# Report from your District Councillor

# Ged Yardy

# Park and Ride Dartmouth

# SHDC Exec agreed to 8 spaces providing 1 hour free parking however also agreed charges for the remainder of the HWBC car park and winter charges for the P&R. I have asked for a further 10 spaces to cover the expanded use of the centre.

# A robust review of parking users and needs has been promised for January 2024. A meeting is et up to discuss this week with SHDC officers

# I continue to support the DAMP campaign against the installation of parking charges in Dartmouth by DCC and in particular support the new Dartmouth & District Chambers of Commerce report on the state of parking in Dartmouth.

* **Dentistry Crisis in South Hams.**

# At the South Hams District Council meeting held on 14 December 2023 Cllr Ged Yardy (Lib Dem – Dartmouth) and Cllr John Birch (Lib Dem -Totnes) put forward a proposal for seeking to address the growing public healthcare crisis in dentistry in South Hams.

# In putting forward their proposal they highlighted the fact that the Community based NHS dental services are both failing and being

# I have circulated ( DCC SHDC LOF, CCG, DTC, NHS) a proposal for review to establish a No Frills Dental service. This requires £32k pump priming funding. Good feedback so far,

# Govt announced new plans, supported by £200m of government funding, NHS dentists will be given a ‘new patient’ payment of between £15-£50 (depending on treatment need) to treat around a million new patients who have not seen an NHS dentist in two years or more. As yet we do not know how this will look in South Hams

# Responsibility for commissioning and contracting sits NHS Devon with the support and expertise of the Primary Care Dental team (Devon and Cornwall) Councils Strategic Delivery Board on 13th March.

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# Ex Dartmouth Hospital Site

# NHS Foundation has now placed the ex Cottage Hospital and Zion place on the open market though Montague Evans with a deadline of the end of January. The NHS have continued to state that Social Value for the local residents will remain important to a future transaction for the site.

# The previous agreement which envisaged DTC to take ownership and a developer to lease the site and build a hotel failed as the developer was not able to provide the funds. In this case there would have been significant funds generated for the benefit of the residents of Dartmouth distributed by a respected local charity. This potential transaction has now been terminated.

# DTC continues to pursue the need for the social value for the residents of Dartmouth. The Social Value Working Group has drafted a proposal for DTC FTC to consider before communication to the NHS

# Sports Facilities

# Meetings to support the Development of Sports Facilities (Rugby Football) using S106 monies

# Supported Swifts football with a donation from the community fund

# Bus Services:.

# Bus Services:. Dartmouth Area Bus proposal – no funding currently. Working to update Dartmouth Area Bus proposal - similar to BOB the Bus in Totnes.

# Concern raised over the loss of the Stagecoach compound on performance and Stagecoach retendering of Dartmouth Park and Ride regarding with stagecoach services. Clear Deterioration of Services.

# Meetings held to discuss how to be best develop a Community bus service in Dartmouth eg West Dart. Discussion on going

# Dartmouth Visitor Centre

# There is a need to explore reducing costs eg diversification / partnerships.

# In 2023 £29000 of funding was received from DTC and 3000 from SHDC without which DVC should not be able to operate.

# DTC meeting planned for March 25th to select preferred options going forward based upon a sustainable funding solution .

# South Devon & Torbay NHS Foundation Trust

# Attended multiple Governor and Board oversight meetings: NHS Torbay NHS Foundation NHS Foundation

# Reviewed the Freedom to Speak up policy in light of the Letby disaster

# Reviewed Dentistry data for those referred to A&E

# Trust has been in NOF4 operational and financial challenges, as have all the local trusts under national oversight. Eg Day surgery, reducing long wait targets.

Despite very challenging financial circumstances due to the economic climate and previous years’ reductions in Government funding for Councils, South Hams District Council’s Full Council heard proposals for how they would set a balanced budget for 2024/2025.

The meeting held today, Thursday 15 February, heard that strong financial management over many years and the continual drive for efficiency has meant that the Council has remained in a healthy financial position.

Reductions in Government funding over the past few years has meant the Council no longer receives any core Government grant (Revenue Support Grant), a loss of £4 million per year, so the Council has to be self-sufficient to fund all of its services.

Councillors agreed to a small increase in Council Tax of £5.54 per year, (2.99%) meaning residents living in a Band D property would pay £190.96 for the District Council’s section of the Council Tax, for all of its services.

