

Report to: **Strategic Planning Committee**



Date of Meeting Tuesday 11 September 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

---

## **Housing Requirement and Site Allocations: Sidmouth, Sidbury and Newton Poppleford**

### **Report summary:**

This report sets out recommendations for sites to be allocated for development through the new local plan for/at the settlements of Sidmouth, Sidbury and Newton Poppleford. Subject to Committee approval, and any further assessment undertaken, the sites will be included as allocations of development in the Regulation 19 draft of the local plan that is proposed to be considered at Strategic Planning Committee in November 2024.

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

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

### **Recommendation:**

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

### **Reason for recommendation:**

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

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

---

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

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

**Equalities impact** Low Impact

## Climate change Low Impact

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

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

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

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

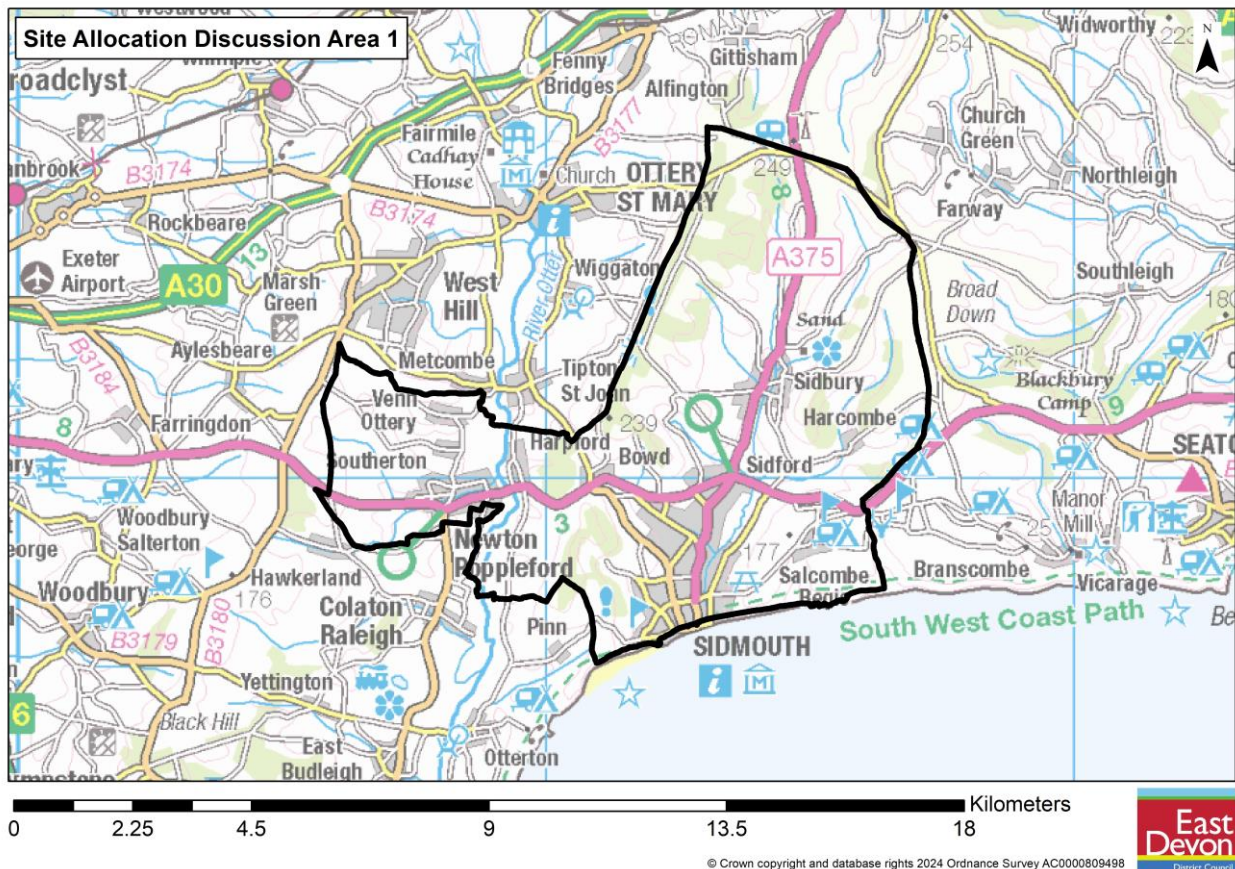
## Report in full

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This report is specifically concerned with proposed sites for allocations for development at and around settlements close to Sidmouth – these specifically are:

- Sidmouth (including Sidford),
- Sidbury and
- Newton Poppleford.
  - n.b. Sidmouth is a Tier 2 settlement; both Sidbury and Newton Poppleford are Tier 4 settlements

The area covered is shown on the map on the following page:



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

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

2.1 To support site selection work officers have produced technical assessments of site options and choices. The assessment reports for sites that are referenced in this Committee report can be viewed in the appendices. These technical reports are amended redrafts of reports that went to Member Working Party meetings held in July and August 2024 to reflect discussions held at those meeting and points raised. In addition, there are some amendments to correct matters of accuracy and update on relevant new information.

