

**Teignbridge District Council
Full Council
28 November 2023
Part i**

Joint Strategy for East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge

Purpose of Report

To approve the Joint Strategy for East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee **RESOLVES** to:

Approve the Joint Strategy (Appendix 1) subject to this being agreed by the partner authorities, with delegated authority given to the Director of Place and Commercial Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning to make any amendments arising from the resolution of the other authorities provided these do not materially alter the content of the document.

Financial Implications

These are as set out in section 2.1

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Legal Implications

These are as set out in section 2.2

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Risk Assessment

These are as set out in section 2.3

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Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

These are as set out in section 2.4

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Executive Member

Executive Member for Planning (Cllr Gary Taylor)

Appendices

1. Joint Strategy for East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge (the 'Shared Coordinates')
2. Stakeholder Consultation Responses
3. Equality Impact Assessment

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the Joint Strategy for East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge. The Strategy sets out the strategic and cross boundary planning challenges across the Exeter sub-region, and how we will collectively respond to them.

2. REPORT DETAIL

2.1. Financial

- 2.1.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the approval of the Joint Strategy. The preparation of the Joint Strategy has been funded from the financial contributions previously made from East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge District Council for the purpose of collaborative working on planning documents, technical evidence and studies.

2.2. Legal

- 2.2.1 The need for Teignbridge to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities on strategic planning matters is established by the 2011 Localism Act and the NPPF, which set out that local authorities have a legal Duty to Cooperate with other local authorities and organisations to seek to address strategic planning matters that are driven by larger-than-local issues and are likely to have an impact beyond the immediate District. Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that to maximise effective working on strategic matters throughout the preparation of plans, authorities have a duty to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis.

2.3. Risks

- 2.3.1 The Joint Strategy has been jointly prepared by four authorities, with support from Devon County Council. This means that Committee decisions will be required from the four authorities at similar times to enable the Joint Strategy to be approved across the Exeter, East Devon

Mid Devon and Teignbridge area. There is a risk that one or more of the authorities does not approve the Joint Strategy. To help avoid this eventuality, officers have been working with their relevant Executive Members to discuss the Joint Strategy's content and intended purpose and the decision-making pathway for its approval.

- 2.3.2 A risk of not approving the Joint Strategy is that the Council will be without a jointly agreed document with other Councils that will be capable of being used to demonstrate continued collaborative working and shared ambitions across a range of strategic priorities and for the delivery of infrastructure. This may be to detriment of seeking to secure funding for infrastructure projects from Government and other potential sources.

2.4. Environmental/Climate Change Impact

- 2.4.1. The Joint Strategy includes shared ambitions to help mitigate the effects of and adapt to climate change and move towards a net zero carbon future.
- 2.4.2. Climate change mitigation and adaptation should form a key part of joint planning work. By its nature, climate change cannot be addressed by one authority working in isolation. Measures to tackle climate change also need to acknowledge cross- boundary transport movements and other strategic matters. The Joint Strategy supports the Devon Carbon Plan and considers the carbon emissions and climate change impacts of development and transport over a wider area than just Teignbridge. Because of this, the Joint Strategy can be more beneficial to climate change policy compared with seeking to achieve carbon neutrality in just one district.

2.5. Background

- 2.5.1. Consultants LDA Design have prepared a non-statutory Joint Strategy, called 'Our Shared Coordinates', following instruction from Exeter City, East Devon, Mid Devon and Teignbridge district Councils and which has been supported by Devon County Council. This has followed decisions taken by each Council's respective committee(s) in the summer / autumn of 2021, which gave approval for the preparation of a Joint Strategy for the planning administrative areas of the four authorities. Teignbridge District Council approved the preparation of the Joint Strategy at its meeting on 20th September 2021 following a recommendation from the Executive meeting held on 16th September 2021.
- 2.5.2. The Joint Strategy reflects the ambitions and proposals of existing and emerging Local Plans. It sets out shared ambitions across a range of strategic planning matters across the four local authority planning areas, together with a high-level list of infrastructure matters that have cross-boundary significance for supporting the delivery of planned new homes, jobs, services, transport and other development. The purpose of the Joint Strategy is to:
- Demonstrate the joined-up strategy and policy approach the Councils have taken across the functional area.
 - Articulate the clear benefits of working together as a cohesive area to address strategic opportunities and challenges.
 - Serve as the starting point for identifying key strategic infrastructure and funding challenges.
 - Provide a framework for more wider collaboration with key stakeholders who are central to the spatial place-making agenda in the area.
- 2.5.3. The Joint Strategy will benefit the four Councils through helping to establish a recognisable 'brand' and serve as a prospectus for the area,

