



West Devon **our
Plan**

Shaping our communities to 2031

April 2014

Our Borough – the area Our Plan will cover



Foreword

Welcome to the first formal stage of us working with you to shape 'Our Plan'. I am assuming if you are reading this that you are interested in what we are doing and how you might be involved.

It only seems like yesterday that we finished our last plan, the Core Strategy 2006-2026, and I bet you are wondering why we are starting another one so soon. Well the main reason for doing so is because central Government have significantly changed planning policy by introducing the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and we need to ensure our plans are fit for purpose and in conformity with this national policy. Also, the new plan that we are required to produce has to cover a wider range of issues that go beyond traditional planning policy and it makes more sense to write a new plan rather than try and amend the existing ones. Therefore, 'Our Plan' will be an overarching strategic plan for the Borough of West Devon up to 2031.

Developing our plans is always challenging. It is always controversial and different sectors and individuals in our community understandably see things very differently. However, we need to hold on to the fact that we are planning for the communities of tomorrow not just for ourselves today. What we do now will have a significant impact on how people live their lives in West Devon in the future.

Our biggest challenge is enabling growth and providing much needed homes and jobs whilst, at the same time, protecting the beautiful place that is West Devon – no mean feat as I'm sure you can appreciate. To do this we need to gather evidence of local need and think about what we need to provide and where to meet those needs.

Your views are important to us as we shape our plans and I do hope you will work with us over the next few months to do so. Unfortunately most people only get involved at a much later stage in the process, normally when a planning application directly affects them. By then it's normally too late as the principle of development has already been established and we are keen to try and engage more people much earlier in the process.

Again this is a challenge and engaging people isn't easy. Some of our more traditional methods such as holding exhibitions in village halls have limited success and we struggle to attract new people to get involved at these events. Whilst we will continue to do this we will also be making better use of technology and social media to try and reach a wider audience.

As the first stage of engagement this document sets out the proposed scope of our plan. It reflects on how things have changed in the area in the last decade or so and shows the major challenges ahead as we see them. It also sets out our timetable and the various ways that you can be involved. What do you think? Are we focussing on the right things or do you feel we are missing something? Do please let us know.

Philip Sanders, Leader, West Devon Borough Council

About the Plan

This is a high level, strategic plan for West Devon which will set out how the needs and aspirations of our communities will be met up to 2031. The high level plan applies to the entire Borough. The planning policies set out in the plan will cover the area of the West Devon outside of the Dartmoor National Park who have their own plans and policies for their area.

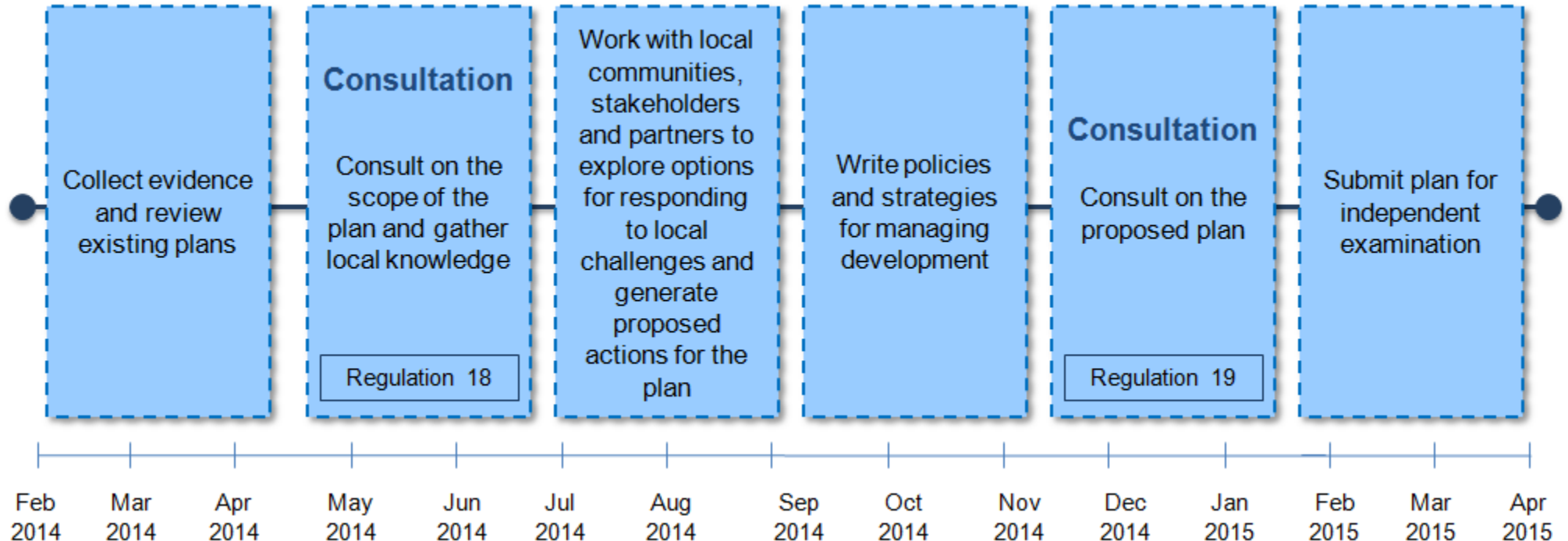
To produce the plan we gather a significant amount of local evidence of need and put this alongside national guidance and policy. We also work with neighbouring areas and other public authorities, to ensure we plan effectively for the wider region as well as working with our local community and stakeholders to understand local needs and aspirations. The information we have gathered so far suggests that the plan should cover the following areas:-



