

REPORT OF **The Leader and Chief Executive**

To: **Full Council**

Subject: **Torridge Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028**

Date: **2 October 2023**

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To present the draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028 prior to publication for consultation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council’s Strategic Plan sets out the vision and ambitions TDC aspire to achieve over the coming years.

2. REPORT

Members will recall that at the meeting of the Full Council held on the 31 July 2023 Councillors unanimously approved the following timetable to the adoption of a new Strategic Plan:

Event	Date	Purpose
Full Council	Monday 31 st July 2023	To introduce and launch the development of the 2023 Strategic Plan
All Councillor Workshop	Monday 14 th August 2023	Councillors to share their aspirations, debate and prioritise themes and high-level actions to include in a “draft Strategic Plan”
Full Council	2 October	Draft Strategic Plan for approval to go out for consultation
Consultation Period	To be run for six weeks ending before 24 th November 2023	Consult with Town and Parish Council’s, businesses and residents of TDC and all interested stakeholders
Full Council	11 th December 2023	To receive and report consultation comments and approve final Strategic Plan
Service Business Plans	From 11 th December 2023 to 31 st March 2024	To incorporate Strategic Plan into business plan documents.
Internal Overview & Scrutiny	2024/25 Committee schedule not yet set	To report progress on first quarter activity through quarterly business report (QBR)

Following the Strategic Planning Day held on the 14 August the Leader and relevant Lead Members have been working with senior officers to refine the information from Councillors that were captured on the day and to produce high level deliverable actions.

More detailed operational actions and plans will be developed once the final Strategic Plan has been approved in Full Council, which is scheduled for 11 December 2023.

The Themes

Prior to the Strategic Planning Day, a short survey was completed by 20 Councillors, and this indicated overwhelming support for our four current strategic themes, this was endorsed during the discussions on the day:

- Local Economy
- Communities, Health and Housing
- Our Environment Our Future
- Our Council

These themes have therefore been carried forward into the draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

Following the meetings that have taken place Appendix one details the themes, priorities and actions proposed, which will be published for consultation.

Levelling up Partnership

As previously advised Torridge District Council has been identified as one of twenty Local Authority Areas across England to be invited to form a Levelling up Partnership (LUP) with Government. The details and formation of the LUP is still emerging with discussions between TDC & DLUHC Officers continuing in advance of any decisions required by the Council.

However, what we do know is that £400m has been allocated by Government to the policy area albeit no allocations or indicative allocations have been made to Councils yet.

TDC officers working closely with officials at DLUHC and supported by Devon County Council officers have already commenced the exploratory and preparatory work needed to gather data and evidence required to form the basis for determining how the partnership is likely to form and what interventions, support, and or projects might be considered appropriate to the levelling up of Torridge.

The formal launch of the LUP is currently expected to take place in March 2024.

The opportunities could and can be broad covering the breadth of the 12 Levelling Up Missions and therefore provides TDC chance to consider the strategic priorities that could be put forward for support through the LUP.

The Council can look to incorporate the relevant actions in the new Strategic Plan into its submission to help to level up Torridge. It is expected that the LUP will have cross cutting strategic themes as the actions required to be delivered through the partnership are aimed at improvements in:

- % of adults with Level 3+ qualifications
- Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked
- Median gross weekly pay
- Healthy life expectancy

It is clear to achieve improved outcomes across these areas needs interventions from others outside of TDC, which could be delivered from both the Public and Private Sectors. The purpose of the Partnership with Government is to facilitate cross Departmental (Government) working enabling interventions (projects or policies) with the purpose of Levelling Up.

On a local / regional basis the importance of working collaboratively and in partnership cross sectoral will also play a major part in delivering the ambitions.

Existing strategic partnership

Working collaboratively and in partnership with like-minded ambitious organisations is seen as a fundamental basis for achieving better life outcomes for our residents. The Council geographical boundary of Northern Devon (North Devon Council and Torridge District Council) is quite often seen to those outside of the Councils as a single economic area, which is a view supported and underpinned through the North Devon and Torridge Joint Local Plan and the Northern Devon Economic Strategy.

Both Councils continually work with partners across a wide range of sectors that collectively we bear a significant impact and influence on Northern Devon (residents, businesses and visitors) in terms “Place”.

