

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 1 May 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Response to the Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan Submission

Report summary:

The purpose of the report is to formally agree the response by this Council to the submission consultation for the Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan. Clyst Honiton Parish Council has formally submitted their Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (Regulation 16) require the District Council to formally consult on the Plan for a minimum of 6 weeks. As part of this consultation, the District Council has the opportunity to comment on the Neighbourhood Plan. Officer observations are set out at the end of this report and members are asked to endorse these as the formal representation on the plan. The comments of this Council and all other comments received during the consultation are submitted to an independent Examiner who will inspect the Plan against a series of conditions that must be met in order for it to proceed to a referendum.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

- (1) That Cabinet note the formal submission of the Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan and congratulate the producers of the plan on their dedicated hard work and commitment throughout the process.
- (2) That Cabinet recommend that the proposed representation set out at paragraph 1.21 in this report is made in response to the consultation.
- (3) That Cabinet give delegated authority to the Assistant Director - Planning Strategy and Development Management in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Strategic Planning to consider and make a decision on the examiners findings and, if considered appropriate, to proceed to the next stage of the plan making process as set out in the Regulations, without further need to seek agreement from Cabinet, in line with paragraph 1.15 of this report.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the view of the District Council is formally recorded and informs the consideration of the Neighbourhood Plan by the independent Examiner, and to help ensure that subsequent to the examination, a decision can be made on the Examiner's findings within the 5-week timescale set out in the Regulations.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

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

Equalities impact Low Impact

Neighbourhood Planning is designed to be inclusive and extensive consultation is a fundamental requirement. The Neighbourhood Plan has gone through wide consultation with the community and has been advertised in a variety of formats to increase accessibility. All electors are invited to vote in the referendum.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; There is a risk that the Neighbourhood Plan could fail the examination if it is considered to conflict with the Basic Conditions to which all plans must comply.

Links to background information [The Localism Act](#); [Plain English Guide to the Localism Act](#); [National Planning Policy Framework \(2023\)](#); [Neighbourhood Planning Regulations](#); [Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap Guide](#); [East Devon Neighbourhood Planning webpages](#); [Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan documentation](#).

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

Report in full

Background to the Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.1 Clyst Honiton Parish Council commenced work on their Neighbourhood Plan in 2014 following the approval on 2 April 2014 of their Neighbourhood Area comprising the rural parts of Clyst Honiton parish, including the village of Clyst Honiton. The final Neighbourhood Area approved by EDDC excluded the strategic /major development areas that lie in the parish and the 'west end' of the district, including the airport, Skypark, Exeter Business Park, the now Lidl distribution centre and Cranbrook expansion areas.
- 1.2 Since then, the Parish Council and volunteers from the local community have spent considerable time and effort consulting with residents of the parish and other stakeholders to produce a plan which endeavours to reflect the aspirations of the community. The community have also received significant technical support package via a grant from Locality and engaged an independent examiner to undertake a 'health check' on the draft plan as an additional step in the process.
- 1.3 The Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan aims to further Clyst Honiton as an attractive, friendly, safe place to live, with enhanced spaces for residents to help to provide a strong

community and business focus, harness community spirit and encourage the community to value its river and rural landscape. To this end, the Plan includes a set of 24 policies covering a wide range of land use planning topics from community facilities, design and sustainability, local economy and employment, housing, parking and accessibility, and natural environment. The plan proposes the allocation of a village gateway site for up to 9 homes, and designation of 4 proposed areas of Local Green Spaces for formal protection. Amongst other things, the Plan seeks to safeguard land close to Clyst Honiton village for a public amenity space and 'green corridor'; whilst supporting proposals for various kinds of development including related to business and tourism development, community facilities, self-build, live-work units, small business space, and public realm. There is also an emphasis on sustainable design and active travel.

