

Report from Hilary Bastone – (My April notes for Parish Councils)

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS:-

Mayors Avenue car park EV charging point

Homes for Ukraine Update

District Council Respond to Recent Article

9,000 Households First to Receive Energy Rebate

New Household Support Fund

Ukrainian Refugees

Garden Waste, Where We Are – An Open Letter

Business Grants Update

Homes for Ukraine - Update

WPD Community Matters Fund

101 call handling and reporting to the police

District Council Raising Awareness of Climate Change

Post-18 Futures Fair

It's Time to Step on...

Museum Development Trust

Council's Action to Support Ukraine

Ringmore community shaping its own future with neighbourhood plan

Joint Local Plan newsletter

*** * * * ***

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS IN MORE DETAIL:-

Mayors Avenue car park EV charging point

I just wanted to let you know that Western Power Distribution propose to come and carry out the trenching work for the EV charging point next Tuesday at Mayors Avenue car park, Dartmouth.

They will need approximately 10 parking bays to carry out the works which should take approximately a week to complete.

The next stage in the process will then be for the meter to be installed and the electrical works to connect the wiring within the unit prior to being commissioned. Scottish Power anticipate that the EV charging point will go live in June. We will of course keep you updated once we have a confirmed date.

Homes for Ukraine Update

It's been another incredibly busy week leading the District support for the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

We have successfully issued financial welcome payments to all of the Ukrainian guests that we have been notified of arriving and we are continuing to do all we can to ensure that we rapidly undertake the accommodation checks.

We have been notified of 52 host properties successfully matched with Ukrainian guests in South Hams (and the team are also supporting another 34 in West Devon).

Due to a time lag in the data being received by the Council from Government, we anticipate the actual number to be higher than this. To date we have undertaken 79% of the accommodation checks we've been notified of.

We have been informed of 23 Ukrainian guests (across ten properties) currently residing in South Hams through the scheme.

Many of the Team Devon discussions have this week have continued to focus on how the funding allocations will work. As Members will know, for each guest arriving through the scheme, the government will provide funding to Councils of £10,500. It is still unclear exactly how this funding will be split. There has also been discussions about hosts that unfortunately fail safeguarding checks and what happens from that point for the guest.

Sophie Cobbledick from our Housing Team continues to play a lead role on the Team Devon work strand looking at how we develop fall-back placements in the unfortunate event that a host/sponsor relationship breaks down and our business development team have also completed the simple online form for hosts and it is currently being tested ready to put live.

District Council Respond to Recent Article

Council responses to Local Democracy article <https://www.radioexe.co.uk/news-and-features/local-politics/nonagenarian-councillor-walks-out/> is as follows:

South Hams District Council's Cllr Keith Baldry, Executive Member for Environment, said: "To be clear, the garden waste is not being postponed as suggested in recent newspaper articles. Our contractors FCC Environment are working to mobilise as many rounds as possible on a daily basis and to collect all waste collections as they can with the resources available. Where rounds aren't able to be sent out, priority will be given to household collections of refuse and recycling collections.

"Before the garden waste service was restarted South Hams asked FCC for an assurance that they had a strong plan to deal with garden waste collections. We were given that assurance.

“Locally our officers continue to challenge FCC daily. Our Leadership Team are meeting with FCC at their highest level to press on them the urgent improvements needed to deliver the quality waste service our residents deserve.”

South Hams District Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman, Cllr John Birch, said: “Cllr Pennington, at last Thursday’s O&S meeting, sought to raise the issue of the Council’s problems in respect of the waste collection service provided by its contractor, FCC. This item was not on the agenda for discussion and furthermore Cllr Pennington had not made any request to have it dealt with as an urgent item.

“Following the conclusion of the committee’s discussion on the standards of behaviour and conduct expected of councillors Cllr Pennington sought to introduce the issue of waste collection. The Council’s constitution does not allow for such unannounced matters to be introduced or discussed and I was left with no alternative but to ask Cllr Pennington not to continue. Unfortunately, he persisted and I was left with no alternative but to warn him he would be asked to leave the meeting. At that stage he left the meeting.

“To be effective in one’s representation there is a time and place to make one’s voice heard. The meeting on Thursday was not the proper time and place.

9,000 Households First to Receive Energy Rebate

Just over 9,000 households who live in Council Tax bands A to D and who paid by Direct Debit on 1 April have now been paid their £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate by South Hams District Council.

