

## **The Extraordinary Council meeting on 25 February 2026**

**This meeting was held to approve Mid Devon's Council Tax Resolution for 2026/27. The average Band D Council Tax across the district will be £2,656.41 for the year ahead, which represents an increase of £135.24, or 5.36%, compared with the previous year and includes all major precepting authorities.**

Mid Devon District Council's own share will rise by 2.99%, bringing its Band D charge to £246.29, an increase of £7.17.

Devon County Council's precept will increase by 4.99%, partly due to additional Adult Social Care responsibilities, resulting in a Band D charge of £1,891.17.

The Devon & Cornwall Police precept will rise by £15 to £303.20 for Band D, while Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue's precept increases by £5 to £109.68.

Town and parish council precepts vary, with **Halberton's Band D precept set at £89.**

Across Mid Devon, parish precepts have risen on average by £18.15, or 20.65%, creating an average parish Band D charge of £106.07. Unlike other authorities, parishes are not subject to central government referendum limits on tax increases.

The financial position for 2026/27 is shaped by the first year of funding changes under the Fair Funding Review 2.0. Although Mid Devon has experienced a reduction in funding, the impact was less severe than originally expected, allowing a balanced budget to be set without reducing service levels. A one-off government grant has been provided to offset changes in Business Rates Pooling, and the district has also received additional funding for homelessness services.

Rising costs have largely been driven by inflation, increased demand for certain services such as housing support, national changes to local government funding arrangements and the need to protect financial reserves against future pressures.

Despite these challenges, Mid Devon has confirmed that it has been able to deliver a balanced budget for 2026/27 while maintaining existing service standards.

### **Business Rates Drop-In Day: Strong Turnout and Positive Feedback**

Mid Devon District Council's recent **Business Rates Drop-In Day**, (Tuesday 17 February) saw an encouraging turnout, with **15 local business owners** attending to seek advice, clarity, and support on a range of business rates matters. According to Dean Emery, Head of Revenues, Benefits, Corporate Recovery, Corporate Fraud, Welfare & Leisure, the event proved both timely and valuable as recent media coverage had caused concern among local businesses.

Attendees were able to sit down with council officers to discuss topics including:

- How business rates are calculated
- What to do when a property needs to be split

- Guidance for changes in occupancy
- Understanding how upcoming changes may affect bills
- How to appeal
- How to use the self-serve system for council and HMRC requirements

One highlight of the session was that officers were able to provide many participants with their **new charges ahead of the formal bill issue**, giving early clarity and reassurance. Only one attendee faced a significant increase, and even in that case, officers were able to offer full guidance and next steps.

The session was also particularly well-received by pub owners—some of whom had been worried by misleading national reporting. After receiving accurate information, several commented that they felt reassured and prepared for the year ahead.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with all attendees leaving satisfied that their questions had been answered in full. A business owner who operates a pub and two other premises expressed particular appreciation for the clear advice provided.

The Council's Communications Team will be sharing broader thanks to the businesses who took the time to attend. With more bills due shortly, the Revenues team anticipates arranging **another drop-in event**, including support with interpreting actual bills once they arrive.

## Local Government Reorganisation

The government has launched a consultation on proposals to overhaul Devon's local government—the biggest change in 50 years. Residents have until **26 March** to give their views. Under the plan, Devon's county and eight district councils will be abolished in **2028** and replaced with fewer, larger unitary councils responsible for all services.

Five options are being considered. Devon County Council proposes a single Devon-wide unitary alongside existing Plymouth and Torbay unitaries. District councils propose a three-unitary "4-5-1" model, with a modified version allowing limited Plymouth expansion. Plymouth and Exeter propose four unitaries, each expanding to take in surrounding parishes, plus a rural Devon council. Torbay also supports a four-unitary model, keeping its boundaries while creating expanded Plymouth and Exeter councils and a rural Devon authority.

Government argues unitaries will cut duplication and improve services, but some councillors warn of reduced democratic representation and rising local costs.

## Car Charge Points

**New rapid car charge points have been installed at Tiverton Pannier Market. Owned and run by Wenea, the 120 kilo-watt dual unit offers shoppers a high-speed recharge, powered by 100% renewable electricity.**

Located in the Council's Market Place car park, just off Newport Street, the dedicated recharging bays offer accessible parking, positioned between the small trader cabins and Market Walk.

## The Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2

A major investment programme has supported households across Devon to reduce energy costs and make homes warmer, greener, and more efficient.

Between April 2023 and March 2025, the **Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2)** scheme delivered improvements to **176 off-gas, low-income homes** across the county. Here in **Mid Devon, 26 properties benefited**, including the installation of **14 heat pumps** and **80 kWp of solar PV**, helping residents cut bills and improve comfort.

