

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL AND TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL
JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Joint Planning Policy Committee held at Bideford Town Hall on Friday, 13th October, 2023 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors:

North Devon Council:

Councillors Cann, Lane, Prowse (Vice-Chair), Roome, Walker and Worden.

Torrige District Council:

Councillors Cottle-Hunkin, Hames, Hicks (Chair), Hodson, James, Leather and Lock

Officers:

North Devon Council: Head of Place, Property and Regeneration (SM), Senior Planning Policy Officer (ED) and Chartered Legal Executive (HP)

Torrige District Council: Planning and Economy Manager (SK), Planning Manager (HS), Senior Planning Policy Officer (IR) and Solicitor (SD)

Also Present:

Councillor Pennington

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Head of Communities & Place (TDC) invited nominations for Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by Councillor Lock and –

Resolved: That Councillor Hicks be elected as Chair of the Committee.

(Vote: For – Unanimous).

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Nominations were invited for Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Roome, seconded by Councillor Lane and –

Resolved: That Councillor Prowse be elected as Vice Chair of the Committee.

(Vote: For – Unanimous)

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from ND Council - Councillor Knight, Councillor Bell (Councillor Walker substituting) and Councillor Crabb (Councillor Cann substituting). From TD Council – Councillor Hackett (Councillor Leather substituting).

4. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2023 (ATTACHED)

It was proposed by Councillor Hicks, seconded by Councillor James and –

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2023 be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Councillors present at the meeting - Councillor Spear is a ND Councillor and not a TD Councillor. (Vote: For 6, Abstentions 7)

5. TO AGREE THE AGENDA BETWEEN PART 'A' AND PART 'B' (CONFIDENTIAL RESTRICTED INFORMATION).

There were no 'Part B' items.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded Members that declarations of interest should be made when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

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

There were no items brought forward for consideration.

8. REVIEW OF THE NORTH DEVON AND TORRIDGE LOCAL PLAN

The Senior Planning Policy Officer (NDC) gave an informative slide presentation, highlighting the following key elements of the report:

Legislation associated with a review of the Local Plan. A Review must be completed every five years, starting from the date of adoption of the Local Plan. Review deadline: 29 October 2023.

The Plan Review Principles.

- Method to ensure that a plan and its policies remains effective.
- Proportionate to the issues in hand.

- Policies do not automatically become out of date after 5 years.

Matters for a Plan Review.

- Conformity with national policy
- Changes in local circumstances
- Demonstration of five year land supply
- Deliverability of key site allocations
- Appeal performance
- Cross-boundary issues
- Changes to social, environmental or economic priorities

North Devon & Torridge Review.

- Based on range of engagement and evidence.
- Presented through completion of PAS Plan Review Toolkit.
- Previously presented to JPPC in early 2023.
- Updated to reflect further work:
 - Five-year housing land supply.
 - Duty to cooperate engagements.
 - Other refinements, changes and updated text.
 - Plan broadly continues to provide robust basis for decision making.
 - Identifies additional policies are required to address matters where the Plan is silent.
 - Identifies some specific policy areas would benefit from being updated.
 - Does not limit scope of future approach to plan-making.

Recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Leather referred to Travellers sites in plural and asked if there was to be more than one site and what the evidence was based on. The attending Officers advised that the evidence is from the Devon Wide Traveller Assessment produced 4 in 2016 which sets out there is a need for 15 permanent sites across the plan area plus 2 transit sites. The Senior Planning Policy Officer (TDC) agreed to forward to Councillor Leather a copy of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. Councillor Prowse suggested that as Members had questioned whether the evidence was sound, a report be brought to the next meeting in December for Members to consider:

- whether the evidence is good enough and sound; and
- to agree a plan to address it.

It was proposed by Councillor James, seconded by Councillor Roome and –
Resolved: That the conclusions of the 5 Year Review of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan attached to the report be confirmed, namely:

1. The policies included in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan remain up to date.

2. Additional policies are required to address matters where the Local Plan is silent, namely: First Homes, Coastal Change Management Areas and the provision of traveller sites.

3. A range of practical implementation issues, principally focused on the detail of the development management policies in Part 3 of the Local Plan are identified that could be considered for future update.

(Vote: For – Unanimous).

9. RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON PLAN-MAKING REFORMS

The Senior Planning Policy Officer (TDC) addressed the Committee and gave a slide presentation highlighting the following key elements contained within the report:

The Government's Vision is for plans to:

- Be simpler to understand and use.
- Be positively shaped by views of communities about how their area should evolve.
- Clearly show what is planned in a local area.
- Be prepared more quickly and updated more frequently.
- Make the best use of new digital technology.

An overview of the Consultation:

- Current consultation focused on detail
- Related to implementation 5
- Open from 25 July to 18 October 2023
- 42 substantive questions • Split across 15 topics
- Does not seek views on matters being taken forward through Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

Scope of the Consultation:

- Wide-ranging and detailed technical consultation covering:
 - Plan form and content
 - Process and timetable
 - Evidence and engagement
 - Monitoring
 - Transition Arrangements
 - Community Land Auctions

As part of the presentation, the Senior Planning Policy Officer (TDC) drew attention to various aspects of the proposed response as set out in the appendix of the report, highlighting key aspects whereby it offered support or raised concerns to the Government's proposals.

Key response points:

Consider principles are broadly sensible and laudable Response broadly offers support, subject to some caveats, for:

Renewed emphasis on vision-led planning

- Targeted local development management policies
- Increased use of digitalization, templates and standardisation
- Clearer expectations on evidence requirements
- Improved project management expectations
- New Requirement to Assist
- Rationalised monitoring requirements

The recommendations as set out in the report.

During the discussion the Senior Planning Policy Officer (TDC) responded to questions/concerns raised by the Committee.

Following comments from Councillor Hames, the Senior Planning Policy Officer confirmed that the community land auction system had been covered in the responses.

Reference was made to the needs of the area, the deprivation in some of the communities and the need for a Local Plan to address some of those issues.

The Committee expressed thanks to Officers from ND Council and TD Council for all their hard work in preparing the response

It was proposed by Councillor Prowse, seconded by Councillor James and –

Resolved:

- a) That the draft response to the Government's consultation (Appendix 1 attached to the report) on implementation of plan-making reforms was considered.
- b) That the response to be formally submitted on behalf of the North Devon Council and Torridge District Council be endorsed.

(Vote: For - Unanimous)

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting to be held on 8 December 2023 at 10am in the Town Hall, Bideford.

The Planning Manager (TDC) said as previously discussed, Gypsy & Traveller matters to be included on the Agenda for the December meeting.

It was also agreed that a Forward Plan be set up for the next 12 months where matters/issues such as those raised at this meeting can be added.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 11.12 am