

## East Devon Local Plan – 2021 to 2040 - Issues and Options consultation for the attention of the Planning Policy team

We would encourage you to complete the on-line response form – see:

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan/initial-consultations/>

Please only use this paper version of the questionnaire if you lack internet access. Receiving on-line submissions will help us save time and money and will mean we can be more accurate in our work.

Your Title	<input type="text"/>	First name or initial	<input type="text"/>	Surname	<input type="text"/>
Your email address		<input type="text"/>			
Your telephone number		<input type="text"/>			
Your postal address and post code		<input type="text"/>			
Organisation name (if relevant)		<input type="text"/>			
If you are an agent acting for a client please provide the name of your client		<input type="text"/>			

### Your Age Range

- 0-18
- 19-25
- 26-40
- 41-55
- 56-70
- 70 plus

In what capacity are you responding to this consultation - what most closely describes you or if you are an agent what best describes, in respect of this consultation, what your client does?

- Private individual
- Environmental body
- Government department or agency
- Local authority
- Parish or town council
- Politician
- Religious body
- Cultural group or body
- Education provider
- Amenity group
- Land owner
- Developer
- Private company
- Emergency service provide
- Utility or transport provider
- Community or resident group
- Representative of commercial organisation or business
- Other – Please specify (in the box below)

## Guidance notes

We have produced a local plan issues and options consultation document that we are consulting on from 18 January 2021 to midday on 15 March 2021. In the consultation document we include a series of questions. Please note that this questionnaire should be read alongside the full consultation document.

Please respond to this consultation event, on-line, if possible, see:

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan/initial-consultations/>

Paper copies of this completed of this questionnaire should be posted to:

Planning policy  
East Devon District Council  
Blackdown House, Border Road  
Heathpark Industrial Estate  
Honiton  
EX14 1EJ

To arrive no later than 12.00 noon on Monday 15 March 2021.

## Data Protection

Any personal information which you provide will be held and used by East Devon District Council for the purpose of local plan production. Your information may also be shared within East Devon District Council for the purposes of carrying out our lawful functions. Otherwise your personal information will not be disclosed to anybody outside East Devon District Council without your permission, unless there is a lawful reason to do so, for example disclosure is necessary for crime prevention or detection purposes. Your information will be held securely and will not be retained for any longer than is necessary. There are a number of rights available to you in relation to our use of your personal information, depending on the reason for processing. Further detail about our use of your personal information can be found in the relevant Privacy Notice which can be accessed at: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/access-to-information/data-protection/privacy-notices>

Please note that responses received will not be treated as confidential and they will be published on our council web site along with your name and if relevant the name of the organisation you represent. If you are an agent your name and organisation will be published as well as those of your client. Postal or email address will not be published unless they are embedded in documentation and cannot be readily blacked out.

### Question 1 - Local Plan Objectives

In paragraph 2.1 of the Issues and Options report we set out a series of suggested objectives for the future local plan that cover issues like climate change, meeting housing needs and supporting the economy. Question 1 seeks your views on these objectives.

**Do you think these are the right objectives for the new local plan, are there any further objectives that you would wish to see added or amendments made?**

- Yes, these are the right objectives
- No, there are further objectives or amendments I would like to add

**Please give details**

### Question 2 – The scope of the local plan

In paragraph 2.2 of the Issues and Options report we propose producing a single plan, but it would be possible to produce a series of plans to cover the different issues. Do you think we should?

**Which option do you think we should take?**

- Option 1 - Single Plan.** Produce a single local plan covering all policy matters
- Option 2 - Multiple Plans.** Produce a plan that deals with strategic matters (the bigger stuff) first and then subsequent plans that deal with more local concerns and detailed matters later
- Option 3 - Other.** Do an alternative or neither of the above

**Please provide any further comments in the box below**

### Question 3 - Neighbourhood Plans and the new Local Plan

Neighbourhood plans have been agreed for many of our neighbourhoods and more are in preparation. In paragraph 2.11 of the Issues and Options report we explain the role of neighbourhood and their relationship with the local plan.

**How do you think we should make best use of existing neighbourhood plans to inform the new local plan that we are producing?**

#### Question 4 - Planning for health and wellbeing

In Chapter 3 of the Issues and Options report we set out the health and wellbeing benefits of active lifestyles and the ways in which planning can promote this.

**How important do you think it is that we should actively promote health and wellbeing throughout our new local plan?**

- Absolutely essential
- Very important
- Quite important
- Of limited importance
- Not important at all

**Please provide comments below on any health and planning matters you consider to be particularly important**

#### Question 5 - Energy efficiency of new buildings

In paragraph 4.4 of the Issues and Options report we identify ways of reducing carbon emissions from new developments, including setting higher energy efficiency standards for new buildings. Do you think we should?

**Do you think we should**

- Option 1 - Plan for net-zero carbon from plan adoption.** This would require all new development to be net-zero carbon upon adoption of the plan. However, it would be at a cost and as a consequence we may see less affordable housing built and maybe fewer other social and community benefits from development
- Option 2 - Plan for net-zero carbon from a future date.** This would require all new development to achieve net zero carbon from a future date in the plan process. It could allow time for the development industry to adjust to the higher standards and may mean we can secure more affordable housing and community benefits from development
- Option 3 - Do neither of the above and not have a policy.** Under this option we could just wait for and apply any Government policy

**Please provide any further comments**

### Question 6 - Provision of solar arrays/farms and windfarms

Paragraphs 4.5 to 4.7 of the Issues and Options report deals with maximising energy from renewable sources. Question 6 seeks your views on what level of support we should give.

#### Which option do you think we should take?

- Option 1 - Identify suitable areas for renewable energy developments
- Option 2 - Not identify areas but offer general support
- Option 3 - Take a restrictive approach to renewables
- Option 4 - None of these options

#### Please provide any further comments on wind farms and solar arrays/panels

### Question 7 - Carbon saving measures

Paragraph 4.8 of the Issues and Options report sets out seven policy objectives for helping to achieve carbon neutrality including using 'waste heat', and promoting community led renewable energy schemes.

#### Do you think we have identified the appropriate carbon saving and related policy matters to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other policy areas that you think we should be considering?

- Yes, the appropriate carbon saving policy matters have been addressed
- No, there are other policy areas that should be considered

#### Please give details

### Question 8 - How many new homes should we plan for each year?

In Chapter 5 of the Issues and Options report we set out the current Government requirement for us to build at least 928 new homes a year (although this figure can change). Paragraph 5.4 explains that we would need to almost double the number of affordable homes (to 461 every year for the next 20 years) to meet current and future needs. Do you think we should?

#### Which option do you think we should take?

- Option 1 - Plan for an average of at least 928 new homes being built each year** – This would accommodate levels of house building that accord with current Government requirements. It may mean, however, that we fall a long way short of meeting all affordable housing needs.
- Option 2 - Plan for a greater number of homes, for example 1,200** – this may meet more of the affordable housing need but not all of it.
- Option 3 - Plan to build considerably more homes each year** - A figure of 1,614 homes would align with Governments previous thinking and would potentially result in all affordable housing needs being met.
- Option 4** - Select option 4 if you think none of the above are appropriate

Please provide any further comments and justification in the box below, especially if you think a different number of new homes being built each year is appropriate.

### Question 9 - Sites for small scale housing developments

Paragraphs 5.5 to 5.7 of the Issues and Options report sets out Government policy that at least 10% of new homes should be built on smaller sites (below 1 hectare). This provides more opportunities for smaller, local businesses and is more likely to reflect local character than mass produced homes. Do you think we should?

#### Which option do you think we should take?

- Option 1 - Allocate or identify land for around 10% of homes to be on small sites** - this approach would meet minimum government standards.
- Option 2 - Allocate or identify land for around 11% to 25% of homes to be on small sites** - this approach would be higher than Government minimum standards.
- Option 3 - Allocate or identify land for 26% to 50% of homes to be on small sites** - this approach would be substantially higher than Government minimum standards.
- Option 4** - Allocate or identify land for 51% or more of homes to be on small sites - with such a high figure this approach could fundamentally change the nature of house building in East Devon.
- Option 5 - None of the above or an alternative**

Please provide any further comments in the box below

### Question 10 - Planning for housing for people at all stages of their life

Paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9 of the Issues and Options report sets out the reasons for building a range of homes that can accommodate different circumstances. What approach should we take to encourage this, or is it not something the local plan should deal with?

#### Which option do you think we should take?

- Option 1 - We should explicitly require housing provision for people at all stages of life.** This approach could place demanding standards on developers to provide housing for all stages of people lives. It could though reduce monies available to pay for other wider community benefits from development.
- Option 2 - We should encourage but not require housing provision for people at all stages of life.** Under this approach we could encourage and support such housing but be less demanding on specific standards to be met.
- Option 3 - Not set standards for differing types of housing provision.** This approach would leave developers to determining the types of houses that should be built rather than policy seeking to require specific outcomes
- Option 4 - None of the above or an alternative**

Please provide any further comments in the box below on how we may best plan for housing for all.

### Question 11 - Additional housing policy objectives

Paragraph 5.10 of the Issues and Options report identifies nine additional housing policy objectives, including encouraging more self-build homes, allocating sites for retirement housing and setting minimum space standards for new homes.

**Do you think these are appropriate housing policy areas to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?**

- Yes, these are appropriate housing policy areas to be addressed
- No, there are other major policy areas that should be addressed

Please give details

**Question 12 - Preference for location for future job provision**

Paragraphs 6.4 to 6.7 of the Issues and Options report explains why much recent employment development has occurred near to Exeter and where future job growth would best be located. We set out below a number of differing potential areas in East Devon that could accommodate future job growth and development. Please indicate your in principle levels of support for each option

<b>12a - Continued focus on big employment sites in the West End of the District</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>12b - Encouraging greater business development in other areas close to Exeter (for example expanding Greendale and Hill Barton Business Parks)</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>12c - Encouraging greater business development at and within the main towns of East Devon</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>12d - Encouraging business expansion and development in the villages and across the countryside of East Devon</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>12e - Encourage and enable more home working</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>If you have any comments on the above or alternative options please set these out below.</b>	

### Question 13 - Differing jobs sectors in East Devon

Paragraphs 6.8 to 6.10 of the Issues and Options report discuss what sort of jobs the local plan should encourage, including the opportunities to attract new and emerging sectors with highly skilled jobs. To what degree do you support, or not, the following approaches to future jobs or differing types of jobs?

<b>13a - More jobs overall – with an emphasis on attracting new/larger employers and inward investment in any or all sectors</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
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<b>13b - More high technology jobs - focussing on high technology and high skilled jobs (including in the transformational sectors).</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
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<b>13c - Local Entrepreneurs – promoting opportunities for more home/locally based/small businesses.</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
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<b>13d - Traditional Sectors - Focus on growth, resilience and diversification in our traditional sectors - such as agriculture, tourism and care</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
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**If you have any comments on the above or alternative options please set these out below.**

**Question 14 - Additional economic policy objectives**

Paragraph 6.11 of the Issues and Options report identifies six areas where policies could be developed to help support the economy. These include promoting jobs close to where people live, encouraging people to patronise local businesses, supporting shared workspaces, allocating additional employment sites and links between economic development and developing a greener economy.

**Do you think these are appropriate economic policy areas to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?**

- Yes, these are the appropriate economic policy areas
- No, I think there are other policy areas that should be addressed

**Please give details**

**Question 15 - Town centre uses**

Chapter 7 of the Issues and Options report considers options for the roles of our town centres. Question 15 seeks your views on these options. We set out below a number of differing potential uses and approaches to promoting town centre vitality and activity. Please indicate your in principle levels of support for each potential option or approach.

<b>15a - Retail to dominate – support retail uses in town centres and if possible resist other uses.</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>15b - Promote mixed commercial uses - support retail as well as other commercial uses such as café's and offices</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>15c - Redefine town centres to smaller core areas – concentration on retail and commercial uses in the core and allowing much greater flexibility for other uses in peripheral areas</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>15d - Support change of use to housing – allow for any shops or commercial premises to be converted to housing</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>15e - Support community uses - promote more community spaces in town centres</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose
<b>15f - Leisure uses – promote new gyms and sports facilities in town centres.</b>	<input type="radio"/> Strongly support <input type="radio"/> Support <input type="radio"/> Neither oppose nor support <input type="radio"/> Oppose <input type="radio"/> Strongly oppose

**If you have any comments on the above or other distribution matters please set these out below**

### Question 16 - Additional town centre policy objectives

Paragraph 7.6 of the Issues and Options report identifies three additional area where policies may be appropriate including the use of vacant stories over shops, resisting 'out of town' uses to support town centres and producing town centre masterplans to identify key areas for improvement.

**Do you think these are appropriate retail and town centre policy areas to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?**

- Yes, these are appropriate policy areas
- No, there are other major policy areas that should be addressed

**Please give details**

### Question 17 - Designing beautiful spaces and buildings

Chapter 8 of the Issues and Options report explains how attractive places can be planned and Question 17 seeks to find out how important you think it is that this is done.

**How important do you think it is that we should actively plan to create beautiful spaces and buildings?**

- Absolutely essential
- Very important
- Quite important
- Of limited importance
- Not important at all

**Please provide comments below on design matters you consider to be particularly important. We would be especially interested in your views on whether we should include design codes in our future local plan for each allocated development site or whether we should make it simpler and just have general guidance.**

### Question 18 - Additional design policy objectives

Paragraph 8.8 of the Issues and Options report identifies two areas with the potential for additional policy work. These are encouraging innovative designs and incorporating wildlife friendly elements into developments.

**Do you think these are appropriate design policy areas to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?**

- Yes, these are appropriate housing policy areas
- No, there are other major policy areas that should be addressed

**Please give details**

### Question 19 - The importance of conserving and enhancing heritage assets

Chapter 9 of the Issues and Options describes our heritage assets and sets out the positive impacts they can have on our quality of life and local economies.

**Through a new local plan (and in the work of the council more generally) how important do you think it is that we should conserve and enhance our heritage assets?**

- Absolutely essential
- Very important
- Quite important
- Not really of any importance

**Please provide any further comments on heritage asset conservation and enhancement below including on any specific matters you think a new local plan should address.**

### Question 20 - Development in protected landscapes

Paragraphs 10.3 & 10.4 of the Issues and Options report sets out the importance of protecting our protected landscapes and the potential limitations this may place on how much and where development should be placed. Question 20 seeks views on the levels of restriction you favour.

**In considering whether we should allow for development in protected landscapes do you think**

- Option 1 - Place significant restrictions on development.** This approach would apply very tight constraints on development. However, it could mean more development pressure elsewhere in East Devon.
- Option 2 - Allow for development to meet local needs.** This would allow for limited development, specifically where it will meet smaller scale local social, housing or economic needs, it could still mean more development pressure elsewhere in East Devon.
- Option 3 - Allow for greater levels of development.** This approach would allow for much more development in protected landscapes, in so doing it could however reduce the need to build elsewhere.
- Option 4 - None of the above or an alternative**

**Please provide any further comments in the box below**

### Question 21 - Net gains in biodiversity

Paragraphs 10.5 to 10.7 of the Issues and Options report explains the new approach of quantifying the potential impact of development on biodiversity to inform planning decisions and ensure that there is a 'net gain'. Question 21 seeks views on the approach you would favour to gain biodiversity improvements.

