



Cllr STEVE KEABLE July 2025

County Councillors Report - Creedy, Taw & Mid Exe for:

Bickleigh • Brushford • Cadbury • Cadeleigh • Chawleigh Cheriton Fitzpaine • Coldridge • Cruwys Morchard • Down St. Mary • Eggesford • Kennerleigh • Lapford • Morchard Bishop • Newton St. Cyres • Nymet Rowland • Poughill Puddington • Sandford • Shobrooke • Silverton • Stockleigh English • Stockleigh Pomeroy • Thelbridge • Thorverton • Upton Hellions Washford Pyne • Wembworthy • Woolfardisworthy • Zeal Monachorum

Mid Devon Councillors Report - Taw Vale for:

Chawleigh • Lapford • Nymet Rowland • Wembworthy

We have ended the last financial year in balance – but tough choices lie ahead

We have ended the 2024/25 financial year without going over budget, but only by relying on temporary savings and one-off government funding.

A report presented to cabinet, 25th June, showed that DCC managed to stay within its £637.5 million budget and ‘balance the books’ despite growing demand for services like social care and support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Exceptions had been to overspend by nearly £4 million in November but managed to avoid this through a mix of short-term measures, including delaying some projects, not filling vacant jobs, and using a one-off grant from government.

The report also showed that £40 million in planned savings were delivered across council services, though this fell short of the £50 million target.

Councillor James Buczkowski, Cabinet Member for Finance, said:

“This isn’t a moment to celebrate, but it is a moment to be honest. Officers have worked incredibly hard to help balance the books, and that deserves recognition.

“But let’s be clear: this balanced position was only achieved by using temporary fixes. “It’s not a sign that everything is fine. We’ve inherited a fragile financial position, depleted cash balances and a special educational needs deficit now over £169 million.

Our new administration is committed to rebuilding trust and making services more sustainable, by working differently, being open about the challenges, and focusing on what really matters to people.”

Council to trial pothole repair blitz - £83 million road maintenance programme

While approving an £83 million programme of capital funded highway maintenance schemes, our Cabinet heard from Councillor Dan Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, who stated that the condition of Devon’s roads is not up to scratch because the county is “grossly under resourced by central government”.

Councillors backed proposals to trial areas where all potholes would be filled, rather than just dealing with safety defects. Although the exact details are still to be agreed, this pilot would be used to establish the budget implications of changing maintenance procedures.

Councillors also agreed that a task group from the Audit Committee should be formed to review the previous Cabinet’s decision from last November on the future delivery model for highway maintenance.

The Cabinet at the time resolved that a procurement process should get underway for a Term Maintenance Contract to deliver core highway work such as safety defect repairs, gully emptying and winter service, supported with smaller “Framework Contracts” for additional patching, surfacing, drainage and other improvements.

It was also agreed to examine the costs of accelerating the remarking of white lines across the county.

Councillor Dan Thomas, Cabinet Member for Highways, said:

“We have a repair backlog of around £390 million, and to keep us in a steady state it costs around £102 million a year. We don’t have that, so whatever we do under the current funding formula, we’re not going to solve the problem.

New DCC Cabinet vows to improve the outcomes of our most vulnerable children through new 10-year plan

In a bold move away from the council's previous preference to commission, rather than directly deliver, residential places for children in its care, councillors, on 25 June, agreed to an ambitious multi-million investment programme to establish 12 new children's homes; 20 specialist foster places; and up to four new therapeutic schools, over the next 10 years.

'Growing Futures: Homes for children and young people in care in Devon' aims to provide new homes, support, residential therapeutic care, education and treatment for children with complex psychological, emotional and behavioural needs.

Our plan will be delivered through a strategic partnership worth up to £156 million and aims to address deficiencies in current care arrangements.

We are required to provide suitable homes for children in care; but nationally an over-reliance on for-profit providers has contributed to rising costs and poor value for money. In Devon for instance costs have almost doubled in five years amid rising demand.

There has been a 29 per cent increase in Devon children in residential homes since 2020 and many of those are not in the county.

The new strategy will aim to reduce costs and improve long-term outcomes for children through more stable, local, and therapeutic housing and education options.

Councillor Richard Jefferies, our Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care said:

"It's not fair that so many children are living far away from their support networks, their friends and family; they want to be looked after by people who are nurturing and friendly, and they want to be close to activities and their school and they want to be able to make friends."

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Mid Devon District Council

Tiverton homes appeal won by developers

A controversial plan for up to 100 homes in Mid Devon on land at a historic house has been approved by a Government Planning Inspector in spite of a wave of opposition. The proposal for Tidcombe Hall, Tiverton was rejected for a second time by Mid Devon District Council's planning committee last year, with the plan attracting around 170 letters of objection.

Councillors have blamed the decision on Central Government's recent increase in housing targets, which raised Mid Devon's annual requirement by 65% — from 346 to 571 homes. They say the change has left local authorities powerless to stop unsuitable developments.

Cllr Luke Taylor, Leader of Mid Devon District Council, said: "This devastating decision is a direct consequence of the recent adjustment to housing targets. We had a five-year housing land supply and robust local plan policies, but the 65% increase has fundamentally undermined our position. These changes are eroding local democracy and forcing unwanted development on communities that have clearly said no."

Cllr Steve Keable, cabinet member for planning and economic regeneration, said: "The Planning Inspector has disregarded the strong planning policies this Council has worked tirelessly to uphold. The new housing targets introduced six months ago mean that Mid Devon must achieve 571 new homes with planning approval every year. This is a charter for developers to secure permissions, land-bank sites, and delay building until market conditions suit their profits. This approach does not solve housing needs. These target adjustments systematically undermine local democracy, and the cost of defending these appeals falls to the local taxpayer. We will continue to fight inappropriate development wherever possible within this unfair system."

Major Poolside Upgrades Completed at CREDITON and TIVERTON Leisure Centres -

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/major-poolside-upgrades-completed-at-crediton-and-tiverton-leisure-centres/>

Copplestone, Road Closure & Cross Hotel Update -

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/road-closure-and-cross-hotel-copplestone-update/>

Tiverton Work Hub completed & management operator appointed -

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/operator-appointed-for-tiverton-work-hub/>

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