

REPORT ON THE PORTFOLIO OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION.

THE SERVICE

Within the past year the service has been restructured, pulling together the economic development, regeneration, growth, delivery and planning functions into a single service. The 2016-2020 Corporate Plan indicates concentration on the four priorities of homes, economy, community and environment with an emphasis on delivering growth to the local economy. The Council is creating strategic partnerships with other authorities within the Greater Exeter area in the areas of economy and planning and is working to a shared strategy for economic growth and prosperity. Within our Local Plan Review major site based projects incorporating urban extensions and a leisure / tourism led allocation at M5 junction 27 are identified. The Council has also set out the aspiration of delivering a garden village to the east of Cullompton with associated infrastructure requirements including motorway junction upgrade and railway station and there are projects in place and proposed for town centre regeneration, enhancement and investment. There is a need to plan for, allocate, enable and ensure delivery of the growth agenda in a coordinated and focused way.

The restructure sought to be responsive to the needs of this growth agenda and configure this part of the organisation to adapt a more external facing and interventionist role in securing the delivery of growth and infrastructure including its funding. This required the realignment of the Council's resources and the amalgamation of the economy, regeneration and planning functions within a single service.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

1.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1.1 Heart of the SW Partnership Productivity Plan

The Heart of the SW Partnership (including the LEP, 17 local authorities, 2 national parks and 3 Clinical Commissioner Groups) have recently published a jointly agreed green paper 'Driving productivity in the Heart of the South West' in order to stimulate debate about how we can drive economic growth in the area. This green paper is itself a response to the Government's Industrial Strategy which focuses on narrowing the productivity gap between the UK and other G7 countries. The LEP will be working with partners to finalise a Productivity Plan by the Autumn which will replace its Economic Strategy. MDDC is the lead district on the Business Group for the development of the productivity plan, reflecting the work we are doing locally and regionally to influence business support priorities.

1.2 Mid Devon Economic Strategy

The Growth, Economy and Delivery team have been developing an Economic Strategy in partnership with the members of the Economy Policy Development Group. So far this has entailed developing a vision and identifying key economic

themes for Mid Devon. This emerging strategy will set a context for economic interventions until 2033. Once this strategy is adopted economic development projects will be prioritised accordingly. The strategy will also provide a clearer and more robust basis for monitoring and reviewing the success of projects.

2.0 BUSINESS – Supporting Business Growth and Job Creation

2.1 Inward Investment – *Attracting new business into the area*

Several employment sites have been brought forward for development, with premises being built at Mid Devon Business Park, Hitchcocks' Business Park and at various sites throughout Crediton, Cullompton and Tiverton. The Economic Development Officer has been supporting planning applications from inward investors and has been linking them with various funding streams to help incentivise them to invest locally. This has been a successful approach, and is strengthening the rapport between the local authority and employment land owners. However, there is a shortage of sites coming forward for development and at present there are fewer than 10 industrial units available across the district, in part because of our local successes.

2.2 Developing Business Infrastructure - Broadband

High quality superfast broadband is recognised as one of the most significant enablers of business growth and investment in the Mid Devon District. The Economic Development Officer has worked with a number of partners to develop funding bids and to support private providers to help improve infrastructure delivery across the District. An expression of interest was submitted to the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) to explore the opportunity to deliver a fibre broadband ring around a number of smaller villages to the West of Tiverton. This expression of interest is now being developed further, both with public and private partners so that a full LFFN bid can be made, hopefully in the summer of 2018.

In January 2018, a bid was submitted to draw down funding for a gigabit voucher scheme. If successful, this project will give businesses the opportunity to access vouchers worth up to £3,000 each, to improve broadband services to their premises. Furthermore, the vouchers can be aggregated, meaning a cluster of 10 businesses for example, could use £30,000 of funding to improve broadband delivery to their industrial estate.

