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***DRAFT North Tawton  
Neighbourhood Plan  
2014 to 2034***

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## Acknowledgements

[to be drafted by Steering Group if required – include reference to source(s) of photos used]

# ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## ***What is a Neighbourhood Plan?***

The Localism Act of 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their own future development at a local level. A Neighbourhood Plan is a planning strategy with legal weight which gives the community of North Tawton an opportunity to set local planning policies which will be taken into account when planning applications are considered by West Devon Borough Council, the local planning authority.

Neighbourhood Plans must be in accordance with higher planning policy – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) and the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan. The NPPF retains the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' embracing the three critical roles for sustainable development: an economic role, contributing to a strong, responsive, competitive economy; a social role, supporting vibrant and healthy communities; and environmental role, protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment.

The North Tawton Neighbourhood Plan is designed to embrace the principles of the NPPF and of sustainable development. These are set out in the Objectives and Policies which have been developed over a period of time with the community of North Tawton.

## ***Why we are producing a Neighbourhood Plan***

In 2012, North Tawton Town Council took the decision to develop a Neighbourhood Plan in order to give those who live in the Parish of North Tawton more say in how their community evolves over time. Without a Plan in place, the Town Council can make recommendations to West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) but input is just that; a recommendation on how they should act. With an approved Neighbourhood Plan in place, WDBC are obliged to give material weight to the policies in the Plan when making decisions about where any new housing might be built or where other development might, or might not take place. The Plan also serves to set out some aspirations; things we would like to see improved and thereby gives us a basis to campaign and lobby for such services, even if not all of these are within the Local Authority's remit to provide.

In February 2013, North Tawton Town Council applied to WDBC to nominate the land area of the Parish as a Neighbourhood Planning boundary. This was approved in June 2013 and the process of drawing up the Neighbourhood Plan began. **Designation statement Appendix 3**

## ***The Community's Plan***

This Neighbourhood Plan is *the Community's Plan*. It represents the community's vision and priorities for how they would like to see the local area develop in the coming years and in doing so it sets out our local planning policies.

The Plan's objectives have been developed from local consultation and analysis of other evidence. The primary focus of the Plan is to develop planning policies to respond to issues of development. However, it was clear from evidence gathered that there are other issues outside the planning arena that are of concern to residents. During consultation with the community we ensured that discussion remained open so that many of the important issues identified were not excluded from consideration. There are a number of objectives which cannot be delivered through planning policies. Community

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Actions will be identified for the Town Council and others within the town to address as and whether appropriate to respond to these issues. These include issues such as transport and parking which are clearly of concern for residents. These will sit outside of this Plan.

The Plan is therefore not a Plan which can cover every issue identified as being important to the community: it has (and must have, by law) a focus on responding to proposals for development and the appropriate use of land. It puts us, as a community, in the driving seat when it comes to having a say over what, how and where development should take place where it requires planning permission.

### ***The Neighbourhood Plan Period***

The Plan covers the period between 2014 and 2034, and is therefore in sync with the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) produced by the Borough Council as the local planning authority (jointly with South Hams District Council and Plymouth City Council). It is logical for our Neighbourhood Plan to be aligned in this way as it is the JLP's strategic policies with which our Plan has to in general conform.

### ***Monitoring and Review***

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for the impact of this Plan and its policies to be monitored, North Tawton Town Council will periodically monitor the impact of policies on change in the town by considering the policies' effectiveness in the planning application decision making process. The Town Council will do this by referring to this Plan when reviewing planning applications.

The Clerk will keep a record of the application, any applicable policies, comments from the Town Council and the eventual outcome of the application. The delivery of any identified community actions will also be periodically monitored.

A full or partial review of this Plan is unlikely to be considered necessary during its lifetime unless triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or borough-wide planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, Borough and / or existing Neighbourhood Plan policies.

## **The Plan Area**

The area that the Plan covers is the whole parish of North Tawton shown in [Map X](#). North Tawton is a largely rural parish with a population of just over 2000 (Devon JSNA Community Profile 2016), situated amid beautiful West Devon countryside and close to Dartmoor National Park. North Tawton is one of West Devon's more important settlements, providing local services and facilities for the surrounding rural Parishes. The Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) recognises the significance of the smaller towns and key villages, of which North Tawton is one, and is committed to maintaining their vitality and viability. The location of the town and its easy access to the A30 means it also has good links with Exeter and nearby Okehampton.

The main settlement is the small ancient market town of North Tawton, situated on the east side of the Taw valley and on the western side of the parish which encompasses some 2,400 hectares (5,930 acres) of land. The form and character of the traditional town centre makes the town locally distinctive. Safeguarding the elements of the town that contribute to its nature and character could help influence the design of future development.

The Parish of North Tawton lies within the North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, with the aim of promoting and demonstrating a balanced relationship between people and nature. These reserves aim to create and maintain sustainable communities where people can live and work in an area of high environmental quality.

The Parish has areas of designated Ancient Woodland in the north of the parish at Western Copse, Rook Wood and Woodland Copse and a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Staddon Moor. The River Taw runs south-north through the western side of the parish and close to the western edge of the town with a number of streams and tributaries feeding the river through the parish. Two streams, broadly running west-east, feed the River Yeo in the south-east and north-east corners of the parish with part of the south-eastern boundary of the parish being formed by the river. There are some areas at risk from flooding which broadly follow the line of the rivers and their tributaries. Agricultural land in the parish is a range of quality grades of 2 (very good), 3 (good to moderate) and 4 (poor). There are over a dozen historic scheduled monuments, several of which most notably at and adjacent to the Mill and The Barton to the north and south of the A3072 and numerous listed buildings many of which are in the town.

Amongst North Tawton's services and amenities are shops, businesses and community facilities. These include the fire station, 4 public house and dining establishments, café and 2 takeaways, GP practice, pharmacy, post office, dental surgeries, memorial park, town hall, youth and community centre, community primary school, 3 churches, free town centre parking, a good range of small local shops and businesses and public toilets. The Tarka Trail, which is around 180 miles long, passes through North Tawton and there are several public rights of way. There is a regular bus service to Exeter, Hatherleigh and Okehampton.

The nearest settlements to the parish include Bow village 2 miles to the east, Sampford Courtenay village a mile to the west and the larger settlements of Okehampton town 7 miles to the south-west and Crediton town which is 12 miles from the parish.

Culturally and historically, North Tawton has links to Ted Hughes, poet laureate 1984-98, who lived in the town from the 1960s; William Budd, a physician and epidemiologist known for recognising the contagious nature of infectious diseases, born in the town in 1811; and more recently, the BBC TV programme "Jam and Jerusalem" was filmed in the town and on nearby Dartmoor between 2006 and 2008.

## **Our Objectives and Policies**

Our objectives, and policies which help to achieve them, are the result of extensive consultation, consideration of evidence and understanding of what policy coverage we need alongside existing policies at national and local authority levels. The latter point is important as we are advised that our planning policies should not simply repeat policies already set out at national or local authority level, but should add local detail or specificity to them.

Our objectives and policies are grouped under six topics. These are:

- Conserving Our Historic and Natural Environment
- Community Life
- The Economy: Employment and Business
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Energy & Environment

Their order does not indicate any priority and it is important to note that, while we have packaged objectives and policies under these topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, *the whole Plan (i.e. all policies)* should be considered.

Our objectives set out under these topic headings are as follows:

### **Conserving Our Historic and Natural Environment**

1. To maintain and enhance the physical appearance of the town in its rural surroundings and help to secure the surrounding countryside, as much as possible, in its present essentially rural state.
2. To ensure that the heritage assets of the parish of North Tawton are protected and conserved for the benefit of the community, as they contribute both character to the town, and significant value to the quality of life for this, and future, generations.

### **Community Life**

3. To provide a safe and healthy place in which individuals and families can thrive where community facilities and services are supported, enhanced and maintained.

### **The Economy: Employment and Business**

4. To provide a greater level and variety of employment within the town.
5. To welcome and support measures which maintain and improve the effectiveness and vibrancy of the town's retail and business centre, ensuring a thriving town.
6. To support the safeguarding of existing public transport and promote better links with other towns and areas - especially those of Exeter and Okehampton.

### **Housing**

7. To support as closely as possible the views expressed by the town's residents through the social engagement process.
8. To support housing development that sustains the population of the town at a level that helps maintains shops, jobs and services sufficient to enable North Tawton to thrive as a place in which to live.

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9. To ensure the provision of a sufficient number, type, range and tenure of housing of a good standard that meets the needs of different groups of people. To wherever possible promote independent living for people of all ages and conditions.
10. To ensure that the design of any new development reflects and respects the distinctive character of the town and its surroundings.

### **Infrastructure**

11. To support a sustainable health provision within the town which enhances healthy living for individuals and families and meets the needs of local residents.
12. To ensure that 106 agreements consider the impact of new developments on the needs of the Pre-school, Primary and Secondary age children in the town providing appropriate financial support.
13. To support the provision of improved car parking within the town.

### **Energy & Environment**

14. To help the town move towards a more sustainable future, especially in relation to renewable energy and to help it play its part in National and Regional initiatives towards greater sustainability.
15. To provide the basis for tangible community benefits from energy projects within the parish.
16. To support a reduction in carbon emission which contributes to improvements in energy conservation, particularly in housing, employment and the provision of goods and services that enhance sustainable living.
17. To aid the reduction of fuel poverty.

For each of our planning policies we set out our justification and evidence behind the policy, as well as the policy itself.

Our Neighbourhood Plan's planning policies are designed to provide a framework which will be used, alongside national and borough planning policies, by local authority Officers and Councillors (elected Members) when considering planning applications for development. Those proposing development in the town will also need to refer to them to understand the local policy parameters against which their proposal will be tested.

### ***How have we got here?***

A Neighbourhood Plan is not compulsory and has been produced by volunteers. In order to produce the Plan, its development has been driven by a steering group, comprised of residents, Town Councillors and assistance from the Town Council clerk.

The aim of the steering group has been to

- Ensure that any expansion of the town is carried out on a scale and in a manner that is as closely as possible supported by the majority of residents.
- Encourage the provision of opportunities for an improved range of employment and the continuation of business within the town and parish.
- Help retain and enhance North Tawton's existing visual and social characteristics of a small country town.
- Maintain as far as possible, local services and amenities and support a variety of community recreational facilities.



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- Safeguard, promote and make accessible wherever and whenever possible, the historical assets of the town and parish.
- Enable the town to play its part in the appropriate development of sustainable environmentally friendly ways of living.

It was recognised at an early stage that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the town and to be *the community's Plan*, we would need to conduct thorough engagement with those who live and work in the town. We also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and agencies with a borough, county, sub-regional or national remit.

The process and types of consultation and discussion that we have gone through is documented in detail in our **Consultation Statement Appendix 1** which accompanies this Plan. However, the key methods we have used have included:

- Public exhibitions, meetings and events
- A community questionnaire sent to all households
- Focus groups
- Discussion with local businesses
- Evidence gathering from community groups and organisations
- Directly contacting wider-than-local organisations and Agencies (strategic stakeholders) which have an interest in planning issues in the town
- Consultation events during which comments have been invited on draft documents

Our development of the Plan was based on a desire to be open and encouraging comments and contributions from all quarters with the aim being to achieve consensus, but also to have debates about issues where the community was divided in its views.

Having developed the Plan through this iterative approach, this first draft of the Plan is being shared with the community and other stakeholders and, it is anticipated, will be revised to reflect comments before progressing through the regulatory framework which will include consultation on the pre-submission (next) version of the Plan, formal submission to the local authority and public examination of the Plan before an independent Inspector. After that point, assuming that the Plan passes through the Examination successfully, the Plan will be subject to a public referendum where residents on the electoral register will be asked if they support the final Plan. If the referendum answer is a "yes" from a majority of voters turning out on the day, the Plan will be "made" (or adopted) by the local authority.

### **Our Evidence Base**

To inform the content of the Plan, we have developed our evidence base so that our policies are underpinned by clear reasoning and justification. We have done this in two ways. Firstly, we have undertaken local consultation (documented in our Consultation Statement which will be submitted alongside this Plan for Examination) and secondly we have gathered together our understanding of the written evidence that already exists into a summary report. We have used these two approaches to help identify our Plan's Objectives, Vision and Policies.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

The Plan is subject to testing as it is developed to help determine the Plan's positive or negative impact on the social, environmental and economic character of the town. This is done through a sustainability appraisal (SA). The report of the SA will accompany this Plan as it proceeds to submission. The aim of the SA is to identify potential impacts of

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the policies and then propose possible amendments to lessen negative impacts which could arise as a result of the Plan's policies and / or proposals.

