



Mid Devon's Community Plan



promoting achievement,
tackling disadvantage





Mid Devon

The district of Mid Devon covers an area of 353 square miles (914sq km) in the heartland of Devon. It extends from the edges of Dartmoor in the south west to Exmoor in the north east.

Broadly speaking the population of Mid Devon (estimated at 68,600 in 2001) is located around the river valleys which are the main landscape feature of the area. The principal towns of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton provide a focus for large rural hinterlands.

In common with most other places the district is an area of contrasts with rural sitting alongside urban and areas of economic and social advantage being adjacent to areas of comparative disadvantage.



This plan is about the future of Mid Devon

The focus of this Community Plan is not on any particular organisation but on the needs and priorities of the people and communities of Mid Devon. It comes from a simple concept:

If all organisations work with the people and communities of Mid Devon to agree on what the important issues are and what needs to be done to deal with them; and if we agree to tackle these priorities together, then we have the best possible chance of success.

The production of a Community Plan is now a legal duty for all county and district councils. It should contain a locally agreed vision about what needs to be done to improve the quality of life. This first Community Plan has been produced by a partnership of local organisations called the Mid Devon Community Planning Alliance. It is through this Alliance that Mid Devon District Council and Devon County Council will jointly deliver their legal duty. The Alliance so far includes:

- Devon County Council
- Mid Devon District Council
- Mid Devon Primary Care Trust
- Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
- Devon and Cornwall Probation Service
- The Environment Agency
- Representatives from town and parish councils
- Representatives from the voluntary sector
- Representatives from local businesses.



About this plan



The purpose of this plan is to make measurable improvements to the economic, environmental and social conditions in Mid Devon and to improve quality of life for everyone. This document is a first attempt to bring together the views, ideas and aspirations of the people of Mid Devon, with proposals and action statements from organisations that deliver a range of services that affect you. Public opinion surveys, Best Value service reviews and the Government's Rural White Paper have also contributed to its contents. It is an overarching framework for other, more detailed, plans so does not cover every issue. It adds up to a vision for the future of Mid Devon. Priorities and targets for improvement have been separated into eight categories to reflect your priorities and those of central Government:

- Achieving a safer community
- Improving travel choices and making roads safer
- Investing in children and young people
- Achieving a healthy and caring community
- Working for increased prosperity
- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Improving cultural activities and lifelong learning
- Providing better information and undertaking consultation

Targets for improvement, many of which are set nationally, are set against current levels of performance and details of these are available by writing to the address on page 22.

Developing the Community Planning Process

The agreement of issues, priorities, targets and the vision is a starting point. The next step is for organisations to work together on actions and to generate and allocate resources to achieve the targets. The targets are not static. Our aim is for continuous improvement and a task group has been set up for each of the eight categories.

Meanwhile, Mid Devon's Community Planning Alliance will seek the views of local people to find out whether the statements in this plan really do reflect a vision for Mid Devon. We will also encourage as many people as possible to get involved in actions to make Mid Devon an even better place to live.

In seeking these views, councils and other partners will be careful not to raise expectations that cannot be met. This is because councils and other agencies do not have limitless resources and have Central Government expectations and targets to meet and legal restrictions placed upon them.

Leading on from this the Mid Devon Community Planning Alliance will develop a 'Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal' where the most disadvantaged localities will be identified and resources targeted toward them.

The Government expects the Community Planning Alliance to encourage Parish and Town Councils to use this overarching Mid Devon Community Plan as a framework for producing their own Parish and Town Plans to help improve quality of life and create and maintain vibrant communities.

Because of the importance of the issues set out in this plan, progress toward the targets set out in this plan will be reported in an annual report to the people of Mid Devon.

On page 22 you will find an address to write to if you wish to comment on, or find out information about the plan or about how to get involved in the community planning process.

This plan has been produced based on our current knowledge and consultation processes. We want to improve the way we are involved with communities in Mid Devon and we intend to work with them to ensure that areas for improvement set out in this plan are effectively shaped by people's local visions and views.