At the same time the Council has approved changes to extend its existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which already supports 4,900 households and has awarded £5.9m to reduce residents’ bills through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

**Cllr Julian Brazil, Leader of South Hams District Council, said:** “This Budget proposed an increase in Council Tax of just £5.54 a year (2.99%), an increase of under 11 pence per week.  We have kept the increase as low as possible and below current price rises.

“We really don’t want to put up any costs and I honestly mean that, but we have to be realistic about how we can provide our services with difficult cuts to our funding.

“By raising our Council Tax by this small amount, we can continue to help residents and businesses who need our support and allow us to continue delivering vital services. Whether that is through support with the cost of living, with home improvement grants, housing, benefits or other services. The extra funding will help us put the resource to where it’s most needed and help to balance the finances and to deliver the key priorities that you, our residents, have told us you want us to focus on over the next three years.

“These are only some of the many services that we offer for less than one tenth of the annual Council Tax bill. We offer real value for money, with only 8p of every £1 paid (8%) in Council Tax being kept by South Hams District Council to fund our services.

“The largest part of the Council Tax bill goes to Devon County Council who provide adult social care, children’s services and the roads network, including potholes which many people mistakenly think we are responsible for. The Council Tax also provides money for the Police and Fire Authorities, as well as local services provided by town and parish councils. South Hams District Council collects the Council Tax and pays the money across to these other councils, the Fire and the Police to run their services.”

South Hams District Council’s Full Council today, Thursday 15 February, has formally adopted its Council Plan for 2024-2028 along with the supporting delivery plan for the first year.

The Council agreed the four key policy areas needed to prioritise the climate change and biodiversity emergency, tackle the challenging housing situation, support the economy and deliver good quality services to the District’s communities.

For the next year, the Council has agreed to take forward the following projects all linked to the Council’s key priorities, to:

* lead on environmental concerns and take direct action to combat climate change and biodiversity loss including supporting community energy groups, increasing electric vehicle charging points and developing a Keep It Local food scheme.
* create and launch the South Hams Housing Offer. This new scheme will support communities and landowners to bring forward affordable housing in their area and help conversations with proven registered housing who working with communities.
* deliver an independent living scheme (Disabled Facilities Grants) increasing the amount of funding available to residents.
* improve the energy efficiency of 55 properties by awarding Homes Upgrade Grants.
* delivery of a new temporary accommodation unit in Kingsbridge.
* refurbish and improve local toilets including exploring potential for more Changing Places toilets as important facilities for residents with disabilities.
* improve local sport and recreation facilities using developer contributions.
* explore the idea of a pilot e-bike hub scheme with 10 hubs totalling 70 bikes.
* buy land for tree planting with part-funding from Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest.

**Cllr Julian Brazil, Leader of South Hams District Council, said:** “I’m really pleased that the Council have agreed with the Executive and adopted The Council Plan. They are a robust set of sensible measures to address the very real challenges that we face in the District. These issues of housing, climate change, a troubled economy aren’t going to go away any time soon and we need to work alongside our community and give what support we can to move forward.

“Climate Change and housing issues are not mutually exclusive and we hope to do both. We can’t just sit by; we have to take personal responsibility and do something about it. We have to be holistic in our approach, we don’t have unlimited resources, but we will do what we can.

“We will reach our goals because despite our different party politics, we have the heart of the community at the forefront of what we are doing and that practical approach, together with our excellent financial management will always stand us in good stead.”

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The consultation invites views on the draft proposals to establish a new Combined County Authority – a new decision-making body which would be required by law to oversee new funds and powers transferred from Whitehall to Devon and Torbay.

A [**devolution deal website**](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=65d2aa9b2f&e=4015c98bd7) has been launched which features FAQs, a consultation questionnaire, a summary of the Devolution Deal proposal as well as the full document.

The consultation closes on 24 March 2024. On completion, Devon County Council and Torbay Council will each consider all responses and determine whether to submit a final proposal to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. If the SoS is satisfied, an Order in Parliament will create the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, with the aim being to create the CCA during 2024.