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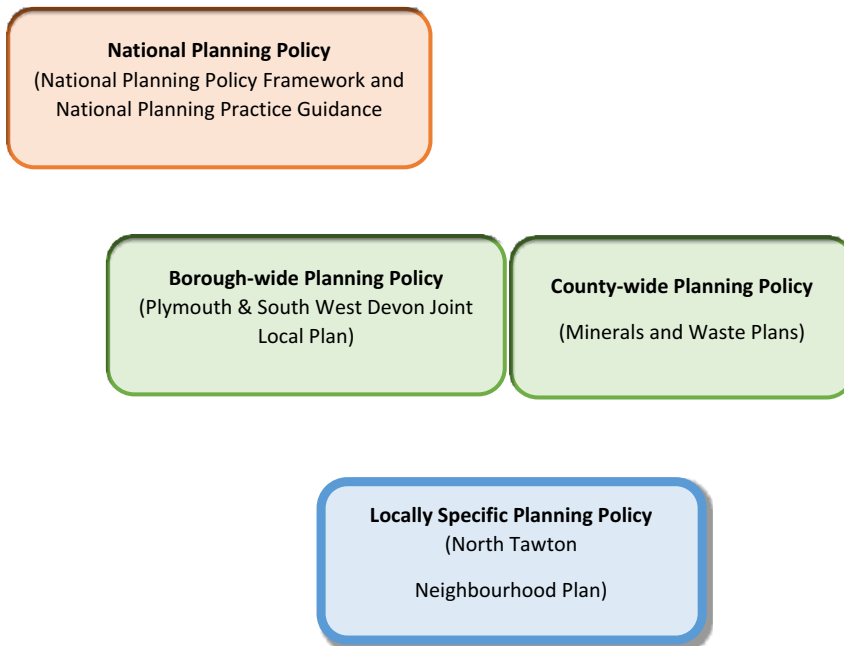
Commented [AJ2]: [if you carry out a strategic environmental assessment (SEA), this paragraph above will need amending. Remember that once you have a set of draft policies you can (and should) request the formal opinion from WDBC of whether or not you will need to carry out an SEA.] **Appendix 2**

### ***This Plan's Status and Relationship with Other Planning Documents***

This Plan, once approved, will be part of the statutory development plan. That means that its policies will have significant weight (or 'real teeth') when it is used by the local authority to help determine proposals for development submitted through planning applications. It will form the local tier of planning policy in our parish. It sits alongside the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) (also part of the statutory development plan) and underneath the umbrella of national planning policy in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), as the main planning policy documents relevant to our area. Other important planning documents which govern specific issues are the Minerals and Waste Plans produced at the county-wide level.

The relationship between our Neighbourhood Plan and other key planning policy documents is shown below:

**Figure 1**



However, this Plan should not be treated as a blueprint. When this Plan is adopted policies will need to be used by the local planning authority when considering decisions that need to be made about development proposals submitted through the planning system.

The Neighbourhood Plan's policies, however, cannot guarantee that a proposal will be refused nor be granted permission, but the policies will carry significant weight, alongside policies of the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Policy Guidance and Joint Local Plan when weighing up the appropriateness of the proposal in question.

### ***Sustainable Development***

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) set out the Government's planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". It is important to understand what that means for our Plan as it sets the parameters within which we can make proposals and set policies.

When taking decisions on proposals for development this means that proposals should be approved where they accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

Translating this to what it means for our Neighbourhood Plan, it states that plans should "...support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development..." and "...plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan". The NPPF goes on to say that "The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan."

We are also advised that neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies. Outside of strategic policies, we are encouraged to shape and direct sustainable development in our area through our Plan.

### ***Local Plan Policy Context for North Tawton***

In the Plymouth & South West Joint Local Plan (JLP), North Tawton is identified as one of the Thriving Towns and Villages of West Devon where the Vision is that they will be thriving when the following outcomes have been met

- Residents are empowered to create strong communities
- Places are created for enterprise to thrive and business to grow
- Homes have been built to meet local needs
- The services and facilities which meet the needs of our communities have been secured

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- The built and natural environment has been protected, conserved and enhanced
- The past is celebrated and our heritage for the future is protected

The strategic objective for the smaller towns and villages is maintaining vitality and viability by promoting the provision of homes, jobs, services and community infrastructure sufficient to enable the small towns and villages to continue to play their important role as local service centres for their surrounding areas.

The vision, objectives and policies in the North Tawton Neighbourhood Plan reflect similar sentiments as those expressed in the JLP for the residents of the town and its surrounding area.

The JLP states that in order for the smaller towns, of which North Tawton is one, to maintain their function as a key local centre, a proportionate amount of new growth is appropriate to ensure that services and facilities are not lost, but can be maintained and enhanced. Policy TTV29 in the JLP sets out for North Tawton that 61 new homes and 1,300 sq.m of employment floor space is considered to be appropriate scale of growth to support the future sustainability of the town.

In order to focus sustainable development into settlements that have facilities to support and accommodate them, settlement boundaries will be identified for those in the top three levels of settlement hierarchy and kept under regular review through supplementary planning documents. The Settlement Boundary for the North Tawton Parish is set out in [Map x](#).

## **OUR VISION, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

### **Our Vision**

## **A Vision for North Tawton**

The thriving North Tawton community - together with its surrounding areas - prides itself in its friendly community spirit and in its commercial and social facilities which meet the residents' day to day needs. We aim to balance new development with the conservation of our historic, rural character and want to ensure that any planned changes in the town contribute to its sustainability and viability in the years to come.

# Conserving our Historic and Natural Environment

## Introduction

North Tawton is a small market town located at the heart of Devon, within easy reach of Dartmoor National Park. The River Taw, flowing to the west of the town, gives North Tawton its name which is Celtic for 'Silent River'.

The town is essentially rural and it is this setting that residents most value and enjoy about living in the Parish. The Devonshire Heartland way, a 43 mile trail running from Okehampton to the village of Stoke Canon, just north of Exeter, runs through the town. Also part of the Tarka Trail, a 180 mile route which follows the route of Tarka the otter, a character featured in Henry Williamson's famous novel, runs to the west, close to the river. Other Public Rights of Way can be found in the town and surrounding countryside.

North Tawton has playing fields for Football and Rugby, a Bowling Green, and the Frank Henson Gibbings Memorial Park which includes play equipment, skate facilities, seating and picnic tables. The Churchyard and Town Cemetery are also important green spaces within the town. There are some allotments behind Fore St and a site currently used by the Environmental Trust at the Depot at Devonshire Gardens where local residents can grow their own produce. Further allotments are proposed within the Bathway development through a 106 agreement.

Residents enjoy the rural, amenity views from several aspects around the town, with views towards Dartmoor to the south dominating. Land behind Bouchers Hill, above the allotments and towards Yeo Lane were areas that residents most wanted to see protected, as well as land west of the river.

There are a number of listed buildings and a Conservation Area covers part of the town. There are three scheduled ancient monuments within the town and a roman fort lies to the south.

St Peter's Church, dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, is the oldest existing building. There are also outlying manor houses and farms which date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In 1374, North Tawton was granted a market charter which enabled the Lord of the Manor to exact tolls for all market and fair days. However, this charter lapsed in 1730.

In 2004, a Village Design Statement was produced which described the visual character of the town and the surrounding countryside. This document has now been updated to form the **North Tawton Design Statement 2017 - Appendix 4** which has been

## Objectives

1. To maintain and enhance the physical appearance of the town in its rural surroundings and help to secure the surrounding countryside, as much as possible, in its present essentially rural state.
2. To ensure that the heritage assets of the parish of North Tawton are protected and preserved for the benefit of the community, as they contribute both character to the town, and significant value to the quality of life for this, and future, generations.

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prepared, following public consultation, in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan and has incorporated and updated much of the historical Village Design Statement.

The objectives of the Design Statement are to describe the distinctive character of the town and surrounding countryside as it is today, and to highlight the qualities that the residents value. It is from these qualities that design principles, based on the distinctive character of North Tawton, have been drawn up to guide future development and maintenance. The purpose of this Design Statement is to provide guidelines to ensure that future development of the town is in keeping with the fundamental character of the area.

The Policies within this theme seek to address the **Objectives 1 & 2**.

The following sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underpin these policies with specific paragraphs listed before each policy:

- Requiring a good design
- Promoting Healthy Communities
- Protecting greenbelt land
- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Within the South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) Strategic Objective SO11 'Delivering high quality development' is committed to delivering development which is sustainable and of the right type and quality which contributes to and enhances the natural network, providing multiple benefits both to people and wildlife.

A number of Policies within the JLP underpin the Objectives within this theme. These are listed before each policy.

## **Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

### **Local Green Space**

Open Space, Sport and Recreation facilities are important community resources. As well as formal sports and play facilities, open spaces, such as parks, nature reserves, woodland and allotments, can provide opportunities for exercise and help to improve health and wellbeing. It is important that such facilities are identified within this plan and the importance they have within the town for the community. The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 76, (NPPF) gives communities the opportunity to protect green spaces through Local Green Space designation. Such areas could be designated as long as they are in close proximity to the community they serve and are considered by the residents to be particularly special with significant local character (NPPF paragraph 77). These areas may also be valued for their beauty, recreational value, tranquillity, richness of wildlife and historic significance.

Under the NPPF Local Green Space is a green area identified for special protection meaning that new development will not be permitted on it other than in special circumstances. The land has protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt. Consequently, an area of land has to meet much more stringent and more specific criteria to permit its designation as Local Green Space.

In the JLP green open spaces and play spaces are seen as an integral part of sustainable communities. An important element of a sustainable community is the accessibility of green open spaces and play spaces due to their substantial health and well-being

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benefits. It goes on to state that in the Thriving Towns and Villages areas Local Green Spaces will be proposed for designation within neighbourhood plans.

In gathering evidence to support **Policy CH1** a questionnaire was sent to sports groups and organisations within the town to gauge how well used green space and sports pitches are and their importance to residents. The Neighbourhood Plan Group is also aware of other areas of green spaces in and around the town which the community (in the Questionnaire) has said they would like to protect from development. However much of this land is regarded as 'an extensive tract of land', which although of significance and importance to the community cannot be designated under this process.

Where land is privately owned or managed by Trustees they have been contacted by the Neighbourhood Plan Group and given opportunity to make representations or object to proposals for designation. A summary of their responses can be found in **Appendix 5**

Consultation took place on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2017 where residents were asked to comment on nine areas identified as important local green spaces. They were asked whether they agreed with these green spaces being designated and what its value was to them. Over 50 residents attended providing very useful feedback. A summary of the comments can be found in **Appendix 6**

#### **Local & National Policies**

- **JLP: Policy DEV29**
- **Neighbourhood Planning Guidance: Open Space, Sport and Recreation and Local Green Space Designation**
- **'West Devon Playing Pitch Strategy' Jan 2015**
- **'West Devon Open Space, Sport, Recreation Study' June 2016**
- **'West Devon Green Infrastructure Report' Feb 2015**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 76 & 77,81**



## **Policy CH1 - Local Green Space Designation**

Our locally valued green spaces (green infrastructure) are identified on [map](#) ..... and are designated as Local Green Space. These LGS (and the reason(s) for their (proposed) designation) are:

**Frank Henson Gibbings Memorial Park – *Recreational Value***

**The Town Cemetery & Extension – *Historic Significance, Tranquillity, Richness of its Wildlife***

**Bowling Green – *Historical Significance, Recreational Value***

**Allotments, North West of Fore St - *Historic Significance, Recreational Value, Richness of its Wildlife***

**The Wordens, Football Club - *Recreational Value***

**Rugby Field & Practice Field - *Recreational Value***

**The Butts Field – *Historic Significance***

**The Churchyard - *Historic Significance, Tranquillity, Richness of its Wildlife***

**The Depot dedicated allotment space (500sq) – *Recreational Value, Richness of Wildlife***

Should these areas be designated as LGS they will be protected from loss for the reasons and uses set out. Development proposals on or likely to impact the site's use and reason for designation will only be supported where they:

- i) have no adverse impact on the landscape, habitats or biodiversity of the site or (where unavoidable) satisfactorily mitigate such impact;
- ii) maintain or enhance the existing use, access to and amenity value of the use of a site or satisfactorily mitigate loss.