- 1.4 Prior to submitting the Plan to East Devon District Council, Clyst Honiton Parish Council have held their own public consultation on a draft version of the plan; a step which is also required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (Regulation 14). This ran for an extended period of 9 weeks from 9th June 2023 to 11th August 2023. The comments made during this consultation, including informal comments by District Council officers, have been considered and the plan updated prior to formal submission to East Devon District Council. Significantly, proposals for a new community building and employment use with enabling residential development on land adjacent to the Clyst Honiton bypass are removed as a proposed allocation from the Plan. These are expected to be pursued separately via a Neighbourhood Development Order. It is also of note, that successful lobbying by the community, borne out of the community engagement undertaken for early stages of the plan preparation, was instrumental in securing the closure of the through-road in the village which has brought benefits to quality of life for residents. This is not to dismiss the impact that continues to be felt, as articulated in the plan, from a combination of the loss of a number of community facilities and the significant surrounding strategic development that has arisen from the implementation of the strategy of the adopted local plan.

Submission of the Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.5 The District Council accepted formal submission of the Neighbourhood Plan from Clyst Honiton Parish Council in January/February 2024. The Plan and its supporting documents are available to view on the [planning pages](#) of the District Council website.
- 1.6 This is the twenty-eighth neighbourhood plan to progress to submission stage consultation in the district. The Parish Council has received support from the District Council and additional financial and funded technical support from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 1.7 The statutory regulations require that the District Council organise and undertake a minimum 6-week consultation on a plan when a compliant Submission is received. This is commonly referred to as the submission or 'formal' consultation. The public consultation period is running for just over 6 weeks from 28 February 2024 to 12 April 2024. Due to Committee cycles, comments from EDDC have been provided to the Examiner as informal Officer views, subject to the outcome of member discussion and decision following which a final formal response will be supplied.
- 1.8 The Plan proposal has been publicised through notice on the District Council website, a press release, emails sent to all Members, adjoining authorities and statutory consultees,

including Devon County Council, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency, and in liaison with the Parish Council, promotion in the local area to raise awareness of the further opportunity to comment. Hard copies of the Plan are available on request and to view at EDDC Honiton office, Exeter library, and local venues in Clyst Honiton.

- 1.9 One of the statutory roles of the District Council is to consider whether the Plan meets the legislative requirements, in production process terms. Cabinet has previously endorsed a protocol for District Council involvement into neighbourhood plans and in accordance with this protocol an officer review has been completed. Officer assessment is that legislative requirements are met.
- 1.10 Anyone may comment on a neighbourhood plan. It is particularly important that the District Council comments. This is because the plan will eventually (if adopted) form part of the statutory Development Plan for East Devon and should conform to the strategic policies of the Local Plan. It will also have increased weight as a material consideration in planning decisions, the more advanced it is through the stages of plan preparation. This report provides the recommended representations on the Plan, made by officers of this authority, to be formally submitted to the Examiner undertaking the Plan examination.

Neighbourhood Plan Examination and Referendum

- 1.11 In preparation for the examination, the District Council is appointing an 'appropriately qualified and independent examiner' in consultation with Clyst Honiton Parish Council.
- 1.12 All responses from the consultation (including any made by this Council) are forwarded to the Examiner who will consider them, by either written representations or at an oral hearing (if the Examiner decides one is necessary). The District Council is responsible for paying the costs of the examination but can recoup these expenses by claiming funding from Central Government of £20,000 once a date has been set up for referendum, following a successful examination.
- 1.13 The Neighbourhood Plan examination is different to a Local Plan examination. The Examiner is only testing whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions and other relevant legal requirements – they are not testing the soundness of the plan or looking at other material considerations. The Examiner will be considering whether the plan:
- has appropriate regard to national policy and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - is in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area (in this case the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031);
 - is compatible with human rights requirements;
 - is compatible with any retained EU obligations.

- 1.14 As part of the Development Plan used in future planning decisions, it is in the interests of the District, Town and Parish Councils to produce high quality neighbourhood development plans.
- 1.15 Following the examination, the Examiner's Final Report will set out the extent to which the draft plan proposal meets the Basic Conditions and what modifications (if any) are needed to ensure it meets the Basic Conditions. The Examiner has 3 options for recommendation:
- A. That the Plan proceeds to referendum as submitted.
 - B. The Plan is modified by the District Council to meet Basic Conditions and then the modified version proceeds to referendum.
 - C. That the Plan does not proceed to referendum.

