

ENVIRONMENT FINDINGS

1. This is a summary of the key findings from Totnes Neighbourhood Plan public consultation data in relation to the environment. It draws data from Workshop 1, Workshop 2, the Housing Needs Survey and the KEVICC workshop. Both the KEVICC workshop and Workshop 2 articulated a Vision for the environment in Totnes.

2. Environmental issues come out as a cross cutting theme across all our data.

2.1 KEVICC's Young peoples' vision for Environment was as follows:

- Sustainable renewable energy.
- A cleaner environment.
- People collaborating in maintaining spaces.
- Allotments and community spaces created.
- More parks to meet the needs of people of all ages.
- Keep the fields.

2.2 Workshop 2: emerging Vision for environment:

- Totnes is a zero waste town where waste is prevented at source
- Energy is localised, renewable and community owned.
- More wildlife areas are created to encourage wildlife across the town and increase biodiversity
- There are community composting and coppicing sites in multiple areas of the town.
- Old inefficient buildings are retrofitted to improve their performance.
- New builds meet the highest of environmental standards
- Air quality has improved and is now well within recommended levels of safety
- Clean transport?? dominates
- New development is characterised as small eco developments, green roofs and wildlife spaces built in, that integrates well with our surroundings.
- More local community spaces / activities – village greens / fetes / shared public open spaces where people can gather together.
- Looking back in our history to see what worked well for the town and revive that e.g. keeping local bakeries, brewery and useful shops / enterprises alive and thriving.
- Eco tourism is optimised and encouraged (e.g. pony and cart – charm and interest)
- People understanding they are part of nature and not separate.
- The use and experimentation of new economic models to achieve end goals – i.e. local and gift economies.
- The conservation of our historic building, beauty spots, and the local wildlife, and the recreation of eco-systems to support vulnerable animal / insect species for the long-term future.

3. KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.1: Workshop 1: This workshop was attended by 150 people on July 20th, 2015 at the Mansion.

The most commented on categories were:

- **Wildlife and greenspaces** (9 comments)
- **Community facilities—energy, fuel & food waste** (8 comments)
- **A Green Economy** (5 comments)
- Other categories were ‘protecting green-field sites from building’ (2 comments) and ‘eco-houses’ (1 comment) both of which were incorporated into housing findings)

3.1: Analysis of top 3 categories:

3:2 Wildlife and green space.

There was a clear desire amongst workshop participants to protect, enhance and create green space and wild spaces for wild-life:

- ‘The creation of local ecosystems to allow re-wilding & bring back what species we've lost,’
- We need to encourage all life & not just some.’
- ‘More wildlife zones (should be created)’

Under this theme, trees were mentioned specifically:

- ‘Protect trees and green spaces as this one is an important wildlife corridor’
- ‘Maintain the wilderness of the trees and under cover in the space between the river path & Bridge Terrace. It is home to many species of birds’
- ‘Protect trees and green spaces as this is an important wildlife corridor’

Community use of wild/green spaces was also highlighted as important:

- ‘Make the local springs a water reserve for wildlife and local people (our water currently comes from far away!)’
- ‘Encourage edible wild plants as widely as possible for the provision for wild food walks offered to the community.’

3:3 A Green Economy:

Many of these suggestions relate closely to moving towards a low-carbon economy/lifestyle above:

- Two participants specifically commented on moving towards becoming a low-carbon town: **'We need to be low carbon & sustainable'** said one, **'self-sufficient in energy,'** said another. Encouraging green businesses and industry into the town could be one way to do this and was suggested by participants. Our business survey respondents also felt that Totnes was the sort of town to attract these businesses and should be built on: **'Encourage green industry and development - make Totnes a show case and encourage industries to work together to share resources in order to limit wasting energy'** said one. **'Renewable energy is a growing business sector and should be included in an economic plan'** said another. We need **'incentives for local people to set up businesses that benefit the locality, including from a sustainability stance.'** said a third.'

3:4 Community facilities – energy, fuel, food waste

Community owned and led facilities (as well as general community cooperation and sharing of tools and resources) for waste and energy was a popular theme: Examples as follows:

- **'Community owned anaerobic digester, hydro, solar on council roofs (Follaton.)'**
- **'Suggest there is a community owned anaerobic digestion for un-compostable waste (at Dartington.)'**
- **'Encourage the use and maintenance of community organic spaces - orchard, allotments and grow community.'**
- **'Communal coppice woodland for fuel wood (like they do in France.)'**
- **Community coppicing area for people with wood burners.**
- **There should be a community forest for fuelwood on steep or marshy land.**
- **'Community composting sites.'**
- **'One shed/garage per street for shared tools which are un-necessary for each household e.g - lawn mowers etc.'**

4 Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Workshop 2:

4:1 Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Workshop 2:

Our most recent public workshop, held at the Totnes Civic Hall on November 28th 2015 was attended by 65 people. These represented a wide variety of organisations across the community.

