

# A Plan for West Devon

September 2021



West Devon  
Borough Council



# A Plan for West Devon

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# *A place to protect*



# The West Devon we know

Think of West Devon and reflections turn to an idyllic pastoral scene. Picture-postcard market towns where local producers sell their wares are surrounded by verdant farming land and dramatic Dartmoor views.

Home to the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we have a rich mining heritage that draws attention from a global audience. It's a very special place for those who live here and the many visitors who come to West Devon to get away from it all.

From farmland to forest, discover a legacy of pioneering communities in our towns and villages. Our individuality and heritage play a vital role in shaping our future and driving our economy for the health and wellbeing of future generations loving living in West Devon.

A cycle along the lanes and paths of the Granite Way and Drake's Trail, connecting Okehampton all the way to Plymouth, reveals many stunning views.

A striking expanse it may be but with a population of just 55,000, delivery of public services costs more than in many other areas.



# *A place to discover*



Home to England's largest industrial UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape, there's a rich industrial heritage. This has influenced our people and landscapes in many ways too, building bustling market towns like Tavistock and a creative attitude.

Forged by the tin and copper mining industry and associated activity in the nineteenth century, remains of deep underground mines and ports, including those at Morwellham Quay, are a testimony to the contribution West Devon made to the Industrial Revolution in Britain.

While our past contributions are rightly celebrated, we know that as our residents look to the future, there are areas of concern. West Devon residents are on average earning £5,000 less than the national average each year. House prices are nine times the average income – putting home ownership out of reach for many of our residents.

In the north of the Borough, people and nature are celebrated and groups are working together to protect the special environment we call home through the internationally recognised UNESCO North Devon Biosphere.



# *A place to breathe*



Independent stores and local fare are at the heart of our market towns including Okehampton, Chagford and Hatherleigh. Stop at a farm shop or deli to sample some of the award-winning local produce which finds its way to the tables of top restaurants across the country. Taste cheese and ice-cream made from the delicious milk of cattle grazed on our lush pastures or refresh after a moorland walk with a pint of locally brewed real ale from Princetown.

Issues facing farming communities are keenly felt in West Devon where diversifying is often the only solution. Our towns also face a challenging future, with consumers rapidly shifting to online shopping and ultrafast digital connectivity being well below the national average.

**We know there are challenges. But by working together, we can seize every opportunity to support the wellbeing of our people, to enhance and protect our very special environment and strengthen the unique economy that we are proud to be custodians of.**





*A place to prosper*



## Our 20 year vision for West Devon

As councillors, we are continually reminded by residents that West Devon is a special place. From the wildness and beauty of the Moor, to the hustle and activity of our market towns, the legacy of our industrial heritage and the warmth and spirit of our communities, that evidence is around us every day.

This strategy – A Plan For West Devon – sets out our longer term vision for the area and how we will work towards it over the next three years. It identifies the areas that our Council has responsibility for and where we will work with others. We are clear that we cannot deliver this longer term vision alone, partnerships will be at the heart of the Plan for West Devon. The strategy also identifies issues outside of our immediate control for which we will seek to influence national policy to improve outcomes for our area.

To support the delivery of the longer term vision for West Devon as a place, we must also focus on ensuring that the services our residents and businesses rely on are easy to access and delivered well.

By working together to improve and enhance the area in which we live, and supporting a thriving, modern and green economy, A Plan for West Devon will enable opportunities for all.

Cllr Neil Jory,  
Leader West Devon Borough Council



# *A place to grow*

# Achieving our Vision

Our longer term vision will be delivered by concentrating on the following areas. These areas of focus will be supported by detailed annual delivery plans.



