

3.0 Policies - Theme 5: Infrastructure

58.1 North Tawton has been identified as a key 'Smaller Town' within the Plymouth & South West Joint Local Plan (Draft) (JLP). This means that although not as big and well-resourced as the main towns within West Devon – Okehampton and Tavistock – it offers some of the essential services and facilities that are found within the towns. Maintaining and protecting infrastructure within North Tawton is essential to the health and wellbeing of all residents, within the town and surrounding villages, as well as to ensuring that the town continues to thrive and remain sustainable. Ensuring that any future development within the town takes account of the infrastructure needs of the community – public services, schools, highways, telecommunications, transport, and waste management facilities – is essential for the town to continue to thrive and be sustainable.

58.2 According to the Draft JLP, Neighbourhood Plans will play an important role in identifying the number of new homes appropriate to the infrastructure needs of the community.

58.3 Three key areas of infrastructure provision have been identified for North Tawton and surrounding areas. Needs in these three areas will require to be met in order to ensure that residents of all ages are able to access services locally, enabling them to enjoy a reasonable quality of life. The three key areas are **Health Provision, Education and Traffic & Car Parking Issues.**

Objectives

11. To support a sustainable health provision within the town which enhances healthy living for individuals and families and meets the needs of local residents.
12. To ensure that 106 agreements consider the impact of new developments on the needs of the Pre-school, Primary and Secondary age children in the town providing appropriate financial support.
13. To support the provision of improved car parking within the town and measures to address traffic congestion.



3.0 Policies - Theme 5: Infrastructure

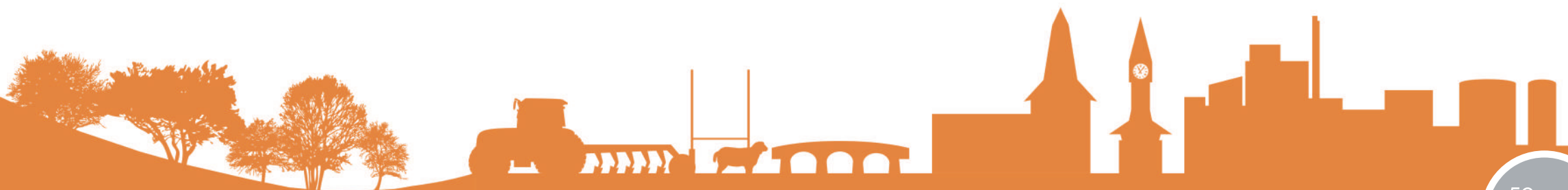
Health Provision

59.1 Within North Tawton there is a G.P. Surgery which is a branch of nearby Bow Medical Practice, two dental practices (one offering NHS provision), and a pharmacy which provides a service to the town and the villages beyond. The pharmacy has recently acquired new premises which enables it to offer a comprehensive service that allows people to manage their medications and receive any support they require. At a time when rural pharmacies are under considerable pressure, this commitment to the health and wellbeing of residents is very welcome.

Education

59.2 Pre School and Primary aged children are well served by North Tawton Community Primary School and Nursery. The nursery, which is managed by the Primary School, provides childcare and education for two to four year-olds and is the main childcare provider in the town. Currently the school is almost to capacity with the likelihood of additional pupils coming from the new Batheway development. The majority of Secondary age pupils travel to Okehampton College, with some accessing Queen Elizabeth College in Crediton and Exeter College for post-16 education. Any significant new housing development within the town would put significant pressure on the schools serving the families of North Tawton.

59.3 Education comes under the remit of Devon County, however this plan can ensure that monies available through 106 agreements are directed appropriately to support the educational requirements of the children of North Tawton and surrounding areas.



3.0 Policies - Theme 5: Infrastructure

Transport, Car Parking & Traffic Issues

60.1 Car parking, along with general transport and traffic concerns, is an issue that runs through a number of themes in this plan. In this section, the aspects being addressed within the relevant policies, are that of improved car parking and traffic congestion. Transport concerns that have been raised by residents, both in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, and regularly within Town Council meetings are car parking difficulties, speed of vehicles through the town, HGV lorries which access local businesses by going through the town, traffic congestion and general road maintenance. Road traffic, transport and car parking are matters that greatly concern most residents.

