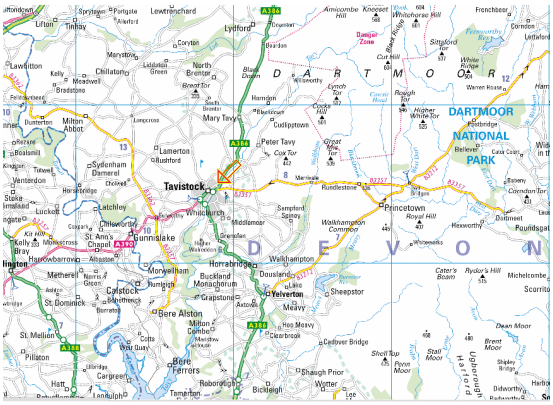
Visioning our local economy across Tavistock and District

Stakeholder workshop, Kingdon House, Monday 6th October 2014

The Tavistock and District Local Economic Blueprint (TAD-LEB) stakeholders came together for the first time at Kingdon House with representatives from various local organisations (see attendee list).



Together we discussed the questions:

- 'What is our local economy for?'
- 'Do we have control over it?'

We explored the potential of our local economy for:

- Food
- Domestic retrofit (making our housing more energy efficient)
- Renewable generation.

We agreed it was a worthwhile afternoon and we should strive towards:

- A strong local economy which provides us with choices
- A vibrant self-supporting and innovative web of sustainable production and consumption which retains a greater proportion of our wealth for local benefit
- A community with a high level of health and wellbeing, through access to meaningful work, good food and a warm home for everyone

Everyone also agreed to continue in this stakeholder group and work with the project team towards a successful outcome. The next stakeholder event will be held in January 2014.

What's our local economy for and do we have control over it?

Our local economy provides a means of exchange and creation of wealth, health and wellbeing

A means of exchange: for example a wage/fee in exchange for our skills, knowledge and manual effort, which we in turn exchange for goods and services.

Key economic components:

- Work for the community (jobs/self employment)
- Desired goods and services
    - Ideally locally sourced to enable more work and support more exchange

Creation of wealth: Exchanging goods and services for more than the cost of the inputs, e.g. through our skill, creating a surplus.

As a community we can create opportunities through investing our surpluses for example into education, training and opportunities for our young people

Enhancing our health and wellbeing through meaningful work in a valued environment with sufficient to eat and keep warm

A **strong local economy provides choices** which we can develop through building on our strengths and areas of expertise.

Robertson's Restaurant

Seth Robertson and his team buy in local ingredients and use their skill and expertise to bring us delicious pizzas (and more!).

They pay local producers who in turn buy local products and services. Robertson's use their takings to pay their staff, buy in local printing services, accounting support perhaps, legal services if required, vehicle servicing and tyres etc.

Do we have control over it?

No … in many areas we don't have as much as we'd like, although we may have influence[KH1].

Area	How we might influence
Difficulties in competing with national and international businesses with significant market power	Facilitate local businesses to co-operate and develop scale economies by working together
Poor communications infrastructure: • Broadband speeds • Transport – a particular challenge placing Tavistock on the back foot as an industrial hub • Does poor infrastructure make us a dormitory town for Plymouth rather than an employment destination?	• Lobby for improvement in broadband. Should be resolved eventually • Develop more localised supply chains where possible to turn transport challenges into opportunities • Stimulate local enterprise to achieve a good balance between dormitory and employment town
Lifestyle changes may have adverse impacts: • Busy lives leading to choices based on simplicity, speed and convenience • Internet shopping • Affordability for everyone	• Make it possible for people to buy what they want in the way that they want • Build local platforms e.g. Tamar Valley Food Hubs; Totnes/Bristol Click and Collect pilot and use internet shopping to our advantage • Develop accessible offers through scale and cutting out the middleman
Tourism is important, built upon our outstanding natural environment, heritage and quality of local produce but is sensitive to weather, seasonal variations, often with poorly paid work	Invest in all year round indoor and outdoor offers providing more interest, adding more value and greater resilience.
Very few large local employers and a shift of public sector jobs to S. Hams	Develop greater interdependency through stimulating local supply chains and networks of smaller businesses?
Focus often on Tavistock Town Centre, less on the peripheries of Tavistock and its parishes	

In Conclusion

Building a stronger local economy will require co-operation, collaboration and determination to overcome our challenges. We need to act together, be innovative and actively encourage stronger links between businesses. How can we encourage this to happen?

