

Agenda for Strategic Planning Committee Tuesday, 2nd September, 2025, 10.00 am

Members of Strategic Planning Committee

Councillors: B Bailey, J Bailey, K Blakey, C Brown, O Davey, P Fernley, D Haggerty, P Hayward, M Howe (Vice-Chair), B Ingham, G Jung, D Ledger, Y Levine, T Olive (Chair) and H Parr

Venue: Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton

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(or group number 01395 517546)

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This meeting is being recorded for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the [East Devon District Council Youtube Channel](#).

1 Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 4 - 13)

Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 8 July 2025.

2 Apologies

3 Declarations of interest

Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making [declarations of interest](#)

4 Public speaking

Information on [public speaking](#) is available online

5 Matters of urgency

Information on [matters of urgency](#) is available online

6 Confidential/exempt item(s)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There are no items which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

7 Newton Poppleford Settlement Boundary (Pages 14 - 20)

This report follows a resolution at Council on 16 July 2025 where it was resolved that Strategic Planning Committee be asked to reconsider the proposed settlement boundary for Newton Poppleford.

- 8 East Devon Local Plan - consideration of potential plan changes to allocations (Pages 21 - 74)

Public speaking for this item has been limited to no more than 2 speakers on any one site.

The items below will not be considered before 1pm

- 9 East Devon Local Plan - Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) (Pages 75 - 96)

This report sets out information and recommendations in respect of where Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) are defined.

- 10 East Devon Local Plan - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation (Pages 97 - 104)

This report sets out information and recommendations in respect of the accommodation needs of the gypsy and traveller communities given that one of the sites proposed in the first Regulation 19 plan is no longer considered to be available/suitable for allocation.

- 11 East Devon Local Plan - Duty to Co-operate (Pages 105 - 116)

This report summarises duty to co-operate considerations and highlights the need for continued work in a number of key areas and summarises the current position in each case and identifies key actions needed.

- 12 East Devon Local Plan - policy for wind farms and turbines (Pages 117 - 120)

This report sets out further information on policy options for addressing proposals for wind turbines and wind farms in East Devon.

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Members of the public exercising their right to speak during Public Speaking will be recorded.

[Decision making and equalities](#)

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EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Honiton on 8 July 2025

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.40 am and ended at 1.25 pm

1 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 May 2025 were confirmed as a true record.

2 Declarations of interest

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Dan Ledger, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Lives opposite a site allocation in Seaton.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Geoff Jung, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Chair of Beach Management Plans for several areas relating to CCMA's.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Jessica Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Olly Davey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Paul Hayward, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Devon County Councillor Axminster and an employee of Axminster Town Council.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. The Chair, Councillor Todd Olive, declared an Affects Non-registerable Interest for the Committee Members that were also a Town or Parish Councillor.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. In accordance with the Code of Good Practice for Councillors and Officer dealing with planning matters as set out in the Constitution, the Chair, Councillor Todd Olive, on behalf of the Committee advised lobbying on the site allocations in Exmouth.

Non-Committee Member

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Aurora Bailey, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Ward Member for site allocation Exmo_20.

Minute 6. East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan. Councillor Nick Hookway, Affects Non-registerable Interest, Exmouth Town Councillor and Devon County Councillor for Exmouth & Budleigh Salterton Coastal Division.

3 Public speaking

12 members of the public had registered to speak on minute 6 – East Devon Local Plan – Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan.

Mr Thomas Shillitoe said that the Regulation 19 evidence demonstrated false statements and misleading evidence and that it was the responsibility for the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Manager to help the Committee to make informed decisions and not to mislead them. He urged the Committee not to be talked out of reviewing some sites and referred them to Exmo_20 which he claimed missed core evidence that demonstrated that it was not a viable site. He suggested that the reallocation sites should be restricted to sites that passed the HELAA process or were either first or second choice sites.

In response to Mr Shillitoe's submitted question 'can Mr Freeman confirm in his professional opinion if, on the 4th of February 2025 when advising Councillors at the Strategic Planning Committee, he believed that the Regulation 19 plan was sound and legally compliant?'. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed that he did believe that it was sound at that time but noted that there was some additional work that needed to be done and that he was confident that it will comply with all relevant legal tests by the time that it needs to be submitted for examination.

Mr Nigel Humphreys sought reassurance that the Regulation 18 process had been followed correctly in relation to site allocation Exmo_20. He referred to various Strategic Planning Committee meetings which had discussed Exmo_20 and in particular the meeting of 6 September 2022 in which documentation had specifically confirmed that Exmo_46 was being promoted instead Exmo_20. He also referred to two new sites Exmo_20a and Exmo_20b which had appeared in the report pack of the meeting on 1 November 2022 and advised that these two sites had not been mentioned or discussed. Mr Humphrey sought clarification as to when the Committee had agreed to remove Exmo_46 and reinstate Exmo_20 and when the Committee had agreed the two new sites Exmo_20a and Exmo_20b. In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management apologised for the confusion and confirmed that all the sites had been taken through the correct process advising that Exmo_46 was part of Exmo_20 which had been merged to create a larger site and then was divided up into Exmo_20a and Exmo_20b. He acknowledged there had been a lot of response for Exmo_20, which would be taken into account when preparing a future report to the actions, if any, that are needed for that site.

Mr Paul Griew, representing Sidmouth's Cliff Road Action Group addressed Policy AR03 – Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) and suggested that this policy should either be dropped or amended as there was little evidence to support this policy nor does it appear to benefit any local purpose. If the Committee were minded to amend the policy Mr Griew advised that householders should be allowed to extend or alter their properties subject to the usual planning permissions at their own risk and that the policy should specifically state that the CCMA designation will be removed upon completion of these works.

Mrs Kerin Hamill said that the 1,110 comments from people commenting on Exmo_20 were being ignored and that the Local Plan was not sound as it went against many of East Devon District Council's policies. Mrs Hamill advised that the main site entrance would be onto the dangerous B3179 road and would have an adverse impact on trees, hedgerows and woodlands as well as the destruction of ecosystems by covering the site with concrete, bricks and tarmac. She pleaded with councillors to visit the site to see for themselves that the land was not suitable for development.

A statement was read out on behalf of Joanna Chalker who queried the site selection methodology which included a key criterion that the site was required to be within a 1600 metres walkable distance to services. She asked the Committee to reconsider Exmo_20 as it was incorrectly stated as being in a sustainable location as its main access point was 4340 metres from Exmouth train station and a 4 mile drive from Exmouth centre. Ms Chalker suggested that the Committee should consider Whimble for the reallocations due to its good road transport links and that it had a main line railway and was close to the secondary school at Cranbrook.

Ms Emily Glanfield submitted the following question:

Since 3rd September it has been confirmed that Exmo_20 has no meaningful vehicular access to Exmouth. It is accepted that housing would need to be concentrated on the Southern part of the site at Exmo_20, so the lack of vehicular access to Dinan Way would require cars to drive at least a kilometre in the opposite direction away from Exmouth town centre to join the main access at the B3179, a country road, before driving back down into Exmouth. The direct result of allocating Exmo_20 would be forcing cars to drive more miles, making longer, indirect car journeys from all of the proposed 700 homes. Furthermore the situation has changed significantly since 3rd September in that the long awaited Dinan Way extension is now finally underway, meaning that the Hulham road sites will link directly to the A376. Can you confirm that you still believe Exmo_20 to be the least worst option, and a sustainable and accessible location? In response, it was advised that the Committee would address this question in debate for this item.

Abi Mewse referred to cross-boundary impacts which she suggested had not been considered enough particularly when housing developments near parish borders (Cranbrook) will heavily impact neighbouring communities and services (Whimble). She addressed some procedural concerns specifically relating to Whim_08 (Bramley Gardens) that officers did not consider suitable but Committee had allocated it in the Local Plan. She referred to paragraph 5.5 of the report that suggests that allocations can no longer be challenged as they had already gone through a logical and comprehensive site allocation process which she did not agree with as the process appeared neither transparent nor evidence-led. Ms Mewse sought clarification about how and when members of the public can challenge the late-stage allocation of a site such as Whim_08 which was not supported by Planning Officers. Ms Mewse also asked a question about AI use and whether the Council had an AI policy in place to govern the ethical and responsible use of AI in planning decisions.

In response the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed that the procedural process had followed a very open and transparent process with all the site allocation decisions being made in public during Strategic Planning Committee and members of the public had been given an opportunity to comment on those sites through the consultations stage of the Local Plan. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management also confirmed that the Council did have a policy of AI use and that it was used in accordance with the Council's privacy notice published on the website.

Karin Rabik raised deep concern for Woodbury Common, which she said was one of the most highly designated conservation areas in the South West of England as it would be severely impacted by the major development of 700 houses at Exmo_20. Mr Rabik asked whether another site could be considered with less harm and risk to wildlife as the Common carried national and international ecological protection and was not only a site of specific scientific interest but also a special protection area for conservation, a nature

reserve and was also in the process of being included in the local nature recovery strategy of Devon as high value land.

Justin Shaw spoke about Whim_08 and noted that the Committee's original aspiration was to allocate sites that were recommended for allocation. However as the Committee was unable to meet the required housing numbers set by government Councillors had to reconsider sites that fell below the threshold and unfortunately Whim_08 was one of those sites.

Mr Shaw addressed the site Whim_08 and sought assurances from the Committee that due consideration will be given to tactical issues associated with this development that had originally not been recommended for development and where appropriate may be removed from the allocation. He also sought clarification on what feedback was being provided to the government to improve future housing development policy noting the feedback being captured throughout this process.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management reassured Mr Shaw that the Council had always and will always continue to push back on the government's housing numbers by pointing out the problems that East Devon District Council face with East Devon's severe environmental and infrastructure constraints. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management also reassured Mr Shaw that the Committee had been provided with all the necessary information for the sites to help them make informed decisions and pointed out that on occasions the Committee's views had differed from officers recommendations.

John Hamill advised the Committee that it was his fourth time addressing his concerns about the failings for Exmo_20 and felt that he was not being listened to. He referred to the 1,110 responses in the feedback report for Exmo_20 which proved that people were concerned and that he could not understand why this site was still being considered for allocation as it was clear there was overwhelming evidence against Exmo_20. He urged the Committee to listen to their electors and remove the site from the Local Plan.

Councillor Jo Yarwood spoke on behalf of the residents of Whimble raising concerns about flood risk issues and pedestrian safety for the two sites that had been allocated in the village. All the roads that lead into the village have single lane access and without pavements and that the increase in houses would lead to more cars in a village that already experiences near misses on a daily basis. Councillor Yarwood also raised a concern that the site Whim_08 would be encroaching onto the Green Wedge.

Tony Burch, a retired chartered Civil Engineer spoke about the mapping of the Coastal Change Management Areas for Cliff Road at Sidmouth. He referred to page 79 of the feedback report for Policy AR03 and opposed this policy as the Cliff Road CCMA map was not based on any erosion data that is in the LPA evidence library or elsewhere in the public domain and so it was not justified. He summarised 3 factual evidence points supporting his opposition and said in conclusion that the Cliff Road CCMA map was not justified with published erosion data and suggested that it was not sound or legally compliant and requested that the Cliff Road CCMA map be reviewed.

In response, the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management acknowledged the concerns raised by Mr Burch and advised that these would be discussed with the relevant officer.

There was one matter of urgency discussed under minute 276.

5 Confidential/exempt item(s)

There were no confidential or exempt items.

6 East Devon Local Plan - Consultation feedback, timetable and future workplan

The report presented by the Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management provided the Committee with feedback on the first stage of the Regulation 19 Consultation and provided an update on the timetable for the production of the Local Plan taking into account any consequential changes.

Out of the 3,510 comments received on the consultations from individuals and organisations the key issues included:

- 1,100 responses had been received for site Exmo_20 raising concerns on biodiversity, flood risk, infrastructure and procedural fairness.
- Concerns had been raised by the housing development industry about the Council's Housing Strategy
- Concerns about under-classification of Feniton and Whimple.
- Concerns about the under representation of Exmouth's strategic role
- Concerns raised about infrastructure delivery, in particular, healthcare, education and utilities.

Some other key issues raised by statutory consultees included:

- Concerns about site allocations within a national landscape.
- Potential impact of wind turbines on heritage assets.
- There is a need for transport evidence for the West of East Devon.
- Concerns raised about the absence of some detail for proposals for the new community.
- Lack of capacity in primary health care in the West of East Devon.
- There is a need for additional evidence on water quality to understand the potential impact of additional housing.
- Impact to heritage assets needs to be addressed prior to any potential development.
- The requirement of a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 4.2 of the report that provided clarification on the implications of two stage Regulation 19 process taking into account the new version of the NPPF. The Committee noted there was a need to be mindful about minimising any significant changes to the Local Plan to help keep within the transitional arrangements as this could have an impact on the housing numbers which could then be increased by a further 25%.

The Committee's attention was also drawn to paragraph 6 of the report which addressed the ongoing evidence work. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that he was confident that the outstanding evidence documents would be completed in time to support the Local Plan consultation and referred to the revised timetable to help get the submission of the Local Plan to examination.

These key steps included:

- Ongoing study and assessment work to be done throughout the summer.
- Committee to receive the first redraft of Local Plan in September/October 2025. (The Committee noted that an additional meeting would be required).
- The second round of Regulation 19 consultation to take into account the second new community and the outstanding evidence work to run from October to November 2025.

The Chair invited questions from Councillors which included:

- Can more details be added to the agenda paper to help identify who is making the comments that had been received during the consultation? The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that officers would be publishing all the comments, but these were still being worked on and gave reassurance that this would be clearer in the summary report.
- Clarification was sought about whether the council would be contacting the local MPs to address the high housing target figures. Although the Chair reassured Councillors that the MPs were already well aware of the council's views and advised that he would send an email to remind them.
- Clarification was sought from the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management about whether it was a surprise to receive negative comments from the statutory bodies. In response he advised that some comments were a surprise and gave an example that the Environment Agency had objected to the lack of a Water Cycle Study when it was not a requirement.
- Clarification was sought on when the Committee would receive the draft final version of the Local Plan. The Committee were advised that the final version would be brought back to Committee late September/early October to be able to begin the consultation in October.
- A question was raised about the lack of coverage for the consultation as 3,510 comments was not good for the East Devon area. The Committee was reminded that the consultation was undertaken in accordance with the instructions made by the Committee and in accordance with the published statement of community involvement.
- Clarification was sought on whether the Committee would be considering any brownfield sites for allocation of development. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management advised that both greenfield and brownfield sites had been considered but there were very few available brownfield sites in the district.
- It was questioned whether the particular sites in Exmouth, Honiton, Feniton and Whimble that had received higher than average comments in the consultation should be revisited. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management raised concerns about the consequences of revisiting those sites in terms of changing those decisions as the Committee did not have all the information to make informed decisions at the meeting and that a further report would be needed.
- It was questioned whether it would still be possible to meet the deadline taking into account the amount of work that still needs to be done on the Local Plan. In response a concern was raised about the amount of work, but reassurance was given that there was a lot of work progressing by officers to meet the achievable deadline.
- Clarification was sought on the comments received for the under representation of Exmouth's strategic role. The Committee was advised that although Exmouth is

the biggest town in East Devon it has environmental and other constraints that would not allow any further development.

- From the comments received in the consultation it was questioned whether there was a need to look to review 3 specific areas around the definition of employment, the settlement boundary and the coastal change management areas (CCMAs). The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management reminded the Committee that all comments would be taken into consideration and sought further guidance from the Committee about whether these areas should be addressed.
- Clarification was sought on what would constitute a ‘substantive review’ detailed in paragraph 5.5. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management clarified that it would depend on the size of the site and whether this would have a consequence on the headroom of housing numbers. He sought guidance from the Committee for a steer on any particular sites of concern so that a further report could be brought back addressing these concerns.
- Point of Information - Lymp_01, Whim_08a, Whim_11, Feni_08, Otry_20, Exmo_17 had received above average comments and Exmo_20 had received significantly above average comments.

The Chair moved the meeting into debate and a statement was read out on behalf of Councillor Matt Hall which addressed the public perception that Local Plans focus too much on housing targets at the expense of community needs. The statement also believed that although Local Plans were essential for managing development and meeting housing needs it was crucial to ensure they are developed in a way that respect and understands the community character and needs, while making sure that local people believe that they have a stake in and a proper role in this important decision-making process.

Further comments included:

- There is a need to look at the Local Plan as a district and not just individual sites. If site Exmo_20 is removed, those houses will need to be located elsewhere.
- Ward Member for Exmo_20 thanked the public speakers for attending the meeting and supported all their comments.
- Support was expressed for Councillor Hall’s comments about respecting community character and it was suggested that Exmouth did not need Exmo_20 and could instead provide houses in existing locations.
- There is a need to listen to the public speakers. Increase the density of existing sites.
- Further study of the CCMAs was needed
- Water quality still needs to be addressed with South West Water.
- Reference was made about the duty to co-operate with other councils and it was stated that this council’s performance was 13% compared to other councils of 6%.
- It was suggested to remove wind energy and to focus solely on solar energy.
- There was a need to consider the high level of objections received for Exmo_20 and a suggestion was made to review Exmo_20. In response the Chair stated that Exmouth had currently allocated 1,455 homes in the Local Plan which was a growth rate of 10% and if Exmo_20 (700 homes) was taken out Exmouth’s growth rate would fall to 5% which was less than every settlement in the settlement hierarchy. The Chair advised that it would not be a sound decision to only review Exmo_20 and there was a need to review the sites that had received a higher number of objections that was listed earlier in the meeting.
- A direct quote made by Angela Raynor was mentioned by Councillor Paul Hayward that ‘there will be no excuses not to deliver 1.5million new homes’.

Nobody wants to cover East Devon in houses, but we have no choice – they must be built somewhere!

Councillor Ledger proposed an amendment to the second recommendation, seconded by Councillor Brian Bailey to read as follows:

That Members noted the changes to the Planning Practice Guidance regarding two stage Regulation 19 consultations and identify any areas where they would like officer advice on potential changes to the plan that are not already being considered in the work programme set out in this report. These are to be addressed in a report to a future meeting prior to the second Regulation 19 consultation with materials being presented to the Committee. These areas are as follows:

- Water Cycle Study
- CCMA's
- Duty to Co-operate
- Wind energy areas
- Sites Lymp_01, Whim_08a, Whim_11, Feni_08, Otry_20, Exmo_17, Exmo_20 and any further sites that officers feel should be brought back

Councillor Ledger advised that due to government reorganisation this was going to be East Devon District Council's last Local Plan and that this Committee had a duty to get it right now as the next one could be done by people outside of East Devon.

Further comments included:

- There is a need to look at alternative sites if these sites are taken out of the Local Plan. The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management confirmed that the report would consider all the implications of removing a site allocation which included the housing numbers and alternative site provisions.
- The Council is in a difficult position as nobody wants to see this level of development, but we have no choice otherwise the government will end up doing this for us.
- There is a need to put some thought into providing higher density developments. In response, the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management addressed the difficulties in terms of the limited demand but acknowledged that this could be looked at for the second new community.
- There was a suggestion to reconsider villages and towns where communities wanted development, but permissions had been refused.

RESOLVED:

1. That Strategic Planning Committee endorse the proposed new local plan making timetable and work plan, including studies to be completed.
2. That Members noted the changes to the Planning Practice Guidance regarding two stage Regulation 19 consultations and identify any areas where they would like officer advice on potential changes to the plan that are not already being considered in the work programme set out in this report. These to be addressed in a report to a future meeting prior to the second Regulation 19 consultation materials being presented to the Committee.

These areas are as follows:

- Water Cycle Study
- CCMA's
- Duty to Co-operate
- Wind energy areas

- Sites Lymp_01, Whim_08a, Whim_11, Feni_08, Otry_20, Exmo_17, Exmo_20 and any further sites that officers feel should be brought back

7 East Devon Local Plan - Local Development Scheme

The report presented to the Committee set out the proposed revised Local Development Scheme in light of the proposed amendments to the Local Plan making timetable which now incorporated a second Regulation 19 consultation to address both the second new community and associated evidence.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET:

That Strategic Planning Committee recommends that Cabinet recommends to Council to adopt the proposed new Local Development Scheme, at appendix 1.

8 Exmouth Rugby Club - Revised Project and Community Infrastructure Levy Bid

The Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management presented the minutes of an additional meeting of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Party held on 3 July 2025 and asked the Committee to consider the revised CIL project from Exmouth Rugby Club for a revised CIL bid that Strategic Planning Committee had previously considered.

The revised CIL bid of £100,000 was for the refurbishment of an existing building on the Rugby Club's site to provide the new changing rooms due to issues with ground works for the original proposed location.

RESOLVED:

That £100,000 be awarded in principle to Exmouth Rugby Club, with this sum to be reduced to £67,000 if it can be evidenced that the VAT on the project can be reclaimed by the Club.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

B Bailey
J Bailey
K Blakey
C Brown
O Davey
P Fernley
P Hayward
M Howe (Vice-Chair)
G Jung
D Ledger
Y Levine
T Olive (Chair)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

A Bailey
I Barlow

C Burhop
R Collins
P Faithfull
N Hookway

Officers in attendance:

Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer
Ed Freeman, Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Management
Damian Hunter, Planning Solicitor

Councillor apologies:

D Haggerty
B Ingham
H Parr

Chairman

Date:



Report to: Strategic Planning Committee

Date of Meeting 2nd September 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Newton Poppleford Settlement Boundary

Report summary:

This report follows a resolution at Council on the 16th July 2025 where it was resolved that Strategic Planning Committee be asked to reconsider the proposed settlement boundary for Newton Poppleford based on concerns raised by Cllr Burhop in his capacity as ward member. The boundary was amended from that recommended by officers at the committee meeting of the 22nd November 2024. It is understood that Cllr Burhop would like to see the boundary revert to that recommended by officers at that meeting.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the committee reconsider the proposed settlement boundary for the settlement of Newton Poppleford to be included in the Local Plan and revise the boundary to that previously recommended by officers as shown on the map at Appendix 1 as a thick black line.

Reason for recommendation:

To fulfil the requirements of the Council motion of the 16th July 2025.

Officer: Ed freeman – Assistant Director- Planning Strategy and Development Management

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information Included within 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
-

Report in full

At the meeting of Strategic Planning Committee on the 22nd November 2024 Members considered the settlement boundaries to be included in the Reg 19 version of the Local Plan. With regard to Newton Poppleford there was some debate over the extent of the settlement boundary with Members resolving “that the Settlement Boundary be drawn as including Stage 2 plus area adjacent to Exmouth Road, with the exact boundary to be drawn by officers for delegated approval by the Assistant Director and the Chair of Strategic Planning Committee”.

At the subsequent meeting of the committee on the 11th December 2024 a revised settlement boundary for Newton Poppleford was presented alongside the draft Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan. This plan can be found at Appendix 2 to this report.

The minutes of the 11th December 2024 meeting document the discussion on this matter as follows:

“Councillor Chris Burhop, Ward Member for Newton Poppleford & Harpford reminded Committee of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 22 November 2024 where the Newton Poppleford settlement boundary was considered and Committee had resolved to delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management and the Chair of Strategic Planning to incorporate more of the western side. Councillor Burhop explained that the village centre and village facilities were all on the eastern side of the village and by incorporating land on the western side he explained that this would not be accessible to the centre of the village as it did not have any safe footpaths. He addressed the possibility of a footpath being created for the proposed allocations Newt_04 and Newt_05 did not have a footpath but emphasised this may or may not happen. Although he concurred with officers’ recommendations for the two site allocations, he raised concerns that for any reason these two developments did not go ahead these development sites on this side of the village would be inaccessible and therefore asked Committee to repropose the original submission to go forward into the Regulation 19 consultation.

During discussions some Members concurred that unless the footpath was installed the western side of the village would be unsafe and there was nothing to confirm at this stage that the footpath would happen. It was suggested that a condition could be imposed to ensure that no development could take place until there was a suitable footpath.

Following legal advice from the Planning Solicitor the Chair explained that the Constitution on page 118, Part 4, paragraph 13.1 states that ‘A motion or amendment to rescind a previous decision made at a meeting of the council within the past six months cannot be moved unless the notice of motion is signed by at least 15 Members’.

During discussion it was then questioned whether Part 4, paragraph 13.1 of the Constitution related to Full Council decisions, rather than Strategic Planning Committee. The Planning Solicitor advised that the Rules of Procedure apply to all meetings of Committees as set out at the beginning of Part 4 of the Constitution on page 109 which states that 'Rules 4 to 26 (except where clearly inappropriate – for example Standing Order 18.1) shall apply to meetings of Committees. The word 'Committee' includes Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and all the bodies referred to in Article 8 of this Constitution' which includes Strategic Planning Committee.

The Planning Solicitor also advised in relation to Article 15 of the Constitution that a motion to suspend the Rules of Procedure could not be moved without notice unless at least one half of the whole number of Councillors entitled to attend the Committee were in attendance. As more than half of Committee were present, the Planning Solicitor advised that it would be possible to suspend the Constitution but questioned whether such a suspension would be proportionate taking account of the purposes of the Constitution set out in Article 1.

Having considered the legal advice Councillor Jess Bailey proposed to suspend the constitution, seconded by Councillor Dan Ledger and proposed a motion to rescind the previous resolution and to include the original boundary as proposed by officers to not include Newt_04 and Newt_05 due to road safety issues.

A vote took place and the proposal was not approved by the Committee.”

As a result, the boundary included in the agenda for Strategic Planning Committee on the 11th December and appended as Appendix 2 to this report was included in the first Reg 19 consultation version of the plan.

This matter was then raised at Council on the 16th July 2025 when Councillor Burhop put forward the following motion:

“At the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meeting of 22nd November 2024 when settlement boundaries were discussed, the SPC minutes record the following in relation to Newton Poppleford’s proposed settlement boundary;

“Newton Poppleford – raising the issue of consistency, concern was raised on the proposed Settlement Boundary in that the area described as excluded in stage 2 on the map should be included. Road safety concerns were also raised. A proposal to support the report recommendation failed. Therefore, a proposal to have the settlement boundary as the area shown as Stage 2 with the inclusion of area adjacent to Exmouth Road was supported.”

Recommendation (f) of that minute went on to state “Newton Poppleford – that the Settlement Boundary be drawn as including Stage 2 plus area adjacent to Exmouth Road, with the exact boundary to be drawn by officers for delegated approval by the Assistant Director and the Chair of Strategic Planning Committee.”

Whilst the thought process given at the time of expanding the settlement boundary to “make the settlement boundary more even over the geographical area of the village” was on the face of it

understandable, the discussion, which excluded the District Councillor for the village, ignored the fact that all of the village's amenities are located to the Eastern end of the village, which is why historically the settlement boundary was set to expand only to include the two proposed development sites Newt 04 and Newt 05 to the East of Exmouth Road, per officers' recommendation.

The revised boundary, attached as a file to this motion, was presented at the subsequent SPC on 11th December at which I spoke in respect of the errors in the thoughts about expanding the settlement boundary to the West of Exmouth Road, namely that the lack of footpath provision makes expansion on the Western side of Exmouth Road inaccessible. This debate is covered in pages 6 & 7 of the minutes (minute 249). They record that "During discussions some members concurred that unless the footpath was installed the western side of the village would be unsafe and there was nothing to confirm at this stage that the footpath would happen. It was suggested that a condition could be imposed to ensure that no development could take place until there was a suitable footpath".

However legal advice obtained at that meeting confirmed that no decision taken by a committee of the council could be moved within 6 months of the original decision unless the motion to amend is signed by 15 or more councillors. In other words errors identified in any council condition need 25% of the council to sign up to an amendment at full council in order to be corrected. I resolved to draw up such a motion to propose a correction.

Subsequent to the meeting I was told by the Chair of the SPC that, as the plans had now been submitted for Regulation 19 consultation, then again they could not be amended until the consultation ended. I have requested that the proposed amendment be included in the agenda of the Strategic Planning Committee of 8th July however the published agenda did not include this proposal.

