

Agenda Item

REPORT OF Economic Development Officer
To: Communities and Resources
Subject: Northern Devon: A Road to Recovery
Date: 28.6.2021

Reference:

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To seek approval for the Northern Devon: A Road to Recovery prospectus and for delegated market approval.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Head of Communities and Place gave an update to Full Council on 1st February, 2021, to provide details of the Team Devon Covid-19 Economy and Business Prospectus and to outline how that would feed into the work of Torridge District Council's recovery efforts.

As part of the next steps in that report it was outlined that there was a need to "produce a prospectus of economic development projects that demonstrates the opportunities and needs of the District". That prospectus is now coming forward for consideration as part of this report. This prospectus has been developed with North Devon Council and with input from North Devon+.

2. REPORT

The "Northern Devon: A Road to recovery" document is designed as a way of demonstrating the opportunities ahead for the area. The prospectus intends to lay out aspirations for both the local resident and business communities and also as a way to support inward investment activities, such as through the Devon Delivers campaign.

The prospectus sets out 4 key threads to create "the essential conditions for a productive and sustainable economy":

- Economy and innovation
- Skills and aspirations
- Business environment
- Connected communities

Within that there are 2 cross-cutting themes:

- Clean growth
- Inclusive growth

An associated Action Plan will then lay out the strategic projects which are either in development, delivery or discussion to help realise these aspirations and create the change and growth which are required. This action plan will follow the now accepted 3 stage formula of restart, regrow and reset.

The document also sets out the potential role of the Northern Devon Futures partnership as part of that work in order to create a more strategic and collective approach to economic and community growth.

Within the Connected Communities strand there is a re-set ambition to support and revitalise town centres. As part of that and in line with work being undertaken with Town Councils as part of the Welcome Back Fund, there is a growth in interest around markets. However, there is an ancient



Markets Charter that prohibits unauthorised markets taking place within a 6 mile radius of Bideford Town Centre without the consent of the Council (Community and Resources Committee). To streamline approval processes it would be beneficial to approve an Officer delegation for future applications for independent markets. The alternative is to report to committee with each and every application.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

It is not legal to operate a market in Bideford, Northam, Appledore, Westward Ho! or other communities within a 6 mile radius of the Pannier market without Council consent.

Financial Implications

Charges for the use of Council-owned land as market spaces are set out in the Council's Events and Licensing Policy and Guidance.

Human Resources Implications

N/A

Sustainability Implications

Careful regulation of market activity will be necessary in order to ensure that high sustainability standards are encouraged.

Equality/Diversity

N/A

Risk Management

N/A

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

- Team Devon Covid-19 Economy and Business Recovery Prospectus
- Heart of the South West LEP "Build Back Better" plan

Ward Member and Leader Member Views

Cllr Hicks –

2. CONCLUSIONS

There remains a recognition that we remain in the restart phase of dealing with the Covid Pandemic. This means that there continues to be a great amount of uncertainty and anxiety among both the resident and business communities, but also that there is significant opportunity. It is also uncertain moving forward what funding opportunities will be available. Yet unless we present an ambitious and detailed set of visions and projects we will not be able to access either funding or support, let alone gather support or attract wider investment partners.

The Initial next steps:

1. Complete the Recovery Prospectus Action Plan
2. Develop this Northern Devon Road to Recovery document into an interim Economic Strategy.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Approve the Northern Devon: Road to Recovery prospectus subject to final design alterations, including final artwork.
- 2) That Members delegate authority to the Chief Executive to assess and permit independent markets within 6 miles of the Bideford Pannier Market until the end of December 2022, after which time authority will again be sought by written report from Community and Resources Committee.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations: Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Governance, S151 Officer,
Economic /Development Officer, NDC Head of Place
Contact Head of Communities and Place
Officer:
Background Northern Devon: A Road to recovery prospectus
Papers:

