

Cllr Steve Keable

July 2026

Devon County Councillor's Report - Creedy, Taw & Mid Exe:

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Mid Devon Councillor's Report - Taw Vale:

Chawleigh • Lapford • Nymet Rowland • Wembworthy

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Welcome to this July newsletter. This is just one way I seek to stay in-touch with local communities. This month more good news on delivering local improvements that bring benefit to all. Working together on infrastructure investment, modernising libraries, reporting financial responsibility, consulting on the Local Plan and possible development sites, plus a free App to help you stay in-touch.

Stay informed about local decisions, community initiatives, and opportunities to have your say

Councils working together: Cullompton Relief Road - DCC & MDDC

To deliver the new road, which is designed to ease congestion in the town centre and support Cullompton's long-term growth we have started works and the appointment of a contractor. The scheme is in budget and on time for opening in March 2028.

The 1.3km route is intended to reduce pressure on Cullompton town centre, improve air quality, cut queuing off the M5 and help unlock new homes and jobs in the area. As part of the scheme, new public land for the Cullompton Community Association (CCA) is being created and replacement facilities are being provided for sports clubs impacted by the construction of the road.

The scheme has already created Cullompton's new cricket wicket and outfield, situated on Horn Road, now ready for the first overs to be bowled for the 2026 cricket season.

Completed last summer, the outfield has now matured and settled, and the wicket is primed, ensuring it is now ready for the first matches to take place.

The high-quality pitch meets the latest England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) standards, with modern drainage and irrigation systems helping to ensure consistent playing conditions throughout the season.

Temporary clubhouse and changing facilities are also in place for the start of the season, while brand-new permanent facilities are already under construction and due to be completed in the first quarter of 2027.

The Department of Transport has agreed the M5 J28a proposal which is subject to Ministerial and Treasury sign-off.



Cullompton Recreation Ground with the relief road, railway and M5 in the background

More flexible hours for Devon libraries with new Open Plus technology

Residents in Devon will soon be able to use their libraries for longer, as new Open Plus technology is introduced across the county. The first phase of the installations begins this month, (July). Eleven libraries will have the technology installed between July and March 2027.

The installations follow a successful trial at Cullompton library earlier this year and is to include Crediton library. Open Plus allows registered library members to access their library outside normal staffed hours. It means people can visit earlier in the morning, later in the evening, and at weekends, using simple self-service systems.

The move is part of ongoing work by the Council and Libraries Unlimited to make libraries more flexible and easier to use, helping more people fit visits around work, family life and other commitments.

Councillor Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin, Cabinet Member for Libraries, said: "We know how important our libraries are to local communities, and we want to make them easier to use for more people".

Devon County Council delivers balanced budget while investing in key services

Devon County Council has delivered a balanced budget, made almost £18 million of savings and continued investing in vital services, according to its Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2025/26, which were published ahead of the statutory deadline.

The accounts show the Council remained on a stable financial footing despite the rising costs and increasing demand that continue to put pressure on councils across the country.

Over the past year, the Council delivered £17.9 million of savings while protecting frontline services. It also rebuilt its financial reserves, strengthening its ability to deal with future financial pressures and unexpected costs.

The accounts show continued investment in the services residents rely on every day, including highways, Children's Services and Adult Social Care.

During the year, the Council invested more than £84 million in Devon's roads and transport network and set aside additional funding for road maintenance, Children's Social Care and SEND reform work.

The report also highlights improvements in financial management and governance, helping the Council live within its budget while continuing to invest in local services.

The Council continues to face significant challenges around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), reflecting a national issue affecting councils across England. Devon continues to call for changes to the national funding system to help ensure children and families get the support they need.

Councillor James Buczkowski, Cabinet Member for Finance, said: "The publication of the Statement of Accounts demonstrates how Devon County Council has managed the public's money over the last year and provides an open and transparent account of our financial performance." "Strong financial management isn't an end in itself. It provides the stable foundation that allows us to continue investing in the services residents rely upon, whilst planning responsibly for the future."

A New app to make accessing council services even easier has been launched by Mid Devon District Council. The app allows people to report issues, read news and set up reminders in one simple to use tool. Residents can also search and comment on planning applications, find the nearest place to eat, bin collection days, get in touch with councillors or set reminders. The free app is available to download from Google Play or Apple App stores – simply search Mid Devon District Council.

Mid Devon Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments (HELAA)

are studies that form part of the evidence base for the preparation of Local Plans. They help identify potential sites that may be deliverable and developable for new housing, employment and other uses over a period that looks forward over the next 20 years (or the period of the Local Plan).

In June Mid Devon published its HELAA assessment: search [Mid Devon HELAA](https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/) or <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment/>

This is a piece of work to identify the potential land supply, that landowners may consider releasing onto the market. The Mid Devon HELAA is an assessment of the suitability and achievability of such sites for housing or for jobs. The challenge is that Government seeks 1.5m new homes nationally and requires Mid Devon to identify 6k sites for development in the next 20 years.

The HELAA has been produced because of MDDC two public calls for sites in 2022 and 2025. These sites have a detailed analysis and have been considered by a panel of advisory authorities together with commercial developers. HELAA is not a planning permission, it is an assessment – that ranges from 'good' to 'unachievable' as ratings in the view of the panel. Have your say and tell your local Mid Devon District Councillor what you think!

Mid Devon District Council has formally kick off work on a **new Local Plan**, marking the start of an important process that will help shape how the area grows and develops in the years ahead. This follows the Government's introduction earlier this year of a new requirement for councils to prepare Local Plans within a 30-month timeframe.

A scoping consultation is open until 10 July, and gives residents, businesses and stakeholders the chance to **have your say** right from the outset:

- what the new Local Plan should cover
- the key issues it should address
- how people would like to be kept informed as work progresses

There will be 2 more public consultations early in 2027 and early 2028.

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July

