

**NORTH DEVON & TORRIDGE**  
**ECONOMIC**  
**STRATEGY**  
**2024-2029**



# FOREWORD

**COUNCILLOR KEN JAMES, LEADER, TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**COUNCILLOR DAVID CLAYTON, LEADER, NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

This Economic Strategy presents a clear statement of shared intent and collaborative approaches between North Devon and Torrridge District Councils.


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The core of the 5 year strategy for North Devon and Torrridge District Councils is to serve as a public sector catalyst for the right kind of growth. How, by working together, we can collectively enable and liberate both wider government funding and, critically, private sector investment, partnerships, knowledge, expertise and leadership. How, in tandem we build momentum towards addressing long-term engrained challenges and creating a community we can all be proud to live within, where people of all ages feel inspired to contribute and where doors are open to having truly impactful, meaningful employment opportunities underpinned by dynamic skills provision and the right housing for all.

This is an exciting strategy which has been co-developed with industry and wider partners and we look forward to also publishing an action plan to ensure delivery.

Our existing strengths in pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, engineering and the creatives sector provide skilled employment across the region. These are cherished and will continue to be supported, whilst also helped to decarbonise as part of an emphasis on collective responses to the Net Zero imperative. It will also be a period which enables us to truly make the most of our inland and offshore strengths, from supporting our agriculture, food and drink industry to thrive to returning our collective gaze to the seas which have shaped the region over so many years.

The period ahead will position our region at the global heart of seaweed and aquaculture, whilst The Crown Estate's leasing round for one of the world's largest offshore energy projects, the Celtic Sea Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) opportunity, will firmly put North Devon and Torrridge on the green energy map and also at the heart of the future green hydrogen industry for the UK.



**An exciting, green and dynamic future for the North Devon and Torrridge region.**



This presents an exciting vision for a green, innovative and dynamic future for the North Devon and Torrridge region which delivers not just for local ambitions, and a just transition for the wellbeing of our community, but also for the Great South West and national priorities.

The Levelling Up Partnership will be a key and highly visible example of this North Devon and Torrridge partnership. Although specifically focused for investment in Torrridge, growth and economic opportunity do not respect political boundaries. Where support is needed across aspects such as rural transport, supporting agricultural futures, working with Department for Business and Trade to explore future Enterprise Zones or the Department for Education to foster stronger life chances for our young people and collectively address social mobility constraints, these are blockers which need removing across our region.

But it is also critically important to ensure that we foster and lead on a regional culture of social value. One of local procurement to build capabilities, and where spend recirculates around our local economy. Where infrastructure works are taking place, ensuring that our local businesses and workforce can be competitive to secure contracts and that inward investment truly does then benefit inwardly, staying within our local economy to secure additional, circular gains and growth.

# NORTHERN DEVON FUTURES

## WHY NOW, WHY NORTHERN DEVON?

Ours is a predominantly rural and coastal region. For too long there have been national trends of decline and deprivation for both of those types of region. Yet this is a unique moment of opportunity to step up as true leaders to deliver on critical priorities in Net Zero, energy, health and food security. All supported by the right skills, transport and housing to serve and benefit the entire community.

All of this provides an ever-greater impetus on partnerships. On a geographical basis with our neighbours in Cornwall, with the wider Great South West and also South Wales to collectively deliver regional growth stemming from The Crown Estate's 4.5GW FLOW Leasing Round 5. And on a technical and strategic level to demonstrate our offer to both the public and private sectors to secure the investment and wider buy-in to create real growth for good.

We also now have the levers and partnerships in place to drive success from within as well as through creating an irresistible case for wider investment and collaborations.

North Devon Futures will work closely the Combined County Authority (CCA) following Devolution. The new powers will ensure the adult education provision delivers our skills needs, as well as the new role of the Local Transport Authority enabling our community to be connected and to access employment. This local control will play an important role in the overall delivery of this strategy, ensuring county-wide policies directly align with our region's growth plans.

A time for collective action, for positivity and for ensuring the communities, the economy and the environment of North Devon and Torridge all flourish.

**A unique opportunity  
to step up as true  
leaders.**

# OUR VISION

Sustained inclusive economic growth underpinned by strong environmental principles and which creates real benefit for our local community.

Our vision is for a time where our rural and coastal setting is no longer seen as conditions for decline and deprivation, but unleash a unique moment of opportunity to step up as true leaders to deliver on critical priorities in Net Zero, energy, health and food security.

Now is the time to present the region in a new light – one for the Net Zero era of natural capital economics, with Torridge and North Devon becoming known as a hotbed of innovation. Our region is already at the heart of all of these.

It is the time to fully celebrate the success and build on our thriving pharmaceutical industry, and both our globally-renowned engineering businesses alongside our vibrant, under-pinning SME community and the agricultural sector which continues to shape our region. This strategy needs to foster and support their aspirations, growth and positive impact on our community and place.

But now is also the time to position North Devon and Torridge to benefit from once-in-a-generation opportunities which are coming our way. To harness circular economies which drive collective growth- from green electricity to green hydrogen, crossovers from maritime to agriculture to engineering.

We will carve out a competitive economy which creates opportunities for all. Which addresses underpinning constraints around housing, transport, skills, connectivity and wider support such as early-years childcare to remove blockages which hold our residents and businesses back.

The North Devon and Torridge Economic Strategy 2024 – 2029 seeks to create a true leap forward for our economy in 3 key areas:

- **Productivity**
  - Raising GVA across key sectors.
- **Average earnings**
  - Generating employment opportunities which raise salary levels and gross weekly pay for all.
- **Supporting and inspiring higher skill levels across all age groups in our community.**
  - Providing skills pathways locally into a range of employment fields, focusing on life-long learning and upskilling and which allows the workforce to be agile during their rewarding and well paid careers.

Our ambition is for a **STEM**-driven (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering and **M**aths) economy underpinned by skills pathways through schools and for continual upskilling, providing routes to high-quality employment for all. These skills support existing strengths in pharmaceuticals, specialist manufacturing and engineering and agriculture / food and drink, married with emerging opportunities in clean maritime and green energy.

The Creative Industries mesh alongside this, fostering our local creativity across all sectors. They also strengthen the profile of the cultural and creative offering which improves life for our communities and the experience for visitors brought to our area by its natural beauty, which must be protected and cherished, and strengthening our town centres as vibrant places to spend time and enjoy as well as key employment and as a focus for community wellbeing.



**An era which creates a radically different state of social mobility for our communities and one which we can all be proud of.**

To achieve that there will be a tight focus on 5 core clusters:



**PHARMACEUTICAL,  
HEALTHCARE AND  
WELLBEING**



**CLEAN MARITIME  
AND GREEN ENERGY**



**AGRICULTURE, FOOD  
AND DRINK AND THE  
GREEN ECONOMY**



**CREATIVE  
INDUSTRIES**



**A YEAR-ROUND  
AND DIVERSE  
VISITOR ECONOMY**

This is a time for fostering local supply chains, supporting both jobs and local resilience and security. Yet it is also a moment for strengthening partnerships on a local, regional, national and also international front – the opportunities ahead reach far beyond our own regional boundaries.

