

County Councillor Update April 2019.

- **Elective Home Education** issue (Children's Overview and Scrutiny)**Council register of home-schooled children proposed.**

Parents will be required to register home-educated children with their local council under government proposals intended to prevent young people from disappearing off the radar. The register will for the first time enable councils to see where children are if they are not in school, or are attending illegal schools, and intervene more effectively if required.

- Teachers may have to **identify children at risk from knife crime.** Home Secretary Sajid Javid has launched an **eight-week consultation** into a new public health approach to youth knife violence that would see a **multi-agency public health duty imposed** on teachers, doctors and other public sector workers to identify and raise concerns about children at risk of being involved in knife crime.

- LGiU (Local Gvt Information Unit) show **4.7% average council tax rise from April**

Typical council tax bills in England will rise by 4.7% (**DCC increase is 3.99%**) in April - the second biggest increase in a decade, official figures show. It is slightly down on the 5.1% increase recorded last year. The levy on an average Band D property will go up by £78 to £1,750, the Government said, in part owing to the cost of policing and adult social care. More rural areas, described as "shire" areas, will see the biggest typical rise - up £82 to £1,826 for a Band D property (**Torridge Band D is £1872**). Cllr Nick Rushton, County Councils Network finance spokesperson and leader of Leicestershire County Council, said: "For a long time, county residents have borne the brunt of the historic underfunding of county areas. It cannot be fair that a resident in a terraced home in Hinkley in Leicestershire is paying double that of a resident in a multi-million-pound house in Westminster. "No-one wants to put up council tax, but many of us have very little option with county authorities facing the most severe financial pressures."

You saw something similar from me in my last month's Update.

Re-cycling Centre

DCC provide 1 Civic Amenity site (Household Waste Recycling Centre - HWRC) per District area where general dustbin waste can be taken as a last resort (e.g. if the householder has missed his kerbside collection or has excess waste).

For Torrridge, this site is located at Deepmoor HWRC near Torrington. The service has to be booked through the DCC Customer Service Centre (0345 1551010) and users are limited to a maximum of 8 bags per year. DCC has no plans to change this service.

Generally, provided residents utilise their kerbside recycling services as much as possible, then excess waste should be minimal.

Highways

2019/20 Highways Budget – Hols Rural includes:

- **Powlers Piece to Stibb X - Buckland Brewer Pre-surface dressing patching (£402k) – A 7.3km scheme, costs under review**
- **Hay X to Highworthy X (Shebbear) Pre-surface dressing patching (c£20k)**
- **Newton School X to Ladford Mill (N.St.Petrock) Pre-surface dressing patching ((£20k)**
- **Caute to Rowden Farm (Shebbear) Patching (£50k)**

Total for 2019/20 for Holsworthy Rural £1 428 043

BROADBAND

15 March 2019 – Stakeholders' Latest Meeting (taken from DCC notes to councillors)

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) has provided **access to superfast broadband to more than 300,000 homes and businesses**, often in sparsely populated rural areas and over challenging terrain. **A further 38,000 homes and businesses have benefited from improved broadband speed.** The programme continues to work to extend broadband coverage across Devon and Somerset. **The take up rate for these services currently stands at 54%** and is **generating significant resources for reinvestment** thanks to the Government's gainshare agreement with BT. Work is advancing on plans to extend BT's network in the CDS area applying the first £6 million from this fund.

There has been **good progress in Devon working with Airband since the last update and CDS is also participating in the national Better Broadband Voucher programme which gets underway next month.** **The situation with the Gigaclear contracts however remains uncertain** while Gigaclear continue to work on providing a robust and credible position to take these contracts forward following the significant delays incurred by the company.

CDS, working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), with support from local authority partners, LEPs and Members of Parliament, has been seeking a funding extension which is supported as a priority by DCMS. HM Treasury has responded positively to representations by DCMS and CDS and is finalising an agreement for an extension with DCMS as part of the Spending Review process. Whilst every effort to resolve the situation with Gigaclear is being made, CDS is also working with DCMS and the LEP to consider alternative options and develop a Digital Strategy for the area.

Public funding is leveraging greater commercial investment with the result that the CDS programme and commercially-funded networks are, together, providing over 950,000 homes and businesses across Devon and Somerset with access to superfast broadband out of a total of 1,083,000 premises currently.

Vouchers

CDS is joining the Government's Better Broadband Voucher Scheme, which is being launched this month (April, 2019). Any home or business with less than 2 Mbps and not part of planned deployment from another publicly funded scheme within the next

12 months can request a voucher. There are a number of providers who can then be selected to provide a new service, including 4g, wireless and satellite solutions. Homes or businesses benefiting from the scheme will not have their status in any future superfast broadband roll-out affected.

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) is also operating a **Gigabit Voucher programme which provides businesses and residential properties with vouchers of up to £2,500 and £500 respectively** when they come together to develop local partnerships to provide fibre connections capable of at least 100Mbps.

Gainshare

It is anticipated that an initial expansion supported by **£6 million of gainshare funds will extend superfast coverage to a further 2,000 homes and businesses in the hardest to reach areas of Devon and Somerset.** CDS will provide full details once the final plans have been agreed with BT and DCMS later this year.

Further reinvestment sums are expected up until 2024. CDS, working with BDUK and the Heart of the South West LEP, is developing a Digital Strategy which will include connectivity and infrastructure, as well as considering digital skills and innovation. This will help guide the approach for extending coverage and applying these reinvestment sums, and other funding opportunities. The first stage will require an Open Market Review which will begin over the coming weeks. CDS is committed to working with BDUK to take forward Government's Full Fibre ambitions and options emerging around a Rural Broadband Connectivity Programme.

