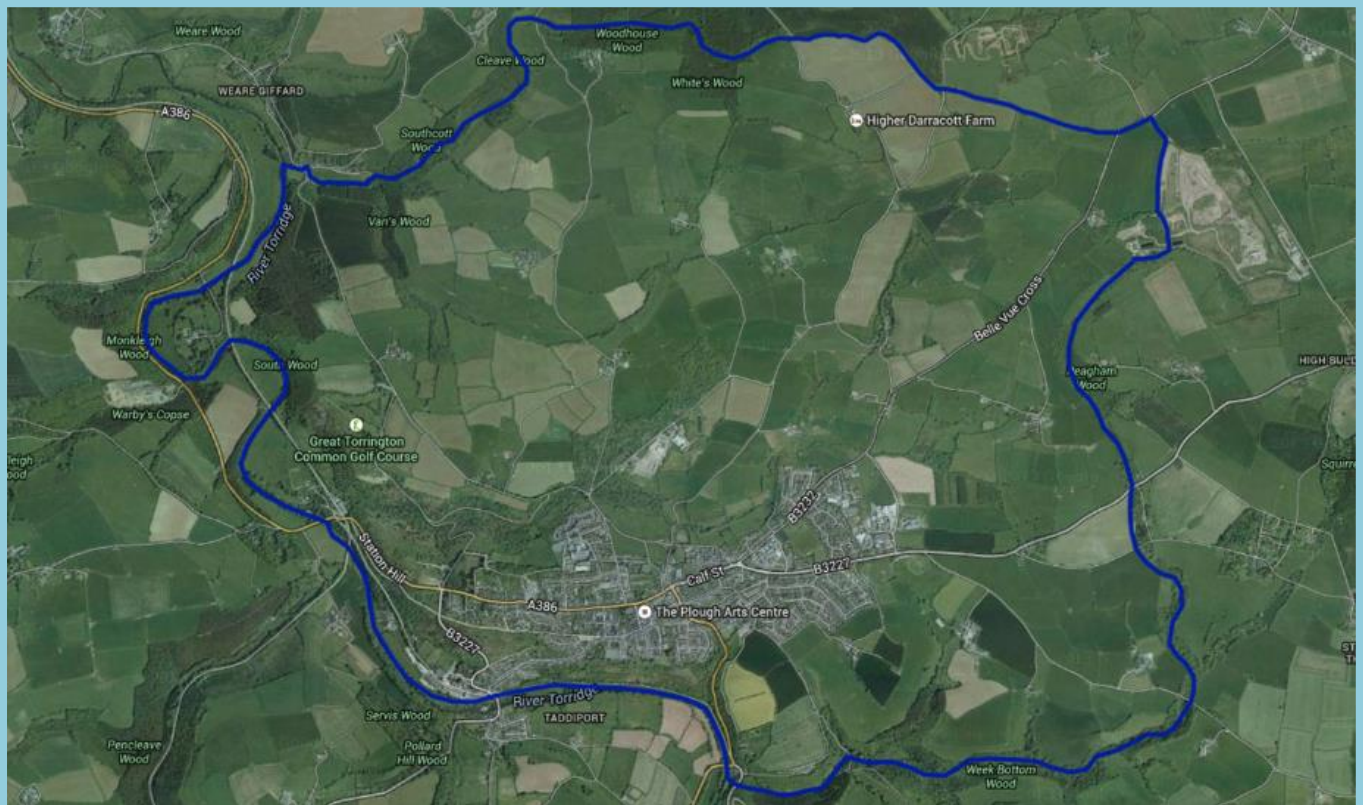


# GREAT TORRINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



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



## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2018-2031



**Great Torrington**  
Town Council

## CONTENT

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>THE PURPOSE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>ISSUES RAISED THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>OUR VISION - GREAT TORRINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD IN 2031.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES.....</b>	<b>18</b>
	ENVIRONMENT.....	19
	HOUSING.....	22
	TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE.....	26
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES.....	32
	EMPLOYMENT.....	34
<b>9.0</b>	<b>SITE ALLOCATIONS.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING.....</b>	<b>43</b>
	Appendix A- Glossary .....	44
	Appendix B- Relevant Bodies.....	46
	Appendix C- Car Parking Concerns (Waitrose Application 2014) .....	48

## 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 16<sup>th</sup>, 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 Plan’s pre-submission consultation which ended on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018, all comments received were reviewed by the Town Council and changes were made to the draft Plan. The then submission Plan was submitted to Torridge District Council (the District Council). The District Council then undertook a six-week consultation on the Plan, over the period 14<sup>th</sup> February – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019. An independent examiner was then appointed by the District Council to examine the submission Plan to assess whether it met the following ‘basic conditions’, which require it to:
- have appropriate regard for national policy;
  - contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development;
  - be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and
  - be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.
- 2.3 The examination of the Plan was conducted by means of written representations. The examiner (Mr. S Lee, MA MRTPI AMInst LM MTCPA NPIERS NSI) issued a report to the District Council and Great Torrington Town Council (the Town Council) on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2019, which concluded that subject to the recommendations contained within the report being accepted, the Plan would meet the basic conditions, as set out above and could be submitted to a referendum.
- 2.4 The penultimate stage in achieving a neighbourhood plan is conducting a referendum. The District Council held a referendum on the Great Torrington Neighbourhood Plan on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021, when all persons entitled to vote in a local election for the area were enabled to participate. Of those who participated 82.52% voted in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan. The District Council considered the outcome of the referendum on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021 and in recognising the referendum result agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan should form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. With development plan status, the Neighbourhood Plan, along with the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan, will