Our Plan – how will it be prepared?

The diagram shows the plan preparation stages. In particular it shows when we will engage and consult with others.

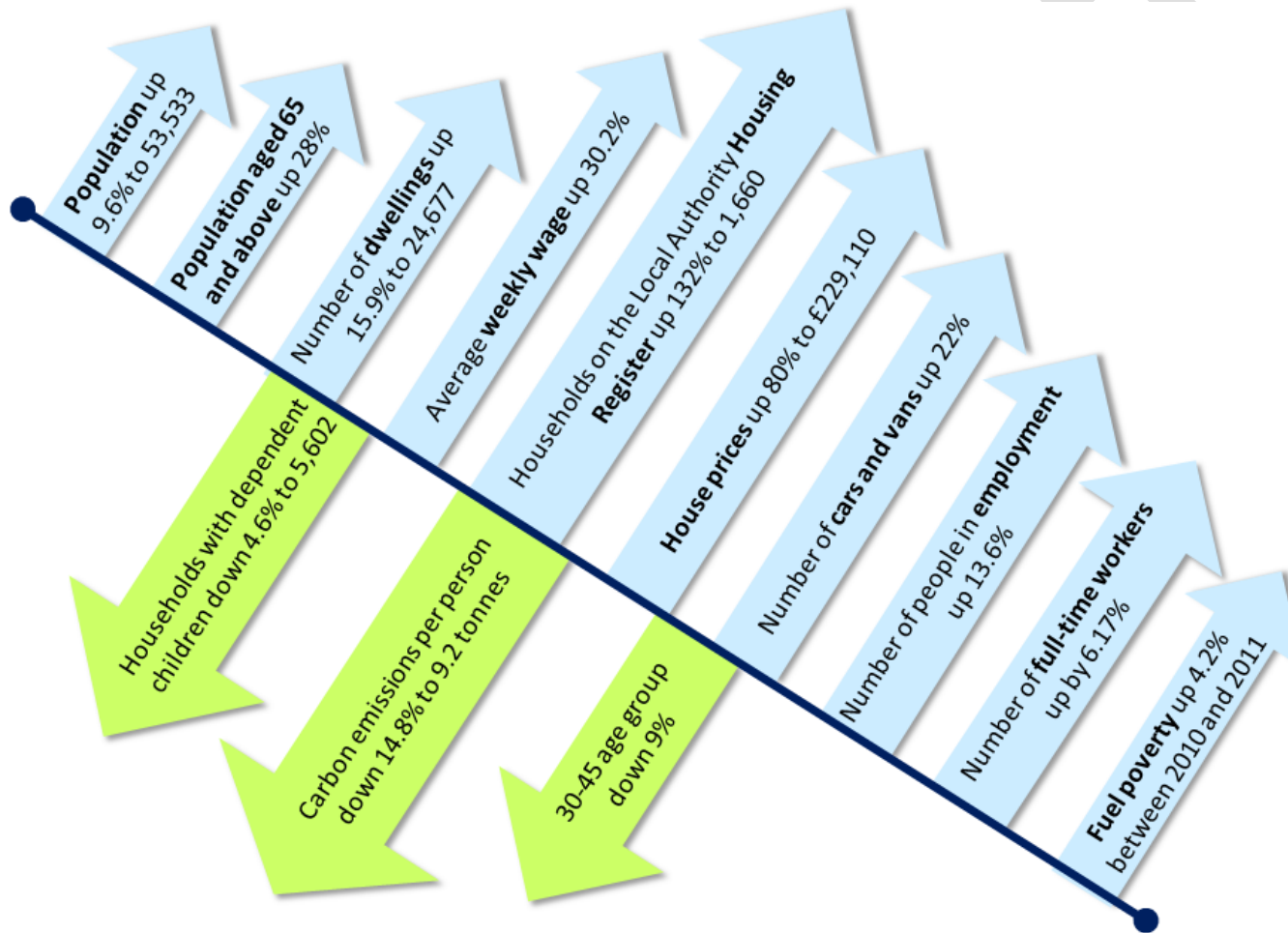
We are required to undertake two formal consultations and this is the first of them. This first stage is quite broad and sets out what the plan will cover. Over the summer months there will be much informal engagement with individuals, communities and stakeholders to discuss various topics which will help us shape the detail of the plan. In the winter we will undertake the second formal consultation which will consult on the draft plan.