2.2 The technical reports contain summary information only and behind them there is more detailed assessment work in respect of landscape, built heritage and biodiversity considerations. Full reports, with all details (again as might be refined and adjusted in the light of new information), will accompany the local plan when presented to Strategic Planning Committee in November 2024.

2.3 The notes taken from the Working Party meeting for Sidmouth and surrounding areas can be viewed as an appendix to this paper.

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

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

#### **Sidmouth and development options at and around the town**

- 3.2 Sidmouth is the second most populous settlement in East Devon, with around 13,300 people. Forty-three per cent of residents are aged 65 or over, making it one of the most elderly settlements in East Devon and, consequently, relatively few working age people.
- 3.3 There is currently a good balance of jobs to workers in Sidmouth (1 to 1) and, although it is relatively self-contained, there remains a significant number of residents working elsewhere, with nearly one in five workers commuting from Sidmouth to Exeter.
- 3.4 There are a wide range of community facilities and services in Sidmouth, including a secondary school, numerous shops, health facilities, and a swimming pool. There are good bus links to other settlements, including regular buses to Exeter.
- 3.5 However, unlike several of the other larger settlements, Sidmouth does not have a train station. The A3052 runs along the northern edge of Sidmouth, providing east to west road links, whilst the strategic road network (A30 and A35) can be accessed at Honiton around ten miles to the north.
- 3.6 The East Devon National Landscape wraps itself tightly around three sides of Sidmouth, providing a picturesque setting for the town. To the south lies the beautiful beach, part of which is within the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site. Sidmouth also has an outstanding historic environment, with much of the southern half of the town covered by conservation areas and home to numerous listed buildings.
- 3.7 Four sites within Sidmouth (including the village of Sidford) are proposed for allocation:
- Sidm\_06a for 30 dwellings;
  - Sidm\_29 (a/k/a Sidm\_24) for 1.63ha of employment land;
  - Sidm\_31 for 15 dwellings;
  - Sidm\_32a (a/k/a Sidm\_01) for 127 dwellings and 0.27ha of employment land.
- 3.8 At the first Reg. 18 consultation on the Draft Local Plan, Sidm\_17 was originally proposed for allocation (11 dwellings) but, following feedback, this site is no longer a preferred option. Sidm\_31 was originally rejected for allocation as having an unacceptable landscape impact (too high intervisibility with the National Landscape) but, on re-assessment, this is now being proposed for 15 dwellings.