2.3 Joint Procurement of Business Support

Mid Devon has been working to change the way in which business support services are delivered, and to improve the quality and value for money achieved through procuring externally delivered business support services.

The Business Boost project delivered support to over 550 businesses in a 12 month period (2016/17 financial year), and case studies, client feedback and auditing of the project showed that clients valued the service they were provided.

The project has since been superseded by the Growth Support Programme (GSP), which Mid Devon District Council had been developing in partnership with Devon County Council. This £1.8m programme covers the whole of the Heart of the South West and delivers similar services to those which were available under Business Boost. Where each local authority had previously put £25k towards business support services, the development of the GSP enabled an almost identical service to be delivered for 3 years across the EHOD area for a total cost of £11,250 per authority.

2.4 Mills Project update

The Hydro Mills project aims to restore Mid Devon's historic mills, leats and weirs, to generate local, clean, sustainable energy for businesses, residents and public buildings. It aims to be a catalyst for attracting investment from the low carbon business sector, and addresses a number of issues of national significance, including flood risk mitigation and energy resilience.

A funding bid was developed in partnership between Mid Devon District Council, the Hydro Mills Group (a private group of riparian owners) and the University of Exeter. This was submitted to the ESIF Low Carbon funding call in July 2017. The bid was unfortunately unsuccessful but has led to the pursuit of funding through other sources, and with the political support that the scheme has secured, activities are being undertaken to raise its profile with the Heart of the South West LEP to make it more likely that future funding bids will meet success.

2.5 Helping businesses access funding - LEADER update

Following the Brexit vote and then the Autumn Statement, there was a long moratorium on publicising the LEADER programme to local businesses. The programme is now re-open, and there have been six new enquiries from local businesses which the team will be working to help them funding applications further.

The last of the previous wave of projects was approved at the beginning of December. Room4U, a community project to provide a day-care facility for vulnerable residents in Silverton, has received £57,828 towards the development of the facility.

3.0 PLACE

3.1 Cullompton Townscape Heritage Initiative.

An application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was made in December as scheduled. The bid is for £1.2m to support restoration of heritage buildings in the Cullompton Conservation Area, and the outcome of the application should be announced in May 2018.

3.2 Cullompton Town Centre Investment and Regeneration Masterplan.

A report is due to be considered at a meeting of Cabinet in the near future that will propose the commissioning of a Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the town centre of Cullompton.

3.3 Tiverton Town Centre Investment and Regeneration Masterplan.

Consultants have been commissioned to prepare a Tiverton Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan SPD and Investment Programme. The aim of the masterplan is to provide a clear strategy to enhance the economic prosperity of the town and improve the look and environment of the town centre. The Investment Programme (Stage 2) will aim to ensure that the initiatives within the masterplan are viable and deliverable.

Following initial stakeholder meetings, material has been prepared for Stage 1 public consultation on draft options for town wide initiatives and key development areas. The material has been revised following discussions at informal Cabinet. A report is going to Cabinet on 1st March 2018 recommending approval of the material for Stage 1 public consultation.

3.3 Tiverton Market.

We have agreed a Tiverton Market Environment Strategy, which will assist the market to operate in a more environmentally sensitive way. This will come into operation over the next few months.

We have also hosted a number of events in Tiverton in partnership with local groups. The Christmas light switch on was a particular success, bringing thousands of people into the town centre.

In the longer term we will be looking at alternative methods of managing the market to see if there are better ways of operating.

3.4 Destination Management Plan for Tourism

Following the results of the survey, reported to scrutiny last year, and following group discussions and consultation with the Economy PDG, a Destination Management Plan for Mid Devon has been developed for consideration at the next Economy PDG. This has taken into consideration a number key issues which have arisen over the past 12 months, including modifications to the local plan.

4.0 GARDEN VILLAGE PROJECT.

- 4.1 Following the Government announcement in 2017 that Mid Devon had been successful in gaining garden village status for up to 5,000 houses and associated infrastructure and community facilities on land to the east of Cullompton and the receipt of some initial capacity funding, Hyas consultants were appointed to act as project lead for the garden village project.