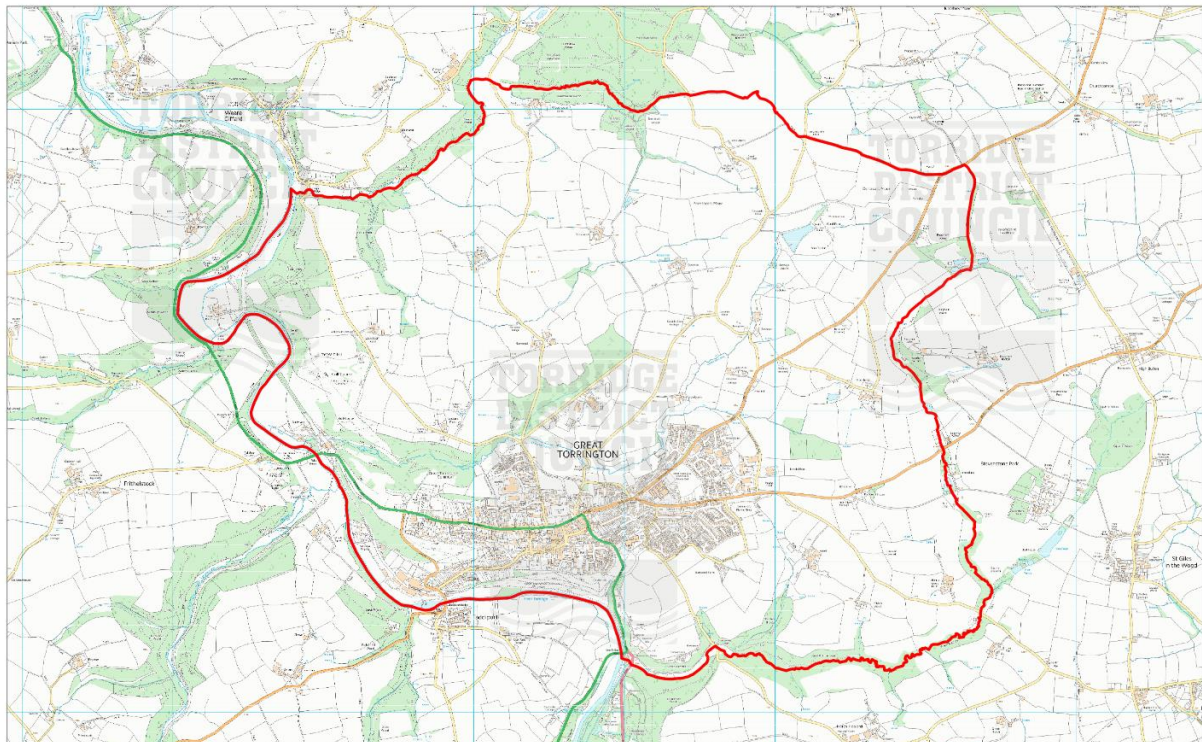
be the first consideration in decision making on planning applications in the parish of Great Torrington.

- 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, the 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 appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area, and a statement that the Town Council is a 'Qualifying Body'. The District Council approved the designation of the Parish of Great Torrington as a Neighbourhood Area on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014, following a six-week period of consultation.
- 3.2 The boundary includes the entire area in the administrative jurisdiction of Great Torrington Town Council, 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

### How the Neighbourhood Plan fits into the Planning System

- 4.1 The Plan, once made, in conjunction with the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (2011-2031) will guide future development in Great Torrington and will be a primary consideration when determining planning applications in the area.
- 4.2 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 (as amended) – to ensure that it comprises a set of policies that are procedurally sound in their preparation and in accordance with the ‘basic conditions’.
- 4.3 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. The District Council, in consultation with prescribed consultees determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not required, as is set out in the Basic Conditions Statement. Although as the Plan allocates sites for development and the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets a Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared.

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England. How the Plan has regard to the NPPF is set out in the Basic Conditions Statement. Although the 2019 NPPF is now in place, stated transitional arrangements<sup>1</sup> require this Plan to be considered on the basis of the 2012 NPPF. The NPPF provides the basis for local planning authorities to prepare their local plans and for communities producing neighbourhood plans.
- 4.5 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.

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (2019) – Paragraph 214

## The North Devon and Torrington Local Plan

4.6 Great Torrington lies within the administrative area of Torrington District Council, 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.

4.7 The North Devon and Torrington Local Plan (2011-2031) was adopted on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018; it sets out a spatial vision and development strategy for Great Torrington. The spatial vision provides that:

*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.*

4.8 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

- 4.9 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 Plan's Steering Group 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 form the structure of the policy section.

### Environment

- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 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.



- 5.5 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.

## Housing

- 5.6 The Great Torrington Town Study 2011<sup>2</sup> 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.
- 5.7 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.
- 5.8 There is a significant need for affordable housing despite average property prices being less than the county average<sup>3</sup>, that such is consequent of high affordability rates locally resulting from relatively low household incomes<sup>4</sup>.
- 5.9 There is also a local demand for accommodation to meet the needs of an increasingly aging population<sup>5</sup> and to accommodate households that require<sup>6</sup> supported housing.
- 5.10 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.

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<sup>2</sup> Great Torrington Town Study (Torridge District Council 2011) Available at:

<https://torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0>

<sup>3</sup> 2017, Torridge Profile 2017. P.28. Available at:

<http://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=18130&p=0>

<sup>4</sup> 2009, Great Torrington Town Study. P.5. Available at:

<http://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0>

<sup>5</sup> 2008-2017 Torridge Profiles: <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/15446/Ward-Profiles>

<sup>6</sup> Torridge District Council Urban Housing Needs Assessments:

<http://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=12978&p=0>

## Transport & Infrastructure

5.11 During the consultation period on the draft Plan, public transport and congestion in the town centre were raised as key issues.

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

5.13 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 town's network of historic streets.

5.14 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.

5.15 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.

## Community Facilities

5.16 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.