Download: [**Information Leaflet**](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=3c309109c1&e=4015c98bd7) | [**FAQs**](https://devonalc.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bd0bc7009504fc55a438a3f1e&id=a3009e6adf&e=4015c98bd7)

# Housing partner merger

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| For your information, a press release was issued just before the festive break on the potential merger of [Places for People](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LnBsYWNlc2ZvcnBlb3BsZS5jby51ay8iLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjQwMTA1Ljg4MDIyMDYxIn0.Ey8uXU2AK7-tQM2_No5Bbv-SMYtgbNV_LHB7FWKwZ5o/s/2973243887/br/234294424126-l) and [South Devon Rural Housing Association (SDR)](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vc291dGhkZXZvbnJ1cmFsLmNvLnVrLyIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyNDAxMDUuODgwMjIwNjEifQ.58SpMU-6vp7kVesDU1i23kaX5ZtVzixDN08cLMrcTMI/s/2973243887/br/234294424126-l).  View the [full press release](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vc291dGhkZXZvbnJ1cmFsLmNvLnVrL25ld3MtZGV0YWlscy9wbGFjZXMtZm9yLXBlb3BsZS1hbmQtc291dGgtZGV2b24tLXJ1cmFsLWFubm91bmNlLW1lcmdlci1wbGFucy8xNDUvMC8wIiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDI0MDEwNS44ODAyMjA2MSJ9.34JmtIawa60U4uYfZE2BHnqvjUhMJU8JGy5HxWdzrpk/s/2973243887/br/234294424126-l).  The two organisations are currently in discussions and, if the merger is successful, this would mean SDR and its 357 homes in the South West of England joining the Places for People Group in the coming months.  The majority of SDR homes within South Hams are in the Totnes/ Dartington area.  We do not see any issues with the merger and welcome the news, which may bring further housing opportunities to the area. Places for People have an excellent track record in social value projects so could potentially help with our priorities around supporting vulnerable people such as care leavers.  We will keep you updated on the progress of discussions, but if you have any questions in the meantime, please email [Alex Rehaag](mailto:alex.rehaag@swdevon.gov.uk).  **Isabel Blake – Head of Housing** |

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# Growing the use of e-bikes

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| We would appreciate your help in building a list of companies who hire bikes in our area, so we can talk to them about how we can support them and grow the use of e-bikes in our area.  We are also planning to invite these local bike businesses to a workshop to discuss barriers early this year. Please can you get in touch with [Gemma Bristow](mailto:Gemma.Bristow@swdevon.gov.uk) (01803 861383) if you know of any other companies not included in the list below:   * Salcombe Bike Hire Co * South Hams E-bikes (Stokeley Farm Shop) * Bearland Bikes (East Portlemouth) * E-XploreDevon (Kingsbridge) * Brightham House – a B&B hiring bikes   (Salcombe) * Evo Bike Hire (Stoke Fleming)   **Gemma Bristow I**Economic Development Team |

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# S106 Infrastructure Funding Statements

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| Each year the Council is required to send to Central Government it's Section 106 Infrastructure Funding Statements.  Following liaison with Finance, Open Space, Sport and Recreation (OSSR) and Affordable Housing Officers, the 22/23 submissions were compiled by the Section 106 team and details of the submissions can be [found here](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LnNvdXRoaGFtcy5nb3YudWsveW91ci1jb3VuY2lsL2NvdW5jaWwtcGxhbnMtcG9saWNpZXMtYW5kLXJlcG9ydHMvcG9saWNpZXMvcGxhbm5pbmctcG9saWNpZXMvZGV2ZWxvcGVyLWNvbnRyaWJ1dGlvbnMiLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjQwMTA1Ljg4MDIyMDYxIn0.c405gBwzloa4o-ao5sB51GabkCm0TDfGXABQE7HG7cQ/s/2973243887/br/234294424126-l).  **Dai Antill** I Senior Business Support Officer |

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# Help residents save on their energy bills

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| Lower income households could benefit from free energy efficiency upgrades to their homes this winter with our support.  We are working with partners South Dartmoor Community Energy to survey eligible homes across the District and provide energy efficiency measures, personalised to the needs of the property.  Homes Upgrade Grants are available to homeowners with an annual income of less than £31k, who have heating that isn't mains gas with an EPC rating of D,E,F or G.  Please spread the word and if you know of any residents who may be eligible for support, please ask them to [apply online.](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9..Tsj92lG-VbHn26gihJjSNT4ZQNA0vRAblNoM2qI4rPY/s/2973243887/br/234294424126-l)  **Dave Sexton I**Principal Environmental Health Officer |

