

Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan  
(2023-2042)

# Referendum Version



**Plan Version 3.6**  
**August 2025**

## Contents

Chapters		
	<a href="#">Contents</a>	1
	<a href="#">Foreword</a>	2
1	<a href="#">Introduction</a>	3
2	<a href="#">Preparing the Neighbourhood Plan</a>	4
3	<a href="#">Sustainability</a>	5
4	<a href="#">The Plan's Context and Status</a>	6
5	<a href="#">The Structure of the Plan</a>	10
6	<a href="#">Aims and Objectives</a>	12
7	<a href="#">Natural Environment and Countryside</a>	14
8	<a href="#">Built Environment</a>	23
9	<a href="#">Housing Development</a>	32
10	<a href="#">Community Facilities and Services</a>	39
11	<a href="#">Business and Jobs</a>	42
12	<a href="#">Travel and Transport</a>	46
13	<a href="#">Sports and Recreation</a>	51
14	<a href="#">Monitoring</a>	54
	<a href="#">Glossary of Terms</a>	55
	<a href="#">Appendix A Design Codes</a>	59
Maps		
1	<a href="#">Neighbourhood Area Boundary</a>	3
2	<a href="#">Flood Zones</a>	15
3a	<a href="#">Non-Statutory Wildlife Areas and Geological Sites</a>	17
3b	<a href="#">Other Wildlife Areas and Habitats</a>	17
4	<a href="#">Woodland Protection Areas</a>	19
5	<a href="#">Green Wedge</a>	22
6	<a href="#">Sowton Conservation Area</a>	25
7	<a href="#">Designated Local Green Space</a>	27
8	<a href="#">Clyst St Mary Settlement Boundary</a>	31
9	<a href="#">Residential Development Site</a>	38
10	<a href="#">Business Areas</a>	44
11	<a href="#">Public Rights of Way</a>	48
12	<a href="#">Sports and Recreation Grounds</a>	53

**Maps in this report are reproduced under the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PSGA)**

© Crown copyright [and database rights] (2014) OS license No. 0100055910

## Foreword

The Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan was officially “Made” and adopted by East Devon District Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017. At the time, this was a new type of planning document to represent the views of our local community. It was a key part of the Government’s new approach to planning, which aims to give local people more say about how their area is developed. The Plan was one of the first to be prepared in Devon.

The reason for developing the Plan at that time was that the Parish was under considerable development pressure, primarily because of its location. The East Devon Local Plan, at that time un-adopted, had allocated 150 dwellings to the Parish. This development pressure continues and today we have another Local Plan under development which includes proposals for a new town close to the eastern boundary of the Parish. It is recommended that neighbourhood plans are reviewed every five years, and we consider this is especially important in the light of development pressures.

This revised version of the Neighbourhood Plan is titled the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan). Experience has demonstrated that the Bishops Clyst title was not well recognised as applying to our neighbourhood area.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been revised and updated on behalf of the community, by a Neighbourhood Plan Review Group, comprising a small team of parish councillors. It takes into account the views of parishioners obtained from a questionnaire, an exhibition and formal consultation. Fundamentally it aims to add more detail and local relevance to district planning policies to ensure development is appropriate, fits in and most importantly brings benefits to the area and its existing communities. We have allowed for a limited amount of new development in the area, to align with the strategic requirements of the new draft Local Plan but have specifically linked this development to improvements to the infrastructure of the Parish to provide some important additional benefits for our existing residents. We have also developed, in conjunction with our consultants AECOM, a new Design Code<sup>1</sup> to guide developers in appropriate building standards and styles for new development.

My appreciation goes to all our consultants for their help. I must also record my thanks to all those people and organisations who have contributed to the plan review process and to all the members of the Review Group who developed the proposals in the revised version of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Rob Hatton

Chair of Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

### **Important**

#### **Regarding the Clyst St Mary and Sowton (Bishops Clyst) Neighbourhood Plan (2023-2042)**

The area under the jurisdiction of Bishops Clyst Parish Council comprises the two ancient parishes of Clyst St Mary and Sowton. It is these two parish areas combined that have been designated as a neighbourhood area for the purposes of preparing a neighbourhood plan and for which, Bishops Clyst Parish Council is the ‘qualifying body’.

It is the two parish areas together that are covered by the policies in this Neighbourhood Plan and referred to throughout the Plan by the term ‘neighbourhood area’ or ‘Parish’. Any reference to Sowton or Clyst St Mary in the Plan will normally refer to the settlement area known as Sowton Village or Clyst St Mary (including Winslade Park and Greenspire).

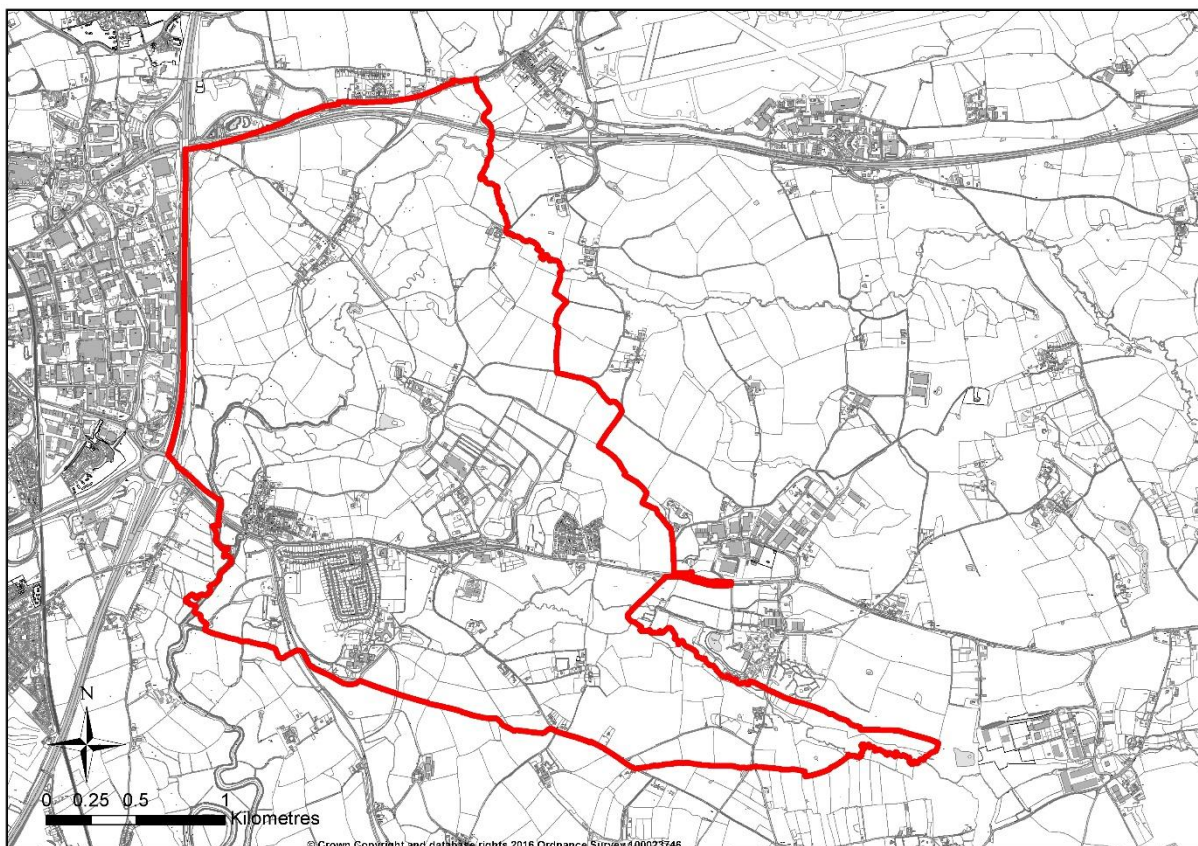
---

<sup>1</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/ezclfy1q/design-codea-and-guidelines-final-document.pdf>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan<sup>2</sup> was deemed ‘made’ and became part of the Development Plan for East Devon on the 8th of March 2017. Its policies were designed to complement and supplement those in the adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031, and the Devon Minerals and Waste Plan.
- 1.2 Section 16 of the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan committed Bishops Clyst Parish Council to monitoring the impact of the policies on change and development in the Parish and to undertaking a full or partial review of the Plan should it be thought necessary because of *“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”*.
- 1.3 A review of the Plan’s impact of the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan, which involved extensive consultation<sup>3</sup>, concluded that given changing circumstances and the emergence of a new East Devon Local Plan, in draft form, it was an appropriate time to refresh and up-date the Neighbourhood Plan for the neighbourhood area. In April 2022, the Parish Council agreed to prepare a revised Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.4 The Parish Council has taken heed of advice it received from a range of statutory consultees and the opinion and aspirations of the community. It was decided that the revised Neighbourhood Plan should be more influential on land use matters than it has been. To do so, several of its policies need to be made more specific. Other policies need to be updated to reflect a changing strategic and local context, to be able to influence development decisions up to and beyond 2031.