If the Examiner chooses A or B above they must also consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the boundaries of the Plan area (this could be applicable if plan proposals could impact on a larger area). The report must give reasons for each recommendation and contain a summary of its findings. It is the responsibility of the District Council to decide what action to take in response to the recommendations of the Examiner.

- 1.16 Once the Plan has been finalised it will be subject to a referendum where everyone on the electoral roll (for the defined neighbourhood area) will have a right to vote for or against it. If at least half of votes cast support the Plan, then it can be brought into legal force.

The Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan Response

- 1.17 As part of the current consultation, the District Council can comment on the Plan. In terms of meeting the Basic Conditions, the Parish Council has produced a statement setting out how the Plan complies with the conditions which the Examiner will assess.
- 1.18 Officers have reviewed the Neighbourhood Plan contents and recommend that the following representation of East Devon District Council be formally submitted to the examiner. It should be noted that comments we make at this stage are primarily restricted to land use planning policy matters rather than other content on the Plan including supporting text or community actions and are made on the basis of:
- Do Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan policies comply with strategic policies in our adopted Local Plan and have appropriate regard to National Planning Policy?
 - Do we have concerns about policy given the wider objectives of the Council?
 - Are the policies workable and enforceable - could they be reasonably applied through the Development Management process? and
 - Are they otherwise appropriate or desirable?
- 1.19 Overall, it is noted that the extensive District Council comments made on draft policies at the previous Regulation 14 consultation in particular, have been given detailed consideration by the Parish Council and numerous amendments made to the Plan as a result. In endeavouring to support the Plan as a community-led document, comments focus on highlighting key areas that we would wish to see considered further through the examination, where policy wording is likely to be difficult to implement, constructive

comments to seek to add value to the ability of the plan to achieve its aims, and matters of fact and accuracy.

- 1.20 In terms of the planned replacement of the adopted Local Plan with a new Local Plan for east Devon, this remains at too early a stage for conformity with emerging strategy and policy to be formally assessed. However, the Parish Council have highlighted links with the emerging Local Plan (at Regulation 18 draft) in their submission and there is therefore an awareness of the relationship. Depending on the final content of the new Local Plan, its adoption may trigger an early review of the neighbourhood plan, to be determined in due course.
- 1.21 East Devon District Council comments on the Regulation 16 Submission Version of the Plan are proposed as follows (a full schedule of the Plan policies is provided in Annex 1 for reference):

Policy Comments

General Observations on Policy

- i. The reduced number of policies compared to the Regulation 14 version, and the removal of the bypass site development allocation to which Officers had raised concerns about scale, sustainability and relationship with the airport, is welcomed. The district council will welcome liaison on the latter as it is understood the proposal will continue to be pursued via an NDO.
- ii. The Plan remains lengthy and 24 policies for a largely rural area could be seen as excessive, but overall the Plan is considered to be well written and presented, with a good range and depth of supporting evidence and good effort to draw on this in policy justification.
- iii. Notwithstanding the observation above, a number of the policies continue to lend support to certain types of development (e.g. live-work units, holiday accommodation) in the more unsustainable locations in the Plan Area, including the hamlet of Holbrook which the plan identifies as comprising only 6 dwellings and accessed by single track lanes, and the wider largely agricultural area south of the A30 (referred to as Zone B). Indeed, notwithstanding the surrounding strategic developments, the whole of the Plan area is classed as open countryside in the adopted Local Plan, and the Plan itself acknowledges in several places the high degree of reliance on the private car for residents and businesses. Given development should be focused and encouraged where it can be accessed by sustainable means of travel to reduce emissions and close to existing services and facilities, and that the Plan includes objectives relating to sustainable development and tackling the climate emergency, there seems to be some conflict within the overall plan strategy we would ask the Examiner to give consideration to.