which may assist when making bids for Government (or other) infrastructure and delivery funding.

3. Content of the Joint Strategy

3.1.1. The Joint Strategy is a 32-page document, which includes a 'Vision', a 'spatial strategy' and an ambition to position the area as one of the best places to live and work in the UK. To achieve this ambition, the Joint Strategy identifies six 'shared coordinates' for delivering sustainable growth which responds to the area's strategic challenges and opportunities:

- Net Zero
- Quality Places
- Jobs and Prosperity
- Nature
- Homes
- Connectivity

3.1.2. Each of the six shared coordinates are explained in their respective chapters, together with references to initiatives for each that are supported through existing and emerging Local Plans. The Joint Strategy is not a development plan document, and as such does not set policies for the development and use of land and buildings or include site allocations for development. It will not be used as a decision-making tool for planning applications. This will be the role of Local Plans prepared by the four authorities and neighbourhood plans prepared by local communities.

3.1.3. The importance of investment in infrastructure (such as transport, green infrastructure, utilities, and health care) to support growth is a cross cutting theme throughout the document. To this end the Joint Strategy includes a high-level list of strategic infrastructure matters that have cross boundary significance, where the four authorities will continue to work in

partnership and with Government agencies, transport and utilities providers to secure funding and investment:

- SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) and nature recovery network provision.
- Strategic waste water and water supply improvements
- Strategic energy grid improvements for import, export and distribution.
- District heating investments.
- Education improvements-primary, secondary, further, higher and special educational needs.
- Strategic healthcare provision.
- New railway stations and line improvements.
- Strategic active travel routes and trails.
- Multi-modal Exeter transport package.

3.1.4. More detail about infrastructure matters can be included in each authority's Infrastructure Funding Statements and Infrastructure Delivery Plans.

3.1.5. The Joint Strategy will be capable of being updated overtime, including its high-level list of infrastructure matters.

4. Groups Consulted

4.1.1. The Joint Strategy has been subject to a focused consultation with identified key stakeholders. The focused consultation with key stakeholders has served to raise awareness of the Joint Strategy and its intended purpose. Key stakeholders have included:

- Natural England
- Historic England
- Environment Agency

- National Health Service
- South West Water
- National Grid
- Western Power (now National Grid Electricity Distribution)
- Network Rail
- National Highways
- Active Travel England
- Devon County Council (as Local Education Authority, Local Transport Authority, and Minerals and Waste Planning Authority)
- Devon Housing Commission
- Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership
- Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership
- East Devon AONB Partnership

4.1.2. Comments have been received from 12 of the key stakeholders consulted. These comments are detailed in Appendix 2, together with responses to these and changes made to the Joint Strategy where it has been agreed these are necessary.

4.1.3. The Joint Strategy has not been subject to a public consultation since it does not introduce new policy or alter the content of existing and emerging Local Plans, which have themselves already been subject to public consultations at key stages in their preparation and independent examinations.

4.1.4. The Council's Officer Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) has considered the Joint Strategy at its meeting on 25th October 2023 and has endorsed the recommendation in this report.

5. Options

5.1. Consideration of alternative options

- 5.1.1. The only alternative is to not approve the Strategy as the work has already been undertaken and fully funded.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1. The approval of the Joint Strategy is a positive step in responding to the strategic planning and infrastructure challenges facing the district and wider sub-regional area. The Strategy demonstrates proactive and cooperative working with our Duty to Cooperate partners and in so doing will support the progression of the Local Plan through its examination. It is therefore recommended that the Joint Strategy be approved.