Dalwood Neighbourhood Plan

Referendum Version

2018-2031

Dalwood Parish Council

December 2021

[This page has been left intentionally blank for printing purposes]

Website: http://dalwoodparish.co.uk (follow links: Village and Neighbourhood Plan)

Email : dalwoodpc@btinternet.com

Phone : 01297 32462 (Dalwood Parish Council)

Table of date of Plan versions

Date of Plan versions	
1st draft	9th January 2018
2nd draft 3rd draft Draft Community Consultation	20th July 2018 18th November 2018 14th February 2019
Pre-submission version	20th January 2020
Draft Submission version	7th November 2020
Submission version	5th March 2021
Referendum Version	5th January 2021

Acknowledgements

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) (Shelagh Fearnley, Kathy Laing, Lorraine Lucas, Sue Cooper and Brian Eddy) give grateful thanks to:

- **Rob Beak, George Marshall, Peter Grimmett and Paul Eastburn** for their beautiful photographs of Dalwood
- **Dalwood Parish Council:** for commissioning The Corry Valley Community Land Trust to overview the NPSG
- **Dave Evans:** for his digital expertise in developing, distributing and analysing the Business Survey
- **David Dower:** for his research expertise
- **Hilary Horley:** for her diligent proof reading
- Dalwood community for all your input, help and support

THANK YOU ALL

Contents

1. Introduction 5
1.1 The Community's Plan 5
1.2 The Plan Area 6
1.3 How has the Plan got to this point? 8
1.4 Plan Development Process 8
1.5 The Plan's Evidence Base 10
1.6 The Plan's Status 11
1.7 Sustainable Development 13
1.8 The Structure of this Plan 14
1.9 Delivering Aims, Objectives and Policies 15
2. Vision, Aims and Objectives 17
2.1 Aims of this Plan 18
3. Natural Environment 21
3.1 Introduction 21
3.2 Retaining and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the Parish 24
3.2.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy NE1: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the Parish 24
3.3 Preserving Tranquillity and Dark Skies 31
3.3.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy NE2: Preserving Tranquillity and Dark Skies 31
4 Built and Historic Environment 33
4.1 Introduction 33
4.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policies: BHE1 and BHE2 34
5 Housing and Population 42
5.1 Introduction 42
5.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy HP1: Housing Development in Dalwood 43
6 Community Facilities and Services 53
6.1 Introduction 53
6.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy CF1: Community Facilities and Services 55
6.1.2 Background and Reasoning for Policies CF2-3: Improvements to Existing Community Facilities, Amenities, and Assets 57
7 Transport and Accessibility 61

7.1 Introduction 61
7.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy TA1: Off-road Parking 62
7.1.2 Background and Reasoning for Policy TA2: Rights of Way (Public Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways) 63
8 Economy and Employment 66
8.1 Introduction 66
8.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy EE1: Pursue advances in communications technology - Superfast Connectivity 67
8.1.2 Background and Reasoning for Policy EE2: Farming 69
9 Energy and Low Carbon 72
9.1 Introduction 72
9.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy ELC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes 73
10 Waste and Plastic 77
10.1 Introduction 77
11 Monitoring and Review 78
12 Appendices 79
12.1 Appendix 1 - Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Design, Guide for Houses 80

Table of Policies

Policy no	Title	Page no
Policy NE1	Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the Parish	27
Policy NE2	Preserving Tranquillity and the Dark Skies	32
Policy BHE1	Maintaining the Built Character of the Parish through High-Quality Design	40
Policy BHE2	Protecting Locally Valued Heritage Assets	41
Policy HP1	Housing Development in Dalwood	51
Policy CFS1	New Retail and Commercial Development in Dalwood Village	56
Policy CFS2	Improvements to Existing Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets	59
Policy CFS3	Loss of Local Community Facilities through Redevelopment or Change of Use	60
Policy TA1	Off Road Parking	63
Policy TA2	Rights of Way (Public Footpaths and Bridleways)	65
Policy EE1	Superfast Connectivity	68
Policy EE2	Farming (New Development Proposals)	71
Policy ELC1	Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes	75

1. Introduction

1.1 The Community's Plan

This Neighbourhood Plan is the community's Plan. It represents the community's vision and priorities for how it would like to see the local area change in the coming years and, in doing so, it sets out local planning policies which will be considered as and when any proposals for development come forward in the Parish.

The Plan cannot deal with every issue identified as being important to the community: it has a focus on responding to proposals for development and the appropriate use of land. It puts the community in the driving seat when it comes to having a say over what, how and where development should take place where planning permission is required. The Plan and its policies reflect the Parish's unique characteristics while recognising that it has a lot in common with other rural parishes in East Devon which share the landscape of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and East Devon (AONBs). The figure below summarises what the Plan can and cannot do. The Plan and its policies reflect the Parish's own characteristics while recognising the need to align with both national and local authority planning policies.

Figure 1: "Cans" and "Cannots"

"It can..." ✓	"But it cannot..." ✖
✓ Develop policies specific to our area, for example, design of new development.	✖ Introduce policies which conflict with national or District Council "strategic" planning policies.
✓ Protect the facilities and areas of land that the community values most such as community buildings, playing fields, etc.	✖ Force requirements on developers which make the delivery of development unviable.
✓ Help us to get additional funding into the area, for example, through identification of projects or having a plan adopted ("made")	✖ Change regulations / legislation such as Building Regulations or Permitted Development Rights.
✓ Protect areas of land for conservation, biodiversity and landscape value.	✖ Simply repeat (duplicate) national or District Council planning policy.
✓ Influence the type, location and design of development.	✖ Reduce the scale of new housing if proposed by the District Council.
✓ Help to secure additional funding for infrastructure and other projects.	✖ Stop all development.
✓ Propose regeneration projects, transport solutions and areas of land for the allocation of housing and / or employment sites if we wish to do so.	✖ Deal with matters not dealt with through the planning system, for example: • Change traffic speed limits • Increase broadband speeds • Enforce parking restrictions

The Plan covers the period between 2018 and 2031 and therefore aligns with the time period covered by the District Council's Local Plan. This current Local Plan 2013-31 was adopted in January 2016, and is supported by the East Devon Villages Plan, adopted in July 2018. EDDC is preparing a new Local Plan, and consultation on Issues and Options took place from January to March 2021. Dalwood Parish Council will work with the District Council and seek to ensure that the emerging new Local Plan's policies and the policies of Dalwood Neighbourhood Plan are complementary.

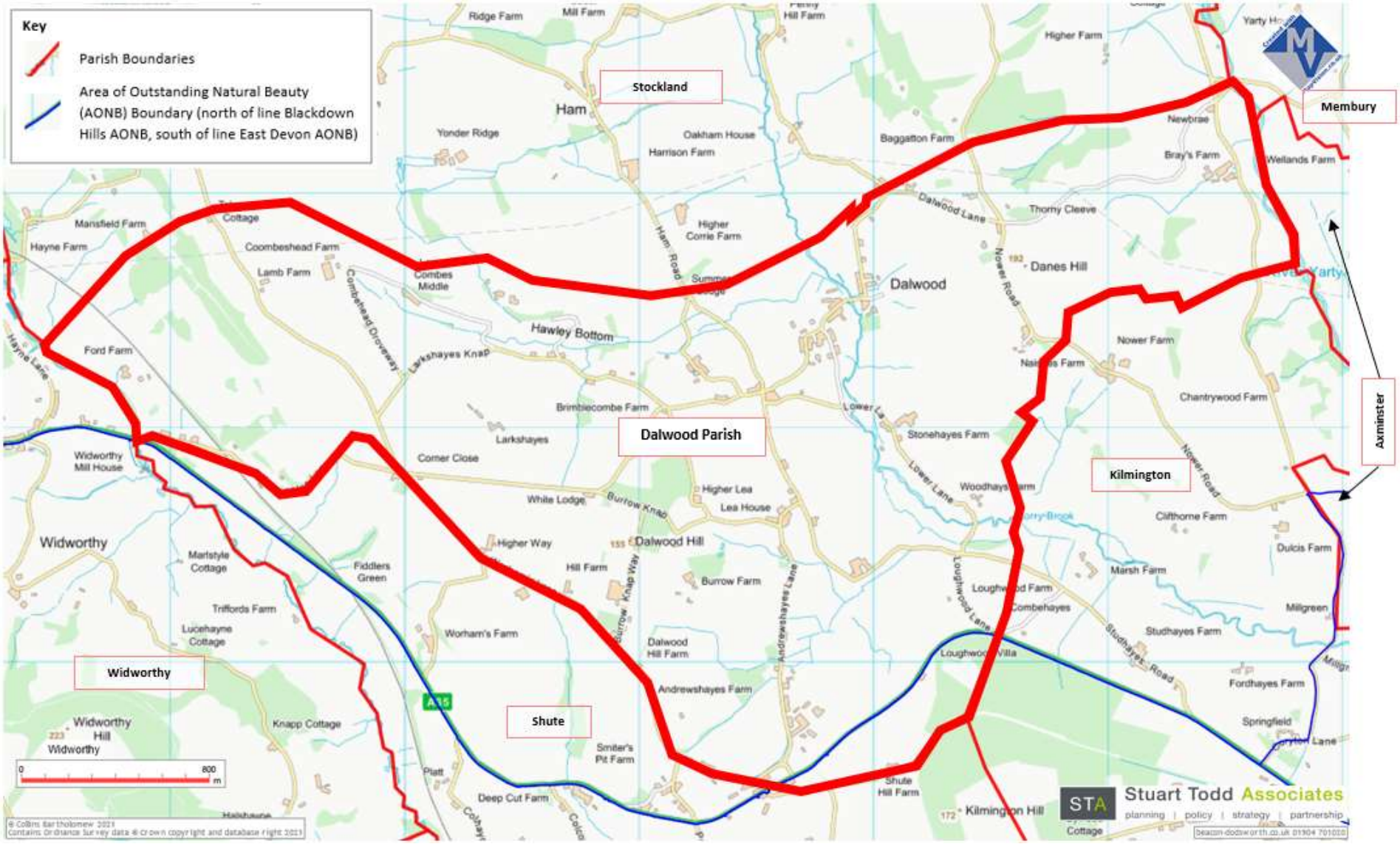
1.2 The Plan Area

The Parish of Dalwood lies almost entirely within the southern boundary of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with a small part of the Parish at the south-eastern end lying within the East Devon AONB. The Parish is approximately midway between the market towns of Axminster (approximately 5 miles away) and Honiton (approximately 7 miles away) in the council district of East Devon.

The Parish is very rural, the predominant activities being arable and livestock farming. The character of the village's buildings is a mixture of old and new with several modern residences either side of the road that runs through the village, with a historic core formed by a church, adjacent cottages and a public house on the opposite side of the road. Corry Brook runs to the east of these buildings providing an attractive green corridor through the heart of the village and greatly enhancing the settlement's rural character.

Figure 2 shows the Parish and neighbourhood area boundary and its wider context.

Figure 2: Dalwood Neighbourhood Plan Area



1.3 How has the Plan got to this point?

A steering group was requested to act on behalf of Dalwood Parish Council. It has driven the development of the Plan and is comprised of residents and a Parish Councillor. It was recognised at an early stage that for the Plan to be truly representative of the planning issues of relevance in the Parish and to be the community's Plan, thorough engagement with those who live and work in the Parish would be required. The Parish Council also recognised that the Plan could not be properly developed without the input of organisations and agencies with a district, county, sub-regional or national remit.

The process and types of consultation and discussion that has been held are documented in detail in the Consultation Statement which accompanies this Plan. However, the key methods used included:

- Public exhibitions, meetings and events;
- A community questionnaire sent to all households;
- Updates on a dedicated 'Our Plan' page of the village website;
- Contact with local businesses and groups, via a business questionnaire and email; and,
- Directly contacting wider-than-local organisations and agencies (strategic stakeholders) which have an interest in planning issues in the Parish; and, Consultation 'windows' during which comments have been invited on draft documents.

The development of the Plan was based on a desire to be open and encourage comments and contributions from all quarters with the aim being to achieve consensus, but also to have debates about issues where the community was divided in its views.

1.4 Plan Development Process

The Plan has been through a process of development and drafting to ensure that the community's views are captured through local consultation and that policies are developed which respond to key issues identified. Figure 3 overleaf illustrates the process followed in order to meet the Government's requirements and best practice.

Figure 3: Illustration of the Plan-making Process

As part of the Submission stage, the Plan and its associated documents will be subject to further consultation run by East Devon District Council (EDDC). Comments from that process are then considered by an independent Examiner during an Examination and then a local referendum is held to determine whether or not the Plan should be "made"

(or adopted) as formal local authority planning policy in the planning system. Both the Examination and Referendum are organised by EDDC.

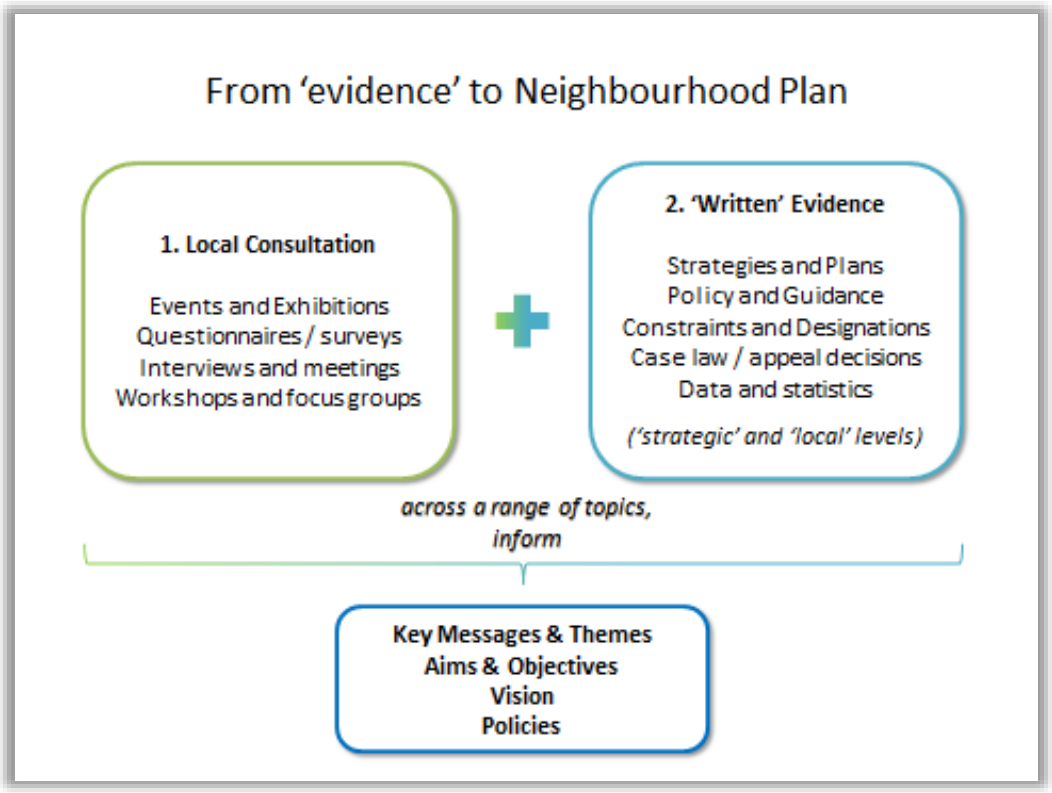
1.5 The Plan's Evidence Base

To inform the content of the Plan, the evidence base has been developed so that clear reasoning and justification underpin the policies. This has been done in two ways. Firstly, through local consultation which has included a local community questionnaire, community meetings and public consultation events (documented fully in the Consultation Statement, which will be submitted alongside this Plan for Examination) and secondly, by gathering together an understanding of the written evidence that already exists into a summary "written evidence base" report. All of these documents are available online and should be referred to in order to understand the full set of evidence to support the policies (although the key sources of evidence to justify policies are referenced directly throughout the Plan)[1].

This approach has helped to identify the Plan's Aims, Objectives, Vision and its policies. This process is summarised overleaf.

[1] http://dalwoodparish.co.uk

Figure 4: The Basis of the Evidence Base and Route to the Vision, Aims and Objectives



1.6 The Plan's Status

This Neighbourhood Plan, once made, will be part of the statutory development plan. That means that its policies will have significant weight (importance) when it comes to being used by the local authority to help determine proposals for development submitted through planning applications. It will form the local tier of planning policy in the Parish. At present, it sits with the district-wide East Devon Local Plan 2013-31 and the East Devon Villages Plan, produced by East Devon District Council (also part of the statutory development plan), and underneath the umbrella of National Planning Policy in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), as the main planning policy documents relevant to the area. The Parish Council will work with the District Council and monitor progress on the new emerging Local Plan to seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan will complement it. The Neighbourhood Plan has had regard for the revised NPPF, published on 20th July 2021, and all references in this Plan relate to the revised version.

Other important planning documents which govern specific issues are the Minerals and Waste Plans produced at the county-wide level. However, this Neighbourhood Plan should not be treated as a blueprint and the Plan's policies cannot guarantee that a proposal will be refused or permitted.

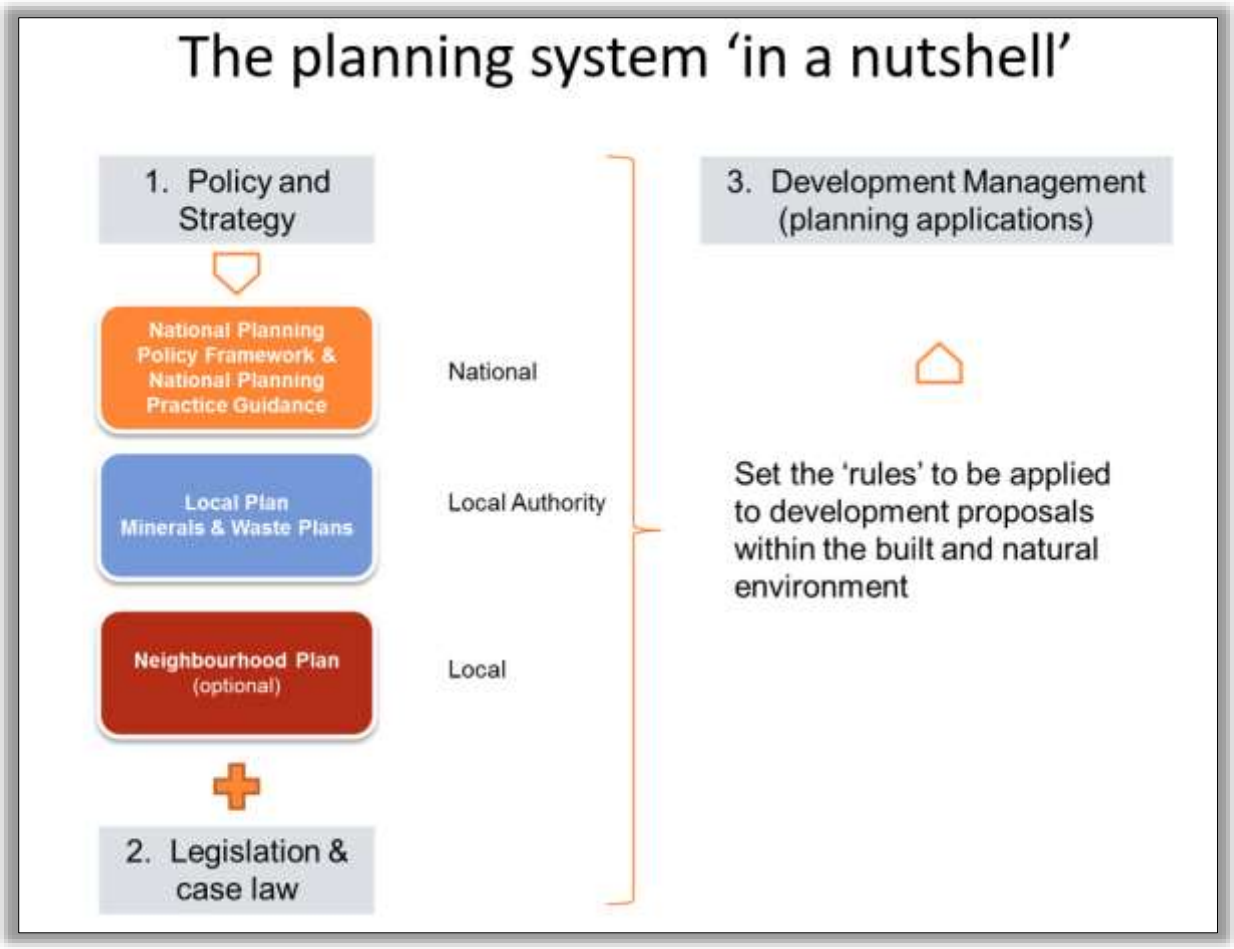
The policies set out by the Blackdown Hills AONB in its Management Plan (2019-24)[2] and other guidance documents (which are advisory rather than carrying statutory weight in the planning system) add a further layer of policies which are particularly important in Dalwood.