## Strengthening our communities

An area that our communities can be proud of



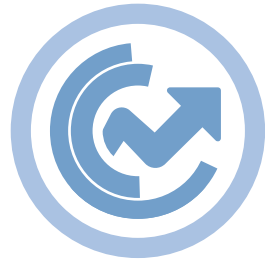
## Enhancing community wellbeing

Every resident is able to live a healthy and active life



## Improving homes

Every resident has access to a quality and safe home



## Stimulating a thriving economy

A Borough that attracts high quality employment opportunities and space for business to grow



## Growing our natural environment

An environment where people and nature thrive together



## Adapting our built environment

Planning for the future, celebrating the past



## **Maximising Council resources**

**Making the best use  
of our resources**



## **Delivering inclusive and accessible services**

**A listening, accessible  
and caring council**



***A place to inspire***



- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Dartmoor National Park
- Tamar Valley Mining District with Tavistock
- West Devon Borough Boundary
- Neighbouring Local Authority Boundaries
- Eco Museum proposal
- West Devon Transport Hub
- Major roads
- Main roads
- Railway

## Steps to achieve the vision

- 1** Delivering 11 self-contained apartments to support people who are homeless
- 2** Rolling out a Community Broadband scheme in Sydenham Damerel
- 3** Developing West Devon Transport Hub proposals
- 4** Delivery of Brentor Community Housing Scheme
- 5** Supporting Tavistock Business Improvement District renewal
- 6** Progressing conversations with Okehampton businesses about how they may want to work together in the future
- 7** Supporting proposals for the Tavistock to Bere Alston trainline
- 8** Supporting proposals for the A386 Cycleway (Roborough to Yelverton)
- 9** Proposals for an Eco-museum (using technology and smartphone applications to link people to heritage sites through active travel)

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*A place to succeed*



## **Strengthening our communities**

**An area that our communities  
can be proud of**



Our communities are the beating heart of West Devon. This is clear to us by the way that they have come together to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, supporting each other in new and innovative ways.

One of our core aims is for all residents to be proud of their area. Through s106 funding and community grants, we'll support enhancements to parks, gardens and play spaces and continue to enable our communities to deliver projects that are important to them.

Our voluntary sector is already incredibly responsive to community needs. We will work with the voluntary sector to promote volunteering, deliver events that celebrate the area and make a positive impact on the lives of all.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ We're supporting more community groups to access grant funding to deliver local schemes
- ◆ We see an increase in the numbers of people volunteering
- ◆ We're supporting improvement to play parks and community facilities



## We will enhance the sense of pride and community



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Empowering our communities to enhance their area</b></p>	<p>Our residents have the best understanding of how to improve their areas. We will empower them to turn their ideas into action.</p> <p>We will also listen to our communities and help them raise the profile of local issues through engagement with partners and by ensuring we have an on-the-street presence across the Borough.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Maximise grant funding opportunities, including for play parks, playing pitches and other community facilities</li> <li>◆ Providing a visible and responsive localities service</li> <li>◆ Working with Parish Councils to understand and tackle local issues and reinstate Parish-Borough Link Meetings</li> <li>◆ Supporting and promoting events in the Borough</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supporting our voluntary sector to respond to community needs</b></p>	<p>The voluntary sector in West Devon is incredibly reactive to the needs of our communities. We will take steps to support the sector and enable it to build on this positive work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Develop a plan for supporting our voluntary sector partners in the future</li> <li>◆ Ensure that the Council is represented in existing key partnerships / voluntary and community groups</li> </ul>



## Play Your Part

- Volunteering for community groups
- Participate in democracy
- Ask us about grants for your community project



# Enhancing community wellbeing

Every resident is able to live a  
healthy and active life

During the COVID-19 pandemic our communities pulled together to support the health and wellbeing of residents.

The pandemic will have a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities. We will work together with partners including Devon County Council, the NHS and the voluntary sector to understand the impacts and identify opportunities to enhance community wellbeing.