Map 1 – Neighbourhood Area Boundary



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BCNP-Review-Community-Questionnaire-Analysis-feb22.pdf>

## 2. Preparing the New Neighbourhood Plan

2.1 The task of preparing a new Neighbourhood Plan was delegated by the Parish Council to a Review Group comprising parish councillors. The Group was asked to prepare the new Plan in accordance with a set of guidelines agreed by the Parish Council. These can be summarised as follows:

- A revised Neighbourhood Plan is needed to ensure there are relevant local policies in place when the new East Devon Local Plan becomes operational.
- The new Local Plan is taking shape, it should be advantageous to revise the Neighbourhood Plan in parallel with the new Local Plan to achieve the most synergy and ensure the Local Plan recognises what is in the best interests of the Parish.
- The Neighbourhood Plan must comply with the strategic policies and meet, as a minimum, the strategic development targets for the Parish as set by the Local Plan.
- All viable development options that satisfy the strategic targets and achieve the aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, should be considered.
- Development which helps address existing infrastructure problems should be given consideration.
- There is no justification for any extensions of the current business areas in the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan should seek to restrict further business and commercial development in the interest of limiting the urbanisation of what is still a rural Parish.
- Wherever possible, policies in the revised Neighbourhood Plan should have specific requirements that clearly articulate what the community want to see, and ensure developments achieve high standards of sustainability and safety.
- Such specificity should include the allocation of the main development sites with site-specific criteria, to provide more certainty as to where, and where not, development will take place.
- There should be more emphasis on design aspects and the Neighbourhood Plan should be accompanied by a Design Code.
- The minimisation of flood risk must be a serious consideration in policymaking.
- The built-up area boundary for Clyst St Mary should be amended to include completed development sites, those with a current planning approval, and any that are allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- All parts of the Parish outside the built-up area boundary should be regarded as countryside, or development within the countryside, and subject to firm restrictions on what further development or changes of use can take place.
- The 'green agenda' that is favoured by the community should be clearly reflected in the aims, objectives, and the policies of the revised Neighbourhood Plan.
- Policies that protect the countryside, green areas and open spaces should be strengthened.
- It is imperative that infrastructure capacity is to the fore and any development must ensure that there is adequate capacity within the infrastructure.
- The impact of any development on issues associated with the local road network should be a mandatory consideration.
- The revised Neighbourhood Plan should be titled 'the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan' to better identify the area and settlements that are covered by the Plan.

### 3. Sustainability

- 3.1 In late 2021 the opinion of the community<sup>4</sup> was sought on the impact and efficacy of the current Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan (operative since March 2017) and their thoughts on the purpose and priorities for a new version of the Plan.
- 3.2 Most of the policies in the current Neighbourhood Plan were considered by the community to still have relevance. Some, it was considered, had more relevance and importance than others. The community's priorities are clearly focussed on safeguarding community spaces and facilities and protecting and enhancing the rural setting in which they live. When asked about the focus of a new neighbourhood plan for the neighbourhood area, the community, reflecting the nation's concerns, prioritised:
- Protecting the natural environment 90%
  - Retaining the rural character of the area 78%
  - Reducing our carbon footprint 71%
  - Improving community facilities and services 66%
  - Using renewable energy 66%
  - Reducing the impact of the motor vehicle 66%
- 3.3 A greener neighbourhood plan that safeguards natural assets and resources and retains the sense of a rural community is what local people want and what this new version of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to deliver.
- 3.4 East Devon District Council has adopted a climate change strategy<sup>5</sup> that seeks to engage with Devon's residents and businesses to plan for how our infrastructure, public services and communities will have to adapt for a 1.5-degree warmer world and implement a plan to facilitate the reduction of Devon's production and consumption emissions. This transformational change should include the following measures:
- Deploying more renewable, decentralised, and smart energy systems
  - Retrofitting energy-efficiency measures into our existing buildings
  - Constructing zero-carbon new buildings
  - Travelling less and using improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure more often, and using electric and hydrogen vehicles
  - Changing our consumption to use less, re-use more and choose low-carbon options
  - Challenging all economic sectors to review their practices and the values of those they do business with
  - Divesting from fossil fuels
  - Changing our dietary patterns and reducing food waste
  - Changing agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon
  - Encouraging carbon storage such as through tree planting, the use of wood in construction and peatland restoration
  - Empowering the people of Devon with the knowledge and skills to act collectively
- 3.5 Bishops Clyst Parish Council endorses this 'action plan' and has incorporated 'green' development requirements in the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan, which should make a notable local contribution to the East Devon climate change strategy.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BCNP-Review-Community-Questionnaire-Analysis-feb22.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://democracy.eastdevon.gov.uk/documents/s7944/EDDC%20Climate%20Change%20Strategy.pdf>

## 4. The Plan's Context and Status

- 4.1 Until this version of the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan is 'made' (adopted), the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan, made in March 2017, remains a relevant part of the development plan and should be used by the local planning authority *"to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area"*.
- 4.2 As is the case for every neighbourhood plan, in preparing a new version of the Neighbourhood Plan, we are obliged, by law, to:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
  - ensure the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan

### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>6</sup> (NPPF) sets 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"* (NPPF para.11). 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"* (NPPF para.13). The NPPF goes on to say that *"strategic policies [in the Local Plan] should not extend to detailed matters that are more appropriately dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies"*. Outside of strategic policies therefore, we are encouraged to shape and direct sustainable development in our area through our own Neighbourhood Plan. *"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"* (NPPF para.30).

### East Devon Local Plan

- 4.4 The more local strategic context for the Neighbourhood Plan is provided by the East Devon Local Plan (2013-2031). The Local Plan that currently remains in force was adopted on the 28th January 2016, with the purpose of guiding development in the district up until 2031. It comprises both strategic policies and development management policies. The strategic policies of the Local Plan, with which the Neighbourhood Plan must conform, number up to 50. Where relevant, we have acknowledged within this Plan which strategic policy the neighbourhood plan policy relates to, and how it conforms and complements the strategic policy.
- 4.5 East Devon District Council has been preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2020-2042. The Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared with that possibility in mind. We have been mindful therefore to ensure that our neighbourhood plan policies conform to the strategic policies and align with policies in both the adopted Local Plan and the emerging in the new Local Plan. Consultation on the new Local Plan took place between November 2022 and January 2023. A further consultation on key matters took place in May/June 2024. As well as remaining cognisant of the emerging strategies and policies for the new Local Plan, the Review Group has consulted with, and regularly taken advice from, the local planning authority throughout the plan-making process. This version of the Neighbourhood Plan is considered consistent with the Regulation 19<sup>7</sup> version of the East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042.

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/regulation/19>

- 4.6 The consultation draft of the new Local Plan acknowledged the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan which was ‘made’ in 2017 and its key aim to protect the countryside, green spaces, and trees, and retain a rural feel, with a clear separation from Exeter.
- 4.7 The consultation draft of the Local Plan considers Clyst St Mary to be *“an attractive location to accommodate growth due to the range of services and facilities it offers alongside its proximity to Exeter and other employment opportunities, which could potentially be accessed by sustainable modes of transportation. However, this needs to be weighed against the development which it has experienced in recent years and is still to come, alongside proposals for larger scale development in close proximity in the form of a potential new town, which could impact upon the village. The A3052 in particular suffers from long tailbacks at peak times to junction 30 and this needs to be considered.”*
- 4.8 Despite recognising the negative impact that un-needed development could inflict on the neighbourhood area, the ‘Preferred Option’ Version of the Local Plan indicated that it was expecting a contribution of new dwellings from the neighbourhood area towards the district’s strategic total between 2020-40. The required target would be confirmed *“following consultation on the methodology for identifying the scale of housing provision requirement in Designated Neighbourhood Areas”*. There were indications from EDDC in early 2024 that a figure around 100 additional dwellings may be required. It was on that basis that the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group explored the residential development options and implications, with a view to identifying and allocating the most suitable sites in the Neighbourhood Plan. In October 2024 the Parish Council was informed that *“that the ‘Designated Neighbourhood Area Housing Requirement figure’ be amended by an additional 72 homes”*. Development proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan have been framed with this in mind.
- 4.9 Our right to introduce local policies for the neighbourhood area is recognised in the East Devon Local Plan. It makes several references to the role of a neighbourhood plan including confirmation that *“through a Neighbourhood Plan a Parish Council or relevant neighbourhood group can produce a local plan for their area that supersedes some or all of the policies in this part of the local plan”*. This includes having significant influence on the nature of any new housing development that does take place.
- 4.10 The new East Devon Local Plan is unlikely to be adopted before 2026, at the earliest. Moreover, there remains uncertainty about the timescale associated with the growth strategy for East Devon. The Parish Council therefore has decided that the Neighbourhood Plan should limit its development policies to those which are considered necessary or beneficial to the sustainability of our neighbourhood area in the next 15 years.
- 4.11 Strategy 27 Development at the Small Towns and Larger Villages of the adopted Local Plan identifies Clyst St Mary as one of the *“settlements that offer a range of accessible services and facilities to meet many of the everyday needs of local residents and they have reasonable public transport”*. Being such it *“will have a Built-up Area Boundary that will be designated in the East Devon Villages DPD though they will not have land specifically allocated for development”*. The Local Plan states that *“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”*. The Winslade Park Office complex is allocated in the Local Plan for a mixed-use development to accommodate 150 dwellings and 0.7 hectares of employment land in the adopted Local Plan,

although the final version of the approved scheme is somewhat at variance with this (see para. 8.4).

