

# North Devon Council News

Councils have now been told by government how much they can spend in the year starting 1st April. For North Devon Council it was even worse news than had been feared with no increase at all in “**spending power**” (a government measure of the money available to a council). But worse than that the 0% increase in spending power assumes that Council Tax increases by 3%!

So you and I will be paying more Council Tax to NDC, but the Council won't see the money. That is extremely disappointing, but because NDC is a well run council the problem can be handled.

We all know that there is a **housing** crisis across the country, including in our area. NDC is the housing authority with a range of specific powers to try and deal with this. At the moment NDC are consulting on a new Housing Strategy, which has three broad thrusts:

- **Prevent homelessness:** Preventing homelessness by supporting citizens to stay in their current home if they have one, but if this isn't possible or they are already homeless seek to help them find alternative solutions,
- **Provide new housing supply:** Supply new housing to meet social demand, delivering affordable and sustainable healthy homes wherever possible,
- **Make homes healthy:** Improving the quality of existing homes making them safe and healthy, in turn making their occupants healthy too.

If you have views on this please go to the NDC website, have a look at the new strategy, and say what you think. You have until

the end on March. If you aren't online or can't find it please give me a ring or drop me an email.

My feeling is that what our local area needs most is a site to build some new social housing in Lynton. We "just" need to find a place for it.

The government's abolition of District and County Councils is continuing apace. It seems likely that the new giant unitary council will be in place on 1st April 2028. The latest guidance issued from Whitehall still says that the minimum population will be 500,000. This is five times the population of North Devon and in my view will move councils further away from the people they represent, and make it harder for you to try and influence the services you receive. I hope I am wrong.

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