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Planning for our future together

Local Plan Review

Member Workshop Report

2022

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

north devon COUNCIL

1 Introduction

1.1   North Devon Council and Torridge District Council agreed to undertake a comprehensive review and update of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted October 2018) (henceforth the Local Plan) towards the end of 2020. This was considered to be an appropriate response due to external circumstances, an opportunity to improve gaps in some policies, and a reconsideration of local priorities. The Councils have been asked to consider whether an update to the Local Plan remains the most appropriate course of action and recognising the changes which could influence their decision.

1.2   These changes in circumstance include that Local Government financial situations have changed alongside Member aspirations and national changes such as the planning reform agenda. Overall Officers consider that the plan does remain broadly effective in shaping and delivering development and is generally achieving delivery regarding affordable housing and infrastructure associated to growth. The plan does generally contribute to the delivery of economic development on allocated sites, although, there is still research and data gathering ongoing.

2 Member Survey

2.1   To understand Members aspirations and concerns following a meeting of the Joint Planning Policy Committee on 4 November 2022 it was decided that, as soon as possible, Member workshops should be arranged to gather views from Members on the Local Plan review. Officers arranged two virtual workshops to take place on 28 November and 1 December 2022, each at different times to allow as many Members to attend as possible and, prior to the workshops a survey was sent out to Members to gauge their thoughts on the plan before meeting in the workshops for an in depth discussion. The survey was sent out to all Members prior to the workshops and received 24 responses which was a 30.8% response rate from Members. As Councils aim to ensure that the approach with reviewing and updating the plan remains appropriate and cost effective, it was decided that Members needed to be consulted. It was essential to fully understand the individual perspectives of Members themselves and the communities they represent, so as to address ambitions for local communities and northern Devon as a whole. The survey and the workshops aimed to identify areas where the existing local plan is or isn't working and what, if anything, the plan should be doing differently.

2.2   The survey asked Members if they felt the existing plan provides an appropriate, up-to-date and relevant basis to continue planning for the future of northern Devon. Around three quarters of the responses to this question were 'no', therefore representing the views of 18 Members. The reason for this response was generally related to the amount which had changed since the plan was first adopted. This ranges from local issues around specific policy to the current national housing crisis and attempts to tackle climate change. However, the majority did agree that generally the plan is okay and working, but there are areas which need to be reviewed and tweaked.

2.3   Members called for some policies to be strengthened, especially in countryside locations, and for officers to recognise how the area has changed recently and really focus on meeting the needs of communities. Sustainability, climate change measures and affordable housing were a common reason for Members believing that the plan is no longer appropriate. The lack of a 5YHLS driving unsuitable development alongside issues with the delivery of housing are important local issues. The provision of infrastructure, with or prior to development, was included in most comments on housing.

2.4   Members were asked whether certain elements of the plan work in a way which delivers for communities, and the majority felt that each element could be improved. The options for each question were: Works well, could be improved and, doesn't work at all. It was felt that place-based strategies and visions, locations for proposed developments and, support for employment proposals were working well. On the other side it was felt that the amount of proposed housing, the mix of housing, traveller accommodation and, development in the countryside were elements where the plan was not working well. Generally, the Members' reasons for responding that certain elements do not work, were focused around the amount of development and the type, with many Members agreeing that development often does not meet local needs.

2.5   Members felt that location should be more carefully considered to ensure we retain more green space and do not over-develop smaller areas where communities do not want large new developments. It was noted that generally the lack of affordable housing is an issue with Members: Members are unhappy with how viability reduces the number of affordable housing units and does not help to reach the 30% target for affordable homes.

2.6   The lack of 5YHLS was mentioned again with most concerns around how this is allowing development which is not plan-led and leading to excessive amounts of housing in the wrong places. Further comments referred to the lack of traveller sites, an urgent need to adapt to climate change, and the inability to provide small rural developments for housing or economic use.

Response to: How well do you think the following elements of the existing local plan work in a way that delivers for the communities you represent?

Legend: ■ Works Well ■ Could be improved ■ Doesn't work at all

Categories (top to bottom):
- Place-based Strategies and/or Vision(s)
- Location(s) of Planned Growth
- Levels of Planned Growth
- Location(s) of Proposed Housing
- Amounts of Proposed Housing
- Mix of Housing (Types and Tenures including affordable)
- Accommodation for Travellers
- Location(s) for Proposed Employment
- Amounts of Proposed Employment
- Types of Employment Develpoment
- Support for Employment Proposals
- Regeneration Proposals/ Opportunities
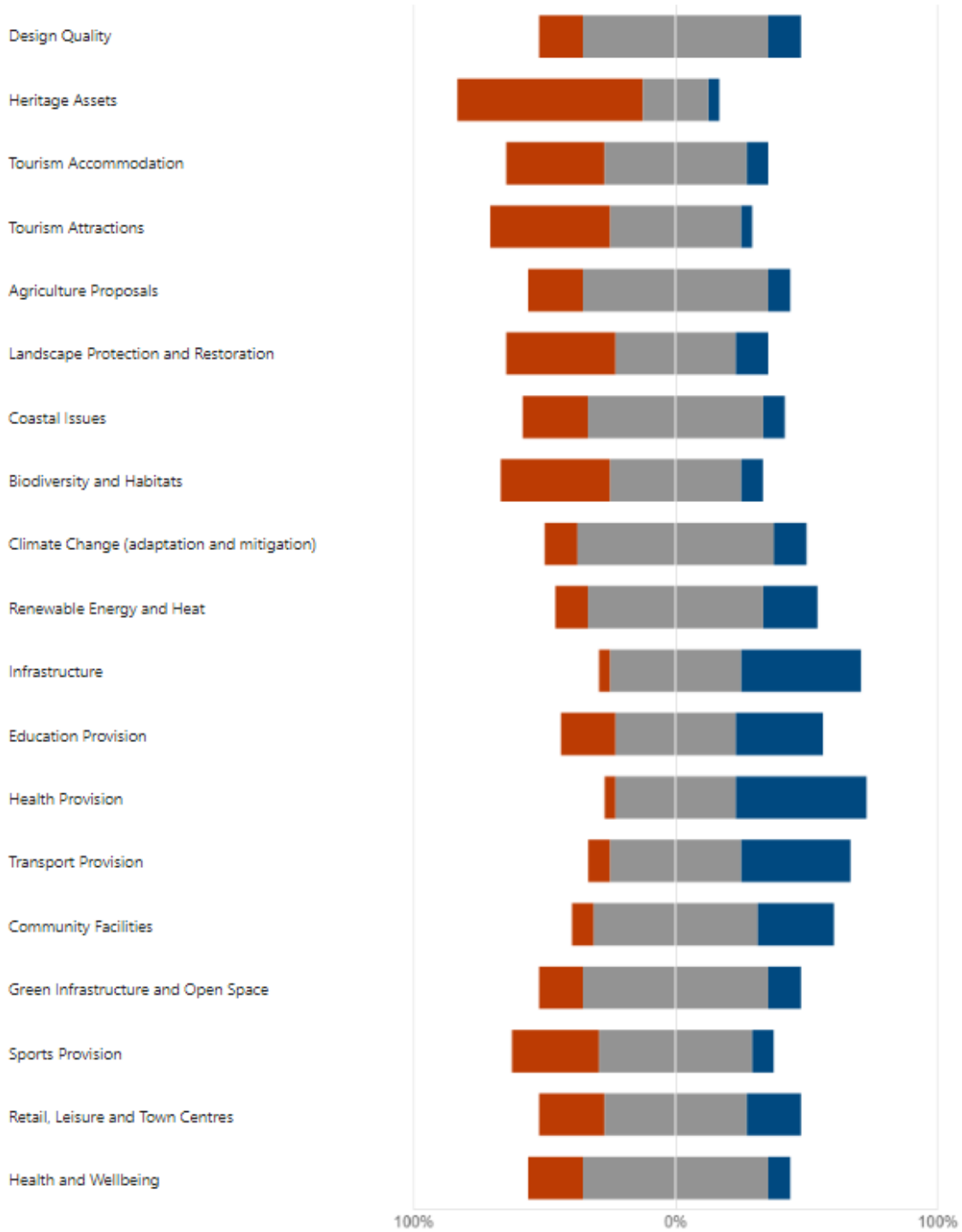- Development in the Countryside

Axis: 100% — 0% — 100%

2.7   Members were then asked to consider some more detailed elements of the plan and decide whether they worked in a way that delivers for communities and, as before, most felt that each element could be improved. Members thought that heritage assets, tourism accommodation, tourism attractions, landscape protection and restoration and, biodiversity and habitats worked well with these receiving the highest votes for 'works well'. However, it was felt that infrastructure, health provision and transport provision were elements which do not work at all. Infrastructure was an issue for many with the lack of new schools, GP surgeries, community facilities and sports facilities being a problem as they should be delivered prior to or alongside new developments. Members also felt that current infrastructure such as roads and facilities were not sufficient for the amount of development and were concerned that water and sewage infrastructure may become overwhelmed. Members were concerned about the future of high streets with some feeling that large out-of-town retail parks have had a detrimental impact.

2.8   Climate change was commented on again with some feeling that recent changes should be considered and the plan adapted to recognise this and support mitigation. Ensuring that new homes meet certain energy efficiency criteria was important as was preserving green spaces within and surrounding developments. Renewable energy should also be considered across the districts and could be used in a way to benefit local communities. Involving communities more was also a consideration for Members with some hoping they could have a say in where S106 money ends up if there are offsite contributions.

Response to: Following on, how well do you think the following more detailed elements of the existing local plan work in a way that delivers for the communities you represent?

■ Works Well   ■ Could be improved   ■ Doesn't work at all

- Design Quality
- Heritage Assets
- Tourism Accommodation
- Tourism Attractions
- Agriculture Proposals
- Landscape Protection and Restoration
- Coastal Issues
- Biodiversity and Habitats
- Climate Change (adaptation and mitigation)
- Renewable Energy and Heat
- Infrastructure
- Education Provision
- Health Provision
- Transport Provision
- Community Facilities
- Green Infrastructure and Open Space
- Sports Provision
- Retail, Leisure and Town Centres
- Health and Wellbeing

100%   0%   100%

2.9 Seventeen Members who responded felt that the current Local Plan allows development which is not appropriate, with the lack of a 5YHLS blamed for allowing most of this. These members felt that the wrong houses were built in the wrong places and not meeting local need with too much over-development being allowed in small villages. Some did feel that the plan did not actually allow some of the inappropriate development but some had been overruled by inspectors which meant there was very little say in the end. Members also raised issues around how the large developments were having an impact on infrastructure which was inappropriate as new infrastructure was not being delivered. It was felt that more evidence should be provided by consultees who respond on planning applications especially when highways or flood risk are key issues around a site. Again, Members recognised that the wrong type of housing in the wrong places was being allowed, which is not supporting local communities, something, it is generally thought, that the Local Plan should do. Fifteen Members felt that the current plan does not prevent development which should be supported, although nine felt it did prevent this with comments made around allowing wind turbines and development in the countryside. Members would welcome changes to policy ST16 (delivering renewable energy and heat) and would like the authority to recognise that new innovative technology merits consideration for future planning. The main changes focus on sustainability and renewable energy, especially allowing wind turbines, while a couple of Members felt that there was a need for a more positive rural policy with better tourism provision.

