

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL AND TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL
JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting of LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP held at Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Friday, 15th July, 2022 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors:

North Devon Council: Councillor Prowse (Chair)
Councillors Chesters, Lofthouse, D. Spear, Tucker and Yabsley

Torrige District Council: Councillors Clarke, Cottle-Hunkin, Hames, Hicks, James and Watson

Officers:

North Devon Council: (KM)Chief Executive, (SM)Head of Place, Property and Regeneration, (CC)Paralegal and (JJ)Service Lead Housing Market Balance

Torrige District Council: (HS)Planning Manager, (DB)Senior Planning Policy Officer, (IR)Senior Planning Policy Officer, (BL)Planning Policy Officer and (CB)Affordable Housing Officer

Also Present:

Councillors Pennington (Torrige District Council)
Councillor Davis (Devon County Council)

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Hacket and Worden.

13. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT THE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 28TH JANUARY 2022 (ATTACHED)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2022 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

14. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE MEETING AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

The Chair requested that the Committee Members meet immediately following this meeting for an informal meeting.

RESOLVED that the item 11 Reinstatement of Bideford to Barnstaple Rail Link be considered before item 6 on the agenda.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest announced.

16. REINSTATEMENT OF BIDEFORD TO BARNSTAPLE RAIL LINK

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration regarding the Reinstatement of the Bideford to Barnstaple Rail Link (circulated previously).

The Head of Place, Property and Regeneration confirmed both Councils had received a presentation from the Director of the Bideford Railway Heritage Centre and ACE Rail Lead regarding the proposal.

Cllr Davis (DCC) addressed the Committee as Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport and confirmed her support for the proposal.

The Director of the Bideford Railway Heritage Centre and ACE Rail Lead, Tim Steer, addressed the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Bideford to Barnstaple rail link is considered as part of the People and Place project.

17. MEMBER VISIONING WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration, which provided feedback on Member Visioning Workshops relating to the People and Place Project, referring to a previously circulated report (circulated previously).

The Head of Place, Property and Regeneration reported that:

- 62 Members from the two Authorities attended a workshop.
- A number of activities were completed by the attending Members, which related to identifying priorities to be addressed in an updated Local Plan and a consideration of how the area should evolve over the next 20 years.
- The top five Member priorities were identified as:
 1. Addressing the affordability of housing;
 2. Enabling economic growth;
 3. Increased resilience to climate change;
 4. Protecting the natural and historic environment; and
 5. Delivering sustainable travel options.

The Chair noted that he had found the workshops to be a worthwhile exercise.

RESOLVED that the feedback report be acknowledged and accepted as a tool to inform the Visioning work and development of the Local Plan moving forward.

18. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Committee considered a report by the Senior Planning Officer (TDC) regarding the North Devon and Torridge Statement of Community Involvement (circulated previously).

The Senior Planning Officer (TDC) confirmed that:

- The report provided the feedback on a recent consultation undertaken on the draft North Devon and Torridge Statement of Community Involvement.
- There had been seven responses from organisations and individuals. These were listed in the appendix A, together with the Councils proposed response and as considered necessary revisions to the draft document.
- The recommended revisions were considered to be of a minor nature, relating to points of clarification and correction. It was noted that some responses to the consultation did not fall within the remit of the Statement of Community Involvement.

RESOLVED that;

- (a) The proposed revisions to the draft North Devon and Torridge Statement of Community Involvement as presented in appendix 1 be agreed, and
- (b) The adoption of the North Devon and Torridge Statement of Community Involvement as presented in Appendix B, be agreed.

19. HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (HELAA)

The Committee considered a report by the Planning Officer (TDC) regarding the North Devon and Torridge Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Methodology (circulated previously).

The Planning Policy Officer (TDC) advised the Committee of the consultation undertaken on the methodology, and referred to the received responses, as summarised in appendix 1 to the report, in response to which no major changes were recommended.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Senior Planning Policy Officer (TDC) advised that it would be difficult to look at full and detailed financial viability of each site at the HELAA stage although it was accepted that further work on site viability would be a useful addition to site assessments as site allocations are further considered through the plan making process.

The Chair noted that although sites had been assessed through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), with regard to development suitability some allocated housing sites did not subsequently deliver policy compliant developments, particularly in respect of affordable housing.

The Planning Manager (TDC) advised that a best practice guidance report in relation to viability assessment would be presented at a later Committee.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Planning Policy Officer (TDC) confirmed that the HELAA delivered a technical review of proposed housing and employment sites.

The Committee discussed the composition of the HELAA Panel, with particular regard to community representation, the consideration of which was set aside for future review.

RESOLVED that;

- (a) The proposed revisions to the draft North Devon and Torridge HELAA Methodology as presented in the appendices of the report be agreed, and
- (b) The North Devon and Torridge HELAA Methodology, as provided in appendix 3 to the report be adopted.

20. PEOPLE AND PLACE PROJECT

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Programme Management and Performance regarding the People and Place Project (circulated previously).

The Head of Place, Property and Regeneration addressed the Committee and advised that the project was approximately six months' behind schedule. This was due in part to the loss of a number of staff from the teams at both NDC and TDC.

RESOLVED that the People and Place Project report be noted.

21. AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The Committee considered a report by the Senior Planning Policy Officers (TDC and NDC) regarding the North Devon and Torridge Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (circulated previously).

The Service Lead (Housing Market Balance) addressed the Committee and advised:

- The SPD was prepared to provide additional guidance to Local Plan policies, to support the delivery of affordable housing.
- The SPD would be considered as a material planning consideration when determining planning applications.
- In response to consultation on the draft SPD, 272 comments were received from 25 respondents, as presented in appendix 1 to the report.
- A number of revisions are recommended to the draft SPD, in response to consultation responses and from an officer review of the document.

The Service Lead (Housing Market Balance) tabled a document which detailed an amendment required to SPD paragraph 5.11 as a point of correction relating to the omission of Great Torrington from the "list of parishes which fall as being outside of the Designated Protected Areas (DPA) in their entirety".

RESOLVED that:

- (a) The proposed revisions to the draft North Devon and Torrridge Affordable Housing SPD, consequent of undertaken consultation, as presented in appendix 1 be agreed,
- (b) That the Councils adopt the North Devon and Torrridge Affordable Housing SPD, as provided in appendix 2 subject to the amendment to paragraph 5.11 and
- (c) The Committee delegates to the Planning Manager of TDC, and the Head of Place, Property and Regeneration of NDC, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee, approval of any minor amendments and corrections to the North Devon and Torrridge Affordable Housing SPD provided as appendix 2 prior to the document's publication.

22. CLIMATE WORKING GROUPS - FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report "Feedback from Councillor Climate Working Groups" by the Sustainability and Climate Officer (circulated previously).

Councillor Lofthouse addressed the Committee and advised that there was a need to:

- Increase biodiversity net gain on smaller development sites.
- Utilise planting and hedgerows, and open fencing.
- Create sustainable development.
- Set priorities and involve the community in assessing those priorities.
- Look at the financial implications – with regard to income generation in addition to costs.
- Seek employment provision for young people and also get them involved.

Councillor Hames addressed the Committee and advised that there was a need to:

- Learn from other Local Authorities.
- Strengthen the Local Plan in relation to climate issues.
- Set targets for carbon assessments.
- Create a better active travel plan, to include rail links.

The Committee also considered:

- Wildlife corridors
- Solar power – provision of panels at development stage rather than by individual homeowners.

RESOLVED that the Feedback from the North Devon Climate Action Team and the Torrridge Climate Change Working Group be noted.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 11.30 am

