Paul Arnott

County and District Report

October 2026

COUNTY

- **Highways:** Cabinet has approved a further £4 million to fund improvements to resilience routes, key roads which become heavily used when there are closures in the vicinity. Of particular interest to our area is £850k for Stockland Hill as key link between A30 and A35.
- **Children's Services**: Ofsted has recognised continued improvement in our children's services, highlighting stronger decision-making, effective early help services and increasingly joined-up support for children and families. The findings follow Ofsted's latest monitoring visit to Devon County Council's children's services in August, which focused on front door services, child protection responses, early help and our emergency duty service. Inspectors found that children and families are receiving a timely, well-coordinated and increasingly integrated response from practitioners and managers. They noted that leaders have taken deliberate and purposeful action to strengthen services, increase capacity, support staff and create the conditions needed for sustained improvement. The report highlights the way social workers, managers and partner agencies work together to ensure children receive the right help at the right time. Inspectors found that concerns are reviewed promptly, decisions are generally proportionate and informed, and children at risk of significant harm receive swift responses through well-established pathways. Inspectors also recognised improvements in how children move between services, noting that transitions from the front door into assessment and intervention teams are managed effectively, with children continuing to receive timely oversight and support.
- **LGR**: As has been well reported, this is currently paused for review. It remains unclear what this means, except that there will be District Elections as well as Town & Parish. Government suggests more news may come next week. However, Devon County Council's Judicial Review remains in play and county's position is that if government comes back insisting on the plans it chose in July, the JR process will. A full set of slides have been provided to parishes & towns recently with more detail following a briefing .

DISTRICT

Waste & Recycling the new EDDC owned Local Authority Trading Company (LATCO) began full, on street operations three weeks ago. Hopefully you will not have not noticed that your waste and recycling has been picked up for the last three weeks by Edenserve. We are pleased with the results so far. In the medium term, Edenserve stands ready to expand and to offer its services to other councils and entities requiring waste disposal.

Local Nature Recovery Plan: East Devon District Council's Countryside Team have adopted a new, providing a clear framework to guide nature restoration, target investment and deliver biodiversity improvements across the district.

The plan translates the wider priorities of the Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy into practical, place-based action for East Devon, helping ensure that local projects, land management decisions and Biodiversity Net Gain delivery contribute directly to county-wide nature recovery goals prioritised by habitats of importance to East Devon.

The plan identifies priority habitats, nature recovery networks and evidence-based opportunity areas where action can deliver the greatest benefits for wildlife, climate resilience and local communities. The framework focuses on protecting, restoring and better connecting key habitats including lowland heathland, wetlands, species-rich grasslands, woodlands, hedgerows and the urban setting, while supporting species recovery and improving access to nature.

Importantly, the plan provides a delivery focus for local schemes by combining county-wide strategic priorities with detailed local ecological data and mapping. This enables projects to be directed towards the areas where nature recovery will be most effective and where habitat creation, restoration and enhancement can provide the greatest impact for wildlife and people.

Initiatives such as the Wild About Seaton Masterplan demonstrate how this approach can be put into practice. By identifying priority habitats, improving ecological connectivity and focusing action where it can achieve the greatest gains, the plan provides a framework for delivering long-term environmental benefits across East Devon and unlock external funding. The Local Nature Recovery Plan helps the council meet its responsibilities under the Environment Act 2021 while ensuring that nature recovery is embedded across services, partnerships and future decision-making.

Sports & Leisure Services. LED East Devon District Council has awarded the contract for the future operation of its sport and leisure services to Sports and Leisure Management Ltd, trading as Everyone Active, following a competitive procurement process and approval by Cabinet.

The procurement exercise followed a comprehensive review of the council's leisure services and facilities which considered how provision could continue to be delivered in a cost-effective and resilient way for the future.

The council carefully evaluated all bids before reaching its decision and was supported by external experts in legal, procurement and the leisure industry. The process was designed to identify the most advantageous proposal for residents, considering service quality, social value, investment, financial sustainability and value for money.

The successful bid includes significant investment in East Devon's leisure facilities and services, alongside financial savings that will help support the long-term sustainability of leisure provision.

East Devon District Council's leisure service is responsible for nine leisure centres, one theatre and several outdoor sports and recreation sites across East Devon. These leisure centres and recreational facilities play an important role in supporting health, wellbeing and community life across the district.

Everyone Active is expected to start delivering leisure services on behalf of East Devon District Council in January 2027.

My letter to the Prime Minister has been shared with parish members already. I concerns grave reservations about sewage and water infrastructure provision when EDDC members being obliged to identify future housing sites through the Local Plan process whilst lacking confidence that, as in Cranbrook, SWW do not plan for the future need.