I therefore submit the following motion to full council:

Motion

The settlement boundary for Newton Poppleford submitted in the Regulation 19 Consultation in the Draft Local Plan contained a material error and should now be amended per the proposed map, being officers' original recommendation."

At the Council meeting a revised motion was carried such that the matter be reconsidered by Strategic Planning Committee. This report seeks Members reconsideration of this matter. The main options available to the committee are:

- Revise the boundary to that previously recommended by officers and support by Councillor Burhop as shown on the map at Appendix 1 as a thick black line;
- Retain the settlement boundary as agreed previously by Strategic Planning Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 – Officers proposed boundary shown in black



Appendix 2 –
Boundary as
previously agreed
by Strategic
Planning
Committee

page 19

Legend

Site Allocations

Type


 Housing

 Settlement
Boundaries

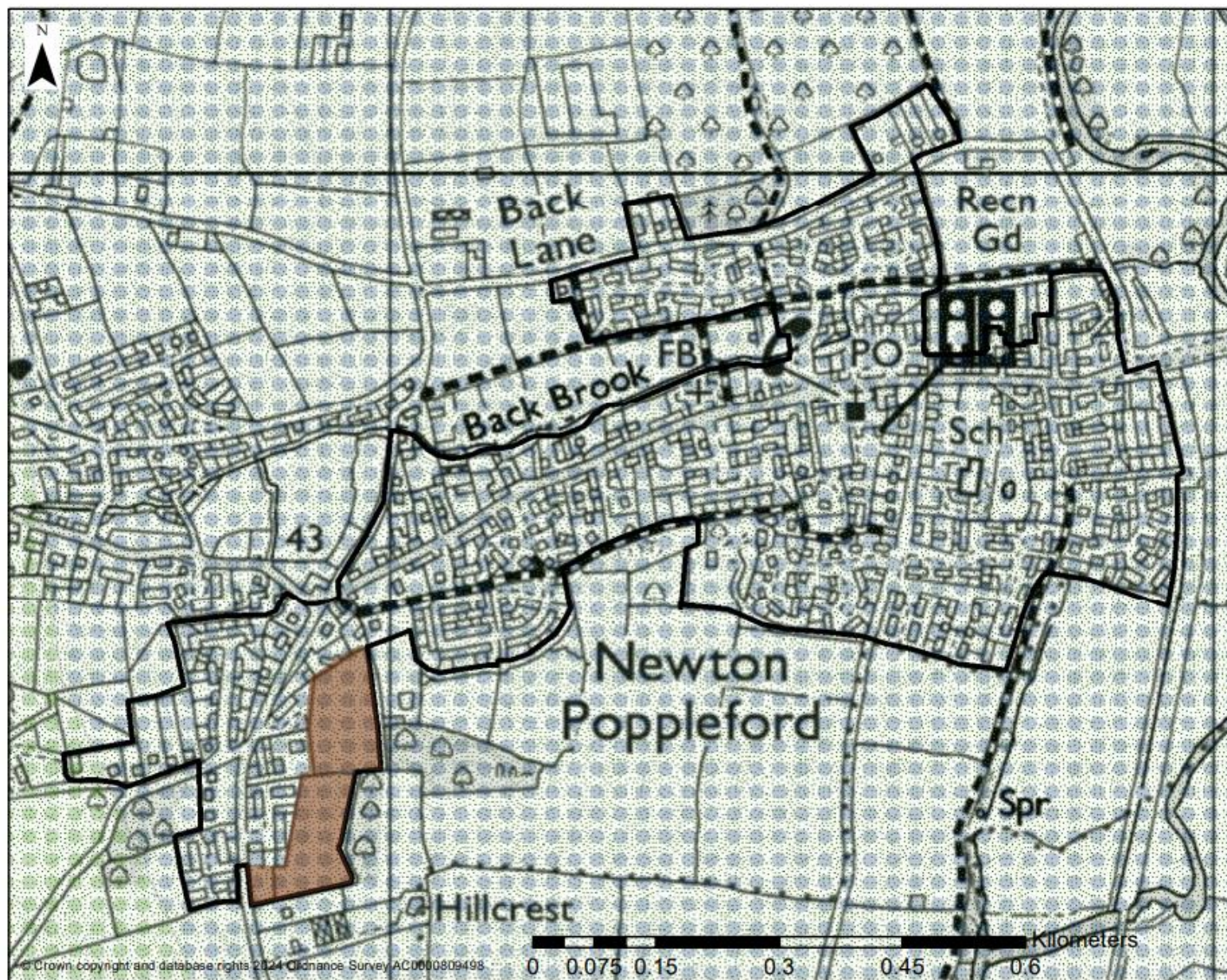
 East Devon National
Landscape

**Habitat Zone Buffer
Areas**

Name

 Exe Estuary and
Pebblebed Heath

 Pebblebed Heath



East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042 (Reg. 19 Consultation)
NEWTON POPPLEFORD

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications identified within the report. (AB/19/08/2025)

Legal implications:

The legal implications are covered in this report (002533/20 August 2025/DH)

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee

Date of Meeting 2 September 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



East Devon Local Plan – Consideration of potential plan changes to allocations

Report summary:

This report, following on from considerations at Strategic Planning Committee on 8 July 2025, considers and advises on recommended changes to development site allocations in the local plan in light of feedback received from the first Regulation 19 consultation. Specifically, this report:

- a) Reflects on past work and succinctly sets the scene for future work.
- b) Advises on what is considered to be the limited legitimate scope for making changes to the plan in respect of the second stage of Regulation 19 consultation.
- c) Highlights the broad approach to more detailed site work around assessment that has been undertaken specifically in respect of heritage and landscape matters.
- d) Sets out limited officer recommendations on changes to the plan in respect of sites that were allocated in the plan at the first stage of Regulation 19 consultation. The sites, identified by settlement/location listed below, are addressed in detail in this report. These are sites that committee previously wished to see reappraised or have been identified by officers as appropriate for review on account of representations received – notably from statutory bodies and including in respect of heritage, landscape or mineral considerations. Officer recommendations on plan changes are detailed below:
 1. **Exmouth** – four housing/mixed use allocations sites are considered in some detail – Exmo_47, Exmo_20, Exmo_17 and Exmo_08 and Exmo_16 combined. None of these are recommended for deletion though refinement of policy is recommended to address concerns highlighted (specifically so for Exmo_20).
 2. **Axminster** – it is recommended that employment site Axmi_01a is deleted from the plan on the basis of potential adverse archaeological impact. In respect of Axmi_02, Axmi_08 and Axmi_09 we will need to come back to a later committee meeting as agents have been asked to undertake archaeological assessments, but conclusions will not be reached in time for the committee meeting.
 3. **Honiton** – Officers recommend that three sites on the southern side of the town - Honi_07, Honi_12 and Honi_13 are deleted from and not shown as allocations in the plan. To address the resulting housing shortfall this will result in it is recommended that two sites on the eastern side of the town, that are already allocations in the plan – GH/ED/39a and GH/ED/39b - have an increase in allocation numbers. In respect of site Honi_18 it is not recommended that any changes are made to the local plan.
 4. **Seaton** – Officer have reviewed site Seat_13a and consultation responses on the basis of potential adverse archaeological concerns, and agree that specialist archaeological assessment is required to justify allocating the site. We will need to come back to a latter committee meeting with any conclusions that may be reached should work be undertaken and conclusions dependent.

5. **Feniton** – Officer have reviewed two sites at Feniton. It is proposed that the housing allocation site Feni_08 is retained in the plan and it is also proposed that the employment allocation site Otry_20 is retained.
6. **Whimble** – It is recommended that both Whim_08a and Whim_11 are retained as allocations in the plan, but with some revisions to policy text.
7. **Land at Darts Farm** – For this employment allocations there are outstanding concerns, including in respect of archaeological considerations. Assessment work is ongoing but at this stage conclusions cannot be reached and therefore will need to come back to a later committee meeting.

- e) We highlight in the report that for some other locations and sites there is also heritage assessment work that is ongoing, and some further wider assessment work, and therefore we cannot draw conclusions at this point in time. For other sites there are some but less significant concerns raised in representations. We would envisage addressing these sites and matters in final policy redrafting, for a later committee meeting.
- f) We would also advise that we have received feedback on a limited number of sites that could impact on overall development levels. Also there are cases where promoters are advocating differing levels of development from those set out in policy, in some cases higher and others lower. We will assimilate all house building numbers into a future committee report with these assessed against quantified housing needs.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Strategic Planning Committee endorse the officer recommended changes to the local plan as set out in this report.

Reason for recommendation:

To help with policy refinement and advance the local plan.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Manager

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☒ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: No specific risk impacts are identified.

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
-

1. Summary of the report to committee on 8 July and note of committee conclusions reached

1.1 Strategic Planning Committee on the 8 July 2025, see: [Agenda for Strategic Planning Committee on Tuesday, 8th July, 2025, 10.00 am - East Devon](#), received a report that, amongst other matters:

- set out information about and summary details of feedback received to the first round of Regulation 19 plan consultation.
- provided a link to a comprehensive summary feedback report, set out on a policy by policy basis, of comments received through consultation – see: democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/documents/s27857/1a Appendix Reg 19 Stage 1 feedback report.pdf
- highlighted key matters raised, specifically including from statutory consultees that are seen to warrant further attention.
- advised of further evidence gathering and assessment work; and
- set out a proposed timetable to take the plan to the second round of Regulation 19 consultation.

1.2 Following lengthy debate, and after hearing members of the public speak, committee concluded that there is a need for consideration at a future meeting of the following:

- Water Cycle Study
- CCMA's
- Duty to Co-operate
- Wind energy areas
- Sites Lymp_01, Whim_08a, Whim_11, Feni_08, Otry_20, Exmo_17, Exmo_20 and any further sites that officers feel should be brought back

The list of sites was compiled based on the sites that had a higher than average number of objections. In light of this it was subsequently confirmed that Lymp_01 was included in error and so this site is not addressed in this report.

1.3 This report forms part of the initial feedback, specifically relevant to allocations sites in the local plan, and is also complemented by separate reports to this same committee meeting on matters noted above and:

- the duty to co-operate, and
- gypsy and traveller policy.

- 1.4 By way of future scene setting, it is proposed that two key further reports will come to committee in the near future:
- **Late September 2025** - A report on the new community setting out - master planning conclusions, viability assessment and other key matters around delivery. This work may generate some, but it's not to be expected substantive, recommended changes to local plan policy and supporting text. Also, where available and completed, we will report on any further site assessment work, specifically in regards to any ongoing archaeological assessment work.
 - **October 2025** – A full redrafted local plan, with accompanying new Policies Map, that will be recommended for a second stage of plan consultation under Regulation 19 of the plan making regulations.
- 1.5 On the basis of the above, with a resolution sought to agree consultation, we would envisage that plan consultation will start in Autumn 2025 and conclude before Christmas 2025.

2 Scope for making plan changes at the second round of Regulation 19 consultation

- 2.1 The government recently issued guidance [Plan-making - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making) in respect of cases where planning authorities undertake two or more stages of Regulation 19 consultation. It states:

How do the implementation aspects of the NPPF apply to plans where more than one round of Regulation 19 consultation has been undertaken?

Some local planning authorities may undertake more than one round of Regulation 19 consultation on a plan. Where this is the case, for the purposes of implementing Annex 1 of the Framework, a plan is normally to be taken as having reached the Regulation 19 stage at the date on which the first round of Regulation 19 consultation commenced.

However, in some limited circumstances, a plan is to be taken as having reached Regulation 19 on the date that a subsequent round of consultation commenced. These limited circumstances could include instances such as when the content of an emerging plan has changed significantly from the one presented at the initial Regulation 19 stage.

Paragraph: 86 Reference ID:61-086-20250616

Revision date: 26 06 2025

- 2.2 This guidance establishes, in Government policy, that more than one stage of consultation can be undertaken. Noting that some making representations on the local plan challenged having two rounds and contested that the plan has/had not legitimately reached the Regulation 19 stage when we consulted earlier this year.
- 2.3 However, we specifically need to note the second paragraph above which highlights that circumstances may arise where the first round of consultation should not be regarded as the valid start of Regulation 19 consultation. In such cases (if the first

round is not determined to be valid) the start of Regulation 19 consultation commences when a second or a subsequent stage of consultation starts. There is a lack of detail or precision around the “circumstances” but an example is given, specifically it is stated **“when the content of an emerging plan has changed significantly from the one presented at the initial Regulation 19 stage”**.

2.4 Although not stated as examples it may be that other circumstances could include:

- if or when there is a substantial time delay between any stages,
- if national policy, guidance or legislation has changed and this materially impacts in a significant way on a plan, or
- if circumstances or issues/matters in a local planning authority area change (perhaps substantially) and this impacts in a substantial way on matters that are or need to be covered in local plan policy.

2.5 The issue of legitimacy of having two stages of consultation is specifically relevant in East Devon as the first stage of consultation was started before the end of March 2025. Under transitional arrangements, from the former 2023 NPPF to the new 2024 NPPF, the Council can provide for 80% of standard method housing need numbers (rather than the full 100%) in the local plan and this is what we do in our local plan. But to do this required that Regulation 19 consultation started before the end of March 2025.

2.6 If the council were not working under transitional arrangements we would need to jump up from meeting 80% of housing needs to the full 100%. This would amount to a very significant increase in the number of new homes that would need to be provided through the local plan and would in effect require work on the local plan to start again (or at least take considerable steps backward). Such an approach would be contrary to the government aspiration for up-to-date local plans to be adopted as quickly as possible.

2.7 Based on our assessment of housing needs, the standard method generates a need for 1,188 new homes per year. Providing for 80% of this generates a figure of 950.4 per year, this amounts to a total of 20,909 over the 22-year life span of the plan. In contrast, if we were to supply the full 1,188, over 22 years, it would amount to planning for 26,136 new homes. This would require finding land to accommodate an additional 5,227 new homes. In reality the arithmetic is slightly more complicated than this but the bottom line is a substantial increase in housing numbers in the plan period..

2.8 The standard method numbers we need to plan for (whether we meet the full 100% or 80%) are determined by Government and they are a minimum.

2.9 We need to be very wary of the potential for challenges around whether we fall foul of rules around having two or more stages of consultation. The guidance is new and therefore will not have been rigorously tested to date. It is suggested that we should work on the assumption that some who advocate higher housing numbers (or have other challenges to the plan) will want to test this matter. They may well do so in and through plan Examination, and an inspector undertaking Examination may wish to draw their own conclusions irrespective of any representations received. Challenges could

also come through the courts and in their deliberations Inspectors at plan examination will be aware of potential for legal challenges and may weigh this in their considerations.

- 2.10 A difficulty we face is that we would not wish to leave ourselves open or vulnerable to challenge. But it is far from clear cut what the degrees of vulnerability are. We would though suggest that of most importance would be the issue around the scale and nature of changes that are made between the first and second Regulation 19 plans. One or more substantial changes could place us in a more vulnerable position, as could a higher number of smaller changes with a big cumulative impact (as could a mixture of big and small changes).
- 2.11 Officer advice is that Committee should be cautious and think carefully about potential plan changes to minimise the potential of placing the Council into a vulnerable position to challenge. In making any changes Committee should also carefully consider whether any changes are justified on the basis of robust objective evidence. Noting these points officers have sought to make limited recommendations on plan changes, in this report. Where changes are recommended, they are not seen to be substantive in scale and as such seek to minimise rather than increase the risk of challenge.
- 2.12 It is highlighted that there are cases where, at Examination, inspectors have concluded that the only way that a plan could be made to be sound would be for substantive changes to be made. But such changes have (in inspectors conclusions) been deemed to amount to making the plan significantly different from the plan that was submitted for examination and as such rules around the Regulation 19 stage of plan making would not be complied with. The result being that such plans fail at examination and could not be adopted.

3 New standard method housing need numbers

- 3.1 Commentary and assessment in this report (prior to this section) relates to standard method housing number outputs that were applicable at the time of production of the first Regulation 19 local plan. However, standard method numbers can change over time, they are a product of calculations that draw data from records that are updated throughout the year.
- 3.2 In May this year new data led to a revision of standard method housing numbers. They fell in East Devon from the level of 1,188 per year, as noted in the first Regulation 19 plan and referenced earlier in this report, to a new figure of 1,156. A fall of 32 per year. Applying an 80% factor to this equals a fall of 25.6 per year and multiplying this out over 22 years equals a plan wide total fall of 563.
- 3.3 We draw this to Committee attention as, in theory at least, there could be scope to plan for less housing in the second Regulation 19 plan. However, we would stress distinct risks in doing so, to include:
- Whilst numbers can go down, as they have, they can also go up - they could do in the future and if they did we may go into plan Examination with a numerical deficit.

- We are already substantially short of meeting the full 100% Standard Method numbers and this is a matter we have been robustly challenged on. However, we justify our position in doing so on the strength of the NPPF advising it is allowable. But to drop numbers further could lead to greater vulnerability to challenges of not adequately planning for appropriate housing provision.
- A full drop of 563, or even going some way towards it, may well be challenged as amounting to a significant change to the plan and as such this might be seen as being grounds to argue that the first stage of Regulation 19 consultation is invalidated.

3.4 Officer recommendation is that we do not seek to amend the housing numbers that the plan seeks to accommodate (i.e. we do not seek to apply the lower standard method number), or at least not in any substantive way. Rather we note this new number in plan text and explain how it helps establish a higher headroom ‘safety-net’ that further shows the robustness of our position (albeit we will need to do future numerical assessment around numbers).

3.5 We would highlight as well, and in respect to housing numbers and the life span of the plan, that we currently have a plan end date of 31 March 2042. The NPPF advises (2023 draft paragraph 22 but also applies to the 2024 NPPF) that strategic policies in a plan should “*look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption*”. Adoption is likely to be in the year of 2027/28 and to run forward 15 full years from here would take us to the year of 2042/43. Whilst having a full 15-year time horizon may not be essential it does help the Council case to have some degree of planned ‘over provision’ to counter possible challenges of not addressing a full 15 year time perspective. The longer time frame for new community development, with development going well into the 21st century, also helps in this respect.

4 Responding to representations on the plan – specifically from statutory consultees

4.1 There were a great many representations on the first draft of the local plan from, amongst others, the public and the development industry that raised legitimate concerns and issues. Where site specific many of these are referenced in this report. However, in this report we particularly major on matters raised by statutory consultees to the plan making process where they relate to technical matters of concern.

4.2 Of greatest significance we note that the report to the strategic planning committee in July 2025 highlighted additional work that was being undertaken in respect of potential heritage impacts and also in respect of allocations in or adjacent to areas designated as National Landscapes. These considerations are especially important as potential for adverse heritage and landscape impacts formed significant aspects of representations on the plan and they are of a nature that relate to legal tests of significance in terms of plan soundness, rather than (just) planning judgement.

Landscape considerations

- 4.3 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) introduced a duty for planning authorities to 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of protected landscapes (conserving and enhancing their natural beauty). This duty came into effect shortly before the first Reg 19 consultation and so was not addressed in our work at that time. Representations have been received from Natural England and both the Blackdown Hills and the East Devon National Landscape partnerships raising concerns that it is not clear how the plan strategy and site allocations comply with the duty to further the purposes of the national landscapes.
- 4.4 A stepped interpretation of the new duty, much simplified, may be looked upon when making planning decisions as:
- Determine whether the development conflicts with the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty.
 - If it does, consider whether, in local plan terms, making land allocations is still justified and explain why.
 - Explore mitigation or compensatory measures where appropriate.
 - Provide clear, adequate reasoning to demonstrate how the duty has been discharged.
- 4.5 The Major Development in National Landscapes Topic Paper is being updated to address these concerns and will be finalised in readiness for a later committee meeting/as background evidence to support the plan. The work undertaken so far indicates that most of the allocations are justified in terms of the national landscapes, subject to additional or amended policy wording. However, as noted in later site-specific sections of this report, there are specific concerns in respect of a small number of allocated sites in the plan that we would wish to draw to committee attention. In some cases, we consider these concerns to be of such a scale to lead to a recommendation of deletion of the sites from the plan.

Heritage considerations

- 4.6 In terms of heritage impacts, Historic England and Devon County Council have raised concerns about the potential of several allocation sites to result in significant harm to heritage assets, including Grade 1 and Grade 2* listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Although the site allocation work previously undertaken highlighted the potential impacts, and various policies required issues to be addressed through the development management process, Historic England and Devon County Council are clear that, in their view that in some cases, work must be carried out before allocation. This is particularly important in respect of subterranean archaeology where the extent of the monument, and potential impact, require technical on-site assessment.
- 4.6 Additional heritage impact assessments have been undertaken for the following sites:
- Exmo_08 and 16 (Littleham Fields) - 45 houses
 - Exmo_17 (South of Littleham) - 410 houses, 1.6ha emp.
 - Exmo_20 (Land at St John's) - 700 houses, 2ha emp.
 - Exmo_47 (West of Hulham Road) - 15 houses

- Honi_07 and 12 (adj St Michael's Church) - 101 houses (noting deletion is proposed as a result)
- Honi_13 (Middle Hill, Church Hill) - 10 houses (noting deletion is proposed as a result)
- Wood_28 (North and East of Exton Farm) - 39 houses

and are appended to this report or addressed in site specific commentary. It is concluded that it is possible for the heritage concerns to be satisfactorily addressed for the majority of sites, subject to additional policy wording and therefore they should continue to be allocated. However, see detailed comments in later section of this report about more significant concerns that have been highlighted.

- 4.7 Archaeological investigations are underway for two housing site allocations, the results of which will need to come back to a later strategic planning committee meeting (Axmi_02/08/09 and Seat_13a).
- 4.8 Archaeological investigation is being undertaken on site Clge_25a, the southern section of the field adjoining Dart's Farm, which is proposed for employment allocation. The results will need to be considered at a later strategic planning committee meeting.
- 4.9 It has not been possible for the landowner of Axmi_01a, an employment allocation site, to undertake the additional archaeological investigation required and this site is no longer recommended for employment allocation. The settlement boundary will be amended to reflect this.

Mineral resource protection

- 4.10 We would highlight that Devon County Council made comment specifically about mineral safeguarding matters at Site Exmo_20. This is addressed in specific commentary about this site.

5 Approach to reassessment of housing and employment allocation sites

- 5.1 Strategic Planning Committee specifically requested a review of a number of allocation sites in the local plan, these are Exmo_20, Exmo_17, Whim_08a, Whim_11, Feni_08 and Otry_20. Commentary on these sites and a number of others identified by officers, are set out in following sections in this report.
- 5.2 On a general note, however, specifically around avoiding substantive plan changes and bearing in mind the need for decisions to be informed and underpinned by sound evidence, officer recommendations are for comparatively limited changes to land allocations in the plan. The onus, it is suggested, should be placed on changes to policy wording rather than changes to allocation boundaries or to the deletion of sites. As a general observation we would identify legitimacy concerns, and therefore vulnerability to challenge, if housing allocation numbers in any settlement, and specifically those settlements at or towards the upper end of the settlement hierarchy, were to change significantly (especially if they went down significantly).

- 5.3 Further, it is important to stress that if housing allocation numbers go down through the deletion of any allocations (or otherwise reductions in housing numbers on allocated sites) then shortfalls would need to be made up. Officers would suggest that should numbers go down in any settlement or location, through policy changes, then the resulting shortfall should be made up through allocation of additional sites, or increase in provision on existing sites, or a mixture of the two, in that settlement/location. Adopting this approach lessens the likelihood of successful challenges around making significant changes to the plan, specifically in respect of the strategic distribution of development.
- 5.4 Of greatest significance we specifically draw to Committee's attention the town of Exmouth and the large allocation sites of Exmo_20 and Exmo_17. Exmouth is the largest town by some way in East Devon and it falls second (in a category of its own and only after the West End) in the settlement hierarchy. Strategic Policy S1 of the local plan advises that the plan is *"Promoting the most significant development levels, other than at the West End where the highest levels of growth are proposed, at the Principal Centre of Exmouth."*
- 5.5 As drafted the local plan allocates land, over a number of sites, for 1,454 new homes in Exmouth. Outside of the West End the town sees the highest levels, in numerical terms, of new housing growth. This is strategically appropriate given its position in the spatial hierarchy. But even this level of housing provision has some degree of fragility noting that in comparison to its existing size (specifically its existing number of dwellings), the percentage increase in the size of the town through plan allocations is not as proportionately great as for some other, lower tier, settlements (specifically including other towns in the district). Some objecting to the plan have raised this issue and we could be challenged by an inspector on this point at Examination.
- 5.6 Exmo_20 accounts for 700 of the allocated dwellings in Exmouth, 48% of the total and Exmo_17 for 410, 28% of the total. If either of these sites were deleted in their entirety from the plan we would be concerned that this would amount to a significant change that would raise challenges around whether the next stage of consultation really is a second stage at Regulation 19, or whether we are effectively starting afresh. Being so much larger this is especially the case for Exmo_20. Furthermore, given the comparative lack of good alternative options for allocation of sites in/at Exmouth, if substantive reductions are made it is challenging to see how any shortfall in housing numbers could be addressed at the town.
- 5.7 We would highlight that there is some limited potential flexibility in allocation numbers at some sites. This is noted further in in this report in respect of two sites in Honiton. We would also highlight, as a specific example, that site Exmo_04 - Land at Marley Drive in Exmouth is allocated in the local plan for 50 dwellings, this reflects site sensitivities in biodiversity terms and a low-density development being envisaged. Site Exmo_04 is, however, subject to a planning application - 25/0078/MOUT - that is currently under consideration for up to 130 dwellings. In this report we do not pass comment on the potential acceptability of the scheme, but if the application were to be granted then it would be an 'addition' of 80 dwellings to the supply side of the equation.

- 5.8 For a future committee meeting, once we have all relevant elements of site assessment work completed, we will bring a report to committee (or set out in proposed amended plan wording) a full review of housing numbers on site allocations.
- 5.9 It is highlighted that in respect of employment allocations the matter of deletion of sites from the plan is somewhat less sensitive. We make good provision for employment land allocation in the local plan, albeit with a large part of this being at or close to the West End. Based on current levels of allocations, and the fact that Government policy is not prescriptive about meeting set identified needs, there is greater scope for some deletion of employment allocations (especially if sites are of a smaller size) than there is for housing with somewhat less need to be concerned about issues surrounding shortfalls. Though if substantive changes to employment provision were made it could lead to vulnerability over challenges.
- 5.10 In later sections of this report we address key settlements in turn where site issues have been identified, and we comment on each identified site in turn. We show a map identifying each identified site plus others that members may wish to choose to allocate for development (in part or full) should they wish to make any plan changes or site deletions. For some site allocations officers have produced suggested revised plan policy wording that respond to concerns raised. In other cases (where less significant concerns arise) matters of relevance are raised but at this stage new policy wording is not proposed. Rather, the intent, is to bring revisions back to committee later in the summer.

6 Ongoing and future refinement of housing number assessment

- 6.1 In this section we highlight a small number of potential recommended changes to housing site allocations and other matters that may impact on housing provision in the local plan. At this stage of work we cannot provide definitive conclusions on overall final numbers, specifically noting:
- a) At this meeting committee are being asked to consider sites and conclusion s reached by committee may impact on allocation numbers.
 - b) We are in active engagement with site promoters and this work may lead to possible future recommendations on changes to numbers at some sites – including where capacity levels may be appropriate for adjustment (potentially up or down).
 - c) We do not yet have all assessment outputs, especially in respect of archaeological works, to draw final conclusions on allocation of some sites.
 - d) We will need to take into account actual housing needs and conclusion that committee may reach in respect of any changes arising, or chosen to be made, from or related to Standard Method output changes.
 - e) We ideally would want to update and rebase housing assessment work from a forward looking position of 1 April 2024, as featured in the first Regulation 19 plan , to a new forward looking position starting from 1 April 2025, i.e. moving

assessment on a year. There is still some work to be undertaken to achieve this and if and when completed it could have some impacts on overall numbers.