As a Council, we will make a positive impact on community wellbeing by ensuring quality housing, supporting vulnerable residents to access advice and support and by promoting active lifestyle choices.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ We increase active participation in sport and physical activity for all ages
- ◆ We promote and support active travel – cycling and walking
- ◆ Fewer people live in fuel poverty
- ◆ More people are supported to live in their homes for longer
- ◆ We are, with partners, actively supporting our residents' mental health and wellbeing



## We will enhance the health and wellbeing of all residents



Focus	Aims	Actions
<b>Reducing health inequalities and rural poverty</b>	Working with partners, we'll focus on the causes of rural poverty and health inequalities, employing practical solutions such as community transport, training and fuel poverty grants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivering a rural poverty pilot, co-ordinating with partners for a targeted scheme</li> <li>Launch a short-term grant funding scheme for the voluntary sector to implement projects responding to health and wellbeing</li> <li>Delivery of projects to enable residents to continue to live safely within their homes</li> </ul>
<b>Ensuring leisure provision meets the needs of residents</b>	We'll take steps to encourage all residents, regardless of ability, to take up sports or active leisure to support their overall health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a new playing pitch strategy</li> <li>Provision of high quality and accessible leisure services</li> </ul>
<b>Promote a positive approach to mental health and wellbeing</b>	We all have a role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our residents. We will ensure that we work with partners to develop a joined-up approach for West Devon residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support delivery of mental health support and outreach for young people</li> <li>Work with Devon County Council to develop a joined-up approach to mental health and wellbeing in the Borough</li> </ul>



## Play Your Part

- Talk and listen
- Take up a new sport
- Be active and healthy



# Improving homes

**Every resident has access  
to a quality and safe home**



West Devon is a beautiful place to live. Over the years this has had an impact on the affordability and availability of housing for local people.

Local people want to ensure that both they and their families are able to afford to remain in the area with a warm and secure home.

To support this ambition, we have adopted a five-year Housing Strategy to underpin how we will ensure better homes lead to better lives for all our residents.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ We deliver local homes for local people that meet their needs and make this available at a cost they can afford
- ◆ More people are supported to live independently for as long as they choose, particularly in later life or for people with health conditions or impairments
- ◆ We improve the overall quality of housing with more homes exceeding the minimum energy efficiency standards
- ◆ No one finds themselves without a roof over their heads
- ◆ We monitor progress through the review of Housing Strategy annual delivery plan



## We will enable better homes for better lives



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Housing for place</b></p>	<p>Driving the delivery of new homes that people can afford and meeting the different needs of our communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Delivery of local homes for local people across the West Devon area</li> <li>◆ Work with Devon County Council to support people to live independently – identifying opportunities for specialist, purpose-built accommodation</li> <li>◆ Develop our understanding of housing need and implement plans for responding</li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing for people</b></p>	<p>Ensuring the best use and improved quality of existing housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ We will promote and support energy efficiency in homes – for example, with Green Homes Grants</li> <li>◆ We will promote the best use and improve quality of existing housing</li> <li>◆ Deliver on our plans for 11 self-contained apartments in Tavistock to support people who are homeless</li> </ul>

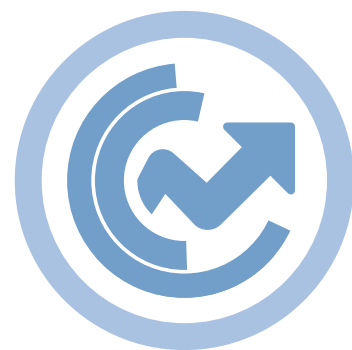
## Check our progress so far

➤ [The Housing Strategy 2021–2026](#)



## Play Your Part

- Increase the energy efficiency of your home
- Register your interest in affordable homes
- Let us know about empty homes



## Stimulating a thriving economy

A Borough that attracts  
high quality employment  
opportunities and space  
for business to grow

We will create the environment for all sizes of business to flourish, through direct and indirect support and policy. This will include infrastructure and development aligned to our priorities.

We will strengthen our visitor economy, maximising the promotion of our unique cultural and heritage offer.