Our vision is clear. But it also requires collective delivery, with this strategy facilitating wider partners across the private and third sectors to engage, to invest and to help create positive change. This is not a strategy which can be delivered in isolation, either geographically or purely by ourselves.

Our intention is to stimulate an era where a skilled workforce in North Devon and Torridge can move between sectors during a career to apply transferable skills from software design to electrical engineering, drone piloting in agriculture to offshore. An era which creates a radically different state of social mobility for our communities and one which we can all be proud of.



## **PLACING THE NET ZERO TRANSITION AT THE HEART OF BOTH NEED AND OPPORTUNITY**


In summer 2019 both North Devon and Torridge District Councils declared a climate emergency. Both Councils are committed to achieving net zero carbon for the whole district by 2050, either through reduction or carbon capture.

Net Zero transitions provide an enormous opportunity for the North Devon and Torridge region to prosper. The required reductions in fossil fuel use will pave the way for a considerable increase in novel renewable technologies, capitalising on the natural capital opportunities presented by our rural and coastal districts.

A “focus on technology is pivotal if we’re to translate our ambitions into results for the wider economy. Investing in technology development and a skilled workforce is fundamental to making our economy more productive and boosting prosperity for the longer-term... The net zero transition is, fundamentally, a technology story and the scale of investment makes it the great growth opportunity of the 21st century” (2024 Offshore Wind Industrial Growth Plan, Renewable UK et al, pg 1).

This emphasis both on innovation and productivity whilst protecting the planet will be seen from Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW) to solar to green hydrogen, from retrofitting and improving energy efficiency carbon savings, all directly stimulate lasting, impactful employment. This is a unique moment in time for the region and one where we are nationally recognised as being at the heart of that opportunity- from FLOW to cable connections and routes to delivering valuable green hydrogen supplies with multiple spin-off benefits.

It is essential that the region further strengthens our existing position at the heart of the Clean Energy revolution, shouting loudly about the offer and the opportunities to invest. Visibility and national profile are now needed to sit alongside activity, working with national partners to deliver maximum gains- developing local supply chain readiness levels as well as technology readiness levels, all underpinned by a local skilled workforce.



**An economy which  
reduces carbon but also  
protects and enhances  
our local environment.**

As an example, the potential for an initial 1.5GW to be cabled to shore in Torridge from the Celtic Sea arrays creates exciting green hydrogen production potential. To capitalise, the delivery of a green hydrogen route map for North Devon and Torridge, funded by SW Net Zero Hub, will lay out a road to local uptake across a range of sectors and uses, from green fuels to lower carbon fertilisers and feeds, supporting manufacturing and agriculture as well as transport on land and at sea. Working with The Crown Estate, National Composites Centre, Petroc and the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere, the routemap will not only raise awareness but will also de-risk investment and ensure environmental, social and economic benefits can be secured locally as part of a Just Transition.

Critically, our existing business base will also need support to decarbonise. We will continue to lobby for, and support, schemes which enable businesses to receive expert advice, to develop decarbonisation plans and also which provide the crucial capital funding to invest and make the transition.

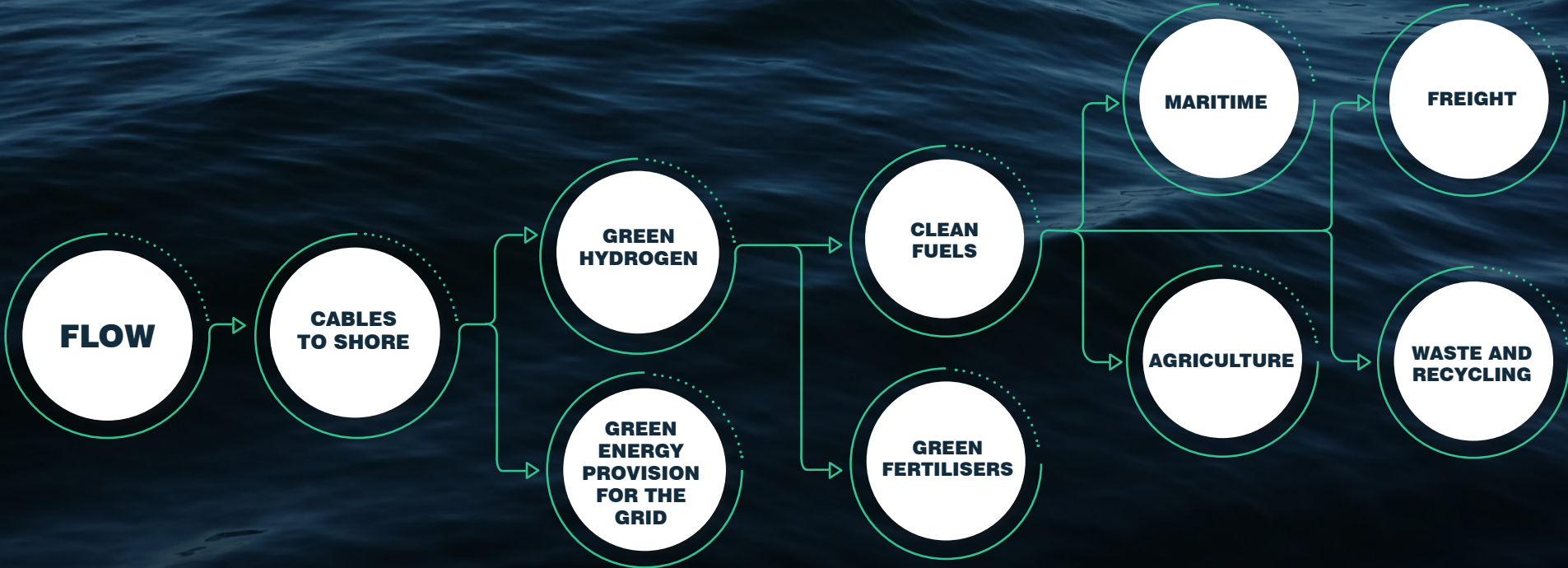
As part of this, we will work to capitalise on the work of the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere's wider green-stewardship agenda, including increasing uptake to the Biosphere Business Programme.

Natural capital markets are based around enabling businesses to invest in projects where tangible, impactful results for nature and society can be achieved and demonstrated – protecting our beautiful setting whilst creating benefits such as

carbon sequestration and clean, skilled employment. High integrity markets on land and sea are a vital route to secure meaningful investment and ensure that Net Zero investments create true positives.

An economy which reduces carbon but also protects and enhances our local environment. An economy which inspires young people and creates new jobs within the green economy which are year-round and with clear pathways for all into higher-skilled, higher-productivity and higher-salaried jobs, playing our part in caring for our environment.