**In order to gain biodiversity improvements which option would you prefer?**

- Option 1 - On-site provision**
- Option 2 - Secure the habitats locally**
- Option 3 - Pay a cash tariff towards a strategic delivery scheme**
- Option 4 - A combination of the above**
- Option 5 - None of the above or an alternative**

**Please provide any further comments in the box below**

### Question 22 - Additional natural environment policy objectives

Paragraph 10.8 of the Issues and Options report identifies 10 additional themes for the natural environment that may benefit from policies in the local plan.

**Do you think these are appropriate natural environment policy issues to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?**

- Yes, these are the appropriate natural environment policy issues
- No, there are other major policy areas that should be addressed

Please give details

### Question 23 - Promoting accessibility by walking and cycling

Chapter 11 of the Issues and Options report sets out the issues for promoting sustainable transport. Question 23 seeks your views on how important you think it is that new development is sited so that it is within walking distance of services and facilities.

**In order to promote walking and cycling and ensure that facilities are accessible we could adopt the possible approaches detailed below, which one would you favour?**

- Option 1 - Focus new development as small clusters of growth in locations within easy walking or cycling distance of existing services and facilities** - This will limit the potential location of new development and will require existing facilities and services to have the capacity to cope with extra customers/users
- Option 2 - Focus new development on a small number of growth areas where the large scale of development will support the delivery of new accessible services and facilities** - This may require very high levels of development to support facilities, which may overwhelm a small settlement.
- Option 3 - A combination of options 1 and 2** – This will enable some growth where existing facilities and services are accessible and have capacity with the remainder focused on growth areas to be developed with new services and facilities.
- Option 4 - Do not require facilities and services to be within walking or cycling distance of new development but require them to be available within the settlement** - This option would not require access by foot or cycle to facilities and services but would require them to be available locally. It may however encourage car use.
- Option 5 - None of the above** - Perhaps you think that accessibility by walking or cycling is not a relevant concern?

Please provide any further comments in the box below

**Question 24 - Additional sustainable transport policy objectives**

Paragraph 11.7 of the Issues and Options report identifies 13 key issues that may need to be considered around the theme of sustainable transport.

**Do you think these are appropriate sustainable transport policy areas to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?**

- Yes, these are appropriate sustainable transport policy areas
- No, there are other major policy areas that should be addressed

**Please give details**

**Question 25 - Facilities and services that are important**

Chapter 12 of the Issues and Options report deals with infrastructure requirements and asks what facilities are important to people to help us prioritise what may be needed and where. Please score the services and facilities listed below in accordance with their importance to where you live or would want to live

Please score the services and facilities listed below in accordance with their Importance to where you live or would want to live?	Please tick one box only for each item			
	Essential	Very Important	Quite Important	Of little Importance
Convenience store/Post Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supermarket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare and nursery school provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children’s play area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports & leisure facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health care facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Easy access to a range of jobs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular bus service (5 plus per day)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Train station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paths for walking and cycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to full fibre broadband	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Place of worship (e.g. a church)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High quality road links	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency services (police, fire, ambulance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community hall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have any other comments or would identify other facilities please set these out below.

### Question 26 - Additional infrastructure and service provision policy objectives

Paragraph 12.9 of the Issues and Options report identifies five other infrastructure and service policy objectives.

**Do you think these are appropriate infrastructure and service provision policy areas to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other major policy areas that you think we should be addressing?**

- Yes, these are appropriate policy areas to be addressed
- No, there are other major policy areas that should be addressed

**Please give details**

### Question 27 - Retaining and refining the existing settlement hierarchy

Chapter 13 of the Issues and Options report considers strategic options for the distribution of new development expressed in terms of a settlement hierarchy. Question 27 seeks your views on what your preferred pattern of development would be.

**Which of the following options do you prefer for a potential settlement hierarchy?**

- Option 1** - Same hierarchy as current local plan: 7 Towns plus Cranbrook and the 15 Villages
- Option 2** - A hierarchy that retains the towns and Cranbrook but has a lower number of villages that may accommodate development
- Option 3** - A hierarchy that retains towns and Cranbrook but has a higher number of villages that may accommodate development
- Option 4** - Do something different in terms of a hierarchy or not have one

**Please provide any comments below on the potential hierarchy, especially if you do not support the listed options.**

### Question 28 - Broad distribution of housing development

Paragraphs 13.12 to 13.14 of the Issues and Options report considers the strategic spatial options for accommodating housing growth. Question 28 asks which broad approach to the distribution of housing development you favour.

#### Which broad approach to the distribution of housing development would you favour in a new local plan?

- Option 1 - As existing.** Continue with a distribution pattern of planned new development that is in line with the current local plan – for 60% of new homes at the West End, 30% in Towns and 10% in Villages and rural areas
- Option 2 - More West End focused.** This approach would focus more of the future new house building close to Exeter, perhaps as much as 75%, with the remaining 25% being in town and villages (for example 20% in towns and 5% in villages).
- Option 3 - A less West End focused pattern.** This approach would seek to accommodate far less development close to Exeter, maybe as little as 20% of future new homes, with the bulk of new housing, 80% of provision, being dispersed across towns and villages (for example 50% in towns and 30% in villages and rural areas).
- Option 4 - An alternative to the above.** You may consider that there are different ways or approaches to look at development distribution (if so we would welcome your thoughts and comments)

Please provide any comments on the above in the space below

**Question 29 - Future options for the type and location of development**

Paragraphs 13.15 & 13.16 of the Issues and Options report sets out a range of option for accommodating development. Which do you prefer?

How do you feel about the development types and locations listed below	For each option please tick one box only					
	Strongly support	Support	Neither oppose or support	Oppose	Strongly oppose	None of the options
Infilling in towns and at larger villages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building one or more additional new towns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning for new villages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
large scale (over 50 home)urban expansions to existing towns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
small scale (under 50 home) urban expansions to towns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building houses on the edges of East Devon villages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any further observations on the alternative development options and approaches? Please provide comments below						

### Question 30 - Establishment of a Development Corporation

Paragraphs 13.17 to 13.19 of the Issues and Options report explain the role that a development corporation could plan in delivering very large scale developments. Question 30 asks for view on how important you consider this would be.

**If one or more big strategic sites for housing or mixed use development are allocated in the new East Devon local plan how important do you think the creation of a Development Corporation would be?**

- Absolutely essential
- Very important
- Quite important
- Of limited importance
- Not important at all
- It would be a bad thing

**Please provide any further comments below**

### Question 31 - Planning for development beyond 2040

Paragraph 13.20 of the Issues and Options report considers the timeframe that the local plan should consider.

**Do you consider that it would be appropriate to start to plan for development in East Devon for a date well beyond 2040 in this Local Plan?**

- Yes it would be very sensible whether a new town is proposed or not
- Sensible only if a new town is proposed
- It does not really matter what end date is set
- It would be undesirable and the end date should be 2040
- None of these options

**Please provide any further comments below**

**Question 32 - And finally...?**

**Are there any big planning issues that you think we have missed in this report or are there any further comments you would like to make?**

**REPRESENTATIONS TO THE EAST DEVON  
LOCAL PLAN 2021 TO 2040  
ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION  
JANUARY 2021 (REGULATION 18)**

**ON BEHALF GREATWORTH PROPERTIES  
LTD**

**March 2021**



**REPRESENTATIONS TO THE EAST DEVON LOCAL PLAN 2021 TO  
2040  
ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION  
JANUARY 2021 (REGULATION 18)**

**ON BEHALF GREATWORTH PROPERTIES LTD**

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Ref: 559/A3/MJK  
Date: 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021

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## 1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On behalf of Greatworth Property Managers, Grass Roots Planning are instructed to lodge representations to East Devon's Local Plan 'Issues and Options' (Reg. 18) (LPIO) consultation which sets out the Council's initial ideas in respect to its emerging plan, which will supersede the current Local Plan that was adopted in January 2016.
- 1.2 Greatworth have land interests across the South West of England but our representations, in addition to commenting on strategic planning issues, also promote a site for development on the northern edge of Axminster. This site is also submitted as part of the 'Call for Sites' process.
- 1.3 We consider that the new plan should be focused on determining a housing requirement for East Devon's that goes as close as possible to addressing the area's full affordable housing need, which is considerable given the rapidly rising house prices that have affected the area for some time.
- 1.4 We acknowledge that this is likely to result in a significant step change in housing delivery for the area but we consider it is essential that this approach is taken, and we are heartened that the Council are looking at more challenging housing targets as options rather than simply taking the baseline requirements that the Government's Standard Method (SM) provides.
- 1.5 Development does not have to be viewed negatively and we genuinely believe that with a positive attitude, increased housing delivery in the area can be an economic catalyst that provides the local economy with a much-needed boost after the COVID19 related recession, while also addressing the acute housing poverty that affects many residents of the area.
- 1.6 The housing crisis, and the need to deliver 300,000+ homes per year to address it, is becoming more and more prevalent in the national imagination, with even the Church of England in the recent publication of a report on the issue, recognising the significant problem that rapidly rising house prices and the insufficient supply of housing is having on the country and wider society in general – particularly in how this is leading to increased inequalities.
- 1.7 As part of meeting these more challenging housing requirements the council should be focusing on sustainable towns that offer the ability to harness sustainable patterns of travel, such as Axminster, and identifying land that is less constrained in terms of landscape and environmental quality (by avoiding development in the AONB as much as possible for example).

- 1.8 Axminster offers the everyday facilities, jobs and excellent public transport links that mean it can be a significant focus for growth on the eastern part of the district and we consider that Greatworth's land holdings on the existing urban fringe of the town, consisting of land west of Chard Road, offers an excellent opportunity to deliver circa 150 dwellings in a highly sustainable location that is not constrained in terms of sensitive land designations.
- 1.9 The site is identified at appendix A of these representations.
- 1.10 The site can also provide the ability to deliver the first spur of the eastern bypass that has long been planned in the area, and which forms part of the previous Local Plan, to come to fruition.
- 1.11 In terms of how this document is structured we have sought to answer some of the council's specific questions that apply to each subject heading, within those sections where relevant, and provide a later section that responds to other questions we wish to make representations to at the end. As always with such submissions the document needs to be read as a whole and our responses viewed in that context.

## 2.0 THE PLAN'S OBJECTIVES

*Question 1 - Local Plan Objectives: Do you think these are the right objectives for the new local plan, are there any further objectives that you would wish to see added or amendments made?*

2.1 Having reviewed the objectives that the LPIO document defines, we are encouraged that the council is seeking to place sustainability, and in particular the reduction in carbon emissions, at the heart of the emerging Plan.

2.2 We also support objective 3 as the delivery of housing is a key aspect of the planning process and rapidly rising house prices, which are particularly acute in East Devon, undermine the delivery of many of the other objectives.

2.3 While we are generally supportive of the identified objectives, we would like to raise the following and ask the council to consider making changes to the plan to address these:

- In respect of objective 3 we would suggest that it should be reworded to make it clear that the aim is to meet people's current and future housing needs, because many people are already in need of a home, either by being priced out of the market or in more acute housing need that requires immediate social rental provision; and
- Any future section of the Draft version of the Local Plan that sets out these objectives needs to make it clear that decision making often cannot address all aims at once, and often priority will need to be given to certain objectives. For example, meeting the district's challenging housing needs may require green field sites to be used, which may be seen as a conflict with objective 8.

2.4 It is also clear to us from the stated objectives that the council may need to rethink its historic trend towards the provision of new settlements, such as Cranbrook, and should instead look to development that supports the existing towns of the District (thereby supporting their town centres with increased footfall and locating residents where there are jobs and services already in place). We consider that such an appropriate location would be Axminster as it offers a range of jobs, everyday shops, services and facilities and a wide range of public transport links.

### 3.0 **THE SCOPE OF THE LOCAL PLAN**

#### Question 2 – The scope of the local plan

*Do you think we should?*

- *Option 1- Single Plan - Produce a single local plan covering all policy matters?*
- *Option 2 – Multiple Plans - Produce a plan that deals with strategic matters (the bigger stuff) first and then subsequent plans that deal with more local concerns and detailed matters later?*
- *Option 3 – Other*

3.1 In our professional experience and opinion, the Council would be best served by preparing a single Local Plan Document and therefore agree with the council's indication that it is their preference to proceed on that basis.

3.2 The issue that often arises with the preparation of separate plan documents is that the time that elapses between their preparation is often significant (often many years between one parts adoption and then final preparation of the next,) by which time planning policy at a national level has changed and evidence and circumstances that underpinned the first part is out of date. A single plan for an area the size of east Devon is far more appropriate and avoids such issues.

3.3 Strategic Plans are more appropriate for larger regions, or sub-regions, such as the Greater Exeter Area. A strategic plan was envisioned – the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP) – but EDDC decided to withdraw from this process citing a concern (amongst others) about the delays that could occur to the adoption of a new Local Plan (which was intended to dovetail the GESP) if agreement couldn't be reached by the authorities on certain strategic issues within the GESP. Given the withdrawal from the strategic plan it would be inappropriate to then seek to undertake a strategic plan from the East Devon area alone as a similar issue could occur.

3.4 The main strategic issue that applies to the GESP area is the issue of Exeter's potential unmet housing need which arises from the constraints that apply to the city and its tightly defined administrative boundary. This issue could however be fairly easily addressed and resolved by EDDC forming a working group with Exeter, Teignbridge and Mid Devon to define the amount of overspill housing need that cannot be accommodated in Exeter, which the City requires help from the surrounding authorities in addressing.

- 3.5 We would however urge EDDC to undertake this joint working as soon as possible because a lack of robust assessment on this subject often leads to the failure of plans. The Tonbridge/Sevenoaks for example, the soundness of which was considered by the High Court who agreed that lack of joint working rendered Tonbridge's plan unsound, highlights the significant risks that need to be avoided.
- 3.6 We hope that the reference made at para 2.8 of the LPIO document to a shorter informal plan with the neighbouring authorities will be the mechanism via which cross boundary strategic issues, such as overspill housing need, will be addressed at an early stage in the process.
- 3.7 In conclusion the council would be best served by preparing a single plan that sets the housing and employment land requirements for the EDDC area and defines the exact sites that will meet this need.

## 4.0 THE NEED FOR HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND GROWTH

### Housing

4.1 In the first part of this section, we will address the following specific question posed by the council:

*Question 8 - How many new homes should we plan for each year? Which option do you think we should take?*

- *Option 1- plan for an average of at least 928 new homes being built each year – This would accommodate levels of house building that accord with current Government requirements. It may mean, however, that we fall a long way short of meeting all affordable housing needs. Option 2 - plan for a greater number of homes, for example 1,200 – this may meet more of the affordable housing need but not all of it.*
- *Option 3 - Plan to build considerably more homes each year - A figure of 1,614 homes would align with Governments previous thinking and would potentially result in all affordable housing needs being met.*
- *Option 4 –none of the above are appropriate.*

4.2 Firstly, we are encouraged by the fact that the council seems open to considering a housing requirement that is higher than that which is established by the Standard Method. This is to be commended as many authorities simply try to find reasons why the SM figure is set in stone, when in fact other factors have to be taken into account as directed by the NPPF, including demographic trends, economic factors, market signals and unmet need in neighbouring authorities.

4.3 In August 2020 the Government consulted on changes to the standard method at the end of 2020. This proposed that East Devon’s housing requirements be substantially increased in response to the methodology proposed at that time (1,614 dwellings per annum).

4.4 While the Government has chosen to progress more modest changes to the standard method, and the previously proposed uplift was a challenging and substantial change from past build rates, the reason such an uplift was being contemplated needs to be further considered when answering the question regarding housing needs and requirements.

