

MDDC Report for Dec 24 – Jan 25

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<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/news-items/>

Could local council please email or call with any work they would like us to uptake.

Update on moves towards Unitary Authority and Devon County Councils attempts to postpone/cancel May elections.

As I'm sure you will know an extraordinary meeting of MDDC was held 08/01/25 and the following was passed with the addition of point 6 requesting that any changes to the democratic structure of Devon move from a 'first past the post' (or 'winner takes all' as I prefer to call it) voting system to a proportional representation model. Apologies that I don't have the exact wording of point 6 to include yet.

Recommendation(s):

1. To write to the Minister in partnership with other council leaders to reaffirm our opposition to a single Devon-wide unitary authority and the postponement of county council elections.
2. Fully endorse the Joint Statement issued by Devon's District Councils (3rd January 2025), emphasising our opposition to a single unitary authority; the importance of proper consultation and evidence-based reform; and a clear stance against delaying scheduled elections
3. To continue to work collaboratively with councils across Devon, including Torbay, to explore options for simplification as outlined in the English Devolution White Paper, with a focus on improving collaboration, efficiency, and shared services, rather than pursuing disruptive structural reforms.
4. To commission legal advice and independent, evidence-based analysis to underpin any future proposals, ensuring they are credible, transparent, and robust to ensure the Ministerial deadlines are met with well-prepared, fact-driven, and scrutinised submissions.
5. To commit to comprehensive public consultation in advance of any business case submission, and to lobby the government on the importance of a Devon-wide referendum to ensure that any revised local government structures meets the principles of devolved powers to local communities rather than being imposed by Whitehall.

Please also see below the joint statement from Devon District Councils and be assured at MDDC, councillors be working hard for DCC elections in May to go ahead as scheduled and not be postponed or cancelled.

JOINT STATEMENT: Devon District Councils - update on devolution and local government reform 03/01/25

This joint statement is made following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper

"The Devon districts are fully supportive of genuine devolution of powers from Whitehall to local government. However, following the publication of the Devolution White Paper, and subsequent statements by the leader of Devon County Council, we would like to make it clear that we do not support the creation of one unitary council for Devon.

"Our county, including Torbay, is diverse and made up of nearly 1 million residents across urban, coastal, and rural areas. Any reform of local government in Devon should follow a period of proper consultation with residents, businesses, elected representatives, and stakeholders. Looking at the evidence, we should decide collectively what is best for our area. A single unitary council for the

county risks diminishing local representation, with decision-making that is remote from the communities we serve.

"We do not support postponing the county council elections scheduled for May 2025. The government has indicated that this will only happen in priority areas who have clear and agreed plans. This is not the case in Devon, so we cannot be in the first phase of these reforms.

"We recognise that the government's white paper sets a clear direction of travel. As Devon's city, district, and borough council leaders, we want to work collaboratively with others in particular with our neighbouring unitary councils to agree how we respond to this. Any changes must be carefully considered, transparent, and inclusive, ensuring that residents and businesses are fully engaged in shaping the future governance of Devon.

"Our objective must be to get this right for our residents and businesses. That cannot be achieved if we make rushed decisions that have not been given the serious consideration that they deserve."

Statement agreed by the following leaders:

Cllr Paul Arnott, East Devon, Cllr Phil Bialyk, Exeter, Cllr Julian Brazil, South Hams, Cllr David Clayton, North Devon, Cllr Mandy Ewings, West Devon, Cllr Ken James, Torridge, Cllr Richard Keeling, Teignbridge, Cllr Luke Taylor, Mid Devon

Rent Corrections

Work in ongoing to correct and refund excess rent that had be paid my MDDC tenants.

We will continue to work with our auditors, the regulator and our tenants to ensure correct rent charges are in place and that anyone facing financial hardship has the support they need.

Tenants do not need to contact the council, they will contact our tenants. But anyone who is worried about rent charges or wishes to speak to a member of our team please

email rentcorrections@middevon.gov.uk or call 01884 255255.

Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund will be open for applications until 31st March 2025. Please be aware that the scheme may close earlier that this date once all funds are allocated so if you know of residents that may need support please encourage them to apply soon. PLEASE NOTE: Payment is by vouchers only, no cash will be provided.

Who can apply?

If you are:

1. A Mid Devon Resident
2. Over the age of 16
3. Facing immediate short-term need

One application only per household for essential food and energy costs.

What can I apply for?

Funding is available to help with:

1. food bills,
2. energy for heating, lighting and cooking.

Link to application –

[Household Support Fund - MIDDEVON.GOV.UK](https://middevon.gov.uk/household-support-fund)

New Years Resolutions!

The fitness studio and functional area at Culm Valley Sports Centre have been updated in time for the New Year.

The gym has reopened with a range of top-of-the-line Matrix Fitness cardio equipment and exciting new features, delivering an enhanced workout experience for all members. The Council has invested more than £140,000 to upgrade the centres facilities.

Culm Valley's gym has all new flooring in the weight area and new equipment throughout, with five new additions including performance treadmills, plate loaded seated row and hack squat machines, and a decline bench. Older resistance equipment has been refreshed, offering gym goers new features like 60 new virtual active courses, wireless phone charging, and 16 workout programmes to accompany Sprint 8.

The functional space has also been modernised with new lighting, fans, equipment and an 8-metre sled track. The squash court also received a face lift in December. The new equipment offers greater variety and training options helping to keep members motivated to hit their goals.

Santa Float Booked for 2025!

The Santa float brought great delight to residents of Cullompton, Willand and Kentisbeare on Christmas Eve 2024 and we are very pleased to say that we have managed to book this again for Christmas eve 2025. Thanks for this goes to Cllr Andrea Glover and the team at Bridgwater Carnival.



Kind Regards
Cathy Connor
Andrea Glover
John Poynton
Lower Culm Councillors