

Section 6

Recommendations for the Neighbourhood Plan

This section of the document considers how the Torpoint Neighbourhood Plan should be formed in order to best represent the Vision. It explains the likely sequence of events associated with the production of the Plan and makes recommendations about how policies should be developed.

Recommendations for the Neighbourhood Plan

“Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should:

- *recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;*
- *define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;*
- *define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations;*
- *promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;*
- *retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive;*
- *allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for retail, leisure, office and other*

main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability. Local planning authorities should

Achieving sustainable development

National Planning Policy Framework

therefore undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable sites;

- *allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where suitable and viable town centre sites are not available. If sufficient edge of centre sites cannot be identified, set policies for meeting the identified needs in other accessible locations that are well connected to the town centre;*
- *set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres;*
- *recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites; and*
- *where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.”*

National Planning Policy Framework



A Vision for Torpoint is an important first step in the local community having a far greater say in shaping its own environment over the next 10 to 20 years. It sets out the aspirations of the local community and provides a framework for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

The concept of neighbourhood planning is a key element of the English planning system. The Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that "Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared Vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area". A Neighbourhood Plan for an area derives its power to direct growth and shape development through following due process in becoming part of 'the development plan'. This is set out in 'The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

The term 'Development plan' has a very important and specific meaning and the glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the term "includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans" amongst other documents. Any application made in Torpoint will be determined with reference to the Cornwall wide Local Plan (once adopted) and also by a Torpoint Neighbourhood Plan (once made). The NPPF sets out that "neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan" and that "outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area.

How the Neighbourhood Plan relates to the Vision for Torpoint?

Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict". In principle therefore converting this Vision document into a Neighbourhood Plan provides statutory power to achieve the aspirations within.

A number of first steps prior to this Vision document have been undertaken. The Neighbourhood Plan area has been applied for, advertised and designated. In addition, Torpoint Town Council is defined as a 'relevant qualifying body' to undertake the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The publication of this Vision document establishes, along with the above steps already undertaken, a firm foundation for the Neighbourhood Planning process.

Many of the 50 ideas within the Vision do not rely on being included in the local plan or Neighbourhood Plan, but are intended to provide a focussed call to action for potentially catalytic initiatives that change the Town. Many parts of the Vision require proactive actions, beyond planning control, such as marketing, but much of the Vision will be facilitated and guided by policy set out within a Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, a Neighbourhood Plan will secure funding through collection of a meaningful proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for development built in the plan area.

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Benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan

The National Planning Policy Guidance Notes (NPPG) notes that “to help deliver their Vision communities that take a proactive approach by drawing up a neighbourhood plan or Order and secure the consent of local people in a referendum, will benefit from 25 percent of the revenues from the Community Infrastructure Levy arising from the development that takes place in their area” and that “the use of neighbourhood funds should therefore match priorities expressed by local communities, including priorities set out formally in neighbourhood plans”.

Although Cornwall Council has yet to adopt CIL, this could capture significant funding to help deliver parts of the Vision. Cornwall Council is currently scheduled to produce a Draft Charging Schedule in the autumn of 2016.

The primary purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to set a planning policy framework to guide decisions on planning applications. Some of the policies will be strategic in nature relating to the whole plan area, some will relate to matters of detail (but applying to the plan area) and some will be site specific.

Using the four objectives as set out in Section 3 & 4, these should be transferred through to the Neighbourhood Plan as headings for various policies to ensure continuity. It is likely that more strategic policies will sit outside the four main theme headings but provide the context that the lower order policies work within.

The table opposite sets out a suggested structure for the Neighbourhood Plan, with example policy headings. It is not intended to be comprehensive or complete at this stage, but is intended to act as a guide for a structure of the Neighbourhood Plan and a catalyst for discussion, rather than being prescriptive.



Neighbourhood Plan Structure

1. Introduction

2. Summary of the Vision

3. Strategic Policies

Policy TOR/S1 – Development Requirements

This policy would set out broad brush parameters for the level of different types of development and provides the bridge/link between the higher order strategic policies within the Cornwall Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy TOR/S2 – Housing

This policy defines housing requirements, by reference to community needs within the parameters set by Local Plan policy. It could define locations and express how the strategic housing requirement for the plan area will be met. Detailed considerations, such as trigger points relating to delivery of any linked infrastructure for example, will be dealt with in site specific policies.

Policy TOR/S3 – Employment

This policy will set out aspirations for employment generating development and could define locations for further provision and also support retention and strengthening of existing provision, such as at Trevol Business Park. It could also seek to respond to changing work patterns, such as greater propensity for home working for instance.

Policy TOR/S4 – Retail

This policy will set out requirements to provide balanced retailing in the town with an improved convenience retail offer to claw back convenience expenditure lost to Saltash, Liskeard and Plymouth, whilst ensuring a vibrant and vital town centre retail provision.

Policy TOR/S5 – Community

This policy will set out aspirations for community uses, such as education for instance.

Policy TOR/S6 – Leisure/Tourism

This policy will address aspirations set out in the Vision, relating to the swimming pool, hotel uses for example, providing an appropriate development management policy framework should these initiatives be taken forward.

Policy TOR/S7 – Community Infrastructure Levy

This policy will set out prioritised initiatives that will be funded by capture of 25% of CIL, so that spending is undertaken in a coordinated and focussed way.

Policy TOR/S8 – Design and local distinctiveness

This policy will guide development proposals by reference to work undertaken on a character analysis of the town and how proposals should respond. It will also address expectations relating to improved public realm, public art and publicly accessible open space.

