

Objectives

4. To provide a greater level and variety of employment within the town.
5. To welcome and support measures which maintain and improve the effectiveness and vibrancy of the town's retail and business centre, ensuring a thriving town.
6. To support the safeguarding of existing public transport and promote better links with other towns and areas - especially those of Exeter and Okehampton.

Introduction

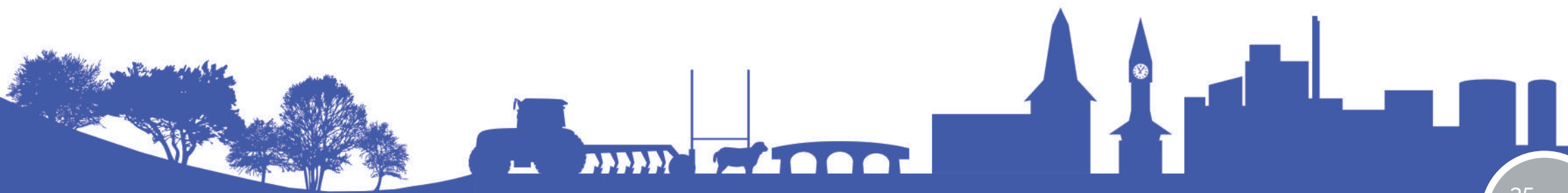
North Tawton is one of West Devon's more important settlements, providing local services and facilities for the surrounding rural parishes. In recognition of this it was identified as an important local centre for the surrounding villages in the West Devon Core Strategy (2011) and is named as one of the key 'Smaller Towns' in the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan (Draft) (JLP). The location of the town and its easy access to the A30 means it has good links with Exeter and nearby Okehampton.

In 2016 the total population of North Tawton was 2067, of which 60.9% were aged between 16 and 64 years, slightly higher than in West Devon and the wider Devon County (JSNA Community profile 2016). In 2014 (North Tawton Parish Profile) 1009 residents aged 16-74 were economically active and 346 were economically inactive or not working. Of those working, just under 50% were full time employees, with 22% part time. A further 21% were self-employed either full or part time. Like most of West Devon, North Tawton has a higher proportion of economically active residents who are self-employed than the regional or national average.

In 2015 11.2% of North Tawton's population were dependent on benefits or tax credits, with 9.2% unemployed (JSNA Community Profile 2016). This is a similar level to neighbouring Okehampton and in West Devon as a whole. 9% of young people aged 16-24 are claiming benefits, slightly higher than the South West and nationally. 76% of young people gained 5 GCSE's or more A*-C which is 20% higher than the national average and considerably higher than the West Devon average. something for the young people of North Tawton to be proud of. (JSNA Community Profile 2016)

North Tawton is well served by a number of strong businesses which have been a significant feature within the local economy for many years. These include Gregory's Transport and Warehousing, Taw Valley Creamery (Arla foods) and Vital Pet supplies at The Barton; all have a national or international reputation and provide excellent employment opportunities for the residents of North Tawton and the surrounding areas.

There are other smaller employers within the town offering a range of employment opportunities including local retail outlets, hospitality, health services, motor mechanics, vets, skilled trades, agriculture, manufacturing and artisan and craft.



3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Economy

Although still thriving, the town has experienced closures and changes to businesses particularly within the main Square. At the time of writing, the Store, Hardware Shop, the butchers and Nat West bank have closed. However, in a positive vein, the pharmacy has recently purchased the old bank, providing an updated and modern pharmacy facility, and the Post Office has undergone refurbishment. As shops or other businesses close or move premises there is a concern that these will no longer offer business and retail opportunities and the premises be absorbed into the residential sector.

A frequently raised issue that affects the viability of the retail centre of the town is adequate car parking and congestion. The policies within this theme seek to address these concerns, in support of the Objectives, to ensure that North Tawton continues to be a vibrant and thriving town. The Draft JLP, through its Strategic Objective SO1 - Delivering the spatial strategy and SPT1 - Delivering sustainable development, emphasises that development and change will be planned for and managed in accordance with principles of sustainable development. A sustainable economy will be achieved and maintained where opportunities for business growth are encouraged and supported, and where important local economic assets are protected for the purpose of economic activity. The policies within this Economy theme aim to address these principles of sustainability.