Achieving a safer community



About the area

Crime levels in Mid Devon are significantly lower than the national average and most other areas of Devon in terms of burglaries, violence, vandalism, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour. Although Mid Devon is one of the safest parts of the country, the fear of crime is very real, particularly amongst more vulnerable people. No matter where you live and whatever the crime levels, local agencies and communities can do more to reduce levels of crime and disorder and the fear of it. This also applies to reducing the impact on property and lives of fires caused by carelessness or accident.

The Crime and Disorder Act provided a framework for a new way of empowering local people to fight against crime and disorder. It gave the police, local authorities and other partners new responsibilities to help prevent crime and disorder by working in partnership. The Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership, which includes representatives from police, district and county councils, health, probation and others, was formed in 1998. After a detailed crime audit and consultation, these priorities for action were agreed:

Priorities and concerns

- Contact with local police officers
- Vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- Domestic burglary and vehicle crime
- Crimes committed by young people
- That the number of fires and fire casualties is reduced, along with the number of false alarms
- Violence and in particular the need to increase the reporting of domestic violence
- Violence and intimidation against minority groups



Targets for improving services and the quality of life

Reduce crime and disorder

By 31st March 2002:

- Reduce the number of domestic burglaries by 8%
- Reduce the number of thefts from motor vehicles by 8%
- Reduce the number of vehicle thefts by 8%
- Reduce the number of public disorder incidents by 2%
- Restrict the increase in violent crime to 6%

Increase fire safety

- Reduce the number of fires to a rate of 52.9 per 10,000 population by 2004
- Reduce the number of accidental dwelling house fires and associated casualties
- By 2001/2 ensure that target time for the attendance at fire incidents are achieved 96% of the time

Work towards safer communities

- Introduce measures to reduce the fear of crime and in all new developments work to 'design out' crime
- Reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour by acting quickly to introduce measures with local communities

- Extend the domestic violence drop-in advice and support centre initiative to Crediton and Cullompton
- Increase reporting of racist/homophobic incidents by 50%
- Increase reporting of domestic violence incidents by 10%
- Develop a rural crime action team
- Increase the number of Neighbourhood Watch schemes by 5%
- Tackle drug-related crime and stifle the availability of Class A and B drugs

Tackle disadvantage

- Identify neighbourhoods where crime levels are high and work with residents to reduce crime
- Hold Home Safety seminars to make carers of vulnerable people aware of safety and prevention measures
- Maintain the 'Handyperson Scheme' to provide home security solutions for vulnerable people
- Work towards every council house having secure windows and doors by 2006
- Assist up to 30 council house residents, who live in the most vulnerable situations, by the provision of security lighting



Improving travel choices and making roads safer

About the area

Broadly speaking, the population of Mid Devon is located around three valleys where the market towns of Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton are the focal points for social and economic activity. Mid Devon is a very rural area and hills provide a natural barrier between the main towns. As most of the population live in small settlements away from these towns, this presents considerable challenges in providing transport opportunities for everyone.

Priorities and concerns

- Convenient and safe alternatives to driving to work, school and shops
- Safer routes for cyclists and pedestrians
- Keep driving speeds down
- Apply weight limits to roads where appropriate
- Link different forms of transport, for instance, co-ordinate rail and bus timetables
- Reduce traffic congestion in Crediton and Cullompton
- More community transport and social car schemes
- More bus services, particularly in the evenings and at weekends
- Better maintained roads
- Retain, improve and develop train services
- Improve and develop bus information and bus shelters
- Improve access for people with disabilities
- Better and cheaper public transport for the elderly, disabled, young people and those on low incomes
- Ensure land use planning processes consider transport initiatives and implications
- Reduce the environmental impact of transport



Targets for improving services and the quality of life

Improve safety

- Reduce the number of fatal and serious road accidents by 40% by 2010
- Consider introducing 20 mph speed limits in consultation with local people and partners
- Complete the 'Safer Journeys to Schools' programme by 2006
- Improve roads and footpaths every year
- Make sure street lights work properly