5.17 The North Devon and Torridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013-2031<sup>7</sup> determined that there is good current access to plan and amenity space in Great Torrington and that a range of open space and recreational requirements would be generated from the housing development planned for in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan. The strategy also recognised the need for the town's tennis courts to be refurbished. There is also a current demand<sup>8</sup> for and future need<sup>9</sup> for allotments in Great Torrington. Great Torrington has a good variety of leisure and recreational facilities; there will however be the need 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 2019, the Great Torrington Bluecoat C of E primary school was at 95% of its capacity<sup>10</sup>.

## Employment

5.18 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.

5.19 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 Barnstaple<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> North Devon and Torridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013-2031. Available at: [consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371346](https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371346)

<sup>8</sup> Great Torrington Town Council allotment waiting list

<sup>9</sup> North Devon and Torridge Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013-2031. Available at: [consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371346](https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371346)

<sup>10</sup> 2019, 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>

<sup>11</sup> 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Available at: [www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0](http://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0)



- 5.20 Great Torrington has experienced recent limited employment development on sites allocated for economic development in the Torrridge District Local Plan<sup>12</sup>. For 14 years, a site of 4.62 hectares adjoining the Hatchmoor Industrial Estate, was allocated for economic development. The site remained undeveloped and has not been maintained as an employment allocation in the North Devon and Torrridge Local Plan. The North Devon and Torrridge Local Plan allocates a new 4 hectare site adjoining the Hatchmoor Industrial Estate to deliver a mix of premises to support business start-ups and expansion. Development of this site should improve employment opportunities in Great Torrington.
- 5.21 In addition to the Hatchmoor site, some limited opportunities for employment-based development exist on the former creamery and abattoir sites. Although both are subject to significant constraints, consequent of their previous use, it is recognised the sites have the potential to be redeveloped on a mixed-use basis in the interest of regeneration. The creamery site is subject to a Local Plan allocation (Policy GTT01), which provides for its redevelopment with a focus on housing with some employment.
- 5.22 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.

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<sup>12</sup> Torrridge District Local Plan (1997-2011). Available at: <https://www.torrridge.gov.uk/article/11250/The-Torrridge-District-Local-Plan-1997---2011-Superseded-29-October-2018>

## 6.0 OUR VISION - GREAT TORRINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD IN 2031

### The Vision

- 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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; and
- 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; and
- 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;
- Great Torrington's rural edge is retained; and
- renewable energy initiatives are encouraged.

## 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; and
- 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 kept in employment use;
- the vitality of Great Torrington's town centre is protected;
- sustainable green tourism activities are encouraged; and
- new employers are attracted, increasing local jobs.



## 8.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES

8.1 Sections 6 and 7 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.

### Policy ENV1: LANDSCAPE PROTECTION

**Development will be supported which demonstrates sensitivity to the distinctive landscape character of the area by retaining local features, such as mature trees, species-rich hedgerows, ponds and woodland of nature conservation, cultural and landscape value, in accordance with the principles of the mitigation hierarchy, to avoid harm wherever possible, or else mitigate, or compensate where mitigation is not possible.**

- 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 Torridge<sup>13</sup> 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

### **Policy ENV2: WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT**

**Development will be supported which enhances ecosystem function and resilience, by:**

- a) improving connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces;**
- b) increasing the wildlife value of private and community land, and/or;**
- c) creating new habitats.**

- 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.

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<sup>13</sup> 2010, Land Use Consultants. Joint Landscape Character Assessment for North Devon & Torridge Districts. Available at : <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/11273/Joint-Landscape-Character-Assessment-for-North-Devon-and-Torridge-Districts>

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

### **Policy ENV3: ENHANCE THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PARISH**

**Development proposals providing and/or enhancing green infrastructure that benefits the community and environment will be supported, whether as an essential mitigation justified by the impact of that development or as a standalone green infrastructure proposal.**

- 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.

### **Policy ENV4: DARK SKIES**

**Development which respects the area's dark skies, takes account of the town's position in the landscape and light pollution will be supported.**

- 8.8 It is desirable to minimise new light sources, development proposals 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.

### **Policy ENV5: RENEWABLE ENERGY**

**Developments which use passive solar gain and/or incorporate renewable energy generation will 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.

### **Policy H1: HOUSING TYPES**

**Development providing four or more residential units shall provide a mix of housing types which reflects identified housing needs.**

- 8.13 In order to support a balanced community, housing should meet the needs of local people. The mix of house types and tenures will be based on the most up-to-date evidence at the time an application is made, which will aim to ensure a reasonable balance. Additionally, regard should also be had to the site's context where this might have an influence on the choice of and/or opportunity for a particular mix of housing types.



8.14 Applicants will need to demonstrate how they have considered and addressed wide ranging housing needs, including those of older households and young families; the mix of which should be informed by strategic or local evidence. Older households would include at least one adult 65+ and young families would include at least one child under the age of 18.

8.15 The Joint Needs Assessment<sup>14</sup> 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 others seek alternative housing in the town, such as smaller dwellings and sheltered dwellings, mainly single storey and with modest gardens.

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

## Policy H2: ALLOCATION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Affordable housing provision shall be prioritised for occupancy by those:**

- a) with a strong connection to the Plan area or surrounding parishes, and;**
- b) whose needs are not met by open market housing, being given first option to take tenancy or shared ownership.**

8.16 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 NPPF (or any subsequent revised definition provided through updated national planning policy or guidance).

8.17 Surrounding parishes include: Huntshaw, St Giles in the Wood, Little Torrington, Frithelstock, Monkleigh and Weare Giffard.

8.18 The occupation of affordable housing will be restricted to households in need of affordable housing, and in the first instance priority will be given to those applicants with a local connection to Great Torrington and the surrounding parishes at least one of the following criteria required to be met by prospective occupants:

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<sup>14</sup> 2008, Housing Vision. Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Northern Peninsula.  
2012, Housing Vision. Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Torrington and North Devon Update.  
2016, GL Hearn. Housing and Economic Needs Assessment. Available at:

- (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.