We will be exploring this further as we evaluate the sectors of Food, Retrofit and Renewables.

Our Food Economy

We have **a vibrant food and drink sector** across the area. How much potential does it hold?

Totnes[1] identified a local spend on food and drink of £30m per annum, with up to £22m leaving the local economy on food imports. This is mainly through 2 (relatively small) supermarkets. How does Tavistock compare? The TAD-LEB will be evaluating this.

Locally owned businesses can make a difference. CPRE independent research (2010 - 'From field to fork') showed that:

- Local independents offer 3 times number of jobs as main supermarkets for same retail spend
- Local food producers employ 50% more workers than large scale farms

Trehil Farm's honey and mustard sausages

1. Pork and sausages produced locally
2. Honey and mustard flavour packet were bought in
3. Introduced to Tamar Valley honey co-op and Berio Mill mustard producer
4. Now all value retained locally.
5. No added artificial flavourings improving quality of product

How vulnerable is our local food economy?

We identified a number of areas of vulnerability summarised below:

Many small local producers	• Small producers are an asset but may be more vulnerable • Where operating in niches subject to changing tastes • Legislation and related admin can be onerous • Unit cost of production may be high • Margins tight particularly if middlemen take a portion • High street presence may be unaffordable • May be need for mid-scale production to meet higher volume demand • Difficulty in forward selling risk at small scale
Climate change impacts	• Variability of weather patterns impacting yields • Increased likelihood of diseases such as blue tongue.
Consumer and household behaviour	• Decline in availability and use of gardens and allotments for home growing • Lack of consumer knowledge and skills in food production and access to fresh food • Desire for ready meals and 24*7 access to supermarkets • Expectation for 'out of season' produce
Transport	• Poor and expensive transport facilities add cost to producers • Reliance on road network makes food distribution vulnerable
Infrastructure, skills and resources	• Loss of local supply chain infrastructure and sales outlets eg livestock market, abattoirs, forcing food into regional and national supply chains and supermarkets • Lost local production skills unavailable in a crisis • Aging skilled workforce

How could we make it more resilient?

- Support smaller businesses to cooperate and develop network economies (e.g. to reduce costs of inputs, transport, selling).
- Provide support to micro businesses capable of growing to mid-scale
- Improve local supply chain infrastructure
- Put in place supportive planning policies e.g. encouraging local growing and allotments
- Provide skills and education for householders to make fresh food more accessible
- Develop local opportunities for larger scale markets e.g. public sector supply

[1] Totnes is a market town of similar size to Tavistock according to Devon CC Town profiles (2011 populations of 25,137 and 30,054 respectively.

How important is our food economy to local health and wellbeing? How could it benefit it?

There was consensus that our food economy can be a major positive force for local health and wellbeing, with much untapped potential. Increasing community health problems such as food poverty, obesity, diabetes etc. can be tackled through improving:

- access to local food and food production
- skills and knowledge on selecting and cooking fresh food
- access to facilities, and ability, to grow your own food

Meaningful work and an adequate wage is important. Our area provides higher than average employment in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. More livelihoods can be supported by the sector and support is needed to improve access to living wages.

What local assets, resources and skills do we have that could help our food economy? How could we leverage these?