Despite guidance issued to councils stating that payments should be made by the deadline of 30 September, South Hams District Council knew that their residents needed this extra help as soon as possible.

Staff worked rapidly to set up the systems to those already registered by direct debit, so they could be paid as early as possible. Whereas some councils nationwide have told their residents that they won’t receive payment until as late as the September deadline.

To date, the Council has issued just over 9,000 payments, which was paid to residents’ bank accounts last week.

Those with different direct debit payment dates throughout April will receive similar payments soon.

An application form is live on the Council’s website, for those who do not pay by Direct Debit, and these will be processed from May.

South Hams District Council’s, Cllr Hilary Bastone, Deputy Leader, said: "We want to support our residents as much as possible and getting the money to those who need it, as fast as possible is crucial. Our teams are well practiced after years of paying business grants at being able to quickly react to ever changing situations and they have done it yet again. We are one of the first batches of councils to get the money paid direct to our residents.

“We will continue to work our way through the rest of the direct debit payments as quickly as we can and then we’ll move on to those residents who don’t pay their council tax by direct debit. If we don’t already have your bank details, then there is a form on our website where you can send them to us.

“If residents don’t qualify for this rebate, there are other ways we can help, so please do look at what is available on our website if residents need support.

“There are a lot of unscrupulous people out there who will try to take advantage of vulnerable people, so please watch out for scammers who may try to cold call residents to gain access to their bank account details. We stress that we never ask for residents’ bank details over the phone, so please never release these. If in any doubt, please contact us directly.”

Find out more about the Council Tax Energy Rebate here: www.southhams.gov.uk/energy-rebate

What other Council Tax help can residents get?

If you are not eligible for the £150 rebate, you may be able to claim support for a Council Tax discount.

If you are on a low income or on certain benefits, you may also be able to claim help through a Council Tax Reduction scheme.

You can find out more about what is on offer here: www.southhams.gov.uk/counciltax

New Household Support Fund

Details are starting to emerge of the government's intentions on this.

Last year the funding, which gets allocated to upper tier authorities, had very little guidance.

This year the government have stated that 33% of the funding should be spent on supporting children, 33% on pensioners, with the remainder allocated based on local need.

While we are still awaiting final funding allocations, initial Team Devon discussions are proposing that DCC use the children’s element as they did last year, to provide additional free school meals and the suggestion is that a one-off payment is made to those of pensionable age in receipt of Council tax support i.e. already in receipt of a benefit.

Across Devon that equates to some 19,000 individuals and would result in a payment of around £85. Once we have more details we will update members.

Ukrainian Refugees

It’s been another busy week leading the district support for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. We are doing all we can to ensure that we rapidly undertake the accommodation checks and are now also undertaking more visits to Ukrainians that have arrived, in order to get some essential financial support to them.

The total number of host properties successfully matched with Ukrainian guests so far is 46 in South Hams (and the team are also supporting another 32 in West Devon).

There is of course a time lag in the data being received by the Council from Government. We anticipate the actual number to be higher than this.

To date we have undertaken 74% of the accommodation checks we've been notified of; so far we have been informed of 11 Ukrainian guests actually arriving in the South Hams through the scheme.

Many of the Team Devon discussions have this week focused on how the funding allocations will work. As Members will know, for each guest arriving through the scheme, the government will provide funding to Councils of £10,500.

It is still unclear exactly how this funding will be split, but we are pushing Devon County Council to understand how much of it they will 'top-slice' and therefore how much we have available to fund wrap-around support. We're hoping to get much more clarity on this next week.

Sophie Cobbledick from our Housing Team is playing a lead role on the Team Devon work strand, looking at how we develop fall-back placements in the unfortunate event that a host/sponsor relationship breaks down. We'll share more information on that next week.

We continue to monitor social media and it is pleasing that South Hams and West Devon are being highlighted by residents about how responsive we are to hosts and guests needs at this time.

We do however now need to focus on what the longer term wrap-around support looks like. With that in mind, in the coming week we will be:

Arranging a drop in briefing session for Town and Parish Councils to ask any questions on the scheme or to share any steps they are taking to support Ukrainians on a locality basis.

Work with Team Devon to develop a series of webinars for Hosts and Sponsors over the coming month.