2.10 Members were also asked whether any specific changes were necessary to make the plan more robust in planning for the future, with 18 answering yes and feeling that changes were necessary. The changes mostly related to establishing a 5YHLS, allowing more renewable development in the countryside, changes to the rural settlements policy and addressing affordable housing issues. Members felt it was important to address the housing crisis and consider local needs further with some feeling that a new town or village would help and this would also prevent infilling of current spaces where communities are worried about losing uniqueness. Addressing the housing crisis should involve providing more affordable housing which reflects the low average wages in the area. Safe spaces to walk and cycle was a change Members would like to see on new developments as this would help to encourage more sustainable travel and help to better link up settlements.

2.11 Members were then asked about specific provisions that may be missing from the current plan with 14 feeling that there was something missing. Members comments again related to affordable housing as well as improved protections of open space, encouraging walking/cycling by making it safer to do this and adapting to climate change and rising sea levels. Members would like to see new developments as carbon neutral spaces with improved walking and cycling routes as well as improvements to roads to make these safer places to cycle. The plan should ensure that houses do not need to be retrofitted in the future and should meet net-zero targets while infrastructure for new developments should be provably suitable.

2.12   There were concerns raised around the protection of green spaces as well as ongoing maintenance of public facilities such as play areas on estates and Members would like to see green spaces protected with wildlife corridors maintained. Affordable housing was raised again with the provision of more affordable housing necessary with a variety of types considered. New developments should also follow and adhere to the new model design guide. One final point raised was that proposals should not be considered unsustainable just because car use will be required as it should be recognised that a car is essential in rural areas anyway.

2.13   Members were asked what complaints they hear most frequently from communities relating to planning and the current Local Plan. The amount of new housing was a concern as too many are not being built to meet local needs or are not affordable for locals with the majority being larger open market homes, often in the wrong locations. It is felt that this leads to having too many second homes which, alongside loss of green space, risks spoiling villages. One complaint heard frequently is about insufficient infrastructure with many asking why there are not enough community centres, health centres, schools, dentists or enough green space. Alongside a lack of community spaces were complaints about the road network with some saying that pressure on the roads is leading to dangerous conditions where management and design is poor. Complaints also suggest issues around there being too much development in the open countryside while there is still inflexibility to allow any development in smaller hamlets which are deemed not suitable.

2.14   Concerns have been raised around damage of natural resources near new developments as well as the loss of too much green open space with it felt that locals considerations were only taken into consideration if they were material planning matters. Members felt that there was not enough understanding of the Local Plan or the planning process as a whole with many complaining about the time it takes to make decisions and how long the whole process is.

2.15   Provision of safe paths with lighting on sites has been criticised as has the lack of incorporation of renewables on new housing and commercial developments. Members noted that it is too easy to get approval for holiday accommodation while it appears more difficult to get affordable housing granted and delivered. Alongside this is the issue that the system can be manipulated by people applying for a change of use under Part 3, class Q of national permitted development legislation, on inadequate buildings, then get these demolished to build a new large house the size that was actually wanted. One final comment was that complaints are often heard about the lack of opportunities in the area with very little well-paid employment to help locals find appropriate housing.

2.16 Members were asked to comment on the compliments that they receive the most often relating to planning or the current Local Plan. Compliments appear to be rare with Members only really hearing them when people are pleased to have received an approval for an application or when a large development is refused near to where people live. Members recognised that people are often very vocal when they have a complaint but do stay silent when it comes to compliments. Compliments have been heard when it is recognised that the authority has listened to the community and made appropriate decisions which have had an impact on local people or enabled locals to buy a house. One comment suggested that positive feedback has been received on the coverage of heritage in the area.

2.17 In conclusion, the survey revealed that many Members did not agree that the local plan is appropriate, up-to-date and relevant with many raising concerns around the lack of 5YHLS, affordable housing and sustainability issues. It was generally felt that most of the plan is working but there is some tidying up needed around certain policies in order to best support the local communities and their needs as well as ensuring that policies stand up at appeal. Further comments reflected on the need to re-establish the 5YHLS and accepted that planning was difficult with so many changes to rules and regulations. Members were generally concerned about communities getting what they wanted and felt we should be able to support and develop our own communities rather than be led by Whitehall.

3 Virtual Workshops

3.1   Member workshops focusing on the Local Plan Review were held on the 28th November and the 1st December as two identical sessions allowing Members a choice of dates and times to ensure that as many people could attend as possible. Each workshop provided a short presentation from the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to set the context for the workshops with officers explaining the purpose of the workshops. Each workshop had three sessions covering the spatial strategy and the delivery of development as well as a sweep-up session for any further comments which Members wanted to add.

4 Session One: The Spatial Strategy

4.1 Session one focused on the spatial strategy which provides a framework to deliver development necessary to meet the area's future needs including housing and employment. It looks to continue the existing roles of place with the function of settlements and the relationships between settlements being considered alongside the opportunities to achieve sustainable development. The spatial strategy looks to provide for flexibility of settlements and takes into account growth requirements alongside the adequacy of infrastructure to accommodate growth. Any growth should be in accordance with the locally determined strategies for individual settlements.

4.2 Officers aimed to find out whether or not Members were comfortable with the current spatial strategy and whether they thought it was delivering what policy says it should. Examples of places where it is or isn't working were encouraged to provide further context to statements. Members were encouraged to discuss what they would like to see instead and consider if these suggestions were within national policy or if there could be any unintended consequences from their suggestions. This discussion aimed to be high level and not focus on the delivery of specific infrastructure or house types as this would be considered in session two. Members were asked to consider two questions during the first session to focus discussion around these key points. They were asked, 'Is the approach in the Local Plan working?' and 'What are the issues which need to be addressed?'. Session one allowed around 15 minutes for a discussion and was followed with a feedback session with one person nominated in each group to inform all participants of the key points raised. There were several themes within the discussion for session one with infrastructure, housing, rural areas, urban areas and town centres discussed the most. There were some points raised around social issues or sustainability as well as a few general comments on the Local Plan overall.

Session One - The Spatial Strategy - Infrastructure Comments
Many rogue planning applications without any infrastructure considered. We should be more ambitious with infrastructure.
There are not enough strong policies in the plan to encourage good quality, necessary infrastructure on/near new sites.
No new transport links being created including more suitable roads as well as cycle ways and safe footpaths.
We should ensure that there is provision on new developments for safe walking and cycling routes.
No important facilities such as hospitals, dentists, and schools. These are in some plans then deemed not necessary.
Schools are struggling and are full according to staff but Devon County Council still says we do not need any new spaces.
DCC needs to sort out their road provisions as the current road network is poor. Highways officers are not robust enough in provision of evidence when it comes to infrastructure.
Broadband quality, especially in rural areas, is generally poor.
Facilities nearby (walking distance) to new outlying developments are not insisted upon but are necessary.
Poor infrastructure argument when looking at development near existing hamlets. Can't refuse applications due to a lack of buses/facilities as the majority living there would have cars anyway.
Developments near to shopping villages/retail parks creates too much traffic and puts people off visiting for shopping.
There is too much traffic in general but especially between Bideford and Barnstaple.
We should preserve more space in case we need it later and we should be preserving open space and green space.

4.3 Infrastructure was an important issue for Members during session one, with many raising points around this topic. Most wanted better infrastructure being created prior to or alongside new developments being built. Most felt that there is not currently enough infrastructure in place to support current needs and there are no strong policies in the Local Plan which require the provision of infrastructure when new developments come forward. Members raised concerns around a lack of schools, hospitals and dentists with the general feeling being that such facilities are already full despite Devon County Council (DCC) saying otherwise.

4.4 It was recognised by Members that important facilities do sometimes appear in planning applications but there is nothing in policy to stop them being removed if it is decided they are not necessary. Members have heard comments from communities suggesting that facilities, especially schools, are struggling. However, they are informed that there is still capacity therefore Members feel that the Councils should be supporting the development of such facilities and recognising that the lack of such places could become a serious issue in the future. Members voiced concerns around rogue planning applications without any new infrastructure and linked this to the lack of a 5YHLS.

4.5 Further comments went on to discuss provision on new outlying sites for amenities and facilities which are within walking distance, around 20 minutes walk, from the development. This could include shops such as supermarkets or useful basic services. It was felt by some Members that the road networks and transport links that we have are not all suitable for the area with the current road network labelled 'poor'. Members felt that Highways Officers should be more robust in their provision of evidence when it comes to all infrastructure. Traffic in general was a concern especially moving between Bideford and Barnstaple and this was thought to be a result of the decision to designate Barnstaple as a Sub-Regional Centre. Some Members however blamed new developments near to shopping villages or retail parks as being the cause of so much traffic. It was felt that the volumes of traffic around such areas could put people off using them. Increasing safe walking and cycling routes was an important consideration and it was hoped that the Local Plan could include more on the provision of such routes within and connecting new developments. It was asserted that poor highway infrastructure, including a lack of public transport, should not be a reason to not expand hamlets. Most people in rural areas would own a car anyway and would not rely solely on buses. Thoughts were shared around whether improvements to public transport in such rural areas should be a priority or whether it was more important to connect people by improving the infrastructure necessary to improve Broadband connections in rural areas. Preserving space to provide expansion of the aforementioned infrastructure in the future was a consideration as we do not always leave areas where we can develop areas such as roads any further. Overall the main comments on infrastructure related to a lack of important facilities, a need to upgrade road networks and provision of safe walking and cycling routes on new developments with Members wanting stronger policies around ensuring all of this provided alongside new sites.

Session One - The Spatial Strategy - Housing Comments
The biggest problem is the lack of social housing, possibly due to a lack of land being available for bigger sites.
Landowners should be able to demonstrate/prove 30% affordable housing before sites are added to the plan.
Lack of affordable housing is not always the fault of developers, there are so many requirements in S106 agreements. Overall the Local Plan is weak on affordable housing.
We need big sites to help increase the amount of affordable housing on new developments. Having more sites available could mitigate speculative and hostile applications.
There is a lack of power to stop new applications for development between Bideford and Barnstaple.
Lack of 5-year housing supply has allowed for development in rural areas, this shouldn't happen with the current plan.
Without an established 5-year housing land supply everything is going straight to inspectorate.
We must recognize how important proportional development is and address viability from the start.
Many developments have planning permission but are yet to be built out. This will only get worse with the current economic crisis.
Housing is more lucrative than employment land but need new employment sites alongside new developments.
The government are demanding too many new homes and some communities feel they are losing their identity and sense of community.
We need to look at smaller units in smaller places to meet local needs for housing, small villages need some new housing to ensure viability.
There is a lack of housing in rural areas, but the majority should continue in larger areas, should be a true mix with associated infrastructure.
Support for new settlements if it means building stops in areas with too much development already.
'Open countryside' policy makes it difficult to develop small sites in rural areas. New developments are necessary to enable young people to stay in the area and be able to afford houses.

Neighborhood plans could support rural proportional development, but some places lack expertise/money/drive needed to develop a neighborhood plan.
Housing is being built and urban expansion is working so how can we demonstrate supply to ensure new applications which get accepted are more policy compliant.
Affordable housing is often included in outline applications then viability means there is less or none in the final plan.
Rural strategy is not working, and rural settlements do need more houses. However there does need to be plan led development in rural areas.
New developments should be affordable, family sized housing to support local need.