Policy-specific Comments (in order as they appear in the Plan):

• C1 Community Facilities and Services

- Overall, it should be noted that there is already a policy protection of this nature in the adopted Local Plan (Strategy 32). Notwithstanding this possible duplication, the policy is not dissimilar to those in other neighbourhood plans.
- However, there appears to be some potential conflict and risk of confusion between the requirements in the first and second parts of the policy, in terms of the difference between 'redevelopment' and 'loss' is unclear. Potentially this could be resolved if the first part was clarified to relate to support for proposals which would further their continued and/or enhanced use/role as key community facilities.
- We note the addition of the parish field further to our comments at the previous stage, and to add to this, we would suggest that now that the allotment site is no longer a proposed allocation, this may be a further facility worthy of explicit reference in this policy for protection and completeness.
- In terms of the sub-clause relating to public houses, it should be clear about how long it should be marketed for and ideally how it should be marketed, in order to strengthen application of the policy, and reduce the ability for lip service to be paid to it.

• C2 New Community Building:

- Given concerns raised by EDDC as Local Planning Authority at Regulation 14 stage to the scale of the proposals, we consider it important for the policy support for residential enabling development to be caveated as 'in principle' support and to be for 'the minimum necessary' to deliver a community building that meets the needs of the community, and also to have clear demonstrable support of the community. Without this, there is a risk of the policy lending support to a residential-led scheme where community engagement activity only can be evidenced. We would also like to see specific reference to engagement with the LPA in point 2.
- To ensure the first sentence/paragraph reads as a policy rather than an aim, suggest replacing, 'To support' at the beginning, with 'will be supported' at the end.

• C3 Additional New Community Facilities and Services:

- Suggest some re-phrasing of the first clause of this policy is required to remove potential for it to be misinterpreted to be supporting development of facilities in the form of buildings on the River Clyst Park site (which is entirely in flood zone 2/3), or to remove this clause as this is addressed specifically in Policy NE3. If retaining for completeness, suggest the River Clyst park reference is moved to form the last bullet of the policy and phrased as being in principle support for proposals to bring forward the River Clyst Park as a new public open space, in line with the requirements of Policy NE3.
- Question whether the need to prove that all proposals would extend the leisure / recreation experience could be too restrictive if proposals for other more functional facilities came forward, e.g. a community shop etc.

- To assist with meeting gaps in provision that the plan identifies it may be beneficial to add a clause to support/encourage use of shared / multi-use spaces/facilities.
- Given the policy theoretically supports proposals anywhere in the Plan Area, we would wish to see greater locational control to avoid it lending support to proposals in the most unsustainable locations. In line with the policy justification, suggest 'in the Neighbourhood Plan Area' is replaced with 'in or adjacent to the village of Clyst Honiton'.
- Suggest consideration could also be given to amalgamating C2 and C3 as the envisaged new community building would be an additional new community facility, and we would suggest the list of requirements in C3 would also be relevant to that proposal.
- **DS1 High Quality Design –**
 - to strengthen the role of the Design Code, the policy could require adherence to it in the opening sentence.
 - Clause 3 relating to heritage assets does not need to require the application of national policy, as this will be considered and applied as a matter of course. If reference to national policy is retained, suggest (here and elsewhere), that the date of the NPPF is not cited within the policy wording as the 2023 version will inevitably be superseded at some point, rendering the policy outdated unnecessarily. Also, strictly speaking to align to national policy this clause should refer to 'the significance of'.
 - Clause 4 – consider this clause is slightly muddled in trying to address both crime and safety elements as well as climate change. Suggest that the requirement relating to climate change resilience can be removed as it is covered in clauses 5 and 8.
 - Clause 9 – flood risk – to avoid potential conflict with national policy (in essence which prescribes that development be located in areas of least flood risk and only allowed in areas at greater risk following a sequential, and if necessary, exception test), suggest this clause is deleted. Suggest the policy focusses on design and does not say anything about flooding in favour of relying on the implementation of national and strategic policy.
 - Clause 10 – suggest 'where necessary' rather than 'where appropriate' for clarity.
- **DS2 Sustainable Design and Construction –** As above, suggest 'where necessary' rather than 'where appropriate' in the final paragraph related to noise mitigation.
- **DS3 Communications Infrastructure –** No comments, but we would observe that notwithstanding this is similar to other policies in made neighbourhood plans, it may be difficult to enforce.
- **DS4 Sustainable Drainage –** Unclear if the policy is referring to all run off. Suggest it would be more reasonable for this to relate to additional surface run-off related to the proposal and this could be clarified by amending the first sentence of the policy to read "will be required to accommodate additional surface water run off within the site".
- **DS5 Flood Risk Management –** We would wish to see the policy prioritise support first for natural flood management (over engineered solutions) and for stronger wording regarding avoidance of biodiversity impacts.
- **DS6 Storage Spaces –**