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

- 3.9 Sidbury is home to around 500 people and has a slightly older age profile than the district average (35% are aged 65 plus). The number of jobs within Sidbury is relatively low, less than half the number of workers, meaning most people have to commute elsewhere to work.
- 3.10 Sidbury has a reasonably good range of community facilities for its size, including a primary school, shop, pub, and sports pitch. There is also an hourly bus service running to the larger settlements of Honiton to the north and south to Sidmouth. The A375 runs through the centre of the village.
- 3.11 The East Devon National Landscape washes over Sidbury, and the floodplain associated with the River Sid runs along the east. A conservation area, with numerous listed buildings, covers a large part of the centre of Sidbury.
- 3.12 One site within Sidbury is proposed for allocation:
- Sidm\_34a for 38 dwellings and 0.15ha of employment.

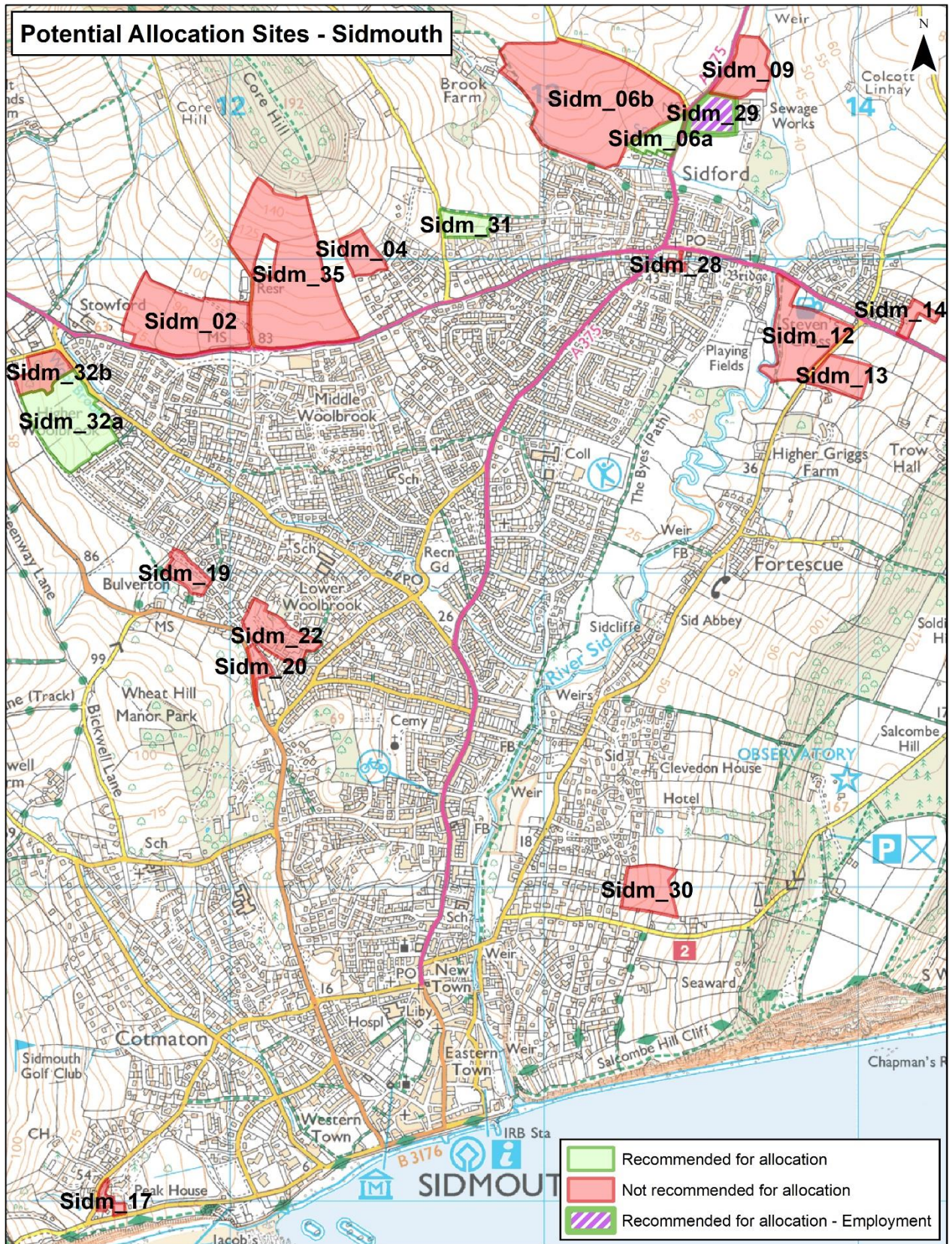
## **Newton Poppleford and development options at and around the village**