60.2 While road safety and the improvement of roads, footways and cycle ways is not a matter for policy in this plan, all new developments should prioritise any possible transport measures which promote sustainable impacts for the benefits of residents. These issues have been discussed by the Neighbourhood Plan group and raised with the appropriate authorities and organisations. See **Appendix 5.3.5.1 'Transport Working Group Report'**.

60.3 The policies within this theme of Infrastructure aim to address the key areas covered by the Objectives. Section 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 'Promoting Healthy Communities', and Section 4, 'Promoting Sustainable Transport' underpin these policies with specific paragraphs listed before each policy. The relevant Draft JLP Policies are also listed.



3.0 Policies - Theme 5: Policy IN1 - Development and Health Provision

61.1 North Tawton is a rural community with limited transport links, therefore the provision of Primary Medical Services within North Tawton is important to the health and wellbeing of patients within the community, particularly those who are unable to travel.

61.2 North Tawton's medical provision has undergone significant change over the past few years. Until April 2008 medical services were provided through a single GP Practice. In September 2011 Wallingbrook, a Group Practice covering Okehampton, Chumleigh, Winkleigh and North Tawton, took over the provision of medical services in the town. In 2014 Wallingbrook withdrew their provision in North Tawton for reasons of financial viability. This left residents in a state of uncertainty about the future of medical services for North Tawton. Interim arrangements were put in place for 12 months.

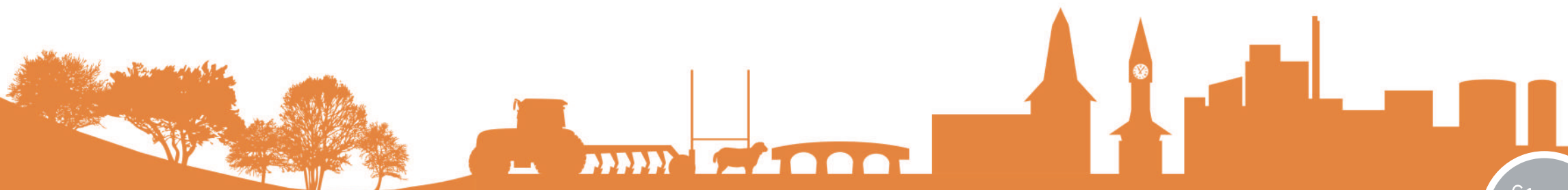
61.3 Following a tendering process in 2015, North Tawton Medical Practice became a branch surgery of Bow Medical Practice, providing much needed security for the future provision of medical services within the town. The surgery is based in an old building in the town which has been adapted for its current use. In the Questionnaire, residents expressed the desire for more suitable premises and improved facilities. Planning permission for the Bathway Development does include the provision of a serviced site for a medical centre, but in the current financial climate, the availability of funding to purchase the site and construct a medical centre seems unlikely. However this continues to be an aspiration for the residents of North Tawton. **Policy IN1** reflects the expressed desire of residents to see improved medical facilities within the town.

Related local and national Policies

- *Draft JLP: Policy Dev32*
- *NPPF: Paragraph 70*

Policy IN1 - Development and Health Provision

Development proposals for the provision of a fit for purpose Health Care facility within the town will be supported.



3.0 Policies - Theme 5: Policy IN2 - Development and the Implications for Education

62.1 There are 455 children and young people aged 0-19 years living in North Tawton (2016 Devon JSNA Community Profile) and making up 22% of the population of the town. 15.5% are of school age (5-19 years)

62.2 Primary and Pre-school education for children aged 2-11 years is provided by North Tawton Community Primary School and Nursery, a school judged as 'good' by Ofsted in 2014. In 2014 there were 135 children on the Primary School roll, by 2018 this will increase to 172, with the predicted increase resulting from additional families from the Bathway development, bringing this to 180+. The main Secondary School for North Tawton is Okehampton College, seven miles away, an 'Outstanding' provision as judged by Ofsted in 2014. This is a popular College serving a wide geographic area. The new housing developments within Okehampton and neighbouring parishes will place increasing pressure on an already oversubscribed college.