Where replacement of an LGS used for recreation is proposed, such replacement will only be supported where:

- iii) it results in provision of equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and the area of space provided. Opportunities should be taken to enhance leisure and recreation provision over and above that provided on the replaced LGS;
- iv) it is provided in a location easily and safely accessible to the community that the replaced LGS served; and,
- v) community access to and management of the space and any facilities provided on the site is secured in perpetuity through legal agreement.

The replacement site for a LGS will be treated as designated LGS and will be defined in a supplementary document to this plan until its inclusion in a future review of this Plan.

Proposers of development should engage with the local community and Town Council at the earliest opportunity to help ensure that any proposals for replacement take into account both this plan's aims and objectives, the needs of users and the views of the local community.

## Design, Heritage and the Built Environment

In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire 59% of respondents valued or highly valued the historic town and its buildings. 71% responded that the heritage and history of North Tawton was important to them and that more should be done to promote and protect it. Residents suggested that local history information and heritage trails were ways in which the heritage and history of the town could be promoted.

The Conservation Area of North Tawton is identified on **Map X** along with other significant buildings within the town and surrounding areas which are identified on the National Heritage List for England in **Appendix 7, The Conservation Area Character Appraisal**, undertaken in 1996 by West Devon Borough Council, highlighted what is in the area and worth keeping, visual and architectural features that needed safeguarding, and how to go about maintaining the character of the area. This appraisal went on to inform the development of the Village Design Statement of 2004.

The **North Tawton Design Statement** describes the distinctive character of the town and surrounding countryside and highlights the qualities that residents value. The Statement includes the essential characteristics of the town including buildings – houses, public buildings and retail outlets; street furniture, lighting, and signs; boundaries – hedgerows, banks, trees and stone walls; signs and public utilities; and public rights of way. It should be consulted when preparing designs for new developments, renovations, extensions or alterations to existing buildings in the parish of North Tawton, regardless of scale and is intended to encourage and stimulate the design process.

The Design Statement does not aim to provide design solutions. Its purpose is to illustrate the distinctive characteristics and elements of the town that should be considered by developers when designing new buildings or altering existing buildings. **Policy CH2** sets out a clear direction to planners and designers showing the importance and significance of the character and heritage of the town to any future developments. Change and development that is well planned and thoughtfully designed is welcome, blending old history with new and keeping the town unique and a special place in which to live.

The JLP sets out policies which will ensure that development genuinely helps to shape high quality and locally distinct places, which celebrate and strengthen the unique quality and inherent value that historic assets and culture offer. The JLP policies (listed below) and **Policy CH2** provide a positive strategy for the conservation, enjoyment and enhancement of the historic environment.

### Related District & National Policies & Documents

- **North Tawton Town Design Statement 2016**
- **Village Design statement 2004**
- **Conservation Area Character Appraisal**
- **National Heritage List for England**
- **JLP: Policies DEV20, 21, 22, 24, 30**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 56-58, 60, 126**

## **Policy CH2 - Design, Heritage and the Built Environment**

To ensure that new development is sympathetic to the traditional and historic built character and landscape of the parish, and our heritage assets protected, development proposals will only be supported where they are of high quality design, enhance visual amenity of the setting and minimise any adverse visual impact on local character and neighbouring properties.

To be considered as high quality design, development proposals should meet the requirements set out in the North Tawton Town Design Statement.

Particular attention should be paid to:

- i) ensuring that the size, height, density, scale and location of the development is appropriate to the form, scale and setting of the surrounding built environment, respecting key characteristics such as (but not limited to) [insert from VDS];
- ii) ensuring that materials and design of the development are in-keeping with the character of the surrounding built environment, with a focus on the use of local materials;
- iii) ensuring that it is of a design and scale which minimises adverse impact on the:
  - a) visual amenity of the surrounding landscape;
  - b) views of the proposed development; and,
  - c) natural environment;

and does not result in the loss of the local amenity views identified on map X (reproduced from the North Tawton Design Statement) or that any adverse impacts on them can satisfactorily be mitigated; and,

- iv) ensuring that it is of a design and layout which maximises opportunities for solar gain (for example, following 'passivhaus' principles); and,
- v) the use of traditional design in the North Tawton Conservation Area and protecting or enhancing the essential character of the Conservation Area.

## Important Amenity Views

The rural setting of North Tawton is the aspect of the town that residents value the most according to the Questionnaire with 88% of respondents citing that this was something they highly valued and was what they most enjoyed about living in North Tawton. Important amenity views identified within the Questionnaire included views from the footpath on Bouchers Hill across the town to Dartmoor, area beside the river, and open views across agricultural fields. Photographs and maps of views important to residents are included in this section.

The surrounding countryside forms part of the 'High Taw Farmland Landscape Character Area' typified by undulating farmland laid largely to pasture. The special features of this area include its relatively remote rural character. The landscape strategy refers to protecting the existing settlement pattern and protecting the elements important to it. This includes the rights of way network, accessibility to the countryside and amenity views.

**Policy CH3** emphasises the significance of the countryside and rural views and how developers need to be mindful of their importance to the residents of North Tawton. Policy DEV24, Landscape character, in the JLP states that development will conserve and enhance landscape and townscape character and scenic and visual quality, avoiding significant and adverse landscape or visual impacts.

'West Devon Borough & Tamar Valley area of outstanding natural beauty landscape Character Assessment' 2008 sets out the essential characteristics of the area to help shape and guide landscape based plans, projects and schemes to be used by planners, developers and others.

### Local & national Policies

- **JLP: Policy DEV24**
- **'West Devon Borough & Tamar Valley area of outstanding natural beauty landscape Character Assessment' 2008**
- **NPPF: Paragraph 58**

### **Policy CH3 Important Amenity Views & Landscape Character**

Development proposals will only be supported where they do not compromise the local landscape setting and special character of North Tawton. Development should conserve and enhance the landscape, townscape, scenic and visual quality.

Important views towards the town and from the surrounding open countryside are valuable local assets that should be protected from inappropriate development. These views should remain uninterrupted and not obstructed in whole or in part. They are set out on Map X and are:

- i. From the footpath from Bouchers Hill across the town to Dartmoor
- ii. Views from Yeo Lane
- iii. Along the banks of the River Taw west of the town

Any development proposals which compromise these views will be resisted.

# Community Life

## Introduction

The residents of North Tawton value the town's community spirit and the services and facilities around which it is centred. The town's activity hub is located in The Square, geographically central and a significant crossroads to all neighbouring towns and villages. [See Map x](#)

The co-location of the most frequently used services and facilities within and around the hub is an important factor in the town's identity and provides ready access on foot from across the town. There is a mix of well-used community facilities with local shops, meeting places, health services, public houses and places of worship, all situated within close proximity of each other.

Groups and organisations utilise the Town Hall, Rugby Club, Youth and Community Centre both for their own activities and for social events for the town. Community spirit is fostered, and residents' health and wellbeing, both physical and mental, is supported by these activities.

Any development should continue to provide opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other, including through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages which bring together those who work, live and play in the vicinity.

The Strategic Objective SO11 of the South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) is committed to delivering high quality development which supports healthy communities that enjoy good quality and clean environments and where healthy lifestyles are positively encouraged through the developments and services that are provided. This is supported by the JLP Vision for the 'Thriving Towns and Villages' where small towns, such as North Tawton, will be a thriving community when services and facilities which meet the needs of rural communities have been secured.

The Policies set out below address the Community Life Objective.

Section 8, 'Promoting Healthy Communities', of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underpin these policies with specific paragraphs listed before each policy.

## Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### Protecting Community Facilities from Loss

North Tawton aims to grow as a thriving small town meeting the needs of its community with independent traders and businesses, meeting spaces and sporting facilities for all age groups, and services that people rely on, whilst retaining its distinctive character.

There is a strong community spirit in North Tawton. The town has a wide range of clubs, societies and charities that meet regularly and cater for different age groups and special interests – the Women's Institute, British Legion, Amateur Dramatics (ANTS) and Youth Amateur Dramatics (YANTS), Friends of the Surgery, Twinning Association, and

### Objective

3. To provide a safe and healthy place in which individuals and families can thrive where community facilities and services are supported, enhanced and maintained.

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Environmental Trust are just a few. There are lunch clubs for older people and playgroups for toddlers.

The town has several valued and well-used buildings and facilities which support a range of activities. The Town Hall, Youth & Community Centre, Mortimer Room, Lakeway Church, Rugby Club, Bowling Club and the pubs and cafes are all well used for community activities. North Tawton has three pubs within the town and one on its outskirts, two cafes and two takeaways.

The Square and its retail and service facilities are important to the community. North Tawton has a Post Office, Pharmacy, Mini Market, Butchers, Dog Grooming shop, Gift and Craft shop, Blacksmiths, two Hairdressers, the Healing Hub and D.A.R.E. The residents value being able to buy many of the things they need in the town. They want to continue to enjoy and, wherever possible, enhance, the town's retail offerings, in relation to the variety of goods and retail outlets available. Local shops, the Post Office and Pharmacy are the most frequently used businesses, with a significant proportion of residents using these facilities daily or weekly. The bank and a general store have both closed in the recent past and there is feedback that competition from online retailers is having an impact on businesses.

The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire clearly defines that residents value the services and local shops available and wish to at least retain the breadth and variety of retail on offer and also to increase both the variety of goods available and the quality of the retail environment.

'Town identity and feeling part of a community' and 'Familiar service in local shops and businesses' were cited by the majority of respondents in the Questionnaire as what they enjoy about living in North Tawton. 78% of respondents cited 'Community Spirit' as a valued or highly valued aspect of North Tawton. 67% of respondents cited Services and facilities as valued or highly valued.

The town holds a number of well-supported community events including regular 'Coffee Mornings' with stalls selling local produce and crafts in support of neighbourhood clubs and charities, firework displays, fun days, 'Nanny Knights' celebrations, Yarnageddon, twinning events, carol singing in The Square. These events require the retention of local facilities in order for them to continue. They bring local residents together and help to develop cohesion, a shared sense of 'looking out for each other' and a strong charitable ethos, evident in the support for fundraising. They also generate a high degree of local pride resulting in a community that is keen to maintain the quality of the environment, as evidenced by the Questionnaire responses and involvement in local campaigns.

**Policy CO1** supports the need to plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, facilities, including local shops, meeting places, sports venues, public houses and places of worship, and other local services, to enhance the sustainability of our community and to guard against the unnecessary loss of these valued facilities and services. Recent refurbishment of the Post Office and the Pharmacy's move to new premises are regarded as positive indicators of maintaining a sustainable community.

### **Relevant National and Local Policies**

- **JLP: Policies DEV 1, 3, 4**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 28,69,70**

### **Policy CO1 - Protecting Community Facilities from Loss**

Existing community facilities will be protected for such use.

Our particularly locally valued community amenities and facilities are identified on **map X** and are:

- a) Post Office Services;
- b) Health Facilities – GP Surgery, Pharmacy, Dentists
- c) Community Venues - The Town Hall, The Youth and Community Centre, Mortimer Room, Rugby Club, Bowling Club
- d) Meeting places - Cafes, Local Pubs
- e) Places of Worship – St Peter’s Church, Lakeway Church, North St Chapel
- f) Sports & recreational facilities - North Tawton Football, Rugby and Bowling Clubs, and the Memorial Park
- g) The Depot, Environment Trust (ACV)

Development proposals that result in the loss or change of use of the community facilities and registered Assets of Community Value (ACVs) will only be supported where:

- i) it can be demonstrated:
  - a) through an up-to-date assessment of community / facility capacity, demand and need, that the facilities are no longer needed; or
  - b) through an up-to-date assessment of local economic demand, that the facility is no longer commercially viable. Evidence will be required to show that the facility has been actively marketed for at least 12 months (ideally over two summer seasons) at a realistic and viable price for the existing or similar uses. Marketing should include an offer to the local community for its acquisition or operation; and,
- ii) it can be demonstrated, through an assessment of local community facilities’ offer and role, that suitable alternative provision (in terms of size, capacity and type) exists in North Tawton to serve the community; and,
- iii) in the case where there remains a need or demand, that suitable alternative and easily accessible replacement provision is included as part of the development proposal on or off-site within North Tawton.

