

**North Tawton Transport Working Group**

**North Tawton Neighbourhood Plan**

**Remit for the working group**

1. To identify the main Transport issues in the town including - car parking, cycle paths, walking routes, speed, HGV Lorries and access issues, public and community transport.
2. To collate solutions already suggested – from the survey, Neighbourhood Plan Development group – and identify any other solutions
3. To develop proposals to address the transport issues & inform the relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies

Membership of the Group: Brian Grant; Martin Ware; Mike Fisher; Steve Whiteley; Carol Burrow; Kay Caldwell; Ray Aplin; Jean Trehitt

Group to meet no more than 4 times and report back to the Neighbourhood Plan Group by September 2016

**Meetings held** 20 July, 24 August, 14th September

**Topics discussed**

Car Parking; HGVs; Traffic Congestion; Speed; Public Transport; Footpaths & Cycle ways.



## Summary of Discussion

### Car Parking

Car Parking within North Tawton was identified in the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Questionnaire as a significant issue for residents and visitors. Many of the houses were built before the advent of the car so do not have garages. Streets are narrow so car parking tends to be down one side only. Many households own more than one car. Public car parks are often full with residents' cars leaving little space for visitors. There are often very few spaces available within the Square and nearby roads for visitors to park therefore deterring people from using shops and businesses in the town.

There are 2 Free Car Parks within the town – Top of High St and off the Square. There are marked bays in the Square, Fore St, Market St and High St. There is a time restriction on parking in the Square, however not sure how often this is enforced. Occasionally a Traffic Enforcement Officer is seen in the town.



### Possible solutions

Potential sites for car parks were identified within the NP Questionnaire and by members of the working group:

North St – Crawford's Yard; Front of Devonshire House – Bob Barratt's land; Millwoods field – park & ride; Batheway 'Medical Centre' land; Butts Way; bottom of Fore St – Gowmans Terrace; increasing spaces in High St car park and

The Square town car park – both would involve removing tree/flower beds. Landowners would need to be contacted to take any of these suggestions forward.

Consider short term parking in the Square to free up more spaces for people to access shops and businesses. This would involve a traffic order. The Town Clerk was asked to follow this up with Devon Highways to see what would be required and the cost.

Consider changing lay out of parking in the Square to increase number of bays.

A survey was undertaken to see how many cars parked in the High St car park belonged to residents and how many spaces were available for visitors. A similar survey was also undertaken in the Square Car Park. Both revealed that the majority of cars belonged to residents with some movement in and out during the day.

The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies that address car parking in relation to new developments and also 106 agreements. (Policies: CO3, E5, HO1, HO7, IN3)

### **Lorries**

There have been concerns for some time about the numbers of HGVs driving through the town to access Gregory's depot and on occasions Arla Cheese factory. Following consultation with Devon Highways new signs were erected at the Bathe cross road directing HGVs around the town, however as these are not allowed to specify business names drivers may follow their Sat Nav through the town. North Tawton Town Council have had meetings with Gregory's and Arla Cheese Factory about the issue of HGVs.

However recently there appears to have been an increase in the number of HGVs driving through the town. Various suggestions were made to address this issue including an audit; camera in the Council Office window; Gregory's sign on land near the cross roads; further discussions with Gregory's and Arla about the problem. Devon Highways have also been contacted highlighting that there continue to be concerns about HGVs ignoring the new signs.

### **Speed**

Concerns have been made to the Town Council about cars speeding through the town, particularly down Fore St. As part of the 106 agreement for Batheway Fields the 30 mph sign will be moved back down Station Rd towards the Cross Roads. There has been a delay due to issues of where to site this.

Children from NT Primary School were asked to make signs which will be laminated and placed around the town to deter speeding.

North Tawton Town Council have raised this issue with Devon Highways who have undertaken a survey. Their conclusion was that speed wasn't a particular problem and that it was more of a perception that cars were speeding. The need to give way to vehicles on the narrow roads was viewed as a traffic calming measure in itself.

## Traffic Congestion

Although traffic congestion was discussed no conclusion was reached as to how best to address this issue. It was recommended that this was something that requires a radical approach and should be considered at a future date. Traffic congestion is not something that can be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan as this is concerned with development and planning issues. However Policy IN4 has been included to address traffic congestion when it may be directly affected by planning applications.



## Footpaths/Cycle ways

There are a number of public rights of way through and around the town. The public footpath next to Batheway Fields is an important access route into the town however it is often muddy and not very accessible. The footpath along Station Rd into the town from the cross roads is not very wide and there is a problem with a tree root making it difficult for prams, buggies, mobility scooters. The Access & Movement section of Wainhomes Planning Statement indicates several pedestrian/cycle access points which will require monitoring to ensure they are adhered to. A policy (E7) relating to safe walking and cycle routes is included within the Plan.

## Public Transport

Although there is a bus service from Exeter to North Tawton this finishes in the early evening which limits access to evening events in Exeter for residents. The bus goes to Okehampton via Hatherleigh thus making this a long journey. There are school buses to Okehampton College although there are concerns about the cost of school transport.

There is an active rail group in Okehampton campaigning for a regular, all year round, train service from Okehampton to Exeter. Currently there is a Sunday summer service from May to September. The Neighbourhood Plan will support the reinstatement of this train service and there is a policy (E6) relating to this.

### **Next Steps**

Relevant policies have been included within the Neighbourhood Plan to address issues of Car Parking, Traffic Congestion, Cycle & Foot Paths and Public Transport.

Actions have been followed up with Devon Highways.

It is acknowledged that the Transport Group went as far as it could to start addressing the issues raised and that further activity is required to take forward ideas to tackle these important issues. Within Policy CO3 in the Plan, 'Priority Local Infrastructure Projects' consideration of the use of 106 Monies to improve car parking and to seek solutions to the traffic congestion within the town would be welcome. This might be achieved, for instance, through the commissioning of a Traffic Consultant to work alongside a local forum and devise a 'Traffic and Transport' Plan proposing solutions to traffic congestion within the town.

### **June 2017**

