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## West Devon Borough Council

Response to the

### Tavistock Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 consultation

October 2024

The Tavistock Neighbourhood Plan submission draft for consultation (Regulation 16 version) was published on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

The plan was publicised in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations and representations invited between Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September and Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

This document sets out West Devon Borough Council's response to the Regulation 16 version of the plan.

Policy/Text	WDBC response
<b>S.1 Introduction</b>	There should be early (and frequent, as appropriate) reference to the CWDML World Heritage Site. Para. 1.2.2 refers at the outset to the Dartmoor National Park and the Tamar Valley National Landscape, but not to the WHS – which is of international importance as a heritage asset of the 'highest significance'. This reference should be added to this opening paragraph.
<b>Section 2: Vision, Aims and Objectives</b>	<p>The vision statement refers to Tavistock safeguarding its natural and built historic environment, but the Aims and Objectives place little emphasis on the importance of respecting local character and distinctiveness. The plan's wording could be stronger in this respect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective xiii), p.22 '<i>...that respects the town's character</i>' - in relation to business development ...could be expressed more strongly.</li> <li>• Aim 7. (p.23) refers to '<i>the landscape attractiveness of the town.</i>' This is a very woolly and imprecise term that will be difficult to interpret effectively.</li> <li>• Objective xxi) '<i>Value and protect landscape, its role and character and the views it frames as part of Tavistock's setting</i>' – this is another imprecise statement.</li> </ul>

	<p>The wording in the above cases could be helpfully strengthened, and there are up-to-date, strong evidence base documents available to refer to (published landscape character assessments, protected landscapes' management plans, Conservation Area appraisals, the Design Codes and Guidance, etc.).</p> <p>Greater emphasis should be given to set the expectation for new development (for employment / housing etc):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that new development protects, conserves and enhances the CWDML WHS and its setting ...</li> <li>• have due regard of its impact on nationally protected landscapes, landscape and townscape character and green infrastructure...</li> <li>• respect the character and distinctiveness of the town and surrounding landscape...</li> <li>• respect the distinctive local character and valued scenic qualities...</li> </ul>
<p><b>S. 2.2 Objective vii)</b> Support the use of community land trusts to achieve affordable, sustainable and high-quality housing design for the benefit of local people.</p>	<p>This should make reference to community led developments not just CLT's. This would provide flexibility within the plan but still focus this on community!</p>
<p><b>Section 4: Sustainable Development</b></p>	<p>4.1 Introduction, third para. The bullet point for the CWDML WHS Management Plan, could helpfully refer to section 6.2.1, addressing the issue of Neighbourhood Plans.</p> <p>S.4.2 High Quality Sustainable Design, para.5 third bullet point on good design: '<i>integrate new development with its surroundings while also providing identity</i>' - this should be much more strongly phrased, in terms of respecting local character and distinctiveness and sense of place. (For example, <b>Policy SD2: Small Scale Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Proposals</b> – the wording is more appropriate as it is stronger and gives a clear indication that proposals should be supported by a proportionate assessment of potential effects on the environment).</p>
<p><b>Policy SD1: High Quality Sustainable Design</b></p>	<p>Clause 2 vi). It appears that a word is missing from this clause: 'complementing and having no adverse impact on the natural environment and landscape setting of the proposal, <b>or</b> satisfactorily mitigating such impacts.'</p>