Our Borough - what are the big challenges we need to address?

Before we can start planning for the future we need to fully understand the big challenges we face as a Borough. The evidence we have gathered thus far has given us a fairly clear picture of what these challenges are but we would be keen to know whether you agree with us.

These challenges are not new to us and our previous plans have made significant inroads into addressing these issues.



It is interesting to look back and reflect on what has changed since 2001. These are just a few of the statistics that tell part of the story of what has happened in West Devon over that time....

However, there is still much to do. We still have many people in need of homes and jobs and we need to meet these needs whilst at the same time protecting the very special place that is the West Devon. We need to do all we can to ensure a good quality of life for our communities now and in the future.

The diagrams on the following pages set out the challenges as we see them. What do you think? Have we missed anything? Is there something you would like us to consider?

Our population is changing with an **increasing older age** population

We have a sustained need for more **market and affordable housing**

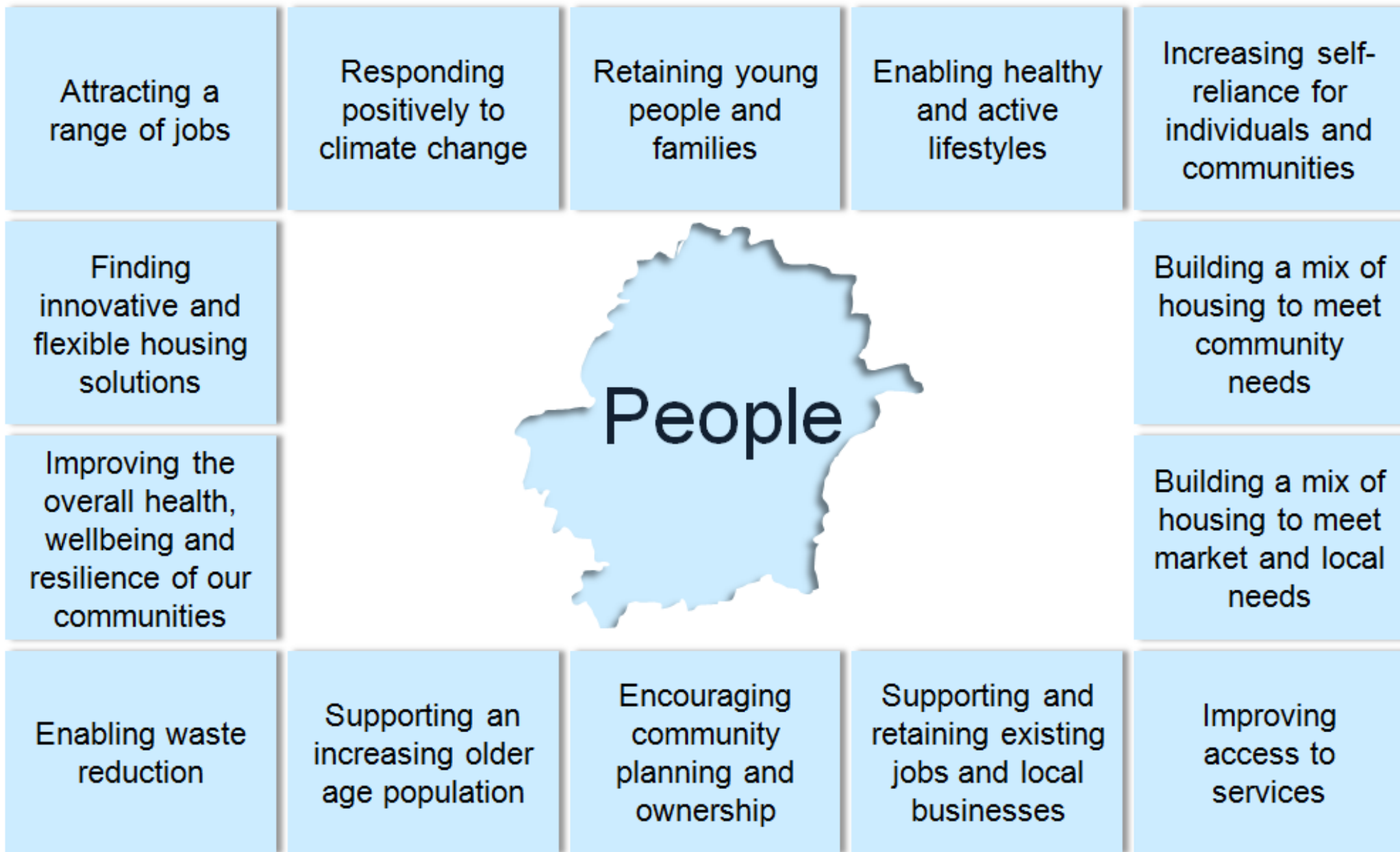
There is an **out migration of young and working age people**

Energy security is a growing issue. We need to find ways to **increase renewable energy** generation and reduce fuel poverty

Climate change means we need to respond and **adapt to changing weather patterns** and reduce carbon emissions

We need to **improve the health and wellbeing** of our communities

We need to empower our communities to **produce Neighbourhood Plans** and take ownership of local planning matters





Our Plan – what happens next and how can you be involved?