8.19 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.

8.20 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.

### **Policy H3: DESIGN AND LAYOUT**

**Having regard to site character and context, residential development shall, where practicable, provide:**

- a) domestic curtilage/garden in the form of private amenity space screened from public view at a level commensurate with the size of the dwelling it serves, and;**
- b) parking space between buildings which ensures such provision does not dominate the street scene.**

8.21 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: Design Principles of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan<sup>15</sup>. The NPPF and Local Plan

<sup>15</sup> North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (2011-2031). Available via: <https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/adoption/>

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.

8.22 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.

8.23 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 play space. This space should enjoy a high degree of privacy from the public street and from any other public places. The appropriateness of private amenity space provided with residential development will be considered having regard to national guidance<sup>16</sup> and as relevant supplementary planning guidance prepared by the District Council.

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<sup>16</sup> National Design Guidance (MHCLG). Available at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/843468/National\\_Design\\_Guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843468/National_Design_Guide.pdf)

## TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

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

8.24 The town centre is surrounded by narrow streets with limited parking, such as Warren

### Policy T1: PARKING

**Development generating a need for parking shall make:**

- a) adequate provision for on-site parking, to meet anticipated needs, and;**
- b) compensatory provision within a short walking distance for spaces lost from on-street parking or existing car parks at South Street, Barley Grove and/or New Street (as identified on the two maps below).**

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.

8.25 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).

8.26 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 respondents 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

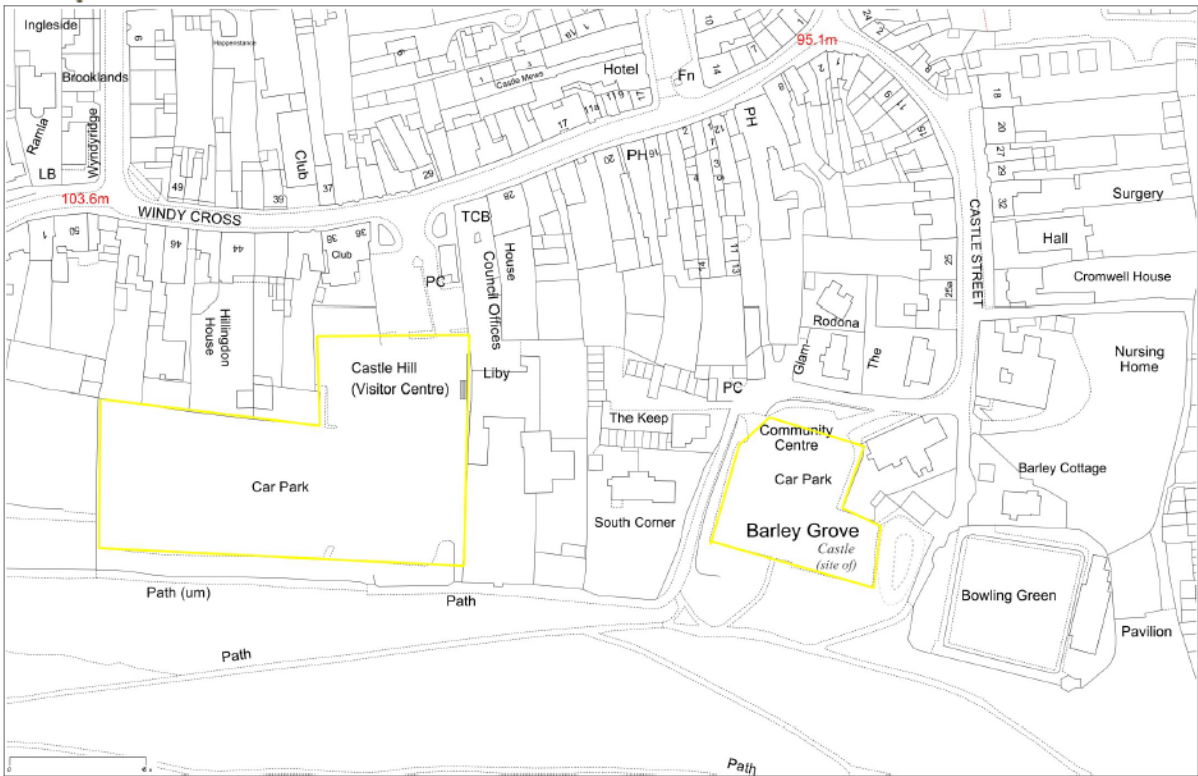
illegal parking. The provision of additional, and the protection of the existing, off-street parking would begin to tackle this issue.

8.27 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.

8.28 In accordance with Policy T1, any compensatory car parking provision required to account for spaces lost due to development should be provided within a short walking distance of those spaces that are lost. A short walking distance is taken to be a maximum of 480m (equivalent to a 10 minute walking time) from the lost spaces, as measured along a route accessible and safe to pedestrians.

