

Appendix C

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT Analysis)

Character and Culture

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Heritage foundation • Motivated and united • History of innovation • Strong local and civic pride • Vision • Low unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some resistance to change • Infrastructure in dire need of improvement • Lack of facilities discourages young families • Low average wages • High level of retirees • Lack of cultural centre
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Molton as regional agricultural centre • Investment in new technology (Broadband or equivalent) • Use of local talents and skills, especially those of Young People • Cultural and recreational opportunities to keep the town alive in the evenings • Inward retail investment • Year round tourism • Use of heritage and location as tourism promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transparency could undermine progress and germinate distrust • Over development and modernisation • Increase in tourism could result in more seasonal working • Increase in relatively well off incoming retirees prices local people out of housing market • Local agriculture suffers at the hand of cheap imports

Economy

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Pathfields Business Park rapidly expanding • There are many small and sole trader businesses • Some large manufacturing companies • Strong agriculture and distribution economy • Good position on North Devon Link Road • Active Tourist Association and Tourist Information Centre • Developing Chamber of Trade • Commutable to regional major cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current lack of premises for small businesses • Lack of Broadband or similar • Reliance on agriculture leaves town vulnerable • Lack of quality employment • High level of self-employment • Lack of business growth • Lack of Unique Selling Point (USP)

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed workspace on Pathfields Business Park • Chamber of Trade collating needs of small businesses to address issues (including premises, training, staffing, apprenticeships etc) • Develop Marketing Strategy to promote area • Development of hi-tech industry which is not reliant on national road network • Development of tourism linked to traditional pursuits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term gain must not compromise the long-term opportunities • National decline in agriculture • Small businesses vulnerable to closure on retirement

Public facilities

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits from a number of public facilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Swimming Pool ➢ Library ➢ Community Information Centre, allowing multi agency access ➢ Museum ➢ Playgroups and Nurseries ➢ Tourist Information ➢ Health Centre and Doctor's surgery ➢ Cottage hospital ➢ Town Hall / Assembly Rooms ➢ Churches ➢ Hotels and Public Houses ➢ Restaurants ➢ Open access centre for lifelong learning ➢ Bowling club • Local authorities are aware of the issues and supportive of improvements • Good schools • Community college has special status for technology • Active University of the Third Age (U3A) • Exeter University is within 1 hour travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The many existing facilities are housed in inadequate, inflexible, cramped conditions • Little provision for youth and young adults, including leisure, training and educational extensions • Few facilities have disabled access • Hospital too small for local need • Lack of police presence • No late/Sunday buses • Public convenience is very dirty • Lack of cycle-ways
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many existing buildings are under utilised • The size of the central car park, along with possible relocation of the Livestock Market, would enable appropriate new build • Funding is available to relocate the Medical Centres • The historic character of the town attracts funding for regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of investment will result in migration to neighbouring facilities • Lack of facilities for young people could result in boredom and vandalism, thus undermining the social framework • Residential developments taking place will add extra burden to the current over stretched facilities • Lack of awareness of facilities

The retail centre

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Many successful individual retail businesses • Able to provide majority of needs for town and hinterland • Rural links with natural and perishable goods • Specialist shops bring in trade from outside the area • Well supported Pannier Market on two days a week • Medium sized supermarket just off town centre • Good sized car park (free 6 days a week) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the A361 ND Link Road potential shoppers bypass the town • Lack of short-term parking on main shopping streets • No clear 'gateways' signifying entrance to the commercial heart of the town • Affected by recent rural economic problems, including foot and mouth disease and cheap imports • Lack of car parking in strategic places
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateways at entrance of town and features at main road junctions would show where to visit • Better use of existing car parking and changes in traffic flow would encourage walking • Better links from the central car park to the main shopping streets, especially in light of supermarket proposal (below) • Better use of existing buildings • Speculative interest in providing a new supermarket would encourage people of the town and hinterland to do their 'main shop' in town and not travel to Barnstaple • Promotion of local produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition from other towns if South Molton has no primary shopping outlet • Parking and traffic strategies which detract from retail availability • Relocation of Livestock Market could result in reduced visitors • Decline in fabric of buildings detracts from attractiveness for shopping • Lack of quiet open spaces impacts shopping environment • Lack of amenity facilities may erode community spirit • Lack of youth facilities may impact on the level of crime and fear of crime and discourage young people