The following sections of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underpin these policies with specific paragraphs listed before each policy:

- Building a strong, competitive economy
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- Supporting high quality communications infrastructure
- Promoting healthy communities



3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Policy E1: Local Employment Land

Policy E1 i-iv highlights the land within North Tawton that is currently utilised for employment and areas allocated within the JLP. E1 v-vii shows land where there is planning permission from West Devon for employment development which are commitment sites within this Plan.

Planning permission for the Bathway Development includes an area of land allocated for employment use which is an allocated site within the Draft JLP as 1,300 sq.m Class B1 Employment Space. This was the subject of a planning application for a further 28 houses with a request to use the land earmarked for employment units to build more houses. North Tawton Town Council have objected to this application, citing as their main reason the need to retain this for its intended purpose, that of employment. West Devon also refused the application. This area of land is currently for sale.

The land at the Woollen Mill has planning permission for mixed use – housing and B1 employment, which is valid until April 2018. Residents have for many years expressed a desire to see some positive development on this site. This is no longer an allocated site within the Draft JLP as it is unlikely to be developed in the near future. In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, 47 out of 153 responses (31%) felt that the Woollen Mill site would be the best place for any new development, whether employment or housing, to take place. The Woollen Mill Project, an organisation with ambitious plans to redevelop the site states on its website that the Project 'aims to become a sustainable and enterprising heritage and cultural destination in West Devon with multi use spaces

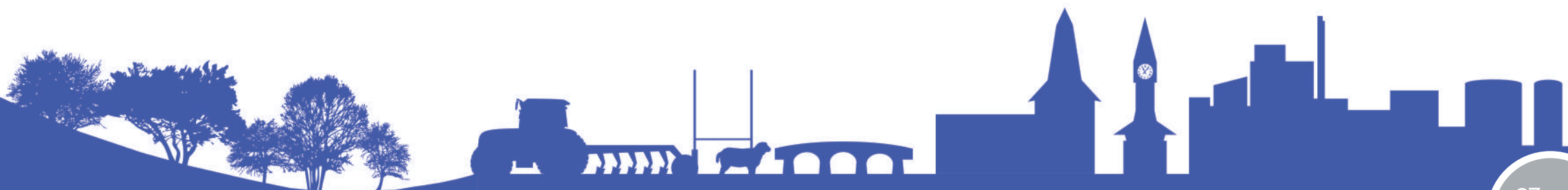
underpinned by a brand new energy built on the legacy of the past by the communities of now for the generations yet to come.'

Planning permission has been granted for employment use at land adjacent to Taw Bridge.

There is some evidence of a need for businesses to seek new premises in the area; however this was only a small number of respondents within the Questionnaire (7 out of 23).

Relevant local and national Policies

- *Draft JLP: Strategic Objectives SPT4, SO8, SO9, TTV29. Policies DEV2, DEV14*
- *West Devon Borough Council Core Strategy 2011*
- *NPPF: Paragraphs 21,22,28*



3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Policy E1: Local Employment Land

The following areas, shown on map E1, are currently designated as local employment land:

- i) Haulage, Warehousing and Transport Depot
- ii) Taw Valley Creamery
- iii) The Barton
- iv) Former Station Yard

The following areas shown on **map E1** are commitment sites for employment use

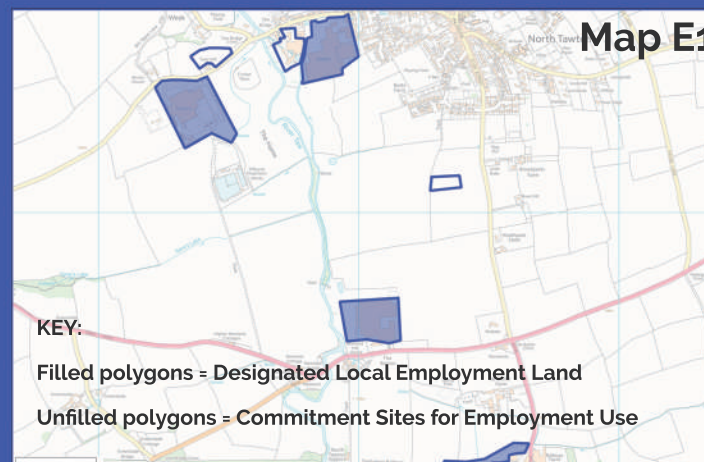
- v) The Woollen Mill, Fore St (WD_13_12_13)
- vi) Batheway Employment land (WD_13_07_08/13)
- vii) Land at Taw Bridge (WD_13_10_13)