While the policies of the East Devon AONB are of course important, we consider that the Parish, being almost wholly within the Blackdown Hills AONB, has greatest synergy with its policy framework and so we have used it as the lens through which to project our policies.

The relationship between the Neighbourhood Plan and other key planning policy documents and the planning system as a whole, is shown below.

[2] See https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/

Figure 5: The Neighbourhood Plan and the Planning System



It is important to remember that this Plan's policies do not seek simply to repeat planning policy and guidance at the national or district-wide levels, nor the policies of the Blackdown Hills AONB. In some cases, policies may appear to be seeking similar or the same outcomes as other policies at these levels, but importantly, where this is the case, the Neighbourhood Plan policies provide the community with the opportunity to add a local dimension or detail to those more strategic policies and to reinforce them on the basis that it is these matters which are of most importance to the community in Dalwood.

1.7 Sustainable Development

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) set out the Government's planning policy to which all plans and proposals for development should comply. The NPPF includes, at its heart, a "presumption in favour of sustainable

development". It is important to understand what that means for this Plan, as it sets the parameters within which it can make proposals and set policies.

When taking decisions on proposals for development this means that proposals should be approved where they accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF, or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted. Translating this to what it means for this Neighbourhood Plan, it states that *"Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies*"[3]. The NPPF goes on to say that "*Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies[4]. Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.*"[5]

1.8 The Structure of this Plan

This Plan sets out the Vision, Aims and Objectives for the area, which have been developed based on extensive dialogue with the community, and shaped by existing planning policies, plans and contributions of key organisations and agencies.

[3] See paragraph 13, National Planning Policy Framework 2021
National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)
[4] Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area.
[5] See paragraphs 29 and 30, National Planning Policy Framework, February 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Having explained the rationale for these, the Plan sets out local planning policies on a topic by topic basis. Topics have been derived by pulling together common Aims and key issues arising from consultation.

Within each topic section, the Aims and Objectives that policies are seeking to address are set out, together with a summary of the characteristics of that topic and the key issues which have arisen. The policies are then introduced through supporting / justification text.

It is important to note that, while policies are packaged under topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, the whole Plan (i.e. all policies) should be considered: policies in one topic may apply to proposals which naturally fit under another.

The Plan finishes with an explanation of how it will be monitored and reviewed.

1.9 Delivering Aims, Objectives and Policies

The Aims and Objectives of this Plan will be delivered in two main ways:

- through its policies;
- through its identified actions (some of which are related to actions which cannot be implemented by this Plan itself as a document relating only to land-use).

The Plan's policies are designed to provide a framework which will be used by Local Authority Development Management Officers and Councillors (elected Members) when considering planning applications for development. The policies provide a set of parameters which will be applied to proposals for development and are therefore largely used in response to such proposals.

This Plan also sets out a range of community actions in each section, which have been identified through local consultation and the development of the Plan's Aims and Objectives, which are projects or programmes that will need to be implemented outside the development of this Plan. These may fall to the Parish Council to lead or the community or partners such as local authorities or statutory agencies. They also provide an indication, in some cases, of what local infrastructure in Dalwood is seen as a priority (and therefore how any proportion of

Community Infrastructure Levy receipts received as a result of new development, could be beneficially used).

In addition to the scope and remit of the Plan in terms of actions and delivery, National Planning Practice Guidance states that public bodies need to have regard to the purposes of the designation of the Parish as part of the Blackdown Hills and East Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 and section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 require that *"in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land' in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, relevant authorities 'shall have regard' to their purposes for which these areas are designated. A list of the public bodies and persons covered under 'relevant authorities' is found in Defra guidance on this duty, and Natural England has published good practice guidance."*

This duty is particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected areas. It applies to all local planning authorities, not just National Park authorities, and is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection."[6]

The duty applies to all decisions and activities that may affect land within an AONB and not just to those that relate to planning, countryside and related environmental issues.

Natural England's good practice guidance considers that in the application of the duty, it is good practice that a public body *"considers the duty of regard at several points in any decision-making process or activities, including during initial thinking, at more detailed planning stages, and at implementation; and provides written evidence that they have had regard and considered whether it is or is not relevant"*[7]

[6] Paragraph 039 (Landscape), Reference ID: 8-039-20190721, Revision date 21-07-19, National Planning Practice Guidance, Department for Communities and Local Government
[7] p.6, England's Statutory Landscape Designations: a practical guide to your duty of regard, Natural England

In practice, the “having regard to” duty means that “Decisions and actions taken by relevant authorities will invariably require a wide range of factors and issues to be taken into account. The duty requires that this process should include consideration of potential impacts on AONB/National Park purposes – with the expectation that adverse impacts will be avoided or mitigated where possible. Provided this is done, the duty has been met, irrespective of whether or not the decision ultimately taken conflicts with AONB/National Park purposes.

This Plan therefore also helps to inform the local planning authority’s duty to “have regard to” the purposes of AONBs, in particular the Blackdown Hills AONB which covers most of the Parish.

Sitting alongside this Plan and the East Devon Local Plan is the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan[8], a statutory plan required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, but which has no statutory status in the planning system. The Management Plan has been an important reference point and part of the evidence informing the development of the Plan and its policies. National Planning Practice Guidance affirms the importance of using the Management Plan in this way and also its role in delivery and considering future development.

“Management plans for National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty do not form part of the statutory development plan, but they help to set out the strategic context for development. They provide evidence of the value and special qualities of these areas, provide a basis for cross-organisational work to support the purposes of their designation and show how management activities contribute to their protection, enhancement and enjoyment. They may contain information which is relevant when preparing plan policies, or which is a material consideration when assessing planning applications.[9]”

2.Vision, Aims and Objectives

The planning Vision for the Parish represents the community’s view of what it would like the Parish to be like in the future by the time the Plan reaches its end date. The Vision is a representation of the Aims of the

[8] See https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/
[9] Paragraph 040 (Landscape), Reference ID: 8-040-20190721, Revision date 21-07-19, National Planning Practice Guidance, Department for Communities and Local Government

Plan and the things that the Plan seeks to achieve, derived from local community consultation and other evidence.

Vision Statement

Dalwood is a vibrant, active and friendly community that is a special place to live, work and visit. This Plan commits to protect, preserve and enhance the qualities of the community and the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONBs.

2.1 Aims of this Plan

The Aims of this Plan have been set following extensive community consultation and discussion. They are set out under a set of topic areas. These topics are:

- ✓ **Natural Environment**
- ✓ **Built and Historic Environment**
- ✓ **Housing and Population**
- ✓ **Community Facilities and Services**
- ✓ **Transport and Accessibility**
- ✓ **Economy and Employment**
- ✓ **Energy and Low Carbon**
- ✓ **Waste and Plastic**

The Objectives (how the Aims will be achieved) are set out in each topic section of this Plan and it is from these Objectives that the policies and community actions have been developed.

Natural Environment

Aim 1: Protect and enhance the natural environment, including the distinctive landscape and ecology.

Aim 2: Protect the tranquillity of the environment and maintain the dark skies.[10]

Built and Historic Environment

Aim 3: Ensure that all new development is sympathetic to the traditional character, materials and style to retain the distinctive character of the village.

Aim 4: Protect the area's heritage assets and their settings.

Housing and Population

Aim 5: Support new local housing development which respects the characteristics and constraints of Dalwood's built and natural environment, yet allows continual evolution of the Parish.

Aim 6: Preserve the overall scale and character of the village within the AONB.

Community Facilities and Services

Aim 7: Encourage retail and/or hospitality development that meets local and visitors' needs.

Aim 8: Resist the loss of local facilities and amenities (including St Peter's Church, Methodist Chapel, Community Shop and Post Office, Village Hall, Pavilion, Jubilee Field, Pub and protect Assets of Community Value (ACV's).

[10] *Aims 1 and 2: relate to the Natural Environment and the Objectives that ensue from them. They should have primacy in the Neighbourhood Plan and must be considered first and foremost in any neighbourhood planning matter.*

Transport and Accessibility

Aim 9: Seek ways to minimise parking problems in the village when development is proposed. Improve parking provision.

Aim 10: Maintain and enhance a network of public rights of way and bridleways.

Economy and Employment

Aim 11: Help create, support and sustain local businesses.

Aim 12: Improve broadband connectivity. Any future developments aim to improve connectivity.

Aim 13: Ensure new builds provide sustainable broadband connectivity.

Aim 14: Help to sustain arable and livestock farming life-styles

Energy and Low Carbon

Aim 15: Support small scale, unobtrusive renewable or low carbon energy schemes providing they are sensitively sited and screened, i.e. appropriately landscaped.

Aim 16: Support a provider or village initiative to come forward with card access electric vehicle charging points.

Waste and Plastic

Aim 17: Increase recycling levels via a generic supporting policy.

3. Natural Environment

3.1 Introduction

Dalwood is a rural Parish nestled in the Blackdown Hills AONB. The Parish itself has little through traffic. It is an example of a tranquil, beautiful and special rural Devon landscape rich with wildlife.

The distinctive quality of the Parish is a characteristic highly valued by the residents and it is one of the reasons people chose to live here. This applies to those who have moved into the village and those who have grown up here and stayed or moved away and returned. The Aims and Objectives reflect the desire to protect the valuable and high-quality natural environment of the Parish.

Dalwood: a view from the north

Aims	Objectives
1. Protect and enhance the countryside's natural environment including the distinctive landscape and ecology	a) Retain and enhance the existing beauty of native trees and hedges alongside the preservation of the existing Devon banks b) Flood protection/mitigation whilst maintaining aesthetics of river vista
2. Protect the tranquillity of the environment and maintain the dark skies	a) Resist any development or road scheme likely to have any significant adverse impact on tranquillity or dark skies and seek ways to reduce any existing impact

Figures 6a and 6b which follow show the locations of some of the most valued greenspace, trees and hedgerow assets.

Figure 6a: Key Natural Environment Assets

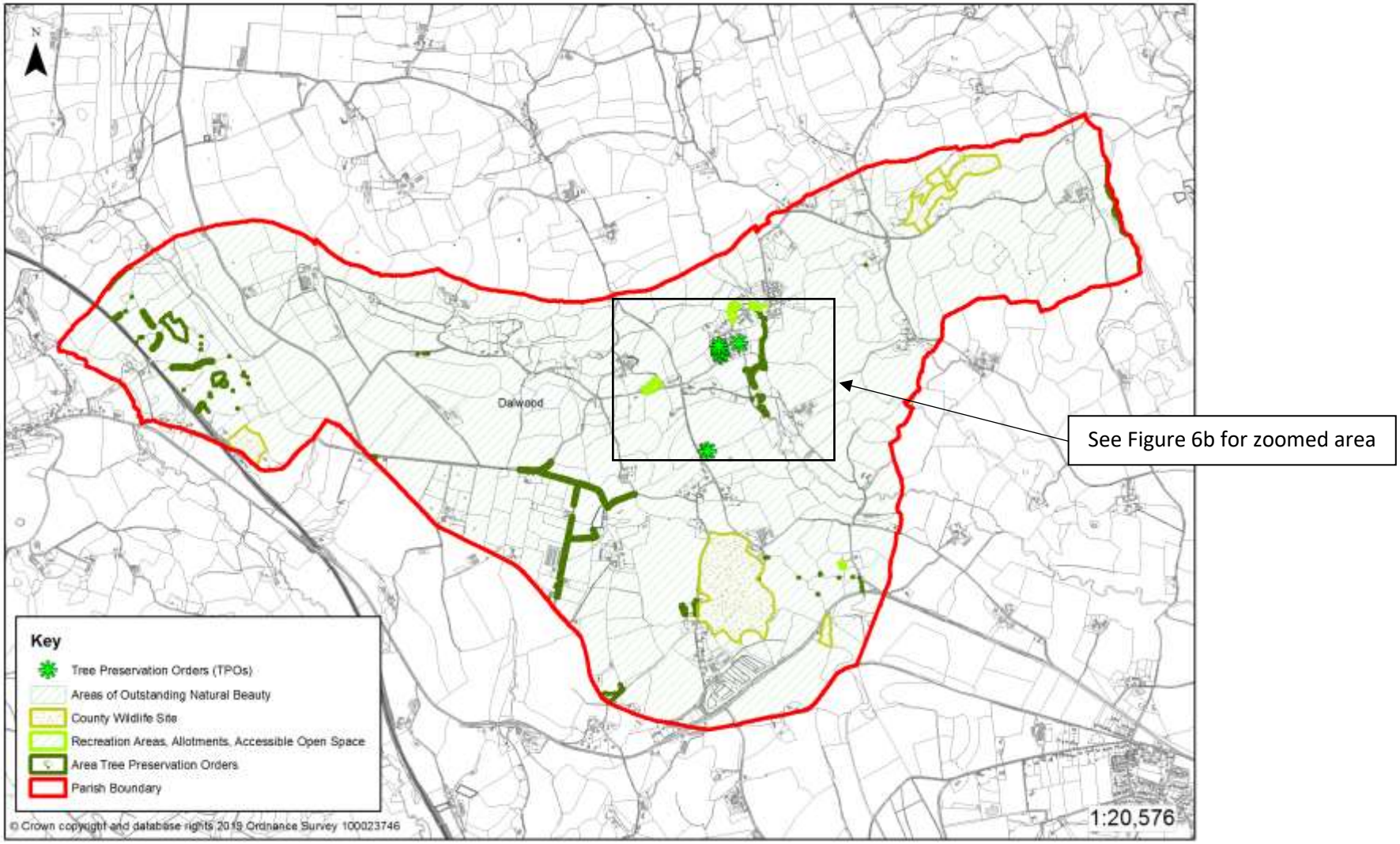
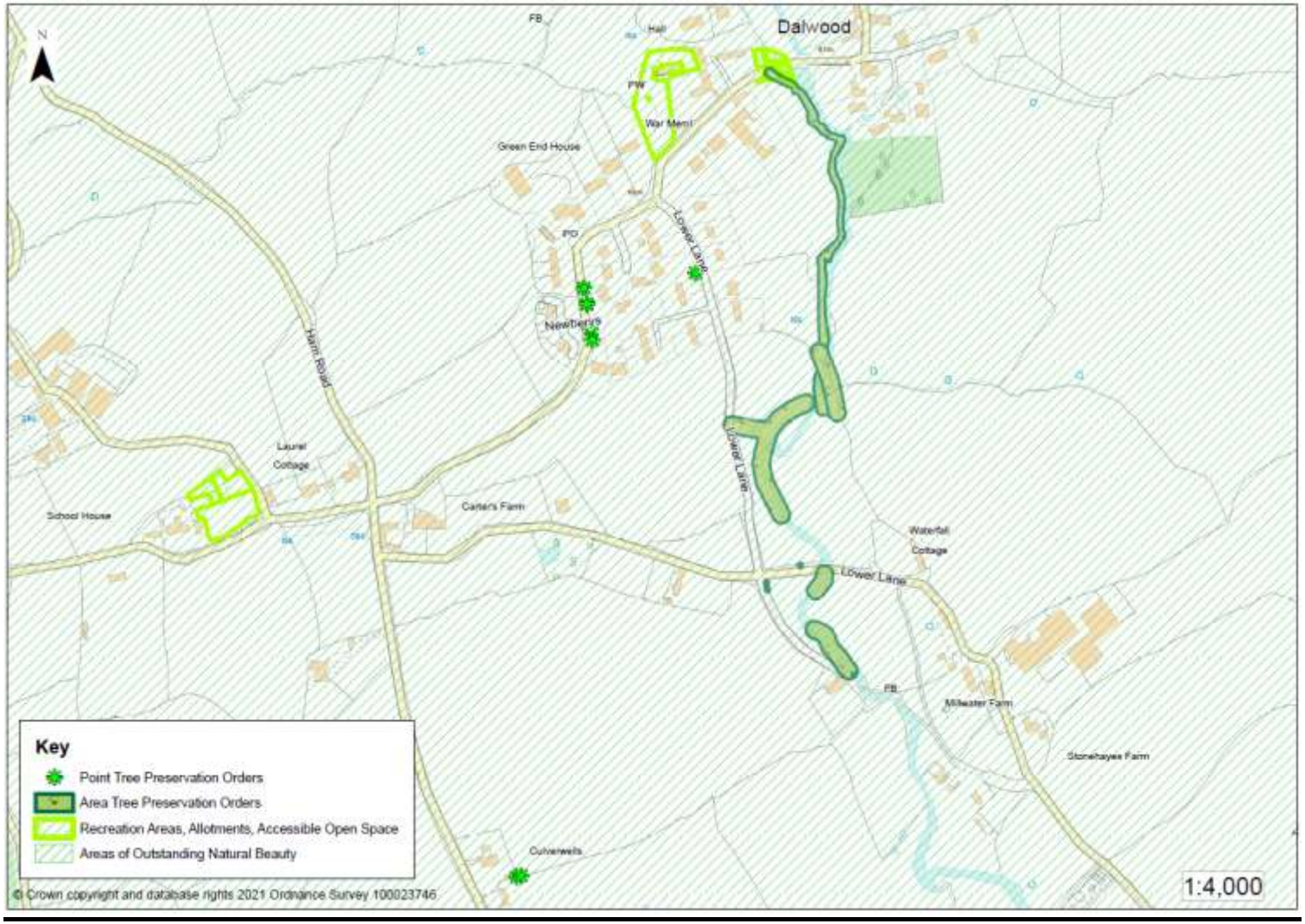


Figure 6b: Key Natural Environment Assets (zoomed area from Figure 6b)



Note: areas are existing designations made by East Devon District Council in the adopted Local Plan or through legal designation apart from the areas labelled as Accessible Open Space which feature as part of an Open Space Study produced by EDDC and which inform Local Plan policies only.

3.2 Retaining and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the Parish

3.2.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy NE1: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the Parish

The Plan has already identified the importance of the high quality of the landscape, and of the biodiversity in the Parish as part of that landscape, to both the people who live in Dalwood and the wildlife which inhabits the natural environment. It is critical, therefore, that the natural environment is retained, conserved, and enhanced where necessary, now and in the future.

While there are other policies at national and district levels which afford some protection of the natural environment, there are several locally specific issues which are deemed of sufficient importance to the community to require additional policy protection and guidance. The Plan also recognises that while the approved Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan provides principles which should be applied to the natural environment in Dalwood, they do not have statutory weight in the decision-making process, even though they should be considered as a "material consideration" when planning proposals are considered by the local planning authority.

There is a strong sense of need for the Plan adequately to reinforce some of the overarching principles of protection for the environment to give both certainty that such policy coverage will remain, and to ensure that the Plan represents fully the weight of the issues raised by the community. In doing so, it can fulfil its Aims and Objectives without relying solely on other policy set out elsewhere.

The Aims and Objectives, identified as important by the community, also show synergy with many of the agreed Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan themes, aims, objectives and policies (some of which are reproduced on this page). As a result this Plan has looked to the Management Plan to take a lead from some of its evidence on landscape quality, biodiversity and specific features and facets of the AONBs to help underpin and justify the planning policies developed.[11]

It is clear that it is not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to prevent development from taking place. However, it is equally clear that any development which is proposed within the Parish, as part of the Blackdown Hills or East Devon AONBs, requires special consideration to ensure that its impact does not have significant adverse or negative impacts on the local valued natural environment.

Policies in this Plan therefore require development proposals to

Planning and development (PD) management objective and policies
Objective PD To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Blackdown Hills by ensuring that all development affecting the AONB is of the highest quality, sensitive to landscape setting and conserves its wildlife, historic character and other special qualities
Farming, forestry and land management (FLM) management objective and policies
Objective FLM To support sustainable farming and forestry practices that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB and deliver a range of ecosystem services
Biodiversity and geodiversity (BG) management objective and policies
Objective BG To conserve geodiversity and ensure effective conservation, enhancement, expansion and connectivity of habitats, forming coherent and resilient ecological networks across the Blackdown Hills and beyond, facilitating the movement of priority species across the landscape
Landscape character (LC) management objective and policies
Objective LC To ensure that the distinctive character and qualities of the Blackdown Hills landscape are understood, conserved, enhanced and restored
Historic environment and cultural heritage (CH) management objective and policies
Objective CH To ensure effective conservation, management and understanding of the Blackdown Hills historic environment, including historic buildings, archaeological sites and heritage landscapes

[11] For example, see https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/bhaonb_management_plan_2019-24.pdf, pp.36-38, 44-45 and 56-59

demonstrate that they will not have any significant adverse impact on the existing state of the natural environment.

The concern about potential adverse impact extends to two specific issues, raised as particularly important by the community during consultation and supported by other evidence: a desire to see any new development landscaped using species of plants native to the area; and the need to protect traditional and ancient hedge banks.

There is a preference for appropriate development to fit within the landscape, without having adverse impacts on its surrounding landscape and the natural and built character of the area within which the proposal is located. However, in some cases, it may be acceptable for appropriate landscaping to play a role as part of the solution to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the setting of the proposal. Where the use of planting is an appropriate part of that solution, native local species of plants should be used, such as hawthorn, blackthorn, oak or beech.