4.5 The Standard Method figures are summarised in table 1 below. This compares them to previously established requirements in the adopted Local Plan, previous delivery and the proposed housing requirement suggested in the August 2020 consultation.

<b>Adopted Local Plan Requirement</b>	<b>Average Delivery over last 3 years</b>	<b>Standard Method 2017</b>	<b>August 2020 Changes</b>	<b>Standard Method 2021</b>
950	956	928	1,614	928

*Table 1. Summary of Standard Method Position*

4.6 A cornerstone of the SM is a measure of the affordability of housing relative to average wages in a particular area. In East Devon the ratio between average earnings and average house prices is extremely high (a ratio of 10.57 according to the latest ONS figures (March 2019)) and that is why the last consultation proposed one of the largest proportional uplifts in the South West (a 74% increase). This factor is a clear market signal that housing delivery needs to increase in the area. The NPPPF states at various points that Market Signals are a relative material consideration that must be taken into account when preparing and reviewing plans, with paragraph 60 specifically stating:

*To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.*

4.7 Therefore, in answering the Council’s specific question on this matter, while the SM figure of 928 should be seen as the minimum potential requirement, it is just the starting point and a range of other factors will need to be considered to decide whether an uplift to this minimum figure is required, including:

- Whether demographic change will drive housing need upwards (i.e. via an ageing population leading to more single occupancy households due to partner’s death, need for immigration to provide more workers in EDDC to compensate for an increased proportion of retirees etc.);
- Market signals relating to the affordability of housing within EDDC, particularly in respect to first time buyers;
- Affordable Housing Needs and how they will be met; and
- Unmet need from neighbouring authorities.

4.8 After further analysis by the council these factors are almost certainly going to point to the need for an increased housing requirement substantially above the 928 minimum. One of the key influencing factors will be how EDDC's identified level of affordable housing need will be met, and given the options put forward by the council are clearly alive to this issue.

4.9 As the consultation question outlines, only a housing requirement broadly in line with the August 2020 SM consultation would potentially result in all of the council's identified affordable housing needs being met.

4.10 The October 2020 'East Devon Local Housing Needs Assessment' report undertaken by Opinion Research Services (ORS) identified that there would be a requirement of circa 461 affordable homes each year (a total of 9,220 over the 20-year period) – an extract of this table is shown below in figure 1:

Figure 2: Assessing total need for market and affordable housing (Source: ORS Housing Model)

	Affordable Housing Need		Overall Affordable Housing Need
	Households unable to afford	Households aspiring to home ownership	
Current housing need in 2020	850	3,706	4,556
Future housing need 2020-40	1,920	2,743	4,663
<b>TOTAL HOUSING NEED</b>	<b>2,770</b>	<b>6,450</b>	<b>9,220</b>

Figure 1. Extract of ORS report showing total affordable housing need.

4.11 As the LPIO document does not go into further detail regarding how the higher figure of 1,614 dwellings per annum would deliver all of the above AH requirement, we have assumed that the Council would be opting for a circa 30% affordable housing requirement on individual sites (1,614 x 20 = 32,280 dwellings over the plan period, equating to circa 9,684 affordable homes being delivered (assuming some allowance for viability cases on brownfield sites)).

4.12 While a step change from 928 to 1,614 dwellings per annum would be challenging, we consider that the council needs to investigate how such a figure might be accommodated in sustainable locations, it can only then really determine which housing requirement it should pursue. However, the higher figure would potentially deliver the total affordable housing need, which includes all of those who are aspiring to own their own home that are currently in the private rented market; a key concern raised by members when they withdrew from the GESP was that they considered insufficient consideration had been given to the needs of First Time Buyers. If the Council is therefore serious about resolving this issue as they indicated when they withdrew from the GESP, increasing housing numbers to allow a greater level of shared ownership properties to come forward would be an appropriate solution.

- 4.13 In summary, we consider that meeting affordable housing needs and establishing at an early stage how much unmet need from Exeter needs to be accommodated in EDDC must be the priority for the council before work on a draft plan is undertaken. Therefore, the initial housing target the council should be exploring should be 1,614 dwellings per annum. Taking a positive and aspirational approach to housing delivery will also have the benefit of providing the council with the flexibility to address unmet housing needs arising from Exeter, once this is determined, which as previously set out should also be an early priority for the council.
- 4.14 The assessment of how this level of housing growth would be accommodated should be subject of detailed work now, to establish a clear baseline from which to progress a more detailed plan and establish if 1,614 dwellings per annum is possible. It may be that constraints such as AONB and other sensitive designations preclude the council from meeting these ambitious targets, which might then lead to the identification of a more realistic and deliverable figure of between 1,200 and 1,614, but until baseline work to assess potential sites is undertaken, which should utilise an updated SHLAA as a starting point, setting an arbitrary housing requirement now will be bound to fail.

#### *Small Sites*

- 4.15 The government has also placed a minimum requirement that plans should accommodate 10% of their housing supply on small sites of less than a hectare in recognition of the role they play in housing delivery across the UK. However, in rural areas small sites play an even more important role in housing delivery, as many villages do not have the facilities to accommodate major/strategic scale developments but still need smaller quantum of growth to support their long-term viability (i.e. to sustain shops and schools, for example).
- 4.16 Given the rural nature of much of the District, and the number of smaller villages it includes, we consider it is right to plan for a higher proportion of small sites than the 10% required by paragraph 68 of the NPPF. We would suggest a figure of between 26%-50% of the Council's overall supply would be appropriate in this context and falls within the sort of parameters that have been delivered on windfalls sites in recent years in EDDC – with the Council's 2020 AMR identifying that 36.7% of net completions had been delivered via windfalls over the March 2019 – March 2020 period.
- 4.17 Balanced against this is the need for the plan to be deliverable and realistic, and sites at the very lowest end of the scale (sub-10 dwellings) have normally already been developed through infill and rounding off proposals associated with settlement boundaries established some time ago and have proceeded under adopted policies. Therefore, at this scale, where

sites are difficult to identify due to their size, we would suggest that this part of the housing supply should not be accounted for as it will fall within the windfall allowance. As such, including such small sites, and also factoring in a windfall allowance in addition, will lead to issues with double counting. This approach then also allows for the windfall allowance to be realistic to ensure that housing supply is boosted beyond minimum levels if unexpected sites come forward.

4.18 In terms of other small sites which are 1ha or less in size but above 10 units, we would strongly advocate that these must be identified as specific sites in the Local Plan. This will give the development industry certainty regarding which sites to select (which is particularly important for smaller housebuilders who don't have the funds to pursue speculative development sites) and also ensure the plan is robust and deliverable, being based on actual development opportunities rather than an indicative supply of land with no real direction on where this might come from or be located. This task should be immediately possible for the council given that it has a SHLAA which identifies such sites, which will be updated to reflect the submissions made via the Call for Sites linked to this consultation.

4.19 Therefore, in respect to Question 9 of the consultation document we strongly agree with option 3, subject to all sites of over 10 units being specifically allocated in the plan to provide certainty to the development industry and ensure the plan, and the housing land supply it contains, is deliverable.

#### *Housing for All Stages of Life*

4.20 The Council rightly identify the need to provide housing that caters for people's varying needs throughout their lifetime and that may include specific mobility and caring requirements. However, we do not agree with being too prescriptive on this issue.

4.21 The reason for this is that the SHMA will identify the mix of housing that should be delivered in an area, and that document should be used as a basis for discussion with developers in respect to the mix of housing that they bring forward on their sites. However, this needs to be applied with flexibility to allow for certain circumstances to be reacted to appropriately - for example, you might not want to locate dwellings for people with certain mobility impairments at the upper end of acceptable walking distances from shops and services, and smaller 'downsizing' apartments for older generations might be best located in town centres where car usage is not required.

- 4.22 We live in a market-led economy and if the market demand for apartments that are suitable for downsizing increases, developers will deliver these in response. Micromanaging this process through the planning system is simply not appropriate and will lead to certain units being forced on sites that cannot sell for commercial values. This will undermine deliverability and the viability of many sites.
- 4.23 In terms of very specific requirements, such as open market wheelchair suitable dwellings for example, stipulating a percentage of a site to accommodate such units would be inappropriate as this need applies to a very small proportion of the population and it is impossible for the planning system to correctly deliver such specific units in an area that definitely has that very specific demand. This matter is often dealt with by Registered Providers who do have such data about individual needs and these units can, and are, be delivered in respect to the affordable elements of schemes.
- 4.24 Therefore, in response to question 10 we consider option 3 is most suitable and developers should not be given prescribed standards, other than to provide a mix that responds to the needs evidenced in the relevant SHMA and/or housing mix policy.

#### *Other Objectives*

- 4.25 Question 11 asks if we consider there to be other housing issues addressed in the plan. Our only other comments on this subject area relate to self and custom build housing.
- 4.26 Such housing is being sought as a proportion of dwellings on larger sites now; this has been a policy approach for the last 2-3 years in much of the UK and our recent experience of it, and that of our housebuilder clients, is that its far from an ideal approach.
- 4.27 Demand for such plots within the wider context of a housing development delivered by a developer is often extremely limited because self-builders want to be building their 'dream' homes on smaller, more contained sites or on one-off plots. The developers themselves also have difficulties associated with the fact that self-build projects often take years to complete so they are left to sell adjacent plots in the context of a building site that has no fixed completion date, which adversely affects sales and values. There is also added complexities associated with Health & Safety (for self-builders using construction haulage routes) and bringing services to a plot with an uncertain completion date.
- 4.28 Self-build and custom plots are obviously in demand in certain contexts, and they offer a further diversified supply that can assist in achieving the government's aim of delivering over

300,000 homes a year across the UK. However, we consider that a more innovative and appropriate solution to delivering such housing would be for the new Local Plan to introduce an exceptions policy (like affordable housing exceptions policy) that allows for small self-build schemes outside, but adjacent to, settlement boundaries to come forward positively. This will provide an incentive for promoters to pursue such schemes in locations more suitable for this type of demand, whilst also allowing larger housing schemes to proceed without the commercial constraints of providing these units mixed into a 'normal' development scheme.

### **Employment Land**

4.29 Key to the success of the EDDC area will be the continued provision of jobs and support to existing business. The key issues to consider when determining the strategy for the provision of employment land are in our view:

- Consider how working from home will affect future working practices and travel patterns;
- Providing land where businesses want to locate, which is often where there is good road access for deliveries and sustainable transport links for staff;
- Regenerating older employment sites that are no longer fit for purpose; and
- Supporting existing businesses by increasing footfall to them and hence demand for the products and services they sell/provide. This is particularly important in light of the COVID19 pandemic and associated recession where existing town centres in particular need as much support and regeneration as possible.

4.30 The council's question regarding this matter (Q12) sets out a range of locations that could accommodate job growth and development in EDDC asking if respondents oppose or support these suggestions. We support all of the development options put forward and would advocate that a blend of all of them is required to make the plan successful – for example, home working should be encouraged, villages provided with small scale employment opportunities, the City of Exeter supported with large scale strategic employment provision on its fringes but most importantly the existing towns of the District provided with suitable land to accommodate employment growth to increase their self-containment and sustain their roles.

4.31 In respect to Axminster, we would suggest that the most appropriate location for employment growth would be on the south side of the town in close proximity to the A35 to give businesses easy access to the strategic road network.

- 4.32 We would also outline that in terms of sustaining existing businesses and centres, such as Axminster, new housing should play an important role in supporting these and providing them with increased footfall to allow them to survive and bounce back from the COVID19 induced recession. Sites with convenient walking and cycling links to existing Town Centres, such as our client's land interest west of Chard Road, should be prioritised for housing to achieve this.
- 4.33 The Council's question 13 asks what types of jobs should be supported by the plan. We consider that it is impossible for a plan to provide any focus on a specific type of job or sector, so we would respond to identify that instead the plan should provide a wide range of sites in a broad portfolio that allows or the potential differing employers that EDDC can accommodate – ranging from large distribution hubs located next to strategic road networks to small office hubs in town centres and in villages to assist in the move towards more flexible working.

### **Town Centres**

- 4.34 As stated above, existing town centres need particular support at this time. A response, and a recent trend, is to allow more flexible usage of such centres to avoid large numbers of vacancies and also provide more vibrancy through wider usage across the whole, rather than core shopping, day.
- 4.35 We support this approach but caution against the wholesale change of use of retail space in town centres to residential and other uses that do not attract footfall into the centre. Therefore, in response to Question 15 we support the diversification of town centres to provide a broader range of uses but would advocate that the Local Plan should resist the change of use of retail and other units to housing, at ground floor level in particular. If necessary, Article 4 directions should be used to restrict such changes under permitted development rights or a policy introduced to allow prior approvals to be denied in defined prime frontage locations.
- 4.36 Again, increasing footfall through housing provision should be seen as a useful tool in supporting Town Centres and sites within walking distance of such areas should be prioritised.

## 5.0 **THE APPROPRIATE SPATIAL STRATEGY**

- 5.1 As chapter 13 of the LPIO document shows recent development patterns in EDDC have been heavily weighted towards the Exeter Fringe.
- 5.2 In response to question 27 we do not consider the answer to be a straightforward one, and while the current hierarchy is generally appropriate (option 1) we would suggest subtle changes are considered.
- 5.3 As we have set out earlier, it is considered that in order to meet the LPIO established objectives more focus needs to be placed on EDDC's existing communities, potentially even meeting some of Exeter's overspill housing need in such locations, rather than on the fringe of the City itself. This should particularly be focused on locations that offer high quality public transport links into the city – such as Axminster with a mainline railway station that provides easy and convenient access into Exeter.
- 5.4 Therefore, we propose that any new spatial strategy that the Local Plan sets out should establish a focus on the seven main towns to accommodate the district's housing needs, alongside some further growth in the Exeter Fringe.
- 5.5 New housing growth and employment provision in these settlements should generally be apportioned broadly proportionate to each settlement's size, but with allowances to take into the account that some of them are constrained by surrounding AONB which may mean that delivering a 'full' proportion will be difficult. Such development should be delivered via a number of methods including infill, rounding off and large and small scale urban extensions to the existing towns – and in connection with question 29 we strongly support these proposed types of development.
- 5.6 This means that less constrained settlements such as Axminster should be considered to accommodate more than their 'normal' proportion. The deliverability of the eastern extension to the Town should also be reviewed following the recently published problems associated with funding a relief road and less constrained development options that promote cycling and walking, rather than large-scale road infrastructure aimed at promoting car borne travel, considered as alternatives that can deliver an immediate boost to housing supply.
- 5.7 In terms of what quantum of development might be distributed where, we consider that a balance between options 1 and 3 should be considered with strategic development close to Exeter being reduced in scale slightly and development in the 7 main towns increased to

compensate for the reasons described above. As an illustration an approximate distribution based on the following proportions is considered suitable in our view:

- West End/Close to Exeter – 45%
- 7 Main Towns – 45%
- Villages – 10%

- 5.8 Connected to such a spatial strategy would be our answer to consultation question 23. We strongly support the option (no.1) of focusing new development on locations within walking and cycling distance of existing services and facilities, to allow them to be supported through increased footfall and also reduce the up-front infrastructure costs on new development, at a time when front loading infrastructure is likely to remain unfunded.
- 5.9 We would caution against option 2 as the delivery of new stand-alone development that must deliver their own facilities are expensive and often require central government 'pump prime' funding to allow them to be initiated, in a time when such funding streams are highly unlikely. Furthermore, such centres would compete with established ones further undermining their viability in these difficult economic times. Therefore, in response to question 29 we oppose building a further new Town in EDDC.
- 5.10 Option 4 should be completely dismissed because it is essential to locate new development within walking and cycling distance (max 2km for walking is appropriate) to minimise the need to use the private car in accordance with the NPPF, maximise alternative modes of transport and minimise CO<sub>2</sub> emissions arising from new development.
- 5.11 We also support the key transport themes identified at paragraph 11.7 of the LPIO document which should inform the spatial strategy. Particularly, we support the need to locate development where public transport is readily available, such as at Axminster where good train and bus services exist, and the need to locate development where high-quality walking and cycling links are in existence or can be engendered.
- 5.12 The only comment we have on these key issues is that while 800m is an ideal walking distance it should be recognised that up to a 2km distance is generally considered acceptable and is appropriate for most people with a relatively good level of fitness, constituting a walk of just over 20 minutes in length.