- suggest would be more appropriate to ensure the minimum requirement is for storage of at least 2 bikes, rather than seemingly limiting the requirement to only the minimum space to store 2 bikes per dwelling. Also, they may wish to consider requirements for cycle storage or parking facilities for developments other than residential.
- Suggest 'no obstruction' rather than 'minimum obstruction' to pedestrians and vehicular access would be the appropriate requirement.
- **DS7 Charging Points –**
 - suggest replacing 'NPPF (2023)' with 'latest Government requirements' as this is an area of fast-moving technology.
- **DS8 Renewable Energy –**
 - The requirement in the 1st sentence and the second bullet appear to duplicate Policy DS2. The clause (1) relating to heritage assets could be added to DS2 and this policy removed.
- **DS9 Community led renewable energy production –**
 - Second part of policy needs some wording amendments for flow and legibility including to remove repetition of 'to ensure the following'. Similarly, the wording of the first bullet is unclear/incomplete.
 - Given the climate emergency and the nature of the potential installations, consideration should be given to whether the requirements to be 'in keeping' with all the various visual considerations are too restrictive.
- **E1 Supporting a Rural Economy –**
 - as raised previously through informal Officer comments at Regulation 14 stage and since, and notwithstanding the restriction to brownfield sites and the fact that all the criteria must be met, we consider this policy remains too open to opportunities for new build business accommodation and holiday let spaces in a rural area, which could also be a backdoor to dwellings in the open countryside.
 - Criteria 2 appears incomplete – the existing scale and form of what?
 - Criteria 3 - being located close to 'a' building may be sufficient for accommodation restricted to holiday use as long as that building will be managing/servicing it (as it reduces the need for a manager to travel to it each day by car) but is considered insufficient to justify E(c) uses - (i) Financial services; (ii) Professional services (other than health or medical services), or (iii) Other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality or E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions. These E uses are often undertaken at a small scale from a home office but as stand-alone businesses, it suggests that workers and customers will need to travel by car to access them. There is no indication of scale, and there is no obvious need for them to be located in the rural area.
 - At the least, the criteria should restrict this to locations with opportunity for access by sustainable and active means of travel.
 - To be aware also that the latest Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA) concludes that we can meet our office space need, so policy provision for this use would be in addition to EDNA requirements and further suggests this could appropriately be limited to conversions and extensions to support home based businesses and working from home, with new build limited to sites in or adjacent to the main Clyst Honiton village and within the established employment areas of Hill Barton and Axe Hayes business parks, in so far as strategic policy would permit.
- **E2 Live Work Units –**

- Similar to comments above, we consider this policy to risk supporting new residential development in the open countryside 'by the back door', in unsustainable locations. It is considered it would be very difficult to monitor / control the use to ensure that the commercial element is/remains the dominant use of space.
- Related to this, the proportion of the workspace element to the live element is key in terms of proportion of floorspace, and this should be how live work units are defined.
- To support this policy we would wish to see it required that the residential element is subordinate to the commercial space, and given that it relates only to 'Zone B', that only conversions, rather than new builds, can be supported.
- **E3 Business Development in 'Zone A' –**
 - Suggest that 'non-village locations' as used to define part B of the policy could more accurately be entitled 'Edge of Village Locations'
 - For greater clarity and control, suggest 'adjacent to the village' in the opening sentence of Part B be amended to read, "immediately adjacent to the existing built form of the village"
 - As the emergence of the NDO is potentially subject to change, and there is no site allocated for the future community building, we consider it unlikely we can implement criteria 'v' of the policy. The risks of the currently preferred 'bypass site' being lost to speculative development for other uses is considered low for the reasons set out in our Regulation 14 comments and there is positive policy support for the new community building in the Community Facilities chapter of the neighbourhood plan. The policy could potentially say this policy will not apply to the bypass site (would need a map to show location and extent) unless there is evidence of clear and demonstrable support from the community, including through a Neighbourhood Development Order.
 - Cross-checking required to ensure no conflict between the clauses a) to h) and those in Policy DS1 Design, e.g., with respect to the Character Assessment and Design Code? (the latter is not mentioned, and unclear when the former might not be applicable?) Suggest airport safety as well as noise is referred to given that Home Farm site falls inside the airport public safety zone.
- Noted that apart from office and holiday accommodation the plan is silent on proposals for other uses that could come forward at existing business park locations that fall within the plan area (namely Axe Hayes / Yeo Business Park, and Hill Barton (part of) and in the absence of any specific policy related to these, Local Plan policy will apply to proposals in these locations. Regarding Hill Barton, for clarity to note the defined boundaries for this Business Park within the Parish will be as set in the Local Plan (currently in the adopted Villages Plan).
- **SA1 Slate and Tile Site –**
 - Proposals resulting in the loss of sites currently in employment use are generally resisted through Strategic Policy 32 of the adopted Local Plan. In this instance some issues regarding residential amenity and environmental quality are identified, together with some evidence of housing need and a shortage of alternative sites to meet this for residents who wish to remain in Clyst Honiton, together with indications of support for the change of use by local residents. There is also evidence the site would be suitable and viable for the intended allocated use for small (1-2 bed) homes, subject to mitigation

for flood risk, and it is accepted that other alternative employment land is available in the vicinity. It is also acknowledged that the loss of the employment use is not an issue that has been raised previously as a priority concern in the development of the Plan, where the focus had been on the significant and controversial 'bypass site' proposals (now being pursued outside the plan). On balance, whilst the loss of employment sites remains a priority for the Council, in this instance it is not proposed to object to the principle.

- the requirement about mitigating noise impacts at clause 2 will be important. This should be worded more precisely to ensure that proposals incorporate measures that mitigate noise impacts from the surrounding soundscape including road, commercial and airport noise to ensure a good level of amenity for residents, to achieve the 'desirable level' for internal noise levels as detailed within BS8233 (2014) and to detail how external spaces will provide a good level of amenity having regard to the standards set out in BS8233 (2014).
- if the intention is that an affordable housing element is secured on-site then it will be necessary to specify the requirements in the policy as we will not be able to require it as standard on a scheme of up to 9 homes under the Local Plan policy
- it may be advisable to add including "and meet national space standards." To point 1 requiring "Housing to be 1 and 2 bed properties" to avoid risk of a scheme coming forward for small 1 and 2 bed properties that have single bedrooms only.
- **H1 Self-Build and Custom-Build –**
 - Concerned that the first part of this policy will be exploited and lead to residential development in unsustainable locations. As written, it would allow a new house to be built either side of a single existing isolated dwelling, as separate 'single' plots. We do not agree with the assertion at paragraph 6 that this would comply / be compatible with Strategy 7 of the adopted EDLP, given it would allow new housing anywhere, providing it was next to an existing house.
 - We would also express concern about the suitability for retention and conversion of some of the examples of structures that have come forward in the evidence gathering for the Plan which are described in paragraph 7 of the supporting text as including a piggery, lambing pens and corrugated iron sheds. We would take a different view to the community about these being suitable for development. We would not want to encourage development of poorly constructed agricultural buildings and PD rights would already allow for conversion of appropriate agricultural buildings, even where they've been split from the farm. From the description, lambing pens, piggeries and tin sheds are likely to need replacement rather than conversion so these are effectively new houses in the countryside with very little justification. Given the rural nature of the wider plan area, we would suggest the policy be revised to allow this development where it relates to houses within Clyst Honiton village rather than throughout the plan area. This would be similar to the policy approach supported in the Broadclyst Neighbourhood Plan (made July 2023). In making these comments, we would advise that custom/self-build development

does not by definition constitute sustainable development, and sustainability of location is a key consideration.

