

## **Northern Devon Futures Board**

Notes of a meeting of the Northern Devon Futures Board held at Petroc on Thursday  
13 October 2022 at 1.30 p.m.

### PRESENT:

Nicola Allen, Petroc  
Andrea Beacham, One Northern Devon  
Bill Blythe, Petroc  
Phillip Butterworth, Arts Council England (virtual)  
Toby Davies, Devon and Cornwall Police Constabulary  
Keri Denton, DCC (virtual)  
Dominie Dunbrook, North Devon Council  
Alan Dykes, TDK Lambda  
Stuart Elford, Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce (virtual)  
Chris Fuller, Torridge District Council  
Councillor Rufus Gilbert, Economy and Skills DCC  
Steve Hearse, Torridge District Council  
David Hoare, Selaine Saxby MP Office (virtual)  
Tim Jones, SW Business Council and North Devon Plus  
Sean Mackney, Petroc (Chair)  
Mike Mathews, Lineal (virtual)  
Peter Morrish, Condition Monitoring Technology Group and Chair of the NDF  
Economy, Innovation and Skills Action Group  
Ken Miles, NDC  
Jon Triggs, NDC (virtual)  
Jon Walter, Torridge District Council  
Dr John Womersley, One Northern Devon

### 1) Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Stuart Brocklehurst, Applegate  
Andy Cotton, Tarka Trust David Ralph, Heart of SW and LEP  
Louise Higgins, Interim Locality Manager CCG and DCC  
Selaine Saxby MP  
Jan Spicer, Devon County Council  
Councillor David Worden, Leader of NDC

## 2) Notes of last meeting held on 23 June 2022

The Board considered and noted the notes of the last meeting held on 23 June 2022 (circulated previously).

Matters arising:

- (a) Northern Devon Cultural Strategy – a public launch of the strategy had taken place recently. Chris Fuller advised that North Devon Council had been successful in its bid to the Cultural Development Fund, however Torridge District Council had not been successful. TDC had not received any feedback from the Arts Council as to why the bid had been unsuccessful. A meeting was scheduled with the Arts Council in mid November to discuss the funding bid for Place Partnership and it was hopeful that if the bid was successful it would provide some capacity.

## 3) Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were announced.

## 4) Data from Census 2021

The Board received a presentation by Jon Walter regarding the Census 2021 initial results. He highlighted the following:

- On Census Day, 21 March 2021, the size of the usual resident population in England and Wales was 59,597,300 (56,489,800 in England and 3,107,500 in Wales); this was the largest population ever recorded through a census in England and Wales.
- 97% response rate. 88.9% responded online
- The population of England and Wales grew by more than 3.5 million (6.3%) since the last census in 2011, when it was 56,075,912.
- The population grew in each of the nine regions of England and also grew in Wales; the region with the highest population growth was the East of England, which increased by 8.3% from 2011 (a gain of approximately 488,000 residents).
- There were 30,420,100 women (51.0% of the overall population) and 29,177,200 men (49.0%) in England and Wales.
- There were more people than ever before in the older age groups; the proportion of the population who were aged 65 years and over was 18.6% (16.4% in 2011).
- There were 24,782,800 households in England and Wales on Census Day; the number of households increased by more than 1.4 million since 2011 (6.1%), when there were 23,366,044 households.

- The rate of population growth (6.3%) in England and Wales across the last decade has decreased slightly compared with the rate between 2001 and 2011, when the population grew by 7.8% (4.0 million people).
- Since the first census of Great Britain in 1801, the rate of population growth in England and Wales was highest between 1801 and 1911, when the population grew by 13.6% on average each decade. Following this, the rate of population growth up to 2021 has been lower, growing at a rate of between 2.8% and 7.8% in each 10-year period except for 1971 to 1981, when the population declined by 0.5%.
- The region with the highest population growth was the East of England, which increased by 8.3% from 2011 (a gain of approximately 488,000 people). Next highest were the South West (which grew by 7.8%, a gain of approximately 412,000 people) and London (which grew by 7.7%, a gain of almost 626,000 people).
- Population change between 2011 and 2021, local authorities in England and Wales.
  - **Torridge District Council:**
    - 2021 – 68,100
    - 2011 – 63,839
    - Change - +6.7%
  - **North Devon Council**
    - 2021 - 98,600
    - 2011 - 93,700
    - Change - +5.3%
- Population change between 2011 and 2021, local authorities in the South West.
  - Nearby areas like Cornwall and West Devon have seen their populations increase by around 7.1% and 6.6%, respectively, while others such as Mid Devon saw an increase of 6.5%.
  - The largest population increases in the South West have been seen in Tewkesbury and East Devon, where the populations have grown by 15.8% and 13.8%, respectively.
  - At 6.7%, Torridge's population increase and at 5.3%, North Devon's population increase are both lower than the increase for the South West (7.8%).
- Age and sex of the population
  - There were more people than ever aged 65 years and over in England
  - The population has continued to age. Across England, more than one in six people (18.4%) were aged 65 years and over on Census Day in 2021. This is a higher percentage than ever before.
  - Overall, in England, there has been an increase of 20.1% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 3.6% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 5.0% in children aged under 15 years.
- Population change (%) by age group in England, 2011 to 2021
  - Overall, in England, there has been an increase of 20.1% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 3.6% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 5.0% in children aged under 15 years.