4.2 In the past year:

- A project team has been established (Government funded) comprising a Project Manager and Area Planning Officer.
- A governance structure for the project has been agreed and initial meetings of the Delivery Board, Stakeholder Forum, Landowner Forum and Sports Working Group have taken place.
- The planning policy context for allocation of the garden village through the Mid Devon Local Plan Review and the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan has also been established.
- Initial work has also taken place on project planning, garden village attributes, the proposed masterplanning process and policy context.
- Infrastructure requirements are being scoped and various potential funding streams are being investigated.
- Two rounds of capacity funding to help support the project have been received and £10 million has been awarded through the Housing Infrastructure Fund towards improvements to J28 of the M5 motorway.

4.3 The garden village is to be locally led. Next steps are to hold stakeholder/ community workshops to establish a “vision” for the garden village and set key garden village principles to provide a focus for masterplanning the development. Once the vision and key principles have been established, masterplanning of the garden village will begin. The masterplan will be developed on a collaborative basis with landowners, key stakeholders and the community and will comprise two elements, a Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document for the Local Plan Review allocation and a strategic masterplan framework for whole garden village. It is expected that initial options for Stage 1 public consultation will be developed by the summer of 2018.

5.0 Major project work.

5.1 Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension (Tiverton EUE) –In 2014 the Tiverton EUE Masterplan was adopted providing a comprehensive plan for the development of the area. In the last year this has been supported by the production and adoption of the Tiverton EUE Design Guide.

Works to the southern part of the A361 road junction commenced in September 2017 and are progressing well. The works for this first part of the junction and a section of resurfacing are expected to be completed by July 2018. Following the successful award of £8.2 million through the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid towards the northern part of the A361 road junction, discussions have commenced with all the relevant stakeholders on the timely delivery of the northern part of the junction.

Outline planning consent (with signed S106) has been granted for up to 1,000 homes, the primary school and the neighbourhood centre on the Chettiscombe Trust land holding. Officers are in continued discussions over delivering the ‘linking road’ between the LILO and Blundell’s Road, the neighbourhood centre, the community

centre and primary school. Following extensive pre application discussions including design review, the Council is now in receipt of a reserved matters planning application (ref 18/00133/MARM) for the north-eastern part of the site. It will be considered at Planning Committee at a future date.

Masterplanning of Area B has been initiated, with a first stage public consultation event undertaken in the last year. Consultants are being engaged to progress that work. A further public consultation event is currently underway seeking an amendment to the adopted Masterplan SPD.

Phase 1 of the Blundell's Road Traffic Calming has also been completed.

- 5.2 NW Cullompton Urban Extension – Three planning applications have been received, two outline applications and one full application in respect of Phase 1 of the NW Cullompton allocation, each for 200 houses. The initial phase will deliver the new spine road through the allocation, land for a new primary school and community building, as well as public open space and green infrastructure, and contributions towards wider infrastructure requirements. It is anticipated that the applications will go to Planning Committee in March/April 2018.

- 5.3 J27 M5 – Pre-application discussions have taken place with the promoters of development on this site and are still ongoing with consultees on technical issues including transport matters. The promoters are undertaking further public consultation prior to application submission. The timescale for application submission is not yet clear.

6.0 INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUNDING.

6.1 Housing Infrastructure Fund.

The District Council has been successful with both the Housing Infrastructure Fund bids. These were submitted last year and included £10m for improvements to J28 of the M5 at Cullompton, plus £8.2m to deliver the northern half of the A361 junction to serve the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension. These schemes will assist in bringing forward development which is dependent on these highway improvements. A process of further engagement with Homes England over the funding is due to commence shortly.

6.2 Capacity funding.

The Council has been awarded several tranches of Government capacity funding to support the delivery of housing on strategic sites including the Culm Garden Village, other developments in Cullompton and the Tiverton Eastern Urban Extension. This is being used to project manage, commission work on evidence base and masterplanning and to support delivery.