## 6.0 **LAND WEST OF CHARD RD, AXMINSTER**

6.1 As part of an appropriate spatial strategy that include the provision of significant housing and employment growth at Axminster, we consider that land situated west of Chard Road offers an excellent location for housing and should be allocated for such use.

### **The Site**

6.2 The general location of the site is depicted in Figure 2 below and in a plan appended as appendix A.

6.3 The site lies to the west of the A358 in Axminster and is bound by a residential development site to the south (currently being built by Bovis Homes), the railway line and Axminster Town Football Club to the west, and the River Axe to the north. The existing access to the Football Club cuts through the site dividing it into two land separate land parcels.

6.4 The site slopes down gently from south-east to north-west towards the railway line and there is an existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) which runs along the northern and western edge. Hedgerows delineate the field parcels.



*Figure 2. Site Location (for exact measured boundaries please see location plan provided at appendix A)*

## **Accessibility**

- 6.5 The site lies within a highly accessible location. To the east is the Axminster Industrial Estate which contains a range of employment opportunities; there is also a convenience store on First Avenue which lies to the east. The centre of Axminster lies within 1.5km (an 18-minute walk) to the centre of the site – this contains a range of everyday facilities and services including supermarkets, cafes, restaurants, pubs, banks, and other shops. An alternative walking route along the western boundary of the site is also available via the PRow within the site which links to Willhay Lane.
- 6.6 There are also existing bus stops on the A358 and Second Avenue which provide services such as the 30 and 885 which go into the centre of Axminster every hour and provides links to the town to located to the north, such as Chard. An additional benefit of locating development at Axminster is the railway line, which carries services to Salisbury and Exeter St David’s which provides connections to the rest of the country.
- 6.7 As such, there are alternative methods to using the private car (walking, cycling and public transport) to access work and everyday facilities, making it a sustainable location for development.

## **The Proposed Development**

- 6.8 The proposed development of the site comprises a residential scheme for circa 150 dwellings, access, drainage, landscaping, public open space and ancillary works. The proposals have been underpinned by technical work and a draft master plan developed for the site is shown overleaf.



Figure 3. Draft Master Plan for Land West of Chard Road

- 6.9 To the north and west of the site, no development is proposed beyond the existing hedgerow boundaries and this area will instead be used for formal public open space, enhancing the recreational trail and providing areas for ecological habitat. Cycle and footpath links have been proposed with the aim to integrate the development with the existing PRow to the west and north.
- 6.10 Initial drainage work undertaken indicates that SUDs can be provided on the lower parts of the site. Attenuation basins are proposed to capture surface water run-off and these can be designed to be permanently wet to enhance ecological habitat on site.
- 6.11 The site adjoins the settlement boundary of Axminster and has existing development to the south and emerging development promoted by Persimmon to the east. A plan at Appendix C shows that in effect the site offers a 'rounding off' opportunity to the Town.

## Highways

- 6.12 IMA Transport Planners have been instructed to assess the development's potential impact on the local highways network as well as establish options for a safe access in and out of the site.
- 6.13 Their preliminary access design includes a new T-Junction taken off the A358. This has been designed in a way so it can be upgraded to a roundabout to serve the expansion to the east, currently subject to a planning application lodged by Persimmon, if this goes ahead. Land adjacent to the T-Junction has also been kept free of development as shown on the master plan to provide the land required to deliver the roundabout; if the eastern expansion does not proceed by the time our client's land comes forward then the land would be dedicated to the council to allow the flexibility to upgrade the junction if required in the future.
- 6.14 The roundabout access that could be delivered if necessary has been designed to DMRB standards and helps unlock the eastern expansion area which we understand has currently stalled due to a change in funding from Homes England. The T-Junction has also been designed to the same standards.
- 6.15 Either access options are possible, and can be delivered subject to final costing.

## Ecology

- 6.16 An initial ecology survey was undertaken in December 2018 by EPS Ecology Ltd and their report is enclosed for information as appendix D. This determined that the majority of the site has low ecological value comprising arable fields, bound and intersected with species-rich hedgerows. Dormouse, bat and reptile surveys have been recommended; these have been completed to inform the masterplan. Grass Roots Ecology, who are now the main ecological consultant for the site, are also undertaking checks for breeding birds whilst completing these surveys and their reporting will support a planning application in due course.
- 6.17 The survey work has identified the presence of Dormice. No evidence has been found of badgers or Great Crested Newts.
- 6.18 With regards to the River Axe SAC, we note policy 20 of the EDDC Local Plan which states that *'prior to the granting of planning permission for any major residential schemes at Axminster, the Council will agree, with the Environment Agency and Natural England, a timetable for the review or development of a Nutrient Management Plan for the River Axe.'*

6.19 We understand that this plan is currently progressing and have seen the initial work that has been undertaken by the Wood Group. We await the further, more detailed, work that will ascertain what sort of mitigation / contributions towards the management of the SAC will be required.

6.20 Subject to the mitigation measures that are being developed, and payments or off-site mitigation that may be required in connection with the River Axe, the development of the site would not give rise to any adverse effects in relation to ecology. This would be the same for a significant proportion of sites being considered for allocation in the new Local Plan.

### **Trees**

6.21 Assured Trees were instructed to assess the quality and health of trees on site and their initial constraints plan is enclosed at appendix E. This identifies that the majority of trees on site are Category U and should be removed for best practice in any event. However, we note that even the poorer quality trees along the eastern boundary of the site provide some landscape benefit and these will therefore be retained, with the exception of providing the roundabout and site access.

6.22 The rest of the existing trees on site will be retained, with only a small loss of hedgerow for the access through from one parcel to another. Extensive new tree planting will be proposed along the edge of the new roundabout and within areas of public open space that will be provided within the proposed development.

6.23 We therefore envisage no adverse impacts in respect to trees.

### **Heritage**

6.24 We are aware that there is a Grade I listed building to the north-east of the site (Weycroft Hall) and Grade II\* (Weycroft Manor) and as such AC Archaeology have been instructed to undertake a Historic Environmental Assessment.

6.25 Their assessment concludes that due to the limited inter-visibility between the site and these listed buildings there will be a negligible change to the setting of these heritage assets. There are also a number of other Grade II listed buildings in the vicinity as well as an undesignated pillbox; however, whilst it anticipated there will be some minor change to the setting of these buildings this is not thought to result in a negative adverse impact.

6.26 In fact, this is likely to result in a positive enhancement to the pillbox, as mitigation can be secured to include an information board on the site which will inform residents and those utilising the PRow network about this undesignated heritage asset.

### **Landscape Impact**

6.27 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the site was undertaken by Clark Landscape Design in late 2018 to support representations made to the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. This assessment and its recommendations have informed the emerging plans for the site.

6.28 Their assessment concludes the following:

- Although the site retains some features of the Landscape Character Area (Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes), it also has an urban edge character which is amplified by its proximity to the A358, the main railway line and the Town Football Club;
- However, there are two nearby AONBs which will need to be considered as part of the masterplanning of the site;
- Although the site will be seen from some viewpoints, established landscape buffer planting will screen the development from view;
- In other locations the views are either glimpses or the site would be seen in the context of established development;
- As a result, the majority of impacts were assessed as 'minor' or 'moderate', with only some PRow views considered to have a 'major' adverse impact (without mitigation); and
- Accordingly, mitigation has been recommended for additional tree and hedgerow planting, and use of grey slate roofs, which will be incorporated into the masterplan.

6.29 The LVIA will be updated shortly to ensure nothing has changed in respect to the baseline established in late 2018 and will support a planning application in due course. Additionally, the mitigation measures outlined have, and will continue to be, incorporated into the emerging master plan and subsequent illustrative layouts for the site.

## Flood Risk & Drainage

- 6.30 According to the Government's flood risk maps for planning, the majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 1 with a small part in Flood Zone 2, as shown below. IMA have been instructed to prepare a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy for the site. They have liaised with the EA and been provided with the modelled flood level date for the site, which has been used to inform the flood level. The level has been determined to be 33.5m AOD, and as such, the outcome of this exercise is that the extent of the EA flood mapping appears to be incorrect for this northern area when overlaid on the topographical survey of the site. The revised flood level contour has been superimposed in red on the image below and it can be seen that the extent of flooding is significantly less than that shown on the current EA flood maps.

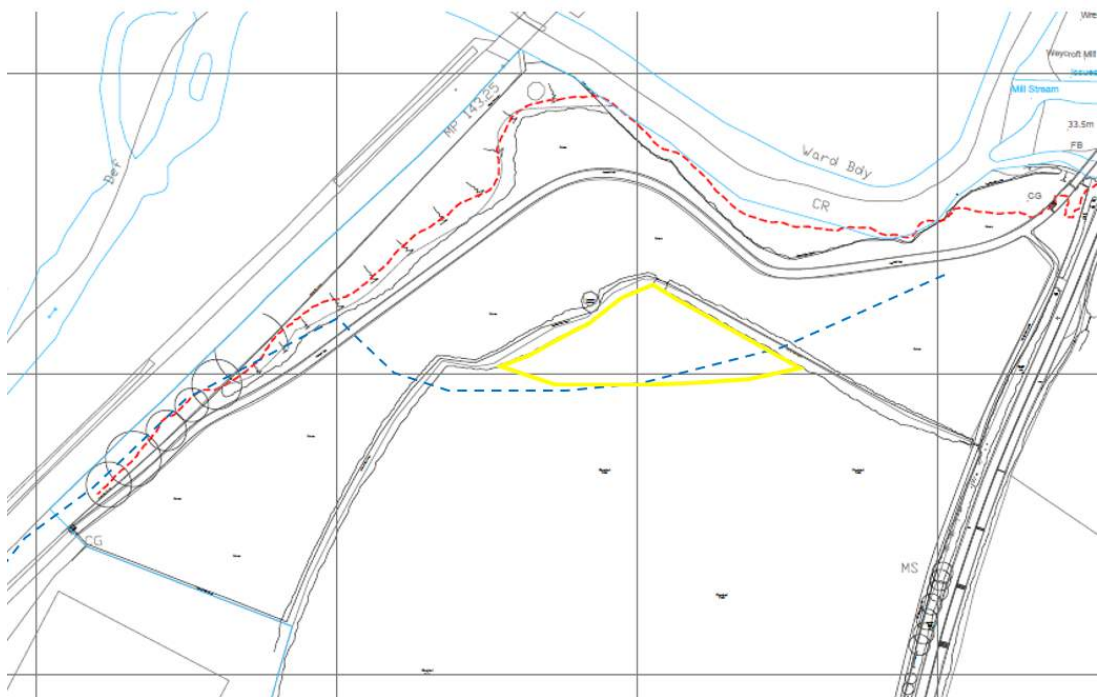


Figure 4. Extract of original Flood Zone boundary (shown in broke blue line) with actual flood areas superimposed in red following receipt of modelled flood levels received from the EA.

- 6.31 The vast majority of the proposed development area is kept outside of even the EA conservative flood extent as can be seen on the enclosed plan. However, we propose to include parts of the central field that fall within this zone within the developable area (area highlighted in yellow in figure 3) because it sits significantly elevated above the adjacent river plain and clearly will not flood.
- 6.32 These points will be further explored with the EA as part of a planning application in due course.

- 6.33 With regards to surface water drainage, infiltration testing is due to be undertaken shortly but due to the underlying sub-soils it is thought that this option for won't be possible. As such, an attenuation basin has been proposed in the western part of the site which can be designed to be permanently wet to enhance ecological value. This will then discharge into the River Axe, subject to securing appropriate consents and managing nutrients in accordance with the aforementioned management plan.

### **Improvements to Axminster Town Football Club**

- 6.34 The proposed development offers the potential to improve and sustain the adjacent football club and our clients are keen to work with the club to produce a scheme that can benefit them, with any physical works being part of an application to be submitted in due course. This can be achieved in the following ways.
- 6.35 Firstly, new residents of the site will offer an additional pool of new players and users of the site's function and bar facilities, bringing more revenue via increased footfall. The proposed development will also offer more natural surveillance at all times of a site that is currently poorly overlooked which could lead to security issues.
- 6.36 Secondly, we are working with the club to identify improvements to its facilities that the development will fund, as a contribution to community infrastructure, that is not required by planning policy.
- 6.37 Thirdly, the club is currently served by an access road that leads onto the A358 Chard Road at an unsuitable location where visibility is inadequate. The development proposes to close off this access to traffic, other than cycles and pedestrians, and provide a route through the development site, to the football club, via a new junction which will be provided with visibility splays that are suitable for the speed of the road. The road through the development site to the club will be designed so as to accommodate coaches and the volume of traffic that is generated by the club's continued, and expanded use.
- 6.38 Finally, via the appropriate planning policies the development will be making S106 contributions towards sports facilities in the Town and we will be asking that a proportion of these monies are spent on the football club to improve its youth and women's team facilities in particular.

### **Pre-application Submission**

- 6.39 We sought pre-application advice from the council in August 2020, and a response was received in November 2020.
- 6.40 The response identified a series of points that needed further investigation in relation to some of the technical work undertaken but raised no fundamental technical objection to the site's development to accommodate housing. However, it did identify that the council did not believe additional housing in this location was required at the current time given the council's position that it can demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land.
- 6.41 We do not agree with the five-year HLS position and are preparing an application that addresses the technical points raised by the council, which will be submitted later this year. Notwithstanding this, the site offers a highly sustainable location for development and should be allocated in the draft Local Plan in due course.

## 7.0 RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

### Question 4 - Planning for health and wellbeing

*How important do you think it is that we should actively promote health and wellbeing throughout our new local plan?*

7.1 We consider this is absolutely essential as there is a compelling need to do this to reduce levels of obesity, increase levels of fitness and harness the potential for people to travel to and from work, shops and services, and education on foot or on bicycle. This will help reduce CO2 emissions and maximise the use of non-car forms of transport.

7.2 To achieve this new development, particularly housing, should be located within walking and cycling distance of everyday facilities to encourage greater levels of walking, running and cycling.

### Question 5 – Energy efficiency of new buildings

*Do you think we should?*

- *Option 1- Plan for net-zero carbon from plan adoption? - This would require all new development to be net-zero carbon upon adoption of the plan. However, it would be at a cost and as a consequence we may see less affordable housing built and maybe fewer other social and community benefits from development.*
- *Option 2- Plan for net-zero carbon from a future date? - This would require all new development to achieve net zero carbon from a future date in the plan process. It could allow time for the development industry to adjust to the higher standards and may mean we can secure more affordable housing and community benefits from development.*
- *Option 3 – Do neither of the above and not have a policy? – Under this option we could just wait for and apply any Government policy.*

7.3 The council should not jump ahead of national requirements in terms of energy minimisation and CO2 reduction requirements for new development and should certainly not be setting arbitrary targets for achieving zero carbon given that the commercial implications of achieving this are yet to be fully understood. Setting a target too early could undermine housing viability and hence deliverability which will have serious implications for affordability – something the question clearly identifies that the council is alive to.

