



## **North Devon Council and Torrige District Council – Joint Planning Policy Committee**

Report Date: 14th October 2022

### **Topic: People and Place Stakeholder Workshop Feedback Report**

Report by: Planning Policy Technical Officer (Torrige District Council)

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. Officers have prepared a report (Appendix 1) that summarises the findings from a stakeholder workshop held on the 20th of June 2022 at Caddsdawn Business Support Centre in Bideford. This was an opportunity for stakeholders to give their views on the Local Plan through the People and Place Project and to help inform the Councils of their issues/challenges and key priorities/major projects. A total of 24 stakeholders attended across a range of sectors.

1.2. The main objectives of the workshop were to gain a better understanding of how stakeholders view the Local Plan as well as their current views on the issues facing northern Devon. It was important to understand their level of knowledge and allow them to recognise that their input is valuable.

1.3. It should be recognised that this report is still in draft form and is subject to subsequent finalisation by officers. The substance of the report will however remain the same.

1.4. The main results identified in this feedback report can be accepted as a tool which could help inform decision making related to the Local Plan as it moves forwards. The results from each activity should be considered as valuable contributions from stakeholders and those they represent.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. To note the findings of the stakeholder workshop as set out in the draft stakeholder workshop report (Appendix 1).

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1. To inform members of the findings and outcomes of the stakeholder workshop.



## 4. REPORT

4.1. In June 2022 one in person event took place at Caddsdow Business Support Centre, Bideford with 24 stakeholders and 9 facilitators present. The event was in the afternoon and ran from 14:00 to 17:00.

4.2. The views of stakeholders are from the perspective of their own organisations as well as communities in northern Devon therefore should be recognised as being valuable.

4.3. Keeping stakeholders involved in plan making will be important as they can represent a wide variety of people and organisations across northern Devon.

4.4. At the workshop event the stakeholders took part in an icebreaker activity followed by three further substantive activities. Activities one and two allowed stakeholders to discuss their views within four small breakout groups. Activity three was a question-and-answer session inviting stakeholders to have any immediate questions answered.

### A. Icebreaker Activity:

*What do you think is the purpose of the Local Plan?*

4.5. This activity aimed to show the level of understanding that the stakeholders had around local plans and the North Devon and Torrige Local Plan. Most stakeholders had heard of local plans, several understood what they were or how they worked, and a few had been involved in one previously. Stakeholders had a short 5-minute discussion where responses were recorded on post-it notes. It was clear that most stakeholders viewed local plans as a guide for development and growth in the local area. It was understood that it allowed key strategies to work by providing a framework to enable key priorities to be met. All stakeholders appeared to have some understanding of how a local plan could be used to influence decisions and goals locally.

### B. Activity One – Issues and challenges:

*What are the issues and challenges that you feel, from your perspective, are facing your organisation, those you represent or the communities of northern Devon? Are there any constraints that you anticipate might impact the local plan?*

4.6. The stakeholders were asked to discuss any issues and challenges which had an impact on their organisation, anyone they represent or communities in northern Devon. Many topics were discussed across the four groups with some more



organisation specific issues raised. The main issues and challenges from across all four groups are set out below.

- Affordable housing provision.
- Recruitment of new skilled staff/retaining staff.
- Lack of high-quality infrastructure.
- Challenge of competing demands/government policies.
- Providing services for health and wellbeing.
- Net-zero challenge.

4.7. Stakeholders were asked to discuss in four small groups with two facilitators to lead the breakout sessions. Facilitators recorded the discussion and aimed to relate the issues and challenges back to the Local Plan by thinking about constraints which may impact the Plan.

#### C. Activity Two – Key Priorities and Major Projects:

*What are your key priorities, what wish to achieve / major projects / those big-ticket items you need to deliver? Consider from perspective of your organisation, those you represent or the communities of northern Devon.*

4.8. The stakeholders were invited to share their current priorities and any projects they may be starting or currently undertaking. This activity was also a discussion within four small groups with two facilitators. The topics raised here overlapped with those in activity one as many issues identified are also a priority for many organisations. The key priorities and major projects are set out below.

- Collaborative working through One Public Estate.
- Encouraging inward investment.
- Delivery of affordable housing/high quality new developments.
- Improved community infrastructure.
- Work towards a circular economy.
- Support businesses in moving to sustainable/renewable methods.

4.9. Several priorities were mentioned by more than one group although, as before, there were some discussions started which were quite specific to one type of organisation.



#### D. Activity Three – Question and Answer Session:

4.10. The third activity was a question-and-answer session to allow for questions from the stakeholders who came together as one group for this final activity. All facilitators were involved to get as many questions answered as possible. The main result to come out of activity three was that stakeholders enjoyed the in-person meeting, wanted further engagement through the People and Place Project, sought to ensure that the public were engaged and wanted to see a simplified version of the plan.

### 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The report on the stakeholder workshop forms part of the body of work on the wider People and Place Project, whereby it will feed into the preparation of the Vision, Aims and Objectives for the Plan, along with informing strategies and policy directions. Stakeholder engagement is an integral part of the Local plan review and forms part of the planning policy teams existing work programme. Any costs resulting from the process can be met within existing budgets and will be shared across the Councils.

### 6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1.No impact identified. The Councils seek to engage with a broad range of stakeholders and representatives as part of the preparation of the Local Plan to ensure that the views of all sectors of northern Devon's communities are considered and reflected appropriately.

### 7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1.No environmental implications result from the recommendations of this report. An EIA will be completed for the wider project.

### 8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1.The North Devon Council and Torridge District Council Corporate Priorities have been considered in the drafting of the report.



## 9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Schedule 2, paragraph 1.1.1-1.1.3 of the North Devon Council and Torridge District Council Joint Planning Policy Agreement.

## 10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

## 11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1. None.

## 12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers:

Cllr P. Watson (TDC) Lead member for Planning and Development;

Cllr M Prowse (NDC) Lead Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning Policy;

Helen Smith (TDC) Planning Manager;

Sarah Jane Mackenzie-Shapland (NDC) Head of Place, Property and Regeneration;