

TODMORDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

UPDATE
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TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

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A VISION FOR TODMORDEN



Town Councillors attended a Visioning Session aimed at developing a shared vision for the Todmorden Neighbourhood Plan.

The outcome of the workshop was a set of statements and principles which will guide the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and its content. The vision encapsulates the aspirations of what Todmorden could be like in 15-20 years, the length of the plan period.

EMERGING VISION

Following the Visioning Session with Town Councillors a draft vision has emerged:

The Todmorden Neighbourhood Plan has been produced, first and foremost, for the benefit of people living, working, visiting, or just simply passing through, the town and its environs, helping to reinforce, consolidate, and promote the area as a tolerant, creative, kind, resilient, and healthy place to be.

The plan encourages and welcomes visitors, new residents and inward investment whilst at the same time - and with equal emphasis - seeking to improve the facilities and opportunities available for young people, encouraging them to remain in the area for education, employment and leisure activities. The plan also aims to ensure that suitable infrastructure and services for an ageing population are developed, namely housing and facilities to support an active and healthy lifestyle.

Todmorden is what it is and its people are what they are - and the Neighbourhood Plan does not anticipate the need to promote fundamental changes to either the physical or social fabric of its community. Existing assets should be retained and improved, and essential services and infrastructure provided where they are lacking.

Todmorden has always encouraged visitors, and in continuing to do so relies heavily on road, rail, and water-borne forms of transport - all of which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks, where possible, to enhance, thereby maintaining and reinforcing the outward looking and welcoming approach of its residents.

In anticipation of future energy shortages, an increasing incidence of air pollution, and an acknowledged need to promote healthy lifestyles, the Neighbourhood Plan encourages walking and cycling within the town and its environs and will seek to facilitate both forms of transport in preference to motor-based journeys wherever possible.

THEMES & PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLES or **THEMES** (arising from the Visioning Session and from which the NP will derive justification for its **POLICIES**)

- 1.** New development should be of an **APPROPRIATE SCALE** and **QUALITY** to the area and its specific location. Large-scale developments are not considered to be appropriate for the NP area, given the nature of the existing built form, landscape considerations, and local topographical factors.
- 2.** The Neighbourhood Plan should adopt a positive **WELCOMING APPROACH** towards new businesses, residents, and visitors by encouraging business start-ups and relocation, identifying land and opportunities for the construction and provision of locally affordable houses of a suitable mix, type and tenure, and ensuring that tourists and occasional visitors are properly catered for.
- 3.** The focus of policies in the Neighbourhood Plan should be on **PEOPLE** as much as **PLACES** aiming to improve the social, environmental, economic, and physical comfort of residents, employers and visitors alike. Existing strengths, such as the 'Incredible Edible' initiative, should be reinforced, young people encouraged to stay put when they leave school, and local businesses given the opportunity to consolidate and expand wherever possible.
- 4.** **CONNECTIVITY** with people and places elsewhere in Yorkshire and beyond is an essential element of the Neighbourhood Plan strategy and has played a large part in making the area the vibrant place it is today. To avoid becoming a "dormitory" community, enable access to higher level services and facilities, and encourage people, businesses and tourists to visit the area, bus and train services must be retained at least at existing levels - and where possible, improved. Likewise, the canal must continue to be promoted as a visitor attraction of national, if not international, standing.

ISSUES, BARRIERS & CHALLENGES WORKSHOP



A workshop was held with members of the local community discussing accessibility, inclusivity and independent living in Todmorden. It was agreed that planning for an accessible and inclusive town should not be an add-on but should be firmly ingrained throughout the whole Neighbourhood Plan forming an essential strand.

Small scale interventions can have a positive impact on people's lives in Todmorden and accessibility and inclusivity will be a key consideration in any new development.

ISSUES, BARRIERS & CHALLENGES WORKSHOP

General Points - There is a general lack of awareness surrounding accessibility issues - it does not just mean providing ramps and it does not just relate to people with mobility issues. Small interventions, changes and new ways of thinking can make a big difference.

Examples - Signage being on the wall instead of the pavement and dropped kerbs should be one inch lower.

These needn't be expensive, time consuming or involve lots of bureaucracy.

The Netherlands has great examples of urban flood defences that are also accessible.

Hebden Bridge is getting new lifts to the railway, Todmorden told they can't have upgrade because it's too close to Hebden Bridge.

Although the NP may be for the long term, things can be achieved in the interim. Processes take time and should not be constrained by electoral cycles. Ideas should be taken from the Stewardship Model to plan for long term management outside of the management of the plan.

ISSUES, BARRIERS & CHALLENGES WORKSHOP

Accessibility of meetings - Issues were raised about the accessibility of meetings. It is not always possible for people to physically attend meetings, and so it would be very useful to have an online method through which meetings could be attended virtually.

Challenges to this are broadband coverage which is patchy and people have struggled to utilise online meetings previously.

Accessibility in Tod - Disability forum undertook a review of the accessibility of the streets in the Calder area a number of years ago which should be available to review/update.

Issues were raised about the placement of street furniture making pavements inaccessible to wheelchair / buggy users. This could be helped by shops having greater awareness of the impact sales paraphernalia in the street.

Impact on footfall when streets are not accessible to all - awareness should be raised and a figure calculated on how much is being lost because streets are not accessible to all.

Buildings are not truly accessible unless the route to them is also accessible. It is fruitless to design standalone accessible buildings if it is not possible for everyone to get to them.

Tod could do with more seating along routes for people to rest. Some seats have recently been removed outside Morrisons. Need to be aware of the limitations of this however, as seating can not be placed on pavements less than 2m wide, as this would cause other accessibility issues. Perching stalls could solve this as they take up less room.

ISSUES, BARRIERS & CHALLENGES WORKSHOP

Housing -

There is a distinct lack of affordable housing in Tod, Young people are unable to get onto the housing ladder, and so either have to stay at home with parents, or move out of the area. Young carers cannot afford to live in Tod either.

Lifetime home standards only apply to new build but it is possible in some cases to convert older houses to make them accessible to all. This however is not always easy in small terraces. In Liverpool terraces were adapted by turning 1.5 terraced houses into 1 terraced house.

100% of new housing should be made to be accessible, and where possible the existing housing stock should be retrofitted.

There should be a register of housing with the Housing Association that lists accessible homes. Calderdale should create a mechanism which records the number of private houses that are accessible. St Vincent's have raised an issue which is that new tenants sometimes remove the accessible features if they do not need them.

Older people looking to downsize do not have much choice of alternative properties. There is a lack of single level homes, whether that be bungalows or flats.

We cannot assume the market will deliver the type of homes Tod needs and different options to achieve the right housing should be sought. This could be a Community Land Trust for example.

ISSUES, BARRIERS & CHALLENGES WORKSHOP

Health Centre -

Issues around the health centre were raised. The main issue was accessibility, some people with mobility issues have to go through the car park to gain access, which can be dangerous.

Currently wheelchair users cannot see over the screens at the health centre.

Level access is at the rear of the building, and the lift at the front sometimes has issues. The internal lift requires a key to operate.

It was felt that the road crossing was too far from the health centre. This raises issues as the crossing can't be moved closer as it would be too close to the other crossing further up the road.

It was suggested that the bus stop from the Hebden Bridge bus be moved to the corner of the health centre as it is difficult to get off in a wheelchair.

Railway Station -

Specific issues were raised about accessibility. Access to platform 2 is currently very difficult for people with mobility issues. It was suggested that a lift to the platform would cost around £1m. A much cheaper option, which was originally pursued was to provide ramped access.

ISSUES, BARRIERS & CHALLENGES WORKSHOP

Shops and cafes -

It would be useful if shops had signage to show if they are dementia/heard of hearing friendly.

Currently the choice of materials in cafes/shops make hearing conversations difficult for people that are hard of hearing. This could be something that could be addressed in a design guide, to ensure that issues around reverberation etc is considered. Bridgewater Hall in Manchester is a good precedent of a building that uses different materials inside to both absorb and reflect sound.

A lot of shops in Tod have steps. When Hebden Bridge was redeveloped they missed the opportunity to install ramps. Tod should not miss this opportunity.

Website -

A website to log or map accessibility or problems would be useful. Work has started on this already (Todable)

Other issues -

Handrails are often too short, they should extend beyond the first and last step and placed on both sides opposed to just one.