

West Down Parish Council

County Councillors report

October 2022

Retirement of Chief Executive

Devon County Council's long-serving chief executive, Phil Norrey, has retired.

Mrs Jan Spicer has taken over the role on an interim basis, formerly Devon County Councils solicitor she is in post while the recruitment is underway for the substantive post. This is likely to be advertised imminently.

DCC Finance

Devon County Council is facing an unprecedented black hole in our finances caused by the cost of living crisis and spiralling demand for help for vulnerable children and adults.

The Director of Finance, Angie Sinclair predicts that we could overspend by more than £40 million in the current financial year. And she says urgent action must be taken by every council department to rein in spending.

A panel of senior officers is already looking at options for councillors to consider including spending cuts, remodelling services to save money and cancelling or delaying building projects. Unlike central government, local councils are required by law to balance their books every year.

At Septembers cabinet continuing pressure on children's services from cost pressures and rising demand with a £12.1 million overspend still predicted on placements for disabled children and independent residential care services was again reported.

Bus companies are giving up contracts for school transport mean services have to be re-tendered at additional cost and this is the main contributor to a £5.9 million overspend in education services.

The £18.6 million savings and extra income identified so far includes income from rising interest rates, delaying some in-house IT projects, reducing spending on insurance contributions and emergency provision and scaling back some targeted funding.

Parish council's in my area are aware that the local members locality budget has been suspended to help with the concerning financial situation. Our essential frontline services have to be prioritised and we must try to continue to support the local economy to help Devon bounce back from the pandemic.

Global price increases and spiralling inflation are having a major impact on our day-to-day services and infrastructure projects and we are facing extraordinary additional costs at a time when budgets are already under strain. We are facing a winter of difficult decisions and tough choices. It is only right that I warn you that things are not going to be easy this winter

Final version of the Devon Carbon Plan has now been published by the Devon Climate Emergency partnership.

Supported by DCC and the latest scientific evidence, the Plan is our county's roadmap to becoming net-zero by 2050 at the latest, and it spells out exactly what we all have to do to create a resilient, sustainable county where people and nature can thrive.

Its publication follows a summer where the impact of human-induced climate change had never been more apparent. Summer 2022 was the joint hottest on record, with four of the five warmest summers for England occurring since 2003.

Through choosing what we buy, how we travel, and how we live the Carbon Plan highlights the long-term changes we can all make to help reduce our impact on the planet.

Additionally, the Plan sets out a range of detailed, evidence-based solutions and strategic objectives for national and local policy makers in areas such as energy production, transport, and the buildings we live and work in.

It has been delivered by Devon Climate Emergency, a partnership of 29 businesses, public bodies, voluntary groups, and Devon's 11 principal councils, including ourselves.

Between now and the New Year each one of those organisations will be called on to endorse and demonstrate how they will use their responsibilities and influence to enact the Plan.

Most emissions (68 per cent) in Devon (including Torbay and Plymouth) come from buildings – our homes and workplaces – and on-road transport. Or, sliced another way, 74 per cent of *all* emissions relate to the energy we use one way or another, from the oil and gas that powers our economy, fuels our cars, and heats our homes.

The Carbon Plan sets out in clear, stark terms that to achieve net-zero we must increase the amount of renewable energy we produce and use. Currently just seven per cent of Devon's energy comes from sustainable sources – and it needs to be almost 100 per cent by 2050.

All organisations are encouraged to sign the Devon Climate Declaration through the Devon Climate Emergency website to show the growing support for taking action.

The full Devon Carbon Plan is available on the [DCE website](#). The link also includes a Quick Read version, highlighting the key actions that Devon can take to become net-zero by 2050 at the latest.

Reminder of how to report a Highway issue;

[Report a problem - Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/report-a-problem)

0345 155 1004

Live chat is available on the Highways website Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 12 pm and 2 pm to 4.30 pm (4 pm on Fridays). To report a problem with road maintenance, traffic management and parking, streetlights and signs and public rights of way

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