Promote participation, sustainability and access to services for everyone

- Support employers to develop and implement Green Travel Plans
- Identify and implement the best solutions to traffic problems in Crediton and Cullompton
- Implement a car parking strategy by 2003
- Extend and increase use of cycle routes every year
- Review the bus network, associated information services and identify opportunities for improvement by 2003
- Increase the number of bus stops with enhanced facilities
- Establish a Rural Transport Partnership supported by a Development Officer by 2002
- Improve transport to and from medical facilities
- Work with the railway industry and others to influence the quality of the rail network in Mid Devon

Tackle disadvantage

- Promote new community car/ transport schemes where they are needed
- Maintain funding for Community Transport Schemes



Investing in children and young people



About the area

In Mid Devon, more than a quarter of the population are under the age of 25 - the highest rate in Devon. Almost half of them live in the three main towns, with the remainder in rural areas and having difficulty getting services and social and leisure opportunities. There are more than 100 youth organisations in the area. Reflecting the national situation, pockets of social and economic disadvantage sit alongside areas of advantage.

Priorities and concerns

- Improve access to quality learning and childcare provision for under fives
- High achievement in schools
- Smaller classes in schools
- Better support for children and young people with additional needs
- Ensure all young people have access to a better range of youth services and activities
- Promote children and young people's awareness of issues such as personal safety, security, causes of poverty, health, drugs, alcohol and civic responsibility
- Better and cheaper public transport for young people at evenings at weekends
- Help school leavers with higher education, jobs, housing and health
- More influence for young people about decisions that affect them
- Protect vulnerable children and young people and improve the educational attainment of children in care
- Reduce the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and their families
- Continue to support voluntary organisations to provide services to children, young people and their families

Targets for improving services and the quality of life

Raise educational standards

- Ensure that 95% of all 3-4 year olds have access to pre school education by 2002/3
- By 2002 at least 77% of 11 year olds to achieve National Curriculum Level 4 in English and 76% in Mathematics
- By 2002 54% of students to gain 5 A-C grades at GCSE and 97.5% of 16 year olds achieve at least one A - G grade
- Develop and implement a strategy to include pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools

Promote participation and access to services for all young people

- Create more job opportunities for school leavers
- Establish a Mid Devon Youth Council which is active in all areas of the area by 2002 so that young people can have more influence about decisions that affect them
- In 2001, create Youth Strategy Groups throughout the area to review and help improve youth services
- Ensure all new housing estates include facilities for young people

Tackle disadvantage

- Implement ways to reduce learning, health and social disadvantages of many children and young people
- Raise levels of attendance in schools
- Reduce the number of permanent and temporary school exclusions by 50% by 2002
- Reduce conception rates in the under 18s by 15% by 2004
- Implement measures to provide more support to parents
- Develop support services for young people who are carers
- Develop supported housing schemes for vulnerable young people



A healthy and caring community



About the area

Generally, Mid Devon is one of the healthiest parts of Devon, but this is not true in all areas. As in the rest of the country, the major causes of death are coronary heart disease, strokes, and cancer. Providing health and social care over a large rural area presents a particular challenge. In recent years there has been a shift to care for vulnerable people in communities rather than in hospitals or other institutions. More than 1 in 8 people in this area are 'carers'. In Mid Devon 8.9% of the population is aged over 75 years, compared to a national average of 7%. People from poorer backgrounds are more likely to have the worst health and to die younger.

Priorities and concerns

- Tackle the causes of illness and accidents
- Quick access to treatment when its needed
- Encourage awareness of and access to healthier lifestyles for all
- Better information about services and how to access them
- Improved information and services for carers
- Work to improve personal independence
- Equality of access to services for residents of both town and country
- Fast and convenient services
- Provide effective and timely care for vulnerable people
- Improve services in rural areas for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems (and their carers)