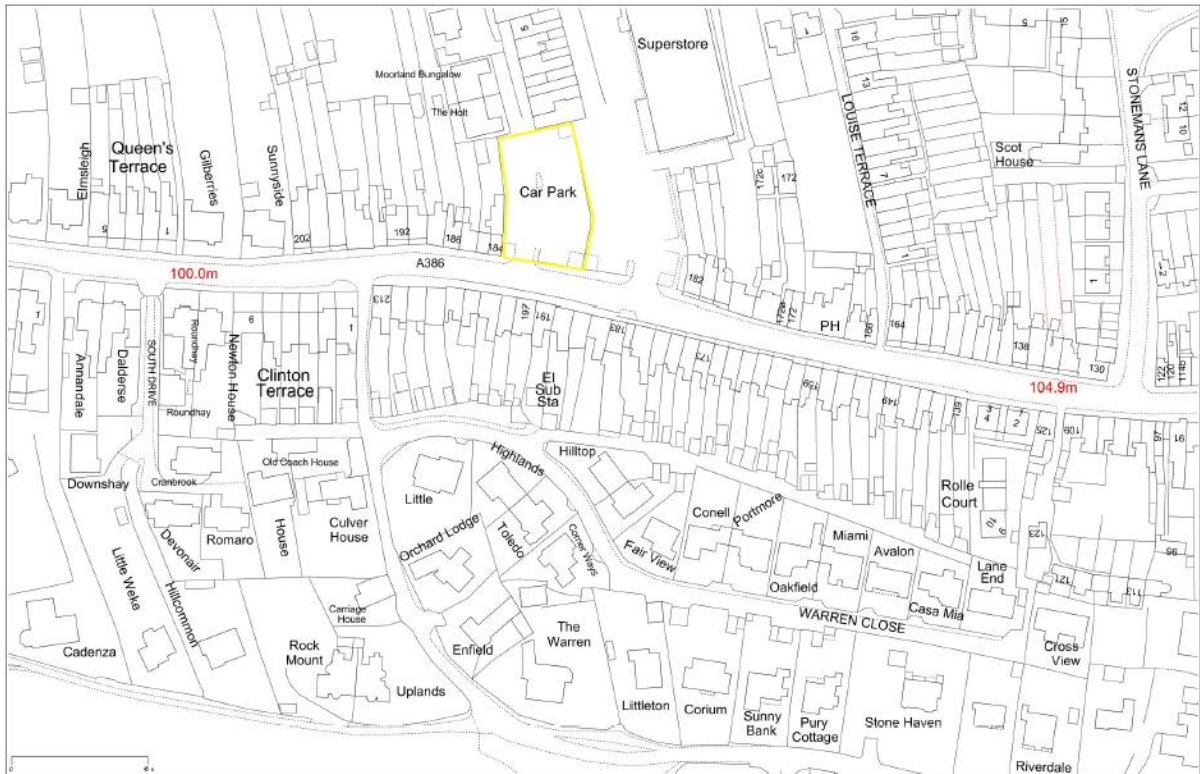
8.29 The reuse of the sites of redundant garages could make a useful contribution to increasing public parking spaces.

## 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.

## **Policy T2: PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS**

**All major development shall make adequate on-site and off-site provision for pedestrians and cyclists, creating or contributing to the creation of safe and attractive walking and routes (by enhancing existing or creating new paths) particularly to the town centre, main employment centres and schools. Pedestrian and cycling routes shall seek to:**

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

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

8.30 Feedback from consultations showed considerable support for making roads 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.

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

(a) the provision of housing where—

- (i) the number of homes 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 non-residential development where:

- (i) additional floorspace of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or
- (ii) development on a site of an area of 1 hectare or more.

8.32 Where a new major development takes place, it is a priority for the proposal 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.

8.33 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.

### Policy T3: RESIDENTIAL PARKING

- a. Residential parking provision should be designed to meet the anticipated needs of residents and visitors alike, well integrated and accessible to encourage maximum usage, based on the following minimum levels per dwelling:

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

- b. developments shall include a minimum of one visitor parking space per four dwellings with one in ten of such spaces a minimum of 3.6m wide, to accommodate the needs of young families and disabled users.
- c. development with lower provision may be considered acceptable in areas of high accessibility or where the type of residential development proposed is likely to generate less demand (such as sheltered accommodation and/or in town centre locations) when applicants will be required to demonstrate the proposed level of parking provision would be unlikely to result in increased demand for parking in the surrounding area or that sufficient capacity or alternative provision is available (e.g. in public car parks).

8.34 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 Torrington<sup>17</sup>. The closest railway station is located in Uمبرleigh, 7 miles away. The Town Study<sup>18</sup> 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 levels of private car dependency and a need for residential parking. The 2011 Census shows that in Great Torrington, 47% of households have one car or van and 30% of households have two cars or vans. The Plan's parking

<sup>17</sup> 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Available at: [www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0](http://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0)

<sup>18</sup> 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Available at: [www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0](http://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8280&p=0)



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: Parking Provision in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan<sup>19</sup>.

- 8.35 Areas of high accessibility will be identified as those areas that are within 400metres of regular public transport links.
- 8.36 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.
- 8.37 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.
- 8.38 The planning portal residential parking standards<sup>20</sup> 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. 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.

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<sup>19</sup> North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (2011-2031). Available via:  
<https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/adoption/>

<sup>20</sup> Parking Standards Annex A: Residential Parking Standards. Available online at:  
[https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning\\_statements\\_and\\_supplementary\\_planning\\_guidance/spg\\_other/parking/parking\\_standards\\_annexes/parking\\_standards\\_annexa.htm](https://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/planning_statements_and_supplementary_planning_guidance/spg_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.

### Policy CF1: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

**Proposals which provide new, replacement and/or enhanced sport and recreational facilities, including allotments, will be supported where:**

- a) they would enhance the range and quality of facilities within the town;**
- b) they would not be detrimental to the character of the area or the amenity of any nearby residential property;**
- c) their flexible design ensures different need groups and activities are accommodated, and;**
- d) any loss of open space, sport and/or recreational facility is replaced to an equivalent or improved standard, whether on or off-site, with no reduction in accessibility, within a reasonable timescale to ensure continuity of use, and;**
- e) where on-site provision is not possible or appropriate, alternative off-site delivery or provision will be sought through financial contributions of broadly equivalent value.**

**Development proposals that affect public rights of way and other recreational routes will be supported only where there is no overall loss of connectivity or reduction in accessibility both of and to the public right of way or recreational route.**

8.39 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: Torrridge 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.

8.40 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.

8.41 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.

8.42 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 Torrington Vale Social Club.

8.43 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.

8.44 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.



8.45 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.

8.46 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: Increased economic development opportunities through the use of appropriately located previously developed land.