Participants were given a list of key areas being looked at by the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Environment Task Group (energy, waste, water quality, air quality, land-use, food, biodiversity) and asked to indicate their top two priorities. The following top priorities emerged:

First priorities:

1. Energy
2. Water
3. Air

Second priorities

1. Land-use
2. Waste
3. Air-quality

4:2 Totnes Energy Plan

Ideas for a Totnes energy plan were outlined at the workshop and people were asked to prioritise key areas of work. The results were as follows:

1. **New build** – low embodied energy/energy efficiency
2. **Community energy**
3. **Energy reduction/efficiency** of existing buildings

Detailed Comments can be found in appendix one.

4:3 When asked to think about issues associated with waste specifically (and prioritise these), the following top 2 priorities emerged:

1. Community composting facilities
2. More education around waste and recycling/reduce/reuse/recycle
3. Better home collection including wider selection of materials

4:4 Waste:

Waste generated a high volume of comments (55) on a variety of topics including. These are summarised:

- **Materials:** There was a clear desire to have access to facilities that could enable a wider variety of materials to be collected to be recycled.
- **Home collection:** Many people requested a more regular home collection service with a wider variety of materials (e.g tetra-pack, printer & toner cartridges) being collected from home but there were also two suggestions about having **'Neighbourhood waste collection rather than house by house. See Europe!'**
- **Plastic bags and packaging** (waste reduction): No plastic bags in shops (this is already being partially addressed by the plastic bag tax.) and reduced food packaging were suggested as ways to reduce waste.
- **Education:** There was a clear desire to get to the 'root causes' of waste and focus on educating people (including businesses) about waste prevention and reduction and also education on what and how to recycle. One suggestion was to set up a 'community and business-led initiative to reduce and reuse resources – water / plastics.'
- **Rewards and penalties:** This was suggested by four people: **'By rewarding people who don't need a black bin or have low amounts of refuse'; 'Business rates lower for those with little / no refuse packaging'; 'Rewards and penalties for those that create low / high levels refuse – weighing scheme? Or who don't need a black wheelie bin,' 'Penalising retailers that use non compostable packaging'**

Specific suggestions for new facilities were as follows:

1. Anaerobic digester on old Dairy Crest site
2. More compost bins and compost heaps in people's gardens and in **designated community spots.**
3. Communal composting sites as there is in Ashprington. *(Note: tick against this comment)*
4. Communal kitchen waste compost bins for those who live in flats with no outside space
5. More composting / green waste recycling sites
6. Waste water – is centralised sewage treatment the most sustainable option? E.g. grey water reuse; reed bed water treatment; compost toilets for public use
7. No scrap yard for end of life vehicles - We need one
8. Reuse centre for people to bring stuff they no longer need – expand refurbish
9. Recycling bins around town e.g. Civic Square, not general "rubbish" bins

In terms of the Neighbourhood Plan, looking at new or improved facilities for waste could be where we have the most impact in terms of waste.

4:5 Biodiversity

There were 33 different species mapped at workshop 2. See APPENDIX Two for detailed information

4:6 Housing - High environment standards

- As referenced in our key findings for housing, there were multiple comments about the need for high environmental standards in new homes at workshop 2. Suggestions included 'living roofs' 'stilt houses', 'high levels of energy efficiency' and renewables, including 'solar'. There were also multiple general comments on high environmental standards and eco-housing without specific suggestions. **'Permit only the highest standards of sustainable housing – not just meeting building regs. Consider embodied energy and restrict list of materials.'** said one participant.

5: KEVICC Workshop

Working with Planning for Real, the Neighbourhood Plan ran a workshop with 110 year 10 students from KEVICC in November 2015. The views generated by students under this theme covered a wide range of topics as outlined below.

The natural environment: **'the river; scenic local area; open spaces; parks; very natural; wildlife.'** Were seen as a key strength of Totnes by the students from KEVICC

5:1 Renewable Energy:

The view of students was that there should be mass solar panel production throughout the town and that solar panels should be included for all new houses and new buildings. (Different from the view expressed under Housing above where students wanted to see less solar panels.) Wind farms and charging stations which were low price or free (like in other European countries) were other suggestions put forward.

5:2 Pollution:

Students saw traffic congestion as a cause of pollution and identified better transport as a way of reducing pollution and they also wanted Totnes to remain a factory free area, again to avoid pollution. Also mentioned under this Theme, as it was under the Public Open Space Theme, was the need to keep rivers cleaner.

5:3 Litter:

Students wished to see more labelled bins to reduce litter and help with recycling, for the relevant authority to be stricter about litter and that there should be penalties like fines.

5:4 Housing:

It was the view of the students that housing should not be built on flood plains and that there was a need for flood protection and that it was important that new houses had gardens to enable people to grow vegetables and fruit.

5:5 Natural areas and wildlife:

Students recognised the importance of the AONB which offers some protection and saw as a positive the natural areas, trees and wildlife in and around Totnes. They saw the need to protect existing wildlife areas and also to create more protected wildlife sites / areas in order to encourage more wildlife and for designated areas to be dog free.

5:6 Parks:

Students wished to see existing parks protected with more natural green land parks, public woods, and walking areas created.

