

## Northern Devon Futures

Notes of a meeting of the Northern Devon Futures Board held virtually on 25 October 2021 at 4 pm.

### 1) Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Present:

Andrea Beacham, One Northern Devon

Bill Blythe, Petroc

Emma Butler-Jones, Devon and Cornwall Police

Phillip Butterworth, Arts Council England

Alan Dykes, TDK Lambda

Stuart Elford, Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce

Rufus Gilbert, Economy and Skills DCC

Steve Hearse, Torridge District Council

David Hoare, Selaine Saxby MP Office

Tim Jones, SW Business Council and North Devon Plus

Sean Mackney, Petroc

Mike Mathews, Lineal

Ken Miles, NDC

Sarah-Jayne Mackenzie-Smith, NDC

David Ralph, Heart of SW and LEP

David Worden, Leader of NDC

### Apologies

Dr John Womersley, One Northern Devon

Geoffrey Cox, MP for Torridge

Stuart Brocklehurst, Applegate

Nicola Allen, Petroc

### 2) Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were announced.

### 3) Agreement of Voting Rules

It was agreed that each organisation would have one vote each regardless of how many representatives of that organisation were present.

### 4) Election of Chair/Vice Chair

Sean Mackney had been nominated as Chair, Tim Jones Proposed this and was seconded by Rufus Gilbert. It was agreed that Sean Mackney would be Chair for a two year period.

It was agreed that owing to the lack of nominees that a Vice Chair was not required. If such a need arose at a future meeting participants would be invited to Chair at that meeting.

### 5) Review of Consultation Responses

A positive response had been received on the consultation of the document with comments that the Board must be more than just a talking shop and had to show demonstrable outcomes.

Dr Womersley had requested that the role of One Northern Devon be discussed further as the role of One Northern Devon was not reflected adequately in the Board's membership.

Toby Davies had asked what his role on the Board might be. He was happy to be part of the collaboration as long as it didn't duplicate the role of other organisations he was a part of. It was suggested the Board might want to consider other emergency services being represented on the Board.

It was agreed that the Board would reach out to the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the University of Exeter.

It was suggested that additional organisations were made aware that they may be invited to future meetings.

### 6) Action Groups

#### a) Role

Northern Devon Futures was about getting things done. The action groups activities would make this happen.

The Board would meet every 6 months with the Action groups meeting quarterly.

It was not intended to upset the balance of work being carried out by other organisations.

It was vitally important that the most up to date information/data was sourced when referenced by the Action groups.

It was important that the Board delivered for and worked on behalf of the people.

The Board was intended to add value to the partnerships already delivering in the community.

It was agreed that further discussion would be needed to ascertain the exact role of the action group Community and Place and if there were any overlaps with other areas.

#### b) Membership

It was agreed that the Farming community needed to be represented on the Board.

#### 7) National Context

The Chancellor was being pushed to provide transparency around the metrics being used for the levelling up funding.

As a guide for the approach of the Board it was suggested the guide 'Addressing the National Syndemic' was read, this could be found online at the Institute of Health Equity website: [addressing-the-national-syndemic.pdf \(instituteofhealthequity.org\)](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/addressing-the-national-syndemic.pdf)

It was agreed that it would be useful to have regular reports from the MP's. David Hoare confirmed that feedback would be provided on request.

#### 8) Local Context

##### i) The Torridge and North Devon Recovery Plan

Having a plan was a positive but caution was suggested around the language used especially the word Recovery which had negative connotations.

Ken Miles confirmed that the two authorities had pooled monies and had launched the Business Boost grant. The £200,000 was being administered on behalf of the authorities by North Devon Plus and was already showing significant activity.

It was agreed that an update report would come to the next Board meeting.

##### ii) The Torridge and North Devon Environment Plan

Action plans were currently being drawn up that would sit below the Environment plan document. The Environment Plan had only recently been adopted by North Devon Council.

The role of this Board was to look at the overall picture for Devon and consider what was working and being delivered successfully. Help could be provided by this Board to Action groups in areas where targets were not being met.

It was important to remember to involve the community and take into account their thoughts on what they wish to be delivered.

##### iii) Housing Situation in Devon report

The housing crises was the biggest issue being faced locally. Everything else such as recruitment, delivering education was all affected by lack of housing.

It was not felt that there was a clear picture of the immediate housing situation. Due to the Pandemic there had been a big migration of people to the area – for example city dwellers who were able to work from home.

Local Authorities had powers to bring empty properties back into use there were still a lot of factors outside of the remit of Local Authorities. The answer to the housing crises had a multitude of solutions.

As well as the age demographics of the population in 30 years plus it was a good idea to look to the near future say 5 years and help the key worker population find housing.

Torridge and North Devon were jointly about to undertake a review of their Joint Local Plan, housing needs assessment data would be critical for this exercise.

Conversations were starting to be held with local Stakeholders to gain the needs assessment information.

It was agreed that it was better to have a focus on 2/3 key areas and that housing was one of those key areas.

iv) Other relevant Plans

#### 9) Town Centre Developments Post Covid

Sarah-Jayne Mackenzie-Shapland, Head of Place, Property and Regeneration, NDC gave the Board a presentation on the latest position on the Barnstaple Future High Street project.

#### 10) Draft Vision

The Board considered the focus of priorities for NDF, the way the action groups might function and the question of whether NDF should address a smaller number of key priorities which might particularly benefit from a 'system-level' response engaging organisations and people from the multiple domains represented across NDF.

The Board agreed that ~~it was agreed that the focus would be on just 2/3 areas not 30~~ 2-3 areas of focus for combined effort would be sensible to identify, whilst also recognising the value in coordinating action and building capacity in different distinct domains through the action groups. The Secretariat was tasked with further exploring what might be most valuable as topic areas for NDF partners to focus on for the combined response. It was noted that ~~t~~The Action groups would then be asked to provide one or two key issues in their respective areas relevant to Northern Devon that could be fed-back to the Board. These ideas would then form the priorities to be in the final Vision document to be presented at the next quarterly Board meeting.

#### 11) To agree the process for developing the Northern Devon Futures Strategy

Once the priorities have been received from the Action groups the Board will be able to decide on whether these are already covered by other organisations. They will then decide on what issues to focus on that will provide the best impact.

12) Any other business

There was no other business.

Meeting ended 18:03