## **Replacement, Improved and Additional Play, Sports and Recreation Facilities**

Currently (2017) the town has active Football, Rugby and Bowling Clubs, each with their own provision. In addition, there is a sports field and play area – The Memorial Park. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to community health and well-being. It is important to retain what the town has and take opportunities to improve facilities, to support health and wellbeing across the residents' age profile, from children to older people. It is also recognised that the sports clubs encourage visitors from across the region, and beyond, making a contribution to supporting sustainable rural tourism that benefit businesses, and respect the character of the rural area. For all of these reasons the town would wish to protect its play, sports and recreational assets, and where appropriate will encourage them to register as

Assets of Community Value. Currently The Football Club is in the process of applying for their pitch to be registered as an Asset of community Value.

The Football Club, providing facilities for a significant number of regular youth, adult and veteran players, and FA qualified coaches for 4-14 year olds, have identified the need for improved lighting facilities at the ground, to extend the hours of use. The town has supported the Bowling Club plans to upgrade both its indoor bowling provision and to extend its facilities for wider community use; this represents an improvement to the town's recreation and local facilities. An improvement plan for the Memorial Park is currently being planned, partly funded through the 106 agreement for the Batheway Development.

Many residents responded in the Questionnaire to *'what facilities they would like to see and use'* with requests for a swimming pool; some also requested gym and tennis facilities. Although these are available within the Primary School, the town would support further development of such facilities if available for community access and use, and if there is adequate resource for long term management and maintenance.

**Policy CO2** emphasises the importance of retaining existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land.

### **Relevant National & Local policies**

- **West Devon Playing Pitch Strategy (Consultation Draft) Jan 2015**
- **West Devon Open Space, Sport, Recreation Study June 2016**
- **West Devon Green Infrastructure Report (Consultation Draft) Feb 2015**
- **JLP: Policies DEV3&4**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 70,73,74**



### **Policy CO2 - Replacement, improved and additional play, sports and recreation facilities**

Proposals for replacement, improved, new and / or additional play, sports, and recreation facilities and pitches will be supported where they:

- i) respond to a demonstrable need and demand for the proposed facility;
- ii) provide community access and secured community use;
- iii) demonstrate how they will be effectively managed and maintained in perpetuity;
- iv) meet up-to-date standards of design set by the appropriate agency or governing body (where appropriate); and,
- v) they demonstrate that local residents have been consulted and positive measures have been taken to ensure that there are no adverse impacts on local amenity.

### **Priority Local Infrastructure and Projects**

**Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990** allows a Local Planning Authority to seek contributions from developers, through the planning application process, towards the cost of providing services and infrastructure within a community. Part of the '106 monies' can be spent on new community facilities or upgrading community facilities within the local area, and are available to projects that can evidence the additional demands placed on a local facility as a result of the development.

Section 106 contributions are negotiated with developers through the planning process and received at a specific point in the development. It is important that residents of North Tawton can identify projects suitable for 106 funding and evidence the need and demand of such facilities.

Retaining and maintaining existing community resources are a priority for the residents of North Tawton as well as the development of new facilities for the benefit of all ages. The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire revealed that residents enjoyed the range of community facilities in the town but would welcome more open spaces. 71% of respondents wanted to see more allotments, 61% some kind of community garden, 63% informal kick about areas, 65% a well-equipped play area. Residents have aspirations for additional leisure facilities and in response to the question about which facilities residents would like to have more of and would use the list included communal open spaces that all ages can enjoy.

**Policy CO3** lists the priority projects that residents would like to see developed and a clear process for ensuring that North Tawton Town Council and residents are included in the decision making process for section 106 funding. This list is not exhaustive and it is recognised there will be a need to review it in the light of new developments over the life time of this plan.

### **Relevant National & Local Policies**

- **West Devon Borough Council Section 106 Community Facilities Grant Scheme Guidance Notes**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 69, 70,**

- **NPPF Sections 3 'Supporting a prosperous economy'**
- **4 'Promoting sustainable transport'**
- **5 'Supporting high quality communications infrastructure'**

### **Policy CO3 - Priority Local infrastructure and Projects**

Developer contributions which are generated from section 106 planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which are required as a result of negotiations (with regard to planning obligations) or CIL (through the local authority adopted CIL), where relevant and feasible, should contribute towards the following local priority projects:

- Development & upgrading of The Memorial Park
- Visitor Car Parking within the town
- Flood lighting provision for Football Club
- Purchase of football ground
- Community garden & Wildlife areas
- Allotments
- Heritage Trail, including Artwork depicting key historical events/people
- Bike & Walking Trails

The use of 106 & CIL receipts awarded to the Town Council will be considered on the basis of the priorities listed in this plan, appropriate timing in terms of the use of the funding and their deliverability (for example, whether the total amount of funding required to deliver the project is in place).

Other priority projects may be identified during the lifetime of this plan and so this list will be periodically reviewed and updated.

Proposers of development should engage with the local community and Town Council to help ensure that any proposals for development take into account both this plan's aims and objectives and the views of the local community.

# Economy

## Introduction

North Tawton is one of West Devon's more important settlements, providing local services and facilities for the surrounding rural parishes. In recognition of this it was identified as an important local centre for the surrounding villages in the West Devon Core Strategy (2011) and is named as one of the key 'Smaller Towns' in the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP). The location of the town and its easy access to the A30 means it has good links with Exeter and nearby Okehampton.

In 2016 the total population of North Tawton is 2067, of which 60.9% are aged between 16 and 64 years, slightly higher than in West Devon and the wider Devon County (JSNA Community profile 2016). In 2014 (North Tawton profile) of the 1009 residents aged 16-74 who were economically active, 346 were economically inactive or not working. Of those working just under 50% were full time employees, with 22% part time. A further 21% were self-employed either full or part time. Like most of West Devon, North Tawton has a higher proportion of economically active residents who are self-employed than the regional or national average.

In 2015 11.2% of North Tawton's population were dependent on benefits or tax credits, with 9.2% unemployed (JSNA Community Profile 2016). This is a similar level to neighbouring Okehampton and in West Devon as a whole. 9% of young people aged 16-24 are claiming benefits, slightly higher than the South West and nationally. 76% of young people gained 5 GCSE's or more A\*-C which is 20% higher than the national average and considerably higher than the West Devon average, something for the young people of North Tawton to be proud of.(JSNA Community Profile 2016)

North Tawton is well served by a number of strong businesses which have been a significant feature within the local economy for many years. These include Gregory's Transport and warehousing, Taw Valley Creamery (Arla foods) and Vital Pet supplies at The Barton; all have national or international reputation and provide excellent employment opportunities for the residents of North Tawton and the surrounding areas.

There are other smaller employers within the town offering a range of employment opportunities including local retail outlets, hospitality, health services, vets, skilled trades, agriculture, manufacturing and artisan and craft.

Although still thriving, the town has experienced closures and changes to businesses particularly within the main Square. In the past two years the Store, Hardware Shop and Nat West bank have closed. However on a positive vein the Pharmacy has recently

## Objectives

4. To provide a greater level and variety of employment within the town.

5. To welcome and support measures which maintain and improve the effectiveness and vibrancy of the town's retail and business centre, ensuring a thriving town.

6. To support the safeguarding of existing public transport and promote better links with other towns and areas - especially those of Exeter and Okehampton.

purchased the old bank providing an updated and modern facility, and the Post Office has undergone refurbishment. As shops or other businesses close or move premises there is a concern that these will no longer offer business and retail opportunities and be absorbed into the residential sector. A further recurring theme affecting the viability of the retail centre of the town is that of adequate car parking and congestion issues. The policies within this theme seek to address these concerns, through the support of the Objectives, to ensure that North Tawton continues to be a vibrant and thriving town.

The JLP, through its Strategic Objective SO1 - Delivering the spatial strategy and SPT1 - Delivering sustainable development, emphasises that development and change will be planned for and managed in accordance with principles of sustainable development. A sustainable economy will be achieved and maintained where opportunities for business growth are encouraged and supported, and where important local economic assets are protected for the purpose of economic activity. The policies within this Economy theme aim to address these principles of sustainability.

The following sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underpin these policies with specific paragraphs listed before each policy:

- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- Supporting high quality communications infrastructure
- Promoting healthy communities

## Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### Local Employment Land

**Policy E1 i-iv** highlights the land within North Tawton that is currently utilised for employment and areas allocated within the JLP. **E1 v-vii** shows land where there is planning permission from West Devon for employment development which are commitment sites within this Plan.

Planning permission for the Bathway Development includes an area of land allocated for employment use which is an allocated site within the JLP as 1,300 sq.m Class B1 Employment Space. This is currently the subject of a planning application for a further 28 houses with a request to use the land earmarked for employment units to build more houses. North Tawton Town Council have objected to this application citing as their main reason the need to retain this for its intended purpose, that of employment land. A decision from West Devon to the application is awaited. In the meantime this area of land is currently for sale.

The land at the Wool Mill has planning permission for mixed use – housing and B1 employment, which is valid until April 2018. Residents have for many years expressed a desire to see some positive development on this site. This is no longer an allocated site within the JLP as it is unlikely to be developed in the near future. In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire 47 out of 153 responses (31%) felt that the Wool Mill site would be the best place for any new development, whether employment or housing, to take place. The Woollen Mill Project, an organisation with ambitious plans to redevelop the site states on its website that the Project 'aims to become a sustainable and enterprising heritage and cultural destination in West Devon with multi use spaces underpinned by a brand new energy built on the legacy of the past by the communities of now for the generations yet to come.'

Planning permission has been granted for employment use at land adjacent to Taw Bridge.

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There is some evidence of a need for businesses to seek new premises in the area; however this was only a small number of respondents within the Questionnaire (7 out of 23).

**Relevant District & National Policies**

- **JLP: Strategic Objectives SPT4, SO8, SO9, TTV29. Policies DEV2, DEV14**
- **West Devon Borough Council Core Strategy 2011**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 21,22,28**

## **Policy E1 - Local Employment Land**

### E1 Local Employment Land

The following areas, shown on **map X**, are currently designated as local employment land:

- i)** Haulage, Warehousing and Transport Depot
- ii)** Taw Valley Creamery
- iii)** The Barton
- iv)** Former Station Yard

The following areas shown on **map X** are commitment sites for employment use

- v) The Woollen Mill, Fore St (WD\_13\_12\_13)
- vi)** Batheway Employment land (WD\_13\_07\_08/13)
- vii)** Land at Taw Bridge (WD\_13\_10\_13)

Development proposals within these areas will be supported which:

- i)** are for employment premises serving B1\*, B2\* or B8\* uses (or a combination of these uses);
- ii)** provide sufficient and secure off-street parking for cars, vans, HGVs, and bicycles;
- iii)** have no adverse impacts on:
  - a. the character of the built environment;
  - b. the character of the natural environment and setting;
  - c. residential amenity;
  - d. traffic generation;
  - e. noise; and,
  - f. light pollution;
- iv) do not contribute to increased flood risk and use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate this risk;

Proposals which result in a more appropriate or efficient use of the site as employment land will be supported:

1. Where proposals are for the extension of existing premises, they should demonstrate, through a business plan, a net increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs or demonstrate a need for the additional space to enable the business to grow.
2. Proposals which suggest a change of use to an alternative use or uses on the site will only be supported where:
3. The alternative proposed use fulfils a need for that use locally;
4. It can be demonstrated that the use of the site solely for employment (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) is no longer viable, through an active twelve-month marketing exercise where the property or site has been offered for sale or letting on the open market for these uses at a realistic price and no reasonable offers have been refused.

## Mixed Use

Both the Bathway Site and the Woollen Mill currently have planning permission to provide Employment opportunities as well as Housing on the respective sites. There is support within West Devon Core Strategy for such developments.

### Relevant District and National policies

- JLP: TTV29, DEV14
- NPPF: Paragraphs 17(9),28,69

### Policy E2 - Mixed Use

In order to maintain a local sustainable economy, mixed use proposals will be supported.

Development proposals for housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more should demonstrate that they have considered opportunities for mixed uses on the site.

## Live-work Units

This Objective identifies the need to provide a greater level and variety of employment within the town. As evidenced above within **Policy E1** there is a lack of suitable or available land and sites for developing new employment opportunities. There is a need therefore for more creative and imaginative solutions. Live Work units offer a degree of flexibility and solution for residents seeking to develop a business and have affordable living accommodation. North Tawton has recently seen the development of such accommodation.

