

Annual Review of Public Health priority actions 2019-2020

“Improving health and wellbeing for residents and communities across East Devon”

1. Introduction and background:

This brief overview of activities has been compiled primarily from the key achievements reported in [East Devon District Council's Service Plans for 2020-21](#).

It is not a comprehensive list of all activities, but provides a flavour of work by our services.

Data from Public Health England, the NHS, and Devon County Council provides a mechanism for evidencing, prioritising and monitoring health and wellbeing issues and reducing health inequalities across our district. We use this evidence-based data to guide and plan our public health work within the council and with our partners. Our public health activities support both physical health *and* mental wellbeing, and align with national, regional and local indicators and priorities.

East Devon's [Public Health Strategic Plan 2019-23](#) identifies three overarching aims which aspire to mitigate the differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities:

1. To help more people to be healthy and stay healthy
2. To enhance self-care and support community resilience
3. To integrate and improve support for people in their homes.

The full Public Health Strategic Plan along with a one-page summary & slightly longer executive summary are all available.

Each part of the council can play a part in a joined-up approach to service delivery supporting these three health and wellbeing priorities. Our [Implementation Plan for 2019-20](#) was based upon activities stated in our Service Plans. Teams across the council worked together to fulfil the activities summarised in our Implementation Plan and reviewed here.

2. Summary of council public health actions by service 2019-2020

The following activities by our services help to illustrate the council's efforts to:

1. To help more people to be healthy and stay healthy
2. To enhance self-care and support community resilience
3. To integrate and improve support for people in their homes.

2.1 Countryside and Leisure

The [Countryside and Leisure](#) service aims to help provide a healthier, more beautiful natural environment and deliver experiences that inspire, educate and involve all those who live in and visit East Devon's outstanding environment.

Countryside outreach:

- i. Continued work with Switch groups and children's centres; combined target of 80 sessions across district green spaces, working with 2,000 people; worked with over 1,000 children as part of housing outreach partnership.
- ii. Delivered new core Outdoor Learning package, under new Countryside stewardship scheme delivered 25 school visits to Seaton Wetlands. Also delivered over 65 school and outreach visits. Over £15,000 of income and total engagement with 4,500 young people.
- iii. Deliver 20 outdoor learning experiences across the district to a variety of organisations. Over 58 outreach events delivered from school grounds and beaches to Offwell woods and THG gallery. Worked with 3,626 young people and attract £10,000 of income.
- iv. Year 2 of the Sport England Connecting Actively to Nature fund delivered:
 - Second stage of pilot project - Wild Swimming club for Over 55s in Sidmouth.
 - Further pilot (third stage) in discussion with Active Devon - wild swimming or Outdoor Club for another town location.
 - CAN projects - Wild Swimming pilot a success – fully booked, 12 people took part with 47 on the waiting list. Two more pilots in 2020 for swimming and supporting LED to run a similar wild swimming club in Exmouth. Outdoor Club funding secured for 2020. New Exmouth Outdoors Club to be piloted in 2020 based in and around Phear Park.
- v. Wild Exmouth Heritage Lottery Fund year 1 delivered:
 - Trail projects up and running - eight events engaging with over 700 people.
 - Volunteering group set up for regular work days, engaged with over 50 volunteers, twelve sessions delivered.
 - 'My Patch for Nature' campaign launched with over 70 people signed up in first month; Trees planted, orchards and wildflower meadows created; new partnership with National Trust and with Streetscene.

Sport England's Local Delivery Pilot programme for Cranbrook:

- Supported *Move More Cranbrook* community group to develop programme of bids for local community sports groups & facilities.
- Pilot programme secured over £250K investment via a Test & Learn fund, Community Chest fund and funding towards a Cranbrook Project Coordinator post.
- Established a steering group with key partners to ensure a focus on investing in and supporting Cranbrook's aims for the pilot.
- Worked with Cranbrook TC to utilise town's green spaces for park runs, active family events, and community run events.
- Worked with LED, Cranbrook GPs and RD&E to set a social prescribing initiative with a Health Coach helping to tackle preventable health issues e.g. obesity, diabetes etc.

Thelma Hulbert Gallery:

- i. The Gallery's strategic mission was redefined as a 'cultural hub' supporting communities in their health, environment and well-being through an annually changing programme of exhibitions, events and workshops.

