



Planning for new development in our communities

Welcome to the latest Our Plan e-newsletter. You will hopefully have seen those already produced and found them helpful and informative.

This e-newsletter focuses on one of the most important parts of Our Plan which is about providing land for new homes and other types of development in West Devon (outside the area of the Dartmoor National Park only). Alongside this e-newsletter we are publishing the following:

- A draft topic paper about our objectively assessed need and future housing targets;
- A draft 2013/14 Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement;
- A draft Tavistock Site Options Sustainability Appraisal; and
- A Land Availability Assessment Final Report.

Jargon Buster!

Useful explanations and planning definitions are provided at the end of this newsletter

We're publishing this information now as part of an informal consultation during December 2014 so that we can share with you our emerging thoughts about how many new homes and other types of development are required and where they could go.

The first three documents in this list will be available for 5 weeks from 1st December 2014 – 5th January 2015, during which time you are invited to send us your comments. We will review all of the comments

received and use these to inform the Draft Submission version of Our Plan which will be published in January 2015.

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Why do we need more housing?

Nationally, there is a drive to build many more new homes to increase and improve our housing stock. At the local level we are tasked with finding out what our housing needs are and then plan to meet them. We continue to have people in housing need living in sub-standard accommodation or who are homeless, and many more on low incomes, struggling to find an affordable home in the area. We also need to make sure there are opportunities for those who can afford to buy homes on the open market to continue to live here, to be near family and to provide a skilled and available workforce to support the local economy. All of these things mean that we will need to plan for more housing across the Borough in Our Plan.

Did you know?

The number of new homes we need to plan for between now and 2031 depends mainly on how our population is expected to change in this period. Factors we need to consider are:

- **Births, deaths and migration** in and out of the area. In-migration often results in there being less housing stock available for local people to purchase and can often lead to increased house prices. Incomers are, however, valuable in supporting our local economy and retirees in particular provide important voluntary and community support.
- **An ageing population** - people are living longer creating a lower turnover of housing stock.
- **Reducing household sizes** as a result of an ageing population and changing relationships and lifestyles.
- **High house prices** increasing the demand for more affordable homes. In West Devon, a combination of high house prices and low wages means that an average property costs around 8 times the average income (2013 CLG).
- **Future economic growth** and the demand that new jobs place on the amount of housing needed.

How many new homes should we be planning for?

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets out what we are required to do to identify the number of new homes we need to plan for. Our starting point is to understand what our “Objectively Assessed Need” for housing is and then translate this into a “Housing Target” for the Borough.

We have produced a topic paper on our “Objectively Assessed Need” which gives the detail behind the numbers. You can view the topic paper on our website at www.westdevon.gov.uk/consultation

OUR OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED IS:

between **190** and **216** new homes per year.

This equates to between **3800** and **4320** over the plan period

OUR PROPOSED HOUSING TARGET IS:

216 new homes per year.
This equates to **4320** over the plan period

Please note: the objectively assessed need and housing targets set out above are subject to consultation with communities, infrastructure providers and other interested organisations and may change as further work on Our Plan is carried out over the next few months.

Did you know?

Our new plan period runs from 2011-2031. In our previous plan period (2006-11) West Devon had a housing requirement of 220 new homes per year.

How are we going to meet our housing target?

To meet our housing target, we can include:

- The number of homes that have already been built since 2011;
- The number of homes that have already been planned (this includes the strategic allocations in Okehampton and Tavistock and all sites with planning permission or which are under construction);
- A windfall allowance to take account of sites which have not been specifically identified for development but are likely to be granted consent for development on the basis of existing and emerging planning policy; and
- New ‘minimum planned requirements’ in our main towns, local centres and main villages (see page 4).

What do we consider when thinking about where new development can go?

When planning for where new homes and other development could be located, there are some key considerations we need to take into account:

Did you know?

We'll be publishing more information about our plans to support job and business growth in our employment strategy in the New Year.

In what types of places should new development be located?

