

Annex B – District Council News. Report from Malcolm Prowse

Malcolm provided a report on recent work being conducted in his position in Regeneration & Planning. Work is continuing on the Future High Street Fund around the regeneration of 36 Boutport Street. Pearce Construction are carrying out the work and are saving features from the original listed building. The foundations for the new walkway to Queen Street have been laid and the project is on schedule and on budget. The Pannier Market is finished and was completed on budget. The final phase of the project will be linking between Queen Street and Butchers Row. This will include a new arcade and tree planting and will provide a line of sight from the car park to the town centre. The breakthrough from Alexandra Road to Queen Street car park is scheduled for October.

The new café in the Bus Station will open on the 6th of September. This will provide a good facility for the area.

Work is continuing to reduce anti-social behaviours in the town centre and it's been agreed to carry on funding Street Marshals, but funding will be needed for next year. There has been no full spending review for a few years and there is a need for a 3-year budget rather than planning year on year.

Currently there are 80 families in North Devon in temporary accommodation. Many of those needing accommodation are single men, so the ratios for housing needs are being looked at. Affordability of housing is still an issue.

In response to a new planning framework NDC are in the process of developing a new plan for housing. Consultations on the new requirements indicate an increase in the number of new homes needed from 730 to 1300. The local plan is looking at potential sites but currently it's unclear what the final numbers required will be.

The development at Severn Brethren will include 1/3 affordable homes. There will be flats and houses and 3/4 of this will be social rents for local people. North Devon Homes and Pearce Construction have already completed Anchorbank.

Ilfracombe are putting in another bid for funding after the previous bid for levelling up funds was unsuccessful. It's recognised that Ilfracombe is in need of the funding to make significant improvements to the town.

NDC are still struggling to retain planning staff and are still losing planning officers to the private sector, in part due to higher levels of pay in the private sector. The same is being observed with surveyors, environmental health, etc.

The Shapland buildings are still to be developed and due to the nature of the buildings there is potential for them to be made into mixed use spaces, including utilising the ground floor as a college facility. It's anticipated that there will be more news on the site at the next meeting.