

County Councillor's Report 16th February - Coffinswell

The Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme for businesses severely impacted by the Tier 2 restrictions is now open for applications. Both rated and non-rated Teignbridge businesses (in any sector) can apply, including businesses that work from home or on a mobile basis. Those who applied for an LRSB for the November 2020 lockdown are welcome to apply for this scheme too.

Grants for the new lockdown period will go live in early February. TDC are also working on a new 'grant checker' that will allow businesses to work out which schemes they are eligible for. In the meantime, TDC are asking members and officers to signpost businesses to our grant summary table on the website under Business. <https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/business/business-support-and-advice/business-help-and-support-during-coronavirus/>
<https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Case numbers are continuing to fall in Devon, but they are still around the same levels now as they were at the beginning of December. Cases are highest among the 20 to 39 year old age group.

Steve Brown, Director of Public Health Devon, said that while the fall in cases is good, we are still seeing the virus spreading in some workplaces, often attributed to car sharing. If car sharing is essential, please follow the recommended guidance about reducing risk to yourselves and fellow passengers.

Speaking on Thursday, Mr Brown also urged critical workers and people who care for others who are vulnerable to use the new Community Testing Centres opening in Devon.

Snow showers and freezing conditions swept across Devon in the early hours of Sunday morning. Devon County Council warned of a significant risk of ice on Devon's roads.

Devon's fleet of gritters have been working around the clock to treat the County Council's salting network, but the authority is urging people to avoid all but essential travel.

Gritting will continue ahead of an anticipated drop in road surface temperatures to as low as -8C across Devon overnight tonight. Conditions are expected to be hazardous for anyone travelling in the morning, and there is a severe risk of ice on untreated roads.

During operations, a Devon County Council gritter over-turned near Holne on Dartmoor, highlighting the treacherous conditions. The driver was shaken by the incident but was unharmed. The vehicle has been recovered and the road re-opened.

Devon County Council is also working closely with Highways England and Devon and Cornwall Police. Additional resources were deployed to Haldon/Telegraph Hill, and ploughing was carried out on the A380 before 4am to keep the road clear of snow.

Climate conscious Devon residents are being urged to reduce their carbon footprint by cutting down on the clothes they buy and instead get the most out of what they have. And if residents do have to buy new clothes, they are encouraged to buy better-quality, ethically sourced items, preferably from a local retailer.

The 'fast fashion' industry is the second highest carbon-creating industry in the world* and emissions from textile production outweigh the total carbon footprint of international flights and shipping combined. Producing the clothes we wear creates 1.2 billion tonnes of CO₂e each year, accounting for over 10 per cent of all global carbon emissions.

The production of a single t-shirt creates the same amount of emissions as driving from Exeter to Plymouth, and in Devon around 6,500 tonnes of textiles are still ending up in waste bins each year.

If re-used instead of binned, this would save 33,800 tonnes of CO₂.

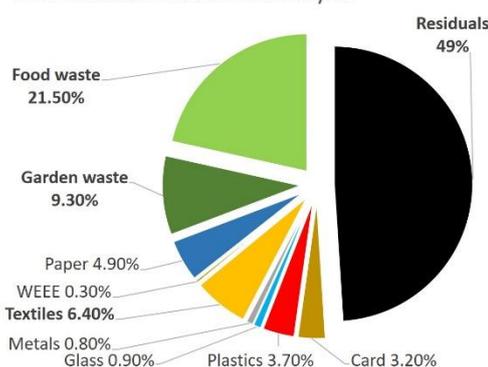
Vice Chair of Devon Authorities Strategic Waste Committee, Councillor David Harvey, said: “Given that £30 billion of unworn clothing is sitting in UK wardrobes, do we really need to be buying even more?”

“The highest contributor to the carbon footprint of clothing is the production and processing of fibre, whether natural or synthetic. This can be reduced by making the most of the clothes we already have, buying second-hand items online or when charity shops are open, and swapping with friends and family. “If we do need to buy brand new clothes, buying good quality, long lasting garments from local retailers made from sustainably, and ethically sourced fibres will help to reduce our carbon footprints. If residents avoided buying new clothes for a whole year, it would save a staggering 132,860 tonnes of CO2.”

For more information about reducing and reusing clothing, please follow Recycle Devon on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or visit www.recycledevon.org.

Reducing waste and increasing recycling

TDC Residual Waste Bin Analysis



Three weeks ago saw the start of Devon’s £578.5 million Budget process. Monday saw the Children’s Scrutiny Committee looking at their £158.3 million budget. Members heard that this was a 7.8% increase on the year before, however even with this increase there was over £1/2 million of savings to be achieved in the disabled Children’s service. What is really terrifying is the High Needs Block negative reserve will reach £78 million by the end of 2022 – at this rate it will consume the Council in a couple more years.

On Tuesday, the £282.5 million budget for Adult services had an 8.3% increase taking to nearly half the total budget. £26.2 million of this was to fund increases in demand and inflation. We heard that the Public Health budget had been held at last years rates because we still have not received the Government grant for this part of the service.

Finally, on Thursday at a 7 ½ hour marathon session the CIRS Scrutiny Committee looked at £39.9 million Communities budget (a 0.2% increase), the £40.4 million Corporate budget (a 7.5% increase) and the Highways £57.5 million budget (a 0.5 % decrease). We were staggered that there were to be cuts to winter operations and Highway Network management. We then brought the whole budget together including the Capital budget.

Following representations made by my Party and the recommendations made by scrutiny the Leader announced an extra £600,000 will be added to the county council’s roads budget under a new plan announced at Cabinet last Friday.

I will report on the debate at full Council on Thursday in my report next month.

Alistair Dewhirst

alistair.dewhirst@devon.gov.uk / Tel 07836 704127