

County & District Councillor's Monthly Report Cllr. Jacqi Hodgson - Date of Report: 3rd April 2023
Devon County Councillor for Totnes & Dartington
(incl. Harberton, Harbertonford, Staverton, Landscope & part of Berry Pomeroy)
South Hams District Councillor for Dartington & Staverton

Devon County Council: key issues

DCC has a new Chief Executive Officer: Donna Manson (replacing interim CEO Jan Shadbolt, previous CEO Phil Norrey)

Corporate Infrastructure and regulatory Services committee. 23.03.23: Items discussed & decided:

Annual Work programme: I requested that a review of the 20mph implementation and enforcement is added.

COVID update: The Director of Public Health had provided a report: The current Covid infection rate remains low and relatively stable, the most up to date information from ONS data indicated an infection rate of approximately 1:50 people. The Health Protection Board and Local Engagement Outbreak Board had been stood down and the Director was no longer providing an update at Team Devon. The Director of Public Health would however report any significant changes to the Committee.

Devon Libraries: A detailed report from Libraries Unlimited, the provider for Devon's library services was presented and discussed. The Report covered building back after Covid; the current activities across the library service including Increased patronage, increased use of digital books and services, Children's services, the Libraries for Life campaign, warm spaces, volunteering, what goes on in the library, financial pressures, looking forward, mobile libraries, investing in library services and the future strategy. A new library will be provided in Bideford in 2023 (£1.8m investment).

Review and **Public consultation on provision of mobile library services:** the revenue and capital cost impact and implications of the aging Mobile Library vehicles fleet (4 vehicles) and possible measures to mitigate the impact in any decreased services by an improved digital/audio offer (particularly in remote areas), resale of donated books, commercial advertising and other income generation opportunities; and support for the voluntary community libraries and links with community cafes etc, all of which was being considered by the Service. (I suggested they could link the schedule and location of mobile library services with local community hubs and café's to increase footfall and a wider experience for users).

DCC are now proposing to stop running a mobile library service. The four vehicles we use are old, reaching the end of their service and have become very expensive to run; and we have fewer people now using the mobile library service. The public consultation with library users is intended to provide a better understanding about how people are using the mobile library service. DCC want to find out how people are using other DCC services that reach people who are unable to access a static library, such as our Home Delivery Service, or Good Neighbours service. They also want to find out whether people are using or are familiar with our wide range of digital books and other materials that are available to all of our library members.

The consultation will be online, and there will also be copies of the consultation on each of our four mobile library routes, and in main libraries. The consultation will close on Friday 26 May. **Link to public consultation on mobile library services:** <https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/document/mobile-libraries/>

Highways performance: Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport was presented by the deputy director of services. This covered an overview of the performance of the Highways and Traffic Management Team over the winter period. This covered Reactive Works, Cyclical Operations, Tree Safety Management (including vegetation), the Customer Engagement Project, the Capital programme delivery, Street Lighting and traffic Signals, Carbon Reduction, and Utility Companies working in Devon.

Key points:

- **PIP (public Interface portal) Enquiries:** Since April 2022, the Highway Safety Inspection Team have assessed over 27,000 reports of potholes from members of the public. Around 63% of these have resulted in no further action. Over 10,000 reports were received and assessed in January'23 alone.
- The recent announcement by Government of an additional **£9.4m funding** which had been allocated: carriageways (£5.5m), local area capital programme £1.5m (to be allocated by neighbourhood teams); skid resistance £0.5m; 'A' roads £0.5m; and £1.3m deferred capital schemes from a total national allocation of £200 m for highways maintenance for the financial year 2023-2024;
- The deputy Director of services, Rob Richardson's overall assessment regarding road maintenance was there will be **continued pressures in maintenance and consequent managed decline** of the network in the short and medium terms; and the reactive nature of works as a result of lack of resources as detailed in the open and frank Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan;
- **Safety Defects:** 7,400 potholes were recorded in January, the highest in a single month for 3 years; largely driven by cycles of very wet weather followed by very cold snaps. Approximately 2,200 potholes were repaired each week, by doubling the potholes gangs from 20 – 40 and extra hours and weekend working. Priority was given to the repair of potholes for safety reasons from the safety defects budget (as a first time repair) and difficulties relating to the appertaining weather conditions; and the 5% random inspection of repairs as part of the quality assurance process;
- **Grit / Salt bins:** this winter 1,100 reports of empty/damaged grit bins have been responded to. (590 more that 2020/21 winter season – the previous highest)
- **Cyclical operations:** Gully cleaning was challenged by driver availability and access to assets obstructions. The Grips, easements and buddleholes cleaning and clearing programme is 75% complete and 76% of assets have been cleaned at 83% of the way through the year.
- **Ash die back (ADB)** requiring the removal of defective trees continues. Inspections take place during the dry summer months. Overall numbers of trees identified were up in 2023 at 325 trees identified, up from 291 in 2022. However, the spread of ADB is still be assessed and more data is sought before trends can be identified with confidence. Overall it is anticipated that independent research indicates ADB will peak 2023-25 and then decline until 2032. Risk based management approach in terms of Tree Safety Management;
- **The inspection process in regard to Utility Works** (including fibre ducts on pavements) which included random audits and limited action available to the Authority if issues arose after a 12 month period;
- **The local area capital programme (doing what matters)** for locally determined priorities; despite a RAC report which related to a 40T limit, the generally good condition of bridges in Devon (highest number in Devon nationally [twice as much as the next highest]) and the best nationally;
- The versatile central street light management system and objectives to reduce lighting where appropriate (in consultation with local councils and communities as appropriate) and reduced carbon impact; in 2016/17 street lighting used ~31million kWh of electricity p.a., in 2021/21 with approx. 70% LED conversion this was reduced to 14 million kWh and 3,300 tonnes of CO2.
- that information on the white lining programme be included in the next dashboard report; and
- the impact of climate change on the network including increased levels of water on the highway and importance of maintenance of drainage assets.
- Delivery of the Capital programme which includes £55M of improvements and planned maintenance including:
 - £6M planned maintenance
 - £9m minor patching and dragon patching
 - £9M resurfacing etc major roads
 - £13.5M Local Assest capital programme
 - £6.4M planned works including surface dressing
 - £9M for bridges and structures
 - Leaving just £2M for Traffic calming, active travel programmes and town centre improvements

Cost of Living – Spotlight review: The scope of the review had been:

- To examine the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on Devon residents.
- To gain an understanding of the role of the Council in supporting Devon residents.

- To identify and explore practical solutions that could be implemented by the Council so to reduce this impact and protect those at risk of falling into poverty.
- To examine the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the provision of Council services.

The review had provided a detailed report (well worth reading – from page 96 at this link:

<https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/documents/g4491/Public%20reports%20pack%2023rd-Mar-2023%2010.30%20Corporate%20Infrastructure%20and%20Regulatory%20Services%20Scrutiny%20.pdf?T=10>

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1. Recommendations

The Spotlight Review asks the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services (CIRS) Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet to endorse and act on the recommendations below, with a report against progress of the recommendations to the Corporate Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee in 6 months' time:

	Intention	Recommendation	Lead
1.	Ensure that people and organisations who are eligible are making use of resources they are entitled to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All Councillors to have a resource list and to be invited to subscribe to Devon Funding News to keep up to date on available resources. b. Wider and regular publicity of the Household Support Fund (HSF) 	Communities team in liaison with comms and District Councils
2.	The Council champions the wellbeing of Council employees.	Write to the LGA to join the lobbying for a local government discount card, similar to the Blue Light scheme for health and social care workers, for all Devon County Council staff in recognition of their valuable role in society.	The Leader
3.	The Council supports partners in their efforts to help vulnerable people.	That the Council writes to Districts to identify if there is scope to align council tax reduction schemes across Devon.	Cabinet
4.	To help alleviate the energy crisis	That the councils ask Government to intervene and reduce the energy price cap at the end of March.	Cabinet
5.	To alleviate poverty	Ask Government to review the current mechanisms for supporting those in need.	Cabinet

Local Transport issues:

Speeding in Totnes & Dartington. I have requested SCARF (speed assessment) surveys to be carried out by DCC. They have been agreed or other wise as follows:

Totnes:

Bridgetown Hill - agreed

Dukes Road, Bridgetown - agreed

Station Road (A385) between Coronation Road and junction with A381 - agreed

Dartington:

Ashburton Road (A385) at Puddaven Terrace – not approved (recent data informs)

A384 at Huxhams Cross – to be confirmed

A residents' parking scheme has been requested in Brooklands, Bridgetown. I have set up a preliminary informal survey to establish the needs and interest of residents that would be affected.