#### Other Development Plan Documents

- 4.12 The Neighbourhood Plan has also been informed by the current supplementary planning documents such as those relating to Affordable Housing<sup>8</sup>, guides like those for self-build housing schemes<sup>9</sup>, and the East Devon Villages Plan, which was adopted on 26th July 2018.
- 4.13 The East Devon Villages Plan 2018 defines the Built-up Area Boundary for Clyst St Mary along with 13 other towns and villages and includes policy VP01 which confirms that *“development proposals relating to the Built-up Area Boundary will be considered in accordance with the strategic policies set out in Strategy 6 and Strategy 7 of the East Devon Local Plan. The policies of neighbourhood plans, which also form part of the development plan, may also refer to the Built-up Area Boundaries defined in this plan. For the purposes of the East Devon Local Plan policies, land that is not specifically allocated for development or falls outside of the Built-up Area Boundaries defined in either this Villages Plan or the East Devon Local Plan constitutes ‘countryside’ where more restrictive policies on the development and use of land apply than within the defined Built-up Area Boundaries”*.
- 4.14 All the policies within the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan are designed to strengthen or bring local specificity, to better determine planning outcomes for the Parish beyond those policies contained in the Local Plan. Policies have been introduced at a neighbourhood plan level where it is considered that a Local Plan policy is insufficient in detail or absent.

#### Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan (2014-2031)

- 4.15 In 2022, five years after the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan was made, the Parish Council decided the time was right to up-date its neighbourhood plan. A thorough review<sup>10</sup> concluded that many of the policies of the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan remained relevant and fit for purpose. However, some changes and addition were considered necessary and, on the advice of East Devon District Council, *“more specific local requirements to add to what is already required by national and district policies or being sufficiently precise to be effective”* was required. It was decided that such specificity should include the allocation of any major development sites with relevant site-specific criteria.
- 4.16 The new Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines agreed by the Parish Council (see paragraph 2.1). It was decided that the uncertainty regarding a strategic development target should not prevent the Plan from allocating land for development. There are no allocated residential development sites remaining, and little scope for major development within the defined Built-up Area of Clyst St Mary. The Parish continues to experience pressure from landowners and developers seeking permission to build houses. To ensure development occurs in the most appropriate locations and at the right time, a thorough assessment of the opportunities and options<sup>11</sup> was undertaken with the help of expert consultants. The community was consulted<sup>12</sup> during the process.

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-plans-guidance-and-past-policy/supplementary-plans-and-development-and-design-briefs/affordable-housing-supplementary-planning-document/#article-content>

<sup>9</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/housing-issues/self-build-and-custom-build/what-is-self-build-and-custom-build/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BCNP-Review-Community-Questionnaire-Analysis-feb22.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/220510-Bishops-Clyst-Site-Options-and-Assessment-Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/CSMSNP-Site-Consultation-Report-September22.pdf>

- 4.17 It is accepted that a little growth may be inevitable and could be beneficial, but only if adequate infrastructure improvements are made to ensure it delivers benefits to the area and community. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates only one area of land for residential development, comprising two sites that were separately submitted for assessment. The resultant allocation policy BisC12 sets criteria that will enable sustainable, incremental growth of the appropriate scale to continue to take place within the neighbourhood area.

#### Bishops Clyst Design Codes

- 4.18 For several years, design guidance has been available to developers from the Bishops Clyst Design Statement. This has now been superseded by the Bishops Clyst Design Codes and Guidelines<sup>13</sup>. This document has been produced to inform new residential development proposed in the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Area requiring a planning application. It presents a summary of the key characteristics which make this a special place to live and visit and provides specific design codes and guidelines which promote sustainable development and guide best practice (see Appendix A for 'design principles'). The approach taken is promoted by the NPPF, which encourages local authorities to use design codes developed with local communities, to help deliver high quality and design policies so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of the area's characteristics. The Bishops Clyst Design Codes and Guidance document (2023) was prepared in collaboration with the East Devon District Council.



<sup>13</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/ezclfy1q/design-codea-and-guidelines-final-document.pdf>

## 5. The Structure of Our Plan

- 5.1 The Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan focusses on neighbourhood planning aims and objectives for the neighbourhood area, which have been developed following a dialogue with the community and shaped by the existing planning policies, plans and contributions of key organisations and agencies.
- 5.2 Having explained the rationale for these, the Plan sets out local planning policies on a topic-by-topic basis. The brief introduction to each topic is based on the findings of the research, surveys and consultations that have taken place as part of the neighbourhood planning process. More detail of these activities can be found on the Neighbourhood Plan website<sup>14</sup>.
- 5.3 Under each topic heading is a summary of the local characteristics of that topic and the key issues and opportunities that have been identified, which should be addressed over the next 10 years.
- 5.4 Due consideration has been given to both the policies of the adopted East Devon Local Plan and those in the emerging, new, Local Plan. We have introduced a neighbourhood plan policy for the neighbourhood area only where we feel it will strengthen or bring local specificity to the Local Plan.
- 5.5 For each neighbourhood plan policy, we set out the policy statement and an explanation of and justification for the policy, including reference to the other planning policies in national and district planning documents which relate to that policy.
- 5.6 It is important to note that, while we have set out policies under topic headings, when development proposals are being assessed, the whole plan (i.e. all policies) should be considered, as policies in one topic may apply to proposals which naturally fit under another.
- 5.7 The Plan finishes with an explanation of how we will monitor and review the Plan, and a glossary which seeks to demystify the planning terminology used in the Plan.

### Companion Documents

- 5.8 Several documents accompany the submitted Neighbourhood Plan. We are obliged to provide a **Consultation Statement** and a **Basic Conditions Statement**.
- 5.9 The Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan is subject to testing to help determine its positive or negative impact on the social, environmental, and economic character of the neighbourhood area. If significant environmental effects are identified an environmental report must be prepared in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 12 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. As the Plan allocates specific sites for development, it requires a **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**, which may influence the content of policies in the Plan.
- 5.10 A 'screening opinion' on the environmental effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies was sought from the local planning authority (LPA) to help determine the scope of the required SEA and whether it should also be subject to a **Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)**. The LPA confirmed that regarding an SEA, "*as there is insufficient evidence available to conclude that harm will not occur to the environment as a result of the residential allocations in particular, a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required*".

---

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan-review/>

- 5.11 Regarding an HRA, the local planning authority (LPA) considered that *“the modest level of development proposed through the neighbourhood plan can be appropriately mitigated through the existing strategic mitigation that exists”*. However, in parallel with the LPA’s screening process, the Parish Council decided to seek advice from the environmental arm of AECOM a major infrastructure consultancy firm. It produced a report to inform the HRA in May 2023. It recommended that given the proximity of the neighbourhood area to various European sites *“that are sensitive to recreational pressure and the precedence of in-combination mitigation requirements”*<sup>15</sup>, the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan should include policy wording to protect these sites from impact resulting from additional residential development. The recommended wording is included in policy BisC012.
- 5.12 The SEA Report<sup>16</sup> (Oct 2023) concluded that *“overall, no significant effects are considered likely in implementation of the CSMSNP”*. The Report predicted some minor positive effects were likely in relation to both biodiversity and geodiversity, and climate change and flood risk. Moderate negative effects were predicted *“due to the loss of greenfield and high-quality agricultural land at the settlement edge, and minor to moderate negative effects are also predicted in relation to transportation and movement. This reflects the constraints of the parish in terms of infrastructure and traffic and congestion”*. Minor negative effects were also predicted *“in relation to landscape given that development will occur within the Clyst Valley Regional Park, as well as in relation to air quality (again reflecting the constraints of existing infrastructure)”*. Several recommendations were made in the SEA Report for consideration, aimed at avoiding or mitigating the possible negative impacts from major developments, in particular. In direct response to these recommendations, changes and additions were made to the allocation policies in the Pre-Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.13 An additional SEA screening was carried out to take account of the Regulation 14 consultation comments received and proposed amendments to be included in the Submission Version of the Plan. Environmental Consultants, AECOM, revisited and updated the SEA with additional detail provided within the assessment of reasonable alternatives. *“The screening of the updates has concluded that the submission version of the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan would not have any additional significant effects to those presented in the SEA Environmental Report which accompanied the Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan. In light of the above, in association with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, further detailed assessment work is not required to explore the implications of the updates to the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan.”*<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/HRA-Final-Clyst-Sowton-Neighbourhood-Plan\\_May23.pdf](https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/HRA-Final-Clyst-Sowton-Neighbourhood-Plan_May23.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/SEA-complete-for-Reg14-Oct23.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> [https://bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241113-Clyst-St-Mary-and-Sowton-NP\\_SEA-Environmental-Report\\_v3.0.pdf](https://bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241113-Clyst-St-Mary-and-Sowton-NP_SEA-Environmental-Report_v3.0.pdf)

## 6. Aims and Objectives

6.1 The aims and objectives for the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan have been derived from a review of those in the first version of the Plan. The aims and objectives have been amended to better align with current community opinion and priorities.

