



**East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042**

**Publication Draft Local Plan**

**Sustainability Appraisal report**

**Non-Technical Summary**



**February 2025**

**East Devon – an outstanding place**

### **Contact details**

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

Email: [planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk)

[www.eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/)  
[@eastdevon](https://www.instagram.com/eastdevon)

To request this information in an  
alternative format or language  
please phone 01404 515616 or  
email [csc@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:csc@eastdevon.gov.uk)

---

## **What is the East Devon Local Plan?**

1. East Devon District Council is preparing a Local Plan, covering the period from 2020 to 2042. The Local Plan will show how East Devon will develop in the future and provide policies which will guide decisions on whether or not planning applications are granted. It addresses development needs for housing, employment, and related development, supporting high quality new development in appropriate locations; whilst also conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment.
2. The Local Plan directs development towards the most sustainable locations in East Devon, focusing new development at the West End of the district to the east of Exeter, including a new community. Significant development is promoted at the larger settlements, with less development to meet local needs at the smaller settlements.

## **What is Sustainability Appraisal?**

3. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is carried out alongside preparation of the Local Plan to promote sustainable development. SA assesses how the Local Plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve environmental, economic and social objectives. SA aims to make the Local Plan more sustainable by identifying the plan's significant effects and ways of minimising its negative effects. The policies and sites in the Local Plan, along with reasonable alternatives, are appraised against the following sustainability objectives:
  - To conserve and enhance the habitat and wildlife of our natural environment.
  - To conserve and enhance the special qualities and distinctive character of our landscapes, undeveloped coast and seascape.
  - To conserve and enhance our heritage assets and promote high quality design and accessibility in new development.
  - To minimise greenhouse gas emissions.
  - To adapt to the possible effects of climate change.
  - To utilise our land resources efficiently and minimise their loss or degradation.
  - To utilise our water resources efficiently and minimise their loss or degradation.
  - To provide and maintain a sufficient supply of good quality, financially accessible homes of mixed type and tenure to meet East Devon's needs.
  - To support healthy, safe and active communities where people have access to attractive and functional recreation spaces.
  - To provide accessible and attractive services and community facilities for all ages and interests.
  - To foster a strong and entrepreneurial economy and increased access to high quality skills training to support improved job opportunities and greater productivity.
  - To safeguard and strengthen the vitality and viability of town centres.

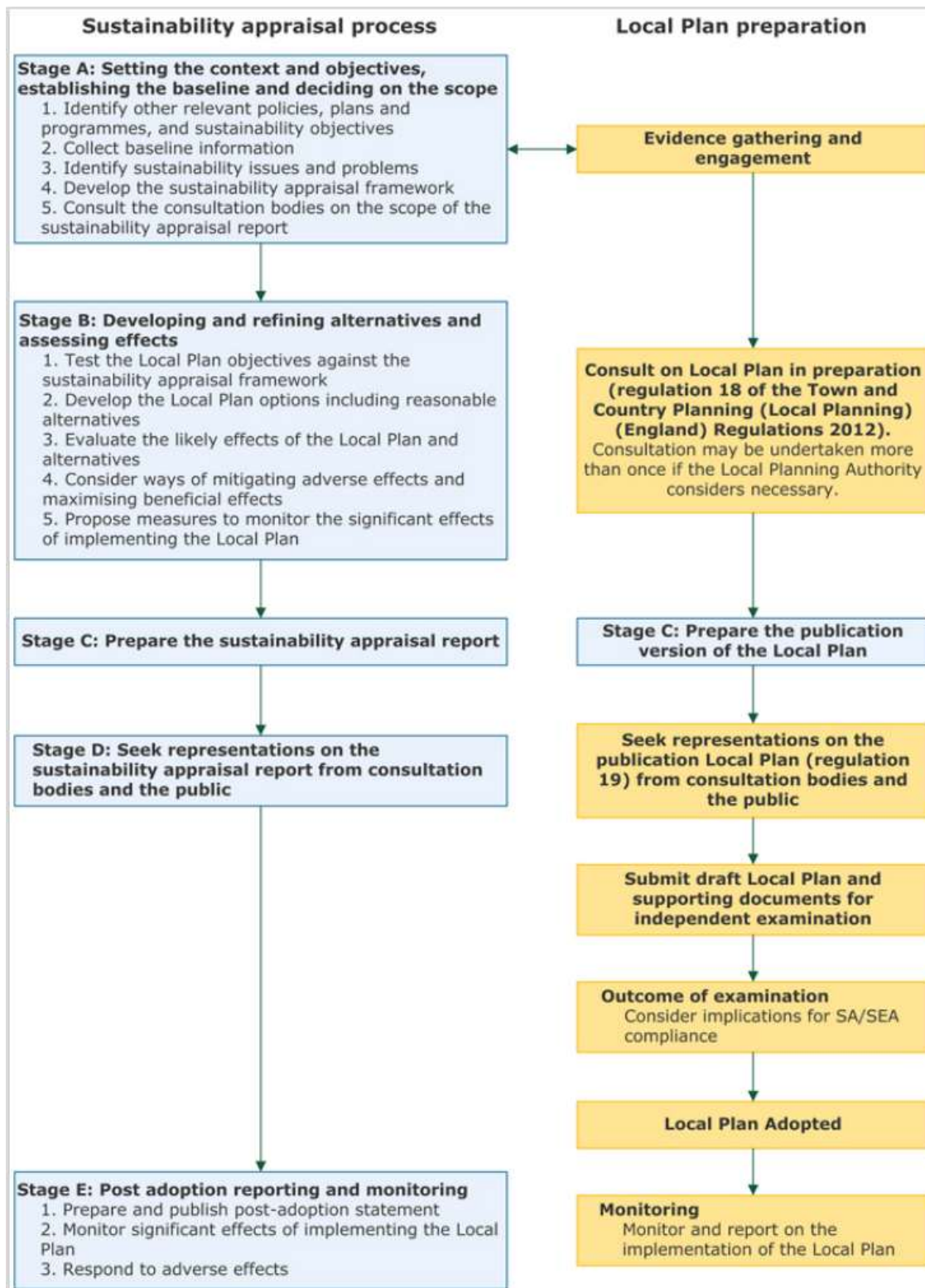
- To connect people and businesses digitally and physically through the provision of broadband, walking, cycling, public transport, road networks and other transport infrastructure both within and beyond East Devon.
4. For each of these objectives, the likely significant effects for each policy and site are described, with a conclusion ranging from major positive effect to major negative effect, as shown in the key below.