4.6 Housing and the quality of housing provided several comments from Members with the majority feeling that housing in the two districts was not good quality. The lack of affordable housing was a point raised several times with most agreeing that overall the Local Plan is weak on affordable housing. It was felt that landowners should be able to demonstrate that they can provide the 30% affordable requirement on their sites. It was recognised that the 30% was only a target, however, many Members felt the plan should be stronger on affordable housing provision. Some felt that if we had larger sites coming forward then it would increase the amount of affordable contributions while having the larger sites could also mitigate speculative and hostile applications. Lack of affordable housing was thought to not always be the fault of the developer with the requirements in a S106 making it difficult and viability often reducing what was planned on developments. Members asserted that the Councils should be better at looking at viability and further explore why this is reducing affordable contributions, and even removing them completely on smaller sites. It was decided that new developments should be affordable, family sized housing which really meets the local need and supports young local people looking to remain in the area. Members felt that we should be looking at building smaller units in smaller places which would help support local needs and not necessarily fill gaps between places such as Bideford and Barnstaple.

4.7 There were concerns raised around proportional development as communities feel they are losing their identity and sense of community as the Government continue to demand more homes. It was felt that the plan was working in terms of growth, especially in urban areas, but it does not help development in rural areas which also need some new houses to ensure their viability. Members agreed that the majority of development should continue around larger urban areas however it was recognised that new developments are needed to support young people staying in rural areas. Open countryside policies make it difficult to develop rural areas and questions were asked around whether this could be adapted. One of the main issues raised was the lack of 5YHLS as this, it was felt, has allowed for rural developments which were not wanted and should not have happened with the current Local Plan. It was felt that with the lack of 5YHLS there were rogue applications taking advantage of this and everything was going straight to the Inspectorate. Some Members recognised that neighbourhood plans could help in some situations but others argued that this was not that easy as their own areas lacked the expertise and money needed to produce their own neighbourhood plan. Members recognised that housing was more lucrative that employment land but wanted the plan to support both as we still need employment land to go alongside new houses. Overall the comments for housing focused on wanting more social/affordable housing, the lack of 5YHLS, the need to provide some housing in rural areas and changes to open countryside policies. It was felt that we should be able to get more policy compliant housing if we could demonstrate supply and that this could help prevent hostile applications.

Session One - The Spatial Strategy - Urban/Town Centre Comments
Why does Barnstaple need to be a strategic centre? This takes away from Bideford/ other smaller towns as people travel to Barnstaple.
Smaller areas are losing business as people go to Barnstaple, this also increases traffic and creates disparity between Bideford and Barnstaple.
People have moved to shopping online and using out of town retail parks as they are often more convenient.
The high streets can be busy around Christmas time (skewed view?), but use should be encouraged all year round.
Town centres are now being used more for recreation e.g., cinemas and escape rooms. They are being used differently now; can we adapt?
Recreation could be the way forward and successful town centres are ones where you can kill time. We should support businesses to adapt. There is concern around the future of town centres.
There is an issue with homelessness in Barnstaple.
It makes sense to continue developing urban areas as the infrastructure will be in place. There has been growth here already and urban areas are working reasonably well.

4.8   Discussions around urban areas and town centres focused on the decision to make Barnstaple a Sub-Regional Centre as it was felt that this has taken business away from smaller places such as Bideford with most people now choosing to travel to Barnstaple. This also increases the traffic between Barnstaple and places such as Bideford, something already discussed in relation to infrastructure. Members discussed how businesses were already missing out due to an increase in people shopping online and using out of town retail parks and it was discussed what, if anything, could be put into the plan to encourage shoppers back to all town centres. Members felt that Councils should support the promotion of high streets all year and focus on how we could possibly adapt our town centres as peoples habits are changing. It seemed clear that town centres were now being used for recreation and places like cinemas and escape rooms were becoming the main reasons to visit. Therefore recreation could be the way forward with the plan helping to support areas looking to adapt to this change. There was concern from Members around the future of town centres with the issue of homelessness in Barnstaple something to be addressed. Members did agree that there was sense in developing urban areas further as the infrastructure already exists, there has also been successful growth in urban areas already and they seem to be working reasonably well. The key points from this theme are that we should recognise changes to town centres and support businesses, there are questions around Barnstaple being a Sub-Regional Centre and we should continue developing urban areas as the infrastructure exists already.

Session One - The Spatial Strategy - Rural Comments
There is no employment land in rural areas as housing is more lucrative although despite this being the case, there is still a lack of housing in rural areas.
Broadband quality and second homes/holiday lets have had an impact in rural areas. Lots of people have needed to sell farmsteads.
Development is often refused due to being in the open countryside, but rural areas need some new houses too. All settlements could do with a couple of new houses to meet targets/local needs.
There needs to be proportional development within the plan so locals and NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard) cannot keep preventing development in their villages.
There needs to be plan led development for rural villages otherwise you get too much unplanned growth.
Small schools in rural areas are struggling therefore rural places need family sized affordable homes.
It was felt that some areas do not have the expertise/money/drive for a neighborhood plan which could help rural development.
Rural areas and settlements are getting left behind in terms of enterprise.
Villages need a small amount of development to ensure their viability and contribute to meeting housing targets.
Some villages are overloaded with houses and some have nothing new. The rural strategy does not fit.
Argument for not building out from hamlets because of public transport/facilities is not right. People living here will likely have cars anyway as they need them to get around.
Difficult to balance rural areas sometimes but communities must be considered. E.g. Bridgerule accepted development (school went from 12 to 70) Pyworthy refused development (school shut).
Outlying developments do not always have facilities nearby and they are not insisted upon.
Half of Torridge population is outside of main centres and development should be allowed here as rural settlements need more houses.
Growth should occur where communities support it and where it helps local communities/families

4.9   Rural areas were discussed throughout session one with Members feeling that often rural areas and settlements do get left behind in terms of enterprise as there can be less support for housing and infrastructure in such areas even where it is needed to support businesses. There is not much employment land available as developers know it is more lucrative to build houses and despite this there is still a lack of housing in rural areas. Members argued that smaller settlements do still need a small amount of development to ensure their viability and ensure that they do not get left behind. All areas can help to contribute to meeting housing targets as long as this is proportional however development is too often refused in the countryside. Members felt that although neighbourhood plans could support more focused rural development, too many areas do not feel like they are able to produce one as they lack the drive as well as the necessary expertise and money. Some members felt that this showed the rural strategy did not fit and needs to be reconsidered properly to allow development to be successful, something which is not always the case as some villages are overloaded with houses while the rest see none being built. It was thought to be of great importance that Councils remembered that half of the Torridge population lives outside of the main centres. Such areas should be supported by small amounts of development so families can upgrade homes and continue living there.

4.10   If development in rural areas goes ahead there should be policies in the plan ensuring that they get facilities built nearby and that this is insisted upon. Members felt that there should be a focus on plan led development for rural areas to ensure that there is not too much unplanned growth which can negatively impact communities. There was recognition that finding balance in rural communities could be difficult but the plan should go further to support communities and help find this balance. There has been an example of poor balance regarding schools where Bridgerule accepted a development and the numbers in the school increased from 12 to 70 compared to Pyworthy where development was refused and the school had to shut. Smaller rural schools are struggling so small developments nearby with family sized affordable housing would help to support these better. Growth should be occurring where it supports local communities and families and there should be more in the plan to prevent NIMBYs from preventing all development in an area where they possibly use policy loopholes.

4.11   Further issues surrounding the quality of Broadband and the impact of second homes was mentioned with Members feeling that there should be improvements to support rural areas in investing in better Broadband infrastructure and reducing the numbers of second homes. This is especially important as locals cannot always afford to stay in the area and some local farmers have needed to sell off farmsteads as they are no longer able to afford them. Generally it was agreed that the Local Plan should support more development in rural areas as long as it is proportional, there should be facilities available alongside any new developments, infrastructure could be improved and neighbourhood plans could help but many areas feel unable to produce one. There was some disagreement around whether there should be more development in rural areas or whether they should have very minimal changes made to some villages however the general feeling was that some is necessary but required balance.

Session One - The Spatial Strategy - Social Comments
Young people are leaving the area due to house prices and a lack of opportunities. They cannot afford to live where they grew up.
Retirees and those looking for second homes are the only ones who can afford houses in northern Devon.
There are lots of retired people living here, there is not enough room or employment opportunity for younger people.
We need to retain community assets such as sports facilities and not just build houses on all available land.
Should be investing more S106 money into the community and provide more green space and amenity areas.
The plan is very weak when it comes to policies around tourism.

4.12 Members discussed some social issues within session one with the focus being around retaining young people in the area. It was felt that they often leave due to house prices and a lack of opportunities available for younger people. It was felt that they should be able to afford to live where they grew up with the plan further supporting affordable housing for local people. Some comments disagreed with this and suggested that while it is important to support local needs we should also encourage young entrepreneurs to the area if they will be contributing to the local area and economy. Members shared concerns that northern Devon would just become a place to retire to, with the only people able to afford homes in the area being retirees and those seeking second homes. Members hoped that policy could legislate for the number of second homes or holiday lets allowed to reduce pressure on house prices. Retaining community assets such as sports facilities is important and we shouldn't just build on every available piece of land; it is important to remember communities and their needs.

4.13 Members did feel like the plan could do more to support town centres by suggesting other ways to use S106 money and possibly allowing offsite contributions to be invested more into town centres as well as community spaces. There was some general agreement that the current Local Plan was generally weak on its policies around tourism. It was also recognised that although holiday accommodation may not support the community feel in an area, it is necessary for the local economy.

Session One - The Spatial Strategy - Sustainability Comments
Lots of people traveling to Barnstaple not using shops in Torridge, improvements in Torridge could reduce the traffic/help the environment.
Need to improve walking and cycle routes within new development plans to connect these areas to existing town centres.

4.14 Sustainability was not mentioned much in session one although it was noted that Members would like improvements to cycling and walking routes and for these to be included in new developments with provision within the plan for this. Connecting new developments with walking and cycling routes is important for encouraging sustainable travel and reducing traffic. Improvements to town centres could also help to reduce traffic as people may shop more in places which are closer to where they live. Members would like to see more in the plan around provision of sustainable travel routes, reducing travel around the area and further discussion around Barnstaple as a Sub-Regional Centre.

Session One - The Spatial Strategy - Other Comments
General feeling that the plan can be left alone and just tidied up in areas where it does not work very well.
A complete plan review could cause poor performance of policies and be an unnecessary risk with any pending appeals.
Planning is too often led by developers and not by local planning authorities. Development should be driven by us.
We should be braver/more ambitious and take on more sites therefore having more of a say in development.
We are trying to mend a broken system where it is up to us to put the system right then developers overturn correct decisions anyway.
Concerns over the HELAA panel and lack of community involvement (briefly addressed by officers/Cllr Prowse in the workshop)

4.15 Members did raise a few other points during the discussion which were mostly opinions and general feeling around the current Local Plan. It was felt that a general view was that the plan can be left alone but does need to be tidied up in a few areas where it has been identified as not working so well. Some Members felt that a complete review could also cause a poor performance of some policies during the review period while causing an unnecessary risk with any pending appeals. Members would like more development to be driven by local authorities instead of developers with concerns around the planning system in general being raised.

5 Session Two: The Delivery of Development

5.1   Session two focused on the delivery of development and thinking about development which has taken place since the adoption of the Local Plan in October 2018. Members were asked to consider whether the Local Plan has delivered what was expected and, if not, then to discuss what is different or missing. The quality of developments was a focus of discussion, as was the delivery of sustainable development. Quality of development included design as well as integration into existing areas and any associated infrastructure.

