

Community Planning

Report of the Community and Strategy Officer

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendations: It is recommended that Members:

- (a) welcome the current position in relation to parish plans, agree response to newly published parish plans and continue to encourage remaining parishes to undertake parish plans;**
- (b) note the discussions that are taking place with partners to further the proposal for closer LSP working across northern Devon.**

1. Summary

This report updates on progress in developing local community action plans and updates on the continuing discussions with partners to consider the establishment of a Joint LSP for Torrige and North Devon. These developments are set in the context of the Local Government White Paper, "Strong and Prosperous Communities".

2. Introduction

Two parish plans have been published since the last meeting of the North Devon County Committee, in Littleham and Landcross and Parkham and a number of other parishes are either actively considering, or have actually determined to undertake a parish plan. The County Council, together with its partners, continues to offer every possible support to parish and town plans and will further strengthen this work through the "Connecting with Communities" programme outlined in the strategic plan. As part of this, the "Bridges Guide", an introduction to parish and town plans, has now been completed and will shortly be distributed widely across northern Devon.

3. Parish Planning Update

Devon County Council, together with its partners on the LSP, has set itself the objective of supporting all parishes that wish to do so to undertake a parish plan. Appendix I summarises the current situation across the district.

Those parishes that have recently decided to undertake a parish plan are: Milton Damerel, Sheepwash, Holsworthy Hamlets, Petrockstowe, Little Torrington and Buckland Filleigh.

Issues arising for DCC from newly published parish plans are set out in Appendix II.

4. Joint work with North Devon Community Alliance (LSP)

Members previously sanctioned, in principle, the proposal to move towards closer joint working across Torrige and North Devon, including the potential development of a Joint LSP. A meeting is scheduled for 13 December involving the Leaders and Chief Executives of the three councils and the two LSP Chairs. This meeting will consider draft Terms of Reference for a new Joint LSP and its relationship with thematic and locality partnerships. It will do so in the context of the Local Government White Paper (Appendix III) and will establish an implementation programme and timetable. The County Committee will be a formal consultee.

5. Conclusion

Devon County Council continues to make a very positive contribution to community planning work across the spectrum of parish, town and LSP activity and the leadership shown by elected members in all these contexts is highly valued. The new budget available to the Committee is demonstrably contributing to strengthening our response to the aspirations of communities across North Devon. LSP developments will offer a major opportunity to demonstrate improved two tier working and will aim to strengthen the impact of the sustainable community strategy and LAA in the area.

Ian Hobbs

Electoral Divisions: All in North Devon

Local Government Act 1972

List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
Stronger and Prosperous Communities – Local Government White Paper.		

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**Appendix I
To EEC/06/228/HQ**

There are 63 parishes in Torrington.

Total that have completed an appraisal, plan &/or other or are in progress Holsworthy Hamlets, Milton Damerel	42
Have not done an appraisal or plan and do not intend to - Dowland, Hollacombe, Luffincott & Tetcott, Newton St. Petrock, Pancrasweek, Thornbury	7
Possibly interested in commencing parish planning activity – FOR THE FIRST TIME (Alwington, Frithelstock, Black Torrington, Bulkworthy, Buckland Filleigh, Halwill, Peters Marland, Pyworthy, Little Torrington, Petrockstow, Sheepwash and Sutcombe)	12

**Appendix II
To EEC/06/228/HQ**

Parish	District	LCP	Issue	Key Words	Lead Officer	Member	Action	Progress	Review Date
Littleham & Landcross	Torr	GTMCTALCP	Speeding traffic	Highways	John Wilde/Joe Deasy	Hugo Barton	Maintain liaison re moratorium on introducing further speed limits and continuation of lobby by PC for safer A386 and A388. Need to review possibility of moving 30 mph speed limit sign in Landcross	On-going	Mar-07
Littleham & Landcross	Torr	GTMCTALCP	Street parking, state of roads, drainage and overhanging trees	Highways	John Wilde/Joe Deasy	Hugo Barton	PC will inform DCC of known Highways issues in order to improve the state of the roads and verges wherever possible. PC will look at possibility of reducing on street parking	Will wait for communication from PC	Mar-07
Parkham	Torr	GTMCTALCP ATLANTIC	Speeding Traffic	Highways	John Wilde/Joe Deasy	Humphrey Temperley	PC will continue to press Highways for 20/30mph speed limits in Horns Cross and Parkham	Maintain Liaison	Mar-07

Other issues to note for Littleham and Landcross:

PC will encourage use of Library Van

PC will publicise Classes available at Village Hall

PC will Encourage use of and investigate improvement of Public transport.