### Policy EM1: EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

**Economic development proposals on previously developed land within the continuous built-up form of the town of Great Torrington will be supported where there are no substantial adverse impacts on neighbouring uses.**

- 8.47 In 2011 unemployment in Great Torrington increased to levels higher than those experienced across Torridge and Devon County<sup>21</sup>. 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. Unemployment levels have improved in recent years and are now reflective of levels across Torridge<sup>22</sup>.
- 8.48 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.
- 8.49 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.

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<sup>21</sup> 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Page 7. Available at: [consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371256](https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371256)

<sup>22</sup> [2017 Torrington Ward Profile \(TDC\): https://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=18050&p=0](https://www.torridge.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=18050&p=0)

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

## Policy EM2: RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

**Retail development within the defined town centre boundary will be supported provided it:**

- **is not of such a scale that it is likely to adversely affect the viability of existing retail enterprises;**
- **complements existing retail provision; and**
- **demonstrates the potential to sustain and/or extend the range of retail choice.**

8.50 The town centre boundary is that defined in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan<sup>23</sup>, as defined on the local authorities' Policies Map, which also defines a, Primary Shopping Area, which is the area predominantly occupied by main town centre uses.

8.51 Consultations and anecdotal evidence indicate a perception by some residents and businesses that 'the town is dying'. Monitoring<sup>24</sup> by the District Council indicates vacancy rates ranging from 4.7%-9.57% over the period 2011-2019, within the Town Centre; 9.57% being the vacancy rate at June 2019, which was just below the national average of 10%. Out-of-town and internet shopping are well-known and are considered to represent a continuing threat to small town businesses

8.52 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*'<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> North Devon and Torridge Local Plan (2011-2031) Torrington Policies Map. Available via: <https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/adoption/>

<sup>24</sup> Torridge and North Devon and Torridge Authority Monitoring Reports (2011/2012-2018/2019) Available at: <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/Authority-Monitoring-Report-AMR>

<sup>25</sup> Reimagining the High Street. New Economics Foundation, 2010, p.2.

8.53 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'*<sup>26</sup>.



OBJECTIVE: Sustainable green tourism activities are encouraged.

### Policy EM3: TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

**Development proposals will be supported where they would:**

- a. improve and/or extend existing tourism and hospitality facilities, or;**
- b. support the enhancement of or not prejudice the future development of the Tarka Valley Railway project.**

8.54 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%)<sup>27</sup>. A sustainable tourism strategy requires a range of accommodation to meet the diverse needs of visitors to the area. Paragraph 10.213 of the North Devon and Torridge 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.

8.55 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

<sup>26</sup> Reimagining the High Street. New Economics Foundation, 2010, p.2.

<sup>27</sup> 2011, Great Torrington Town Study. Page 6. Available at: [consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371256](http://consult.torridge.gov.uk/file/3371256)

be encouraged through local publicity to visit other attractions in the area and so increase the tourist footfall in the locality.

OBJECTIVE: New employers are attracted, increasing local jobs.

### **Policy EM4: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT**

**Expansion of business and employment provision in appropriate locations will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there would be no consequent substantial adverse impact on residential living conditions and/or highway safety.**

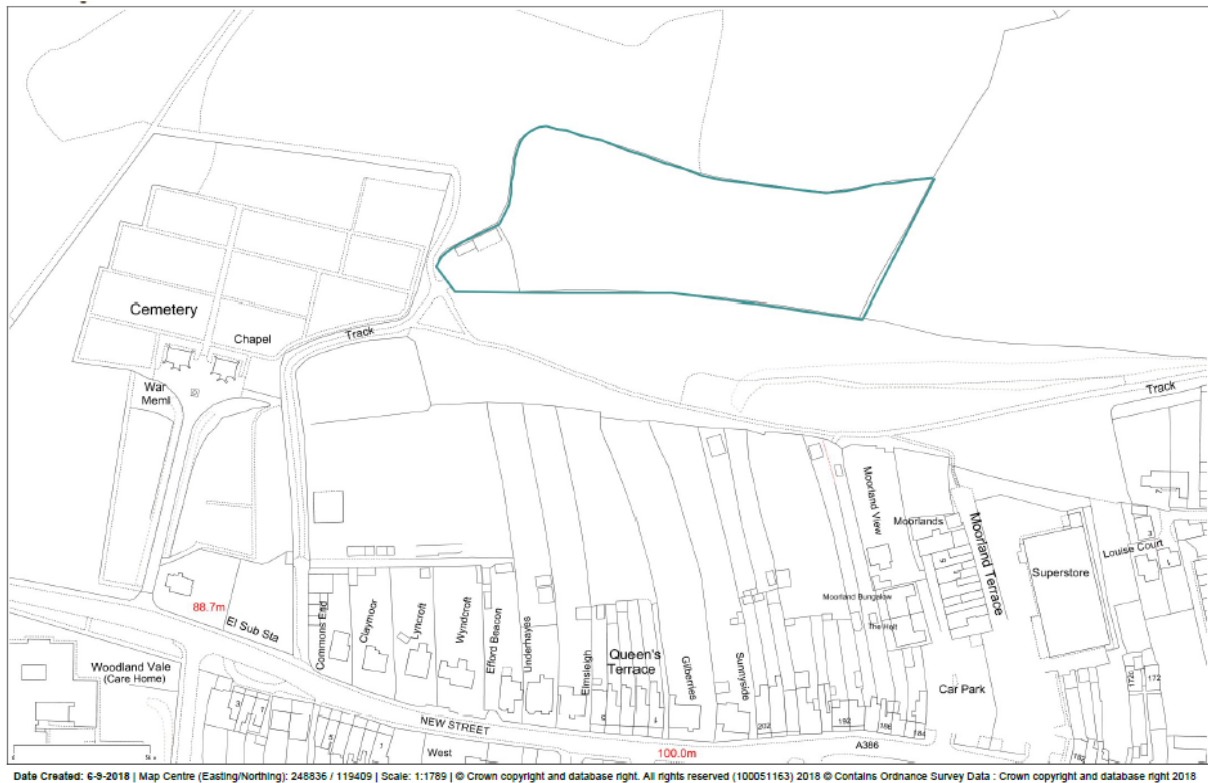
- 8.56 The consensus from consultation with local business leaders is that Torrington needs to move on from its manufacturing past and promote itself as a location for a new range of businesses. Recommendations include establishing itself as a home for niche businesses such which are less dependent on 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.
- 8.57 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.
- 8.58 The following development proposals to provide opportunities for local employment shall be viewed favourably, subject to other policy conditions, including the locational qualifications set out in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan:
- 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; and
  - commercial developments which offer full-time employment, including live/work' units which incorporate accommodation for owners and partners.