<b><i>Natural Environment and Countryside</i></b>
Aim: To protect and maintain our unique natural environment and diverse habitats, prevent flooding' increase resilience to climate change, and maintain the rural nature of the Parish
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect existing habitat areas</li><li>• Take every opportunity to enhance biodiversity</li><li>• Restrict development in the countryside</li><li>• Protect trees and woodlands</li><li>• Plant more trees</li><li>• Improve standards of flood protection for property in vulnerable locations in the Parish</li><li>• Improve surface water drainage to prevent flooding throughout the Parish</li></ul>
<b><i>Built Environment</i></b>
Aim: To protect our heritage and the historic character of our villages, determine the acceptable limits of development, and set appropriate development standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect historic buildings, character and identity of the villages and other settlement areas</li><li>• Ensure development is appropriate to its locality and setting</li><li>• Positively influence the layout and design of new developments</li><li>• Reinforce the sense of local character and rurality of the area</li><li>• Identify sites acceptable for development</li><li>• Require developers to set out sustainability measures of development</li><li>• Ensure adequate infrastructure is in place before development takes place</li></ul>
<b><i>Housing</i></b>
Aim: To ensure new housing development is sustainable, beneficial to the housing needs of the area, and in keeping with its surroundings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require new housing development to help maintain a locally relevant mix of housing types and tenures</li><li>• Set site-specific access and layout criteria for housing development sites</li><li>• Support sustainability standards for housing development</li><li>• Provide design guidance for developers</li><li>• Require adequate off-street parking and service provision for new development</li><li>• Require private outdoor space is provided commensurate with the type and size of new dwellings</li><li>• Require adequate amenity and public open space for residential areas</li><li>• Promote self-build initiatives that meet local need</li></ul>

<b><i>Community Facilities and Services</i></b>
Aim: To protect and enhance local facilities to ensure they continue to meet local needs, and improve access and accessibility to local facilities and services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support improvements to existing facilities and establishments to remain fit for purpose</li> <li>• Ensure primary school provision can continue to meet local demand</li> <li>• Protect existing public parking facilities</li> <li>• Require public parking facilities to be provided in appropriate developments</li> <li>• Require all new residential, educational, and business premises development to make provision for high-speed broadband</li> </ul>
<b><i>Business and Jobs</i></b>
Aim: To protect existing business and commercial premises and sites, support homeworking, and restrict new business development to suitable locations and sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct new business to existing business areas</li> <li>• Resist commercial development on agricultural land</li> </ul>
<b><i>Transport and Travel</i></b>
Aim: Facilitate sustainable transport modes, improve parking in the Parish for local people, improve road safety for all users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the provision of additional off-street parking</li> <li>• Support the provision of EV charging points in appropriate locations</li> <li>• Support the provision of more and better pavements</li> <li>• Improve and maintain existing footpaths</li> <li>• Facilitate a new footpath link to Cat &amp; Fiddle that avoids the A3052</li> <li>• Support the extension of the network of footpaths and safe cycleways to improve public access to the countryside</li> <li>• Support the creation of traffic-free linkages between the Parish and nearby settlements</li> <li>• Support improved safe cycle links between residential areas and local business and community locations</li> <li>• Facilitate improved public transport access and services</li> <li>• Support provision of an alternative vehicular access to Sowton village</li> </ul>
<b><i>Sports and Recreation</i></b>
Aim: To maintain and improve existing recreation facilities, provide sufficient community spaces for recreation, increase sporting options for all
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect existing community spaces and current facilities and support enhancements that meet local needs</li> <li>• Encourage provision of a wide range of outdoor and indoor sports</li> <li>• Ensure there is adequate play space close to residential areas</li> </ul>

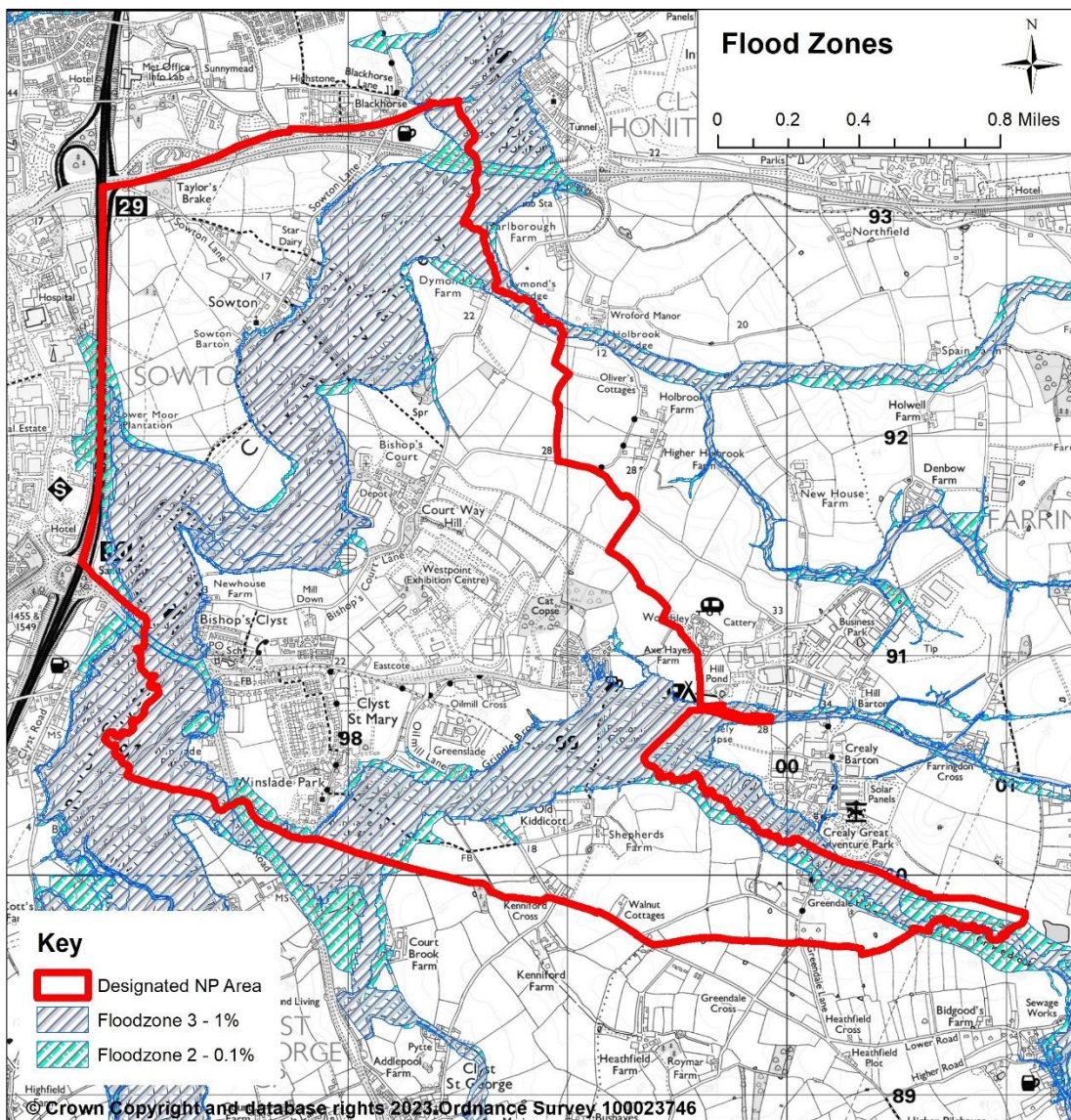
## 7. Natural Environment & Countryside

### Overview

- 7.1 Clyst St Mary and Sowton remain villages surrounded by countryside, despite being so close to Exeter. The Cat and Fiddle Residential Park can be similarly regarded. The rural setting of the settlements with their surrounding patchwork of open fields and floodplain is of great importance to residents.
- 7.2 The sense of rurality that endures has benefited significantly from the proximity of the River Clyst and its floodplain, which has ensured the separation of the Parish's settlements from the city of Exeter. This area, known as Clyst Marshes, is protected as a 'green wedge' by Strategic Policy 8 in the Local Plan, and we fully expect it to be similarly protected by a policy in the new Local Plan. This is a policy device that remains relevant and is wholly endorsed by the Neighbourhood Plan and reflected in policy BisC05.
- 7.3 Clyst Marshes forms an important part of the Clyst Valley Regional Park (Strategic Policy 10 of the East Devon Local Plan), which states: "*Development will not be allowed in the designated area [i.e., the Clyst Valley Regional Park] unless it will clearly achieve valley park specific objectives for people and wildlife. Countryside policies of the plan will still apply in non-allocated development locations and areas.*"
- 7.4 Bishops Clyst Parish Council supports the development of the Regional Park, which is recognised as "*a tranquil haven for people and wildlife centred on the River Clyst, its floodplain, and tributaries*". Our aim is to protect this special area and as much of the other areas of countryside in the Parish as possible, to help retain the village and rural character we currently enjoy.
- 7.5 The countryside of the Parish is not without agricultural value, much of it is grade 2 and grade 3. It provides habitats for a diverse ecological network. The Parish has several areas of ecological or geological significance that must be protected. The Devon Biodiversity Records Centre recognises 11 such areas including Clyst Marshes, a designated County Wildlife Site, and the old sandpit (occupied by the Village car park and Rydon Motors) which is designated as a County Geological site.
- 7.6 We are mindful of the relative proximity (i.e., within 10km) of two areas of European importance for biodiversity. We have considered it appropriate therefore to refer to these areas along with the several sites within the Parish that are recognised of importance or having significance in ecological terms or geological terms (such as the Old Sand Pit, a 'Regionally Important Geological site').
- 7.7 Our countryside offers contrast, relief and refuge from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Such areas that are close to population centres are becoming scarcer. Bishops Clyst Parish Council has consistently supported the preservation of agricultural land for agricultural use whenever a planning application is considered.
- 7.8 Clyst St Mary is noted for its defining areas of green focal features and enclosures, which reinforce its rural setting and assist in offsetting the effects of the main roads and noise and pollution. Most noticeable and appreciated are the planting on the centre roundabout, the tall trees each side of the road, particularly the distinctive tall plane trees on the west side of the A376 dual carriageway, and the old trees and hedgerows at the bottom of Winslade Park Avenue and the mature trees and tall hedges along the A3052. It is important to retain these features as they define the village as well as providing a protective environment. There are a several significant areas of natural woodland in the Parish, which we also seek to preserve.