We will identify opportunities to lobby for the best outcomes for our agricultural sector and ensure that we seize on opportunities to attract additional funding through the Government's Levelling Up Fund, Community Renewal Fund and other sources.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ We have a strong relationship with our key business sectors and can work with them for the benefit of our whole economy
- ◆ We have secured additional inward investment to support the economy
- ◆ The visitor economy is strengthened
- ◆ Our towns and their businesses continue to thrive
- ◆ Digital connectivity is not a barrier to business



## We will stimulate a thriving economy



Focus	Aims	Actions
<b>Promoting Destination West Devon</b>	We will actively support marketing and schemes that will further promote West Devon as a tourist destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a West Devon visitor economy plan</li> <li>Support place-based public realm enhancements in West Devon</li> <li>Promote active travel, cycling, horse riding and walking routes across West Devon</li> <li>Progress plans for an eco museum across West Devon to maximise the assets of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Dartmoor National Park and Tamar Valley AONB</li> </ul>
<b>Helping West Devon's towns and businesses thrive</b>	Our economic development team will work to secure inward investment and conditions to support existing businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champion improved digital (broadband and mobile) connectivity across West Devon</li> <li>Offer business advice services for existing, expanding and new businesses</li> <li>Remain prepared to respond to any future Government business grants (COVID-19 or other)</li> <li>Deliver an inward investment campaign aimed at attracting new businesses to West Devon</li> <li>Continue to support the Tavistock Business Improvement District</li> <li>Establish a new business forum within Okehampton</li> </ul>
<b>Responding to opportunities to enhance the economy</b>	We will work with partners to prepare to respond to opportunities that will support the West Devon economy into the future, promoting events and supporting bids for schemes in the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a West Devon Transport Hub through the Government's Levelling Up Fund</li> <li>Submit a bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund</li> </ul>



## Play Your Part

- Shop local
- Support the High Street
- Access business advice



# Growing our natural environment

An environment where people  
and nature thrive together



West Devon is a stunning part of the country. We will take steps to ensure we enhance the environment so that people and nature thrive together. We will work with key partners including Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to protect, adapt and enhance the natural environment.

Residents, businesses and the Council must all play our part to make this happen. Encouraging and promoting active travel (such as cycling) will be a key focus for the Council.

We're already taking positive steps having adopted a Climate and Biodiversity Strategy and a detailed delivery plan for both the Council and the whole of West Devon.

The Council must lead by example and encourage all others to take their own steps to adapt and mitigate climate change and increase biodiversity.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ We increase access to our wonderful countryside through promoting and developing walking and cycling trails
- ◆ We measure positive progress against our aims in the Climate and Biodiversity Strategy
- ◆ We see an increase in the number of trees planted across the Borough



# We will transition to an environment where people and nature thrive together



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Working towards net-zero</b></p>	<p>The Council will lead by example in reducing our carbon footprint through delivery of our Climate and Biodiversity Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Phased conversion of our environmental management fleet to a greener fleet</li> <li>◆ Increasing availability of electric charging points across the Borough</li> <li>◆ Carry out a feasibility study of renewable energy schemes on our land</li> <li>◆ Promote recycling and reduction of waste (at source) to our residents</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making the best use of our incredible natural environment</b></p>	<p>Promoting, enabling and supporting access and enhancement of our environment whilst increasing biodiversity and active travel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Deliver a 10% increase in biodiversity on Council land</li> <li>◆ Support delivery of a mix of woodland, on-street trees, wooded habitat corridors, and hedgerows through the Plymouth and South Devon Forest</li> <li>◆ Support nature recovery through larger wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors and nature preservation schemes</li> <li>◆ Map our ecosystems, species, waterways and other natural capital to better inform future land use</li> <li>◆ Work with partners to promote tree planting within the Borough</li> <li>◆ Work with key landowners and partners including Tamar Valley AONB, Dartmoor National Park, the National Trust, English Heritage, West Country Rivers and the Biosphere</li> </ul>

## Check our progress so far

➤ Climate and Biodiversity Action Plan



## Play Your Part

- Take the Go Zero Challenge
- Sign up for our newsletter
- Join our online forums to share good practice
- Start a tree bank, pot up and give away unwanted tree seedlings



# Adapting our built environment

Planning for the future,  
celebrating the past

From the Western edge of Dartmoor through to the east of Cornwall, we have a built environment of global importance through the World Heritage Site.

