

**NOTES OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 10.00 A.M.**

PRESENT: Councillor: P Bullivant (Chairperson) Presiding

Councillors: L Cooke (Mayor)
M Joyce
C Parker
L Wood

Officers In attendance: Phil Rowe – Town Clerk
Pierre Doutreligne - Projects & Strategy Officer
Linda McGuirk – Principal Administrator

By invitation: Rob Kelley, Senior Planning Officer - Teignbridge District Council

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor A Hall (Vice-Chairperson), Samantha Scott (Deputy Town Clerk & RFO) and Nigel Canham - Communications Advisor.

22. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Infrastructure Plan Working Group held on 7th September 2026 were agreed.

23. INTERESTS

None declared.

24. REVIEW OF THE IPWG ANNOTATED PLAN AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Chairperson, Councillor P Bullivant, suggested that Members undertake a page-by-page review of the Newton Abbot Infrastructure Plan (NAIP), focusing on the key areas for the town and identifying a list of priorities.

Senior Planning Officer, Rob Kelley, advised that the NAIP was the only plan which included details of assets and therefore provided a useful overview of the extent and scale of infrastructure within the town.

Members identified four principal areas for consideration:

1. Green spaces
2. Car parks
3. Community centres
4. Play areas

Discussion took place regarding the resources required to deliver the Council's aspirations, including whether the Town Council would be prepared to take on the associated financial commitments. Members considered the potential use of borrowing and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and expressed concern about placing an ongoing financial burden on the town. Consideration was also given to whether the Council would need to own assets or whether alternative management arrangements could be explored.

Members should also consider how the Infrastructure Plan aligned with the Council's other strategic plans. It was noted that some duplication between the plans demonstrated alignment and common strategic priorities.

Rob Kelley circulated a draft NATC Strategic Document Comparison for consideration, which demonstrated a high level of alignment between the relevant documents. It was clarified that the Infrastructure Plan was not intended to determine how individual assets would ultimately be managed. Members thanked Rob for this useful piece of work.

Members discussed what the Town Council could realistically deliver through the NAIP and where its priorities lie. The Project & Strategy Officer advocated a prudent approach while acknowledging that, at an appropriate stage, decisions would need to be made to progress the Council's ambitions.

The Chairperson invited Members to consider what the Council's vision for Newton Abbot should look like and what the aspiration to be the best market town in South Devon would mean in practical terms. Members were reminded that the vision and aspirations should remain concise.

It was noted that maintaining an aspirational list would assist the Council in identifying and accessing future funding opportunities. The list could be reviewed and refreshed periodically and should therefore be regarded as a living document.

Members considered that the core objectives and vision set out from page 37 onwards of the document combining the NAIP and Action Plan provided an appropriate basis for this work.

The following high-level aspirations were identified:

Short term

- Newfoundland Way Public Conveniences – it was noted that the Heads of Terms had been exchanged and signed.
- Town Quay – an aspiration was identified to encourage greater use of the Quay for waterborne activities. It was noted that the access road required urgent resurfacing and that an issue relating to title remained to be resolved. This was identified as a short-term priority, with an aspiration for progress by the end of 2026.
- Sandringham Park – identified as a short-term priority.

Medium term

- Town Quay – an aspiration was identified for the provision of a permanent café.
- Facilities Maintenance Depot – it was noted that the current lease was being renegotiated and that opportunities for a permanent, Council-owned facility were being investigated.
- Community Hub – Phase II was considered necessary to meet the needs of Newton Abbot. It was noted that due diligence was currently being undertaken on a town centre building.
- Theatre & Arts Training Academy – an aspiration was identified to develop a town-centre facility to promote culture and provide opportunities for theatre and arts training.
- Old Forde House – Members expressed an aspiration for the building to remain fit for purpose and in public ownership. The Town Council's ambition was to support relevant partners in retaining and protecting the building for the future.

Long term

- Aspirations to be identified.

The PASO asked whether any assets had been omitted from the NAIP. Members did not identify any additional assets.

Members considered that the Plan demonstrated an understanding of anticipated growth within Newton Abbot and that the Council's ambitions should reflect this growth.

Discussion also took place regarding developments on the outskirts of the town and the risk of those communities becoming isolated from the town centre. Members considered ways of encouraging residents to use the town centre, including improving the retail offer, entertainment and cultural opportunities, and making greater use of green spaces.

The Chairperson highlighted the importance of clearly identifying and developing relationships with key stakeholders to ensure that Newton Abbot Town Council was appropriately engaged and considered in future infrastructure projects and decision-making.

25. NEXT STEPS

It was agreed that Officers would prepare a draft of the Infrastructure Plan for consideration at the next meeting. Subject to the Group being satisfied with the final document, the Infrastructure Plan would then be presented to Full Council for approval before being shared with Teignbridge District Council.

Members expressed their thanks to Rob Kelley, Senior Planning Officer for his significant contribution and support throughout the process.

26. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed.

Meeting closed at 11:23 a.m.

CHAIRPERSON..... Date.....