Devon hedges (commonly also referred to as “Devon banks”) are a common feature of the landscape in Dalwood. They are usually formed of an earth bank which is faced with either stone or turf and is often topped with bushes or shrubs. They are often very old, biodiverse, and very attractive. They play an important role as stock-proof barriers and shelter for livestock and crops. Banked hedges and associated ditches are important to mitigate against flooding. The Parish’s farming community and other local landowners have a key role in maintaining the integrity of these important features. The successful conservation of these hedges is critical to maintaining the special character of Dalwood’s natural, farmed, and historic landscape.

Policy NE1: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the Parish

1. **Development proposals will only be supported where:**

   i) **the development does not result in adverse impacts on the natural environment (landscape and biodiversity); and,**

   ii) **they enhance the natural environment.**

2. **Where any adverse landscape impact can be suitably mitigated, this must ensure compatibility with local landscape character. Such measures should include the use of locally present native species of trees, shrubs and hedges.**

3. **Proposals for development which unavoidably affect traditional Devon hedges will only be supported where they have demonstrated no harm to the hedgerow/bank, setting in the landscape, biodiversity, and habitats.**

4. **There is a presumption of conservation of any existing natural features even where they are not afforded specific protection by law. Any removal must be justified in the planning application, and new or replacements must be of suitable locally present native trees, shrubs and hedges.**

5. **Proposals for development should not increase flood risk or undermine flood protection/mitigation measures especially in the Corry Brook corridor, where green infrastructure which will give benefits in terms of flood risk management and protecting water quality will be supported.**

6. **Opportunities to incorporate provision for nesting birds and roosting bats must be considered, and included wherever possible/practical in new developments, to protect and enhance biodiversity. A minimum of one integral bird box designed for swifts shall be incorporated into each new build residential unit, and/or where existing buildings are being altered/extended, an ecologist should be instructed to**

check for existing nests/ roosts of birds or bats. These should be retained where possible or replaced with an integral box, or if not practical, an external box. Wherever possible and practicable, this minimum requirement should be exceeded through other appropriate measures including, but not limited to, external nest cups for house martins and swallows, and internal oxygen "tubes" for bats, at all times in accordance with current legislation for specially protected species.

7. For the avoidance of doubt, in this context, the definition of "development" includes changes to access to the highway where planning permission is required and in such cases the Devon County Council Highway Management in Protected Landscapes Guidance[12].

[12] See https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/landscape-policy-and-guidance

Community Actions and Projects

CA1 - The Parish Council will work with partners including the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB and East Devon District Council (EDCC) to encourage the planting of native species of hedges and trees.

CA2 - The Parish Council will work with partners including the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB, Devon County Council (DCC) and EDDC to encourage the positive management and preservation of Devon banks.

CA3 - The Parish Council will work with the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB, EDDC and DCC to identify hedgerows and Devon banks at risk in the Parish.

CA4 - The Parish Council will actively resist attempts to introduce any extra unessential signs to the area.

CA5 - Vehicles used in the Parish must be appropriate to their access routes to prevent damage to the lanes and track banks and hedges. When employing contractors, it is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure suitably sized vehicles will be used to complete the contract.

CA6 - The Parish Council will work with the local community and DCC to retain and support the position of Footpath Warden.

CA7 - The Parish Council through the Parish Tree Warden with the assistance of others, will prepare an asset register of trees, stands and copses which the community will help to protect.

CA8 - The Parish Council, through the Parish Tree Warden, will secure, encourage, and promote a wide range of tree species, woods, and hedges in and around the Parish to enhance and benefit the community now and for the future.

CA9 - The Parish Tree Warden, through the auspices of the Parish Council, should form a group of residents who wish to assist in the preservation and appreciation of tree and woodland heritage.

CA10 - The Parish Council with the assistance of others will prepare a biodiversity assessment of the Parish.

CA11 - The Parish Council will encourage the use of guidance produced by the Blackdown Hills AONB for householders and organisations on limiting light pollution from new and replacement lighting.

CA12 - The Parish Council will seek to deliver the Community Actions and Projects.

3.3 Preserving Tranquillity and Dark Skies

3.3.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy NE2: Preserving Tranquillity and Dark Skies

This Plan has already identified the importance of the tranquillity of the Parish in relation to the characteristics of the natural environment and landscape. Much of the coverage in policy terms which relates to preserving the tranquillity of the environment is contained within AONB Management Plan guidance (which is advisory and not statutory). The adopted Local Plan has no policies specifically referencing or considering the implications of potential change to the tranquillity of the Parish. National planning policy allows for planning policies and decisions to aim to identify and protect areas of tranquillity which "…*have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason*"[13].

It is a locally specific issue to the Parish and therefore, given its importance to the community, merits some reinforcement through policy in this Plan. There is a significant body of evidence which demonstrates the presence of dark skies above the Parish and their value[14]. Protecting them as an asset through the control of light pollution is important locally. Even small changes to lighting can have an impact when added together cumulatively. National planning policy states that planning policies should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location and should *"…limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*"[15] The Local Plan sets out a policy which identifies light pollution as District-wide criteria for consideration of development proposals.

---

[13] See paragraph 185(b), National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

[14] The AONB Management Plan signposts this stating that "Natural starry skies are one of the sights which make the Blackdown Hills so special. Night-time darkness is a key characteristic of the area's sense of tranquillity and relative remoteness. The Blackdown Hills is the fifth darkest AONB in England, with very low levels of night time brightness; 95% of the AONB is in the two very darkest categories as evidenced by 2016 research by CPRE." See https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/bhaonb_management_plan_2019-24.pdf, p.38
Appendix 1 to this Plan: Blackdown Hills AONB Design Guide for Houses provides guidance on lighting at p19 (p81 of Dalwood Neighbourhood Plan)

[15] See paragraph 185(c), National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The focus of this policy is on local amenity and surroundings rather than on the impact on dark skies per se. However, the AONB Management Plan sets out a policy which relates very clearly, to the tranquillity and value of dark skies, stating that "*Promote high levels of peace and tranquillity with dark night skies by minimising noise, intrusive development and light pollution.*"[16] Given this context, the importance to the community, and its identification in the AONB Management Plan's objectives and policies as an important issue, the Plan introduces a policy which specifically refers to maintaining tranquillity and maintaining the dark skies through the control of light pollution.

Policy NE2: Preserving Tranquillity and Dark Skies

To ensure that the tranquillity of the Parish and dark skies are maintained, development will only be supported where it demonstrates that it:

i) will not adversely impact on the tranquillity of the Parish through increasing levels and extent of noise; and,

ii) will not adversely impact, through light pollution (during any part of the year), on valued dark skies observable from the Parish.

New development should follow the guidance on lighting contained in the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24, and its Design Guide For Houses.

[16] See https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/bhaonb_management_plan_2019-24.pdf, p.29

4 Built and Historic Environment

4.1 Introduction

The importance of the built and historic environment is recognised very clearly in national policy, in the Local Plan and the AONB Management Plan. Protection of heritage assets[17] and of the character of Dalwood is important both to the local community and also for the sake of the high-quality landscape within which the village sits.

St Peter's Church

The NPPF provides strong guidance on the importance of high-quality design, reinforced by the publication of the National Design Guidance in 2019[18]. Development proposals should take the guidance fully into account while also meeting the requirements in the policies in this section of the Plan. Section 16 of the NPPF is also very clear on the importance of the historic environment and protection of heritage assets.

The AONB Management Plan, although advisory in nature, sets out themes, aims, objectives and policies relating to the importance of ensuring that any new development is of high quality design and conserves the historic character of the AONB, stating that, "*To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Blackdown Hills by ensuring that all development affecting the AONB is of the highest quality, sensitive to*

[17] The NPPF defines a "heritage asset" as "A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)". See Annex 2, p.67, National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

[18] Section 12 of the NPPF July 2021(National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)) provides the Government's planning policy on design which is amplified in the National Design Guide which can be viewed at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide.

landscape setting and conserves its wildlife, historic character and other special qualities."[19]

This places additional importance on the careful consideration of the quality of new development proposed in the Parish.

Aims	Objectives
3. Ensure all new development is sympathetic to the traditional character, materials and style to retain the distinctive character of the village	a) Work with East Devon District Council and applicants to ensure that any new development, alteration, or extension is done according to the Blackdown Hills AONB design guide for houses
	b) Any new developments should use locally distinctive materials wherever possible and should be of an appropriate design and scale and not detract from or intrude on the natural beauty of the area
4. Protect the area's heritage sites and locations	a) Protect St Peter's Church and adjacent cottages, The Tuckers Arms, Village Hall, Loughwood Meeting House, Dalwood Jubilee Pavilion and Field, Reading Room, Methodist Chapel.

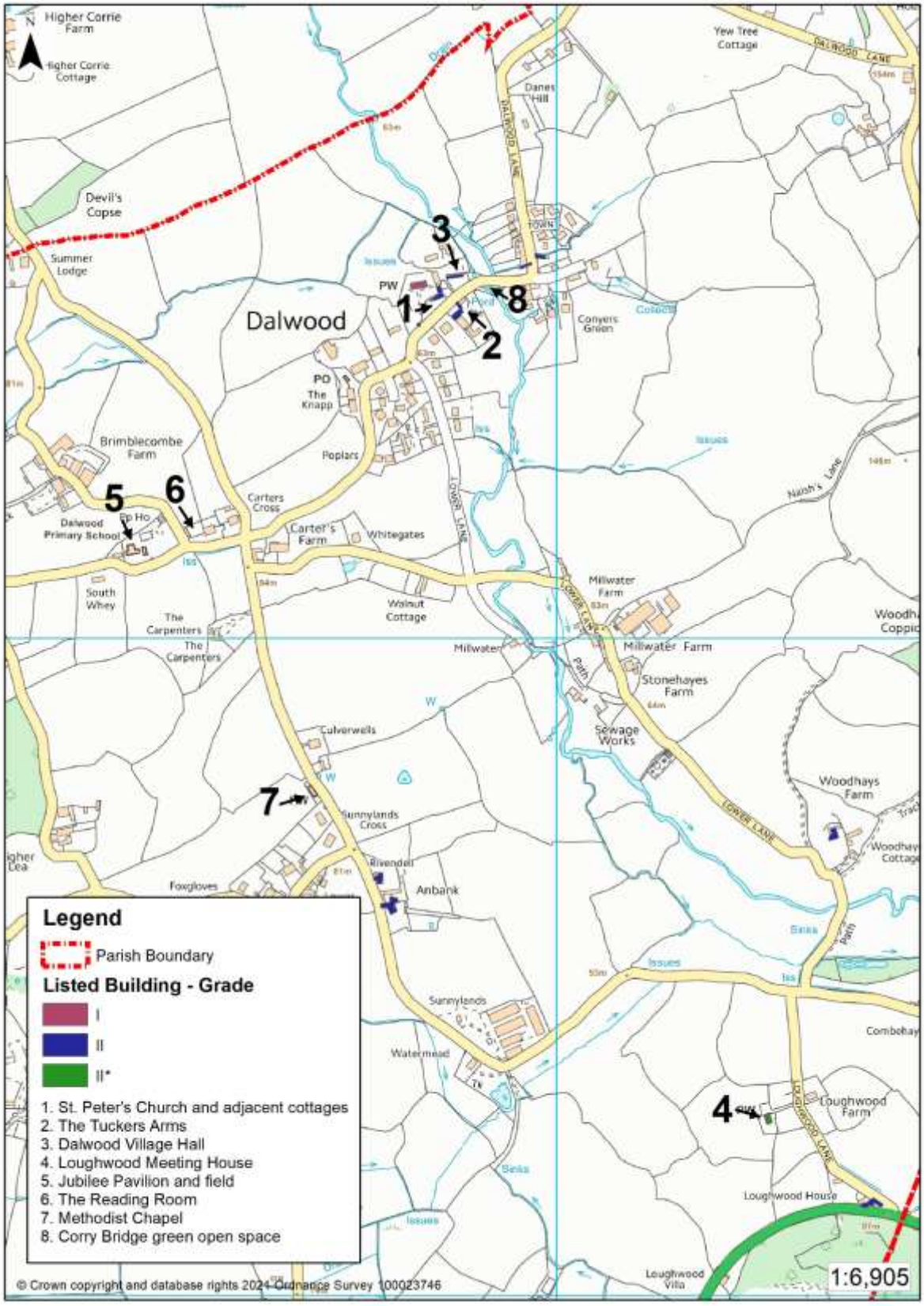
4.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policies: BHE1 and BHE2

Dalwood has several buildings of historic significance, some of which already have national protection through listed building status and others which are present on the Historic Environment Record. Of particular importance to us are: St Peter's Church (Grade I listed) and the adjacent cottages (Grade II listed), The Tuckers Arms (Grade II listed), Village Hall, Loughwood Meeting House (Grade II *), The Methodist Chapel, and The Reading Room (see Figure 7). National planning policy requires assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. The table following Figure 7 provides additional information as to the status of the named assets. The green open space of the Jubilee Field, Green river-bank and Corry Bridge and St Peter's Church Cottages were all raised as significantly important, in historic terms, throughout consultations. Our objective above (4a) therefore reflects the desire to protect them. The Parish Council will work with EDDC to secure the inclusion on the local

[19] See objective PD, https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/bhaonb_management_plan_2019-24.pdf, p.60

list of assets which do not have protection in place, but which demonstrably merit protection. It is the expectation that Devon County Council Highways Authority will consider planning conditions, if necessary, as a result of proposed developments, including the potential impact of construction traffic while development takes place.

Figure 7: Heritage Assets Most Valued by the Local Community



Status of Local Heritage Assets

Asset	National designation (source: Heritage Gateway)	EDDC "Local List"?[20]	(Also) locally valued?
1. St Peter's Church and the adjacent cottages (Hill View and Old Yew Cottage)	Grade I Listed (St Peter's Church) Grade II Listed (Hill View) Grade II Listed (Old Yew Cottage)	No	Yes.
2. The Tuckers Arms	Grade II Listed	No	Yes.
3. Dalwood Village Hall	None. See for further details on HER. https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?resourceID=104&uid=MDV30318	No	Yes. The building is important from an historic and cultural perspective being at the heart of the community to this day. The old village school was erected in 1833, and enlarged in 1870. When a new school was built in 1926 it became the church hall, and in 1970 it became the village hall. On the front wall of the hall there is a stone Water Vessel (not sure of its original use) built proud of the wall dated 1837- 1897 in commemoration of Queen Victoria's 60 year reign . 1897 being her Diamond Jubilee year.
4. Loughwood Meeting House	Grade II* Listed (known as Loughwood Chapel)	No	Yes.

[20] Based on working with EDDC officers and checking the following source: https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/3721755/east-devon-list-of-local-heritage-assets-december-2020.pdf

Asset	National designation (source: Heritage Gateway)	EDDC "Local List"?[20]	(Also) locally valued?
5. Jubilee Pavilion and Field	None.	No	Yes. Dalwood Recreation Trust was formed to purchase on the site of Dalwood Primary School a wooden building which was renovated to become The Pavilion. The old school field was gifted to the village by EDDC and became the Jubilee Field, as Queen Elizabeth celebrated her Diamond Jubilee in 2012.
6. The Reading Room	None.	No	Yes. Deed of Gift of a Site for a Recreation Room at Dalwood Devon, 1903. The site was gifted to Dalwood to build a Recreation Room on it. From subscriptions from the Dalwood community the Reading and Recreation Room was built to ' permit the room to be used for the benefit of the inhabitants of Dalwood Parish'. It is known today as the Reading Room, it is managed and maintained by a registered charity. It is used regularly by community groups who meet to play snooker and support other community leisure activities and fundraisers.
7. Methodist Chapel	None. See for further details on HER. https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?reso	No	Yes. The Methodist Church, as a place of worship, was built by devout Bible Christian's donations and ready for services in 1868. Some seven years later '..the commodious schoolroom

Asset	National designation (source: Heritage Gateway)	EDDC "Local List"?[20]	(Also) locally valued?
	urceID=104&uid=MDV11193		and vestry' were added'. All was refurbished in 1904. Over a period of time Bible Christians and others amalgamated and in 1932 it became the Methodist Church. It is known today as the Methodist Chapel, it welcomes all to weekly services and other fundraising events with and for the community.
8. Corry Bridge green open space	None.	No	Yes. The site of burial of a time capsule in October 1996. It contains a copy of the Mid- week herald paper dated on the day and items/writings from Dalwood Primary school children. It was hoped it would be of interest to anyone in the future who might discover and read it, revealing a snapshot of life in Dalwood 1996. It remains a 'modern' site of local historic importance and needs recognition as such for future generations.

Dalwood is a typical rural village, set in the AONB. It is considered important to protect and conserve the character of the existing built environment, while recognising that where change does take place, often due to local resources becoming restricted, it does so in a way that is sympathetic and sensitive to the village. The Blackdown Hills AONB has developed design guidance for housing and it is fully endorsed as appropriate advice, guidance and content for any housing developments

proposed in the Parish. The guidance is reproduced in Appendix 4 of this Plan[21].

Policy BHE1: Maintaining the Built Character of the Parish through High-Quality Design

All new development should achieve high-quality design and be sympathetic to the traditional built character of the Parish. Proposals will be supported where they:

i) in the case of housing development, take fully into account the Blackdown Hills AONB Design Guide for Houses (March 2012) alongside the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code.

And, for all development:

ii) ensure that the size, scale and location of the development is appropriate to the form, scale and setting of the existing built environment;

iii) ensure that materials and design of the development are in-keeping with the character of the existing built environment;

iv) ensure that it is designed in such a way that it minimises the impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape, on views of the proposed development and on the natural environment;

v) ensure adequate covered and secure external storage for recycling and waste disposal bins;

vi) include the use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and other measures to reduce surface water run-off; and,

vii) are designed to minimise the occurrence of crime, disorder or anti-social behaviour.

[21] It is also available to see at https://blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/bhaonb-housing-design-guide_publishedmarch2012.pdf

Policy BHE2: Protecting Heritage Assets

Proposals for development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings will only be supported where they demonstrate, as part of the planning application, that:

- **i) they have fully considered the Historic Environment Record (HER) as well as other available local evidence documenting local historic sites; and**
- **ii) they will not have an adverse impact on these assets or their settings.**

Community Actions and Projects

CA13 - The Parish Council will work in partnership with the community and Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, and other partners to ensure as necessary to protect the sites of local value including to utilise the EDDC Heritage Strategy to proposed non-designated Heritage Assets for inclusion on the EDDC local list

5 Housing and Population

5.1 Introduction

National planning policy advises that it is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability, and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability and vitality of villages and smaller settlements.

It suggests that a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, on retaining local services and community facilities such as a nursery school, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship, and that rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities. It also states that assessing housing need and allocating sites should be considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and / or Neighbourhood Plan process.

Newberys: Dalwood's most recent development

The Local Plan requires special care to be taken when development takes place within the AONBs, as do AONB policies, with development proposals being required to conserve or enhance the character of the landscape and protect the traditional local built form.

Aims	Objectives
5. Support new local housing development which respects the characteristics and constraints of Dalwood's built and natural environment, yet allows continual evolution of the Parish	a) Recognise the existing built form and boundaries of the village and resist any new development outside these confines b) Look favourably upon new housing development which meets Parish needs and / or supports the ageing population as well as young families c) Support development where it re-uses redundant or disused sites or buildings which meets the criteria of this Plan and would lead to an enhancement of the setting d) Support schemes which will benefit the Parish rural economy and / or society and improve the sustainability of the Parish providing they are appropriate to the setting and meet the requirements of this Plan
6. Preserve the overall character and scale of the village within the AONB	a) Any new development should use locally distinctive materials whenever possible and should be of an appropriate design and scale so as not to detract from or intrude on the natural beauty of the area

5.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy HP1: Housing Development in Dalwood

According to the 2011 census, the Parish had a population of 380 residents in 193 households. Recent estimates suggest that Dalwood village has around 196 households accommodating 380 residents. The following table presents a snapshot of figures for the Parish and, alongside the questionnaire results and other consultation held during development of the Plan, sets the context supporting the housing policy.

Figure 8: Snapshot of Housing Data

Dalwood Neighbourhood Plan Housing statistics

NOTE No allowance has been made for the affordable housing development of 4 houses and 2 flats at Newberys

The Information below was collected from various sources :

- Individual questionnaires circulated to all Parish residents
- Reference to latest census material
- From information provided at Parish open consultation meetings. List of dates of meetings can be found elsewhere in this document.
- Local and district council records
- Planning applications.

Ownership

Owned outright	118
Owned with Mortgage	32
Rented from Council	9
Rented from Housing Associations/ Charities	2
Rented from private landlord	5
Rent Free	6
Second Homes / holiday letting	Approx 7

Recent Builds.

Records show that over the last 20 years 2 new properties have been built but several existing properties have had extensions and alterations carried out.