7.4 While the Local plan should provide a policy that requires developers to demonstrate how they have explored, and utilised where possible, low carbon technologies and maximised

energy efficiency the planning system should not try and replicate national standard sets out in building regulations.

7.5 Updates to Part L/F of the Building Regulations will deal with this matter and should be seen as the definitive guide for such requirements. The planning system should not be providing a parallel regime of control that would be confusing and costly for developers of all sizes.

7.6 So, in conclusion we strongly support pursuing option 3.

Question 7 - Carbon saving measures

*Do you think we have identified the appropriate carbon saving and related policy matters to be addressed in a new local plan and are there any other policy areas that you think we should be considering?*

7.7 We consider that appropriate measures are being considered, although reference to heat networks needs to be caveated on the basis that these only work at significant scale, such as at Cranbrook, which even at that strategic scale of development is not operating as originally intended with non-renewable fuels being used in the site system.

7.8 We support point 5 of the emerging policy development, set out at paragraph 4.8, which identifies the measure of locating development in locations that are close to local facilities to promote walking and cycling above private car use. This should be the cornerstone of any carbon minimisation strategy connected to new development.

7.9 We also fully support community led renewable energy schemes as direct sale to local users of the energy can significantly boost the viability of such projects and allow communities to reinvest in expanded community-based energy projects.

Question 20 - Development in protected landscapes

*In considering whether we should allow for development in protected landscapes do you think:*

- *Option 1- Place significant restrictions on development - This approach would apply very tight constraints on development. However, it could mean more development pressure elsewhere in East Devon.*
- *Option 2 – Allow for development to meet local needs - This would allow for limited development, specifically where it will meet smaller scale local housing, community or economic needs, though it could still mean more development pressure elsewhere in East Devon.*

- *Option 3 – Allow for greater levels of development - This approach would allow for much more development in protected landscapes, in so doing it could, however, reduce the need to build elsewhere.*
- *Option 4 – None of the above or an alternative.*

7.10 A nuanced approach to this issue needs to be taken given the proportion of land within the district that falls within the AONB, the protection of which needs to be balanced against the need to ensure that affordable housing need, even in communities that are surrounded by AONB, should be met.

7.11 Therefore, we consider that the Council should pursue option 2 and look to allocate land in the AONB in order to meet settlements affordable housing need but wider strategic needs should be met in sustainable locations outside of the AONB, such as at Axminster.

*Question 21 – Net gains in biodiversity*

*In order to gain biodiversity improvements which option would you prefer:*

- *Option 1 – On-site provision - this would see new habitats created on site as part of the development, however they are likely to be small and would sit alongside housing.*
- *Option 2 – Secure the habitats locally - This would require a legal agreement with a landowner near to the development to deliver and maintain it.*
- *Option 3 – Pay a cash tariff towards a strategic delivery scheme - This would require a developer to make a cash payment (to the Local Authority or other organisation) towards a central fund so that a large area of strategic habitat can be provided to offset the impacts of a number of developments.*
- *Option 4 – A combination of the above*
- *Option 5 – None of the above or an alternative*

7.12 We agree with the requirements to enhance biodiversity as part of new development; however, the emerging 10% requirement will be difficult for some sites to achieve and therefore flexibility needs to be retained.

7.13 In light of this no one option is correct. Instead, a hierarchical policy approach is required where a development first looks to maximise biodiversity on-site, and if the 10% gain is not possible then either financial contributions or a local off-site provision delivered via S106 should 'top up' to the 10% requirement. However, we would caution that making the delivery of a specific local site may be difficult and costly for some developers, so we would suggest the policy allows for either option to be pursued if a 10% gain cannot be achieved on-site.

## 8.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 In conclusion, the general aims and objectives of the issues and options document offers a suitable way on which to proceed with the Local Plan. We are particularly supportive of the Council considering a level of housing growth in excess of the minimum requirement that the Standard Method identifies and we support that sort of ambition. Development doesn't have to be viewed as a negative burden on a Council and as part of its plan making responsibilities, it should be embraced positively as a catalyst for change, economic success and social benefit, particularly in addressing affordability and acute housing need. For these reasons we support the council in taking forward a more aspirational housing target and urge them to proceed on that basis.
- 8.2 To ensure the plan, and the finalised housing targets it sets out are sound, immediate work is required to identify the level of unmet need that will arise from Exeter and how that might be apportioned to the surrounding authorities. We would also recommend that the SHLAA, updated to reflect the new Call for Sites, also forms the basis of an assessment of what level of housing delivery is feasible in East Devon.
- 8.3 These housing requirements should be accommodated in accordance with a spatial strategy that places more focus on the District's seven main towns, while also supporting further growth on Exeter's fringe and more modest growth in smaller settlements to allow their roles to be sustained.
- 8.4 When apportioning such growth to the seven towns Axminster offers a suitable location for employment land and housing growth in excess of its current population size, because it offers a highly sustainable location for development, providing a range of shops, services and employment opportunities that need to be sustained with further footfall, and most importantly it offers a choice of public transport options, including train services.
- 8.5 In terms of how development should be specifically distributed around the town we would advocate that employment growth should be located south of the town near to the A35 and a range of more discrete housing sites that represent infill and rounding off opportunities provided in various locations around the town to accommodate housing. This will remove the overreliance on the large-scale strategic site that lies to the east of the town, that has struggled to deliver because of high infrastructure costs and land constraints associated with a proposed relief road required to serve it.

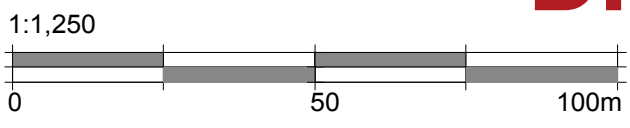
8.6 One such location that should be allocated to accommodate circa 150 dwelling is the site we identify west of Chard Road, on the northern edge of the Town. This site offers a highly sustainable location relative to existing facilities in the settlement where real public benefits, including improvement to the adjacent football club can be secured. Therefore, we commend this site for inclusion in the draft plan in due course.

**APPENDIX A**  
**LAND WEST OF CHARD ROAD, SITE PLAN**



# The Site

Application Site



# DRAFT

client:  
**Greatworth Developments Limited**

project:  
**Chard Road, Axminster**

drawing title:  
**Site Location Plan**

[urbandesignbox.co.uk](http://urbandesignbox.co.uk)

job number:  
**GRE101**

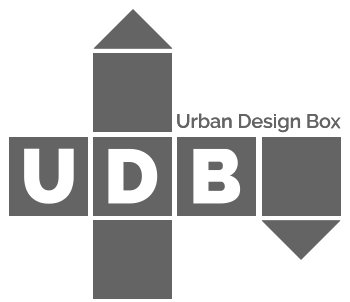
scale:  
**1:2000 @ A3**

date:  
**July 2020**

drawing number:  
**1001 draft**

drawn:  
**jvs**

status:  
**preliminary**



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**APPENDIX B**  
**EMERGING MASTER PLAN**

- 1 Flexible access design could accommodate a roundabout or priority junction.
- 2 Existing link to the football club incorporated into the proposed road network.
- 3 A well-connected and accessible development through maximising connections to existing national cycle route and footpath network.
- 4 Green approach into Axminster has been retained and the development is visually well contained by existing and proposed hedge and tree planting.
- 5 Attenuation features have been provided in low areas outside of the flood plain and could be combined with ecological betterment.
- 6 Around 153 homes with a mix of sizes and tenures subject to further design and technical work.
- 7 Landmark buildings positioned at key vistas to improve sense of place and distinctiveness.



- Legend:
- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Development boundary             | Residential development blocks |
| Proposed access                  | Existing hedges to be retained |
| Access to football grounds       | Proposed hedge planting        |
| Existing pedestrian/cycle link   | Existing trees to be retained  |
| Proposed pedestrian/cycle link   | Proposed tree planting         |
| Residential street               | Attenuation area               |
| Private drive                    | Informal parking               |
| Indicative residential buildings | Focal building locations       |

DRAFT

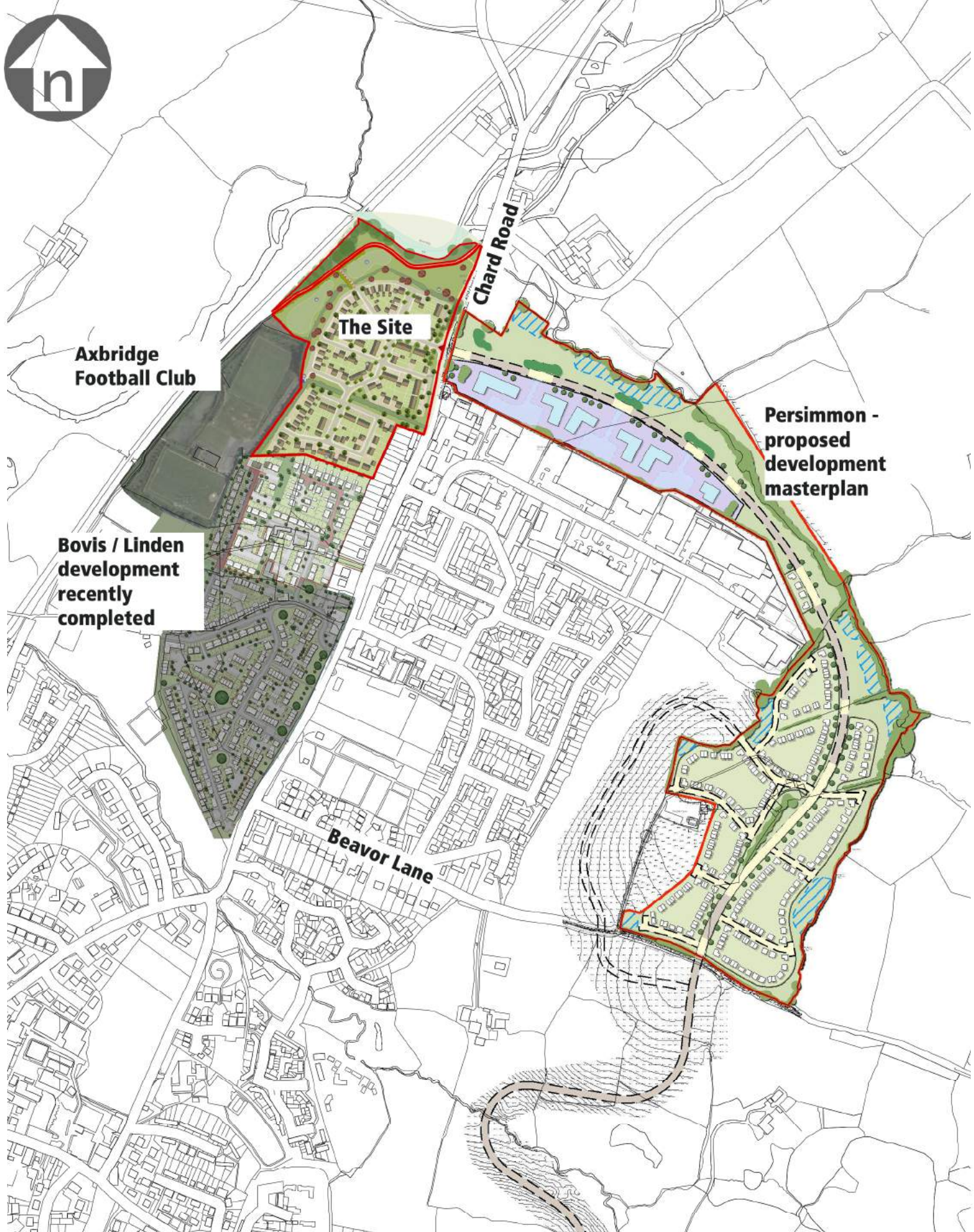
client: **Greatworth Property Managers Ltd**  
 project: **Chard Road, Axminster**  
 drawing title: **Concept masterplan**

job number: **GRE101**  
 drawing number: **4001 Draft**  
 scale: **1:1250 @ A3**  
 drawn: **rt**  
 date: **February 2021**  
 status: **preliminary**

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**APPENDIX C**  
**WIDER CONTEXT PLAN**



**Axbridge  
Football Club**

**The Site**

**Persimmon -  
proposed  
development  
masterplan**

**Bovis / Linden  
development  
recently  
completed**

**Beavor Lane**

**Chard Road**

client:  
**Greatworth**

project:  
**Chard Road, Axminster**

drawing title:  
**Site Context Plan**

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job number:  
**GRE101**

scale:  
**1:7500 @ A4**

date:  
**March 2021**

drawing number:  
**1010**

drawn  
**jvs**

status:  
**preliminary**



Urban Design Box

**APPENDIX D**  
**ECOLOGY REPORT**



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## **PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

**LAND WEST OF CHARD ROAD**

**AXMINSTER**

**DEVON**

**December 2018**

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND TO PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is used to gather data on existing site conditions and make a preliminary assessment of likely impacts of development schemes. Some evaluation is usually made within these appraisals of the ecological features present, as well as scoping for notable species or habitats, identification of constraints to proposed development schemes, identification of the need for further ecological surveys and recommendations for mitigation.

These ecological appraisals, together with any ecological evaluation undertaken, may be prepared before undertaking a full EclA or may be stand-alone documents where no Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) is required (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 'Guidelines for PEA', April, 2013).

This PEA, undertaken to establish baseline conditions for land to the west of Chard Road, Axminster, Devon (also referred to as 'the Assessment Site' or 'site'), provides the following information:

1. A description of habitats present within the Assessment Site (Phase 1 habitat survey).
2. An assessment of habitats with potential to support notable or protected species.
3. Direct evidence of the presence of notable or protected species.
4. A prediction of impacts should the site be cleared, developed etc.
5. Recommendations for mitigation to prevent significant adverse impacts on important species and habitats.
6. Recommendations for further actions (including survey work) prior to submission and/or determination of any planning application.

No site-specific desk study to identify notable or protected habitats or species was commissioned from the local Records Centre as part of this PEA. Data from the following websites were however examined:

1. 'Magic' – ([www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)) for information on protected sites.
2. Devon County Council – ([http://www.devon.gov.uk/wildlife\\_designations](http://www.devon.gov.uk/wildlife_designations)) for information on protected sites.
3. RSPB – published information on cirl bunting distribution (taken from the 2009 national survey).
4. 'Devon Great Crested Newt Consultation Zones' Guidance for Developers, June 2012.
5. Adopted East Devon Local Plan, 2013 to 2031.

