

Report to Saltash Town Council November 2025

Cllr. Hilary Frank



MoU FOR DEVONPORT DEFENCE GROWTH DEAL

On 29th October, Cllr Leigh Frost, Leader of Cornwall Council, agreed that Cornwall Council would enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council and Torbay Council to enable coordinated strategic planning and delivery in support of the Defence Growth Deal.

The Deal represents a £4.4 billion regional investment in HMNB Devonport and associated defence infrastructure over the next decade. It's a transformative opportunity for Cornwall, particularly South East Cornwall, expected to generate significant employment across the defence, construction, engineering and marine autonomy sectors, as well as their supply chains. The MoU focuses on making sure local residents will be able to access these opportunities through targeted housing, transport and skills initiatives.

Leigh is clear that this is in no way a precursor to a combined authority with a Mayor for 'Devonwall'. It is, in fact, the exact opposite: a clear demonstration that we can deliver effective partnership working without being restructured into a wider local authority.

The details of the MoU will be published once it has been signed, but the background information is here: [Devonport National Defence Growth Area Memorandum of Understanding.pdf](#)

ADULT EDUCATION

I was pleased to help bring together a meeting on Adult Education with members of Saltash Town Council, Cllr Tim Dwelly (Cabinet Member responsible for Adult Education), Cllr Keith Johnson and Cornwall Council's lead officer for the service. The discussion focused on how we can restore adult learning opportunities to Saltash following the previous administration's decision to withdraw local provision. Our shared aim is to develop courses that support employability and lifelong learning. I'll continue to press for this and ensure that Saltash once again benefits from accessible, community-based adult education.

SPEEDWATCH SESSIONS

We've held Speedwatch sessions almost every week over the past month. Vehicles on North Road were largely compliant with the speed limit, but Fairmead Road saw a higher number of speeding cars. The police have now authorised Oaklands Drive as a Speedwatch site, so residents can expect to see sessions taking place there in the very near future...

VICTORIA GARDENS

Cornwall Council's Tree Officer has provided repeated assurances that the large Monterey pine in Victoria Gardens remains safe. A couple of 'daughter trees' have self-seeded nearby, and I'm working with the Tree Warden to make sure these are properly nurtured so that the tree will live on over future generations. New railings have been manufactured and are sitting in the depot awaiting installation, but there is a Cornwall-wide backlog. I've been told several times over the last month that they 'will be installed by the end of the week'...

BUS STOP ON VICTORIA ROAD

I've received emails from residents concerned about the removal of the bus stop on Wearde Road, which has left some elderly people facing a much longer walk. I am looking into the matter and will report back once I have further information.

SALTASH YOUTH NETWORK

Our recent quarterly meeting of the Saltash Youth Network was very positive, with strong attendance. The heads of Saltash Community School and Fountain Head House School both took part, and there was excellent collaboration across organisations. Sixteen youth groups were presented with cheques thanks to the marathon fundraising efforts of Simon Wengradt and the generous support of previous Mayor Cllr Julia Peggs, who chose the Youth Network as one of her charity beneficiaries.

DELAY OF SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER on SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

The SEND system is broken. Families, schools and councils across the country are all under enormous strain. We had all been waiting for long-promised national reforms, expected to be published in the autumn, to provide a clearer framework for the future. The Government has now announced that these reforms are delayed until early next year.

This delay is disappointing, as we really need support and clarity, but at the same time it is important that the Government takes the time to get these reforms right. The SEND system is under immense pressure nationally, and we need solutions that will be sustainable, fair and properly funded.

Here in Cornwall, the number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has risen by more than 70% over the past five years. Cornwall Council's spending on SEND support and Home to School Transport has increased sharply as a result. We have managed to bring transport costs down for young people with SEND, but they still stand at just over £30 million a year.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Earlier this year, Healthwatch Cornwall published a report on Mental Health in Cornwall, based on feedback from more than 500 residents and service-users. The report highlights both progress and pressure: more people are now accessing support, but waiting times and service fragmentation remain real challenges, especially for young people moving from child to adult services. Between December 2021 and 2024, the number of children and young people receiving specialist mental health support in Cornwall more than doubled.

Working closely with Cllr Jim McKenna (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care) and Dr Eunan O'Neill (Cornwall Council's Director of Public Health), I'm helping to drive a renewed focus on trauma-informed, whole-system mental health and wellbeing support. Our shared goal is to create seamless transitions between childhood and adulthood, bringing together schools, the NHS, Family Hubs and voluntary, community groups so that people can access help at the right time, in the right way.

The Healthwatch Cornwall report was debated at a meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee earlier this week, and I was encouraged to see strong representation from the NHS. Our discussions reflected a real determination to build a joined-up system of care that supports mental health and emotional wellbeing throughout life.