high level document that gives residents an indication of what services are operating as normal and where there are current restrictions.

Recovery actions in addition;

- Working with other Districts, Housing Providers and the MHCLG to look at how we step down the ‘everybody in’ approach that has been taken to ensure nobody is homeless through the crisis. With increased numbers of people in temporary accommodation we now need to consider ‘move on’ plans for each individual/household. We are constantly alert to funding streams that we might be able to access to improve our position here, the crisis has seen an overspend on our homelessness budget due to the higher numbers of people we have placed in temporary accommodation.
- We have fast tracked Sailors Rest, Exmouth (12 self-contained flats purchased by the HRA at the end of 2019) and designated the use to move on accommodation as a direct way of assisting people in temporary accommodation.
- We are continuing to review arrears cases to ensure we are providing as much support and assistance as possible to people who are struggling, working closely with Housing Benefits to do this.
- Constantly monitoring demand to services to ensure we have Officers deployed in the right areas and can respond to peaks in demand as and when required.
- Following the closure of all community centres, we are risk assessing all 14 Community Centres with a view to beginning to open back up with appropriate safety measures in place.
- Working with legal to prepare for Courts re-opening, be ready to prioritise cases as appropriate.

- Recovering our tenant participation work, zoom meetings with our tenants to resume meetings. We have also consulted with tenants and asked for their views on our recovery plan.
- Working on a special edition of Housing Matters to outline how we are recovering the housing service.
- Created a complete remobilisation plan for the start-up of the Integrated Asset Management contract following 3 months of only emergency works being undertaken. A considerable back-log of non-essential repairs built up and this work has had to be carefully reviewed and a system created to book these jobs back in. This has been done in partnership with Ian Williams and been monitored by the day. A communications plan has been in place to ensure we are clear on how we are communicating these messages to residents, we have created a specific risk register which is monitored weekly to ensure we are constantly reviewing updated government advice that may change the situation or cause us to review how we are running the service.
- Constant focus on gas compliance, we have now brought non-compliant properties down to just 9 (as of 09/07/20) at its highest this was 34. Each non-compliant property is having a weekly risk assessment carried out over the phone until we are able to get into the property. We are reviewing advice on this constantly and due to non-compliance self-referred ourselves to the Social Housing Regulator.
- We are reviewed the planned works programme for the year, many programmes have not been able to start so we are looking at the financial consequences of this in order to best decide how to proceed through the rest of 20/21.
- We have reviewed and signed off all RAMS and risk assessments from all contractors who work across the housing stock.
- We are reviewing property acquisition scheme in relation to what has been achieved since lockdown and what potential penalties there could be for pay-back of receipts (slight extension now given for pay-back) risk of financial impact and also stock levels.
- Monitor RP completions to understand the impact on affordable housing delivery in the district.
- As part of restarting the Housing Support Service we are considering how we can operate a 'face to face' service without entering people's properties. Currently reviewing options with Corporate Health and Safety Team. Options could include 1:1 drop in sessions in community centres, setting up marquees on estates with Housing Officers being available outside to talk to people.

Charlie Plowden - Service Lead Countryside & Leisure Service

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

Countryside team:

- Our Tree team continued to provide advice to residents and making socially distanced site visits relating to issues on TPOs and also planning consultations so keeping the service "live" throughout the lockdown.
- Decision taken to keep all our Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) open as an important area of green space for local people to use during the lockdown restrictions of taking one form of exercise a day close to your home.
- We carried on with our LNR management tasks to help with both habitat and species recovery plans which has seen really a positive improvements in wildlife numbers due to the lack of disturbance from visitors.
- LNR car parks were closed as were facilities such as toilets, bird hides, outdoor learning room & visitor centre at the Seaton Wetlands.
- All our public events, outdoor learning and outreach activities were temporarily postponed following Government/PHE guidance to implement the social distancing guidance. We responded positively to the lockdown by moving our outdoor events activities onto a digital platform with the creation of a wide range of activities to connect with nature and learn about wildlife in your own garden or in your own home, these received a huge amount of interest.
- Created an online package of natural environment activities that supported the curriculum for natural sciences and geography modules for both primary and secondary schools.

Thelma Hulbert Gallery team

- The gallery was closed as soon as the lockdown was enforced following Government/PHE guidance.
- The majority of the team were furloughed by Human Resources as a consequence.

- All public events and outreach activities were postponed.
- The THG team developed a series of on line activities and workshops under the “nature shorts” brand working in collaboration with the Countryside team and East Devon AONB Partnership to enable families to stay creative and engaged with the visual arts whilst in lockdown.
- The Gallery Manager negotiated with the Tate to retain the Sir Richard Long exhibition for an extended period so we could use it as part of the gallery’s recovery planning programme.

Manor Pavilion theatre

- The theatre was closed as soon as the lockdown was enforced.
- The Box Office staff were furloughed by Human Resources.
- The Theatre Manager carried out refunds for ticket sales booked in advance and has rescheduled the summer/autumn programme in collaboration with all the performers and local theatre companies to ensure there will be a bounce back on the easing of restrictions.

Ongoing actions/future recovery actions

Countryside team:

- THG & Countryside team working on collaborative post COVID project - ‘Creative Cabin’ - with a planned programme of cultural activities that connect with the communities natural environment to travel around East Devon bringing ‘culture & nature’ on tour as part of a recovery roadshow.
- Countryside team to ensure all its LNRs are COVID compliant - signage and info to ensure social distancing messages clear following Government guidance.
- Countryside team to bring furloughed staff back into operational duties in June and July
- Restart the Wild Exmouth project with a revised work programme by early. Focussed on surveying new wildflower areas, small group volunteering, household bookable events, launching a volunteer training bursary, providing online learning and supporting the re-wilding agenda in the town.
- Countryside team to develop a Wild Honiton project as part of recovery planning with focus on community nature reconnections, nature recovery projects, developing a volunteer network, working with Honiton Town Council and Streetscene to improve the town’s greenspaces with rewilding projects and connecting to AONB.
- Introduce small group and COVID19 safe practical outdoor volunteering in July. This will initially be for groups of 5, pre booked, with a range of mitigation measures to make volunteering viable.
- Trial “Family bubble/Household” events in July and August. A series of bespoke and bookable activities to engage groups in nature and wellbeing across our sites. These will be COVID19 safe and be led by our skilful ranger team. Costs will vary to accommodate different audiences.
- Roll out self-led trails on nature reserves starting with a new wildlife sculpture trail at Seaton Wetlands, this was funded by a successful £4,000 bid to Tesco’s.
- Redesign a series of hides at Seaton Wetlands to allow visitors to again enjoy these popular features and to get close to nature. These will be opened up in a phased manner from mid-July, with a range of mitigation measures to make visiting them as safe as possible.
- Risk assess and resource the reopening of the wetlands toilets to coincide with increase in summer visitors. We are working closely with Streetscene to see how this can be achieved and hope to open before the end of July.
- Social marketing. Rollout our monthly newsletter and continue our high quality engaging content on our social media platforms. This is focussed on outdoor activities, suggested guided walks, noticing nature and wellbeing features. Alongside this a series of videos from the team and partners will be published on a regular basis to engage audiences who cannot visit our sites.
- The above programme will see the team adapt and evolve as we find new ways to engage and inspire visitors and residents at this difficult time. With a combination of restarting and redesigning programmes along with adapting visitor facilities we hope to recover the best of Wild East Devon and look forward to an exciting year ahead.