62.3 Both North Tawton Community Primary School and Okehampton College became, from 2017, members of the Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust.

62.4 Education requirements from all new housing developments, subject to 106 agreements, should be assessed by applying Devon County's Education section 106 policy (January 2013). As stated in the 106 agreement for the Bathway Development, monies must be used for the provision and/or improvement of Primary Education facilities and ICT equipment, and for the improvement of Secondary Education facilities and contribution to transport costs.

62.5 **Policy IN2** ensures that all new developments must consider the education implications of increasing the number of pre-school and school age children and young people in the town and the potential impact of schools becoming unsustainable and overcrowded.

Related local and national Policies

- *Draft JLP: Policy DEV32*
- *Devon County Council 106 Policy Jan 2013*
- *NPPF: Paragraphs 70 & 72*

Policy IN2 - Development and the Implications for Education

Development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered implications arising from the proposal (if any) for education provision and capacity in North Tawton (including Pre-school and Primary provision) and any wider catchment implications in relation to Secondary Education.

Where an educational need is demonstrated, section 106 planning obligations (where relevant) and/or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (when in place in West Devon Borough) should be prioritised to support any necessary improvement in education facilities in North Tawton and where appropriate a contribution to secondary school facilities and transport costs.

3.0 Policies - Theme 5: Policy IN3 - Development and the Implications for Car Parking Provision

63.1 The most frequently raised issue in the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire was car parking and transport in the town. In response to the question 'what changes would you like?' addressing car parking (75%), and road and pavement maintenance (77%) produced the highest responses.

63.2 Of residents who responded 54% said that change or significant change was required in relation to car parking to enable better access to the town centre, 59% said that change was required in relation to residents' parking, and 49% said it was required in relation to visitors' parking. For 44% of those who responded, change or significant change would be welcomed to aid businesses to access car parking.

63.3 The majority of houses in the roads approaching The Square were built before the invention of the motor car and thus without garages or off road parking areas. The vast majority of residents have at least two cars per household. Additional traffic and parking requirement is also caused by increased numbers of residents and visitors from new developments. North Tawton has two public car parks, one at the top of the High St and the second off The Square, behind the Council Office. Both are regularly full during the day and overnight, very often with residents' cars, leaving few spaces for visitors or residents accessing the town's businesses. Alternative sites for Car Parking in the town were suggested by residents in the Questionnaire and have also been considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Group. These require further discussions with owners of these sites and further consultation within the community.

63.4 In the Questionnaire, respondents indicated that the lack of adequate parking within the area of The Square prevented people from shopping in the town. Policy IN3 seeks to direct developers and others to consider the impact of any changes to current car parking facilities, whether public or private, and to explore ways or mitigating further impact on the retail centre of the town.

63.5 Draft JLP Policy DEV31 states that development proposals should, where appropriate, ensure sufficient provision and management of car parking in order to protect the amenity of surrounding residential areas and ensure safety of the highway network.

Related local and national Policies

- *Draft JLP: Policy DEV31*
- *NPPF: Paragraphs 39,40,41*

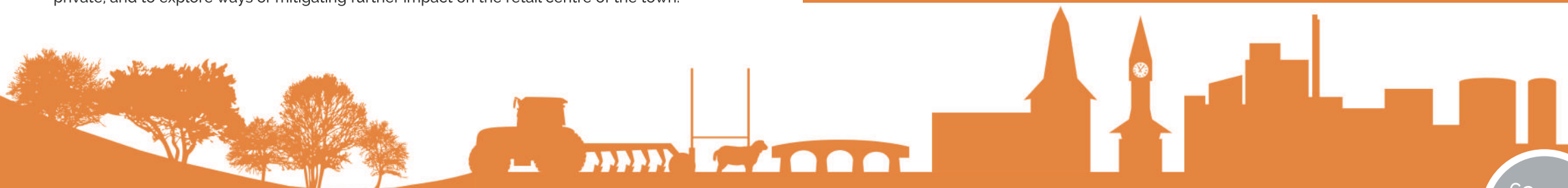
Policy IN3 - Development and the Implications for Car Parking Provision

Development proposals should demonstrate that they have considered implications of the demand for car parking provision in North Tawton.