## 9.0 SITE ALLOCATIONS

### Policy SA01: LAND FOR CEMETERY EXPANSION

The approximately 2.5ha site identified in Policy Map 1 'Land for Cemetery Expansion' shall be reserved for future cemetery provision.



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Policy Map 1: Land for Cemetery Expansion

- 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.



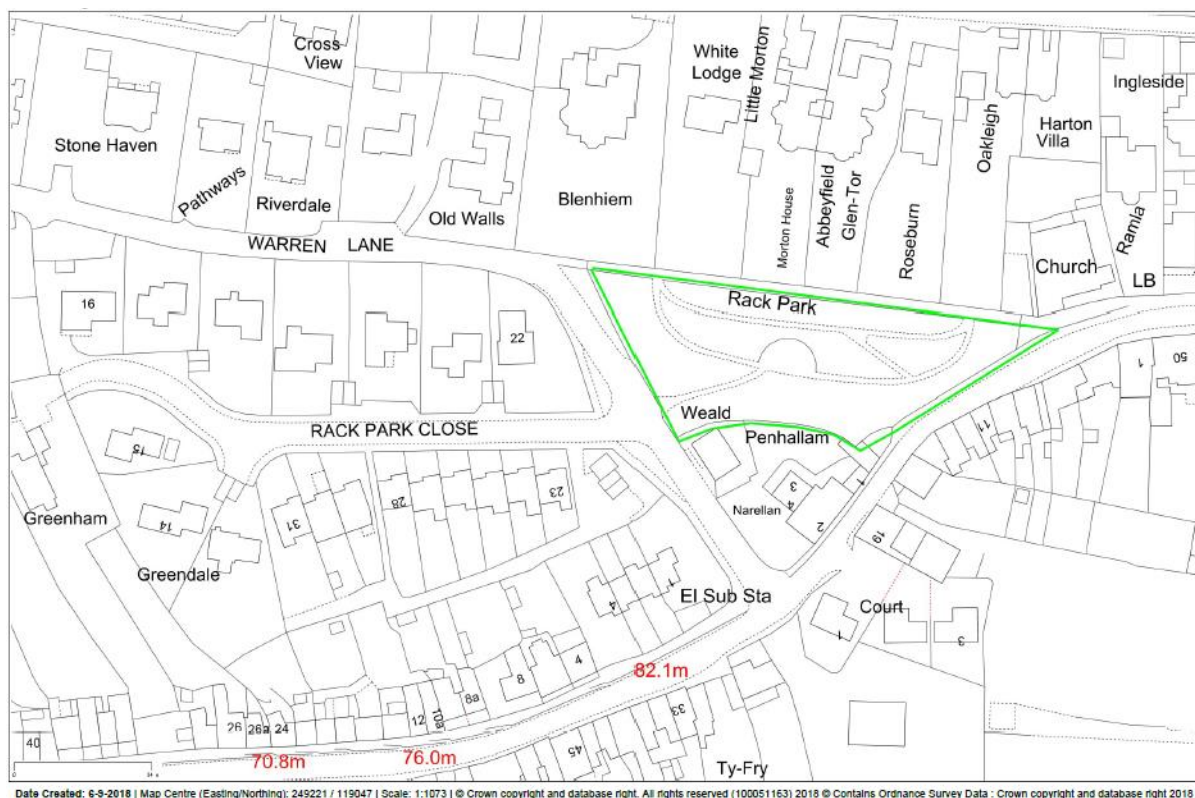
## Policy SA02: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The areas at Jubilee Wood and Rack Park identified on Policy Map 2 'Jubilee Wood' and Policy Map 3 'Rack Park' are designated as Local Green Spaces and any development proposals within their boundaries will be required to protect and enhance the quality of these spaces and the contribution they make to community recreation.



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Policy Map 2: Local Green Space - Jubilee Wood