- Torridge comparison - there has been an increase of 30.2% in people aged 65 years and over, a decrease of 0.6% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 1.6% in children aged under 15 years.
- North Devon comparison - There has been an increase of 22.1% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 0.1% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 1.3% in children aged under 15 years.
- In 32 of the 309 local authority areas of England, the total number of people aged 65 years and over increased by 30.0% or more between 2011 and 2021. This compares with a 20.1% rise across England. Torridge was one of the 32.
- Population density, 2021 and changes since 2011, local authorities in England and Wales
  - People per Sq km. There were 434 residents per square kilometre in England in 2021, up from 407 per square kilometre in 2011. Population density varies from area to area.
  - Torridge
    - 2021 – 69
    - 2011 – 65
    - 6.2% increase
  - North Devon
    - 2021 - 91
    - 2011 - 86
    - 5.8% increase
  - As of 2021, Torridge is the second least densely populated of the South West's 30 local authority areas and North Devon is the fifth least populated.
- Changes in the number of households between 2011 and 2021
  - **Torridge**
    - 2021 – 30,500
    - 2011 – 27,986
    - Change +9.0%
  - **North Devon**
    - 2021 – 43,200
    - 2011 – 40,000
    - Change +8.0%
  - The regions with the largest percentage increases were the East of England (8.5%) and the South West (8.1%). Local authorities with notably high increases in households were Tower Hamlets (19.0%), Uttlesford (18.2%) and Bedford (17.4%).
  - Only 12 local authorities experienced a drop in the number of households between 2011 and 2021. Mirroring the trend with the changes in population size, the local authorities with the largest decreases in the number of households since 2011 were Kensington and Chelsea (14.8%) and Westminster (10.4%).

- From October to the end of the year 2022, ONS will publish a series of data and supporting commentary groups by a similar theme, known as topic summaries. Proposed topic summaries in publication order are:
  - demography and migration
  - ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion
  - UK armed forces veterans
  - housing
  - labour market and travel to work
  - sexual orientation and gender identity
  - education
  - health, disability, and unpaid care
- Further detailed release would be made on 2 November 2022 and more detailed statistics would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

Following the presentation, the Board discussed the following:

- More detailed statistics would be released in relation to migration.
- Ageing population and people living longer - increase in ageing population in the area and people retiring to the area. This was having an impact on housing prices which were no longer affordable to local communities and resulting in increasing pressures on health. It also had an impact on recruitment and retention as employees were not able to find affordable housing. There was a need for Government to consider ways of making housing affordable both for purchasing and rental for younger people.
- The make-up of households would have an impact on care provision and whether a future data release would include this information i.e. single occupancy or multi-generational.
- Migration from cities due to Covid and the impact on the delivery of housing targets.
- Number of people leaving work at an earlier age of 50 rather than 65. Previously people were having to work beyond retirement but this had changed due to Covid and caring responsibilities.
- There was a need to look at impact on health provision and independent living and not so reliant on healthcare and the skills that would be required
- There was a need to review the statistics to consider what impact would be had locally, what questions needed to be asked to interrogate the data and how to channel economic activities.
- The demographic data would enable predictions to be made in relation to the needs for future housing.
- Decrease in the number of 30-40 year olds and understanding the reasons for this.
- In 10 years time, what would employment look like? If the younger population left the area there would be an employment gap? Need to understand whether the over 50 age group were working or retired.
- From a health perspective there was a need to understand the data and then consider how to address the poor health issues for the different age groups.

- The timing of the Census may have had an impact on the data due younger people studying having to return home as a result of Covid.
- The impact on young people's mental health as a result of not being able to find housing.
- There was a need to consider the knock on effects of disproportionate growth in one sector on local communities and consider mitigation if needed.
- DCC had received a green paper regarding business and employment which contained data in relation to growth areas which should be shared with the Board.