- The policies of the adopted strategic plan would not allow residential developments of 30 or more, the neighbourhood plan does not make allocations for such, and, the policy expressly states the requirement would not apply to the NDO scheme (although we would question why this is?), and therefore the clause related to this scale of development seems unnecessary. However, if retained, the policy wording should be amended to 'encourage' rather than 'require' this, to bring it in line with adopted Local Plan policy (H2).
- **NE1 Landscape and Biodiversity** – no comments.
- **NE2 Green Landscaped Corridor** – consider this policy will assist with maintaining the landscape setting of the village and will also help to provide a landscape buffer between the village and the Clyst Valley Regional Park. Suggest the policy could be strengthened to actively seek to enhance and strengthen the landscape corridor and setting of the village. This could then be a potential BNG opportunity.
- **NE3 River Clyst Park** –
 - EDDC support this policy – the securing of this space as a public open space with a wildflower meadow to the north of Honiton Road/York Terrace is being progressed through the planning permission for the Logistics Park via an existing s.106 legal agreement. Officer would be open to a discussion with the Parish Council about the delivery of this space, agreeing access areas and considering other opportunities such as tree planting, BNG etc.
 - missing word or words in last sentence – Clyst Honiton Parish Council to advise.
- **NE4 Local Green Spaces** - no comments.
- **AC1 Parking Provision** – Regarding policy support for further on-site parking spaces on existing commercial sites, in order promote further sustainable development priorities, we would suggest that as this places no limitation on number of spaces as written, it should be requiring additional spaces to be justified to meet operational requirements of the business that cannot be met through measures to promote sustainable travel such as travel plan.
- **AC2 Public Realm Improvements** – suggest this includes an additional bullet to support 'measures that facilitate walking and cycling infrastructure and connectivity'. This is on the basis that at present the existing street forms an important link to the Clyst Valley Trail – and will remain an important route for people cycling to the airport and nearby destinations, as well as Bishop's Court Lane.
- **AC3 Active Travel** –
 - The opening part of the policy needs rewording for clarity on the requirement/expectation in relation to development proposals and the routes listed e.g. '...active travel, particularly those routes listed below, will be supported.'
 - Suggest specifically naming the Clyst Valley Trail, and referring to the emerging LCWIP. It would also be preferable to reference links to the east – Cranbrook, Airport etc. in Figure 55 (an annotated map can be provided to illustrate)
 - to avoid risk of supporting developments that might be less than desirable in other aspects but will provide these links, suggest caveating the support given in the opening sentence by adding, "subject to being otherwise acceptable'.

- Suggest strengthening by amending the clause, “Development proposals should provide appropriate and safe access and should link up with existing networks” to read, “Development proposals **must** provide appropriate and safe access and should link up with existing networks, **wherever practicable.**”

Other non-policy specific comments:

- Aims and Objectives:
 - Generally support the overall aims and objectives of the plan. However, as noted elsewhere, we consider that the various policies enabling development in the rural area away from services and facilities and likely to encourage travel by car, seem somewhat at odds with the sustainable development and climate change objectives;
 - Suggest the Natural Environment Aim relating to ‘Local Green Spaces’ does not mean to refer to NPPF formally designed LGS, but rather more generally to green spaces in the locality and to re-phrase accordingly.
 - Similarly on associated objectives for LGS and the green corridor, replace ‘allocate’ with ‘designate’ for accuracy.
- Map of businesses in the plan area (page 69) would benefit from annotation/key of the locations and addition of the plan area boundary.
- Economic policy evidence – Noted that some of the published evidence cited to support the economic policies is now quite dated. We would advise as follows:
 - The Shared Economic Strategy quoted ran to 2020, and there is a new EDDC economic strategy which is due to be adopted in the very near future, so this could be acknowledged via modifications.
 - Non-EDDC reports – we are not aware of more recent evidence to replace these so suggest the text could just acknowledge the position and say that, whilst the reports are dated, their content is still considered to be relevant.
- Unsubstantiated or misleading comments – it would be helpful in a number of places to provide some further explanation or reference to evidence to justify comments stated as facts, including:
 - Paragraph 2.41, page 21 – to justify the assertion that the Honiton Road (C832) has returned C832 to maximum capacity levels – is there traffic data supporting this?
 - Paragraph 2.42, page 21 – suggest this cannot be said to apply “all country lanes” and to say many would be more accurate, unless evidence is provided.
 - Paragraph 4, bottom page 58 – this quote is taken directly from page 1 (not p.20) of the minutes and is a factual record of the statement read to Strategic Planning Committee at the meeting on 4th Oct 2022 in the agenda item for public speaking. It should be attributed as recorded in those minutes to being a statement read out on behalf of Paul Smith, a resident of Cranbrook, and not as the NP a statement of EDDC. Suggest if retained a link is provided to the minutes for reference.
 - Regarding the sister NDO /bypass land proposals for community facility and enabling development, would question the light in which this is referred to in some places in the plan, which could be unhelpful now it is being developed outside the Plan – for example on plan page 26, it states (without reference to

