



Sustainable Community Strategy for Devon

Evidence Base

Summary of Issues for Devon

Consultation draft

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**Devon Strategic Partnership
Sustainable Community Strategy – Evidence Base**

The Key Issues for Devon – Summary document

Context

Devon is a great place to live – but not all aspects of life are good for everybody, and action sometimes needs to be taken together in order to solve some of the more difficult problems, and to shape plans to ensure Devon becomes what people want in the future. This is the role of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Devon.

Community Plans, of which the Sustainable Community Strategy for Devon is an example, are all about partnership; about working together to find solutions to those problems that affect the quality of life of residents that cannot be solved by one individual, organisation or group working by itself. However they are concerned with more than just issues; they are also about developing a vision for the future that can inspire future work. This will ensure that we are not just looking at today's issues, but are also shaping the future in an imaginative way. Community Plans work at various levels – parish plans are prepared by residents to draw out the issues facing a locality. Some market towns develop plans to steer future projects and regeneration in their town and its hinterland. District and County Councils have a statutory obligation to prepare Community Plans but the way they are produced is through the Local Strategic Partnerships or LSPs. LSPs are good examples of working in partnership, with each LSP drawing its membership from key agencies across their area, plus representatives of many sectors of the population. In Devon there are LSPs in each of the 8 district/city authorities, plus LSPs in the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay. At County level, the Devon Strategic Partnership looks at Devon wide working, and this evidence base forms part of the Devon Strategic Partnership's work to develop a new Sustainable Community Strategy for Devon. (Community Plans are now referred to as Sustainable Community Strategies, with an increased importance placed on promoting social, economic, and environmental sustainability). When this evidence base, which shows the issues facing Devon, is married with the Vision for Devon in the Future that is being developed, the foundation will be set for the emergence of a Sustainable Community Strategy for Devon, and a new Local Area Agreement to help deliver it.

The evidence base for Devon brings together many views on the strategic priorities for Devon. This document attempts to summarise those issues as they are currently evidenced. However, this is the start of a consultation process, and responses will be sought from the public, from partners and from those involved in taking action for Devon. **With your help, we can fill gaps, and make changes to ensure this evidence base is as complete as we can make it.** As we publish this draft version we already know that there are issues we need to explore further, such as issues from parishes, and issues relating to vulnerable groups. These will be included in the consultation process.

Format

This document takes various themes and for each one:

- Provides a theme analysis, which has been produced by some of the experts working in the area and which summarises and provides evidence to show the issues facing Devon
- Provides a summary of issues raised by an analysis of other strategies:
 - issues still live from the DSP's current 2004 Community Strategy for Devon
 - issues raised by a review of District Community Strategies, also the strategic plans of partner organisations, and notes
 - issues raised in regional strategies

From these, the key issues for Devon can be highlighted.

- As a Sustainable Community Strategy, it is important that issues are not considered in isolation but also show how they contribute to the environmental, economic and social sustainability of Devon. The solutions to some issues may well involve a cross cutting approach. Many issues are not linked to just one theme so this document then notes the links to cross cutting themes, in particular the following:

Environmental sustainability - Climate Change
Making Devon Greener

Economic sustainability - Improving Devon's economy
Overcoming deprivation

Social sustainability - Adapting to demographic change
Equality and social inclusion

Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities

These specific cross cutting themes are proposed only as a starting point for discussion, as they show a great deal of synergy with the issues being raised.

There are a large number of issues raised, and no attempt has been made to prioritise the issues here, as this is designed to be a factual base which can be used as a basis for later prioritisation by DSP and by other partners to influence action planning.