Homes should be provided in 'sustainable' locations. This requirement lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework and means development should:

- be located in places where there is good access to services and facilities or where new facilities can be provided;
- protect our most sensitive environments and the character and beauty of them;
- drive and support growth in the local economy; and
- support the transition to a low carbon future by taking account of flood risk, making the best use of existing land, buildings and resources and encouraging the use of renewable energy.

Where do people want to live and work?

We need to think about where the demand for new homes and jobs are within the Borough and balance this against the provision that is already being made. Our main towns, local centres and main villages have a vital role to play in supporting businesses and delivering local services and facilities and we have been working with them and our Neighbourhood Planning Groups on development options.

What is the capacity of our local infrastructure?

Wherever possible, we aim to make sure that we avoid putting development in places that do not have the infrastructure to support it or where it might be difficult to fund improvements.

We have been working closely with local infrastructure providers to understand what infrastructure is required to support new development. Developers will be required to fund improvements or provide new facilities where the development has a direct impact on the capacity of existing infrastructure. There are some instances where it is difficult to overcome the impact of new development on infrastructure and this may mean that we are unable to accommodate high levels of new development in all, or parts of the Borough.

How much land can be developed?

We have carried out an exercise to identify land that could possibly be used to provide sites for new homes and employment activities. This has helped us to find out what opportunities there are for development in the Borough and how we can plan to meet our needs in the best way possible.

Our final report shows that there are some constraints to development on many of the sites. However we can demonstrate that we do have sufficient land available to meet our "Objectively Assessed Need". You can view more information about this assessment and the final report on our website - www.westdevon.gov.uk/siteassessment

Where will new homes and other development be located?

In all of our Main Towns, Local Centres and Main Villages (see Table 1) we are proposing that some new development takes place. These are considered to be the most suitable and sustainable settlements for accommodating new development. However, levels of development will vary between communities based on local circumstances, site availability, outstanding development sites and how much development has been accommodated within the settlement in recent years.

The Council is seeking to encourage communities to take a lead role in identifying where new homes and other development opportunities should be located within individual towns and villages through neighbourhood planning projects.

We are currently proposing that new homes and other types of development are distributed around West Devon in the following way:

	Settlement	Minimum Planned Requirement*
Main Towns	Okehampton	100
	Tavistock	200
Local Centres	Bere Alston	60
	Hatherleigh	50
	Lifton	100
	North Tawton	60
Main Villages	Bridestowe	30
	Crapstone & Buckland Monachorum	20
	Exbourne	20
	Highampton	30
	Lamerton	30
	Lewdown	40
	Milton Abbot	20
	Northlew	30
	Spreyton	30

* The minimum planned requirement shows the proposed number of new homes for each of the settlements which would need to be planned for either in neighbourhood plans or through a future allocations development plan document prepared by the Borough Council. These minimum planned requirements are subject to consultation with communities, infrastructure providers and other interested organisations and may change as further work on Our Plan is carried out over the next few months.

Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Plans allow local communities to develop their own plans for growth in their area. These plans, once adopted, carry legal weight when making planning decisions. Even emerging plans can be taken into consideration. Neighbourhood plans are about planning for growth not stifling it.

We currently have six Neighbourhood Plan areas designated in West Devon: Bere Peninsula, Buckland Monachorum, Bridestowe and Sourton, Lifton, Milton Abbot and Kelly, and North Tawton.



- **Existing Strategic Allocations:** sites already allocated for homes and employment in the Core Strategy.
- ▲ **Proposed Strategic Employment area:** large strategic sites which are the focus for major industry and inward investment.
- ▲ **Proposed Area of Employment Opportunity:** areas which support the development and expansion of small-medium sized businesses suitable for their locality.
- **Main Towns:** places of economic, retail, cultural and leisure activity which serve communities across the Borough.
- **Local Centres:** places which provide a range of important local services for themselves and surrounding communities.
- **Main Villages:** places with a small number of services and opportunities for community activity and interaction.

How are we managing development elsewhere?



Settlement Boundaries

We are proposing removing artificially created settlement boundaries to provide small scale development opportunities for proposals of up to 2 dwellings that can demonstrate real benefits to the community, rather than just basing a decision on location alone. This is a more flexible and positive strategy that will help to deliver housing, including more affordable homes, to meet local community needs. This doesn't mean that there will be a free for all; instead, we will use a set of robust criteria to assess whether proposals contribute to sustainable development for the community. We'll be providing more detail about this approach in our Draft Submission Plan in February/March next year.