- 3.13 Newton Poppleford is the twelfth largest settlement with a population of around 1,800. About 31% of residents are aged 65 or over (similar to the East Devon average of 30%), with 16% aged between 0-15. There are some 800 economically active people and an employment density of 0.35, which shows that there are far fewer jobs than workers.
- 3.14 Newton Poppleford has a good range of local services and facilities but there is no railway line and road access is via the busy A3052, which runs through the middle of the village. This carries a high level of traffic, including HGVs, and at the western end of the High Street is constricted in width and lacks safe pedestrian refuge. Cycling and walking along this stretch of road is dangerous and there are currently no suitable alternative routes.
- 3.15 The existing Built-up Area Boundary does not extend to the west of the village because of the constraints of this section of road (as it was found not to be suitable for development). The new settlement boundary proposed also excludes this area.
- 3.16 There are around 20 listed buildings in the village, but no conservation area. The whole village is in the East Devon National Landscape. The River Otter floodplain lies to the east of the village and there is a smaller floodplain running through the middle of the village.
- 3.17 Zero sites within Newton Poppleford are proposed for allocation. At the working party meeting there was, however, some qualified support for some development in the village, noting a possible new pedestrian link from the south west of the village to paths providing links to the village centre, thus avoiding use of the main road. This was seen as potentially opening up scope for development.

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

- 4.1 Set out below, in settlement/ward order (for settlements listed and addressed in this report) are lists of sites, as referenced and that feature in the site technical assessment documents. The tables below provide an officer recommendation on whether they should be allocated for development in the Regulation 19 draft of the local plan or not. We do not list sites that have a planning permission for development or that were sifted out from assessment.
- 4.2 For feedback that relates to the sites listed in this section at the draft plan stage of consultation see: [accessible-reg-18-consultation-feedback-report-spring-2023.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](https://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/accessible-reg-18-consultation-feedback-report-spring-2023.pdf) Feedback highlights a range of concerns associated with nearly all sites referenced in this report, whether proposed for allocation or not. There were, however, some favourable comments raised for some sites.
- 4.3 In the early summer of 2024 we undertook further consultation on proposed boundaries for Green Wedges and Coastal Preservation Areas (both being restrictive policies on development) as well as some other local plan matters. In some cases proposed allocations sites fell within the protective policy areas being consulted on. Full analysis of the feedback received has not yet been undertaken; a report is in production and will come to this Committee. However, we would highlight that many respondents attached great weight to the protection that policies afford and were concerned about adverse impacts from development. Suggestions of environmental and wildlife losses featured heavily in feedback received as did landscape concerns. In respect of the Green Wedges there were particular concerns around settlements merging into one another in comments received and there were more general concerns expressed about impacts of development on infrastructure and its availability. Not all comments were, however, negative with some support for allocations expressed. There were also some responses that questioned the extent of designated areas and the process and methodology for defining areas included under the policies. There were also some questioning the rationale and logic for designation. A detailed summary of the comments received is appended to this report.
- 4.4 A spreadsheet showing these allocations will be presented at this Committee, for Members to discuss and endorse (or not), and to show a 'running total' of the number of homes being allocated. This will enable Members to see in real time the impact of decisions to allocate or not allocate sites, in terms of the overall district-wide housing requirement.