Our Clean Maritime Growth Vision will deliver precisely that, the first of the focused action plans stemming from this Economic Strategy





LUNDY HERITAGE COAST

NORTH DEVON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

HARTLAND DEVON HERITAGE COAST

EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK

SOMERSET

NORTHAM

ILFRACOMBE

MULLACOTT BUSINESS PARK

BRAUNTON & WRAFTON

CHIVENOR BUSINESS PARK

POTTINGTON BUSINESS PARK

BARNSTAPLE

WIDDON VALLEY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

YELLAND

ALVERDISCOTT

BIDEFORD BUSINESS PARK

CLOVELLY ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

CADDESDowny BUSINESS PARK

BIDEFORD BUSINESS PARK

HATCHMOOR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

GREAT TORRINGTON

HOLSWORTHY AGRI BUSINESS CENTRE

HOLSWORTHY

PYWORTHY

SOUTH MOLTON

LINKS TO CREDITON AND EXETER

LINKS TO PLYMOUTH

LINKS TO EXETER

DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK




EXETER UNIVERSITY  
EXETER COLLEGE

EXETER ENTERPRISE ZONE

SOUTH DEVON COLLEGE


CORNWALL



-  Regional Centre
-  Strategic Centre
-  Main Centre
-  Enterprise Zone
-  Strategic Business Park, Industrial Estate and Employment area
-  Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre
-  Grid Sub-stations
-  Port/Harbour
-  Agri Business Centre
-  Strategic Routes
-  Railway
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest
-  Main Beach/Watersports
-  Education Centres


# OUR KEY CHALLENGES AND AMBITIONS

## % of residents (16+) with Level 4+ qualifications

	N.DEVON	TORRIDGE	DEVON	ENGLAND
	28.5	26.2	32.9	33.9
<b>AMBITION</b>	30	28	-	-


Source: Census 2021

## Gross Value Added (GVA) per filled job (£)

	N.DEVON	TORRIDGE	DEVON	ENGLAND
	43,596	34,070	44,887	52,286
<b>AMBITION</b>	45,000	39,000	-	-


ONS Subregional productivity indices 2021

## Median annual full-time gross earnings – workplace based

	N.DEVON	TORRIDGE	DEVON	ENGLAND
	£29,034	£27,212	£29,743	£33,197
<b>AMBITION</b>	£31,000	£30,000	-	-

Median annual full-time gross earnings – workplace based

## UK Competitiveness Index ranking (of 379 LA areas)

	N.DEVON	TORRIDGE	DEVON	ENGLAND
	252	357	-	-
<b>AMBITION</b>	Top 200	Top 300	-	-

UK Competitiveness Index 2021

### Notes to the data sets used here:

**Level 4 Qualification:** Level 4 qualifications are equivalent to the first year of a bachelor's degree and are considered advanced learning. They are typically taken after college A-levels, an Access to Higher Education programme or similar Level 3 courses.

**Median Annual Gross Earnings (work place based):** Full-time is calculated at 30 hours a week

**Gross Value Added:** GVA is defined as the value of the goods and services produced minus the value of the intermediate inputs that were used to produce those goods and services. It can be calculated for firms, industries, local and national economies.

**UK Competitiveness Index:** this index measures provides a benchmarking of the competitiveness of the UKs local authorities, and it has been designed as an

integrated measure of competitiveness focusing on both the development and sustainability of businesses and the economic welfare of individuals.

\*A full data set for North Devon and Torridge is set out in our Technical Document that accompanies this document.

# SHAPING THE ECONOMY TODAY FOR THE INDUSTRIES AND GENERATIONS OF THE FUTURE

## Community and places

The future of our economic success and local prosperity depends on fostering a new type of growth to go with and amplify existing strengths.

The core focus of this economic strategy is the creation of growth which genuinely benefits the whole economy. Growth which is part of a just transition, not leaving parts of our community behind or damaging the wonders of the Biosphere in the process. Growth which harnesses the creative nature of our communities and makes the most of the talent we have within our region- from an education sector which works closely with industry to open the eyes of our young people from an early age to the career pathways available to them locally, working with schools and industry to create an even stronger local workforce, equipped with the right skills for our opportunities.

This also means ensuring that our town centres are vital and vibrant. From flexing our retail offer to boosting the cultural offer to supporting in-town skills and workspaces and generating a healthier evening economy. That is the regeneration that is needed, along with our communities being able to engage proactively with local regeneration boards to shape future spaces so that the towns can work for people's needs and rhythms.

Our historic market towns are embracing their heritage whilst also becoming even better places to work, socialise and enjoy and with improved public and active transport access.

Our rural communities are hotbeds of micro enterprise, energy which provides an essential glue to unite and provide local vitality. That energy needs to be protected and fostered to guarantee the future appeal and sustainability of those villages within the heartlands of our region and protect the essence of life in our region.

This means addressing regional inequality and nurturing the drivers of good health, education and skills, alongside growing high-productivity sectors, attracting inward investment, and supporting resilient local supply chains. These priorities are not 'nice to haves', but central to delivering the inclusive growth that will counter economic stagnation and improve prosperity.

## Visibility and connectivity

How can a farmer be asked to increase productivity through robotics or a rural business submit tax returns online without reliable access to full fibre broadband, 4G and progressively 5G connectivity? Support is needed to ensure that the range of existing options on the market are made more readily-visible to all rural businesses and to then receive expert input to develop business cases where additional investment is required.

We will lobby and work with key partners, including Building Digital UK (BDUK) and the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme to ensure that none of our communities are left behind, protecting our rural communities in a digital world.

For those businesses that wish to adopt new innovative agri-tech practices there are a range of digital connectivity options that could support their ambition. Torridge will also be seeking opportunities to help businesses acquire the skills they need to embrace these new technologies.

As a predominantly rural area, both North Devon and Torridge residents face barriers to accessing key services, notably average travel time to a hospital, to education and to sites of employment. As part of this strategy's inclusivity, innovation is needed to reduce local car dependency or exclusion. A significant part of this will need to focus on improvements to railway links. Ensuring that the Barnstaple – Exeter link achieves a journey time of under one hour and creating better links to Tiverton Parkway is of genuine significance, improving work, study and leisure opportunities as well as removing carbon and volume from the roads is of genuine significance. Yet it is also hugely important to not just "settle". Early-stage feasibility work is now underway for the Barnstaple – Bideford line to be reconnected as a follow-on to improvements from Exeter, in turn servicing new growth stimulated in and around Bideford and the wider Bideford Bay. The route 21 bus electrification is a first step, but bus networks also need strengthening in rural areas.

As part of the role of the County Combined Authority proposed under Devolution there are opportunities to embed transport innovation stemming from improved rural transport data, adopting smarter approaches to increase the efficiency and safety of available road space and mobility infrastructure across all modes of transport.

Prioritising growth to enable sectors such as advanced manufacturing to thrive whilst also addressing engrained rural mobility constraints and reducing constraints for our workforce to access jobs. Transport Plans will be developed and implemented at a place level ensuring the right infrastructure is put in place to meet the individual needs of our towns and villages.

Electrical Grid connectivity will also play an ever-increasing role in developing our local economy, and cannot simply be done unto our communities. It is imperative that strong consultation be undertaken to enable new transmission infrastructure, and that our communities also be supported to feel the benefits where grid upgrades create a short or longer-term impact.

