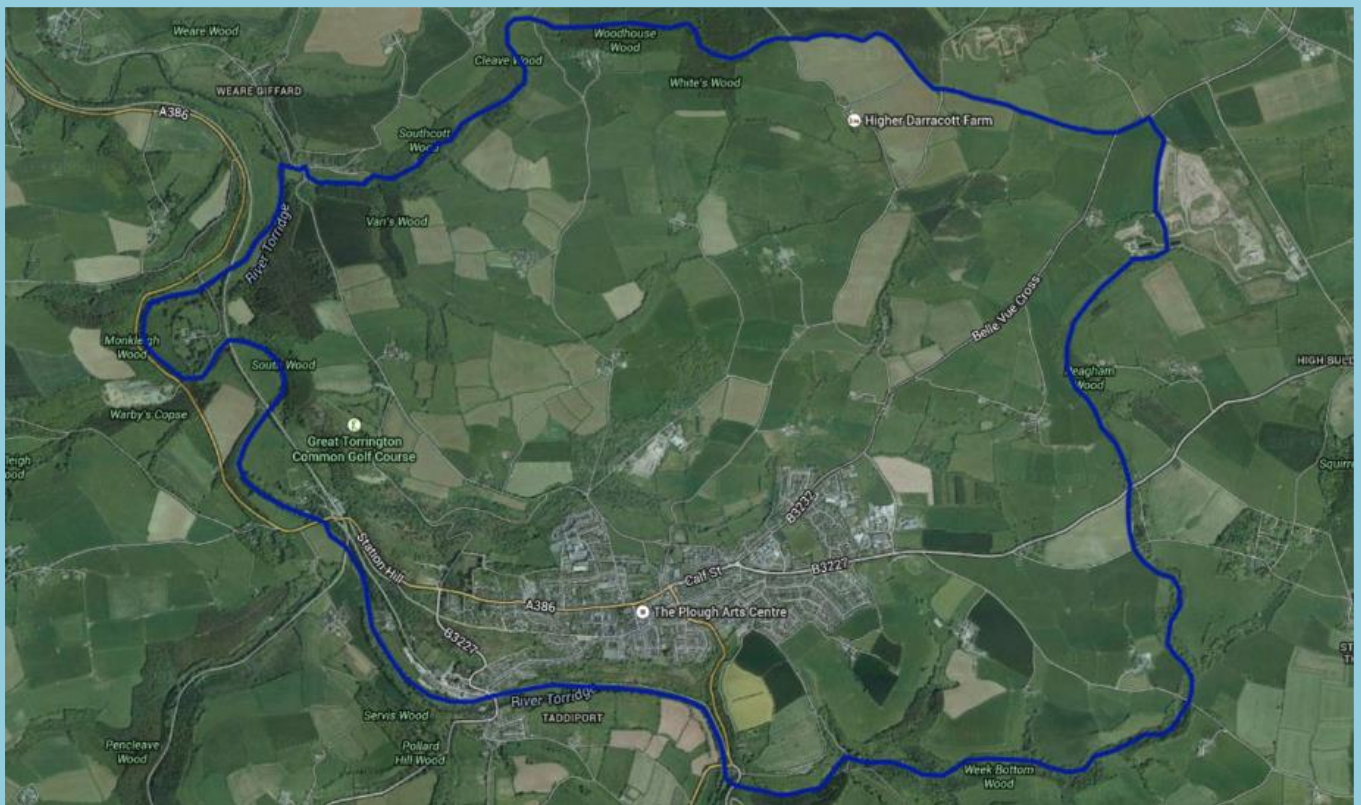


GREAT TORRINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



KEEPING THE **GREAT** IN **GREAT TORRINGTON**



SUBMISSION PLAN – (November 2018)
2018-2031



Great Torrington
Town Council

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Great Torrington has a long history and a distinctive character, the town sits in the middle of the beautiful countryside with spectacular views into the very heart of the Tarka Country. It occupies an elevated site east of the river Torridge, about 5 miles to the south of Bideford. The town is an elongated settlement with good connections to the A386, B3227 and B3232. Great Torrington is surrounded by common land, the Great Torrington Commons and Conservator Lands (the Commons) which cover 147ha (365ac) and have over 32km (20 miles) of public rights of way. The Commons play a major role in the social, economic and environmental vision for the town.
- 1.2 This history of Great Torrington is a major tourist attraction and draws people from across the country to the area. During the Civil War, Great Torrington was, first, a Royalist Garrison and then it was taken by General Fairfax, who mounted a surprise attack in one of the largest battles of the Civil War, on February 16th, 1646. This proved to be one of the last and most decisive battles of the Civil War in the West Country, with a battlefield of some fifteen thousand men. The Royalists were defeated and events moved forward to the eventual culmination of the Civil War in England with the execution of King Charles I. The Civil War highlights the historical importance of the town.
- 1.3 Tourist hotspots within the area include Dartington Crystal, Rosemoor Gardens, the Tarka Trail, the Town Museum and the Plough Arts Centre.

- 1.4 Great Torrington has a wealth of local independent shops that have come together with the aim of improving the Great Torrington experience. The town has an active community and it is renowned for its great festivals and local events, such as Mayfair, Torrington Carnival and spectacular bonfires organised by the Torrington Cavaliers. Yet there is a strong local feeling that house prices are high, employment opportunities within the town are diminishing and young people with Great Torrington connections are being forced to go elsewhere. Furthermore, public transport connections to the outskirts of the town and other strategic centres is infrequent and the availability of car parking spaces within the town centre is proving a difficult situation. Recent development pressure has focused the challenges of maintaining and enhancing a sustainable community, and the quality of the natural, built and historic environment. This Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) has been prepared to help address these challenges.



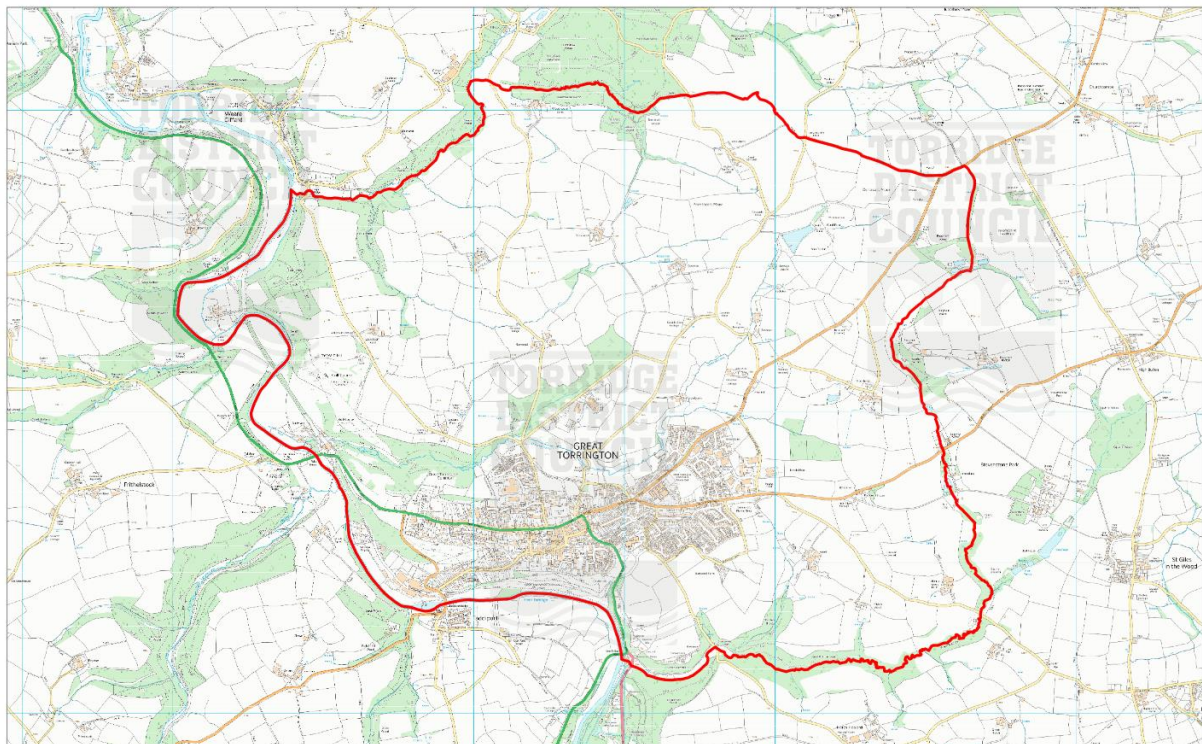
2.0 THE PURPOSE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 2.1 A neighbourhood plan is a type of planning document which was created by the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood plans should provide locally focused policies and actions to address matters identified as important to the local community, offering people a powerful new opportunity to plan the future of their communities. It establishes a vision for the evolution and long-term sustainability of Great Torrington (see Section 6), and practical proposals to guide development over the next 13 years (2018 – 2031).
- 2.2 Following the pre-submission consultation which ended on 14th May 2018, all comments received were reviewed by the Town Council and changes were made to the draft Plan. The submission Plan will be further finalised and then submitted to Torridge District Council (the District Council). The District Council will then undertake a six-week consultation on the draft Plan. An independent examiner will be appointed to examine the draft Plan to assure it accords with the ‘basic conditions’, which require it to:
- Have appropriate regard to national policy
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
 - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area
 - Demonstrate compliance with all relevant EU obligations
- 2.3 The examination will generally be conducted by means of written representations; oral hearings will not normally be required to ensure a neighbourhood plan is adequately examined. The examiner will issue a report to the District Council and Great Torrington Town Council (the Town Council), which will state if he/she is minded to recommend that the draft Plan should proceed to referendum.
- 2.4 The final stage towards achieving a neighbourhood plan is the referendum. The District Council will hold a referendum on the Plan, where all persons entitled to vote in a local election for the area will be entitled to participate. If the majority of those who vote in the referendum are in favour of the draft Plan, the District Council will give the Plan legal force, at which point the Plan would form part of the development plan for the area. With development plan status, the Plan, along with the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan, will be the first consideration in decision making on planning applications in the parish of Great Torrington.