Summary of each theme

1 Economy

a. **The theme analysis** can be found [here](#)

b. **Issues** The summary of issues brought forward from other strategies can be found [here](#)

c. **Summary**

The theme analysis above shows the following issues as being important to Devon:

i. **Demographic change manifested as:**

1. in migration and population growth
2. related employment provision
3. types of housing and services Provision (and relation to and ageing population)
4. planning issues
5. transport and infrastructure provision

ii. **Earnings and house prices** including:

1. low overall levels of average earnings
2. higher earnings in some districts
3. distribution of high and low paid jobs and accessibility to these
4. high house prices

iii. **Levels of deprivation** manifested as:

1. pockets of high levels of deprivation with concentrations in particular communities
2. differing types of deprivation in different communities
3. difficulty in linking economic opportunity and success to all members of communities
4. integrated solutions to issues required
5. changing funding streams

iv. **Business productivity, including environment as an economic driver** including:

1. low overall levels of business productivity and low growth forecast
2. a massive difference between best and worst performing areas
3. Exeter doing well, but no room for complacency
4. North Devon and South Hams improving from a low base
5. Torridge has extremely low productivity and a strong relative downward trend
6. need to monitor performance of other Districts – particularly Mid Devon, ensuring relative business productivity grows
7. peripherality
8. outdated brand regarding the perception of Devon
9. how to capitalise on Devon's underused assets i.e. environmental quality
10. changing funding streams

v. **Employment including skills**

1. unemployment including underemployment
2. high levels of self employment
3. low levels of NVQ4+ qualified in Torridge and North Devon and links to low earnings and business productivity

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4. changing skills and employment needs in response to globalisation and commercial pressures
5. high levels with no qualifications in East Devon and North Devon
6. Jobs matching skills. Low levels of Knowledge (KE) based employment in Northern and Western Devon
7. increasing role for social enterprise
8. funding streams
9. need for planning support to increase suitable employment sites

Other issues raised by district and other strategies and carried forward from the 2004 Community Strategy) include:

- vi. **'Infrastructure' type issues** (varied - see [summary of issues document](#))
- vii. **Sustainable transport.**

d. Links to Cross Cutting Themes

There are links from the Economy theme to the cross cutting themes as shown below.

EXAMPLE: The table below shows that employment including skills is not just an economic problem and this should be acknowledged when considering how to act.

	Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon's economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities
		Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
1	Demographic change	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Earnings and house prices			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Levels of deprivation			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Business productivity, including environment as an economic driver	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
5	Employment including skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Sustainable transport	✓	✓	✓				✓

2 Environment

a. **The theme analysis** can be found [here](#)

b. **Issues** The summary of issues brought forward from other strategies can be found [here](#)

c. **Summary**

The theme analysis above shows the following issues as being important to Devon:

- i. **Climate change** is the number one environmental challenge that we face over the next five years and beyond. It is real and it is happening now. The scientific evidence is irrefutable and the impacts are already being felt. Temperatures are increasing, sea levels are already rising and there are changes in seasonal rainfall patterns, increasing the risk of flooding. Climate change will have a major impact on the environment and has the potential to undermine the environmental improvements that have been achieved in recent years.
- ii. **Flood risk.** The risk of flooding is likely to increase. More than 15% of properties in Devon are in flood risk areas (greater or lesser).
- iii. **Waste** There is a growing amount of waste produced which has implications for disposal, sustainability, waste of natural resources and pollution. Reducing the amount of waste and increasing recycling and composting are priorities.
- iv. **Soils and run – off.** Agricultural pollution is the single biggest cause of water quality problems in Devon, particularly in the Axe, Exe, Taw and Torridge catchments. It also contributes to failures in Bathing Water Quality standards and impacts on shellfisheries. Run-off from land can increase flood risk, pollute rivers and harm aquatic wildlife, for example by smothering fish spawning gravels e.g. those in the River Torridge. Nitrate levels in groundwater have been steadily rising as a result of the increased application of fertilisers to agricultural land.
- v. **Habitat fragmentation.** Devon still contains a significant number of wildlife rich sites, but they are mostly fragments of a historically much richer, more extensive and largely contiguous suite of habitats. The issues are that they are not all recorded, protected, that there is no overall blueprint for management, and that they are particularly vulnerable to climate change.

Other issues raised by district and other strategies and carried forward from the 2004 Community Strategy) include:

- vi. **Improving the built environment and public spaces.** Issues around use of and access to public space, and improving the quality of the built environment, in terms of regeneration, standard and sustainability of new build.
- vii. **Transport, congestion and air quality.** Transport is an issue that cuts across several themes, but in terms of environment is particularly relevant in terms of congestion and pollution.

