

Tavistock Neighbourhood Development Plan

Visions, Aims and Objectives Presentation to Tavistock Town Council & invited guests

Wednesday January 3rd 2023, Tavistock Council Chambers

Presentation was made by Cllr Ursula Mann, Chair of TNDP

Attendees:

Councillors: Tavistock Town Council; West Devon Borough Council; Gulworthy Parish Council
Steering group members

Alex Rehaag, Principal Affordable Housing Officer, West Devon Borough Council

Elliott Hale, Neighbourhood Planning Officer, West Devon Borough Council

Transcript of presentation with comments and observations from meeting attendees.

Ursula Mann:

Thank you to those of you who have chosen to attend today. As I mentioned, today's discussion is just one opportunity for those of you who are already working in our community for the good of it to get involved with shaping the aims of the Tavistock Neighbourhood Plan.

To promote the most open form of discussion, including dissenting or unpopular opinions, with the need for transparency for a community project, I intend to apply the Chatham House rule to the meeting.

NDP Steering Group members:

- Cllr Ursula Mann, Chair
- Dr. Sharon Gedye
- Kit Harbottle
- Stuart Honey, Secretary
- Cllr Philip Peers
- Janna Sanders
- Sue Spackman
- Cllr Pete Squire
- Ian Wright

I'm extremely grateful to the members of the group, who are responsive, committed and creative and to whom we should all extend thanks for their time, given voluntarily, toward this community effort.

I would also like to introduce Alex Rehaag, Principal Affordable Housing Officer and Elliott Hale, Neighbourhood Planning Officer, West Devon Borough Council. They have both provided support throughout the process so far and on behalf of the Steering Group and the Town Council I would like to thank them for their continued support and guidance and for their time today.

As background, I would remind you that the NDP will be adopted to run alongside the Joint Local Plan which itself will enter review in 2024 and runs to 2034. Each set of policies must be reviewed regularly (at least every 5 years) but the nice thing about adopting the Tavistock plan is that the next time we head into review we should have less work to do and the policy work is more about adjusting policies or adding additional policies.

Also, just a reminder, the NDP sits under National Planning Policy and the Joint Local Plan, and in general it must be in conformity with those plans and shouldn't repeat policies that are already part of the plan. I don't expect you or I to know whether the aims do this, we have hired a planner as project manager who will help as will the WDBC officers.

In setting aims for a neighbourhood plan, it is necessary to assess and predict the social, environmental and physical trends affecting Tavistock over the plan period. But aspirations should also be considered. The whole point of a neighbourhood plan is to have a positive impact. A careful balance needs to be struck between being ambitious, but also realistic. The vision and aims should be as clear and concise as possible, as they will inform the policies of the plan. The vision and aims will need to be translated into a practical set of policies as the means to achieving them and this is why it's so important to frontload the process with good consultation to make sure the aims really reflect what Tavistock wants and needs as a community.

It's important to note as well, that this is a working document – one that is likely to evolve over the next few months. There is still evidence incoming that relates to these aims and objectives. We have had a draft Housing Needs Analysis and a Town profile from WDBC. Interviews with businesses and other groups are ongoing. Some ideas may fall away if we don't get evidence to support it, others need real work to be done to gather evidence and this may be another request that the steering group makes to those in this room, to continue to support and spread the word about those efforts to gather evidence. Thank you to those of you who have already supported the efforts of the steering group to this point. Your social media shares and comments, your individual contributions are much appreciated.

Finally, throughout the document we've tried to separate out 'Community Actions' which aren't really able to be turned into planning policy. Projects that could come from community actions are still worth documenting in an NDP however, because if the community support is present and the will to do these things is present then the NDP can act as a source of evidence when the community seeks to fund the project from various grant organisations.

Thank you for all of your input today. We will publish the notes on our website and will discuss them at our next meeting. (January 11th, here in the chamber)

We are going to be holding a similar exercise with the public invited in February at the town hall on the 22nd and will send you all invitations then as well to forward to anyone with whom you're working to make sure they also get a chance to feed into the vision and aims. If you didn't get a chance to mention something or would like to email comments to us you can either email myself or Stuart Honey. You can follow Tavistock plan on Facebook, on Instagram and you can also get on our mailing list to keep up with the steering group.

Feedback and comments on Tavistock Plan Vision and individual topics VOA

Tavistock Plan Vision:

Greater emphasis should be given to Climate emergency, bio-diversity and energy crisis in the opening vision statement, as well as being adjunct statements in individual topics VOA
Safeguarding and enforcing should be community objective

Regeneration and retention of green spaces should be emphasized

Housing:

Community Land Trust was addressed and this will be researched with support of Alex Rebag and WDBC

Alex has offered the opportunity to visit Chagford Community Land Trust development

Community Facilities:

Greater emphasis should be made for the local community to have a greater say in what facilities are required and wanted in the coming years.

This is accepted and there will be need for evidence gathering 'on the ground' with support and feedback from councillors from their wards.

Aim: ensure that planning decisions 'enhance' the impact... - is more positive language

Objectives: identify the what the community facilities are: pubs, leisure centres, halls, societies, library etc

Partnership – working together is key

Community action – acknowledgement of threats facing facilities due to energy costs and inflation

Business:

Emphasise importance of sustainable supply chain – encourage greater links with town hinterland (countryside/local farms)

Language in key aims – 'safeguard and retain' interests and aims of business

Spell out acceptable use of upper floors – residential and office services and other businesses

Identify land for regeneration

Highlight hospitality industry

Address issues of small traders, micro and online businesses based in the town

Environment and Green Space:

More emphasis on climate emergency – especially flood risk

Instead of 'respect' stronger word 'protect'

Are there incentives or enforcements possible within plan?

Heritage:

World Heritage status to be not only promoted – but goal to ensure that this is understood in the community.

Whitchurch should have a specific defined conservation area character assessment plan as part of TNDP – 'beef up' what there is at present

Heritage building maintenance should be balanced with needs of the community eg. energy efficiencies

Travel and Connectivity

In seeking digital improvement - development of free wifi in public spaces

Note: Barriers to a high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure could be addressed with a grant available for local communities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/329-million-to-create-a-national-network-of-walking-and-cycling-experts>

In conclusion

In order for the plan to succeed, with the amount of work and breadth of scope required, support and input from the Council and councillors will be vital, in the coming months.

Stuart Honey
Secretary
TNDP Steering Group
08/01/23