A site survey was undertaken by Dr David Fee MCIEEM on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018, at which time the Assessment Site and land immediately adjacent were carefully examined. No limitations to the site assessment were encountered and so the findings in this report

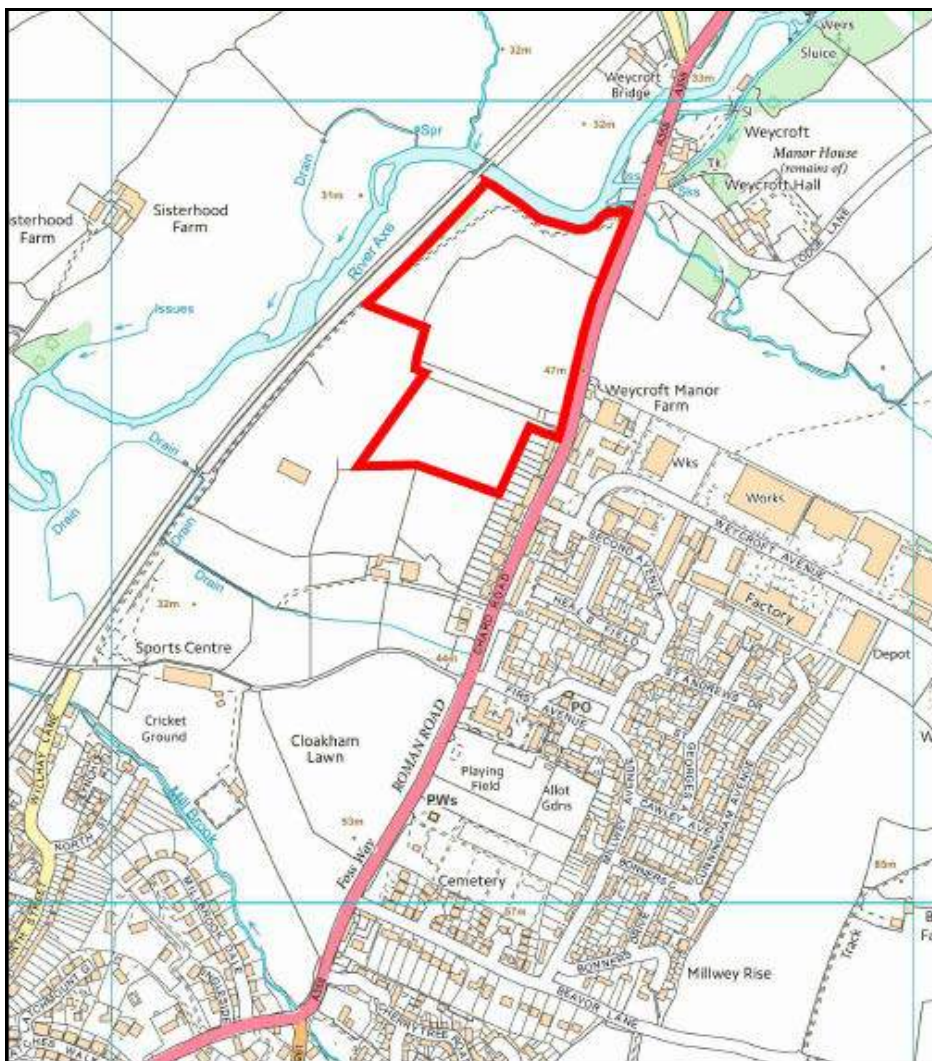
represent a reasonable representation of the baseline ecological value of the site at this time (December 2018).

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT SITE

The survey area for this PEA is defined as the Assessment Site and a c.30m buffer zone around the site. The site centre is at National Grid Reference SY 304 996.

The Assessment Site location is shown in Fig.1 below. It comprises three arable fields, two of which have recently been re-sown, one remaining unmanaged. Mature hedgerow boundaries are found around a majority of the fields.

The site is being promoted for residential development. This PEA therefore provides an assessment of the ecological issues that will need to be considered as part of any future development on site.



**Fig.1 – showing the Assessment Site (approximate boundary in red). Taken from Brimble, Lea & Partners Drawing No. 16142-1.**

### 3.0 FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Desk study

Reference to the information sources listed in Section 1.0 has confirmed the following:

1. The northern boundary of the Assessment Site lies immediately adjacent to the River Axe Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This European statutory site is designated due to the presence of an exceptionally diverse range of aquatic flora, birds, mammals and fish (further information available at - <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/protectedsites/sacselection/sac.asp?eucode=UK0030248>).
2. Strategy 20 of the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013 to 203 states that, in Axminster, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will make sure that ...”any development does not harm wildlife and habitats in the Axminster area. In particular, the water quality of the River Axe and the surrounding wildlife sites should be protected. Prior to the granting of planning permission for any major residential schemes at Axminster, the Council will agree, with the Environment Agency and Natural England, a timetable for the review or development of a Nutrient Management Plan for the River Axe. This plan will set out detailed actions that allow for new growth at Axminster to progress with adequate mitigation in place to negate the additional phosphate load that would be caused. The Nutrient Management Plan will work in collaboration with the diffuse Water Pollution Plan, and will seek to restore water quality for the River Axe SAC to enable it to meet its conservation objectives within a specified timescale, and in accordance with commitments to European Directives. Depending on the findings of the plan, growth will only proceed in accordance with the mitigation delivery set out within that plan. Growth at Axminster will also be informed by the current status of the relevant discharge consents for waste water treatment works, and any upgrade required to support new growth will be the subject of Habitats Regulations Assessment prior to planning permission being given. The determination of such development applications will be informed by Habitat Regulations Assessment that takes account of the consent requirements”.
3. The Assessment Site **does not lie** within the known range of cirl buntings in Devon.
4. The Assessment Site **does not lie** within a ‘Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone’; the nearest being centred on a pond to the south west of the site c.3.7km away at Kilmington.
5. The Assessment Site **does not include** any ‘Ancient Woodland’ habitats (i.e. woodland that has developed naturally and been present for many hundreds of years).

#### 3.2 Habitats

The Assessment Site comprises four main habitat types.

### **Habitat 1 – mature hedgerow boundaries**

A majority of the fields are bounded by mature hedgerows (up to 4m in height). Most of these are naturally established, but those along the access road to the adjacent (Axminster Town) Football Club are recently planted. Typical species include dog rose, hazel, ash, oak, field maple, elm and elder. All meet the definition of being ‘species-rich’; i.e. where ...”the structural species making up a 30m section of hedgerow include at least five woody species that are either native ... or which are archaeophytes” (page 14 of the ‘Hedgerow Survey Handbook’ , DEFRA, 2007).

These hedgerows may be used by specially protected species (see Section 3.3 below).

Species-rich hedgerows are listed as ‘Habitats of Principle Importance’ (HPI’s) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

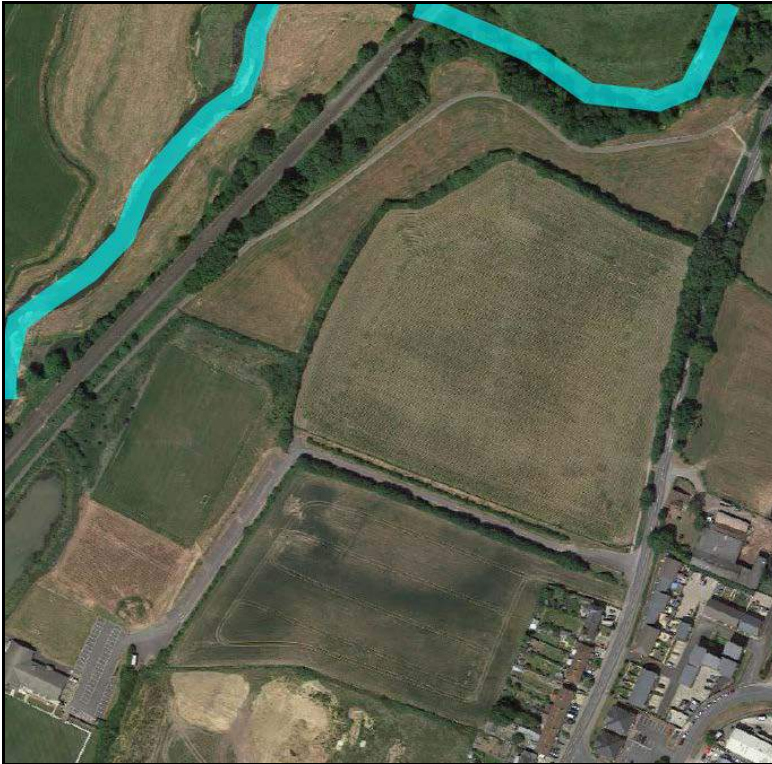


***Fig.2 – showing distribution of mature hedgerow boundaries***

### **Habitat 2 – River Axe SAC**

This watercourse runs immediately outside the northern and western site boundaries. It is flanked by woodland (to the north of the site) and by meadows to the west.

This European statutory site is designated due to the presence of an exceptionally diverse range of aquatic flora, birds, mammals and fish.



*Fig.3 – showing River Axe SAC*

**Habitat 3 – Arable field**

The field in the southern part of the Assessment Site comprises an arable field (oil seed rape) that had been left uncut at the time of survey.



*Fig.4 – showing distribution of uncut arable field*

#### **Habitat 4 – Re-sown arable field**

The two fields in the northern part of the Assessment Site comprise arable fields that have recently been re-sown.



**Fig.5 – showing distribution of re-sown arable fields**

### **3.3 Species**

These include all species listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), such as dormice, otters, bats, reptiles and amphibians, as well all 'Species of Principal Importance' listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Badgers are also included (under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992), as are nesting birds (protected under the WCA, 1981).

#### **Dormouse**

Dormice are considered highly likely to be found within the Assessment Site hedgerows, this because:

- A number of dormouse nest boxes were found within a hedgerow leading down to the adjacent Football Club site. This indicates that mitigation for dormice has recently been provided as part of a previous local development - reference to data available on the MAGIC website confirms this as most likely being dormouse mitigation licence EPSM2012-4210.
- The maturity and species-rich nature of the hedgerows within the site make them suitable for use by dormice.

### Bats

A site assessment for bats during December can only consist of a 'preliminary ecological appraisal'. Given the Assessment Site location (in a diverse landscape and including an ecologically important nearby watercourse), it might be expected that many of the bat species recorded in East Devon are likely to be found within the local area. Not all of these species will use the Assessment Site for foraging, commuting or roosting, but features for these activities are all potentially present within the site.

Using the criteria in Table 4.1 of the 'Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines' (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), the potential suitability of the Assessment Site for commuting and foraging habitats is determined to be 'moderate', due to ..."the presence of continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape ...that could be used by bats". For roosting the potential suitability of the site is determined to be 'low, as only a few mature trees are present within the hedgerows, some of which may have features that might be used by individual bats for 'opportunistic roosting'.

### Otters

The River Axe is known to be used by otters. However, no habitat suitable for use by otters to feed or rest is found within the Assessment Site boundary.

### Water voles

The River Axe is known to be used by water voles. However, no habitat suitable for use by water voles to feed or rest is found within the Assessment Site boundary.

### Reptiles & amphibians

No ponds are found within the Assessment Site.

Reference to standard guidance, in 'Devon Great Crested Newt Consultation Zones – Guidance for Developers, June 2012', has confirmed that the Assessment Site does not lie within a 'Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone'; and in following the flow diagram within this guidance document it is evident that the Assessment Site does not provide habitat suitable for use by this species (as the 'Habitat Suitability Score' for the Assessment Site is less than 0.6).

Rough grassland margins along the base of some hedgerow sections may provide habitat suitable for use by small numbers of common reptiles (e.g. slow-worm).

### Birds

Some hedgerow sections may be used by small numbers of common bird species for nesting; but this only during the breeding season which is generally accepted to run between the 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> July (for the range of 'typical' species likely to be found on site).

The Assessment Site does not lie within the known range of breeding/wintering cirl buntings in Devon.

#### Badgers

No evidence of badgers or their setts was identified within the Assessment Site.

### **3.4 Other features**

#### Hedgerows

Hedgerows are detailed in Section 3.2 of this PEA. They are likely to be of value to dormice, nesting birds and some bats (for foraging/commuting).

#### Trees

A small number of mature trees are found within some hedgerow sections. Some may be associated with features that might be used by roosting bats and/or be used by birds for nesting.

#### Invasive species

No invasive species (including Japanese knotweed) were noted on/close to the Assessment Site.

#### Waterbodies

No waterbodies are found within the Assessment Site boundary. The ecological value of the nearby River Axe SAC is detailed in Sections 3.1 & 3.2 of this PEA report.

## **4.0 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

### **4.1 Proposed work**

The site is being promoted for residential development.

The following assessment of (potential) impacts is provided in relation to the typical range of development activities that might damage the biodiversity value of the site; for example 'direct impacts' arising from vegetation clearance and site levelling, as well as 'indirect' impacts such as runoff/pollution of watercourses and light spillage of currently dark areas.

If the site does come forward for development, these impacts will need to be carefully assessed in relation to site-specific development proposals.

## **4.2 Protected sites and habitats**

### Protected sites – River Axe SAC

The northern boundary of the Assessment Site lies immediately adjacent to the River Axe SAC. This European statutory site is designated due to the presence of an exceptionally diverse range of aquatic flora, birds, mammals and fish.

No direct impacts on the River Axe SAC are predicted, as vegetation clearance, site levelling, etc. will take place at a reasonable distance from this watercourse. However, once any development was completed there would be potential for indirect impacts on the River Axe, including long-term inputs of waste water into this river.

Such an impact would be an adverse, certain, long-term effect at a 'National level'.

### Other habitats

Loss of, or damage to, hedgerow habitats has potential to kill, injure or disturb specially protected species, namely dormouse and nesting birds. Habitats used by bats for foraging and/or commuting may also be lost. Species-rich hedgerows are listed as HPI's under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. These impacts would be adverse, certain, and of long-term effect at a 'Parish level'.

Loss of the arable fields to development does not represent a significant impact, as they all comprise species-poor and disturbed agricultural land with little value to biodiversity. Such an impact would be an adverse, certain, medium-term effect at a 'sub-Parish level' (i.e. not significant).

## **4.3 Species**

### Dormouse

Dormice can be adversely affected by disturbance (e.g. noise and light, habitat management/clearance) as well as habitat fragmentation. It is an offence to kill, injure or disturb a dormouse without a mitigation licence from NE.

Dormice are considered likely to be found within the Assessment Site hedgerows and so removal of hedgerows without due consideration to this species would most likely give rise to an adverse, certain, and of long-term effect at a 'Parish level' (i.e. significant).

### Bats

Using the criteria in Table 4.1 of the 'Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines' (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), the potential suitability of the Assessment Site for commuting and foraging habitats is determined to be 'moderate'. For roosting the potential suitability of the site is determined to be 'low'.

Bats can be adversely affected by direct damage or obstruction to roost locations, installing light near a roost/along an important commuting route, the removal of commuting habitats like hedgerows, watercourses and woodland, and by changing or removing bats' foraging areas.

Bats will certainly be found within the Assessment Site boundary and are likely to be strongly associated with the hedgerow habitats (for foraging and/or commuting). Removal of hedgerows without due consideration to bats would most likely give rise to an adverse, certain, and of long-term effect at a 'Parish level'.

It is an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat (in a roost) without a mitigation licence from NE.

### Otters

The River Axe is known to be used by otters. No direct impacts on the River Axe are predicted, as vegetation clearance and site levelling will take place at a reasonable distance from this watercourse. However, once any development was completed there would be potential for indirect impacts on the River Axe, including long-term inputs of waste water into this river. This could adversely affect use of the river by otters (due to changes in water quality affecting food sources).

Such an impact would be an adverse, certain, long-term effect at a 'Parish level'.

### Water voles

The River Axe is known to be used by water voles. No direct impacts on the River Axe are predicted, as vegetation clearance and site levelling will take place at a reasonable distance from this watercourse. However, once any development was completed there would be potential for indirect impacts on the River Axe, including long-term inputs of waste water into this river. This could adversely affect use of the river by water voles (due to changes in water quality).

Such an impact would be an adverse, certain, long-term effect at a 'Parish level'.

### Reptiles & amphibians

Rough grassland margins along the base of some hedgerow sections may provide habitat suitable for use by small numbers of common reptiles (e.g. slow-worm). These species are protected from intentional killing or injury.