- ii. Exhibitions for 2019/20 included *Paper Play* which engaged the public, community groups and schools through creative programming, workshops, events and ‘play labs’: 659 visitors.
- iii. The outreach learning programme awarded £49,900 for a 21 month project delivered a community curated response to the *On Paper* exhibition delivered with support of Admiral Nurse art auction funds. Outreach combines art, environment and social prescribing – THG hosts Devon Recovery Learning Community twice a week aimed at establishing a partnership for future collaborative projects.
- iv. Launched *THG Out & About* for non-gallery-based projects - works outdoors to engage diverse audiences through participatory, interactive and unusual creative processes.
- v. Phase 1 of the Honiton Cultural project delivered over 30 events and activities showcasing EDDC’s cultural teams and key partners (AONB teams, LED and Honiton TC) with over 2,000 participants; launched its events programme at the THG’s Museums at Night garden party.

2.2 Environmental Health and Car Parks

[Environmental Health](#) staff work across a range of areas to influence decisions and to control a range of behaviours and environmental factors that can affect the health and wellbeing of people in East Devon. We have a key role in contributing to public health and wellbeing of our local communities in ways not available to other agencies such as NHS bodies.

Public Health Project Officer

The Public Health Project Officer researched and wrote the evidence-based Public Health Strategic Plan 19/23, which was approved and published in March 2019. She also wrote East Devon’s Public Health Annual Review for 2018/19. To help guide and report public health activities, we initiated and coordinated a public health steering group of council managers and officers to monitor progress by each service against their SMART objectives annually.

To help more people to be healthy and stay healthy the Public Health Project Officer researched and shared health-information, including:

- i. Ongoing flow of tweets researched & tweeted – c 250 between April ‘19 and March ‘20 e.g. ranging from food safety, debt advice, ideas for ‘Blue Monday’, to fuel poverty campaigns
- ii. Researched, created, and published ‘spotlight’ web pages e.g. on stress management, summer health
- iii. Written copy for staff, residents, tenants and taxi drivers’ newsletters, e.g. new year new you; smoking cessation; climate emergency
- iv. Shared advice about health messages with members e.g. smoking
- v. Ordered resources / posters/ leaflets etc. and delivered to groups such as HALFF, Exmouth Open Door, parish and town councils
- vi. Liaised with students at Exmouth Community College re children’s mental health awareness; provided information re autism, ADHD, general mental health resources
- vii. Shared health information with local health forum groups and others
- viii. Shared information about funding opportunities to groups such as local charities.

She evaluated and contributed to several national / regional campaigns over the year, choosing ones for their relevance to our local priorities:

- i. Sugar Smart / Healthy Weight Declaration: finalised & printed Sugar Smart fliers for EH commercial team to hand out after food inspections. Discussed diet-advice and both schemes with LED contact.

- ii. Smokefree Devon Alliance / Stoptober: represented EDDC and contributed to regional Smokefree Alliance meetings; published webpage; tweeted; distributed posters & text to town & parish councils, members, newsletters.
- iii. MECC [*making every contact count*] training: arranged and evaluated four MECC sessions for community groups across the WEB area; two in Axminster. Facilitated MECC awareness for Members in Oct '19. DCC stated that East Devon has made substantially the most progress leading to most referrals.
- iv. "Undefeatables" campaign: sourced and distributed posters, liaised with town & parish councils and LED, helped to promote this physical activity campaign.
- v. Refill drinking water campaign: initiated several contacts, considered options, made recommendations, following up [work in progress].

She identified further opportunities to enhance self-care and support community resilience:

- i. Supported the head teacher to arrange Littleham Primary School's health and wellbeing week, and facilitated subsequent support with forest school classes delivered by the Countryside team.
- ii. Arranged and evaluated four funded MECC [*making every contact count*] sessions of healthy conversation skills training for community groups across the WEB area; two in Axminster, and facilitated MECC awareness for Members in Oct '19. DCC stated that East Devon made substantially the most progress, leading to most referrals.
- iii. Offered support to a member of public in Axminster setting up holiday-hunger scheme, summer '19.
- iv. Active member of the WEB [Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh] Community Health & Wellbeing Board.
- v. Helped deliver safe hand-washing and 5-a-day fruit & veg messages to primary school children at Junior Life Skills summer event
- vi. Responded for EDDC to consultation on Devon's Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020/25.
- vii. Contributed to Budleigh Hub business plan consultation.
- viii. Contributed to review of Action East Devon's progress.
- ix. Also contributed to work with Housing teams relating to homelessness, mental health strategy, fuel poverty and landlord registration scheme [work in progress].

Antisocial Behaviour and community Safety Coordinator

Delivered a range of projects and interventions as set out in the East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership Action Plan for 2018-2021, designed to make our communities less vulnerable and more resilient, to tackle those at risk of exploitation and to reduce the impact of antisocial behaviour.