6.3 Planning Delivery Fund.

In December the Government invited local authorities to submit bids for resource funding. It has recently been announced that the Council in conjunction with East Devon, Exeter City, Teignbridge and Devon County Councils have been awarded £246,000 in 2017/18 and £210,000 in 2018/19 to support joint working on the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

Unfortunately Mid Devon's individual bids for design and innovation in the delivery of planning services were not successful.

7.0 PLANNING.

7.1 Local Plan Review and Community Infrastructure Levy.

The Local Plan Review, proposed Community Infrastructure Levy draft charging schedule and associated documents were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination at the end of March 2017. The examination process was paused in response to legal advice from the Council's barrister in order for independent review of the major modifications stage sustainability appraisal. The results of this review concluded that the work carried out was proportionate and appropriate. Following consideration at Council on 21st February 2018, a 6 week public consultation on the schedule of amendments to the sustainability appraisal update 2017 has commenced and will conclude on 11th April 2018.

Examination of the Local Plan Review and proposed Community Infrastructure Levy is expected to recommence. Examination hearing dates have yet to be rescheduled by the Inspector and once known, will be publicised for 6 weeks in advance.

7.2 Greater Exeter Strategic Plan.

Mid Devon, East Devon, Exeter, and Teignbridge, in partnership with Devon County Council, are working together, engaging with stakeholders and communities, to prepare a new joint strategic plan. By working together, the aim is to deliver the best possible outcomes for the provision of new homes, jobs and infrastructure for existing and future generations, while also protecting and enhancing the environment. The plan is being called the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan and the Greater Exeter area covers all of the four local authority areas, excluding Dartmoor National Park.

An initial public consultation has been held over the vision and strategic aims of the proposed plan and a call for sites undertaken. Evidence to support the plan has been commissioned and sites put forward for allocation are currently being assessed. It is proposed that a draft plan be issued for public consultation.

7.3 Neighbourhood planning.

Neighbourhood planning areas have been designated in Cullompton (2014), Silverton (2014), Tiverton / Halberton (joint) (2015) and Crediton (2014). None have yet been submitted for examination. Officers have been attending meetings with the neighbourhood planning groups to offer advice / guidance where requested.

A first consultation version of the Silverton Neighbourhood Plan was produced in May 2017. A pre-submission Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan was produced in October 2017 for consultation. Consultation ended on 21st November 2017. The neighbourhood planning group are currently considering representations received

and whether to make any amendments to the draft plan.

7.4 Brownfield Land Register.

The Government brought into force a requirement for Councils to prepare and publish a Brownfield Register. The Register will help housebuilders identify suitable sites quicker, speeding up the construction of new homes and maximising the number of new homes built on land that has been previously development. Mid Devon was one of the pilot authorities chosen across the country for the Government's new Brownfield Register. The first brownfield register for Mid Devon has now been published online. Local authorities are required to update the information relating to each entry and review of the sites on their registers at least once a year.

7.5 Self Build Register.

The Government wants to enable more people to build their own home. The Council recognises the potential benefits of self-build in meeting the housing needs of Mid Devon residents. It can represent a more affordable housing option for local people, support the construction industry and give people more choice in the housing market. Mid Devon District Council holds a live self-build register which helps us understand the demand for self-build housing in Mid Devon which will inform policies to improve the supply of land for self and custom build housing.

7.6 Mid Devon District Design Guide.

Good quality design is an integral part of sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that design quality matters and that planning should drive up standards across all forms of development. Achieving good design is about creating places, buildings, or spaces that work well for everyone, look good, last well, and will adapt to the needs of future generations. The Council has started working on the production of a new District Design Guide SPD and report will be brought to a meeting of Cabinet shortly.

