

Northern Devon Futures Strategy Workshop

Thursday 8th June 2023

Sean Mackney, Chair of NDF, welcomed the board members to the Northern Devon Strategy workshop.

For the past two years, the NDF board has been meeting as a partnership and has established subgroups, working to a common purpose, and has seen across the last year some significant investment coming into our region:

- Through the cultural strategy investment coming in from the Arts Council,
- Through Levelling Up, the clean maritime and innovation centre at Appledore,
- Through One Northern Devon, funding for young people's mental health and northern Devon being part of research projects.

We value partnerships to provide a platform to allow us to move forwards and the Strategy workshop allows us to consolidate what NDF is doing and set a focus and direction to establish how we are going to monitor our progress and the impact that we make as well as to promote and advocate publicly to show what NDF and the people that are part of it to create a long-term future for Northern Devon.

The purpose of the strategy workshop was to look at the recommended objectives of each subgroup, discussing them and add to them within smaller groups, with an aim to have an emerging consensus of what the individual groups objectives should be over the next five years, and this would then provide details for the Northern Devon Futures Strategy document.

Steve Hearse confirmed that the board had been operating as a partnership for some time and had originally set visions of what the NDF board wanted to achieve and that this workshop is to revisit the vision, and to look forward. To make sure the board and the action groups are moving on the right direction, and to make sure we are aware of new opportunities and outcomes and how we measure impacts in the future. To provide a clear set of objectives and actions for each of the action groups to make sure our vision is heading in the right direction.

Ken Miles confirmed that the purpose of the workshop was to be able to revisit the purpose of NDF and to bring all the key partners together to create a strategic vision for Northern Devon, which will then feed down to the visions in their own organisations, so all are collectively working together and aiming for the same goals. Revisiting the visions and objectives of the group now is appropriate because one of the most strategic documents for the area is the local development plan. It sets out where we want to see development and vision for the area and on the cusp of a review of the plan, so the work of NDF and the Strategy workshop, will aim to feed into the development plan.

Sean Mackney confirmed the current vision for NDF

'The Vision of the Partnership is that by 2050 Northern Devon is healthy, prosperous, and sustainable, recognised for its aspiration, innovation, and ability to get things done. A place where all are able to succeed, and no one is left behind.'

Sean Mackney asked the board members present if that vision still fits with the NDF partnership.

- It is an all-embracing vision, and the finer details will be captured by the work of the action groups.
- Choosing where we can show success. If the group tries to do everything, it will succeed in nothing. Need to narrow down a focus to the areas that the groups can make a difference.
- Ensure that we are proactive with topics and agendas that are new and current.
- The NDF is at a good stage, to be able to listen to stakeholders and use the action groups to feed into discussions.
- It is good to have a long-term vision, up to 2050, but be helpful to also look at short- and medium-term goals.
- Would be helpful to have some short-term plan proposals ready for when the new government is in place with funding opportunities.

The board members were then invited to take part in a 'world café' style discussions. Each action group was represented at a table and attendees were invited to join a table discussion to give views and create discussions and then move onto another group. The aim of this was to look at existing objectives and to amend and add to them to provide a clear list of objectives for the groups to look at and work towards within the next five years.

Proposed Objectives for the Climate Action Group:

- Get Communities Ready - Prepare Devon's communities for the necessary adaptations to infrastructure and services to respond to a warmer world.
- Working towards the Devon Carbon Plan objectives:
 - Fossil Fuels phased out as an energy source.
 - Minimised energy consumption
 - Engaged communities acting for resilience and a net-zero carbon Devon.
 - Carbon captured from the burning of fuels.
 - Minimise future greenhouse gas emissions
 - Resilient local economies with access to green finances
 - A circular use of resources
 - Maximise carbon storage in marine and terrestrial environments.

None of the participants disagreed with the above objectives. Discussions rather focussed on actions that needed to be taken in the next 18 months, and barriers that needed to be addressed.

Communication

Need to raise climate change up the agenda of residents, businesses, partner organisations.