The policy/option/site is likely to have...	
+ +	a major positive effect overall in contributing towards the achievement of the objective.
+	a minor positive effect in contributing towards the achievement of the objective.
0	a negligible or no effect in contributing towards the achievement of the objective, or some positive and some negative impacts thus the balance overall is neutral.
-	a minor negative effect in contributing towards the achievement of the objective.
- -	a major negative effect in contributing towards the achievement of the objective.
?	an uncertain effect in contributing towards the achievement of the objective.
+ / -	a mixture of positive and negative effects in contributing towards the achievement of the objective.

5. This Non-Technical Summary of the SA report relates to the Publication Draft East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042 (February 2025). The SA report is published for consultation alongside the Local Plan, from February 2025. Comments can be submitted via our website at [Emerging Local Plan 2020-2042 - East Devon](https://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/emerging-local-plan-2020-2042-east-devon) or email to [planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk). Comments can also be made by post to Planning Policy, East Devon District Council, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ.

## How does the Sustainability Appraisal process relate to preparing a Local Plan?

6. The SA process has five stages. The following diagram shows the relationship between these stages and preparing a Local Plan. This Non-Technical Summary of the SA report is Stage D of the SA process: seeking representations from consultation bodies and the public, alongside the Publication Draft Local Plan (regulation 19).



7. There were some difficulties in preparing the SA report. A large number of site options are considered for inclusion in a Local Plan, and there is a general difficulty relating to the approach

and ensuring site options are appraised in a consistent manner. There remain some uncertainties regarding the long-term effects of working practices after the Covid-19 pandemic, and whether the pattern of part workplace based, part home working, will continue into the future. Distances to environmental constraints, employment, community services and facilities reflect straight line distances ‘as the crow flies’, but this is likely to be an underestimate and other factors than distance are relevant, such as topography and safety for pedestrian/cyclists; and impact pathways for biodiversity sites (e.g. watercourse, recreation route). Agricultural land quality of grade 3a and above is considered as “best and most versatile”. Whilst some areas in East Devon have been subject to further assessment that shows grade 3 as ‘a’ or ‘b’, the vast majority of land has only been subject to strategic level assessment that does not distinguish between Grades 3a and 3b and is also subject to uncertainty with regards to other grades. The Government has committed to ending the sale of new cars powered solely by internal combustion engines by 2030, but the rate at which emissions from these vehicles will reduce across the plan period is difficult to predict with any certainty. Therefore, it is assumed that driving a private car will still lead to carbon emissions.