West Devon, together with South Hams and Plymouth, has published a strategic plan for the area (Joint Local Plan) which sets out the future vision, policies and plans for our built and natural environment up to 2034.

We will work with our communities to produce new visions for all our towns, setting out the opportunities and actions required to ensure they remain thriving, active places. By the end of 2024, all main towns will have the opportunity for up-to-date and deliverable Town Centre strategies.

In our urban centres, we will develop Conservation Area Plans to preserve and enhance important historic building and places across West Devon. We'll also work with our communities to support the development of Neighbourhood Plans.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ We have supported the development and adoption of Neighbourhood Plans
- ◆ We make positive progress in delivering the Joint Local Plan
- ◆ Our urban areas have actively managed Conservation Area Plans



# We will protect our past and plan for the future



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Celebrating our heritage and ensuring it's protected</b></p>	<p>We will conserve and maintain existing historic fabric and retain and reflect locally distinctive features in the design of buildings, layouts and landscape to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the World Heritage Site.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Commissioning and actively managing Conservation Area Plans</li> <li>● Support the promotion of parishes surrounding the UNESCO World Heritage Site</li> <li>● Support the Tavistock Guildhall Visitor Centre and Experience</li> <li>● Celebrate culture and heritage to enhance West Devon Towns</li> </ul>
<p><b>Planning infrastructure for the future</b></p>	<p>We will ensure that we work with partners so West Devon has the infrastructure in place to meet the future needs of our communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Delivery of the Joint Local Plan</li> <li>● Support Neighbourhood Plans</li> <li>● Support key road corridor and travel gateway improvements including integrated cycling and walking</li> <li>● Supporting improvements to local rail connectivity and links between Tavistock and Plymouth and Okehampton and Exeter</li> </ul>



## Play Your Part

- Actively engage in the planning process through consultations on the Joint Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans
- Respect the World Heritage Site



# **Delivering inclusive and accessible services**

**A listening, accessible  
and caring council**



The Council has been through a major period of change and improvement which has meant that we have continued to deliver services through the pandemic.

We will continue to be a modern organisation that is responsive to the changing needs of our residents, businesses and communities.

We will further modernise the way we work by making use of technology and striving to continually improve the services we offer.

We will do what we say, when we say and we will do it as efficiently as possible.

We recognise that our reputation is dependent on the quality and responsiveness of the services we provide.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ You're able to get what you need, when you need it
- ◆ We get things right, and if we don't we take responsibility and fix it quickly
- ◆ You tell us that we're doing a good job



# We will be a listening, accessible and caring council



Focus	Aims	Actions
<p><b>Listening and being accessible and caring</b></p>	<p>Our Consultation and Engagement Strategy sets out how we'll be open and transparent with our residents, and seek their views. We want to ensure that your voice is heard so that you can help shape our services and future direction. We'll be a Council that listens.</p> <p>Through the pandemic, customers have changed how they interact with us. Our ambition is that you should be able to access all Council services online in the coming years, although we'll still enable you to contact us in other ways if you prefer.</p> <p>We will set out clearly what our customers can expect from the Council, its Councillors and staff. We'll ensure that our communications are free of jargon and can be understood by everyone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Set out clearly what you can expect from us by developing a customer charter</li> <li>◆ Enabling you to access all Council services online where you can, but developing plans for how those not online can access services they need</li> <li>◆ Actively seek your views when developing proposals – by delivering on our Consultation and Engagement Strategy</li> <li>◆ We'll ask our residents how we are doing, by carrying out an annual resident satisfaction survey focusing on West Devon as a place</li> <li>◆ We will ensure that our elected Councillors are accessible and have the knowledge required to help you when needed</li> </ul>



## Play Your Part

- 'Do it Online'
- Tell us what we can do better
- Take part in our resident surveys



# Maximising Council resources

Making the best use  
of our resources

A key part of realising our ambitions set out in 'A Plan for West Devon' is ensuring that we make the best use of Council resources, be that finance, buildings, staff or systems.