Development proposals that would result in the loss of off street parking will only be supported where:

- In relation to existing public car parks an equivalent or increased capacity is provided elsewhere in the town;
- In relation to private car parks or similar off street parking areas an equivalent or increased capacity is provided elsewhere, or the need for the private parking capacity can be shown to be reduced as a result of the implementation of the development proposal, or the parking can be shown to be not needed.

Section 106 planning obligations should be prioritised to support the development of additional public car park provision. All new developments must adequately address the car parking needs of residents and visitors. This includes the provision of a 'Plug in' facility for charging electric cars.



3.0 Policies - Theme 5: Policy IN4 - Development and the Implications for Traffic Congestion

64.1 Related to the concerns about car parking provision is the issue of traffic congestion in the town. Each of the access roads into the town, towards the Square, is narrow with parking usually down one side of the road. Vehicles frequently have to give way to other vehicles approaching, often causing a back-up of buses, delivery vans, farm traffic, HGV lorries and cars. Footpaths along these roads tend to be narrow thus making it difficult, and at times, dangerous for pedestrians. Concerns have been raised by residents about the implications of proposed developments on traffic congestion and this has been cited in objections to planning applications. **Policy IN4** highlights the requirement for developers, whether commercial or residential, to consider the implications for traffic congestion of their development proposals.

Related local and national Policies

- *Draft JLP: Policy DEV31*
- *NPPF: Paragraphs 39,40*

Policy IN4 - Development and the Implications for Traffic Congestion

Proposals that accord with policies in the Plan and result in improvements to the free flow of traffic in the town will be supported. Proposals requiring planning permission, and which seek to increase the number of access points or which would involve an increase in traffic generation, will need to demonstrate that they do not further inhibit the free flow of traffic or exacerbate conditions of parking stress, including conflict with larger vehicles



3.0 Policies - Theme 5: Policy IN5 - Safe Walking and Cycling Routes

65.1 Improving the ease, safety and opportunities of walking and cycling routes can make a significant contribution to easing congestion, improving health and reducing the demand for car parking. In order to encourage more people to walk and cycle, routes need to be safe and accessible. North Tawton is fortunate in having a number of footpaths and public rights of way. These need to be available and maintained for walking and cycling, as well as being accessible for people with mobility issues. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlights the need for communities to protect and enhance public rights of way and access in their commitment to promoting healthy communities.

65.2 In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, 41% responded that change or significant change was needed to provide or improve cycle paths in and around the town and 35% felt similarly in relation to footpaths. A number of respondents highlighted the need for better footpaths and safe cycle routes.

65.3 Residents from the new development at Bathway have already raised concerns about safe routes into the town along the main footpath. A Public Footpath borders the west side of the Bathway development from Moor View to the Barton, however this requires upgrading to make it accessible to cycles, push chairs and mobility scooters and improve the surface for all users.

Policy IN5 builds upon the need for improved safe routes in and out of the town.

Relate district and national Policies

- *Draft JLP: Policy DEV31*
- *NPPF: Paragraph 75*

Policy IN5 - Safe Walking and Cycling Routes

Development proposals which create or facilitate the creation of safe off-road cycle and footpaths within the Parish will be supported where:

- there is no adverse impact on the immediate landscape setting;
- there is no adverse impact on amenity of nearby properties;
- the route is well-lit but there is no unacceptable impact from lighting the route;
- wherever feasible ensure they link to the existing network of public footpaths including the Tarka Trail and Public Rights of Way.