# Careers fair success

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| As part of our commitment to attract younger people into the organisation, we attended the Dartmoor Multi Agency Trust Careers Fair last week with a popular stand representing our organisations, and it has been an enormous success.  The event covered Holsworthy School, Oakhampton College and Tavistock College and involved years 9 to 13 and saw over 600 students per year pass through the Fair.  Over the two days we talked to hundreds of students promoting the opportunities and range of jobs at our Councils. |

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| What was evident from talking to students of all ages, is the interest in apprenticeships which is something we are focusing on.  We are continuing to exploring other events that we can attend across our areas, to raise our profile with the schools and students, and also other organisations with whom we can work to promote these opportunities.  **Catherine Bowen I**Head of Organisational Development |

# New planning software

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| As part of the implementation of the Planning Improvement Plan, we have now gone live with our new Planning Software called MasterGov. The system went live on Wednesday 29 November 2023 and alongside the back office system we have also introduced new website pages to search and display planning applications. This is updated by the main MasterGov software in real time – meaning that documents, plans and decision will be published immediately. The changes to the website have been positively received.  The move across to MasterGov has gone well and been completed on time. There are some minor issues to resolve as expected, and understandably it will take a little time for everyone to become confident with the new software. However, staff are already appreciating the benefits of the new system, working together and supporting each other through the change.  The system has numerous benefits, but the primary focus is on the external users of the service – applicants, agents, residents, town and parish councils. They will benefit from a simpler, more intuitive and structured planning online system, including a brand new Map search function which will be enhanced over time.  Over the coming weeks we will introducing further changes, including updating the weekly reports and the information which can be reported from the system to continue to further improve the planning service.  If any Members would like to be shown the new planning software or website please contact [Helen Smart](mailto:helen.smart@swdevon.gov.uk).  **Helen Smart**  Planning Business Manager |

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# Joint Local Plan Appeals Digest

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| The Appeals Digest considers a handful of planning appeals that have been issued in the JLP area, and provides an assessment of the way that policies have been applied and interpreted. This will help make more consistent and transparent decisions in the future.  Each appeal contained within the digest includes key passages of text from the appeals, and highlights the issues considered by Inspectors in coming to a decision.  Where relevant, the appeals digest will also include appeals and case law from other parts of the UK that contain decisions that are pertinent to decision making by the JLP Councils.  Read the Appeals Digest [here](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vY29udGVudC5nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeS5jb20vYXR0YWNobWVudHMvVUtTV0RFVk9OLzIwMjMvMTIvMDcvZmlsZV9hdHRhY2htZW50cy8yNzA5MzA5L0FwcGVhbHMlMjBkaWdlc3QlMjBKYW4lMjBOb3YlMjAyMDIzLnBkZiIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMzEyMDguODY4MzQ3NzEifQ.qPVHRQ0YnKpWS-1dl2763Wn-dHahW6CFKG2NiiWFJLY/s/2973243887/br/232614650110-l).  **Phil Baker**  Principal Planning Officer |

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# Support with energy bills

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| Lower income households could benefit from free energy efficiency upgrades to their homes this winter with our support.  Please help spread the word of our Homes Upgrade Grant, available to homeowners with an annual income of less than £31k, who have heating that isn't mains gas and an EPC rating of D,E,F or G.  We are working with partners South Dartmoor Community Energy to survey eligible homes across the District and provide energy efficiency measures, personalised to the needs of the property.  If you know of any residents who may be eligible for support, please ask them to [apply online.](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd3d3LnNvdXRoaGFtcy5nb3YudWsvaG91c2luZy9ob3VzaW5nLXN1cHBvcnQvaG91c2luZy1ncmFudHMtbG9hbnMtYW5kLXNlcnZpY2VzL2hlbHAtcmVkdWNpbmctZnVlbC1iaWxscy9ob21lLXVwZ3JhZGUiLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjMxMjA4Ljg2ODM0NzcxIn0.5STAFFG7e6vILaDIK1-uQMm_g0O2J0OlkdwnIp8P3yw/s/2973243887/br/232614650110-l)  **Dave Sexton**  Principal Environmental Health Officer |
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