7.7 Housing Land supply.

The Council has been found at appeal to not currently be able to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and as a result has been experiencing the receipt of speculative housing applications on unplanned sites. A report on this and its implications was brought before the meeting of Scrutiny Committee on 9th October 2017. A series of mitigation measures were identified within this report, first and foremost being advancing the Local Plan Review to adoption.

7.5 Local Enforcement Plan.

A Local Enforcement Plan has been prepared and publically consulted upon, setting out how planning enforcement will be managed, how the implementation of

planning permissions will be monitored, how alleged cases of unauthorised development will be investigated and action taken where it is appropriate to do so. This document was agreed by Council on 21st February 2018. It also sets out a prioritisation criteria for compliant investigation together with performance standards.

7.6 Performance.

Performance results for quarters 1, 2 and 3 of 17/18 indicate that the national planning performance indicators for the speed and quality of decision making continue to be met and exceeded by the service.

Speed:

- Majors: More than 60% of major applications determined within 13 weeks (over 2 year period). Mid Devon performance on this for the 2 year period to the end of December 2017 was **83%**.
- Non majors: More than 70% of non-major applications determined within 8 weeks (over 2 year period). Mid Devon performance on this for the 2 year period to the end of December 2017 was **78%**.

Quality:

- Majors: Previous assessment round -Applications determined over a 2 year period, no more than 20% of decisions to be overturned at appeal. The Mid Devon figure over the 2 year period ending December 2017 was **4%**.
- Non majors: This indicator of quality of decision making is measured over a 2 year assessment period: no more than 10% of decisions to be overturned at appeal. The Mid Devon figure over the 2 year period ending December 2017 was **less than 1%**.

Authorities not meeting these targets risk being designated as underperforming, resulting in the application of special measures. Development management performance against national and local indicators is set out below.

Planning Service Performance	Target	15/16	16/17	17/18		
				Q1	Q2	Q3
Major applications determined within 13 weeks	60%	*47%	90%	75%	75%	86%
Minor applications determined within 8 weeks	65%	68%	80%	82%	96%	76%
Other applications determined within 8 weeks	80%	86%	89%	91%	91%	91%
Householder applications determined in 8 weeks	85%	93%	98%	94%	94%	93%

Listed Consents	Building	80%	71%	84%	81%	81%	90%
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Enforcement site visits undertaken within 15 days of complaint receipt	87%	89%	96%	88%	99%	94%
Delegated decisions	90%	94%	94%	95%	95%	90%
No of applications over 13 weeks old without a decision	Less than 45 applications	40	29	41	42	43
Major applications determined within 13 weeks (over preceding 2 years)	More than 60%	53%	82%	83%	83%	83%
Major applications overturned at appeal as % of all major decisions over preceding 2 years	Less than 10% (previously 20%)	10%	7%	4%	3.5%	4%
Non-major applications determined within 8 weeks (over preceding 2 years)	More than 70%	N/A	77%	79%	79%	78%
Non-major applications overturned at appeal as % of all non-major decisions over preceding 2 years	Less than 10%	N/A	<1%	<1%	0.2%	0.2%
Determine all applications within 26 weeks or with an extension of time (per annum – Government planning guarantee)	100%	99%	100%	99%	99%	100%

A 20% increase in national planning fees was introduced by the Government in January 2017.

8.0 BUILDING CONTROL.

- 8.1 Mid Devon's Building Control service operates in partnership with North Devon Council as NMD Building Control. The partnership service has been operational since April 2017 and is delivered from offices in Tiverton and South Molton. A joint committee oversees the delivery of the functions of the partnership service.

- 8.2 The Building Control service is now exceeding performance against targets following a period of bedding in following the new partnership being set up.

Service Performance	Target	15/16	16/17	17/18		
				Q1	Q2	Q3
Building Regulations Applications examined within 3 weeks	95%	72%	88%	96%	86%	98%
Building Regulation Full Plan applications determined in 2 months	95%	97%	91%	84%	95%	96%