Housing Occupancy

Single person	48
Two people	93
Three people	14
Four people	14
Five people	6
Six people	3
Seven people and more	0

AGE (Calculated from available evidence. Some people declined to answer this question)

Under 25 years old	6%
25 - 55	16%
55 - 65	20%
Over 65	55%
Declined to answer	3%

As the Plan sets out in the Built and Historic Environment Section, Dalwood village is characterised by an historic core. Roads to the village are narrow, often single track and flanked by traditional Devon banks or hedges. Whilst there is no public transport available, anyone without a car is reliant on community transport such as 'Ring and Ride' (a Parish Council supported service), Trips Community Transport Association, or lifts from others to access facilities not available in the village.

The village benefits from a Village Hall, Children's Nursery, two churches, a community shop and the Jubilee Pavilion and Field with children's playing area. There is some employment in the village, which include: the Pub, Sewards Coaches, Benger Landscaping, Burrow Farm Gardens, Andrewhayes Caravan Park, and B&B accommodation. Much of the local employment in the Parish is naturally based on farming activity. It is important to understand the characteristics of the village as they inform the suitability or not of locating new development there, and to what scale and type.

The Local Plan does not consider Dalwood as suitable to sustain further development under Strategy 27 due to its limited range of services and facilities. Any new development within Dalwood needs to be mindful of Strategy 7, Development in the Countryside, which includes the following requirements:

"…*Development in the countryside will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local or Neighbourhood Plan policy that explicitly permits such development and where it would not harm the distinctive landscape, amenity and environmental qualities within which it is located, including:*

1. Land form and patterns of settlement.

2. Important natural and manmade features which contribute to the local landscape, character, including topography, traditional field boundaries, areas of importance for nature conservation and rural buildings.

3. The adverse disruption of a view from a public place which forms part of the distinctive character of the area or otherwise causes significant visual intrusions."

Local Plan policies have established a strategy for the District which focuses most development in the more sustainable locations in East Devon (Strategy 27). In this context Local Plan Strategy 27 is also

pertinent: "*If communities wish to promote development other than that which is supported through this strategy and other strategies in the Plan (at the settlements listed above or any other settlement) they will need to produce a Neighbourhood Plan or promote community led development (for example Community Land Trusts) justifying how and why, in a local context, the development will promote the objectives of sustainable development.*"

Dalwood is a rural Parish with few facilities and is set in a sensitive environment and landscape which needs to be protected for its beauty and biodiversity, and its status within the AONBs reflects this. Policies are set out earlier in this Plan which govern how any new development should look with regard to respecting its rural surroundings.

The Local Plan policy (Strategy 35: Exception Mixed Market and Affordable Housing at Villages, Small Towns and Outside Built-up Area Boundaries[22]) sets out exceptional circumstances when housing could be acceptable in countryside locations. The policy identifies criteria which must be met for 'Exception Sites' to be supported[23]. The policy states that "*Exception site mixed affordable and open market housing schemes, at villages and outside of Built-up Area Boundaries, for up to or around 15 dwellings will be allowed where there is a proven local need demonstrated through an up to date robust housing needs survey. Affordable housing must account for at least 66% of the houses built…*" before defining more precisely the requirements for such sites to be considered acceptable.

The community questionnaire identified a preference for housing developments to take place only if local need is established and for them to come forward within a 'settlement boundary'. The consultation process also highlighted a need for smaller homes for existing residents to down-size and remain in the village[24]. Responses also suggested support for housing development at a rate equal to that of the last 20 years of around an average of 2 per annum. There was also a desire for mixed types of

[22] See https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1772841/local-plan-final-adopted-plan-2016.pdf
[23] The Local Plan defines exception sites as "Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding." See https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1772841/local-plan-final-adopted-plan-2016.pdf, p.231
[24] See our Consultation Statement for details.

development including both privately owned and community-led housing.[25]

While housing delivery within the current built extent of the village is not always feasible it is also, therefore, recognised that "exceptions sites" outside the village's current built extent could be acceptable. The village has benefitted before from a site coming forward in this way[26].

Within this context, this Plan looks favourably upon new housing developments which meet Parish needs and/or support the ageing population as well as young families. This Plan supports the provision of housing through the demonstration of small-scale local needs on exception sites in Dalwood.

Within East Devon District Council's adopted Local Plan, the Parish of Dalwood is designated as open countryside and the previous Built-up Area Boundary defined in the previous Local Plan was removed. To help respond positively to the feedback from the community set out in the paragraph above, the reintroduction of a boundary to define the 'village' for development purposes is considered appropriate.

The Lympstone Neighbourhood Plan set a precedent for the reintroduction of Built Up Area Boundaries within East Devon. The East Devon Villages Plan acknowledges this. "Lympstone has made a neighbourhood plan that defines the Built-up Area Boundary and other neighbourhood plans may be produced which define Built Up Area Boundariess. *[sic.]*" Whilst Lympstone was included within East Devon's Local Plan as a Strategy 27 settlement, and Dalwood is not, it provided the catalyst for considering something similar for Dalwood.

However, a Built-up Area Boundary has a particular definition within East Devon's Local Plan and Villages Plan. So as not to be confused with these prescriptive definitions with the associated strategies and policies, and avoid being subject to any future updates to the Local Plan that may alter the policy direction of these designations, the steering group decided to define a Zone or part of the Parish where limited housing development would be permitted, providing it meets the requirements of Policy BHE1 for high quality design and sympathy to the traditional built character of Dalwood. The Zone is shown in Figure 9, and its boundary is tightly drawn

[25] See http://dalwoodparish.co.uk

[26] In 2010 Dalwood's Housing Survey identified the need for 6 affordable dwellings, which have been built and occupied since 2015.

around the existing village. Policy HP1 will permit 'annexes' to existing dwellings, subject to the stated criteria. Within the context of the policy, an 'annexe' is defined as accommodation which is ancillary to the main dwelling and used for residential purposes. It may be inter-connecting within the property as a whole (e.g. via doorways) or it may be accessed by a separate external entrance and form separate, additional accommodation. Annexes are typically proposed to allow relatives to live 'with' or close to their family with a degree of independence. In Dalwood, this is particularly relevant to younger and elder people who may still wish to live at home or in the village, but also require an element of support. The availability of additional annexes could enable some downsizing by elderly or single people from larger family accommodation, enabling young and growing families to meet their housing needs by occupying the main residential premises.

In the summer of 2015 East Devon District Council consulted on criteria for defining the Built-up Area Boundaries within their Villages Plan. The consultation resulted in the criteria, which were subsequently used to define the built-up areas included in East Devon's Villages Plan. To help interpretation of these criteria a plain English guide was developed[27]:

- Criteria A1 – black lines will be drawn around the main groups of existing buildings and not around undeveloped areas. If communities want additional development this can be looked at through neighbourhood planning.
- Criteria A2 – black lines will generally follow recognisable features such as fences and hedges, although large gardens may be excluded to help control the building of extra houses in their grounds.
- Criteria B1 – sites with existing planning permissions will be included in the black lines if they are close to the village, unless there were particular circumstances that justified the permission such as outstanding design or low-density development.
- Criteria B2 – community buildings will be included in the black lines if they are close to the village, unless they include large grounds on the edge of the village.

[27] See East Devon Villages Plan, http://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planningpolicy/villages-plan/proposed-criteria-for-revised-built-up-area-boundaries/

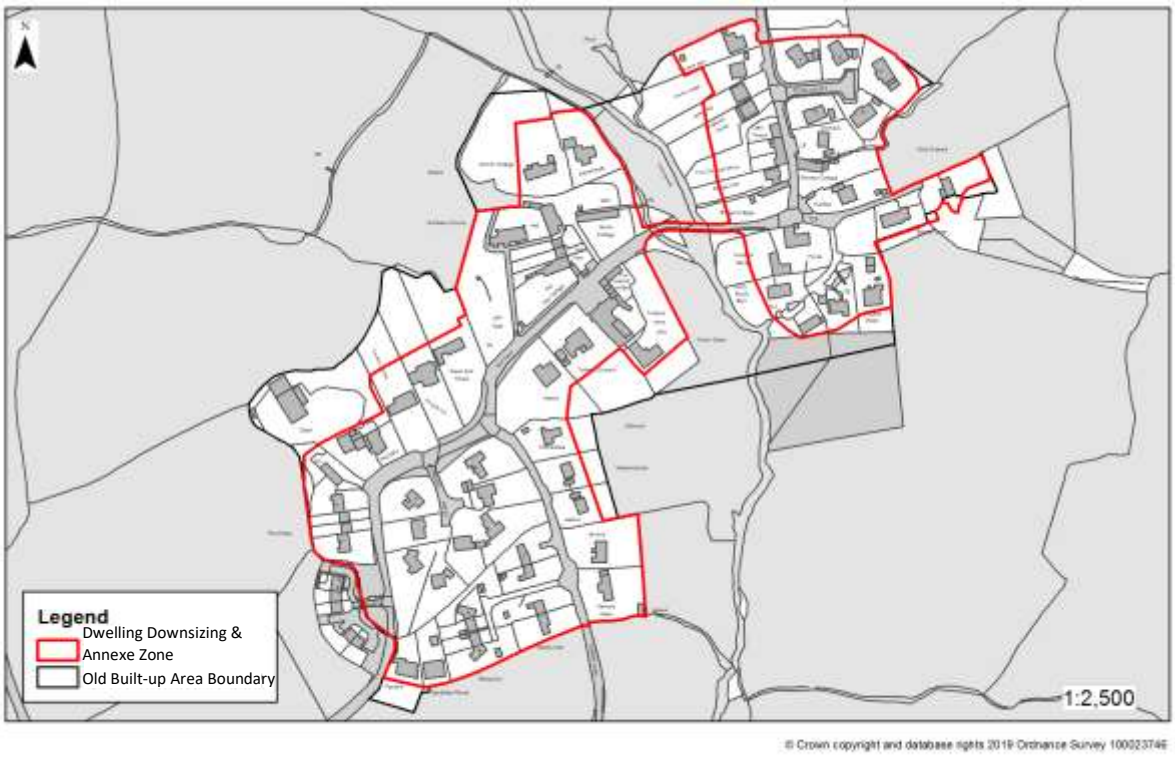
- Criteria B3 – where a site has been allocated for housing, employment or community development in the local plan or a neighbourhood plan it will be included in the black lines unless it includes large areas of open space.
- Criteria C1 – large gardens or grounds associated with buildings will be excluded where they could extend the built-up area if developed.
- Criteria C2 – large gardens will not be included in the black lines unless they are surrounded by buildings, and any new buildings would look like part of the existing village.
- Criteria C3 – groups of buildings detached from the main village area will not be included in the black lines.
- Criteria C4 – if different parts of the village are separated from the part of the village that has the services and facilities, they will not be in the black lines unless they have services and facilities of their own.

These criteria have been used as the basis for the steering group to identify an appropriate Dwelling Downsizing and Annexe Zone for Dalwood, shown below in Figure 9 (as a red line to show it clearly, rather than a black line as quoted in the criteria above)[28].

The previous Built-up Area Boundary had some anomalies and would not meet these criteria as it included large garden areas and the central band of open space around the river which is liable to flood. The introduction of a Dwelling Downsizing and Annexe Zone in this Plan presented an opportunity to create a more holistic boundary.

[28] The Neighbourhood Plan steering group invited East Devon District Council planners to visit Dalwood to review the revised boundary and ensure that it would be appropriate for inclusion within the Neighbourhood Plan. Subsequent discussion confirmed that the officers are content that the boundary demarcation has followed the criteria appropriately.

Figure 9: Dalwood Village Dwelling Downsizing and Annexe Zone



The boundary of the new Dwelling Downsizing and Annexe Zone excludes the existing affordable housing to the southwest of the village. This is to ensure that, should the site be redeveloped in the future (for example, following a fire), it will remain affordable in perpetuity and will not comply with policies allowing open market housing. If a need for more affordable housing is proven in the future, it can be built on a suitable edge-of-village site outside the settlement boundary through East Devon District Council's Strategy 35 for exception sites.

The Zone, shown on Figure 9 does not replace or remove the village's designation as being in the countryside, as defined in Strategy 7 of the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-31.

Policy HP1: Housing Development in Dalwood

1. Proposals for housing developments in the Zone in Figure 9 will be supported where they are for:

i) annexes to existing dwellings, within the existing curtilage of a dwellinghouse, which provide additional residential space for family members being cared for, but who wish to retain a degree of independence in their living arrangements, or,

ii) 1 or 2 bedroom units developed on land within the curtilage of an existing dwellinghouse and suitable in their size and design to meet the needs of the existing residents wishing to downsize or to establish a first home to rent or buy.

2. Proposals will be supported within the Zone where:

i) development is of a scale, density massing and appearance in keeping with surrounding properties and the character of the village and consistent frontage is maintained;
ii) sufficient garden depth and area is retained within the curtilage of existing dwellings, commensurate with their size and character, where relevant;
iii) with regard to annexes, the proposal does not introduce a separate access to the existing dwelling and the remaining garden is shared;
iv) they demonstrate how they have taken into account the criteria of Policy BHE1, where relevant;
v) local amenity (including issues of overlooking, daylight and sunlight, outlook or noise disturbance) is not adversely impacted, and the privacy of occupiers of dwellings is maintained;
vi) the impact of the development on garden habitats and biodiversity has been considered and kept to a minimum;
vii) access and egress arrangements do not compromise road safety for pedestrians and vehicle users; and

viii)	**provision for off-street vehicle parking meets current adopted parking standards and exceeds them where feasible. There should be a minimum of one parking space for 1 bedroom properties, and a minimum of two spaces for 2 bedroom properties.**

6 Community Facilities and Services

6.1 Introduction

Dalwood is a thriving and active community. There are numerous community organisations and a range of regular community activities that take place. It would support a café and other retail business. The aim is to maintain and increase, not decrease, the range of facilities that serve the local community. The community will oppose any proposal that results in a loss of such facilities. The Parish Council will work with organisations and businesses that seek to ensure Dalwood has the facilities and amenities it requires.

Paragraph 93 of the NPPF states that planning policies should "…*guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day to day needs".* Strategy 27 in the new East Devon Local Plan also states the loss of existing facilities will be resisted. Paragraph 84(d) of the NPPF recognises that planning policies should enable "…the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship", amongst other criteria, to support a strong and prosperous local

economy. Within that policy context, the community would welcome a café at the heart of the Parish.

New retail businesses that are easily accessible and serve the local community will help make the community be more sustainable. They would help strengthen the sense of community and neighbourliness in Dalwood. They would reduce the need to travel and dependency on the motor vehicle for every-day activities and supplies. Respondents to the community questionnaire stated that they would welcome some retail business as a potential means of increasing local employment opportunities as well as providing an outlet for local produce and crafts.

Aims	Objectives
7. Encourage retail and/or hospitality development that meets local and visitors' needs.	a) Support applications for retail or hospitality businesses that are in keeping with the character of the area. Any development would need to demonstrate that it would not have any significant adverse impact on the existing state of the Natural Environment
8. Resist the loss of local facilities and amenities (including St Peter's Church, Methodist Chapel, Community Shop and Post Office, Village Hall, Pavilion, Jubilee Field, Pub, The Reading Room and protect Assets of Community Value (ACV's)	a) Support the sensitive and necessary maintenance and improvement of local facilities and amenities b) Ensure decisions on applications affecting any Asset of Community Value or locally important community facilities, give weight to the wishes of the community

6.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy CF1: Community Facilities and Services

Any new retail or commercial development should be of an appropriate scale and not adversely affect the character and visual appearance of the neighbourhood. To that end they should be of a scale in keeping with the density and character of the neighbouring buildings. Development proposals should also conform to the Neighbourhood Plan policies for the natural and built environment.

New additional retail and commercial premises (and the businesses that they accommodate) should improve the local economy and services available in the community, and not threaten the viability of any existing businesses. Therefore, whilst healthy free-market competition cannot be influenced by planning policies, the community does not wish to see new businesses established to the overall detriment of the local economy. The Plan does not impose onerous requirements on proposals but in balance in should be demonstrated, or considered at least, that proposals will not harm the existing provision available to the village, but complements it.

For these reasons the policy below permits new facilities and services that are clearly aimed at serving a local demand and developed in keeping with the area.

Policy CFS1: New Retail and Commercial Development in Dalwood Village

Proposals for new retail and commercial facilities, extensions and/or alterations to existing facilities to serve the local community will be supported on sites within or adjoining the Zone as shown on Figure 9 provided that:

i) they can be provided (preferably) through the conversion or extension of an existing building, or if that is not viable or feasible, the development of a new building, without having a significant adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments;

ii) they are small-scale, in-keeping with the density and massing of neighbouring buildings and with the built character of the village;

iii) the proposal will be well related to the built form of the settlement and close to existing development;

iv) the site is accessible by a variety of types of transport, including walking and cycling and the amount of traffic generated by the proposal could be accommodated on the local highway network without harming road safety;

v) the proposal would not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residents by reason of undue noise or traffic; and,

vi) the proposal demonstrates that it will have a beneficial impact on existing community services and / or the local retail /commercial offer, complementing existing provision of a similar nature or filling a gap in demand / need.

6.1.2 Background and Reasoning for Policies CF2-3: Improvements to Existing Community Facilities, Amenities, and Assets

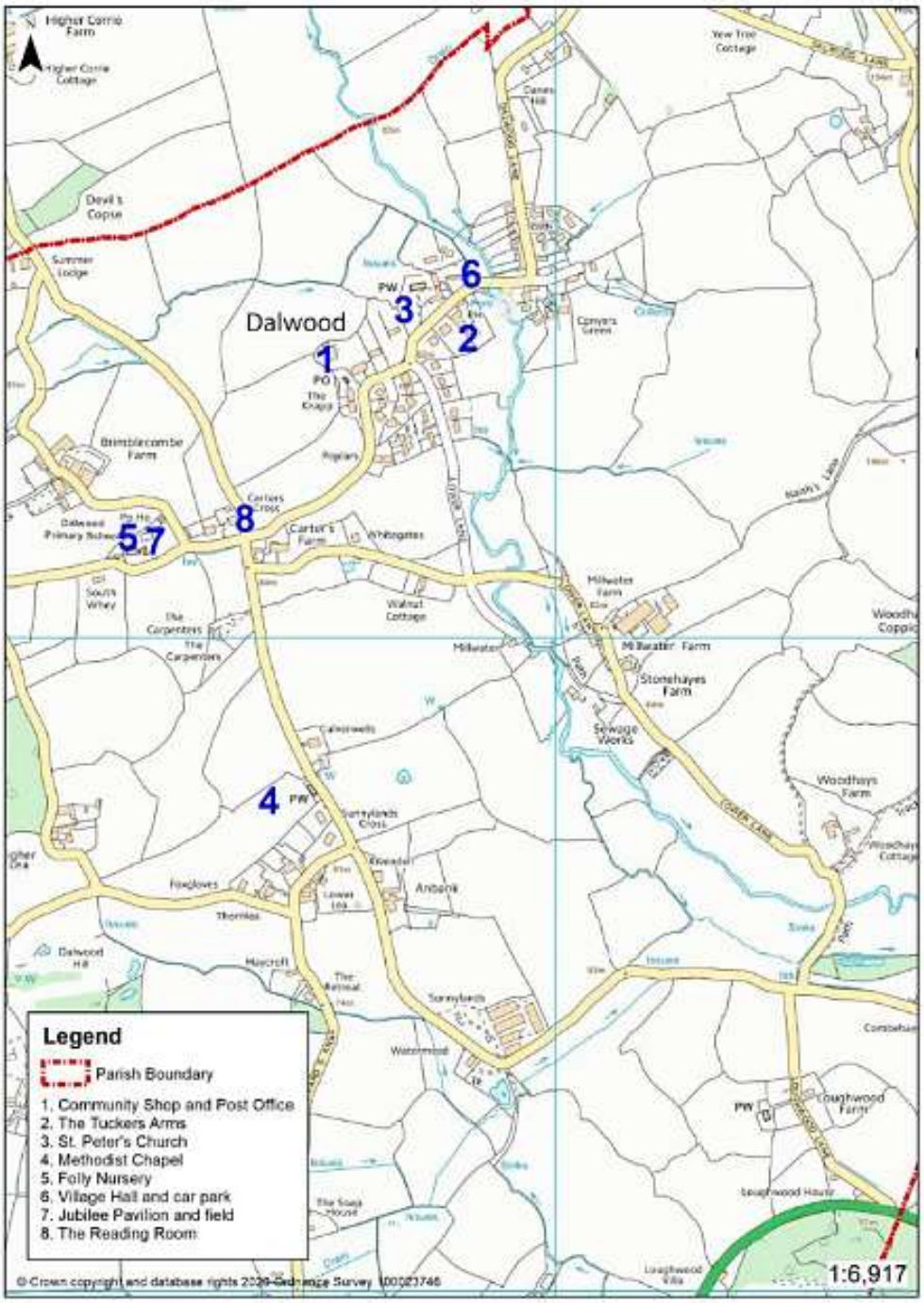
To ensure that Dalwood remains a proper community, there is a strong sense of feeling that existing local facilities which contribute to the way of life and its quality should be protected. Consultation events have demonstrated a desire amongst the local community to ensure that there is no loss of community facilities and what the community has remains fit for purpose[29]. It is acknowledged that changes may have to be made to help the community remain relevant, viable and able to meet future needs and demands in an appropriate way. Changes or improvements that require modification, alteration or extension of existing land or buildings, however, should not be detrimental to the character of the area or the area's natural assets.