### Relevant district and national policies

- JLP: DEV14&15
- NPPF: Paragraphs 21, 28

### **Policy E3 - Live-Work Units**

Development proposals which enable or facilitate working and living in the same building or on the same site will be supported where:

- i) they are well-related to the surrounding land and building uses;
- ii) the uses do not cause unacceptable nuisance to neighbouring premises / properties;
- iii) the proposal provides satisfactory living conditions for future occupants;
- iv) they provide sufficient and secure off-street parking for cars, vans, HGVs, and bicycles;
- v) they do not contribute to increased flood risk and use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate this risk; and,
- vi) there is no adverse impact on:
  - a. the character of the built environment;
  - b. the character of the natural environment and setting;
  - c. residential amenity;
  - d. traffic generation;
  - e. noise; and,
  - f. light pollution.

Proposals which seek the change of use of existing employment space to form accommodation must demonstrate that such changes do not result in an unacceptable loss of existing employment space to the detriment of the local economy. Proposals should retain existing ground floor employment space.

To ensure that the supply of live-work employment premises are retained for the benefit of the local economy, and to prevent the use of this policy to achieve wholly residential use through conversion of live-work units in the future, new additional development of live-work units permitted under this policy must remain as their proposed use in perpetuity to support the local economy unless it can be demonstrated, through a robust local economic assessment, that there is no demand or need for the live-work unit to remain as such for 3 years from the point of assessment.

### **Maintaining the Retail & Business Offer**

North Tawton residents value the town's community spirit and the services and facilities around which that is centred. The hub of the town is The Square where the majority of the retail businesses lie. At one time there were shops selling a wide range of products in the streets leading into and around The Square ensuring that residents could buy everything they needed within the town. Today there are fewer shops and services however these continue to be much valued by the residents, particularly the older people of the town and those without transport.

As well as shops and services North Tawton has 3 Public Houses – The Fountain, White Hart and Copper Key within walking distance of The Square and The Railway on the edge of the town. There is also a café, Fish & Chip shop and restaurant, and International Takeaway within The Square. All these businesses contribute to the viability and vitality of the town.



In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, just under 50% of respondents said they used the local shops daily rising to 90% for weekly visits. The majority of these used the Post Office and Pharmacy. 93% of respondents said they shopped in the town to 'top up' grocery shopping whilst only 7% did their main shopping in the town. The majority used Okehampton for their main shopping although an increasing number use online shopping. In response to the question 'what kind of business should we be trying to attract to North Tawton' a significant number of respondents indicated independent shops and restaurants.

In response to the question 'what one thing would make you do more shopping in the town' the 3 main responses were a greater variety of shops offering more choice, cheaper products and better car parking.

**Policy E4** provides an important timeframe for considering the future of retail and business premises if and when they become vacant thus indicating the value of retaining wherever possible the availability of choice for residents. This was reinforced by the feedback from residents at the Consultation Event (10<sup>th</sup> December 2016).

Policy DEV18 – Protecting local shops and services, in the JLP, reinforces this stating that development within centres should maintain the vitality and viability of the centre and ensure it retains its role in the retail hierarchy, meeting the needs of the area it serves. Change of use to other facilities of local community importance, will only be supported where there is no significant harm to the level of service locally and where there is no reasonable prospect of the business or community use continuing.

#### Relevant National & District Policies

- JLP: Policy DEV17 &18
- NPPF 23,28, 70

#### **Policy E4 - Maintaining the Retail & Business Offer**

North Tawton Town Centre and the town's primary retail & business premises are defined on [map X](#).

Within the town centre's retail and business area, the primary retail premises will be protected from change of use and development proposals for change of use to non-retail and non-service uses will only be supported where they demonstrate that:

- i) they have been marketed for existing use for a period of 12 months;
- ii) there is no significant harm to the level of service locally and where there is no reasonable prospect of the business continuing
- iii) the proposal demonstrates that there is no demand for the existing or alternative uses suitable to the town centre retail area
- iv) options of conversion to alternative service uses have been considered and it has been demonstrated that such uses would not be viable and there is no market demand

## Transport & Parking

As indicated elsewhere in this plan, car parking and traffic congestion within North Tawton is a significant issue for residents. Stall holders at a recent Craft Market highlighted the issue of parking their vehicles to unload their goods as a significant reason for not returning to the town.

In the Questionnaire respondents indicated that the lack of adequate parking within the area of The Square prevented people from shopping in the town. **Policy E5** seeks to direct developers and others to consider the impact of any changes to current car parking facilities, whether public or private, and to explore ways of mitigating further transport congestion problems. JLP Policy DEV31 states that development proposals should, where appropriate, ensure sufficient provision and management of car parking in order to protect the amenity of surrounding residential areas and ensure safety of the highway network.

### Related District & National policies

- **JLP: Policy DEV31**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 29,41**

#### **Policy E5 Transport & Parking**

Development proposals that would result in the loss of off street car, motor bike, motor scooter or cycle parking will only be supported where:

- i) In relation to existing public car parks an equivalent or increased capacity is provided elsewhere in the town
- ii) In relation to private car parks or similar off street parking areas an equivalent or increased capacity is provided elsewhere or the need for the private parking capacity can be shown to be reduced as a result of the implementation of the development proposal or the parking can be shown to be not needed.

## **Safeguarding Public Transport and Opportunities for the reinstatement of the Railway**

Currently there is no regular train service between Okehampton and Exeter. In the summer months there is a Sunday service which has proved popular with residents and visitors to the area. There has been a much-publicised campaign to reinstate a regular all-year-round service between Okehampton and Exeter, a need which became even more urgent during the winter of 2014 when the mainline through Dawlish to the South West was closed due to flooding. The Neighbourhood Plan supports the reinstatement of the railway between Okehampton and Exeter. North Tawton has not had its own Railway Station since the 1960s however, should a regular service be introduced, the re-opening

of a local station or halt would be an aspiration for the town. This would not only provide access to Okehampton and Exeter for shopping and employment for residents but also bring visitors to the town and surrounding areas. **Policy E6** reinforces this commitment to supporting the reinstatement of the railway. This is supported within SPT8 – Strategic Connectivity, within the JLP and also SO8 which refers to sustainable transport links to other settlements.

88% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire expressed support for the Okehampton to Exeter railway to reopen on a regular basis. 80% said they would use the railway for social reasons, 67% to connect to mainline train services, and 24% would use the train to travel to work.

30% of respondents raised the Bus Service as a transport issue, with a number of people highlighting the need for the buses to run later in the evening. Should the train service from Okehampton to Exeter be reinstated, within the life of this plan, a direct bus service from North Tawton to Okehampton should also be reinstated.

### **Related district and national policies**

- **JLP: Strategic Objective SPT8 & SPT9, policy DEV31**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 29,30,69**

### **Policy E6 - Safeguarding Public Transport and Opportunities for the reinstatement of the Railway**

Supporting improved local rail connectivity and links between Okehampton and Exeter.

Provision of a halt/local station for North Tawton should be considered which has the potential to contribute to improved sustainable travel links to key settlements

### **Safe Walking & Cycling Routes from The Barton & Batheway into the town**

Improving the ease, safety and opportunities of walking and cycling routes can make a significant contribution to ease congestion, improve health and reduce the demand for car parking. In order to encourage more people to walk and cycle, routes need to be safe and accessible. North Tawton is fortunate to have a number of footpaths and public rights of way. These need to be available and maintained for walking and cycling, as well as being accessible for people with mobility issues. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the need for communities to protect and enhance public rights of way and access, in their commitment to promoting healthy communities.

In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, 41% responded that change or significant change was needed to provide or improve cycle paths in and around the town and 35% felt similarly in relation to footpaths. A number of respondents highlighted the need for better footpaths and safe cycle routes.

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Residents from the new development at Batheway have already raised concerns about safe routes into the town along the main footpath. A Public Footpath borders the west side of the Batheway development from Moor View to the Barton, however this requires upgrading to make it accessible to cycles, push chairs and mobility scooters and improve the surface for all users.

**Policy E7** builds upon the need for improved safe routes in and out of the town.

#### **Related district and national policies**

- **JLP: Policy DEV31**
- **NPPF: Paragraph 75**

#### **Policy E7 - Safe Walking & Cycling Routes from The Barton & Batheway into the town**

Development proposals which create or facilitate the creation of a safe off-road cycle and footpath from The Barton & Batheway will be supported where:

- i) there is no adverse impact on the immediate landscape setting;
- ii) there is no adverse impact on amenity of nearby properties;
- iii) the route is well-lit but there is no unacceptable impact from lighting the route.

# Housing

## Introduction

In the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) North Tawton is identified as a smaller town, alongside Hatherleigh, Bere Alston and Lifton, within the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy area. Strategic Objective SO8 (JLP) sets out to maintain the vitality and viability of the smaller towns and key villages through the provision of homes, jobs, services and community infrastructure sufficient to enable them to play an important role as local centres for their surrounding areas. In relation to housing this will be achieved through delivering an appropriate mix of new homes that responds positively to local housing needs and improves long term sustainability.

The JLP sets out the provision for new homes across the whole plan area for 2014-2034, the life of the JLP. Within the Thriving Towns and Villages area, across West Devon and South Hams, at least 7,700 homes are required of which 970 are within the smaller towns and key villages. These include homes that have been completed or under construction, have planning permission, site allocations or are 'windfalls'. The term '**windfall**' is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as 'sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.' Windfalls can be included within the housing allocation within West Devon's 5 Year Land Supply where there is compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply.

At time of writing (2017) within North Tawton, 87 dwellings are existing commitments – completed, under construction or planning approved. In addition, planning permission has been granted for 77 dwellings with a further 37 dwellings awaiting planning permission. Of this total of 201, 22 would be described as 'windfalls'. There is every likelihood that over the period of the Plan that a number of windfalls will become available within North Tawton contributing to the number of dwellings developed.

At the time of writing (2017) it is known that Wainhomes are considering the next phase of their long term plan to develop up to 600 homes within the North Tawton area, on Greenfield sites. This kind of large scale development is not required to meet the

## Objectives

7. To support as closely as possible the views expressed by the town's residents through the social engagement process.

8. To support housing development that sustains the population of the town at a level that helps maintains shops, jobs and services sufficient to enable North Tawton to thrive as a place in which to live.

9. To ensure the provision of a sufficient number, type, range and tenure of housing of a good standard that meets the needs of different groups of people. To wherever possible promote independent living for people of all ages and conditions.

10. To ensure that the design of any new development reflects and respects the distinctive character of the town and its surroundings.

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housing needs for North Tawton, or the Smaller Towns and Key Villages, within the JLP. Neither is it in keeping with the views and wishes of the town's residents. This scale of development would not be regarded as sustainable putting significant pressure on the infrastructure of North Tawton.

## **Priority sites for North Tawton identified in the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP)**

The JLP highlights **Batheway Fields** for Mixed use - homes and employment (Use Class B1) for 61 dwellings and 1,300 sq.m. employment floor space. Wainhomes submitted a Planning application in 2016 for a further 28 dwellings to be built on the land identified for employment use at the Batheway Site. A decision is awaited on this application. At time of writing (2017) the land identified for the employment space, along with land identified for medical centre use, has been put up for sale.

A further Planning application for 100 dwellings (Phase 2 development) was submitted in November 2016, followed up with some amendments in April 2017, a decision is also awaited on this application. In both cases North Tawton Town Council has objected to these planning proposals. West Devon Strategic Planning has also objected to this application on grounds that this 'phase 2' development is not an allocated site within the emerging JLP with the current site allocation for North Tawton in JLP Policy TTV29 sufficient to meet the identified housing needs in the North Tawton area.

The Woollen Mill, where there is planning permission for 62 homes and B1 Office space, is no longer an identified site within the JLP however development of the Woollen Mill site continues to be a priority for residents whether for housing, employment or alternative use. The redevelopment of this listed building would provide an opportunity to safeguard the future of the building and enhance the surrounding environment.

## **'Call for Sites' Process**

In 2014 the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group initiated a 'call for sites' - an informal opportunity for individuals and organisations to propose sites within North Tawton, for development. The exercise in itself did not decide whether a site should be allocated for development, nor commit the proposer(s) to applying for planning consent, but enabled the Neighbourhood Plan Development Group to better understand the needs and wishes of the residents, in the context of land that may become available for development.

