

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Agenda Friday 4th April 2025

9.30am Village Hall (Maple Room)

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 14th February 2025.
2. To receive feedback from the NPWG presentation to the Annual Parish Meeting.
3. To receive an update the application to EDDC for funding for a Housing Needs Assessment and to decide actions. (Appendix 1)
4. To review the draft NP Survey and to decide actions:
 - a. Prepare further draft
 - b. Do we need a survey for young people?
 - c. Plan for contacts with village organisations
 - d. Timetable
5. To review the draft Basic Conditions Template and decide actions.
6. To review NPWG Financial Statement.
7. To agree date of next meeting:

31st March 2025

Anne Oliver, Parish Clerk

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Funding for Housing Needs Assessment

Angela King, EDDC NP Officer

27th March 2025

Dear Anne and Margaret

I have now heard back from our Housing Officer who manages the contract with DCT for the funded Housing Needs Surveys. She has advised me that the programme is not yet open for 2025/26 and the contract is in the process of being agreed still. However, she has registered your expression of interest, so you are on the list. However, the contract only allows EDDC to offer up to 3 funded surveys, and for a community of your size (with more than 600 households), it would apparently equate to 2 of those 3. EDDC will be prioritising surveys for communities that are likely to deliver a housing scheme as a result e.g. to support one of the many Community Land Trusts that exist in the district and/or NP groups with an intention to make an allocation for housing in their plans. I don't believe from our meeting discussion this is expected to be the outcome in West Hill (although I appreciate it's possibly a bit chicken and egg in terms of making that decision and having the data to inform it!). Unfortunately, the circumstances mean that West Hill is unlikely to be able to supported as a priority for early funding in the 2025/26 programme, but this will remain under review, and it could therefore be something that is offered later in the year.

However, there are other elements you can progress depending partly on budget and capacity of course, in terms of reviewing the effectiveness of the current plan and undertaking initial community engagement and evidence gathering side to provide a further steer on the direction of travel / focus for a reviewed plan. Doing a project plan for the NP review is probably a useful early task. Locality offer this template tool which is very high level:

[Project planning tool - Locality Neighbourhood Planning](#) but useful to help map out and track the overall process. EDDC have a more detailed template which I think is probably more useful: [Project plan - East Devon](#) (please ignore the reference in it to EDDC grant funding which unfortunately is not currently available). On the housing needs side of things specifically, if, for instance, you were to do a community survey, you could perhaps include some of the type of questions that a HNS would ask and collect some initial evidence yourselves that would give them some data that could indicate need – for example, asking if people are needing to move in the next 5 years, the reasons and what accommodation they would be seeking e.g. by dwelling type, minimum bedroom size.

I am sorry to come back with this no doubt rather disappointing news. There is also no further news as yet on the new round of Government funding. However, our Housing Officer has suggested it might be possible to apply for funding to help with doing a survey etc for the NP via the annual Ward Councillor budgets that Devon County Council offers: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/democracy/councillors-info/locality-budgets/>. I've not signposted groups to these grants before, but could be something worth investigating, although I think likely you are aware of them already.