# Sites at Sidmouth



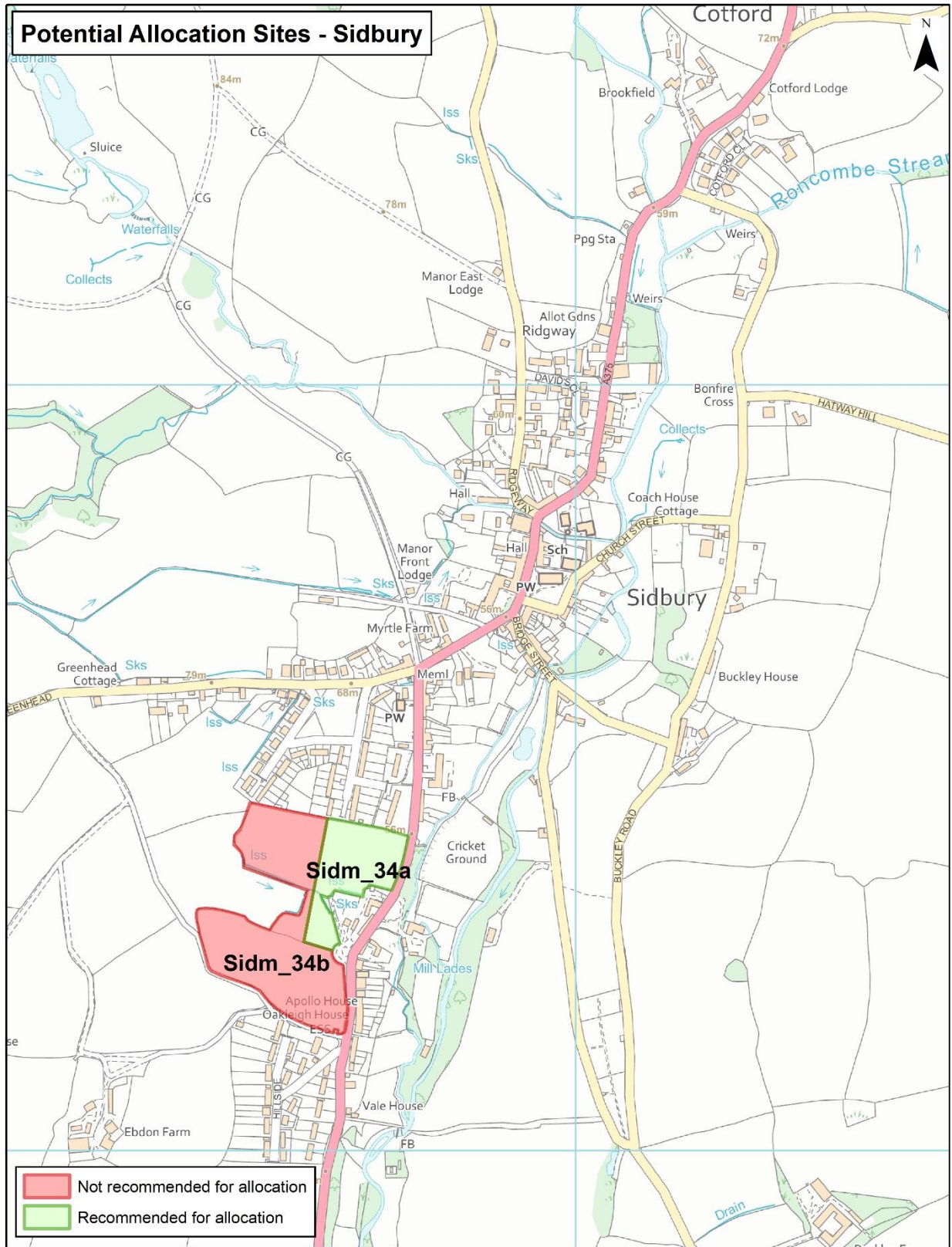
| Site reference             | Number of dwellings    | Recommend allocating? | Succinct officer commentary – if relevant (see technical report for full assessment)  |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Sidmouth Town Ward</b>  |                        |                       |   |
| Sidm_17                    | 8                      | No                    | This site was previously proposed for allocation in the first Reg. 18 Draft Local Plan consultation but no longer a preferred site following feedback.  |
| <b>Sidmouth Rural Ward</b> |                        |                       |   |
| Sidm_12                    | 62                     | No                    | Development of the site would have a high landscape impact (site within The Byes / adjacent to a PROW), major heritage impact and a significant moderate adverse impact on ecology.   |
| Sidm_13                    | 43 (plus hotel)        | No                    | This site is very sensitive in landscape terms, falling in the East Devon National Landscape on rising land that is visually prominent from a wide range of public viewpoints.  |
| Sidm_14                    | 12                     | No                    | Development of the site would have an unacceptable landscape impact (site within the East Devon National Landscape with high intervisibility) and a significant moderate adverse impact on ecology.   |
| Sidm_29<br>(a/k/a Sidm_24) | 1.63ha employment land | <b>Yes</b>            | This site is well located for employment land, with an extant economic development permission on an adjacent site to the south, and should be considered as available and developable. At the Working Party meeting, however, it was questioned if this site was a realistic proposition as the allocation to the south has not been brought forward. Concerns were also raised regarding flooding and urban creep. The site would need to secure the multi-use trail, proposed by DCC, which is proposed to aid walking and cycling through this area. |
| Sidm_30                    | 30                     | No                    | Development of the site would have an unacceptable landscape impact (site within the East Devon National Landscape with high intervisibility).  |