Produce case studies to show how we can save money and take action to deliver net zero ambitions.

Use North Devon Homes and their community ambassadors to demonstrate effectiveness of retrofit/new technology in homes, myth-busting etc - site visits, energy safari etc

Local Plan Review

Planning policy needs to be aligned with net zero ambition.

Local planning resource with remit to support delivery of RE infrastructure, funded by RE developers.

Net zero new homes with allowable measures for retrofit in the area.

Update 'Energy in the Landscape' studies for inclusion in the new LP.

At County-level potential for trial of National Grid's Regional System Planners to build in more accountability of National Grid to the areas it's meant to serve.

Other deliverables

Partners to endorse SWLEP public sector procurement declaration around local (SW region) food sourcing.

Encourage primary schools to have allotments/gardening clubs.

Promote the Councils' Green Events guide beyond our own events/licensed events.

Develop broad sectoral partnerships to fund social housing retrofit to net zero (approx. £80k per home)

Additional comments

Do we need to find funding (i.e., public sector) or leverage green finance (private sector)?

Conflict between cost-of-living crisis and additional costs of 'doing the right thing'

Purchasing power/combined buying power of public sector.

Learn/copy from other partnerships who are trying to do the same thing as NDF.

Need to develop skills to deliver net zero/adaptation.

Club together to get discounts e.g., solar PVs on roofs.

Barriers to network connections – National Grid removing 'blocking licences'.

Re-nationalise the National Grid – private sector monopoly fundamentally impacting our communities and our ability to tackle climate change.

Develop approved models for retrofit accreditation e.g., rockwool change.

Local skills training to take up benefits of big infrastructure projects.

Carbon offsetting vs local area-based in setting – investing in most vulnerable households.

Fuel poverty as a priority.

Renewable energy on Council assets.

Proposed Objectives for the Communities and Place

Current objectives:

- Support local initiatives that help to reduce the **housing** inequality in northern Devon – developing a housing strategy with short-, medium- and long-term goals
- Bring **culture** into all that we do - creating vibrant places that people want to live in, work in and visit
- Champion the unique and important **environment** we live in by utilising our outstanding land and seascapes to our economic and social advantage
- Develop social cohesion by building thriving connected sustainable **communities**. By providing the right platforms to shape and deliver services, invest in meaningful volunteering programmes to engage, and harness talent in all formats

Feedback on Objectives/Action Plan tasks

HOUSING

- The objective as it stands could risk duplicating housing strategies and work that is already taking place at a more strategic level – is that the best use of an 'action groups' time, and should they be engaged in strategic work?
- The membership of the Action Group provides a brilliant resource in terms of gathering intelligence from residents and communities. This can then be rationalised and fed up with the more strategic/policy driven groups/organisations to inform better service delivery/highlight gaps etc.
- This should be about 'connecting the conversations' not strategy
- Could (should?) link to the People and Place work (local plan for the districts)
- Group could be used to review different housing delivery models and provide case studies for communities to use/adopt – for example, how Community Land Trusts are working to provide housing for local people at area appropriate rates

CULTURE

- Promote the positives within community more – the people and actions
- Consider the use of the word 'culture' as this sometimes implies an exclusivity that some don't relate to – 'creativity' could be an alternative?
- Culture is great as acting to be an informal inclusion tool, can this be developed for community development workers to use
- Raise profile of cultural and community events – this can be a good way of raising the profile of the area and in turn bringing more revenue to continue the circle of events
- Towns are Villages are losing their traditions – through events and festivals that have always taken place, this is often due to the previous 'committee' not having the resources or getting older and not wanting to continue. There is no succession planning/handover to younger generations to continue these traditions which often given villages/towns their identity and bring people together

- Need to provide 'space' to allow younger generations to bring forward new events and begin the process of starting their own traditions – ensure they are included in shaping the places they live and feel connected/wanted
- Culture can be used to overcome isolation and break barriers between backgrounds, ages, genders etc. This could be measured to show the benefits of encouraging culture in all places