- 6.2 For the locations and sites specifically featured in this report we would, however, advise of significant enough confidence in numbers and development distribution matters to draw up recommendations. But we would highlight that final numbers and sites, to be recommended by officers, and taking into account decisions made at this Committee meeting, will need to come back to a subsequent committee meeting to be incorporated into and agreed on for the final draft of the local plan.

7 Sites at Exmouth

- 7.1 Sites at Exmouth that have been identified for further assessment are referenced below. After the listed sites there is a map showing their locations. We identify alternative sites at Exmouth that could be allocated for development should committee wish to make amendments. All sites are referenced and assessed in the Exmouth site report - [sal-022-exmouth-site-selection-report.pdf](#)

Exmo_47 - Land west of Hulham Road - Exmouth

- 7.2 This site is to the north of but well related to the built form of Exmouth. It abuts existing built development and is close to a range of facilities. It does, however, also abut an historic park/garden and is close to heritage assets. In consultation feedback Historic England consider the allocation to be unsound because development, in their opinion, would result in harm to the significance of three grade 1 listed buildings and the grade II Registered Park and Garden. Though site promoters supported the allocation.
- 7.3 Conservation Officers at the council are concerned that, whilst visual impact may be acceptable, noise, loss of tranquillity, lighting etc will cause harm to the setting, from a built heritage perspective. Comments are set out below.

The allocation site is close to the Grade I Point in View Chapel and Grade I The Manse, also historically part of the gardens associated with this and Grade I A La Ronde. There are a pair of modern semi-detached cottages to the south of The Manse, between this building and the site.

When viewed from the chapel, there is no intervisibility between this and the site as the land drops off to the south and there are mature trees on the south boundary of the chapel site. There may be some visibility between the LP site and the rear of The Manse so this would need to be carefully considered if the allocation is retained. In terms of the impact on the listed buildings I feel that development on the site could be acceptable, subject to an adequate landscaped buffer and tree / hedge screening on the northern boundary, with development towards the southern end and none at the northern end where the rooftops may be visible in context with the listed buildings.

My main concern is the relationship between the LP site and the registered park and garden associated with the Chapel, Manse and A La Ronde, which is directly adjacent to the LP site boundary. However, the impact on the setting of the designated park is such that development on this linear site could lead to an unacceptable level of harm unless a landscaping scheme can reduce the harm to an acceptable level. This needs to be assessed further. Ideally, this site will be omitted as only 15 houses are proposed.

- 7.4 It is noted that comments raised, specifically from a heritage impact perspective raise concerns around the suitability of this site for development. However, potential adverse heritage impacts need to be considered in the overall planning balance, including other factors pointing to the suitability of this site for development and the strategic role, relevance and need to accommodate new development at Exmouth.
- 7.5 As drafted policy highlights heritage concerns and considerations. Policy as drafted specifically states “.....*The sensitive historic setting of this site, with a Registered Park or Garden to the northern and western site boundaries is such that any scheme will need to be sensitively designed to avoid adverse impacts. Built development should be accommodated in the southerly parts of the site only.*”
- 7.6 In future redrafting heritage concerns can be more fully emphasised stressing the need for a high quality scheme and that any planning application will need to be accompanied by a heritage assessment that demonstrate, at worst, nil/minimal net negative heritage impacts and that to achieve this outcome housing numbers may need to be slightly lower than the allocation number. But given the small scale of the size any such lower development level would have an insignificant impact on overall housing numbers in the plan (on this basis full deletion of the site, as a one off for Exmouth, would have insignificant impacts).
- 7.7 **Officer recommendation** - Retain the site as an allocation for 15 dwellings though with policy refinement to follow to more fully emphasise heritage protection matters.

Exmo_20 - Land at St John's - Exmouth

- 7.8 This site on the north-eastern side of Exmouth is physically close to the built form of the town and southern site parts in particular are visually very well screened by mature planting within the site and to site boundaries. The site provides significant mixed-use development potential and is accessible (will be with the proposed new access), especially southern parts, to a range of existing facilities.
- 7.9 Main issues raised during the consultation included:
- Harm to the Pebblebed Heaths SAC/SPA: concerns include air quality, recreational pressure, and habitat fragmentation. (Devon Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Natural England, Environment Agency, Individuals)
 - Loss of biodiversity, ancient woodland, and wildlife corridors. (Devon Wildlife Trust, Individuals)
 - Adverse impact on the setting of St John in the Wilderness Church (Grade II*) and other heritage assets. (Historic England, Individuals)
 - Loss of tranquillity, dark skies, and rural character. (Historic England, Individuals)
 - Flood risk due to clay soils and upstream location relative to Withycombe Brook. (Environment Agency, Individuals)
 - Poor access from B3179 and Southern Wood; concerns about traffic, safety, and sustainability. (Devon County Council, Individuals)

- Unsustainable location due to distance from services and facilities. (National Highways, Individuals)
- Allegations of procedural flaws: site not properly consulted on at Regulation 18 stage. (Individuals, Community Groups)
- Support for the allocation and its deliverability. (Planning Consultant/Developer)

7.10 Whilst noting there were a large number of objections to this site but this is far from unique for planning proposals.

Landscape considerations at Exmo_20

- 7.11 With respect to landscape considerations Exmo 20 is a very large site situated to the east of St Johns Road. The northeastern boundary abuts the B3179 and the East Devon National Landscape. The eastern boundary is mostly set back from St John's Road with only one field within the site providing direct frontage onto it. The site boundaries encompass an area of 84.8ha of which preliminary proposals prepared by the promoter indicate 41.5ha will be developed.
- 7.12 The site has a south-westerly aspect with the highest fields situated on a plateau edge which falls away moderately steeply down through the site. An undulating landform below the plateau together with blocks of woodland, substantial hedges and small copses within and around the site generally limit views out to the fields on the plateau at the northeastern end which afford distant views to the sea and across the Exe estuary. There are also views across the town and Exe Estuary from the higher fields below the plateau.
- 7.13 A 400m development buffer is required to be provided from the boundaries of the SPA/SAC. As this coincides with the higher, more open parts of the site, maintaining it clear of development will also help to reduce landscape and visual impact of the development in the wider landscape.
- 7.14 There is some potential for partial views of the developable parts of the site from the National Landscape on higher ground between Salterton Road and the coast. There are also views across the site from a short section of St Johns Road where the site boundary abuts it.
- 7.15 The site is somewhat set apart from the built-up area of Exmouth and possible locations for vehicular access are limited. St Johns Road is narrow, tree lined and lacks width for footways. The only alternative with the current land available is to create an access off the B3179. The creation of a new road in this location with associated kerbing, footways and visibility splays could have localised adverse impacts on the National Landscape. These should be minimised by sensitive design, avoiding streetlighting between the junction and lower, developable parts of the site and provision of appropriate mitigation planting including new hedge banks and woodland creation.
- 7.16 The site currently affords poor opportunities for active travel connections. As an access from the B3179 would be somewhat remote from local services, new cycle and pedestrian links should be provided onto St Johns Road to the east and also to the

Meadow View estate from the southwest corner of the site. The latter would offer onward links to Liverton Business Park and Salterton Road.

- 7.17 There is opportunity for heathland creation on higher land at the northeastern end of the site as landscape enhancement. Existing hedges and trees within the site should be retained and reinforced with additional planting and habitat creation. Natural England require fencing/ buffering of any onsite SANG from the SAC/SPA albeit the main site access from the B3179 will be situated opposite designated access land on the Pebble Bed heaths. Conversely, however, site development could enhance active travel links from the town to the Pebble Bed heaths.
- 7.18 Policy SD01 states that no development that would result in an unacceptable impact will be permitted within 400 metres of the Pebble bed heaths. However, there is no mention of the relationship of the site to the national landscape and the policy could be improved by highlighting the importance of addressing the setting of the national landscape are incorporated into the development. Policy should also restrict street lighting along the proposed access road serving the site and require provision of foot/ cycle path links to the Meadow View estate and Liverton Business Park and/ or appropriate financial contributions towards securing these.
- 7.19 There are, therefore, landscape concerns that we do need to be aware of but these can be dealt with through policy refinement that will lead to a high-quality comprehensive masterplan. Furthermore, given how well screened the site is (specifically the southerly site parts that are proposed for development) there is very little intervisibility with surrounding areas.

Mineral considerations at Exmo_20

- 7.20 We would also wish to highlight a minerals consideration that applies to this site, as raised in comment by Devon County Council, as the minerals planning authority. The County Council highlighted that the northern part of the site falls within a mineral safeguarding area, around which, and of a slightly larger area, is a county council defined Mineral Consultation Area. This consultation area mostly coincides with, though is slightly larger than, the Pebblebed Heaths 400 metre zone.
- 7.21 The Devon Minerals Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient and appropriate amounts and types of minerals are safeguarded and can be extracted to meet future needs, should demand arise and extraction is commercially and technically viable.
- 7.22 The role of safeguarding areas is to ensure that non-mineral development does not sterilise or constrain future mineral extraction. There can, however, be exceptions where a technically robust and objective Mineral Resource Assessment is undertaken by a qualified person that demonstrates that extraction of the mineral resource has no current or potential economic value, when prior extraction takes place, or where the use is temporary and will be removed prior to any future mineral working. This reflects Policy M2 of the Devon Minerals Plan.
- 7.23 Allocating a site area that extends into the Mineral Safeguarding Area and Mineral Consultation Area provides potential for such an assessment to be undertaken and if

this concludes that the resource has no current or future potential, non-mineral development may be considered. However, it should be noted that other significant development constraints apply across most of the land that falls in the consultation area anyway. If the mineral constraint were lifted it could provide some greater scope and site capacity to accommodate some extra areas of built development and potentially, and more so, extra open space and recreational potential for the land.

- 7.24 The image below/over the page illustrates the extent of the site and the approximate boundary of the Mineral Consultation Area. For reference purposes it also shows the St John in the Wilderness Church.



- 7.25 The changes recommended to plan policy in respect of minerals matters have been discussed with officers of Devon County Council who have considered the mineral resource, proposed use, existing constraints, and the strategic nature of the allocation.

Heritage considerations at Exmo_20

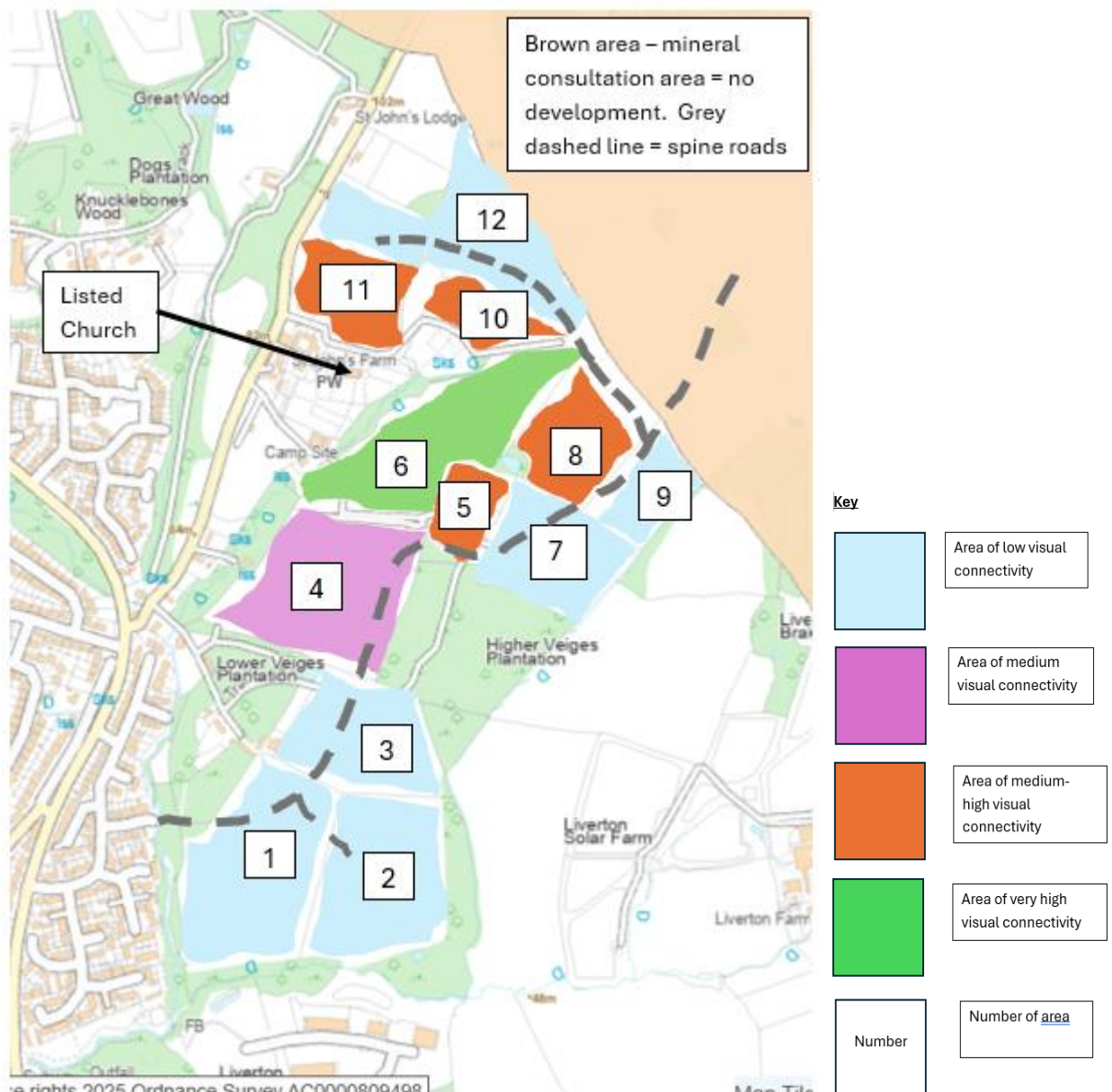
- 7.26 There is a statutory obligation to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings and this is especially pertinent as St John in the

Wilderness Church, a Grade 2* listed building, adjoins Exmo_20. Development would not directly impact the listed building itself but has the potential to significantly harm its setting.

- 7.27 Setting can be described as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage. The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations, including views of or from an asset and the way in which the asset is experienced in its environment. The policy objectives in the NPPF and the PPG establish the twin roles of setting: it can contribute to the significance of a heritage asset, and it can allow that significance to be appreciated. An assessment of the impact on the setting of the Church has been undertaken, and takes into account the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.
- 7.28 Historic England advise that “Being tall structures, church towers and spires are often widely visible across land- and townscapes but, where development does not impact on the significance of heritage assets visible in a wider setting or where not allowing significance to be appreciated, they are unlikely to be affected by small-scale development, unless that development competes with them, as tower blocks and wind turbines may. Even then, such an impact is more likely to be on the landscape values of the tower or spire rather than the heritage values, unless the development impacts on its significance, for instance by impacting on a designed or associative view.”
- 7.29 This element of analysis specifically assesses the visual connectivity, and in this respect sensitivity, to development of separately identified land parcels to the St John in the Wilderness church. Assessment is based on ground level assessment (human eye level) from points within the churchyard. The church tower is not particularly high and will have limited public access but from the top of the tower more expansive views would be expected bearing in mind that, by design, the church tower is meant to be widely seen and to dominate the landscape.
- 7.30 The assessment is based on visibility of the ground level in adjoining nearby land areas and considers the height of buildings and their potential impact in terms of elevation. Recognising that the field pattern has changed very little since the church was largely rebuilt in 1748 (and little changed since its original construction in 1348), the identified land parcels are for the most part based on existing historic field boundaries, though in some cases fields/areas that have similar characteristics/visual connectivity have been merged. In other cases fields are split where differing characteristics exist. Only the main fields are captured in the assessment, there are some smaller pockets of land that fall between these that have not been assessed and as such could be looked upon as extras.
- 7.31 We have identified four area types in terms of visual connectivity:
- **Very High** – areas that are visually very well connected and unsuited to development
 - **Medium-high** – areas where all or parts of a site have a clear visual link.

- **Medium** – areas where there are parts of the site that have a visual link, but of lesser prominence/proximity.
- **Low** – areas where there is either nil visual link or at most it is only in longer distance views.

7.32 These areas are shown on the map below/over along with sensitivity conclusions reached. A site visit was undertaken in August 2025 and as a broad-brush observation it should be noted that the boundaries to the graveyard surrounding the church, both the original graveyard and a more recent extension to the east, are very heavily planted with both deciduous and evergreen trees. The extent and density of planting means that in the summer months there are limited views and intervisibility with surrounding fields. In the winter, with the falling of leaves, this will increase but even then the evergreens and mass of branches on the deciduous trees will result in a retained degree of screening.



Above – Map showing areas of the site by visual connectivity to the listed church. For further details see table following para. 7.39

7.33 The church is surrounded by an old original graveyard which lies on gently sloping land that forms part of the general wider upward sweep on land from south to north. This creates a sense of tranquillity and remoteness. Some views out from this original

graveyard area are adversely impacted, however, by an existing caravan park and what appears to be a caravan storage area to the south, this causes a degree of visual intrusiveness. There are existing dwellings to the west of the churchyard, and in close proximity to it, and in part directly overlooking. To the east of the original graveyard is a newer graveyard area that sits within a very distinct hollow in the landscape. Its sunken position, along with dense existing boundary planting limit outward views, especially to the north where the land rises up quite sharply giving this area a sense of enclosure. At night time, artificial lighting (especially in winter) from new development if poorly provided for could be particularly intrusive to the graveyard areas.

- 7.34 The site assessment work needs to be seen and read in the context of the way that the church and churchyard sit within the landscape and specifically the mature dense vegetation that limits views.
- 7.35 We have undertaken some finer grained assessment of comparative sensitivity of different site parts to inform possible overall capacity. For this work we have worked on a net density assumption of 40 new homes being built per hectare for those areas with a low visual connectivity. For areas with very high and medium-high visual connectivity we have assumed zero dwellings - such areas could remain as open space to serve development. For areas ranked as medium we have run two scenarios, one at a low figure 20 homes per hectare and the other at zero. The 20 homes per hectare would provide for either low density-built development (for example homes in large plots, perhaps single storey in potentially more sensitive areas) and/or it could provide for areas of green space accessible to the public and some more typical density new homes (for example open space in more sensitive parts and homes in less).
- 7.36 Assessment work undertaken as part of the sustainability appraisal of the Cranbrook Plan – see Appendix 3 of [Cranbrook Development Plan: Issues and Options Report](#) shows net density levels, at the time of assessment for homes built, averaging just over 40 dwellings to the hectare. The net area being defined as including:
- houses and gardens;
 - car parking courts
 - estate roads and footpaths;
 - incidental open space – including small play spaces and other local green spaces.
- 7.37 The net areas exclude larger scale, strategic and non-residential features such as strategic highways and access roads, major landscaping areas and parkland, playing fields, schools, community and businesses uses and larger scale play areas. For strategic highways and access roads (noting an indicative spine road is diagrammatically shown on the map) we have assumed a substantive area with a width of 15 metres that is discounted from recorded area totals.
- 7.38 It is stressed that this work is not a formal detailed assessment and in no sense is it intended to form policy or establish any specific set of proposals or patterns for development. Rather it is illustrative and approximate of comparative areas of sensitivity and is set out as a means to illustrate the scale or level of development that could potentially be achieved by directing development to the less or nil sensitive

locations only. It is worth highlighting, however, that development when well designed and implemented can frame and enhance heritage assets and as such 'sensitive areas' can in some cases be appropriate and positive for development and built uses.

7.39 In the table below/over we set out details of assessment undertaken.

Table of assessment if identified areas

Area	Net area in hectares	Visual connectivity	Homes per hectare	Homes total	Alternative homes per hectare	Alt homes total	Comments
1	4.79	Low	40	191	40	191	This area is very well screened, it falls some distance from the church and no visual connectivity was recorded.
2	4.17	Low	40	167	40	167	This area is very well screened, it falls some distance from the church and no visual connectivity was recorded.
3	3.04	Low	40	121	40	121	This area is very well screened and it falls some distance from the church. The only possible and at most slight visual connectivity would apply to the most northerly parts of the site.
4	4.50	Medium	20	90	0	0	This area was recorded as having a medium sensitivity. More northerly parts have some visual links, with the northern site boundary falling on a minor ridge. But as the land slopes southward much of this area has limited or nil visual connection.
5	1.11	Med-high	0	0	0	0	This area is comparatively close to the church. Its western sides have visual connections and a ridgeline runs north-south through the site. But moving eastward the area becomes more of a plateau, slopes of to the east and visual connection diminish/are lost.
6	4.70	Very High	0	0	0	0	This area is very prominent in views and has a particularly tranquil character. Noise and light impacts will be particularly intrusive.
7	2.56	Low	40	102	40	102	This area slopes downward from west to east and is not visually connected to the church.
8	2.80	Med-high	0	0	0	0	The western edge of this site is defined by a mature hedgerow that sites in views above the church. The hedgerow and lie of the land mean that at ground level views into this are not seen. Though built development, especially at two storeys, there could be some visual links as ridgeline considerations as with area 5 also apply. Moving eastward across the area visually connectivity (or potential for) diminishes.

Area	Net area in hectares	Visual connectivity	Homes per hectare	Homes total	Alternative homes per hectare	Alt homes total	Comments
9	1.48	Low	40	59	40	59	Whilst land slopes upwards toward this area the slope is on a shallow gradient than land nearer to the church and also the area and especially easterly parts are some distance from the church. The lie of the land, and hedgerow boundaries are such that visual connections are limited.
10	1.02	Med-high	0	0	0	0	This area lies to the north of the newer graveyard area. It sits above the graveyard but because of the rising nature of the land, the hollow within which the graveyard sits and vegetation cover there is very limited visual connection, really only southerly parts, of this area. Sensitive to light intrusion.
11	1.32	Med-high	0	0	0	0	The south east of this area lies next to a part of the old church yard, albeit with a deep layer of vegetation to the boundary within and to the sides of what appears the remains of an old sunken lane. This area stretches upward to the north and sensitivity diminishes as the extent of separation from the churchyard increases.
12	3.79	Low	40	151	40	151	This area forms the northerly parts of fields that are recorded as medium high sensitivity to the south. On account of distance from the church and graveyard and intervening vegetation cover a low sensitivity is recorded.
Total	35.25			848		792	

The above is to read in conjunction with the site map.

7.40 In the above assessment building homes on the low and medium sensitive land (as described) could accommodate around 848 homes. Though this figure does not take into account the 2 hectares of employment land and land for community uses. For community uses, and using Cranbrook as an example, the Younghayes centre and the parade of shops next to it and associated service yards, parking, paved areas and landscaping occupy an area of around ½ hectare. A policy area of 2½ hectares built on land calculated at 40 homes to the hectare would occupy the land equivalent of 100 homes. Deducting this from the 848 total would leave a capacity figure of 748, i.e. some way above the 700 homes allocated in the local plan. The scenario of not building on the medium sensitive land (i.e. building on low sensitivity land only) would accommodate 792 new homes, or with the 100 home deduction a figure of 692. But it is important to reiterate that the medium sensitivity will apply to some parts of areas in this classification but not all parts and some of the medium-high classified areas could well have some development potential as well.

Proposed redrafting of policy for Exmo_20

- 7.41 Set out below/over the page is proposed revised wording that allocates Site Exmo_20 for development. These changes stress heritage sensitivity concerns, opportunities to enhance the natural beauty of the national landscape, restrict street lighting along the proposed access road serving the site and a requirement for provision of foot/ cycle path links to the Meadow View estate and Liverton Business Park and/ or appropriate financial contributions towards securing these. They also refer to mineral matters. A heritage assessment and masterplan have been produced by the prospective developer that respond to some of these issues. With a well-designed scheme a good development should be achieved.
- 7.42 In making officer recommended changes to the plan we would highlight that we are not recommending changes to the number of 700 new homes being accommodated at the site. Retention of the allocation, deletion and other options, in order to give a comprehensive overview, are listed below:
- a) Retain the allocation of Exmo_20 (full spatial extent and housing numbers) in line with the officer recommendation, albeit noting minerals, heritage and Pebblebed Heath constraints on development.
 - b) Delete the allocation of Exmo_20 from the plan and make associated boundary changes – specifically redraw the Settlement boundary to exclude Exmo_20 noting that this is likely to be a significant change to the plan that takes it outside of the transitional arrangements in the new NPPF.
 - c) Reduce the site area of Exmo_20 in respect of land in the northerly part of the site, for example to exclude land that falls in the Minerals Consultation Area (or potentially a greater area). Though the access road from the north would remain and run through this area. This option need not impact on site capacity for 700 new homes but could depending on the extent of any reduction. A

significant reduction in housing numbers could generate financial viability concerns.

- d) Reduce the site area of Exmo_20 more substantially so that development is just focussed on southerly site parts. In much earlier draft plan work this was the suggested development form with an allocation shown for around 150 new homes. Though this would be reliant on road access from the road called Southern Wood to the south of the site. Previously Devon County Council advised of the technical acceptability in highway terms for this option at this level of development (150 homes). However, even with a reduced site area, for example covering the southerly three site fields, there could be capacity for close to 300 new homes and open space provision, but potential acceptability in highway terms, coming via Southern Wood, at this point in time has not been tested at this level of development and it may well not be deemed as acceptable.

Proposed redrafting of: Strategic Policy SD01: In respect of Exmo_20

Please note that of direct relevance to this policy, but also elsewhere, a plan change is proposed that we show all Mineral Consultation Areas on the policies map.

7.43 Officer recommendation - Retain Exmo_20 as an allocation for 700 dwellings with amended policy wording as set out above.

To address the issues highlighted above, in the event that Members are minded to retain the allocation in accordance with officers' recommendation then the proposed revised wording for the allocation is also recommended:

Land at St John's (Exmo_20)

Land at St John's, on the eastern side of Exmouth, is allocated for a comprehensive development scheme to accommodate:

- A. Social and community facilities;
- B. Around 700 new homes; and
- C. At least 2 hectares of employment land.

This site allocation will need to come forward on the basis of an agreed masterplan and access strategy for the whole site that clearly demonstrates how phased comprehensive development will be undertaken and implemented, including with appropriate mechanisms for apportionment of development costs and contributions across separately owned land parcels. Full agreement will be required before any specific parcels of land can come forward for development.

Built development will need to be concentrated in the southern parts of the site and the scheme will need to place considerable emphasis on protection of the setting and tranquillity of nearby heritage assets, specifically St John in the Wilderness church.

Support will be given for expansion of the churchyard, to provide more burial/interment of ashes space at St John in the Wilderness.

A detailed heritage assessment will need to accompany any overarching planning application/s for the site or any other planning applications for any parts of the site that are visible from or otherwise lie in close proximity to, or impact upon the setting of, any listed buildings or other heritage assets at or close to the site, this explicitly includes the St John in the Wilderness church. An extensive area must be established around the church in master planning work within which built development will not be allowed, though subject to not having adverse heritage impacts open space non-sports pitch/noisy recreational activities will be permitted.

Northern parts of the allocated site fall in a Minerals Safeguarding Area (for sand and gravel resources) and associated larger Minerals Consultation Area as defined in the Devon County Council Minerals Development Plan 2011-2033 (and as may be refined or appear in amended form in any subsequent minerals Local Plan). The safeguarding area is shown on the local plan policies map.

Planning permission for development or use of the land (including for open space and recreational uses) in the Minerals Safeguarding Area will not be permitted unless the development demonstrates through a robust Mineral Resource Assessment that the mineral resource is not of current or potential economic value. Should a Mineral Resource Assessment show that the mineral resource is of current or potential economic value, prior extraction of the mineral resource in advance of development should be undertaken; or a non-mineral development is of a temporary nature and can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction or operation within the timescale that the mineral resource is likely to be needed.

It is recommended that any applicant engages with the Mineral Planning Authority during the design stage of any development proposal.

The only exception to this constraint will be provision of an access road and associated parallel running footway and paths/cycleway that link built development at the site and built development to the B3179 highway to the north of the site. This road access and any associated works must be sensitively designed to avoid any possible adverse impacts on the National Landscape. Street lighting should be avoided and new planting should provide screening. Development of this site should actively support opportunities to enhance the natural beauty of the national landscape.

Development in the Mineral Consultation Area must be designed in a way to not constrain any future mineral working, for example, locating less sensitive uses adjacent to the Mineral Safeguarding Area.

Parts of the site and adjoining areas, especially woodlands are of biodiversity importance and sensitivity and great care will be needed in developing proposals to ensure their protection and enhancement. Over and above mineral constraints new ~~New~~ homes and other development that would result in unacceptable impacts will not be permitted within 400 meters of the Pebblebed Heaths. The development will need to be

supported by a new developer provided SANGs, brought forward and implemented as part of the overall scheme on the allocated or on nearby land.

Vehicular access, to accommodate modest levels of development, will be allowed for southern site parts from the road 'Southern Wood', subject to detailed assessment of highway access acceptability and objective review of local road and junction capacity ~~and with mitigation provided to address unacceptable adverse impacts~~. Primary vehicle access to the site, serving the large majority/large bulk of development, will be from the B3179 to the north. Mitigation measures may be required to address potentially unacceptable adverse highways impacts, including at locations on the wider highway network. High quality, safe and attractive to use pedestrian, cycle and public transport access, particularly providing southerly site links into Exmouth and to nearby services, facilities and job opportunities, will need to be an essential part of the overall development scheme. As part of this, consideration should be given to alterations to vehicular access on St John's Road, in order to help create quiet routes for walking and cycling.

Exmo_17 - Land to the South of Littleham - Exmouth

- 7.44 Allocation of this site is consistent with the spatial strategy, noting the relevance of growth at Exmouth. The site is close to a range of services and facilities and offers significant development at the only Principal Centre in the District.
- 7.45 Matters raised in consultation responses included:
- Development within a designated National Landscape (formerly AONB) is strongly opposed. (Historic England, Individuals)
 - Potential harm to the setting of St Margaret and St Andrews Church and surrounding historic landscape. (Historic England, Individuals)
 - Concerns about traffic, access, and pressure on local infrastructure and services. (Individuals)
 - Support for the allocation and its deliverability. (Planning Consultant/Developer):
- 7.46 With respect to site Exmo_17, the following observations are made, though noting that comments are written in the context of an indicative masterplan currently being promoted by the prospective developers, rather than specifically local plan allocation and policy wording matters.
- 7.47 The site is situated on sloping ground adjacent to the urban edge of Exmouth with the Liverton business park situated to the north, a 20th century housing estate to the northwest and the historic core of Littleham including the parish church to the southwest.
- 7.48 The site area extends to 27.2ha of which approximately 13.5ha will remain undeveloped including provision of approximately 8.6ha of SANG, 1ha of SuDS and 2.8ha of other natural and semi-natural greenspace. As part of this open space, a minimum 250m buffer will be provided between site development parcels and Littleham Church to reduce adverse impact on its setting.

- 7.49 Employment land is shown located on higher level ground at the northern end of the site adjacent to Salterton Road and will be set against the backdrop of Liverton Business Park beyond.
- 7.50 Hedge removal should be minimised and any loss compensated for within the scheme proposals. A high standard of site and building design and appropriate materials reflecting local distinctiveness will be required with extensive planting to help to screen and filter built form and associated infrastructure in key views from the National Landscape.
- 7.51 The site forms part of an extensive tract of farmland, extending some way eastwards beyond the site, which is owned by the same landowner (Clinton Devon Estates). This provides opportunity to undertake a range of landscape and biodiversity enhancements within the wider landscape such as managing hedges less intensively, hedge re-instatement, providing additional trees and creating biodiverse grassland to field margins, secured through section 106 agreement.
- 7.52 National Cycle Route 2 passes through the middle of the site on the former railway corridor and affords active travel links to Littleham and Exmouth town centre to the west and Budleigh Salterton to the east. There is also potential for providing additional footpath/bridleway links from NCR2 over adjacent land to create circular routes and connect with the South West Coast Path secured through s106 agreement.
- 7.53 Policy SD01 requires the development to be undertaken in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the whole site with particular sensitivity to minimising potential for adverse impacts on the national landscape. The wording should be amended to refer to the need to ensure that the development will conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the site and its wider landscape setting and to further the purposes of the National Landscape. This should include access, biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the wider landscape to the east of the site.
- 7.54 The policy also requires SANGs provision together with the enhancement of the current cycle route within an attractive corridor and other pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development. This wording could also be improved by requiring circular routes within the site and connections to the wider network of footpaths and cycleways, including the South West Coast Path as well as to local services in Littleham and to the Liverton Business Park.
- 7.55 Policy amendments should include the need to ensure that the development will conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the site and its wider landscape setting and to further the purposes of the national landscape. This should include access, biodiversity and landscape enhancements within the wider landscape to the east of the site as well as the provision of circular routes within the site and connections to the wider network of footpaths and cycleways.
- 7.56 Conservation officers at the council, from a built heritage perspective have reviewed this allocation. Comments are set out below noting that they are specifically made in respect of an indicative layout promoted by the prospective developers in pre-

application engagement work. Whilst related to this indicative layout they do have full relevance to the matters of principle that are relevant to a local plan allocation.

The development site is currently open land, in which there are glimpsed views from the churchyard of the Grade II listed Parish Church of St Margaret and St Andrew. These views are limited due to the tall wall surrounding the churchyard. In terms of views towards the church, the church tower rises above the mature tree line and is a prominent feature when viewed from the east and north-east and has been part of the landscape since the 15th century (or even earlier). The church serves Littleham, which was a small settlement in a rural setting until the 20th century when the town of Exmouth expanded from the west. This expansion has gradually encroached up the setting of the church, with open views surviving to the east and north-east where the allocation site is proposed. This encroachment is particularly evident when walking north-west through the churchyard where a row of existing mid-late 20th century dwellings which back onto the churchyard is highly prominent and harmful. The loss of the only surviving area of open space would lead to a degree of harm to the setting of the church in terms of a slight visual impact, the loss of open space, noise and light pollution.*

The highest degree of harm would be at the southern end of the allocation site which the concept plan shows as a SANG and a cemetery extension. These open spaces would go some way towards maintaining countryside views and a peaceful environment, protecting the setting of the church. Landscaping and tree/ hedge planting along the west boundary of the development to the south of the former railway line will also help to protect the setting of the churchyard extension to the north of the church.

In this instance I feel that the indicative layout is acceptable, with the public benefits of providing landscaping and ecology enhancements outweighing any harm, subject to the scale, design and materials of the dwellings being carefully considered, and if necessary, repairs to the churchyard wall carried out to ensure it remains an effective barrier.

- 7.57 On the basis of this heritage feedback, and prior heritage assessment work undertaken, it is considered that the site forms a sound allocation in the local plan.
- 7.58 **Officer recommendation - Retain Exmo_17 as an allocation for 410 dwellings.**
Though in due course we will look to refine policy wording to afford greater protection of heritage assets and landscape protection.

Exmo_08 and Exmo_16 combined - Littleham Fields - Exmouth

- 7.59 Allocation of this site is consistent with the spatial strategy, these sites are close to facilities at Littleham.
- 7.60 Main issues recorded in consultation were:
- Development would harm the setting of the Grade II listed Green Farmhouse and the Maer Valley landscape. (Historic England, Individuals)
 - The site supports diverse wildlife and is ecologically sensitive. (Individuals)

- Local infrastructure—roads, schools, sewage, and water—is already under strain. (Individuals)
- The area is prone to flooding, with concerns about increased runoff. (Individuals)
- Access via Parlour Meadow is unsuitable due to congestion and industrial traffic. (Individuals)

There were calls for:

- Remove the allocation due to landscape, heritage, and infrastructure constraints. (Historic England, Individuals)
- If retained, require detailed assessment and mitigation of heritage impacts. (Historic England)
- Explore alternative access options, such as Elm Lane. (Individuals)
- Prioritise brownfield development and protect high-grade agricultural land. (Individuals)

- 7.26 The chief concern highlighted in representation around this site related to potential adverse heritage impacts with, amongst others, Historic England raising specific concerns. In initial site assessment work it was acknowledged and recognised that there were heritage considerations of relevance to this site. The Grade II listed Green Farm is immediately to the southwest of the site. This farm and its immediate garden area is an attractive and important heritage asset. It does not, however, sit within a clear and obvious countryside and undeveloped setting, rather its location is urban fringe.
- 7.27 Its setting and an overarching sense of remoteness or rurality is compromised (at least to some degree) by existing development to the east and of more visual significance new development sitting above the ridgeline, with a clear visual connection, to the north of the site. In addition, whilst acknowledging that they are agricultural buildings, there are a range of larger format structures to the west of the listed farmhouse that are not complimentary to its form, structure or character, though there are also some older and attractive farm buildings as well.
- 7.28 As drafted policy wording for this site advises: “.....*There is also the listed Green Farm to the west of the site the setting of which will need to be carefully addressed.*” There is, therefore, already heritage sensitivity considerations written into policy and these were written in the context of recognising the sloping nature of the site and the fact that it does overlook the listed farmhouse.
- 7.29 We would also highlight that the Grade I Listed St Margaret and St Andrew's Church lies relatively close, though around 140 metres away from and to the northeast of site. In summer months, with tree coverage there is no apparent visual connection between the church graveyard and the site. In winter months visibility will be greater but would be seen within the context of existing intervening development between the church and the site and also, potentially, new elevated development that sits above the church.
- 7.30 The heritage considerations and concerns related to this site, and the comparative negatives to development need to be seen in the context of the need to accommodate development and wider comparative positives associated with this site. On balance

officer conclusion, despite objections is that the site is a reasonable choice for allocation. However, it is seen as appropriate to strengthen plan policy in the light of heritage considerations to further stress their significance. It would also be appropriate to set out in policy that as part of site development open space uses should be located in the south-westerly parts of the site (specifically Exmo_08) and these are to be designed to meet site needs but also to help protect the setting of the listed farmhouse. Further policy should also be refined to advise of the explicit need for a heritage assessment to clearly set out how heritage considerations have been fully taken into account and potential adverse impacts minimised. This should include the listed Grade I church to the east of the site and may place limitations on development potential of higher land on the site. This work will need to accompany any planning application for the development of the site. Plan policy should also be refined to advise that final site capacity may need to be lower than allocation levels in order to overcome heritage concerns at the application stage and as demonstrated through further assessment work.

7.31 Officer recommendation - Retain Exmo_08 and Exmo_16 combined as allocations for 45 dwellings.

Exmo_18 - Littleham Fields, next to Liverton Business Park- Exmouth

- 7.61 This site is allocated for employment uses in the plan. It is on the eastern side of the town next to the existing Liverton Business park.
- 7.62 This site is not located in the East Devon National Landscape, but the southern part of the site is adjacent to it, on the other side of Salterton Road, which follows a low ridge line. The site is within Landscape Character Type 1B: Open coastal plateaux, where landscape guidelines include protecting skylines and ridgetops that form the settings to settlements. The site drops steeply from Salterton Road at a gradient of 1:5 and a new access off Salterton Road is likely to involve extensive grading and engineering works to create a route at suitable gradient which is likely to have localised adverse landscape and visual impacts on the National Landscape and its setting. This could be avoided by limiting development to the northern 2/3 of the site with access provided from the Liverton Business Park. Existing hedges to the southern and eastern site boundaries should be reinforced and appropriately managed and additional trees provided.
- 7.63 It is considered that the allocation is sound, subject to additions to the plan policy to mitigate landscape impacts as set out below. This would have the effect of reducing the amount of land available for employment uses on the site from 2.7ha to around 1.8ha.

Land directly to the East of Liverton Business Park (Exmo_18)

This land east of Liverton Business Park is allocated for employment uses and will form an extension to the existing business park and extends to around 2.7 hectares in size. Development should be designed to take account of the relationship between the site and the East Devon National Landscape, with vehicular access from the Liverton Business Park (not Salterton Road) and no built development in the southern third of the site. Existing hedges to the southern and eastern site boundaries should be reinforced and appropriately managed and additional trees provided.

7.64 Officer recommendation - Retain Exmo_18 as an employment allocation.

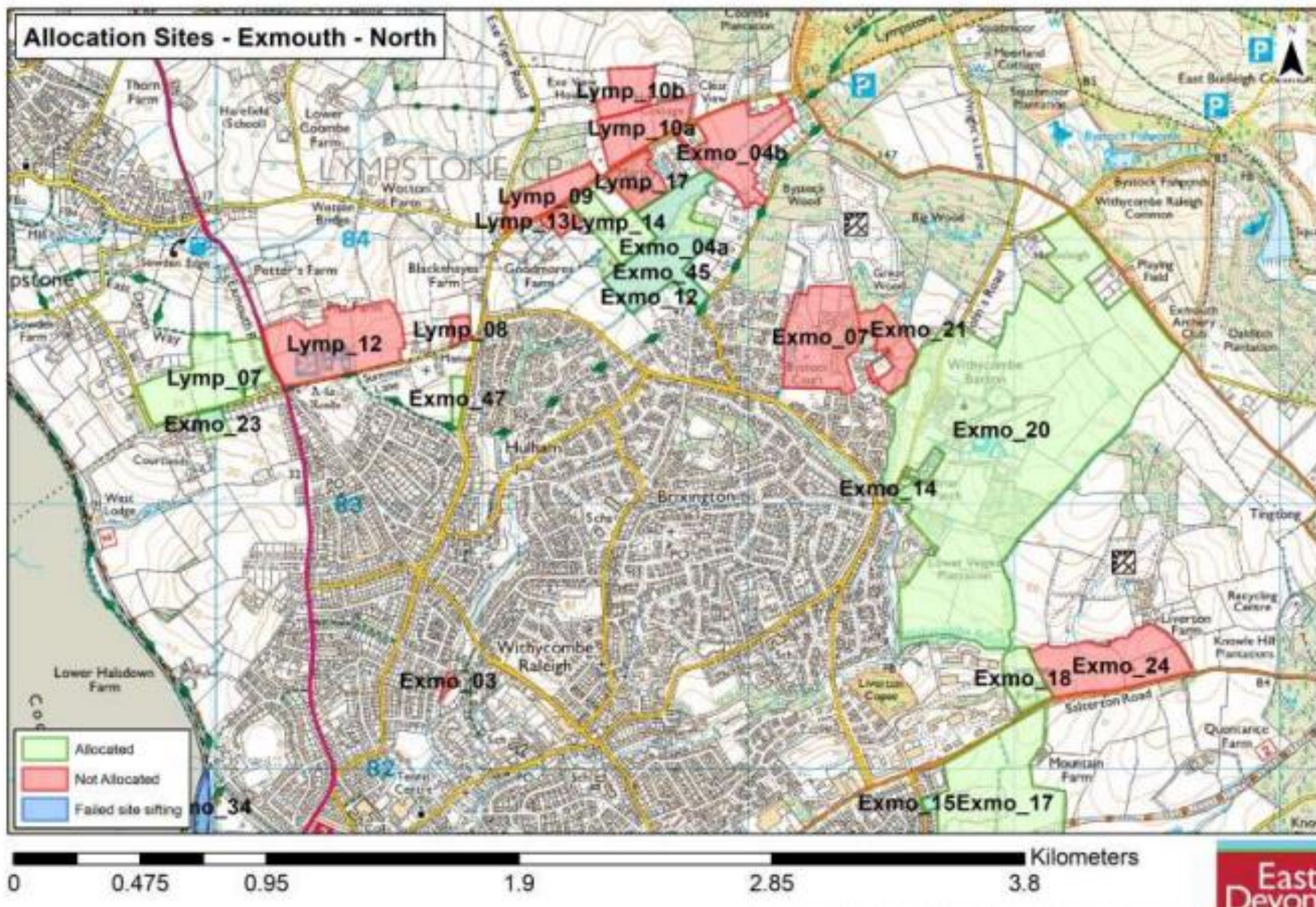
Alternative site options at Exmouth

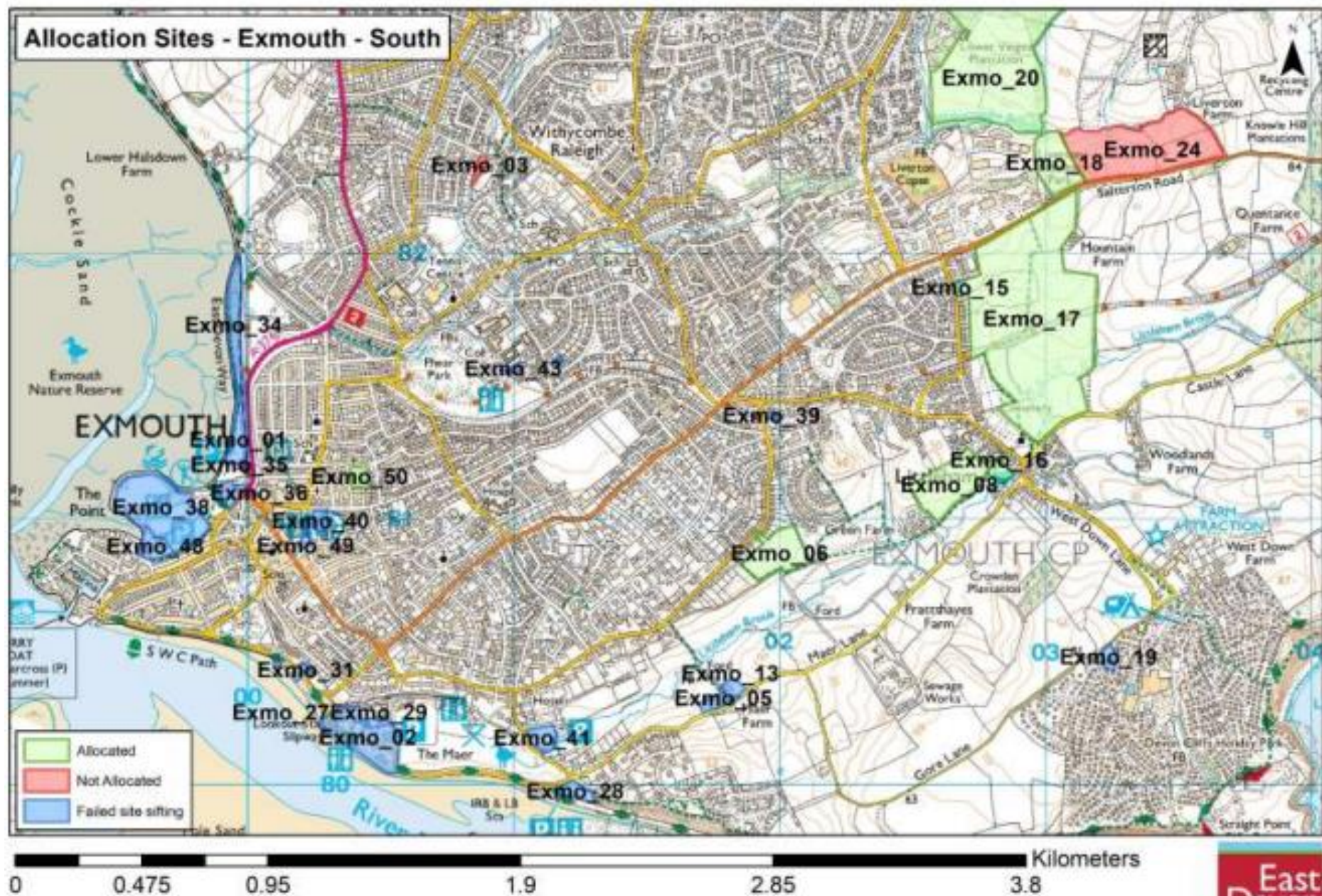
7.65 Should committee wish to not allocate, in part or full, any of the housing sites at Exmouth, or wish to not allocate any additional sites (for example in response to plan objections in respect of claims of under-delivery) there are alternative site options available albeit not recommended. Those sites that were considered in the site assessment work and that were debated by Committee in 2024, are:

- Exmo_03 – 5 dwgs - Land at bottom of Bapton Lane
- Exmo_07 – 40 dwgs - Bystock Court, Old Bystock Drive
- Exmo_24 - 124 dwgs - Land to the north of Salterton Road
- Lymp_08 – 14 dwgs - Land off Summer Lane, Exmouth
- Lymp_09 – 54 dwgs - Land fronting Hulham Road
- Lymp_10 – 100 dwgs - Land off Hulham Road, Lympstone
- Lymp_12 – 174 dwgs - land fronting A376 and Summer Lane
- Lymp_13 – 25 dwgs - Kings Garden & Leisure, Higher Hulham Rd
- Lymp_17 – 80 dwgs - Land at Marley House
- Exmo_21 – 15 dwgs - Land east of Bystock court

7.66 These sites, in total, would offer capacity for accommodating approximately 631 dwellings (a figure that falls someway short of the Exmo_20 allocation of 700). It should be noted that a number of additional sites failed at site sifting and were not otherwise carried forward for assessment, nor had other justifying grounds for assessment.

7.67 Sites assessed at Exmouth/referenced in this committee report are shown on the maps below, as taken from the Exmouth site assessment report - [sal-022-exmouth-site-selection-report.pdf](#)





8 Sites at Axminster

- 8.1 Sites at Axminster that have been identified for further assessment are referenced below. After the listed sites there is a map showing their locations. We identify alternative sites at Axminster that could be allocated for development should committee wish to make amendments. All sites are referenced and assessed in the Axminster site report – [sal-005-axminster-site-selection-report.pdf](#).

Axmi_01a - Land west of Musbury Road

- 8.2 Site Axmi_01a is a 2ha employment allocation that was included in the plan because it was consistent with the spatial strategy. However, part of the site is at risk of flooding and development is further constrained by two World War II pill boxes. The policy requires the land between the pill boxes and the railway line to be kept as public open space.
- 8.3 In addition to the pill boxes, the Devon Historic Environment Record identifies potential areas of archaeological interest on the site including the potential route of the Fosse Way Roman Road, the route of the Axminster and Lyme Regis light railway, a trackway that may reflect an earlier feature and findspots for prehistoric flint and medieval pottery. The site is also close to two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Newenham Abbey and a Roman Fort & Later Romano-British Settlement). Devon CC object to the allocation unless further archaeological work is undertaken.
- 8.4 Further archaeological investigation has been requested of the site owner but has not been undertaken. The site cannot be justified due to uncertainty over the extent and importance of archaeological remains.
- 8.5 **Officer recommendation – Remove Axmi_01 as an employment allocation -** Officers would not see the need to make alternative employment provision as the site is small and there is already adequate provision made at Axminster. It is recommended that the allocation be removed, and the settlement boundary be amended to exclude the site and land up to existing urban edge.

Axmi_02, Axmi_08 and Axmi_09 - Land east of Musbury Road

- 8.6 These three sites abut one another and are taken together as they form a single allocation in the local plan. They are allocated for 438 dwellings.
- 8.7 The land was allocated because it was consistent with the spatial strategy of the plan and the site has good access to facilities and employment, although concerns about landscape and heritage impacts were noted.
- 8.8 Matters raised in consultation responses included:

Main Issues:

- Heritage and archaeological sensitivity due to proximity to Roman Fort and Fosse Way. (Historic England, Devon County Council)
- Support the requirement for a masterplan on this site, especially to suitably manage the flood risks. (Environment Agency)
- Road safety concerns on A35 due to additional turning movements. (National Highways)
- Objection to employment allocation and community hall viability. (Planning Consultant)
- Road safety and access issues on Musbury Road. (Individuals)
- Inadequate sewerage infrastructure and surface water flooding. (Individual)
- Support for residential allocation and comprehensive masterplanning. (Developer)

Calls for:

- Removal of the site due to archaeological sensitivity and setting impacts. (Historic England)
- Desk-based assessment and site evaluation before allocation. (Historic England)
- Reference to the proximity of the strategic road network and road safety concerns. (National Highways)
- Clarification of community hall need and delivery mechanism. (Planning Consultant) • Rewording of bus stop requirements to reflect deliverability and best practice. (Planning Consultant)
- Flood mitigation and drainage infrastructure upgrades. (Individuals) • Road safety improvements and alternative access routes. (Individuals) • Removal of the site due to cumulative infrastructure and environmental constraints. (Individuals)

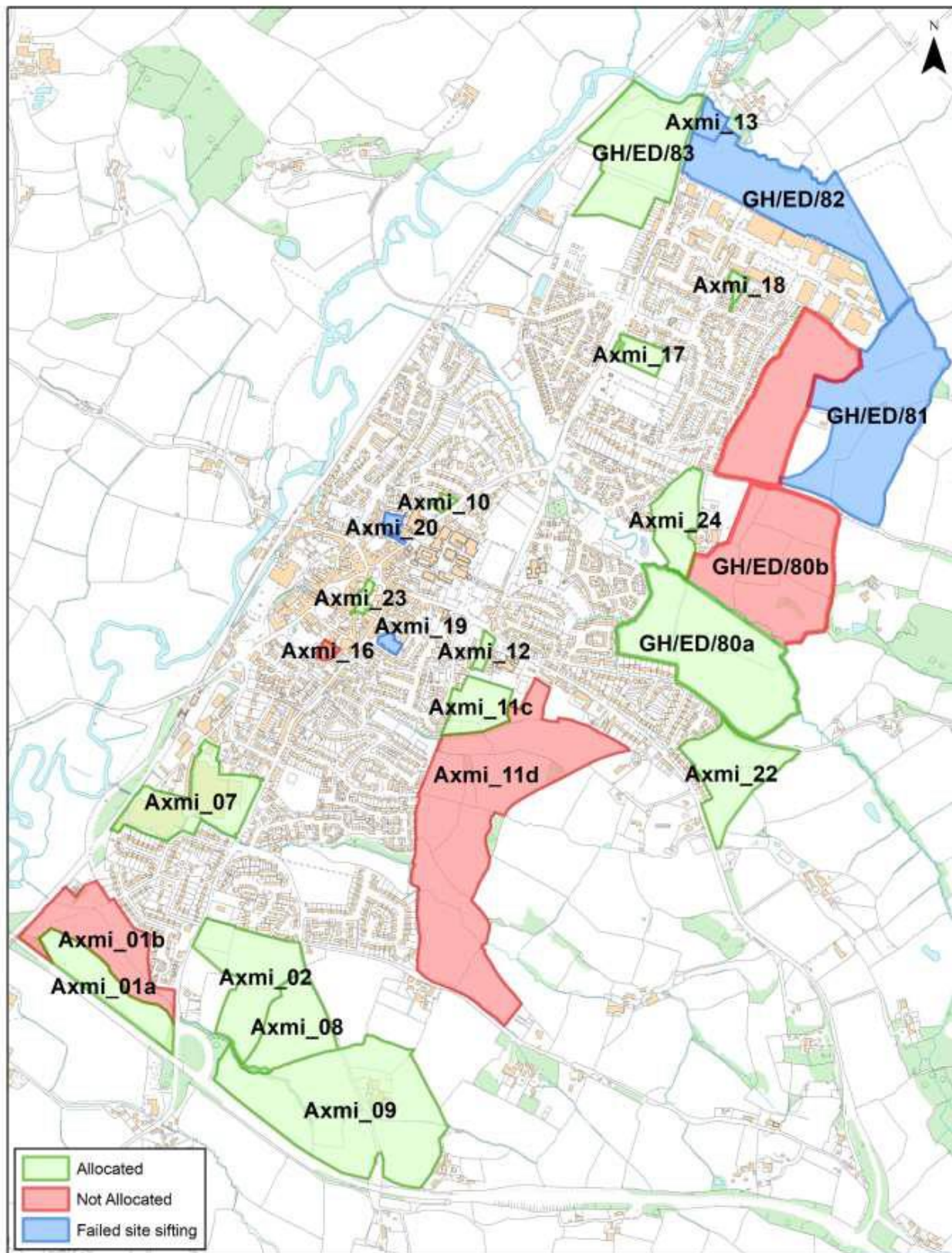
- 8.9 The Devon Historic Environment Record identifies potential areas of archaeological interest in the northern part of the site including the route of a Roman Road from Axminster to Honiton, defensive works dating from 1940 and Prehistoric, Roman & Medieval artefacts.
- 8.10 Devon CC object to the allocation until further archaeological work is undertaken. Historic England, in addition to archaeological objections, say the potential harm to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument is considerable because built development across the site would remove or fundamentally alter the physical and visual relationship between the Scheduled Monument, the route of the nearby Roman Road and the landscape over which the fort would have had surveillance, falling to the River Axe before rising to the hills beyond.
- 8.11 Initial investigation work has shown that a Roman road crosses this site and has associated Romano British settlement remains. The remains may be significant enough to justify extending the boundary of the scheduled ancient monument, but until trenches are excavated it is not possible to know how much material has survived intact and therefore the significance of the site. Even if significant remains are found, it may be possible to provide a suitable access from Musbury Road to the remainder of the site and to keep the area of archaeological significance as open space, but until investigation work is further advanced it is not possible to know.

- 8.12 **Officer recommendation – Subject to archaeological concerns not establishing an unreasonable constraint to development (this information is not currently available) retain the allocation of Axmi_02, Axmi_08 and Axmi_09 - Land east of Musbury Road.**

Alternative site options at Axminster

- 8.13 Should committee wish to not allocate any of the housing sites at Axminster (in this schedule or otherwise in the plan) then the following options to address any housing shortfall arising are identified but not recommended (numbers are approximate):
- Axmi_01b – 15 dwgs
 - Axmi_16 – 15 dwgs
 - Axmi_11d – 330 dwgs
 - GH/ED/80b – 169 dwgs
- 8.14 It should be noted that other sites failed site sifting and were not otherwise carried forward for assessment, nor had other justifying grounds for assessment. Sites assessed at Axminster in this committee report are shown on the maps below, as taken from the Axminster site assessment report.

Map of site options at Axminster – for assessment report see [sal-005-axminster-site-selection-report.pdf](#)



0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 Kilometers

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9 Sites at Honiton

- 9.1 Sites at Honiton that have been identified for further assessment are referenced below. After the listed sites there is a map showing their locations. We identify alternative sites at Honiton that could be allocated for development should committee wish to make amendments. All sites are referenced and assessed in the Honiton site report – see: [sal-027-honiton-site-selection-report.pdf](#)

Honi_07, Honi_12 and Honi_13 - Land adjacent/near to St Michaels Church

- 9.2 These three allocations are taken together as they are close to and abut the grade II* listed St Michaels Church on the southern side of the town. In the local plan they are allocated for:
- Honi_07 and Honi 12 combined – 101 homes; and
 - Honi _13 – 10 Homes.
- 9.3 The sites were allocated because development would be consistent with the spatial strategy, with good access to facilities, public transport, town centre and employment land.
- 9.4 Matters raised in consultation responses included in respect of Honi_07 and Honi_12 – Land adjacent to St Michael's Church and south east of Cuckoo Down Lane:

Main Issues:

- Statement in policy that Honi_12 is dependent on Honi_07 for access is challenged due to separate ownership and potential for independent access. (Planning consultant on behalf of landowners)
- Concerns about landscape and heritage impact due to proximity to listed buildings and location within a National Landscape. (Town Council, Historic England)
- Legal compliance concerns over consultation process and late inclusion of Honi_12. (Town Council)

Calls For:

- Amend policy to allow for independent access to Honi_12 via Higher Brand Lane. (Planning consultant)
- Restrict Honi_07 to open space only, with built development limited to Honi_12. (Historic England) Stage 1 Publication East Devon Local Plan – Draft Consultation feedback report – July 2025
- Remove Honi_07 and Honi_12 from the plan due to landscape and heritage concerns. (Town Council)

- 9.5 Matters raised in consultation responses included in respect of Honi_13 – Land at Middle Hill, Church Hill

Main Issues:

- Site lies within the AONB and has very high landscape value. (Historic England)

- Close proximity to Grade II* listed Church of St Michael and Former Sexton's House; moderate heritage impact predicted. (Historic England, EDDC site assessment)

Calls For:

- Remove Honi_13 from the plan due to cumulative landscape and heritage impacts. (Historic England)

- 9.6 Honiton Town Council requested deletion of the allocation due to landscape/heritage impact and legitimacy of consultation process (due to late inclusion of Honi_12).
- 9.7 Historic England requested that Honi_07 be used as open space only due to impact on heritage assets.
- 9.8 Since the allocation was made the adjacent 'Former Sexton's House' has been listed as grade II. Furthermore, while the Church of St Michael and All Angels has been designated as a Grade II* listed building since 1949, a recent amendment to the listing has formally included the lych gate as part of the listed building. It is not considered that the impact on these heritage assets can be mitigated through policy wording.
- 9.9 Following officer assessment and bearing in mind consultation feedback it is not recommended that these sites are allocated for development. These sites are within the Blackdown Hills National Landscape and are partly adjacent to, and seen within the context, of the East Devon National Landscape. The allocation of these sites is not considered to be justified as they are prominently situated and sit poorly in relation to the established green urban edge and the setting of St Michael's Church, a grade II* listed building.
- 9.10 To see site Honi_12 in context we have indicated the approximate extent of site boundaries with red dots on the photograph below, which is taken from Roundball Hill. The photograph shows the site in red dots which indicate its elevated position above surrounding development and the marked extension into open countryside that development would result in. Below the site, in the photograph, is a band of mature trees that form a southern edge to the built form of Honiton. Development would breach the boundary these trees form.



- 9.11 It is not considered that the impact on these heritage assets and the national landscapes can be mitigated through changes to policy wording and the allocation is proposed for deletion.
- 9.12 Together with Honi_13 (recommended for deletion on heritage grounds) these allocations have a housing yield of 110 dwellings. Consideration has been given to whether this would constitute a significant change to the plan, the key factor in this case being whether the number of houses allocated can be incorporated into existing allocations around the town. In terms of the overall delivery of housing sites in Honiton, it is considered that this shortfall could be made up through an increase in the yield of two Honiton allocations on land south of Northcote Hill (GH/ED/39a & b). GH/ED/39a was allocated for 100 homes in the first Regulation 19 plan, but there is a resolution to grant planning permission for 115 dwellings.
- 9.13 **Officer recommendation is to delete sites Honi_07, Honi_12 and Honi_13 from the plan.**

Honi_18 – Land at Kings Road, Hale Close, Honiton

- 9.14 The site lies on the eastern side of Honiton, measures around 8 hectares in area and is allocated under Strategic Policy SD03: 'Honiton and its development allocations' for 136 homes. In consultation feedback there was a petition opposing the allocation that was signed by around 80 people. Committee identified that sites that received high levels of objection should be reassessed this site is brought back to committee for further consideration. Concerns raised in the petition are commented on below.

- 9.15 Road safety and access – Whilst noting initial objections to allocation from the highway authority, further technical work has been undertaken by the site promoter, and through liaison with National Highways and the Police means to overcome these concerns have been identified. These measures will include works to provide for safe site access and specifically will need to include introduction of a new speed limit, extending the existing 30 miles per hour limit, in a south easterly direction up the A35. The Police have confirmed no objection to this proposal, noting that the stepped reduction from national speed to 30 miles per hour is preferable to the current arrangement. We do not have objection from the highway authority on road capacity concerns, and a new speed limit offers potential to enhance road safety. Impacts on residents wellbeing - Almost any possible development site maybe challenged on this basis, and it's a difficult consideration to quantify. But compared to some allocations in the local plan the site has few adjoining neighbours, most of the site lies away from adjoining properties, and the existing A35 is significant in terms of existing urbanising impacts.
- 9.16 Environment and wildlife – Whilst many green field sites (and brownfield sites) may have some local wildlife interest there are no statutory designations at the site. Plus, with biodiversity net gain in place site development offers scope for overall net wildlife benefits. Heritage and visual impact – The Grade II listed Copper Castle (a former toll house) and the associated Copper Castle Gates lie to the south west of the site, Copper Castle on the opposite side of the A35. These are the only listed heritage assets in close proximity to the site. Any development of the site would need to be seen within the context of the intervening busy A35 road and the more general urban, 20th century development, on this side of Honiton. Potential for adverse impacts could be mitigated on account of the large site size with most of it someway to the east of these assets. The Blackdown Hills National Landscape abuts the southern site boundary but visually the site is seen within the context of existing built development, specifically along its western edges. The site does not protrude above any ridgelines and sits well below the dominant elevated land that lies to its south and rises above it.
- 9.17 Process for making the allocation – It is noted that the site was first identified for inclusion in the local plan, as an allocation, at the first stage of Regulation 19 consultation. Whilst it had not featured in earlier consultation documents as a recommended allocation, it is within the scope of plan-making practice to introduce new sites as the process progresses, including at Regulation 19 stage. This may be especially, so as new evidence emerges. Even beyond the Regulation 19 stage of work, specifically including at Examination and under advice of planning inspector/s, new sites may be allocated in a plan. It is reiterated that a key reason for not initially identifying the site as an allocation in the plan was that a technical objection from National Highways had been received (highway access to the site is from the A35 trunk road), but this has now been addressed. Including the site in the Regulation 19 consultation has ensured that public consultation has been undertaken and the fact that a petition was circulated and signed demonstrates a public awareness of the site as a proposed allocation for development.

9.18 Overall the petition and other objections received through the consultation do not identify concerns to suggest that the site does not remain an appropriate allocation for inclusion in the Local Plan.

9.19 Officer recommendation is to retain the allocation of Honi_18 - Land at Kings Road, Hale Close, Honiton.

Alternative site options at Honiton

9.20 The officer recommended approach is to delete allocations at Honi_07, 12 and 13 and by way of addressing the shortfall increase the density of two other Honiton allocations to compensate for the number of dwellings lost. Allocations Honi_07, 12 and 13 have a combined capacity of 111 homes.

Recommended increase in allocation numbers at GH/ED/39b - Land south of Northcote Hill (south of railway) and GH/ED/39a (north of railway)

GH/ED/39b – Land south of Northcote Hill – south of the railway

9.21 GH/ED/39b was allocated for 100 homes in the first regulation 19 plan, but submissions on behalf of the developer make provision for up to 300 homes on this site. The original allocation for 100 new homes was a lower-level estimate and this was informed by concerns around adverse landscape impacts that may arise from development, especially if not well spaced and screened with vegetation extending up Northcott Hill towards the east, and noting proximity to the National Landscape. Another reason for the lower-level estimate was concern regarding the narrow access under the railway bridge, which may constrain safe and efficient movement to and from the site. Further work, however, indicates the potential to acceptably increase capacity in a reasonable landscape sensitive way, also the increase reflects Devon County Council's view that a larger development could help deliver improvements to walking, cycling and bus access, which are currently poor. They also advise that impacts on the Strategic Road Network are likely to be negligible. To make up for recommended lost allocations an allocation of 195 homes would appear a reasonable level, though we will look to see if this figure might be refined further (and increased) through ongoing landscape assessment which (with the additional 15 homes from GH/ED/39a) would compensate for not allocating the other sites.

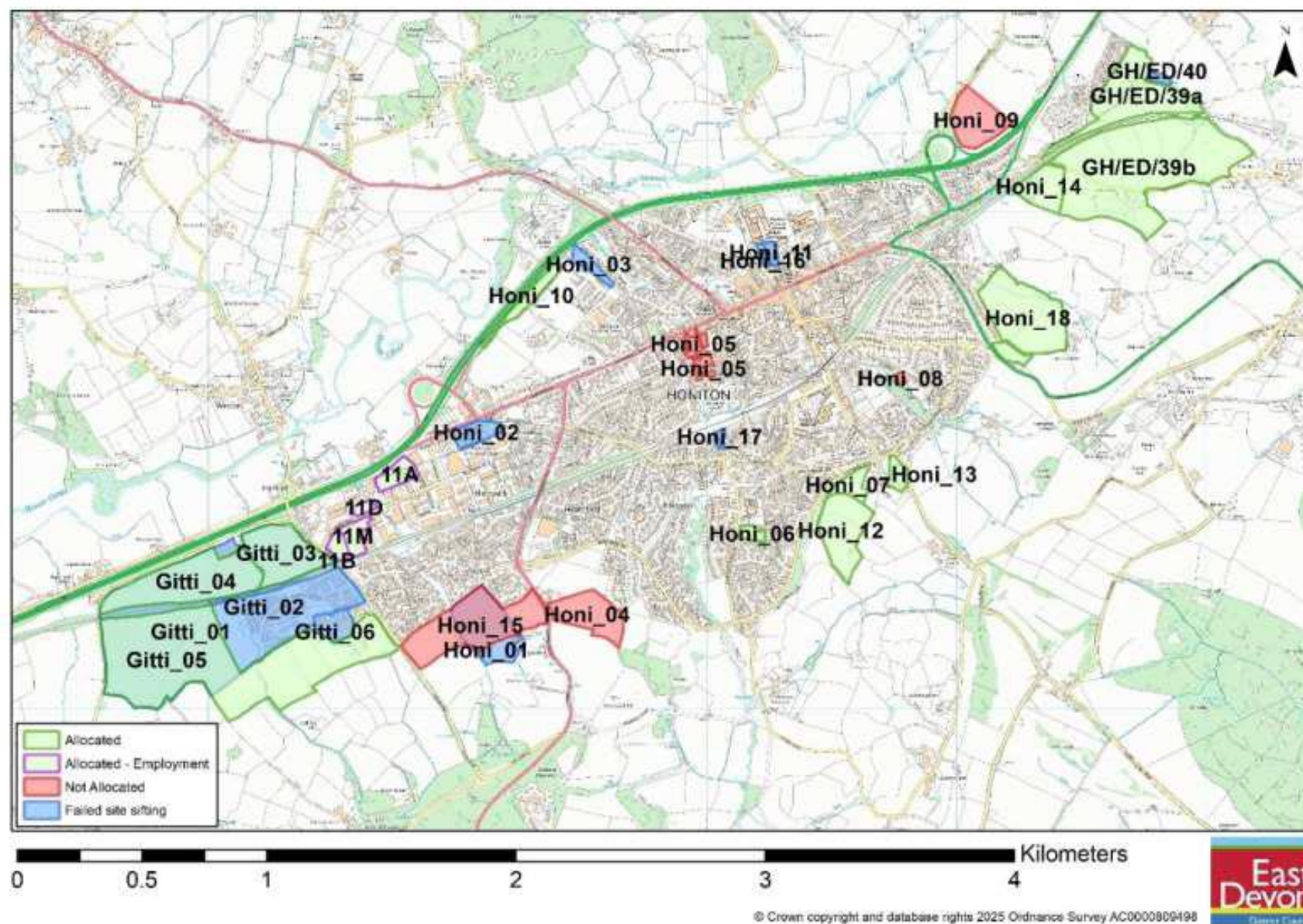
9.22 Other sites at Honiton that could be allocated, albeit not recommended as such, as alternatives or in addition are:

- Honi_04 – 56 dwgs - Land lying to the North East of Heathfield Manor Farm
- Honi_05 – 40 dwgs - Land to the north and south of King Street, including former Foundry Yard
- Honi_08 – 6 dwgs - Land at the South Side of The Glenn Honiton
- Honi_09 – 50 dwgs - Former Honiton Showground, Langford Road
- Honi_15 – 133 dwgs - Land at Heathfield

See site assessment at:

[sal-027-honiton-site-selection-report.pdf](#)

Map of site options at Honiton – for assessment report see [sal-027-honiton-site-selection-report.pdf](https://www.exeter.gov.uk/media/14622/sal-027-honiton-site-selection-report.pdf)



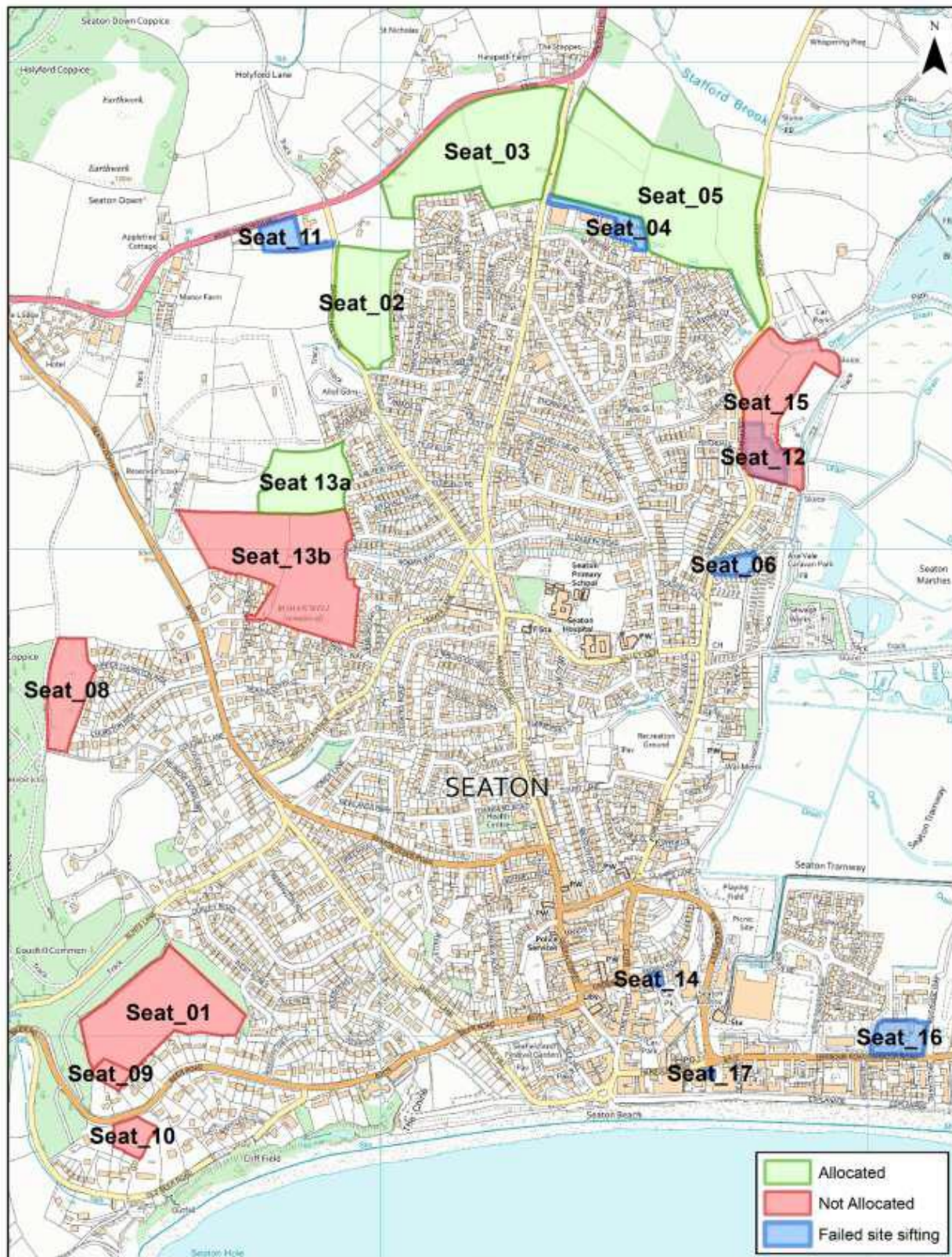
10 Site at Seaton

- 10.1 One site at Seaton has been identified for further assessment as referenced below. After the listed site there is a map showing its location. We identify alternative sites at Seaton that could be allocated for development should committee wish to make amendments.

Seat_13a - Land west of Axeview Road

- 10.2 Allocation of Seat_13a (a site owned by East Devon District Council) is consistent with the spatial strategy and the site has good access to facilities and employment, no on-site flood risk, and medium landscape sensitivity.
- 10.3 Devon County Council, however, objected to its allocation until further archaeological work undertaken. Historic England, in addition to archaeological objections, say there is a high risk of harming the significance of the adjacent 'Roman and earlier settlement at Honeyditches' Scheduled Monument
- 10.4 The land owner of the site, in this case East Devon District Council, has been approached requesting that they commission/produce assessment work in respect of archaeological interests.
- 10.5 **Officer recommendation is that should archaeological work come back and set out a robust case to allow for development then the site Seat_13a should be allocated in the plan. If not then the allocation should be deleted.**

Map of site options at Seaton – for assessment report see [sal-039-seaton-site-selection-report.pdf](#)



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11 Sites at Feniton

- 11.1 Two sites at Feniton have been identified for further assessment and are referenced below. After the listed site there is a map showing their locations. We identify alternative sites at Feniton that could be allocated for development should committee wish to make amendments. All sites are referenced and assessed in the Feniton site report – see: [6g Feniton site selection report.pdf](#).

Feni_08 - Land adjacent to Beechwood

- 11.2 At the time that allocation was made the site was consistent with the spatial strategy, has good access to facilities in the village, no major adverse landscape, biodiversity or historic environment impacts.
- 11.3 Whilst there was prospective developer support for allocation there was strong opposition from residents and the parish council citing flooding, sewage, traffic, and sustainability.
- 11.4 The allocation site performed well in assessment terms (as did a number of possible site choices in Feniton), but it is noted that there is local opposition to proportionately high development levels at the village (as well as objections to this specific site). It is not regarded that policy amendments are appropriate in respect of matters raised in objections received. However, with the granting of permission at appeal for land at Colestock Road there is a basis of an argument that this appeal site (plus the allocation site Feni_05) meets the needs at Feniton and as such deletion of the allocation is appropriate. But it is suggested that such a deletion could be vulnerable to challenges based around how robust any site-specific concerns are about the allocation (as opposed to more strategic spatial strategy considerations).
- 11.5 In his appeal decision the inspector noted (para 14) that *“it is not disputed between the main parties that the proposed development would conflict with the adopted and emerging development plan policies relating to the Council’s spatial strategy and I have no basis to find otherwise.”* However, the inspector also set out (Para 15) that *“.... there is no certainty that the emerging allocations will become adopted, given that the second round of Regulation 19 consultation and the examination itself remains to be conducted”*.
- 11.6 The inspector went on to comment (para 18) that granting of approval of the appeal site plus existing local plan allocations and other commitments would provide for 206 dwellings at Feniton and this would be greater than for any other Tier 4 settlement. But, he nonetheless, and on his balance determined the appeal should be granted with specific reference made to the benefits of the development (see para 86 onward) that he identified – these specifically included *“boosting the supply of homes”* against a development shortfall and *“....the added benefit of 50% of the units being affordable dwellings*”.
- 11.7 From the inspector’s decision it is difficult to draw clear conclusions on whether he regarded the spatial strategy for Feniton as appropriate and therefore the quantum of growth that could be appropriate. Probably understandably he steered away from making a judgment on this issue other than to note the existence of the strategic

approach in the existing and emerging local plan and to conclude that granting of the appeal (noting some uncertainty around the emerging plan) was not unacceptable.

- 11.8 Committee may wish to consider the above matters in drawing conclusions on site Feni_08. However, from officer review we would suggest that when considered on a stand alone basis it performs acceptably well in assessment terms and that it is challenging to explicitly establish that if developed it would have an overtly marked and perverse strategic outcome in terms of distribution of development matters and therefore the overall plan strategy in light of the inspectors decision. On balance the officer recommendation is to not delete the allocation.
- 11.9 **Officer recommendation is to not delete Feni_08 from the plan.**

Otry_20 - Land to the south east of Bridge Cottages

- 11.10 Otry_20, on the eastern side of Feniton, was one of the few village employment sites allocated for development in the plan. There are a higher number of economically active residents in Feniton - around 75% - than elsewhere in the District but it has one of the lowest employment densities (0.28) meaning that there are nearly three times as many residents available to work than the number of jobs that are available locally. Feniton can therefore be described as a 'dormitory' settlement where most people have no choice but to commute to work elsewhere, making it in this respect a relatively unsustainable place to live. Employment development would be consistent with the spatial strategy - to increase settlement self-containment and meet the needs of the community - with no significant adverse development impacts..
- 11.11 Whilst this is a comparatively large site it was promoted for employment uses and as drafted policy has a phased approach to provide for what could well end up being longer term development. As an alternative, the development area could be reduced so that only phase 1, the northerly 2ha of the site is allocated, leaving the southerly section for a possible later allocation in a future plan.
- 11.12 The phased approach is considered preferable to allocating part of the site in this plan period and part in the next, as it allows for expansion within the plan period if there is a high take up rate and is likely to improve scheme viability. It will help to balance the overall amount of housing at Feniton with local employment opportunities. If the site were deleted in its entirety, without replacement, there could be some vulnerability to challenge, but this would not be expected to be as severe as might apply for housing site deletions. It should be noted that the site owner has **not** confirmed that the site remains available and as such there is some possible uncertainty over whether it will come forward.
- 11.13 There were no other sites promoted for employment uses at Feniton so a 'like for like' site swap would not appear credible. There may be an option of allocating an alternative housing site and seeking some employment provision on it, although this is unlikely to meet more than the immediate need generated by the housing, and won't balance the wider needs of the community/parish.

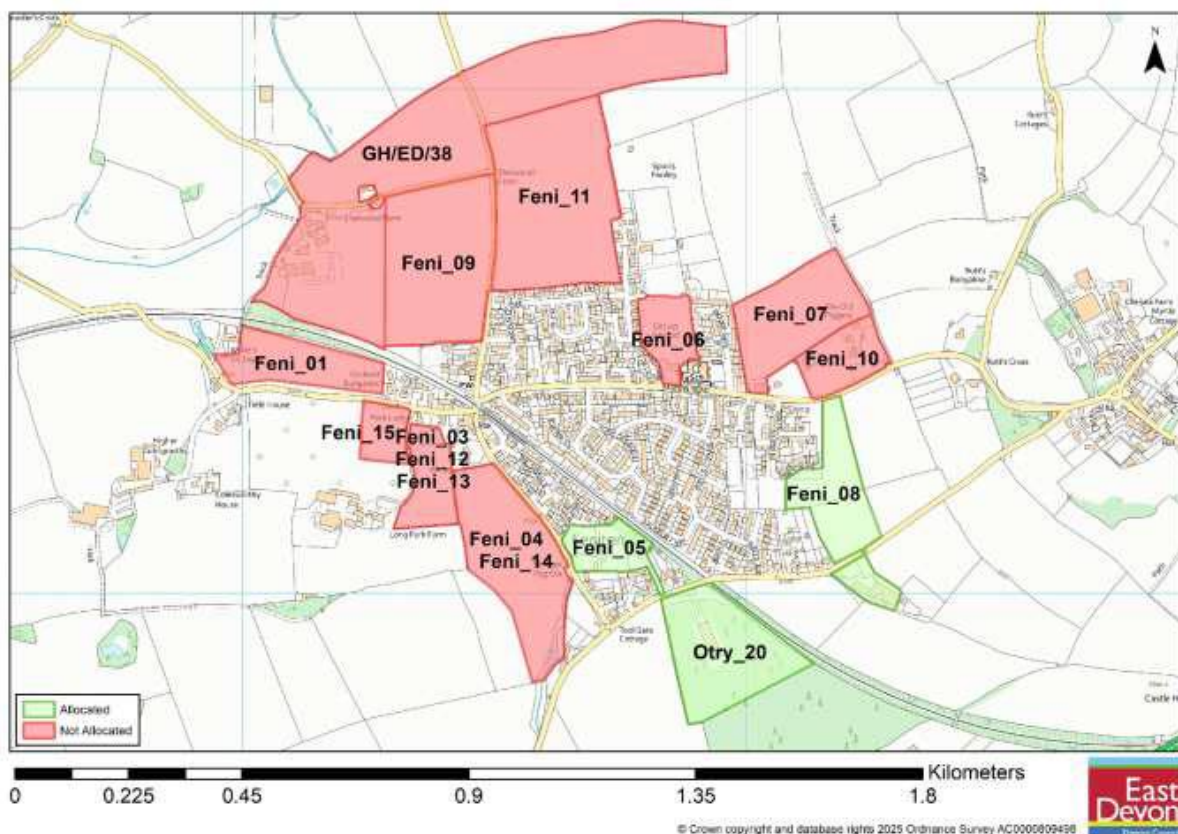
11.14 **Officer recommendation is to not delete Otry_20 from the plan.**

11.15 Noting officer comment about deletion, should committee wish to delete Feni_08 and replace provision with an alternative the following options exist albeit they are not recommended:

- Feni_01 – 42 dwgs
- Feni_06 – 30 dwgs
- Feni_07 – 60 dwgs
- GH/ED/38 – 150 dwgs
- Feni_10 – 36 dwgs
- Feni_13 – 25 dwgs
- Feni_14 – 75 dwgs
- Feni_15 – 30 dwgs

11.16 Note that part of GH/ED/38 gained approval at the Colestock Road appeal – therefore numbers for residual area have been adjusted downward. From earlier assessment.

Map of site options at Feniton – for assessment report see [sal-024-feniton-site-selection-report.pdf](#)



12 Site assessment at Whimble

- 12.1 Two sites at Whimble have been identified for further assessment and are referenced below. After the listed sites there is a map showing their locations. We identify alternative sites at Whimble that could be allocated for development should committee wish to make amendments albeit these are not recommended for allocation. All sites are referenced and assessed in the Whimble site report – [sal-047-whimble-site-selection-report.pdf](#).

Whim_08a - Land west of Bramley Gardens

- 12.2 Whim_08a is allocated for 50 homes and a community orchard in the local plan.
- 12.3 The site was allocated because development would be consistent with the spatial strategy of the plan with no major adverse effects.
- 12.4 Representation received on the plan highlighted:
- green wedge,
 - flood risk,
 - impact on wildlife,
 - lack of safe pedestrian access and procedural issues in allocation.
- 12.5 A draft level 2 strategic flood risk assessment (SFRA L2) shows that part of the site is at risk from fluvial, surface water and groundwater flooding. The flow path runs from east to northwest across the middle part of the site and in some scenarios up to 20% of the site is affected by flooding. The SFRA L2 states that a sequential test will be needed to justify the allocation, but an exception test will not be required as long as development is not proposed within flood zone 3. It is recommended that detailed flood modelling is undertaken (as part of any planning application) to assess the risk of flooding to the proposed development. The [Flood Risk Topic Paper](#) will be updated to support the next plan consultation.
- 12.6 Officer recommendation is to retain the allocation of Whim_08a - Land west of Bramley Gardens.**

Whim_11 - Land at Station Road

- 12.7 Whim_11 is allocated for 33 new homes in the plan.
- 12.8 The site was allocated because development would be consistent with the spatial strategy of the plan with relatively few constraints.
- 12.9 Concerns raised in consultation included:
- flood risk (including downstream),
 - impact on protected trees,
 - traffic and pedestrian safety and
 - Land of Local Importance designation.

12.10 Many sites in Whimble are at risk of flooding and this site was allocated following detailed work to understand the extent and nature of flood risk (see the [Flood Risk Topic Paper](#)). This shows that it is possible to develop the site for the number of dwellings allocated, although amendments to the policy wording are recommended in accordance with the Environment Agency comments. The site is well related to the existing village form. Although the intermittent nature of footpaths to facilities in the village centre is noted, this is a common issue with all development options in Whimble, and improvements are required through plan policy. Potential impacts on a nearby listed building are noted and improvements to policy wording are recommended to reflect comments from Historic England. The land is not designated as land of local importance in either the adopted or the emerging local plan.

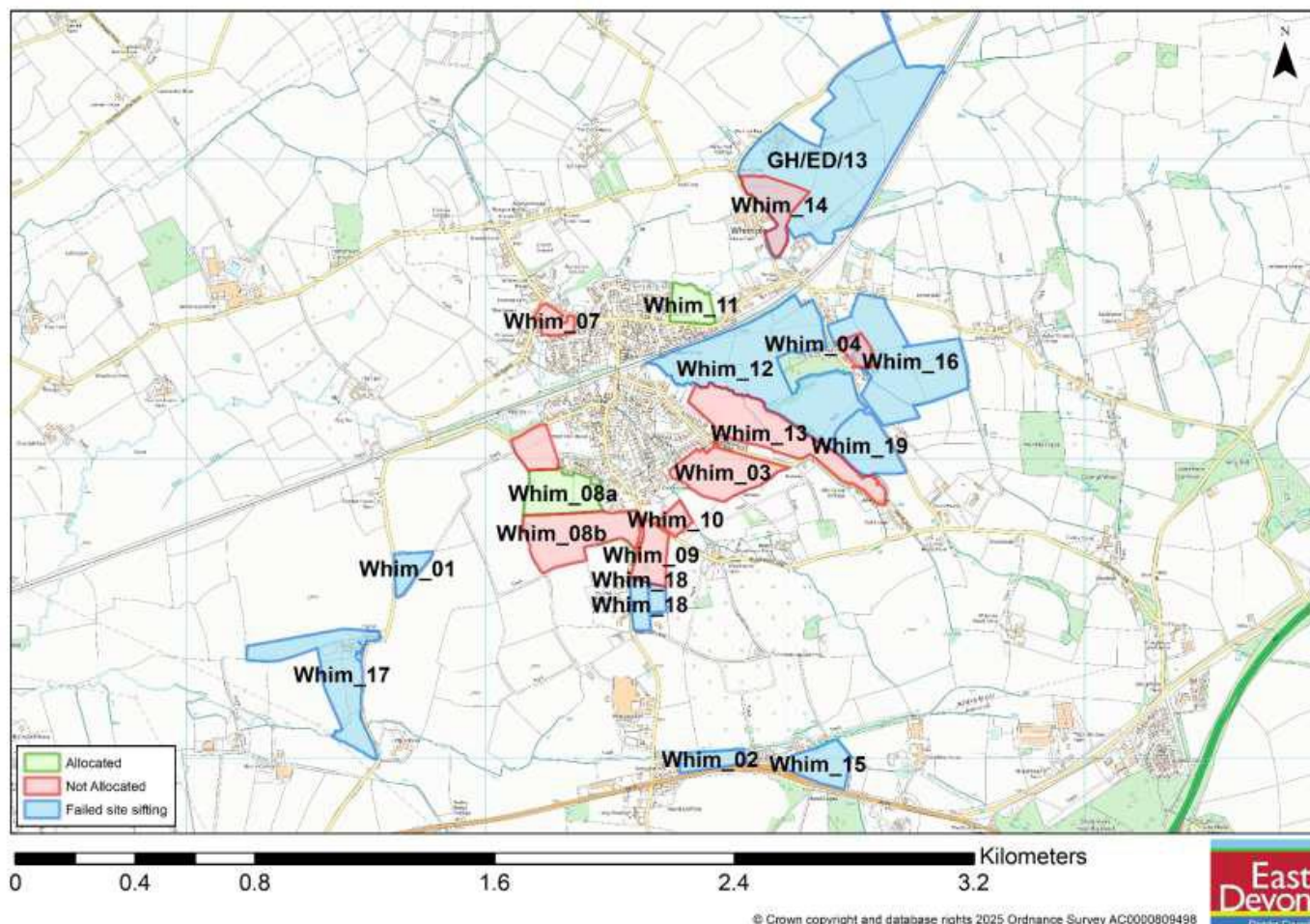
12.11 **Officer recommendation is to retain the allocation of Whim_11 - Land at Station Road.**

Alternative sites

12.12 Should committee wish to not allocate any of the housing sites at Whimble (in this schedule or otherwise in the plan) then the following options to address any housing shortfall arising are identified below but none of these sites are recommended by officers:

- Whim_03 – 72 dwgs
- Whim_04 – 21 dwgs
- Whim_07 – 10 dwgs
- Whim_08b – 120 dwgs
- Whim_09 – 45 dwgs
- Whim_10 – 17 dwgs
- Whim_13 – 108 dwgs
- Whim_14 – 46 dwgs

Map of site options at Whimble – See site assessment report at: [sal-047-whimble-site-selection-report.pdf](#)



Proposed redrafting of: Strategic Policy SD29: Whimble and its development allocations

The following changes in policy wording are proposed at Whimble to address consultee comments:

Strategic Policy: SD29: Development allocations at Whimble

The sites/areas listed below, as identified on the Policies Map, are allocated for development.

Land at Station Road (Whim_11)

This site is proposed for 33 new homes. Part of the site is at risk of flooding and a Level 2 SFRA has been undertaken, the results of which should be taken into account in any development proposals. Where development cannot be located outside of the area at risk of flooding (over the lifetime of development) an FRA will be required ~~There may be a need for a site specific flood risk assessment at this site to assess the risk of fluvial and surface water flooding and therefore to inform development proposals~~ so that no gardens or other domestic features are sited within the area of flood risk.

A line of trees to the site frontage and two trees within the field are subject to Tree Preservation Orders. These must be retained in development proposals.

Site layout should be planned to enable convenient east to west pedestrian and cycle links to the site frontage, but behind the existing hedge and protected trees. Development proposals should deliver a footway extension from the west and tie into the site. A

pedestrian access opposite the Withey should be provided if compatible with protection of trees and highway safety. Careful attention should be paid to conserving and enhancing the setting of Slewtown House, a Grade II listed building including through appropriate building heights, layout and landscaping. The development will need to maximise opportunities for localised improvements/contributions to enhance sustainable travel modes.

Land west of Bramley Gardens (Whim_08a) Update post SFRA 2

The site is allocated for 50 homes and a community orchard. The residential development element of the scheme should be located south of the existing Bramley Gardens development. Provision of an orchard, that could include open space provision associated with new housing, will be encouraged on land to the north of the new houses. Part of the site is at risk of flooding and a Level 2 SFRA has been undertaken, the results of which should be taken into account in any development proposals. Where development cannot be located outside of the area at risk of flooding (over the lifetime of development) an FRA will be required to assess the risk of fluvial, surface water and groundwater flooding and therefore to inform development proposals so that no gardens or other domestic features are sited within the area of flood risk. Access would need to be off Bramley Gardens. The development will need to maximise opportunities for localised improvements/contributions to enhance sustainable travel modes. Prior to development, an archaeological investigation should be undertaken to understand the nature and extent of the structure noted in the Devon Historic Environment Record (HER no. MDV112700).

Reasoning behind policy changes to land at Station Road (Whim_11)

The existing policy wording already deals with issues relating to flooding, heritage, access and protected trees, but amendments/additions are proposed to reflect the comments of Historic England and the Environment Agency.

13 Employment allocation Clge_25a – next to Darts Farm

- 13.1 Development of this employment site would be consistent with the spatial strategy (enables expansion of existing business for specialist employment use), with no significant adverse sustainability effects
- 13.2 There were, however, concerns raised in representations from consultation in respect of:
 - Flood risk
 - Highways
 - Archaeology -DCC object on the basis that extent and importance of the subterranean archaeology need to be determined.
- 13.3 Highway capacity/access improvements may be required. The technical work is being undertaken and a masterplan will be submitted.
- 13.4 A draft level 2 strategic flood risk assessment (SFRA L2) shows that part of the site is at risk from surface water and groundwater flooding. The flow path runs from east to west across the site, with an additional branch of flooding flowing north, and in some scenarios up to 28% of the site is affected by flooding. The SFRA L2 states that a

sequential test will be needed to justify the allocation, but an exception test will not be required provided development is proposed outside of the areas at risk. It is recommended that development is placed outside of the areas at risk from surface water flooding, and a site-specific flood risk assessment is undertaken to assess the risk of surface water flooding in relation to the proposed development, using detailed modelling. The [Flood Risk Topic Paper](#) will be updated to support the next plan consultation.

- 13.5 Archaeological assessment work is understood to be ongoing for this site and at this stage no conclusions have been reached.
- 13.6 **Officer recommendation is to wait for further information before drawing conclusions on the potential allocations of this site.**

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications identified within the report. (AB/19/08/2025)

Legal implications:

The legal implications are covered in this report (002533/20 August 2025/DH)

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee

Date of Meeting 2 September 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



East Devon Local Plan – Coastal change management areas (CCMAs)

Report summary (and report details in full):

This report sets out information and recommendations in respect of where Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs) are defined, the justification for this and the policy relating to CCMAs.

The CCMA boundary defined in the 1st regulation 19 plan was largely based on work undertaken by the university of Plymouth. It was acknowledged that new national coastal erosion risk management mapping (NCERM) had been recently updated, but it was too late for this work to be taken into account at that time. The boundaries have now been redefined to generally account for both the University of Plymouth work and the NCERM. In the vicinity of Cliff Road in Sidmouth, the line is redrawn to align with new national coastal erosion risk mapping lines (though noting that these are similar to those shown in the 1st Regulation 19 consultation plan).

An interactive map showing the changes between the 1st regulation 19 plan and the CCMA now proposed is available at [EDDC Coastal Change Management Areas](#).

There are limited recommended policy wording changes to the CCMA area policy of the plan .

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Strategic Planning Committee endorse the officer recommended changes to the CCMA boundary and related plan policy as set out in this report.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the CCMA boundary is based on the most up-to-date evidence and the policy is appropriately worded.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Manager

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

☐ Assets and Economy

☐ Communications and Democracy

- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☒ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; .

Links to background information Included within 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

Report in full

Defining CCMA's

- 1.1 The emerging local plan seeks to define coastal change management areas (CCMA's) in East Devon for the first time, in accordance with national planning policy (paragraph 177 of the [NPPF](#) 2023, under which the plan will be examined). The first Regulation 19 consultation was accompanied by a [topic paper](#) that described how these areas had been defined. This was based on [evidence](#) produced for the Council by the University of Plymouth and, in the case of land in the vicinity of Cliff Road, on work undertaken for the Sidmouth Beach Management Plan (BMP). The topic paper noted that new national coastal erosion risk mapping ([NCERM](#)) had been published too late to be considered when the CCMA was defined and would need to be taken into account before the plan was finalised. One option highlighted was to use both the Plymouth work and the NCERM to inform the plan and to take whatever was the more landward extent of the area identified as being potentially affected by coastal change. In their representation on the local plan the Environment Agency recommended this as the appropriate course of action.
- 1.2 A number of other responses were made in respect of the CCMA, under Policy AR03: Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMA's), and can be summarised as follows:

Main Issues:

- Strong opposition from residents and landowners in Sidmouth, particularly Cliff Road, who argue that the CCMA is based on flawed or inconsistent erosion data. (Individuals, local groups)

- Many claim the policy infringes on property rights and could lead to blight, reduced property values, and difficulty selling homes. (Individuals, local groups)
- Concerns that the policy does not account for the forthcoming Beach Management Scheme, which is expected to reduce erosion risk. (Individuals, local groups)
- The Environment Agency supports a precautionary approach using the most landward extent of available evidence. (Environment Agency)
- Calls for the policy to better reflect the need for environmental enhancement. (Devon Wildlife Trust)

Calls for:

- Reassess the CCMA boundaries using the most robust and locally specific data, including the Beach Management Plan. (Individuals, local groups)
- Include a commitment to review the CCMA following implementation of the Beach Management Scheme. (Individuals, local groups)
- Allow householders to extend or modify existing properties within the CCMA, subject to risk assessment. (Individuals, local groups)
- Clarify the evidence base and methodology used to define erosion rates. (Individuals, local groups)
- Include reference to environmental enhancement and biodiversity. (Devon Wildlife Trust)

1.3 The Coastal Change topic paper has been updated and is available with the agenda papers in a track changed format so that differences can be readily identified. The topic paper concludes that the CCMA boundaries should be defined by using both the Plymouth University and NCERM evidence and taking the most landward boundary to define the extent of the CCMA, in accordance with the advice of the Environment Agency. The only exception to this approach is in the vicinity of Cliff Road, Sidmouth, where it is recommended that NCERM be used to define the boundary. This designates a far smaller area of land than identified by the Plymouth work and is justified on the basis that key decisions on the beach management plan happened after the conclusion of the Plymouth work. The line is very similar to that shown in the previous consultation plan, which was based on the beach management plan, but using the NCERM mapping overcomes criticisms of the evidence underpinning the beach management plan. The approach taken to defining the CCMA is consistent with advice set out in paragraph 72 of the Government [advice](#) on flood risk and coastal change.

Policy text

1.4 Other criticisms related to the CCMA that the July Strategic Planning Committee wanted to be considered revolve around policy wording and whether it is reasonable in respect of householders wanting to extend their property.

1.5 Paragraph 178 of the [NPPF](#) (2023 version on which the plan will be examined) states that:

“Development in a Coastal Change Management Area will be appropriate only where it is demonstrated that:

- a) it will be safe over its planned lifetime and not have an unacceptable impact on coastal change;
- b) the character of the coast including designations is not compromised;
- c) the development provides wider sustainability benefits; and

- d) the development does not hinder the creation and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast”.

The relevant government [advice](#) says:

What development will be appropriate in a Coastal Change Management Area?

Local Planning Authorities should ensure that strategic plans are sufficiently flexible to deal with changing circumstances in coastal areas, such as updates to relevant Shoreline Management Plans or sudden shifts in the protection afforded to a particular area.

General policy tests for considering development in Coastal Change Management Areas are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Within this context, [essential infrastructure](#) may be permitted in a Coastal Change Management Area, provided there are clear plans to manage the impacts of coastal change on it, and it will not have an adverse impact on rates of coastal change elsewhere.

Ministry of Defence installations that require a coastal location can be permitted within a Coastal Change Management Area, provided there are clear plans to manage the impacts of coastal change. Where the installation will have a material impact on coastal processes, this will need to be managed to minimise adverse impacts on other parts of the coast.

For other development, the following may be appropriate, subject to the tests in the National Planning Policy Framework:

- Within the short-term risk areas (i.e. losses are expected within 20-years), a limited range of development directly linked to the coastal strip, such as beach huts, cafes/tea rooms, car parks and sites used for holiday or short-let caravans and camping – all with time-limited planning permissions;
- Within the medium (20 to 50-year) and long-term (up to 100-year) risk areas, a wider range of time-limited development, such as hotels, shops, office or leisure activities requiring a coastal location and providing substantial economic and social benefits to the community. Other significant development, such as key community infrastructure, is unlikely to be appropriate unless it has to be sited within the Coastal Change Management Area to provide the intended benefit to the wider community and there are clear, costed plans to manage the impact of coastal change on it and the service it provides;
- Existing buildings, infrastructure and land-use subject to the relevant planning permission could adapt and diversify to changing circumstances, where it reduces vulnerability, increases resilience and raises funds to facilitate subsequent relocation
- Permanent new residential development (including through change of use) will not be appropriate within a Coastal Change Management Area.

In all cases, there should still be careful consideration of the policies on development and flood risk, including [table 2](#)

Further advice on:

- [how a vulnerability assessment can be used to demonstrate whether development is appropriate in a coastal change management area](#)
- [permitted development rights in areas at risk of coastal change](#)
- [how neighbourhood plans and Neighbourhood Development/Community Right to Build Orders should take account of coastal change](#)

Advice is also available on [what approach should be taken to making provision for the relocation of development away from Coastal Change Management Areas.](#)

- 1.6 It can be seen that Policy AR03, in allowing house extensions in some circumstances, already goes further than either national policy or guidance. The local plan could just define the CCMA and say that development proposals will be considered in relation to national policy. Should members wish local plan policy to define potentially acceptable development in the CCMA, it is recommended that the following changes (in red, underlined font) should be made. The proposed changes make it clearer that the implementation of coastal management schemes will be taken into account when determining when coastal change can be expected. Additional clarity is provided for householder development. The change proposed to clause E will make the policy compliant with national advice. The final change relates to ensuring that the implications of surface water runoff are considered for applications in the CCMA and is in line with policy EN22 of the adopted local plan.

Policy AR03: Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMAs)

Within the Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA) defined on the Policies Map, proposals for new ~~dwelling~~~~residential~~ development, including the conversion of existing buildings, will not be permitted.

Applications for ~~non-residential~~ development within the CCMA will be assessed in relation to the most up-to-date evidence available for when coastal change can be expected, taking into consideration the implementation of coastal management schemes, so that:

0-to-20-year time horizon - In parts of the CCMA expected to be at risk within a 0-to-20-year time horizon (2020 to 2040), only the following developments will be allowed:

- A. Temporary development directly related to the coast, such as beach huts, cafes, car parks or sites used for touring caravan and camping;
- B. Temporary modifications to other existing commercial facilities where a positive link can be made to the local economy;
- C. Mitigation measures for dealing with coastal change that are in accordance with the relevant coastal strategy; or
- D. Nationally significant infrastructure projects related to offshore development that are constructed to withstand the impacts of the expected coastal change.

D.E. Ministry of Defence installations that require a coastal location, subject to any material impacts on coastal processes being managed to minimise adverse impacts on other parts of the coast.

20-to-50 year time horizon

In parts of the CCMA expected to be at risk within a 20-to-50 year time horizon (2040 to 2090), in addition to the development allowed in the 0 to 20 years zone the replacement, relocation and adaptation of infrastructure, commercial and community uses will be permitted, providing they require a coastal location and provide economic and/or social benefits to the local community.

50-to-100 year time horizon

In parts of the CCMA expected to be at risk within a 50 to 100 year time horizon (beyond 2090), in addition to the development allowed in the 0 to 50 year zones, extensions to residential properties and householder applications may be acceptable if it is demonstrated that they will not exacerbate rates of coastal erosion.

All applications for development within a CCMA must show that it would not result in an increased risk to life or any property through the submission of a coastal change vulnerability assessment, which should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development. Planning applications must also show that the surface water run-off implications of the proposal have been fully considered and found to be acceptable, including implications for coastal erosion.

Planning permission for all development in a CCMA will be time limited according to the risk identified in the coastal erosion vulnerability assessment.

This policy does not apply in the Cranbrook Plan area.

- 1.7 The policy was criticised for being unclear and for not allowing even small extensions, such as porches. This is not accurate because the plan does not seek to remove permitted development rights in the CCMA. Government guidance on removing permitted development rights in these circumstances states that local authorities should ‘consider this where it is likely to result in an increase in the scale of property or the number or vulnerability of occupants at risk from coastal change’.
- 1.8 Another criticism of the policy was that there were no lines drawn to show where the time horizons would apply. This is because any applications will be “assessed in relation to the most up-to-date evidence available for when coastal change can be expected” (third sentence of Policy AR03). This is a flexible approach that allows for changes, such as the implementation of a BMP that slows the rate of coastal erosion, to be taken into account. The policy word in has been amended to make it clear that coastal management schemes can be taken into account when assessing applications and that householder extensions would be likely to be acceptable (subject to the usual considerations) unless they are likely to cause increased rates of coastal erosion.
- 1.9 It should be noted that the new NCERM shows erosion projections for the years 2055 and 2105 under three different climate change scenarios, although the Shoreline Management [Plan](#) strategy approach is determined by three epochs (0-20 years, which is 2005 to 2025, 20-50 years, which is 2025 to 2055 and 50-100 years, which is 2055 to 2105). Presumably the 0-20 year epoch is reflected in the current shoreline position. The Plymouth [work](#) does indicate erosion rates in terms of 20, 50 and 100 years and would provide good evidence to inform the policy, in the absence of more up-to-date evidence. An alternative approach would be to combine the criteria for the 1-20 year and the 20-50 year epochs, although this would not reflect national guidance.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications identified within the report. (AB/19/08/2025)

Legal implications:

There are no direct legal implications identified within the report (002533/20 August 2025/DH)

East Devon Local Plan – Topic Paper – CCF- 005

Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change: Coastal Change

Second Regulation 19 consultation version 01



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Cover photo: looking west along Jacobs Ladder beach, Sidmouth – taken by planning policy team.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This topic paper sits behind and helps to explain the content and evolution of the second Publication draft of the East Devon Local Plan¹. There may be new versions of this topic paper as plan making progresses into and through plan Examination.
- 1.2 The local plan designates Coastal Change Management Areas² (CCMAs) in East Devon for the first time and this paper explains how they have been defined. The approach takes account of the new National Coastal Erosion Mapping (NCERM)³, which was published too late to be incorporated into the CCMA defined in the first Regulation 19 plan.

¹ [regulation-19-plan.pdf](#)

² This is an area identified in plans as likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast. Such changes include erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or accretion. [Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK](#)

³ [New national flood and coastal erosion risk information - GOV.UK](#)

2 Coastal change in East Devon

- 2.1 The coastline is a dynamic system being continually impacted by a range of forces and influences. Coastal change is the term used to describe any permanent physical change to the shoreline caused by erosion, landslip, permanent inundation (flooding) or coastal accretion. It is anticipated that climate change will create increasing pressure on coastal and estuarine environments through accelerating rates of sea level rise and an increased number of storms.
- 2.2 The East Devon coastline extends from Devonshire Head (just west of Lyme Regis) along the English Channel and up the Exe Estuary to the mouth of the River Clyst (west of Ebford). It includes beaches, often backed by steep rocky cliffs, together with estuaries and their important inter-tidal habitats. There are numerous environmental and heritage designations that include a World Heritage Site, a Ramsar Site, a Special Protection Area, a Special Area of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Marine Conservation Zones. The integrity of both the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site and the Sidmouth to West Bay SAC depend on the continuation of coastal processes. The East Devon coast is also home to many people and businesses, some of which could be vulnerable to the effects of coastal change.
- 2.3 East Devon District Council (EDDC) is a coastal protection authority responsible for the delivery of beach management plans and any associated coastal protection works and the preparation of shoreline management plans⁴. EDDC is responsible for the maintenance of coastal defence assets at Beer, Exmouth, Seaton and Sidmouth⁵. Beach Management Plans relate to Exmouth, Seaton and Sidmouth/East beach⁶.
- 2.4 The Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) that covers East Devon is produced by the South Devon and Dorset Coastal Advisory Group⁷. SMP16 Durlston Head to Rame Head⁸ includes the East Devon coast and identifies the most sustainable approach for managing the risk from coastal flooding and erosion over three epochs: short (0 to 20 years); medium (20 to 50 years) and long (50 to 100) term. It guides the planning and management of coastal defences and identifies areas of the coast for different approaches.

⁴ [Flood and coastal erosion: risk management authorities - GOV.UK](#)

⁵ [Our Coastal Defences - East Devon](#)

⁶ [Beach Management Plans - East Devon](#)

⁷ [Shoreline Management Plan - East Devon](#)

⁸ [Durlston Head to Rame Head SMP16 | Shoreline Management Plans](#)

2.5 In East Devon the SMP sets out four general approaches⁹:

a. No active intervention – do not defend.

This is where no defences are present, and it would be technically, economically, or environmentally unsustainable to introduce defences due to their impact on other communities, or on sites protected for their environmental importance. This applies mainly to parts of the coast that adjoin areas of countryside (except for the western part of the Budleigh Salterton). Sections of coast identified for no active intervention include from Orcombe Rocks (Exmouth) to Budleigh Salterton West; the Otter spit: Otterton Ledge, Budleigh Salterton to Chit Rocks, Sidmouth; Salcombe Hill to Beer; Beer to Seaton Hole; Axe Estuary spit and from Haven Cliff west to Monmouth Beach (Lyme Regis).

b. Hold the existing defence line - maintain/replace.

This is where protection is currently provided by coastal defence structures or managed beaches, and the intention is to retain a defence along approximately the current alignment. This will involve replacing defences when needed. Defence type, method and standard of protection may be modified over time. This applies to the Exe Estuary (from the lower Clyst to Exmouth Spit) and the main coastal settlements (from Exmouth Pier to Orcombe Rocks; Sidmouth; Beer; Seaton west to Axe Estuary spit; Axe Estuary Seaton West; Axe Estuary (Mouth Breakwater to Axmouth North).

c. Managed realignment - set back defence.

This is where the intention is to defend elsewhere in flood plain inland from present shoreline or allow erosion/recession to a defined alignment. New defences might be constructed at that new location if needed. This may involve the creation of inter-tidal habitat. This applies to the Otter Estuary (where the Lower Otter Restoration Project¹⁰ has delivered floodplain reconnection and habitat creation that has helped to reduce flood risk within the estuary) and part of the Axe Estuary (Axmouth North to Seaton North).

d. Managed realignment - slow erosion.

This is where measures might be introduced or permitted that slow, not stop, erosion of cliffs or other features at the back of the shoreline. This applies to River Sid and Sidmouth East and in the medium and long term epochs for Seaton Hole to Seaton West.

⁹ Further details are given in areas 5, 6, 7 and 8 of [Durlston Head to Rame Head SMP16 | Shoreline Management Plans](#) including a summary management approach for the relevant areas from 6A23 to 6B07

¹⁰ [Home: Lower Otter Restoration Project](#)

- 2.6 The SMP policy can change between epochs and in East Devon this happens in Seaton Hole to Seaton West, where the policy is to hold the line in the short term and managed realignment (slow erosion) in the medium and long term.

3 National policy and guidance

- 3.1 The national approach to planning for coastal areas can be summarised as avoiding development in vulnerable areas and not increasing the rate of coastal change. It emphasises working with natural processes to adapt to coastal change rather than trying to prevent it. The National Planning Policy Framework¹¹ (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should identify a Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA) in any area likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast¹².
- 3.2 The purpose of a CCMA is to identify areas where special policies and actions are likely to be needed to deal with the anticipated physical changes to the coast. Development in a CCMA will only be appropriate if it can be shown to have wider sustainability benefits and be safe over its planned lifetime without having an unacceptable impact on coastal change, compromising designations or undermining the character of the coast.
- 3.3 The National Planning Guidance¹³ (NPG) states that a CCMA should be defined where rates of shoreline change are likely to be significant over the next 100 years, taking account of climate change. They will not normally need to be defined where the accepted shoreline management plan policy is to hold the line. The NPG gives guidance on what type of development is likely to be acceptable in a CCMA in areas likely to be affected by coastal change in the short (up to 20 years), medium (20 to 50 years) and long term (50 to 100 years)¹⁴. A vulnerability assessment may be required to demonstrate whether development is appropriate in a CCMA and the NPG gives guidance on what issues this should address¹⁵. There may be circumstances in which existing development and infrastructure should be relocated to areas at less risk of coastal change¹⁶.
- 3.4 The NPG advises local planning authorities defining CCMA's to use the best available evidence¹⁷. Sources can include the Shoreline Management Plan¹⁸, coastal strategies (including beach management plans) and the Environment Agency national coastal erosion risk map¹⁹.

¹¹ All references to the NPPF are to the December 2023 [version](#), under which the local plan will be examined, unless otherwise stated.

¹² Paragraph 171 of [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] \[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](#)

¹³ Paragraph 72 of [Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁴ Paragraph 73 of [Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁵ Paragraph 74 of [Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁶ Paragraph 12 of [Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁷ Paragraph 72 of [Flood risk and coastal change - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁸ [Durlston Head to Rame Head SMP16 | Shoreline Management Plans](#)

¹⁹ [Sign In](#)

4 Evidence for Coastal Change in East Devon and how CCMA lines have been drawn

- 4.1 Work on understanding and mapping changes to the coast to inform the local plan started with involvement in a partnership project with the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation, North Devon and Torridge Councils working with the Coastal Processes Research Group in the School of Biological and Marine Sciences, University of Plymouth²⁰. The project partnership was formed to develop a robust methodology to predict likely rates of coastal change. This was felt to be necessary because, although CCMA's were first suggested by Central Government in 2010, very few had been designated nationally and these varied in scope. It was thought that that may have been because there was limited guidance on how a CCMA should be defined with no consistent methodology for identifying areas at risk at a detailed level, rather than the broad brush approach of the SMP's. Although the SMP was considered to be a useful starting point, it was noted that it was dated and did not incorporate future climate change impacts or the more detailed work necessary to understand the complex East Devon coastal system.
- 4.2 Partnership work on a methodology was completed in 2020 and led to an East Devon specific report defining the areas likely to be affected by coastal change for inclusion in a CCMA²¹ that was completed in 2022. The study defines a number of different lines that indicate the potential extent of physical changes to the coast in three epochs (short, medium and long term). Additional lines indicate a buffer²² for each of the epoch lines, which stretch further inland.
- 4.3 Early in 2025 new NCERM²³ mapping was published. This is the most up-to-date evidence of coastal change at a national level. It was not published in time to be considered when the CCMA was defined in the first Regulation 19 plan, but it was noted that it would need to be taken into account before the CCMA lines were finalised.
- 4.4 There are some parts of the coast where the potential erosion shown in the Plymouth study is less extensive than the coastal risk projections shown in the NCERM, and in other areas the opposite is the case. For example, the Plymouth line does not affect Peak Hill Road, west of Sidmouth, but it is shown to be affected in the NCERM (relevant extracts are included in Appendix A). Another potentially significant difference is west of Seaton, where the NCERM identifies less housing to be affected by coastal change than in the Plymouth study (also shown in Appendix A). The differences are likely to reflect the more granular nature of the

²⁰ [Application of Coastal Change Management Areas \(CCMA's\) for coastal adaptation to climate change impacts in SW England - SWEEP](#)

²¹ [cfl-007-ccma-methodology.pdf](#)

²² The calculations for determining buffers are set out in section 4 of [cfl-007-ccma-methodology.pdf](#)

²³ [New national flood and coastal erosion risk information - GOV.UK](#)

Plymouth study in comparison to the NCERM as there is more variation within the Plymouth line when compared to the NCERM.

4.5 The topic paper that supported the first Regulation 19 plan stated that, when considering how to take account of the new NCERM mapping, “One option would be to take a ‘precautionary’ approach and redraw the CCMA line to follow the NCERM line where this is further inland than the CCMA defined in the Regulation 19 plan. This would require additional consultation because land would be subject to the more restricted policies that apply in a CCMA. An alternative approach would be to keep the CCMA lines the same as in the Regulation 19 plan”.

4.6 This issue was considered by the Environment Agency in their response to the first Regulation 19 plan which states that:

“With reference to section 5 of the Topic Paper – CCF-005 Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change: Coastal Change, we are pleased to see an acknowledgement that there is a difference in evidence bases between NCERM2 and the Coastal Marine Applied Research/Plymouth Uni Methodology report (CCF-006) in some areas.

We have considered this in detail and our view is that to designate the CCMA's without the NCERM evidence would leave the CCMA's more open to challenge. As such, our advice would be to follow the option as set out in your paragraph 5.4 of topic paper CCF-005 and would take a precautionary approach, ensuring that the CCMA follows the most landward extent of either of the evidence bases, which would be robust.”

4.7 The CCMA boundaries have been redrawn for the second Regulation 19 plan to follow the Environment Agency advice so that, for areas of the coast where the SMP policy is ‘no active intervention’ or ‘managed realignment’, CCMA's have generally been drawn to include whichever is the most landward line shown in the 100 year epoch plus buffer defined by the University of Plymouth²⁴, or the NCERM, 2105 Climate Change (Upper End). This includes the largest area shown to be potentially affected by coastal change and represents a precautionary approach so that longer term issues can be identified and considered in planning decisions. The areas designated as CCMA's are shown on an interactive map²⁵.

4.8 In accordance with national guidance, CCMA's have not been defined for stretches of coast where the SMP policy is to hold the existing defence line. CCMA's have not been drawn around flood lines related to permanent inundation as this is an issue best dealt with through the separate flood risk policy²⁶.

²⁴ [cfl-007-ccma-methodology.pdf](#)

²⁵ [EDDC Coastal Change Management Areas](#)

²⁶ [regulation-19-plan.pdf](#) Strategic Policy AR01: Flooding

- 4.9 There is one location, to the east of the River Sid in Sidmouth, where the CCMA does not follow the most landward line. The CCMA defined in the Regulation 18 local plan consultation²⁹ had used the 'Plymouth' line for the whole of the East Devon coast. This showed very significant erosion rates east of the River Sid with a considerable number of houses included in the CCMA in the Regulation 18 local plan. Several responses were received³⁰ expressing concern about the extent of the CCMA, including that it was far larger than the recession line defined in the Sidmouth Beach Management Plan³¹.
- 4.10 Following the Regulation 18 consultation, a further option for the Sidmouth Beach Management Plan (BMP) was agreed³². This includes constructions designed to slow the rate of erosion from the existing levels, on which the University of Plymouth work is based. It is anticipated that the work will be complete by 2030. The Sidmouth and East Beach Outline Business Case (BMP OBC) included a plan³³ that shows a much slower retreat rate than the 'Plymouth' study. Whilst this rate of erosion is still higher than the 'original' BMP erosion rate³⁴, there are no projected erosion lines following implementation of the BMP so future monitoring will be needed to inform a new erosion rate.
- 4.11 The 5th of November Strategic Planning Committee³⁵ agreed to draw this part of the CCMA boundary in accordance with the BMP OBC line. This decision was in accordance with the principle of considering recent evidence from detailed studies in the designation of a CCMA and reflected the fact that the Plymouth line was based on past erosion rates and did not take account of the proposed works at Sidmouth that will slow the rate of erosion. There were some criticisms of this approach through consultation on the first Regulation 19 plan including claims that the CCMA was based on flawed or inconsistent erosion data. The CCMA boundary along Cliff Road in Sidmouth has been redrawn for the second Regulation 19 plan to match the NCERM 2105 Climate Change (Upper End) line. This means that plans produced in relation to the Sidmouth Beach Management Plan have not been used as evidence to support the CCMA defined in the second Regulation 19 plan.

²⁹ [Draft Local Plan Consultation - Nov 2022 to Jan 2023 - East Devon and sidmouth.pdf](#)

³⁰ Summarised from page 353 of [accessible-reg-18-consultation-feedback-report-spring-2023.pdf](#)

³¹ [Sidmouth Beach Management Plan: Frequently Asked Questions - East Devon](#)

³² [Outline Design, General Arrangement](#)

³³ See Figure 7: Sidmouth East Beach historic and predicted erosion lines on page 11 of [Outline Business Case Template for non EA Risk Management Authorities](#)

³⁴ [Microsoft Word - Coastal Processes Baseline v16 \(final\).docx](#)

³⁵ [1. Local Plan redrafted chapters 5 Nov mtng.pdf](#)

Map 2 Extract from Sidmouth [BMP OBC](#)

5 Appendix A Comparison maps of CCMA and NCERM

5.1 Map 6 Land west of Sidmouth CCMA



5.2 Map 7 Land west of Sidmouth NCERM



5.3 Map 8 Land west of Seaton CCMA



5.4 Map 9 Land west of Seaton NCERM



Report to: Strategic Planning Committee

Date of Meeting 2 September 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



East Devon Local Plan – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Report summary (and report details in full):

This report sets out information and recommendations in respect of meeting the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities given that one of the sites proposed in the first regulation 19 plan is no longer considered to be available/suitable for allocation.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

1. That Strategic Planning Committee endorse the officer recommended changes to delete site Brcl_23 and delete/amend the related plan policies as set out in this report.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that Gypsy and Traveller needs are appropriately met, allocations are based on the most up-to-date evidence and the policy is appropriately worded.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Manager

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: If appropriate sites are not identified there is a high risk that Gypsies and Travellers needs will not be met.

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
-

Report in full

1. Accommodation Assessment

- 1.1 The Council has based the emerging local plan requirements for Gypsy and Traveller pitches on a [Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment](#) (GTAA) commissioned jointly with Exeter City, Mid Devon and Teignbridge District Councils. The GTAA provides a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in East Devon (although jointly commissioned for consistency, each District was reported on separately). As well as updating previous GTAAs, the assessment provides a credible evidence base which can be used to aid the implementation of Local Plan Policies and, where appropriate, the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots for the period 2023-2045 to cover the Council's Local Plan period and the 15-year requirements set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).
- 1.2 The GTAA is based on a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews, and engagement with members of the Travelling Community living on all known sites, yards, and encampments. A total of 32 interviews or proxy interviews were completed with Gypsies and Travellers living on sites in East Devon. No interviews were completed with Travelling Showpeople as they were not present during the fieldwork period (and in any case the main showpersons site in the District has significant spare capacity on consented but unimplemented plots which could be brought forward should there be a need). In addition, it was not possible to complete any interviews with households living in bricks and mortar, although it is known from Census data that such households exist in the District. A total of 4 stakeholder interviews were also completed.
- 1.3 During the production of the GTAA the planning definition of a Gypsy or Traveller changed several times. The report reflected the most up to date definition at the time it was received by the Council (September 2024). The NPPF was subsequently updated in December 2024 and the associated [planning policy guidance](#) was also amended so that the latest definition is "Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, *and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan*, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such." The italicised text has been added to the latest definition.
- 1.4 The consultants who undertook the GTAA advise that households that do not meet the planning definition do not need to be included in the pitch requirements but the Council will need to consider them as part of their work on wider housing needs assessments. The issue with this approach is that, since the definition changed after the needs assessment was undertaken, it is not known how many households did not meet the original definition but do

meet the latest one. Council Officers believe that the 4 households in need are located on a very longstanding unauthorised site and therefore are likely to have a 'cultural tradition of...living in a caravan' so do meet the latest definition.

- 1.5 Similarly, the consultants advise that the needs of any 'undetermined' households must be considered where an interview was not able to be completed (either due to refusal to be interviewed or households that were not present during the fieldwork period) but where there are believed to be Gypsies and Travellers who may meet the planning definition living on the site. Whilst there is no legislation or guidance that sets out how the needs of these households should be addressed, the consultants estimate that around 30% are likely to meet the definition (the methodology is explained in the GTAA) and have allowed for this in their forecast need figures.
- 1.6 The GTAA identifies a need for 20 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers who meet the planning definition, up to 8 pitches for those whose status is undetermined and 4 pitches for those who do not 'meet the definition' (as at the time of the study), for the period 2023-2045. It should be noted that, as the planning definition has changed since the assessment was undertaken, it is possible that all 32 respondents may now be considered to require accommodation. The tables below show the number of respondents who met, did not meet or were not available to confirm whether they met the definition.

Figure 1 – Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in East Devon (2023-2045)

Status	2023-2045
Meet Planning Definition	20
Undetermined	8
Do not meet Planning Definition	4

Figure 2 – Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in East Devon that met the Planning Definition by year periods.

Year Period	Dates	Need
0 – 5	2023-27	12
6 – 10	2028-32	2
11 – 15	2033-37	2
16 – 20	2038-42	2
21-24	2043-45	2
0 – 24	2023-45	20

Figure 15 – Need for undetermined Gypsy and Traveller households in East Devon by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
0 – 5	2023-27	5
6 – 10	2028-32	0
11 – 15	2033-37	1
16 – 20	2038-42	1
21 - 24	2043-45	1
0 – 24	2023-45	8

Figure 19 – Need for Gypsy and Traveller households in East Devon that did not meet the Planning Definition by year periods

Year Period	Dates	Need
0 – 5	2023-27	4
6 – 10	2028-32	0
11 – 15	2033-37	0
16 – 20	2038-42	0
21 – 24	2043-45	0
0 – 24	2023-45	4

1.5 The study considered the timescale to 2045, which is longer than the local plan period. If the figures are extrapolated to cover this time period the numbers are as follows:

Year period	Dates	Need		Total need from all sources
0-5	2023-27	Met the definition-	12	21
		Undetermined-	5	
		Did not meet definition-	4	
6-10	2028-32	Met the definition-	2	2
		Undetermined-	0	
		Did not meet definition-	0	
11-15	2033-37	Met the definition-	2	3
		Undetermined-	1	
		Did not meet definition-	0	
16-20	2038-42	Met the definition-	2	3
		Undetermined-	1	
		Did not meet definition-	0	
21-24	Beyond the local plan period 2043-45	Met the definition-	2	Not required in this Local Plan period 3
		Undetermined-	1	
		Did not meet definition-	0	
0-20	2023-42 (LP plan period)			29

2. Allocations to meet the need

First Regulation 19 Plan approach

2.1 It was proposed in the first Regulation 19 plan that the need for up to 29 pitches would be met in full through the provision of **fifteen** permanent pitches at the new community in East Devon; **five** pitches on land east of the M5 and south of the Exeter-Waterloo line; and **fifteen** pitches at the Cobdens and Treasbeare Expansion Areas in Cranbrook. The additional 6 pitches, over and above identified need, would allow for flexibility in supply and any delays

arising in delivery. Existing planning permissions will also contribute to supply, and policy sets out criteria for the consideration of windfall sites that come forward in addition to the allocated sites. No additional plots are needed for Travelling Showpeople due to significant capacity on an existing consented site and no further need being identified during the plan period.

- 2.2 The land east of the M5 and south of the Exeter-Waterloo line (Brcl_23 land at Langaton Lane, West End) was allocated for at least 5 pitches in the First Regulation 19 Plan and it was anticipated that these would be developed within 5 years. The site is one that requires significant additional assessment work through the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and an archaeological assessment to address concerns raised by Historic England and the Environment Agency. The expectation was that the site promoter would cover the not insignificant costs of this work but the owner has not been willing to undertake this work and has given little commitment to bringing the site forward. The site has been up for sale for some time and without the additional work being undertaken and demonstrating that the site is acceptable with regard to these constraints or a landowner who is proactively promoting the site it is no longer considered appropriate to pursue allocation of this site. **It is therefore recommended that Members agree to the deletion of Site Brcl_23 as an allocation and the associated policy WS11.**

Addressing the needs of those who meet the planning definition in the Second Regulation 19 Plan

- 2.3 Planning policy requires us to identify and update a supply of deliverable sites for a 5-year period and developable sites for years 6-10. In the absence of site Brcl_23, there is a risk that needs for the first 5 years of the plan go unmet as we will be reliant on those at Cranbrook coming forward, however all of the pitches needed to meet the needs of those who met the planning definition in the first 10 years (14 respondents) can be met through the provision of 15 pitches at Cranbrook. These are expected to come forward in this timeframe.

Addressing the needs of those who don't meet the planning definition or are undetermined

- 2.4 In the first 5 years, 9 pitches are required to meet undermined need and for those who did not meet the planning definition (it is not known how many of these respondents would be considered to meet the latest planning definition). One of these pitches could be provided at Cranbrook. The remainder would be dependent upon the pitches at the new community being delivered at an early stage of the development; or upon gaining planning permission on windfall sites; or being allowed to remain on unauthorised sites until these other provisions are made.
- 2.5 Unless a new study is undertaken, and the Local Plan timetable does not allow for this, a precautionary approach would be to allocate sufficient sites to meet the total needs of all of the categories of respondent as proposed on the sites at Cranbrook and the new community. This would ensure that sufficient pitches are provided for all Gypsy and Traveller need identified in the GTAA and will ensure that no discrimination or disadvantage arises to these groups, in accordance with the Councils duty under the Equalities legislation.

Transit Site Provision

- 2.6 The GTAA identifies a need for at least one transit site within the Greater Exeter area. The details were not established by the study, however it was recommended that the four authorities should work together to establish a common evidence base, recording unauthorised encampments across the Districts. This information will then be used to determine the most suitable location/s for a transit site/s and the size, layout etc. A methodology for this work has been agreed and Officers dealing with unauthorised

encampments will record the requisite details for at least a year before determining what provision is required.

3. Other changes to Policy

- 3.1 Most objections with regard to Gypsy and Traveller matters related to the proposed allocation of Brcl_23 and deleting that site overcomes these concerns. There are two significant, related, representations referring to more general matters however, that should also be addressed.
- 3.2 Dr Ruston objects to Policy HN09: Gypsy and traveller sites, the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and some comments on the site section methodology, on behalf of TravellerSpace, a registered charity supporting Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Travellers in Cornwall and Devon. Devon County Council also object on the basis of Dr Rustons comments which they support. The objection makes some valid suggestions, especially in light of the December 2024 guidance, and these are proposed to be incorporated into the policy.
- 3.3 The policy that was consulted on at Regulation 19 stage is shown below, with text that is now proposed to be deleted struck through and proposed new text shown in italics.

Policy HN09: Gypsy and traveller sites

Proposals for new permanent or transit gypsy, travellers or travelling showpeople sites or extensions of existing sites will ~~need to meet all of~~ *be considered against* the following:

- A. ~~To be located inside or adjoining a settlement boundary, or within 15 minutes travel time by safe, walking, cycling or public transport providing access to a range of services including school and health services~~ *To be located within a reasonable distance of a range of services including school and health services;*
- B. ~~To have a site size and have a number of pitches that is appropriate, and not over-large, in relationship to the nearest settlement in the settlement hierarchy and its range of services and infrastructure;~~
- C. ~~To not exceed 15 pitches as a maximum; Sites should ideally consist of up to 15 pitches in capacity unless there is clear evidence to suggest that a larger site is preferred by the local Gypsy or Traveller community and this can be managed appropriately and accommodated without detriment to local amenity or the services and infrastructure available;~~
- D. ~~To be assimilated into the surrounding landscape without significant adverse effect~~ *not have a significant adverse effect on the local landscape;*
- E. To have acceptable vehicular access, on site turning, parking and servicing;
- F. To be in locations that are not vulnerable to flooding or affected by any other environmental hazards that may affect the residents' health and welfare; and
- G. To have access to essential utilities - water supply, sewerage, drainage, waste disposal.
Where service connections are needed these need to be readily available on or close to the site.

Preference will be given to the expansion and intensification of existing sites ~~subject to maximum site threshold of 15 pitches~~. If expansion or intensification is impractical, then account will be taken of the cumulative impacts of additional sites on the character of the local area and on the local community.

In addition to meeting these requirements, planning applications for gypsy and traveller pitches, or plots for travelling Showpeople, on windfall sites in the countryside outside settlement boundaries must demonstrate the status of the applicant / intended occupant/s meeting the national definition for gypsy, traveller or travelling showpeople ~~and the pitch or plot will be occupied by at least one person with a strong local connection to East Devon district;~~ and there is a proven unmet need for new pitches or plots, having regard to the supply of deliverable pitches or plots and their availability to gypsies and travellers or travelling showpeople ~~who have a strong local connection to the district.~~

Safeguarding sites

Existing authorised sites, sites with planning permission, and allocations for Gypsy and Traveller Use or for Travelling Showpeople use, will be safeguarded for the number of pitches/plots permitted.

The loss of sites will be strongly resisted. If, in exceptional circumstances (such as long-term vacancy and a demonstrable lack of need), changes of use or redevelopment to non-Gypsy/Traveller or Travelling Showperson's accommodation use are permitted, then, if need exists in the District, suitably located and laid out alternative provision must be provided prior to the loss of the existing site or part of thereof.

This policy applies across the whole plan area including the Cranbrook Plan area.

- 3.4 Not all of the objectors suggested amendments are considered to be necessary. There is a balance to be struck between the need to support Gypsy and Traveller provision, the permissive nature of the policy in areas where housing would not normally be allowed, and conserving and enhancing the rural character of much of East Devon.
- 3.5 The objectors suggest that Criteria B should be deleted as it is not a requirement of the planning guidance, however it is considered that impact is an important consideration, especially if sites are not to be limited to a maximum 15 pitch capacity. Large sites in locations that are not easily accessed by public transport or on foot, and are potentially quite remote, have the potential to impact on existing residents and communities, and place additional demands on limited services and infrastructure.
- 3.6 Historically, East Devon sites have been limited to a maximum 15 pitches, based on the [Government site design guidance](#) and most do not exceed 3-4 pitches. This is now very dated (2008) but it states "There is no one ideal size of site or number of pitches although experience of site managers and residents alike suggest that a maximum of 15 pitches is conducive to providing a comfortable environment which is easy to manage." Current guidance does not seek to restrict site size and recent [guidance](#) from the National Policy Advisory Panel on providing and managing sites gives examples of best practice that range from several pitches to over 60. On balance, larger sites could be appropriate in East Devon and so, whilst there is still a preference for smaller sites, it is proposed that policy allows larger ones where these can be managed and harm to local amenity will not arise.
- 3.7 Objection is also raised to requiring a local connection and limiting windfalls to those applicants who can show that there is an unmet need in the District. Whilst non-compliance with either of these might be reasonable on their own, in combination we could be faced with large numbers of Travellers with no connection to East Devon, seeking to live in open

countryside on unallocated site/s. Their needs would not have been assessed or informed the GTAA since we would have had no prior knowledge of them and they could overwhelm the provision that we've made through the GTAA for established residents. This may seem unlikely but, with the wider planning definition and with enforcement action/lack of stopping places displacing large groups of Travellers elsewhere in the country, it should be considered. Given the nomadic culture of Travellers, it may be unreasonable to require a local connection in order to settle permanently in East Devon and so this requirement is proposed for deletion. However, it is still appropriate to limit windfall sites in the open countryside or outside settlement boundaries as the GTAA identified need will be met in full on allocated sites. This means that, where an applicant can demonstrate that their need will not be met (for example if there is a delay in delivering allocated sites) then their application will be viewed positively.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications identified within the report. (AB/19/08/2025)

Legal implications:

There are no direct legal implications identified within the report (002533/20 August 2025/DH)

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee

Date of Meeting 2 September 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



East Devon Local Plan – Duty to Co-operate

Report summary (and report details in full):

This report summarises duty to cooperate considerations and highlights the need for continued work in a number of key issues including housing and employment land provision, transport issues, habitat mitigation issues and water quality matters. The report summarises the current position in each case and identifies key actions needed to progress the plan and continue to respond appropriately to the emerging Exeter Plan.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

1. That Strategic Planning Committee note the issues highlighted in this report, particularly those matters that remain unresolved.
2. That Strategic Planning Committee agree to the addition of explanatory text to the local plan to deal with any future significant under delivery of housing in East Devon, or requests from other authorities to help meet their unmet housing requirement, as set out in paragraph 2.3 of this report.
3. That Strategic Planning Committee note that there continue to be concerns with Exeter City Council's approach employment land provision in the Exeter Plan which are being clarified through a statement of common ground. Delegated authority to be granted to the Assistant Director – Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning to sign a Statement of Common Ground with Exeter City Council which reflects the Council's position as previously agreed by the Committee.
4. That Strategic Planning Committee note the update on the Water Cycle Study and consider including a strategic policy on water quality, as generally described in paragraph 6.3 of this report, the details of which would be finalised following the completion of the water cycle study.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure Committee are aware of the importance of complying with the duty to cooperate and the issues that remain to be resolved.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Manager

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☒ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: No specific risk impacts are identified.

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

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The duty to co-operate is a legal plan making requirement to ensure local planning authorities and county councils cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries. The first thing that the inspector/s appointed to examine our plan will consider is whether we have met our duty to co-operate and, if it is found that we have not, the plan will not progress to examination of soundness. It is therefore vital that we actively consider any issues raised under the duty to co-operate to establish whether agreement can be reached. A brief summary of the current issues is set out in table form in Appendix 1 to this report with recommended changes to the plan text also referenced. The second regulation 19 plan will be supported by statements of common ground which are signed by the parties involved and set out the relevant issues, the degree to which agreement has been reached and any outstanding matters.
- 1.2 The main duty to cooperate issues that remain to be resolved relate to: changes to plan text to include contingency planning for potential future situations of either significant under delivery of housing in East Devon or requests to meet with unmet housing requirement from other local planning authorities; clarity on whether employment allocations meet an East Devon need only and the extent to which they could meet a wider 'Greater Exeter' need, particularly for Exeter City; transportation issues related to growth in the West End; the implications of additional traffic for the Pebblebed Heaths and water quality.