THG team:

- THG to investigate putting its shop merchandising online to ensure income streams are "live" on reopening and are COVID compliant.
- THG working with Exmouth TC and Countryside team to redesign project plan for Abode of Love to synergise with easing of restrictions to enable work with Exmouth Community College, local artists etc.
- THG operational actions:
 - Become more organisationally collaborative
 - Gallery opening: Limit on visitors/controlled visitor flow /time slots
 - Become more organisationally collaborative
 - Increase THG Out & About offer – ‘Recovery Roadshow’
 - Gallery opening: Limit on visitors/controlled visitor flow /time slots
- THG team to come off furloughing scheme June and assist with reopening and relaunch of the programme.
- Thelma Hulbert Gallery (THG), Honiton will reopen its doors to the public on 11th July with its acclaimed exhibition: ARTIST ROOMS Richard Long Being in the Moment. This ambitious exhibition examines our relationship with the natural world, is kick-starting East Devon District Council’s programme of cultural recovery.
- The Richard Long exhibition will be accompanied by an inspiring new touring creative programme of art activities, projects and workshops touring neighbourhoods across East Devon over the summer and autumn months.
- To ensure the safety of all visitors and staff, THG has reconfigured the visitor experience in the galleries in line with latest government guidelines.
- The gallery’s new opening hours will be: Thursday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm. Individuals and households of up to 4 people will be able to book a guided tour of the current exhibition (up to 45 minutes) on the THG’s website or by calling the gallery. 6 tours will take place each day.
- The guided tours provide a unique opportunity to have a private visit to THG and its world class exhibition. The tour will include the THG shop which is selling a new range of greetings cards, ceramics, jewellery, prints and more.
- THG continues to encourage everyone to enjoy its Wild Art garden for picnics, sketching or their general wellbeing.
- For those audiences who are staying at home, THG and Wild East Devon will shortly launch its Recovery Roadshow, with its plans to take nature and culture out to our local communities, rural and urban. A new mobile Creative Cabin will hit the streets with a dynamic programme of art activities, projects, talks, performances and workshops, to support health, wellbeing and respond to our local environment.

Manor Pavilion theatre:

- Manor Pavilion theatre reviewing its opening hours, box office arrangements and likely reopening date following industry guidelines.
- Manor Pavilion theatre to engage EDDC’s Health & Safety Officer to carry out a risk assessment of venue to ensure it will be fully COVID19 compliant on reopening.
- Theatre Manager implementing the 5 step roadmap guidance to reopening theatres recently launched by the DCMS to ensure that the theatre will meet Government guidance.
- Manor Pavilion theatre putting together a programme that considers suitable performances that will meet the social distancing requirements on stage e.g. comedy nights and critically acclaimed shows such as ‘The Audience’, ‘One Man, Two Guvnors’ etc.
- Theatre Manager working with local theatre companies to arrange socially distanced rehearsals utilising its main stage, arts centre and bar area to ensure the theatre provides crucial support to Sidmouth’s cultural sector.

Additional comments

- In lockdown, there has been a reconnection with nature. People have found solace in going out and connecting with nature again. UK visits to greenspaces were up 67% and nearly 90% of people said being in nature made them happy. We have seen bird-song replacing traffic noise and the ability to hear insects instead of the drone of the motorways

- Recovery planning can help transform some of our greenspaces into miniature woodlands, orchards and our verges into wildflower meadows supporting the recovery of East Devon's nature and providing a renaissance with our connection to natural environment.
- The reconnection with nature experienced by many of our communities now needs a new relationship with nature. This is a chance to create a new 'nature aware' society which is connected with a healthy natural environment. The role of planning and economic development can assist with creating new vibrant wildlife friendly greenspaces within in all our developments as these will be needed more than ever in the event of further pandemics and lockdowns.
- Our cultural offer with the THG and Manor Pavilion theatre can help post lockdown the reconnection and healing of our communities using the creative arts to be at the centre of civic regeneration schemes, re-engaging with our communities with a programme of activities and events that helps all our communities rediscover their "sense of place".

Ed Freeman – Service lead Planning Service

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

- No face to face meetings with residents.
- No internal site inspections – particularly relevant for listed buildings and enforcement issues albeit we are reviewing this as restrictions are being eased.
- New systems and processes for receiving and registering planning and building control applications particularly those that come in as paper forms and plans to BDH.
- New processes for validating incoming applications as this was usually done using paper plans and forms, however we have had to ensure that these are held electronically prior to validation to enable this to be done electronically by planners and surveyors working remotely.
- Established new protocols for undertaking site inspections ensuring that these are only done when essential, social distancing rules applied etc.

Ongoing actions/future recovery actions

- Government guidance requires us to take a more flexible approach to matters such as operating hours on constructions sites and planning obligations to help to facilitate recovery of the construction industry.
- Further changes to government guidance and legislation with regards to planning to support the recovery are expected shortly.

Karen Simpkin – Strategic Lead Organisational Development and Transformation Service

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

Human Resources and Learning and Development for EDDC and Strata Services Solutions Ltd

Coronavirus job retention scheme

- In total, 26 employees were consulted with by phone and in writing and placed on furlough. Individual monthly HMRC claims were made for those who remained on furlough totalling £59,860 to date. 8 currently remain furloughed with 18 contacted by phone and in writing to end their furlough/ return them to work.

Vulnerable/extremely vulnerable employees

- Pre-lockdown, identified and ensured arrangements in place for 52 employees who are vulnerable / extremely vulnerable and maintained contact with 28 who needed to self-isolate and are unable to work from home during the lockdown. Ensured risk assessments conducted for all returners, 2 remain off work until shielding restrictions are lifted. Issue specific shielding and social distancing advice.
- Support to staff struggling with home schooling and help with resources and how to manage their work patterns.

Virtual training

- Following arrangements on 17 March 2020 to cancel and postpone planned learning events, 33 virtual training sessions have been arranged (20 held to date) with a total of 275 attendees having attended or booked on. These included working with our training providers to ensure that we put in place specific virtual courses aimed at supporting employees through the national emergency as well as other well-being and skills training.