ENVIRONMENT

- Help community cohesion by developing an identity within communities using the natural capital as a 'glue' that binds people and often is the draw for new people moving to the area
- Using the natural capital as the focus, create a 'brand/identity' for the area that locals recognise, and visitors understand – a quality mark for the place
- Reconnect people with the 'places' they live beyond their social networks, re-connect to nature around them

COMMUNITIES

- How do we measure community cohesion? Can we introduce an annual residents survey to gather views on places people live
- Help to build back pride in communities – use community connectors to re-connect people and places!
- Make better use of community assets to open up for community use – school buildings in the evenings/weekends and holidays – brilliant assets within a lot of our communities, plus others
- Develop a system that allows flexible sharing of skills – informal volunteering but within a neighbourhood or village/community. A 'local exchange trading' scheme for skills
- Support what we have here already to keep communities alive – this includes the people, assets, environment, and businesses – don't always look to 'new' things to overcome issues
- With the increase in the number of new community development workers across northern Devon – look to create a forum for them all to meet to ensure no duplication and even spread of resources where it is most needed

Proposed Objectives for the Children & Young People

Use of Buildings and multipurpose centres (Cross over with Community and Place)

- Family Hubs (Family Centres)
Contact for preschool success and multi-agency support across the region.....a network of them?
- Investment in Youth Centres
- Home schooled young people.
Access to hubs for support – young people and parents
Safe spaces
Access to information to support parents/families.
- SEND Resource Centres in schools.
- Making better use of school buildings and especially within the school holidays.
- Resource management for buildings. Are they being used to their full potential/Multipurpose spaces.

YP Activities

- Increase Young Person – Student voluntary and community engagement.
- Need to give children a voice, giving them confidence to speak out.
Youth Parliament
Youth Council
- Getting young people interested in local opportunities – getting YP to engage to aspire to work locally.
- Look at recreation and hobbies to keep YP in the area.

Support

- Parental support to support their children – a learn & support program?
Currently have Maths and English provision for parents running at Petroc.
- The Holistic Young People's life
Program to contribute to the success and opportunities for all:
4 x work placements
Volunteering opportunities
Time with nature – visit beach, Moors, Biosphere
Fitness and health
- Challenges around social care (currently 250 children in care in our area).
Wrap around support for parents, carers, families.

SEND

- Create a SEND learner, NEET task force with monitoring and intervention.
- Prioritise SEN

School life/Curriculum

- Transition support for every education transition.
- A 'Reach Foundation' partnership project to shift disadvantage.

- Curriculum development – moving forward, looking into the future to what skills may be needed.
- University for Northern Devon – in 10 years
- Natural History GCSE coming into curriculum in 2 years' time.

Employment, Skills, Training (Cross over with EIS)

- An immersive VR conference of the major sectors in our patch providing the opportunities.
- Showcase to YP success stories of people from ND area – bit like an alumni for all.
- Promote recruitment in STEM jobs, Police, Healthcare – encouraging own aspirations.
- Investigate the positive effects of employers becoming school Governors
- Understanding work opportunities in the area.
- Work experience opportunities earlier in schools. YP need to choose their GCSE options earlier in school (From year 8)

Other

- Look at short term actions/ the smaller issues than can be resolved quickly.
- Resettlement Migration – work and training opportunities

Proposed Objectives for Health & Wellbeing

What could we tackle as partners together to improve health/reduce health inequalities?

1. Some long-term health conditions that are influenced by lifestyle factors and behaviours are:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Cancer
- Type 2 diabetes

Increasing physical activity and having a healthy diet reduces the risk for these diseases – they also support other key health conditions -

- Poor mental health
- Frailty (a person's mental and physical resilience, or ability to bounce back and recover from events like illness and injury)

As well as increasing demand on the NHS, these modifiable health conditions play a large part in reducing the productivity of an area and increase long-term sickness absence.

Short-term actions:

How could we use all our staff/public/members communications networks to promote healthy behaviours such as increasing physical activity, supporting people with healthy eating and encouraging community connections and access to our natural and cultural assets?