Development proposals within these areas will be supported which:

- i) are for employment premises serving B1*, B2* or B8* uses (or a combination of these uses);
- ii) provide sufficient and secure off-street parking for cars, vans, HGVs, and bicycles;
- iii) have no adverse impacts on:
 - a. the character of the built environment;
 - b. the character of the natural environment and setting;
 - c. residential amenity;
 - d. traffic generation and congestion;
 - e. noise; and,
 - f. light pollution;
- iv) do not contribute to increased flood risk and use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate this risk;

Proposals which result in a more appropriate or efficient use of the site as employment land will be supported:

1. Where proposals are for the extension of existing premises, they should demonstrate, through a business plan, a net increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs or demonstrate a need for the additional space to enable the business to grow.
2. Proposals which suggest a change of use to an alternative use or uses on the site will only be supported where:
3. The alternative proposed use fulfils a need for that use locally;
4. It can be demonstrated that the use of the site solely for employment (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) is no longer viable, through an active twelve-month marketing exercise where the property or site has been offered for sale or letting on the open market for these uses at a realistic price and no reasonable offers have been refused.



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3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Policy E2: Mixed Use

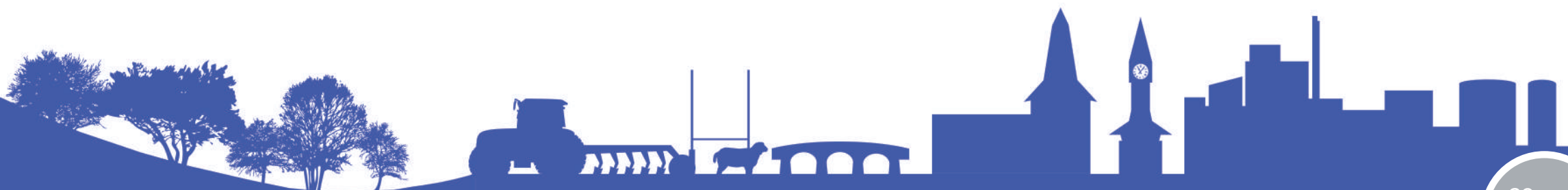
Both the Batheway Site and the Woollen Mill currently have planning permission to provide Employment opportunities as well as Housing on the respective sites. There is support within West Devon Core Strategy for such developments.

Relevant District and National policies

- *Draft JLP: TTV29, DEV14*
- *NPPF: Paragraphs 17(9),28,69*

Policy E2 - Mixed Use

In order to maintain a local sustainable economy, mixed use proposals will be supported. Development proposals for housing on sites of 10 dwellings or more should demonstrate that they have considered opportunities for mixed uses on the site.



3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Policy E3: Live-Work Unit

North Tawton is a working town and steps need to be taken to support and diversify the local economy. As well as making land for employment available, consideration needs to be given to business support and training. This Objective identifies the need to provide a greater level and variety of employment within the town. As evidenced above within **Policy E1** there is a lack of suitable or available land and sites for developing new employment opportunities. There is a need therefore for more creative and imaginative solutions. Live Work units offer a degree of flexibility and solution for residents seeking to develop a business and have affordable living accommodation. North Tawton has recently seen the development of such accommodation.