Ken Miles advised that the majority of Devon Local Authorities had signed up to the creation of a Housing Task Force to look at housing issues, housing supply, second homes, Air BnBs. It was likely this would be run through Exeter University. Local Authorities had raised this issue with Government as part of the call for evidence request from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and would continue. Local Authorities would continue to raise this issue with Government. North Devon Council had put forward the stalled housing sites as a proposal for the Investment Zones. There was concern regarding the Government's proposals to remove planning obligations and environmental controls. Employers were advising that they could not grow their businesses due to insufficient number of housing for its employees and therefore could not attract employees to the area. The increase in the number of households in the Census data did not reflect the increase in the number of new build properties. There was a need to build the right amount of houses in the right place and attract more private landlords into the sector. North Devon and Torridge District Councils produced a joint local plan which defined the level of housing required and the sites. There was a need for the Board to consider how to feed into the Local Plan process in terms of provision of housing.

Toby Davies advised that the crime statistics tended to be the same as nationally. Over the last 10 years, the statistics had gone down due to policing. However, over the last 3-4 months post Covid, there was an increase in issues which were more challenging. Policing was based on demand modelling and the levels of staff had remained at a similar level. Older people were more vulnerable to crime such as fraud. There were extreme levels of both wealth and deprivation in North Devon.

Stuart Elford advised that as part of the work on the Local Skills Improvement Plan consideration was being given to the key drivers for businesses and employers. This plan was being developed further to a Government Working Party. The Devon and Cornwall Plan was being produced in partnership with Somerset and included representatives from colleges, training providers and other stakeholders. The first stage was to collate data and then to produce a report including tangible measures to be presented to Government. In addition to skills, housing and transport were also key drivers. It was important that the key driver of employees travelling to work was also considered. There were 35 areas tasked with producing a Local Skills Improvement Plan which were accredited to the British Chamber of Commerce.

Steve Hearse advised that the Rural Services Network had produced data in relation to travel to work times for the North Devon area.

Keri Denton advised that the Heart of the South West Joint Committee had requested District Councils to formulate “key asks” to put forward to the Government.

Actions:

- (a) Secretariat to facilitate discussions with the Devon Youth Parliament and National Citizenship Group regarding the lack of affordable housing.
- (b) Secretariat to arrange for the powerpoint slides to be circulated to the Board.
- (c) Further detailed Census statistics be presented to the next meeting of the Board for consideration.

#### 5) Rural England Prosperity Fund

The Board considered a report by Dominie Dunbrook (NDC) and Chris Fuller (TDC) regarding the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Dominie Dunbrook highlighted the following:

- The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) had been launched on 3 September 2022 by the Department, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and was designed as a top up to the UKSPF.
- It succeeded the EU funding from LEADER and the Rural Growth Programme which were part of the Rural Development Programme.
- Allocations made were: North Devon £1,091,259 and Torridge £995,347.
- There was a need to show the funding would be split over the 2 years of the fund 2023/24 and 2024/25. Defra had suggested a 25/75% split in the budget over the two years, however a different budget allocation could be submitted if it was clearly shown in the addendum the ability to spend more than 25% in 2023/24.
- It was proposed that for North Devon and Torridge for the delivery of the funding, that it was considered that the LEADER style grant element would attract the higher budget allocation to enable direct delivery to rural business and communities.
- There were two proposals:
  - Proposal 1 - That North Devon+ would administer the grant scheme on behalf of the two Councils. The two action groups of Northern Devon Futures with a focus on Business and Community could act as the “Local Action Groups” for the scheme, agreeing the applications that were recommended by the North Devon+ team following appraisal. Defra expected any scheme delivering using the REPF to be a “light touch approach and that the 4% administration allocation under the UKSPF should be used for this delivery. Local Authorities were

challenging this with Defra. Discussions were also taking place with North Devon+ regarding financing the administration costs.

- Proposal 2 - NDC and TDC had identified strategic community infrastructure schemes that aid regeneration in our most deprived communities which could include:
  - Victoria Park, Bideford – play infrastructure
  - Great Torrington Pannier Market – investment
  - Improvements to tourism facilities on the Ilfracombe seafront, including crazy golf attraction, bus shelter and toilet provision.
  - This would be capital funding delivered directly by the local authorities on identified projects and not via an open grants scheme.
- A steer was required from the Board prior to reports being presented to the full Council meetings of both North Devon and Torrington District Councils in November 2022.

Following questions from the Board, Dominic Dunbrook and Chris Fuller advised the following:

- The grant funding would be a good way of testing innovation and agritech in rural communities. There would be a lot flexibility for towns and villages. It was proposed that the grant scheme would start in April 2023. The grant would be available to the private sector and communities. Barnstaple was the only area that would be excluded from the grant scheme due to its population.
- A steer was required from the Board regarding the maximum amount of grants and whether a maximum of £25k was an appropriate threshold with businesses being required to seek match funding.