any associated evidence) that an NDO was the 'only viable way forward' and on page 41, that there is community agreement on the 'number of houses and economic units required to deliver the community building' when this is a technical matter relating to viability work, rather than public opinion.

- Notwithstanding the acknowledged and very real loss of community facilities the community have experienced, it is inaccurate to say, as stated top page 43, that it has a lost a 'full range of valuable assets', when there remains a parish field, 2 public houses, allotments, bus service (now enhanced).
 - Paragraph 3, page 64: to explain why "in the Plan Area the nature of the rural countryside limits the options for low and zero carbon energy production..."
 - Paragraph 2, page 73 – "It is important that the Plan Area continues to attract businesses in the area..."
 - Paragraph 4, page 73 – "The traffic created by such businesses [said to be office use and service provision to members of the public] is well suited to the road network...." Whereas previously (p. xx) the road network of single track lanes with no passing places was raised as being an issue...
 - Paragraph 4, page 78 – "... Clyst Honiton is perfectly positioned to capitalise on the recent resurgence and popularity of locally produced speciality foods and drinks and for the location of a much-needed gym and nursery to service the wider area,"
 - Paragraph 6, page 67 – "non village locations within Zone A" – are there any that can be said to be not at/adjacent to the village?
 - Paragraph 3, page 83 – "The locals were fully aware that in order to get a free community building that the number of houses required to fund such a facility was always going to be high" – funded or provided at no cost might be a more appropriate term than 'free' and also the amount of enabling development would be proportionate the facility required which is our view on the proposals as they stood at Reg 14 was excessive.
 - Bullet (i), bottom page 84 – "There are two local factors specific to Clyst Honiton, namely its location relative to likely employment growth and the need to accommodate likely housing allocations lost from the Cranbrook masterplan due to the noise levels at bordering Exeter Airport, which indicate a higher level of projection may be required" – this is not factually correct and the Cranbrook Plan (adopted 2022) allocated enough housing sites to meet the objectives of the Local Plan for the town and so there is no under provision that Clyst Honiton need to pick up, beyond the allocations we have already made in the parish.
 - Paragraph 4, page 95 – reference to 'shops in the Tithebarn development' – as these are not yet completed or occupied, this should be 'future' or forthcoming.
 - Bottom page 97 – "there is support for the NP policies to be written to cover any development of housing coming forward in the future both within and outside the Clyst Honiton village" – given Local plan policy would not support new housing anywhere in the Plan area (notwithstanding the possible future new community under the new emerging local plan), this support needs qualifying as presumably coming from the local community?
- Formatting and Referencing:

- Paragraph numbering - it would be good practice and assist with referencing by applicants and in Officer reports for paragraphs to be numbered throughout in continuous sequential order.
 - Welcome the referencing update for submission to the 2023 version of the NPPF, but to note there remain several references to the 2021 version (e.g. on plan page 42) which should be updated.
 - Minor corrections – there are a small number of grammar and typographical errors in the Plan document that should be corrected before the plan goes to referendum.
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Financial implications:

No direct financial implications have been identified.

Legal implications:

The legal implications are fully set out within the report. It is important that EDDC comments on the content of the submitted Clyst Honiton Neighbourhood Plan (given that it will form part of the Development Plan and therefore help guide decision making on planning applications) and that it makes a decision on the examiner's findings within the prescribed timeframes to ensure that it sits within the strategic requirements of the East Devon District Council's Local Plan.