<p><b>S.5.2 Community Housing Schemes</b></p>	<p>Policy Justification, first para. (p.36) – should be redrafted as follows to reflect the current ‘Right to Buy’ and ‘Right to Acquire’ legislation (additions in red text).</p> <p>‘...Within this context, however, even affordable housing units controlled by Registered Providers (for example, Housing Associations) can be lost to becoming supply within the open (private) market, with residents’ “Right to Buy”<sup>43</sup> and the “Right to Acquire”<sup>43a</sup> limiting the ability to retain affordable housing stock as such. Control by a Community Land Trust (CLT)<sup>44</sup> is recognised as the main mechanism or model that provides the greatest certainty of retaining affordable housing stock in perpetuity for the local community. However, this is not to say that an element of normal market housing may have to be accepted on a CLT controlled site when developed for the site as a whole to be viably delivered. CLT developments meet Charitable aims and are therefore exempt from the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire legislation.</p> <p><sup>43a</sup> See <a href="http://www.gov.uk/right-to-acquire-buying-housing-association-home">www.gov.uk/right-to-acquire-buying-housing-association-home</a></p>
<p><b>Policy HOU3:</b> Responding to Local Housing Needs (Tenure, Type, Size and Mix)</p>	<p>HOU3 clause 2 – The Council remains concerned that there is an over-reliance on the March 2023 Housing Needs Assessment and that reference to it in this clause fails to provide clarity for the decision-maker. Reference to it introduces an unnecessary degree of ambiguity as this is not consistent with the subsequent reference to ‘other relevant datasets’.</p> <p>The HNA does not take account of important factors such as affordability and under-occupancy. When assessing the appropriate tenure, type, size and mix of any housing development it is important to take into account other datasets and evidence from the local authority (regardless of the status of the HNA). These are of no less relevance than the HNA, which as time progresses will become increasingly out-of-date and therefore other sources of data will be of significant relevance.</p> <p>Therefore, clause 2 of the policy would be much better if it deleted reference to this specific HNA in the opening phrase and started ‘Proposals should be informed by updated data...’</p> <p>This change in emphasis, by recognising the importance of other sources of information to give a comprehensive and accurate picture of the true housing needs, will better ensure that Objective ix) can be achieved.</p>
<p><b>S.6 Business Policy B2:</b> Town Centre Development and</p>	<p>This policy contains a lot of ‘negative’ phraseology and emphasis. Clauses i) – iv) could be re-phrased to indicate supportable approaches, such as ‘should enhance’... ‘should reinforce’ ...</p>

Protecting Character	'should 'do'' whatever it is without harming the special qualities / distinctive characteristics / environmental qualities... etc.
<b>Policy CF1:</b> Protecting Locally Valued Community Facilities (including Recreation, Sports and Play Facilities) from Loss	<p>Two important community facilities currently missing from the list in Policy CF1 (clause 1) should be included – namely: Tavistock Community College 3G pitch and Tavistock Community College Sports Hall (both of which have community use).</p> <p>The reference in Policy CF1 (1) vii) to 'Meadowlands' should be changed to 'Meadowlands Leisure Centre'. This is the town's only public leisure facility – swimming pool, gym and fitness suite, and should be given its correct, full name. This change should also be made in the table on p.60.</p> <p>It would be helpful if the supporting text to Policies CF1, CF2 and CF3 on p.62 included (maybe as an example) the significance of Meadowlands Leisure Centre to the town and surrounding area and its extensive community use. Reference specifically to the ageing nature of the swimming pool facility and much of its equipment would also be helpful, especially in the context of the aims of Policy CF3.</p>
<b>Policy CF2:</b> Community Infrastructure Projects	<p>It would be useful to add some further context to the projects listed in policy CF2 – why are these projects needed, what evidence of need is there, etc? At the moment there is only a brief reference to them being identified through community consultation in the text at the top of page 62.</p> <p>It would add weight if potential sites could be identified/allocated within the plan for MUGA/allotments/cemetery/community arts facility.</p>
<b>Policy ENV2:</b> Extending Access into the Countryside	The wording of this policy should be re-phrased. By finishing the policy with ' <i>...will be supported</i> ' without qualifying this implies that proposals will be acceptable even if there is conflict with other policies or issues. It should be reworded to state that proposals will be supported when they demonstrate that the development will have no adverse impacts on the quality and character of the built and natural environment and the townscape/landscape setting.
<b>Text p.87</b>	Correction/up-date required: The sub-heading and text references to 'Devon Woodland Management Strategy' should be changed to 'Trees for Devon: Devon's Tree and Woodland Strategy'.
<b>Policy ENV3:</b> Protecting and Enhancing Habitats and Biodiversity	In clause 3v) reference to 'Devon Woodland Management Strategy' should be changed to 'Trees for Devon: Devon's Tree and Woodland Strategy'.
<b>Policy ENV4:</b> Protecting and	The Council considers that the wording of policy ENV4 is not clear enough about what it is trying to achieve, which from the