Staff well-being

- Developed and published a 36-page “Stay well resource pack” which was issued to all employees including to those who were off work due to having to self-isolate long-term.
- Staff survey issued in late June to ask people how they are feeling and what we can do to support them – results awaited.
- Implementation of Mental Health First Aiders – a cohort of staff specially trained to be a first point of contact for those who may be concerned about their mental health and do not wish to discuss matters with their line manager or HR in the first instance.
- Co-ordination of homeworker support through Strata and occupational health for special and IT equipment.

Communications to all staff

- Pre-lockdown communications issued on hygiene, conference calling, counselling support, self-isolation, non-essential travel and non-essential contact.
- Following 2 intensive weeks of daily briefings to staff on operational, coronavirus guidance and wellbeing matters; and a further 4 of twice weekly briefings, the weekly staff communication ‘Stay informed, stay connected, stay well’ was developed and implemented and continues to be issued to staff.
- COVID-19 intranet hub implemented to keep colleagues updating on government advice, managers’ guidance and policy changes.
- Employee’s reminded to update contact details and informed about homeworking tax relief

Revised employment policies

In consultation with Unison:

- WorkSmart – the new normal written and published to comply with Covid secure protocols and guidance for staff and provide for DSE risk assessment for homeworking.
- Job Evaluation and recruitment paused.
- Suite of new guidance documents developed for managers to assist with protocols and messaging for management of new policy related to Covid-19 response and including annual leave, flexible and home working and childcare needs.
- SPP legislation changes implemented along with system update for coronavirus related absence reporting reasons
- Emergency volunteer leave provisions published in accordance with Government guidance
- Service recognition scheme rewards arrangements temporarily changed
- Employment checks and expenses claims processes amended and implemented together with protocols for managing communications by post.
- Key worker guidance and protocols developed and implemented.
- Self-isolation guidance, reporting and recording requirements issued.
- Covid-19 government guidance disseminated.

Communications

From March 10 – July 14 we had 290,724 visitors to our website up just over 51,000 on the same period in 2019.

The most popular pages are still Planning and Recycling & Waste but the Coronavirus hub comes after those two.

From March 16 – July 9

- 101 media inquiries
- 78 statements
- 39 press releases

Social media:

Facebook from March 20 – July 9

- 502 messages sent out - total reach of our posts over this period was more than 1 million people.
- The average reach of each post was 2,388 people. Followers increased from 3,647 (Sept 2019) to 5,246. Likes increased from 3,284 (Sept 2019) to 4,555.

Twitter from March 20 – July 9

- 694 tweets reaching on average 11,900 people each day. Followers increased from 8,020 (Sept 2019) to 8,683

Campaigns supported through social media include EDDC Coronavirus Hub; Think Twice; Hand Hygiene; Catch it, kill it, bin it; Beach safety; Anyone can get it; Social distancing; Looking out for each other; Every Mind Matters; Track and Trace; Domestic abuse; Child sex exploitation; Enjoy Britain Safely; Tourist Charter; Never Alone; Coronavirus Symptoms; NHS volunteers; Scams; Shop Safely; Keep Britain Tidy; NHS Open for Business; Stay home, save lives; Stay alert for your family; Stay alert outdoors; Talkworks; #Unacceptable behaviour; Get your grants and a variety of localised recycling messages.

Newsletters:

- 18 coronavirus Residents' updates
- 17 coronavirus Business updates

Leaflet: Community Hub Handbook delivered to 72,000 households (accessible, non-digital) promoting the coronavirus hub and with key telephone numbers.

Video: Step by step guide to apply for business grants, Hal's PPE production line, two councillor videos for business update.

East Devon app: 20,000 plus users. We used this to promote our coronavirus hub with several messages.

Website: Dedicated coronavirus hub with national and local information for residents, businesses and volunteers.

Community Support Hub

The Community Support Hub was set up to assist individuals needing support with food or prescriptions and other help and to help co-ordinate community effort across the District.

The Community Support Hub was established at the beginning of April and during its existence has dealt with c 2500 calls to support residents and community groups. Setting up the hub required significant work with Strata in developing the web based forms and training our Hubsters on how to use these.

Staff were seconded from the Community Development Team, Homesafeguard and Organisational Development. Training was provided on the telephone system and in how to use the web-forms.

The hub has operated alongside our funding support to help ensure that vulnerable and shielding residents were supported particularly in terms of food provision and other help such as collection of prescriptions.

In support of the food effort, as a District we:

- sourced and delivered 169 emergency food parcels to residents.
- delivered 158 top up dietary requirement food boxes to 39 residents on behalf of Devon County Council.
- have so far signed up 95 residents for priority Tesco and Iceland slots through the new Defra priority supermarket shopping scheme for vulnerable people. We were one of the pilot authorities for this new Defra scheme, giving feedback directly to Defra to help them set it up and improve it.

Corporate Food Funds

As a Council, EDDC put in place two funds to support community, voluntary and charitable groups. These were the Coronavirus Community Food Fund and Covid-19 Prompt Action Fund

Eighteen very worthy projects were funded by our Coronavirus Community Food Fund, giving out a total of £29,487. This fund provided grants of up to £2,500 for any community projects related to providing food to residents of East Devon who were in food poverty during the Coronavirus situation.

In order to ensure that the fund remains able to fulfil its primary objective we have now paused the fund. This is in line with the pausing of the County Council's Covid-19 Prompt Action Fund and will ensure we have enough money available to help deal with a possible second wave of Coronavirus or a noticeable increase in the local unemployment rate. The fund was set up with a budget of £46,976 and has £17,489 remaining.

EDDC has also worked with Devon County Council on a Covid-19 Prompt Action Fund, giving out small grants of up to £500 to a wide variety of community Coronavirus projects. 16 grants were given out jointly by Devon County Council and East Devon. EDDC paid out £3,488 of £25,000 of its available funding, leaving £21,512 yet to be allocated. It will be revived again if there's a second wave of Coronavirus, a noticeable increase in the local unemployment rate or if it is otherwise needed for the recovery phase.

[Ongoing actions/future recovery actions](#)

- Return of remaining furloughed workers / end of furlough scheme / furlough bonus claim.
- Return of clinically extremely vulnerable employees.
- Review of annual leave liability for remainder of the year (planned September 2020)
- Review learning and development provision for managers and staff.
- Deliver Learning Management System.
- Refresh of Council Plan.
- Review resources and skills required to deliver the new Council Plan and further reviews depending on the financial resources available.
- Proactive preparation in Communications to support the Local Outbreak Management Plan.
- The Community Hub will be fully demobilised by end July and any residual calls redirected to the Customer Service Centre. The team have been fully briefed.

[Additional comments:](#)

- We are continuing to monitor attendance in the office which remains minimal at this stage – approximately 30-35 people daily. We will review this occupancy level to ensure the risk assessment is adhered to.
- We will do all we can to retain the culture and 'social glue' which is consistently reported as intrinsic to why people work for EDDC. Critical to this is developing a clear sense of organisational purpose through the Council Plan.
- Sickness absence has remained at the same level as in this quarter as the previous year and is currently projected to be 6.87 days at the end of the year which is low compared to our target of 8.5 days.
- We have had 4 employees who reported absence under the reason coronavirus however the number of days lost being low at 10.5 and 34 employees self-isolated.
- The usual Human Resources provision has continued including managing sickness absence cases, grievances, disciplinary matters and recruitment.