Flags placed on large map of Totnes:

- Better network of footpaths: south of Plymouth Road; outlying residential areas; Maltmill area; Weirfields.
- Create more play areas for children: Borough Park; Bridgetown area
- Create more open space for informal play: open space on western side of Totnes; Borough Park; open space at Smithfields / Quarry Close off Plymouth Road.
- Include eco homes in plans: Whiteley Avenue; Punchards Down.
- Incorporate renewable energy sources – wind: open land either side of Harpers Hill
- Investigate community heating scheme: Maudlin Road; Plymouth Road
- Protect / manage local wildlife: Plymouth Road area / open land around and west of Western By Pass; Borough Park
- Protect area as open space: Plymouth Road area / open land around and west of Western By Pass; Borough Park
- This is an important green space / recreation area: open space around Castle; area of open space north of Bridgetown; Plymouth Road area / open land around; Borough Park.

When asked about weaknesses in of the town, pollution and litter were cited as two:

- ‘The condition of the River Dart and weir – pollution and rubbish.’
- ‘Poor quality of environment e.g. litter and rubbish; areas used by dog walkers; and the astro-turf.’

6 Housing needs survey

6:1 A Housing Needs Survey (HNS) was undertaken in summer 2015. Questionnaires were delivered to every household in the town with a total of over 620 responses received representing a response rate of around 16%.

6:2 Making Totnes a low carbon town is coming out as a clear message from our data on environmental sustainability. This is backed up by our housing needs survey. When asked 'if new homes were to be built in Totnes in the future, what features should they have,' **'high energy efficiency'** was the top answer (**83% of respondents**).

7: Business Survey

7:1 Our business survey findings (65 respondents.) show that the reputation of Totnes as a 'green town' and the natural setting of Totnes is important to our economy:

- Totnes's reputation as a **'green centre'** was cited as a benefit to businesses
- The trend for ethical and green businesses encourages green entrepreneurs to set up businesses in the town. **'It's great to feel part of a network of ecologically minded enterprises.'** *Said one business*
- The natural 'setting' of Totnes is an advantage to businesses (i.e making it an attractive place to visit)

8 Links to transport and open spaces

8:1 Sustainable transport including upgrading and improving foot-paths and cycle paths came out as a top priority from both our transport findings and open spaces across workshop one, two and our housing needs survey and workshop with KEVICC students.

Summary of key findings/priorities emerging from public consultation data – Environment

- **'Environmental sustainability'** appears to be a cross-cutting theme
- **Environmentally sustainable housing** (renewables, embodied energy, efficiency) overlap with housing
- **Renewable energy** (*community owned, related to comments below*)
- **Energy efficiency** (*in housing*)
- **Community facilities/community ownership** (community composting sites, coppice, energy, allotments, green spaces) overlap with open space
- **Waste:** New/improved facilities and services are needed

- **Build on Totnes' reputation as a 'green-centre'** - in terms of how our 'green/alternative culture' appeals to visitors and green entrepreneurs *overlap with culture and economy*
- **The natural 'setting' of Totnes** (as well as its historical buildings and conservation areas) needs protecting (*overlap with culture*)
- People want clean, rubbish/pollution free public open spaces
- Pollution in the river
- People want high quality/clean air & water ?
- People say land-use is important (finding from workshop 2)

Next steps and discussion points

- High quality air and water and land-use were prioritised at workshop two but we have no direct comments relating to these themes to provide us with more information
- In terms of land-use this could mean anything from land-use for housing, open spaces, employment spaces, food growing etc. More needs to be understood about what's important for people
- Food featured as being important in workshop two but we have no data to back up what aspect of food is important to people in the Neighbourhood plan
- Going back to our original list of priorities, do we think we can manage them all?
- What are the next steps in terms of evidence gathering and public engagement?

APPENDICES

Energy in the Totnes Neighbourhood *Results from Workshop Two*

QUESTIONS:

What do you think of when you hear the phrase “community renewables”?

Responses on post it notes and written directly onto chart:

- Owned by Community. Community-led (part of the Team)
- Owned by the community. Benefitting all or a large part of it.
- Local installation that local people can invest in and see other benefits from e.g. cheaper electricity
- Energy for people, not profit.

What would you like to see prioritised within the Totnes Energy Plan?

Responses on post it notes and written directly onto chart:

- Rooftop solar on existing industrial units and all new housing and industrial units. (*Note: against this comment was were the words: I agree with this post it!*)
- Energy monitoring – individual and town-wide.
- Community energy
- Decentralisation.
- Bio waste used for energy generation.
- All “affordable” housing to be at least Sustainable level 4.
- Community energy: wind, hydro, solar, waste, composting
- All new housing to be made with low impact materials i.e. low embodied energy with renewables as standard.
- Generation of energy from waste.
- Attention to new developments in storing energy.
- Energy efficiency schemes to help beat fuel poverty in Totnes.
- More small scale hydro. Enable less wastage of energy. New build with passive solar – it ain’t hard.