Finalising plans with the CVS to deliver signposting, linking up translators to hosts / community groups / other organisations supporting our Ukrainian guests, supporting us in facilitating regular webinars with hosts and guests

Formally launching the Fusion Leisure Homes for Ukraine free membership offering

Going live with our simple online form to enable hosts to sign up to receive their £350 monthly welcome payment.

Garden Waste, Where We Are – An Open Letter

Dear Resident,

FCC Environment Ltd restarted our garden waste collections on Monday 28 March, but unfortunately, since the service resumed they have experienced increased sickness within the workforce, which has impacted some of our collection rounds.

Of course, this isn't what we or FCC wanted and we are extremely sorry that the high numbers of FCC staff absent has resulted in some of our garden waste rounds being affected especially so soon after they resumed.

I completely understand why our residents may be frustrated, but it is not easy to get agency staff to cover for sickness and FCC have tried to cover absences where they can.

Unfortunately, when there are severe staff shortages, we need to prioritise our statutory services, which are the collection of black bins and recycling.

We are working closely with FCC to ensure that they try to get back to as many missed collections as possible. However, if your brown bin is not collected on your scheduled day, we are asking you to leave it out until 5 p.m. on the following day. If it still hasn't been collected, then please take your bin back in and bring it back out on your next collection day.

If your bin has been missed please tell us here: www.southhams.gov.uk/missedcollection

We know the situation is difficult and some other Councils in the area are also experiencing operational challenges at the moment. We are working with FCC on a daily basis to try and ensure we get back to our scheduled collections and the services our residents expect and deserve.”

Cllr Keith Baldry

Executive Member for Environment

South Hams District Council

Business Grants Update

The Council has administered 12 different business grant schemes on behalf of the Government over the last two years, paying out a total of £85.9million.

This included the ARG scheme (Additional Restrictions Grant) scheme, where the Council paid out 99.8% of its total Government allocation of £3.619million by 31/3/22.

A total of 19,775 individual grant awards were made to businesses across the various schemes.

The last scheme was the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant where the Council paid out £2.87million in Government Business Grants.

All of the Business Grants finished on 31 March 2022. The Council has to retain all of its records for the next ten years.

We will be following up in the next few weeks with some press releases on promoting the benefits to some businesses who have received a business grant.

Homes for Ukraine - Update

We continue to welcome more Ukrainian guests into the area and the team are continuing to carry out accommodation checks for those hosts that we have been notified have successfully matched. As before, our aim is to carry out accommodation checks before Ukrainian guests arrive. To date the team have carried out 33 checks of accommodation with 14 further checks booked for the coming week.

This week we met with CVS to discuss proposals for formalising the voluntary sector support for both hosts and sponsors. This longer term wrap-around support is incredibly important to ensuring as many host/sponsor relationships as possible continue to be successful. The CVS will submit their proposals to us within the next two weeks and I will arrange a briefing note for you once received.

We're pleased that our Leisure contractor, Fusion have offered to support Ukrainians arriving through the Homes for Ukrainians scheme with a six month pass to their centres. We're just working up the detail of how this can be accessed and will share more next week.

WPD Community Matters Fund

Western Power Distribution (WPD) is pledging to support its most vulnerable customers with grants from its Community Matters Fund.

To provide much needed support for the local organisations tackling these vital issues, WPD is calling on charities, councils and community groups in the South West, the Midlands and South Wales to apply for grants of up to £10,000.

This is the latest round of grants from WPD's annual £1 million Community Matters Fund, which has already seen the energy distributor support more than 100 grassroots organisations with crucial fuel poverty grants.

The application window for funding is open until Sunday 24 April.

To help guide applications, examples of the types of project the fund will consider supporting are:

Digital skills and inclusion projects

Social inclusion and connectedness projects

Mental health interventions

Employability skills

Projects increasing community access to outside space

Inter-generational support projects

Befriending services

Innovative solutions to combating loneliness.

To find out more, visit: <https://www.westernpower.co.uk/community-matters-fund>

101 call handling and reporting to the police

Following concerns being raised by Councillors over 101 police call handling and reporting to the police, the local commander for that department has issued the following message for Members:

We encourage the public and our partners to report crime, intelligence, ASB and incident of concern and we understand the frustrations individuals experience, when they feel let down by the service.

As a force we acknowledge performance is a long way from that we desire and offer our apologies.