5.2   Asking whether infrastructure had been delivered successfully and as expected was a prompt for Members to share their thoughts. In relation to the infrastructure the Local Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which details key infrastructure and was expected to be delivered during the plan period. Members were invited to discuss their thoughts around this and whether it helps meet local needs for residents and businesses. What is or isn't being delivered for local communities was an important topic, with access to appropriate types of housing within developments being especially important. This mostly relates to the size of housing and the tenure, with questions asked around whether the affordable types on new sites were really appropriate. Examples of specific developments which worked or didn't work were encouraged to provide further context. Session two allowed around 15 minutes for discussion and was also followed with a feedback opportunity with one participant nominated to share key points back to the whole group. The main themes from this session were related to infrastructure and housing with some comments focused around a social theme.

Session Two - Delivery of Development - Infrastructure Comments
Infrastructure is not being delivered prior to development. It should already be in place for new developments. Needs to be more public access on developments as they are often inward facing.
There is a lack of amenities and greenspace with S106 promises not kept. This causes an amenities imbalance. Should be an ongoing amenity clause ensuring sustainability of such areas.
Insufficient infrastructure is in place with regards to accessibility and mobility. We should be looking at wider connectivity with roads/transport/footpaths and cycle paths.
Car parking is becoming dangerous as it is so overcrowded. This can lead to parking on pavements and neighbour dispute.
Issues with developments where residents suffer from further development beyond their property.
Better links between places are needed with improved roads etc. There is no joined up thinking around roads and infrastructure.
There are no sports facilities coming forwards e.g. Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) or other pitches/facilities.
More facilities/bigger green spaces should go hand in hand with developments. We have green space policies but don't deliver sport facilities.
Cycling is not easy with few connected routes other than the Tarka Trail. Some places are not connected at all with cycle paths.
Areas such as Torrington appear to be excluded from the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP).
Should be insisting on more facilities such as schools to go alongside new developments
Need to consider management of facilities such as play areas. If they are provided sometimes the management is taken over then not managed properly.
Instead of tiny amounts of green space, some areas would benefit more from play areas or something people would actually use.
Green space contributions should be meaningful spaces which get use such as sports pitches or large open community spaces.
Developments owned by multiple people or delivered by different developers is often poor. No joined up thinking amongst developers doesn't deliver a quality place with the necessary infrastructure.

5.3   Infrastructure was a common theme across session two with several comments made around this topic with many echoing points already made in session one. It was reiterated that one of the most important issues was a general lack of infrastructure with none being delivered prior to development and nothing in the plan really requiring specific infrastructure alongside new developments. It was felt that new developments should have improved public access as they can be quite inward facing and should be opened up more and designed to be better connected with other areas. The plan should be encouraging wider connectivity when planning for roads, footpaths and cycle paths to link different areas together and also attempt to reduce traffic and the number of cars on the roads. This would reduce issues caused by a lack of car parking space which is now becoming dangerous due to overcrowding.

5.4   Another way to reduce traffic on the roads would be to better connect areas with high-quality cycle routes. Some Members felt that cycling is not easy with very few connected routes, other that the Tarka Trail, while some places are not connected at all by cycle paths. Members recognised that the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) could help with cycling infrastructure in the future but there were concerns raised that some areas, such as Torrington, appear to be excluded.

5.5   In terms of what the plan could do, Members thought that it should better ensure the provision of amenities with an ongoing amenity clause to ensure the sustainability of areas which may have an amenity imbalance. It was suggested that this often happens where S106 promises are not kept with amenities and green spaces becoming lost. Further to these comments, Members felt that there were no sports facilities coming forward, and thought that these should be included with new developments to provide facilities or further open space for those living in the area. It was noted that although we do have green space policies we still don't deliver sports facilities which could be really beneficial to communities. Members pointed out that green space contributions should be meaningful spaces which will get used by the community and should be including larger green spaces or sport facilities such as Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). The way green space contributions are calculated currently do not allow for this as they are a percentage of a development meaning you end up with lots of small patches of green to meet the percentage requirement but no useful or useable space.

5.6   There have been issues seen where developments are owned by multiple people or are being delivered by different developers and the quality is often poor due to a lack of joined up thinking. This does not allow a quality place to be delivered and can cause problems where residents suffer from further development beyond their property where poor planning leads to this being allowed. Members felt that insufficient infrastructure is in place with regards to accessibility and mobility, also due to a lack of joined up thinking, and roads do suffer from this. Areas such as play areas also suffer from similar issues where management has been taken over and not managed properly. Members recognised that management of such areas needs to be considered as too often it is not kept up. Some final comments returned to infrastructure issues mentioned in session one, regarding a lack of facilities alongside new sites especially a lack of new schools to support the need of the local community. Overall, for the topic of infrastructure, Members found the most important things to

consider were delivering infrastructure with or prior to new development, better green space policies to provide more meaningful spaces and more joined up thinking about transport networks and new developments.

Session Two - Delivery of Development - Housing Comments
The quality of some new homes is terrible with large developments not in the plan causing massive problems (230 near crematorium).
Location is very important. E.g. Fremington Army Camp where there are few complaints other than location.
Lack of affordable housing being delivered for young families and to meet the local need. Often disappears following viability reports.
Affordable housing targets are not being met and developers should be held accountable especially when building multiple small developments close together to get around any obligations.
Will a 5-year housing land supply ever be met if future economic concerns are realised, and building/development scaled back.
The lack of this supply is allowing poor development to be pushed through. Need a better quality overall with no compromise.
We need more bungalows to be delivered to reflect an ageing population, but developers do not want to provide them.
This delivery would however have greater land take, not deliver the numbers needed and can go on the market at a premium.
There are green space policies for new developments, but these do not deliver while calculated as a percentage.
You often get tiny patches spread around outside new houses/developments. This adds up to the percentage but doesn't really provide much.
Need to be careful that social housing does not fall under any new right to buy schemes. More security if delivered by a Community Land Trust.
Houses often start off as 2/3 bed then increase to 5 bed houses.
Lots of new houses are being built but with no thought for who may actually live in them. Not sustainable development which meets local need.
They often do not meet local needs in terms of size, location, or affordability. Mostly for those retiring with money not locals/young people.
New houses should be more energy efficient as it is not sustainable to build houses which are expensive to heat.
It is cheaper to insist on solar panels and quality insulation when homes are built as it can be expensive to retrofit later on.
Allowing conservation double glazing should be reconsidered for listed buildings as it is not usually allowed in Torridge.

Buildings have poor energy efficiency; all sites should have renewables on site, but this doesn't happen.
Homes are too small inside and are not useful spaces for modern living. Homes are often built without enough parking spaces.
There is an argument that bigger homes would be more expensive and not affordable for locals or young people.
Questions over the role of building control? Developers are allowed to provide the bare minimum in terms of standards.
What happens to houses when companies run out of money and stop building. Example seen in Westward Ho! with abandoned flats.
Houses may not be selling due to poor standards. There is little sound proofing and people want to move due to noise and a lack of privacy.
Developers see affordable housing as being small and cheap meaning that homes are too small for the needs of local families.
Design is important, homes should have multiple living space instead of bedrooms to allow families to expand their own homes in the future.
Proper social housing needs to be built to help tackle the housing crisis. This should be good quality and not packed into sites.
Can we increase key worker housing? Many student police/teachers/community workers do not move here as they cannot afford it.

5.7   Comments around the topic of housing were the most popular for Members in session two with most having something to say around this theme. Most comments reflected frustration around the types of housing on new sites not meeting the local need and being poor quality buildings. The quality of some new homes was thought to be terrible with large developments not in the plan causing massive problems as they are not allocations and not properly thought out, with the location not always considered.

5.8   It was also felt that poor quality has led to many people feeling like they need to sell their homes due to noise and a lack of privacy with little sound proofing causing issues, and the main difficulty being that these homes do not sell as well so people cannot leave easily. Members voiced concerns that affordable housing targets were not being met and developers should be held responsible, especially if they are trying to not provide any contribution by building multiple small developments close together. Members asserted that this is not helpful when there is already a lack of affordable housing being delivered for locals in the area and, affordable housing is seen by developers as being small and cheap meaning that homes are too small for families. Proper social housing needs to be built in order to support people during a housing crisis but this needs to be good quality and should not just be small cramped homes packed into larger sites.

5.9   Members also questioned the lack of key worker accommodation and raised the point that workers that we need to encourage to the area, such as teachers, community workers and student police, do not come here as they cannot afford to live locally.

5.10   Design should be more important and homes should be built with more living space to allow families to expand their own homes if they want to in the future. Members felt that homes are too small inside and are not good spaces for modern living, there are usually not enough parking spaces for new homes.

5.11   On the other side of this argument were comments reminding others that larger houses often become more expensive and this is not always going to be affordable so there needs to be a balance found between providing good sized homes and the cost of such homes. It was also noted that houses often start as two or three bed homes, which would likely meet most local needs, but when the final plans come forward they have increased to five beds which is too big and will become too expensive. There was a point made around the provision of social housing as it was thought that we need to take care that it doesn't fall under any new right to buy schemes and we could ensure more security if delivered by a Community Land Trust (CLT).

5.12   Members felt that too many houses were being built without any consideration for who may actually live in them which is not sustainable development for meeting the needs of the community. It was felt that housing too often doesn't meet local needs in terms of size, location or affordability and instead cater to those with money looking to retire or purchase a second home in Devon. Bungalows were discussed as something we need to see more of in the area as we need these to be delivered to reflect the ageing population who often want to downsize into more appropriate homes where they can continue to live independently. This change could result in other housing stock becoming available for others to purchase. Members felt the plan could do more to ensure some bungalows on some sites as developers do not like to provide them, however, some Members did argue that the delivery of bungalows would take up more land while not delivering the numbers needed and can also be found on the market selling for a premium.

5.13   Members also had some concerns around how energy efficient houses were with agreement that new houses should be as energy efficient as possible as it is not sustainable to build houses which are expensive to heat and this is especially important with energy prices as they are. It was noted that it is generally cheaper to insist on solar panels and quality insulation at the time of building as retrofitting later on can become expensive and the cost is then on the owner. Further to these comments, some Members wanted the plan to support allowing conservation double glazing to be reconsidered for listing buildings where it will make them more energy efficient without compromising the look of the building. Alongside these comments was the recognition that most buildings in northern Devon have poor energy efficiency and all new sites should have renewables included to help people make use of their own energy and help costs in the long term.

5.14   Concerns around green space policies were mentioned as Members wanted wording in some policies to be improved to guarantee useful contributions and not just see small green areas to meet the minimum percentage requirement around new housing sites.

5.15   Some Members did remind others that costs are being felt by companies involved in housing provision and raised questions around what happens if such companies run out of money or go out of business. This has already been seen in Westward Ho! with the building of a block of flats abandoned when the company shut down. This is especially a concern with the 5YHLS not being in place, as Members wondered if supply would ever be met if future economic concerns are realised and building and development was scaled back despite Government demanding more homes. The lack of 5YHLS is a big concern for Members as they worry about the quality of new homes being pushed through with poor development being allowed because we do not currently have the supply of homes that we need.

Session Two - Delivery of Development - Urban/Town Centre Comments
Every new development is moving further away from town centres which encourages use of out-of-town shops.
We do have enough in the plan with boundaries allowing us to distinguish between urban and rural.
On larger estates near the urban centres most houses are just being packed in because developers want them near to existing facilities.
More S106 money should go into town centres and communities to support businesses and the local economy.

5.16 Session two did not encourage much discussion around urban areas or town centres although Members wanted to point out that we are doing enough in the current Local Plan with boundaries which allow us to distinguish between rural and urban. There were comments made that despite these boundaries new developments are moving further away from town centres and this could suggest that the plan is not working. New developments further away from urban centres is also thought to be a likely cause of people increasingly using out of town retail parks or online shopping as this will be more convenient for those not living near to urban areas. Members further commented on the quality of new developments which are growing from urban centres with many unhappy with how many houses were packed into small areas just to put as many homes as possible close to existing facilities instead of providing new facilities. It was also questioned whether S106 money could do more for out town centres with some going to support our local businesses and the local economy as this would be a good contribution which would benefit many residents across the districts.

