



East Devon District Council

Woodbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement

10 April 2026 (effective date of decision)

1. Summary

Following an independent examination, East Devon District Council now confirms that the Woodbury Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan will proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum.

In accordance with the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Guidance (updated September 2020), the effect of this Decision Statement is to give the Woodbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) significant weight in decision-making so far as the plan is material to the planning application.

2. Background

On 12 June 2013, East Devon District Council agreed to designate the area comprising the parish of Woodbury as a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with Part Two of the Town and Country Planning (England), Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Following the submission of the Woodbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan to the Council, the plan was publicised, and representations invited. The publicity period ended on 27 November 2025.

East Devon District Council appointed an independent examiner, Andrew Ashcroft, to review whether the Plan should proceed to referendum.

The examiner's report concluded that, subject to a series of recommended modifications, the Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements, including the prescribed Basic Conditions, and can proceed to a Neighbourhood Planning referendum (based on the referendum area being the same as the Neighbourhood Area (i.e. the parish of Woodbury)).

3. Decision and Reasons

3.1 Modifications

The modifications set out overleaf were agreed to be made to the Submission Version of the Woodbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan by East Devon District Council, further to the [findings of the independent examination](#) and consideration of the plan and examiners report at [EDDC Cabinet on 1st April 2026](#). As agreed by EDDC Cabinet, the modifications incorporate the examiner's recommendations in full, to secure that the plan is clear, accurate, and meets the basic conditions set out in legislation.

3.2 Referendum

The District Council has considered whether to extend the area in which the referendum is to take place. The District Council agreed with the Examiner that there is no reason to extend the Neighbourhood Plan area for the purpose of holding the referendum.

The examiner has concluded that with the below modifications made, the Plan meets the basic conditions and other relevant legal requirements. The Council concurs with this view. Therefore, to meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, a referendum which poses the question, '*Do you want East Devon District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Woodbury Parish to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?*' will be held in the Neighbourhood Area of Woodbury.

The referendum will take place at the earliest opportunity, allowing for the adherence to the prescribed timescales from publication of the referendum documents. The details will be available on the [Electoral Services pages](#) of the East Devon District Council website.

3.3 Referendum Version of the Plan

This Decision Statement and a Referendum Version of the Woodbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan, incorporating the changes set out in this Decision Statement, will be available to view on the [Neighbourhood Planning pages](#) of the District Council website (www.eastdevon.gov.uk).

Hard copies will also be available to view at:

- a) East Devon District Council Offices, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY** between the hours of 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday, **by calling 01404 515616**.
- b) Woodbury Parish Council office at the Greenside, Greenway, Woodbury, EX5 1LP (Mon to Thurs 9.30am - 12.30pm). Enquiries relating to this should be directed to Woodbury Clyst Parish Council Tel. 01395 233791 / clerk@woodburyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Paper copies can also be provided by post if necessary. To request a hard copy please contact Angela King, Neighbourhood Planning Officer by calling 01395 571740 or emailing: Angela.King@eastdevon.gov.uk.

Modifications Made

Note: ***Bold italic text*** in modified policy wording indicates changes for the purposes of this decision notice only. For full changes from the submitted policy wording, particularly for deleted text, please cross refer to the [Submission Version](#) of the Plan published on the website.

Modifications to Policies

1. Policy 1: New Housing Developments

For clarity and to aid effective implementation, revised all parts of the policy to read:

“In accordance with thresholds set by Local Plan policy, housing development proposals for multiple dwellings should provide a mix of sizes and types that reflects identified local needs as indicated by the latest Housing Needs Survey, including, where relevant, opportunities for self-build and affordable housing for social rent.

Development proposals should deliver high-quality design which conforms to the local character as set out in the Woodbury Design Guidance document (Appendix C) and is in keeping with the local surrounding area by virtue of an appropriate scale, mass, height, size, layout and density, and the use of appropriate materials.

Development ***proposals should*** be in sustainable and accessible locations ***and have*** access to regular and reliable public transport, existing footpaths and cycleways enabling reduced dependency ***on*** car use whilst also recognising the importance of disabled access.

Development proposals should respond positively to their immediate locality and avoid any adverse environmental impacts. Where an environmental impact is unavoidable, proposals should incorporate appropriate mitigation measures.

2. Policy 2: Retention of Affordable Homes

- Deleted the policy in favour of relying on existing legislative provisions.

3. Policy 3: Accessibility of New Development

- For proportionality and clarity, modified both parts of the policy to read:

“As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, proposals for new housing development **should** demonstrate how safe access to sustainable transport, including dedicated cycleways, walkways and public transport, have been included in the scheme. **In the case of major developments this should be** through a Transport Assessment.

Wherever practicable, new housing developments **should** provide pedestrian access to link up with existing or proposed footpaths, ensuring that the public can walk safely to **access local services and facilities and public transport, including where necessary,** providing safety measures to enable the safe crossing of roads.”

4. Policy 4: Assessment of Cumulative Impact

- Included a general overarching requirement and re-focused the policy on highway matters, to read:

“Development proposals should be designed and located so that they can be accommodated within the capacity of the local highway network.

Development proposals of more than ten dwellings within the Parish should be accompanied by an assessment of their impact on the local highway network which takes account of the cumulative impact of other development that has been granted or is known to be strategically planned within the Parish or adjacent to the parish boundary.

Development proposals that would have a net negative impact on the local highway network will not be supported, unless suitable mitigation **measures are included within the associated planning application** or an overriding public benefit can be demonstrated.”

5. Policy 5: Green Energy Initiatives

- For clarity and to aid effective implementation, revised all parts of the policy to read:

“Development proposals for power generation from renewable and low carbon sources (and associated energy storage) will be supported. Any such facilities should be designed and sited to avoid adverse landscape, visual and environmental impact.

The incorporation of sustainable initiatives within new developments including but not limited to those in paragraph 4.9 of the Plan will be supported.

As appropriate to their scale, nature, and location, and where it is practicable to do so, development proposals should be accessible to sustainable transport.”

6. Policy 6: Vehicle Parking Requirements

- For clarity (including on the role of the neighbourhood plan in this policy area), and to aid effective implementation, revised both the opening line and criteria 3, and replaced 'must' with 'should' throughout the policy, to read:

“Development proposals for a new or enlarged dwelling **should** meet the following criteria:

1. Off-street parking **should** be provided at least in the ratio of one parking space for a one-bedroom home, two car parking spaces for two and three bedroom homes and three parking spaces for four and more bedroom homes.
2. In the case of Houses with Multiple Occupation, the ratio **should** be one off-street parking space per bedroom.
3. ***Proposals should not result in the loss of off street car parking spaces for existing dwellings where it would lead to on-street parking that would be detrimental to highway safety***
4. Access for all utility and emergency vehicles **should** be ensured.
5. Cycle storage **should** be provided.”

7. Policy 7: Landscape Enhancement

- Deleted the second part of the policy (P7.2) relating to views due to insufficient clarity and detail and revised the remainder of the policy for clarity. The revised policy to read:

“Development proposals should respond positively to existing trees, Devon banks, and hedges within or adjacent to the development site.

Wherever practicable development proposal[s] should incorporate additional vegetation of this type within their overall layout.

Where new landscaping is proposed, native species of local provenance **should be used** and the siting of trees must take account of their canopy and root development.”

8. Policy 8: Biodiversity Enhancement

- Deleted the policy in favour of relying on the statutory requirements and Local Plan policy.

9. Policy 9: Support for wildlife within new developments

- To ensure a proportionate approach and for clarity, recast the opening and closing lines to the policy and amended all criteria for brevity and clarity in the requirement, to read:

“As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should make provision for wildlife which:

- ***incorporates swift bricks;***
- ***includes bat boxes and barn owl boxes, especially where existing buildings are to be demolished;***
- ***protects or establishes permeable and ideally planted boundaries that permit the movement of hedgehogs;***
- ***include solitary bee boxes, bee bricks, and insect houses; and***
- ***retains existing and where practicable plant new native trees, shrubs, and hedges to create green corridors for wildlife.***

All such provision of facilities for wildlife should be appropriately located on or adjacent to the development site.”

10. Policy 10: Conservation of Heritage

- Deleted the policy in favour of relying on national and local policy provisions, and on the development management process, including in the absence of identified non-designated heritage assets in the plan.

11. Policy 11: Green Spaces

- Reframed and revised the policy to align to its stated objectives and, in the absence of explicitly defined spaces for protection in the plan, to ensure it takes a positive approach, and incorporates the importance of biodiversity considerations in this sensitive neighbourhood area. The revised policy to read:

“Development proposals that would enhance the use and accessibility of public and communally used open and green spaces, including village greens, recreation and sports grounds, allotments, and common land will be supported subject to the avoidance of adverse biodiversity impacts.

Development proposals that would involve the loss of public and communally used open and green spaces, including village greens, recreation and sports grounds and allotments, or which would detract

from the attractiveness and accessibility of such spaces will not be supported unless it is demonstrated that **the** development:

- will result in a net increase in the community value of that space or assets, and features on it, or
- **the proposal involves a replacement for the facility which is of equal or enhanced community value to that of the existing use.**

12. Policy 12: Small Business Development

- Deleted the first part of the policy due to insufficient regard to national planning policy. Retained the second part of the policy in a revised form to allow for appropriate and sensitive business development and aid effective implementation. The revised policy to read:

“Development proposals for the extension of existing businesses or the sympathetic conversion of existing buildings **to employment use** will be supported where **the following criteria are met:**

- **the size of the extension is proportionate to the scale of the premises concerned and can be accommodated within the existing curtilage of the premises;**
- the premises **are** within accessible locations **and would not generate a significant increase in vehicle movement;**
- **the proposal would respond positively to safeguarding the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential properties; and**
- **a commercial justification for larger business premises can be demonstrated and which cannot be met elsewhere in the vicinity.”**

13. Policy 13: Rural Diversification

- Revised the policy for simplicity to ensure a criteria-based approach with the addition of the highway capacity as a consideration, as follows:

“Development proposals for the re-use of farm and other rural buildings for business or tourism purposes **will be supported where:**

- the proposed use is small-scale;
- if on an operational farm, **the use** is subservient to the farm and its operations;
- **they respond positively to** the surrounding landscape or environment;
- **they respect the** amenities of adjoining or nearby residential occupiers;
- **they can be accommodated within the local highway network; and**
- **they ensure that buildings are** converted to a standard that meets the design guidelines set out in Appendix C.”

14. Policy 14: Equine Activities

- For clarity, to aid effective implementation and for good practice, amended the policy to read:

“Equestrian development will be supported **where** it:

- is of a scale and/or an intensity of **equestrian** use which will be compatible with the landscape and its special qualities, **and** demonstrates sensitive design which responds to local character and distinctiveness including location and siting;
- **is well-related to existing infrastructure including vehicular and field access. Any field shelters should be located adjacent to existing vegetation. Native planting should be provided where existing vegetation is insufficient to screen the building concerned;**
- re-uses existing buildings **on a farm or holding** wherever practicable and viable. Covered ménages or arenas should utilise existing agricultural buildings;
- locates new buildings, stables, yard areas and facilities adjacent to existing buildings **whilst ensuring that** they respect the amenities of surrounding properties and uses. **Any new buildings** should be established as a block, near to existing dwellings or farm buildings from which they will be managed, to improve security, reduce visual impact and minimise the footprint; and
- provides new or supplementary native planting, **and** boundary treatments **which are** consistent with local character, where appropriate.”

15. Policy 15: Protection of community facilities

- For clarity and to aid effective and reasonable implementation, revised the policy to read:

“**Development proposals** which **would** result in the loss of a **community** facility will only be supported where one of the following criteria is met:

1. the facility is relocated to, or a better facility is provided, **in** an equally or more accessible **and appropriate** building or location;
2. **it can be demonstrated** that the facility is no longer needed and there is no reasonable prospect of use in the future;
3. a satisfactory assessment has taken place which proves there is an excess of such provision and the site or building is not needed for any other community facility or use.”

Other (non-policy or non-material) modifications

1. Plan period

For the avoidance of doubt, in line with the Examiner's findings, added the following wording at the end of plan paragraph 1.1:

- ***"The Plan period is 2020 to 2031. The neighbourhood area is shown on the map on Page 1 of this document."*** at added to the end of paragraph 1.1.

2. Supporting text

The following supporting text additions / deletions are made further to the Examiner's findings for reasons of clarity, accuracy, and consistency with the changes agreed to policy:

- Regarding Policy 1 New Housing Development:
 - At end Paragraph 2.4, added the wording, ***"East Devon District Council is addressing the strategic delivery of new housing up to 2042 as part of the preparation of its emerging Local Plan. Sites are proposed for new housing in both Woodbury and Exton in that Plan."***
 - New paragraph (2.11) added, to read, ***"The policy relies on the existing Woodbury Design Guidance (appendix C) to underpin the second part of Policy 1. The Parish Council will be updating the Design Guidance shortly. Any review of the Plan will incorporate the revised Design Guidance."***
- Regarding deleted Policy 2 Retention of Affordable Homes:
 - The Examiner recommended associated supporting text was deleted. In creating the Referendum Version no specific reference to affordable housing was included in text in the Housing Development chapter specific to the deleted policy, and as such no text was required to be deleted. All text is relevant to the retained and revised Policy 1.
- Regarding Policy 3 Accessibility of New Development:
 - For accuracy, replaced paragraph 3.8 to read: ***"Developments outside, but adjacent to, the Parish such as the major housing developments at Goodmores Farm and other sites in Exmouth result in increased through traffic throughout the Parish."***
- Regarding Policy 12: Small Business Development:
 - Deleted paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4.

3. Other Consequential and Incidental Changes

In line with [National Planning Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning](#) and recommendation by the Examiner, minor amendments made where required directly consequential to implementing the agreed modifications, for example to page numbering in the contents page, together with inconsequential minor edits to correct any typing and referencing errors, agreed between the LPA and the Qualifying Body (Woodbury Parish Council) in creating the final Referendum Version of the plan, as follows:

- For accuracy and version control, updated title page and header to rename the Plan to the '**Referendum Version**' and update the date to April 2026.
- Renumbered policies, paragraph and page numbers as required throughout resulting from other modifications to policy and wording.
- Updated Appendix F Summary of Policies to align to revisions made to policies throughout.
- Retained Policy titles for Submitted Policies relating to green spaces and community facilities as written within the policy boxes themselves ('**Green Spaces**' and "**Protection of Community Facilities**") rather than the variations used in the Submission Version index).
- Paragraph 6.2 – minor amend to the text to reflect that the EDDC Area of Great Landscape Value designation is no longer in use but existed under previous Local Plan policy.
- Retained paragraphs 6.8 to 6.11 under with the Examiner's general recommendation relating to consequential modifications, for information purposes relating to the Community Action at paragraph 2.12.
- Minor inconsequential and non-material amends for presentation, such as corrected paragraph spacing and typos and grammar.

4. Accessibility

East Devon District Council and Woodbury Parish Council have considered accessibility of the Plan for publishing online in preparing the final Referendum Version. Alterations for improved accessibility relate to formatting and descriptive text ('alt text') added for images but have not otherwise amended any part of the plan.