



North Devon Council and Torrridge District Council – Joint Planning Policy Committee

Report Date: 15th July 2022

Topic: Member Visioning Workshop – Feedback report

Report by: SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland, Head of Place, Property and Regeneration, North Devon Council

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. North Devon and Torrridge District Councils are updating the North Devon and Torrridge Local Plan (adopted 2018). As a key early project, the Councils are reviewing the exiting Spatial Planning Vision which includes looking forward to an extended plan period.
- 1.2. A series of joint workshops were held during November and December 2021; a physical meeting at Caddsdon and two virtual meetings with 62 members attending one of the events. There were a number of objectives for the workshops:
 - To establish Member views on the on-going relevance of the current Spatial Planning Vision,
 - Member priorities for the updated Plan,
 - Issues that would need to be addressed,
 - Start to understand how members perceive our future and wish to see northern Devon develop over the next 20 years.
- 1.3. A series of activities were held and the feedback report (circulated previously) captures the results from across the workshops.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. Members to acknowledge the feedback report and accept it as a tool to inform the Visioning work and development of the Plan moving forward.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The Visioning workshop sought to understand member priorities for the Local plan review and aspirations for the revised Plan. The results from this workshop will be used to help inform the draft Vision.
- 3.2. It is critical to the success of the Plan that members remain committed and engaged in the development of the Vision, aims and objectives of the Plan and the wider review going forward.

4. REPORT

4.1. In November and December last year 3 member Visioning workshops were held; 1 in person event and 2 virtual events. The content of the workshops was identical and members only needed to attend 1 session. In total, 62 members across North Devon and Torridge attended a workshop.

4.2. Ahead of the workshops members were asked to participate in a 'homework' activity and to comment on the appropriateness or otherwise of the Vision in the current Local Plan and what they might like to see changed. 21 members provided feedback in this regard and the feedback report sets out the comments received. In summary, the following matters were raised:

- the current North Devon and Torridge Local Plan vision is out of date;
- the length of the current vision is about right;
- the new vision needs to be more comprehensive and dynamic;
- the new vision needs a stronger commitment and to be more ambitious in responding to climate change;
- the new vision should add strength to the delivery of affordable housing, and the means by which employment will increase and the economy will develop; and
- a mix of opinions were provided on tourism, a few comments suggested tourism is detrimental to the housing stock and price.

4.3. At the event itself members were asked to participate in 4 activities:

- Priorities for the future – members were presented with 12 populated cards and had to prioritise the themes on the cards in the form of a pyramid
- Imagine our Future - Members were asked to consider what they wanted to achieve from a new vision, taking account of the outcomes of the first activity
- A branding exercise – members were asked to consider the importance of branding and thoughts on a new brand
- Postcard from the Future – members were asked to list up to 5 things that they would be most proud of achieving over the Plan period. The postcard was to be written from 2041.

4.4. The Visioning feedback report (circulated previously) provides a detailed summary of the results from each activity that will help inform the development of a Vision for the revised Plan moving forward.

4.5. Activity 1 - Priorities for the Future:

The top 5 priorities for members are summarised below but 58% of groups placed addressing the affordability of housing as the highest priority for the Plan and 33% selected enabling economic growth.

- 1. Addressing the affordability of housing
- 2. Enabling economic growth

- 3. Increased resilience to climate change
- 4. Protecting the natural and historic environment
- 5. Delivery of sustainable travel options.

4.6. Activity 2 – Imagine our Future

Members were asked to consider what they wanted to achieve from a new vision, taking account of the outcomes of Activity 1. The topics that were subject to most discussion within this activity related to the following themes:

- Transport
- Utilising the natural environment
- Retaining the younger generation

A number of themes were discussed in this activity. They were not a set of priorities for the Vision (as required by activity 1) more an opportunity for members to consider their ambition for northern Devon over the next 20 years, and members were encouraged to think creatively and outside the box.

4.7. Activity 3 – Branding

Members will be aware that the feedback from this activity resulted in the adoption of the People and Place brand, which is now used for this project.

4.8. Activity 4 – Postcard from the future

Members were asked to write a postcard to the present day from 20 years in the future, to identify what they would be proud of achieving in respect of making a positive impact on northern Devon. Wide ranging improvements were identified, the following being the most popular:

- An appropriate supply of housing, by tenure, increasing the supply of affordable housing, and mix, by size and type to meet the accommodation needs of local people;
- The protection and restoration of northern Devon's unique natural environment;
- Northern Devon has responded to the climate change emergency, carbon emission are reduced to the point of “net zero” and our communities live and work in a sustainable more self-sufficient environment;
- Increased connectivity within northern Devon is delivered by a network of sustainable travel options; and
- Communities across northern Devon are enjoying a work life balance, enabled by adequate and quality homes, good employment opportunities, access to services and facilities, all within an attractive environment.

4.9. The appended Feedback report provides a detailed account of the workshops. Since these workshops a Stakeholder workshop has been held to understand the work being undertaken by our partners, their visions for the future and the impact this might have on the development of the revised Local Plan.

4.10. Informed by this work, time will now be spent developing the Vision, Aims and Objectives of the revised Plan ahead of a further member workshop to consider a draft Vision. The Vision will be concluded in 2023.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The preparation of the Vision, Aims and Objectives is an integral part of the Local plan review and forms part of the planning policy teams existing work programme. Any costs resulting from the process can be met within existing budgets and will be shared across the Councils.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. No impact identified.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. No environmental implications result from the recommendations of this report. An EIA will be completed for the wider project.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. The North Devon Council and Torrington District Council Corporate Priorities have been considered in the drafting of the report.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Schedule 2, paragraph 1.1.1-1.1.3 of the North Devon Council and Torrington District Council Joint Planning Policy Agreement.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.



11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
(The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report but has been circulated to all members under separate cover):

- Member Visioning Workshops – November and December 2021 – Feedback report

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

- Cllr P. Watson (TDC) Lead member for Planning and Development;
- Cllr M Prowse (NDC) Lead Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning Policy;
- Helen Smith (TDC) Planning Manager;

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