## Living and learning

The Housing Crisis is a known challenge to all communities. Delivery of not only the right volume but also the right type of housing will be critical to achieving the economic and social growth that is proposed by this strategy. Providing suitable housing for a local workforce whether just starting out or relocating to the area, to be able to thrive and contribute, as well as to enable highly-skilled leaders and workers to relocate to the region and boost local productivity and earnings alongside our existing strengths.

With both Councils committed to a new Local Plan at the earliest moment, and the imminent publishing of local and regional Housing Strategies, there is a unique opportunity to deliver the housing (including both affordable and accessible) which is relevant to the economic potential and community need in front of us as a region, alongside the employment land required by industry.

All secondary schools in North Devon and Torridge, bar two, are currently rated as 'Good' by Ofsted. Yet social mobility levels remain among the lowest in England. This is a unique moment in the economic future

of North Devon and Torridge where we call on government to address under-funding, invest in education and ensure that every learner in the region, no matter what their age, has the best possible chance to succeed and thrive.

Employers also need to continue to engage and support delivery of the Gatsby benchmarks, ensuring schools get the expert steer they require for curriculum development and delivery. We recognise apprenticeships as a crucial career pathway option that should be open to all in North Devon and Torridge. Work will continue with employers and education providers to create a system that works seamlessly opening up apprenticeships in all sectors. To secure the required workforces of the future both parties need to engage and support, and the cluster approach in this economic strategy will provide a crucial way for that to be fostered in an ever-more coordinated way and truly impact on aspiration and social mobility.

The acute lack of childcare provision holds back our workforce and needs to be addressed, working with skills providers and employers to introduce steps to overcome the issue and in turn liberate parents and grandparents to be an active part of our employment market.

## Services and spaces

The charitable and third sector plays an important role as an employer within North Devon and Torridge. There are just under 4.500 registered charities that operate some or all of their services within Torridge and North Devon. This, often socially driven, sector provides an employment option to many who are looking to start a career or re-enter the workforce after a break from it. The charitable and third sector is vital to the continued health and growth of the economy across North Devon and Torridge. Community is at the heart of our region's distinctiveness and it needs to be cherished and protected. Without the underpinning fabric of our charitable and third sector the sense of place and shared benefit will be lost.



# BUILDING THRIVING CLUSTERS



**PHARMACEUTICAL,  
HEALTHCARE AND  
WELLBEING**



**CLEAN MARITIME  
AND GREEN ENERGY**



**AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD AND DRINK  
AND THE GREEN  
ECONOMY**



**CREATIVE  
INDUSTRIES**



**A YEAR-ROUND  
AND DIVERSE  
VISITOR ECONOMY**

# CLUSTER 1: PHARMACEUTICAL, HEALTHCARE AND WELLBEING



## Overview of the local industries


There is a significant pharmaceutical and healthcare cluster that is already thriving in North Devon and Torridge. Barnstaple hosts the main hospital provision for the area – North Devon District Hospital which provides acute and specialist care, with 423 bed provision, and just under 3,000 staff. Investment into the new hospital facility will further strengthen that offer and also the draw for a localised supply chain.

The wider health and social care sector in North Devon and Torridge is significant, providing 8,947 jobs across 365 care settings (establishments, including the hospital), with a combined GVA value (2018) of £231m.

Whilst North Devon and Torridge's population is expected to have grown by 2043, the working age population (16-64) is forecast to be almost static whilst older age groups (65+) are forecast to grow and the number of children (0-15) to fall. The care settings required to accommodate this demographic will present a necessary growth in this sector, and it is essential that local, regional and national partners collaborate to ensure that conditions and salaries improve for people working in the sector.

North Devon is already home to a cluster of high value pharmaceutical companies such as Accord and Perigo, which account for some of the larger businesses in the area. The factories primarily focus on manufacturing products, for UK and international markets, but with a growing R&D element to enable movement into new markets.

The Pharmaceutical industry will face challenges and threats from for getting new drugs recognised, how to use new technologies, an ageing population, and the need for less generic and more personalised drugs.

**8,947**  
**JOBS**  
**ACROSS 365**  
**CARE SETTINGS**

**£231M**  
**COMBINED**  
**GVA VALUE**  
**(2018)**  




Photos supplied by Accord UK



## KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- One Northern Devon, Local Care Partnership and the One Network
- Royal Devon University Healthcare (North Devon District Hospital and six community hospitals)
- Pharmaceutical and life sciences businesses, such as Accord, Perrigo, TDK Lambda and Pall
- Care Home providers
- University of Plymouth/University Centre of Northern Devon
- Petroc
- Local Authorities and the Combined County Authority
- Department for Business and Trade
- Department for Health

## TOGETHER WE WILL:

### Drive Competitiveness for businesses in the region:

- Raise awareness of applications for AI and big data analytics to transform business operating models
- Improving linkages to university partners to support Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and wider access to academia, including local accommodation to facilitate students in the area.
- Strengthening local place appeal to ensure the hardest-to-reach experts are attracted to North Devon and Torridge.
- Continue to lobby for the improvement of existing infrastructure and new services to be delivered from North Devon District Hospital.

### Support the local skills agenda by:

- Investing in up-skilling the workforce for all aspects of healthcare, and life science sectors.
- We will support Petroc's efforts to bring a new dentistry learning hub to the area.
- Foster engagement and learning from the range of National Catapult centres; High Value Engineering, Cell and Gene Therapy, Medicines Discovery.

### Improve collaboration and information sharing by:

- Facilitating the development of a pharmaceutical cluster to foster shared learning, better supply chain management and lobbying for improved resources and systems.

# CLUSTER 2: CLEAN MARITIME AND GREEN ENERGY



## Overview of the local opportunity

From becoming a National Centre of Excellence for clean-propulsion vessels through to green hydrogen, maritime cyber security to robotics, and seaweed bi-products to smart environmental intelligence, the Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre will directly contribute to the Offshore Wind Industrial Growth Plan's ambition to double research and development investment and output. With a focus on collaborating to innovate between industry, academia and also the public sector there will also be a clear goal- to achieve not just IP but also commercialisation with target markets on the doorstep.

The Petroc/University Centre for Northern Devon will work closely with the centre and wider North Devon and Torridge Maritime Network to generate a skilled local workforce, at all ages, in a range of maritime and engineering fields. Alongside this the support ecosystem will also include access to the wider innovation Catapult network, including close engagement with the High Value Manufacturing Catapult, Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult and Connected Places Catapult, putting local economic activity at the forefront of national innovation.

Off the coast of Hartland the Algapelago seaweed farm is the largest Marine Management Organisation (MMO) licensed farm in the UK and a forerunner for the industry. This will position the area at the heart of an industry with an estimated European value of €9.3 billion by 2030<sup>1</sup>, with activities underway to ensure bio-refinery and added value can be created locally – infrastructure needs will be critical to maximise local gains.

The Crown Estate's 4.5 GW Leasing Round 5, equivalent to over 3 million homes worth of electricity, will create one of the world's foremost FLOW installations by 2035 off the coasts of North Devon and Cornwall as well as South Wales.

**4.5GW**  
**INITIAL FLOATING  
OFFSHORE WIND**



**EQUIVALENT TO  
3 MILLION  
HOMES**

**WORTH OF  
ELECTRICITY**



<sup>1</sup> Seaweed for Europe, Investor Memo for seaweed investment in Europe, 2021



The Celtic Sea Blueprint highlights the importance of establishing Operations and Maintenance (O&M) bases within the Celtic Sea to deliver FLOW. Our proximity and the opportunity to develop and deploy novel technologies to drive safer, more productive and competitive O&M solutions, including working with the Environmental Space Living Lab (Satellite Applications Catapult) at Petroc, ideally positions North Devon and Torridge to play a significant role. Our local ambitions and offer will also support successful developers to fulfil their obligations around decarbonisation, environmental innovation and, crucially, social value, aligned with a community benefit scheme to generate social, economic and environmental growth.

The Offshore Wind Industrial Growth Plan highlights the South West's shipping expertise, including a specific reference to the ambition for Appledore, including the innovation centre and Harland & Wolff, to provide clean propulsion vessels and solutions. Newbuild Service Operation Vessels (SOVs), a key local priority, are listed as a UK "Make" priority, which "will increase the UK's competitive standing on the global stage by increasing exports"<sup>2</sup>, which in turn will link with retrofit and repairs activities, supporting the renewed focus on innovation and decarbonisation from The Royal Navy and also the local development of a green hydrogen production and refuelling ecosystem.

Alongside FLOW the X-Links cable project also presents a critical opportunity to forward plan for. The 3.6 GW of green energy will be cabled over from Morocco in a project which is comparable in size to the 3.4 GW at Hinkley Point C nuclear power station in Somerset. The collective high-energy user potential will be a powerful tool to attract investment and resultant job creation.

The skills needs for these engineering projects, as well as those major projects across the South West region, will require detailed collective mapping and delivery with FE and HE partners and industry, with steps already underway.

There are major local strengths which can be supported to thrive in these industries. Our existing business base is internationally recognised in smart environmental services and intelligence, composites and a range of engineering fields. A local supply chain directory has been developed which will continue to evolve and provides a useful first introduction to our strong local offer.

The North Devon and Torridge Clean Maritime Growth Vision, including a detailed Ports, Harbours and Jetties study, provides an underpinning, detailed vision for an innovative future for the sector. To play our role in longer-term O&M, including as the array ramps up to 25GW by 2050, as well as the onshoring and initial processing of seaweed crops and broader aquaculture, our ports, harbours and jetties infrastructure will require significant modernisation.

This cluster presents a crucial catalyst for job creation across the North Devon and Torridge region, but benefits will only truly be captured if the provision is across the region. From office space in Barnstaple to port facilities in Bideford, existing and new manufacturing facilities being required through to maximising brownfield opportunities at Yelland and in East-the-Water to secure inward investment and resulting clean growth.

The region has an enormously proud maritime heritage. Now is the time for that to underpin a new phase of positive local impact and pride both at the heart of the green energy revolution and also aquaculture.



**There are already major local strengths which can be supported to thrive within these opportunities.**



## KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- The Crown Estate
- Petroc and the wider network of primary and secondary schools across the region
- North Devon UNESCO Biosphere and the Biosphere Foundation
- North Devon+
- The Catapult network, including Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, High Value Manufacturing Catapult, Connected Places Catapult and also the UK Agri Tech Centre
- Government agencies such as Department for Transport, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Business and Trade and also The National Shipbuilding Office
- RM Instow and RM Chivenor
- Defence Security partners such as The Royal Navy, along with the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA)
- Key industry experts, such as the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) and the Global Underwater Hub (GUH)

## TOGETHER WE WILL:

### Drive competitiveness for businesses in the region by:

- Establishing the Appledore Clean Maritime Innovation Centre as a National Centre of Excellence.
- Delivering a phased grow-on ladder for businesses within the clean maritime and green energy cluster, to support wider supply chain growth and manufacturing activity across the region. The development of a new Local Plan will also be essential to facilitate this further growth.
- Lobbying for the creation of an enterprise zone across North Devon and Torridge to support not only clean maritime and green energy growth but also the cross-over into agri-food and drink innovation.
- Working with The Crown Estate, MMO and North Devon UNESCO Biosphere to establish the UK's first Aquaculture Enterprise Zone offering tax incentives and accelerated licensing processes on pre-approved, defined uses and sites to accelerate the industry's growth and positive impact on marine biodiversity.
- Collaborating with the private sector to deliver infrastructure to add value to locally-cultivated seaweed crops, including a cascading biorefinery with associated digital twin.
- Progressing proposals for 2 linked Energy Parks within North Devon and Torridge to bring together green hydrogen production with skills development, incubation spaces for Research and Development and specialist innovation support which provides a cross-over between maritime, green energy and agri-food and drink.

### Improve collaboration and information sharing by:

- Creating a North Devon and Torridge clean maritime cluster, recognised as part of the Maritime UK SW structure.
- Creating the role of Clean Maritime and Green Energy Officer to provide a single point of contact with North Devon and Torridge District Councils, enabling a smoother way to work with businesses, government partners and investors.
- Commissioning a green hydrogen routemap for North Devon and Torridge to bring together in a coordinated manner the ingredients needed for a successful green hydrogen industry locally, including environmental considerations, skills and offtakers, de-risking investment.
- Ensuring full representation for North Devon and Torridge on the Celtic Sea Cluster and South West Aquaculture Network.
- Working with key projects to ensure a consistent approach to social value investments to aggregate and maximise their positive impacts for the wellbeing of the economy, community and local environment.

### Support the local skills agenda by:

- Facilitating schools and industry to work together, raising teacher awareness and building STEM curriculum content aligned with industry needs to deliver the capabilities industry will need, focused on transferable skills within engineering and digital.
- Establishing the Ilfracombe Sea School to provide a key facet of maritime skills development, providing routes into employment for our local workforce.
- Develop the Science, Nature and Technology Centre to provide a focus for citizen science and greater engagement and participation in STEM related activities that will spark interest in industries in the area that require these skills.

# CLUSTER 3: AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND DRINK AND THE GREEN ECONOMY



## Overview of the local opportunity

Agriculture and the range of allied industries lie at the heart of Torrridge and North Devon. Nestled within the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve environmental sustainability has always been a priority for the sector, with the quality of the resulting produce being a great source of pride to local communities. At a time when food security, self-sufficiency and biodiversity gains have to be a priority for us all, ensuring a strong balance of custodianship and business success – including diversification and renewable energy generation.

The pressure on farmers is greater than ever before. Increased costs across all elements of the business, ever-tightening margins, government funding changes and a growing call to reduce carbon emissions challenge the very model of financial sustainability and in turn the appeal to younger generations to create new entrants to the industry. Ensuring the sustainability of our agricultural workforce is key, from housing to skills and the right support.

Increasing technology uptake and reducing waste through circular economies to drive productivity will, as always, be key. Robotics, drones and environmental intelligence sensors will play a crucial role in making

data-based, efficient decisions to support soil health through to reducing run-off levels. That can only be achieved if universal fibre and 4G/5G can be provided. Rural productivity is directly linked to rural connectivity for all. This is doubly the case in an age of digital by default.

There is already significant innovation and world-leading activity already on display in the region which needs to be celebrated and shared. Raising awareness of activities such as the Smart Biosphere will be crucial to enable widespread learning and uptake, with national-level funding secured to assist.

**AGRICULTURE  
LIES AT THE HEART  
OF TORRIDGE AND  
NORTH DEVON**



**SIGNIFICANT  
INNOVATION  
AND  
WORLD-LEADING  
ACTIVITY**





The region has a proud heritage within the production of local food and drink. With a growing national emphasis on food sustainability and independence it is critical to also explore further measures to strengthen our impact, including ensuring that we provide infrastructure to add value locally to produce and supporting vertical farming activities where appropriate. We have collective pride in the quality of our goods but it is also essential that a local regional brand be able to shine far more to an external market.

The growth of the maritime sector also provides a key route to growth for the agricultural sector. The two sides of our green and blue region have long been separate, but the innovation future at sea also provides routes forward on land.

- The growth of the seaweed industry providing local sources of low-carbon agri-feed, with studies demonstrating methane reductions of up to 80%<sup>3</sup> when seaweed is used in dairy feeds.
- Green hydrogen fuels which key plant manufacturers are seeing as the future replacement for red diesel.
- Green hydrogen based fertilisers, an innovation with the potential to radically address the carbon footprint of agriculture and where significant private sector is already being shown in the region.

To truly add value to our products and the agri-food and drink sector we need to bring together the right facilities, the right support and generate the right long-term skilled workforce. A holistic approach to deliver agricultural and industrial solutions and resulting economic opportunity for a community which has long shaped our region and needs to be at the heart of a more prosperous future in the face of significant ongoing challenges.

<sup>3</sup>Roque BM, Venegas M, Kinley RD, de Nys R, Duarte TL, Yang X, et al. (2021) Red seaweed (*Asparagopsis taxiformis*) supplementation reduces enteric methane by over 80 percent in beef steers. *PLoS ONE* 16(3): e0247820. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0247820>



## KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- NFU
- Devon Young Farmers
- Exmoor Hill Farmers
- North Devon UNESCO Biosphere and the Biosphere Foundation
- North Devon+
- Devon Agritech Alliance (DATA)
- The Crown Estate
- National Composites Centre
- UK AgriTech Centre
- Utilising the Levelling Up Partnership in Torridge to build Defra engagement with pilot and innovation opportunities in Torridge and wider North Devon.
- Rothamsted Research, North Wyke Platform
- The Met Office
- University partners, including the University of Exeter and the University of Plymouth

## TOGETHER WE WILL:

### Drive competitiveness for businesses in the region by:

- Raising awareness of the Biosphere's Natural Capital Marketplace, which helps landowners secure payment for increasing the biodiversity or carbon sequestration of their land.
- Providing specialist business support programmes to assist the cluster through North Devon+.
- Securing funding to deliver the Holsworthy Agri-Business Centre to further strengthen the local agricultural sector, and within that to strengthen feasibility into the creation of a National Aquaculture Centre to bridge the divide between farming at sea and on land.
- Working with the private sector to explore proposals for a green-fertiliser production facility.
- Investing in feasibility work to explore the value of an agri-food and drink centre of excellence with connected specialist business support avenues.
- Delivering capital grant schemes through the Rural England Prosperity Fund to enable farm diversification and investment into decarbonisation, and seeking further follow-on funding to expand the impact.
- Lobbying for universal gigabit fibre connectivity and 4G / 5G coverage.
- Working with the NFU and agri-food and drink businesses to raise engagement with the Made in Devon marque and improve local brand awareness.
- Lobbying for local procurement approaches to be adopted across the public sector.

### Improve collaboration and information sharing by:

- Developing stronger links between the local authorities, the NFU and the sector, establishing a sector forum to provide regular information and intelligence-sharing.
- Building a coordinated programme of events in North Devon and Torridge with the Devon AgriTech Alliance (DATA) to increase local impacts.
- Strengthening links with the maritime sector to ensure crossover economic, skills and carbon gains from blue growth into the agricultural sector and to support a more circular economy.

### Support the local skills agenda by:

- Engaging with Petroc/University Centre for Northern Devon, as well as wider agricultural skills providers such as Duchy College, Bicton College and the Royal Agricultural College, the University of Exeter and the University of Plymouth to understand where opportunities for innovative new agri-skills pathways can be created within North Devon and Torridge.
- Working with the NFU and the agri-food and drink sector to ensure access to courses to enable key local growth opportunities including in green hydrogen plant mechanics, green fertilisers, and seaweed-based feeds, as well as in cross-over fields of robotics, autonomous vehicles and environmental intelligence.
- Encouraging events such as Farmwise to take place in North Devon and Torridge to ensure primary school children see the range of opportunities from an early age.

# CLUSTER 4: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES



## Overview of the local opportunity

Culture and creative industries have a major role in unlocking inclusive growth that brings together all sections of communities and raises a voice for local people to shape the future of their towns and villages. The economic value of these sectors is clear, contributing £160bn to the UK economy with 3.2 million jobs, and making the UK the fifth largest global exporter of cultural services<sup>5</sup>. In recognition of the untapped potential of the sector, in 2023 the government and the Creative Industries Council published a sector vision which set out ambitions to grow the creative industries by a further £50 billion in GVA and support an additional 1 million jobs.

Culture has a vital role to play in the individual and communal pride and wellbeing of people who live in the region, it is an essential driver of the local economy and it has the potential to raise North Devon and Torridge's profile on the national stage. Our ambitions have recently been set out in the publishing of our first joint Cultural Strategy: Flourishing Culture. This cultural and creative growth is essential both for the wellbeing of our towns and communities but also for us as healthy people.

Investment into the cultural sector is critical to open access for all and to bring communities together in vibrant local spaces. The use of Pannier Markets, historic buildings and open spaces around town centres adds to the offer within our areas and makes culture accessible to those who don't otherwise engage. Investing in a dynamic range of buildings and spaces that will provide better, more-connected workspaces whilst bringing more visibility to creative industries in the heart of our towns and communities will be a key strand of growth within North Devon and Torridge. From artists to ceramicists to exploring the need for production and editing facilities, the breadth of cultural opportunity and vibrancy is truly vast.

**345**   
**CREATIVE AND  
CULTURAL INDUSTRIES  
OPERATING**

**EMPLOYING AROUND**  
**1,250**  
**PEOPLE** 

<sup>5</sup>Source: Inclusive Growth Network <sup>6</sup>Flourishing Culture,  
The Northern Devon Culture Strategy 2022 - 2027

There are an estimated 345 creative and cultural industries operating in North Devon and Torrington, employing around 1,250 people, which represents around 1.8% of total employment in the districts. This sits below the Devon level of around 2.54% and well below the national level at 4.57%. To put this in perspective, lifting the level of North Devon and Torrington's creative industries sector to that of Devon would raise the overall contribution of the creative industries to GVA by £32.75m. Even assuming this were to take the form of displacing existing average jobs, it would still create an estimated £3.89m net uplift in GVA<sup>6</sup> to the local economy in the form of increased productivity.

Building skills within the creative industry sectors will be a key priority for the area.





## KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- Theatres, Museums, Galleries across the region, in particular the National Portfolio Organisations
- Charitable and third sector bodies
- Arts Council England
- Creative UK
- Historic England
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Petroc
- University of Plymouth
- North Devon and Torridge Culture Board
- ArtMakers
- Tech SW
- Screen Devon
- Devon LVEP
- Town Centres

## TOGETHER WE WILL:

### Drive competitiveness for businesses in the region by:

- Embedding culture into regeneration and economic programmes, with a start in Barnstaple through the delivery of the Future High Streets Fund programme and the Cultural Development Fund programme and in turn boosting a healthier evening economy.
- Securing investment to provide additional creative spaces within our town centres, giving visibility to our range of creative industry businesses.
- Collaborating with local businesses and organisations to deliver quarterly Creatives Meets, sharing opportunities and learning, from AI to Innovate grants to feeding into local regeneration planning.
- Positioning the North Devon and Torridge Culture Board as a key part of the Northern Devon Futures structure to remove divides between the cultural and creatives sector with other strands of our local economy, community, place and wellbeing offers.
- Celebrating the vibrancy of the local Creatives sector through Phase 2 of the North Devon Makes Map.
- Working with partners to support the delivery of infrastructure for the creatives industry, including through the sector development work of Screen Devon.
- Developing a bespoke centre for Media and TV to attract greater investments from this industry to the area.

### Improve collaboration and information sharing by:

- Creating bespoke hubs such as the North Devon Heritage Skills Hub, reviving heritage construction skills and ensuring a legacy of well-maintained heritage buildings is created, together with an appropriately skilled workforce.
- Setting up further town teams for culture and delivering resulting bespoke action plans, in line with the North Devon and Torridge Flourishing Culture Strategy.

### Support the local skills agenda by:

- Providing sector intelligence to local academic bodies to enable industry-focused boot camps and apprenticeship routes into creative industries.
- Collaborating with creative industry businesses to ensure apprenticeships and T Levels are developed as part of their role within the local economy.



# CLUSTER 5: A YEAR-ROUND AND DIVERSE VISITOR ECONOMY

## Overview of the local opportunity

North Devon and Torridge's natural environment will always be a valuable asset to a sector which attracts over 4.5m visitors from the UK and beyond every year, generating over £350m for the local economy.

The North Devon UNESCO Biosphere plays a pivotal role in driving the local nature tourism agenda alongside North Devon and Torridge District Councils and collectively setting a national lead for its work. Tourism has a unique role to play in preserving and protecting the area's natural resources to maintain its attractiveness and long-term sustainability. And to then capitalise on those natural wonders as part of a stronger year-round offer. This links closely to our vibrant contemporary arts and event scenes, as well as to our renowned local food and drink and, of course, fantastic people. The visitor economy is underpinned by fantastic all-year round facilities, such as our Leisure Centres, Ilfracombe Watersports Centre, North Devon Wake Park, Tennis Courts, Gymnastics Centres, Northam Burrows Visitors Centre, indoor and outdoor roller and skate parks and urban parks.

Torridge and North Devon also have some of the darkest skies in the UK, which need to be protected, promoted and

enjoyed. Exmoor National Park is a Dark Skies Reserve, and other parts of the region are now developing similar offers and approaches.

The coast line in North Devon and Torridge stretches for over 60 miles and holds the title of World Surf Reserve – the first in the United Kingdom and only one of 12 in the world. This seeks to protect and enhance the surfing eco-system and protect the communities that surround these coastal areas from seeing any kind of degradation to their environment and communities.

North Devon and Torridge have a wealth of stories to tell, shaped by local people and traditions and born out of beautiful buildings and historic landmarks. The heritage of North Devon and Torridge provides a truly inspiring and unique tourism offer, with trails and events to highlight and celebrate our culture and heritage.



**4.5M**  
**VISITORS**  
**EACH YEAR**



**GENERATING OVER**  
**£350M**  
**FOR THE LOCAL**  
**ECONOMY**





Photos supplied by Graham Hobbs

Diverse, thriving town centres with an increased draw and range of opportunities for our community will also play a role in establishing an even stronger, higher-value opportunity for our tourism sector. Drawing visitors into our town centres is a key driver for creating year-round tourism and protecting our town centres from further decline. However, the core drive will be collectively to shape vibrant, vital places which have strong visions for their future, with a healthy evening economy to capitalise on our local produce and food heritage and where people can enjoy spending time. A great place for our residents and our local workforce and in turn a fantastic place to visit.

To create a truly dynamic and year-round tourism industry we will grow the business-tourism share, as domestic tourism rates slow and plateau, even after showing signs of some recovery post-Covid. The business-tourism model will provide a service to some of our other key industries, with accommodation and conferencing facilities to suit a range of business events and marketplaces. The visitor economy infrastructure extends beyond the domestic market and attracting a vibrant business economy can have benefits across all our industries in North Devon and Torridge.

Working with local schools and skills partners, our ambition is to improve the career pathways within the tourism and hospitality sector. Driving up leadership and customer-focused skills within the sector to further ensure fantastic experiences for locals and visitors alike and to strengthen the investment draw to stimulate full time, year round, well paid jobs within all sections of the industry.

## AVERAGE SPEND PER TRIP



### DOMESTIC VISITOR

In the UK

**£262**

International visitor

**£927**

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### BUSINESS DELEGATE

From within Europe

**£990**

From outside Europe

**£1,748**

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Among those who extended their trip for leisure, which many (87%) overseas delegates do, the average spent £1,942.



## KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- Existing visitor economy businesses across the region
- North Devon UNESCO Biosphere
- World Surf Reserve Local Stewardship Council
- Plastic Free North Devon
- Devon Local Visitor Economy Partnership
- Town/Village marketing and tourist business groups
- Town Regeneration Boards
- Town Cultural Partnerships/town teams
- Attractions and cultural and leisure facilities
- Town and Parish Councils
- Regional schools, Petroc, University of Exeter, University of Plymouth, Falmouth School of Art, Arts University Plymouth
- North Devon+
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Culture, Media and Sports
- University of Exeter
- University of Plymouth

## TOGETHER WE WILL:

### Drive competitiveness for businesses in the region by:

- Developing business tourism, promoting the offer to businesses looking to hold conferences, expos and trade fairs in the region.
- Embedding local activities within the Devon LVEP to ensure strong marketing promotion for North Devon and Torridge as part of a coordinated Devon-wide programme.
- Ensuring that the North Devon and Torridge Nature Tourism programme is acknowledged as a national lead.
- Enhancing the work of the Nature Tourism Officer to strengthen connections with local tourism businesses and cross-overs into sectors such as agriculture.
- Seeking funding for North Devon+ to deliver specialist business support to enable visitor economy growth.
- Delivering capital grant schemes through the Rural England Prosperity Fund to enable investment into decarbonisation, and seeking further follow-on funding to expand the impact.
- Developing local visions for our towns which merge to form a regional whole, with Barnstaple forming the primary regional focus.
- Ensuring that regeneration boards are in place to provide coordination and drive, with opportunities for local input and leadership.
- Creating bespoke marketing plans with regeneration boards for towns to celebrate their distinctive characters and offers.
- Lobbying for improved transport and digital connectivity to remove ongoing constraints to visitor economy businesses.