We would be very happy for any Councillors would like to come and visit the Contact Centre for a tour, they would be more than welcome. Below is a list of activity being progressed looking to improve how we response to calls for service;

£2M investment in more staff during 2022/23 – which given recruitment and training will be implemented by Christmas, not before

Investment in a new switchboard

Investment in a new telephony software platform

Investment in a new website

Seeking more investment in 23/24 and 24/25 for additional staff, to bring our performance up to the level we desire

District Council Raising Awareness of Climate Change

South Hams District Council is making major strides in its fight against climate change, with a significant investment in improving the carbon footprint of its leisure centres and efforts to reduce its own impact on the environment through a wide range of other actions.

In a meeting on 7 April, the Council's Executive Committee heard about the steady progress being made by the organisation since the approval of its Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy in December 2020.

The goals set in this strategy include reducing the Council's own carbon footprint to net-zero by 2030 and increasing biodiversity on its own land by 10% in 2025.

To back up the organisation-wide efforts to lower carbon emissions, the Executive Committee approved plans to loan Fusion Leisure £500,000 for the installation of solar panels at all four District Council leisure centres.

A study on greenhouse gas emissions caused by Council activity, commissioned last year, showed that the biggest proportion of the organisation's emissions relate to its activities from leased assets, franchising and outsourcing. That includes the four leisure centres.

The installation of the panels will reduce the carbon emissions of the centres by 131 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_e), equivalent to the annual energy emissions of 38 homes.

Predictably, the emissions study also found that the reduction in staff travel caused by the pandemic led to a big saving in CO2 released into the atmosphere; a saving of 234 tCOe was made, the equivalent of powering 66 homes for a year.

Many Council staff continue to work remotely, which continues to reduce emissions significantly. To capitalise on these gains made, however, an electric vehicle project is about to begin shifting the Council's fleet of vehicles over to electric power. The project has the potential to save around 160 tCOe per year – the equivalent emissions of 45 homes.

Cllr Tom Holway, South Hams District Council's Executive Member for Climate Change and Biodiversity, said: "As we turn our attention to our own carbon footprint we have started to move along some projects to help tackle that, such as converting our fleet to electric and providing renewable energy for our leisure centres. We also know we need to impact our partners and contractors now to make sure that carbon savings are echoed through our supply chain, as well as across the District.

"We all need to work together to do what we can because there is much to do and we know that climate change is rapidly showing its hand with the increase and severity of storms. We really are all in it together."

As well as reducing carbon emissions, the Council has changed its ground maintenance procedures to increase biodiversity and wildlife in the South Hams.

Exciting rewilding plans include planting 2.5 hectares of new wildflower areas, in addition to the planting of 2.2 hectares of trees across the district. £10,000 has already been earmarked from the Council's Climate Change and Biodiversity reserve fund to go towards wildflower seed to create these new wildflower areas.

A further £36,000 has been allocated from the reserves for new mechanical equipment that will be essential to prepare and manage the green spaces in a more biodiverse manner. This new and greener approach could deliver a huge biodiversity net gain across the Council's green spaces by 2025.

As part of efforts to achieve the climate change goals, the Council has also carried out Carbon Literacy Training, in collaboration with Torbay Council, from the Carbon Literacy Project. Thanks to this training, the Council now has been deemed a bronze level Carbon Literate Organisation.

Applications for the Council's Climate Engagement Fund also recently closed. The fund encouraged community groups to apply for grant funding for a fund to support community engagement and behavioural change projects to help the District reduce its carbon emissions. 15 applications were received for the £50,000 available. The Council is now in the process of reviewing these applications.

You can read the report from Executive Committee here: www.southhams.gov.uk/Executive

Post-18 Futures Fair

South Devon Fair Post 18

South Devon College is hosting the Post-18 Futures Fair this autumn and businesses in the South Hams are being invited to exhibit at the event.

This Careers Fair will offer local students the opportunity to discover the vast range of options available to them as they consider their future careers.

South Devon is home to a fantastic range of businesses in a variety of sectors. However, many young people currently fail to recognise the local opportunities and move out of the area to find employment.

This event will allow your business to engage directly with young people, encouraging them to consider career options in the area and in turn, revitalising our communities and boosting the local economy.

Please find below some of the key information about the event.