2.5 The implementation of the Plan will require co-ordinated input and cooperation of a number of statutory and non-statutory agencies, private sector organisations and the local community. It is intended as a starting point to ensure the continuation of the market town identity of Great Torrington and implement positive physical change within the area. The Town Council will monitor the implementation of the Plan. Subject to available resources the Town Council will prepare regular monitoring reports, which will be published on the Town Council website.

3.0 THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

- 3.1 In order to protect the Town’s history and enhance its uniqueness, Great Torrington Town Council applied for the area to be formally designated as a neighbourhood area. The application letter included a map which identified the area to which the application relates, a statement as to why the area is considered to be designated as a neighbourhood area, and a statement that Great Torrington Town Council is a ‘Qualifying Body’. Torridge District Council approved the designation of the Parish of Great Torrington as a Neighbourhood Area on 24th November 2014, following a six-week period of consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.2 The boundary includes the entire area in the administrative jurisdiction of Great Torrington Parish Area, which serves the community of Great Torrington. The boundary follows the River Torridge from north to south and encompasses the outskirts of the Town such as Rosemoor, Torrington Wood, Week Bottom, Daracott Moor, Woodhouse Wood and Van’s Wood.



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 Great Torrington Neighbourhood Area
Designated November 2014

Scale 1:20000



4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning System

4.2 The Plan, once adopted, in conjunction with the North Devon and Torrington Local Plan will guide future development in Great Torrington and will be a primary consideration when determining planning applications in the area.

4.3 Additionally, the Plan has been prepared in strict accordance with all relevant primary and secondary legislation – principally Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 – to ensure that it comprises a set of policies that are procedurally sound in their preparation and in accordance with the ‘basic conditions’.

4.4 The basic condition for EU obligations includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive, which requires an assessment for neighbourhood plans that are likely to have significant environmental impacts. As Great Torrington allocates sites for development and the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the Plan, a Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared.

4.5 National Planning Policy Framework

4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and was revised in July 2018. The NPPF provides the basis for local planning authorities to prepare their local plans and for communities producing neighbourhood plans.

4.7 The NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies. The NPPF goes on to state that neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.

4.8 The North Devon and Torrington Local Plan

4.9 Great Torrington lies within the administrative area of Torrington District, in the County of Devon. Along with national policy, the District Council has policies and proposals that have a significant influence on the strategy and detailed content of the Plan.

4.10 The North Devon and Torrington Local Plan was adopted on 29th October 2018 and sets out a vision for Great Torrington as follows:

Great Torrington will develop as a self-sufficient local service centre with a vibrant, independent retail and employment offering. Great Torrington will be enhanced and promoted through tourism and leisure utilising its unique cultural heritage as well as the natural environment of the Commons. Its future will be supported through small to medium scale employment and housing development and the successful regeneration of key sites and buildings both within the historic town centre and urban fringe. A creative and dynamic community will be fostered through improved access to arts, culture and leisure facilities.

4.11 In synopsis, the Spatial Development Strategy for Great Torrington sets out a plan for:

- (a) High quality, sustainable development in appropriate locations;
- (b) the provision of a minimum of 632 dwellings, including affordable and supported homes;
- (c) the redevelopment on brownfield sites and modest urban extensions to the east and south to meet the housing requirement;
- (d) a new primary school and enhanced early year provisions;
- (e) additional employment land: 4 hectares to the east of Hatchmoor Industrial Estate, and safeguarding of employment activity at the former abattoir site;
- (f) regeneration opportunities being actively pursued, including the former Creamery site;
- (g) delivering economic growth through capitalising on enhanced levels of assistance offered by the Assisted Areas Status;
- (h) improvement and enhancement of the town's retail function; and
- (i) enhancement and promotion of the town's heritage and cultural assets.

Summary

4.12 The Plan does not seek to repeat National or Local policies but, where appropriate, to add local detail to those policies. It sets out the clear wishes of the community of Great Torrington in respect of the management and control of development, to attain appropriate sustainable growth within the Great Torrington Neighbourhood Plan Area.

5.0 ISSUES RAISED THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5.1 Local involvement and consultation is at the heart of neighbourhood planning. The Town Council started the process at the beginning of June 2014. A public meeting was held by the Town Council to explain the concept and invite volunteers. From this, a Steering Group was formed of Town Councillors and local volunteers as the Council considered it important that the Plan was not simply seen as something produced by the Town Council but as a community effort. A Consultation Statement has been prepared and accompanies the Plan, which goes into greater detail regarding the consultation process.

5.2 The Steering Group has identified a number of key issues, as a result of public consultations and household questionnaires. These are grouped under five themes; environment, housing, transport and infrastructure, community facilities and employment, which will form the structure of the policy section.

5.3 Environment

5.4 The initial consultation raised that protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment should be a key focus of the Plan. This was reinforced in the second round of consultation, where a leading conclusion was that the Plan should aim to maintain the unique individuality and scenic area of the town.

5.5 An 'area of waste called the Common', was given to the people of Torrington in 1194. This was formalised in 1889, when the Common's Act was presented in Parliament. 'An Act for vesting Great Torrington in a body of Conservators'. Since then the Act has been continually updated, with the latest byelaw in 2010. The Commons today are an important feature of Great Torrington, the land adjoins the town on three sides, extending to an area of 132.6 hectares. The Commons provides substantial informal open space and contains two play areas. It is rich in flora and fauna, contains ancient woodland, and includes part of the River Torridge and the Tarka Trail, which is well used by local residents and tourists.



5.6 The Great Torrington Conservation Area extends from west to east, Castle Street to Halsdon Terrace and north to south. New Street to the south of Castle Hill Car Park where it borders the Great Torrington Commons. A large number of listed buildings are

contained within the Conservation Area, which reflects the town's historic importance. The majority of the town has been built on gentle to moderate sloping land commanding a hilltop location. The steep-sided river valleys are significant constraints to future development.

5.7 Housing

5.8 The Great Torrington Town Study 2011 identified that there were 2,529 properties in Great Torrington. Currently there is a requirement in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan for at least an additional 632 houses to be built in the Great Torrington area between 2011 and 2031. Over the period April 2011-March 2017, 104 dwellings were built in Great Torrington, therefore in respect of addressing the Local Plan requirement, there is a balance of at least 528 dwellings to be provided by 2031.

5.9 Building over the next 13 years must not only provide the appropriate type of housing, but also remain within the limits set out in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan.

5.10 There is a significant need for affordable housing despite average property prices being less than the county average¹, that such is consequent of high affordability rates locally resulting from relatively low household incomes².

5.11 There is also a local demand for assisted living developments to accommodate the growing elderly population and the disabled.

5.12 The above issues were raised through the consultation process where it was concluded that a main aim of the Plan should be to allow for good quality affordable housing for those who work in the town, as well as assisted living housing for the elderly.

5.13 Transport & Infrastructure

5.14 During the consultation period, public transport and congestion in the town centre were raised as key issues.

5.15 There are regular bus services between Great Torrington, Bideford and Barnstaple. However, it is limited in respect of employment accessibility, evening travel, and connection to the outlying villages and regional centres are infrequent. Improved

¹ 2017, Torridge Profile 2017. P.28. Available at:
<http://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=18130&p=0>

² 2009, Great Torrington Town Study. P.5. Available at:
<http://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0>

connections to other centres would help reduce car dependency, reduce carbon emissions and improve people's quality of life, especially the youth.

5.16 Great Torrington is well served by walking and cycling opportunities, most significantly through the Tarka Trail and the network of paths provided across the Great Torrington Commons. Future development will need to consider how it would link with existing facilities in the town centre and established sustainable transport options. Priority



should be given to the provision of a cycle link from the Tarka Trail to the town centre. Improved cycling and pedestrian links could further support the sought enhancement of the town's tourism role and through improved modal options for residents encourage non-car borne movements that would have benefits in respect of health, climate change and congestion within the towns network of historic streets.

5.17 There is sufficient water supply to support new development. However, it is recognised that because of the dual water run off/sewerage system found in older properties, Great Torrington has an inadequate sewerage treatment system. This is exacerbated by the large number of new housing built in recent years. South West Water has recognised this problem and given Great Torrington priority for improvement in their forward Plan. The sewerage treatment systems require urgent attention irrespective of new development occurring over the Plan period.

5.18 Due to the loss of part of the New Road car park and the proposed restrictions on on-street car parking within the centre, public car parking in the town centre is proving to be a major issue.

5.19 Community Facilities

5.20 Great Torrington has a good range of community facilities and services which serve the town and outlying villages. Residents in the surrounding parishes have a high dependency on Great Torrington for key services such as education and healthcare. The overall consensus during the consultation process was that people appreciate and enjoy Great Torrington as it's '*a very friendly town with great community spirit*', therefore it is essential that the Plan protects and enhances the community.

5.21 The North Devon and Torridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013-2031³ determined that there was a good supply of open space. Although there is not a shortage of sports pitches, existing courts such as tennis courts require enhancement. There is also a demand for allotments as there are currently 13 people on the waiting list. Although Great Torrington has a good variety of leisure and recreational facilities, there will be even greater pressure for additional facilities as the town grows over time. In terms of educational facilities, the primary, junior and infant schools are nearing full capacity and an additional primary school and early year's provision is severely needed. Currently Great Torrington children are being bussed out to village schools. As of January 2016, the Great Torrington Bluecoat C of E primary school was at 98% capacity⁴.

5.22 Employment

5.23 It became clear during consultation that people believed employment opportunities in the town needed to improve and the Plan should encourage skill-based employment. Additionally, it was repeatedly raised that opportunities of tourism in the area should be increased and derelict sites should be redeveloped.

5.24 Employment within Great Torrington is mainly supported by businesses at Hatchmoor Industrial Estate and through the services and facilities provided throughout the town centre. Just over half of the town's working residents, work within and around Great Torrington, with a further significant number commuting to Bideford and Barnstaple⁵.