Relevant district and national policies

- **Draft JLP: DEV14&15**
- **NPPF: Paragraphs 21, 28**

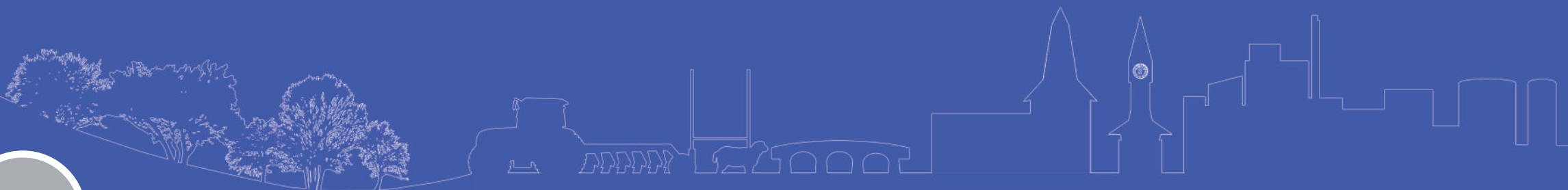
Development proposals which enable or facilitate working and living in the same building or on the same site will be supported where:

- i) they are well-related to the surrounding land and building uses;
- ii) the uses do not cause unacceptable nuisance to neighbouring premises / properties;
- iii) the proposal provides satisfactory living conditions for future occupants;
- iv) they provide sufficient and secure off-street parking for cars, vans, HGVs, and bicycles;
- v) they do not contribute to increased flood risk and use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate this risk; and,

- vi) there is no adverse impact on:
 - a. the character of the built environment;
 - b. the character of the natural environment and setting;
 - c. residential amenity;
 - d. traffic generation and congestion;
 - e. noise; and,
 - f. light pollution.

Proposals which seek the change of use of existing employment space to form accommodation must demonstrate that such changes do not result in an unacceptable loss of existing employment space to the detriment of the local economy. Proposals should retain existing ground floor employment space.

To ensure that the supply of live-work employment premises are retained for the benefit of the local economy, and to prevent the use of this policy to achieve wholly residential use through conversion of live-work units in the future, new additional development of live-work units permitted under this policy must remain as their proposed use in perpetuity to support the local economy unless it can be demonstrated, through a robust local economic assessment, that there is no demand or need for the live-work unit to remain as such for 3 years from the point of assessment.



3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Policy E4: Maintaining the Retail & Business Offer

North Tawton residents value the town's community spirit and the services and facilities around which that is centred. The hub of the town is The Square where the majority of the retail businesses lie. At one time there were shops selling a wide range of products in the streets leading into and around The Square ensuring that residents could buy everything they needed within the town. Today there are fewer shops and services. However these continue to be much valued by the residents, particularly the older people of the town and those without transport.

As well as shops and services North Tawton has three Public Houses – The Fountain, White Hart and Copper Key within walking distance of The Square and The Railway on the edge of the town. There is also a café, fish & chip shop and restaurant, and international fast food outlet within The Square. All these businesses contribute to the viability and vitality of the town.

In the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, just under 50% of respondents said they used the local shops daily rising to 90% for weekly visits. The majority of these used the Post Office and pharmacy. 93% of respondents said they shopped in the town to 'top up' grocery shopping whilst only 7% did their main shopping in the town. The majority used Okehampton for their main shopping although an increasing number use online shopping. In response to the question 'what kind of business should we be trying to attract to North Tawton' a significant number of respondents indicated independent shops and restaurants.

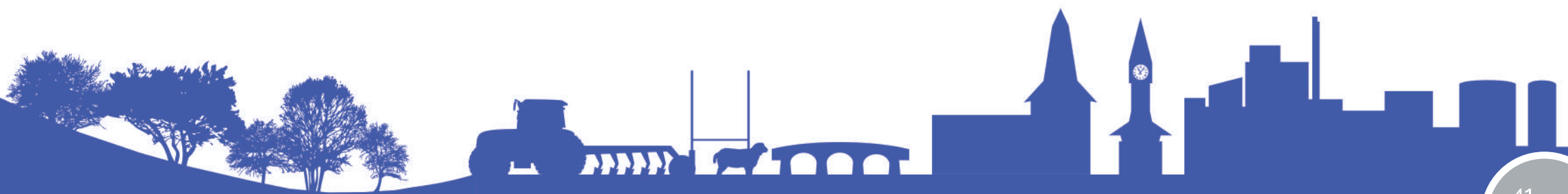
In response to the question 'what one thing would make you do more shopping in the town' the three most frequent responses were a greater variety of shops offering more choice, cheaper products and better car parking.