| Site reference                 | Number of dwellings                                 | Recommend allocating?                  | Succinct officer commentary – if relevant (see technical report for full assessment)   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Sidmouth / Sidford Ward</b> |   |  |  |
| Sidm_02                        | 124   | No                                     | Development of the site would have an unacceptable landscape impact (site within the East Devon National Landscape with high intervisibility) and a significant adverse effect on ecology.   |
| Sidm_04                        | 10  | No                                     | Development of the site would have an unacceptable landscape impact (site within the East Devon National Landscape with high intervisibility).   |
| Sidm_06                        | Sidm_06a – 30 dwellings<br>Sidm_06b – 238 dwellings | Sidm_06a – <b>Yes</b><br>Sidm_06b – No | Development of the site as taken as whole with Sidm_06b (268 max yield) would have a high landscape impact (site within East Devon National Landscape with high inter-visibility), major heritage impact and a significant moderate adverse effect on ecology. However, with good access to facilities and employment, it is considered that the eastern side of this site (specifically Sidm_06a) could make a reasonable development option. At the Working Party meeting, concerns were raised that development of this site would open up pressure to release other land in the future to the north and the reduction of the green wedge as a whole, along with potential flooding issues. |
| Sidm_19                        | 8   | No                                     | Development of the site would have an unacceptable landscape impact (site within the East Devon National Landscape with high intervisibility), major heritage impact and a significant adverse effect on ecology.  |
| Sidm_20                        | 11  | No                                     | The loss of an active employment site is a significant constraint on development of this site. There would also be a significant adverse effect on ecology.  |
| Sidm_22                        | 43  | No                                     | The loss of an active employment site is a significant constraint on development of this site. There would also be a significant adverse effect on ecology.  |