5.25 Great Torrington has experienced limited employment development on allocated employment estates in the past. For over 5 years, 4.62 hectares of undeveloped land has been available east of the Hatchmoor Industrial Estate, with no indication of progression for employment purposes. The North Devon and Torridge Local Plan has now allocated 4 hectares for the delivery of economic development that provides a mix of premises reflective of the site and appropriate to enable business startup and expansion; this will hopefully improve the availability of employment provision in Great Torrington.

5.26 In addition to the Hatchmoor site, opportunities for employment-based development exist on the former Creamery and abattoir sites. Although both are subject to significant constraints, it is considered that there are opportunities for the sites to be redeveloped on a mixed-use basis. The Creamery site will be redeveloped with a focus on housing,

³ North Devon and Torridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013-2031. Available at: [consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371346](https://www.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371346)

⁴ 2017, Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England Primary School data. Getthedata.com. Available at: <https://www.getthedata.com/school/great-torrington-bluecoat-church-of-england-primary-school-113377>

⁵ 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Available at: www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0

as set out in Local Plan Policy GTT01 and reflected in planning application 1/0039/2016/OUTM.

5.27 Although employment growth may be limited with regard to site allocations, opportunities should be provided to support the expansion of existing businesses within the town. Regard must also be given to the economic benefit and potential to be achieved through supporting tourism, hospitality and other serviced based proposals that will not require land release on traditional industrial estates.

6.0 OUR VISION- GREAT TORRINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD IN 2031

- 6.1 A friendly, welcoming town that serves the local population, rural surroundings and visitors. A thriving neighbourhood where - regardless of age, health or status - people have access to suitable housing, employment and community facilities. The stability and cohesion that are central to the character of the town have been maintained by making it attractive and safe for all ages. Innovative approaches to the challenges of the 21st century are encouraged where they enhance the highly valued natural setting. Appropriate development is supported where it is matched by the provision of relevant infrastructure.
- 6.2 The natural **environment** is managed for the benefit of residents and visitors; creating a town that is known for its natural beauty and accessible open spaces for all to enjoy.
- 6.3 Great Torrington will be a sustainable settlement in which to live, with sufficient and appropriate **housing** to meet local needs.
- 6.4 **Transport and Infrastructure.** Strong and flexible connections between the town centre and its residential surroundings are established, achieving a high level of social and economic integration. Traffic management ensures minimal congestion and adequate parking, and pedestrian infrastructure ensures accessibility for all users. Great Torrington will be an environmentally-friendly neighbourhood.
- 6.5 The value of **community** is reflected in the availability of facilities for people of all ages, including sport and recreational facilities and opportunities for artistic and creative engagement.
- 6.6 The economic strength of the town continues to derive from its role as an important local centre. **Employment** opportunities are diverse and plentiful.

7.0 OBJECTIVES

7.1 In order to achieve the aforementioned vision, the community focused its objectives on five groups of key issues, they are:



7.2 ENVIRONMENT

The Plan will make sure that:

- The Torrington Commons, the distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern and historical nature of the town is protected and enhanced;
- The wildlife value of the area is protected and where possible enhanced to ensure ecosystem function;
- Access to and provision of open spaces should be protected and additional, accessible open spaces provided for the benefit of people and wildlife.

7.3 HOUSING

The Plan will make sure that:

- Developments include a suitable mix of housing suited to local needs, including dwellings suited to older residents;
- There is provision of affordable housing that meets the national definition and will be subject to a local connection;
- Development will be of high quality, well designed to fit in with the local area and contribute to creating a strong sense of place.



7.4 TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Plan will make sure that:



- The number of town centre car parking spaces will be maintained or increased;
- Any new development in the neighbourhood area will take account of the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, car users and public service vehicles, with safety for all and carbon reduction being paramount;
- Any new development will ensure that car parking is appropriate for the scale and context of the development;
- To retain Great Torrington's rural edge;
- To encourage renewable energy initiatives.

7.5 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Plan will make sure that:

- Support is given for proposals to create new play facilities for young people;
- Proposals for new sporting and recreational facilities, including allotments, will be supported and encouraged;
- The developers of new housing must make appropriate financial contributions towards new and existing community facilities.





7.6 EMPLOYMENT

The Plan will make sure that:

- Existing employment sites are encouraged to be kept for employment use;
- The vitality of Great Torrington's town centre is protected;
- Sustainable green tourism activities are encouraged;
- New employers are attracted, increasing local jobs.

8.0 INTRODUCTION TO POLICIES

8.1 Sections 7 and 8 set out the overall vision for Great Torrington as a whole. This section sets out the policies to support and deliver the vision. The policies are grouped under the following topics:

- Environment
- Housing
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Community Facilities
- Employment

8.2 Each topic has its own Chapter. The chapters are structured in the same way for each topic and each objective is supported by a number of policies. These policies are numbered, coloured and supported by text that explains how and why the policy requirements must be met. The policies are then followed by justification statements.

ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVE: The Torrington Commons, the distinctive rural landscape, settlement pattern and historical assets of the town are protected and enhanced.

ENV1: LANDSCAPE PROTECTION

Planning applications will be supported that retain local features of nature conservation, cultural or landscape value, including mature trees, species-rich hedgerows, ponds and existing areas of woodland, and are sensitive to the distinctive character of the area.

8.3 Great Torrington is renowned for the Commons and Conservator Lands which contain a diverse number of flora and fauna. The steep sided Torridge river valley borders the town to the south and west with a tributary valley running east to west along the towns northern edge. The valleys accommodate much of the Great Torrington Commons. The land to the east rises and the promontory of high ground broadens out towards high Culm measures. The character of the landscape and the landforms to the south, north and west of the town as well as the presence of the Commons physically define the town and contribute to its distinctive character.

8.4 The Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon and Torridge⁶ provides guidance for the conservation and enhancement of the areas special landscape qualities.

OBJECTIVE: The wildlife value of the area is protected and where possible enhanced to ensure ecosystem function.

ENV2: WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT

Development proposals shall be supported which improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces, to improve ecosystem service function and resilience, and/or improve the wildlife value of private and community land; creating new habitats where possible, in accordance with Local Plan policy DM08.

⁶ 2010, Land Use Consultants. Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon & Torridge Districts. Available at: <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6982&p=0>

8.5 Wildlife corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes, including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations, as they form a connection between two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat. In addition to larger tracts of land, the NPPF notes the ecological importance of “wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them” within the built areas of towns. These contribute directly to the continuity and integrity of natural features and support the spread of flora and fauna within the built environment; therefore, holding significant economic and environmental value.

OBJECTIVE: Access to and provision of open spaces should be protected and additional, accessible open spaces provided for the benefit of people and wildlife.

ENV3: ENHANCE THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PARISH

Development proposals which secure the provision and enhancement of green infrastructure that benefits the community and the environment will be supported.

8.6 The NPPF defines green infrastructure as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

8.7 Enhancing green corridors will provide, not only for wildlife, but where possible, multi-functional green space, which can deliver a wide range of quality of life benefits for the local community in order to achieve our vision. Enhanced green infrastructure will provide residential amenity space, therefore development that impacts amenity value will only be supported where similar amenity value is provided on site.

OBJECTIVE: To retain Great Torrington’s rural edge.

ENV4: DARK SKIES

Planning applications for developments which respect the area’s dark skies, take account of the town’s position in the landscape and minimise light pollution shall be supported.

8.8 The Torridge Valley and adjacent slopes are a Devon County designated dark sky area⁷. Therefore, any development in or near a protected area of dark sky or an intrinsically

⁷ Devon County Council. Torridge Area. Available at:

http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environmentplanning/natural_environment/landscape/devon-character-areas/dca-torridge/dca-61.htm

dark landscape where it is desirable to minimise new light sources, should fully incorporate sensible lighting schemes. Lighting schemes can be costly and difficult to change, so getting the design right and setting appropriate conditions at the planning stage is important.

- 8.9 Devon County Council (DCC) is currently replacing 33% of its lanterns with LED's. With regard to turning lights off, DCC have been implementing the Part Night Policy since January 2010. This policy allows for street lights to be turned off for a period of 5 hours from approximately 12:30 each night and equates to approximately 45,000 street lights. In addition, LED's installed on the main roads have a stepped dimming profile, which allows for light levels to drop to 75% of output from 21:30 to 12:00 and then to 50% until 05:00, whereon they will rise back to 75% until 06:00 and 100% until dawn.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage renewable energy initiatives.

ENV5: RENEWABLE ENERGY

Residential and commercial development proposals which use passive solar gain from building orientation and/or incorporate renewable energy provision into building design shall be supported.

- 8.10 Within development, the use of renewable energy should be encouraged, along with its benefit to reducing energy costs. This policy would reduce the retrofitting of solar panels which can spoil the look of established housing.
- 8.11 The benefits arising from renewable energy and the need for a positive context for development are recognised but landscape considerations are also relevant. This policy takes account of the unique character of the landscape, as all proposals involving the use of renewable energy measures should consider the impact on local character including views, the amenity of neighbours, heritage assets, highway safety and nature conservation.
- 8.12 This policy also recognises the importance of renewable energy in contributing to national carbon reduction targets.

HOUSING

OBJECTIVE: The Plan will make sure that developments include a suitable mix of housing suited to local needs, including dwellings suited to older residents.

H1: HOUSING TYPES

Housing development proposals shall provide for a mix of housing types that will be informed by the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment and local evidence of housing need. In particular, applicants will need to demonstrate how they have considered and addressed the housing needs of older households and young families.