Smaller Villages, Hamlets and the Countryside

Under normal circumstances we would not support development taking place in our much smaller settlements and the countryside because of their lack of services and facilities, the potential for more people to rely on the private car and a risk of increasing rural social isolation. However, where there is an evidenced and overriding need for a particular type of development to take place, we would not wish to prevent this from happening. For example, we may wish to permit the development of an affordable housing exception site which has been evidenced through a Parish Housing Needs Survey, support the provision of elderly or ancillary accommodation for local needs, or allow development where it would reduce use of the private car for care or business purposes and where it can be demonstrated that the need can most appropriately be accommodated there.

We would also support isolated homes in the countryside where:

- there is the essential need for a rural worker or family member to live permanently at or near their place of work or family unit in the countryside;
- such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would secure the future of heritage assets in the most appropriate way;
- the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting;
- the proposal is of an exceptional quality or innovative nature; or
- there is an identified need for a Gypsy or Traveller site in that location.



Why are we allocating land in Tavistock?



For the majority of our towns and villages, Our Plan will not allocate sites for development. This will either be done through neighbourhood plans or a future allocations development plan that is prepared by the Borough Council.

Tavistock is a unique case in that specific circumstances mean that allocating land for future development is necessary. This is primarily as a result of needing to address a requirement set in our previous plan (the Core Strategy) by a Planning Inspector and in response to a number of recent applications that have been submitted for development on unallocated sites around the town in recent months. By allocating land in Tavistock through Our Plan, the Council and community will be in a stronger position to defend applications on less favourable sites by taking control over how and where we want development to happen. We will be in a stronger position to say no to the places where we don't want development if we are clear about where we will allow it to go.

A total of 8 options are being considered as potential sites for future development in Tavistock. Some of these options provide opportunities for small scale development (e.g. 10-15 homes) while others can accommodate much larger scale developments (e.g. 100-200 homes). There are different benefits to be had from the different options which all need to be considered and it may be that a combination of options provides the best opportunity for future development in the town. A few smaller scale developments may have less concentrated impacts on local infrastructure and the environment but larger scale developments may be able to generate more funding towards improvements for infrastructure and facilities in the town.

Option 1: New Launceston Road	Option 5: Anderton Lane
Option 2: Mount Kelly	Option 6: Brook Farm
Option 3: Green Lane	Option 7: Callington Road South
Option 4: St Andrews Road	Option 8: Cattle Market

The [Tavistock Site Options Sustainability Appraisal](#) provides more information about each of these options and includes maps showing the locations of the sites.

What are our longer term development options?

Clearly, growth in our current settlements is constrained due to very sensitive landscapes and environments and due to difficulties in providing supporting infrastructure for our communities. As such, we are exploring a much longer term option around the provision of a new community. This would be either towards the end of the current plan period (i.e. 2031) or after. A new community would need to be of a sufficient size (usually around several thousand homes) to provide all the infrastructure and facilities to support it. Whilst this would relieve pressure on existing settlements, it would mean building on greenfield land. Examples of new communities are Cranbrook near Exeter, which is currently being built, and Sherford near Plymouth, which now has planning permission and is due to start next year. Both of these communities have taken many years from conception through to application so this is not something that would meet our housing needs in the short to medium term. However, this is something that we are considering to meet our longer term needs and we will be talking to our neighbouring authorities and infrastructure providers in the coming months about whether this option might be achievable in the future.



Jargon Buster

A lot of the terms we use to describe the planning requirements for new housing may be unfamiliar to you. To help, we've provided some useful explanations and definitions below:



Affordable housing

Affordable housing is the term used to describe housing which is provided for households whose incomes do not allow them to compete in the open market, or for whom private sector rents are too high. Affordable housing comes in a range of forms, including social rented, affordable rented and intermediate (e.g. shared ownership) housing. Affordable housing is only available to people with a local connection (i.e. living, working or with a close family tie to West Devon).