A further opportunity was provided by West Devon Borough Council in 2016 for developers to come forward with potential sites for development. **Appendix 8 'Site information pack'** provides a list of sites presented and the results of the analysis of these sites.

Although there were other sites identified through the 'Call for Sites' process, 2 of these have been prioritised by the Neighbourhood Plan Group as meeting the criteria for development sites as identified from Questionnaire responses - brownfield, level, close to town amenities and suitable for a small development of low density housing or self-build. These sites, which are currently within the West Devon Planning system, are:

**Land behind Bouchers Hill (WD\_13\_06\_13) Davies** - This land is currently (2017) subject to an outline planning application for 9 self-build dwellings. There is also a barn on the same site with permitted development permission. Although this site is on Greenfield land there is support within the town for this self-build development. This planning application was approved by North Tawton Town Council and is under consideration by West Devon Borough Council at time of writing. Should this self-build

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scheme gain approval it is important that any development on this site adheres to **Policy HO8** and the '**North Tawton Design Statement**'.

**Land East of Devonshire Gardens (WD\_13\_05\_08/13) SW Water** - It is recognised that the Land East of Devonshire Gardens and North St, owned by South West Water, has been registered by North Tawton Environmental Trust as an Asset of Community Value. This allows them a right to bid for this site if offered on the open market. North Tawton Neighbourhood Plan supports the Environmental Trust in its right to bid for this designated site.

Members of the Environmental Trust, in their feedback to the Consultation Event (10<sup>th</sup> December 2016), raised objections to this site being developed for housing. They cite concerns about losing a valuable natural environment for families in the community. Concerns were also raised about their ability to fund the purchase of this site should it become available for sale.

Whilst acknowledging the concerns and objections raised by the Environmental Trust it is likely that South West Water will wish to sell this site for development within the life time of this plan, it is currently subject to an outline planning application. The site has been identified as being in accordance with many of the desired requirements for developments from the community consultation, e.g. brownfield, level, close to town amenities and suitable for a small development of low density housing. Therefore, should the bid by North Tawton Environmental Trust be unsuccessful, the Neighbourhood Plan would support a specific type of small development whilst maintaining the important wildlife features and its importance to the community. This would include no dwelling exceeding two storeys, good sized gardens, assisted living type accommodation, adequate parking for residents, visitors and allotment holders, and dedicated allotment space to be used by members of the Environmental Trust and the community. This dedicated Allotment space will be designated as a 'Local Green Space' under Policy CH1.

For both these sites there are identified access and traffic issues in relation to North Street and the junction with The Square. These have been raised as objections to the development of both sites and also contributed to these sites being classified as 'amber' in the Call for Sites process. However Independent Traffic reports have been commissioned by the landowners which have concluded that such concerns can be overcome. Robust evidence that such issues can be mitigated will need to be provided for planning to be accepted, and any recommendations from independent traffic reports are carried out as part of the development.

## **Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

The 8 Neighbourhood Plan Housing Policies identified below seek to meet the Objectives set out in this Housing theme. The following sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underpin these policies with specific paragraphs listed before each policy:

- Delivering a wide choice of quality homes
- Requiring a good design
- Promoting Healthy Communities
- Protecting greenbelt land
- Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding.

Since 2000 there have been a number of developments adding a range of new dwellings to the town. These include Strawberry Fields to the south, Taylors Field and Webbs

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Orchard, Barton Hill and Barkers Way, providing much needed social and affordable housing to the west, Richina Drive and Shiptons site providing smaller dwellings and flats and most recently Batheway Fields where 61 dwellings are currently under construction. These can be found on [Map X](#)

The residents of North Tawton made it very clear in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire responses that there is a preference for small scale rather than large developments in the town. 69% of respondents said they preferred the use of Brownfield sites for any new development, which should be a mix of small developments (70% of respondents) rather than one new estate. The public response to the 'Call for Sites' exercise undertaken in 2014, also indicated that smaller sites were preferred. This view was further supported by residents in their feedback following the Consultation Event on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

## Consultation with residents

There is an expectation from the North Tawton Town Council that for any significant development within the town there should be consultation with residents. This provides the opportunity for developers to present their plans, including any benefits to the town, for consideration by residents.

## New Dwellings

**Policy HO1** has been informed by the expressed views of residents of North Tawton through the responses to a number of relevant questions within the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire and in feedback from the Consultation Event (10<sup>th</sup> December 2016).

The current housing stock in North Tawton provides a good cross section of types of property, but the future increase in house numbers should be kept to a minimum with traditional style housing on Brownfield sites preferred. There was a clear preference from respondents for 3 bedroom properties, some bungalows and larger gardens than those provided in the last development at Strawberry Fields and the current development at Batheway Fields.

The Questionnaire revealed that 65% of respondents would not want to see any more than 100 new houses built within the town over the next 20 years. Only 27% of respondents thought between 76 and 100 was acceptable, with 38% preferring less than 76. 21% of respondents did feel that more than 100 new houses would be acceptable.

An analysis, undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, of the density of new developments built over the past 10 years within North Tawton, informs the preferred density of dwellings per hectare **in Policy HO1**.

69% of respondents expressed a preference for the use of Brownfield sites for any new development, which should be a mix of small developments (70% of respondents) rather than one new estate. 54% expressed this as their least preference with only 19% preferring one large development. A mix of open market/affordable/social housing was preferred by 63% of respondents.

In relation to the type of new housing, 53% of respondents preferred 2 storey dwellings with the same number expressing 3 storey houses as their least preference. 63% expressed a preference for more traditional style dwellings.

In response to whether residents would welcome dwellings using environmentally friendly technologies to reduce carbon foot print and running costs, 67% respondents expressed agreement.



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The Questionnaire also revealed that 72% of respondents identified Parking as a very serious issue for the town, with a further 16% viewing it as a concern. Car parking provision for residents was seen as a major concern for 59% of respondents, with provision of car parking for visitors a serious concern for 49%.

In relation to accessibility any new development must comply with the JLP Policy DEV9 4 1&2.

### **Related district & national policies**

- **JLP: Strategic Objectives SO8, SO11, Policies TTV 1,2, 29, DEV7,8,9: 4 1&2,10**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 17, 29-30,47,50,56,58,61,69,75, 94-95,99-100.**

#### **Policy HO1 - New Dwellings**

Proposals for development on sites of 12 or more new dwellings will only be supported where they:

- i) provide, on average, a density of 30 dwellings per hectare;
- ii) provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes commensurate with local needs of local households in North Tawton, with the majority being 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings;
- iii) utilise rainwater harvesting and/or grey water recycling within dwellings to reduce water disposal from sites;
- iv) do not contribute to increased flood risk and use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate this risk. Where SuDS are put in place, developers should consider positive solutions for landscape incorporation and biodiversity improvements as part of the schemes;
- v) provide adequate off road car parking facilities through provision of a garage and/or driveway which should be held in perpetuity only for parking provision;
- vi) provide safe, convenient and pleasant cycle and pedestrian routes to the town centre and to principal facilities including schools; safe and convenient crossings of roads, where the location of the proposal suggests a need for such routes;

Developers are encouraged to:

- vii) utilise small plot sizes of approximately 12 dwellings in-keeping with the traditional form, character and plot sizes associated with North Tawton; and,
- viii) consider the use of previously developed land (brownfield) sites before greenfield sites.

## Affordable Housing

In the 2013 Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment undertaken for North Tawton by West Devon Borough Council, 67 affordable homes a year were identified as being required within the town. In October 2014, a Housing Needs survey was undertaken. The questions asked within the survey were intended to provide a headline figure to advise what housing provision may be needed within the town over the next 5 years.

The conclusion of the **Housing Needs Survey (Nov 2014 Appendix 9)** was that the number of new homes needed to meet "local needs" is currently zero, largely due to the development under construction at Batheway Fields. This takes into account the number of homes currently in the planning process and the provision of 11 units at Barkers Way which was completed in 2014. On the basis of the results of this survey, these units will adequately meet the affordable housing needs of the local community for the next 3-5 years. However, any future development does need to provide affordable housing either on-site or through a financial contribution. Any applications submitted will be required to demonstrate how they meet **Policy DEV8** of the JLP which states that developments between 6-10 dwellings or 11 plus dwellings must provide at least 30% Affordable Housing.

### Related district & national Policies

- **JLP: Policies DEV7,8,9**
- **North Tawton Housing Needs Survey Nov 2014**
- **West Devon Borough Council Affordable Housing Policy**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 47,50,54**

### Policy HO2 – Affordable Housing

Proposals for housing development will be required to satisfy requirements for affordable housing set out in the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan, and should demonstrate how they address local housing needs identified in the most up-to-date housing needs survey.

In addition, all proposals for affordable housing should:

- i) demonstrate how they meet relevant requirements set out in the North Tawton Design Statement; and,
- ii) demonstrate how they meet local needs for dwelling sizes (bedrooms) and type (for example, bungalows, semi-detached, terraced, maisonettes, apartments / flats, detached).

### Occupancy of Affordable Housing

Affordability will continue to be an issue for people looking to buy or rent in North Tawton.

All of the applicants who completed the Housing Needs Survey lived within North Tawton and many had relatives in the area. Therefore all applicants responding met West Devon

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Borough Council's Local Allocation Policy and would meet the Local connection criteria set out for the area.

**Policy HO3** sets out clear guidelines for all future occupancy of affordable housing within the town.

#### **Related district & national policies**

- **JLP:**
- **West Devon Borough Council Local allocation policy**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 47,50 &54**

#### **Policy HO3 - Occupancy of Affordable Housing**

Initial and subsequent occupancy of the affordable housing will be restricted to a person(s) with a local connection who:

- a) Do not have access to open market housing;
- b) Is a resident of North Tawton, or has a local connection with the town because of family ties or a need to be near their workplace.

In the event that an occupier who fulfils both (or either) of criterion (a) or (b) cannot be found within a reasonable period of time, then (b) will be widened:

- i) firstly to a person(s) with a local connection to neighbouring parishes because of family ties or a need to be near their workplace;
- ii) secondly to a person(s) with a connection to Okehampton because of family ties or a need to be near their workplace;
- iii) and thirdly to a person(s) with a connection to the wider West Devon Borough.

## **Retaining Affordable Housing for the Local Community**

**Policy HO4** seeks to ensure that a mechanism exists for developing housing schemes which will remain affordable. In the light of changing Government Policy in relation to 'Right to Buy' this policy will require regular monitoring.

### **Related local & national policies**

- **JLP:**
- **NPPF: Paragraph 53**

### **Policy HO4 – Retaining Affordable Housing for the Local Community**

Affordable housing should be provided in perpetuity, where feasible, for example, through a Community Land Trust or other community housing scheme / mechanism which retains stock for the benefit of the local community at an accessible cost. Community housing schemes will be supported.

## **Private Rear Amenity Space (Gardens)**

In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire 56% of respondents expressed a strong preference, and 23% a preference, for any new developments to have larger rear gardens than those provided in the last development at Strawberry Fields (average being 48 Square metres). An analysis of rear garden size within recent developments within North Tawton, undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, revealed an average size of 60 square metres. This analysis therefore informs the minimum size for a rear garden within **Policy HO5**.

### **Related local & national policies**

- **JLP: Policy DEV10**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 47,50,54**

### **Policy H05 - Private Rear Amenity Space (Gardens)**

New residential development proposals should demonstrate, through a design and access statement or planning statement, that adequate well-located private amenity space is provided of an appropriate size and type for reasons of good quality design, amenity of residents, accessibility, privacy, enabling adequate light (sunshine) and the provision of healthy living environments. This should normally be provided as rear garden space.

New dwellings should have a minimum of 60m<sup>2</sup> of useable private garden (amenity) space, where feasible.

Amenity spaces should be well-designed and fit for purpose and therefore:

- i) be practically shaped (preferably rectangular), having a useable area and be accessible and well planned in relation to the dwelling's living spaces;
- ii) provide a private 'sitting out area' not overlooked by a window of a neighbouring property;
- iii) be secure; and,
- iv) receive direct sunlight for part of the space for at least part of the day.

### **Residential, Supported Care and Sheltered Homes**

In 2014 18.5% of the total population (2067) of North Tawton were aged 65 - 84 (382 people) and 2.6% were aged 85 and over (54 people). **Source: Devon JSNA Community Profile 2016 Appendix 10.** Although within the average for the South West, this is above the England average.