The programme was delivered by **Devon County Council**, working closely with district partners in **East Devon, Mid Devon, Teignbridge, Torridge, North Devon**, as well as **Exeter City Council** and **Torbay Council**. Funding was provided by the **Department for Energy Security and Net Zero**.

This work forms part of a wider effort to support households who are most in need, reduce carbon emissions, and ensure that rural communities—especially those off the gas grid—are not left behind.

**ACTIVE Mid Devon** has taken a significant step toward improving accessibility for swimmers with the purchase of two Pool Pods—state-of-the-art equipment designed to help more people enter and exit the water safely, comfortably, and with dignity.

The Pool Pod 3.0 is a discreet, fully automated pool lift that enables swimmers with reduced mobility, disabilities, or additional support needs to get into and out of the pool independently.

Mid Devon is also set to become a hub for one of the UK's fastest-growing sports, with plans for several padel courts across the district. Active Mid Devon is currently exploring options to deliver up to eight padel courts at Active Tiverton (Exe Valley), along with the potential for two padel courts—or one padel court and one pickleball court—at Active Crediton (Lords Meadow).

In addition, the Active Mid Devon app continues to make booking faster, easier, and more convenient. The free app puts customers in control of their fitness by offering 24/7 booking, real-time schedules, swimming lesson progress updates, waiting-list access, and personal reminders, making it simple to plan and manage activities on the go.

## **Cullompton Relief Road – Early Works Now Underway**

I wanted to update residents on the latest progress with the Cullompton Relief Road, as Devon County Council has now begun preparatory works on the site. This marks another important step toward delivering the long-promised route that will help ease congestion, improve local air quality, and support the town's future growth.

Although the main construction phase is not scheduled to begin until the summer, a number of ecological and archaeological tasks are taking place now. These early works are carefully timed to avoid the bird nesting season and ensure that all environmental obligations are fully met. Specialist ecologists are overseeing the clearance of vegetation so that wildlife is properly protected, including the sensitive dormouse habitats along the route.

Progress on land acquisition has been positive, and alongside the road scheme, new public land is being created for the Cullompton Community Association (CCA). Replacement sports facilities are also being delivered for clubs affected by the project. The new junior football pitches are already installed and the grass is establishing well, with work on the new training pitch due to begin in May.

Some areas of the CCA land will be temporarily affected to allow access for both these early works and future construction. During this period, new paths and bridge links will be put in place to ensure residents can continue to move safely and easily across the site. Archaeological investigations are also underway to record and protect local heritage before full construction begins.

To minimise disruption for residents and improve traffic flow in advance, several upgrades will be delivered early. This includes a new layby bus stop opposite the Weary Traveller at the Station Road / Millennium Way roundabout, allowing buses to pull off the carriageway and reducing delays. Improvements at the Exeter Road junction will also be completed ahead of the main works to help with safety and congestion.

The main contractor for the relief road is expected to be appointed in the spring, with full construction planned to start in the summer.

## **Summary of the Devon Funding News bulletin**

The bulletin provides an update on newly opened and upcoming funding opportunities across Devon. It highlights several grants and programmes, including:

- **School-Based Nursery Capital Grant (2027–2030):** Funding for local authorities to create or expand nurseries in state-funded primary schools and family hub sites. [\[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook\]](#)
- **Ending Homelessness in Communities Fund:** A new £37m fund opening 23 February to support organisations tackling homelessness between 2026 and 2029. [\[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook\]](#)

- **Royal Society Partnership Grants:** Grants for schools to partner with STEM professionals on investigative projects for students aged 5–18. [[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook](#)]
- **Boost Charitable Trust:** Small grants for programmes that improve the lives of disabled and disadvantaged people through sport. [[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook](#)]
- **Trading for Good Programme:** Support for community businesses in the South West, running from March to September 2026. [[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook](#)]
- **Geovation Accelerator Programme:** Applications open until 28 February 2026 for start-ups using geospatial and property data. [[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook](#)]
- **Speech, Language & Hearing Foundation:** Grants (£3,000–£20,000) for projects supporting children with speech, language, or hearing difficulties. [[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook](#)]
- **The Happiness Fund:** Two £5,000 grants for small UK non-profits delivering community-based wellbeing and inclusion projects (applications open 2 March). [[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook](#)]

The email also includes subscription management information and contact details for the Devon County Council Economy, Enterprise & Skills team. [[Devon Coun...ews Update | Outlook](#)]

I will continue to keep residents informed. If you have questions or concerns please do get in touch.

Gwen DuChesne MBE