Session Two - Delivery of Development - Rural Comments
People are traveling out of towns to find open space and walking trails. Public good is about allowing people the space to breath.
The plan doesn't touch on the subject of public good and access to green areas enough.
Many people are looking to move into rural areas of northern Devon for retirement.
Housing estates are increasingly moving out into the countryside.
In conservation areas or protected areas, mostly in rural areas, often heritage is put before energy conservation.

5.17   Session two saw less discussion on rural areas however a few key comments were made around green space and public good. It was noted that people are increasingly traveling out of towns to find open space and walking trails with it mentioned that this makes it even more important to link up new developments and provide more open space here. This is not to stop people traveling to seek larger open spaces but recognising a want and need for such spaces where people are living.

5.18   Some Members decided that the plan doesn't touch on the subject of public good and access to green space enough and should recognise that green spaces should be provided on or near to new developments. Members recognised that many people are looking to move into rural areas of northern Devon with most agreeing that we don't want to be only known as a place to retire and should be promoting rural businesses and communities as a place for a wider range of generations. There were a few concerns around the number of housing estates moving into the countryside or expanding out into these areas, this followed comments where Members generally agreed that expanding urban space was working and rural areas should see less development.

5.19   Conservation areas were briefly discussed with questions around why heritage is so often put before energy conservation. Members felt that houses in rural areas, even those in protected areas, should be able to gain permission for solar panels on roofs and should be able to replace windows to make their homes more energy efficient. Overall it was recognised that rural areas should be protected to retain the green and open spaces, there should be fewer barriers in conservation areas in terms of making homes more efficient and we should encourage a range of generations to rural areas not just retirees.

Session Two - Delivery of Development - Social Comments
It is important to recognise that the ageing demographic within the population has different needs.
Elderly people are being asked to downsize to free up family homes but there is a lack of suitable homes, such as bungalows, available.
Retaining young local people should be important and not pricing locals out of the area is a priority.
There is a low average income in this area and retirees are keeping house prices high when they move here. Lots of housing is available if you have lots of money.
Poorer people cannot afford to make their homes more efficient and will use the cheapest solutions possible.
Local communities are becoming less balanced, but communities want balance and not just the older generations. The plan should consider our children and grandchildren.
We should be encouraging young entrepreneurs and new families to the area.
People are working from home, perhaps we should be encouraging people to run entrepreneurial businesses and not leave it to the southeast.

5.20 Session two drew out several social issues which revolved around young people and families living across northern Devon. It was noted that the low average income in the area coupled with high house prices was not recognising the needs of those living here. Members stated that local communities should be considered as they are becoming less balanced, with concerns raised around the loss of community spirit as people feel forced to find other places to live. Retaining young people in the area is important and we should be encouraging them to find opportunities locally as well as encouraging new young entrepreneurs and families to the area. This would help balance communities and help boost the south west economy by becoming an area encouraging people wanting to run their own business and therefore give back to the local economy.

5.21 Members stated that it is also important to recognise that we do have an ageing population and this demographic within the population does have different needs which should be met. One way to do this is by ensuring that the right housing is being built to allow elderly people to downsize and move into more suitable accommodation should they want to. Providing bungalows would be a good way to do this, especially as elderly people are being asked to downsize and free up larger homes for families in the area. Currently, this is difficult as developers do not like to provide bungalows, and it was questioned whether a policy could push their development more on certain sites, possibly in a similar way to affordable housing.

5.22 There were also comments made around making homes more energy efficient as older homes are not built to new standards can be expensive to retrofit especially if people need to organise this themselves. People on low incomes will likely need to choose the cheapest options which are not always the most efficient and not necessarily a good long term solution. Generally the social comments from session two revolved around the low average income in the area, encouraging young people and families and providing the right housing to meet the needs of the population. It was questioned whether the plan could further support the development of appropriate housing and help support young people setting up businesses in urban and rural areas across both districts.

Session Two - Delivery of Development - Sustainability Comments
Storm and climate change infrastructure needs to improve regarding flooding and flood defences.
Need to update conservation policies around renewables such as allowing more solar panels in conservation areas.
Cannot plan for biodiversity with green spaces often lost after outline permissions are approved.

5.23 There were only a few comments on sustainability in session two with suggestions around updating and improving what is already being done. It was felt that improvements could be made to infrastructure designed to defend against flooding as climate change has caused an increase of flood events and storms. Members felt that updating some policies focused on conservation would be helpful to allow more renewable energy such as solar to be captured by allowing panels on roofs even if they are in conservation areas. Members also discussed difficulties around planning for biodiversity when so many green spaces are becoming lost due to changes following outline permissions. This was a point of frustration for many Members as it affects several aspects of a development and not just biodiversity.

Session Two - Delivery of Development - Other Comments
The Local Plan was originally balanced but has become imbalanced due to what has been allowed at appeal.
We should not be passing outline planning; lots seems to change before the full application comes through e.g. loss of green space.
Government guidance has now placed a stronger emphasis on ensuring viability at plan making stage. We should allocate based on viability.
The Councils should embrace this opportunity to potentially push back on viability challenges at application stage.
Concerns over allocations in Northam for 1000 dwellings but a lack of connection with the settlement. Is this the plan or the implementation?
A lot of housing is coming forwards but so much of it isn't actually being built. Builders have concerns about this too.
No use spending more on the Local Plan as developers will always find ways around policies anyway.

5.24   There were a few other comments to come out of session two with most being general concerns or thoughts around the Local Plan or around Government guidance and National policy. It was mentioned that Members did generally feel the plan was balanced when it was adopted however it has started to become imbalanced, mostly due to what has been allowed to happen at appeals. Some thought that there was no use spending much more time or money on the plan right now as developers will probably find ways to get around policies especially if sites are refused and appealed.

5.25   Another concern was outline permissions being allowed but lots being changed before the full application comes through. Members wondered if we could stop approving so many applications at outline and instead focus on retaining things such as affordable housing and green space which often gets lost. This could be supported by ensuring viability at the plan making stage and allocating based on viability. The Government now places more emphasis on this and Councils could embrace opportunities to push back on viability challenges at application stage and improve the overall quality of developments. It was felt that lots of housing was coming forwards but not actually being built and this is something also concerning builders.

6 Session Three: Sweep-Up Session

6.1 Session three was a sweep-up session where Members were asked if there was anything else to be considered and allowed for a general discussion on any matters which had not already been covered. Some examples were provided in the presentation for topics which may have not been focused on already and these included climate change and sustainability, rural economy and agriculture, approach to tourism, the role of town centres and economic issues. This session allowed 15 minutes for the discussion and was followed by a feedback session like the ones following the first two sessions. Sustainability was a key topic mentioned in session three.

Session Three - Sweep-Up Session - Infrastructure Comments
Drainage concerns/sewage concerns, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) don't solve issues as suggested. Insufficient existing infrastructure with external agencies saying they can handle it without evidence.
Improve transport links into northern Devon such as regular shuttle to Tiverton Parkway, upgrades to Barnstaple rail link and ferries to Wales.
Include the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) within the Local Plan.
More cycle storage and electric vehicle charging should be included on new developments.
Possibly include the provision of building our own local grid network for renewable energy to use locally. Infrastructure for storage of energy needs improvement so we can capture and store all available energy.
More properties could have their own solar panels to reduce large solar farms covering fields and we could promote district heating systems within new developments.
Road structure and infrastructure is not suitable for large vehicles used by rural businesses. We need to link rural areas to the link road more than we do currently.

6.2   Infrastructure had been discussed a lot at this point however Members did have a few final points to make around the topic. There were concerns around the current drainage infrastructure with some believing that SuDS don't solve issues as suggested with too many companies saying that the infrastructure and sewage systems do work efficiently but cannot provide enough evidence for this. External agencies can say they are happy without providing the evidence and we currently need to take their word for this even though there are often drainage and sewage issues, with some even spilling into our oceans following recent rainfall.

6.3   It was reiterated that the current road structure and infrastructure was not suitable for rural businesses as they often rely on larger vehicles to transport goods around. Rural areas should be better connected and they should be able to easily reach the link road without encountering issues. Transport links generally were suggested as needing improvements to help support people needing to travel in and out of northern Devon. The suggestions for enabling this were a regular shuttle to Tiverton Parkway, upgrades to the Barnstaple rail link and re-introducing a ferry link to Wales.

6.4   Many infrastructure comments made in this session were related to renewable energy with Members wanting to see building for our own local grid network to store and use energy locally with storage of energy being addressed to allow us to capture and store all available energy. Members also felt that more properties could have their own solar panels to reduce the number of large solar farms which take up more space and are covering lots of fields in the countryside. Allowing more turbines able to capture and store energy locally would also reduce the need for these large solar farms. As well as properties having their own solar panels, the use of district heating and cooling systems could be considered within new developments. Including more areas in the LCWIP would benefit many people and help those looking to use cycling as a more sustainable way of getting around. Therefore, something in the plan to actually include the LCWIP into the plan could help. This, alongside further provision of cycle storage on new developments, would help encourage cycling however we must ensure that it becomes safer to cycle and walk across northern Devon. As well as cycle storage, Members mentioned that they would like to see more electric car charging points provided with new housing.

Session Three - Sweep-Up Session - Housing Comments
Concerns around the quality of insulation but this comes down to government regulations, could we require better quality?
Sustainable materials should be used more, can we support the sourcing of better materials.
Need to be delivering energy efficient development and promote more solar panels on vacant roof space (residential and commercial).
New developments should be designed around walking and cycling instead of being car-dominated. We should move away from cars being an integral part of design and layout.
Introduce policies requiring new developments to have an element of renewables on new sites. Recognised that this would require government legislation to change.
Could be re-using empty spaces in towns as flats or housing rather than leaving empty buildings or vacant upper floors.
Many empty buildings are too expensive to fix up as they are listed buildings. Can we un-list them to more easily make them into housing?
The overall quality of the current houses being developed is poor and Local Councils will be picking up the pieces in the future.
Retrofitting houses to get them up to standard in expensive so insulation etc needs to be put in when houses are first built.
There is often a trade off between sustainable housing and affordability and this can be questioned in viability reports.
The pandemic was not good for housing. More demand for holiday lets emerged and owners realised they were often more lucrative than charging residential rent.
Design codes should be prepared for expanding settlements to promote the use of more natural materials.

6.5   Housing was another topic already discussed in great depth recently although there were a few more comments which Members felt it was important to share or reiterate. There were further concerns raised around the overall quality of buildings especially the quality of insulation with Members recognising that this does come down to Government regulations but questioning whether we could require better quality on local developments. The cost of retrofitting was raised with the cost of this a concern and the need to provide quality insulation at the time of building being important.

6.6   There were concerns from Members that if good quality materials were not put in when houses were built then it would cost people a lot to sort this themselves and, with a low average income in the area, this may be a challenge. Sustainable materials should be used more and Members wondered how we could best support this while recognising the trade off between sustainable housing and affordability as this can often be mentioned in viability reports. Design codes were mentioned with suggestions that these should be prepared for any expanding settlements to promote the use of more natural and more sustainable materials across new developments.