Incident at Week, Dartington: Last Friday lunchtime a VERY large Nisa pan Technicon blocked the narrow road that runs through the heart of the hamlet for over an hour trying to get round one of several blind corners in the lane– and then backing up when he saw he could not get over the ancient narrow bridge. His vehicle created a lot pool of mud and he was unable to move until a local resident with a tractor pulled the vehicle back from the mud. This vehicle should never have been on that road and the need for Sat nav and width restriction signs on main roads warning drivers of the narrow widths on these lanes has been reported to DCC.

Local Parish, Town and District Council Elections on May 4th 2023

Voter ID requirement: From 4 May 2023, voters in England will need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections. This will apply to:

- Local elections
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- UK parliamentary by-elections
- Recall petitions
- From October 2023 it will also apply to UK General elections.

If you don't have accepted photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate. Find out more about accepted forms of photo ID, how to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate, and what to expect on polling day. <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id>

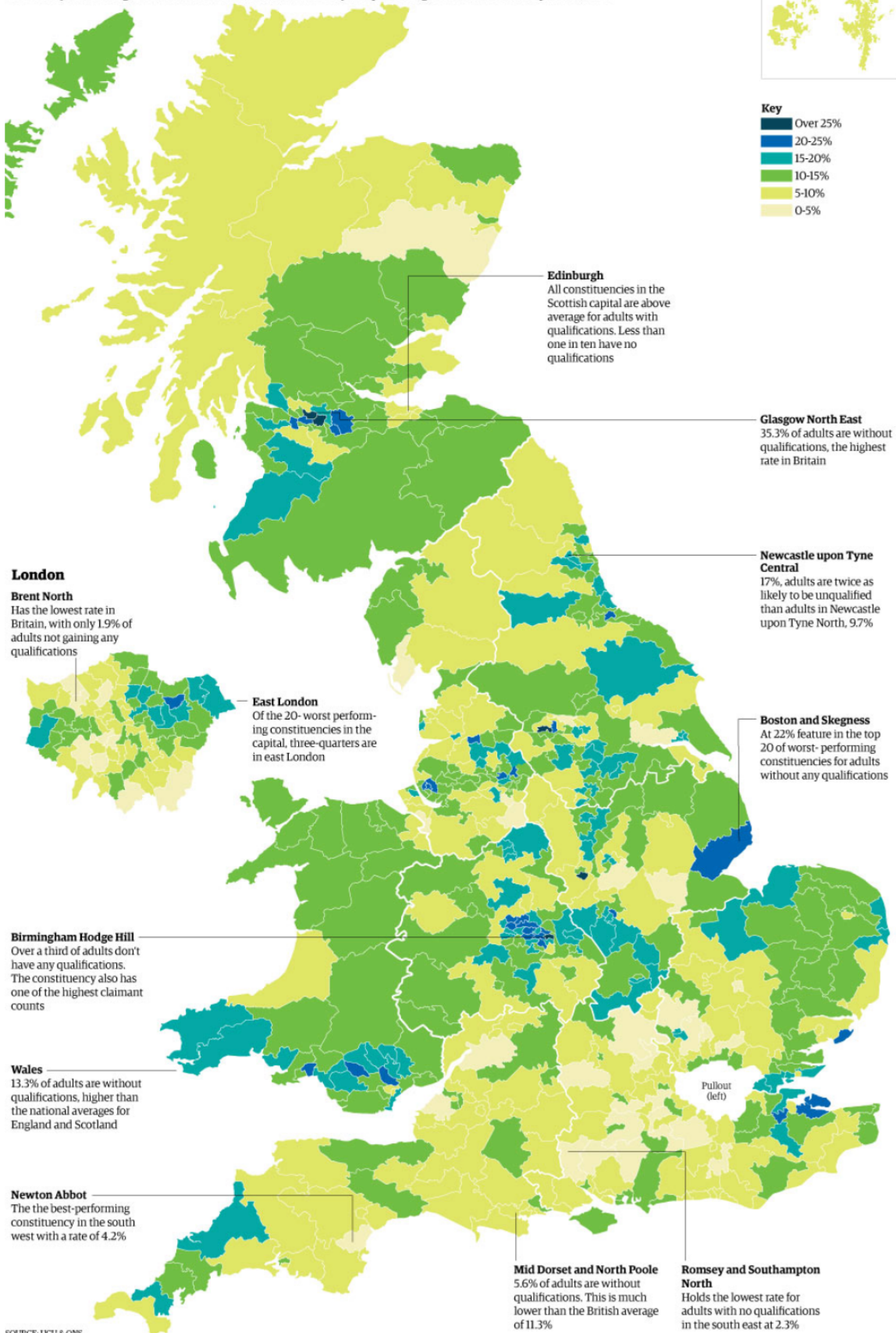
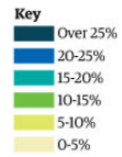
Totnes & District Traffic and Transport Forum Meeting – Wednesday April 26th at 6.30pm at Totnes Guildhall

Totnes Climate & Ecological emergency working group: the next meeting will be held **6.30 – 8.00pm on May 16th** in person at Totnes Guildhall and hybrid with Zoom access at this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81347699786> Meeting ID: 813 4769 9786. (Totnes Climate Hub events are posted on-line at this link: <https://totnesclimatehub.info/events/>)

Uneducated Britain

University and College Union have ranked constituencies by the percentage of adults with no qualifications



Edinburgh
All constituencies in the Scottish capital are above average for adults with qualifications. Less than one in ten have no qualifications

Glasgow North East
35.3% of adults are without qualifications, the highest rate in Britain

Newcastle upon Tyne Central
17% adults are twice as likely to be unqualified than adults in Newcastle upon Tyne North, 9.7%

London
Brent North
Has the lowest rate in Britain, with only 1.9% of adults not gaining any qualifications

East London
Of the 20-worst performing constituencies in the capital, three-quarters are in east London

Boston and Skegness
At 22% feature in the top 20 of worst-performing constituencies for adults without any qualifications

Birmingham Hodge Hill
Over a third of adults don't have any qualifications. The constituency also has one of the highest claimant counts

Wales
13.3% of adults are without qualifications, higher than the national averages for England and Scotland

Newton Abbot
The best-performing constituency in the south west with a rate of 4.2%

Pullout (left)

Mid Dorset and North Poole
5.6% of adults are without qualifications. This is much lower than the British average of 11.3%

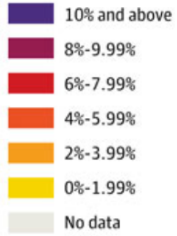
Romsey and Southampton North
Holds the lowest rate for adults with no qualifications in the south east at 2.3%