Targets for improving services and the quality of life

Tackle heart disease, stroke and cancer

- Reduce tobacco consumption by 1% a year
- Reduce deaths from strokes and coronary heart disease in people under 75 years by 40% by 2010
- Reduce deaths from cancer in the under 75s by at least 20% by 2010
- Promote moderate physical activity at least five times a week
- Ensure anyone suspected of having cancer is seen by a specialist within two weeks of referral by December 2001
- Encourage everyone to eat five helpings of fruit and vegetables a day

Promote independence and access to services for everyone

- Reduce maximum waiting time for out patient appointments to three months and inpatient treatment to six months by the end of 2005
- Improve rehabilitation services for everyone
- Provide single access points to services and information from Health and Social Services.
- Increase the number of people over 65 receiving help at home
- Ensure Tiverton has a new hospital by the end of 2003
- Improve services to carers, increase the number able to take a break from caring and encourage them to join the 'carers register'.

Tackle disadvantage

- Increase by 55% the number of drug users receiving treatment by 2004
- Improve the quality of support to vulnerable people in the community wherever they live
- Protect vulnerable people from neglect, abuse and exploitation
- Ensure good quality housing is provided to people in need





About the area

Mid Devon is, in national terms, relatively prosperous and has a low level of unemployment (2.3% in September 2000). However, the area suffers from low rates of pay and relatively high house prices. Many Mid Devon residents work outside the area, notably in Exeter. The rural character of the area is reflected in the fact that more than 10% of the workforce is employed in agriculture, compared with a Devon-wide figure of 3%. In recent years, the crisis in agriculture has had considerable adverse effects on all aspects of the industry. The foot and mouth disease outbreak has only served to deepen the crisis and has now impacted on the tourism industry. Although the situation is changing, the employment structure in Mid Devon is still biased to the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, at the expense of employment in the service sectors.

Priorities and concerns

- Help the agricultural industry through its difficulties, working to minimise the effect on rural communities
- Improve, promote and regenerate town centres
- Enable communities to be self-supporting where the wellbeing of future generations is not compromised
- Manage industrial and employment development in an environmentally sensitive manner
- Manage the tension between those who want no development and continue to enjoy peace and tranquillity, and those who want to sustain and regenerate communities by encouraging development
- Maintain retail and service facilities in towns and villages
- Attract more jobs to the area, increasing opportunities and reducing commuting
- Make available more appropriate training and further/higher/adult education opportunities
- Increase the number of people claiming entitlement to welfare benefits

Targets for improving Services and the quality of life

Regenerate town centres and sustain villages

- Improve commercial activity in Tiverton town centre through the Town Centre Management Partnership.
- Seek to complete the library and central offices and the Pannier Market Redevelopment/Improvement in Tiverton by 2005
- Improve the environment and facilities in Crediton's employment areas and work to establish the new Exeter Road Employment site
- Work towards achieving regeneration schemes in Crediton e.g. the Market Square area, the Old Town Hall
- In Cullompton, achieve appropriate regeneration through the provision of a Town Development Manager
- Develop measures to support provision of rural facilities especially village shops and post offices
- Encourage people to buy local goods and produce

Promote access to opportunities to increase prosperity

- Ensure a sufficient and available supply of employment land and suitable buildings for employment development, using 'brownfield' sites where possible
- Encourage uptake of grant support from outside agencies to help appropriate new business developments
- Support and encourage the growth of appropriate tourism by working with the private sector in marketing the area and promoting good practice
- Help the agricultural industry by promoting farmers' markets, providing advice and helping with the take up of appropriate grants and training
- Complete Phase 2 of the successful Tiverton Business Park
- Support sensitive economic developments in the Blackdown Hills area

Tackle disadvantage

- Ensure people are encouraged and helped to apply for welfare benefits to which they may be entitled
- Increase the number of disabled and disadvantaged people in work
- Investigate setting up a Credit Union.



Protecting and enhancing the environment



About the area

The high quality of Mid Devon's natural and built environment underpins the quality of life for residents and visitors and the viability of many local businesses. The rivers Exe, Creedy and Culm flow through the three largest towns and the rivers and their valleys are an important feature of the Mid Devon landscape. There are substantial areas of ecological importance, in particular the semi-natural habitats of ancient woodlands, grasslands and moorlands, and 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Exe Valley Area of Great Landscape Value have been designated for their landscape importance. However our increasing use of energy, water, land and transport, and production of waste and pollution, impacts on our local environment and the global life support systems we depend on. We must change the way we use the environment for the sake of present and future generations.

