

THE PARISH OF STOKE GABRIEL

DOES STOKE GABRIEL NEED A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

Under the Localism Act 2011 Town and Parish Councils were empowered to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and your Parish Council is writing to all residents in the Parish of Stoke Gabriel to seek their views about preparing a Plan.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development and growth of an area. It may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities, or allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development. Neighbourhood plans relate to the use and development of land and associated social, economic and environmental issues. It may deal with a wide range of issues like housing, employment, heritage, protection of green areas of importance to the community and transport or it may focus on one or two issues that are of particular importance in a local area. The Neighbourhood Plan has to conform to the District Local Plan which is currently in the early stages of development with estimated completion in around 18 months. A Neighbourhood Plan can be developed in tandem with this which will ensure more transparent consultation. An accepted Neighbourhood Plan has legal status and becomes part of the statutory development plan and the District Council would have to take account of it when making decisions on planning applications. .

How does it work?

The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is a serious commitment for the community and will take between 18 months and two years to complete. The development of a Plan is best carried forward by a steering group made up of representative members of the Parish. Significant public participation at all levels is key to the successful development of a Plan. A Neighbourhood Plan must meet basic conditions and on completion will be subject to examination by an independent assessor and ultimately a public referendum by residents to accept or reject it. If more than 50% of voters support the plan the local authority must bring it into place. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot stop present or future developments and cannot override existing national and local development plan policies but can add details and additional proposals so long as they are in line with these policies and are supported by the local community. The process will follow a defined route and there will be associated costs. Costs are covered by grant funding, subject to a successful application .available for the next 18 months from the government and technical support will be provided by the District Council and others. Some funding may be necessary from the Parish, although there is no change in the 2014-15 precept which already carries a small provisional allocation.

What is happening now?

In the South Hams, Totnes, Ivybridge, Salcombe, Ugborough, Marlborough, Harberton, and Bickleigh are pursuing the Neighbourhood plan route, while Brixham, Paignton and Torquay have already started a consultation process. In Devon about 30 plans are being considered by local residents and more than 800 nationally. On the 'Local Plan front' landowners have already been asked by the District Council to identify sites that may be suitable for development and be included in the Local Plan.

Some points to be considered before we can decide?

Will the Parish benefit from a Neighbourhood Plan?
Would enough local people wish to become involved with the preparation process?
Should this process be started without delay?
Should it wait until further information is gathered from the Local Plan?

In order that the Parish Council can judge the support for the compilation of a Neighbourhood Plan it would be greatly appreciated if you could complete the attached questionnaire and return it either to the undersigned at 12 Kings Rydon Close, TQ9 6QG. or to Stoke Gabriel Stores by 20th February 2014. If you would prefer to complete the questionnaire online, go to www.stokegabrielnp.co.uk

John Robinson. Cllr acting as Clerk, Stoke Gabriel Parish Council