## **How does the East Devon Local Plan relate to other relevant plans?**

8. There are numerous plans, policies and programmes that contain relevant objectives for the Local Plan and SA. At an international level there are several European Union Directives relating to environmental assessment, habitats, water quality, waste and air quality. The National Planning Policy Framework states the purpose of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, with a range of policies to do this. Other relevant national plans include legislation such as the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Climate Change Act 2008, and The Environment Act 2021.
9. At a more local level the East Devon District Council Plan 2024-28 sets out four key priorities, relating to the right homes in the right places, with appropriate infrastructure, a sustainable environment moving towards carbon neutrality, a vibrant and resilient economy, and a well-managed, financially secure council. Other relevant plans at a local level include the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan, South West Water’s Water Resource Management Plan, and the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan. Local Plans are also being prepared by adjoining local authorities which may identify cross-boundary implications; for example, in relation to housing need, environmental impacts of development, and infrastructure requirements.
10. These other relevant plans have been taken into account when preparing the Local Plan. For example, the Local Plan reflects the NPPF “presumption in favour of sustainable development” to meet community needs for new housing, in sustainable locations, whilst improving the environment and mitigating and adapting to climate change. Other examples include Local Plan policies that contribute towards meeting climate change targets, support the economy, and conserve and enhance the natural and historic environment.

## **What is the current state of environmental, social and economic issues in East Devon and how might they change without the Local Plan?**

11. East Devon has highly impressive natural and historic environment, with seven international wildlife sites within the district, and several others just beyond; 26 Sites of Special Scientific Interest; hundreds of local wildlife sites; over half (57%) of East Devon is designated as National Landscape; and over 3,000 listed buildings. Even without the Local Plan, there are still legal and national policy considerations that apply to designated wildlife, landscape, and historic environment sites and buildings, including the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain requirement. However, sites would not benefit from the comprehensive overview that a new Local Plan can provide, such as an up-to-date strategic approach to habitat mitigation for internationally designated sites, protecting against the piecemeal loss of attractive landscape outside designated areas, and conserving local areas or buildings that are valued for their historic interest.
12. Some of the international wildlife sites suffer from existing problems, such as the River Axe Special Area of Conservation (SAC) being in “poor” status meaning restrictions on new development to stop wastewater entering the river; a potential loss of suitable bat foraging habitat, roost sites or connectivity in the vicinity of Beer Quarry and Caves SAC; and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SAC and Pebblebeds Special Protection Area subject to recreation pressure from nearby development, water pollution and air pollution from vehicle emissions. The Council is producing an assessment under the Habitat Regulations to inform the Local Plan that considers these designated sites, threats upon them, and potential mitigation measures in greater detail.
13. Climate change is a fundamental challenge for the world due to the amount of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere. Without a Local Plan, emissions will likely increase due to not strategically planning for renewable and low carbon energy generation and not promoting sustainable patterns of development that lead to lower carbon dioxide emissions. The Local Plan also offers a strategic approach to climate change mitigation, for example by identifying Coastal Change Management Areas which are most likely to change over the long term.
14. Water quality in East Devon is varied with some water courses, in particular, suffering from pollution that is detrimental to nature conservation objectives, most notably sections of the River Axe. In the absence of a new Local Plan it may not be possible to pro-actively plan for water quality improvements or it might be that it is not possible to accommodate development, building work may stop, on account of there not being acceptable means to secure mitigation.
15. East Devon is a largely rural district but has seen significant population growth in recent years, particularly at the ‘West End’ close to Exeter, and now has a population of around 150,000 people – the highest of the eight districts in Devon. Residents of East Devon are among the oldest in the country, and this elderly population is projected to grow in the years ahead. Exmouth is the settlement with by far the largest population at nearly 36,000, over two and a half times that of Sidmouth, the second largest town. There are several other market and coastal towns, along with numerous large and small villages. As a developing new town in the ‘West End’, Cranbrook’s population is growing more quickly than elsewhere, and is predicted to be around 18,000 people when complete in the early 2030s.

16. Without a Local Plan there is far less control over the types of homes that may be built and where, and the development industry is likely to build the types of homes, at the quantities that suits them, around the objective of maximising profits. This could well meet many consumers' needs but is unlikely to meet all, especially in respect of some specialist needs to include adapted houses and affordable homes. Development would be expected to carry on in the absence of a plan but it may be more likely to result from appeals or at least come forward in an unpredictable manner.
17. Generally, people in East Devon live in a safe and healthy environment with limited levels of pollution. Crime levels are also comparatively low though there is a fear of crime. The absence of a Local Plan would reduce the scope to actively plan in a coordinated way for open space provision and to coordinate what is built with the best accessible existing provision. It would be less possible to actively plan to minimise possible adverse impacts and if relevant to secure relevant mitigation.
18. The towns and larger villages in East Devon are well served with community facilities and services, but peripheral parts of some East Devon towns can be some distance from key services. Service provision in villages is more sporadic and even more so in many rural areas, and a reduction in rural services is likely to continue. The Local Plan provides positive opportunities to plan for services and facilities alongside new development, especially housing development. The absence of a local plan would provide less scope and less overview to ensure that services are accessible either through new provision alongside development or through directing development to locations that are already well served.
19. East Devon has low unemployment levels but also low wage levels. There is an emerging high technology base in the West End but lower skilled jobs, many seasonal in nature, are a prevalent characteristic of the District. There will continue to be jobs and employment in East Devon in the absence of a Local Plan, but not having a plan reduces scope to seek to identify appropriate sites and take other measures to support and encourage inward investment and business start-ups and expansions. As such an absence of a new local plan could reduce the scope to encourage more and better paid and more secure jobs.
20. Town centres in East Devon form a vital resource and area that support retail as well as social and wider commercial activities. They form a critical location to actively plan for where people congregate and come together. The growth in on-line retailing casts a fundamental challenge to future town centre vitality and viability. Without a Local Plan, and active policy to promote town centres, opportunities may be lost to protect commercial premises, to plan for new ones, and to promote activities that could encourage town centre vitality.
21. The quality and availability of broadband connections and transport infrastructure in East Devon varies greatly. Public transport is of variable quality, generally reasonable or good in towns and on some through routes connecting urban areas together, within and beyond East Devon. However, in rural areas coverage can be patchy and in places poor or non-existent. East Devon itself has limited road congestion, though routes into Exeter can be busy and congestion does occur. In the absence of a Local Plan there is the potential for a more ad-hoc pattern of development that does not, in a coordinated manner, plan for issues around connecting places in an efficient and effective manner.

## **What are the key Sustainability Appraisal findings of the topic-based policies Local Plan?**

22. The Local Plan Spatial Strategy focuses new development at the West End of the district, including a second new community, ongoing development at Cranbrook and other major development close to Exeter. Other significant development is promoted at the larger settlements, with less development to meet local needs at the smaller settlements. The Spatial Strategy also sets the district-wide housing and employment requirement. The key SA findings of the Spatial Strategy are major positive effects relating to housing, employment, and town centres. Some major negative effects are likely on the landscape and biodiversity, arising from the adverse effects of built development. Negative effects for carbon emissions, land and water resources are also likely.
23. Local Plan policies relating to development at West End (apart from site allocations) within the Enterprise Zone, Exeter Science Park, the Airport, and Clyst Valley Regional Park have major positive effects for transport and connectivity, given the accessible location of the West End, and also for jobs and employment. Negative effects on the landscape and land resources arise from development in this area. The Clyst Valley Regional Park has a series of major positive effects on the environment and health and well-being, but restrictions on housing development means a negative effect for this objective.
24. Policies on mitigating and adapting to climate change have major positive effects on carbon emissions and climate change adaptation. Minor positive effects are noted for the environmental objectives, and job opportunities arising from the development of renewable and low carbon energy.
25. The Local Plan has a series of policies to provide a mix of decent, affordable homes that are safe, secure and adaptable to changing needs. Major positive effects for homes are identified for all policies, with consequent positive effects on health and well-being. Given the focussed nature of the policies in this chapter, negligible effects are noted for many objectives.
26. Policies on employment development (including resisting their loss), farm diversification, town centres, local shops and services, and tourism will likely have major positive effects by fostering a strong and entrepreneurial economy, increase access to high quality skills training, improve job opportunities and greater productivity. Several policies also promote access to services and connectivity, with major positive effects. Negligible effects for most other objectives.
27. High quality design policies will likely have major positive effects are likely on the built environment, climate change, health and well-being, connectivity and land and water resources, with no negative effects.
28. Local Plan policies prioritise sustainable travel and ensures the transport impacts of development are properly assessed. Major positive effects are noted for carbon emissions, health and well-being and connectivity and transport from prioritising sustainable travel. Major positive effects are also likely for digital and telecommunications policies as these are essential to foster a strong and entrepreneurial economy.

29. Policies relating to the natural and historic environment result in major positive effects on these issues, which will also have positive effects on adapting to climate change and health and well-being. As these policies could restrict housing and employment delivery, negative effects are identified for these objectives.
30. Finally, the Local Plan contains policies that support access to open space, sports and recreation, and community facilities. These policies mean major positive effects upon health and well-being, with linked positive effects on the natural environment. It will also mean major positive effects upon access to services, positive effects upon the built environment, carbon emissions, and jobs.

### **What are the key Sustainability Appraisal findings of housing and employment site allocations in the Local Plan?**

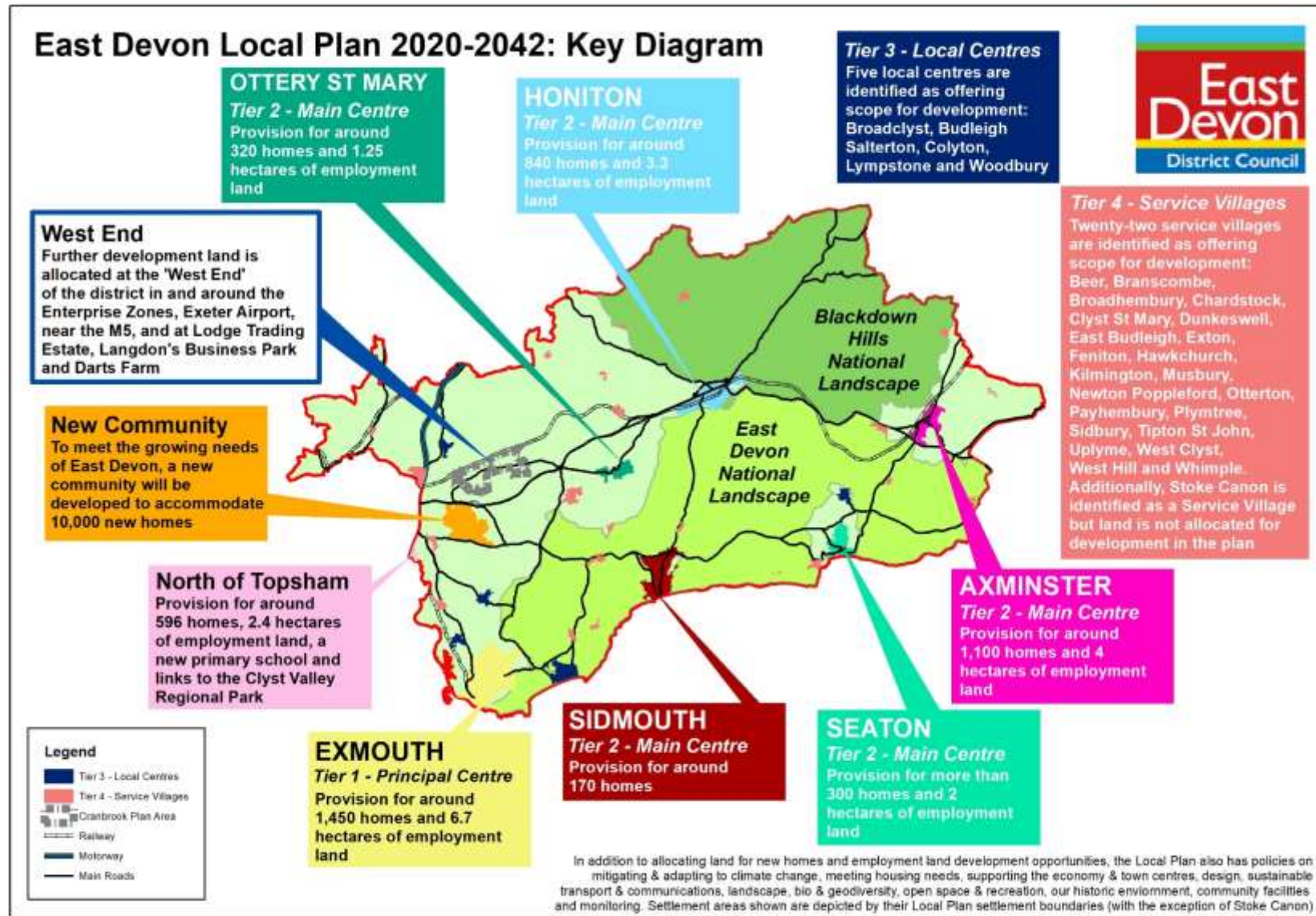
31. The Local Plan includes a range of housing and employment site allocations in the West End, with several large-scale sites. The largest allocation is the second new community, for 8,000 dwellings and accompanying employment, services and facilities. This is set within a longer-term vision for a total of 10,000 new homes at the new community – the land required for the additional 2,000 dwellings and associated land uses will be allocated in a future Local Plan. Other housing and mixed-use sites in the West End are 600 dwellings plus accompanying uses (North of Topsham), 90 dwellings and employment land (Land north of Exeter Science Park, Brcl\_23), and a gypsy and traveller site east of the M5. The remaining allocations in the West End are for employment uses, around Exeter International Airport, at Lodge Trading Estate, Langdon's Business Park, and at Darts Farm.<sup>1</sup>
32. The sites at the West End have positive effects on housing and employment. The proximity to a range of transport links in the West End means positive effects for connectivity, and also carbon emissions from promoting sustainable travel. However, the large-scale loss of greenfield sites leads to negative effects upon biodiversity and the landscape. There is some best and most versatile agricultural land in the West End, and its loss means a negative effect on land resources.
33. Elsewhere in East Devon, a significant number of housing and employment site allocations are located at Exmouth, followed by the Main Centres of Axminster, Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Seaton and Sidmouth, consistent with the Spatial Strategy. Fewer site allocations, of a generally smaller scale, are located in the Local Centres and Service Villages. Again, the delivery of housing and employment means positive effects for these sustainability objectives. At the larger settlements these sites will help meet development needs of a wider surrounding area, whilst local housing and employment needs are met at the Local Centres and Service Villages.
34. Sites at the larger settlements generally have positive effects on transport connectivity, access to services, town centres, and carbon emissions, as there are greater opportunities for sustainable

---

<sup>1</sup> The 'first' new community at Cranbrook is also located in the West End but site allocations at Cranbrook are outside the scope of the Local Plan as it is addressed in The Cranbrook Plan (adopted October 2022). Therefore, sites within or adjoining the Cranbrook Plan area are not being considered for allocation in the Local Plan.

travel and minimising the need to travel to jobs and facilities. Such opportunities are less at the smaller settlements, but the scale of development is more limited, so positive effects remain.

35. Several settlements are in the vicinity of internationally designated Exe Estuary SPA/Ramsar and Pebblebed Heaths SPA/SAC. Sites at these settlements (e.g. Exmouth, Lympstone, Woodbury, Exton) will likely mean adverse effects due to recreation pressure from new residents. In addition, a Main Centre (Axminster) and several Service Villages (Chardstock, Hawkchurch, Kilmington, Musbury) are within the area where new housing will likely lead to additional nutrients in the River Axe SAC catchment; and other Main Centres (Sidmouth, Seaton) and Service Villages (Beer) are also located in close proximity to internationally designated biodiversity sites. So negative effects are likely on biodiversity.
36. Similarly, the lack of brownfield land in East Devon means a significant amount of development will take place on greenfield sites, with adverse effects on the landscape and land resources as a result. The negative effects increase for sites at settlements in or close proximity to the National Landscape, with all Principle or Main Centres apart from Ottery St Mary in close proximity to National Landscape and/or undeveloped coast; two Local Centres (Budleigh Salterton, Colyton) within or in close proximity to National Landscape; and many Service Villages in the National Landscape (East Budleigh, Otterton, Newton Poppleford, Tipton St John, Sidbury, Branscombe, Beer, Musbury, Kilmington, Uplyme, Hawkchurch, Chardstock).
37. Climate change will mean warmer, wetter winters with more intense storms. All Principal and Main Centres contain areas of high flood risk (flood zone 3), with flooding from the sea due to climate change likely at Exmouth, Sidmouth and Seaton. Similarly, areas of flood zone 3 affect most Local Centres and Service Villages, and potential for coastal flooding at Exton, Lympstone, Budleigh Salterton, Branscombe and Beer. There are critical drainage areas at Axminster, Feniton and Whimble, indicating particular drainage problems. For sites affected by flood risk, a negative effect is identified.
38. The Local Plan Key Diagram, which provides an overview of proposed development, is on the following page.



## **What are the cumulative and short, medium and long-term sustainability effects of the Local Plan?**

39. The significant amount of housing and employment development proposed in the Local Plan, alongside policies to conserve and enhance the natural environment, means a likely mixed minor positive and minor negative but uncertain effects on the natural environment as a result of the proposed development.
40. For climate change, the spatial strategy should minimise carbon emissions from travel but the overall scale of development will inevitably increase carbon emissions from construction, building occupation, and road traffic. The Local Plan is likely to have a cumulative mixed minor positive and minor negative but uncertain effect, depending on whether mitigation measures can fully address negative effects.
41. The potential for development to adversely affect the existing land and water resource in East Devon, alongside Local Plan policies to protect such resources, means a cumulative minor positive and minor negative effect on this issue.
42. The delivery of significant amounts of new housing and employment, that meets local needs, means a major positive cumulative effect for these issues.
43. Promoting development in the most accessible locations leads to a positive cumulative effect on access to services, health and well-being, and connectivity and transport, tempered with a mixed negative effect from transport growth.
44. The likely significant effects of the Local Plan may be experienced in the short-term (five years), medium-term (5-10 years), or long-term (over 10 years and up to the end of the plan period, and potentially beyond).
45. Short-term effects predominantly relate to the initial impacts of commencing development. As most Local Plan sites are currently greenfield, these effects include the removal of vegetation (trees, hedgerows) and soil, and the initial construction of infrastructure (utilities, roads) and the buildings themselves. This will mean likely negative effects on biodiversity, landscape, and health and well-being (through construction noise, lorry movements, dust etc). There will be positive effects on the economy from job opportunities during construction.
46. Medium-term positive effects arise from the completion and occupation of homes and employment development for residents and workers. However, there may be negative effects upon the landscape from the visual impact of development (before landscape mitigation has had time to mature), and biodiversity impacts upon habitats and species, both directly from new buildings, and indirectly from the recreational impact of new residents close to biodiversity sites. There may also be negative effects on carbon emissions, health and well-being, and access to services, where non-residential uses and open space is not delivered alongside the occupation of new dwellings, requiring travel, potentially by car.

47. Most of the Local Plan effects will be long-term, as the plan directs and manages development that will last many decades. This includes positive effects from the provision of homes and jobs for residents and workers. The Local Plan spatial strategy directs development to locations which are, or can be made, sustainable where there is access to services and community facilities, with positive effects upon carbon emissions (from minimised travel), health and well-being, access to services and connectivity and transport. The adverse short to medium-term landscape effects of new housing and employment development will lessen as landscaping matures and provides mitigation, although a negative effect may still remain for the most sensitive sites. A long-term minor positive effect on biodiversity is likely due to the legal requirement for biodiversity net gain, meaning development must deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development value of the onsite habitat. Most Local Plan sites are currently greenfield, some of which is best and most versatile agricultural land, so a negative effect upon land resources is likely. Carbon emissions to power new homes and employment sites, and from the likely proliferation of electric vehicles, will be minimised in the transition to the legal requirement for net zero from 2050.

### **How can mitigation measures reduce the adverse effects of the Local Plan?**

48. The SA report notes the mitigation measures that can be applied to the policies and sites to reduce any adverse effects; and where those measures have been incorporated into the Local Plan. Mitigation measures will vary depending on the specific characteristics of each site, but some general mitigation measures include:

- Incorporate existing habitats and features, and seek opportunities to expand and create new habitat, to reduce adverse effects on biodiversity.
- Landscape mitigation, such as including a buffer, tree planting, between the site and surrounding areas to reduce landscape impact.
- High quality design to reduce negative effects and maximise beneficial effects on the built environment, including on any heritage assets.
- If parts of the site are at risk of flooding, use this land for well-designed drainage and open space, rather than built development.
- Noise attenuation for sites that are adversely affected by noise (for example, from nearby main roads, railway).
- Enhance sustainable travel links such as creating bus stops and pedestrian and cycle links within the site and off-site.
- Provide a mix of uses on-site, such as community facilities, employment land, open space and play space, and sustainable travel links – this is more realistic for large-scale sites.

### **What alternatives have been considered in preparing the Local Plan?**

49. Sustainability Appraisal must identify and assess the reasonable alternatives that have been considered in preparing a Local Plan. Reasonable alternatives are the different realistic options considered by the plan-maker in developing the policies in its plan. They must be sufficiently

distinct to highlight the different sustainability implications of each so that meaningful comparisons can be made. This means that alternatives that are not reasonable do not need to be appraised, for example policy options that do not meet the objectives of the Local Plan or national policy, or development sites that are unavailable or undeliverable. The words “alternatives” and “options” are used interchangeably and mean the same thing.

50. A range of alternatives have been considered for the topic-based policies and sites in the Local Plan. For the Spatial Strategy, alternatives on the distribution of development are to concentrate development at the existing settlements, with no further large-scale development at the West End; more development at villages; development at existing settlements but focus strategic development at the West End with either a new town or several smaller new villages. The preferred option is to promote development at existing settlements where there is a range of jobs, services, and facilities; whilst also focussing development where there is good connectivity in close proximity to a much wider range of jobs, services, and facilities in the West End and Exeter. The scale of development proposed in the new town offers the greatest potential for a mix of uses, reducing the need to travel and providing opportunities sustainable travel links, which provides better accessibility and reduced carbon emissions.
51. Several options were identified for the amount of housing development in East Devon over the period of the Local Plan. A requirement for 80% of the local housing need figure was considered as it was allowed by transitional arrangements in the latest National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024); an extra 10% is potentially deliverable (the highest housing delivery in recent years is 1,065 dwellings in 2019/20) and would further boost housing supply, consistent with Government policy; and finally a figure that reflects the outcome of the standard method for calculating local housing need in national planning practice guidance (published on 12 December 2024). The first option (80% of local housing need) is preferred as it will deliver significant amounts of new housing in East Devon at a level that is consistent with the NPPF, will support economic growth, with a less adverse environmental impact than the other options.
52. Alternatives were also considered for other topic-based policies, such as providing higher or lower levels of affordable housing, aiming for carbon neutral by 2050 rather than 2040, and not including policies on several topics such as landscape, design, and biodiversity.
53. By far the largest site allocation in the Local Plan is the new community for 8,000 dwellings and associated uses (set within a longer-term vision for 10,000 dwellings). Three site options were appraised for the new community, all at the West End to avoid significant environmental designations and to be in close proximity to the wide range of existing jobs, facilities and services in the area and Exeter. Option 1 is preferred as there is greater certainty that the proposed new town can be delivered as a large proportion of the land is being promoted by a single entity. This Option has greater potential to reduce carbon emissions through the use of low carbon energy at a prospective district heating network between the proposed Energy from Waste plant at Hill Barton and the existing network serving Cranbrook and other major sites in the area. Option 1 offers sustainable travel opportunities given its proximity to regular bus services, and Cranbrook train station to the north. It is located in proximity to the greatest range of existing employment opportunities at Exeter, Exeter Airport and the associated Airport Business Park, Skypark, and

Exeter Science Park. Traffic modelling indicates that Option 1 has the least significant highways impact.

54. Other large-scale sites that have been considered at the West End include Land at Mosshayne Lane for around 1,000 dwellings, which was rejected due to significant highways concerns arising from a single access point for such a large scale site, with the landowner also stating their land is not available to access the site from this location. Land North of Topsham for around 600 dwellings was preferred as it forms a logical urban extension to the north of Topsham, with limited adverse impacts, close to facilities and services in moderately close proximity of the site albeit additional facilities as part of a mixed use development would be sought as part of the overall site development. A range of employment sites have also been considered at the West End.
55. At the Principal Centre of Exmouth, 22 sites options were considered, of which 12 are allocated in the Local Plan. A range of site options were also considered at the Main Centres of Axminster, Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Seaton and Sidmouth; with generally fewer site options at the Local Centres and Service Villages.

## **How will the sustainability effects of the Local Plan be monitored?**

56. Monitoring of the significant effects of the Local Plan is required to check whether the plan is having unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, and to undertake appropriate remedial action. The focus should be on monitoring significant effects, rather than all effects. Monitoring indicators are set out below, for each SA objective.

### **Biodiversity**

- Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance.
- Monitoring of biodiversity net gain.

### **Landscape**

- Number of dwellings and amount of employment land constructed in the National Landscape, Coastal Preservation Area, Green Wedge, Land of Local Amenity Importance and Local Green Space.

### **Historic and built environment**

- Number of planning applications permitted contrary to Historic England advice.
- Number of heritage assets in East Devon on the 'Heritage at Risk' register.
- Proportion of new dwellings that meet the Nationally Described Space Standard.

### **Climate change and carbon emissions**

- Renewable energy capacity installed.
- Number of homes and amount of employment land connected to a district heating system.

### **Climate change adaptation**

- Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood defence grounds.

### **Land resources**

- Percentage of new development taking place on brownfield land.
- Brownfield Land Register listing suitable brownfield sites for development.
- Amount of best and most versatile agricultural land lost to development.

### **Water resources**

- Percentage of new dwellings that achieve average water use of 110 litres per person per day or less.
- Percentage of water bodies at good ecological and chemical status.

### **Homes**

- Total net and gross dwelling completions by district, parish, settlement, and Built-up Area.
- Percentage of new dwellings that are affordable housing.
- Five Year Housing Land Supply.
- Housing Delivery Test results.
- Demand and supply of self and custom-build housing.
- Delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

### **Health and well-being**

- Recreation space standards the Local Plan being met.
- Delivery of Clyst Valley Regional Park and Clyst Valley Trail.
- Amount of delivered suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANGS).

### **Access to services**

- Availability of and proximity to services and community facilities.
- Playing Pitch Strategy monitoring.

### **Jobs and employment**

- Developed plots and building floorspace.
- Vacant or undeveloped plots suitable for future business development.
- Loss of employment land to other uses.
- Wages and productivity.
- Unemployment and economic inactivity.
- Employee and job numbers.

### **Town centres**

- Amount of completed development in town centres.

- Amount of town centre uses permitted outside of town centres.

**Connectivity and transport**

- Levels of bus and rail patronage.
- Delivery of transport sites and routes identified in Local Transport Plan 4, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans in East Devon, and Local Plan Strategic Policy TR02.

---

---