Post-18 Futures Fair - A Careers Hub event hosted in association with Anthony Mangnall MP and South Devon College

Location: South Devon College, Paignton

Date: Thursday 13 October 2022

Time: 12 – 7pm (students will be invited to attend with their school or college between 12 – 3pm, or with their parents between 4 – 7pm)

Cost to attend: Free of charge

Purpose: To inspire young people who are considering their next steps after completing Further Education and show the range of options available to them within South Devon, from employment and self-employment to apprenticeships and Higher Education.

Audience: Year 12 and Year 13 students from Kingsbridge Community College, King Edward VI Community College, Bidwell Brook School, Brixham College, Churston Ferrers Grammar School and South Devon College. A total number of over 3,000 students will be eligible to attend the event.

Exhibitors: A broad range of businesses from across South Devon as well as educational establishments. Employers are asked to make their stand interactive to encourage engagement with students. Additional guidance will also be offered to students in the form of workshops on subjects such as CV writing and interview skills, as well as talks on options outside employment.

Other important details: Tables and chairs can be provided but all other displays (table cloths, visual aids etc) must be brought by exhibitors. Disabled access and parking will be available for all exhibitors. Refreshments will be available at multiple catering outlets onsite.

Exhibitor stands will be allocated on a first come, first served basis - if you would like to attend, please email Anthony Mangnall MP.

It's Time to Step on...

The Launch of a new scheme to help would-be buyers step onto the shared ownership property ladder is welcome news in South Hams, where the district is revealed as having the biggest affordability gap.

Step On - The innovative new pilot scheme, announced earlier this year, to help local people get a foot on the housing ladder is now live!

www.southhams.gov.uk/step-on

The scheme designed to provide a deposit for people to buy a stake in a shared ownership property and relieve the pressure on rental properties, is now open for applications.

The Step On scheme enables anyone who is currently renting a social housing property to apply for a grant of up to £5,000 to help them with a deposit to purchase a shared ownership home.

Cllr Judy Pearce, Leader of South Hams District Council said: “We received news from the Office of National Statistics last week, that the biggest affordability gap in Devon is in the South Hams, this demonstrates why schemes like this are so vitally important to our residents.

“We have known for many years that South Hams had a very high rate of second home ownership and that house prices were being pushed beyond the reach of many local people. We can now see that property prices have increased at around double the rate of income over the last 20 years.

“Add to this the shortage of rental property, and it is clear why local people are struggling to live and work here in South Hams.

“We hope that this scheme will bring home ownership into the reach of more people and make their aspirations a reality. It is really difficult to save for a deposit while you are managing a home particularly with the increases in the cost of living.

“This in turn, frees up their old home to help someone in housing need on the housing register, helping us to help even more people.”

The new pilot Step On scheme is part of the response to address the housing crisis, which the Council declared in September 2021. They have identified 12 action points as key to tackling the problem which sees more local people and families facing homelessness or having to leave the district.

The scheme launches this week, at the same time as a number of national changes to make shared ownership more affordable for

more people. From April 1, the new Homes England shared ownership funding scheme will allow buyers to start purchasing shares from 10% (currently 25-30%). There will also be a change to responsibility for repairs and maintenance of the home.

www.southhams.gov.uk/step-on

Museum Development Trust

As you are aware, for many years South Hams District Council have provided a small financial contribution (£4,000) to the Museum Development Trust.

They have provided us with a report on their activities 2018-2022 which may be of interest.

Council's Action to Support Ukraine

South Hams District Council has this week confirmed its role in supporting the Ukraine humanitarian crisis.

From setting up a project team who can support those people offering accommodation and passing a motion of condemnation against the aggressors, to pledging a £10,000 grant to the Disasters Emergency Committee, the Council is taking a number of steps to support those affected by the crisis.

At a meeting of South Hams Full Council yesterday (Thursday 31 March), all parties expressed their deep sadness and empathy with the people of Ukraine.

The Council then confirmed that it is playing a key role in delivering the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme and as a result, is working closely with Team Devon (which includes Devon County Council, East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge and Torridge District Councils, West Devon Borough Council and Exeter City Council) to respond as quickly as possible.

The Council passed a motion which stated: "We stand ready to provide support to those affected by this war and will open our arms to people displaced and affected. We will also work with and support the efforts of our local communities to provide help and comfort to those in need."