6.7   It was generally felt that delivering energy efficient developments and promoting renewables was important with the hope that policies could require new developments to have an element of renewables on site. It was recognised that this would require government legislation to change but would help with providing more locally sourced energy. Being able to use vacant roof space on both residential and commercial buildings for solar panels could help locals and businesses provide their own energy and reduce the need for large solar farms in the area.

6.8   It was felt that new developments should be designed around walking and cycling and this should be made as safe as possible with the focus moved away from car dominated sites being an integral part of design and layout.

6.9   Members recognised that the pandemic had not been good for housing anywhere as many owners were starting to realise the potential for holiday lets when staycations increased as people increasingly holidayed in the UK. With the demand in holiday lets rising, owners realised that it was more lucrative than charging residential rent and keeping permanent tenants. While recognising the housing crisis and need locally, it was questioned whether we could be re-using empty spaces in towns as flats rather than leaving them as empty upper floors. Members felt that many are empty because of the cost to fix them up which is often as they are listed buildings and it is possible that un-listing them could allow them to be used again which would provide more housing and further support town centres.

Session Three - Sweep-Up Session - Urban/Town Centre Comments
We cannot predict shopping habits and all attempts to save high streets feel fruitless when we can't predict or mitigate major changes in advance.
Town centres are suffering due to online shopping and people using out of town shopping for convenience.
There is a need to promote town centres as destinations with multi-functional purpose such as entertainment, leisure and residential.
We must recognise how town centres are changing and becoming social and leisure hubs. Should not lose sight of the retail element.
Should recognise that town centres are not the same as they were 10-15 years ago. Need to support local businesses allowing them to thrive and prosper.
Pedestrianising all or part of town centres should be considered to keep traffic out of town centres and create a nice environment.
Budget hotels could be moved closer to town centres rather that situated on the edges of towns. Cheaper hotels in centres could increase income here for shops as well as the night-time economy.
Need for robust policies to create different town centres and support for businesses adapting to new circumstances.
More events should be supported to bring people into towns, this could be during the day or at night.
Should be more flexibility with S106 offsite contributions. They could be used to further improve town centres.
People living in re-used spaces above flats could bring more people into town centres using the shops there rather than out of town retail.
Would question the need for primary and secondary frontages within town centres.

6.10   Urban areas and town centres received several comments in session three with many Members concerned about the future of town centres and wondering whether any policies could change to help support such areas even more. Members found that being unable to predict changes to shopping habits, especially following the pandemic, made efforts to support our high streets feel fruitless as major changes can't be predicted then mitigated in advance. It was felt that town centres were suffering due to changes such as people using online shopping more and going to out-of-town shopping parks. Therefore, we should recognise that town centres are not the same as they were 10-15 years ago.

6.11   As mentioned in the housing comments, it was thought that bringing more people to live in town centres and starting to occupy empty spaces above shops could bring more to the local economy. Members wanted to consider what brings people into towns and focus on making them places that people want to visit thus supporting local businesses and allowing them to thrive.

6.12   Pedestrianising all or part of town centres could be a start to making them places people really want to spend time in and create a nice environment where people feel safe to visit and enjoy.

6.13   It was recognised that we need to see how town centres are changing and becoming social and leisure hubs with a move away from shopping being witnessed. There is a need to promote this in towns but it is important to not lose sight of the retail elements which are so important to many areas. Recognising that town centres are now used more for entertainment, leisure and residential uses is important as it allows us to support those businesses trying to adapt to new ways of remaining viable in such areas.

6.14   Members felt that some flexibility in S106 offsite contributions could be better used by going to support town centres, whether it is supporting businesses, promoting certain events or making them nicer places to spend time.

6.15   It was mentioned that events needed more promotion and should be supported to bring people into towns whether during the day for markets or at night to benefit the night-time economy. It was felt that we should question the need for primary and secondary frontages within town centres and we should have more robust policies to create different town centres which are reflective of new uses.

6.16   One final point was made about budget hotels with some Members wanting these closer to town centres instead of being situated on the edge of towns. Cheaper hotels in town centres could improve the economy, especially the night-time economy as people may use amenities there rather than staying in. When the hotels are on the outskirts and cheap meals etc are all included then people tend not to leave but if they were in town centres it would be easier to walk to nearby amenities and local shops.

Session Three - Sweep-Up Session - Rural Comments
Rural enterprise and entrepreneurial spirit should be promoted and not discounted even if it is not within the plan. Should encourage rural economy and support businesses in the countryside.
Policy doesn't currently allow areas to be designated for wind turbines but rural communities support this on a small scale. Small scale wind farms could contribute to the rural economy.
Not much in the current Local Plan around the re-use of buildings in the countryside. Could be used to support tourism rather than building new structures.
Too much interfering with farming and agriculture and there could be more support for applications from such businesses.
We need to decide whether we are going to support agriculture or not. There has been a move away from agriculture in rural areas.
People retire to rural areas and do not move there for work like they used to.
There is a desire for some businesses to be in rural areas and if this is not planned for you get a mess not a planned rural area.
In rural areas it appears that one property in four is changing to become a holiday let. It is not always clear what the policy is on rural tourism.
There are jobs in agriculture available for young people in rural areas across northern Devon. We should be investing in farms, but we don't and they are fighting for diversity.
Promote rural businesses in growing and distributing food locally. Food used to be a strategic necessity. Government wants to import food. DEFRA is starting to push food self-sufficiency again.
Tourism is based on natural beauty, mostly in rural areas, so we need balance between natural areas and infrastructure for renewables.
Should support rural businesses such as B and Bs (not Air B and Bs/holiday lets) and pubs which rely on tourism throughout the year.
Rural enterprises are important, and the countryside is not just fields. Need to recognise rural businesses and rural communities.

6.17   Rural areas are especially important to Members as they often want greater protection of the green open spaces found here and it was felt that rural areas can become left behind.

6.18   Members were concerned that there was too much interfering with farming and agriculture without enough support with planning applications from such businesses and stated that we need to decide whether to support these sectors or not. It was felt that we should invest more in farms but they are too often left fighting for themselves despite the fact that they could be providing opportunities for young local people looking to work in rural areas. There are jobs in agriculture available to young people across northern Devon but it doesn't feel like a safe job as the future is uncertain. Members felt that we should be promoting rural businesses which are growing and distributing food locally as DEFRA is beginning to push food self-sufficiency again. Food used to be a strategic necessity and Members questioned why this seemed to have lost its importance. Rural enterprise and entrepreneurial spirit should be promoted and not discounted even if this is not specifically mentioned within the plan as we should encourage our rural economy. Members also felt that we need further support for rural businesses such as B&Bs (not Air B&B) as well as pubs which rely on tourism throughout the year. These businesses may struggle where the tourist season does not go through the entire year and sees a drop off in tourist money coming in during the winter. It was asserted that Councils need to recognise that the countryside is not just fields and there is a community and a heart in these places. Tourism is based on natural beauty which is mostly found in rural areas so it is important to find the correct balance between preserving natural areas and finding the infrastructure for tourism. Members noted that there is not much in the Local Plan around the re-use of buildings in the countryside but empty buildings could be used to support tourism instead of building any new structures.

6.19   In regards to rural tourism it can be unclear what the policy actually is around this. As well as balancing natural areas with tourism infrastructure we must consider a balance with infrastructure for renewable energy. This should be provided but considered carefully to allow renewables such as small scale wind farms to contribute to the rural economy without compromising the local area. Policy doesn't currently allow areas to be designated for wind turbines but rural communities do support this on a small scale so should be considered within the plan. Residents who were initially against turbines do mostly agree that they have blended into the countryside. People are retiring to rural places instead of moving for work and this is becoming a place full of retirees or tourists. In some rural areas it appears that one property in four is changing to become a holiday let which is not supporting communities and their want to remain balanced with strong community spirit. Members recognised the desire for some businesses to be located within rural areas and if this is not planned for then you can get left with a mess instead of a planned rural area. This was a concern as it could cause further issues in rural areas and not help to support the natural environment and rural communities.

Session Three - Sweep-Up Session - Social Comments
Tourism policies are not delivering and are too constrained. They could and should go further without necessarily allowing tourism accommodation everywhere.
Need to promote tourism more alongside considering the views of local residents and businesses. Re-visit the 'Golden Bay' promotional campaign and improve the quality of hotels/other places people may stay.
Future tourism policy should provide a more flexible approach to deliver tourism development and be more proactive around tourism. Should an area of search be considered as opposed to a criterion based one.
The low income in the area discourages young people from staying. We don't want the area to just become a place to retire.
Higher paid, skilled jobs would be required if there was a shift to the 'green economy' with installation and maintenance required.
Greater links with Petroc to train young people to meet the skills necessary for a future within the 'green economy'.
There is nothing you can put in the plan to rectify any major impacts from tourism. Stopping second homes or at least reducing the numbers and legislating amounts would help if this is even possible.
Food has never been classified as a public good but is a necessity and the plan doesn't support local food producing businesses.
Should be more scope for quality tourism. Need to recognise increased demand for glamping and other high-quality accommodation.
Need more facilities for tourists alongside holiday accommodation as we are at capacity in terms of restaurants etc.
As amenities are so important, we should consider whether businesses will cope outside of the tourist season.
Tourism caravan parks have been changed into permanent accommodation caravan parks now. Are trends changing?

6.20   Comments around the social theme were mostly focused on tourism, low wages and facilities or amenities. The low average income in the area was mentioned several times by Members in relation to a variety of issues as there are concerns that it will discourage young people from staying in the area. This can lead to an imbalance in the population as young people leave to find better opportunities and older people retire here. Members felt that a shift to the 'green economy' could help provide more higher payed skilled jobs as the shift would require this due to the installation and maintenance necessary. Greater links with Petroc could support young people by training them with the necessary skills for a future within the 'green economy'. This would benefit the area and help to allow younger people to stay in the area as well as bringing in new skilled workers with their families which further benefits the local economy.

6.21   Members felt that tourism policies are not delivering and are too constrained so they should and could go further without necessarily allowing tourism accommodation everywhere as this does not support the housing crisis. Although tourism should be promoted more this must be considered alongside the views of local residents and businesses as, especially businesses, may have a good insight into tourists habits and could help promote tourism the right way. Some Members agreed that our current promotions could be improved and we should even re-visit previous campaigns such as the 'Golden Bay' promotional campaign.

6.22   Improvements should also be considered to the quality of hotels and other tourist accommodation to encourage people to stay in such areas rather than rely on Air B&Bs all the time. Future tourism policy should provide a more flexible approach to deliver tourism development and be more proactive around tourism to allow for this to be developed locally without harming surroundings and while supporting the local economy as much as possible.

6.23   Members questioned whether an area of search should be considered as opposed to a criterion based one. Some Members did argue that there is nothing you can put in the plan to rectify any major impacts from tourism and it will always be pushed through because the area is so reliant upon the tourism. It was thought that stopping second homes or at least having a way to reduce the numbers or legislate for the amount of second homes could help but it was unclear if this was even possible within the plan.

6.24   Another point made on tourism was the scope for quality tourism alongside a need to recognise that there has been an increase in demand for glamping and other high-quality accommodation which has been especially popular in rural areas across the UK. With this rise it was important to also recognise the potential need for more facilities alongside accommodation as it was felt that we are currently at capacity in terms of restaurants and pubs. With amenities being of importance, we should be considering whether businesses will cope through the winter or whether they could need further support during this time.

6.25   Members questioned other trends which may be changing such as changes from tourism based caravan parks to permanent residential accommodation and highlighted the importance of monitoring such trends. One final comment was around food as a public good with members questioning why it has never been classified as such despite the fact that it is a necessity. They also suggested that the plan should do more to support local food producing businesses as food is a necessity and we should have less reliance on getting this shipped in from other countries.