How can we ensure our Community Development workforce is aligned, not duplicating and joined-up so that we can target our efforts most effectively (any door is the right door approach to community support)

Medium-term actions:

Making Every Contact Count. Could all partners have a role in supporting people to connect with agencies that can help support health such as Stop Smoking Services, Physical Activity and Cultural Groups?

2. Fuel poverty

Fuel poverty is another area that could benefit from more joined up working as living in a cold or damp home can have a significantly detrimental effect on a person's health and mental wellbeing.

Short-term actions:

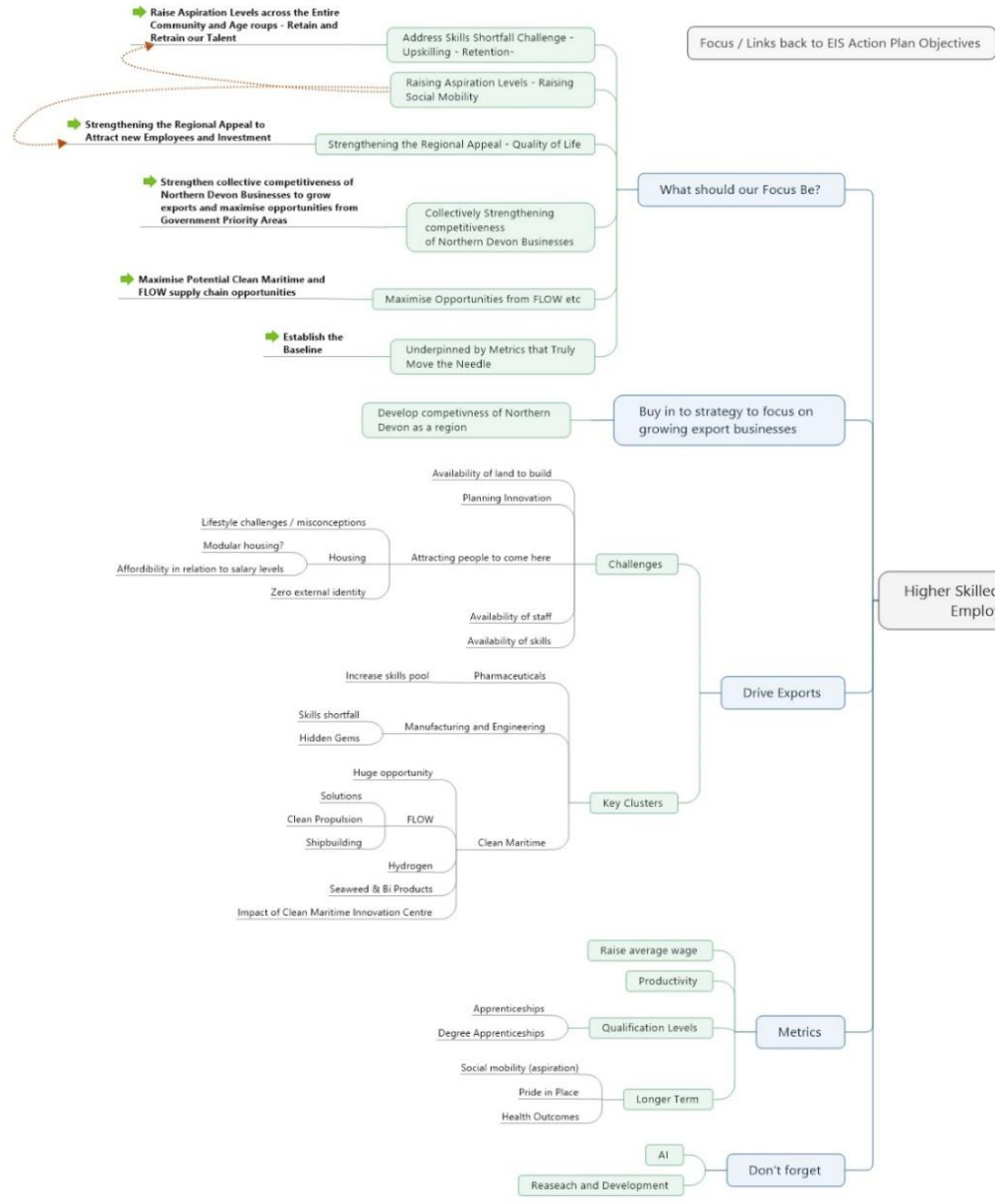
New chair to be found for OND's Fuel Poverty Steering Group to continue progress with the Fuel Poverty Strategy including improving access to retrofitting. Alternatively, this group could move over to one of the NDF subgroups.