So far in the South Hams, the Council is supporting sponsors who have come forward, offering 22 properties. They will be potentially hosting 50 individuals or guests, including children.

The Council is already conducting checks on the suitability of accommodation and have been working with Devon County Council on the swift processing of DBS checks.

Anyone wanting to become a sponsor must be able to offer a minimum of six months' accommodation. This can be anything from a spare room to an unoccupied home.

They will be eligible for a £350 'Thank You' payment per month per address. This won't impact their benefits or single person Council Tax discount.

For those people who do arrive here, if they are old enough to work they can apply for Universal Credit. Guests of pensionable age will be entitled to Pension Credit and Housing Benefit.

South Hams District Council is also developing a local support plan to provide a supportive welcome to Ukrainians once they arrive. This includes having conversations with the voluntary sector about longer term support that can be provided to Ukrainian guests.

Anyone offering support that is not accommodation or finance can email the council at supportforukriane@swdevon.gov.uk

The Council said that the team's immediate priority is to complete checks on the accommodation for those people who they have been told are arriving in the South Hams.

Cllr Judy Pearce Leader of South Hams District Council added: "This week our officers have worked very hard to put together the necessary arrangements to deal with all the tasks we are required to carry out, and to make the homes for refugees scheme a reality.

"Our role is to ensure that everything runs as smoothly and as quickly as possible for both the hosts and Ukrainian family groups."

South Hams District Council has also unanimously agreed to grant £10,000 to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

DEC brings together 15 leading UK aid charities; they raise funds to quickly and effectively respond to overseas disasters. The Council believes that this is one of the most efficient and effective means of providing humanitarian aid.

Cllr Judy Pearce Leader of South Hams District Council added: "We believe that one of the other ways we can help those people displaced by the crisis is to provide financial support through the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC); that way we can ensure that our support goes directly to those charities best placed to deliver aid."

DEC have said the message from aid workers is that "money is needed, rather than specific donated items, which are often not necessarily what people require and are difficult to transport."

Members of the public wanting to pledge financial support can also give money to the DEC.

For anyone wanting to offer a home or give financial aid, a new website created by Devon County Council now hosts the latest guidance and will be updated as new information becomes available.

Ringmore community shaping its own future with neighbourhood plan

South Hams District Council is delighted to see the formal making of the neighbourhood plan for Ringmore.

The plan was made formally at South Hams' full Council meeting on 31 March. It will now be a statutory part of the Local Development Plan and will have an influence on potential future planning developments in the Ringmore area.

A neighbourhood plan plays an important role in shaping the decisions made by the District Council's planning committee in the years ahead. The communities adopting a neighbourhood plan have their chance to say whether they think such a plan should be adopted; on March 17, 81.8% of local people who voted in a referendum supported the plan.

Cllr Bernard Taylor, Ward Member for Charterlands, said: "It is very encouraging to see South Hams communities taking proactive steps to shape and protect their local area for the

future. Ringmore is just the latest community in the South Hams to adopt a neighbourhood plan; it's a real sign that our residents are passionate about the district.

To find out more about neighbourhood plans, visit:
<https://www.neighbourhoodplanning.swdevon.gov.uk/>

To find out more about the Ringmore Parish Neighbourhood Plan, visit:
http://www.ringmoreparishcouncil.gov.uk/Neighbourhood_Plan_14079.aspx

Joint Local Plan newsletter

Welcome to the third edition of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) newsletter.

In our August newsletter we hoped that during the Autumn 2021 we would be working on interpreting and implementing any changes the Government had introduced to the planning system, but we are still waiting for the reforms. The Government have published the Levelling Up White Paper which we will talk about briefly, but we are not expecting any formal news about planning reform until May.

This edition will cover our consultation on the Climate Emergency Planning Policy and Guidance (CEPPG) document, the Authorities Monitoring Report, exciting funding news on digital engagement and some information about the Environment Act and Biodiversity Net Gain.

We hope you enjoy this edition and please contact the JLP Team if you have any questions.

Climate Emergency Planning Policy and Guidance

The climate emergency planning policy and guidance consultation started on Thursday 3 March 2022 and you have until Thursday 21 April 2022 to make comments.

We have added a video to our webpage that provides a short overview of what Climate change is, why it matters and what we are trying to do about it with our new planning policy and guidance. As well as a video there are factsheets for you to download.

