

North Devon Council

Report Date: 29 June 2022

Topic: People & Place Project

Report by: Nina Lake, Head of Programme Management & Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This is a highlight report setting out progress to date on the People and Place project initiated to deliver a comprehensive review of the Joint Local Plan. The reporting period is from May to July 2022.

2. CHANGE CONTROL

2.1 Nothing new being brought into the scope of this project.

2.2 Nothing being de-scoped from this project.

3. MATTERS FOR ESCALATION

3.1 Risks to note for this reporting period

Cause: Better external job opportunities, with greater salaries and job satisfaction.

Risk: Loss of more human resource taking their knowledge of this project and policy experience, coupled with difficulties then recruiting into this field.

Consequence: Further delays in the delivery of this project.

3.2 Issues to note for this reporting period

Cause: Since May '22 we have lost:

(a) Senior Supplier / Planning Manager from TDC

(b) Senior Business User / Planning Manager from NDC

(c) Two Planning Policy (PP) Officers from TDC

(d) The full time Project Manager was no longer available at baselining of this project

(e) One Communications Officer left NDC 2 months ago. Now the communications manager at NDC is also leaving in August '22.

Issue: Although TDC have recruited internally a new Planning Manager. NDC have not yet replaced their PP Manager, but have recruited a new PP Officer.

Consequence: This project is complex and takes time to understand all of the stages and the interdependencies. The remaining project team are having to take time to bring those new staff up to speed. This project has slipped by at least 6 months at the time of preparing this report, with further slippage anticipated.

Cause: Is the consequence of the Issue raised above.

Issue: This project has slipped by at least 6 months, mainly linked with commissioning a proportionate evidence base and without successful recruitment further slippage is highly likely.

Consequence: The project plan aligned with the Local Development Scheme will need to be revised, taking into account the new members of staff and the skills and experience they have to deliver the complexities of this project.

Mitigation for both Issues: Explore the opportunity of recruiting an experienced / senior Planning Policy Officer with Local Plan project management experience, although recruitment remains a challenge for our area.

Communications will need to be re-allocated.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Joint Planning Policy Committee to note this report.

5. REPORT

5.1 Noted below are the key products they have been delivered during this reporting period and those scheduled for the next quarter.

5.2 Consultation & Engagement Plan with associated Branding

Delivered

- Branding in place and being used on all reports, communications, email banners, social media and bulletins.

Planned for the next quarter

- Representation at the various shows
- North Devon Homes' Summer Fayre

5.3 Sustainability Requirements

Delivered

- The Sustainability Scoping document was finalised and is now out for consultation with our statutory consultees.

Planned for the next quarter

- Collation of feedback
- Commissioning of Land Use Consultants (LUC) to carry out the sustainability appraisals.

5.4 Policies Map

This element of work is now live and being up-dated as information becomes available.

5.5 Early 'Soft' Engagement

Delivered

- Following feedback on the Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement, a report is on this meeting's agenda.
- A report in relation to the HELAA Methodology is also on this meeting's agenda.
- The wider community consultation received a limited number of responses, so further communication / engagement events will be factored into the communication / engagement plan.

Planned for the next reporting quarter

- Our soft launch with Town and Parish Council's
- Feedback and thanks to those who completed the community engagement

5.6 Statement of Community Involvement

A separate report is on this Committee agenda.

5.7 Duty to Cooperate (D-t-C) & Statements of Common Ground

Additional resources will be required

Delivered

- All engagement to date by everyone on the project team is being documented on a shared file repository hosted by TDC. This evidence is fundamental to the success of the project and ultimate adoption.

Planned for the next 6 months

- Triggering of Regulation 18 in November

5.8 Vision, Aims and Objectives

Delivered

- An Executive Summary and full report has been sent to this Committee and all Members in relation to the early visioning workshops. A report is on today's agenda.
- A further stakeholder workshop was held with our partners to establish what constraints they were facing trying to be the best they could be within northern Devon, plus identification of their key infrastructure projects planned.

Planned for the next reporting quarter

- Collation of Stakeholder feedback
- Finalise draft vision, aims and objective

5.9 Collating, Development or Commissioning of 'Proportionate' Evidence

Delivered

- Settlement Assessment: Sent to all Town and Parish Council's
- HELAA: Consultation, Calls for Sites, Methodology. Report's on this agenda.
- Landscape & Character Assessment: Review profiles
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: Brief prepared
- Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure: DCC

Planned for the next reporting period

- HEDNA: Prepare brief and seek quotations
- Green Infrastructure Plan: Scope of this work
- Retail, Leisure, Town Centre Survey: Prepared brief and seek quotations
- Carbon Reduction Approach: Determine scope of evidence required
- Gypsies & Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment: Prepare brief and seek quotations
- Strategic Viability Assessment

5.10 Monitoring and Review Framework

This element of work is dependent on the topic work stream.

5.11 Issues, Preferred Options and Approaches

Significant slippage on this element whilst the proportionate evidence base is being commissioned and understood.

5.12 Place-based Strategy Development

Appointment of external consultant required for this element of work.

5.13 Strategic Viability Assessment

Delivered

- Focus group of officers identified to progress this work package with first meeting held.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Limited spend to date. Briefs are now prepared to commission professionals to provide proportionate evidence on various topic areas.

6.2 Staff resources noted in section 3 of this report.

7.0 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

7.1 There are no equalities implications anticipated as a result of this report. An Equality Impact Assessment will be developed as part of this project.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

8.1 There are not any environmental implications anticipated as a result of this report, as the purpose of this report is to present an update on the People and Place project. The review will of course address environmental issues.

9. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

9.1 The People & Place Project contributes to both Torridge and North Devon District Council's Corporate Plan and the priorities contained within.

10. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

10.1 Legal advice needs to be sought on appropriate context

11. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report.

13. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Officers:
Nina Lake, Head of Programme Management & Performance

SarahJane Mackenzie-Shapland, Head of Place, Property and Regeneration NDC
Helen Smith, Planning Manager TDC