Implications of the White Paper for LSP work

Chapter 5 of the White Paper sets out the Government's intentions for LSP's. These are to:

reinforce the strategic leadership role of local government by:

- placing a duty on local authorities to prepare the LAA, in consultation with others as already is the case with the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- making clear our expectation that local authority leaders will play a leading role on LSPs – with an opportunity to agree the chair of the LSP; and
- making clear that we expect local authority executive portfolio holders to play a key role on relevant thematic partnerships;

strengthen local partnership working by:

- placing a duty on the local authority and named partners to co-operate with each other to agree targets in the LAA; and
- making clear that the Sustainable Community Strategy and other local and regional plans should have regard to each other;

put partnership working at the heart of local service delivery by:

- placing a duty on relevant named partners to have regard to relevant targets agreed between the Government and local partners in LAAs;
- bringing more area-based funding streams into the LAAs to further improve the efficiency and delivery of outcomes;
- removing the 4-funding block structure from LAAs (to be negotiated through 4 themes); and
- clarifying the role of district councils;

strengthen and simplify local arrangements for delivering responsive services and involving local people by:

- streamlining procedures for involving communities in the creation of Sustainable Community Strategies, LAA's and Local Development Frameworks (LDFs);
- improving and integrating strategic planning procedures
- setting out key principles of strategic commissioning and incentivising local authorities to focus on secure service outcomes in new imaginative ways.

The Government intends to issue one new streamlined piece of guidance on the place-shaping role, replacing existing statutory and non-statutory guidance.

Volume Two of the White Paper sets out the key themes that the Government expects to be taken into account in these arrangements. These are:

- Community safety
- Health and well-being
- Vulnerable people
- Children, young people and families
- Economic development, housing and planning
- Climate change

- The third sector

There is a major emphasis on neighbourhoods and localities and an explicit view that neighbourhood management approaches should be rolled out as evidence demonstrates that public satisfaction with services has improved in these areas. In northern Devon our work with Transform, Local Community Alliances/Partnerships, Parish and Town Plans etc puts us in a strong position to build our locality approach and reinforces the importance of their inclusion at the heart of all we do.

Implications for a Joint LSP

Some of this new direction has been signalled previously. The alignment of LAA, SCS and LDF work through LSPs is to be welcomed. In this area it will impose some challenges, particularly in fully aligning with the Devon LAA and in bringing LDF Core Strategies together, but the logic is probably greater for us than in some other parts of the region. It reinforces the intention of the DSP and LAA to continue to build on its relationship with other LSPs in Devon. This means improving the alignment between county and local priorities and greater engagement of the northern Devon community in the work of the DSP and its thematic partnerships. This will require a great deal of thought about the roles and responsibilities of all partners and leadership groups.

The key themes identified in the White Paper broadly align with existing thematic partnerships operating in this area. There is a need, however, to revisit the ToR's and membership of some of these partnerships, particularly in the context of the intention that LA Executive portfolio holders should be more engaged in their work and to think about how effectively they integrate with the LSP. Their relationship to county thematic partnerships also needs to be considered.

The biggest challenge is probably in the area of "securing service outcomes in new and imaginative ways" and exploring new ways of commissioning service delivery. There has been a good track record of innovative commissioning locally, with North Devon+ and the North Devon Theatres, Arts and Museums Trust as the most recent examples.

Increased joint service provision is implied by this, leading to something akin to "virtual unitary" authorities. In our two tier setting imaginative approaches will need to be developed to ensure that the clearest, simplest forms of community leadership and service delivery are offered to the public.

There are also extended ombudsman powers proposed, to cover all partnerships with Local Authority engagement. Therefore there will be a need to define partnerships much more clearly and to monitor their performance more rigorously. There is therefore a need to audit existing partnerships operating in the area of the joint LSP.