Delivering Council services in a rural area is more expensive than in more densely populated areas. We will continue to lobby the Government for a fair share of funding.

We will also spend our existing budgets wisely, working to spend more with local suppliers while still delivering value for money to our residents.

## We will know we are succeeding when:

- ◆ We continue to set a balanced budget annually
- ◆ We increase the amount of money that the Council spends with local suppliers
- ◆ We are successful in lobbying for fairer funding for rural services



## We will make the best use of our resources

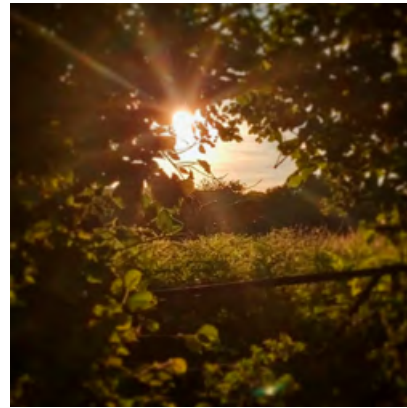


Focus	Aims	Actions
<b>Value for money of existing services</b>	<p>We'll ensure that the Council has clear performance measures and is clear about how we are performing. We will share this information with you so you too can see how we're performing.</p> <p>We'll also ensure that we manage the Council's resources including budgets, buildings, staff and systems effectively and efficiently.</p> <p>At all times we'll seek to deliver our services in the most cost effective way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Implement our new customer-focused system to enable our customers to engage with us easily both online and on the phone</li> <li>◆ Ensure we manage the Council's performance effectively</li> <li>◆ Carry out reviews of services in order to improve the customer experience</li> <li>◆ Manage and support our employees to deliver the best possible service</li> </ul>
<b>Finances fit for our future</b>	<p>We need to ensure that in addition to ensuring value for money of existing services, that we plan for the future.</p> <p>To support our financial stability, we will effectively manage our budgets and ensure that we maximise our income.</p> <p>As a large employer with a net budget of £7m, we will also look at how we can increase our local spend to support the West Devon economy.</p> <p>We will develop partnerships with other 'anchor institutions' to maximise value for money, working together where there is mutual benefit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ensure annual budgets meet our service delivery requirements</li> <li>◆ Work to secure the Council's longer term financial sustainability</li> <li>◆ Identifying opportunities to 'spend more locally'</li> <li>◆ Work across Devon to increase efficiency and share services with others where it means you get a better service</li> <li>◆ Lobbying for fairer funding for rural services</li> <li>◆ Assess suitability of our Asset Base and Council owned property</li> </ul>



## Play Your Part

- Volunteer to be on our Customer User Groups
- Look out for our Annual Report



## Your West Devon

This plan has set out some of the key actions we will take to protect that which makes West Devon a special place. We will keep the plans under review to ensure they remain focused on delivering a Plan for West Devon.

Over the coming pages, we're pleased to share photos that you, the residents of West Devon, have taken. From stunning scenery to community spirit, they illustrate why we can all be proud to call this place our home.











## Thanks to the many local people, businesses, organisations and community groups for sharing their photos -

Kate Brimacombe p.1, p.23

Lee Marshall p.2

Nick Fox p.3

Phil Desmond p.4

Denise Horner p.5

Lucy Elliott p.7

Charlotte Reeves p.8

The Square Shop p.9

Ewins Aerial p.11, p.27

Anthony Purnell p.13, p.35

Cary Marks for the Dartmoor Shepherd p.15

Emily Sismur p.19, p.31

Sandra Jones p.20

Temo Donovan p.21

Aster Group p.24

The Flapjackery p.28

David Rogers p.32

Natalie Jephtha p.33

Jo Mary Roberts p.37

Richie Bolgiani p.39

Some more of our photo competition entries p.48 - p.51

# A Plan for West Devon



West Devon  
Borough Council

[www.westdevon.gov.uk](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk)