

County Councillor's Parish Council Report 26th February 2018 – Abbotskerswell & Kingskerswell
Good evening.

Devon County are the lead authority on Waste and you may have been concerned by reports in the media about Plastic recycling but in Teignbridge with the kerbside sort and high quality product there is currently no issue for Teignbridge's material. The plastic bottles collected are all reprocessed within the UK. The remaining Pots, Tubs and Trays are then sold internationally on global markets for recycling – including China – who still want/require good clean material like that produced from Teignbridge's 'kerbside sort' process. Teignbridge are not currently stockpiling any material, have no short term need to incinerate recyclable plastics and continue to generate an income for the material.

The Council will of course be keeping a watchful eye on markets and liaising with District and County colleagues on the matter.

The budget has been uppermost in our minds for the last month and the scrutiny process started with the examination of the Children's Directorate budget of £125.487million last Tuesday. We heard that despite an additional £7.5 million for schools this year the government is underfunding Devon's schools by £268 per pupil. It seems that primary schools in Westminster have much lower levels of additional needs yet they receive 19.6% more funding per child than Devon's schools.

This was followed by Adult Services and Public Health's budget of £227.851 million. We heard that DCC is the 6th worst LA for Public Health funding per head and the government is reducing this budget by 2.6% year on year until 2020. We also heard that for every £1 spent on residential adult care the budget increases by £85k and a 50p increase in the hourly rate for Care workers was a £1 million increase in the budget – we commission 36,000 hours of care per week!

At CIRS Scrutiny we looked at the Communities, Environment, Corporate Services and Highways budget of £124.053 million on Wednesday. Communities and Highways budgets are scheduled to reduce by 2.7% and so we recommended to Cabinet that they identify additional resource in the Highways budget to prioritise preventative work on drainage to include gully emptying and cleaning; as well as ditching.

At Executive the Leader managed to find a further £6.5million for Highways down the back of the sofa – however there have to be concerns about the Highways Directorate being able to spend this money in the light of their inability to get their Term Maintenance contractor, Skanska, to fulfil more than 2/3rds of their contract this year.

At Council on the 15th February my group proposed in addition to the proposals in the Leader's budget £223k to protect young people's mental health services by scrapping the cut planned from the mental health budget. We added £½ million for the education of children with special educational needs. We reversed the £2.2 million cut from Devon's schools budgets last year and we created a £50k hardship fund for post 16 home to college transport. This was all funded by cutting £750 k from the budget for consultants, cutting £850k from the spin and media budgets, reducing spending on outside room hire by £260k, saving £64k from car allowances (143 staff drive their car less than 10 miles per week), transferring £899k from the economic development budget by working closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership and District Councils and finally cutting the Development Planning budget by £150k by making planning agreements with District Council colleagues. Finally, we called on the County Council along with District colleagues to ask Government to urgently review Second Home Council Tax to ensure that the system is robust and much needed revenue is not lost. A real, caring and forward thinking budget for the people of

Devon! Sadly, our amendments were lost and we saw yet another austerity budget passed through on the nod – the best we got was the Deputy Leader complaining about unfair government funding from his own colleagues in Westminster! For the County Council you will be paying £1,331.19 for a band D property from April – sorry!