- Ensuring that EV recharging infrastructure is supported across the entire region to reduce barriers to low-carbon transportation and to enhance the appeal to nature-considerate visitors.
- Increasing high-quality accommodation options and developing business tourism.

### Improve collaboration and information sharing by:

- Creating a shared 'story' for North Devon and Torridge to use in promotion to visitors and business.
- Strengthening industry networks to encourage improved coordination and to enable a more unified tourism voice for the region.
- Securing funding for year-round tourism 'products' to further improve the regional draw, such as astro-tourism.
- Supporting the South West Tourism Data Hub and building intelligence in the sector and for the sector.
- Work together to provide heritage trails and information to bring our local vibrant culture alive and celebrate the historic buildings that define our towns and villages.

### Support the local skills agenda by:

- Providing regular events for the visitor economy to upskill in emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence, trial and learn about new technologies that will give their business models a cutting edge.
- Ensuring digital skills are embedded in the sector.
- Create training pathways that cater for new entrants and upskilling the existing workforce.

# INDUSTRIES AND NEEDS WHICH CUT ACROSS OUR CLUSTERS



## Overview of the local opportunity

Some sectors cannot be pigeonholed into neat clusters. In fact, our work needs to be to support their diversification across wider economic activity within the region and beyond, opening up routes to diversification and new markets to stimulate job creation and strengthen productivity.

Our specialist manufacturing and engineering businesses already create global-leading products across a broad range of fields, and over 10% of employment in North Devon is linked to manufacturing. Enabling a Barnstaple-based business to diversify from aerospace into Floating Offshore Wind or a Great Torrington-based business to strengthen its composites offer enables supply chain and spend localisation to be at the heart of this strategy. The threads of visibility, communication, collaboration run throughout this strategy, and to support this diversification that truly will need to be the case.

To enable that significant strides have to be taken to improve the availability of suitable, flexible employment land and workspaces. Progress has been made through the developments of Cotie, Node and community

workspaces such as the Castle Hill Work Hub, but larger facilities need to be developed to meet our economic goals.

Beyond manufacturing, our burgeoning tech cluster is sector blind. Whether developing software solutions to support youth mental health or AI models to maximise the quality assurance process of engineering solutions the core skills required are the same, which is true for so many more fields. Marketing, data synthesis and visualisation, machine learning and even ensuring that our services sector can adapt and flex to provide the required local solutions. New work opportunities in these growth sectors will also be there for solicitors, accountants, architects and even our construction industry.

Too often core challenges to enabling this diversification can be found in awareness, skilled workforce availability and then access to finance and workspaces. Steps need taking to address all of these for our local business community as part of this strategy. And to build a stronger pathway of apprenticeship options, including degree-level, collectively removing barriers for SME and retaining our local talent.

Underpinning all of those activities is visibility. Competitiveness and becoming a net exporter are only plausible if the outside world is aware of the offer and the quality available. The brand image for North Devon and Torrington is a pivotal opportunity to strengthen inward investment pathways and stimulate the right kind of growth for the good of our community, environment and economy.



## KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS

- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Department for Business and Trade
- Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
- North Devon Manufacturer's Association (NDMA)
- Maritime UK SW / North Devon and Torrridge Maritime Cluster
- High Value Manufacturing Catapult
- Make UK
- Tech SW

## **TOGETHER WE WILL:**

### **Drive competitiveness for businesses in the region by:**

- Strengthening the North Devon and Torridge regional brand to raise visibility of economic activity and opportunity.
- Sponsoring the creation of a regional Maker's Map to raise awareness of engineering and manufacturing activity, with future layers to support tech and the creative industries, boosting awareness for supply chains and educational partners.
- Lobbying for a new North Devon and Torridge Local Plan, enabling a wider range of suitable employment land allocations to be brought forward and developed, in particular to support R&D, high value manufacturing and engineering.
- Securing funds to facilitate business support programmes which enable direct impacts on productivity and profitability, as well as enabling increased Innovate UK grant success, drawing investment into the region for innovation across our communities.
- Providing seed funding to create local finance support structures where appropriate, including the development of a North Devon and Torridge angel investment network, or linking to wider activities such as the British Business Bank.

### **Improve coordination and information sharing by:**

- Developing a programme of supply chain awareness events to ensure local businesses are briefed and supported to access forthcoming opportunities and to access innovation and diversification support regardless of traditional business sector.

### **Support the local skills agenda by:**

- Supporting delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Plan for Devon and Somerset and ensuring strong local representation within future iterations.
- Working with Petroc to ensure FE and HE content delivers skills pathways into key engineering and manufacturing fields, including mechanical, digital and electrical engineering.
- Working with Petroc and other apprenticeship providers to ensure that there is a strong and appropriate local apprenticeship and degree apprenticeship offer for key sectors.
- Collaborating with the Southwest region's universities including Exeter, Plymouth and Bristol to harness knowledge and drive forward innovation – whilst ensuring clear life long learning career development opportunities for our local people.
- Working with key stakeholders, including NDMA and Maritime UK SW, to develop coordinated programmes of school engagement to raise the profile of high-quality employment opportunities within the local area across all key clusters.
- Strengthening links, through the Northern Devon Futures Children and Young People group, to ensure that local schools are given the required intelligence and industry contacts to develop appropriate curriculum to link to opportunities in manufacturing and engineering careers, including in fields such as robotics and autonomous vehicles.
- Work across clusters to support coordinated efforts to engage with schools and build both awareness of the jobs available and emerging as well as building aspiration and desire for a bright future in the region.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Elected Members of North Devon and Torridge District Councils

The RT Hon Sir Geoffrey Cox MP KC and Selaine Saxby MP

Petroc/University Centre for Northern Devon

North Devon UNESCO Biosphere

Devon County Council

North Devon Plus

361 Energy

Brend Collection

Seiche

TCi

NFU

TDK Lambda

North Devon Voluntary Services (NDVS)

Bable Smart Cities

Department for Work and Pensions

Devon and Cornwall Police

Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC)

The Crown Estate

Biosphere Foundation

South West Business Council

CMTG

Accord

Lineal Software

Roots Creative

NHS

Algapelago

Town Square Ltd @ NODE

Torridge Voluntary Services (TTVS)

Innovate UK Edge

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Harland & Wolff

Harper's Feeds

## NEXT ACTIONS

Following the adoption of this Strategy, North Devon Council and Torridge District Council will be working with partners to develop and publish delivery action plans, with a particular focus on the indicated actions and development of identified clusters.