- 8.13 In order to support a balanced community, housing should meet the needs of local people and not be disproportionately weighted towards two and three-bedroom dwellings, as has been the perception in recent years. The mix of house types and tenures will be based on the most up-to-date evidence⁸ at the time an application is made, which will aim to ensure a reasonable balance.
- 8.14 Older households contain at least one adult 65+ and young families contain at least one child under the age of 18.
- 8.15 Key findings from the Town Lands and Alms Report indicated that the community has aspirations towards 4-bedroom family accommodation. The Joint Needs Assessment⁹ recognises there is a growing ageing population in Great Torrington and that one-bedroom dwellings are in demand. Many residents are content to continue into retirement in their current homes, whilst other seek alternative housing in the town, such as smaller dwellings and sheltered dwellings, mainly single storey and with modest gardens.
- 8.16 The Lifetime Homes Standard was established in the mid-1990s to incorporate a set of principles that should be implicit in good housing design. Good design, in this context, is considered to be design that maximizes utility, independence and quality of life, while not compromising other design issues such as aesthetics or cost effectiveness.
- 8.17 The Lifetime Homes Standard seeks to enable 'general needs' housing to provide, either from the outset or through simple and cost-effective adaptation, design

⁸ Devon Home Choice. Available at: <https://www.devonhomechoice.com>

⁹ 2008, Housing Vision. Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula.
2012, Housing Vision. Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Torridge and North Devon Update.
2016, GL Hearn. Housing and Economic Needs Assessment.

solutions that meet the existing and changing needs of diverse households. This offers the occupants more choice over where they live and which visitors they can accommodate for any given time scale. It is therefore an expression of Inclusive Design.

- 8.18 There is a set of 16 design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes. Applications for all new housing development should complete a Lifetime Homes Standards checklist as part of the Design and Access Statement. Applicants must be able to provide justification for any non-compliance.

OBJECTIVE: The provision of affordable housing that meets the national definition and will be subject to a local connection.

H2: ALLOCATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing in Great Torrington will initially be subject to a local connection, meaning that people with a strong connection to the town or surrounding parishes and whose needs are not met by open market will be first to be offered the tenancy or shared ownership of the home.

- 8.19 Affordable housing means housing provided for households whose needs are not met by the local housing market and defined as 'Affordable housing' in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (or any subsequent revised definition provided through updated national planning policy or guidance).
- 8.20 Surrounding parishes include Huntshaw, St Giles in the Wood, Little Torrington, Frithelstock, Monkleigh and Weare Giffard.
- 8.21 The occupation of affordable housing will be restricted to households in need of affordable housing, and additionally, within Great Torrington and the surrounding parishes at least one of the following criteria must be satisfied by perspective occupants:
- (a) at least one adult in the household was resident continuously for a minimum of five years immediately prior to occupation;
 - (b) at least one adult of the household was resident for five years within the previous ten years immediately prior to occupation;
 - (c) at least one parent, guardian, child or sibling, of at least one adult in the intended household, has been resident for a minimum of five years immediately prior to occupation; or

(d) at least one adult in the household has been in continuous employment for at least 16 hours a week in Great Torrington or the surrounding parishes for at least five years immediately prior to occupation.

8.22 Starter homes and family homes with adequate gardens or shared greenspace are priorities for the community to retain and attract young families. There is a need to provide more 'affordable housing' for local people, particularly social rented housing stock for lower income families. The community supports this – feedback from early consultations identified that the lack of affordable local housing was a big problem. Respondents know local people in housing need, know people who have moved away unable to meet their housing needs, think that young people should be able to remain in the community, but that local wages mean people cannot afford decent housing.

8.23 Affordable housing should generally be provided on-site and must be fully integrated with the market housing throughout the development. Affordable housing must be visually indistinguishable from the market housing.

OBJECTIVE: The Plan will make sure that development will be of high quality, well designed to fit in with the local area and contribute to creating a strong sense of place.

H3: DESIGN AND LAYOUT

To meet with specific requirements in Great Torrington, new housing developments should ensure:

- **Sufficient private garden amenity space, appropriate to the size of the property**
- **Parking is located in between houses (rather than in front) so that it does not dominate the street scene**

8.24 New housing, including conversions and the development of individual plots in Great Torrington, will be required to meet the criteria set out in policy DM04 of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan. The NPPF and Local Plan attach great importance to good quality design. Similarly, the community, through consultation unanimously said that the town should be protected from inappropriate development, its setting should be safeguarded, and that new development should be of an appropriate scale and form.

8.25 Given the landscape character and heritage quality of Great Torrington, if new housing is going to be successfully incorporated into the town, particularly on its periphery, we have to address the quality of design and local distinctiveness. The Design and Access

Statements of new development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how the provisions of this policy are addressed.

- 8.26 Amenity space is an essential part of the character and quality of the environment of residential properties. Garden space should not be reduced to a point where it is out of scale or fails to meet the present and future occupiers need for adequate useable private amenity space. All residential properties require some in-curtilage private open space, usually to the rear, compatible with the overall size of the plot, for normal domestic activities, such as, bin storage, clothes drying, sitting out and playspace. This space should enjoy a high degree of privacy from the public street and from any other public places.

TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

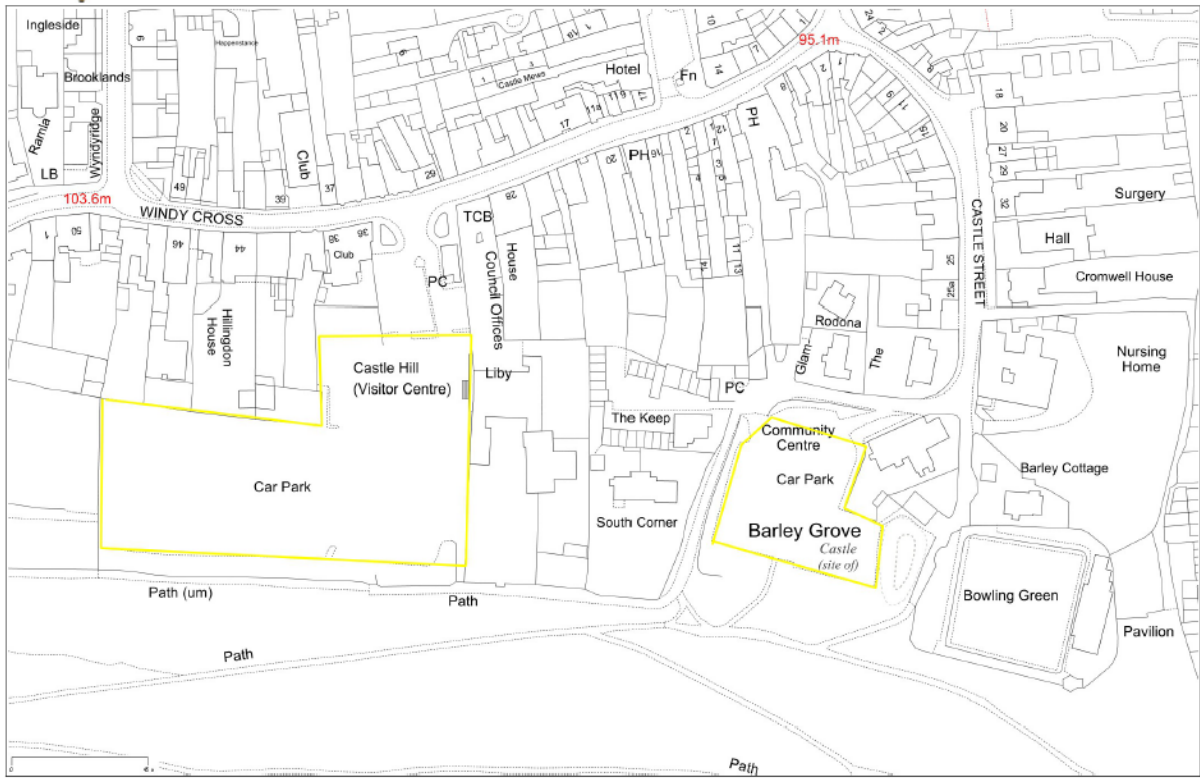
OBJECTIVE: The number of town centre car parking spaces will be maintained or increased.

T11: CAR PARKING

Development proposals should consider and address the related provision of off-street parking. Proposals that involve the loss of existing on-street parking or off-street parking at the locations identified on the Policies Map must replace the spaces lost within a convenient walking distance.