On the 5 October 2021 Full Council unanimously decided to join **Northern Devon Futures (NDF)** the strategic partnership of organisations working together to improve the lives of those who live and work in the two Council areas (North Devon Council & Torridge District Council) Northern Devon and to plan for the future of the area. The NDF Partnership is founded on the belief that through working together organisations can achieve more in support of agendas that the partners share. It recognises that in addressing different aspects of improving life in Northern Devon: its economy, the places that people live, its health, its education, action that can be taken in one aspect can impact (positively or negatively) on other areas. NDF looks to add value through providing a perspective that takes a holistic view, exploring and developing the areas where different actions can complement more than one agenda positively. The framework and model adopted by **NDF is illustrated at Appendix two**. With all Partner organisations represented at the Strategic Board with those most senior positions from within it truly aims to bring together those across Northern Devon who are pivotal in achieving the better outcome we all strive to deliver for our residents, communities businesses and visitors.

Northern Devon Economic Strategy - an important document underpinning some of this work is the Northern Devon Economic Strategy, which is currently being refreshed

and due to be reported to both Councils within the next six months. The previous version of the Strategy focussed largely on recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic.

One Devon - is a collaboration of the NHS and local councils, as well as a wide range of other organisations like the voluntary sector, who are working together to improve the lives of people in Devon.

3. Implications

Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications.

Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications at this time

Human Resource Implications

There are no specific substantiality implications

Equality / Diversity

There are no specific equality / Diversity issues

Risk Management

There are no specific risk issues contained in the report.

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

The report aims to set the Council's strategic vision for the next five years.

Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

There are no Data Protection Implications contained in the report.

Climate Change

Climate Change implications are covered within the Strategic Plan.

Lead Members Comments

Local Economy

Cllr Hicks – *“It's the economy stupid.” Recognised here.*

Cllr Lock – *“We must be able and ready to adapt to any changes that occur during this term of the council in order to maintain the progress and aspirations of the Council”.*

Communities, Health and Housing

Cllr Hodson – *“The priorities and actions within the Communities Health and Housing theme provide a comprehensive plan to improve all aspects of community lives within the District.”*

Cllr Cottle-Hunkin – *“The priorities and actions have taken into consideration a wide range of areas in which lives can be improved and enhanced for the people of Torridge. In particular I’m pleased that mental health has now been recognised as a priority, as well as the importance of cultural enrichment and the recently adopted Culture Strategy 2022-27”*

Cllr Hackett – *“Increasingly Torridge is placed in a position where, as a council, it finds itself taking on greater responsibilities due to agencies retreating on the delivery of services. We need to balance what additional provisions we can make with the budget available. This plan seeks to provide the best for our community”.*

Cllr Piper – *“I endorse the proposed wording of the Communities, Health and Housing strategic theme. They encompass well considered member and officer input and provide a framework for long term positive change relating to the most fundamental needs of residents of the Torridge District”.*

Our Environment Our Future

Cllr Leather – *“ Our enhanced Strategic Plan will continue to improve the delivery of Our Environment Our Future, and confirm Torridge as a leading Waste & Recycling authority, working with other Devon Waste collection councils”*

Cllr Hames – *“As Climate Lead Member I look forward to the Council’s continued urgent commitment to carbon reduction and increased energy efficiency regarding its properties and operations and to increasing biodiversity in its public spaces.”*

Our Council

Cllr James – *“As part of the development of our new Strategic Plan and following a well-attended councillor workshop I have met with Lead Members and senior officers to produce this draft document that I am pleased to present to Council for consultation”.*

Cllr Newton – *“Comment from the Strategic Workshop has confirmed that much of the “Our Council” theme in the Strategic Plan is still relevant however this draft updates priorities and actions to reflect modern requirements whilst also developing a Customer Charter and increasing the awareness of local democracy amongst the young.”*

Cllr Bushby - *“The wording in the draft Strategic Plan emphasises the importance of modern, responsive and accountable services that support members and front-line services”.*

4. CONCLUSIONS

The draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is attached as appendix 1 for members information. **The document will be updated and republished with the report during the w/c 25 Sept following the meeting with the Lead Members of the Communities, Health and Housing theme.**

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the draft Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028 is published for consultation.