In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire 36% of respondents expressed a strong preference for sheltered housing for elderly, infirm or disabled people to be provided within the town, with a further 35% of respondents expressing some preference. Also 30% expressed a strong preference for Care/Nursing provision within the town.

Further evidence from the Bow GP Practice indicated that provision for elderly care within the communities served by the Practice is limited. A number of patients have had to move to reside in Okehampton, Crediton, Hatherleigh and Holsworthy to access suitable provision to meet their needs. A facility within the local area, providing some form of social care accommodation for the wider community, would be warmly welcomed by the GP Practice.

### **Related local and National Policies**

- **JLP: Strategic Objective SO11, Policy DEV7, 8**
- **NPPF: Paragraph 39**

## **Policy HO6 - Residential, Supported Care and Sheltered Homes**

To help ensure provision for our ageing population, proposals for development of residential care and sheltered accommodation for the elderly will be supported.

## **Parking in Residential Development**

**Policy HO7** seeks to reduce on street parking, improve road safety and to mitigate problems being experienced within the town in relation to car parking and congestion issues.

The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire revealed that 72% of respondents identified Parking as a very serious issue for the town, with a further 16% viewing it as a concern. Car parking provision for residents was seen as a major concern for 59% of respondents, with provision of car parking for visitors a serious concern for 49%.

The Questionnaire also revealed that 80% of respondents had up to 2 cars per household with 11.5% having 3 or more cars per household.

Identifying additional sites for car parking within the town for both residents and visitors produced 112 responses in the Questionnaire, including the suggestion of more off road parking within any new housing developments as referenced above in **HO1(v)**. As a number of residents have commercial vehicles it is important that there is provision made within any new development for parking such vehicles to avoid further congestion in residential areas.

### **Related district and national policies.**

- **JLP:**
- **NPPF: Paragraph 50**

### **Policy HO7 - Parking in Residential Development**

New residential development should provide adequate off-road parking for residents and visitors with roads being of sufficient width and an appropriate layout to ensure easy two-way vehicular access, without compromising the safety of pedestrians or cyclists.

Proposals for development will be supported where they demonstrate, through a Transport Impact Assessment or Planning Statement, how they comply with standards set out by the Highways Authority in its most up-to-date standing advice.

Proposals are encouraged to exceed this standard where viable:

- i) to help ensure that existing parking problems in North Tawton are not exacerbated;
- ii) to provide the opportunity to maintain good and safe accessibility on local roads;
- iii) to take realistic account of vehicle ownership (and use of commercial / business vehicles) per household in the town; and,
- iv) ensuring that their layout provides easy access for residents and their visitors, to service vehicles (for example refuse vehicles) and to emergency service vehicles.

### **Small Scale Self-build Housing**

Self-build housing, which includes 'custom build housing', is defined by the Government (in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 2014) as a dwelling built by (or commissioned by) someone to be occupied by them as their sole or main residence for at least 3 years. This is a desirable expectation to ensure that plots are purchased by people committed to self-build and remaining in the community as opposed to a developer building the property to sell on.

Self-build can offer a lower cost solution to local residents as well as supporting the local economy by providing work for local builders, architects and trades people. It can also help to "free-up" the availability of market housing (private rent and owned) as a self-builder will usually be resident in the parish already and will vacate their home when their self-build home is complete.

There is growing support for this method of delivering housing, with the Government having introduced the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act in 2015. This is borne out by the response in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire where 42% of respondents expressed a strong interest in custom built/self-build housing, and 25% expressing interest in this form of development within the town. Also 42% of respondents expressed a strong interest in affordable community self-build developments.

A requirement of the Housing Act is for Local Authorities to maintain a register of people interested in finding or developing a self-build plot. The preference would be that such self-build opportunities would be prioritised for local people who may be constrained by the availability and market cost of properties, and who would not normally qualify for affordable or shared equity housing, but who wish to remain within the parish. There should be compliance with the 'North Tawton Design Statement', **Appendix 4** in relation to the design of the houses, gardens and surrounding area.

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At time of writing there have been 2 outline planning applications within North Tawton to develop sites for self-build dwellings which have received support from North Tawton Town Council. One of these for 3 dwellings next to Devonshire Gardens has been approved, the other for 9 dwellings at Bouchers Hill awaits a decision.

#### **Related district and national policies**

- **JLP: Policy DEV9**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 47,50**
- **Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 2014**
- **Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act in 2015**

#### **Policy HO8 - Small Scale Self-build Housing**

To help achieve localised organic housing growth which supports our rural community and help meet the Government's objective of encouraging custom and self-build, proposals for innovative self-build dwellings will be supported. Any such development must comply with the Self-Build & Custom Housebuilding Act and the North Tawton Design Statement.



# Infrastructure

## Introduction

North Tawton has been identified as a key 'Smaller Town' within the Plymouth & South West Joint Local Plan (JLP). This means that although not as big and well-resourced as the main towns within West Devon – Okehampton and Tavistock – it offers some of the essential services and facilities that are found within the towns. Maintaining and protecting infrastructure within North Tawton is essential to the health and well-being of all residents, within the town and surrounding villages, as well as ensuring the town continues to thrive and remain sustainable. Ensuring that any future development within the town takes account of the infrastructure needs of the community – public services, schools, highways, telecommunications, transport, and waste management facilities – is essential for the town to continue to thrive and be sustainable.

According to the JLP, Neighbourhood Plans will play an important role in identifying the amount of new homes appropriate to the infrastructure needs of the community.

This theme of Infrastructure has identified 3 key areas for North Tawton and surrounding areas which will ensure that residents of all ages are able to access services locally that ensure they can enjoy a reasonable quality of life. The 3 key areas are **Health Provision, Education and Transport & Car Parking Issues**.

## Health Provision

Within North Tawton there is a G.P. Surgery which is a branch of nearby Bow Medical Practice, 2 Dental Practices (one offering NHS provision), and a Pharmacy which provides a service to the town and the villages beyond. The Pharmacy has recently acquired new premises which enables it to offer a comprehensive service which allows people to manage their medications with any support they require. This commitment to the health and well-being of residents at a time when rural Pharmacies are under considerable pressure is very welcome.

## Education

Pre School and Primary aged children are well served by North Tawton Community Primary School and Nursery. The Nursery, which is managed by the Primary School, provides childcare and education for 2-4 year olds and is the main childcare provider in the town. Currently the school is almost to capacity with the likelihood of additional

## Objectives

11. To support a sustainable health provision within the town which enhances healthy living for individuals and families and meets the needs of local residents.

12. To ensure that 106 agreements consider the impact of new developments on the needs of the Pre-school, Primary and Secondary age children in the town providing appropriate financial support.

13. To support the provision of improved car parking within the town.

pupils from the new Batheway development. The majority of Secondary age pupils travel to Okehampton College, with some accessing Queen Elizabeth College in Crediton and Exeter College for post 16 education. Any significant new housing development within the town would put significant pressure on the schools serving the families of North Tawton. At time of writing discussions are underway for both the Primary and Secondary schools to become part of a multi-site Academy.

Education comes under the remit of Devon County however this plan can ensure that monies available through 106 agreements are directed appropriately to support the educational requirements of the children of North Tawton and surrounding areas.

## **Car Parking & Transport Issues**

Car parking, along with general transport concerns, is an issue that runs through a number of themes in this plan. In this section the aspect being addressed, within the relevant policy, is that of improved car parking. Transport concerns that have been raised by residents both in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, and regularly within Town Council meetings, include speed of vehicles through the town, HGV Lorries which access local businesses through the town, and general road maintenance. Road traffic, Transport and Car Parking are matters that greatly concern most residents.

Whilst road safety and the improvement of roads, footways and cycle ways is not a matter for policy in this plan, all new developments should prioritise any possible transport measures which promote sustainable impacts for the benefits of residents. These issues have been discussed by the Neighbourhood Plan group and raised with the appropriate authorities and organisations.

The Policies, within this theme of Infrastructure, aim to address the key areas covered by the Objectives. Policies E5 & E6 within Economy also address the issues of Car Parking and the possible reinstatement of the railway between Okehampton and Exeter.

Section 8, 'Promoting Healthy Communities', and Section 4, 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underpin these policies with specific paragraphs listed before each policy. The relevant JLP Policies are also listed.

## **Neighbourhood Plan Policies**

### **New Medical Practice**

North Tawton is a rural community with limited transport links, therefore the provision of Primary Medical Services within North Tawton is important to the health and wellbeing of patients within the community, particularly those who are unable to travel.

North Tawton Medical provision has undergone significant change over the past few years. Until April 2008 Medical Services were provided through a single GP Practice. In September 2011 Wallingbrook, a Group Practice covering Okehampton, Chulmleigh, Winkleigh and North Tawton, took over the provision of medical services in the town. In 2014 Wallingbrook withdrew their provision in North Tawton for financial viability reasons. This left residents in a state of uncertainty about the future of medical services for North Tawton. Interim arrangements were put in place for 12 months.

Following a tendering process in 2015, North Tawton Medical Practice became a branch Surgery of Bow Medical Practice providing much needed security for the future provision of medical services within the town. The surgery is based in an old building in the town which has been adapted for its current use. Residents expressed the desire for more suitable premises and improved facilities in the Questionnaire. Planning permission for the Batheway Development does include the provision of a serviced site for a medical

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centre, in the current financial climate funding to purchase the site and construct a medical centre seems unlikely. However this continues to be an aspiration for the residents of North Tawton

**Policy IN1** reflects the expressed desire of residents to see improved medical facilities within the town.

### **Related District & National Policies**

- **JLP: Policy Dev32**
- **NPPF: Paragraph 70**

#### **Policy IN1 - New Medical Practice**

Development proposals for the provision of a fit for purpose Health Care facility within the town will be supported.

### **Development and the Implications for Education**

There are 455 children and young people aged 0-19 years living in North Tawton (2016 Devon JSNA Community Profile) which makes up 22% of the population of the town, with 15.5% being of school age (5-19 years)

Primary and Pre-school education for children aged 2-11 years is provided by North Tawton Community Primary School and Nursery, a 'Good' school as judged by Ofsted in 2014. In 2014 there were 135 children on the Primary School roll, by 2018 this will increase to 172, with the predicted increase resulting from additional families from the Batheway development, bringing this to 180+.

The main Secondary School for North Tawton is Okehampton College, an 'Outstanding' provision as judged by Ofsted in 2014, based 7 miles away. This is a popular College serving a wide geographic area. The new housing developments within Okehampton and neighbouring parishes will place increasing pressure on an already oversubscribed college.

Both North Tawton Community Primary School and Okehampton College are currently (2017) subject to discussions to achieve Academy status.

Education requirements from all new housing developments, subject to 106 agreements, should be assessed by applying Devon County's Education section 106 policy (January 2013).

As stated in the 106 agreement for the Batheway Development, monies must be used for the provision and/or improvement of Primary Education facilities and ICT equipment, and for the improvement of Secondary Education facilities and contribution to transport costs.

**Policy IN2** ensures that all new developments must consider the education implications of increasing the number of pre-school and school age children and young people in the town and the potential impact of schools becoming unsustainable and overcrowded.

## Related District & National Policies

- JLP: Policy DEV32
- Devon County council 106 Policy Jan 2013
- NPPF: Paragraphs 70 & 72

### **Policy IN2 - Development and the Implications for Education**

Development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered implications arising from the proposal (if any) for education provision and capacity in North Tawton (including Pre-school and Primary provision) and any wider catchment implications in relation to Secondary Education.

Where an educational need is demonstrated, section 106 planning obligations (where relevant) and / or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (when in place in West Devon Borough) should be prioritised to support any necessary improvement in education facilities in North Tawton and where appropriate a contribution to secondary school facilities and transport costs.

### **Development and the Implications for Car Parking within the town**

The most frequently raised issue in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire was car parking and transport concerns in the town. In response to the question 'what changes would you like?' addressing car parking (75%), and road and pavement maintenance (77%) produced the highest responses.

Fifty four % of residents who responded said that change or significant change was required in relation to car parking to enable better access to the town centre, 59% of those who responded said that change was required in relation to residents' parking and 49% in relation to visitors' parking. For 44% of those who responded, change or significant change would be welcomed to aid businesses to access car parking. Anecdotal evidence from stall holders attending a Craft Market held in the Town Hall highlighted the main obstacle for them supporting such an event in the future was the severe lack of car parking in the town.

