

REPORT OF: Head of Communities and Place

To: Full Council

Subject: Northern Devon Place Story

Date: 8th December 2025

Reference:

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To re-present the Northern Devon Place Story for adoption.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. A Northern Devon Place Story has been developed by Northern Devon Futures Partnership, on behalf of Torridge District and North Devon Councils, and is presented to Council for adoption.

2. REPORT

2.1 The intention of a Place Story is to provide a compelling narrative about an area including its history, culture, community, challenges and future aspirations. It can be used to help promote an area or to describe an area to those unfamiliar with it. The narrative should be flexible enough to be used across different communication streams and be relevant to different audiences.

2.2 The Northern Devon Futures Partnership, which is a strategic partnership made up of local authorities, education, health and other public and private sector organisations and representatives, considered that a Northern Devon Place story would be of assistance in trying to raise the profile and awareness of the North Devon and Torridge areas.

2.3 As a consequence, Torridge District and North Devon Councils have jointly commissioned the piece of work that has led to the creation of a Place Story, the final version of which is attached as Appendix 1.

2.4 The Place Story is intended to reflect the area's identity, its culture and its ambitions in one single narrative. It will be used to raise the profile and the understanding of the area with regional bodies such as the Devon and Torbay CCA and the Great South West. It is also being used to influence Local Government Reorganisation and the proposals that might be submitted this month.

2.5 It can be used to highlight the economic activity taking place in the area and also the opportunities that exist for new sectors to develop with a view to bring forward inward investment and increasing confidence.



2.6 Importantly, it will be used to raise awareness of our area in central government. It is often said that Northern Devon does not shout about its achievements or its ambitions and this is a way of helping achieve that.

2.7 The Place Story was developed following wide engagement with stakeholders through the Futures Partnership and with councillors in both councils.

2.8 The Place Story was presented to Full Council on the 26th November and there was a debate about how it might be adapted to reflect the thoughts of various Councillors. The main focus of the debate was that some members did not feel the document did enough to present the agricultural heritage of the area, the vibrance of the rural areas and villages and that there was no mention of cultural events like agricultural shows. Community sport was also mentioned.

2.9 Wholesale change to the document will not be possible. It has been adopted in its current form by North Devon Council and the many other partner organisations involved in its production, all of whom are ready and keen to publicise it widely for its intended purpose i.e. to generate interest and investment in the area.

2.10 It is possible that we could include some minor additions and amendments (like changing the representation of agriculture as a low value sector) as soon as members approve and adopted the document. This will be discussed with colleagues at NDC.

2.11 Adoption of the document as soon as possible is advised in order that the document can be put to use and to demonstrate a partnership approach with the other contributors in its production.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

None

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with adoption of the Place Story

Human Resources Implications

None

Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

None

Equality/Diversity

None



Risk Management

None

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

The place story has been prepared with awareness for the priorities of the Council and in furtherance of its strategic ambitions.

Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

None

Lead Member Views

Cllr James, Leader - 12/11/25

“This is an important step towards presenting a vision for Northern Devon which will establish our position in any future Unitary”

“The Place Story isn’t intended to give the reader every detail about Northern Devon, it is meant to create some interest and catch the attention of inward investors and make them want to learn more”

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The various partners associated with the presentation of the Place Story believe the it is an accurate and usefull reproesentation of Northern Devon

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Council adopt the Northern Devon Place Story as set out in Appendix 1
- 5.2. That Council delegate authority to the Head of Communities and Place, in consultation with the Leader, to make any final minor amendments to the Place Story prior to publication

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations: Senior Leadership Team

Contact Officer: Sean Kearney