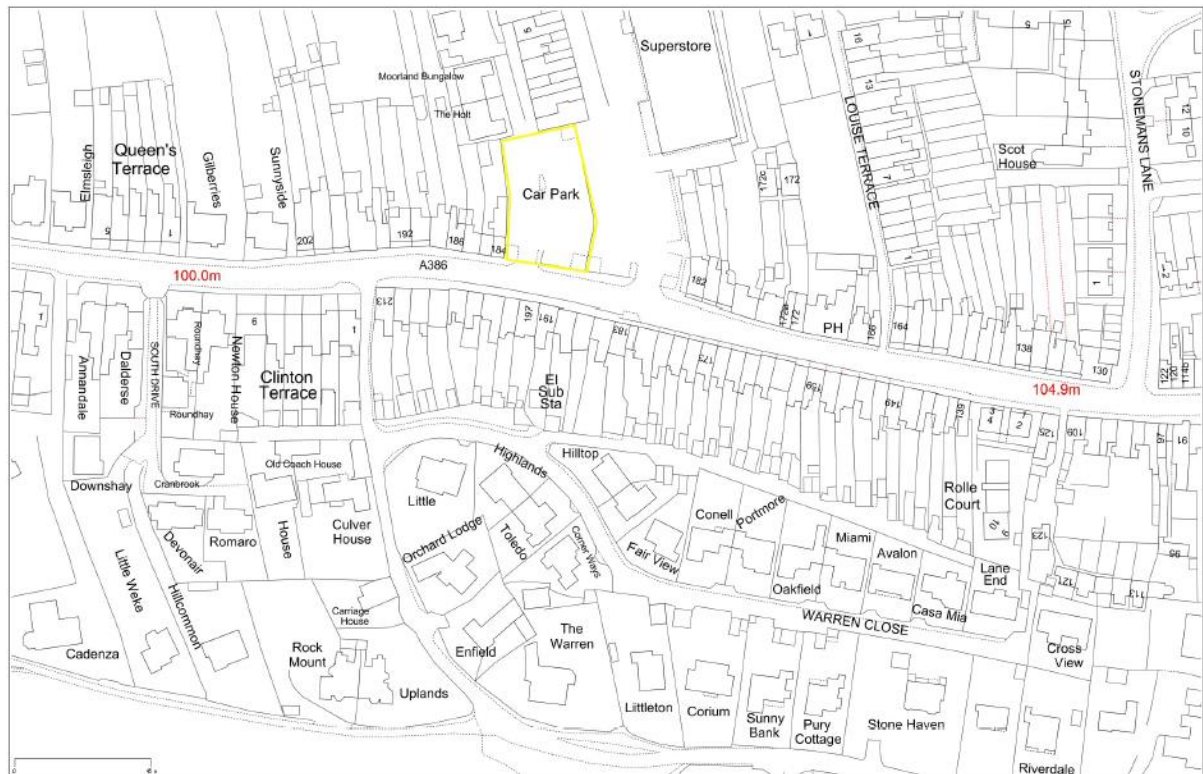
- 8.27 The town centre is surrounded by narrow streets with limited parking, such as Warren Lane, Well Street, New Street and Town Parks which are used by commuters and local residents. At certain times, there is high pressure on available parking in the town.
- 8.28 The car parking concerns in Great Torrington were raised during the application for a new Waitrose in the town in 2014 (please see appendix C).
- 8.29 The issue of car parking was also frequently raised during the consultation phase of The Plan's preparation. The initial consultation questionnaire asked, 'how do you rate the car parking facilities in great Torrington?' In response to this, approximately 70% of people deemed the car parking facilities to be inadequate, poor or average. Additionally, an exhibition was held at the Plough Arts Centre, where exhibition boards asked, 'What do you dislike about Great Torrington and what would you like to change?'. One of the most frequently raised issues was the level of congestion in the Town Centre. Congestion in Great Torrington is worsened by the level of on-street and illegal parking. The provision of additional, and the protection of the existing, off-street parking would begin to tackle this issue.
- 8.30 The two existing public car parks (South Street and Barley Grove) are essential to the social and commercial wellbeing of the town, providing easy access to shops, business, churches and other social clubs situated in the town centre and adjacent areas. These car parks are already subject to volatility in terms of parking numbers and often reach full capacity when there are social or church events organised. Furthermore, the opening of the Town Hall as a venue for weddings and other large events, the growth of tourism in the area and the continuing increase in population, will contribute to added pressure on parking capacity.
- 8.31 The reuse of the sites of redundant garages could make a useful contribution to increasing public parking spaces.

SOUTH STREET AND BARLEY GROVE CAR PARK



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NEW STREET CAR PARK



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OBJECTIVE: Any new development in the neighbourhood area will take account of the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, car users and public service vehicles, with safety for all and carbon reduction being paramount.

T12: PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

All major residential and commercial developments should deliver, through planning obligations or otherwise, appropriate provision for pedestrians and cyclists. This should seek to create routes (either by enhancing existing paths or by creating entirely new paths) that provide for safe and attractive walking and cycling within the development and beyond, particularly to Torrington town centre, the main employment centres and schools.

Pedestrian and cycling routes should:

- **Keep road crossings and changes in level to a minimum**
- **Be suitable for those with wheelchairs, frames, buggies or other mobility aids**
- **Where possible, be separated either physically or with lane markings**

Proposals to provide a designated cycle route from the Tarka Trail to the town centre will be supported.

8.32 Feedback from consultations showed considerable support for making roads and pavements safer and more attractive routes for cyclists. Many of the roads in the area are narrow and carry a lot of vehicle traffic, making it difficult to create safe cycle routes, especially on routes that children use to and from school.

8.33 A “major development” is defined as development involving one or more of the following:

(a) the provision of dwellinghouses where—

(i) the number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more; or

(ii) the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known whether the development falls within subparagraph (a)(i);

(b) the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or

(c) development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

8.34 Where a new major development takes place, it is a priority for the proposals to include safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes to and/or through the site. Creative and innovative measures will be encouraged. The layout of a development and the quality of connections it provides can make a significant impact on walking distances and people’s travel choices.

8.35 The main employment centre to which the provision of walking and cycling routes will be encouraged is Hatchmoor Industrial Estate. The industrial estate provides the base for a range of manufacturing and service-based industries.

OBJECTIVE: Any new development will ensure that car parking is appropriate for the scale and context of the development.

TI3: RESIDENTIAL PARKING

Residential parking should be adequate, well integrated and located where it is accessible and likely to be well used.

The following table indicates minimum parking allocations required per dwelling:

	On-plot/allocated parking spaces per dwelling	Cycle storage spaces provided per dwelling
1 Bed	1	1
2 Bed	2	2
3 Bed	2	2
4 Beds +	3	2

Garages smaller than 7m x 3m will not count towards overall parking requirements. Garages must have functional entrances and sufficient space provided for the opening and closing of garage doors.

Residential developments will be expected to take account of the demand for visitor parking and provide spaces accordingly.

Residential development that provides less than the required standards will only be considered acceptable in circumstances where there are areas of high accessibility, or for specific types of residential development that create a lower demand for parking, such as sheltered accommodation. In these circumstances, applicants will be required to demonstrate that their proposals for car parking and cycle provision would not have an adverse impact on parking in the surrounding area.

8.36 Great Torrington is served by a number of bus services; however, these are limited in respect of evening and weekend travel and employment accessibility between surrounding villages and Great Torrington¹⁰. The closest railway station is located in Uمبرleigh, 7 miles away. The Town Study reports that 48% of the working population from Great Torrington commute to destinations outside of Great Torrington, within and beyond the district and county boundaries. These factors combined result in high

¹⁰ 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Available at: www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0

levels of private car dependency and a need for residential parking. The 2011 Census shows that in Great Torrington, 47% have one car or van and 30% have two cars or vans. The Plan's parking standards reflect these local factors and seek to make sure that new development does not add to the current levels of congestion caused by on-street parking. The standards will be applied to take account of policy DM06 in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan.

- 8.37 Areas of high accessibility will be identified as those areas that are within 400metres of regular public transport links.
- 8.38 While the aim is to reduce car use in order to mitigate the effects of climate change and depletion of finite resources, this mode of transport will still be essential for many in the coming years. Parking was raised as a major issue during consultations.

T14: VISITOR PARKING

Residential developments will be expected to take account of the demand for visitor parking and provide spaces accordingly. Developments should include:

- **0.25 visitor parking spaces per dwelling, rounded up to the nearest whole number.**
- **10% of visitor parking spaces to be a minimum of 3.6m wide, to accommodate the needs of young families and disabled users.**

- 8.39 Many of the roads in the area are narrow and/or heavily trafficked and the increase in on-street parking in recent years is adding to traffic congestion and represents a safety risk to pedestrians and other road users, it also presents a challenge to access for service and delivery vehicles. Providing sufficient space to accommodate visitor's vehicles will prevent this problem worsening.
- 8.40 The planning portal residential parking standards¹¹ set out the car parking provision required for residents in developments on green-field sites or in low-density areas. The total requirements given include spaces for visitors. Combining policies T13 and T14, from this Plan, comply with those standards.
- 8.41 During all phases of the consultation process it was repeatedly raised that providing accessible homes for the elderly and those with disabilities should be a priority of the Plan. In order to ensure a good quality of life and the safety of these residents, wider car parking spaces should be considered a necessity.

¹¹ Parking Standards Annex A: Residential Parking Standards. Available online at: https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning_statements_and_supplementary_planning_guidance/s_pg_other/parking/parking_standards_annexes/parking_standards_annexa.htm

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

OBJECTIVE: Priority will be given to providing appropriate facilities for young people.

OBJECTIVE: Proposals for new sporting and recreational facilities, including allotments, will be supported and encouraged

OBJECTIVE: The developers of new housing must make appropriate financial contributions towards new and existing community facilities.

CF1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Proposals for new and/or enhanced sporting and recreational facilities, including allotments, will be supported so as to enhance the range and quality of facilities within the town, providing any such development would not be detrimental to the character of the area or the amenity of any nearby residents.

Proposals should be flexible in design so that different need groups and activities can be accommodated.

Contributions may be sought from housing developments to secure delivery of such facilities, through methods such as planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Proposals that involve the loss of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, whether privately or publicly owned, will be developed in a reasonable time scale to ensure continuity of use and to provide facilities of an equivalent or improved standard.

Development that would result in a reduction of existing recreation facilities in the countryside, including public rights of way and other recreational routes, will not be supported.

8.42 The loss of the Eric Palmer Centre over 10 years ago created a gap in community provision of facilities for use by local organisations. However, there are still a large number of organisations for young people functioning in Great Torrington. These groups meet in the following locations: Torridge Vale Social Club, the Scout Hut, hut in the grounds of GTS, GTS sports hall, Bluecoat School, the Rugby Club, the Football Club and The Plough.

8.43 There are community facilities at Castle Hill including the library, the Tourist Office and the Town Council offices. These last include a room that can be rented out on the first

floor with and overhead projector. The 1646 Cafe on the ground floor would potentially benefit from daytime rentals in the above room. The space formerly used by 1646 is now fully refurbished and has become the Castle Community Centre.

8.44 Funding has now been secured via the Atlantic Racquet Centre Community Charity to enable the Torrington Tennis Courts to be enhanced. These improvements include resurfacing the courts, reinstalling the floodlights, renewing the fencing, building a small clubhouse, installing electronic gated access and gaining access through the football club.

8.45 Sports facilities not already mentioned, include the Rugby Club at Donnacroft and Function Fitness, a privately-run facility in the former Eric Palmer Centre, which provides a gym and a variety of classes and the Boxing Club, which used to be at the Eric Palmer Centre but now meets five nights a week in its own facility above the Torridge Vale Social Club.

8.46 The army cadets meet in their own hut within the grounds of GTS. The Bluecoat Primary School also acts as a community resource to, for example, Allsorts who meet there on Fridays, and to Streetz. There are a number of rooms to hire in local pubs, in the Conservative Club and attached to local churches.