The majority of houses in the roads approaching The Square were built before the creation of the motor car thus without garages or off road parking areas. The vast majority of residents have at least two cars per household. North Tawton has 2 public car parks, one at the top of the High St and the second off The Square behind the Council Office. Both are regularly full during the day and overnight, very often with residents' cars, leaving few spaces for visitors or residents accessing the town's businesses. Alternative sites for Car Parking in the town were suggested by residents in the Questionnaire and have also been considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Group. These require further discussions with owners of these sites and further consultation within the community. There is no easy solution to the parking problems within the town

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hence the need for all the policies within this plan to address this important problem – **Policy IN3; HO1; HO7 & E5.**

#### **Related District & National Policies**

- **JLP: Policy DEV31**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 39,40**

#### **Policy IN3 – Development and the Implications for Car Parking Provision**

Development proposals should demonstrate that they have had considered implications arising from the demand for car parking provision in North Tawton.

All new developments must adequately address the car parking needs of residents and visitors.

Section 106 planning obligations should be prioritised to support the development of additional car parking provision.

# Energy and Environment

## Introduction

North Tawton's Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address the areas of Energy & the Environment regarding new housing and renewable energy installations in North Tawton.

North Tawton has ambitions for housing built within the Neighbourhood Plan area to be constructed to high levels of energy efficiency and incorporate low carbon technologies. We have a responsibility to build low consumptive and high performing housing stock not only to reduce associated emissions and tackle climate change but to provide homes which cost less to heat and live in, in order to challenge and redress issues relating to fuel poverty within our community.

North Tawton has, over the years, seen the development of renewable energy installations grow in popularity, acceptability and economic viability. There are many domestic scale installations retrofitted on to existing properties and new developments incorporating technologies such as heat pumps. The community through public consultation has shown support to domestic scale renewable energy installations and those which would be incorporated onto existing business premises.

North Tawton has also been the prospective site for a number of large scale commercial renewable energy installations. Such projects have met with varying community opinion. It was felt that the Neighbourhood Plan should not only consider such installations being proposed in the future but to actively substantiate criteria by which they would be supported and a clear strategy for the provision of robust community benefit.

The Energy & the Environment Policies, sets out the North Tawton Neighbourhood Plan's position in relation to sustainable housing and renewable energy installations.

## Neighbourhood Plan Policies

### New Housing Development and Energy Provision

There is a need to develop only highly energy efficient homes, with low carbon emissions, reduced running costs and with the potential to generate their own heat and electricity. This is to tackle the societal issue of fuel poverty, the global issue of climate change and the security issue of the reliance on imported fuel.

Community consultation, through the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, provided the stimulus for this policy with 67.4% of respondents thinking that all new housing

## Objectives

14. To help the town move towards a more sustainable future, especially in relation to renewable energy and to help it play its part in National and Regional initiatives towards greater sustainability.

15. To provide the basis for tangible community benefits from energy projects within the parish.

16. To support a reduction in carbon emission which contributes to improvements in energy conservation, particularly in housing.

17. To aid the reduction of fuel poverty.

developments should incorporate the latest environmentally friendly technologies to reduce their carbon footprint and running costs, and 37.8% believing that this should be achieved through the incorporation of rooftop solar technologies. 59.1% of the respondents felt there was a need for more Eco-friendly housing in North Tawton.

It was decided that the easiest way to incorporate this community desire for more efficient homes which incorporate renewable energy technologies into the Neighbourhood Plan was through what is generally referred to as a "Merton Rule". A Merton style Rule is a percentage carbon reduction target, based on the breakthrough policy of the borough of London. A Merton style Rule will also act as an incentive for architects and engineers to begin designing more energy efficient buildings - with the core rationale that the more energy efficient the building, the less renewable energy capacity is required to meet a percentage target, therefore it serves the dual purpose of creating more energy efficient homes which will also incorporate low carbon technologies.

The 20% carbon saving equations and financial viability are based on the Standard Assessment Procedure assessment of the newest domestic dwellings built to current building regulation standards in North Tawton (construction in 2015/2016 by Wain Homes Ltd). The Plan wished to use a new dwelling built within the North Tawton locality as a basis to give the most realistic case study for the incorporation of low carbon technologies. These case study calculations found that the additional cost per property to achieve a 20% reduction through onsite generation would be in the order of £1,250 per property, from a 1kW PV array providing 471kg of carbon savings per annum. Please see [Appendix xx](#) for calculations and scenarios, this cost does not include savings afforded to a developer from the reduction of roof covering costs etc.

The installation of energy generating technologies on new housing built within North Tawton will also benefit householders providing them with cheaper electricity or heat, reduce incidents of fuel poverty, increase saleability and provide income from incentives.

The construction of sustainable, low carbon housing, incorporating low carbon technologies for onsite generation is supported by the NPPF paragraphs 58, 95-96 and positively supports the delivery of our Neighbourhood Plan objectives 14, 16 and 17.

#### **Relevant National & Local Policies**

■ **JLP: Strategic Objectives SPT1 3, SPT2 11, SO11 6, Policies DEV 34. 1,3,4,5,**

■ **NPPF: Paragraphs 58, 95, 96**

#### **Policy EE1 – New Housing development and Energy**

Housing development proposals should provide 20% of the home's post construction energy requirement from onsite generation from low carbon technologies. This will be realised with a 20% reduction in carbon emissions from the dwellings based on Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) reporting through the installation of low carbon technologies. There is currently a preference from the community for this to be delivered by rooftop solar panels within new housing developments.

## **Individual and Community Energy Schemes**

North Tawton Neighbourhood Plan wishes to support its Objective 15 of playing an active role in a sustainable energy future. The plan wishes to support both individual low carbon technology installations and those owned and operated by the community.

Although it wishes to support renewable energy installations it also recognises that North Tawton is located within a rural landscape with areas which require protection and preservation. This incorporates areas of high grade agricultural land and those of historical, archaeological and biodiversity importance. In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, 14.3% of the respondents to the question on what kind of renewable energy schemes they favoured, and where they should be located, wanted the preservation of grade 1 & 2 agricultural land.

Within this plan there is a desire to support community owned renewable energy projects which provide wider benefits to the local community. These benefits include the retention of financial gain within local economies, reduction of carbon emissions, educational and investment opportunities. Community energy generating schemes are not denoted by scale but rather ownership and governance arrangements being owned by and producing energy for the benefit of the community; as opposed to a commercial development.

The Questionnaire found that 52.9% of respondents were in favour of renewable energy schemes. The favoured technologies were solar 28%, roof mounted solar 19.3%, biomass 12.6%, hydropower 5.9% and heat pumps 5%. The benefits of renewable energy generation resulting from these development types are clear. However, their potential adverse effects on the landscape are less easy to define and articulate. See landscape impact effects in the Devon Landscape Policy Group Advice Note No. 2: Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape for a more detailed criteria and definition.

**Policy EE2** sets out the support for Individual and Community Energy Schemes.

### **National & Local Policies**

- **JLP: Strategic Objectives SPT1 1iv, SPT1 3, SPT1 4i & iv, TTV31 4v, SPT2. Policies DEV 36 & 35**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 14, 97**
- **Devon Landscape Policy Group Advice Note No. 2: Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape**



## **Policy EE2 – Individual and Community Energy Schemes**

Proposals for individual and community energy schemes generating from hydro-electricity, solar photovoltaic panels, solar thermal, heat pumps, local biomass facilities (to supply heat for local housing, businesses and community facilities), anaerobic digestion and wood fuel products will be supported where they demonstrate, through a Planning Statement that:

- i) the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape and takes into account the cumulative impact of any new installation on the landscape;
- ii) the proposed development does not create an adverse impact on the local amenity of residents or it can demonstrate that any such impact can be satisfactorily mitigated;
- iii) the proposed development does not have an adverse impact on land of natural, historical, archaeological or biodiversity importance or any such impact can be satisfactorily mitigated;
- iv) the proposed site uses grade 3, 4 or 5 quality agricultural land in preference to grade 1 or 2 quality agricultural land.
- v) that fuel for any said system is from sustainable sources

## **Commercial Energy Installations**

North Tawton has been the prospective site for several large scale commercial renewable energy installations. Such projects have met with varying community opinion. It was felt that the Neighbourhood Plan should not only consider such installations being proposed in the future but to actively substantiate criteria by which they would be supported and a clear strategy for the provision of robust community benefit.

North Tawton hosts some large businesses, which are major employers in the town, with large industrial premises which are highly energy consumptive. Due to this, there is robust grid infrastructure, inclusive of transformers, sub-stations and other substructure elements in and around North Tawton. This makes North Tawton an attractive location for large renewable energy installations, along with potential local large energy users.

Within this plan commercial energy installations are defined as those beyond domestic scale installations and any scheme built for private profit not within community ownership, constructed for the sole purpose to generate heat and/or electricity.

To support objectives 14 & 15, the plan will support commercial energy installations where they are in accordance with the criteria of **Policy EE2** and provide tangible community benefits as set out in **Policy EE3**.

The Questionnaire found that 52.9% of respondents were in favour of renewable energy schemes. However in order to mitigate the adverse impacts on the community, clear and tangible benefits must be provided by the commercial developer. These benefits include making community amenity resources more sustainable, tackling fuel poverty and supporting local good causes.

The viability for a commercial energy installation developer to provide such benefits are evidenced through the provision of similar benefits at other schemes. See [Appendix XX](#) for the wind power protocol, Dorset County Council Solar Farm Community Benefit Presentation and briefing paper, BRE Planning Guidance of Large Scale Ground Mounted

Solar Systems (page 18 Community Gains) and Den Brook Valley Local Energy Discount scheme.

### Related National & Local Policies

- **JLP: Policies DEV 35 & 36, Strategic Objectives SPT1 1iv, SPT1 3, SPT1 4i & iv, TTV31 4v, SPT2**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 97 & 98**

### Policy EE3 – Commercial Energy Installations

Proposals for the development of commercial renewable energy generating installations will be supported where they are in accordance with EE2 & contribute to the community in at least one of the following ways:

- i) Contribution to a community benefit fund to be administered by the Town Council and used for real community benefit. This should be for a set amount per MW installed (at a minimum of £3,000 per MW for all technologies other than wind) per year for a twenty-year payment period;
- ii) The developer will (or provide funding to an independent agency/organisation that will) provide a fuel poverty mitigation scheme in North Tawton; providing practical energy efficiency measures, tariff switching services, fuel debt counselling and alleviation;
- iii) Install small scale renewable energy technologies for local community buildings, groups or sectors of the community subject to fuel poverty;
- iv) A reduced electricity tariff rate for local residents in North Tawton.

Community energy benefits are to remain as such in perpetuity regardless of the sale and purchase of the asset to another organisation and must form any condition of sale. Once the development reaches the end of its operational life it must be removed and the site remediated to its previous use.

### Sustainability and Housing

Due to changes in planning legislation, North Tawton Neighbourhood Plan cannot enforce any building construction standard above building regulations for new housing in the plan area. North Tawton would like to see the highest standard of housing being constructed in order to provide in the long term for our housing needs. This includes dwellings which provide life-time homes, which have low running costs, in order to challenge and redress issues relating to fuel poverty within the community. They should have low associated emissions in order to not contribute to climate change and help North Tawton act locally while thinking globally. Although this plan is unable to stipulate a building construction standard for housing within the minimum plan requirement it wishes to support housing built beyond this MPR which are constructed to Passivhaus standards. see [appendix xx](#) for the definition of Passivhaus housing.

**Policy EE4** positively supports our objectives 14 & 16. The requirement for good design which lasts the longevity of the development is supported by NPPF paragraph 58 & 61 and buildings of high level of sustainability in paragraph 65 and low carbon buildings in paragraph 95 and 97.

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Community consultation, through the Questionnaire, provided the stimulus for **Policy EE4** with 67.4% of respondents thinking that all new housing developments should incorporate the latest environmentally friendly technologies to reduce their carbon footprint and running costs. While 59.1% of the respondents felt there was a need for more Eco-friendly housing in North Tawton.

#### **Related National & Local Policies**

- **JLP: Strategic Objectives SPT1 3, SPT2 11, SO11 6, Policies DEV 34. 1,3,4,5,**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 58, 61, 65, 95&97**

#### **Policy EE 4 – Sustainability and Housing**

New housing built in North Tawton within the period up to and including 2034, will only be supported if they are constructed to Passivhaus standards.

*15 May 2017*