- 7.9 A survey conducted in conjunction with the review of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2021 made clear that the community regards protecting the natural environment and retaining the rural character of the area should have the highest priority in the Plan.
- 7.10 Flooding has long been a matter of concern to the community. Substantial tracts of land in the Parish are at risk of flooding. The River Clyst has an extensive flood plain that crosses the neighbourhood area. Grindle Brook to the south is also prone to flooding. The village of Sowton is unaffected by flooding except on the access road. The village of Clyst St Mary has a long history of flooding from the River Clyst affecting the lower part of the village and causing limited flooding in Winslade Park Avenue. Although this issue has recently been alleviated by major works. In 2022 new improved flood alleviation works were completed at Clyst St Mary. The Standard of defence in the village, we are now informed, is now 1 in 100 years, i.e. 1% chance of the area flooding in any one year. Map 3 shows the pre-defence work situation. An up-dated map is due to be published by the Environment Agency, which will indicate the new risk bands. It is highly likely the current flood risk bands in the vicinity of the village of Clyst St Mary will be moved to a lower risk category.
- 7.11 Despite the new defences, there remains flooding problems behind these defences caused by infiltration into an inadequate sewage system and occasional failures at the pumping station, which has to cope with run-off arising in the defended area.

Map 2 – Flood Zones



**Policy BisC01 Protecting and Enhancing Geodiversity, Biodiversity and Wildlife**

1. Development proposals should:

- a) avoid development on local wildlife sites, and habitats of principal importance, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, and appropriate mitigation measures provided;
- b) protect and enhance where possible the network of habitats, species, sites of importance and wildlife corridors;
- c) minimise impacts on biodiversity; and
- d) unless exempt, deliver a net gain in biodiversity in compliance with national legislation and the requirements of the LPA.

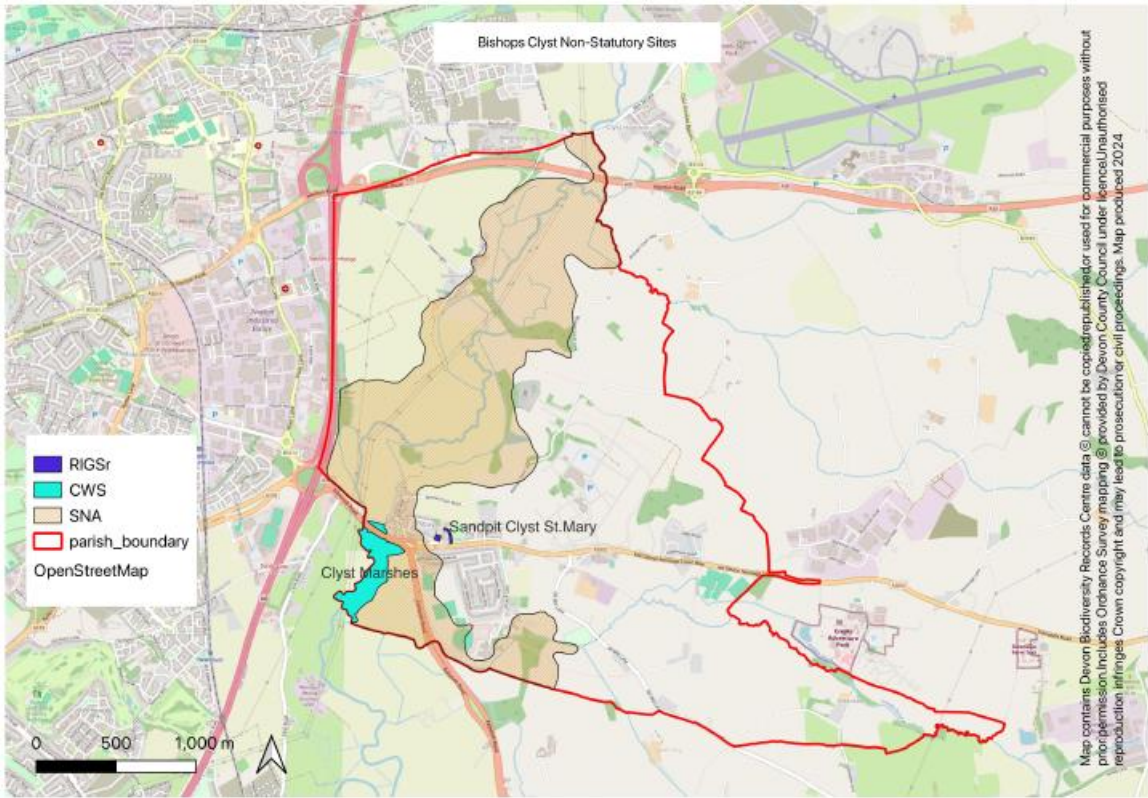
2. Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or which would create significant harm to, wildlife sites and other areas of ecological or geological significance, will not be supported.

- 7.12 Policy BisC01 makes it clear that we expect all development proposals to recognise how ecologically important the local countryside is. The most important and sensitive wildlife sites and habitats should be unaffected by development. If any disturbance is justified because of the public benefit to be gained, then an appropriate and satisfactory mitigation strategy should be part of the development proposal. Maps 3a and 3b show the recognised wildlife and geological areas of the neighbourhood area and their special status. Further details can be found in the Bishops Clyst Wildlife Site Resource Map and Species Information<sup>18</sup> of 2024 prepared by the Devon Biodiversity Record Centre (DBRC).
- 7.13 Within the Neighbourhood Plan we also recognise the value of trees, woodlands and hedgerows as habitats and part of the network of wildlife corridors (see policy BisC02) and emphasise the need to achieve a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% for each development in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 and in a manner specified in the Government's guidelines<sup>19</sup> and agreed with the local planning authority. Wherever possible habitats should be retained, restored and re-created as part of developments. Opportunities onsite to create, expand, buffer and link semi-natural habitats should be sought.
- 7.14 Guidance on the status and significance of local wildlife areas and other areas of local countryside must be sought by developers from the appropriate agencies, such as the DBRC, prior to planning application. It is preferred that biodiversity net gains should be achieved onsite in new developments. Where this is not possible, key local areas to be targeted for off-site measures, should be discussed with the Parish Council, and agreed with the local planning authority.
- 7.15 In accordance with the NPPF para.193, development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity will normally be supported. New development in a rural area like neighbourhood area of Clyst St Mary and Sowton should always prompt consideration as to whether it provides an opportunity to safeguard and/or improve local wildlife habitats and ecological networks. For major developments, opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity help establish coherent ecological networks and/or enhance public access to nature, where this is appropriate.

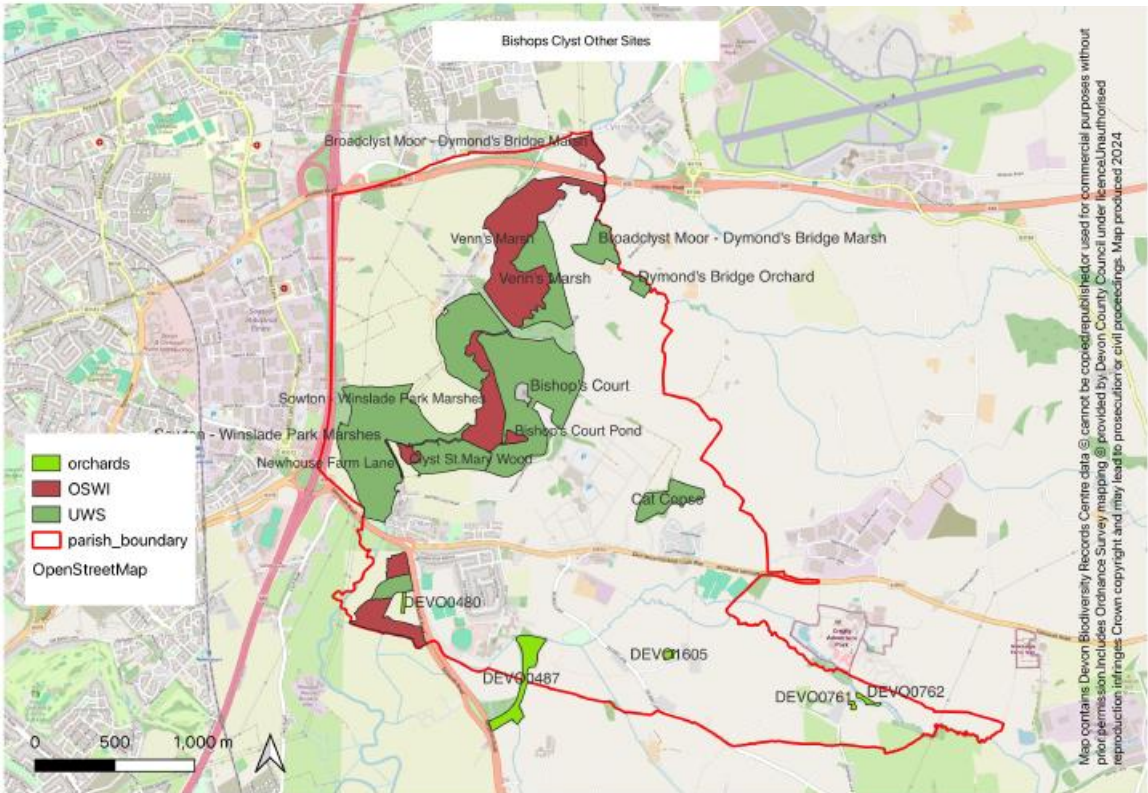
<sup>18</sup> <https://bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Bishops-Clyst-biodiversity-report-DBRC-2024.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>

