

The Salcombe Neighbourhood Development Group received almost 500 replies to their recent Neighbourhood Development Plan survey which as a 25% response rate is marginally higher than the national average for such surveys. The survey was issued as a consultation tool to enable the NDP Steering Group to produce draft policies that will form a key part of the ultimate Plan that will be written for Salcombe.

The main headlines from the survey are:

- Incorporate Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) policies in the NDP
- Establish design guidelines in the Plan to protect character of the town and area
- No reduction in car, boat and trailer spaces
- Advance consultation with the community on any SHDC proposals re community land assets
- Create a development ‘master plan’
- Salcombe Town Council (STC) to lead a complete review of all car parking matters
- Establish a fund to support NDP policies after adoption
- Control backland/infill developments
- Agree site adjacent to West End garage for housing “if reasonable amount of affordable housing” can be built
- Temporary seasonal car parking on greenfield land
- A “St Ives” style ‘principal residence policy’ for any newly built homes
- Develop outside existing development boundary if development is exclusively for affordable housing
- Protect from unwanted development in conservation area, along harbour front, along Island Street and North & South Sands valleys

During the first week of 2017 the NDP Group met with the Head of Planning and the Senior Specialist (Assets) at South Hams District Council (SHDC) and with one of the Town’s two District Councillors. The above findings were communicated to those present and duly acknowledged. At the present time SHDC do not have a “five year land supply for housing”: some developers may seek to submit planning applications because of the absence of a ‘five year land supply’. However once the Joint Local Plan is adopted (anticipated in 2017) SHDC will then have a five year land supply and this will pave the way for a more robust planning environment where the wishes of the community as expressed through a formal Neighbourhood Development Plan will have **statutory status**.

It was emphasised in a recent note circulated to those people that had completed the survey, and who provided their email address, that the NDP group cannot at this stage say that all the wishes contained in the survey results can miraculously be granted; a spokesman indicated that "there is no magic wand, but there is now formal recognition that our ND Plan is emerging. It was also agreed with SHDC that there will come a point when it will be appropriate to advise all planning applicants of the existence of the emerging ND Plan and the likely policies that will be included. This may not be a full blown 'master plan' as aired in the survey but it is along similar lines and will incorporate the parking review that so many people expressly supported".

The NDP group will also now start the process to draft Neighbourhood Development Plan policies using the information provided by the recent survey. This is anticipated to take at least three - six months. The draft of the Plan will then be the subject of a further round of public consultation, following which it will be further edited and then circulated to all in the community as a final draft for comments. The Plan must then be submitted for independent examination by a qualified Inspector to ensure that it complies with the quite onerous legal requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning legislation. Once it has passed examination the Plan is then sent out a final time to those in the community who are on the local electoral register. The plan has to be approved by SHDC and be in line with the Joint Local Plan. It is important to note that second home owners will not be invited to vote on the Plan at referendum unless they are registered to vote in Salcombe. This has been cross-checked with local and national legislation.