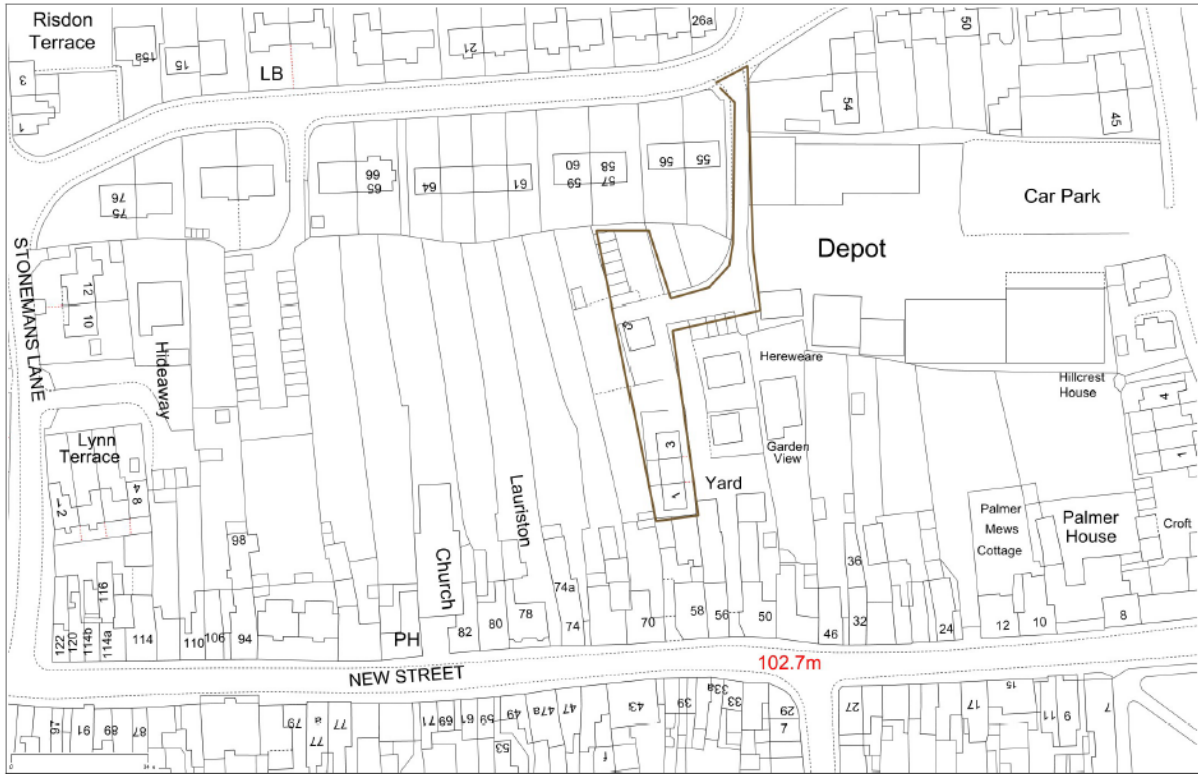


Policy Map 3: Local Green Space - Rack Park

Local Green Space	How the sites meet 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. Rack Park is an open space community facility, which is used by all. The site is of historical importance as it was used for the drying of sheep skin in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Rack Park has a locally significant outlook.</p>

## Policy SA03: SITE NORTH OF NEW STREET

Residential proposals on the “Site North of New Street”, identified on Policy Map 4, will be supported, provided they are of a high quality design that respects the local character, including in the use of external materials.



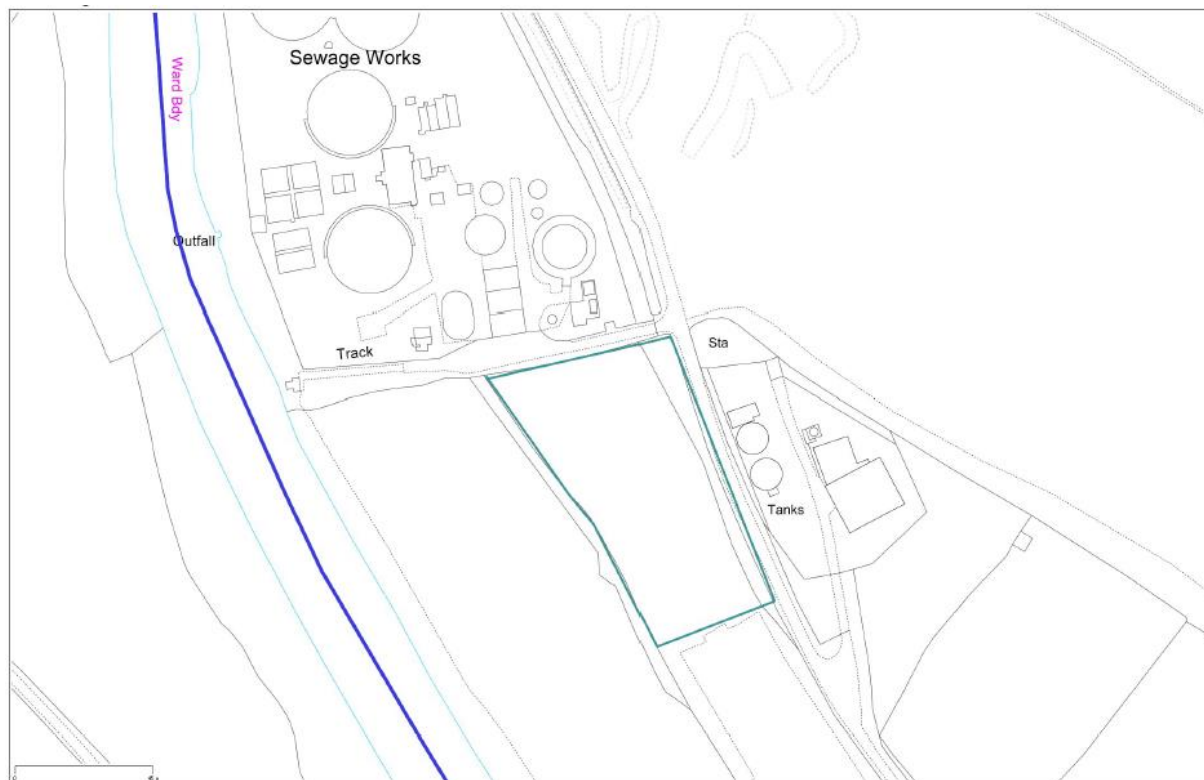
Date Created: 12-9-2018 | Map Centre (Easting/Northing): 249317 / 119286 | Scale: 1:1073 | © Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (100051163) 2018 © Contains Ordnance Survey Data : Crown copyright and database right 2018

Policy Map 4: Site North of New Street

- 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.

## Policy SA04: SHEPERD'S HAM ALLOTMENTS

This site identified on Policy Map 5 as 'Sheperd's Ham allotments' shall be safeguarded for allotment use.



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Policy Map 5: Sheperd's Ham Allotments

- 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 Torrington 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.
Previously Developed Land	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 waste and minerals plans.
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 29<sup>th</sup> December 2014. Approx 8pm

<b>Car park numbers</b>	
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.