Airband

Airband is currently building a new network for CDS that will provide access to superfast broadband for around 16,000 homes and businesses across mid, north and west Devon by June 2020 and is completing a network to serve around 5,000 hard to reach properties in Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks with superfast broadband.

Gigaclear

CDS awarded five contracts in December 2016 to Gigaclear Ltd based in Abingdon, Oxfordshire to deliver ultrafast broadband across Devon and Somerset.

In total, **Gigaclear is contracted to provide 47,810 homes and businesses** with access to full fibre broadband across five of the six CDS contract areas or lots. **Gigaclear is investing £60.5m to finance the roll-out with CDS contributing £31m public sector subsidy.**

Gigaclear has also committed to deliver services to a further 43,000 premises under its own commercial programme funded by a further investment of £67.3m.

The award of these contracts was approved by BDUK and the CDS Board, with BDUK playing a full role in the assurance of the proposed contracts.

However, **Gigaclear has incurred delays, [set out in a joint briefing in November](#), partly resulting from the collapse of the giant engineering contractor Carillion** which meant the **company could not meet its 2019-20 contract deadlines** with CDS. CDS is one of a number of local broadband programmes in the UK affected by roll-out delays.

Gigaclear is currently building full fibre networks in 31 areas initially in Devon and Somerset for CDS, providing access to ultrafast broadband speeds to 6000 homes and businesses. The company is **also continuing its commercial build which will serve a further 6000 premises.**

Gigaclear is working at its own risk and is investing significant sums of its own to undertake this build programme, including the opening of a regional office in Taunton and an increase in staff.

One of the knock-on effects of the delays incurred by the company is that **exact details about communities in the next phase of the roll-out have yet to be confirmed.** Gigaclear says it will provide updated information about its roll-out timetable on its [website](#).

CDS and DCMS continue to require key reassurances from the company particularly regarding capacity and acceleration of deployment. In response, Gigaclear is investigating further options to improve its operations in Devon and Somerset.

CDS and DCMS require acceptable plans for each contract area backed by fully costed analysis of the network delivery options and await further information from the company. The company remains on notice of default. Pending a satisfactory outcome CDS is withholding public subsidy.

Although this regrettably means a further period of uncertainty over Gigaclear's roll-out, the potential benefits of allowing the company some further time to complete its analysis are judged to be better than the disbenefits of bringing the contracts to an end at this time.

The **ultimate aim is to ensure maximum coverage of full fibre to homes and businesses** and thereby future proofing the installation for the consumer. However, **CDS has made it clear to the company that this period of uncertainty cannot continue indefinitely.**

Funding extension

As a consequence of the delay to the Gigaclear roll-out, CDS, working closely with DCMS, has been seeking a funding extension for £18.7 million of Government funding to March 2023. This is supported as a priority by DCMS and has benefited from the support of local authority partners, LEPs and Members of Parliament.

In recognition of representations made by DCMS and CDS, there has been positive response from HM Treasury which is finalising an agreement for a funding extension with DCMS as part of the Spending Review process. The effect of such an extension would be to provide CDS with the flexibility to either agree an acceptable revised timetable with Gigaclear to complete a new ultrafast full-fibre network or for CDS to pursue alternative full-fibre solutions for residents and businesses

CDS is agreeing similar support from other funders. Whilst every effort to resolve the situation with Gigaclear is being made, CDS is also working with DCMS and the Heart of the South West LEP to consider alternative options and develop a Digital Strategy for the area.

GRANT FUNDING

1. **Crowd funding** – anyone can use this platform. The Crowdfund Team can, if required, guide people with loading their campaigns. **No limit** to how much they ask for but to be eligible for DCC contribution

they **will have to achieve 25% of their target** and meet DCC eligibility criteria. **All DCC grant details are on the DCC website Communities page.**

2. Making the Connection Grants – Grants of **up to £300** no match funding

required. It is for supporting community groups that **help people connect** with others.

3. DOING WHAT MATTERS FUND – grants of **between £5k and £20k** need a 25% match. It is for projects that have a **significant impact on Well-being.**

There is also the **County Councillor £10 000** funding continued!

(DALC will be forwarding details on above to Parishes very shortly)

Holsworthy Community Involvement Group (HCIG)

In terms of the engagement event held on the 10 April, feedback at the event and following it on Facebook suggests that it was really well received as seen as a positive opportunity for people to be heard in Holsworthy.

Building on the successes and learning from the event – the following dates are proposed for the next events:

- **Chilsworthy – 15 May 2019 – 10am-12pm (9am-12.30pm for anyone wishing to provide support) – *just awaiting confirmation of booking from hall organiser***
- **Holsworthy – 29 May 2019 – 1pm – 3pm (12pm-3.30pm for anyone wishing to provide support) – *just awaiting confirmation of booking from hall organiser***

- **Shebbear - *proposed date and time of 19 June 2019 (10am – 12pm) – nothing booked yet, and will await agreement from the group before confirming***
- **Carer Event – *proposed to be an event targeted at where carers already are and to take place in mid-June***

In terms of the beds:

3 beds (accessed via referral from the complex care team) will be open as of Monday (8 April) and will be block purchased until end of November 2019. The beds will predominantly be for EOI or intensive rehab – more than one session a day e.g. stroke patients. The team is working closely with the home, with training is ongoing, and made clear that it is not going to be 100% from day 1, but support is in place to make sure things run well.