- i. Tackled a number of cases involving antisocial behaviour and began to focus on the "youth" element of our communities to prevent future offending.
- ii. In Axminster we secured funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to support youth outreach activities.
- iii. In Exmouth we tackled a visible issue with homelessness, working closely with police and housing officers under the "Safe Streets" banner.
- iv. The Safer Devon Partnership developed an online toolkit to tackle the threat of exploitation, which we are using to develop in-house training for our frontline staff.

Commercial team

- i. Delivered 1,353 routine statutory food safety interventions. There are currently 1,737 live registered food businesses operating in East Devon and 1,628 of these are categorised as “Broadly Compliant”.
- ii. Following interventions there have been two voluntary closures of food businesses; two Prohibition notices served under the Health and Safety at Work Act and fifty two Hygiene Improvement Notices. Another 494 written warnings issued to food business operators relating to various food safety matters.
- iii. Helping businesses improve their food hygiene scores and increase allergen awareness training-course for businesses.
- iv. Organised and delivered a swimming pool water quality and safety management seminar for pool operators in February - creating course content and training for officers ready for pool inspection.
- v. Taken 234 samples so far this year, responding to 57 failures and discovered a new issue with listeria in dessert factory. Projects looking at contamination of plastic “school dinner trays” and problems with local crab picking industry.

There were investigations of several ongoing cases working with our housing and Fire Service colleagues on domestic premises above commercial premises with potential fire safety issues. We responded to 189 consultations from Licensing so far this year on street traders. For the six month period ending 31 July, we responded to 138 infectious disease notifications and 64 accident notifications. We also dealt with 628 other enquiries and service requests relating to the work of the commercial premises team, organised the Council’s contribution to the Junior Life Skills event, and delivered 8 days of presentations at the event itself – which engaged with 990 children this year along with further hand washing promotion days elsewhere.

We also introduced a system of formal health impact assessment of significant new housing developments including a validation checklist – working with Liverpool University.

2.3 Finance

The [Finance service](#) includes the Benefits Team, who provide means tested financial support in respect of housing and council tax costs in accordance with prescribed legislation and a local determined scheme. We give approximately £30m in Housing Benefits and have 5,212 claimants and we provide Council Tax Support of £7.2m to 7,204 CTR cases.

- i. We are the second highest to process new benefit claims out of all Devon and Cornwall authorities –16 days, and are 8th highest in the South West.
- ii. We are the joint quickest to process changes in circumstances out of all Devon and Cornwall authorities at 4 days, and are 5 highest in the South West.
- iii. Our combined performance for processing both new benefit claims and changes in circumstances is the quickest out of all Devon and Cornwall authorities at 4.78 days, are 1st in Devon & Cornwall and 9th in the South West.
- iv. The Council has just had its annual housing benefit subsidy claim audited. This claim is for circa £30m and to have no amendments to the claim is a testament to the accuracy of the team’s work.

2.4 Governance and Licensing

The [Governance and Licensing](#) team assist our clients to run their businesses effectively, contribute to the welfare of residents and visitors, and promote a vibrant and sustainable future.

- i. Licensing introduced an awareness campaign *No Excuse for Abuse*, working in partnership with the taxi trade, members and key partners [Taxi Licensing (Driver & Public Safety)]; other Devon authorities planned to emulate in 2020.
- ii. Assisting in the successful delivery of numerous outdoor events districtwide including Sidmouth Folk Week, licensing Honiton Gate to Plate and Ottery St Mary Tar Barrels and numerous smaller local events.
- iii. Implementing the Street Trading post has formalised trading arrangements by supporting high profile events and contributing to the safer delivery and regime for trading.
- iv. Completed the lease to Grenadier at Exmouth Queen's Drive, facilitating the new road and the commencement of construction of the Watersports Centre.
- v. Assisted in drafting and progress of the Affordable Housing SPD and delivery of affordable housing through negotiating S.106 planning agreements.

2.5 Growth Development and Prosperity

The newly formed [Growth Development and Prosperity service](#) works to ensure that sustainable growth is accommodated within our outstanding natural environment, helping to realise positive economic, social and environmental benefits. Activities included:

- i. Growth Hub business support provided a free single point of contact for all businesses seeking advice and support on any issues relating to the operations and aspirations of their business.
- ii. The East Devon Enhancing Productivity (EDEP) Programme offered a range of fully funded workshops and one-to-one support for pre-start and existing businesses across East Devon. The project delivered ahead of target and we are funding additional support to meet the sustained demand from businesses for this support.
- iii. The Propeller Group in Exmouth has been successfully growing its collaborative incubator space with discretionary rate relief to help establish the initiative. As well as providing a workspace for people to collaborate, the group is delivering networking, innovative events and developing an education programme to help new and existing businesses grow and provide valuable jobs in the developing local tech sector.
- iv. The team supported key local employers who were experiencing challenging conditions. This included a rapid redundancy response for Axminster Carpets Ltd with an information and advice session in October featuring Job Centre Plus, Business Information Point, Axminster Job Club and others. There was engagement with Flybe following acquisition by new owners, alongside the County Council, LEP and Airport.
- v. The team continued to support the planning process with responses to planning applications. Positive outcomes included promoting new workspace development, protecting existing employment sites and bringing forward Employment and Skills Plans as part of major developments.
- vi. The team co-ordinated and developed the evidence-based submission to the House of Lords Select Committee Enquiry for Rural Economies.
- vii. Quarterly Business Newsletters were developed and are disseminated to increase awareness among local businesses of relevant training, funding and wider support opportunities.

- viii. 2019 FSB Award for Building Greater Exeter was an active collaboration between Exeter, East Devon, Teignbridge District Councils and industry to support local people gaining construction skills and employment opportunities through apprenticeships and diverse training initiatives.

2.6 Housing

The [Housing Service's](#) vision is to deliver a decent home for all residents of East Devon. Our Housing Strategy sets out four key objectives:

- To provide a housing options service for all who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- To provide, maintain and manage our own council housing stock;
- To work with housing developers and housing associations to deliver more affordable housing;
- To regulate and improve other social rented, private rented and owner occupied housing.

Housing needs and strategy team:

- i. Housing Options team assisted people affected by fire in a block of privately rented flats following an arson attack in Seaton. This included re-housing several vulnerable households. The residents' needs were met with offers of emergency short-term accommodation as well as longer term as many of the flats were subsequently classed as uninhabitable.
- ii. Many people who approach Housing Options team have limited access to furniture and household items, so the team looked for opportunities to re-use and recycle items, because providing a 'shell' of a property without essential household items can disadvantage people and be a barrier to sustaining a tenancy.
- iii. The new Homelessness Strategy was produced and published, with an ongoing action plan and a working review party including former service users.
- iv. The Housing Options team evolved to adapt to additional demands on the homelessness service, including the additional responsibilities of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- v. £93,000 of additional funding was secured from central government to tackle homelessness and in particular rough sleeping, including setting up the district's *Housing First* project.
- vi. The second year of the 'Your Home, Your Wellbeing' study was completed; a longitudinal study that monitors factors that impact on tenants' wellbeing as well as people on our waiting list for council housing.
- vii. A block of 12 flats in the centre of Exmouth were purchased, of the type of housing most needed, in the most desired town in the District.

Property and Asset team:

- i. Reviewed actions from the most recent round of fire risk assessments for blocks of flats and worked on a programme to escalate spend prioritising fire safety maintenance works to keep tenants safe in their homes.

Landlord Services:

- i. A new Resident Involvement Strategy was consulted on and published, that set out a new approach we take to ensuring customer input is always considered in our service delivery.
- ii. We continued a robust approach to fire safety inspections, undertaken routinely across the district ensuring the safety of residents living in communal blocks of flats. We maintained

close links with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and received recognition for our pro-active work.

- iii. Responded to rising levels of demand for our Estate Management services to deal with more complex situations centred on more tenants displaying chaotic behaviour. We trained our Estate Management Officers to a higher standard to deal with these more complex cases.
- iv. Home Safeguard met demand from a high volume of callers and increasingly customers with complex needs, providing a vital support service.

Private Sector Housing:

- i. Sixteen empty homes have been brought back into use across the District.
- ii. Worked to identify and focus on energy efficiency, HMOs and EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) Regulation properties.
- iii. Launched a Private Sector Housing social media campaign.
- iv. Researched and implemented amendments to the Private Water Supply Regulations which includes more comprehensive sampling regime which affects 80% of the samples we take.
- v. Maintained our Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme and introduced the Devon Wide Housing Assistance Policy, offering more variety of grant assistance, an increase in ECO Flex top ups and loan applications.

2.7 Organisational Development

Activities by the [Organisational Development Service](#) include development of the council plan and key corporate strategy, corporate performance management, engagement and funding, internal and external communications and marketing/campaigns, and human resources.

- i. Delivery of management, promotion and take up of Crowdfund East Devon, with at least 25 more community groups attending introductory sessions and at least 50% of available funding distributed.
- ii. Delivery of updated employment policies and in particular Menopause Awareness Policy and guidance which has been circulated to other districts.
- iii. Communications team outputs via social media, e-newsletters including 55 Coronavirus residents' and business updates; press work and website management.