- Recruitment has now fallen to a low but there are still a number of positions in active recruitment.

Libby Jarett – Service Lead Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services & Corporate Fraud & Compliance

We have delivered on a number of the government emergency financial support measures for both the business community and our residents in East Devon and additionally have provided a significant amount of advice and support. Our response is summarised as follows:

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

Grant Scheme & Rate Relief - Supporting local business

- Implemented the government grant scheme. This involved:
 - Scheme 1 & 2 - Designed & implemented a system and application process to administer the government grant scheme which was live within 8 days after receiving the first set of guidance and 15 days after the initial announcement. This included a two code authentication process to reduce risk of potential fraud & bank account checking facility.
 - Paid grants to businesses:
 - 221 grants approved & paid within 24 hours of go live.
 - 1,136 grants approved & paid within 72 hours of go live.
 - This then increased to 1,924 and 3,056 by the end of the first week and first month respectively.
 - To date we have paid out grants in excess of £42.1m under scheme 1 and 2 to 3,613 businesses.
 - Supporting the Growth and Prosperity team with the Discretionary Grant scheme (scheme 3) worth £2.4m with formulating policy, determining applications, responding to queries.
 - Carried out over 4,600 post assurance fraud checks for scheme 1 & 2. A further 73 prepayment fraud checks for scheme 3.
 - Recovering any grants claimed fraudulently or in error on behalf of government.
- Implemented the government's expanded retail discount & nursery discount schemes:
 - 1,134 businesses rebilled under the expanded retail discount scheme. Now benefit from having 100% rate relief for 2020/21 worth £18.62m.
 - 21 nurseries rebilled as now benefit from 100% rate relief for 2020/21 worth £117K.
- Business support and advice:
 - Responded to over 1800 items of post, more than 50% of these related to the business grants. We have also responded to queries raised by MPs, Councillors, etc.
 - Answered and dealt with over 2,100 calls (256% increase) within the first 10 weeks predominately in relation to the business grants.
 - Phoned over 750 businesses regarding why they hadn't claimed their grant.
 - Answered and dealt with 200+ calls in relation to sundry invoices (325% increase) – agreeing deferrals for rent, agreeing payment arrangements, changes to payment methods, etc.

Council Tax and Benefits- Financially supporting residents:

- Implemented government changes to the Local Housing Allowance Rate (these were increased back up to 30th percentile) 975 Housing Benefit (HB) claimants received advantageous changes to their claim
- Implemented government changes to the standard allowance within Working Tax Credit & Universal Credit. 1,368 claims being reassessed resulting in advantageous changes in HB.
- 524 successful new claims made for Council Tax Reduction (CTR).
- Interpret government's new funding initiatives (e.g. self-employment scheme) in relation to how this should be treated for HB and CTR purposes in order to pay residents the right amount as schemes not covered within HB legislation.
- 8, 899 DWP notifications received and assessed between mid-March and June (157% increase). In addition, processed 6,586 other items of benefit work
- Over 1,100 council tax residents have been given changes to their council tax instalments.

- Set up an online financial support form for those who had been negatively impacted. 444 requests have been received. From this residents were provided with tailored support – help with Benefits, Council Tax or via the Financial Hardship Fund
- Create and implemented a Covid-19 Hardship Fund Policy (funding provided by County). So far this new team (pulled together from existing staff) has supported 62 residents amounting to £12,804 being given to help with energy, food etc. as well as referring onto other support agencies – money advice, South West Water Care, Housing Needs, etc.
- £100K of additional government funding for Discretionary Housing Payments. Total fund for 2020/21 now £279,520. To date we have spent £67,355 and dealt with 356 applications.
- Awarded £74,722 in Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF) payments. £62,605.78 has been awarded as a direct result of residents being financially impacted. In comparison the total spend of EHF in 2019/20 was £19,571.
- Answered and dealt with over 13,000 calls in the first 10 weeks. Whilst not a significant increase on last year we experienced a shift in calls from recovery work and moving home to support and advice due to residents financially impacted (furloughed, loss of self- employed earnings, loss of job, etc.).
- Co-ordinated plans for a Devon wide agreed approach for recommencing recovery action to ensure consistency.

Ongoing actions/ future recovery actions

Businesses:

- Still administering and dealing with requests as all schemes still open.
- Recently published government guidance for fraud risk control and assurance measures will require ongoing reporting until March 2021.
- Following initial post assurance fraud checks we will need to undertake targeted investigations including a review of Small Business Rate Relief as part of government assurance controls.
- Recovery and claw back – government will issue guidance in August. However, we have already made a proactive start. Currently 10 cases of which 6 have committed to repay.
- Monitor business rates data to inform budget monitoring and medium term financial plan. Alongside this utilising intelligence led data for assessing economic impact and recovery.
- Start recovery work segmenting Businesses for standard reminders and soft non-standard reminders. Over 500 reminders and letters for circa £1.5m overdue payments.
- 439 new Beach Huts invoices being issued.

Residents:

- Implement the government's CTR hardship scheme for working age. Worth up to £150 off their council tax bill. East Devon's allocation is £713,034. We currently have 3,835 working age residents who will benefit from this. Currently unable to implement this due to delays in system enhancements being received from our external software provider. It is a priority to get this implemented so we can rebill residents and work with those who maybe still struggling to pay outstanding balances.
- New scheme to be implemented. Government have announced a £63m fund to provide personal financial hardship support for food and essentials. Still awaiting guidance. Funding is likely to be distributed via County. As we have a Covid-19 Financial Hardship Fund policy (which has been put in place for this type of support) we can look to link up these funds. We will need to review our policy, engagement with the voluntary sector & partner agencies. There will be ongoing administration of the fund.
- Continue to administer the Covid-19 Financial hardship schemes (funding provided by County). This will include tying funding in to our poverty strategy to not only address immediate need but also helping in rebuilding longer term financial resilience. Working across internal teams e.g. benefits, Council Tax, recovery, Housing and with outside agencies such as regional landlords in the private and social sector, Local Job Centre, Devon County, schools, foodbanks, Homemaker, etc. to promote take up of funds available to

deal with hardship along with DHP and EHF, to ensure that this assistance also reaches those who we would not normally have contact with.

