

Division members report to Buckerell PC, 13th September 2023 - **DCC Cllr Phil Twiss**

Welcome back after the summer break which I hope has gone well for you all and your batteries are recharged and this month's Division members report has a schools, health and community focus. I also hope the Indian summer we have in early September lasts a little longer.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in Devon School

There is understandable concern about RAAC in the Devon County Council Schools area of responsibility and what work DCC has done to establish if any schools are constructed with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete that poses any risk to children and teaching staff?

No Local authority run Devon Schools have been identified with RAAC and an urgent piece of work is being done to check the status of other schools in Devon that were formerly Local Authority run and now academies.

Ultimately If RAAC is identified, a full condition and structural review would be undertaken and if remedial works were to be identified then these works would form a priority for investment under the DCC Schools Capital Maintenance programme where Health & Safety works are deemed the highest priority for investment.

In detail DCC have undertaken a review of the school estate that Devon County Council are the responsible body for to identify buildings where RAAC may be present. Any buildings that were identified were subject to more intrusive investigation to ascertain whether RAAC was present.

None of the identified buildings were subsequently confirmed as being constructed of RAAC. In 2020/21 the County Council put in place arrangements within the existing school quinquennial condition survey programme for condition surveyors to highlight and report any material they suspected might be RAAC during their condition survey. To date no RAAC concerns have been raised.

The Department for Education recently updated their RAAC guidance for schools/responsible bodies and following this guidance the County Council is in the process of improving the robustness of our processes. This will involve a desktop exercise to identify specific properties constructed during the period and of the construction type where RAAC might be present. Property professionals undertake various surveys across the school estate to ensure compliance on an annual basis in addition to the quinquennial condition surveys. It is proposed to add a RAAC review as part of the surveyors visit, where they are attending a building that has been identified meeting the age and construction type criteria.

Immunisation advice to parents and carers at the start of the new school year

The relevant immunisations?

Pre-school boosters, offered to children from age three years and four months, are:

- The four in one pre-school booster (diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio)
- The MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine is given at one year (first dose) and at three years and four months (second dose)

A list of all the vaccinations your child should have had, by age, and by when, is <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>

If you are not sure if your child has had all of their vaccinations, please check their personal health record (the red book) and if you have any questions, contact your child's doctor's surgery.

Annual flu vaccinations are also available to all school children from reception age to year 11, and these are usually given at school. The vaccine for children is a nasal spray. Vaccinating your child protects them, but also others who are vulnerable to flu, such as babies and older people.

Children who are aged two or three by Thursday 31 August 2023 will be invited for vaccination at their registered GP practice, as well as any children who are at greater risk from flu to enable them to access the vaccine as early as possible in the flu season.

Safeguard cash as a vital payment method for many people

Devon County Council is a member of the Rural Services network <https://rsnonline.org.uk/> and they have joined a coalition of businesses, charities and consumer groups to issue an open letter to Jeremy Hunt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging for the protection of cash as a critical payment method for both consumers and businesses. As the cost-of-living crisis escalates, cash has become an essential tool for budgeting, allowing for greater financial control and flexibility

Signatories acknowledge the Government's recent release of its cash access policy statement as a positive first step, but emphasise that a more comprehensive effort is required to ensure the robust funding and safeguarding of the UK's cash network.

Despite the huge increase in digital payments cash remains the second most widely used payment method in the UK, accounting for a substantial 15% of all payments...

However, the viability of the UK's cash infrastructure is under threat due to bank branch closures and successive reductions in funding for the free-to-use ATM network, which comprises nearly 80% of the country's cash machines.

Since 2018, 14,400 free-to-use ATMs have vanished from communities throughout the UK, and an additional 37,000 now face the imminent risk of closure or conversion to pay-to-use machines. This puts at risk the role of cash in future payment systems but also endangers the financial inclusion of vulnerable populations.

ENDS