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- viii. **Biodiversity issues** (linked to habitat fragmentation above)
- ix. **Funding: the need to lobby** for a fair proportion of agri-economic expenditure in Devon, and **the need for funding** for the advisory function.

d. Links to Cross Cutting Themes

There are links from the Environment theme to the cross cutting themes as shown below.

EXAMPLE: The table below shows that transport congestion and air quality is not just an environmental problem and this should be acknowledged when considering how to act

Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon's economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities
	Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
Climate change	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Flooding	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Waste	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Soils and run-off	✓	✓					
Habitat fragmentation	✓	✓					
Built environment	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Transport, congestion and air quality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3 Strong Communities

- a. **The theme analysis** can be found [here](#)
- b. **Issues** The summary of issues brought forward from other strategies can be found [here](#)

c. Summary

The theme analysis above shows the following issues as being important to Devon:

- i. **Participation, involvement and influence** Although there is much excellent practice across a range of organisations, there is no overall strategy which ensures that people feel able to influence decisions which affect them and their local area.
- ii. **Equalities and diversity** There is considerable evidence that despite legislation to outlaw discrimination and to enable positive action to support people from minority groups within Devon's communities, a large number of people experience reduced life chances as a result of their particular characteristic.
- iii. **Accessible services** Accessibility of services is not only about the location of key services, but also about how easy people find it to get information about them and how to access them. When we talk about services we are referring mainly to public services such as health, social care, housing, education and training, and general advice services, but also to key shopping facilities and leisure and cultural activities. These are equally important aspects of life which contribute to people's sense of well being.
- iv. **Community development** In some respects community development underpins other issues, not only within the Strong Communities theme, but also through other Sustainable Community Strategy themes.

d. Links to Cross Cutting Themes

There are links from the Strong Communities theme to the cross cutting themes as shown below.

EXAMPLE: The table below shows that accessibility of services is not just an social problem and this should be acknowledged when considering how to act.

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	Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon's economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities
		Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
	Participation, involvement and influence				✓	✓	✓	✓
	Equalities and diversity			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Accessible services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Community development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

5 A Safer Devon

- a. **The theme analysis** can be found [here](#)
- b. **Issues** The summary of issues brought forward from other strategies can be found [here](#)
- c. **Summary**

The theme analysis above shows the following issues as being important to Devon:

- i. **Volume Crime** The impact of re-offending committed by adults and young people more specifically Priority and Prolific Offenders (PPO). We need to reduce this figure by providing a robust and consistent service across the whole area.
- ii. **Domestic Violence** The issue for Devon is that domestic abuse has a major financial impact on all agencies' services and undermines the well-being of significant sections of the population. Services and policies have been developed over the last four years but need sustaining and building more comprehensively into mainstream activity
- iii. **Alcohol/ Drugs** Lack of adequate prioritisation and funding for local alcohol treatment and projects, due to national absence of both.
- iv. **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)** In order to tackle ASB effectively, all agencies need to be signed up to taking action, from an early preventative stage right through to setting boundaries and enforcing an acceptable standard of behaviour. Whilst single agencies have responsibilities, there are multiple risk factors associated with ASB perpetrators and this requires a joined up response from all agencies
- v. **Prejudice and hate crime** The issue for Devon is that activity on the impact of prejudice on minority communities has not so far been led by a co-ordinated strategy or clear county-wide action plan.
- vi. **Youth crime** To reduce the number of Devon's children and young people who enter the youth justice system
- vii. **Fear of crime** General public perception that crime and anti-social behaviour is a bigger problem than crime data would show. This fear can impede quality of life and well-being for some sections of the community.

d. Links to Cross Cutting Themes

There are links from the Safer Devon theme to the cross cutting themes as shown below.