Policy E4 provides an important timeframe for considering the future of retail and business premises if and when they become vacant, thus indicating the value of retaining, wherever possible, availability of choice for residents. This was reinforced by the feedback from residents at the Consultation Event (10th December 2016).

Policy DEV18 in the Draft JLP – Protecting local shops and services, – reinforces this stating that development within centres should maintain the vitality and viability of the centre and ensure it retains its role in the retail hierarchy, meeting the needs of the area it serves. Change of use to other facilities of local community importance, will only be supported where there is no significant harm to the level of service locally and where there is no reasonable prospect of the business or community use continuing.

Relevant district and national Policies

- *Draft JLP: Policy DEV17 &18*
- *NPPF 23,28, 70*



3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Policy E5: Transport and Parking

Development proposals that would result in the loss of off street car, motor bike, motor scooter or cycle parking will only be supported where:

- i) In relation to existing public car parks an equivalent or increased capacity is provided elsewhere in the town
- ii) 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.

3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Policy E6: Safeguarding Public Transport and Opportunities for the Reinstatement of the Railway

Currently there is no regular train service between Okehampton and Exeter. In the summer months there is a Sunday service which has proved popular with residents and visitors to the area. There has been a much-publicised campaign to reinstate a regular all-year-round service between Okehampton and Exeter, a need which became even more urgent during the winter of 2014 when the mainline through Dawlish to the South West was closed due to flooding. The Neighbourhood Plan supports the reinstatement of the railway between Okehampton and Exeter. North Tawton has not had its own Railway Station since the 1960s however, should a regular service be introduced, the re-opening of a local station or halt would be an aspiration for the town.

This would not only provide access to Okehampton and Exeter for shopping and employment for residents but also bring visitors to the town and surrounding areas. Policy E6 reinforces this commitment to supporting the reinstatement of the railway. This is supported within SPT8 – Strategic Connectivity, within the Draft JLP and also SO8 which refers to sustainable transport links to other settlements.

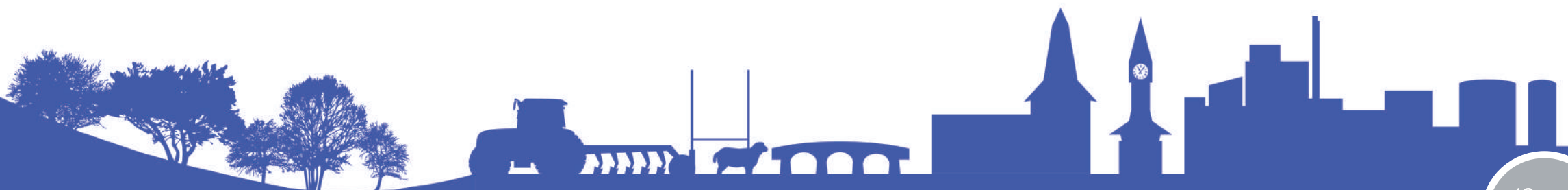
88% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire expressed support for the Okehampton to Exeter railway to reopen on a regular basis. 80% said they would use the railway for social reasons, 67% to connect to mainline train services, and 24% would use the train to travel to work.

30% of respondents raised the Bus Service as a transport issue, with a number of people highlighting the need for the buses to run later in the evening. Should the train service from Okehampton to Exeter be reinstated, within the life of this plan, a direct bus service from North Tawton to Okehampton should also be reinstated.

Related district and national policies

- *Draft JLP: Strategic Objective SPT8 & SPT9, policy DEV31*
- *NPPF: Paragraphs 29,30,69*

Supporting improved local rail connectivity and links between Okehampton and Exeter. Provision of a halt/local station for North Tawton should be considered which has the potential to contribute to improved sustainable travel links to key settlements



3.0 Policies - Theme 3: Policy E7: Safe Walking and Cycling Routes

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.

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.

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 E7 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*

Development proposals which create or facilitate the creation of a safe off-road cycle and footpath 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.