Session Three - Sweep-Up Session - Sustainability Comments
Promotion of green tourism is important. There is a fine balance between facilitating tourism development and landscape impact. Greater protection required for non-designated biodiversity sites.
Could introduce more community composting schemes and promote greater use of repair/recycle facilities to reduce waste.
The plan must be specific about what is meant by sustainability/renewables, this is now of greater importance than when the plan was written.
Need better understanding of the potential of facilitating new development within the Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA).
Need better protection of our natural environment especially rivers, hedgerows, and wildlife. Rivers are at capacity and there is increased flooding due to climate change with reservoirs suffering despite the rain.
Should be more sustainable management of green spaces within new developments. We need greater boundaries between hedges and developments.
New flood maps indicating increased risk of flooding in both districts need to be considered for all future planning applications.
Relocation is unsustainable and we should not be building on floodplains.
New developments should include soakaway systems and rainwater harvesting. We need more trees, passive cooling solutions, more soft landscaping, and protection for existing biodiversity assets.
Quality of rivers and seas is suffering as a result of sewage spilling into these areas. There is very little in the plan looking at the long-term life of beaches and future economic impacts of coastal retreat.
More innovative approach is necessary to delivering sustainable drainage that benefits biodiversity net gain/flood prevention e.g. Green roofs, ponds, reed bed systems.
Promote greater use of cycling and walking to move away from reliance on cars for shorter journeys.
Promote community based onshore wind projects including the necessary infrastructure for storage. Small scale not large commercial scale.
Or we need to look at a proper wind farm instead of lots of individual turbines scattered around because without turbines we just get solar farms which cover more land and produce less energy.
Locals usually feel turbines blend well with surroundings, even those initially opposed to them being built.

There is nothing in the plan to differentiate between small scale Photo-Voltaic (PV) and large-scale PV. Some are too big for the area despite the plan not supporting large scale PV developments.
Can't do much with renewables unless Government policies change. Local authorities just follow Government guidelines.
The plan should strengthen the wording around climate change and not use vague words like request or aspire. Be precise on non-negotiables.
We must do more to reduce reliance on other countries' energy and become more self-sufficient, so we do not become vulnerable.
We still bring in most supply from abroad which uses up our local capacity for capturing and storing our own energy.
DEFRA policies are often changing regarding re-wilding and planting more trees. Should follow these policies to help protect our unique landscape.
Climate change is a main concern as is biodiversity and offsetting and how this is implemented.

6.26   The topic of sustainability was the most popular in the discussion during session three with Members contributing several points around this topic. Members felt that we could do a lot on new developments to make them more sustainable which was agreed is of great importance now with the current climate crisis. Including soakaway systems and rainwater harvesting on developments could help reduce flooding and help with water costs with residents having the ability to recycle rainwater for some uses.

6.27   Members felt that we need more trees on sites along with passive cooling systems, more soft landscaping and protection for existing biodiversity areas with it being important to recognise that these are all features which would need to be planned before building was commenced. Another point to consider was that Members felt we should have greater boundaries around trees on development sites and greater boundaries between hedges and developments.

6.28   Members agreed that sustainable development shouldn't stop once building has been completed and it will be important to provide suitable management of green spaces within new and existing developments to ensure that this is managed efficiently. Greater management and protection is also needed outside of developments to keep our natural environment protected especially our rivers, hedgerows and wildlife with greater protection required for non-designated biodiversity sites. Members thought this was especially important as recent flood events have caused issues, with the quality of rivers and seas suffering as a result of sewage spilling into rivers and seas and these concerns link back to the drainage and sewage infrastructure.

6.29   Flood risk, likely to be a result of climate change, has been seen to increase over the last few years therefore new flood maps should be considered for all new applications as relocation is not sustainable and we shouldn't be building on floodplains at all. It was noted that rivers are at capacity with reservoirs suffering despite the rain suggesting that there is a lot to do within our own districts to mitigate any future issues as best as possible.

6.30   Further to this, Members felt that there was not enough in the plan looking at the long-term life of beaches and the future economic impacts of coastal retreat which has already been seen in several areas.

6.31   Members thought that a more innovative approach is necessary to delivering sustainable drainage that benefits biodiversity net gain as well as flood prevention which is important to consider in the current climate. Examples of this would be green roofs on new developments as well as ponds and reed bed systems. It was felt that the plan must be more specific about what is meant by sustainability and renewables especially if developers are expected to make any contributions.

6.32   The Local Plan should also strengthen any wording around climate change and not use vague words like request or aspire as this is not clear enough when we should be precise on non-negotiable parts of the plan especially relating to sustainability. This is of greater importance now than when the plan was written as the climate crisis has increased in severity over the last couple of years. We should also have a better understanding of the potential for facilitating new development within the Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs).

6.33   Members wanted Local Government to start doing more to reduce our reliance on other countries' to energy supply as we should strive to be more self-sufficient and not allow ourselves to become vulnerable. It was questioned why we are still bringing so much energy in from abroad and using up our capacity for capturing and storing our own energy. Members would like the plan to promote community based onshore wind projects which include the necessary infrastructure for storage and this should focus on providing several small scale projects rather that allowing a large commercial wind farm which may be out of character for the area. Some Members disagreed and felt that we could just focus on one wind farm rather than have lots of individual windfarms scattered around the country as just having one could reduce the infrastructure needed and have less of an impact on the countryside. Either option would reduce the need for large solar farms which cover more land and produce less energy. Most locals are happy with wind turbines and would prefer these over large solar farms as some are too big for the area despite the plan not supporting large scale Photo-Voltaic (PV) solar developments. Members were unhappy that there was nothing in the plan to differentiate between small-scale PV farms and large-scale PV farms. General feeling amongst Members was that there is actually very little we can do in terms of renewables due to Government policy and we would require changes to this to help us locally as we currently just follow Government guidelines.

6.34   It was felt that more could be done within local communities to further support sustainability and this could be as simple as introducing community composting schemes and promoting greater use of repair and recycle facilities to help people reduce waste.

6.35   The promotion of green tourism was considered important by Members as this is becoming more popular and could help mitigate some impacts from climate change, although it must be remembered that there is a fine balance between facilitating tourism development and landscape impact in rural areas. Promoting a greater use of cycling and walking to move away from reliance on cars could be pushed for both tourists and residents. Climate change was a main concern for Members as was biodiversity and offsetting and how this is implemented throughout northern Devon while recognising the need to protect the area. It should also be considered that DEFRA often update their policies around re-wilding and planting trees etc. and we need to remain aware of these and follow the policies in order to best protect our unique landscape.

Session Three - Sweep-Up Session - Other Comments
Too much emphasis on competition and growth particularly when there are concerns around our changing climate or Brexit.
Less emphasis on inward growth and more towards a circular local economy. We should be more sustainable/prosperous.
Could minimise employment allocations but have criteria-based policies to encourage economic uses within local communities. Judge economic applications on their own merits.
There are pressures from several organisations and sometimes this comes with conflicting policies.
Support for leaving the plan as it is because there is not much point spending money on updating it when central Government will make decisions which won't help local communities.
We put time and money into the plan but ultimately Whitehall will ignore us. We should engage other local authorities to see if they feel the same then let the Government take the flack as we get ignored anyway.

6.36　The few other comments from session three were similar to those mentioned in the two previous sessions with some new points raised alongside these. Members felt that sometimes conflicting pressures from a variety of different organisations could make policy writing and decision making difficult. It was felt that there was too much emphasis on competition and growth as there are several concerns around our changing climate and Brexit which should possibly be addressed as important current issues. Less emphasis on inward growth and a greater focus on moving to a circular economy could help allow us to be more sustainable and prosperous. Although we need employment land it was suggested that we could minimise employment allocations and instead use criteria-based policies to encourage economic uses within local communities. It is important to recognise that some economic applications should be judged on their own merits.

6.37　Some personal opinions on the Local Plan review showed support for leaving the plan as it due to some Members not seeing the point on wasting money doing a complete update when it is likely that Government will make changes or make decisions which will overrule the plan and not support local communities anyway. Members recognised that we have been putting time and money into the plan but it was felt that we too often get ignored by Government anyway and it may be better to engage other local authorities to see if they feel the same way. If we are not alone in this thinking then it is possible that something could be done about this.

7 Conclusion

7.1   In conclusion, it is clear that there are several key issues which Members feel should be addressed through the Local Plan which are not in the current Local Plan and, these issues cover a wide range of topics. Many Members did however feel that the plan could be left for now as the majority was working and some had concerns about whether a comprehensive review could cause issues in policy performance and may mean unnecessary risk with pending appeals. There was a general feeling that it would be good if planning was more led by local authorities instead of developers and that most issues raised were not the fault of the Local Plan.

7.2   Most of the issues which Members would like to resolve were focused around the quality of new housing, provision of affordable housing to meet needs, mitigating climate change impacts and providing infrastructure and facilities to support the population. Members would like to update some policies so they stand up better at appeal, however, some felt that there was not much point as Government policies will always limit us and decisions are often overturned by inspectors at appeal.

7.3   There was support for leaving the plan as it is and not wasting time and money on updating it when we are ignored by Government so much and risk Government policy change having an impact on the plan.

7.4   Some Members did feel that the Local Plan was no longer working and and had become imbalanced, suggesting that a review should be undertaken to prevent certain poor decisions from being made.

7.5   There was not a clear conclusion from Members around which approach necessary as there was a mixture of opinions. Overall, it appears that the majority want to tidy up several parts and make some updates to a few specific areas but are questioning whether the time and cost associated with this would make it worth doing.

8 Appendix 1: Workshop Attendance

Local Plan Review Workshop Attendance (28th November).

Local Plan Review Workshop (28th November) Session Attendance

Name	Council	Group
Cllr Knight	NDC	1
Cllr Hodson	TDC	1
Cllr Mackie	NDC	1
Cllr Wiseman	TDC	1
Cllr Christie	TDC	1
Cllr Roome	NDC	1
Cllr James	TDC	2
Cllr Langford	TDC	2
Cllr Manley	TDC	2
Cllr Prowse	NDC	2
Cllr Laws	TDC	2
Cllr Gubb	TDC	3
Cllr Leather	TDC	3
Cllr Pennington	TDC	3
Cllr Mack	NDC	3
Cllr Ley	NDC	3
Cllr Dart	TDC	3
Cllr Biederman	NDC	4
Cllr Lock	TDC	4
Cllr Tucker	NDC	4
Cllr Worden	NDC	4
Cllr Hawkins	TDC	4
Cllr Bushby	TDC	4
Helen Smith	TDC	1

Local Plan Review Workshop (28th November) Session Attendance

Christopher Power	TDC	1
Sarah Jane Mackenzie-Shapland	NDC	2
Mark Alcock	NDC	2
Ian Rowland	TDC	3
Tristan Otten	TDC	3
Eleanor Goodhead	TDC	3
Ben Lucas	TDC	4
Phillipa Mackintosh	NDC	4

Local Plan Review Workshop Attendance (1st December).