We have …

- Plenty of **good growing land** and the **capacity to meet our own and external market needs**
- Recognised and sought-after **provenance**: expertise and a **reputation** in producing high quality and flavour foods for a fair price
- Several growing cooperatives that provide production and marketing support, branding, continuity of supply from diverse sources; and can help producers and retailers develop scale and trade fairly e.g. Dartmoor Farmers and Tamar Grow Local / Tamar Valley Food Hubs
- Several large public and private organisations (hospitals, schools, colleges) who could be encouraged to buy and/or prepare local food locally
- Morrison's which [it is said] doesn't travel empty but picks up supplies needed elsewhere – could this be some of our produce?
- Great rural training centres and a skilled (but aging) working community who could support development of younger people and those interested in retraining
- A significant agriculture, forestry and fisheries (AFF) industry which can be supported and strengthened (70% of Bere Ferrers economy linked to food production; across Tamar Valley 35% of population employed in AFF)
- Skilled and experienced groups such as WI, Roots to Transition, West Devon Borough Council's 'Love Food, Hate Waste' resources who can help upskill the communities culinary and growing skills
- Access to support facilities and grants for start-ups and expansion (e.g. BIP and GD LEAF) and co-operative mechanisms to reduce costs of admin etc. (Tamar Grow Local)

Our emerging vision for our local food economy

This is a draft. We'd like your feedback and comments …

- Our larger private and public organisations and businesses buy in local supplies of produce
- Our residents and businesses have access to affordable land for growing
- Our area is renowned for the quality, variety, accessibility and affordability of its local produce; and for its product innovation
- We support a network of businesses (micro, small, larger) co-operating to provide a diverse range of offers
- Business support and skills training is available to those able and willing to work in the sector
- Work in agriculture, fisheries, farming, food production and service is celebrated
- There is a vibrant self-supporting network of producers, outlets and consumers from field to fork
- Every household has the capability to prepare meals from fresh and local ingredients; and has access to grow their own
- A growing proportion of food and drink bought and served locally is produced locally

Our Retrofit Economy

The challenge to make our housing stock more energy efficient and more affordable to heat is significant, and also presents opportunity.

The Energy Saving Trust estimates that around £1.5 billion needs to be invested to enable SW housing to meet 2050 energy efficiency targets. They also now recognise that householders tend to improve their homes room by room which requires new approaches.
There's a need to engage many local tradesmen and related businesses to encourage energy efficiency to be incorporated into improvements.

The Totnes blueprint estimated a £25m investment was needed in housing stock to meet basic energy efficiency and £75m to maximise energy efficiency. This could lead to 70 – 700 local jobs.

External Wall Insulation (EWI)

Greenhus is an EWI specialist based in Pitts Cleave Ind. Estate, Sunny Waters is a property in Crapstone

- Owners came to Eco Fair Jan '14
- Talked to exhibitors & decided to install EWI – completed in Sept '14 by Greenhus
- Took part in Open Homes in Sept. '14 sharing experience with others locally

How vulnerable is our economy to the heating and power costs of our homes and how could we make it more resilient?

We identified a number of areas of vulnerability summarised below:

Age and condition of housing stock	• Much of our housing is older and not very energy efficient • A large number of solid walled properties difficult to insulate • Damp is a common problem often made worse by poor ventilation • The risk of radon in certain areas requires air flow which can result in draughts
Fuel type	• There are many 'off the gas grid' properties which necessitate the use of more expensive fuels such as oil and LPG, supplies of which can be vulnerable
Housing ownership	• High housing costs and low wages are leading to more people renting • Landlords may have little incentive to improve energy efficiency of rental properties • Many householders are elderly and are disinclined, or unable to invest in improvements
Householder expectations	• Generally expect whole house to be warm. In the past only one room heated. • 'Recommended' room temps generally much higher than needed • 'Gone soft'– put heating on rather than putting on a jumper o These all drive up amount of energy used and costs
Planning	• Retrofit planning policies sometimes inconsistent compared to new housing standards; not always enforced and not always 'joined up'. This can lead to unintended consequences
Retrofit Complexity	• It can be difficult to know what technology is appropriate for your house type e.g. cavity/external/internal wall insulation … and to find the right advice
Skills of tradesmen and contractors	• Many local builders have not acquired skills in new techniques and are poorly equipped to deliver best solutions • It can be difficult to find contractors to trust

How could we make it more resilient?