The Board agreed the following:

- That North Devon+ advice be sought and recommend a maximum threshold for grants based on their experience of administering grants and to incentivising collaboration and that the recommendation be circulated to the Board for comment.
- That North Devon+ administer the grant scheme on behalf of the two Councils. The two action groups of Northern Devon Futures with a focus on Business and Community act as the “Local Action Groups” for the scheme, agreeing the applications that were recommended by the North Devon+ team following appraisal for grants of less than £2,500 and that the threshold for larger applications be determined following consultation with North Devon+.

Bill Blythe and Sean Mackney declared interests has Petroc were in discussions with an organisation regarding remote sensors and agri tech.



## 6) Update on the NDF Thematic Sub Groups

The Board received updates provided by the Leads for each NDF Thematic Sub Groups:

### a. Place and Community (Housing)

Dominie Dunbrook advised the Board that the Group had met. Discussions had taken place regarding the appointment of a Chair of the group and it was anticipated that a successor of a member of the Group would be appointed as Chair at the next meeting. The terms of reference was currently being drafted and it was anticipated that this would be presented to the Board after the next meeting of the Group.

### b. Economy, Innovation and Skills

Chris Fuller provided an update regarding the Employment and Skills and Innovation Board and advised the following:

- The Board had met four times.
- The Board's vision "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."
- The objectives of the Board.
- What does success look like in terms of quantitative and qualitative improvements.
- An initial visioning workshop had been held on 7 October 2022 and discussed average salaries and skills.
- An Opportunity Prioritisation Framework had now been produced.

Action – that the secretariat arrange for the powerpoint slides to be circulated to the Board and to seek feedback on the slides titled "what does success look like" and "the opportunity prioritisation framework"

### c. Children and Young People

Nicola Allen advised that the first meeting of the Group had been held in June 2022 and had discussed the way forward. It was agreed that the membership of the Group would consist of representatives from early years, primary and secondary education, further education, SEND and multi-academy trust. The next meeting of the Group would take place prior to the next meeting of the Board and would consider the appointment of a Chair.

### d. Climate Emergency (Environment)

Bill Blythe advised that a meeting of the Group had not yet been held.

Action – that the Secretariat provide support in the arrangements of the first meeting of the Group and arrange for Emily Read to provide a presentation to the Group to provide a focus for the group.

e. Health and Wellbeing (One Northern Devon)

Andrea Beacham advised that four reports had been circulated via email to the Board which included:

- OND Flow Programme Report
- OND Communities Report
- OND Health Inequalities and Prevention Report – October 2022
- Cost of living crisis presentation

A stakeholder workshop had been held at the end of June and two top priorities identified were housing and physical health of people with complex needs. The second workshop was due to take place on 8 November 2022. The strategy would focus on how partners can work together around health and inequalities. The KALO project had undertaken work on engagement.

Andrea also provided an update on the work being undertaken by One Northern Devon regarding the Cost of Living Crisis in partnership with the North Devon and Torridge District Councils and Devon County Council. Petroc was also providing assistance with producing a video. She advised that OND had produced a Cost of Living website detailing support available locally and requested that the Board provide feedback on any support that was missing.

Actions

- (a) Andrea Beacham to circulate the highlights of the results of the engagement work which included the biggest challenges and how to overcome the challenges.
- (b) The Board to provide feedback on OND Cost of Living Crisis webpage.

Sean Mackney advised that Dr John Womersley was due to retire shortly and thanked him on behalf of the board for his tremendous work and the impact he had had on improving the health and wellbeing of people in Northern Devon and being part of the collaborative working.

Dr John Womersley advised that he would be retiring at the end of January 2023.

7) Brief Updates on Shared Prosperity Fund

Steve Hearse advised that due to the changes in the Government that the Devolution/County deals had been paused and there was no further news regarding bidding. The new Rural SPF and Innovation Fund was now in the forefront.

Ken Miles advised that there were discussions that a Chief Executives Group would take place in November.

Action – that Keri Denton be requested to provide a copy of the latest report to the Secretariat for distribution to the Board.

8) Board Discussion of Theme for Next Meeting, Meeting Date and Venue

The Board agreed that:

- (a) the theme for the next meeting be “Economy, Growth, Investment Zones and Cost of Living”.
- (b) That the next meeting be scheduled mid January 2023 and that the Secretariat send a Doodle Poll to the Board to check availability.
- (c) That an alternative venue be sought for the location of the next meeting of the Board.

9) Any other business

There was no other business.

Meeting ended at 3.32 p.m.