Transport and car parking

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate parking for current needs • Close to A361 • Free car park • Lack of congestion • Low accident levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large lorries use town centre to access non-town centre areas • Some streets have narrow pavements • Busy periods of traffic movement can cause dangerous conditions on some streets and junctions • Buses in the town centre cause obstructions and can be hazardous • Parking around the Square is inefficient and unattractive • South Street long-term parking discourages shoppers • Dropped kerbs are frequently blocked • Inconsiderate parking causes congestion • Lack of regular public transport • Car park too far from retail centre

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of one way traffic flows • Alterations to traffic flows on the Square in favour of pedestrian environment • Relocating main bus stop to a small bus station/stand in the central car park • More sustainable travel - car share, cycle etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking and transport strategies need to develop with a strong link to the regeneration programme. Failure to do so would compromise proposed improvements • 'Boy racers'

Town Centre

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rich tapestry of Listed Buildings and a strong identity to its Conservation Area • Examples of cob structures, timber framed buildings, attractive stone buildings with elaborate details and attractively proportioned brick built Georgian facades with key buildings forming attractive landmarks around the Square • The central car park is a large area dominated by parking, lorry parks, recycling centre, open fields and cattle market. From here there are good views across the rear buildings of the main streets and the Pannier Market. • There are a variety of attractive spaces in the town, some streets are wide and would allow for a variety of uses to spill out onto the street. The spaces around St Mary Magdalene Church and the Pannier Market are particularly attractive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking and bus routes compromise the structure and possibility of public uses on the street and in places dominates the pedestrian experience • The rear of the main street buildings are unattractive in many places and the recycling centre dominates what could be an attractive open area • The central park green spaces are under utilised • The car park coach and lorry park is unattractive • Pedestrian links from the central car park area to the main streets are unattractive and inaccessible in places • Poor listing of buildings
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance shop frontages • Promote town as Farm Gate with a link to local produce • Farmers market • Environmental improvements to street pavements, squares and mews • Promote better use of second and third floor accommodation • Listing of buildings would preserve heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate alterations to historic buildings could undermine development opportunities • Elements of modern living, parking, traffic flows, shop signs etc are unsympathetic to the character of the town

Agriculture

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Strong agricultural history • Tenacity shown as farmers are restocking after FMD • Many local outlets for local produce • Good position on North Devon Link Road • Local authorities support promotion of town as regional centre • SWeRDA report on livestock markets in South West supports relocation of livestock market due to resultant opportunities in CDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current livestock market needs investment to meet bio-security requirements • Any new livestock market facility will struggle to be economically viable • Low income • High start-up costs
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of livestock market to out of town site and development as regional centre with bio-security requirements met • Development of a new livestock market facility to include managed workspace and training facilities • Promotion of local produce through quality food programme • New facility to include environmental improvements (rainwater for wash off, reed beds, wind power etc) • Relocation of livestock market would free up land for regeneration of the town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without further investment in the current livestock market it may continue to decline until closure is the only option • Creation of new and better facilities in rival facilities in other areas • Lack of investment in infrastructure • Government agricultural policy • Young People unwilling to take on business

The hinterland

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment • Tourism generator (walking etc) • Increases viability of regional centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of young people and families • Unable to provide expected services locally • Inaccessibility
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village appraisals • Funding streams • Community plans • Developing rural issues initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current legislation discourages new development including housing that is not infill • Lack of affordable housing is making local services unviable

Geographical location

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On A361 North Devon Link Road • Close to Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty • Centre of rural road network • Within thirty minutes of M5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No rail link • Poor local bus service • Poor road junctions • Bypassed by and not visible from A361
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better cycle and footpaths connected to existing networks supported by town centre cycle security • Marketing as gateway to the Atlantic Highway, North Devon beaches, Exmoor • Attract industry and new employment • Allocation of employment land in emerging Local Plan • Introduction of Broadband would enable hi-tech industry investment which is not dependant on physical location within UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development without necessary infrastructure improvements • Threats from other centres • Lack of Broadband