2 Housing requirements.

- 2.1 Great care has been taken to ensure that the housing allocations in the plan have been thoroughly assessed to determine that they are likely to be delivered within the plan period. The plan includes appropriate 'headroom' so that it is not necessary for every site to be developed to meet our housing requirement. However, it would be sensible to include additional text within the plan to set out explicitly that a plan review/update would be triggered should housing delivery fall significantly short due to unforeseen circumstances.
- 2.2 Furthermore, there is uncertainty from other local planning authorities over whether they will be able to meet their housing requirements in local plans that are at an earlier stage of preparation. Torbay council has requested that the East Devon Local Plan helps to meet their housing requirements. Most of the constraints to development in Torbay also apply to East Devon and Torbay has not produced any comparative evidence to justify additional housing in East Devon rather than Torbay. A [report](#) to this Committee in response to a previous Torbay consultation in 2022 summarises the issues involved. East Devon has no shared border with Torbay and is separated from it (on land) by Exeter City Council and Teignbridge District Council. Given the physical separation between Torbay and East Devon, it would be difficult for Torbay to justify how the provision of additional housing within East Devon could meet the Torbay housing requirement. Furthermore, the environmental and other constraints of building additional housing in East Devon, rather than in or closer to Torbay, to meet a Torbay requirement would need to be properly investigated, considered and justified.
- 2.3 The neighbouring authorities of Mid Devon, Somerset and Dorset are at an early stage in plan making so it is not clear whether they will be able to meet their own housing requirements.
- 2.4 In order to make it clear that significant under delivery of housing in East Devon would result in a plan review/update (or to meet the duty to cooperate), it is recommended that additional plan text (not policy) is added to paragraph 3.8 of the plan as set out below. This is an approach that was found to be acceptable through the examination of the Teignbridge Local Plan.

Levels of future housing provision

- 3.8.** Delivering a sufficient supply of homes' is an NPPF policy theme. The NPPF requires Local Plans to identify and meet as a minimum the objectively assessed development needs for their area. The purpose of this strategic policy is to set out what the housing development requirements are for East Devon for the plan period. This is central to the council's 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to housing development. In the event of housing not being delivered in accordance with the plan and/or the identified need for new homes changing in the future, including taking account of possible unmet needs in neighbouring areas, the requirements of national policy and legislation for a review/update of the plan will be followed.

3 Employment Land

- 3.1 East Devon objected to employment land provision in the Exeter Regulation 19 plan on the basis that it failed to allocate or otherwise make sufficient land available to accommodate the future employment needs of the city. The representation noted that the City Council's approach relied on employment land provision outside of the city boundary but within the wider Functional Economic Market Area to meet the economic needs of the area. However,

no request had been made under the duty to co-operate for East Devon District Council to assist in meeting the employment land needs identified by the EDNA. East Devon stated that the land identified in its emerging Local Plan 2020 – 2042 is necessary to meet the needs of East Devon and does not seek to address wider needs. East Devon requested that the Exeter Plan explicitly quantified, citing appropriate evidence, city employment land needs and all sources of supply, specifically including land allocations in the plan, with any shortfalls in land provision arising between the supply and need assessment being addressed through additional provision, specifically land allocations for development, in the Exeter plan. These views were agreed by the committee at its meeting of the 4th February 2025 following consideration of the report available at: [3. Exeter Reg 19 Local Plan consultation.pdf](#)

- 3.2 Exeter supported the East Devon first Regulation 19 plan, saying “East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge Councils have a jointly commissioned economic development needs assessment which provides the employment evidence for the functional economic area (FEMA). It is noted that through the East Devon Local Plan East Devon are making a significant contribution to employment land requirements and that overall, the employment development needs of the FEMA are being met. This demonstrates that the area operates on a functional geography which crosses administrative boundaries. The City Council supports this approach”.
- 3.3 In their draft SoCG to support their submission plan, Exeter has set out the position as shown in the box below.

The City of Exeter generates significant growth potential for the sub-region but has limited land within its administrative boundary to accommodate this. The growth of the City's economy can take place outside its boundary and the EDNA is clear on this issue. The Publication Draft Local Plan acknowledges the City's shortage of employment land, and refers to the city's role within a FEMA, stating that need and supply should be matched across Greater Exeter.

The principle of matching requirement and supply across the FEMA is well established and is reflected in the commissioning and use of the Greater Exeter EDNA in the preparation of the Draft Local Plans in the area.

The current employment land need and supply position across the FEMA indicates that supply significantly exceeds demand and therefore economic growth potential will not be constrained. However, it is acknowledged that the Publication Draft Exeter Plan isn't sufficiently clear, or up to date, in regard to demonstrating how economic need can be met. Therefore, a modification to the Exeter Plan is to be suggested to set out the potential for economic growth generated by the FEMA over the plan period and to show how this is met by the constituent authorities.

A further modification to Policy EJ1 of the Exeter Plan is to be suggested to insert an evidenced jobs growth target for Exeter.

A modification will also be suggested to insert reference to the clean growth scenario and to state clearly that we are committed to strive to meet this higher growth potential.

The Publication Draft Exeter Plan already indicates that development proposals will be supported where they meet the economic needs of the city as identified in the EDNA (see policy EJ1). However, a modification will be suggested to ensure a more balanced and flexible approach to economic growth, that refers to the priority sectors identified in the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (as well as the transformational sectors).

Furthermore, the new site allocations (see policy EJ6), which were identified specifically for transformational uses, will, through a suggested modification, be opened up to all traditional classes of economic development that meet the economic needs of the city and the wider area as identified in the EDNA. Whilst the transformational sectors will undoubtedly be

important to the future of the City's economy, taking a less prescriptive approach to the nature of occupiers will ensure flexibility in meeting the employment needs of the city.

Exeter has responded to previous concerns regarding brownfield sites (at Regulation 18 stage) by removing Marsh Barton and North Gate from the list of allocations. The regeneration opportunity areas are not allocations but are a proactive attempt to ensure efficient use of brownfield land in accordance with the approach advocated by national policy (this approach was actually suggested by MDDC at a duty to cooperate meeting on 16 April 2024 at which EDDC were present). Furthermore, the policy criteria for any proposed regeneration requires that development proposals 'Ensure no loss of employment floorspace'.

And finally, whilst East Devon's contends that its own employment land allocations only meet the District's own needs, the Draft East Devon Local Plan has identified 178 ha of employment land supply to meet a need for 80 ha generated by the East Devon economy (as determined by the EDNA). The Draft East Devon Local Plan appears to be meeting the long-established principle of considering need and supply across the FEMA. Without considering the principle of balancing supply and needs across Greater Exeter, East Devon's Plan could be seen as over-providing employment sites, leaving some sites vulnerable to proposals for alternative use.

- 3.4 Discussions are progressing on Statements of Common Ground to set out the respective positions of the two authorities to the examination of the Exeter Plan. These will not look to change the Council's previously stated position but will pick up on areas of agreement as well as the points of disagreement. Delegated authority is sought to agree statements of common ground with the city council which accurately reflect the position of this Council as previously agreed.

4 Transport issues related to growth in the West End

- 4.1 Members will be aware that work is ongoing on the Greater Exeter Transport Study, being prepared with the three other districts in the area, Devon County Council, and National Highways. The study comprises a series of transport modelling reports, some of which were published alongside the Regulation 19 Local Plan, other reports that are ongoing, and the mitigation measures required to minimise travel by car. In consultation responses to the Regulation 19 Local Plan, National Highways object due to significant impacts on the strategic road network (M5 and A30); Devon County Council state the potential transport impacts of the new community are significant due to its scale and proximity to parts of the transport network which are already under significant pressure; and Exeter City Council note the development allocations will have implications on the transport network that will be felt at Exeter given its strategic role.
- 4.2 Whilst there are undoubtedly major transport issues arising from significant growth in the West End, these are 'normal' planning issues that we are working to resolve. The prescribed bodies recognise that work on transport evidence is ongoing, and there has been no indication of a failure to comply with the Duty to Co-operate. Indeed, in their Local Plan consultation responses, Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, and National Highways have made clear they are working closely with us and the other districts on the transport evidence, welcoming the collaborative approach.

5 Implications of additional traffic for the Pebblebed Heaths

- 5.1 Habitat Regulation Assessment work for the local plan has identified that with additional development (most significantly new homes being built) there will be greater levels of traffic using roads crossing the Pebblebed Heaths. The Pebblebed Heaths are designated in the

highest tier of wildlife sites in the UK – both a Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area.

- 5.2 Petrol/diesel engine vehicle exhausts lead to increased levels of nitrogen being deposited along roads which lead to increased growth of the 'wrong' types of vegetation and this is detrimental to biodiversity conservation objectives and targets.
- 5.3 To understand the nature and scale of the concerns, and thereafter appropriate mitigation, East Devon District Council has appointed consultants, Ricardo, to assess matters more fully. This is joint work with key partner bodies including Natural England and the key conservation managers of the Pebblebed Heaths. The mitigation strategy will form evidence to justify and sit behind local plan policy, and it will inform future spend and investment packages.

6 Water quality

- 6.1 In their response to the first Regulation 19 plan, the Environment Agency raised concerns about a lack of evidence and policy related to water quality. The EA highlighted the prevalence of recent water incidents, the increase in housing requirement and the number of sensitive water receptors and designations in East Devon. It also expressed concern that the local plan does not reflect national policies relating to improving water quality where possible and preventing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of water pollution.
- 6.2 Committee will recall that the Council commissioned a water cycle study. This work has been long in gestation but we are pleased to advise that it is now moving towards completion. A draft from the consultants, Haskoning, has been received and has been reviewed. Feedback on relevant refinement has been provided and there is minor additional testing and review work that they have been asked to undertake.
- 6.3 The consultants have also been asked to address concerns raised by Members that the report does not adequately address the capacity of transmission infrastructure particularly within Exmouth leading to the Maer Lane wastewater treatment works. There were also requests that the work explain the evolution of investment works in the Maer Lane and Countess Wear wastewater treatment works since the last water cycle study so that the assessments can be better understood. Aside from this further work the consultants will also need to rerun modelling to reflect the final housing allocations in the plan.
- 6.4 The intent is that the final study will be reported to committee and that it will form part of the background evidence behind the 2nd Regulation 19 consultation draft of the plan and will be available to inform any final policy refinement.
- 6.5 Several policies in the local plan relate to water quality. Policy DS04: Green and blue Infrastructure requires major development proposals to provide multi-functional green infrastructure which incorporates and enhances natural ecosystem functions including water quality. Policy OL09: Control of pollution states that permission will not be granted for development which would result in pollution that cannot be adequately mitigated, including pollution of all water bodies. Strategic Policy AR01: Flooding requires sustainable drainage systems that reduced pollution risks and enhance water quality on all development sites.
- 6.6 Whilst these policies collectively require improvements to water quality, there is no overarching policy to bring such issues together. Members may consider it preferable to include such a policy to explicitly put improvements to water quality at the heart of the plan. Any such policy would need to be informed by the final water cycle study (WCS), but would be likely to include:
 - a requirement for major development proposals to demonstrate what measures can reasonably be taken to enhance the water environment;

- a requirement for development to make adequate provision of water services including timely provision of foul water so that development does not overload the sewer network;
- the phasing of development to ensure the avoidance or mitigation of any adverse impacts to residents on water supply or wastewater infrastructure;
- provision of appropriate surface water drainage and disposal; and
- measures to protect aquifers and Source Protection Zones.

Financial implications:

Consultancy work commissioned, which is referred to within the report is being completed within budget. (AB/19/08/2025)

Legal implications:

There are no direct legal implications identified within the report (002533/20 August 2025/DH)

Appendix 1 Duty to Co-operate summary table

Topic	Issue	Summary	Changes to plan
1A Housing	Meeting the East Devon requirement	The second Regulation 19 East Devon Local Plan shows a housing delivery that meets the net new homes required under Annex 1 of the December 2024 NPPF. No requests have been made to neighbouring local planning authorities to help meet unmet need.	None
1B Housing	Meeting Exeter requirement	The Publication Exeter Plan makes provision to meet its own housing requirement, and no requests have been made by Exeter for neighbouring authorities to help to meet its housing requirement.	None
1C Housing	Meeting Teignbridge requirement	The Teignbridge Local Plan is in the final stages of preparation with adoption of the plan expected following the current main modifications consultation. The plan makes provision for Teignbridge to meet its own housing requirement (outside of Dartmoor National Park) and no requests have been made for neighbouring authorities to help to meet the Teignbridge housing requirement.	None
1D Housing	Meeting Mid Devon requirement	Work on a new plan has recently started and plan adoption is scheduled for 2028. It is too early to know whether Mid Devon will request that neighbouring authorities help to meet its housing requirement.	Additional text as set out in paragraph 2.4 of this report.
1E Housing	Meeting Somerset requirement	Work on a local plan for Somerset started in 2023 and the plan is scheduled for adoption in 2029. It is too early to say whether Somerset will request that neighbouring authorities help to meet its housing requirement.	Additional text as set out in paragraph 2.4 of this report.
1F Housing	Meeting Dorset requirement	Work commenced on the Dorset Local Plan at the point that Dorset Council was formed in 2019. The Dorset Local Development Scheme shows plan adoption in 2028. In response to the first Regulation 19 consultation, Dorset Council stated that it was not possible to say if Dorset will have an unmet housing need.	Additional text as set out in paragraph 2.4 of this report.
1G Housing	Meeting Torbay requirement	The Torbay Local Plan was adopted in 2015. Work is currently focussed on preparatory work for a review/update, including further evidence base work and assessments. At the first Regulation 19 consultation Torbay requested that East Devon meet part of its housing requirement. Given the physical	Additional text as set out in paragraph 2.4 of this report.

Topic	Issue	Summary	Changes to plan
		separation between Torbay and East Devon, it would be difficult for Torbay to justify how the provision of additional housing within East Devon could meet the Torbay housing requirement. Furthermore, the environmental and other constraints of building additional housing in East Devon, rather than in or closer to Torbay, to meet a Torbay requirement would need to be properly investigated, considered and justified.	
1H Housing	Meeting the Gypsy and Traveller requirement	A needs assessment for permanent pitch provision has been undertaken jointly with Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge and informs the policies and allocations on the plan. The need for a transit site/s is being addressed jointly between all four authorities. See separate report to this meeting for further details.	None.
2A Climate change	Mitigation	The first Regulation 19 plan included a chapter on mitigating climate change, including policies to meet the overarching goal of achieving carbon neutrality in East Devon by 2040. The Environment Agency had some detailed comments on these policies that it is recommended are incorporated into the second Regulation 19 plan.	Minor policy wording changes recommended by the Environment Agency.
2B Climate change	Adaptation	At the Regulation 18 consultation, the Environment Agency suggested that more emphasis should be given to adaptation and resilience (extreme heat, flooding, water supply). These were incorporated into the policies of the first Regulation 19 consultation, and no substantive representations were made on this subject. The Environment Agency did make some detailed policy comments that it is recommended are incorporated into the second Regulation 19 plan.	Minor policy wording changes recommended by the Environment Agency.
3A Employment	Meeting East Devon needs	The Publication local plan and supporting documents, demonstrate that we can meet our employment needs in full. East Devon, Exeter, Mid Devon and Teignbridge Councils have a jointly commissioned economic development needs assessment which provides the employment evidence broken down, by sector and size, to a district level. Sufficient land is allocated in East Devon to meet the districts identified need in full with some headroom to allow for flexibility and changing market conditions. The requirement for land for logistics based	None

Topic	Issue	Summary	Changes to plan
		industry was assessed across the whole study area and allocations in East Devon are sufficient to meet the identified requirement in full. This was the only sector assessed on this basis.	
3B Employment	Meeting the needs of others	There have been no formal requests from neighbouring local planning authorities to meet any of their employment needs within East Devon. However, this authority objected to employment land provision in the Regulation 19 Exeter plan on the basis that it failed to allocate or otherwise make sufficient land available to accommodate the future employment needs of the city. See paragraph 3 of this report for further details.	None
4A Transport	'Greater Exeter' strategy	Joint work on transportation in relation to developments within the West End is ongoing as summarised in paragraph 4 of this report.	Await evidence to inform the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
4B Transport	Rail improvements	Network Rail are investigating how to improve the frequency of rail services along the Exeter – Waterloo line. The provision of one or two passing loops would enable one extra train per hour from Honiton or Axminster to Exeter. This is reflected in Local Plan Strategic Policy TR02: Protecting transport sites and routes.	None
4C Transport	Walking and cycling improvements	Walking and cycling. Devon County Council has adopted the Clyst Valley and New Communities Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which includes walking and cycling routes in the West End of East Devon travelling into Exeter. This is reflected in Local Plan Strategic Policy TR02: Protecting transport sites and routes. DCC has also adopted the Countywide LCWIP, and has requested the Otter Trail, and Beer to Axminster and Uplyme routes are added to Strategic Policy TR02.	None – the Otter Trail, and Beer to Axminster and Uplyme routes are only indicative in the LCWIP and lack sufficient certainty to protect in Local Plan policy.
5A Water quality	River Axe catchment	Developments in the catchment of the River Axe in Somerset, Dorset and Devon have the potential to have a negative impact on water quality to the detriment of the River Axe Special Protection Area. Strategic Policy PB04 theoretically ensures that there are no adverse effects and further work is underway to establish suitable mitigation measures.	None

Topic	Issue	Summary	Changes to plan
5B Water quality	River Exe catchment	The Environment Agency comments on the Regulation 18 plan highlighted potential impacts from cumulative growth projections in East Devon, Exeter and Mid Devon on the Exe Estuary Special Protection Area. The Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Regulation 19 version found that there were no credible risks to the Exe Estuary SPA/Ramsar with respect to water quality. No comments were received from the Environment Agency or Natural England at the first Regulation 19 consultation specifically related to water quality in the River Exe catchment.	None
5C Water quality	Improving all East Devon water bodies	In their response to the first Regulation 19 plan, the Environment Agency raised concerns about a lack of evidence and policy related to water quality in light of the prevalence of recent water incidents, the increase in housing requirement and the number of sensitive water receptors and designations in East Devon. It also expressed concern that the local plan does not reflect national policies relating to improving water quality where possible and preventing development from contributing to unacceptable levels of water pollution. See paragraph 6 of this report for further details.	Include additional strategic plan policy informed by WCS?
5D Water quality	Impact of increased housing numbers	This issue is being considered through ongoing work on the WCS.	To be informed by WCS.
6A Biodiversity	Nature recovery	There is a pipeline of BNG delivery that can accommodate the predicted level of growth over the next plan period.	None
7A Habitat mitigation	In combination impacts of proposed development on Exe Estuary SPA and Pebblebed Heaths SAC	A joint strategic approach to mitigating the impact of growth levels in East Devon, Teignbridge and Exeter on three designated European wildlife has been in place since 2014 and ensures mitigation can be delivered. The mitigation strategy provides a robust and established means to address impacts arising from the cumulative effects of development across a wide area and has been supported by Natural England.	None
7B Habitat mitigation	Air pollution from increased traffic on Pebblebed Heaths SAC	There is the potential for the plan to result in additional road traffic movements across the Pebblebed Heaths SAC/SPA that could have adverse impacts from vehicle emissions. Joint work with key	Await strategy.

Topic	Issue	Summary	Changes to plan
		partner bodies is being undertaken to understand the nature and scale of the concerns and identify appropriate mitigation. See paragraph 5 of this report for further details.	
8A Landscape and seascape	Impact of windfarms	The first Regulation 19 plan identified areas of land suitable for wind production, subject to a criteria based policy. Consultation responses expressed concern that some of these areas may be sensitive to landscape and heritage impacts and were not justified without further assessment. See separate report to this meeting, where it is recommended that the sites be removed from the policy map.	Remove areas from policy map.
9A Site allocations	New community	Strategic Policy WS01: Development of a second new community east of Exeter commits to partnership working to deliver infrastructure, social, community and education facilities to support a town of at least 10,000 homes in the longer term. The resolution of cross boundary issues in relation to transportation (as summarised in paragraph 4 of this report) has been the main focus of joint working so far. Ongoing work to deliver the new town will continue throughout and beyond the plan period.	
9B Site allocations	Land north of Topsham	The local plan includes an allocation for mixed use residential, employment, and supporting infrastructure on land adjoining the border with Exeter City (Strategic Policy WS10: Development next to the M5 and north of Topsham). Land is also safeguarded for education purposes. Nearby sites are also being allocated in the Exeter Local Plan And there may be further windfall developments. There has been an appreciation that sites on both sides of the administrative boundary should come forward in a co-ordinated way to ensure that infrastructure is delivered appropriately and it is understood that Exeter will make amendments to the plan text to ensure that this happens.	Agree suitable amendments to the text of the Exeter plan in a statement of common ground.

Report to: Strategic Planning Committee

Date of Meeting 2 September 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



East Devon Local Plan – Policy for wind farms and turbines

Report summary:

This report sets out further information on policy options for addressing proposals for wind turbines and wind farms in East Devon. The conclusion reached is a recommendation that the local plan does not identify specific areas or locations on the policies map where wind turbines/farms will be allowed, rather the policy across all of East Devon should be criteria based.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That Strategic Planning Committee endorse the officer recommended changes to the plan in respect of wind turbines and wind farms as set out in this report.

Reason for recommendation:

To help with policy refinement and advance the local plan.

Officer: Ed Freeman – Assistant Director Planning Strategy and Development Manager

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☒ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- ☒ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☐ Finance
- ☒ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: No specific risk impacts are identified.

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
-

1 Locations for wind farms and turbines under Strategic Policy CC03: Promoting low carbon and renewable energy

- 1.1 Strategic Policy CC03: Promoting low carbon and renewable energy, of the first Regulation 19 local plan, sets out how planning applications for (amongst other things) wind farms and turbines will be considered in certain circumstances.
- 1.2 The previous Government had made it challenging to get planning permission for on-shore wind farm. In England few on-shore wind farms/turbines (other than of a small scale) have been developed in recent years. The 2023 version of the NPPF [UK Government Web Archive](#) advised in footnote 58: *“Except for applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing wind turbines, a planning application for wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan or a supplementary planning document; and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been appropriately addressed and the proposal has community support”*.
- 1.3 Though (perhaps of a somewhat contradictory nature) the 2023 NPPF also advises in paragraph 160 that *“To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should: b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development;”*. It is not stated but might be reasonably inferred that for Footnote b) to positively apply (i.e. for turbines to be granted consent) then a local plan would need to comply with paragraph 160 b) and should have positively considered and chosen to identify suitable areas for development.
- 1.4 The Government elected in 2024 has taken a more pro-development approach to accommodating wind farms and turbines. In the 2024 version of the NPPF the need to identify locations for their development has been removed. Plans can rely on criteria based policy only that, for example could be a blanket policy covering a whole local plan area.
- 1.5 A challenge faced for the East Devon local plan is that it is being progressed under the 2023 version of the NPPF to accord with transitional arrangements. To be fully and strictly 2023 NPPF compliant and to plan for the accommodation of windfarms or turbines the plan would need to show areas on the policies map where wind farms will be allowed. This is what we have done and in policy wording the local plan sets out policy tests that need to be met that will be considered at the planning application stage. The areas identified are taken from an evidence document produced for our Council and neighbouring authorities (at the time when

the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan was being produced - [cfl-013-uo-2020-low-carbon-and-climate-change-evidence-base-for-gesp.pdf](#)). The identified areas, as included in the Local Plan Policies Map, were a product of technical assessment of locations that could accommodate wind farms, on account of wind speeds and links to the national grid, as well as higher level assessment that screened out key sensitive locations, specifically including National Landscape areas (formerly AONBs).

- 1.6 We have received an objection, however, from Historic England who express the view that the areas we identify effectively amount, in their view, to land allocations. An assumption that may be read into this objection is that Historic England assume a clear presumption, in principle, that planning permission would be granted in these areas. Historic England consider the identified areas have not been sufficiently and appropriately assessed. They raise the issue of heritage assets close to (and within) the defined areas as shown on the policies map and raised concerns that wind farms and turbines, if developed, could/would have adverse heritage impacts. For example, Historic England point to the potential for notable adverse effects on the settings of prominent heritage assets, including Grade II* Pynes House and Grade II* Poltimore House, situated in the far northwest of the plan area.
- 1.7 Historic England's comments in full are as follows:

"Historic England recognises that climate change is one of the most challenging issues of our time, with potential negative consequences for both people and heritage. While we support the promotion of renewable energy, we have significant concerns regarding the lack of historic environment evidence underpinning the proposed 'Areas Considered Suitable for Wind Energy'.

NPPF paragraph 160 states that plans should 'b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development'. However, we note that under the new NPPF decision-making framework introduced in 2024, the fact that suitable areas have not been identified would not prevent schemes from gaining consent. This is because footnote 58 of the NPPF December 2023, which had the effect of restricting new wind proposals to areas identified as suitable, has been removed.

Given that the locations identified in East Devon would require developers to consider schemes on small, discrete areas, not unlike a site allocation, we are concerned that the plan is not accompanied by adequate evidence to demonstrate that these sites are suitable for wind energy. Planning Practice Guidance for Renewable and low carbon energy states that when considering locations, local planning authorities will need to consider (amongst other things) 'the potential impacts on the local environment, including from cumulative impacts'. However, the identified areas in East Devon are not supported by any evidence of potential setting impacts. For example, considering only those locations in the far northwest of the plan area, there appears to be potential for significant adverse impacts on the settings of highly graded assets including grade II Pynes House and grade II* Poltimore House.*

The Sustainability Appraisal suggests Policy CC03 would result in positive effects on topics such as landscape and the historic environment."

- 1.8 Bearing in mind what Historic England say in representation it is suggested that there are three broad options available:
- a) We work on the basis that we continue to show suitable areas but that we do further work looking into these and particularly heritage sensitivity matters. Such work could lead to some areas, or parts of them, being deleted on non-suitability grounds.

- b) We continue to show the same areas on the policies Map and take the view that we disagree with Historic England's interpretation and we present the case that they are not allocations and that our plan policy wording (potentially subject to refinement) is robust in establishing that they do not have this status.
- c) We delete the identified areas from the Policies Map and work on the basis that plan policy is just criteria based and applies across the whole district. Though we could refine wording and exclude some specific locations, for example land in National Landscape designated areas.

- 1.9 If we chose to pursue our plan under option b) we would, in effect, be needing to present a case that Historic England are wrong and have incorrectly interpreted matters and that we have not allocated land/site for wind farms/turbines. Plan policy would therefore need to be read as areas of search for wind farms/turbines with rigorous criteria that still need to be complied with, rather than being or being akin to allocations.
- 1.10 The simplest option would be C) as this would address the objections raised by removing any doubt or possible interpretation that areas shown are allocations.
- 1.11 Option c) is the recommended policy approach. However, we do acknowledge, to some degree potential non-compliance with the 2023 NPPF. Though there is a clear direction of travel of Government Policy, as explicitly set out in the 2024 NPPF, and this would be presented as a specific case where accordance with new guidance is appropriate. Though we appreciate the matter could be tested through plan examination.
- 1.12 To bring about this change it is proposed that the first two sentences of the penultimate paragraph of Policy CC03 are deleted – they currently read *“Proposals for wind farms will only be allowed in defined areas as shown on the Policies Map. Domestic and other small-scale wind turbines will be preferred.”*

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications identified within the report. (AB/19/08/2025)

Legal implications:

The legal implications are covered in this report (002533/20 August 2025/DH)