2.8 Place, Assets and Commercialisation

The [Place, Assets and Commercialisation Service](#) was newly formed in January 2020, to deliver place-making projects across both the Council's own portfolio and through working with others, and to ensure the efficient and effective management of the Council's assets so that both financial and non-financial performance is maximised.

The Queen's Drive project continued to progress with the completion of phase 1, the re-routing of the road and moving the car park to the rear of the site. This opened up the phase 2 site where the new Watersports centre will be located. The delivery of the new Watersports centre will offer a destination for watersports activities in Exmouth that will bring health and well-being benefits to those using the facilities.

Queen's Drive Space remained open throughout the year providing a free play area for children and seating area. Over the summer months, 70 events took place within the space including:

- Exmouth Chamber of Commerce networking evening

- The Deaf Academy Colour Bomb event
- Centre Stage Pirates of Penzance
- Free cinema event for over 300 Primary School children in Exmouth
- RNLI Maer Rocks
- Best of Rum and Reggae Festival
- Paws for the Cause
- Wild Exmouth Story Telling and welcome events for international students attending Mountlands Language School Whizzkids Cycling and Circus Skills
- 1,190 people attended the Open-Air Cinema Screenings
- 804 people attended the 3 Royal Opera House Screenings

These events have been well received by residents and visitors, and let young children experience a play area designed to challenge various developing skills. The space also offered the opportunity for families and friends of all ages to relax and enjoy the coastal location. Overall the Queen's Drive Space facilities have contributed to a sense of wellbeing for people who visit the site.

The Place and Prosperity team facilitated a storage facility for Seaton Parkrun. Weekly Saturday morning Parkrun events offered health and wellbeing benefits to all those taking part. The Parkrun received referrals from the local surgery in Seaton.

2.9 Planning

The [Planning service](#) aims to deliver good growth, thriving communities and environmental care. It helps to create the places where people want to live, work, invest and visit; it can shape places and stimulate markets; it can have significant positive impacts on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the community. Some of their activities performed included:

- i. New proposed guidance on the provision of affordable housing was prepared and consulted, to provide greater clarity over the Council's requirements and improved provision of affordable housing on new developments.
- ii. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule was revised, consulted on and submitted for examination, to help address the infrastructure funding gap while ensuring that developments remain viable.
- iii. The Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Document was consulted on and is being examined. The plan provides a template for the future development of the town and seeks to ensure a high quality of development that will be delivered alongside the necessary infrastructure.
- iv. The Team ensured that a number of major housing and employment developments in the district continued to deliver the planned growth in the enterprise zone and growth point area to meet the aspirations of the Local Plan.
- v. Granted planning permissions to enable delivery of the Exmouth seafront flood defence scheme as well as delivery of the water sports centre and regeneration area on the seafront.
- vi. Over £1.3million in CIL receipts were collected in the year towards infrastructure projects in the district.
- vii. A number of major planning applications for housing within the growth point area have successfully been progressed including the next phases of Cranbrook, reserved matters at Mosshayne and the land swap at Science Park. These developments and others enable the continued build-out of the growth envisaged in the local plan in this part of the district supporting our housing land supply.

2.10 Streetscene

The [StreetScene Service](#) affects every resident and visitor through the broad range of service areas it covers; providing opportunities for health and wellbeing in our outstanding environment as well as contributing to public health through provision of sanitation services.

- i. We increased our range of annual cultural events and engagement activities from around 150 to over 300 a year, ensuring all major parks have an event during the year which offers opportunities for health & wellbeing for example our Beach Rugby and Gig rowing events in the summer. We reached our increased events income target of £45k.
- ii. Social prescribing - we improved the opportunities for health and wellbeing in our green spaces by working with the Public Health Officer compile a network of friends of groups in our parks and open spaces within towns.
We delivered 300 litter pickers to over 60 community groups to help support their volunteer litter picking work; using a government grant which had a very tight timescale for delivery.
- iii. Green Space Plan - completed CABI site scoring, reviewed the results and currently producing a proposal for AMF to identify strategically important sites to retain, sites of community importance and sites which could be managed through other models such as community groups, trust/foundations or devolution.
- iv. We planted over 120 small whip trees throughout StreetScene green space sites and have well progressed plans for planting community orchards at Budleigh Salterton Green and Ottery St Mary Land Of Canaan in 2020.
- v. We planted 50 substantial trees in our parks and supported the planting of over 200 trees through community projects and Wild Exmouth.
- vi. Capital replacement of play areas & skate parks which have reached the end of their service life. Skate parks replaced with modern low maintenance concrete. Completed Exmouth skate park phase 1, Budleigh Salterton skate park and Seaton skate park.

Helen Wharam – Public Health Project Officer

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