This document is for anyone submitting a planning application, whether it is for an extension to their home, new employment development or new homes. This document is ambitious. It sets out ways to ensure that all new development is fit for the future, by including solar panels, heat pumps and electric vehicle charging facilities as standard. It sets out measures that will mean development is better able to cope with the challenges of climate change to avoid overheating and flooding and bring health and wellbeing benefits.

We need your help to test these proposals. We want your views on whether they are ambitious enough, and if you think they will work. If you think there are better ways we can address the climate emergency in new development, we want to hear from you.

Get involved in the climate conversation and let us have your views by Thursday 21 April 2022.

Authorities Monitoring Report

The Authorities Monitoring Report (AMR) sets out key information on the delivery of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. It is produced annually and sets out progress against the indicators which are set out in Annex 2 of the Joint Local Plan. The latest AMR covers the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The AMR is a statutory document that the JLP Councils are required to produce annually. In addition to reporting on the JLP indicators, it therefore also reports on additional information which is relevant to the development plans that have been and are being produced by the JLP Councils.

[Read the Authorities Monitoring Report](#)

This year we have made it more slimline and added a new mapping feature that allows you to see the stage of development for each of our allocated sites.

[View the Land Use Allocations Monitoring Map](#)

[Government funding](#)

Ahead of the Planning Reforms the Government have been inviting councils to bid for various pots of funding. We are happy to announce that we have successfully won funding from Round 2 of the PropTech Engagement Fund. Our colleague Ed is the project coordinator for this work and we asked him a few questions.

[Let's talk](#)

[What is this project all about?](#)

The project is part of the Government's ambition to improve the quality and efficiency of engagement within planning services. The PropTech fund specifically targets the use of digital tools to encourage wider participation in processes influencing planning policy.

Our project seeks to explore what services and facilities exist in our Joint Local Plan Area and the spatial considerations in how we choose to use them. We have some information, but it is not mapped consistently or up to date so we are hoping to use this project to work with the local community to evolve the way we use data and online mapping tools.

[How will this help us to plan better?](#)

By having an up to date picture of how residents use services facilities and services it will be easier to prioritise discussions with service providers and share data and analysis with the public and neighbourhood planning groups. We know this will not be perfect at first, but it is our ambition that we can integrate lessons learnt into how we engage and share data in the future.

[Can our local communities get involved?](#)

Yes, this is the whole point of the project. We currently envisage consultation this summer so watch this space for further updates.

[In Focus: The Environment Act 2021](#)

The Environment Bill became law on the 9 November 2021. The Act is important as it puts the environment at the centre of development and sets out requirements which have impacts

on planning. A key part of the Act is the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain which places an obligation for developers to ensure all new development proposals provide for at least 10% improvement for biodiversity. We have our plan policy DEV26 which already sets out requirements for this but colleagues within the three Councils along with Devon County Council are preparing guidance to help clarify what is required. We will update you on how this work is progressing.

Environment

The Environment Act also introduces Local Nature Recovery Strategies which will be mapped across the whole country in the future, Conservation Covenants and sets up a new Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) which will be monitoring and reporting on the environmental legislation, improvement plans and targets.

Clearly this act has important implications for planning and we will be following its evolution and keeping up to date with related Government consultation. We are expecting secondary legislation which will provide further details of how the various parts of the Act will be implemented and DEFRA and Natural England are working closely to set out how this will work in practice.

The Future of Planning

Focus on the future

The Levelling Up White Paper

On the 2 February the Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove unveiled the government's flagship Levelling Up White Paper. This document set out a plan to transform the UK by spreading opportunity and prosperity to all parts of it.

Read the Levelling Up White Paper

This document set out some key planning changes and what we can expect to see in the Planning Reforms once published:

The simplification of local plans ensuring they are transparent and easier to engage with

The consideration of new models for a new infrastructure levy

A number of policies and powers to enable planning to better support town centre regeneration

Improving democracy and engagement in planning decisions

Supporting environmental protection through planning

Planning Reforms are expected in the Spring/Summer 2022

We are expecting news about planning reform possibly in May. Joanna Averly, the Chief Planner for the Government has said

“This will provide further detail on how we will take forward measures to create a modernised and effective planning system that empowers communities to support, and local

authorities to deliver, the beautiful, environmentally-friendly development this country needs.”

We will hopefully update you on this in our next newsletter.