8.47 Arts facilities include the Plough which runs a wide range of arts related activities for young people and adults. The Plough is hoping to use the Town Hall, when refurbishment is complete, to extend the activities it can offer. The Howe Hall is owned by the Torrington Silver Band who rehearse and perform there. The Howe Hall is also available to hire from the Torrington Silver Band.



8.48 This shows there are already many activities available to young people (and adults) and a good selection of venues where they can meet. However, some are not ideal. For example, one organisation, Streetz, meets in several different venues and would benefit from one centre where it could store its equipment.

8.49 Access to community resources such as voluntary groups and befriending services should be encouraged in the community to reduce isolation and promote positive wellbeing. These services are supported where possible to enable sustainability.

EMPLOYMENT

OBJECTIVE: Existing employment sites are encouraged to be kept for employment use.

EM1: EMPLOYMENT USES ON URBAN BROWNFIELD LAND

Planning applications for the reuse of brownfield land within the built-up area for employment uses will generally be supported where they demonstrate appropriate regard for existing neighbouring uses.

- 8.50 In 2011 unemployment in Great Torrington increased to levels higher than those experienced across Torridge and Devon County¹². Historically, the town has experienced high levels of unemployment that resulted from the closure of the Dairy Crest Creamery and North Devon Meats and through the down scaling of manufacturing at Dartington Crystal.
- 8.51 The NPPF sets out a policy of 'brownfield sites first', stating that "Planning policies and decisions should promote effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land." Sites such as the Creamery are now infamous as a local eyesore and are the focus of a series of unrealistic planning applications. Its continuing presence is inconsistent with the Spatial Vision for Torrington (above), its economic and cultural aspirations.
- 8.52 Local Government in this district is under pressure from National Government to provide more land for housebuilding. Anecdotal evidence from various professionals suggests that owners of land designated for business use keep rents or purchase prices high to discourage applicants in the hope that the land will be re-designated for housebuilding and thus increase in value.
- 8.53 It is important that the potential for all employment uses are considered on the site before planning applications are made for non-employment uses. Where a business is coming to the end of its economic life or has ceased trading altogether, applicants will be expected to submit a Viability Statement as part of the planning application. The Viability Statement should provide proof of marketing and demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect of retaining or re-using the site in its current use. The viability

¹² 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Page 7. Available at: consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371256

case will be considered along with other policy considerations. Proof of marketing should include all of the following criteria:

- The land/premises has/have been widely marketed through an agent or surveyor at a price that reflects its current market or rental value for employment purposes, and no reasonable offer has been refused. The period of marketing should be 18 months long;
- The land/premises have been regularly advertised in the local press and regional press, property press, specialist trade papers and any free papers covering relevant areas. This should initially be weekly advertising for the first month, followed by monthly advertising for the remainder of the marketing period. Advertisements should be targeted at the appropriate target audience;
- The land/premises have been continuously included on the agent's website, the agent's own papers and lists of commercial/business premises for the marketing period;
- There has been an agent's advertisement board on each site frontage to the highway throughout the marketing period.

8.54 The Viability Statement should also detail the following information:

- Details of current occupation of the buildings and where this function would be relocated;
- Details as to why the site location makes it unsuitable for existing uses
- Any physical constraints making the site difficult to accommodate existing uses;
- Environmental considerations/amenity issues; and
- Consideration, firstly, for a mixed-use scheme involving the existing use and other compatible uses, secondly, for other employment generating uses such as those relating to tourism, leisure, retail and residential institutions and, thirdly, of the viability of providing affordable housing on the site, which could meet a specific local need, before consideration of market housing.

8.55 In certain cases, for example, where a significant departure from policy is proposed, the District Council may seek to independently verify the Viability Statement, and the applicant will be required to bear the cost of independent verification.

OBJECTIVE: The vitality of Great Torrington's town centre is protected.

EM2: RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Further retail development within the town centre will be supported where it:

- **Is scaled appropriately to the existing retail units;**
- **Complements or builds on existing retail provision; and**
- **Demonstrates the potential to sustain and/or extend the range of choice to residents, visitors and tourists.**

8.56 The town centre is defined in the Local Plan as the area defined on the local authorities' proposals map, including the Primary Shopping Area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the Primary Shopping Area.

8.57 Consultations and anecdotal evidence indicate a perception by some residents and businesses that 'the town is dying'. In fact, monthly monitoring of vacancies in Town Centre business premises from June to December 2015 indicated a top vacancy rate of 14%, compared to the national average of 13%. But out-of-town and internet shopping are well-known and continuing threats to small town businesses¹³.

8.58 Great Torrington is rated fourth highest of the least cloned towns in the UK on the Clone Town Britain Index, just above Crediton. This is a measure of the identity and diversity of outlets on the high street; the Index indicates towns with thriving independent shops, cinemas, restaurants and markets. Summarising the research contained in this study, the authors state that: '*... diversity matters for local economic resilience. Locally rooted, independent retailers relate differently to the communities they serve. In economic terms, more of the money spent in them is liable to stay and re-circulate in the local area. They are more likely to support other local businesses too, rather than procuring the goods and services they need from other remote national and international suppliers. In difficult times, locally rooted stores are also more likely to go to greater lengths to remain open, doing whatever they can to keep trading*'¹⁴.

¹³ Local shop monitoring: A. Williams.

¹⁴ Reimagining the High Street. New Economics Foundation, 2010, p.2.

8.59 The predominance of independent shops together with the architectural character of the Town Centre is an asset which attracts visitors and inspires loyalty amongst residents. A study by the New Economics Foundation also notes that: *'Where large clone stores dominate, research shows that people become less engaged with community life. They have fewer conversations while out shopping and can even be less likely to vote. Human relationships and the quality of civic life suffers'*¹⁵.



OBJECTIVE: Sustainable green tourism activities are encouraged.

EM3: INNOVATION IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Innovations in the provision and extension of tourism and hospitality facilities will be supported.

Proposals that protect and enhance the Tarka Valley Railway project will be supported.

8.60 Public consultation indicates the need for a hotel; the proportion of people from Torrington who are employed in hotels and restaurants is below the average for Torridge (5.5% / 9.8%)¹⁶. A sustainable tourism strategy requires a range of accommodation to meet the diverse needs of visitors to the area. Paragraph 10.213 of the Local Plan confirms that tourism is a significant contributor to the area's economic position and a sector which is recognised as having growth potential.

8.61 Tarka Valley Torrington Railway are developing a site around the original Torrington railway station as the hub for part of the revived North Devon Line, now called the Tarka Valley Railway. The first phase of the development will reinstate approximately 300 yards of line from the existing line alongside the station and provision of two sidings on one side of the former station yard. Further phases will gradually extend the running line northwards towards Bideford. The attraction of the reinstated railway along part of the trackbed will bring more people to use the recreational facility of the Tarka trail, to visit the station and railway at Torrington. Some of these people will wish to experience a journey on a rural branch line through the beautifully scenic valley of the river Torridge. Many of these people will be visitors to the area who will be encouraged through local publicity to visit other attractions in the area and so increase the tourist footfall in the locality.

¹⁵ Reimagining the High Street. New Economics Foundation, 2010, p.2.

¹⁶ 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Page 6. Available at: consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371256

OBJECTIVE: New employers are attracted, increasing local jobs.

EM4: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

Planning applications for the expansion of existing businesses and the provision of employment through the development of business and industrial (B use classes), public and community and town centre uses in appropriate locations will be supported.

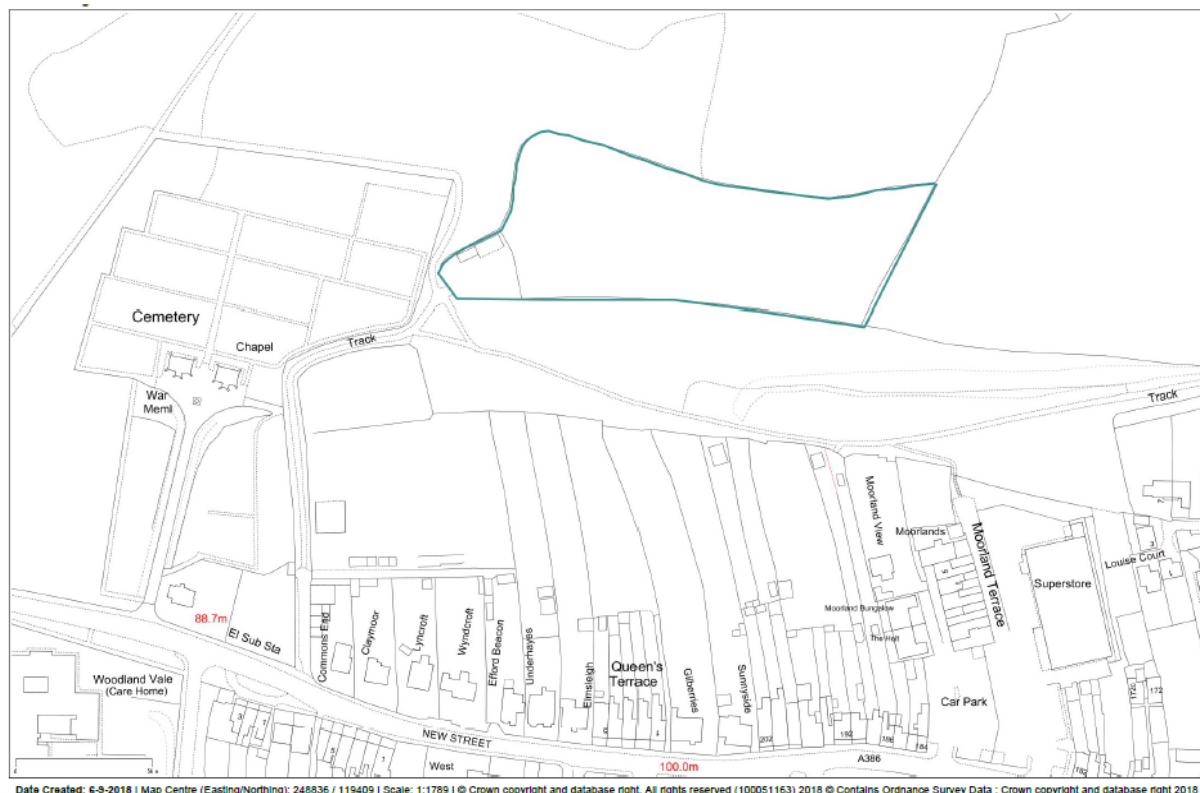
- 8.62 The consensus from consultation with local business leaders is that Torrington needs to move on from its manufacturing past and promote itself as a location for a new range of businesses. Recommendations include establishing itself as a home for niche businesses such which are less dependent on the road network but benefit from good broadband connections; care and personal support services which will see significant growth in line with projected growth in the older population; and hospitality and tourism services which will support the planned growth in tourism as a major sector in the south-west economy.
- 8.63 Consultation proposes indicated that businesses that co-locate and/or work in similar product areas can develop local networks and foster a climate of economic growth, which helps to attract other businesses to the area. Having more full-time workers in and around the Town Centre will increase the use of local shops and other retail businesses. *Torrige has a high proportion of part time workers. There are 4.3% more part-time workers in Torrige than the South West and 8% more than the British average¹⁷.*
- 8.64 The following development proposals to provide opportunities for local employment shall be viewed favourably, subject to other policy conditions:
- A range of small and medium sized business, including those working in technology, arts/media, niche industries and internet marketing
 - The establishment of business ‘hubs’ with shared services and business support
 - Agriculture, market gardening and other horticultural enterprises
 - Social enterprises, particularly where there are tangible benefits to the neighbourhood
 - Commercial developments which offer full-time employment, including ‘live/work’ units which incorporate accommodation for owners and partners

