

Cllr Steve Keable

June 2026

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

Bickleigh • Brushford • Cadbury • Cadeleigh • Chawleigh • Cheriton Fitzpaine • Coldridge • Cruwys
Morchard • Down St. Mary • Eggesford • Kennerleigh • Lapford • Morchard Bishop • Newton St. Cyres •
Nymet Rowland • Poughill • Puddington • Sandford • Shobrooke • Silverton • Stockleigh English •
Stockleigh Pomeroy • Thelbridge • Thorverton • Upton Hellions • Washford Pyne • Wembworthy •
Woolfardisworthy • Zeal Monachorum

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Mid Devon Councillor's Report - Taw Vale:

Chawleigh • Lapford • Nymet Rowland • Wembworthy

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Welcome to my June newsletter. Last month has been another busy month, with 15 parish council meetings attended of the 18 that have taken place in May. In my first year since being elected I have achieved a 74% attendance rate of all parish council meeting in my County Division. If I have missed a meeting this is often because there are more than 3 parish councils meeting on the same evening. I seek to stay in-touch with all through this newsletter.

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

Devon Financial Outturn 25/26

At the end of May, DCC Cabinet received the final revenue and capital outturn for last year. The Council ended the year in a balanced position, which is a welcome sign of improved financial grip after many years of very difficult budget pressures.

The headline of the outturn is that we underspent by £9.8 million last year. Adult social care, children's social care and SEND, remain under enormous pressure. However, ending the year in a stronger position has allowed some important additional investment to be carried forward. In the administration's first year, we have demonstrated financial responsibility and an ability to make serious efficiencies.

Of particular local importance, is additional money to this year's budget. A further:

- * £4 million is to be invested to support additional highways maintenance;
- * £1 million has been set aside to invest in the Children's Social Care workforce;
- * £416,000 will support the diagnostic work needed for Devon's High Needs Stability Grant application as part of SEND reform;
- * £2 million has also been transferred into the Service Transformation reserve.

These are the sorts of decisions that determine whether we can repair more roads, stabilise vital services, and make practical improvements for residents.

Local government across the country is expected to keep ageing road networks going without the level of investment needed to do the job properly. The result is a system that has too often been forced into reactive repairs rather than preventative maintenance. Devon has now approved an additional £15 million for highways maintenance in 2026/27, followed by an extra £10 million per year for the following four years. This is significant and welcome, but it will still need to be spent carefully.

Call for better resilience & investment for railways



Councillors, from wards along the North Devon and Okehampton rail lines, recently joined the Northern Devon Railway Development Alliance annual meeting. "The Tarka Line and the new Okehampton Line have been a great success," said Councillor Steve Keable. "Passenger number have grown hugely, but that success has brought its own challenges".

"It is encouraging to hear that new rolling stock is to be updated with more capacity. Crediton now has two trains every hour, carrying 1.5m passengers through the station. The rail industry is wanting to accelerate the doubling of the line to Exeter".

£2 million programme of investment, strengthen & modernise Library Service

Cabinet unanimously agreed to maintain current staffed opening hours, following one of the largest public consultations the Council has ever undertaken.

The decision will ensure that the county's 50 libraries remain firmly at the heart of Devon's communities.

The package includes a £1 million transformation fund, earmarked in February, and an additional £100,000 investment in books and digital resources. Cabinet also announced a further £1 million at the meeting, made possible by a council-wide underspend last year.

Mid Devon District Council will formally kick off work on a **new Local Plan** for the district on 26 May 2026, 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 now open to 10 July, 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

Crediton Tesco's road upgrade

Works to start at A377 roundabout from 29th June. Traffic lights will be in operation between 9.30am and 3.30pm weekdays on the A377 as major works are required in the roundabout. Diversions will be shown for alternative A roads only, and other minor roads may be affected to assist the flow of traffic. Please check maps and use local knowledge to identify alternative routes. Tesco's Crediton will provide information in June.

PlanMidDevon
2026-2046

LAUNCH 26TH MAY 2026

SCAN ME

A 20-YEAR PLAN
for new homes, jobs, infrastructure, and protecting the environment and responding to climate change.

NEW HOMES | JOBS | INFRASTRUCTURE | ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE ACTION

HAVE YOUR SAY
PARTICIPATE IN THE SCOPING CONSULTATION
Help shape the future of Mid Devon by sharing your views on the key issues you think the plan should cover.

DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS
5pm on Friday 10th July 2026

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
Following this preliminary consultation on the scope of the Plan, two further consultations will take place in early 2027 and early 2028 where there will be opportunities to help shape the Local Plan. This will include draft policies and potential site options and, a comprehensive draft local plan before it is finalised and submitted to the Government for its examination. We expect the final Plan to formally take effect in spring 2029.

PLAN MID DEVON ADOPTION SPRING 2029

Find out more about Plan Mid Devon and have your say on: <https://letstalk.middevon.gov.uk>

Mid Devon
DISTRICT COUNCIL

National changes to Planning - Important changes that will affect all Parish Councils

Streamlining of local planning decision-making is part of the Government strategy to build 1.5m new homes. Through the Planning & Infrastructure Act 2025* the Secretary of State has introduced a new scheme of delegation intended to modernise local planning committees by setting out which applications will be delegated and determined by officers (Schedule 1) and which will go to Committee (Schedule 2).

The Regulations detail is still to be published. Once received Mid Devon will be required to adopt the National Scheme and update Constitution and Scheme of Delegation.

This new system will start from 30 September 2026 and decisions will be based strictly on application stage evidence and national criteria. District Councillors will no longer be able to 'call-in' all applications as they can today. Mid Devon is still to consider whether it will introduce a "triage" system to assess which Schedule 2 applications go to committee.

In parallel with these changes to our approach to decision making, Government is also looking to streamline the appeals process, promoting the use of a fast-track approach to written representations appeals. (Which comprise most appeal decisions)

The new system will require both planning applications and officer reports to be 'appeal ready' as the Planning Inspectorate will not consider new plans, reports or late submissions from appellants, interested parties or the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

LPA planning officer planning reports must provide

clear, well-reasoned decision notices and supporting documentation, planning conditions and S106 obligations, which must be fully justified.

The new system is designed to 'submit once, submit right', and places a duty upon all to submit their argued case and supporting evidence 'once and right' as there will no later opportunity. This includes the observations from parish councils as these will contribute to the reports of the LPA planning officer and will be taken forward to any appeal stage.

Where the Planning Committee resolves to overturn officer recommendations, the appeal case is likely to comprise the committee minutes and decision notice. To support this change, the Planning Committee has requested training to ensure the minutes (previously a record of key discussion points only) will provide a comprehensive explanation of the reasons for refusal.

If a parish council has something to say, then say it at the application stage! Any comments made by interested parties during the application will be forwarded to and considered by the Inspector when deciding the appeal. Most appeals will be considered through written procedures, known as Part 1 (fast track within 12 weeks), or Part 2 (full written representations, 6-months) which has a very high bar leading to a hearing or inquiry.

More detail will be available once the Regulations are published. Parish Councils are asked to note these national changes to the planning system.

* Received Royal Assent: 18 December 2025