Policy CC3 of the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan, 2019-24 advocates the need to "*Support and promote initiatives that help to provide, retain or enhance community facilities and services where they are compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty*" .

Dalwood has a real sense of community. This is reflected in the Community Shop and Post Office, The Tuckers Arms, The Village Hall, The Jubilee Pavilion and Field and The Reading Room. All have become the ad-hoc social hubs of the Parish. They offer meeting places where the local community, clubs and organisations can gather. The Shop and Post Office is often the 'ticket office' and communication centre for forthcoming events and activities. The Jubilee Field is the only community owned open space, available for public use in Dalwood. It is an on-going development for sports and leisure activities. Figure 10 identifies the location of the Parish's valued community facilities, amenities and assets.

[29] For details, see our Consultation Statement.

Figure 10: Locally Valued Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets



Policy CFS2: Improvements to Existing Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets

1. **Figure 10 identifies the Parish's community assets, facilities and amenities valued for protection/retention and /or improvement. They are:**

i) Community Shop and Post Office;

ii) The Tuckers Arms;

iii) St. Peter's Church;

iv) The Methodist Chapel;

v) The Folly Nursery;

vi) The Village Hall and car park;

vii) The Jubilee Pavilion and Field; and,

viii) The Reading Room.

2. **Proposals relating to but not limited to the assets named above which seek to enhance or improve Dalwood's existing local community facilities, amenities and assets will be supported where:**

i) there is a demonstrable need for them.

ii) they do not have an adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments.

iii) there are no adverse impacts on the amenity of residents or neighbouring uses.

3. **Applicants for development will be expected to demonstrate how their proposals meet the aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and how they have consulted and engaged with the Parish Council, users of the facility, and with the wider community.**

Policy CFS3: Loss of Local Community Facilities through Redevelopment or Change of Use

1. Proposals for the change of use or development of locally valued community assets defined in Policy CFS2 will only be supported if:

i) they would not have an adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments;

AND,

ii) there is no other reasonable prospect of viable continued use of the existing building or facility which will benefit the local community and it has been professionally marketed at a market price for at least two years and no proceedable buyer has been found; or,

iii) it will not result in the net loss of a community facility where need and demand for that facility and/or an alternative community use has been evidenced.

2. Applicants for development will be expected to demonstrate how their proposals meet the aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and how they have consulted and engaged with the Parish Council, users of the facility, and with the wider community.

7 Transport and Accessibility

7.1 Introduction

Dalwood Parish is served by a network of narrow lanes typical of rural East Devon and the Blackdown Hills. The main access road into and out of the Parish connects to the A35, near Axminster. Traffic in the centre of Dalwood is relatively light and mostly local. As a Parish community, residents are very car-dependent; there is no bus service. The nearest public bus service is approx. 2,414m and an approx. 35-minute walk from the village.

In its Planning for Walking document the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transport (CIHT) cite:

"Most people will only walk if their destination is less than a mile away. Land use patterns most conducive to walking are thus mixed in use and resemble patchworks of "walkable neighbourhoods", with a typical catchment of around 800m, or a 10-minute walk."[30]

Most references seem to indicate that 400m is the ideal distance to encourage people to walk to catch a bus and 800m for a train. These figures are, however, subject to other factors including the availability of safe, well-lit walkways and not based on dark / country lane access to facilities that further deter people from walking.

Car ownership is high – only a few households do not have regular access to a motor vehicle. Fortunately, the Parish has a 'Ring and Ride' service supported by the Parish Council. The community also has access to Trip Community Transport Association service. Recent consultation shows that travel and traffic issues are few and most people accept and enjoy their relative seclusion. It is pleasing to record that many local people enjoy walking. This Plan's intent is to encourage sustainable travel and minimise the use of the car wherever possible, having regard for national planning policy (Section 9 of the NPPF) and the East Devon Local Plan

[30] See https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/4465/planning_for_walking_-_long_-_april_2015.pdf, p.29

(e.g. Policy TC2). The adverse effects of increased road traffic - noise, air pollution (causing harm to biodiversity, human health and climate change), road accidents and loss of visual amenity – could also undermine the tranquillity and beauty of Dalwood within the AONBs. This Plan, nevertheless, recognises the necessity of the motor car for local people within the Parish, whilst it will continue to make walking, riding and cycling safer and more appealing.

Aims	Objectives
9. Seek ways to minimise parking problems in the village when development is proposed. Improve parking provision	a) Support proposals to increase off-road parking for existing properties where these do not adversely affect local character and the built environment b) Ensure that new developments have satisfactory access and egress and off-road parking
10. Maintain and enhance a network of public rights of way and bridleways	a) Support schemes that extend the footpath network where needed. b) Support improvement projects for footpaths and bridleways c) Introduce measures to establish pedestrian/bridleway routes in preference to routes open to motorised vehicles d) Support the position of Footpath Warden under the Parish Council

7.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy TA1: Off-road Parking

Dalwood has a parking problem (confirmed through community consultation) and although this falls outside neighbourhood planning policies it was felt that it should be recognised. The Parish Council has been approached by many different people concerned about “dangerous parking”. Dangerous parking being highlighted as a key safety issue, indicating a general desire for more off-road parking.

The lack of off-road parking spaces combined with the growing number of multiple cars per household, has resulted in an increased number of cars that daily park in the Parish’s narrow lanes. In the interest of the safety of pedestrians and car drivers initiatives will be welcomed which lead to a reduction of the number of cars that have to park in the lanes. Alongside

the safety issues, not having as many parked cars would improve and maintain the visual appearance of Dalwood as an attractive rural village.

Policy TA1: Off Road Parking

Proposals to provide additional off-road parking will be supported where they do not have an adverse impact on:

i) the character of the local built environment;

ii) the quality of the surrounding natural environment; and,

iii) highway safety.

Community Actions and Projects

CA 14 - The Parish Council will work with partners within the community to support a traffic survey

CA 15 - The Parish Council will support community partners considering car parking possibilities

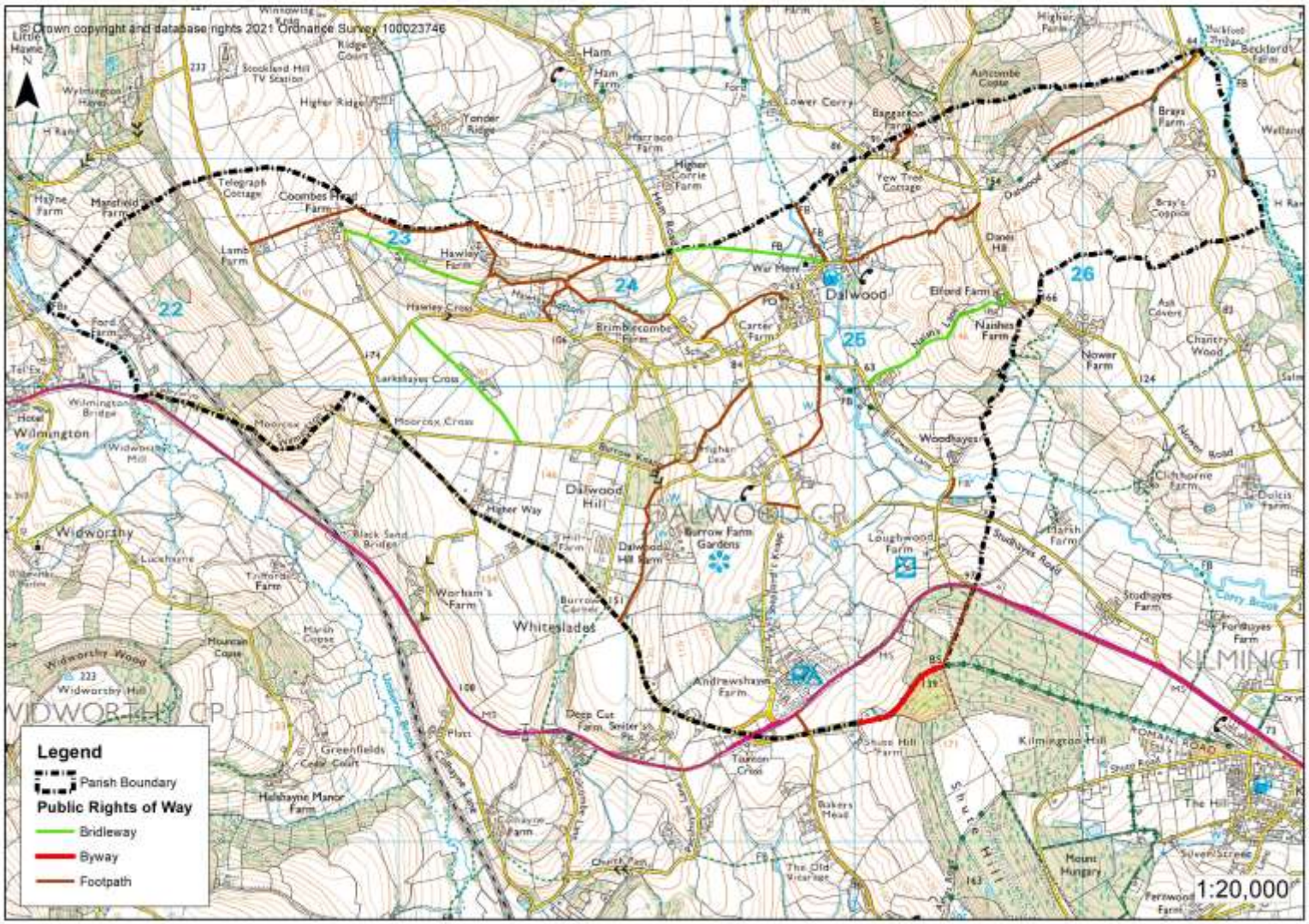
CA 16 – The Parish Council will continue to explore sustainable transport schemes and solutions to treating and improve accessibility for residents to local facilities and services, working with partners within the community.

7.1.2 Background and Reasoning for Policy TA2: Rights of Way (Public Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways)

The community appreciates the footpath and bridleway network and wishes to enjoy the natural environment in a way that is safe and not detrimental to the countryside or those that inhabit or work within it. This should be maintained and, where or if appropriate, enhanced.

The voluntary position of Footpath Warden - appointed through the Parish Council - is one that should be maintained and supported.

Figure 11: Footpaths and Bridleways



Policy TA2: Rights of Way (Public Footpaths and Bridleways)

The improvement and enhancement of public rights of way will be supported. Subject to compliance with all other relevant policies in this Plan, proposals for development of or affecting public rights of way will be supported where:

i) they promote, protect, maintain and enhance the existing local footpath and bridleway network for use on foot, bicycle or horseback; and/or

ii) they improve and enhance the existing network through the provision of new or extended routes; and/or

iii) they include measures designed to prevent motorised vehicles (except those specifically designed for the disabled) illegally using designated footpaths, bridleways and cycleways (where established).

8 Economy and Employment

8.1 Introduction

A view from Danes Hill

Dalwood is a rural community with a rural economy based on agriculture[31]. There is an above average (20%) level of those of working-age working from home within the local economy[32]. The character of the local and wider economy and employment patterns are showing an ever-increasing number of people working from home, and this Plan's proposals are aimed at supporting this whilst protecting the overall character of the Parish.

Aims	Objectives
11. Help create, support and sustain local businesses	a) Encourage measures to uphold best practice farming methods, especially the management of land within a flood catchment area b) Support the provision of improved connectivity for local businesses and people working from home, though policies and community actions which respond to Aims 12-14
12. Improve broadband connectivity. Any future developments aim to improve connectivity.	a) Actively pursue advances in communication technology and support the provision of highspeed broadband and mobile phone signal to every property in the Parish b) Ensure the area stays well connected, as it is necessary for businesses to function properly and meet the many and varied needs of the local population
13. Ensure new builds provide sustainable broadband connectivity.	

[31] The largest employer in the Parish (Dalwood Hill Nursery) employs around 70 people, only 3 of which are from Dalwood village.

[32] Source: Business questionnaire.

14. Help to sustain arable and livestock farming life-styles.	a) Support the diversification of farm businesses and the conversion of agricultural buildings, where it is shown to be necessary, to help ensure the continued viability of the farms b) Encourage measures to uphold best practice farming methods, especially the management of land within a flood catchment area

8.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy EE1: Pursue advances in communications technology - Superfast Connectivity

Good mobile phone connection and regular use of the internet and social media is important if the community is to maintain the quality of life and allow local businesses to flourish. 85% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan household questionnaire strongly agreed that superfast connectivity is vital. Fast and reliable connection will be essential in future for running successful businesses, accessing services and assistance, furthering education and creating a breadth of opportunities for personal growth and development. This Plan is intent on establishing and maintaining the necessary level of connectivity. While the main driver for the policy below is to help sustain and improve the local economy, the need for improved provision extends beyond the traditional business premises and offices, as many people are now working from home or running a business from home which could require high speed broadband connectivity. There are naturally positive spin-offs in ensuring improved connectivity speeds to households on this basis, as the use of the internet for social interaction, education (home school links) and access to essential services increases with time.

However, this cannot be done at any cost and so recognising the special quality of the natural and built environment, there is a need to minimise the visual impact of new connectivity infrastructure such as cabling or telecoms boxes or hubs for superfast fibre broadband. Such infrastructure should be appropriately sited, sympathetically designed and camouflaged so that it is in keeping with its setting and surroundings.

Faster broadband is identified as the biggest need to support employment within the Parish.

Given the numbers working from home or considering it, faster broadband would be important in supporting this as would improve mobile phone signals.

Policy EE1: Superfast Connectivity

The development of a superfast broadband infrastructure to serve the Parish will be supported where it is sensitively sited and sympathetically designed. Where practicable, all new residential, educational and business premises will be required to make provision for the latest high-speed broadband and other communication networks.

Community Actions and Projects

CA23- The Parish Council will make every reasonable effort to keep abreast of evolving advances in communications technology so that the Parish as whole can benefit.

CA24- The Parish Council will recognise the importance of mobile signals and broadband or other means of accessing online data and take advice, make representations and lobby, and work with providers, as well as other Parishes and organisations to try and obtain effective communications within the Parish.

CA25- It is acceptable for there to be some limited visual impact in order to achieve mobile phone communication, should this be necessary. However, proposals must take into account that this is an AONB.

CA26- Work with providers to accelerate the introduction of a reliable Parish-wide mobile phone signal.

8.1.2 Background and Reasoning for Policy EE2: Farming

Farming has described and defined the character of the natural and local environment of the Parish for centuries. Changes in farming methods should not put this special and unique character at risk.

Devon Reds

The community has made it clear at recent consultation events that it supports measures to uphold best-practice farming methods. This includes the Parish's farming community.[33] Therefore, where the proposed change is not enabled by the General Permitted Development Order, this Plan's policies will resist developments and changes on farmland that are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the established rural landscape or best practice agricultural methods.

Should new development be deemed necessary it should meet the requirements of the East Devon new Local Plan - Policies EN13 and D7, and Policy EE2 (below) of the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy D7: Agricultural Buildings and Development, of the new Local Plan, states that (sic):

"New agricultural buildings and/or buildings intended for intensive agricultural activities that could give rise to adverse amenity, landscape, environmental or other impacts, will be permitted where there is a genuine agricultural need for the development and the following criteria are met:

1. *It is well integrated with its surroundings and closely related to existing buildings, being of appropriate location, scale, design and materials so as not to harm the character,*

[33] The times and ways that we have discussed issues with local farmers is set out in our Consultation Statement.

biodiversity and landscape of the rural area particularly within the AONB

2. *It will not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby residents on grounds of smell, noise or fly nuisance*

3 *It has been established that there are no other suitable buildings on the holding or in the vicinity which could meet the reasonable need*

4 *It will not lead to an unacceptable increase in traffic on the local highway network*

5 *All clean roof and surface waters will be drained separately from foul drainage and foul drainage will not discharge to any watercourse in order to prevent pollution of the water environment.*

Proposals for the development of new large-scale buildings for livestock or for other use that could have polluting impacts should be accompanied by a Waste Management Plan."

The NPPF (paragraph 170) states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

"a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."

Policy EE2: Farming (New Development Proposals)

Proposals for new agricultural development requiring planning permission will be expected to demonstrate how they will:

i) meet an agricultural need and be commensurate in size with the intended future use;

ii) protect and / or enhance historic farming or landscape features and the rural characteristics of the surrounding area;

iii) protect or reinforce the natural beauty, bio-diversity and special character of the AONB landscape; and

iv) Include minimal new lighting, and comply with Policy NE2: Preserving Tranquillity and Dark Skies.

Community Actions and Projects

CA27 - Encourage measures to uphold best practice farming methods, especially the management of land within a flood catchment area.

9 Energy and Low Carbon

9.1 Introduction

The community recognises the importance and value that renewable and low carbon energy schemes (and improvements to energy efficiency of buildings where done sensitively) can help provide alternatives to fossil based fuels and therefore help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, improve the security of energy supply, reduce households bills for energy, generate an income for community organisations and businesses and reduce the cost of supply of energy.

However, in practical terms, different types of renewable and low carbon energy installations will be suitable in different built and natural landscapes. This Plan has already set out the value the community attaches to Dalwood's natural landscape and tranquillity within the context of the AONB. The policy developed with regard to energy proposals reflects this position.

Aims	Objectives
15. Support small scale unobtrusive renewable or low carbon energy schemes providing they are sensitively sited and screened, i.e. appropriately landscaped	a) Ensure that any renewable or low carbon energy schemes are sensitively sited and screened (appropriately landscaped) to protect the essential qualities of the AONB b) Resist large-scale and obtrusive renewable or low carbon energy schemes that are likely to have a negative impact on enjoyment of the natural and built environment and are contrary to the Plan's Vision c) Develop possible ecological solutions to energy conservation and generation using any natural features within the constraints of all other policies
16. Support a provider or village initiative to come forward with card access electric vehicle charging points	a) The Parish Council would support the installation of the charging station on an appropriate site that would not have a significant adverse impact on the Natural Environment

9.1.1 Background and Reasoning for Policy ELC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

Evidence gathered, together with the views of the local community, has identified support for smaller scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes which respect the qualities of the landscape and natural environment as a whole and do not have an adverse impact on the beauty of and biodiversity within the Parish.

This Plan endorses the findings of the "Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills" report[34] which assessed the suitability, in broad terms, in the AONB of different types and scales of renewable and low carbon energy solutions. This provides guidance on the acceptability of renewable and low carbon technologies in the context of the sensitive landscape. Advice produced by the Devon Landscape Policy Group[35] is also useful in providing relevant context and advice in relation to solar and wind energy proposals in particular. The policy below relates principally to small and medium scale energy proposals and this Plan does not identify suitable areas in the plan for major energy installations such as solar farms or large scale on-shore wind farms.

Figure 12 below, reproduced from the "Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills" report, sets out this position and also helpfully confirms what the policy below means by "small scale" and "large scale" renewable energy installations.

[34] The report is available to view here.

[35] See https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/landscape-policy-and-guidance

Figure 12: Suitability of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Proposals in the Parish

TYPE	TECHNOLOGY	SUITABILITY
Biomass	Large-scale 10-40MW electricity generation plant	
	Small Combined Heat and Power plant	
	Business / domestic biomass boilers	
	Business / domestic biomass stoves	
Anaerobic digestion	Centralised anaerobic digestion (AD) plant	
	AD serving a group of farms	
	AD serving a single farm	
Waste to energy scheme		
Micro-hydro	Micro-hydro	
	Restoration of traditional mill sites	
Photovoltaics	Building associated PV systems	
	Solar PV farms	v. limited
Solar hot water		
Ground, air and water source heat pumps		
Community heating	Small-scale or micro community heating	
Wind	Large-scale turbines (90m – 135m)	
	Medium-scale turbines (25m – 90m)	v. limited
	Small-scale turbines (12m – 25m height)	
	Micro turbines (<11m)	

Notes: This table is coded by 'traffic lights' with those technologies appropriate to the AONB coded green and those that are considered inappropriate coded red, with those with a strong element of caution coded orange / amber.

Policy ELC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

1. **Renewable and low carbon energy schemes will be supported at a scale appropriate to those defined in Figure 12 and where they are sensitively sited, and demonstrate that they have no adverse impact on enjoyment of the natural and built environment nor on the quality of Dalwood's and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's landscape, biodiversity, wildlife habitats, heritage assets (including their settings and any archaeological needs) and neighbouring amenity. These will principally be at the small and medium scale depending on the need to minimise impact on the landscape.**
2. **Renewable energy and low carbon scheme proposals should demonstrate that they would have no adverse impact on water supply and water quality, such as fish pass (Hydro-electric power - HEP), flood flow (solar panels / HEP) and ground water quality (wind turbines), and they should provide a net gain for biodiversity.**
3. **Where appropriate, landscaping should be used to mitigate the impact on the landscape.**
4. **In addition to other policies in this Plan, proposals should take into account the advice given in the "Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills" Report 2010 and the most up-to-date landscape policy advice produced by the Devon Landscape Policy Group, or equivalent.**
5. **Planning applications for smaller wind turbines will be assessed in terms of visual intrusion and the appropriateness of the site and must be accompanied by site-specific measured wind speed data and not solely the AONB (estimated) database.**
6. **Proposals for large-scale renewable and low carbon energy generating plants and fossil-fuel based energy generating plants will not be supported.**

Community Actions and Projects

CA28 - Encourage possible ecological solutions to energy conservation and generation using any natural features within the constraints of all other policies

CA29 - The Parish Council will make every reasonable effort to keep abreast of evolving advances in electric vehicle technology and potential charge points so that the Parish as a whole can benefit

10 Waste and Plastic

10.1 Introduction

Minimising waste in Dalwood became clear during consultations. Reducing the use of plastics and waste recycling was identified as important. Proposals that introduce measures to minimise household and employment premises' waste and use of water and promote reuse, recycling and composting, will be supported where these are compatible with the purpose of the AONB and its special qualities. However, proposals for or solutions to dealing with local waste within the Parish are unlikely to be subject to planning applications, more likely comprising local schemes, actions or development which does not require permission (i.e. permitted development). Therefore, and given its importance to the local community, a community action is identified which relates to the aims and objectives of this Plan, but no planning policy has been developed. For most waste recycling or disposal development proposals requiring planning permission, this will normally be dealt with by the County Council as a "county matter". Such proposals are considered "excluded development" over which this Plan has no jurisdiction and cannot therefore set planning policies. Objective c) is dealt with through the policy on housing development and good design.

Aim	Objectives
17. Increase recycling levels via a generic supporting policy.	a) Encourage community-based recycling levels b) Facilitate the extension of recycling to include other and new forms of waste such as plastic c) Ensure new builds provide adequate storage for waste

Community Actions and Projects

CA 30- The Parish Council will work with the local community in the development of a recycling collection area, which is properly screened and managed providing there is no significant adverse impact on the area.

11 Monitoring and Review

While there is no statutory requirement for the impact of this Plan and its policies to be monitored, the Parish Council will periodically monitor the impact of policies on change in the Parish by considering the policies' effectiveness in the planning application decision making process. The Parish Council will do this by referring to this Plan when reviewing planning applications. The Clerk will keep a record of the application, any applicable policies, the comment from the Parish Council and the eventual outcome of the application. The delivery of community actions that have been identified will also be periodically monitored.

A full or partial review of this Plan is unlikely to be considered necessary during its lifetime unless triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or district-wide planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and / or existing neighbourhood plan policies.

Dalwood Parish Council will work with East Devon District Council and seek to ensure that the policies in the new emerging Local Plan and the policies in the Dalwood Neighbourhood Plan are complementary.

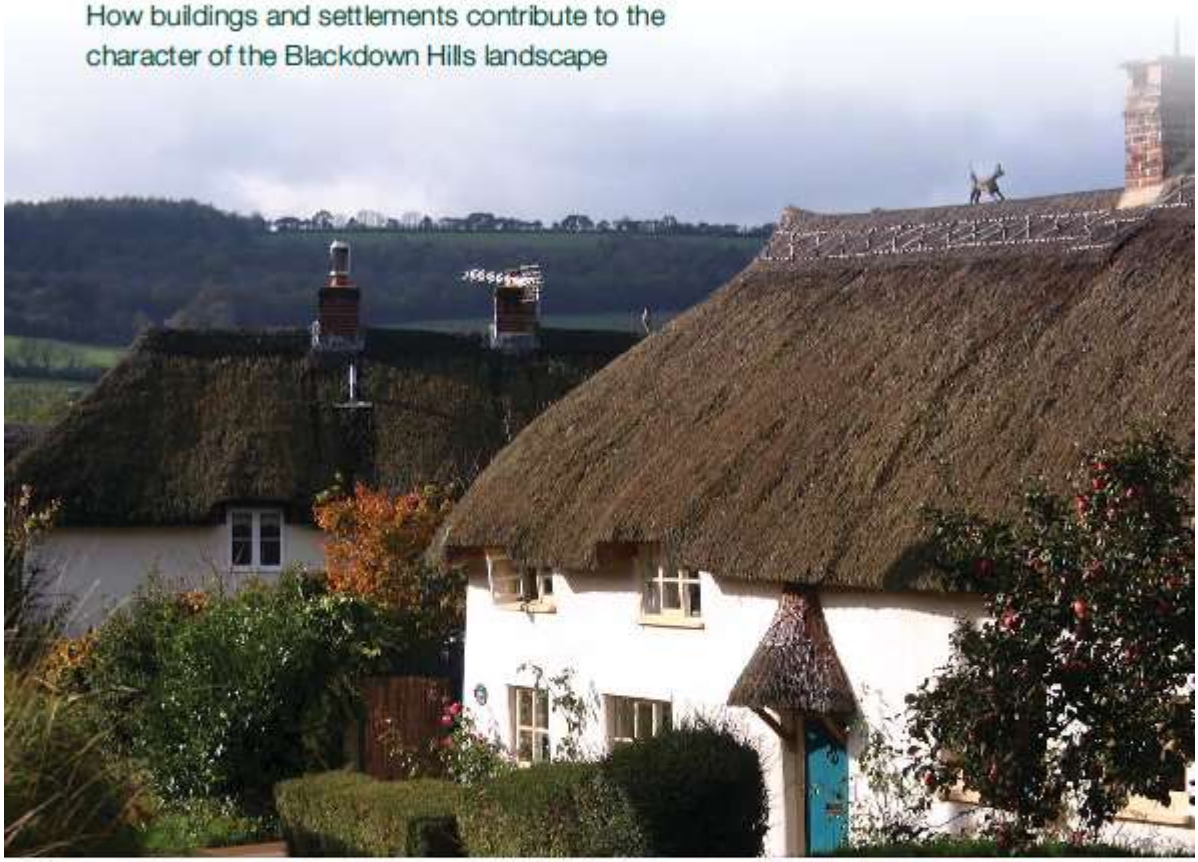
12 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 - Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Design, Guide for Houses

Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Design guide for houses

How buildings and settlements contribute to the character of the Blackdown Hills landscape



Blackdown Hills AONB

Foreword

Welcome to our AONB design guide for houses. The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is truly a special place, with its ever-changing landscape and attractive, traditional villages. The buildings of the Blackdown Hills are an integral part of the patchwork of beauty and heritage which makes the area so special.

This is not chocolate box, stylised countryside – yes, we have the thatched cottages, the high-banked and wild flower-strewn hedged lanes, but also working farms and villages, smells and mess! The advice in this guide can be applied to modern, cutting-edge development or to the restoration of very old houses. It is also forward looking, promoting sustainable construction and sensitivity to climate change – all from the starting point of thinking about the relationship between the landscape and buildings.

Good building design really matters, and decisions made today can help to maintain the quality of our built environment for generations to come. This guide gives homeowners, planners, architects and builders a brief and user-friendly tool for getting it right. It celebrates local building materials such as chert, and guides you through the architectural details which make up the distinctive style of the Blackdowns.

Whether you are involved in building, extending or renovating a house in the Blackdown Hills, this guide will help you to play a part in maintaining the unique character of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Councillor Paul Diviani
Chairman, Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership

Photo credits:
Page 5 – Dan Bryan
Page 10 – Nichola Burley
Page 11 (top left and bottom right) – © Natural England/Pauline Rook
Page 18 (top left) G Page-Turner, Woodhayes
Page 20 – N Saunter, The Woolly Shepherd

Illustrations by Cynthia Goodman
(Illustration page 4 by Cynthia Goodman, after Michael Collins)

Published March 2012

Contents

Introduction 2

Purpose 2

The AONB designation 2

Planning context 3

Landscape character assessment 3

Community-led planning guidance 3

Landscape and setting 4

Geology 4

Landscape character 4

Settlement pattern 7

Built heritage 8

Building materials 8

Positioning and form 9

Historic houses 9

- Medieval period to eighteenth century 9
- Georgian and Victorian houses (1700 – 1900) 10
- Twentieth century houses 11

Farm buildings 11

Towards sustainable and distinctive design 12

Planning and building regulations 12

Some general design principles 12

Sustainable construction 13

Orientation and passive solar gain 13

Position 13

Size and scale 14

Building materials and methods 14

Render and mortar 15

Windows and doors 15

Roofs 16

Guttering, downpipes and bargeboards 16

Chimneys 16

Extensions to existing houses 17

Conversions 17

Hedges and boundaries 18

Nature conservation 18

Roads, entrances and driveways 18

Lighting 19

Domestic energy 20

Energy conservation measures 20

Traditional versus modern building construction 20

Methods of conserving energy 20

Domestic renewable energy 21

Photovoltaics and solar hot water 21

Wind energy 22

Heat pumps 22

Glossary 23

Contacts and further information 24

Introduction

This design guide is intended to be of use and interest to anyone involved in the planning, design and construction or alteration of houses in the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It provides guidance on how buildings can be designed to conserve or enhance the distinctive character of the Blackdown Hills.

The traditional buildings and settlements of the Blackdown Hills are an essential and distinctive part of its landscape. To preserve local distinctiveness, the

The traditional buildings and settlements of the Blackdown Hills are an essential and distinctive part of its landscape

design of any new building needs to draw on the construction traditions of the area. This does not mean slavishly copying the appearance of traditional buildings, but applying the principles of construction traditions to new and altered buildings – including innovative, contemporary solutions where appropriate. These traditions can be understood by appreciating the area's distinctive buildings and settlements, and how they relate to their setting in the landscape.

Purpose

The buildings of the villages, hamlets and farms of the Blackdown Hills are as much a part of the character of the landscape as the area's hedges, woodlands and field patterns. It is the occupants of the buildings and their predecessors who created the landscape that we see today. The location, construction and detailing of their buildings is an integral part of the beauty of the area.

If the beauty of the area is to be protected for future generations, it is essential that the character of the Blackdown Hill's traditional, vernacular buildings is understood and respected in both the care of historic buildings and the construction of new ones.

We are also mindful of the need to accommodate change that brings economic and social benefit, and for adaptation to meet the challenge of climate change without eroding the distinctive landscape character and special qualities of the AONB.

In this document we have identified the primary features and characteristics which have helped to create the distinctive qualities of the built environment in the Blackdown Hills. From this, design principles can be applied to new housing developments and individual buildings, conversions, extensions and alterations.

We hope therefore that the guidance will inform and inspire both those undertaking works and those making decisions about development, as well as encourage a greater interest in the built environment and appreciation of the special qualities of the Blackdown Hills AONB.

In summary, the objectives of this design guide are to:

- **Raise awareness of the quality of the traditional built character of the Blackdown Hills AONB**
- **Help identify and protect the distinctive traditional built character of the Blackdown Hills AONB and promote local identity**
- **Inspire high quality design in new developments which respect the traditional built character and wider landscape of the AONB**
- **Provide a co-ordinated and integrated approach to design advice throughout the AONB**
- **Promote sustainability in design and use of resources, particularly locally produced building materials**

The Blackdown Hills AONB designation

The Blackdown Hills AONB is one of a family of AONBs established in England and Wales under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Along with National Parks, AONBs are 'protected landscapes'

formally recognised as representing the finest countryside in England and Wales, where special policies should apply to safeguard and manage the countryside for the benefit of this and future generations.

The Blackdown Hills were designated as an AONB in 1991. The primary purpose of the designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape; 'natural beauty' is not just the look of the landscape, but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlements over the centuries.

The Blackdown Hills AONB lies across two counties and four districts. One of the tasks of the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership is therefore to ensure the effort to conserve and enhance the AONB does not vary from one part to another, and between constituent local planning authorities. One of the reasons for producing this guide is to assist these authorities in promoting elements of good design and characteristics of buildings that are commonly found across the Blackdown Hills.

A new house in the background which draws on the characteristics of its traditional neighbour

Planning context

From a national planning policy perspective, conserving and enhancing the natural beauty and special qualities of AONBs continues to remain a priority. This is reflected in local plan documents produced by local councils.

This design guide is intended to supplement and complement the local development plans and other design guidance produced by local planning authorities, and does not replace these policies and guidance. Adherence to the design guide does not mean that development proposals will necessarily be approved. Other planning policy considerations may make a proposal unacceptable.

Before considering any work concerning buildings in the AONB contact the local planning department to confirm whether planning permission or other consents, such as listed building consent or conservation area consent, are required. The building control section will be able to advise on building regulations. Contact details are given at the end of the guide.

Landscape character assessment

Landscape character assessment (LCA) is a systematic process to understand, describe and classify how the character of the landscape varies from place to place. Such assessments provide a mapped evidence base for making judgements about the landscape and for developing a strategy and guidelines for each area. The Blackdown Hills are covered by Devon's landscape character assessments, which have identified geographically specific county-scale character areas and their divisions into generic landscape character types. Further information is available at: www.devon.gov.uk/landscapecharacter.htm

Community-led planning guidance

Many local communities have produced their own village design statements and parish plans. These describe the distinctive character of individual villages and the surrounding countryside, and identify design principles which should influence future development in individual settlements. This design guide provides a wider context for the preparation of these local village- or parish-based documents, and will also be very relevant to any communities embarking on a neighbourhood plan.

Landscape and setting

Geology

The unique geology of the Blackdown Hills is one of the main reasons for its protected status, and is central to the landscape's appearance and character.

Geology is the key to the area's vegetation, farming and settlement patterns and traditional building materials.

The bedrock of the hills is an extensive outcrop of Upper Greensand. A hard, sedimentary rock, it contains the mineral glauconite which gives it its greenish colour. It also contains nodules of chert, a creamy-coloured quartz stone.

Water percolates through the greensand and emerges along a spring line where it meets less permeable rock below, making springs a feature of the Blackdown Hills. The slope of the bedrock dictates the course of the rivers, which over time have cut deep valleys into the hills.

Settlements tend to be nestled in the river valleys where there is shelter from extreme weather, a ready supply of water, and more fertile soils than on the hilltops.

The overlying sediments create the soils, that in turn dictate the natural vegetation and the types of farming which are most compatible with the area.

A deposit of clay-with-flint on top of the greensand forms the soil of the plateau. Below the greensand are Marl mudstones, used in cob construction. Flints, greensand and chert are all commonly used in traditional local buildings.

The simplified geological cross-section below illustrates how many settlements are located above the spring lines on the valley sides below the greensand hills with their clay-with-flint capping.

Landscape character

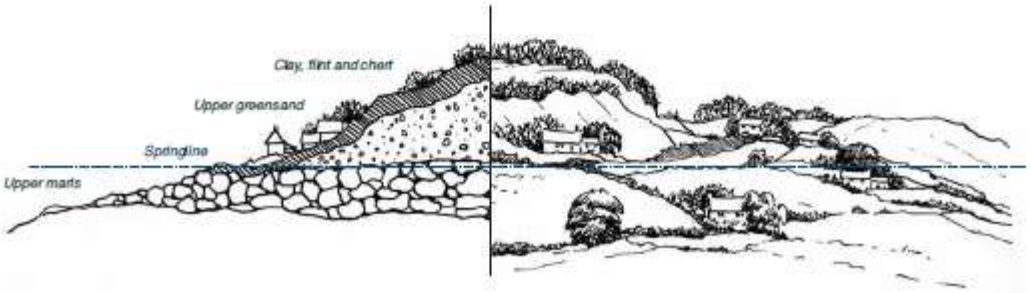
The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a tranquil, rural, and relatively remote landscape. Elevated, windswept plateaux and ridges give way to steep wooded escarpments to the north and west and broad, deep valleys laid to pasture in the south and east.

The plateaux and ridges are sparsely populated. The area's isolated farms, scattered hamlets and villages are connected by quiet country lanes bounded by hedgebanks.

One of the reasons for AONB designation is that it is a 'landscape with architectural appeal', meaning the individual buildings and settlements blend and fit so well within their broader landscape.

Understanding the distinctions and relationship between landscape and settlements helps to reinforce local distinctiveness and sense of place. Understanding the landscape context, working with the landscape patterns, embracing historic features and important vistas all contribute to good design.

The Devon landscape character assessment has identified five separate character areas covering the entire Blackdown Hills AONB.



A simplified geological cross-section through a Blackdown Hill

Typical landscape in the Blackdown Hills

Devon Character Area:

Blackdown Hills

This landscape comprises a central plateau that is elevated, exposed and open in character and fans out into narrow ridges at its edges, where it is fringed by steeply sloping, wooded edges and farmed slopes which descend into river valleys.

The interplay of open, elevated plateau – with its regular enclosure pattern, beech hedges, outgrown beech hedges and pine shelterbelts – the steeply sloping fringes that are cloaked in woodland, and the farmed valleys with small-scale, irregular enclosures of medieval origin, gives this landscape its distinctiveness. The expansive plateau and prominent beech shelterbelts in particular, distinguish this area from the East Devon Central Ridge found further south and east. In places there is a sense of bleakness about the longer views across unbroken stretches of plateau. There are picturesque villages with traditional buildings linked by narrow winding lanes with a very distinctive building tradition that uses local chert with red brick detailing and slate roofs.

Devon Character Area:

East Devon Central Ridge

This landscape encompasses a narrow, elevated, rolling ridge fringed by steep scarp slopes and upper valley farmland. The main ridge forms a distinctive spine to East Devon, fanning out into a series of narrow fingers that have distinctive southerly aspect and are flanked to the south by wooded slopes, which give way to small-scale farmland in the upper and tributary valleys of the Axe and Sid. The northern finger of the ridge is within the Blackdown Hills and sits between the upper Otter valley and the Yarty valley.

The river valleys drain southwards, forming steep-sided and often remote-feeling valleys, the sides of which are clothed with ancient oak woodlands. Views from the open upland ridges, particularly in the north, are extensive, often looking over the treetops on the steep, greensand scarps to other ridges beyond and into the visually strong, field pattern of the valley slopes. The area is sparsely settled, with individual farmsteads and small hamlets in the valleys and vernacular buildings mainly of stone and red brick.

Devon Character Area:

Axe Valley

This area comprises the broad river valley of the Axe and its tributaries, principally the Coly and Yarty. The Axe valley is orientated north-east to south-west and the tributary valleys penetrate as a series of fingers into the ridges to the east and west.

The valley sides have a strong hedgerow pattern with hedgerow trees coupled with small broadleaved woods and occasional farm orchards that give rise to a generally wooded character overall. Land use is mainly pastoral set within small fields in the upper tributary

Map of the Blackdown Hills AONB showing landscape character areas

valleys that are more enclosed and intimate than the main river valley. Moving northwards, there is a more gradual transition from river valley to upland open ridge. A dispersed pattern of farmsteads are scattered across the valley sides, often next to spring lines. The local vernacular includes cob and thatch buildings.

Devon Character Area:
Eastern Blackdown Ridge

This landscape of gently undulating, elevated ridge is similar in character to other Blackdown ridges comprising an open and exposed plateau landscape with regular field boundaries. However it lacks the fringing wooded greensand scarp that characterises the other Blackdown ridges. Instead the edge of the ridge connects directly with the farmed slopes of the upper river valleys. Hence there is a smoother transition between exposed open upland and the valleys below, and contrasts in landform and land cover are less pronounced.

This landscape has a strong time-depth reflected in its historic enclosures, archaeological sites and settlement pattern, which comprises small hamlets and dispersed farmsteads. The small villages, such as Buckland St Mary and Whitestaunton, are often surrounded by trees and their associated church towers act as landmarks within the open, elevated landscape. There is a strong local vernacular of chert buildings with slate roofs, with more use of Hamstone detailing and local lias than elsewhere in the Blackdown Hills.

Devon Character Area:
Blackdown Hills Scarp

This landscape forms a wide band of scarp woodlands and farmed slopes that are orientated east-west and

face northwards over the Vale of Taunton. Historically this area has divided the counties of Somerset and Devon.

This is a dramatic landscape that is very prominent, particularly in views from the north. It stands out from the land that surrounds it and has considerable visual interest and texture due to its diverse land use and woodland cover. The Wellington Monument, a key landmark, is located on the north-facing slopes that are gently undulating, rising to Staple Hill (the highest point in the AONB). The western end of the scarp is most pronounced – to the east the slopes become broader and gentler. Dense, semi-natural woodland covers the steepest slopes, along with patches of gorse and scrub. There is limited settlement on the steep, scarp slopes; a dispersed pattern of small, spring-line hamlets and farmsteads with associated orchards and little or no modern development.

Further information is available at www.devon.gov.uk/landscapecharacter.htm

Settlement pattern

The area's largest villages are found near river crossings, for example Stockland, Chardstock, Dalwood and Hemyock.

Above the valley bottoms, villages and hamlets are located on the slopes along spring lines.

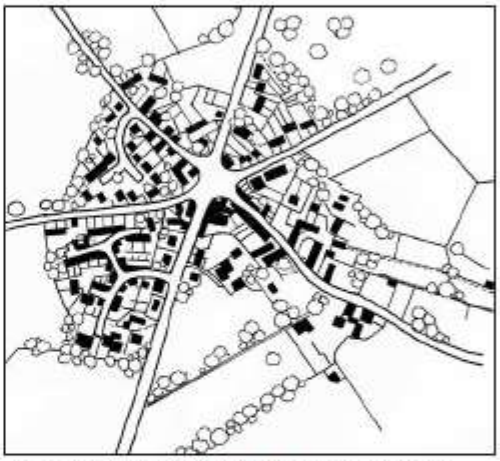
Elsewhere hamlets and isolated farms have been built where there is ready access to water, some shelter and good soils for farming.

Villages at river or road crossings have developed in a nucleated form, clustered around the focal point of the village, for example Hemyock, Stockland and Churchinford. The existence of an obvious centre such as a crossroads, church or village green, give the village a distinctive character.

Villages that developed along a trade route, river or spring line are linear in form, for example Yarcombe and Luppitt.

Both types of village have their oldest buildings at their core and often focus around their parish church. Buildings near the village centre tend to be tightly packed together with the density of buildings decreasing away from the centre.

Churchinford, a nucleated village



Plan view of Churchinford, with village clustered around central focal point

Luppitt, a village that has developed in linear form

Built heritage

Building materials

Traditional houses have a functional simplicity, built from locally available materials to serve the needs of the agricultural community. The most characteristic construction material in the Blackdown Hills is chert – the stone readily collected from the fields. The extent to which it is used is unique in the UK.

In the Blackdown Hills, chert occurs in nodules with whitish outsides and various shades of grey, brown or yellow/orange within. Generally laid randomly rather than in courses, it gives buildings a creamy coloured, rough textured appearance.

Beerstone and Hamstone from nearby quarries are most commonly used to provide defined features for chert buildings, for example window mullions, door jambs, chimney stacks and gate piers.

Beerstone, from the village of Beer on the East Devon coast, tends to be found as a detail on buildings in the south and east of the area.

Hamstone from Ham Hill near Yeovil in Somerset is found generally in the east and north of the area.

Blue Lias, once quarried locally but now from north of Yeovil, is a soft stone that can be cut but which decays quite rapidly, and so it tends to be used for simple building blocks rather than carved details. It is found as a principal construction material on the east and north side of the area.

Greensand is used where it can be readily quarried, but less often than expected, because it is easier to gather chert from the fields than quarry stone.

Finally, cob is a building material made of local soils. Soil is trampled and turned with straw, then piled up and tamped down to create mass construction walls. Traditionally it was trampled by cattle in a yard but today a tractor with a lifting bucket is usually used. On the Blackdown Hills cob tends to be a brown-red colour due to the use of Marl mudstone soils in the mix. Cob is found everywhere in the area but is most common on the area's west side.

Up until the mid-nineteenth century, the local materials described above were generally used for all buildings

The most characteristic construction material in the Blackdown Hills is chert

in the Blackdown Hills. There are remarkably few examples of any alternatives.

Roofs were thatched. Stone walls were generally built of rubblestone, rather than cut stone, and the stones were laid randomly rather than in courses. Randomly laid rubblestone was the quickest and cheapest way of building a wall.

Occasionally a wealthy property owner would pay for stones to be cut and laid in courses or for rubblestone to be coursed. This indicates a high status building.

Cob walls, and sometimes stone walls, were rendered with lime render and limewashed. Limewash was usually off-white as it was coloured by the minerals in the impure lime. Cream or pink rendered walls are characteristic for the area. There is no tradition of brightly coloured limewashes as found, for example, in East Anglia.

Brick, clay roof tiles and roofing slates were not readily available in the area until the arrival of the railways and the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal. Prior to this some bricks may have been made locally and a few wealthy property owners may have been able to afford to import slate by packhorse, but they were not commonly used.

Mass-produced construction materials became increasingly available and affordable from the mid-nineteenth century. An extension of the Bridgwater and

Taunton Canal reached Chard and began operation in 1842. This opened up a supply line for clay roofing tiles and bricks made in Bridgwater, and slates from South Wales. The London & South Western Railway reached Honiton in 1860 and the Bristol & Exeter Railway reached Wellington in 1866.

Brick or slate features found in the Blackdown Hills can therefore be dated with some confidence as post-1842.

Positioning and form

The scale, shape and detailing of traditional buildings are controlled by the need to provide shelter from the prevailing weather and by the building materials that are readily available. In the Blackdown Hills the prevailing weather is moderate rainfall, comparatively mild temperatures and south westerly winds. Buildings tended to be constructed in locations sheltered from south westerly winds, orientated towards the sun with steeply pitched roofs to shed rain.

Historically, it was the length of timber available for the beams that controlled the depth of buildings. Traditional buildings in the Blackdown Hills tend therefore to be only four to five metres deep.

Historic houses

Medieval period to eighteenth century

Houses in the Blackdown Hills built before about 1700 have a narrow, long plan, referred to as a 3-room-with-cross-passage plan. This is common across most of the West Country. Exceptions would have been grand manor houses and very basic dwellings that have not survived.

It is a plan of three rooms in a line with a front and back door in the long elevations. The doors were directly opposite each other, linked by a passageway through the depth of the house, referred to as the cross-passage.

On one side of the passage was a one room service area and on the other side of the passage was a main room, called the hall. Beyond this was an inner, more private room for the family.

The two outer rooms generally had a first floor but the hall was open to the roof. Until about 1600 the hall of the house was open to the roof because there was no chimney. Smoke rose into the roof from a fireplace in the centre of the hall floor and escaped from vents in the hipped, gable ends of the roof.

Houses were improved from about 1600 onwards by the introduction of chimney stacks. The chimney was located to heat the hall as it was the main room of the house. Most often the chimney stack was built in the hall backing on to the cross-passage.

An alternative location however was to place it on the front elevation of the house. This was done to show the neighbourhood that the owner could afford a new chimney stack.

The insertion of chimney stacks to control the emission of smoke meant that it was now possible to build a first floor over the hall.

Early houses are therefore often recognisable by their long, narrow plan, the position of their chimneys and by their hipped or half-hipped roofs.

Early farmhouse in the Blackdown Hills with a long narrow plan, typical chimney and roof

Medieval houses had small, timber-framed windows with shutters rather than glass. The purpose of these was to balance the need to let in light and to conserve heat. Early glazed windows generally had a timber frame with side hung iron casements fitted with leaded lights.

High status houses might have stone mullions and lintels in place of a timber window frame, made from Beerstone or Hamstone.

Later windows had timber frames and casements with timber glazing bars in place of leaded lights.

Typical single storey lean-to extension at rear

The basic 3-room-cross-passage plan was frequently extended with a lean-to structure at the rear or side of the house, called a catslide or outshut extension. This tradition has continued with buildings of later periods. Less often, an extra two-storey extension was added to one or both of the gable ends, or as a rear wing.

Georgian and Victorian houses (1700 – 1900)

From the 1700s, houses were built with chimneys as an integral part of their construction. With building stone readily available in the area, hipped roofs were abandoned in place of full height, stone built gable ends that incorporated a chimney stack.

The European fashion at this time was for architecture based on classical proportions. This approach was mixed with the local building style, resulting in the emergence of the highly distinctive Blackdown Hills form of house.

The characteristic Blackdown Hills' house from 1700 until the nineteenth century had a symmetrical front elevation, consisting of a central front door, one window either side of the door on the ground floor, and three windows to light the first floor. It was most often constructed of chert, possibly with Hamstone or Beerstone dressings. It would have originally had a thatch roof but is now more likely to be under a slate roof.

Another house type that developed in the Georgian period, for higher status properties such as rectories and estate farmhouses, was the double pile house. This is effectively two narrow house plans placed back to back.

Georgian houses were often rendered to give the smooth surface finish that was fashionable at the time.

The orientation of windows changed from landscape to portrait to accommodate the vertical sliding sash windows that were introduced to grand houses in the area in the eighteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century these were found even in workers' cottages.

Characteristic 18th century Blackdown Hills symmetrical house, built of chert with gable ends

As explained in the section about building materials, the Victorian period saw the arrival of new building materials and building styles that could be readily imported through improved communications and transport systems. From the mid-1800s through into

Nineteenth century houses in Upottery that combine Victorian detailing with local building stone

the twentieth century, fashions and style of architecture were drawn upon, yet still fitted with the local building traditions through form and materials.

Twentieth century houses

The rich tapestry of the built heritage was added to throughout the last century by individual dwellings, new farmhouses and small housing developments in villages. Although having a style that reveals their date, in many cases these continued to maintain the local character through scale, simple form and use of materials.

In the second part of the twentieth century houses were often designed without reference to local traditions and constructed using standard detailing and imported materials such as engineered bricks and concrete roof tiles. Houses of different scales and shapes were built, and along with the houses came new layouts such as cul-de-sacs and roads with wide, splayed junctions.

These types of house often do not relate to the area in terms of plan form, scale, location, or materials, weakening the strength of the AONB's distinctive character.

Farm buildings

Historic farmsteads are a key part of the AONB's architectural, agricultural and social heritage. An understanding of a farm building's history and original function will help to achieve a successful conversion or re-use proposal. The setting and group as a whole is often an essential part of the individual building's character.

As well as the farmhouse, farmsteads had a minimum of a storage barn which could also house animals. A large barn is often the oldest building in a farmstead.

As with houses, pre-nineteenth century buildings were constructed of local stone or cob. Some were rendered, some were not. They were a maximum of five metres deep and had thatch roofs.

As farms developed more buildings were often added. Over time, brick, slate and imported stone from neighbouring areas began to be used, and larger buildings were made possible by advances in technology.

Modern houses, Smallridge, reflecting local building styles and materials

Historic farmsteads are a key part of the AONB's heritage

Towards sustainable and distinctive design

The Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership encourages development which draws inspiration from the distinctive architectural heritage of the area to create something new.

This section provides information on the materials, construction techniques and design attributes and considerations which help a new house to fit harmoniously into its surroundings, whether modern or traditional in style.

These guidelines are also intended to help in the restoration, alteration or extension of existing properties.

The importance of context, thinking about how the building will sit in the landscape and its relationship with neighbouring properties, applies whether the style is based on historic references or is contemporary in its use of materials and design.

Traditional local and natural materials can be utilised effectively in modern designs for example, while a visual contrast between a historic building and a new addition can offer an appropriate design solution.

House under construction in the Blackdown Hills

Planning and building regulations

Building work which takes places within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is subject to the same planning legislation and building regulations as elsewhere in England.

Unlike National Parks, AONBs do not have dedicated planning authorities. The planning authority is the relevant district or borough council. Before embarking on any building or alteration project, contact the local planning department for advice.

Building regulations apply to the construction of all new buildings, extensions and some types of alteration work. Compliance is normally the responsibility of the builder. Contact the building control department at the district council for more information.

The following guidance is intended to encourage sensitive development in the Blackdown Hills AONB. It does not constitute formal planning policy or replace building regulations.

There are contact details for all the relevant authorities at the end of this guide.

Some general design principles

- Whether new build or alterations, good detailing, appropriate materials and sensitive treatment of the spaces around buildings are essential elements in achieving a successful and sympathetic scheme.
- Locations for new buildings and development should follow the traditional settlement pattern and respect the integrity of historical settlement forms.
- Layouts for new development sites should reflect the road patterns and plot forms of the surrounding traditional settlement. It is important to create the same sense of enclosure, traditional proportions and massing of buildings, for example continuing a distinct building line along a street.
- Building forms and materials should reflect the local traditions.
- New extensions and additions to traditional buildings should respect the character and setting of the original building. Where new buildings are adjacent to traditional ones, consider the group as a whole, using scale, form, colour, and materials to link new and old.
- Sensitive design of the spaces around buildings is essential to preserve local character. The most harmoniously designed building can look 'out of place' if it is not properly integrated into its setting.
- Contemporary design should draw on the qualities of landscape, historic features and buildings to reinforce local distinctivenesss.

Sustainable construction

Construction projects should aim for minimal negative impact on the environment.

When choosing materials and products, consideration should be given to the amount of energy used in manufacture and transport (known as embodied energy), and pollution caused at extraction and processing sites. Ways of addressing this include using local and reclaimed materials wherever possible, using local labour, and choosing materials that are environmentally certified, such as FSC timber. For example, traditional building materials such as chert, cob and timber, which contribute so much to the quality of Blackdown Hills buildings, tend to have low levels of embodied energy since they often involve minimal processing and are sourced locally.

Energy use in dwellings is considered further in the section on domestic energy.

The building process should be planned to cause the least possible damage to the immediate environment. This may mean carrying out work at certain times of the year to avoid disturbing nesting birds or damaging trees for example.

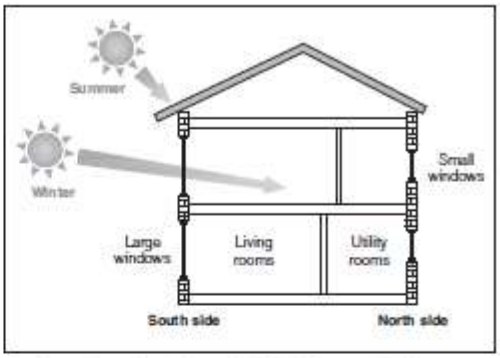
Orientation and passive solar gain

Prior to the twentieth century houses were designed to conserve energy. They tended to be orientated towards the sun and to have small windows to keep in what heat was being generated by an open fire or range. Today, the importance of reducing carbon output means that these old design principles are relevant once again.

Capturing warmth from sunlight to help heat a building is known passive solar gain. This should be exploited wherever possible within an appropriate design.

Where practical, the longer elevations of a house should be orientated towards the sun and the principal rooms placed on the sunny side of the house. In a development of more than one house, there needs to be a balance between optimal positioning for passive solar gain, and a layout which fits in with the character of the area.

A design with a significant amount of south-facing glass should only be proposed if the appearance is in keeping with the character of the area and the heat dynamics are fully understood. Over-heating can result in excessive energy consumption because of the need for air conditioning.



Passive solar gain – the main habitable rooms (living room, bedrooms) should face south and have larger windows to capture heat and light with bathrooms and kitchen for example being sited on the north elevation

Position

The majority of traditional houses on the Blackdown Hills are set close to the road, either parallel to the road or gable end on. The gable ends of houses are frequently extended to become low garden walls giving a characteristic sense of enclosure along lanes and in villages and hamlets.

New buildings should have a similar relationship to the road as their neighbours, to avoid gaps in the village street-scene or an uncharacteristic set-back. It is possible with careful design to position a new house in the traditional way, and still provide parking.

The gable ends of houses are frequently extended to become low garden walls giving a characteristic sense of enclosure along lanes and in villages and hamlets

New properties (centre and right) fit into the street scene by having similar proportions to older neighbours (left)

Size and scale

A two-storey house design with a narrow plan and gable ends is most likely to fit in with the character of the area.

Houses in the Blackdown Hills tend to be relatively small in scale. It is important that the overall mass of a new property does not overpower its neighbours. One way of achieving this is to break up the form of the building with a one or two storey wing additional to the main body of the house. This could take the form of the traditional catslide extension.

A new property should have similar ridge and eaves heights to its neighbours, and windows and doors should also be of a similar size.

Building materials and methods

As set out in the Built heritage section, typical building materials are greensand, chert, flint and cob, any of which might be rendered and limewashed. These are augmented by stone from neighbouring areas. Using the palette of Blackdown Hills' materials can help new houses be in keeping with the character of the area. It is also more fuel efficient to use local materials in construction.

With careful handling, locally distinctive features can be incorporated into the design of new development to help it blend into its setting, for example red brick detailing is common in Hemyock while buff-coloured brick can be seen in Buckland St Mary and Bishopswood.

Modern insulation and damp proofing standards require up-to-date building methods, but these can be combined with traditional materials to create buildings with character.

Local stone may be used to face a timber-framed or blockwork house. Blockwork can be rendered with traditional lime.

Concrete blocks with in-set flint or chert are readily available but must be carefully chosen and handled to avoid a heavily-banded appearance, which is not a local characteristic. The random rubble appearance of a traditionally constructed building is desirable.

Cob is a versatile material and can be used for new buildings and extensions.

Flint with stone detailing, typical building materials in the Blackdown Hills, in this example laid in courses

Concrete blocks with in-set flint or chert are available but must be carefully chosen and handled to avoid a heavily-banded appearance

All traditional materials tend to be repairable and recyclable and take less energy to produce than plastic or cement-based alternatives. Although they can be expensive, they generally have greater longevity if maintained properly. It is recommended that builders and craftspeople with specialist experience are always employed when working with traditional materials.

Render and mortar

The pointing of rubblestone buildings has as great an impact upon the appearance of the building as the stone itself. The mortar colour and profile should match closely that of neighbouring vernacular buildings, with careful consideration given to the ratio of mortar to stone and joint widths. Wide joints or excessive pointing which dominate the appearance of the stone should be avoided.

Lime mortars and renders are reusable, less environmentally damaging in their production than cement, and can be sourced locally. They allow a building to breathe and do not crack with movement.

Lime render is a characteristic finish for both cob and rubblestone walls. In the Blackdown Hills, lime render should be applied in soft shades of cream and pink.

Windows and doors

The appearance of a building is strongly influenced by the positioning, size and design of the windows. Houses in the Blackdown Hills tend to have comparatively small windows with multi-paned frames. Window styles and sizes should be designed appropriately in the setting of neighbouring houses.

Side-hung casements work best for small, square windows and landscape aspect windows. Taller windows of portrait aspect may be better fitted with vertical sliding sashes. The setting of the frame within the window reveal is also important, and the depth should be based on neighbouring vernacular houses.

Doors too are significant features and the proportions, material and finish of external doors in new houses are important considerations. In historic buildings the style of door should suit the style and period of the house.

The production of uPVC is an energy intensive process, and products are difficult to repair and ultimately recycle (although advances are being made in this). Timber from sustainable sources is therefore preferred for frames and doors and, if well maintained, will have a longer lifespan than uPVC. Wood also provides a more characteristic and balanced appearance. Both windows and doors are traditionally painted, rather than using wood stain.

In some more modern properties though, replacement energy efficient uPVC units may be appropriate in place of draughty, single-glazed windows.

Blackdown Hills' houses tend to have comparatively small windows with multi-paned frames

Roofs

Steeply pitched, gable end roof structures are the most common form. Slate, pantiles, occasionally plain tiles and thatch are the typical roofing materials. The shape, size, pitch and colour of the roof are important elements of a building, the street scene and wider landscape setting, and are important factors to consider if the building is very visible.

Characteristic gable end roof under modern slate

Thatch is particularly characteristic in some parts of the AONB – Broadhembury is a notable example. Thatched roofs offer a particular insight into historic building practices and should be maintained and repaired. Thatch also offers a sustainable material for new build. The local style traditionally used combed wheat reed with a flush ridge and simple rounded eaves.

Thatched houses at Broadhembury

Dormer windows can traditionally be seen on smaller properties where the upper floor takes up some roof space. Usually small, restricted in number and sited low down on the roof, they have swept or gabled roofs. On new or extended properties they should relate to the design and materials of the building and to the size and position of existing windows.

Guttering, downpipes and bargeboards

Eaves details should be plain and simple with a thin fascia board flush to the wall. Traditionally, gutters are supported on wall-mounted brackets rather than attached to a timber fascia board. Traditional gutters and downpipes are made of cast iron. Powder-coated aluminium is a cheaper alternative and is more similar in appearance to cast iron than uPVC. Dark coloured gutters and downpipes are generally less obtrusive.

During the nineteenth century bargeboards were introduced as a design feature, often with ornate styling. They are appropriate for some Victorian buildings but are not generally a typically characteristic feature.

Plain and simple fascia board with dark coloured gutters and downpipes are generally less obtrusive

Chimneys

Chimneys are usually internal at the gable end of houses. In the case of an historical building, the chimney stack is likely to be an integral part of the design and attractive features in their own right. New houses can be provided with working chimneys so that it is possible to install a heating system which burns

This Victorian house in Bishopswood shows that chimney stacks can be interesting features in their own right

wood fuel. Chimneys can be used as a convenient location for boiler flues or for ventilation intakes and extracts; however it is better to avoid false chimneys without a function.

Extensions to existing houses

Generally extensions should fit in with the character of the existing building and should not overpower it. The roof structure, eaves and ridges of the extension should complement the existing building. Construction materials may be the same or may complement the existing structure. For example, render or weather boarding could be placed next to rubblestone, or slate next to thatch. Windows should generally be of similar size and proportion to the existing house.

Complementary materials such as render or weather boarding may be suitable for extensions

Porches or simple canopies can be found on a variety of houses, built to shelter the main door from the weather. Generally small, simple structures that mirror the main building, a porch should not dominate the elevation of the property. Within settlements or a group of houses it is worth considering the appearance of a new porch in relation to neighbouring properties or the overall street scene.

Conservatories can have a useful role in passive solar gain but to benefit the dynamics must be understood as they can both gain and lose heat rapidly. Modestly sized, simple rectangular designs of timber, or timber and stone construction with sloping or gable roofs at the rear of a property generally fit a building's character best.

Conversions

Some old farm buildings have become redundant as farming practice has changed. Even though they may not be specifically protected, most traditional farm buildings are historic assets, particularly the many intact small farmsteads of the Blackdown Hills. The setting is often an essential part of the building's character.

Most traditional farm buildings are simple, functional structures built from local materials with small window openings and minimal decoration. Successful conversions respect and reflect the building's original functions and maintain the agricultural character and

historic elements on the outside and inside. The layout of the existing building will impose limits on what is achievable.

Successful conversions respect and reflect the building's original functions

Hedges and boundaries

Boundaries around properties in the Blackdown Hills are traditionally demarcated with rubblestone walls or hedges and hedgebanks planted with species commonly found in the area such as oak, ash, beech, hazel, hawthorn and blackthorn. Cob walls and iron railings are also occasionally used. Mass-produced fencing and decorative concrete blocks are not typical and have a disproportionate impact on character.

While the traditional methods of enclosing space may initially be more costly or take longer to establish, they have greater longevity and are fundamental in helping to maintain the character of an area, and will help to 'anchor' new development into its surroundings.

The maintenance and repair of boundary walls or the erection of new ones has very similar considerations to the walls of buildings. The style of capping used on a wall can contribute much to local distinctiveness.

The style of capping used on a wall can contribute much to local distinctiveness

Nature conservation

New developments should look for opportunities to make a positive contribution to the natural environment. As well as any steps that may be required to protect certain species – all bats and nesting birds are protected by law – proposals should aim to encourage wildlife.

Features to encourage birds and bats can be easily installed on new or existing buildings. Hedgerows and trees provide shelter, feeding and nesting sites for a variety of species and act as wildlife corridors. Stone walls also provide valuable wildlife habitats.

Stone walls provide valuable wildlife habitats

Roads, entrances and driveways

The design and detail of new roads in small housing schemes is critical in determining the character of new developments, from the overall layout and road pattern to design of junctions and detail of road surfacing.

New roads and driveways must meet highway planning requirements. However there is some flexibility within the legislation for non-standard layouts to be adopted, as long as it can be shown that vehicles can negotiate them without an unsafe level of risk.

Through careful design and discussion with highway advisors, it is possible to come up with a sensitive design that features, for example, a narrower driveway or tighter curves.

A simple entrance and drive in a rural setting helps a house to blend in to the landscape

A well-designed drive blends into the setting and helps a house look appropriate in the landscape. Wide entrances, sweeping corners and large areas of tarmac or block-paving can result in an appearance which is out of character.

Driveways and external spaces can play an important role in mitigating flooding problems. The use of permeable surfaces rather than tarmac, blocks and slabs can reduce large amounts of surface water run-off as rain can soak into the ground.

Entrance gates should reflect the location – the appropriate solution will differ between a rural setting and one within a village. Gates should be simple, either reflecting the boundary style or typical farm gates in the area. Stone or timber gateposts are also traditionally simple, robust structures. Ornate, high and solid gates are out of place with the traditionally simple building form.

Lighting

If external lighting is installed it should only light a specific area such as a drive or parking area and not the wider countryside. Directional cowls should be fitted to stop or limit light spillage, lights should be directed downwards not upwards. Lower wattage bulbs can be used and lights should be fitted with timers and passive infra-red detectors to ensure that they are only on when needed.

These steps will help to preserve the AONB's dark starry skies, and avoid disturbance to wildlife and neighbours. Information to help minimise light pollution from homes is available on the Blackdown Hills AONB website.

Domestic energy

Energy conservation measures

A key consideration for the maintenance, management and alteration of existing properties and the construction of new properties is energy and resource consumption. Changes to old buildings and the construction of new ones should be carried out in materials that have as low as possible impact upon the environment and introduce features that help occupiers of the buildings to minimise their consumption of energy, particularly energy from carbon emitting, finite, fossil fuels.

The use of microgeneration energy installations: photovoltaic units, solar thermal units, wind turbines and ground, water and air heat source units are ways in which property owners can seek to reduce their consumption of fossil fuels. However, these installations can be highly visible in the landscape and street scene, sometimes significantly changing the appearance of a building or its setting.

As a first step it is advisable to consider measures to reduce energy use and improve energy efficiency before thinking about renewable energy installations.

Sheep's wool makes ideal insulation material

Traditional versus modern building construction

A significant number of the buildings on the Blackdown Hills were constructed before 1900. These houses would not have been built with cavity walls, damp proof courses, insulation, central heating systems or double glazed windows. They are buildings that function closely with the environment in that they allow a little damp in but, by virtue of the draughts that also get in, the damp is generally dispersed into the atmosphere and no significant damp problem should arise.

Modern buildings with insulation, damp proof courses, and other methods work in a different manner; their aim is to exclude damp and cold and to have very little connection with the external environment. Modern buildings are required to operate on a near airtight basis. To attempt to make a traditional building function as a modern building by trying to make it impermeable to damp and cold can result in huge damp problems.

It is virtually impossible to keep damp from penetrating through the walls of a solid rubblestone, cob or brick building. If damp does inevitably get in and cannot escape because of newly fitted double glazed windows, draught proofing and the loss of the open fire, then it will remain as damp within the building.

A good understanding of the way that a traditional building works is therefore required before any intervention is made. This may include rainwater goods efficiently discharging run-off away from the house so avoiding the house sitting in a 'puddle', avoiding insulation that traps damp in walls and doors and windows that entirely eliminate air movement.

It is advisable to discuss matters such as damp proofing and insulation with a surveyor experienced in the care of traditional buildings prior to implementing any changes to ensure that they will achieve the end goal rather than adding to any problem.

Nevertheless, there are some simple measures that can be taken to help conserve energy in all houses.

Methods of conserving energy

Insulation

The loss of heat through the roof is significant and the laying of insulation material in the roofspace between the ceiling joists is a simple procedure as long as the eaves ventilation to the roof is not blocked off. In traditional buildings it is desirable for the insulating

material to be vapour permeable to allow any damp that has got in from outside and vapour from activities in the building such as cooking and washing to be able to pass through. Hemp and sheep's wool insulation are ideal for this.

It is a straight forward procedure to insulate cavity walls too, and wooden floors can be insulated where appropriate.

Draught proofing

Draught proofing of doors and windows and openings such as letter boxes will go a long way to help remove the chill feeling caused by draughts. Shutters and thick curtains are a traditional and effective way of draught proofing. There are specialist companies that repair and draught proof, for example, sash windows so that they still operate effectively but let in a lot less unwanted air.

If vapour producing rooms such as kitchens and bathrooms are effectively draught proofed then mechanical ventilation in the form of a fan may be required to remove the damp air from the room.

Windows

In older houses built with single glazed windows, their replacement with double or triple glazing will undoubtedly make the house feel warmer and reduce energy loss but it may not always be a viable option in historic buildings or on cost grounds. Thick curtains, shutters and secondary glazing are alternative, cheaper, energy conservation measures that could be considered.

Pipework insulation

Insulate all pipes to ensure that heat gets to where it is wanted rather than being lost under floors or in roofspaces.

Efficiency of existing heating system and household appliances

Check the existing heating system to see whether it is working as efficiently as possible, or look at the cost of fitting a more fuel efficient boiler. Change to low energy bulbs, and energy efficient household appliances.

Domestic renewable energy

Separate guidance is available which assesses the constraints and opportunities for renewable energy in the Blackdown Hills. It contains a description of different technologies and consideration of costs and carbon saving. It also provides an overall assessment of the potential landscape impact. It is available at www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk.

This guidance therefore focuses on providing some simple advice on ways to reduce any impacts from household microgeneration installations in relation to the immediate built environment.

You should contact your local planning authority before undertaking any work to establish whether planning permission or listed building consent is required for your specific proposal and seek advice on building regulations requirements.

Photovoltaic and solar hot water

There are two types of solar panel. Photovoltaic (PV) panels or tiles generate electricity from the sun's energy. Solar panels or collectors use the sun's radiation to heat water. [Note that reference here to 'panel' is intended to refer to the technology and covers the increasingly wide choice of products including PV tiles and slates.] Both work best facing south at an angle of 30-40° and located to avoid shadowing from chimneys, trees or neighbouring properties for example.

PV and solar panels installed on an older property

New developments offer the opportunity to consider the inclusion and siting of solar panels as part of the overall design. PV panels are available in different colours and a range of designs that can be used to provide a contemporary design or match more traditional materials and finishes. Increasingly solar heating collectors are becoming available that can be incorporated into a new or existing roof in much the same way as rooflights. Panels should be flush with the roof to minimise contrast.

Consideration of the positioning of panels can help to minimise any visual impact by retaining the balance and appearance of a house, for example by lining the panels up with windows and matching the size of the panels to existing features.

Outbuildings or extensions can provide good locations that have minimal effect on the overall building, or free-standing panels within the garden may offer a good solution, especially in the case of older vernacular buildings.

Wind energy

Even small wind turbines can have visual impacts on sensitive landscapes. There may be important views to consider from settlements, public access land, public rights of way and other public vantage points.

Developments that break skylines can have more significant landscape impacts, so consider siting a turbine on lower slopes rather than on hill tops. Impacts can also be minimised if a turbine is set against a backdrop of trees or group of buildings.

Landscape impacts can be reduced by the choice of a suitable colour for the turbine and its pole. Examples are the use of semi-matt off white or light grey to blend with the sky or dark grey or black to blend with hills and trees. If possible cables connecting a turbine to the dwelling or grid should be put underground.

Consider the likely noise that a turbine will make so that any impacts on the tranquillity of neighbouring properties and surrounding countryside can be assessed. Check to make sure that the turbine shadow will not cause a flicker effect on neighbouring windows.

Consider the height of the turbine in relation to any adjoining buildings and try to ensure that it is in proportion and consider design issues such as colour, reflectivity and size. If mounted on a building a turbine fixed to the gable end will minimise the length of the pole.

The main species likely to be affected by turbines are birds and bats. Many birds and all bats are protected by law. Specialist advice should be sought if bats are known to be present and it may be that a wind turbine is not the best option. Bats tend to occupy old buildings and trees and will often fly along hedgerows and other natural corridors. This should be considered in choosing an appropriate location for a turbine.

Heat pumps

Ground source heat pumps use a buried ground loop which transfers heat from the ground into a building to provide space heating, generally with under-floor heating, and sometimes to pre-heat hot water. Water source heat pumps use temperature differences in a similar way to extract heat via a heat exchanger. Air source heat pumps are mounted directly on an external wall to make use of the ambient air as a heat source.

Air source heat pumps are mounted directly on an external wall to make use of the ambient air as a heat source

Before digging trenches to install ground source heat pumps, check with the county council archaeology service to ensure there are not likely to be any archaeological remains that would be damaged by the works. Consider also whether the work may cause damage to a habitat that is of high wildlife value. In such cases it could be better to install the pipes vertically using a borehole.

Using heat exchangers in water bodies such as ponds and lakes could lead to ecological impacts through localised temperature changes and specialist advice should be sought.

The main issue with the installation of air source heat pumps is the siting of a heat exchanger on the outside of the building. It should be positioned carefully to avoid detrimental impacts on the building, particularly if it is listed or in a conservation area. It is worth considering detailed design issues such as fixings, colour, reflectivity and size. To avoid problems of noise nuisance it is also worth bearing in mind the likely noise that a pump will make.

Glossary

Bargeboard – a timber piece fitted to the outer edge of a gable to protect roof timbers from the weather, sometimes carved for decorative effect

Casement – A window frame hinged on one side so that it swings out or in to open

Catslide – A roof with a break in pitch, the lower section being a lower angle than the upper. This might be found where a roof line is extended from a two storey building down over a single storey extension

Chert – a hard, creamy coloured type of quartz stone formed in the upper greensand bedrock and traditionally used extensively for building in the Blackdown Hills

Chimney stack – the part of the chimney breast visible above the roof

Cob – a traditional mixture of earth, sand, straw and water pressed together to form the walls of a building

Cut stone – building stone that has been chiselled or worked into a desired size and shape

Door jambs – a pair of vertical posts or pieces forming the sides of a door frame

Eaves – the eaves of a roof are its lower edges, usually projecting beyond the walls of the building to provide weather protection

Embodied energy – the energy used (and therefore the CO2 emissions) in manufacturing, packaging and transporting a product, material or service

Fascia – the vertical board under the lower end of the roof to which the guttering can be fixed

Gable end – the triangular portion of walling between the edges of a sloping (pitched) roof and the wall below it at the end of a ridge roof

Gate piers – a column or pillar of brick or masonry to which the hinges of a gate are attached

Half-hipped roof – a roof finishing at a gable end where a small section of the top part is angled or hipped, the rest vertical

Hipped roof – a roof without gable ends so it slopes at the ends as well as the sides

Landscape – the character and appearance of land, including its shape, form, ecology, natural features, colours and elements and the way these components combine

Lime mortar – one of the oldest forms of mortar, used to bind construction blocks, composed of lime, an aggregate such as sand, and water. Unlike modern cement, it is breathable and slightly flexible, making it particularly suitable for buildings of traditional construction

Lime render – a lime-based, cement-like mortar applied to the external walls of stone buildings. In contrast to modern cement-based mixes, it is porous and allows the masonry to breathe

Lime wash – a traditional low cost paint based upon lime and water

Lintel – a horizontal beam over a door or window opening that is carrying the weight of masonry or brickwork

Local distinctiveness – the positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place

Mass construction walls – a method of constructing a stone, brick, or cob wall where the weight of the roof is transmitted to the ground continuously along the length of the wall. In comparison, with frame construction the weight is focused on posts positioned along the length of the wall

Pointing – mortar joints between masonry blocks or bricks

Ridge height – the highest part of the roof structure

Rubblestone – irregular, variable sized and shaped building stone

Scale – the impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person

Soffit – the underside of eaves or other projection

Spring line – a line of springs along the sides of a valley, as a result of a change in the underlying geology

Vernacular – the way in which ordinary buildings were built in a particular place, making use of local styles, techniques and materials and responding to local economic and social conditions

Wall capping – weatherproof finish along the top of a wall, often decorative and formed of stone, slate, tile or brick

Window mullion – vertical dividing structure in a window frame

Contacts and further information

Local authorities

For planning, building control and building conservation:

East Devon District Council
Council Offices
The Knowle
Sidmouth
Devon EX10 8HL
Telephone: 01395 516551
www.eastdevon.gov.uk

Mid Devon District Council
Phoenix House
Phoenix Lane
Tiverton
Devon EX16 6PP
Telephone: 01884 255255
www.middevon.gov.uk

South Somerset District Council
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
Somerset BA20 2HT
Telephone: 01935 462462
www.southsomerset.gov.uk

Taunton Deane Borough Council
The Deane House
Belvedere Road
Taunton
Somerset TA1 1HE
Telephone: 01823 356356
www.tauntondeane.gov.uk

Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership

AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014, 2009

East Devon and Blackdown Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and East Devon District Landscape Character Assessment and Management Guidelines, 2008

Light pollution in the Blackdown Hills and Light Pollution Action for householders, 2009

Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 2010

English Heritage

www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property

www.helm.org.uk
[English Heritage website providing case studies, guidance and publications]

Other design guides

Planning Design Guide for Mid Devon, (undated)

Extensions and alterations to houses – a design guide, South Somerset District Council, 2010

Landscape Design – a Guide to Good Practice, South Somerset District Council, 2006

Design Guide for Taunton Deane, 1998

Reference books and useful websites

Buildings of England: Devon, Nikolaus Pevsner, revised edition 1989

Buildings of England: South and West Somerset, Nikolaus Pevsner, new edition 2002

Devon building, an introduction to local traditions, P Beacham (ed), 1990

The traditional houses of Somerset. Jane Penoyre, 2005

Traditional buildings in the parish of Combe St Nicholas, Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group, 2009

www.devonbuildingsgroup.org.uk
[a group whose aim is to encourage awareness of all aspects of the wealth of historic buildings in Devon]

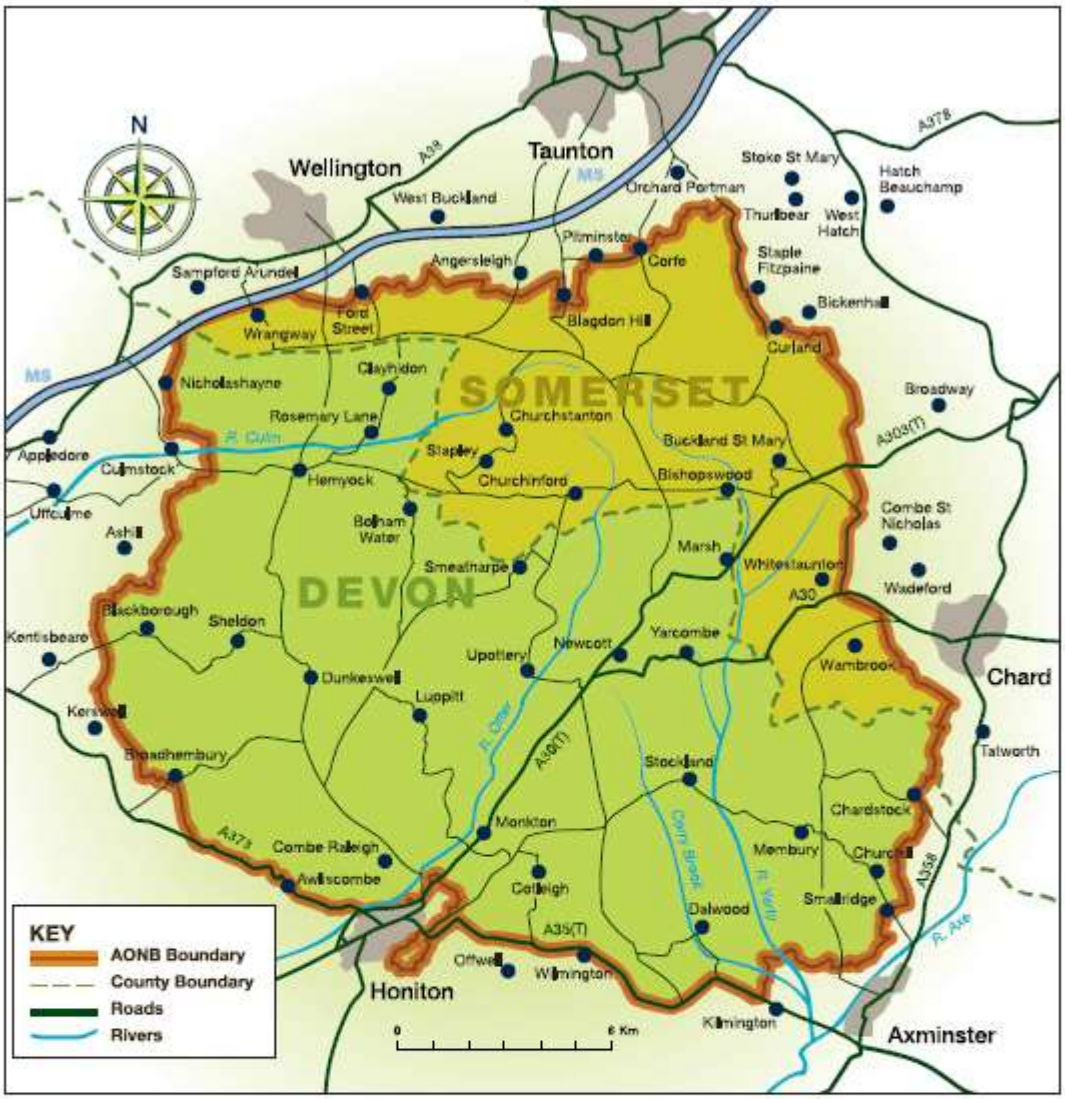
www.devonearthbuilding.com
[an association whose aim is to sustain the ancient and traditional practice of building in earth or 'cob' in the South-West of England]

www.svbrg.org.uk
[website of the Somerset Vernacular Building Research Group]

Domestic energy

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk
[English Heritage website for those with older houses]



The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. 100019783 2012

Blackdown Hills AONB

St Ivel House

Station Road

Hemyock

Cullompton

Devon

EX15 3SJ

Tel: 01823 680681

www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk

Blackdown Hills AONB