

## **North Tawton Neighbourhood Plan Project**

**Terms of Reference:** final version for consideration by NTTC Planning & Estates Committee.

(Relates to WDBC Community-Led Planning Protocol [Annexes A & B])

### **Main Aim of the Project**

To help the residents of the Parish of North Tawton play an active role in formulating planning priorities that will have relevance over a twenty year period.

### **Objectives**

- 1) To identify a broadly agreed vision for the future development of the Parish, which accords with the West Devon Borough Council Development Plan.
- 2) To produce a set of objectives that will
  - a) support the shared vision of the Parish
  - b) add detail to, and work within, the Development Plan
  - c) have successfully passed a robust sustainability analysis.
- 3) To produce a neighbourhood plan which identifies development policies that
  - a) support the objectives set (ie. as in section 2 above)
  - b) are broadly acceptable to a majority of the residents of North Tawton Parish
  - c) have been articulated within the provisions of the Localism Act 2012, its instruments and associated protocols of West Devon Borough Council.

### **Membership and Governance**

#### **1) Project Structure (members and Roles)**

The project is controlled by the Planning and Estates Committee of the Town Council (hereafter, 'the Committee'<sup>1</sup>) on behalf of the Town Council and is supported by a Project Team of approximately 12 people, broadly balanced between town councillors and residents of the Parish. See Appendix 1 for a list of the current members of both the Committee and the team.

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<sup>1</sup> This term to refer to the lead group (The Group) which takes responsibility for the project. Ref: Para.2.4 of the WDBC Community Services Report 'Community-Led Planning Protocol' 30 October 2012.

The Project Team is chaired by a councillor, appointed by the Committee. The team functions as both a consultative forum and as a means of reaching out to consult further with individuals, businesses and community groups within the parish. Its meetings are not open to the public. This is because its role is in part that of a working party on behalf of the Committee and it is considered that unrestricted debate with members of the public is not conducive to that function. The team reports to the Committee every two months during the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and to the full council when requested by them to do so. The Committee in turn, informs the full council of progress made, from time to time at the discretion of its Chair. Meetings of the Committee are open to the public in the same way that are all meetings of the Planning and Estates Committee. The Ward Member for North Tawton attends Project Team meetings ex-officio.

Councillor members of the Project Team sometimes meet informally in between planned meetings of the Project Team, to deal with immediate issues. Such matters are then discussed at the next Project Team meeting.

Minutes of both the Committee and the Project Team are taken and agreed at their next meetings in accordance with normal practice. Preliminary and informal discussion of those minutes may take place by email but are always subject to ratification at the next meeting.

## **2) Changes to membership**

Replacement and/or additional members of the Project Team are sought by publicity on the Council's website, in the local news letter 'Roundabout' and in notices in the Council Office window and/or the Post Office. Decisions concerning membership are taken by the Committee and in carrying this out the Committee have in mind the need for maintaining

- a) a balance between Councillors and residents
- b) the size of the Project Team at an optimal level for efficient working.

## **3) Declarations of Interest**

In the work of the Project Team, declarations of interests, including those relating to ownership of land, are made by team members as and when such potential conflicts of interest arise. It is assumed that all members of the Parish have personal interests of various kinds and, in keeping with the provisions of the Localism Act 2012 it is considered beneficial to the community, for there to be no barriers to residents taking part in the discussions. Therefore all, members of the project team are entitled to participate in discussions, debates and voting, whether or not they have a personal interest in the matter under discussion. It is expected however, if only on the basis of courtesy and the maintenance of good relations in a small community, that all such interests are in fact declared.

The Committee, as the group with the responsibility for the Neighbourhood plan, necessarily functions more formally and here the normal code of conduct of the Town Council applies. The details of this can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

## **4) Voting**

The Project Team themselves decide when voting is required and it is carried out by a motion being proposed, seconded and carried or rejected by a simple majority. The Ward Member, attending ex-

officio, does not normally vote but is entitled to do so if he/she wishes. The Project Team would be quorate if 4 members were present. Voting within the Committee is carried out according to normal Council practice.

## 5) Decisions

Within the parameters set by the Committee, operating decisions can be made by the Project Team, and these are subject to ratification by the Committee through the reporting process. The relationship between the Committee (ie. the Planning and estates Committee) and the full Council, continues to function in the normal way.

## 6) The resolution of Conflict

Disagreements from time to time are inevitable when planning development is being considered, but it is hoped that transparency of operation will keep them from becoming conflicts. However it is always possible for example, that the Project Team could be accused by a resident of operating unfairly or in some way improperly. Should such a conflict (or something similar) arise, the Chair of the Project Team will attempt to resolve the dispute in the first instance. If this is unsuccessful the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Committee for mediation. If necessary a final ruling on any unresolved conflict will be made by the full Town Council.

## Reporting and Feedback

### 1) Sharing Information, feedback and consultation with the Community

This takes place through some or all of the following;

- a) information and updates being included on the Council's website
- b) notices in the Council Office window or Post Office
- c) inclusion of updates and notices in the local newsletter *Roundabout*
- d) individual letter and/or surveys (in relation to consultation)
- e) participation in the Community Forum organised by Devon Heartlands Community Partnership
- f) presentations and individual approaches made by members of the Project Team
- g) the inclusion of interested community members in the work and decisions of the Project Team
- h) presentations and the display of information at public meetings and other community events.

## **2) Publication of minutes and meetings of the Project Team.**

These are published on the Council's website and advertised in the Office window.

### **Resources and Finance**

Regular meetings of the Committee and of the Project Team take place in the Council Office, for which there is no charge. Apart from the cost of the examination and the referendum, which it is understood is being borne by West Devon Borough Council, there is a need only for funding for secretarial services, for associated materials and for the hire of space for occasional public meetings/ events. Some fundraising is being planned by the Project Team (for example a combined public meeting and coffee morning) and it is anticipated that West Devon Borough Council will be applying for a Government grant on behalf of the Parish.

In relation to non-financial resourcing The Committee is encouraged by the practical help in the form of guidance and advice being offered by Officers of West Devon Borough Council. Valuable though this is to the project, it is recognised that such support must be limited and that ultimately, the success of the project, and the work involved, is the responsibility of the residents of North Tawton.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The work of the Project Team is regularly monitored by the Committee and the progress of the project as a whole is reviewed from time to time by the full Town Council, in whose name the Neighbourhood Plan will be formally submitted for examination and referendum.

After the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Project Team will be disbanded. The work of supervising the operation of the plan to ensure its effective operation will be the responsibility of, the Committee. At its discretion, the Committee will itself carry out this work along with any necessary adjustments to the plan, or will set up an appropriate project team to do so on their behalf.

31 January 2013

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