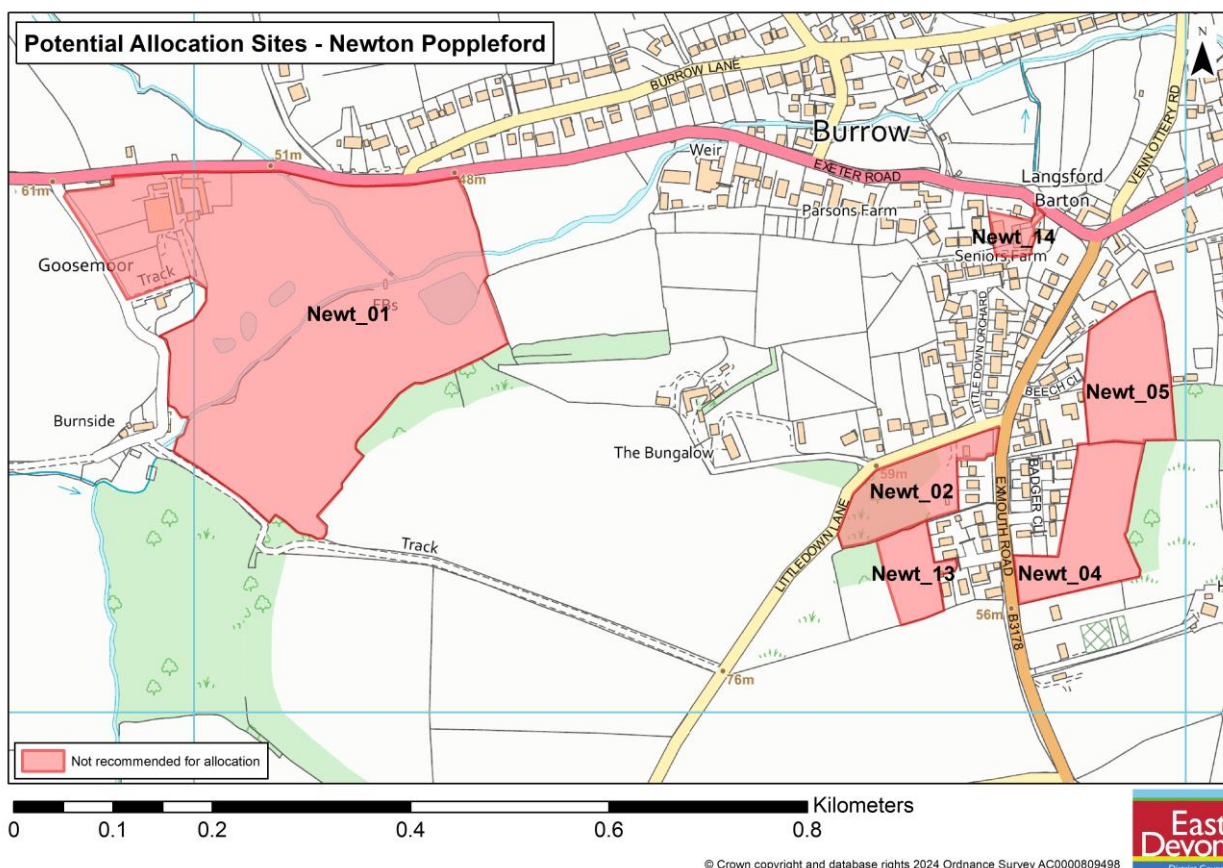
| Site reference                | Number of dwellings                      | Recommend allocating?                  | Succinct officer commentary – if relevant (see technical report for full assessment)  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Sidm_28                       | 4  | No                                     | This site is rejected due to concerns about the loss of the existing use and the lack of a clear public benefit / contribution to housing delivery of site allocation.  |
| Sidm_31                       | 15                                       | <b>Yes</b>                             | The scale of development on this site would help deliver the district-wide housing requirement in a manner that is consistent with the spatial strategy. This site was previously rejected in the first Reg. 18 Draft Local Plan consultation but now a preferred site following re-assessment. At the Working Party, although the site was not particularly favoured for development, it was generally accepted that it made some sense as it squares-off the built-up edge. However, some concerns were raised about access and how this would be achieved. |
| Sidm_32<br>(a/k/a<br>Sidm_01) | 127 dwellings and 0.27ha employment land | Sidm_32a – <b>Yes</b><br>Sidm_32b – No | The scale of development on this site would help deliver the district-wide housing requirement in a manner that is consistent with the spatial strategy. However, the area of woodland at the northern end of the site (Sidm_32b) is excluded from the proposed development although, at the Working Party meeting, 32b was highlighted as a potential 'park and change'.   |
| Sidm_35                       | 80                                       | No                                     | Development of the site would have an unacceptable landscape impact (site within the East Devon National Landscape with high intervisibility).  |