SOURCE: UCU & ONS

Boys struggling with reading

Boys aged 11 achieving below Key Stage 3 in reading, 2010

England
18,855 boys in maintained schools
9% of boys aged 11



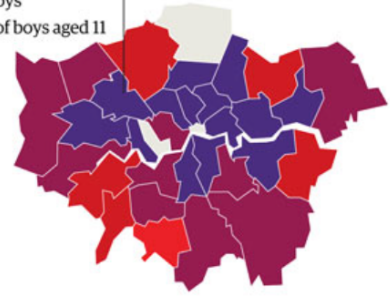
Liverpool
187 boys
11% of boys aged 11

Telford & Wrekin
84 boys
14% of boys aged 11

Birmingham
403 boys
13% of boys aged 11

Cornwall
165 boys
11% of boys aged 11

Brent
150 boys
10% of boys aged 11

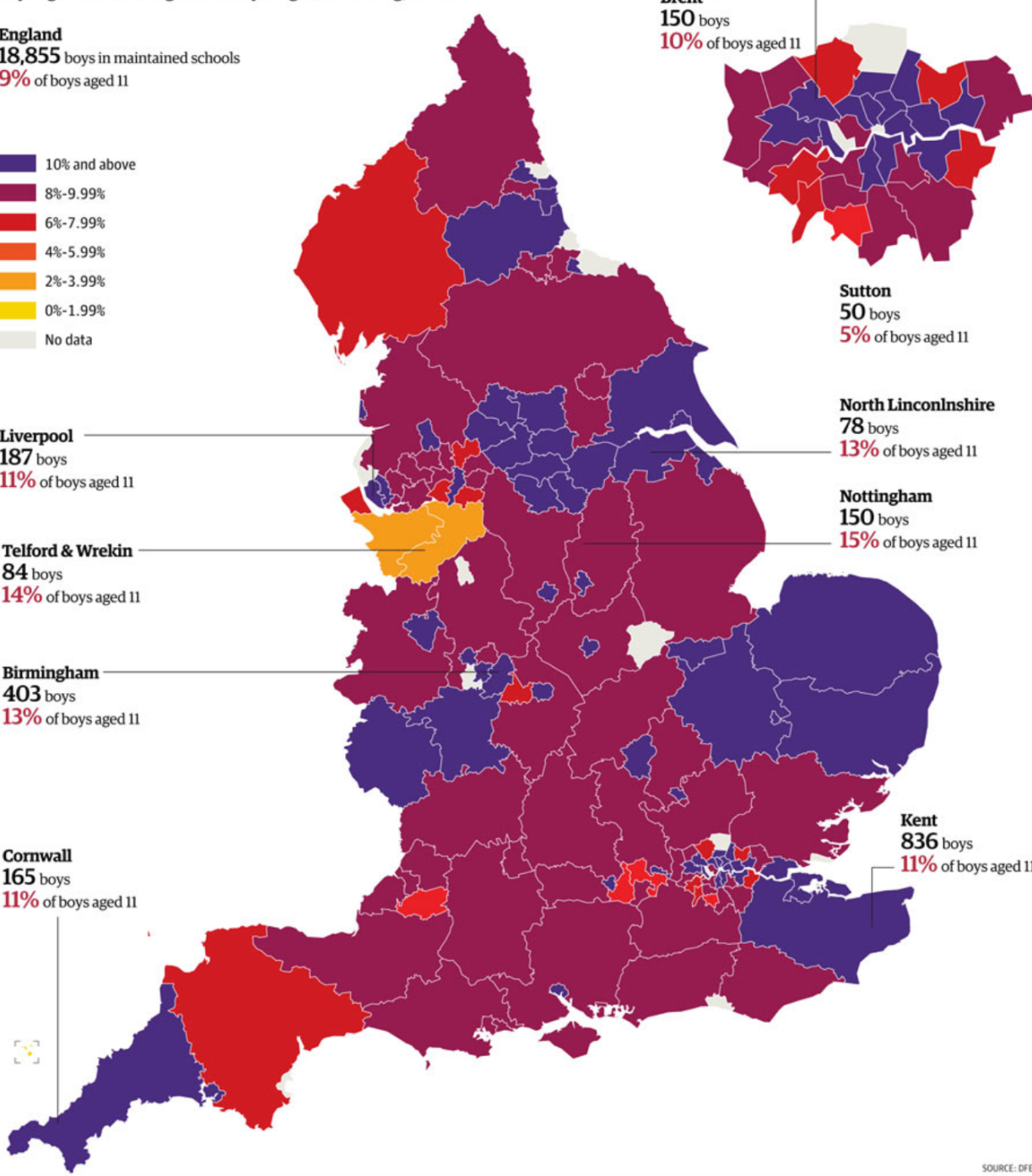


Sutton
50 boys
5% of boys aged 11

North Lincolnshire
78 boys
13% of boys aged 11

Nottingham
150 boys
15% of boys aged 11

Kent
836 boys
11% of boys aged 11



SOURCE: DfE