

Appendix D

Recent History

1995: The North Devon Local Plan (Deposit November 95) looked at the future of Employment, Shopping, Tourism, Community Facilities, Sport and Recreation and Leisure in the South Molton and its hinterland.

It recommended the promotion of the area as the District's Agricultural Centre, in accordance with the Local Authority's employment strategy for the District.

1996: The South Molton Regeneration Steering Group brought forward a proposal entitled 'Developing a Blueprint'. This was designed as a method of developing initiatives in the Town and its surrounding area by bringing together different groups, which may act as a catalyst for initiating actions and mobilising development.

1997: Molton Area 2000 was born. Its mission is to enable and encourage communities and organisations across the project area to work in partnership to put together a package of individual and group projects that support economic, social and environmental regeneration in South Molton and its surrounding area. Its work includes Visioning Surveys and SWOT analysis.

1997: Community Governance Pilot for the South Molton area, summarised in the report on socio-economic characteristics based on deprivation and analysis of information available (produced by Joyce Halliday, Devon Research Fellow, Exeter University).

1997: Community Appraisals carried out in South Molton and several outlying parishes.

1998: Planning for Real exercise carried out by Molton Area 2000.

1998: South Molton Area Committee Locality Agenda was produced using 'information drawn from a multitude of sources including a statistical profile of the area, which was presented to Committee on 7 July 1998'.

2000: District wide retail study undertaken by G L Hearn, specialist retail consultants. This provides background on the retail situation in South Molton that will be useful in the preparation of the community strategic plan.

2000: Molton Area 2000 reported back to the community in an Open Forum, showing progress to date including projects identified to meet the needs and aspirations of the area.

2000: Formation of the South Molton Alliance to take forward the actions identified by Molton Area 2000, and consultation/healthcheck initiatives.

2001: The Market and Coastal Town Initiative Steering Group was formed following the identification as an area of need following the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

2001: Report commissioned by North Devon District Council Cabinet on the Future of Finished Stock Markets/Abattoirs in Northern Devon, including a reassessment of the conclusions following the Foot and Mouth crisis.

2001: North Devon Local Plan (First Deposit November 01).
Supports findings of all consultation, reports and healthchecks.

2001: Public Consultation events run in South Molton and four outlying parishes. These supported the previous findings with one major exception; previously it was felt that closure of the Livestock Market in the Town Centre would have major repercussions on the economic viability of the town. Experience has shown this not to be so, resulting in overwhelming support for its move to Pathfields Industrial Estate. The National Farmers Union and Farmers for Action are in support of the move.

2002: Stage One funding for the MCTI process was applied for and successfully achieved, with funding from South West Regional Development Agency (£54,000) South Molton Town Council (£15,000) and North Devon District Council (£6,000)

Issue groups were setup to deliver the projects identified to date. From these consultants were engaged to carry out feasibility studies on:

- The regeneration of the town centre (the Master Plan)
- The relocation of the Livestock Market to Pathfields Industrial Estate
- The provision of a new youth resource centre

Quick win projects were delivered, such as supply of new dog bins, landscaping on New Walk Steps and painting of bollards on the Square. Molton Area 2000 was established as a Company Limited by Guarantee

2003: MA2K invited residents, community groups and people who work in the area, to become members of the limited company by an annual £5 subscription. The results of the town centre regeneration feasibility study were received and findings presented to the public stakeholders, and technical officers of various statutory bodies via open meetings/workshops and three newsletters and newspapers. Funding bids were put together for the first deliverable projects. The idea of a town centre project co-ordinator was developed.

With many Market Towns seeking to improve livestock market provision, SWeRDA commissioned a report reviewing current provision and considering the future of the industry. This concluded that market forces would determine the future of specific sites, but that in the case of South Molton, relocation would be beneficial to the overall regeneration of the area.