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4. Theme headings			
4.1 Town Centre	4.2 Waterfront	4.3 Strengthening the community	4.4 Links to Rame
Policy TOR/TC1	Policy TOR/W1	Policy TOR/SC1	Policy TOR/R1
The 'bottom end of town' site	The boardwalk	Strengthening Fore Street	Heritage and visitor centre
Policy TOR/TC2	Policy TOR/W2	Policy TOR/SC2	Policy TOR/R2
Torpoint Market Square	Torpoint Passenger Ferry	Torpoint swimming pool	A legible peninsula – signage/ mapping

5. Site specific Policies (beyond Vision themes)
Policy TOR/SS1 – Housing site 1
This policy would set out broad brush parameters for the level of different types of development and provides the bridge/link between the higher order strategic policies within the Cornwall Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.
Policy TOR/SS2 – Housing site 2
This policy to contain detailed development management considerations relating to a specific identified site. This could incorporate a defined affordable housing percentage, the incorporation of public open space, linkages/ accessibility considerations etc
Policy TOR/SS3 – Employment site 1
This policy to contain detailed development management considerations relating to a specific identified site.

Policy TOR/SS4 – Employment site 2
This policy to contain detailed development management considerations relating to a specific identified site.
Policy TOR/SS5 – Retail site 1
This policy to contain detailed development management considerations relating to a specific identified site.
Policy TOR/SS6 – Community site 1
This policy to contain detailed development management considerations relating to a specific identified site.
6. Monitoring and Review
A section of the Neighbourhood Plan that places a duty on the Town Council to monitor the delivery of the Plan and setting out a process on how this will be undertaken and consequent actions.

Neighbourhood Plan Policy Suggestions

Other Policy themes that the Town Council may wish to explore, include for example:

Location of housing (Defiance Field and Borough Farm)

Further review of housing sites to keep pace with changing demand and supporting community infrastructure in the town

CIL and section 106 directed at town centre enhancement

Affordable housing levels lower in town centre to assist in ability for high quality delivery to be possible

Preparation of a town design guide to ensure a step change in design quality and a new civic pride

Master plan for Thanckes Park

Master plan for Sainsbury's site and vicinity/retail store on edge of town

Town centre regeneration focus

Support town centre retail – particular emphasis on Fore Street

Support for development proposals that will result in enhancement of Harvey Street

Support the reVision of proposals that will improve the waterfront public realm and its role as a destination in the town

Support a high quality mixed use development including the laying out of a market square at the 'bottom end of town'.

Next steps towards the Neighbourhood Plan

The next step is to produce a draft Neighbourhood Plan using the suggested framework as above, or variant of as agreed by the relevant steering group, as a template. As noted above, the Neighbourhood Plan gains its relevance

and power through process as set out in the relevant regulations. Once a draft Neighbourhood Plan has been produced, Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations requires pre-submission consultation and publicity to be undertaken by the Town Council "that is likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area". This consultation should last no less than six weeks and should provide "the proposals for the Neighbourhood development plan". The Town Council must send a copy of the proposals to Cornwall Council. Before undertaking consultation under Regulation 14, it has been agreed with the relevant Neighbourhood Planning officer at Cornwall Council that some informal consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan should be undertaken, along with screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

The Steering Group is already incorporated and well placed to take the Neighbourhood Plan forward once this Vision document is signed off. The first step therefore is to make the transition from Vision to Neighbourhood Plan over a number of steering group meetings and to then informally consult on the draft document. Once representations are received and any necessary modifications made, the scope of the document can be set, which will inform that SEA screening letter to Cornwall Council. Further work on SEA may be required as a result. If the screening opinion concludes that SEA is not required, the Neighbourhood Plan should be finalised through the steering group recommending to a Town Council meeting that the Plan should be approved for the Regulation 14 consultation, as set out above. After representations have been received and any further modifications made, the Plan is submitted to Cornwall Council under Regulation 15. Cornwall Council then have to publicise the submitted Neighbourhood Plan for a further six weeks and then submit the Plan for examination under regulation 17, along with any representations received.

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The Plan is then subject to an examination, where the examiner advises if the 'basic conditions' have been met. The Town Council as the qualifying body should submit a 'basic conditions statement' to the examination. The basic conditions are as follows;

- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan.
- the making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.
- the making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).
- the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations.
- prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.

Following examination and if the examiner is minded to recommend that the neighbourhood plan should proceed to referendum, Cornwall Council will make arrangements for the referendum to take place. The rules covering all aspects of organising and conducting the polls can be found in the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

If the majority of those who vote in a referendum are in favour of the draft neighbourhood plan, then the neighbourhood plan must be made (brought into legal force) by the local planning authority.

In terms of timescales, the following is suggested as realistic following discussion with the relevant officer at Cornwall Council, notwithstanding current uncertainty on the likely outcome of any SEA screening. Please note that the timescales are in draft form and will inevitably be subject to change. At this stage, they are intended for guidance only.

April 2016	Draft Neighbourhood Plan
April / May 2016	Informal consultation on Draft Neighbourhood Plan
May / June 2016	Modifications to Draft Neighbourhood Plan
June 2016	Submission of draft Plan to Cornwall Council for SEA screening
June - August 2016	Finalising Neighbourhood plan for pre-submission consultation
September / October 2016	Pre-submission consultation
October / November 2016	Modifications prior to submission to Cornwall Council
December 2016 / January 2017	Consultation undertaken by Cornwall Council
April 2017	Examination
July 2017	Referendum
August 2017	Adoption of Neighbourhood Plan