

DCC county councillor update September 2023.

Debo.sellis@devon.gov.uk 07765103316

Devon County Council has a general statutory duty of Best Value:

Economy – spending less.

Efficiency – spending well.

Effectiveness – spending wisely.

Equity – spending fairly.

The IT systems have been improved to help with the ever-increasing need for improved communication.

Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay Devolution Deal.

The Government has agreed to conclude a devolution deal covering Devon Plymouth and Torbay this year. The deal will, subject to consultation, see the establishment of a Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay Combined County Authority. It will not require a directly elected Mayor not costly reorganisation of existing councils. Devon's District Councils will have representation on the CCA as will representatives from the business and educational sectors. The CCA will have new powers and additional funding from Government to tackle priorities such as housing, public transport, jobs, training, and skills. Functions and resources of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership will be folded into the CCA.

Governance Review

People Strategy. A clear focus on putting our “people first” how DCC will ensure that we have the appropriately skilled and talented people we need to deliver services to our communities and ensure that our Council is fit for the future in a highly competitive workforce market.

SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) is a huge part of Children's services. DCC is in special measures following Ofsted assessment. A new Cabinet post focusing on SEND has been created and Cllr Lois Samuels (from Okehampton) will be tasked with this. She will be working with Cllr Andrew Leadbetter who has portfolio for Children's services.

Highways

The increase in repair gangs working evenings and weekends has remained in place in some areas and work is underway to improve the messaging on the “report a problem” webpages to reduce the number of defects that are incorrectly reported, since January this represented around 55% of all reports reported.

Winter Services

Preparations for winter have been taking place over the summer, with the fleet of gritters receiving their annual servicing and calibration checks. Works to install solar panels on some of the salt barns has been progressed and salt stocks are being replenished ahead of winter.

Gully cleaning

Over 5,000 drainage issues identified by the gully cleaning crews and highway officers have been resolved since April. The challenge remains dealing with over 15,000 outstanding reported issues with funds available.

Road Markings

Since April, parish remarks have been undertaken in 6 of our market towns with works planned in a further 17. Tavistock will have the markings done.

Homelessness

While DCC doesn't have responsibility for housing or homelessness directly, the issue of homelessness has significance across a great deal of what DCC does, public health, support for the young people and care leavers.

DCC will have full and frank discussions with our 8 district councils, and other agencies including the Police and Public Health to see a full and accurate picture of the different situations across the county. Financial support for current contracts with providers will be extended until the end of March 2024.

More information is available on the DCC website.

Number 89 bus timetable changes.

The no 89 bus route to Whitchurch has seen some changes resulting in fewer buses in the afternoon. Understandably, users are concerned. I have asked officers for an information update. We are trying to encourage people to use the buses, however numbers have not picked up post pandemic and providers are making reductions.

I am seeking information too about the bus stop near the Tavistock Country Warehouse. It appears the bus stop sign has gone, so I am making enquiries and will give an update when I hear.