¹⁷ 2015, Profile on Torrige 2015. Available at: <http://www.torrige.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=16027&p=0>

9.0 SITE ALLOCATIONS

SA01: LAND FOR CEMETERY EXPANSION

The site is allocated for future cemetery provision for the town.



9.1 The cemetery was established in 1854 by the Great Torrington Burial Board. The site occupies about 2.5 hectares, and is bounded by stone walls, banks and hedges. It slopes from the southern boundary and has views over Great Torrington Common.

9.2 The allocation is located to the east of the existing cemetery. There is a need for the cemetery to expand as there are only 7 remaining years of burial space (based on Town Council records) and this parcel of land allows for a natural extension. As part of this allocation, the footpath onto the Commons must be retained.

SA02: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

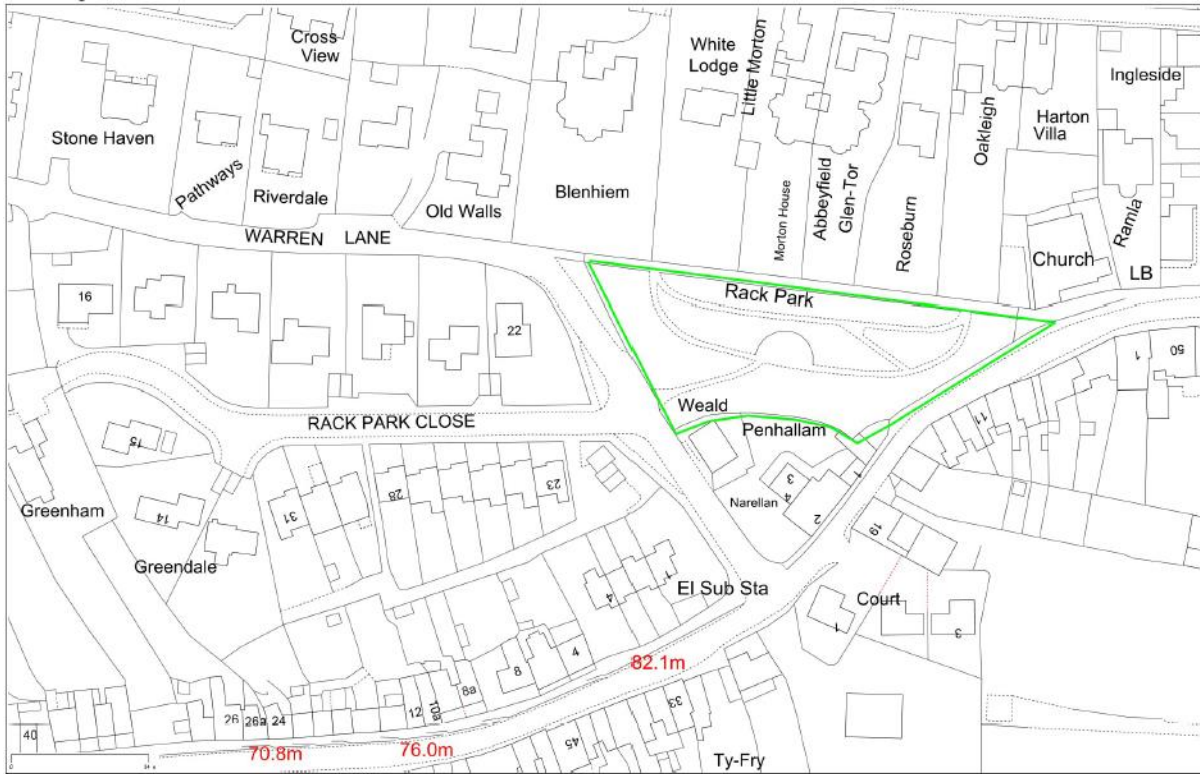
The sites listed below and identified on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Spaces and developers will be required to protect and enhance these spaces.

JUBILEE WOOD



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RACK PARK



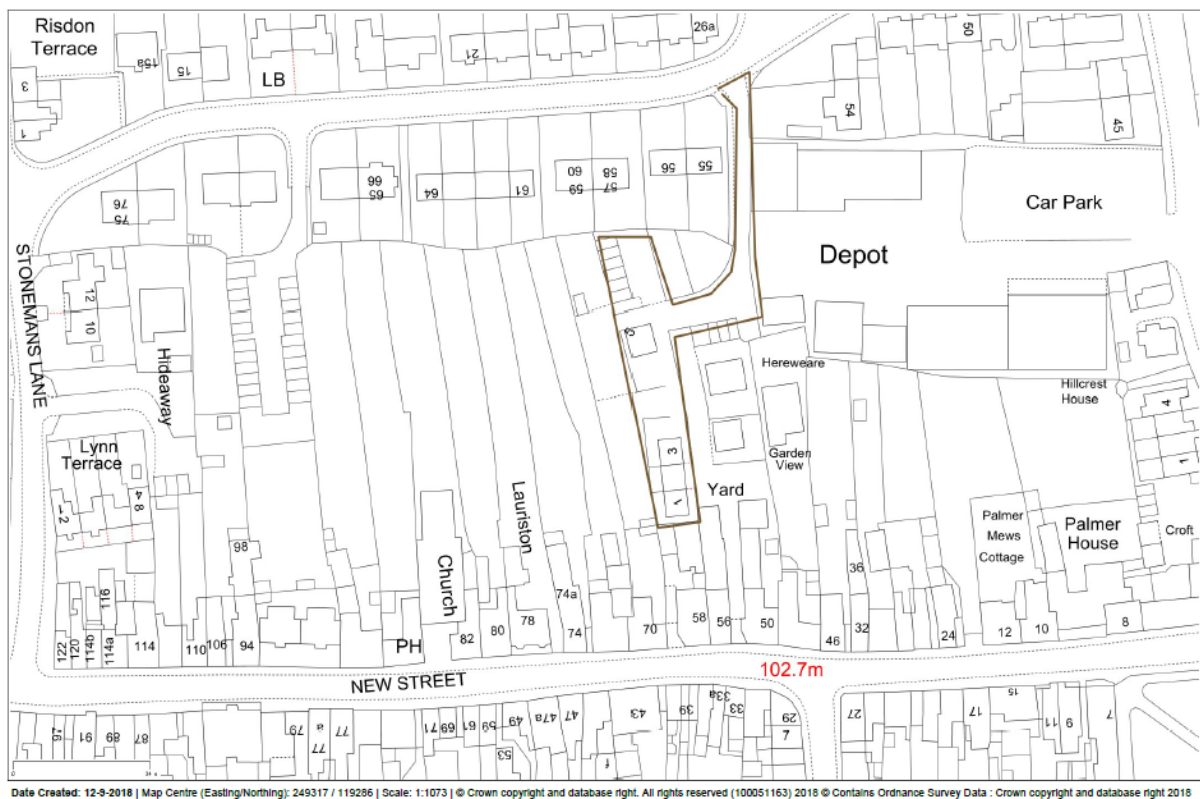
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Local Green Space	How the site meets the NPPF criteria
Jubilee Wood	<p>This greenfield site lies directly behind a residential development and the development boundary, with the north side of the site bordering the Commons. Jubilee Wood is a stepping stone from the open space within the town to the Commons. It is an important green space as the nearby modern houses have small gardens, meaning the site provides a recreational space for the residents.</p> <p>The site is valuable to the local community as the Woodland Trust has been spearheading a national project to create Jubilee Woods of various sizes. This land has been identified as suitable for the ongoing planting of trees. As the land slopes, the bottom part is for tree planting, whilst the upper flatter area could be used to create a wildflower meadow. The whole area is for community led planting initiatives. The site is now owned and managed by the Town Council, with ongoing enhancements planned.</p>
Rack Park	<p>The site is located south of New Street and in a residential area of Great Torrington.</p> <p>Rack Park is an open space community facility, which is used by all.</p> <p>The site is of historical importance as it was used for the drying of sheep skin in the 16th Century. Rack Park has a locally significant outlook.</p>

SA03: SITE NORTH OF NEW STREET

This site is allocated for residential development (C3) and planning applications will be supported which meet the following criteria:

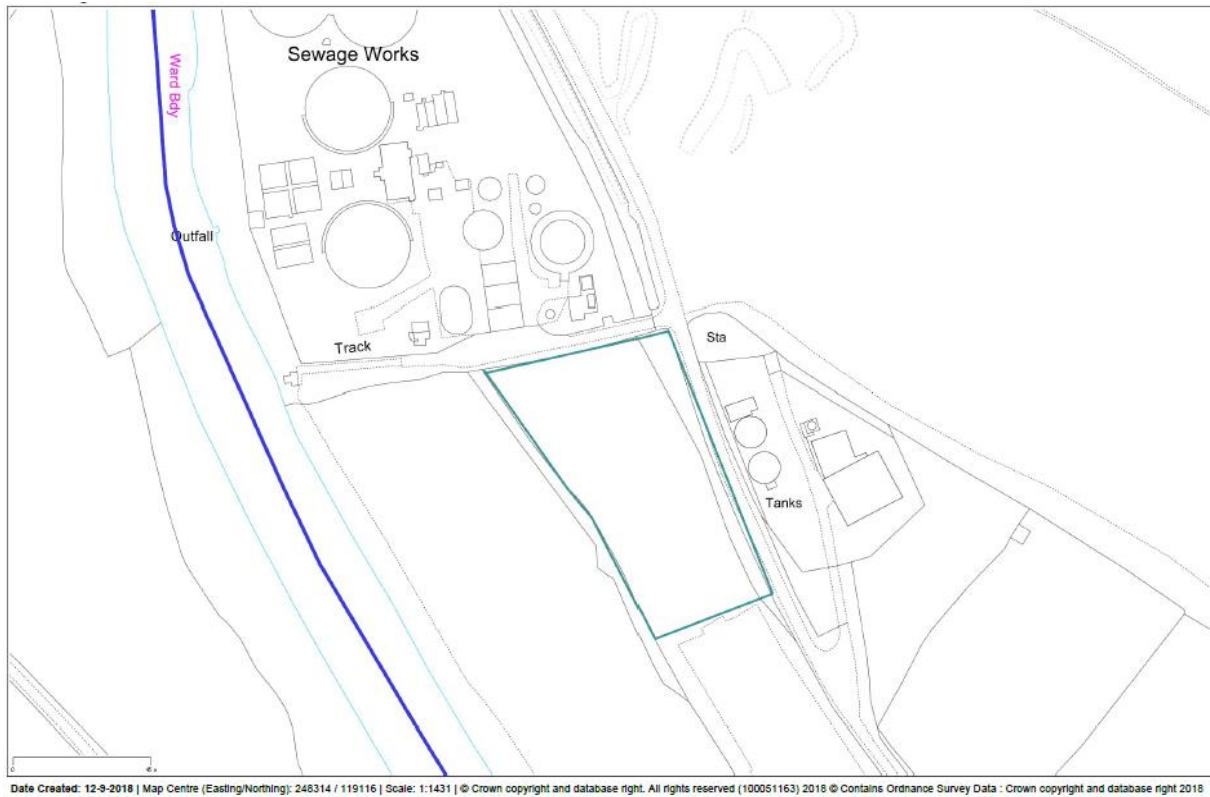
- be of highly sustainable design;
- enhance the setting of the local buildings in the vicinity;
- conserve and promote the use of building materials which are in keeping with the landscape character;
- provide pedestrian and cycle links; and
- use developer contributions towards public transport network links.



9.3 To the north, south and east of the site are existing housing, to the west are other long back gardens. The access road is located off Town Park to the north of the site which is reached by either Stonemans Lane or School Lane. This access road serves a number of dwellings and garages.

SA04: SHEPERD'S HAM ALLOTMENTS

This site is allocated for allotment use, to meet current and future demand in Great Torrington.



9.4 The site abuts the town, adjacent to the allocated old Creamery site and is accessible both by numerous footpaths and the Rolle Road.

9.5 There are currently 13 people on the waiting list for an allotment in Great Torrington. This number is likely to increase as the population of the town increases.

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- 10.1 When the Plan forms part of the development plan for the area, its policy provisions will be considered alongside the relevant policies of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan, when development proposals located in the Parish of Great Torrington are subject to consideration.
- 10.2 Implementation of this Plan will depend on the co-ordinated activities of a number of agencies. It is essential that necessary infrastructure is provided in a timely manner related to the needs of new development. The precise timing and phasing of infrastructure will be managed by the relevant bodies (see appendix B) but the underlying principles will be to provide an attractive and sustainable community.
- 10.3 The Town Council will monitor the delivery of the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan, and work to ensure that the objectives of gaining the benefits for the community of Great Torrington are achieved. If appropriate, the Plan will be reviewed and revised.

APPENDIX A- GLOSSARY

Affordable Housing	Housing provided for households whose needs are not met by the local housing market and defined as 'Affordable housing' in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (or any subsequent revised definition provided through updated national planning policy or guidance).
Assisted Areas	Areas defined by the Government where regional aid can be offered to undertakings, typically businesses, under European Commission state aid rules.
Biodiversity	The whole variety of life on earth. It includes all species of plants and animals, their genetic variation and the ecosystems of which they are part.
Brownfield sites	An area of land or premises that has been previously used, but has subsequently become vacant, derelict or contaminated.
Development Plan	The Development Plan sets out land use planning policies and development proposals against which planning applications will be considered. The Development Plan comprises adopted Local Plans, Neighbourhood Development Plans and Regional strategies until such are revoked.
Ecosystems	Environments consisting of all living things in a particular area and the non-living things with which they interact such as soil, air, water and sunlight.
Green Infrastructure	Green infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments and private gardens.
Infrastructure	A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, schools, health facilities, flood defences and types of green infrastructure.
Local Planning Authority (LPA)	The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area.
Material Considerations	Any consideration relevant to the use and development of land and which is taken into account in determining a planning application.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied.
Open Space	All space of public value, including public landscaped areas, parks, allotments and playing fields, and also including, not just land, but also areas of water, such as rivers, lakes and reservoirs, which offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can act as a visual amenity.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	The European SEA Directive requires a formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment. Local authorities are advised to take an integrated approach towards Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment to avoid unnecessary duplication and confusion. Together they will play an important part in testing the soundness of Local Development Documents, ensuring that they contribute towards sustainable development objectives.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	A study into the long-term housing demand, supply and needs of a market area. A market area can be defined as the geographic area within which the majority of households move.
Sustainable Communities	Sustainable communities “meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunities and choice. They achieve this in a way that makes effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and strengthen economic prosperity” (source: The Egan Review; skills for sustainable communities, ODPM 2004).
Viability	Viability is the capacity of a centre to achieve the commercial success necessary to sustain the existence of the centre.

APPENDIX B- RELEVANT BODIES

STATUTORY CONSULTEES

- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Coal Authority
- Network Rail
- Highways Agency
- Adjoining local authorities
- Parish Councils (including those which adjoin the District in neighbouring local authority areas)
- Relevant county authorities
- NHS
- Devon and Cornwall Police
- The Homes and Communities Agency
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Relevant electronic communication companies, such as BT and Virgin Media
- Relevant electricity and gas companies
- Relevant sewerage and water undertakers, such as South West Water

DUTY TO CO-OPERATE BODIES

- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England
- The Civil Aviation Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency

- Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS England
- Integrated Transport Authority
- Highways England
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Nature Partnership

APPENDIX C- CAR PARKING CONCERNS (WAITROSE APPLICATION 2014)

Waitrose application: Concerns about car parking in Torrington

"85% of Torrington's food expenditure is going to supermarkets elsewhere."
"Sydney House car park rarely has more than 80 cars parked at any one time".
These two statements, which still appear today on the Waitrose Torrington website, are both completely untrue, yet they have influenced three key documents: the planning application for the development, the proposed car park agreement between Waitrose and Torridge District Council and the views of County Highways in their response to the application.

In fact, Sydney House car park regularly has well in excess of 100 vehicles parking there at any one time on a Saturday. On a recent Saturday evening, by about 8pm, there was nowhere at all to park in the town centre. Sydney House, Barley Grove and the unofficial parking space in School Lane were all full, as were all the streets. There were some 340 cars in the three car parks and along South Street / Halsdon Terrace / Whites Lane. These visitors must have brought a huge amount of income to the town.

In their current configuration the two Council car parks would probably have just coped with the influx of visitors if part of Sydney House hadn't been fenced off. If the supermarket were built there would be just 281 parking spaces available to accommodate those 340 cars. Traffic restrictions along South Street / Halsdon Terrace / Whites Lane and the loss of free parking on the derelict transport depot at some point would leave the town centre with much reduced parking capacity. *This would be before even one person parks to shop or work at the supermarket.*

We have now heard that parking in the proposed supermarket car park, about half of the town centre capacity, would be limited to 2 hours at the weekend – *and this limit would also apply outside of the charging period.* The property services manager at Torridge has stated "This is to enable a turnover of vehicles in the shoppers' car park and hence the easy access to the store for shoppers as clearly at the end of the day Waitrose are a business". Torridge District Council has signally failed to appreciate the importance of Sydney House car park to the town centre shops, attractions and community.

The traffic assessment for the town, submitted by the developer and used by County Highways to make their response to the planning application, is full of errors and misleading information, including the claim that, at peak demand, Sydney House car park would be only 70% full.

We request that Torridge District Council commission a fully independent traffic and parking study for the town before this planning application goes any further, so that the town's needs and concerns, not just those of the developer, are taken into account.

(A version of this document was presented to Torrington Town Council on 4.12.14)

Car park numbers Saturday 29th December 2014. Approx 8pm

Car park numbers	
Sydney House*	160
Barley Grove	70
School Lane	80
South St / Halsdon Tce / Whites Lane	30
Total	340

Post-development parking capacity

Sydney House Zone A (supermarket - time limited parking)	136
Sydney House Zone B	75
Barley Grove	70
Total	281

*Sydney House car park capacity reduced due to archaeological excavations.