# Sites at Sidbury



| Site reference             | Number of dwellings  | Recommend allocating?                  | Succinct officer commentary – if relevant (see technical report for full assessment)  |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Sidmouth Rural Ward</b> |  |  |   |
| Sidm_34                    | Sidm_34a – 38 dwellings and 0.15ha employment land<br>Sidm_34b – No additional dwellings / employment land | Sidm_34a – <b>Yes</b><br>Sidm_34b – No | The initially proposed area has been significantly reduced due to high landscape sensitivities, as well as other ecology and heritage related constraints. Assessment suggests that access would only be feasible via the north of the site (i.e. Greenhead / Furzehill) rather than directly from the A375, so any development should be kept to this end of the site (Sidm_34b) and kept as near to the floor of the valley as possible to mitigate the visual impact. Access issues were a particular focus at the Working Party meeting, including the potential for employment uses to access from the road coming off the A375 on the Eastern boundary of the site. The site would need to secure the multi-use trail, proposed by DCC, which is proposed to aid walking and cycling through this area. It was questioned at the Working Party meeting whether it was appropriate to include any employment uses on this site. Concerns were also raised about the closure of gap and loss of separation between Sidford and Sidbury. |

# Sites at Newton Poppleford



| Site reference                               | Number of dwellings | Recommend allocating? | Succinct officer commentary – if relevant (see technical report for full assessment)   |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Newton Poppleford &amp; Harpford Ward</b> |                     |                       |  |
| Newt_01                                      | 119                 | No                    | No satisfactory pedestrian/cycle access to village centre. Negative landscape, ecological and historic environment impacts. Major development in national landscape.   |
| Newt_02                                      | 21                  | No                    | No satisfactory pedestrian/cycle access to village centre. Impacts on TPO trees and National Landscape on part of site.  |
| Newt_04                                      | 28                  | No                    | Site Newt_04 lies to the south of Newt_05. The safe in principle concerns in respect of Newt_05 apply to Newt_04. However, noting that, if a safe pedestrian access could be achieved directly from Newt_05 into the village centre then there may be scope for Newt_04 to have pedestrian links into Newt_05 and thereon to the village centre. |
| Newt_05                                      | 27                  | No                    | East Devon District Council officer concerns highlighted lack of safe pedestrian/cycle access from this site to the village centre (though it is noted in the  |

| Site reference | Number of dwellings | Recommend allocating? | Succinct officer commentary – if relevant (see technical report for full assessment)  |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|
|                |                     |                       | technical report that Devon County Council did not raise this objection). Impacts on National Landscape and Grade 2 agricultural land are also noted. There was extensive discussion at the Working Party meeting around footpath access and it was highlighted that there is understood to potentially be scope for a new footpath route connection from the north of site, going eastward, through to the centre of the village, thus avoiding the need to walk along the main road. If a safe footpath link were to be achieved this may overcome concerns around pedestrian safety. There was a view expressed at the Working Party that sites Newt_05 and 04 could be the logical next steps for the village's growth. |
| Newt_13        | 11                  | No                    | No satisfactory pedestrian/cycle access to village centre.  |
| Newt_14        | 5                   | No                    | No satisfactory pedestrian/cycle access to village centre.  |

## 5 Next steps

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

---

### Financial implications:

Officer time, reports and consultancy associated in producing this report have been covered within existing budgets. There are no other specific financial implications regarding the council's finances on which to comment.

Legal implications:

The legal implications are set out within the report (002533/September/ALW