Without due consideration to reptiles, site clearance may give rise to an adverse, certain, and medium-term effect at a 'Parish level'.

### Birds

Some hedgerow sections (and associated mature trees) may be used by small numbers of common bird species for nesting; but this only during the breeding season which is generally accepted to run between the 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> July for the range of 'typical' species likely to be found on site. All birds and their nests, eggs and young are protected from damage/destruction. Loss of hedgerows and (to a lesser degree) the arable fields are likely to reduce the overall area of feeding habitat for some bird species.

Without due consideration to both nesting and feeding birds, site clearance may give rise to an adverse, certain, and medium-term effect at a 'Parish level'.

### Badgers

No evidence of badgers or their setts was identified within the Assessment Site. No impacts are predicted.

## **4.4 Other features**

### Hedgerows

Potential impacts on specially protected species likely to use the hedgerows within the Assessment Site are detailed in Section 4.3.

Species-rich hedgerows are listed as HPI's under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. These impacts would be adverse, certain, and of long-term effect at a 'Parish level'.

### Trees

A small number of mature trees are found within some hedgerow sections. None of these trees are of sufficient age to be considered of historic/biodiversity significance (i.e. not 'veteran trees'). The impact arising from the loss of individual trees would be an adverse, certain, medium-term effect at a 'sub-Parish level' (i.e. not significant).

Potential impacts on specially protected species that may use trees within the Assessment Site should still be considered, as detailed in Section 4.3 of this PEA report.

### Invasive species

No invasive species (including Japanese knotweed) were noted on/close to the Assessment Site. No impacts are predicted.

### Waterbodies

No waterbodies are found within the Assessment Site boundary.

Potential indirect impacts on the nearby River Axe SAC are 4.2 of this PEA report.

## **5.0 MITIGATION**

### **5.1 General principles**

A sequential process should be adopted to avoid, mitigate and compensate negative ecological impacts and effects. This is often referred to as the 'mitigation hierarchy'.

Negative impacts should always be avoided where possible, for example by deciding not to locate a project in a particular area or making a change to scheme layout to ensure no negative impacts. Mitigation includes measures to avoid or reduce the negative impacts of a project, for example careful timing of an activity to prevent an impact occurring.

Avoiding and/or minimising negative impacts is best achieved through consideration of potential impacts of a project from the earliest stages of scheme design and throughout its development. Many impacts can be avoided or reduced by consideration of alternatives.

Mitigation measures incorporated into the scheme design are often described as 'embedded mitigation' or 'mitigation by design'. This can include the re-design of the layout of the scheme, or adjusting the location of certain activities. Mitigation by design is particularly beneficial as there is greater certainty that it will be delivered.

Compensation describes measures taken to offset residual effects resulting in the loss of, or permanent damage to, ecological features despite mitigation. For example, it may take the form of replacement habitat or improvements to existing habitats. Compensation can be provided either within or outside the project site (defined by the red line of a planning application). Compensation should always be seen as a last resort, when all other mitigation options have been exhausted.

### **5.2 Mitigation at the Assessment Site**

The design of mitigation and compensation measures is an iterative process. It needs to consider what is realistically achievable and the likely extent to which success can be guaranteed, based on good practice guidance and evidence. Measures need to be agreed and a commitment made by the developer before a planning application is submitted to the competent authority. Such commitments must then also be agreed with the competent authority and secured through appropriate planning conditions, consents, permits and/or legal agreements. The aim should be to provide the competent authority with as much certainty as possible over the likely effectiveness and deliverability of the proposed measures.

As there is no detailed proposal for development at the Assessment Site, no final recommendations for mitigation can be provide as part of this PEA. A determination of impacts and mitigation can only be made once a site-specific development proposal has been formulated, this forming part of the standard Ecological Impact Assessment process.

With a sensible approach to site development (in line with the general principles in Section 5.1 above), there is, however, no reason why some form of development should not be allowed in the future, especially if such a development is designed in order to:

1. Protect the nearby River Axe from any changes in water quality.
2. Protect and enhance a majority of existing mature hedgerows on site.
3. Ensure no light spillage off site towards currently dark areas (e.g. the River Axe corridor).
4. Create new wildlife habitats on site (e.g. by hedgerow, scrub, woodland planting, provision of bat and bird boxes in some new buildings).

To this end Greatworth Properties are in the process of commissioning the necessary ecology surveys for the 2019 survey season. These are listed in Section 6.2 below.

In addition, Greatworth Properties and their agents will start discussions with the relevant statutory bodies during early 2019; this to ensure any development does not result in adverse impacts on the nearby River Axe SAC.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTIONS**

### **6.1 Planning and legislation requirements**

Strategy 20 of the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013 to 203 states that, in Axminster, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will make sure that ...“any development does not harm wildlife and habitats in the Axminster area. In particular, the water quality of the River Axe and the surrounding wildlife sites should be protected”.

The LPA will also need to be satisfied that any ecological evaluation of a proposed development is sufficient to:

1. clearly determine the potential impacts on biodiversity arising from the proposals and provide suitable mitigation (as required under the relevant legislative and planning context, including Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, the WCA 1981, the Conservation Regs. 2010, ODPM Circular 06/2005 and the National Planning Policy Framework), and
2. reassure any ‘appropriate authority’ that the proposed mitigation will reduce these impacts to acceptable levels, and
3. meet the requirements for biodiversity protection and enhancement detailed in Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012),
4. meet the requirements of BS42020:2013 (‘Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development’).

## **6.2 Recommendations for further surveys**

The requirements outlined in Section 6.1 can only be met by a detailed assessment of site ecology in relation to a specific development proposal (this in the form of a full Ecological Impact Assessment). To inform this ecological assessment the following surveys will be required.

### Habitats

In relation to potential impacts on the River Axe SAC, detailed discussions should be held at the earliest opportunity with the LPA, EA and NE.

An assessment of hedgerows within the Assessment Site should be completed to determine both their botanical value and likely value (based on structure and species diversity) to dormice/nesting birds.

### Dormouse

A dormouse 'tube survey' should be completed no more than three years before any planning application is submitted to the LPA (to ensure the survey results remain valid). A tube survey usually starts in early April and runs until the end of September in any year.

### Bats

Using the criteria in Table 4.1 of the 'Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines' (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), the potential suitability of the Assessment Site for commuting and foraging habitats is determined to be 'moderate'. Bat activity surveys will be required to quantify the value of the site for commuting and/or foraging, in this case:

- One survey visit per month April to October, at least one of the surveys to comprise a dusk to dawn survey.
- At the same time, two locations per surveyor transect to be used for 'static' data collection over five consecutive nights.

For roosting the potential suitability of the site is determined to be 'low'. Surveyors undertaking the activity surveys will also be required to carry out an assessment of mature trees for roosting bats at dusk/dawn on each survey occasion.

These surveys should be completed no more than two years before any planning application is submitted to the LPA (to ensure the survey results remain valid).

### Reptiles

Rough grassland margins along the base of some hedgerow sections may provide habitat suitable for use by small numbers of common reptiles (e.g. slow-worm). A 'presence/absence' survey of reptiles will be required in all suitable habitat areas no more

than two years before any planning application is submitted to the LPA (to ensure the survey results remain valid).

#### Birds

Some hedgerow sections (and associated mature trees) may be used by small numbers of common bird species for nesting. Loss of hedgerows and (to a lesser degree) the arable fields are likely to reduce the overall area of feeding habitat for some bird species.

A Breeding Birds Survey (BTO/JNCC/RSPB) of the site should be undertaken no more than two years before any planning application is submitted to the LPA (to ensure the survey results remain valid).

#### Badgers

A survey to identify any setts or badger activity should be undertaken no more than one year before any planning application is submitted to the LPA (to ensure the survey results remain valid).



#### Invasive species

A survey to identify any invasive species should be undertaken no more than one year before any planning application is submitted to the LPA (to ensure the survey results remain valid).

**APPENDIX E**  
**TREE REPORT**

## Summary of tree constraints for Land adjacent Chard Road, Axminster

<b>Site location</b>	Land adjacent Chard Road, Axminster, EX13 5HW
<b>Client</b>	Matthew Kendrick Grass Roots Planning Ltd Unit 106 86-88 Colston Street Bristol BS1 5BB
<b>Date of survey</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2020
<b>Surveyor</b>	Stuart Roberts
<b>Local planning authority</b>	East Devon District Council Knowle Sidmouth DEVON EX10 8HL E-mail: <a href="mailto:planning@eastdevon.gov.uk">planning@eastdevon.gov.uk</a> Telephone: 01395516551 Web site: <a href="http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk">http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk</a>

<b>Site location:</b>	
	
<p><b>Figure 1:</b> Site Location indicated by orange arrow <a href="http://www.streetmap.co.uk">www.streetmap.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Figure 2:</b> Red line indicates approximate survey area <a href="http://www.Google.com">www.Google.com</a></p>

### Statutory designations

Contact has been made with East Devon District Council and it has been confirmed that the site does not lie within the limits of a Conservation Area and that there are no trees on or adjacent to the site that are the subject of a TPO. Currently it is not necessary to notify, or apply for permission from, East Devon District Council in order to fell or prune trees on the site.

Although the trees on the site are not protected by a Conservation Area or a TPO, tree felling is a legally controlled activity and if tree removals are proposed on the site in excess of 5 cubic metres in volume in a calendar quarter (or 2 cubic metres if the timber is being sold) then a felling license may be required from the Forestry Commission<sup>1</sup>. Tree removals proposed in order to carry out development that is authorised by the approval of full planning application do not require a felling license regardless of timber volume.

### East Devon District Council Planning policy

#### East Devon Local Plan 2013 to 2031 Adopted – 28 January 2016

**D2 - Landscape Requirements:** Landscape schemes should meet all of the following criteria:

1. Existing landscape features should be recorded in a detailed site survey, in accordance with the principles of BS 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Construction' (or current version)

**D3- Trees and Development Sites:** Permission will only be granted for development, where appropriate tree retention and/or planting is proposed in conjunction with the proposed nearby construction. The council will seek to ensure, subject to detailed design considerations, that there is no net loss in the quality of trees or hedgerows resulting from an approved development. The development should deliver a harmonious and sustainable relationship between structures and trees. The recommendations of British Standard 5837:2012 (or the current revision) will be taken fully into account in addressing development proposals. No building, hard surfacing drainage or underground works will be permitted that does not accord with the principles of BS 5837 or Volume 4 National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees – Issue 2 (or the current revision or any replacement) unless, exceptionally, the Council is satisfied that such works can be accommodated without harm to the trees concerned or there are overriding reasons for development to proceed. The Council will as a condition of any planning permission granted, require details as to how trees, hedges and hedge banks will be protected prior to and during and after construction. The Council will protect existing trees and trees planted in accordance with approved landscaping schemes through the making of Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate or necessary. Planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-felling-overview#tree-felling-licence>

### Tree survey

Ten trees, nine tree groups and five hedges were identified in the survey, which have been awarded category ratings in accordance with the BS5837:2012 cascade chart for tree quality assessment (table 1), a rating of **A**, **B**, **C** or **U** is allocated based on the condition of a tree or group of trees in its/their current surroundings. A full account of the tree survey methodology including the categorisation criteria for surveyed trees is presented at the end of this summary.

	Category			
	A	B	C	U
Trees	0	4	5	1
Groups	0	2	6	1
Hedges	0	0	5	0

**Table 1:** Tree categorisation quantities

### Comments on principal tree constraints:

- None of the trees on the site are protected by statutory designations (Tree Preservation Orders or Conservation Area Status) therefore permission is not currently required from East Devon District Council to prune or remove trees on the site.
- The principle trees with the potential to be impacted by the proposed development are located on the east site boundary adjacent to Chard Road (G01-G12). To the south of the east boundary the trees are predominantly small ash that have historically be managed as a hedge but a lack of recent management has allowed full crowns to form. The tree makeup changes towards the north end of the east boundary to densely grouped single stem, semi-mature trees with attenuated form due to light competition. There are several oaks along the boundary which are the highest value trees in the group as they are not vulnerable to Ash Dieback Disease.
- The east boundary trees are dominated by ash which are also prevalent throughout the site, ash are currently being impacted by Ash Dieback Disease which is likely to become a significant factor in the management of this group. It is considered likely that the vast majority of Ash in the UK will die as a result of Ash Dieback infection and those trees that are located in areas of public use, such as adjacent to roads and housing developments, will need to be removed as the disease advances. Local Planning Authorities still require ash to be treated on a best case scenario in development situations so even though they will likely be dead or dying within the next 5 years we are unable to condemn them at this stage as there may be some natural tolerance within the ash tree stock. Please note however that in my opinion all of the ash on the site will require removal within the next 5-8 years and possibly much sooner. More information can be found at the following links:

<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/news/e-newsletter-articles/countryside-newsletter/september-2019/coping-with-ash-dieback/>

<https://www.devonashdieback.org.uk/>

### Comments on principal tree constraints:

- The hedgerows surrounding the area proposed for development (H13-H16) have landscape value and it is likely that the LPA will want to see the hedges retained and protected. H13 has several elm trees standing proud of the hedge but these are either dead, dying or will soon die from Dutch Elm Disease so are not a significant consideration. The hedges should be relatively simple to protect from development activity by physical barriers.
- The large tree groups on the north and west boundaries, adjacent to the river and railway line, are a significant distance from the area proposed for development and should not require further consideration or protection as long as construction activity is not proposed near the trees.
- There is a group of dead elm trees (G20) on the north east site boundary which are a significant distance from the development proposals but are dead and adjacent to the road, these trees should be removed regardless of development proposals along with T08 which is also a dead elm adjacent to the road.
- Trees 17 and 19 are off site trees with root protection areas extending into the site which will need to be considered and protected as part of development proposals.

### Next stage for arboricultural input:

This tree constraints summary is intended to provide the design team with pertinent information ahead of preparing a report for submission with the site planning application and is not intended for submission to the LPA.

As this is an outline application the LPA will certainly make a pre-commencement condition for the provision of a detailed arboricultural method statement as a reserved matter. *BS5837:2012 Figure 1* recommends that the detailed/technical design of tree protection and arboricultural methodologies should be resolved and finalised following on from the approval of the feasibility of a scheme by the Local Planning Authority.

Therefore following the issue of the final proposal drawings for the site a full arboricultural report will be issued in support of an outline planning application including:

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) containing an assessment of the potential impact of the development on the trees on the site including any necessary tree removals, any impacts on retained trees and any impacts retained trees may have on the proposals post development;
- Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)- heads of terms;
- Draft Tree Protection Plan (TPP).

## Tree survey methodology

A site visit was undertaken by qualified arboriculturalist Stuart Roberts. The inspection took place from ground level and employed the Visual Tree Assessment method (Mattheck and Breloer, 1994).

**Category ratings:** In accordance with the BS5837:2012 Cascade chart for tree quality assessment, a rating of A, B, C or U is allocated based on the condition of a tree or group of trees in its/their current surroundings. No consideration is given to any specific development proposal when allocating category ratings, category definitions are detailed in Table 2.