We will review all of the comments that you make and use these to help shape Our Plan. We are also required to prepare other supporting documents such as a Sustainability Appraisal which allows us understand the social, environmental and economic effects of our plans and policies. Your comments will help inform these documents as well.

We would like to know whether we have identified the right challenges and topics that Our Plan will cover or whether there are things missing. We have prepared a short response form (link) for you to complete – just add your comments and press ‘submit’.

Please remember to have your comments back to the Council by Friday 20th June!

You can make your comments between **Friday 9th May and Friday 20th June 2014**. We would like to encourage you to send us your views electronically wherever possible.

However, should you wish to read a hard copy, you can find one at West Devon Borough Council, Kilworthy Park, Tavistock, PL19 0BZ and the Customer Service Centre at St James Place, Okehampton, EX20 1DH. Your comments can be sent to the Strategic Planning Team at the same address.

We will add as much information as we can about Our Plan on the Council’s website at www.westdevon.gov.uk/ourplan.

This will include consultation events that we plan to attend, with an Event Timetable ([provide direct link](#)) explaining where we will be over the summer months. This will be regularly updated over the coming weeks as we confirm our attendance at more events.

Follow us on Twitter and find us on Facebook to keep up to date with progress being made on Our Plan and to find out about events near you.



@OurPlanWD



[insert facebook logo and page name]



**West Devon
Borough
Council**

For further information please contact:

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This document can be made available in large print, Braille or tape format on request.

This document meets the requirements of Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) and incorporates the Local Plan as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.