3. Measures

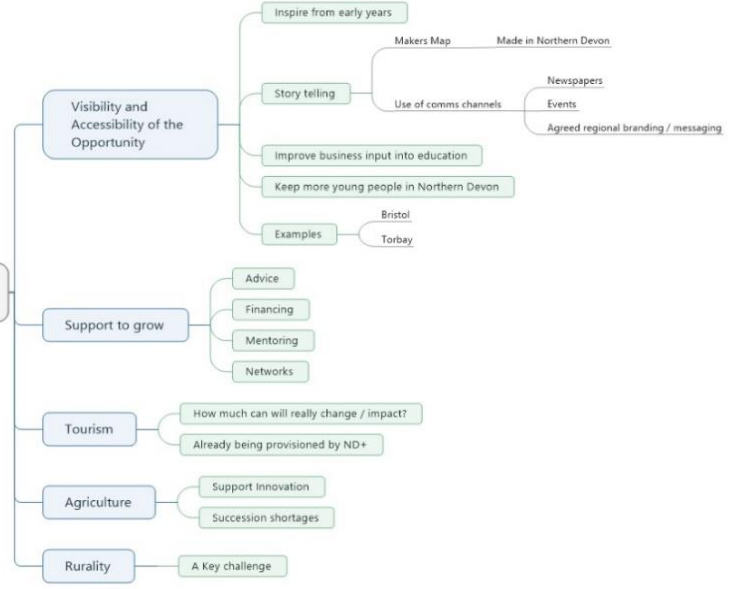
We were asked to consider what measures we could use to understand if interventions are having an impact. We discussed:

- Long-term impact measures:
 - o Rates of CVD, Cancer, Diabetes in comparison to the rest of Devon
 - o Levels of depression
 - o Reduction in 14-year life expectancy gap between the most deprived and least deprived areas in Devon
 - o Reduction in levels of obesity in children
- Medium-term
 - o Reduction in sickness absence]
 - o Increase in physical activity levels.
- Short-term
 - o Communications measures through partner organisations
 - o Effectiveness of communications measured through engagement.

Proposed Objectives for the Employment, Innovation & Skills



NDF Strategy Meeting Notes for EIS Action Group 8th June 2023



Proposed Objectives for the Cross Cutting Themes

- Three cross cutting themes for NDF have previously been confirmed, Housing, Climate and Skills.
- Plan to have 'shovel ready' funding proposals available to use when funding opportunities arise.
- NDF to be represented at the following groups and create a mandate to put forward for Northern Devon.
 - LSIP
 - Integrated Care Partnership
 - Devon Housing Taskforce
 - Devon Economy and Business Recovery Group
 - HEROG (HotSW Economic Resilience and Opportunities Group)
- Outcome based policy - Look at bottom-up indicators as well as top-down indicators.
- For example, Housing = Place. Targets for New Build are "Non-negotiable", but other actions groups can feed into this.
- Climate – not to build on flood plain.
- Young People – housing to be in proximity to existing education provision.
- Health to include area quality, space, and outdoor access.
- Economy – housing to be of a size and price to meet employer needs.
- Proximity areas in Northern Devon have a mortality rate discrepancy of 14 years. Needs to be investigated.
- Visibility – NDF website and logo.
To be able to launch NDF, the group needs to be visible and identifiable. This will include the creation of a new website and the creation of a logo. The secretariat team have worked on this, logos have been created and a work has started on the website creation. The board member attendees endorsed and formally agreed the use of the logo and creation of the simple website.