EXAMPLE: The table below shows that prejudice and hate crime is not just a safety problem and this should be acknowledged when considering how to act

Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon's economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities

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		Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
	Volume crime			✓	✓		✓	✓
	Domestic Violence			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Alcohol/ drugs			✓	✓		✓	✓
	ASB			✓	✓		✓	✓
	Prejudice and Hate crime			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Youth Crime			✓	✓		✓	✓
	Fear of crime			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

6 Children and Young People. Issues associated with this theme will be included at a later date.

7 Older People Issues associated with this theme will be included at a later date.

8 Housing

a. **The theme analysis** can be found [here](#)

b. **Issues** The summary of issues brought forward from other strategies can be found [here](#)

c. **Summary**

The theme analysis above shows the following issues as being important to Devon:

- i. **Increasing Housing Delivery.** Devon's Housing is some of the least affordable housing in England. Demand for housing is high with a continued net in-migration and a rise in single person households, the fastest growth being amongst the elderly. Supply has not kept pace with demand which has led to unaffordable housing for first time buyers and high private sectors rent levels in many parts of Devon, particularly the County's more rural areas.
- ii. **Achieving Good Quality Homes.** Good quality homes are needed for new developments and for the existing housing stock in both the private and social sectors. If more housing is to be built, at higher densities it is important to mitigate the impact of development on the environment and climate change through good design and improvements in energy efficiency. Improvements to existing homes can make an important contribution to greater energy efficiency.
- iii. **Reducing Homelessness.** The shortage of good quality, affordable housing is a significant cause of homelessness and overcrowding. Devon needs to increase the housing options for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This requires Local Authorities to continue to increase and improve current homelessness prevention initiatives and work to increase access to alternative accommodation e.g. private rented sector. It is also important that households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness have access to the right kind and level of support to enable them to sustain accommodation independently.
- iv. **Making More Efficient Use of Existing Stock.** The increase in demand for affordable housing is unlikely to be met by increasing supply alone. Strategies and joint working is needed in order to make better use of the existing stock. This will involve reducing the amount of long term empty homes, monitoring the level of Right to Buy Sales, having efficient social lettings policies, encouraging the development of good quality, well managed, private rented sector and developing appropriate policy responses for managing the impact of second homes and holiday lets and enabling appropriate move-on from supported housing schemes.

d. Links to Cross Cutting Themes

There are links from the Housing theme to the cross cutting themes as shown below.

EXAMPLE: The table below shows that homelessness is not just a housing problem and this should be acknowledged when considering how to act.

	Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon's economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities
		Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
1	Increasing Housing Delivery.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Achieving Good Quality Homes.	✓	✓				✓	✓
3	Reducing Homelessness.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Making More Efficient Use of Existing Stock.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

9 A Healthier Devon

- a. **The theme analysis** will be posted shortly on this website
- b. **Issues** The summary of issues brought forward from other strategies can be found

c. Summary

The theme analysis above shows the following issues as being important to Devon:

- i. **Accidental Injury**
- ii. **Emotional Wellbeing**
- iii. **Health Protection and Emergency Planning**
- iv. **Health Inequalities**
- v. **Obesity**
- vi. **Smoking**
- vii. **Sexual Health**
- viii. **Sensible Drinking**

d. Links to Cross Cutting Themes

There are links from the Healthier Devon theme to the cross cutting themes as shown below.

EXAMPLE: The table below shows health protection and emergency planning is not just a health problem and this should be acknowledged when considering how to act.

Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon's economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities
	Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
Accidental Injury			✓				
Emotional Wellbeing			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Health Protection and Emergency Planning	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health Inequalities			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Obesity		✓	✓			✓	✓
Smoking			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sexual Health				✓		✓	
Sensible Drinking			✓	✓	✓	✓	

10 Culture

a. The theme analysis can be found [here](#)

b. **Issues** The summary of issues brought forward from other strategies can be found [here](#)

c. Summary

The theme analysis above shows the following issues as being important to Devon:

- i. **Better integration of cultural provision across Devon**
- ii. **Improving access to cultural opportunities**
- iii. **identifying standards of cultural entitlement**

Other issues raised by district and other strategies and carried forward from the 2004 Community Strategy) include:

- iv. **Enhance and promote Devon’s reputation** as home for high quality cultural experiences and enterprises
- v. **Issues around the preservation and promotion of Devon’s heritage**

d. Links to Cross Cutting Themes

There are links from the Culture theme to the cross cutting themes as shown below.

EXAMPLE: The table below shows that improving access to cultural experiences has wide implications and this should be acknowledged when considering how to act

	Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon’s economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon’s communities
		Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
1	Better integration of cultural provision across Devon		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Improving access to cultural opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	identifying standards of cultural entitlement						✓	✓
	Enhance & promote Devon’s reputation as home for high quality cultural experiences & enterprises						✓	✓

11 Prosperity from Sustainable Energy and a Low Carbon Future

- a. **The theme analysis** can be found [here](#)
- b. **Issues** The summary of issues brought forward from other strategies can be found [here](#)

c. Summary

There are three interrelated energy issues for Devon as follows

- i. Devon needs to **reduce** its share of **emissions** urgently
- ii. Devon needs to **realise the economic benefits of moving to a low carbon economy** by reducing energy use, improving energy efficiency and creating opportunities for business growth through development of low carbon technologies, such as renewable energy;
- iii. Devon needs to **protect the health and well being of vulnerable individuals by eliminating fuel poverty**, caused by increasing energy costs, low incomes and poorly insulated and heated homes.

d. Links to Cross Cutting Themes

There are links from the Sustainable Energy theme to the cross cutting themes as shown below.

EXAMPLE: The table below shows that sustainable energy and a low carbon future has wide implications and this should be acknowledged when considering how to act.

Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon's economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities
	Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
Reducing emissions	✓	✓	✓				✓
A low carbon economy	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Fuel poverty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

12 Transport and accessibility

a. Issues. Transport and accessibility is a subject whose issues are connected very closely with every theme. However, we have not included a theme analysis relating to the subject as The Local Transport Plan 2006-11 “Devon on the Move” is a comprehensive document that has already recognised these links and has action in place or planned to address many issues; much of this action is in partnership. A theme analysis would reiterate what is in the Local Transport Plan. It is probably also not appropriate for transport and access to be a cross cutting issue. However we will be continuing to seek to maximise opportunities for partnership working where beneficial.

b. Local Transport Plan

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/transport/devon_local_transport_plan/dltp_20062011.htm :

1. Aims:

- a. Supporting the Spatial Strategy within Devon
- b. Addressing the travel needs of all sectors of the community
- c. Improving the safety and effectiveness of Devon’s transport networks
- d. Reducing the environmental impact of travel

2. Objectives:

- a. Tackling Traffic Congestion
- b. Delivering accessibility
- c. Making roads safer
- d. Improving air quality
- e. Improving recreation, leisure, tourism
- f. Promoting health and wellbeing
- g. Improving public services

c. Links to Cross Cutting Issues and Other Themes

As explained above, transport and accessibility links to all other themes and to the cross cutting themes as shown below. The Strong Communities theme analysis includes further discussion of accessibility.

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Cross cutting Issue	Climate Change	Making Devon Greener	Improving Devon's economy	Overcoming deprivation	Adapting to demographic change	Equality and social inclusion	Rural/ urban issues – looking after Devon's communities
	Environmental Sustainability		Economic Sustainability		Social Sustainability		
Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accessibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Theme	Economy	Environment	Housing	Children and Young People	Older People	Safer Devon	Health
Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accessibility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Theme	Culture	Energy	Strong Communities				
Transport	✓	✓	✓				
Accessibility	✓		✓				

13 Areas not yet included It is recognised that not everything will have been covered in this set of documents. During the period January – March 2007, we would encourage comments to be made about the evidence base and any gaps identified. During this time we are already planning to include further information about **issues from parishes** and **issues relating to vulnerable/ disadvantaged groups of people** as well as uploading the outstanding theme information.

14 Conclusion

Although there are clearly areas where more work is needed, it should be noted that there is much to celebrate in Devon, and it is still considered one of the best counties in England to live, and that most residents enjoy living here. This evidence base aims to highlight the issues facing Devon, so that future planning and partnership working can seek to address them, and improve further the quality of life for those living in the county. This summary paper should be read in conjunction with the other documents that comprise the evidence base to give a complete picture of the information gathered to date. As it is web based, we have the advantage of being able to update the information and add to it over time so it remains relevant.