

An introduction to Neighbourhood Plans (Localism Act 2012).

Information Sheet No 2

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

The first thing to say about is that it is different from the informal town plans and surveys that we have been involved with before. This one, if it is produced in the right way and accepted by the people of North Tawton in a referendum, it will have legal statutory power and it cannot be ignored by planners.

The West Devon Borough Council has described it like this...

A Neighbourhood Development Plan (under the Localism Act) enables communities to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. Certain steps have to be taken to comply with the legislation, including independent examination and a local referendum, before the plan can be adopted. Once this happens decision-makers will be obliged, by law, to take what it says into account when they consider proposals for development in the neighbourhood

WEST DEVON BOROUGH COUNCIL
Community-Led Planning – A short guide
July 2012

As you can see, a properly prepared neighbourhood plan becomes an important tool enabling the town's views on development to be taken seriously when planning consents are given.

Most importantly, the views of the residents of North Tawton on how they would like the town and parish to develop, have to be gathered and taken into account. To begin this task the Council have prepared a short questionnaire for people to say what they think about long term future of the town. It has been placed in the March edition of Roundabout but, if you've missed this, or not received your copy yet, do please call into the Council Office for a separate questionnaire. The office is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

This notice and questionnaire in the Roundabout is the first of several invitations that we are preparing, for people of the town to give their views. Our first public discussion of the project will be at the Devon Heartlands Community Forum, which is to be held in the Youth and Community Centre, Barton Street, 2pm on the 6 March. Future meetings will be held there and in other places in the town, during the evenings at weekends.

Why is it important that we develop a neighbourhood Plan?

This is because without it we shall have only a very limited say in how our town and parish is developed over the next twenty years or so. At present, developers wishing to build new houses and other buildings here need only ensure that their plans are in keeping with West Devon Borough Council's Local Plan which provides a broad outline for future development for the whole of the West Devon area.

Covering that large area, the local plan is necessarily a little sketchy about any one small part of it and although your Town Council scrutinises each planning application, it is empowered only to advise, not to decide. The final decision on what gets built, where it goes and how it looks, rests in the hands of West Devon Borough Council. We, in the town, have only one representative (Clr Nick Morgan) - one voice in effect - on that council. So in practice we don't have much control over our town's future.

As we know, West Devon do a pretty good job of managing our development for us but the Government, through its recent Localism Act, has now given us the right to have a more formal say in how our town will develop over the next twenty years. We won't have complete power to decide what we want; for example we will not be able to go against the things that West Devon's Local Plan has already decided, in the same way that West Devon Borough Council, as the Planning Authority for our area, cannot go against the requirements of the Government. What we are able to do though is to put some detail on the Local Plan where it refers to North Tawton, again in the same way that West Devon puts detail on the Government's plans for this part of the South West.

On the Town Council we think that this is an important opportunity which shouldn't be missed, because, as we all realise, the built environment of houses, shops, places of employment, social services and recreation, affect the quality of our lives and that of our children too.

The Town's Project Team

The development of the plan is being undertaken by a project group which is working on behalf of the Town Council. It is comprised of six councillors and six members of the public who answered the call for volunteers, made last summer. There will be more roles for people in the town as the production of the plan progresses. Indeed, everyone is welcome to participate in various ways and we need people of all ages to take part.

At present the members of the Project team are:

Mrs Karen Alchin

Clr Mr Steve Blood

Clr Dr Peter Brickley (Chair: Project Team)

Clr Mrs Carol Burrow

Mr Geoffrey Cawse

Mrs Rosemary Davies

Clr Mrs Gillian Hoggins
(Chair: NTTC Planning and Estates Committee)

Mrs Susan Knott

Mr Richard Knott

Clr Mr Morgan
(Ex-Oficio: as our member on West Devon
Borough Council)

Clr Mrs Annette Ponsford

Mrs Irene Wareing

Our Secretary is Mrs Rosalind Rice , Clerk to the Town Council.

Generally speaking it is better to call in to see Ros in the Council office if you have any questions about the project but of course members of the Project Team will be happy to

discuss with you any aspect of the plan. This is a community project for the whole town and Parish of North Tawton and we would like everyone to play a part in it and tell us what you think about the various questions concerning our future that we shall be raising over the coming months.

Thank You,

Pete Brickley
Project Team Chair