Map 3a – Non-Statutory Wildlife Areas and Geological Sites



Map 3b – Other Wildlife Areas and Habitats



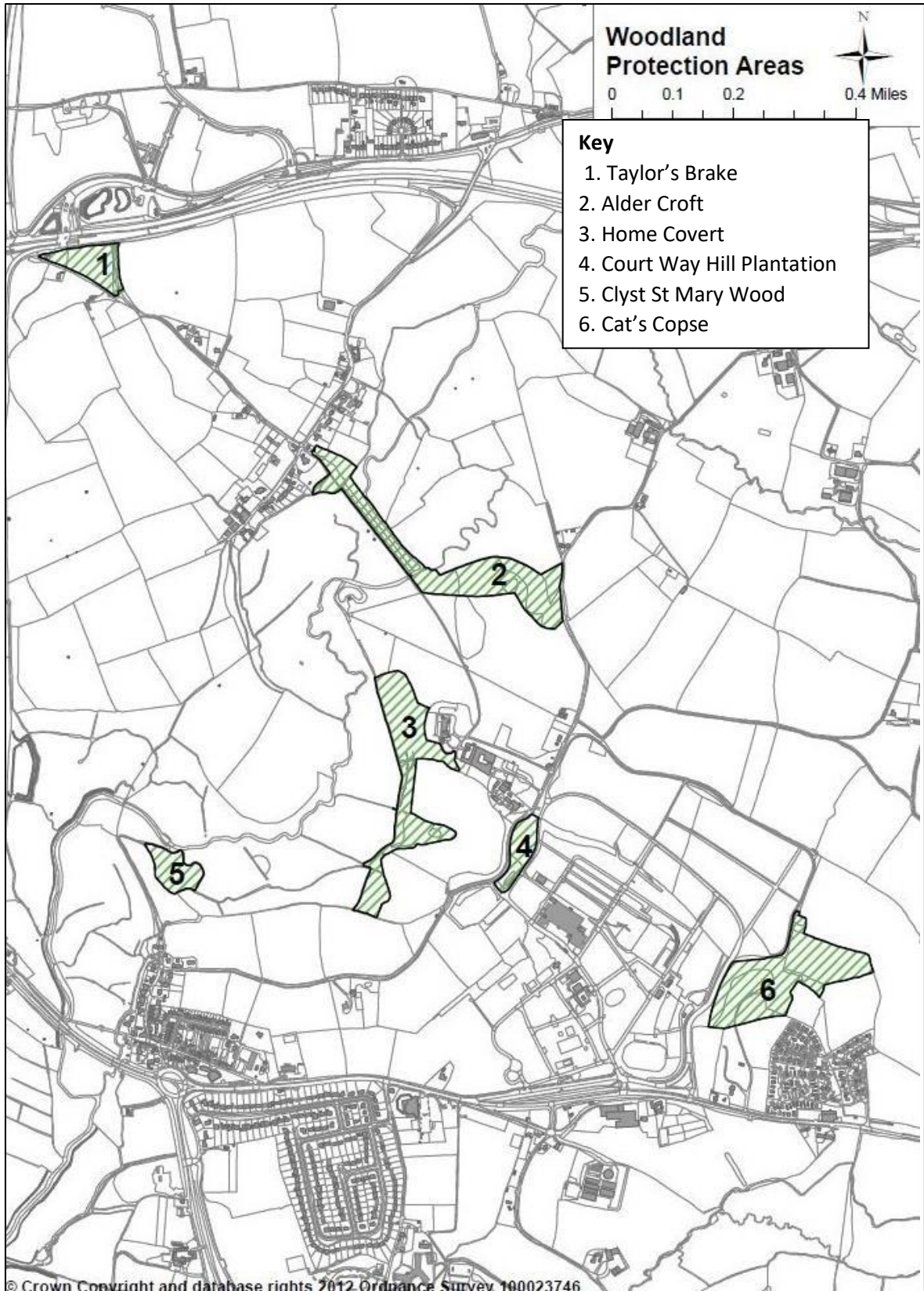
Map Abbreviations:			
RIGS	<i>Regionally Important Geological Sites</i>	OSWI	<i>Other Sites of Wildlife Interest</i>
CWS	<i>County Wildlife Site</i>	UWS	<i>Unconfirmed Wildlife Sites</i>
SNA	<i>Strategic Nature Area</i>		

### Policy BisC02 Protecting Trees and Woodlands

1. Areas of predominantly native woodland (including, but not limited to, the woodlands shown on map 4) are regarded as important natural features. Any development proposals that would result in the loss, damage or deterioration of these woodlands will be resisted, unless there are exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
2. Development proposals that will cause the loss of or damage to trees, woodland, or species rich hedgerows that contribute positively to the character and amenity of the area must provide for appropriate replacement planting together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting where deemed necessary by the Local Planning Authority.
3. New development within the proximity of existing mature trees will be expected to have a tree protection plan in place before any development commences, prepared in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012. This will detail tree protection strategies to be employed during construction. An arboriculture method statement will also be required to cover any proposed works to trees or other works within their root protection areas.
4. Where development results in the unavoidable loss of trees or hedgerows, proposals must provide for appropriate replacement planting on the site, or as close as possible to it, together with a management plan for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. Such replacement planting should use native and or local appropriate species with an expected mature size similar to those removed and be in the ratio of three trees for the loss of a large tree, two for a medium sized tree and one for a small tree. (See the Glossary for a definition of tree sizes.)

- 7.16 Mature woodlands and trees within the area form an integral part of the rural landscape of the Parish and have been recognised as significant to the area by successive East Devon Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) carried out in 2008 and revised in 2019<sup>20</sup>. Aside from the unique environment and character of the valley of the river Clyst which dissects the neighbourhood area, the area to the north and east of Clyst St Mary is regarded as LCA3E where “*fields are generally surrounded by wide hedgerows, often with mature hedgerow oaks*”. The village of Sowton and the countryside to its west is LCA3B where “*patches of woodland, copse, and hedgerow trees give the landscape a well-treed character*”. The management guidelines for both character areas include maintaining the woodland groups and hedgerow trees and promoting traditional hedgerow management.
- 7.17 The loss of trees and woodland would not just harm the character of the area. Many are important wildlife habitats, and several woodlands are regarded by Natural England as ‘habitats of principal importance’. The NPPF, para.192, says we should be promoting the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks. Policy BisC02 places protection on existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows that are regarded as key features in the landscape, an essential part of the rural character of area and/or very important wildlife habitats.
- 7.18 The main areas of woodland are shown on Map 4. We are advised that ‘aged or veteran trees’ can be found as individuals or in groups within ancient wood-pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, parks, or other areas.

<sup>20</sup> [https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2816886/LCA Complete Final March-2019 Low-Res.pdf](https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2816886/LCA_Complete_Final_March-2019_Low-Res.pdf)



### Policy BisC03 Minimising Flood Risk

1. Wherever practical and appropriate, development proposals for the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan Area should show how they will incorporate Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS) principles to minimise flood risk and, in particular, reduce the need for runoff into the surface water drainage system in Clyst St Mary village and at the bottom of Winslade Park Avenue.
2. Proposals to improve the management of the river and other water courses and construct new defences in the neighbourhood area to reduce flooding will be supported.
3. In improving flood defences, opportunities must be taken to enhance biodiversity and aid local delivery of biodiversity net gain.