- Prepare to deal with potentially higher volumes of ongoing changes in customer circumstances and new claims for Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction as residents come off the furlough scheme, continue to see changes in self-employment and any increases in unemployment. These have a direct impact on our workloads.
- Formulate and implement plans for recommencing recovery action as this has been paused since March 2020 whilst resources were diverted to implement these financial measures. We are £1.1m down on council tax income (end of May 2020). We are 4 months behind with this work. We recognise there will be a significant amount of extra work we will need to do in working with residents who are struggling to pay to identify wider financial support.
- Need to analyse the benefits and council tax data to assess the impact of Covid-19 in order to help inform poverty strategy.
- Working with our internal and external partners (Housing, DWP, Citizens Advice, Devon County, the Voluntary sector, etc) on promoting and co-ordinating the various financial support funds available to ensure that residents who are financially struggling are being referred and are accessing the various financial support packages. To not only address immediate need but also helping in rebuilding longer term financial resilience.
- Creating welfare experts within the service (using existing resources) ensuring that we have pulled together all the various financial support available within the district so that we are proactively helping and supporting residents effectively as part of rebuilding financial resilience.
- Need to implement additional monitoring data across income streams to help provide accurate information for budget monitoring and MTFP.

Additional comments:

- Our service has been at the forefront of implementing a significant amount of emergency government financial measures for supporting our residents and businesses. We have only been able to achieve this by:
 - The commitment and dedication of staff in all pulling together (which included working additional hours) while being manoeuvred and assigned depending on service area pinch points to alleviate the bottle necks in an agile and fluid way.
 - We have a number of multi skilled officers capable & willing to adapt to new types of work in a relatively short period of time pulling on the strength of the cross training before Covid-19 hit
 - Joining forces with our growth and prosperity teams to deliver the business grants along with support from our finance colleagues
 - Additional staff from licensing and electoral services to backfill customer services roles in order to move cross trained CSC staff into revenues and benefits work.
 - Strata support with setting up new forms, helping to develop the system to administer the grant schemes, changes to telephony, etc.
 - Support from the comms team in both internal and external communications.
 - Pausing other key areas of work in order to prioritise our covid-19 response, such as; recovery, fraud & error, reviews, face to face service delivery, green waste renewals, etc.
- To continue to build with the cross training of staff and agile working to ensure that resources are used in the most effective way and can be shared where need is highest.
- Promote and build upon the shift in customer behaviour that has taken place with higher use of online and automated channels.

Andrew Ennis – Service Lead

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

Health and Wellbeing

Since March work on our health and wellbeing strategy and our public health implementation plan has ceased and our resources have been entirely focussed on covid-19 response actions, including:

- Working with volunteer contacts and councillors helping to identify community volunteer response leads for all 8 towns and 70-80 parishes/villages, a piece of work that resulted in this online publication: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/east-devon-district-council-coronavirus-community-support-hub/community-contacts-in-east-devon/>
- Briefing individual councillors on demand and in some detail on matters relevant to their Ward or Portfolio.
- Helping to set up support for the community groups, including work with Devon County Council's Adult Social Services on their contract for delivery of community support services in East Devon generally and Exmouth in particular with Westbank. Liaising with Devon's Local Pharmaceutical Committee on behalf of Sidmouth volunteers.
- Managing our new "covid.community" incoming emails whilst helping to train and brief East Devon's covid-19 phone hub team. The training covered how to deal with enquiries from volunteers, care homes, callers who were either selling PPE or in need of it, assistance with supermarket deliveries, callers unable to access their medication and even lack of home- heating.
- Working with County and other District colleagues to develop and manage data relating to our shielding residents. This included developing a brand new system, quickly developing an understanding of complex data, spotting then flagging systems issues and training issues, and then arranging for training of our own staff to access the data.
- Focussing on support for clinically shielded people, ranging from emergency food distribution to welfare visits. This has included prioritising and keeping on top of actions being carried out by a number of staff from our Environmental Health team including literally hundreds of telephone calls, sourcing and delivering emergency food parcels to those in need and ultimately we even carried out home visits to check on the welfare of those people in the "shielded" group who no one had been able to contact.
- We have been providing data to both the County Council and to our own SMT assisting with risk assessments and other evaluation work.

Community Safety, Emergency Planning, Business Continuity and Safeguarding

- Our Community Safety and Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator is also our lead Officer for Emergency Planning, Business Continuity and Safeguarding.
- **Community Safety Partnership (CSP)**: actions here include a more virtual delivery with meetings via skype on a bi-weekly basis linked to covid-19 lockdown to tie in with the increased risk associated with hidden crimes of Domestic Abuse & Violence/online exploitation/ Modern day slavery/ radicalisation, and other CSP priorities. Offers of virtual training and messaging for other service providers.
- **We have organised Multi Agency meetings** online to identify operational delivery around Exmouth, funding support from Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide Community Marshals for ten weeks this summer and provision of CCTV to Marine Drive to assist the police in preventing and tackling alcohol related antisocial behaviour, anti-social driving and beach safety working closely with the Coast watch organisation and Exmouth life guards.
- **Liaison with Police neighbourhood Teams Exmouth & Rural east and DYS Space** youth outreach to interact with youths who have been active in our communities despite "lockdown" and where some have been causing antisocial behaviour.
- **Safeguarding updates** have continued to be delivered virtually by way of updates from Devon Safeguarding Adult Board and Devon Children and Family Partnership.
- **Business Continuity & Emergency Planning activities have of course been onerous**; initially the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was activated back in February. This has moved on from a preparedness role to an operational delivery role. This work commenced with an Internal Pandemic exercise for the SMT+ identify 20 actions to hone our current plan and an External multi agency workshop with Local Resilience Forum (LRF) key partners. Both our BCP & our Emergency Plan (EP) have been formally activated in response to the pandemic. We have been carrying out a mid-point review of BCP delivery during the EP response phase.
- We have been involved in weekly strategic and operational multi agency (LRF) virtual meetings and with our own SMT (in its "Emergency Management Team" role) and we have provided operational support, linking to the LRF and providing daily updates on the latest developments in legislation and guidance. In fact 2400

Gov.uk messages have already been received, reviewed and shared with Service and Strategic Leads where they are relevant to the delivery of their services.

Environmental Health Private Sector Housing (including private water supplies and better care fund grants)

The team's actions have included:

- Established a new working from home preference for all team members
- We have developed a safe system for accessing the council offices only if there has been an absolute need.
- Conducted all formal meetings via teleconference or videoconference
- Temporarily suspended/reduced operational visits in all areas of work during lockdown.
- Developed a dynamic risk assessment for essential site visits during the lockdown period and phased return to normality
- Established new customer contact procedure prior to face-to-face visits
- Established a new Private Sector Housing news webpage and issued COVID-19 related guidance for areas of the team's work
- Streamlined the suite of analysis for mandatory private water supply samples to capture the highest risks, reducing the amount of time spent on site and cost of samples for residents.