- Encourage householders and landords to take steps to improve their properties, beginning with simple measures such as draughtproofing
- Improve our understanding of appropriate measures for various house types e.g. research has shown that more traditional properties such as cob and thatch perform better than thought
- Provide independent practical advice to householders and details of competent tradesmen
- Incentivise local businesses and tradespeople to learn new skills and techniques
- Encourage householders to make changes to their behaviour e.g. turning down thermostat or wearing warmer cloths

How important is the condition of our housing stock to our community's health and wellbeing?

- Living in a home which is comfortable and warm enough is essential for health and wellbeing
- Damp may have even greater negative impacts on health than cold
- Poor conditions can inhibit children's development and education

We have a responsibility, as a community, to support the vulnerable to access energy efficiency improvements

What local assets, resources and skills do we have that could help our retrofit economy? How could we leverage these?

We have …

- Many skilled local tradespeople who understand our local housing stock but may not be up-to-date with latest techniques.
- Availability of free / subsidised training and support on best practice techniques and materials, which need signposting
- A number of well-respected local specialists e.g. Greenhus
- Local organisations e.g. Transition Tavistock (Energy Savers and Open Homes) and CAB able to provide independent advice to householders; and with a growing understanding of appropriate techniques
- A Borough Council and Housing Associations keen to improve local housing stock where possible
- The opportunity to encourage as many eligible householders as possible to take up offers such as Cosy Devon
- The Green Deal and other financing mechanisms to help householders pay for measures

Our emerging vision for our local retrofit economy

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- Every householder is aware of how they can make their home energy efficient and access support
- We are an area of excellence in understanding and applying the most appropriate techniques for each house type; and sharing this knowledge
- We have schemes in place to enable householders to access improvement measures whatever their means
- We have worked hard to eliminate fuel poverty wherever possible
- We have an excellent skilled network of tradesmen across the area

Our Renewables Economy

The idea of generating energy from renewable sources can 'generate' a wide range of responses and emotions! It was clear from stakeholder discussion that our work with the blueprint is firstly to evaluate renewable energy's economic potential for the area and then to look at those opportunities which are likely to be supported by the community and can bring widespread benefit.

Energy can be generated locally from a range of sources including biomass, sun, wind, tides and the earth's core.

The Totnes blueprint identified renewable energy as a significant opportunity with the potential to generate £6m of the areas annual energy requirements. With only 10% installed £600,000 could be put back into the local economy annually. Although many of the jobs in the supply chain may be out of the area, there would be a number locally for installation and maintenance.

Locally owned generation can make a difference.

Mary Tavy Power Station, on our doorstep, is the largest hydro plant in England. It generates enough for 2500 homes – approx. 20% of our local annual requirement.
The plant is now owned by SW Water, itself owned by Pennon (French), so much of the benefit is exported to shareholders or investment elsewhere rather than in local benefit for the community. This could £1m+ benefit per annum under a local ownership model.

Abbey Surgery and its renewables

- PV has been installed on Abbey Surgeries roof to reduce bills
- This enables greater investment in patient care
- New Generation Energy were installers (based at Crelake Industrial Estate)
    - 'In-roof' panels have been used to minimise their impact.
- NGE employ several people locally

new generation energy
the alternative solution

How vulnerable is our energy economy and how could we make it more resilient?

There was general agreement that our economy is vulnerable to weaknesses in the energy supply sector

Energy infrastructure and security of supply	• The National Grid in the South West is congested, aging and requires further investment • Many of our traditional and aging generation sources are coming to the end of their lives • Much of our supply is dependent upon imports; some from unstable territories • New nuclear will be coming on board but not until early 2020's • Many renewable sources are dependent upon the elements and require a different approach to grid management and balancing. Much work still needs to be done in these areas
Policies and Planning	• There seems to be no explicit policy to encourage solar on industrial roofs • Our position as part of Dartmoor National Park and Tamar Valley AONB can prohibit even micro-generation schemes • Aesthetics can play a part in local views and planning decisions; and some forms of generation may appear to be more favourable than others • National energy policy is unstable, subject to frequent change
Perceptions and Knowledge	• There can be misconceptions about the impact of various forms of renewables
Renewable generation assets	• Much of the production of generating equipment (e.g. wind turbines and solar panels) is undertaken overseas and requires imports
Convenience	• Some renewable sources such as woodfuel require investment from the householder in terms of time, and space for storage

How could we make it more resilient?

- Encourage diverse sources of local supply and development of local smart grids (eg Smart Grid Cornwall) and local energy tariffs
- Encourage local ownership of local generation
- Work co-operatively towards a local approach, planning renewable generation which makes the best use of our resources and respects our landscape
- Provide good objective evidence concerning renewable technologies and their application
- Use British technology wherever possible
- Provide independent support to householders and businesses to encourage the most appropriate fuel use for the circumstances

How important is energy to our community's health and wellbeing?

The availability of energy in the form of heat and power is critical for our economy and for our community's health and wellbeing.
Community benefit can also be derived where renewable generation is owned by the community and surpluses are ploughed back in to community projects.

What local assets, resources and skills do we have that could help our renewables economy? How could we leverage these?

We have …

- An abundance of natural resources for renewable generation in the form of solar energy, wind energy, hydro energy (rivers and streams), energy from biomass (including woodlands and hedges), energy from the air and the ground (heat pumps) and potentially geothermal (most likely location is in the area of Lee Moor)
    - We should assess their potential and consider prioritising a range of diverse options with due consideration to our landscape
- Housing stock with existing oil and LPG heating systems which might benefit from alternative fuel sources. In many cases the heat source (boiler) can be changed without changes to the distribution system(pipework and radiators)
- A significant area of woodlands and hedgerows in need of better management, which could provide livelihoods, local energy supplies and other products
    - There may be potential to relook at the feasibility of local wood fuel hub(s) / supporting local infrastructure
- A number of impending housing developments
    - We should work with planning and developers to encourage incorporation of the highest levels of energy efficiency, micro-generation and district heating

Our emerging vision for our local renewables economy

This is a draft. We'd like your feedback and comments …

- We have a wide mix of sources of heat and power
- A significant amount is generated from renewable sources and locally owned
- We have our own local energy network linking into the national infrastructure which enables our community to benefit from the economies of local generation
- We have a thriving and sustainable biomass industry employing many people locally from lumberjacks and hedge layers to carpenters, joiners and installers, and maintenance engineers for biomass stoves
- We have several new housing developments benefiting from district heating; and are exploring any opportunities for retrofitting to existing developments
- All new build has to be able to generate at least 20%(?) of their power / heat requirements from renewable sources

Follow Up and Next Steps

The following actions were agreed:

- To clarify the geographical scope of the exercise
- To circulate a list of research sources available and to ask participants to highlight any gaps
- To secure funding for project completion. TAP funding was identified as a possible source and the project team will explore this with parish councils
- To identify sector experts to support the next stages of the work
- To invite stakeholders to attend a review of initial findings in January/February 2015

As a reminder the project timetable is below:

Deliverable	**Planned Date**
Stakeholder Workshop	6th October 2014
Sector experts recruited and funding secured	November 2014
Secondary research completed	December 2014
Primary research completed - initial findings circulated	December 2014
Review sessions with experts	December 2014
Review sessions with stakeholders	Late January / early February 2015
Summary document published	End March 2015

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Attendees

Attendee	**Organisation**
Karen Bridgford	Devon County Council (DCC)
Debo Sellis	DCC / W. Devon Borough Council (WDBC)
Robert Samson	WDBC
Carl Hearn	Tavistock Town Council (TTC)
David Whitcomb	TTC / WDBC / Tavistock Business Association
Councillor Sue Bailey	TTC / WDBC
Corinna Woodall	Tamar Valley AONB
Jo Rumble	Dartmoor National Park Authority
Simon Earland	Federation of Small Businesses
Mike Benson	Bere Ferrers Parish Council / WDBC
Nigel Tigwell	Dartmoor Forest Parish Council
Alex Inman Kate Royston Kit Harbottle Liz Whitwell Simon Platten	Facilitator Project Team Project Team Project Team Project Team