Core Strategy

The Council's existing plan which covers the period from 2006 to 2026. It sets out planning policies and proposals for the development and use of land in West Devon, outside the area of the Dartmoor National Park.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure means all of the services and facilities that support us in our everyday lives. This includes:

- Education
- Healthcare
- Sport, recreation and social facilities
- Energy and power
- Roads and transport
- Telecommunications e.g. Broadband, telephone lines
- Flood defences
- Water and sewage
- Waste

Objectively Assessed Need and Housing Targets

The 'objectively assessed need' is what the demand for new housing will be, based on how the population is predicted to change over time as a result of patterns of birth and death rates, migration, household sizes, affordability issues and achievable economic growth.

The housing target does not necessarily equal the objectively assessed need. The housing target should reflect:

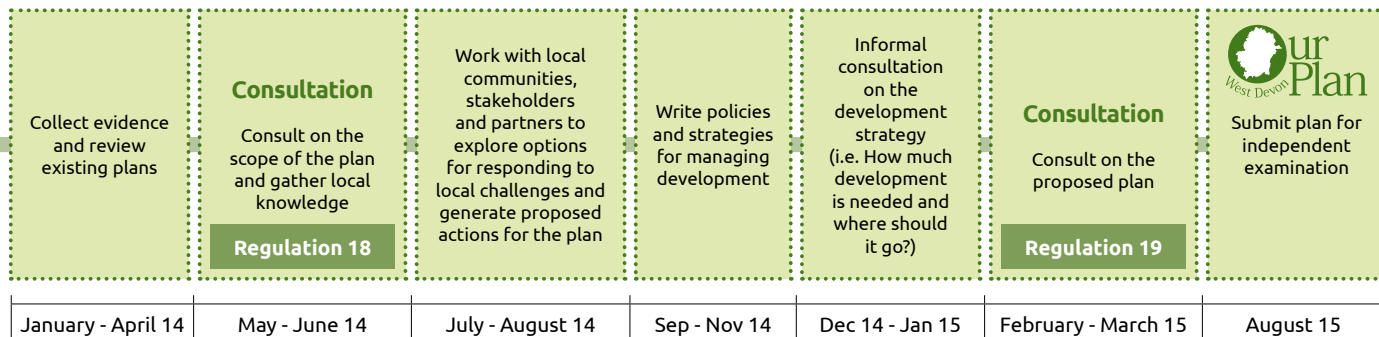
- Whether there is sufficient land in suitable locations to meet the objectively assessed need. The housing target however cannot be lower than the objectively assessed need. Therefore, if the Council cannot accommodate the objectively assessed need within its boundaries, then it should work with its neighbouring authorities to address any unmet requirements.
- How the housing target helps to achieve other aims and priorities of the Council, e.g. increasing local job opportunities which may result in more in-migration into West Devon and an increased demand for homes.

Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is the process used to assess the environmental, economic and social impacts of a proposal or policy within a plan. The SA ensures that plans are sustainable and that any negative effects identified can be appropriately overcome.

What happens next?

Our timetable for production of the plan has shifted slightly and we anticipate consulting on the Draft Submission version of Our Plan in February/March next year with submission to the Secretary of State in late summer 2015. Previous newsletters and more information are available on the webpage: www.westdevon.gov.uk/ourplan



How can I get involved?

Have your say!

This e-newsletter explains why we have to plan for new homes and the options we are considering for future development. No final decisions have been made and this period of informal consultation provides an opportunity for you to comment on the suggested proposals.

In particular, we want to hear from you about the following...

- Do you agree with our objectively assessed need and housing target?
- Do you support the proposed locations for new homes and other development?
- Do you support the proposed numbers for new homes in the different locations?
- Which sites in Tavistock do you think offer the best opportunities for future development in the town?

We welcome your comments and views about anything we've included in this e-newsletter. If you would like to share your comments then please get in touch using our response form.

Please send us your comments by **5pm on 5th January 2015**



For more information

Follow us on Twitter and find us on Facebook to keep up to date with progress being made on Our Plan and to find out about events near you.



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