- 7.19 The risk of flooding is a matter of much concern to many residents of the Parish. The village of Sowton regularly experiences incidents of flooding, which can on occasions cut the village off because there is only one access road. Cat and Fiddle Residential Park has experienced temporary ground saturation problems following heavy rain when run-off from woodlands to its north traverses the site on its way to Grindle Brook. Flooding from the River Clyst can cause limited flooding to the lower part of Winslade Park Avenue where the surface water drainage arrangement is inadequate. The village of Clyst St Mary has a long history of flooding from the River Clyst affecting the lower part of the village in particular.
- 7.20 The Environment Agency have recently completed a new scheme which protects 53 properties identified to be a risk from flooding in the village of Clyst St Mary to a return period of once in 100 years. The properties at risk are mainly in the centre of the village and include the shop and Half Moon Public House. These properties remain at risk from surface water flooding, flash floods and the hydraulic overload of the sewage system causing sewage to overflow from manhole covers. South West Water are currently undertaking works in an attempt to rectify the problem.
- 7.21 There have been several flooding events over the last few years in Clyst St Mary village. Frog Lane, the Old Bridge area and the bottom of Winslade Park Avenue are the most susceptible to flooding. Fortunately, the South West Water pumps adjacent to the Old Bridge can deal with all but the most severe flooding and flash floods.
- 7.22 The Parish Council supported a community Flood Group that produced a Community Flood Plan. The plan established flood wardens from community volunteers mainly in the lower part of the village. With a grant from the Devon Community Resilience Forum a ready supply of sandbags has been made available for residents use as necessary. The Community Flood plan has now been incorporated into the Parish Council Emergency Plan<sup>21</sup> which is in the process of being updated.
- 7.23 The fact that a flood-related policy BisC03 features so early in the Neighbourhood Plan signifies the importance of this issue to the residents and businesses of Clyst St Mary and the fear that major new development in or adjacent to the neighbourhood area will, in an era of climate change and unpredictability, only make things worse. In accordance with the NPPF, para.162, *“plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change...”*. All major development proposals should be fully cognisant of the nature of the risk they pose, avoid land that may flood and reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Emergency-Plan-2018.pdf>

### **Policy BisC04 Development Outside the Clyst St Mary Settlement Boundary**

1. Other than where proposed through strategic allocations or provided for by strategic policies of the Local Plan, development proposals on land outside the confines of the Clyst St Mary settlement area (as defined on Map 8) will be supported where they are necessary for the purposes of agriculture, informal outdoor recreation, or farm diversification without harming the countryside, or conform to other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.
2. Where planning permission is required, farm diversification schemes will be supported where:
  - a) existing buildings are reused wherever possible but without substantial rebuilding or disproportionate extension
  - b) new buildings are sensitively sited amongst or adjacent to existing farm buildings, unless specific justification can be made that there is operational need for an alternative location
  - c) the design of any new building reflects the scale of existing buildings and respect landscape features.
3. Development proposals should demonstrate no significant adverse impact, or that any adverse impacts are satisfactorily mitigated, on the following:
  - a) landscape, geodiversity, biodiversity, habitats, and wildlife corridors
  - b) existing agriculture and other land-based activities;
  - c) the rural character of the area and its setting;
  - d) local transport network and road safety;
  - e) heritage assets; and
  - f) residential amenity.

- 7.24 All land outside of the Clyst St Mary settlement boundary (see Map 8) is regarded by the development plan as countryside where, in accordance with Strategy 7 of the Local Plan, *“development 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”*.
- 7.25 Policy BisC04 recognises that the countryside is an appropriate location for some recreation activities, and business-related development, which is necessary to ensure that an existing farming business can diversify in the interests of viability. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that development that does take place is relevant and necessary and does as little harm to our countryside assets as possible.
- 7.26 In accordance with NPPF, para.88, development to ensure the wellbeing and viability of local farms and farming should be supported, including farm diversification, if it does not have a harmful impact on the area. Development intended to help the farming community to change agricultural practices to reduce emissions associated with farming operations, manage soils sustainably and replenish soil carbon, will likewise be supported.
- 7.27 Use of the countryside for informal leisure and recreation purposes that have a low impact on the environment such as walking, cycling and horse-riding are encouraged if they are consistent with the guidance provided by the Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan<sup>22</sup>.
- 7.28 Development proposals on the business areas and at the existing recreation sites are covered by policies elsewhere in the Neighbourhood Plan.

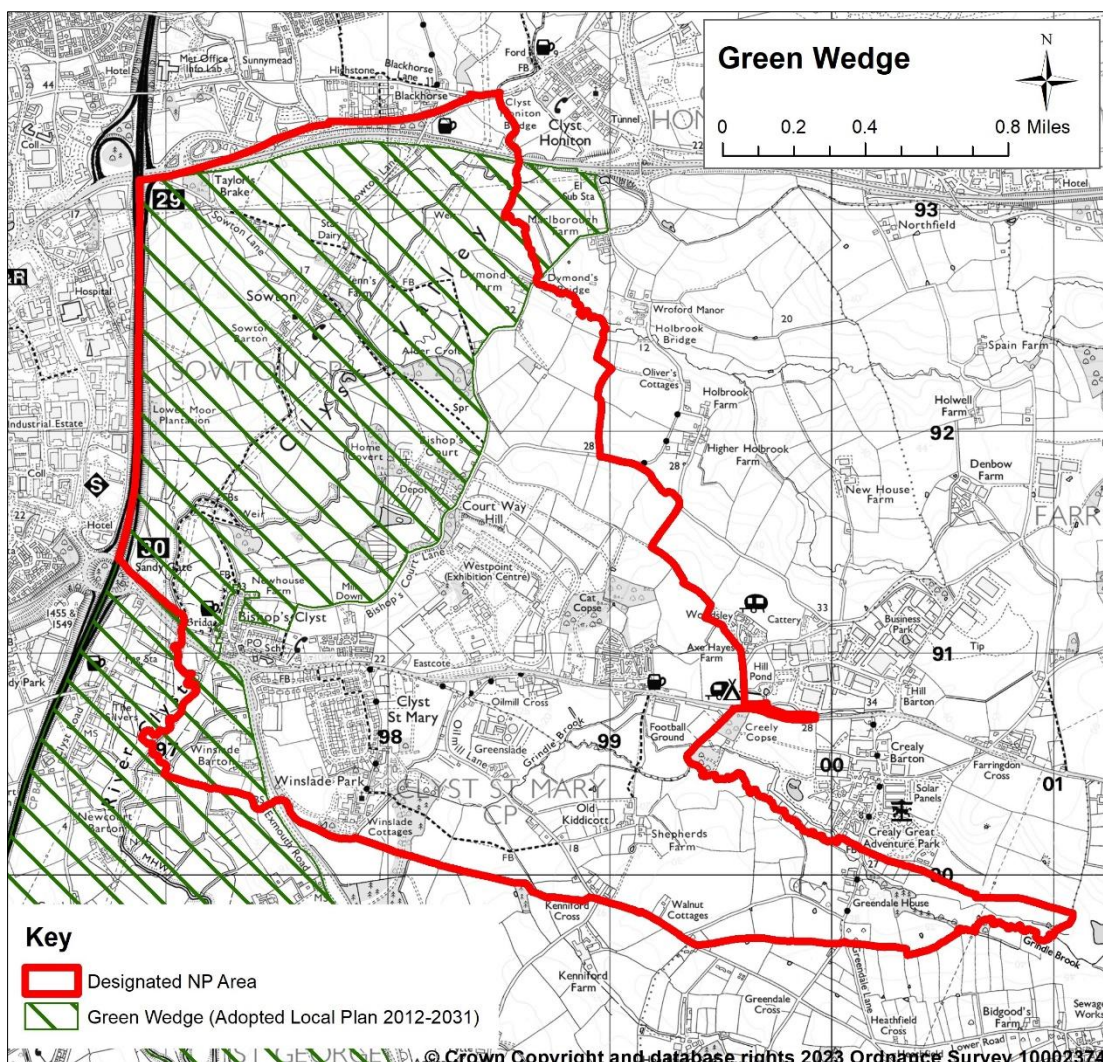
<sup>22</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/3722704/cvrp-masterplan.pdf>

## Policy BisC05 Green Wedge

Development proposals in the designated Green Wedge area (shown on map 5), within the neighbourhood area, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that no harm to the character or purpose of this area will occur.

- 7.29 Green wedge areas in East Devon as defined by the Local Plan have been designated to protect the undeveloped land between settlements to stop them merging and to protect their separate characters.
- 7.30 The green wedge between Exeter and Clyst St Mary, which includes Sowton, has served to preserve the setting and special character of historic settlements and ensure the neighbourhood area has remained rural in character, whilst protecting land, of such landscape quality and value, that it is now recognised as part of the Clyst Valley Regional Park.
- 7.31 Policy BisC05 is an endorsement of the Local Plan's green wedge policy approach and recognition of the designated "land east of Exeter and the M5" as green wedge as shown on Map 5. Within this area isolated new development or incursions into the green wedge area will be resisted. We recognise there may be a need and justification for small-scale development in the interests of ensuring that existing properties and businesses within the green wedge can continue to function properly. Any such development should be subservient to other buildings within the curtilage, sympathetic in character to its setting and not visually intrusive.