Car Parking

- Our car parks have remained open throughout the pandemic and Civil Enforcement Officers have carried out daily safety checks in addition to assisting with our covid-19 response by organising and delivering hundreds of emergency food parcels to households in need. The daily checks included wiping down ticket machine contact surfaces with sanitiser and we used social media to promote our mobile phone app "parkmobile" payment option to avoid physical contact and encourage social distancing.
- Not only did lockdown on 23 March effectively reduce our car parks revenue from an average £10,000 per day for this time of year to more or less nothing, many of our parking permit residents who had bought annual permits for work or shopping purposes requested either refunds or agreed to suspend their permits with an "open" restart date.
- We also agreed to allow free of charge parking for NHS workers responding the covid-19 and held our winter offer (just £2 per day) in all of our car parks for the whole of April and May.
- Although we continued to patrol our car parks the officers were, wherever possible, instructed to act informally and during this period.

Environmental Health, Environmental Protection (including antisocial behaviour)

- As we have seen more people spending more of their time at home it is probably no surprise that our services have been in high demand in trying to resolve a range of issues involving people complaining about the behaviour of their neighbours.
- With the added pressure of household recycling centres begin closed early on in lockdown this has included an increased number of complaint about both excessive accumulations of rubbish in gardens and garden bonfires causing a nuisance to neighbours. We have also seen an increase in complaints about fly tipping and in the last month complaints about antisocial behaviour in general were up by 400% compared to the same period last year. The team has continued to work with the police on these complaints alongside our ongoing planning, construction and contaminated land work.

Pest Control

- Our pest control service has continued throughout lockdown. We undertook an early risk assessment and with suitable social distancing and hygiene measures we felt that we could continue to safely deliver this important front line service. Interestingly we have seen one of the busiest springs / early summers for domestic rats that the pest control industry can remember.

Environmental Health Commercial Premises

- The Council' EHOs are now responsible for the "first response" to the official "Infectious disease single case plan" so that, in contrast to our former role where we assisted Public Health England's doctors in their investigations, we are now the lead for all non-Covid-19 infectious disease case investigations. We have for example been giving advice on outbreak controls to care homes with norovirus outbreaks.
- The Officers have seen increasing demand for covid-19 related business advice. Around half of our work demand has been Covid-19 related over the last few months.
- The work has included providing advice to residents who are complaining about other people failing to adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- Although we have continued to give advice to new food businesses on all aspects of food safety, hygiene and workplace safety but we have currently stopped carrying out routine food hygiene inspections following instructions from the Food Standards Agency. There are now around 400 inspection visits technically overdue and we await further guidance from the Agency.
- We have however been maintaining contact with those poor performing/ non-compliant and high risk food businesses that we know about.
- Our Officers have been incredibly busy giving business advice on Covid 19 security and we have ourselves been undertaking covid-19 trading and development to develop our own professional expertise in this area thereby ensuring officers are competent and confident in interpreting the Coronavirus Restriction regulations which have been changing by the week.
- This has included both investigating and giving advice to business following complaints from residents and requesting and assessing businesses own risk assessment around their Covid 19 security.
- We have of course been busy investigating complaints about a range of businesses that appeared to be trading when they should have been closed and both warnings and formal Notices have been served as appropriate.
- EDDC's Officers have been part of weekly meetings of experts from across the region to ensure consistency across our different functions.

Corporate Health and Safety

- The corporate health and safety team has been agile during this period. Whilst they remain focussed on the safety of our staff and others who are affected by our work activity, much of their work over the last 3-4 months has been about making our workplaces covid-19 secure and reviewing both the health and safety issues arising out of our new home working arrangements and reviewing dynamic risk assessments as we review what levels of services we can and cannot provide in the light of evolving legislation and guidance.
- We have been engaged with managers and staff in work leading to the use of our offices, depots, other workplaces, vehicles, public toilets, outdoor spaces, play area, skate parks and of course, visits to residents' workplaces and dwellings in connection with our work and the work of our contractors.
- A review of the supply and use of Personal Protective Equipment has been led by Corporate Health and Safety and a central ordering and storage capability of relevant COVID 19 PPE is now in place although in most cases a dynamic risk assessment means that most of our work can be carried out safely from remote locations or by strict observance of social distancing and hand-washing without the need for PPE.

[Ongoing actions/future recovery actions](#)

Health and Wellbeing

- We are currently working to reduce the risks associated with the government's end of the shielding programme, e.g. food supply including our need to buy emergency supplies and what will happen after shielding ceases on 31 July.
- Whilst we will retain a standby role pending any second wave of the pandemic and we will be involved in ongoing work around data management in this context, our focus is now shifting back to our own public health implementation plan for this year. There is also a significant piece of work facing us in converting the enormous amount of information presented on our health and wellbeing pages into a format accessible to all (including those who use screen readers) before the September deadline.

Community Safety, Emergency Planning, Business Continuity and Safeguarding

- Virtual Recovery planning Internal and External has commenced alongside our ongoing response. The lead role of the LRF has now passed on to the covid-19 Health Protection Board and the Outbreak Engagement Group – both chaired by Devon County Council.

Environmental Health Private Sector Housing (including private water supplies and better care fund grants)

- As we now move back towards business as usual we will gradually be carrying out more site visits both in response to complaints and on a programmed basis. Each step will have an accompanying risk assessment to test the business need for the visit and ensure a combination of social distancing, hygiene and personal protective equipment as necessary to maintain a safe working environment.

Car Parking

- As lockdown eased residents have returned, we switched back to our usual tariff at the beginning of June and the team is now more or less back to a business as usual mode and we are expecting a busy summer although that is still likely to be weather dependent.

Environmental Health, Environmental Protection (including antisocial behaviour)

- More recently our role is shifting to licensing consultations and we are braced for further work as pubs, cafes and restaurants take advantage of the simplified pavement licensing regime and the as the entertainment industry starts to recover we anticipate further work associated with the prevention of nuisance and protection of public safety during musical entertainment and at events.

Pest Control

- Although we are now very much in a business as usual mode, residents are waiting for around two weeks for the next available appointment at the moment, reflecting the quality and value of the service we offer and the ongoing increased demand for treatment of domestic rat infestations.

Environmental Health Commercial Premises

- The team expects to transition from regulatory compliance advice associated with the coronavirus restrictions regulations and the guidance back to a routine business as usual inspection regime following the lead of the Food Standards Agency.
- We also have an important public health role within the Covid-19 Outbreak Management plan and in the event of local outbreaks and clusters, we expect to be working closely with the County Council's public health team and Public Health England in responding to and managing the situation.

Corporate Health and Safety

- As we begin to recover, the work continues to focus on covid-19 secure ways of working and there in ongoing work in reviewing risk assessments as other services, buildings and outside spaces either re-start or begin to increase their activities again.