Category	Criteria
<b>A</b>	<i>Those trees or groups which have high quality and value, are in good structural and physiological condition and are expected to have a useful life expectancy of at least another 40 years- indicated in green on the associated plans</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Those trees or groups which would be considered as category A trees but which are of lower value, poorer structural condition, or which are expected to have a useful life expectancy of a minimum of 20 years- indicated in blue on the associated plans</i>
<b>C</b>	<i>Those trees or groups which are of low quality and value, trees currently in adequate condition to remain until new planting is established or are young trees with a stem diameter less than 150mm. Category C trees are expected to have a life expectancy of a minimum of 10 years- indicated in grey on the associated plans</i>
<b>U</b>	<i>Trees or groups in such a condition that any existing value would be lost within ten years and which should, in the current context, be removed for reasons of sound arboricultural management- indicated in red on the associated plans</i>

*BS5837:2012 Tree categorisation criteria*

**Sub categories** are awarded in accordance with the following criteria:

Sub category 1	<i>Trees with arboricultural value</i>
Sub category 2	<i>Trees with landscape value</i>
Sub category 3	<i>Trees with cultural or conservation (ecological) value</i>

*BS5837:2012 Tree sub-category criteria*

## Root protection areas

Below ground constraints or Root Protection Areas (**RPAs**) for all trees on site have been calculated in accordance with BS5837:2012. The RPA is a layout design tool indicating the minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure should be treated as a priority. The RPAs have been plotted onto the Tree Constraints Plan as a circle centred on the base of each tree stem with a radius of 12 times the trees stem diameter measured at 1.5 metres above ground level.


BS5837:2012 requires that where pre-existing site conditions or other factors indicate that rooting has occurred asymmetrically the RPA should be modified to produce a polygon of an equivalent area.

## Data presentation

Data collected regarding the individual trees or groups is presented in the Tree Survey Schedule in accordance with BS5837: 2012. Trees have not been physically tagged but have been assigned individual numbers that are used to identify a tree, group or hedgerow within the Tree Survey Schedules and on the associated plans.

The following information has been collected for each tree in the survey:

- Tree or group number
- Single or group category
- Common and scientific name of species
- Height in metres
- Number of stems
- Stem diameter
- Clearance of crown from ground level in metres
- Radius of crown
- Age class
- Physiological condition
- Estimated remaining contribution in years
- Structural condition
- Preliminary management recommendations
- Tree categorisation
- **Root Protection Area (RPA)**

<b>Tree Survey Schedule</b>	
<b>Client:</b> Matthew Kendrick, Grass Roots Planning Ltd, Unit 106, 86-88 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BB	
<b>Location:</b> Chard Road, Axminster	
<b>Surveyor:</b> Stuart Roberts	
<b>Date of Survey:</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2020	

Tree Number	Single (S) or Group (G)	Tree Name (species)	Height (m)	Calculated Stem Diameter (mm)	Number of Stems	Crown Clearance (m)	North (m)	South (m)	East (m)	West (m)	Age Class	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Condition Notes	Recommendations	Estimated Remaining Life Contribution	BS Category	Root Protection Area (Radius in m/ m2)
01	G	Ash	9	450	1	1	7	7	3	2	Sm	F	F	Group of 3 ash on the east site boundary historically managed as a hedge but with no recent management the trees have formed a full crown. Ploughed field 3 metres to the west.	None.	40+	C2	5.4 91.6
02	G	Ash	8	450	1	1	8	8	3	2	Sm	F	F	Group of 4 ash on the east site boundary historically managed as a hedge but with no recent management the trees have formed a full crown. Ploughed field metres to the west.	None.	40+	C2	5.4 91.6
03	G	Ash, oak, field maple, blackthorn	10	250	1	0	See associated plans				Sm	G	G	Tree group on the east site boundary on a raised verge adjacent to the road, dominated by ash but with occasional field maple and oak, dense group with attenuated stems due to light competition.	None.			3.0 28.8
04	S	Ash	12	370	2	3	3	2	3	3	Sm	G	G	Twin stem from base from a narrow fork.	None.	40+	C2	4.4 61.9
05	S	Oak	13	320	1	3	4	3	1	5	Sm	G	F	Oak in roadside verge on the east site boundary, stem lean and crown bias to the west.	None.	40+	C2	3.8 46.3
06	S	Oak	13	410	1	4	5	4	5	2	Sm	G	G	Oak in roadside verge on the east site boundary, stem lean and crown bias to the east.	None.	40+	B2	4.9 76.0

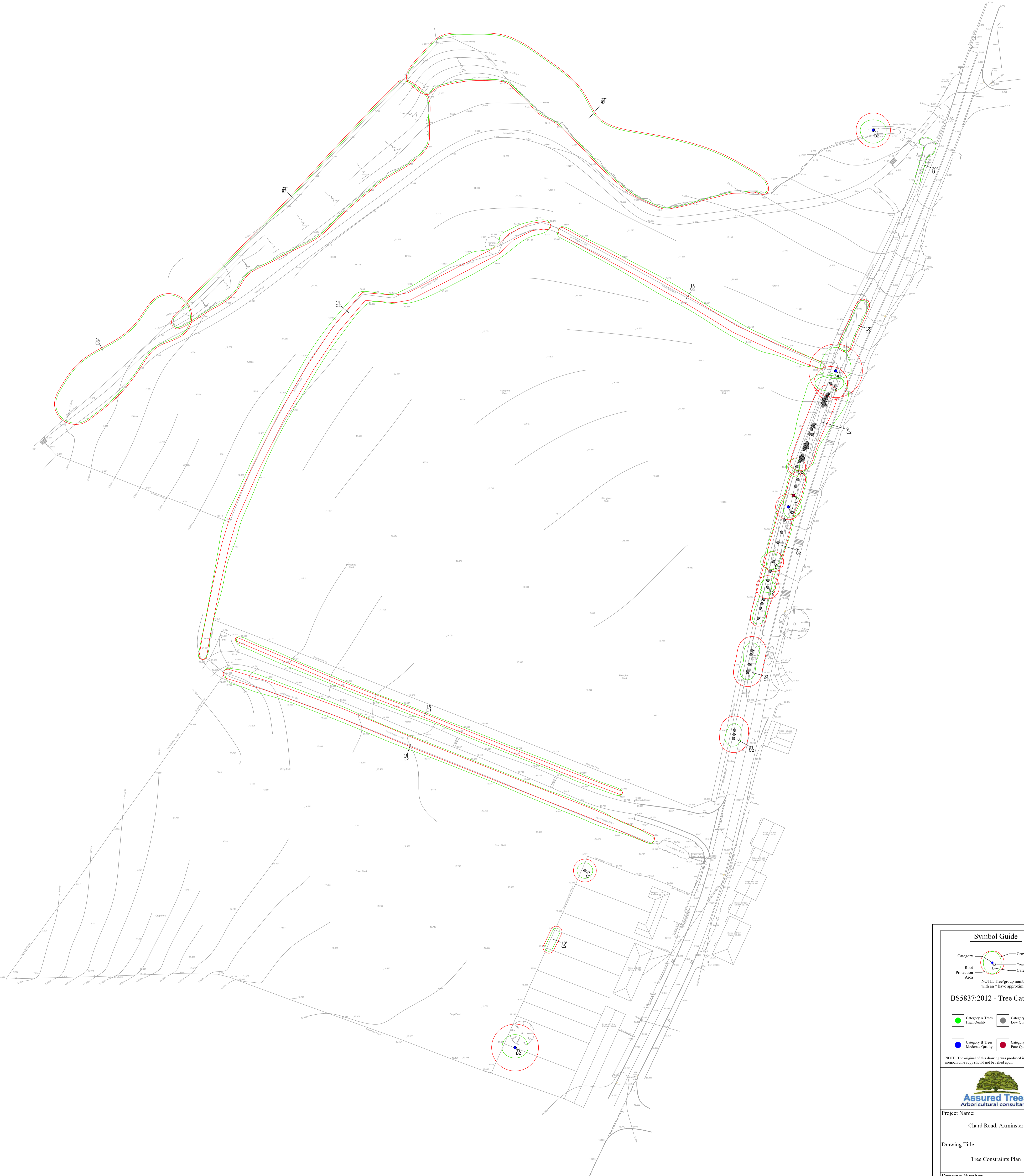
Tree Number	Single (S) or Group (G)	Tree Name (species)	Height (m)	Calculated Stem Diameter (mm)	Number of Stems	Crown Clearance (m)	North (m)	South (m)	East (m)	West (m)	Age Class	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Condition Notes	Recommendations	Estimated Remaining Life Contribution	BS Category	Root Protection Area (Radius in m / m <sup>2</sup> )
07	S	Oak	13	280	1	5	3	4	1	4	Sm	G	G	Oak in roadside verge on east site boundary, stem lean and crown bias to the west.	None.	40+	C2	3.4 35.5
08	S	Elm	12	220	1	5	1	1	1	1	Y	D	D	Dead elm stem in roadside tree group, 50 metres south of wooden gate on footpath. Tree could potentially fail into the road.	Fell tree.		U	2.6 21.9
09	G	Ash, sycamore and field maple	17	290	1	0	See associated plans				Sm	G	G	Tree group on the east site boundary on a raised verge adjacent to the road, dominated by ash but with occasional field maple and sycamore towards the north end. Dense group with attenuated stems due to light competition.	None.	40+	C2	3.5 38.0
10	S	Sycamore	17	539	6	1	3	3	5	6	Sm	G	G	Multi stem Sycamore on top edge of roadside verge.	None.	40+	C2	6.5 131.4
11	S	Sycamore	18	857	6	1	9	3	6	6	M	G	G	Multi stem Sycamore in roadside verge	None.	40+	B2	10.3 332.3
12	G	Hazel, field maple, ash and elm	5	80	1	0	See associated plans				Y	G	G	Group of young multi stem trees in roadside verge.	None.	20+	C2	1.0 2.9
13	H	Elder, field maple, elm, blackthorn and ash	6	120	1	0	See associated plans				Sm	G	G	Predominantly low level field maple with English elm growing proud of the hedge in various stages of infection by Dutch Elm Disease.	None.	40+	C2	1.4 6.5

Tree Number	Single (S) or Group (G)	Tree Name (species)	Height (m)	Calculated Stem Diameter (mm)	Number of Stems	Crown Clearance (m)	North (m)	South (m)	East (m)	West (m)	Age Class	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Condition Notes	Recommendations	Estimated Remaining Life Contribution	BS Category	Root Protection Area (Radius in m / m2)
14	H	Elder, field maple, hazel, elm and blackthorn	6	120	1	0	See associated plans				Sm	G	G	Predominantly low level field maple and hazel with occasional English elm growing proud of the hedge in various stages of infection by Dutch Elm Disease.	None.	40+	C2	1.4
																		6.5
15	H	Hawthorn, Norway maple, blackthorn alder, hornbeam, field maple, lime and oak.	2	60	1	0	See associated plans				Y	G	G	Recently planted mixed species hedge on north side of access road.	None.	40+	C1	0.7
																		1.6
16	H	Field maple, ash, holly, elder and blackthorn	6	150	1	0	See associated plans				Sm	G	G	Field boundary hedge on south side of access road, dominated by ash historically maintained as a low level hedge, lack of recent management has allowed full crowns to form.	None.	40+	C2	1.8
																		10.2
17	S	Apple	5	367	4	2	3	3	3	3	M	G	G	Apple tree in off-site garden 2 metres from the boundary, ploughed field 3 metres to the west.	None.	20+	C1	4.4
																		60.9
18	H	Cypress	6	180	1	0	See associated plans				Sm	F	F	Offsite cypress hedge on adjacent garden boundary.	None.	40+	C2	2.2
																		14.7

Tree Number	Single (S) or Group (G)	Tree Name (species)	Height (m)	Calculated Stem Diameter (mm)	Number of Stems	Crown Clearance (m)	North (m)	South (m)	East (m)	West (m)	Age Class	Physiological Condition	Structural Condition	Condition Notes	Recommendations	Estimated Remaining Life Contribution	BS Category	Root Protection Area (Radius in m / m <sup>2</sup> )
19	S	Horse chestnut	15	750	1	3	5	4	5	5	M	F	F	Off-site tree in private garden, twin stem from 2 metres from a narrow fork with bark inclusion, symptomatic of Bacterial Bleeding Canker. Hanging broken limb west side.	None.	20+	B2	9.0 254.5
20	G	Elm	9	200	1	0	See associated plans				Y	D	D	Group of dead and dying elm on the east site boundary adjacent to the road.	Fell group.	<10	U	2.4 18.1
21	S	Sycamore	15	550	1	2	4	5	5	5	M	G	G	Sycamore on south bank of stream.	None.	40+	B2	6.6 136.8
22	G	Alder, sycamore, ash, willow and blackthorn	18	500	1	0	See associated plans				M	G	G	Mixed species group dominated by ash on the south bank of the river.	None.	40+	B2	6.0 113.1
23	G	Hawthorn, ash, elder, goat willow and sycamore	15	250	1	0	See associated plans				Sm	F	F	Mixed species group on a slope between footpath and rail track boundary fence.	None.	40+	B2	3.0 28.3
24	G	Ash	15	450	1	0	See associated plans				Sm	F	F	Group of ash trees growing on rail track land adjacent to the site boundary.	None.	10+	C2	5.4 91.6

Table Heading	Definition
<b>Tree Number</b>	Tree numbers as they appear in the Tree Schedule and are marked on the Tree Protection Plan drawings.
<b>Single or group</b>	S for a single tree, G for a group of trees and H for a hedge
<b>Species</b>	The common name of the tree
<b>Height (m)</b>	In meters measured with a laser clinometer
<b>Calculated stem diameter (mm)</b>	Calculated diameter of the stem(s) measured in millimetres at 1.5 meters from ground level
<b>Number of stems</b>	Indicates the number of stems measured to inform the Root Protection Area
<b>Crown clearance (m)</b>	Height in metres of crown clearance above adjacent ground level
<b>Crown spread (m)</b>	The spread of the crown measured in metres, taken at the four cardinal points from the trunk
<b>Age class</b>	(Np) Newly planted, (Y) Young, (SM) Semi-Mature, (EM) Early mature, (M) Mature, (A) Ancient or (V) Veteran
<b>Physiological condition</b>	Good – tree has good health and vitality. Fair- tree has minor health and vitality problems. Poor- tree has low vitality and significant health problems. Dead- dead tree.
<b>Structural condition</b>	G-good P- poor F- Fair D-dead
<b>Condition notes</b>	Specific notes relating to the condition of the tree
<b>Recommendations</b>	Recommendations for tree surgery based on any physical defects found or for further investigation of defects that require a more detailed assessment
<b>Estimated remaining contribution</b>	In years <10, 10+, 20+ or 40+
<b>RPA (Root Protection Area) Radius / m2</b>	The minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree’s viability, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure should be treated as a priority. The RPA is calculated as a circle centered on the tree, the upper figure is the radius of the RPA from the tree and the lower figure is the total area of the RPA in square metres.
<b>Category grading Category</b>	<p><b>Category A:</b> Trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years</p> <p><b>Category B:</b> Trees of moderate quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 20 years</p> <p><b>Category C:</b> Trees of low quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 10 years, or young trees with a stem diameter &lt;150mm</p> <p><b>Category U:</b> Trees in such a condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years</p>

**TREE SURVEY SCHEDULE KEY**



**Symbol Guide**


Category	Crown Spread
Root Protection Area	Tree Number
	Category

NOTE: Tree group numbers marked with an \* have approximate locations.

**BS5837:2012 - Tree Category**

Category A Trees High Quality	Category C Trees Low Quality
Category B Trees Moderate Quality	Category U Trees Poor Quality/Retain*

NOTE: The original of this drawing was produced in colour - a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.



Project Name:  
Chard Road, Axminster

Drawing Title:  
Tree Constraints Plan

Drawing Number:  
200306-CR-TCP-AM

Client:  
-

Agent:  
-

Date:  
March 2020

Scale:  
1:500@A0

