

## Community Life



## Introduction

North Tawton residents value the town's community spirit and the services and facilities around which that 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...

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 community. 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 Policies within this theme 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 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 community buildings and facilities which support a range of community activities. The Town Hall, Youth & Community Centre, Mortimer Room, Lakeway Church, Rugby 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 facilities are important to the community. North Tawton has a Post Office, Pharmacy, Mini Market, Butcher, Pet shop, Gift and Craft shop, and two Hairdressers. Residents

### 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.

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, both in relation to the variety of goods and retail outlets available. Local shops, the Post Office and the 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 local clubs and charities, firework displays, fun days, 'Nanny Knights' celebrations, twinning events, carol singing in the Square. These events require the retention of community facilities in order for them to continue. They bring local residents together and help to develop community 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, community 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 (draft)**
- **NPPF 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 (2016) 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 become Assets 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 community facilities. An improvement plan for the Memorial Park is currently being considered and will form part of 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. 'Neighbourhood Development Orders', and 'Community Right to Build Orders' will be utilised where possible. **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**
- **NPPF 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 and a swimming pool.

**Policy CO3** lists the priority projects that residents would like to see developed and a clear process for ensuring that the 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

- **JLP (draft)**
- **West Devon Borough Council Section 106 Community Facilities Grant Scheme Guidance Notes**
- **NPPF 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**
- **Flood lighting provision for Football Club**
- **Purchase of football ground**
- **Community garden & Wildlife areas**
- **Allotments**
- **Heritage Trail, including Artwork depicting key historical events/people**
- **Community building**
- **Bike & Walking Trails**
- **Swimming Pool**
- **Visitor Car Parking**

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.