Tim Child – Service Lead Place, Assets & Commercialisation

Service Actions taken in response:

- Re-started inspections – primarily health & safety compliance related and reactive maintenance.
- Rent deferment option for tenants.
- Removed Reception Service from East Devon Business Centre.
- Working with LED on management of vacant Leisure sites – predominantly Health & Safety compliance related.
- Temporary closure of Queens Drive Space.
- Only essential repairs undertaken during lockdown.
- Risk assessments and covid related adaptations / working practices at BDH, ETH and East Devon Business Centre in collaboration with Organisational Development and Health and Safety.
- Supporting other Services to undertake adaptations at other premises.
- Restricting access to buildings.
- Working with contractors to un-furloughing of staff to support EDDC.
- Liaison with insurers to ensure properties covered during closure.
- Inspections of empty buildings to ensure secure.
- Close liaison with other Local Authorities in respect of their response / recovery.

Ongoing / Future Actions:

- Considering impact on commercially let portfolio to include vacancy levels and tenant difficulties / rent arrears – with a £1.1m rent roll this could be significant.
- Remarketing of commercial space that becomes vacant duo circumstances. Exploring video viewings.
- Understanding impact on asset values and factor into financial reporting.
- Understanding whether portfolio remains fit-for-purpose and identify assets no longer viable or meeting a need – both direct covid response but also from an EDDC business perspective.
- Consider whether there is a case for extending the rent deferment offer or introducing another support package.
- Have now re-introduced Reception Service at East Devon Business Centre.
- Deferral of marketing of Queen's Drive Phase 3 to Spring 2021. Future marketing subject to Member approval.
- Working with LED to re-open sites.
- RE-opening of Queens Drive Space to traders and bar use.
- Return to routine planned maintenance works.
- Leading EDDC's response to the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund.
- Making arrangements for Sitting out Licences on EDDC owned land.
- Prioritising projects which have a catalytic effect on the District.
- Using Place-Prosperity based interventions to best support our environment and economy.
- Seat on Environment & Infrastructure Countywide Recovery Group.

Additional Comments:

- Significant challenges and concerns around the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and the effectiveness and ease of administering.

- Beginning to experience impact on our commercially let portfolio. Where tenants have flexible lease terms, tenants are serving notice to leave and this trend might start to be seen across wider portfolio. The existing support package to tenants is being reviewed.

Andrew Hancock – Service Lead Streetscene

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

- w/c 23 March – All Play Parks closed to follow government advice.
- Parks and Gardens all closed as we perceived the risk of adhering to social distancing being too great and also were concerned about staff resource and staff safety.
- We took the decision to close parks reluctantly, and in line with government guidance on social distancing. Unfortunately some people were not respecting this advice when using our parks and we felt it was the right thing to do to help in the Country's response to the outbreak. Many councils have taken the same decision, and we are not going to re-open them at this time but will monitor the situation.
- We also experienced a very real staffing impact from the virus and team members self-isolating or shielding, so keeping parks open and safe would have been difficult with limited staff. We prioritised our remaining staff to help keep essential frontline services running such as recycling & waste, street bins, dog bins, dangerous litter, some limited grounds maintenance in open spaces and fly tips.
- w/c 23 March – All Public Toilets closed
- w/c 23 March – Sports Pitches closed – all bookings cancelled. Devon FA cancelled season.
- Recycling & Waste Service – Initially Bulky Collections and Green Waste Collections were paused. Most other services ran very close to normal, but with some next day catch up and missed collections increasing slightly. This was due in the most part to exceptional demand with tonnages twice the average for this time of year. Suez have experienced a significant over contract cost to keep our collection service functioning. This will need to be the subject of a future Cabinet report.
- 30 March - Green Waste subscribers given 3 months additional period to their subscription to account for the service downtime. Daily service updates have been posted on our web page and social media posts have covered significant disruption.
- March - Operations Staff reduced hours - are not able to work from home, as suggested by early government advice (work from home where possible). So we took steps to protect our staff by adopting a task and finish short hour's day. This was possible due to the public being in lockdown and parks and toilets closed, so demand lessened.
- w/c 23 March – Events – all event bookings on East Devon Land were paused, and placed on 8 weekly rolling review. They were later cancelled and have yet to re-start. We propose to allow events to re-start from 1st Aug (report to follow).
- April – The summer bedding order was cancelled by suppliers due to Covid impacts – so many beds remain bare earth this year. The team have bought in basic planting where possible to plant out some areas.
- April – Decision taken to cease beach hut occupancy due to not being able to maintain social distancing. As restrictions are lifted we reviewed this decision. Invoices had been issued in March, and hit doormats just as lockdown came into effect. We had to communicate with residents and cancel invoices. Normal income £313,845.36. Anticipated worst case was a full season loss, but recently agreed to re-start the season from 6th July. Income due from beach huts should now be around £150k.

Ongoing / Future Actions:

- 23 April – Following pressure from the public and a government statement we reviewed our approach and decided to re-open parks where safe to do so.
- RNLI lifeguards not able to operate at Exmouth for our usual season.
- Outside contract work was stopped and contracts informed. Some re-starting from 11 May.
- 11 May – Parks and Grounds Maintenance works limited - There are no seasonal staff in place to help with the rounds meaning that the teams are taking longer to complete a full cut. Our rewilding programme was still at the planning stage at this point and this was having an impact on the teams as their rounds will change to reflect this different approach and public perception of work needing to continue.

- May – Re-wilding of many areas of East Devon green space begins. Managing areas for nature, with longer grass and wildflowers encouraged and cut paths/edges. The Re-wilding is beneficial for nature and biodiversity and has also allowed the Grounds agency budget to be saved (£72k).
- 12 May – Re-opening of 10 Public Toilets - 10 initially. Toilet re-opening considerations SMT doc. Refers. Cabinet discussed and agreed the paper on the 13 May.
- 18 May Operations staff went to working 6 hour days (winter hours) to minimise their exposure to the risks and adapt to the fallen demand on the frontline service whilst people stayed at home. This has been an incremental rise in hours (from 3, 4 now 6) and it is likely that the reopening of all parks and gardens and some public toilets will necessitate the Operations Staff to work their full summer hours; 8.5 hours M-W; 8 hours Thursdays & Fridays.
- 19 May – All Members & Towns/Parishes alerted to new social distancing signage going out around the district in response to Government’s guidance on safe open spaces. We also informed everyone of the re-opening of the first 10 public toilets. Email – Social distancing signage & public toilets relates.
- 2 June – Media release following exceptional demand on beach front services, litter bins and mounds of litter left behind.
- 18 June - Following the exceptional demand and calls for more toilets to be re-opened, a report to Cabinet outlined options for using the ‘paused’ agency seasonal budget to bolster staff capacity to cope with demand and considered options for re-opening further toilets whilst ensuring they were covid-19 secure and had enhanced cleaning. Cabinet approved the use of resource and re-opening of 14 toilets in total until 8pm in the summer. Email – report to Cabinet – reinstating StreetScene resource refers and includes cabinet report.
- 20 June – RNLI Lifeguards back in operation at Exmouth.
- 25 June – reported to Cabinet on the options for re-opening Beach Huts safely. They agreed with the approach. Email – Beach Hut Provision refers. Media release
- We now estimate we will re-coup around £150k of our usual £313k beach hut income for the remainder of the season and will allow many tenant to enjoy the remainder of the summer on the beach now lockdown has been suitably eased.
- 25 June – Media release following unprecedented demand at Exmouth, ASB at Orcombe point and people leaving lots of litter on the beach. StreetScene teams stretched to breaking point and collecting 16 tonnes of litter in 1 day! Over half the usual amount collected in a busy summer week. Multi Agency Police meeting convened to discuss actions to tackle ASB.
- 6 July – Following a report to SMT and Cabinet and the relaxation of government advice, the decision is taken to re-open Skate parks and Multi Use Games Areas. Email – Skate parks & Mugas refers.
- 6 July – Beach Hut season re-instated. Beach Hut provision email relates.
- 9 July – Recycling & Waste tonnages remain extremely high. In an average pre-pandemic month we would collect c. 250 tonnes of cardboard and in the last few months we have collected 460 tonnes per month and this is with leaving some on the kerb-side. Food waste is around 600 tonnes a month, the same as in the post Christmas week (normally the highest annually). The long collection days and roll over of collection days due to volume have seen an increase in complaints. To try and explain this we issued some media information.
- 13 July – 12 Play areas to re-open, followed by the remainder over the next few weeks as sites are risk assessed. An operational report on the risk assessments and government measures was agreed by Cabinet on the 8th July. Email – proposal for re-opening play areas refers.