Local Plan Review Workshop (1st December) Session Attendance

Name	Council	Group
Cllr Craigie	TDC	1
Cllr Lofthouse	NDC	1
Cllr Leaver	NDC	1
Cllr Boughton	TDC	1
Cllr Hicks	TDC	1
Cllr Bright	TDC	1
Cllr Hepple	TDC	1
Cllr Brenton	TDC	2
Cllr Brown	TDC	2
Cllr Hames	TDC	2
Cllr Hurley	TDC	2
Cllr James	TDC	2
Cllr Newton	TDC	2
Ian Rowland	TDC	1/2
Ben Lucas	TDC	1
Eleanor Goodhead	TDC	1
Christopher Power	TDC	1
Sarah Jane Mackenzie-Shapland	NDC	1/2
Dawn Burgess	TDC	2
Phillipa Mackintosh	NDC	2

9 Appendix 2: Running Order

Running Order.

Item	Lead	Monday 28th November	Thursday 1st December
Introduction by Chair (2 mins)	Cllr Prowse/Hicks	18:30-18-32	15:00-15:02
Setting the Context (13 mins)	PAS / DAC	18:32-18:45	15:02-15:15
Purpose of the workshops (5 mins)	Ian Rowland	18:45-18:50	15:15-15:20
Session 1 Introduction (5 mins)	Sarah Jane Mackenzie-Shapland	18:50-18:55	15:05-15:10
Session 1 Breakout (15 mins)		18:55-19:10	15:10-15:30
Session 1 Feedback (10 mins)		19:10-19:20	15:30-15:40
Session 2 Introduction (5 mins)	Helen Smith	19:20-19:25	15:40-15:45
Session 2 Breakout (15 mins)		19:25-19:40	15:45-16:05
Session 2 Feedback (10 mins)		19:40-19:50	16:05-16:15

BREAK (5 mins)		19:50-19:55	16:15-16:20
Session 3 Introduction (5 mins)	PAS/DAK	19:55-20:00	16:20-16:25
Session 3 Breakout (15 mins)		20:00-20:15	16:25-16:45
Session 3 Feedback (10 mins)		20:15-20:25	16:45-16:55
What's Next? (4 mins)	Sarah Jane Mackenzie-Shapland/ Helen Smith	20:25-20:29	16:55-16:59
Closing Remark by Chair (1 min)	Cllr Prowse/Hicks	20:29-20:30	16:59-17:00

Session 1

Topic: The location, level of development and development distribution – is the approach in the Local Plan working? If not what are the issues?

Session 2

Topic: Delivery of development – what is the quality of the development delivered? Suggested matters include sustainable development, the quality of development including design and integration with existing area. Has the required infrastructure been delivered as expected? What should be the priorities? Please provide examples.

Session 3

Topic: A general discussion on other matters not already covered. Examples include:

- Climate change, sustainability and renewables
- Tourism
- Town Centres
- Economy

10 Appendix 3: Presentation Slides

PowerPoint Presentation Slides.

Areas of silence or non-compliance...

1. Approach to Town Centres
2. Demonstrating a 5-year housing land supply
3. Approach to calculating housing requirement
4. Coastal Change Management Areas
5. Accommodation for Travelling Communities
6. Biodiversity Net Gain?

9

The Potential Options...

▶ Comprehensive Update
▶ Partial Update / Plan Supplement
▶ Slow down, pause or do nothing...for now!

▶ Different approaches have pros and cons

Note: A comprehensive update doesn't mean that we disregard the effective parts of the existing plan and start from scratch.
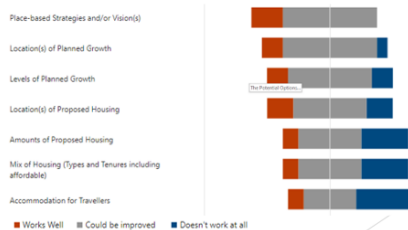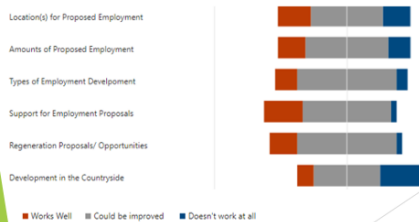
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Local Plan Review Member Survey

▶ 24 Responses received (30.8% response rate)
▶ Do you feel that the existing local plan provides an **appropriate, up-to-date and relevant** basis to continue planning for the future of northern Devon?
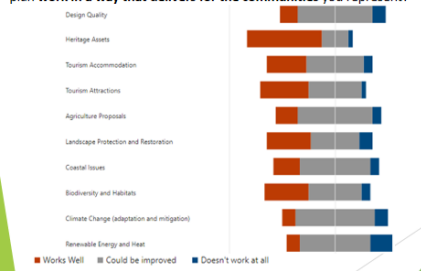
● Yes 6
● No 18

How well do you think the following elements of the existing local plan **work in a way that delivers for the communities** you represent?

Place-based Strategies and/or Vision(s)
Location(s) of Planned Growth
Levels of Planned Growth
Location(s) of Proposed Housing
Amounts of Proposed Housing
Mix of Housing (Types and Tenures including affordable)
Accommodation for Travellers

■ Works Well ■ Could be improved ■ Doesn't work at all

How well do you think the following elements of the existing local plan **work in a way that delivers for the communities** you represent?

Location(s) for Proposed Employment
Amounts of Proposed Employment
Types of Employment Development
Support for Employment Proposals
Regeneration Proposals/ Opportunities
Development in the Countryside

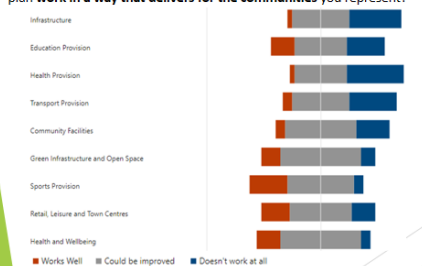■ Works Well ■ Could be improved ■ Doesn't work at all

13

How well do you think the following more detailed elements of the local plan **work in a way that delivers for the communities** you represent?

Design Quality
Heritage Assets
Tourism Accommodation
Tourism Attractions
Agriculture Proposals
Landscape Protection and Restoration
Coastal Issues
Biodiversity and Habitats
Climate Change (adaptation and mitigation)
Renewable Energy and Heat

■ Works Well ■ Could be improved ■ Doesn't work at all

14

How well do you think the following more detailed elements of the local plan **work in a way that delivers for the communities** you represent?

Infrastructure
Education Provision
Health Provision
Transport Provision
Community Facilities
Green Infrastructure and Open Space
Sports Provision
Retail, Leisure and Town Centres
Health and Wellbeing

■ Works Well ■ Could be improved ■ Doesn't work at all

The Workshop

The purpose of the workshop:
▶ to allow elected members to positively contribute to the discussion on Local Plan Review
▶ An opportunity for elected members to say what is working well in the Local Plan
▶ An opportunity for elected members to highlight where are there significant issues which need to be addressed through a Local Plan Review

Slide 17

Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

Session 1: The Spatial Strategy

Sarah Jane Mackenzie-Shapland, NDC

Slide 18

The Spatial Strategy

▶ The spatial Strategy provides the a framework to deliver development that is necessary to meet the area's future needs including housing and employment

▶ Reflects the function of and relationship between settlements

▶ Takes account of growth requirements

▶ The adequacy of infrastructure to accommodate growth

▶ Opportunities to achieve sustainable development

Slide (The Spatial Strategy)

The Spatial Strategy

▶ Is the approach in the Local Plan Working?

▶ What are the issues which need to be addressed?

Slide (Session 1 Feedback)

Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

Session 1 Feedback

Slide 21

Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

Session 2: The Delivery of Development

Helen Smith, TDC

Slide 22

The Quality of Development

Thinking about the development which has taken place since the adoption of the local Plan in October 2018...

▶ Has it delivered what was expected in the Local Plan?

  ▶ If not what is different/missing?

▶ How do you rate the quality of these developments?

▶ Is sustainable development being delivered?

Please provide examples of what is working and what isn't...

Slide (Session 2 Feedback)

Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

Session 2 Feedback

Slide (Time for a break)

Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

Time for a break
5 Minutes

Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

Session 3:Sweep-Up session

25

What else needs to be considered?

A general discussion on other matters not already covered...

For example:

▶ Climate change, sustainability and renewables
▶ Rural economy and Agriculture
▶ Approach to tourism
▶ The role of Town Centres
▶ Economic issues

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Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

Session 3 Feedback

Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

What's Next?

Sarah Jane MacKenzie-Shapland, NDC
Helen Smith, TDC

What's Next?

▶ Consolidate and reflect on Member perspectives
▶ Complete portfolio of additional technical work
▶ Continue engagement and support with PAS/DAC
▶ Discuss options at informal meeting of Joint Planning Policy Committee
▶ Report with recommendations to Joint Planning Policy Committee
▶ Report to Full Council if recommending a different approach

29   *

Local Plan Review
Member Visioning Workshop

Closing Remarks

Councillor Robert Hicks
Torridge District Council
Vice-Chair, Joint Planning Policy Committee

30

Local Plan Review
Member Workshop

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

PAS/DAC Presentation.

Slide 1

PAS
PROJECT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT
North Devon and Torridge Local Plan
Member Workshops
28 November and 1 December 2022

Slide 2

Introduction to PAS

- Planning Advisory Service part of the Local Government Association
- PAS provide high-quality help, advice, support and training on planning and service delivery to councils
- Councils being provided with targeted support by PAS as part of Local Plan Project Management Support programme
- Aim is to support the effective production of the Local Plan
- Initial support focussed on providing advice to support the Local Plan review
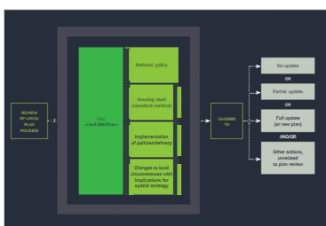
Slide 3

Local Plan Route Mapper and Toolkit

- PAS Local Plan Route Mapper and Toolkit supports local authorities in all stages of Local Plan production - including undertaking a review
- Handbook to support plan production
- Toolkit includes a Local Plan Review Assessment

Slide 4

Local Plan Stages

Slide 5
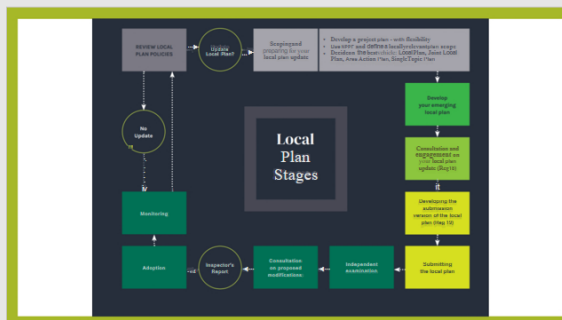
Local Plan Review

Collect evidence to identify and consider:

1. Is the **vision, policy objectives and spatial strategy** of your Local Plan being effectively delivered?
2. Does your plan **meet current national planning policy** requirements?
3. Have there been **any local changes** which have significant implications for the strategy set out in your plan?

Slide 6

Key Considerations

- Is the adopted Plan consistent with national planning policy? Do the policies have full weight in decision making?
- What has changed nationally and locally since plan adoption?
- Are policies delivering effectively?
- Have there been any significant changes or developments in the wider sub-region?
- What can / should / must be done to respond?

Slide 7

Key Considerations

- New National Planning Policy Framework published in 2021
- Local housing need and standard methodology
- Without five-year land supply housing policies are out of date
- Plan period should extend 15 years from adoption
- Can existing spatial strategy be rolled forward / extended?

Slide 8

Scope of the Update

- If an update is required, will it be partial or full?
- Can overall approach of adopted Plan be maintained - is it feasible and desirable?
- How much needs to change?
- Are there other tools and mechanisms that may be used?
- Programme and budget required to update the plan will depend upon the scope of the update
- Consider approach to publishing review outcomes - manage risk

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