<p>Enhancing Landscape Character, Views and Vistas</p>	<p>supporting text is to, ‘seek to protect from degradation and adverse impact as a consequence of development proposals which require planning permission.’ Much of the ENV4 policy wording seems relevant to the explanation of the policy, rather than to the actual policy. The appendix that explains the details of the identified viewpoints on Map 11 is very helpful, however (pages 182–188).</p> <p>In order to add clarity and strength to the policy, and to aid decision-taking, the following alternative wording is proposed:</p> <p><b><i>‘Development proposals which are located within the identified Locally Valued Landscape, Views and Vistas will be resisted where it is considered that a development would have an adverse impact upon either the aesthetic or character of a view. Where a viewpoint is located within the site of a proposed development, inclusive public access must be maintained to the viewing location and the user experience of the view enhanced.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Locally Valued Landscape, Views and Vistas are identified in Map 11 as particularly important in the local context, but this is not an exhaustive list, and other quality views may exist. Proposals should therefore demonstrate that they have responded to the requirements in Joint Local Plan Policies DEV20 and DEV23, whether or not they relate to the identified Locally Valued Landscape, Views and Vistas.’</i></b></p>
<p><b>S.9 Heritage</b></p>	<p>Comment re. 9.1 p.91 para’s. four, five and six. The Tavistock Town Conservation Area Appraisal is currently being reviewed. There is currently no CA Appraisal for either the Railway CA or the Whitchurch CA, but it is hoped that appraisals will be undertaken in the coming years. The NP text could helpfully include this clarification (along with the recognition in the plan that there is no Management Plan for either of these two CAs). The current situation re. CA documents also needs to be reflected accurately by amending the second para. on p.95.</p> <p>Comment re. 9.1 p.91 seventh para. Would generally caution against stating “Most of the listed buildings within Tavistock are of Grade II status” and then continuing to only note the GII* and GI buildings, as this infers GII are of such lesser status they are not worth mentioning.</p> <p>Comment re. p.94 Map 13 Conservation Area boundaries. The Tavistock Town Conservation Area Appraisal is currently being reviewed and this could potentially result in a change to the CA boundary. The final version of the NP should reflect any such change.</p>

	<p>9.2 Local Heritage Assets p.97 final para.(last sentence). The statement that named NDHAs ‘... <i>should be treated, with regard to planning applications for development, in the same way as existing registered heritage assets will be</i>’, does not reflect national guidance. The NPPF (in para’s.207-209) sets out different balancing acts for designated and non-designated heritage assets.</p>
<p><b>Policy HER1: Protecting Local Heritage Assets</b></p>	<p>Policy HER1, clause 2. It would be helpful to also include reference to the WHS Management Plan (Policies C3, C8 and C11 are of particular relevance and support the aims of the NP’s heritage policies – so a cross-reference and link to the WHS MP would be appropriate).</p> <p>There is always risk in naming non-designated heritage assets (pp.104-105) as something will inevitably be omitted. The addition of a disclaimer would be helpful – such as: <i>“However, no appraisal can ever be entirely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space, should not imply that it is of no interest”</i>. (The LPA has adopted a criteria-based approach within the decision-making process to identify non-designated heritage assets set out in a matrix contained within the Supplementary Planning Document (2019). This allows for the effective consideration of buildings, structures and other features to be made based on real time threats and priorities. This is considered to be of real benefit).</p>
<p><b>Policy TC4: Supporting the Reinstatement of the Former Railway Line</b></p>	<p>Welcome references to the Conservation Area designation in the policy and text. Reference to Archaeology should also be included.</p>
<p><b>S.10 Transport and Connectivity</b></p>	<p>S.10.8 (p.122) Parking Provision for Bicycles, E-scooters and Mobility Vehicles. Policy Justification, first para. The Footnote 134 should be removed because the LCWIP does not consider the issue of cycle parking, and therefore the view of community groups on this specific issue should not be reported with reference to the LCWIP.</p>