

TDC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2023

Consultation Responses and Review

From 11 May to 29 June 2018 Teignbridge District Council ran a consultation on the draft Economic Development Plan (EDP). This review will analyse the responses and propose suggested amendments to the draft plan. This will also be an opportunity to respond to the various comments brought up in the consultation.

CONSULTATION

Businesses, residents and TDC partners were encouraged to take part in the consultation. In order to maximise coverage of the EDP and encourage people to take part, the following actions were taken:

Survey

An online survey was set up which allowed participants to have their say on the draft EDP. A total of 28 responses were received from businesses, residents and partners, with a further 3 responses sent to the Economic Development team directly.

Social media campaign

TDC Facebook and Twitter accounts were used to promote the EDP and the consultation survey to capture an online audience. The results are as follows:

- Teignbridge Facebook: 4 posts, 11 likes, 13 shares and 3 comments
- Teignbridge Twitter: 12 posts, 10 likes, 20 retweets, 1 comment

With the average post getting anywhere between 200 and 1,000 views, it is likely that the total amount of 'views' would have been at least 10,000 throughout the duration of the consultation.

Town council meetings

Meetings were attended by TDC officers to discuss local issues, to ask councillors to participate in the consultation, and also to encourage their constituents to take part. A6 postcards were given out with a link to the survey. All of the towns in Teignbridge were invited to take part, the following meetings were subsequently attended:

- Chudleigh Town Council: 18th May 2018
- Teignmouth Town Council: 5th June 2018
- Buckfastleigh Town Council: 13th June 2018
- Newton Abbot Town Council: 20th June 2018

Business group meetings

Chambers of commerce and other business representative group meetings were attended by TDC officers to discuss local issues and ask members to participate in the consultation. A6 postcards were given out with a link to the survey. The following meetings were attended:

- Great Western BNI: 11th May 2018
- Newton Abbot and District Chamber of Commerce: 29 May 2018
- Torbay Business Forum: 5th June 2018
- Chudleigh Business Guild: 13th June 2018
- Dawlish Warren Tourism Group: 20th June 2018
- Dawlish Chamber of Trade and Commerce: 26th June 2018
- Moor Business Breakfast: 27th June 2018

Partner organisations

The Economic Development team meet regularly with counterparts at the Councils for Devon County, Torbay, Dartmoor, Exeter, East Devon and Mid Devon. The draft EDP and action plan were discussed with those colleagues throughout the development of the Plan and during the consultation.

In-house discussions

The EDP was put together with on-going input from colleagues across the Council, most notably Planning, Building Control, Environmental Health, Business Rates, Parking, Markets and Tourism. A cross-party review group was formed from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and contributed significantly in the development of the EDP draft, endorsing the published version to the Council's Executive Committee.

Direct response requests

The Economic Development team contacted a variety of partners for their thoughts along with a request to respond if they wished. Direct responses were received from:

- Heart of the South West LEP
- NFU South West

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The survey received a total of 28 responses from 19 residents, 6 businesses and 3 inputting 'other'.

The survey began with Q1. asking the participant whether they believed the draft plan will reach the aims set out in Our Vision. 11 inputted 'yes', with 10 saying 'somewhat' and 7 saying 'no'.

Participants were then asked what was missing. Below are some of the answers that were inputted:

- There were no references transport and education (areas which TDC has little or no control over).

- There were no references to parking and housing (non-economic areas which TDC covers).
- The plan is too Newton Abbot centric.
- The plan falls short of delivering specific commitments to specific projects.

The following five questions explored each of the five ventures. For each venture the participant was first asked whether they agreed with the objectives and were then asked whether they believed anything was missing.

Q2. Supporting and Networking: 15 yes, 9 somewhat, 3 no.

- There needs to be more support to initiatives before they embark on setting up a business.
- There needs to be a preference made to Teignbridge businesses for TDC procurement, even if it is slightly more expensive.
- No mention of the National Park.
- TDC need to do better at helping businesses secure funding, either through a separate department helping with applications or working more closely with Devon CC.

Q3. Driving Productivity: 17 yes, 10 somewhat, 1 no.

- Securing better broadband provision.
- There is no mention to what we mean by lengthening trading times.
- There is no mention of the need for public Wi-Fi

Q4. Building Partnership: 17 yes, 8 somewhat, 1 no

- TDCs commitments are not matched by funding, for the TCMs for example
- There is doubt regarding the effectiveness and likelihood of a peripatetic TCM.

Q5. Catalysing Growth: 17 yes, 6 somewhat, 4 no.

- Parking capacity, particularly in Teignmouth, is becoming a problem.
- Economic growth tends to result in environmental degradation.
- The planning department must not hinder growth.
- The plan is too retail centric and should focus on other important sectors, such as tourism for example.
- There are no actual project details.

Q6. Co-operative Services: 18 yes, 6 somewhat, 3 no

- Monitoring is not enough, there needs to be more mention of how this will be achieved.
- This venture is not fully explained in detail.

Question 7 asked if there was anything else the participant would like to add to improve the draft plan, some of the responses included:

- We need to preserve and upkeep public and green spaces.
- We need a more realistic affordable housing target.
- A strategy is needed for transport, roads and parking
- Business rate reliefs for high street occupants.
- We need to promote our most important sectors, such as tourism and agriculture.

Question 8 asked if there was anything else participants could think of that we could put into the action plan to fulfil our objectives, some of the responses included:

- A strategy is needed for transport and local infrastructure.
- Concentrate on education and skills of students.
- Expand street lighting by producing more green energy.
- There needs to be targets for our actions.

In addition to the survey, responses were sent directly to TDC officers. Officers also attended various meetings and events where notes were taken of the most relevant points. These points include:

- There was a lack of targets.
- There was no direct reference to education or to housing.
- TDC should do more to market the area to large (high-wage and high-skill) employers.
- TDC should develop ideas to lengthen the times of trade.
- The EDP should include the number of jobs in tourism and/or hospitality into the plan.
- TDC should use its powers through parking and business rates to support the town centres.
- The document should link to the Industrial Strategy and HotSW Productivity Strategy.
- There is no mention of mobile coverage, which remains an issue in some places and is equally important as broadband coverage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To include:

- We should mention procurement and a commitment for fair and transparent tendering processes which offer value for money to the taxpayer whilst also supporting local business. (Venture: Supporting and Networking? Bullet point 2 can be deleted).
- We need to mention Dartmoor NPA under the Building Partnerships venture (bullet point 3).
- We need to clarify what we mean by 'lengthening trading times' under Driving Productivity.
- We should acknowledge environmental and ecological constraints, perhaps by committing to a 'circular economy' for Teignbridge. (A third aim for Our Vision?).
- We should mention our aim to improve mobile coverage under Driving Productivity. (Under bullet point 1?).

Not to include:

- We should not include specific targets in the Action Plan, as economic indicators are more likely to be influenced by national/global pressures rather than TDC actions.
- We should avoid mentioning areas where TDC has little or no control over, such as education, transport and setting business rates. We already mention our commitment to supporting skills (apprenticeships), supporting infrastructure projects as and when they are proposed and using our limited business rate relief powers.
- We should avoid expanding any more on other TDC responsibilities with limited implications for economic development, such as parking and housing for example.

Things to consider:

- How can we make the plan less Newton Abbot centric?
- How else can we link the plan to the Industrial Strategy and HotSW Productivity Strategy?