Priorities and concerns

- Protect the environment through farming and food
- Involve everyone in protecting wildlife
- Monitor changes in land use and their impacts
- Reduce waste from households and businesses
- Increase reuse, recycling and composting of waste
- Develop energy saving programmes and more renewable energy supplies
- Measure energy use to set targets and monitor performance
- Identify community activists and support them
- Invest in local businesses, through, for example, local purchasing
- Reduce the environmental impact of transport
- Integrate environmental issues into the Community Plan and raise awareness across communities organisations
- Give guidance on the scale and location of future developments based on the principles of sustainability

Improving services and the quality of life

Reduce waste, recycle more and dispose of waste safely

- Reduce growth in all household waste from 7% in 2000 to 3% by 2005
- 33% of household waste recycled or composted by 2005/6
- Provide 75% of the population with kerbside recycling or a recycling centre within 1km of their homes by March 2002
- Investigate 90% of dog fouling complaints within two working days
- Ensure 70% of people are satisfied with street cleaning standards by 2001/2
- Remove fly-tipped waste within two working days

Environmental management, saving energy and climate change

- Reduce the risk and impact of flooding from rivers by providing effective warnings and defence by a major programme of capital, maintenance and operational works
- Provide services to businesses to help them reduce their environmental impact and save money
- Reduce energy use in the area by 10% by 2006
- Increase generation of energy from local renewable sources
- Increase farmland under organic cultivation and local consumption of local food

Protect the natural environment

- Increase the percentage of river length rated good in terms of water quality
- Preserve and enhance the variety of animal and plant life, and their habitats
- Preserve and enhance the built environment

Tackle Disadvantage

- Increase access to open space and quality environments for all
- Complete 16 Local Environment Improvement Schemes by March 2002



Cultural activities and lifelong learning



About the area

There are sixty-two parishes in Mid Devon and more than 1000 voluntary leisure clubs and organisations. Most cultural and learning activities take place in the three largest centres of population and many people travel to Exeter, Taunton and Barnstaple. The area's rural nature means that, for more than half of the population, access to leisure and cultural and learning opportunities may be limited, particularly if there is a lack of transport. Access to information technology is becoming important to help promote public information.

Priorities and concerns

- Extended opportunities for adult learning, both in types of course available and venues
- Improved access and opportunities through better transportation, physical access to venues and affordability
- Better information about what is going on and what's available
- Better and more leisure facilities and activities in localities
- A new, larger, easily accessible library in Tiverton
- Libraries to open for longer hours and more books added to the stock
- Increased public access to computers
- Increase awareness of the natural, built and cultural environment

Targets for improving services and the quality of life

Promote participation and access to services for everyone

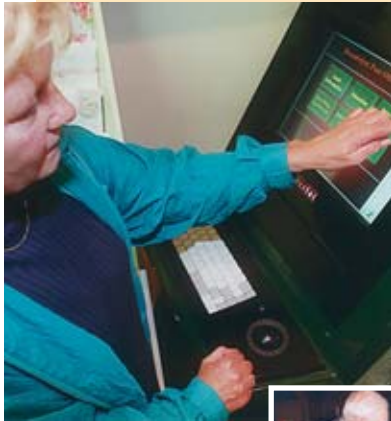
- Open the Exe Valley Leisure centre in Tiverton by the end of 2002
- Continue to work towards the creation of a new library for Tiverton
- Create more opportunities for all people to join in physical and arts activities
- Increase the availability of public access personal computers to support lifelong learning
- Review the area's range of cultural activities and identify opportunities for improvement by 2003
- Improve information through revision of the Community and Leisure Directory by 2002, including making it available electronically via the Mid Devon website
- Produce a funding advice booklet for community organisations by 2003
- Increase awareness of the range and scope of volunteering activities

