

Penzance Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation - West Cornwall Health Watch Comments

WEST CORNWALL HEALTHWATCH

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Comments submitted in response to the Regulation 14 (Pre-submission) Consultation on the Draft Penzance Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2030

These comments are submitted by West Cornwall HealthWatch to express our disappointment and concern that the Draft Parish Plan pays little attention to current and future health and social care needs of the resident population of the Parish.

Despite acknowledging that the natural and built environment is important in sustaining health, the draft Plan contains no analysis or policies which will help to improve existing facilities and services for community health, health care or social care or to meet additional needs arising from increased population.

We note that the scale of increase of housing in the Parish is significant – perhaps resulting in a 25% increase in the population? – and yet there are no policies which will address key issues, such as:

- The need for premises to accommodate expanding and new GP surgeries, health hubs, hospitals, care homes or other local health and social care facilities
- The need to ensure affordable housing suitable for key workers in health and social care
- The need to ensure housing for groups in the population with particular health or social care needs
- The need to support employment in these key sectors in the local economy
- The need to support links between resident population and workforce and various activities or facilities supporting healthy communities
- The need to respond to seasonal increased pressure on health care facilities and services due to tourism

We understand the purpose and restriction on the scope of the Plan :

“The Plan must only have policies which relate to land-use planning and development matters. It should not repeat other planning policies, and should add local detail not already provided by Local Plan policies. Those actions, programmes and projects which do not typically require planning permission or are not about the use of land or buildings will not have policy coverage, although they can be referenced in the Plan if they help to convey wider issues of importance.”

And we note that the Plan must fit within Countywide and National Planning Policies and Guidelines.

This means we do not expect the plan to include proposals for specific health or social care developments - e.g. a site for a new healthcare facility, GP surgery or care home - if no such proposal already exists, but we had expected to see an analysis of current provision and live proposals against current and future need over the Plan period, leading to policies and (where appropriate) proposals to support appropriate or necessary development.

The draft Plan makes several comments about a Vision to support healthy communities and about the importance of the national built and natural environment in supporting physical and mental health, and talks about supporting growth of employment in key sectors in the economy such as tourism, but ignores the potential of the Plan to support provision of good facilities and services for the community, and significant amount of employment in health and social care in the Parish. It also talks about the importance of a Penzance as a centre serving the wider area but again does not reflect the important existing role, evidenced by, for example, the West Cornwall Hospital currently seeking expansion, and the various doctors' surgeries serving patients in the wider area.

There is a lot of attention in the draft Plan to the question of growth in housing, and affordability. As we understand the figures, about 2,000 new houses will be built in the Parish, with an further 1,000 in the wider area of West Cornwall. Against an existing Parish population of 21,000, does this imply a population growth in the Parish of about

5,000 or 25%, with perhaps a similar % in the wider area? Surely this demands an assessment of the need for expanded or additional GP surgeries and other health and social care facilities; the need for housing to

accommodate additional staff; and the opportunities and constraints on more employment in the sector as part of the local economy – and sets of policies to ensure that where such proposals come forward in the planning process they are properly considered and if necessary prioritised to meet Parish-wide and local neighbourhood needs. For example, where a new or expanded healthcare facility is proposed, or a new care home is planned, what policies will guide its' priority compared to other uses, e.g. residential or employment? We would argue that there may well be a need to give such a proposal a higher priority than other uses, but of course other factors, such as location, traffic generation or building design must also play a part - so requiring careful policy drafting.

We note that there is no discussion of the particular need to provide more housing for over-55s, for sheltered housing and for additional (or expanded) care home, beyond a few very broad comments.

Given that each type housing has its own particular requirements in terms of environmental setting, building design, transport and access to shops, services and other facilities, and that there is a least one important live proposal, we would have expected to see analysis, comment and policies.

Also we imagine that there could be policies (not just general comments) to make the connection between environment and community health, for example encouraging facilities that encourage health through participation in recreation, sport, indoor and outdoor activities.

Therefore we suggest that the draft Parish Plan requires attention at least to these issues:

- A new section, alongside Economy, Housing, Environment, etc., discussing Communities, Health and Social Care, including quantification in a robust analysis of the overall scale and type of health and social care provision appropriate to the Parish now and in the light of housing growth – e.g. number of GPs and GP surgeries, number of care home places, etc. – and a review of proposals which have recently been considered (or are under current consideration) through the planning system and by health and care agencies
- Appropriate links to Health and Social Care issues within the other sections of the Plan
- Policies to priorities and support appropriate development and standards in appropriate locations including
 - o Premises for health and social care services
 - o Housing for older and elderly people
 - o Care homes
 - o Affordable housing for key workers
 - o Measures to support employment in health and social care sectors (perhaps similar to policies for employment in Tourism/Visitor Economy?)
 - o Facilities to support community health and well-being in the natural and built environment

There may well be other issues which emerge through careful analysis and consultation with appropriate agencies and groups (including ourselves), and there may opportunities to be identified as well as challenges in responding to this comments. However we hope that by submitting these comments we can help to contribute to a Neighbourhood Plan which truly serves the needs of the local population and economy.

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(Drafted by John Forsyth, on behalf of West Cornwall Heath Watch)