

Report to: **Strategic Planning Committee**



Date of Meeting Tuesday 20 September 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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## **Housing requirement and Site allocations – Honiton and surrounding areas**

### **Report summary:**

This report sets out recommendations for sites to be allocated for development through the new local plan for/at the settlements of – Honiton (including edge of Honiton sites in Gittisham) and Dunkeswell. Subject to Committee approval, and any further assessment undertaken, the sites will be included as allocations for development in the Regulation 19 draft of the local plan that is proposed to be considered at Strategic Planning Committee in November 2024.

### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### **Recommendation:**

- (1) That Strategic Planning Committee agree to include the recommended site allocations set out in this report, for Honiton and surrounding areas, for inclusion in the Regulation 19 draft of the plan scheduled to be considered by this Committee in November 2024.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

To ensure that appropriate land, in Honiton and surrounding areas, is allocated in the new local plan to provide for development needs, specifically for housing.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Assistant Director, Planning Strategy and Development Management,  
[efreeman@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:efreeman@eastdevon.gov.uk), Tel 01395 517519

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### **Portfolio(s) (check which apply):**

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

**Climate change** Low Impact

**Risk:** High Risk; To be found sound at Examination, and therefore to be in position where it can be adopted, the local plan will need to provide for sufficient and appropriate housing growth to meet levels set out by Government. This requires the allocation of land for development. Should decisions be taken to **not** allocate appropriate and sufficient land the expectation is that the local plan will not be in a position where it can be adopted. Amongst other impacts this is likely to lessen or remove controls and influence that this council will have on the type, nature and location of development, notably housing, that may be built in the future, with speculative planning applications, for example, being far more likely. In the absence of a plan we would need to anticipate far more planning appeals with the costs and other impacts that arise from these. There are powers, should a planning authority not produce a local plan, for Government intervention and imposition of a third party to produce a local plan on behalf of the authority.

**Links to background information** Links are contained in the body of the report.

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

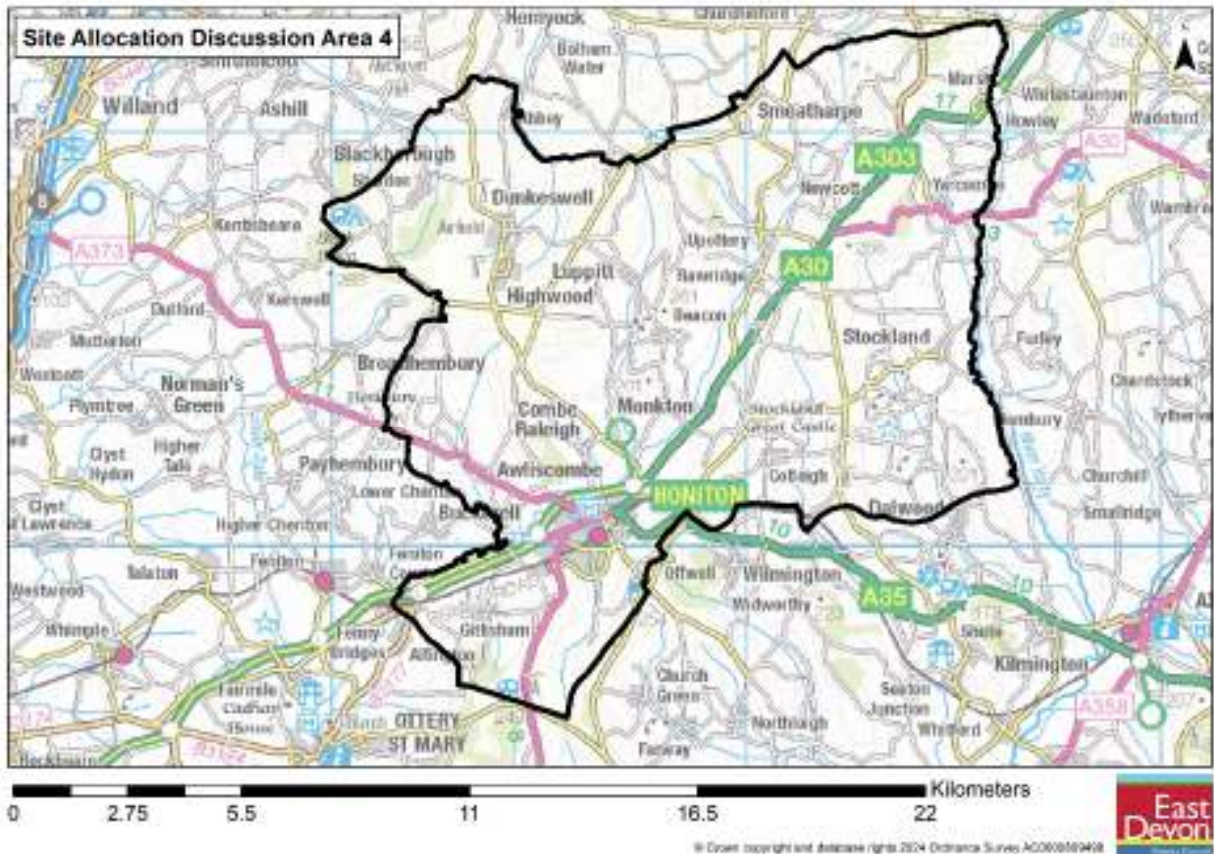
- A supported and engaged community
  - Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
  - Resilient economy that supports local business
  - Financially secure and improving quality of services
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## Report in full

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is specifically concerned with proposed sites for allocations for development at and around settlements close to Honiton – these specifically are:
- Honiton (including edge of Honiton sites in Gittisham) and
  - Dunkeswell

The area covered is shown on the map extract below, inside the surrounding black line.



1.2 It should be noted that we are only proposing to allocate sites for development that fall in/at/next to settlements in the draft local plan settlement hierarchy (see [commonplace-reg-18-final-071122.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](https://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/commonplace-reg-18-final-071122.pdf) – Strategic Policy 1). Therefore, other smaller settlements, hamlets and rural areas that fall within the overall black line area above are not included in this report, and are not identified as locations for allocation of land for development.

## 2. Technical assessment of sites and working party considerations

- 2.1 To support site selection work officers have produced technical assessments of site options and choices. The assessment reports for sites that are referenced in this committee report can be viewed in the appendices. These technical reports are amended redrafts of reports that went to Member Working party meetings held in July and August 2024 to reflect discussions held at those meeting and points raised. In addition, there are some amendments to correct matters of accuracy and update on relevant new information.
- 2.2 The technical reports contain summary information only and behind them there is more detailed assessment work in respect of landscape, built heritage and biodiversity considerations. Full reports, with all details (again as might be refined and adjusted in the light of new information), will accompany the local plan when presented to Strategic Planning Committee in November 2024.
- 2.3 The notes taken from the working party meeting for Honiton and surrounding areas are appended to this report.

### 3. Summary of key site allocation recommendations by location

- 3.1 In this section we set out some headline commentary around recommended site allocation choices at the settlements addressed in this report. This is intended to provide an overview of some key considerations. In the next section of this report we list, on a settlement by settlement basis, and in Ward boundary order, all of the sites that have been promoted for development in various calls for sites and that were not sifted out on account of being deemed not developable or not being in accordance with the settlement hierarchy -see [1a. Role and Function of Settlements report v3 final draft for SPC.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#).

#### **Honiton (including edge of Honiton sites in Gittisham) and development options at and around the town**

- 3.2 Honiton is a tier 2 settlement, one of the largest towns in East Devon. It is a Main Centre in the emerging Local Plan, home to a wide range of community facilities including a variety of shops, sports facilities, a library, primary school, GP and hospital. The National Landscape surrounds Honiton, including the Blackdown Hills National Landscape and East Devon National Landscape, which to some degree limited development inside the current built-up area in Honiton.
- 3.3 To address the constraints and needs of the area, some development would be located within the National Landscape. Four of the recommended allocations in Honiton would fall within the National Landscape, with three of them, Honi\_07, Honi\_13, and Honi\_15, being entirely within the National Landscape. Additionally, the southern portion of Gitti\_05 would also be located within the National Landscape.
- 3.4 It should be noted with regard to Honi\_15 that the central part of the site was previously consulted on as Honi\_01 as part of the draft Local Plan consultation at the end of 2022/early 2023 (see plan below). Since the adjoining fields to the east and west have been submitted for consideration as well. To date these additional fields have not been consulted on and further consideration about how these are dealt with is required. As a result, Members are only therefore being asked to consider the element that comprised Honi\_01 at this stage.



- 3.5 In total 10 sites are proposed for allocation in Honiton (including edge of Honiton sites in Gittisham), which would yield around 14.6 ha of employment land and roughly 450 dwellings

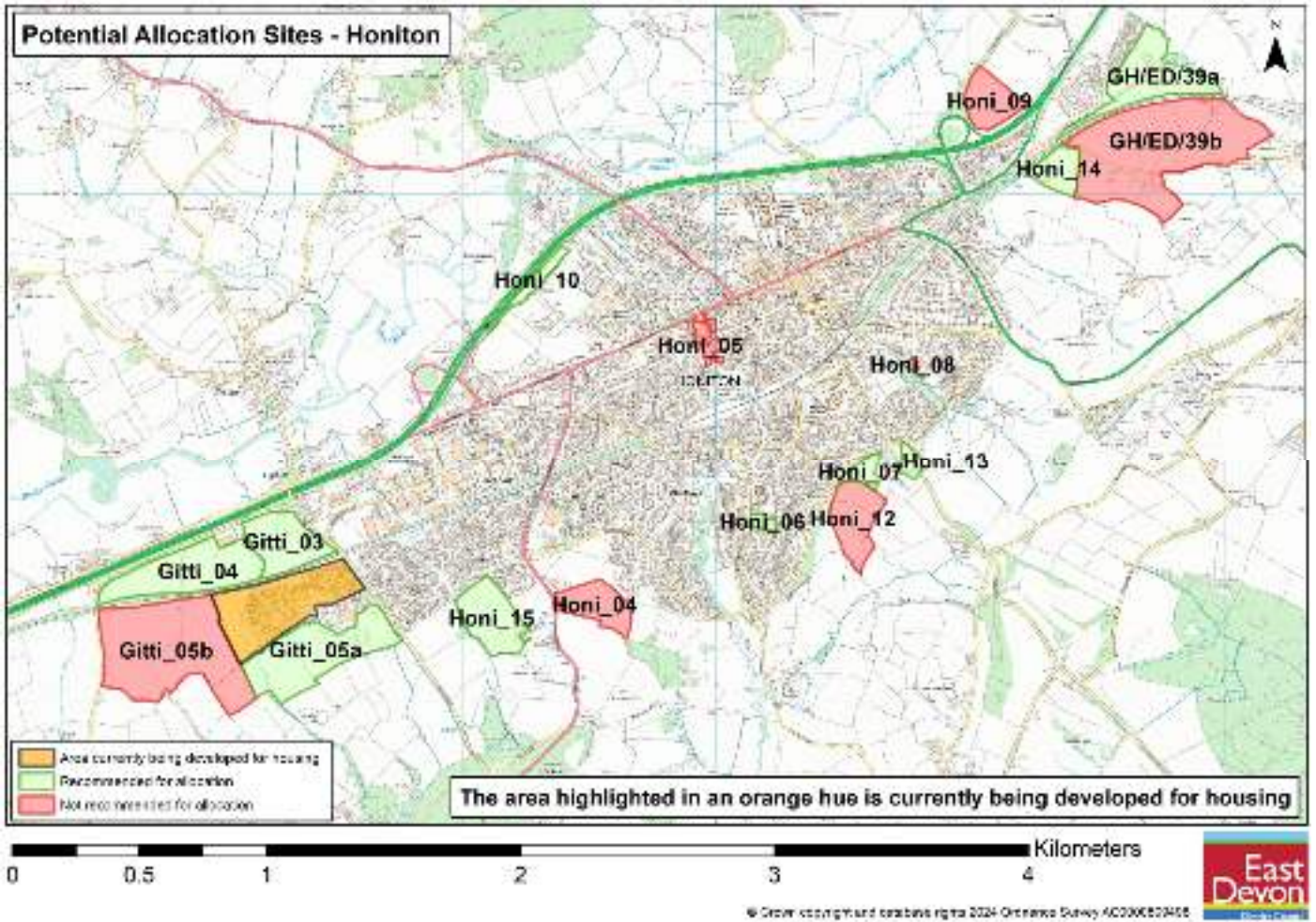
### **Dunkeswell and development options at and around the village**

- 3.1 Dunkeswell falls in the fourth tier classification, of the settlement hierarchy, it is classified as Service Village with some facilities and services to meet basic day-to-day needs. Draft plan policy provides for limited development to meet local needs. Few sites have been assessed at these settlements, with one recommended allocation (Dunk\_05).

### **4. Sites recommended as allocations to go into the Regulation 19 plan**

- 4.1 Set out below, in settlement/ward order (for settlements listed and addressed in this report) are lists of sites, as referenced and that feature in the site technical assessment documents. The tables below provide an officer recommendation on whether they should be allocated for development in the Regulation 19 draft of the local plan or not. We do not list sites that have a planning permission for development or that were sifted out from assessment.
- 4.2 For feedback that relates to the sites listed in this section at the draft plan stage of consultation see: [accessible-reg-18-consultation-feedback-report-spring-2023.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](https://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/accessible-reg-18-consultation-feedback-report-spring-2023.pdf) Feedback highlights a range of concerns associated with nearly all sites referenced in this report, whether proposed for allocation or not. There were, however, some favourable comments raised for some sites from a range of respondents and not just the site owners/promoters of those sites.
- 4.3 A spreadsheet showing these allocations will be presented at this Committee, for Members to discuss and endorse (or not), and to show a 'running total' of the number of homes being allocated. This will enable Members to see in real time the impact of decisions to allocate or not allocate sites, in terms of the overall district-wide housing requirement.

# Sites at Honiton (including edge of Honiton sites in Gittisham)



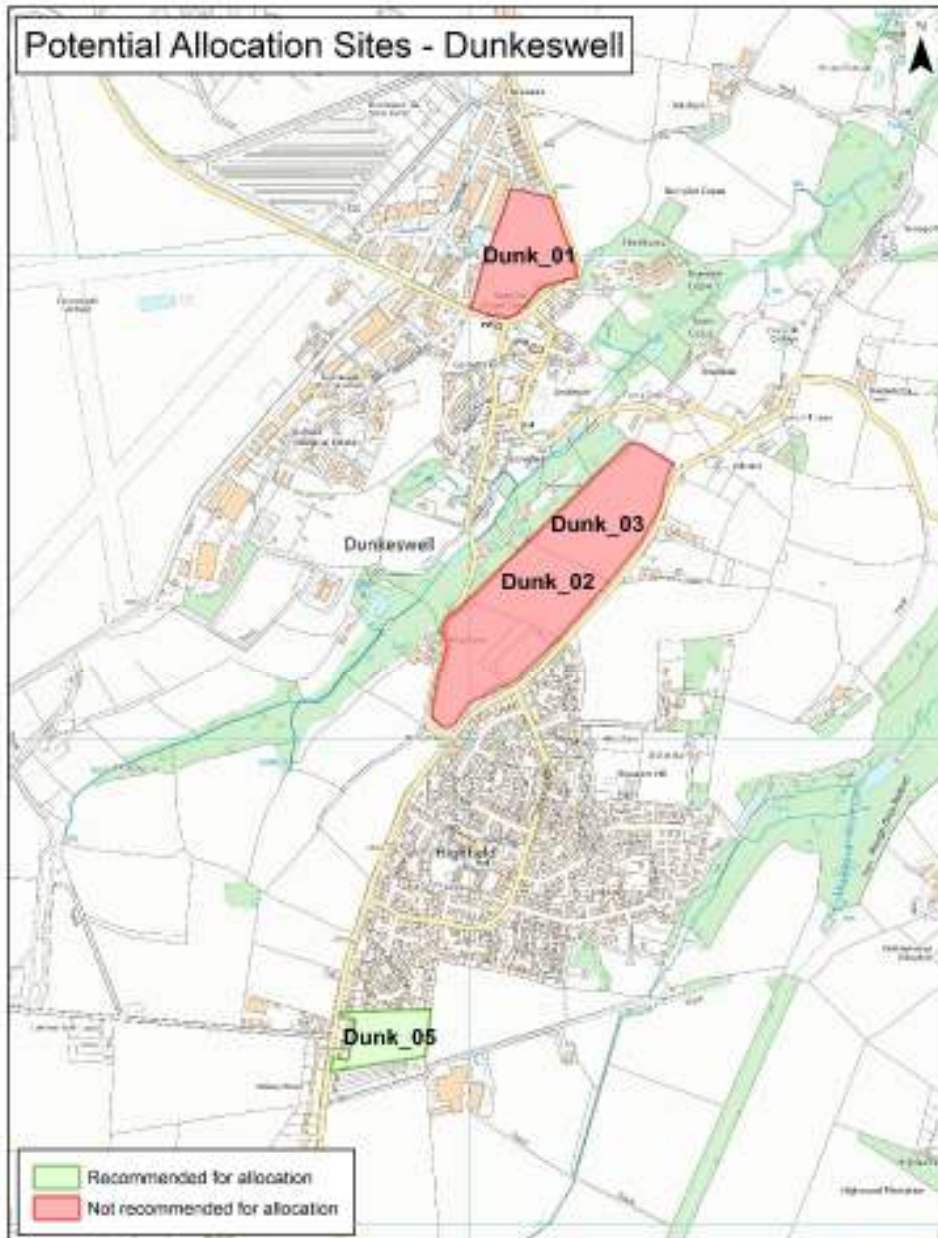
| Site reference | Number of dwellings or Ha of employment land | Recommend allocating? | Succinct officer commentary – if relevant (see technical report for full assessment)   |
|----------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Gitti_03       | 5.5 hectare (employment land)                | Yes                   | <p>The working group observed that the Gitti_03 and Gitti_04 employment sites had been designated in the existing local plan but remained undeveloped.</p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the high infrastructure costs and lack of evidence supporting the viability of these sites. The working group suggested that 15 hectares of new employment land might be unnecessary and questioned the inclusion of a potential new railway station in the assessment notes (this is an historic record that is now redundant).</p> <p>The group noted that ongoing work was exploring viability considerations for these sites and inquired whether residential development might be a suitable option.</p> |
| Gitti_04       | 9.1 hectare (employment land)                | Yes                   | See above  |
| Gitti_05       | 100  | Yes, partly Gitti_05a | The working group noted that the southern part of the site falls within the National Landscape.  |
| Honi_04        | 56   | No                    | The working group highlighted that it is elevated and of landscape prominence.   |
| Honi_05        | 40   | No                    | There was a comment from the working group in favour of development at this site though flooding concerns were highlighted. It was noted that the site will fall in development boundaries and could come forward through a windfall application.  |

|         |    |     |   |
|---------|----|-----|---|
| Honi_06 | 30 | Yes | <p>While the working group favoured allocating the site for development, they noted the presence of Tree Preservation Orders on trees within the site and questioned whether additional school land might be needed due to the proximity of an existing school.</p> <p>The Devon County Council response regarding school needs states that there are no concerns about primary school capacity in Honiton given the proposed level of development. While the town has experienced a trend of migration to rural areas for primary education, the overall capacity of Honiton primary school, which has been expanded to 630 places, is sufficient. Currently, the school is operating at 420 places due to low intake.</p> |
| Honi_07 | 30 | Yes |   |
| Honi_08 | 6  | No  |   |
| Honi_09 | 50 | No  |   |
| Honi_10 | 21 | Yes | <p>This site is situated north of the existing Taylor Wimpey development. The working group expressed concerns regarding highway access and the potential traffic impacts on the land to the north. Noise pollution was also a concern due to the proximity of the A30 road.</p> <p>During the meeting, the working group noted that the existing planning application for the site included a proposed highway access through the southern portion of the development. Additionally, they observed that the Council's Environmental Health section had not raised any objections to the current planning application.</p>  |
| Honi_12 | 71 | No  |   |
| Honi_13 | 10 | Yes | <p>The working group raised concerns this site has an existing planning permission.</p> <p>The existing planning permission only covers a small part of the site and should not impact the development potential.</p>   |



|          |     |  |   |
|----------|-----|--|---|
| Honi_14  | 30  | Yes  | The working group expressed concerns about the site's accessibility, as it is accessed via a narrow railway bridge. They also noted that a previous planning application for the site had been rejected. There was a general concern that the highway access was inadequate and that development in this area could lead to Honiton expanding into the surrounding countryside. |
| Honi_15  | 79  | Yes – the part that previously comprised Honi_01 | The working group has noted that this site was on rising ground with landscape impact concerns on the National Landscape noted.   |
| GH/ED/39 | 100 | Yes, partly GH/ED/39a                            | The working group support not allocating GH/ED/39b, and noted that GH/ED/39a part has a resolution to grant planning permission for residential development on it.  |

# Sites at Dunkeswell



| Site reference | Number of dwellings | Recommend allocating? | Succinct officer commentary – if relevant (see technical report for full assessment)  |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Dunk_01        | 53                  | No                    |   |
| Dunk_02        | 150                 | No                    | The working group advised that the site accommodated the football club and air ambulance (though it was questioned how much of the site these uses used).   |
| Dunk_05        | 43                  | Yes                   | The working group questioned the feasibility of establishing a suitable highway access to the site. The council's planning officer reported that Devon County Council, as the highway authority, had not raised any objections.<br><br>Concerns were expressed regarding potential flooding and water runoff issues at the site. Additionally, there was no public footpath connecting the site to the village. |

## 5. Next steps

- 5.1 Officers will use the resolutions of this meeting to finalise drafting the Local Plan housing requirement, and the allocation of sites to meet this requirement, in the Regulation 19 Publication Local Plan. Depending on outcomes of other committee meetings, that consider other settlements and sites, there may however be a need to revisit site choices. This maybe so if total land allocations recommended for inclusion in the plan, and the dwellings they may accommodate, fall short of the levels of provision that are required to meet Government housing requirements.
- 5.2 There will, however, also need to be further refinement and testing work on sites, projected delivery rates and constraints (and opportunities) before final conclusions can be drawn.
- 5.3 As previously discussed and agreed, the Regulation 19 Publication Local Plan will come to this Committee in November 2024 with consultation scheduled to run from December 2024 to January 2025.

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### Financial implications:

There are no specific financial implications within the report.

### Legal implications:

The legal implications are set out within the report. (002533/September/DH).