Simon Davey – Strategic Lead Finance (CFO/s151)

Service Actions taken in response

- Close monitoring and projections of Council’s financial position to ensure overall control maintained and to provide information to Government and lobbying groups to help influence and inform the local government financial support packages. Regular meetings with other Devon Authorities to ensure consistent and clear message to Government.
- Under some working constraints completed close down of Council’s Accounts and preparation of the Council’s Statement of Accounts is close to completion including electronic transmission of audit evidence. Extended deadlines given in legislation as difficulties acknowledged by Government.

- Working with services including additional training and support to ensure goods and services still paid for promptly thereby assisting suppliers' cash flow.
- Implementing new payment process and controls to enable the prompt payment of business grants.
- Implementing new processes to facilitate improved electronic payment methods for residents.
- Internal online forms and authorisations processes implemented to allow complete home working for services.
- Procurement advice being provided to reopening high street fund to ensure claim compliance.
- Audit resources directed to supporting business grant control process.

Ongoing / Future Actions

- Options to be presented for members to decide how to ensure a balanced budget is maintained for the current year and consideration of balancing the MTFP position
- Ensure returns and claims to Government are made to maximise funding available.
- Further enhancement of website to help services promote paid for activities and make it easy for customers to book and pay for services in advance. We have seen significant switch to online activities and it would be useful to maximise that position.
- Enhancement of financial monitoring reports to streamline the processes and improve presentation as essential a clear understanding by all.

Henry Gordon Lennox – Strategic Lead Governance & Licensing

Service actions taken in response to Covid-19

- Legal have supported services in interpreting and applying the various legislative changes that have occurred in response to COVID-19. They have continued with business as usual where possible and where client services have been available. Specific support has been given to the governance work including virtual meetings.
- Democratic Services have enabled a transition to virtual meetings through Skype & Zoom and delivered a series of meetings relating to governance matters and planning.
- Information and Complaints have carried on in a 'business as usual' manner in relation to complaints, freedom of information requests and data protection matters.
- Elections have been precluded from moving forward with by-elections and referenda and have been able to spend time on various administrative matters and preparing for future tasks including May 2021 elections.
- Licensing have continued dealing with licensing and related applications and supported those affected by COVID-19 where possible. Revised working arrangements have been put in place given lockdown restrictions.

Ongoing actions/future recovery actions

- Conducting Council business through completely virtual or hybrid solution. Democratic Services will;
 - Work with Strata on understanding a hybrid solution.
 - Pursue electronic voting solution to ensure business conducted efficiently.
 - Consider the resourcing impact of virtual / hybrid meetings (and increasing meeting programme) if this becomes 'business as usual' – virtual meetings require significant officer support and hybrids are likely to worsen the situation.
- Decisions / choices in relation to recovery will need full assessment in terms of legal duties / powers. Legal to advise services on legal duties and powers as they change during the remainder of the Pandemic and recovery phase.
- Potential for increased complaints in relation to service delivery / provision as a result of decisions in relation to recovery. MO to monitor complaint levels and issues raised and report to SMT.
- Health and Safety concerns in relation to carrying out elections and canvassing in particular. Elections manager will;

- Regularly review situation and will monitor on an ongoing basis. Workforce database being cleansed and brought up to date. Council staff can be called on if required.
- Ensure that we are following Cabinet office guidance and preparing contingency support and appropriate training.
- Increasing number of applications for premises licences / variations of existing licences and TENS in short / medium term (Summer/Autumn) as restrictions lifted – increased work for team and L&E committee. Licensing are taking on the new responsibility for Pavement Licences. Licensing Manager will;
 - Monitor work volumes but is putting in contingency arrangements to help support the team manage the situation.
 - Recruit additional support to assist with dealing with pavement licences.

Appendix C

District Council Report Aug 2020, Helen Parr

Greater Exeter Strategic Plan [GESP]

The Strategic Planning Committee voted to recommend to Council that EDDC should not consult residents on the Draft GESP and is withdrawing from this project.

It is to be hoped this will not be agreed at Council.

It is only democratic that residents have their say. We should all be asked our views which should be taken into account in the revisions of the GESP.

Many questions remain unanswered:-

*What new arrangement for co-operation has the Democratic Alliance got in mind? How is EDDC going to cooperate if we pull out of GESP? eg. over cross boundary sites. Is there a plan for carrying out less formal cooperation? How would it work? When will this be made public?

* How will the district council control development? It is likely we will be significantly worse off without GESP. If EDDC tries to refuse development we will constantly lose Appeals as we will not have a 5 year land supply.

*What will happen about gov funding applications? The strategic GESP with its more formalised duty to cooperate is more likely to win support than revised Local Plans from individual DCs.

We will still have to include agreed strategic housing sites in a revised Local Plan- go through a call for development sites process, and select from the same sites that are submitted by landowners.

Risk- development in the wrong place without infrastructure to support it.

From a reading of the recently published White Paper, Planning for the Future, and two other consultation documents on Affordable Housing and Housing Numbers the signs are that much higher housing numbers are going to be required for the government to reach its national target of 300,000 homes per year.

It is highly likely if the DCs cannot work together government may insist on a Unitary solution for Devon.

Links to the Strategic Planning committee report, the GESP and the YouTube recording of the meeting below-

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/papers/strategicplanning/230720bpgespappendixsiteoptionsanddraftpoliciesconsultationreportjune2020.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxxWWietCJ0>