Tackle disadvantage

- Through drop-in centres for young people, improve advice on health, learning and training, drugs, and housing etc
- Promote reader development and literature events for enjoyment and education of readers of all abilities
- Raise skills levels so that 28% of the workforce has achieved NVQ Level 4 or equivalent by 2005
- Increase the range and number of community based learning opportunities by 2005, including Literacy Skills Courses, Adult Basic Education and Information Technology opportunities
- Target training, lifelong learning, advice and leisure opportunities in specific areas of disadvantage



Better information and consultation



About the area

The rural nature of Mid Devon and the fact that organisations usually distribute information in an ad hoc way means people may not always receive important facts and advice to help them make more informed choices. Agencies work in isolation and people seeking information are often misdirected or misinformed.

Priorities and concerns

- Build closer links between agencies to enable exchange of knowledge and expertise
- Public sector organisations must improve their communication with each other and with local people
- Information should be provided in a variety of formats, such as tapes and Braille
- Increased access to recommended internet sites
- Encourage village shops, post offices and schools to be key places for information
- Encourage links with relevant private sector bodies and enlist their help where appropriate
- A single telephone number which accesses all public sector agencies
- Increased public access to computers and the internet

Targets for improving services and the quality of life

Make consultation more meaningful

- Evaluate the purpose, content and process of existing consultation structures to rationalise them
- Public organisations to work together more on consultation to avoid duplication
- Recommend consultation frameworks to best meet the challenges of the future
- Use a variety of consultation methods and always be clear about the purpose of the consultation, the methods to be used and who needs to be consulted

Promote access to information for everyone

- Further develop the Mid Devon web-site to create a single electronic entry point for information
- Encourage and support all organisations in Mid Devon to link to the Mid Devon web-site and offer help so that voluntary agencies and groups can promote their activities via the internet
- Try to reduce the amount of separate information leaflets produced by various agencies
- Produce themed leaflets or information packs on topics or life events in paper form and on the internet
- Produce an index of information leaflets and work towards 'online' ordering for everyone
- Introduce joint media/poster campaigns to promote specific initiatives
- Contribute to the Carers Support Direct and Care Direct initiatives
- Continue to fund the Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Ensure more public services can be delivered electronically

Tackle disadvantage

- Set up initiatives to bring information to people and neighbourhoods who find it difficult to get it
- Ensure relevant and helpful information is available for people with visual and hearing difficulties and those for whom English is not their first language.



You can get involved in this plan for Mid Devon

The subject areas in this plan are the ones you told us were most important to you when MORI conducted a public opinion survey in the District in 1999.

We hope, therefore, that the vision and proposed actions contained in this document will provoke wide discussion in your Parish or Neighbourhood and that it will create the impetus for people to get involved at a local level in order to improve the quality of life.

This is a 'working' document, not intended to get dusty on shelves, but designed as a 'work plan' for those of us involved so far. We would like communities from all over the District to work together with us to make the vision a reality.

We are confident that many communities throughout the District will want to produce their own community plans which will in turn promote the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of their community.

Why not start the ball rolling and ask us to come and talk to your group and discuss?:

- How we are working together to achieve improvements and meet targets set out in this plan?

- How this plan can be developed and made relevant to your town, village, parish or neighbourhood?
- How your organisation could get involved in implementing one of the priority areas or actions?
- What we can do to work on any important 'gaps'

We want to meet you to:

- Hear your views and ideas about this plan
- Find out more about what goes on in your town, parish or neighbourhood
- Answer any queries you might have

You can use the tear off slip at the bottom of this page to ask us to make contact with you, ask for more copies of this plan or alternative versions etc. Please get in touch.

To find out more about life in Mid Devon, why not visit the community website www.mid-devon.net

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone No: _____

Please send me _____ more copies of this document

Please send me a copy of this document in *(please tick the appropriate box)*

Large print

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Please return this slip to:

**The Community Partnership Office
Tiverton Police Station
2 The Avenue
Tiverton EX16 4HS**