Map 5 – Green Wedge



## 8. Built Environment

### Overview

- 8.1 Development in the Exeter area continues apace. An integrated approach has been pursued by Exeter City and East Devon District Council to the problem of satisfying the demand for development land around Exeter. As a result, development has been expanding eastwards from Exeter into the East Devon District Council area to the north of the A30 and south-eastwards towards the M5 and Clyst St Mary.
- 8.2 Being situated so close to Exeter has brought continuous development pressures to the parish area. The pressure for more development in the Parish is likely to continue. Sowton Village is protected by its Conservation Area status, but the future of the countryside area around the village will depend on a determination to preserve the village in its rural setting.
- 8.3 The Cat & Fiddle Residential Park is a completed development in a rural setting at a considerable distance from the main settlement. Under present policies relating to sustainability and the preservation of the rural environment, additional development on the land surrounding Cat & Fiddle would not normally be permitted. However, being separated from Westpoint and Hill Barton by only a few fields on each side, the pressure to fill in the gap in the future will be great.
- 8.4 Since the first version of the Neighbourhood Plan was made, Greenspire, a development of 80 dwellings to the east of the Village Hall, has been completed and the redevelopment of Winslade House and urbanisation of the surrounding land is well advanced, and likely to result in 78 new dwellings by 2040. These developments are more than sufficient to meet local needs and increase the availability of affordable homes in the Parish.
- 8.5 Despite a little evidence of local housing need, recent work on the new Local Plan indicates a requirement for the area under the jurisdiction of Bishops Clyst Parish Council to contribute a minimum of a further 72 dwellings by 2042. To preserve the rural character of the Parish residential development will generally be limited to land within the defined settlement area<sup>23</sup> of Clyst St Mary and nearby. The choice of available land at Clyst St Mary is further constrained by the flood-prone river meadows on one side of the village, the busy road skirting the west side of the village and, in the case of the Sidmouth Road, running through the heart of the village.
- 8.6 Bishops Clyst Parish Council is not anti-development but continues to examine development proposals with the preservation and enhancement of the essential character of the various areas within the boundaries of the Parish firmly in mind. Our general approach will be to ensure that any development which does take place fits in with the needs of the residents, with the existing nature of the surroundings and is of an appropriate scale. We will also seek to ensure that any development is sustainable and will enhance or add to the facilities within the various areas.
- 8.7 The capacity and quality of local infrastructure and facilities is a matter of great concern. At present there are very evident inadequacies with the sewage system, flood defences, highway capacity, the footpath and cycle network, parking space, and health service provision, many of which are in danger of being worsened by imminent new development at Winslade House.

---

<sup>23</sup> Nb. The term “settlement boundary” is used in this version of the Neighbourhood Plan instead of “built-up area boundary” to be consistent with the change of terminology adopted for use in the new Local Plan.

- 8.8 It is important to set standards for new development to ensure it will blend in with the character of the existing village and that it is of a sufficiently high quality to provide an environment that is pleasant to live in. The focus should primarily be on the needs of the residents walking or cycling from one part of the village to another. Roads need to be designed to facilitate safe access by all road users.
- 8.9 A set of design codes for the neighbourhood area was commissioned in response to the guidance in the NPPF, paras 133-134. Design codes provide a local framework for “*creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. Design codes can be prepared.... at a neighbourhood scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents*”. The Clyst St Mary and Sowton Design Codes and Guidance<sup>24</sup> is subject to separate community consultation prior to adoption by the Parish Council.

## Built Environment Policies and their Explanation/Justification

### **Policy BisC06 Heritage Assets**

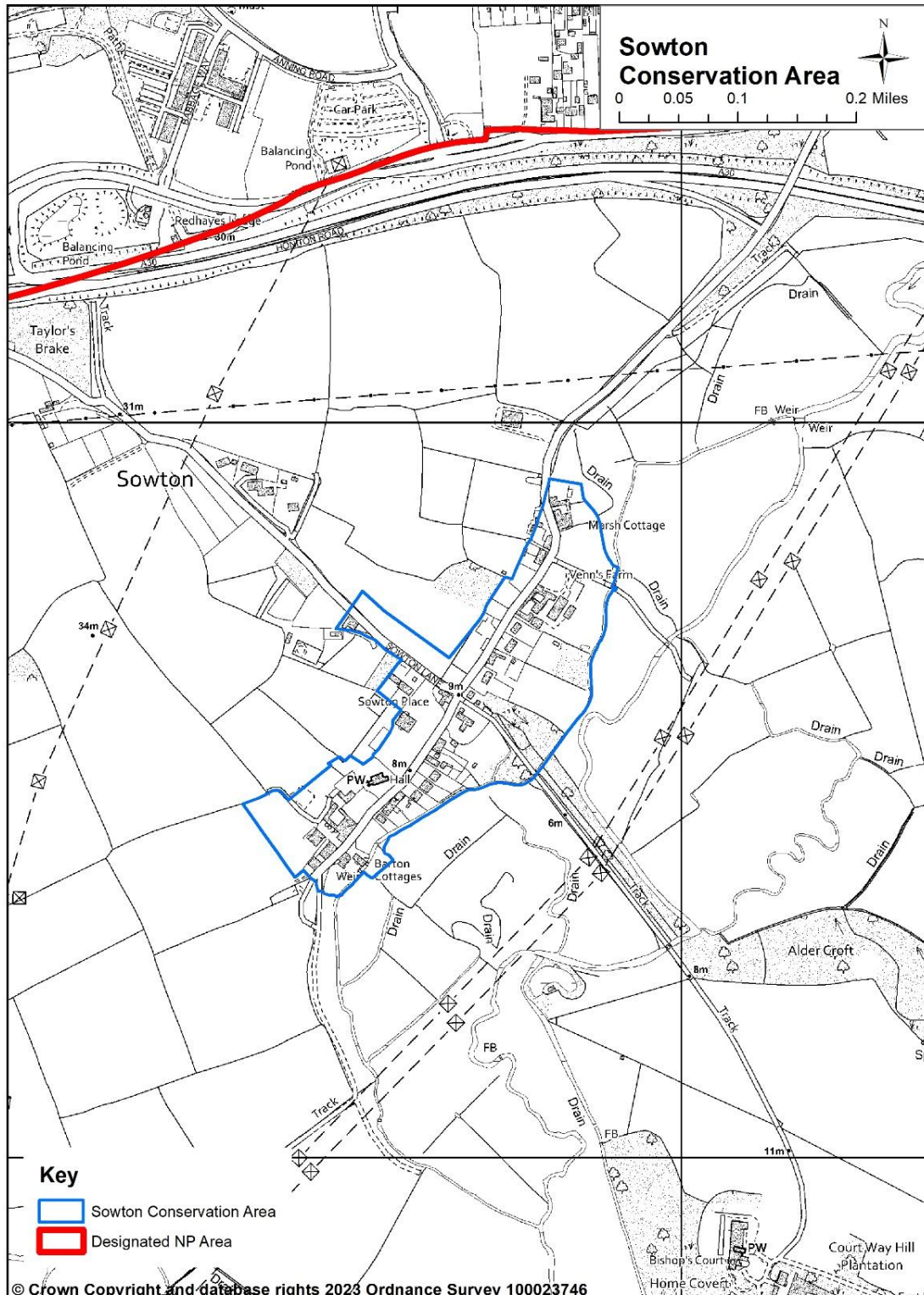
Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets should be accompanied by an appropriate assessment which sets out the significance of the asset(s) (including setting) and the impact of the proposal upon significance and experience of the asset(s). Applications will be determined strictly in accordance with national policy and guidance and the development plan.

- 8.10 The NPPF, paras. 202 and 203, says we should recognise that heritage assets are “*an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations*”. We should “*set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats*”.
- 8.11 The ‘listed’ buildings and structures in the Parish are afforded statutory protection by way of listed building consent, which is required for all works of demolition, alteration or extension to a listed building that affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.
- 8.12 Historic England maintain the List of statutory-protected buildings and structures. There are other buildings and structures in the Parish, beyond those that are statutory listed, that have a local heritage value and are highly regarded.
- 8.13 The village of Sowton with its many listed buildings is designated as a conservation area (see Map 6), recognising its special architectural and historic interest, and providing it with a significant degree of protection, including its setting. Policy BisC06 is intended to ensure that the full range of local heritage assets throughout the Parish are similarly recognised and provided with some protection from inappropriate development, The potential impact of development proposals on nearby heritage assets will be an important consideration.
- 8.14 The emerging new Local Plan emphasises the significance of both designated and non-designated assets and requires development proposals to be determined with due regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

<sup>24</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/ezclf1q/design-codea-and-guidelines-final-document.pdf>

8.15 As a community, we wish to ensure that all types of heritage assets are recognised and afforded an appropriate level of protection. The Parish Council will encourage the nomination of suitable, non-designated, local heritage assets using established procedures for entry on the East Devon List of Local Heritage Assets. The local entries on this List should be subject to policy BisC06.

Map 6 – Sowton Conservation Area



### **Policy BisC07 Maintaining Local Character**

Development should be well designed to fit in with the local area and contribute to creating a strong sense of place. New development will be required to demonstrate a high quality of design, use of materials and detail that are appropriate for the area and have regard to the prevailing scale, massing, density and plan form in the locality. Extensions and alterations to buildings will be supported so long as they complement and enhance the main building and its setting. Replacement of any building will only be supported if the proposed development makes an enhanced positive architectural contribution to the location. Boundary treatments for new and amended curtilages should reflect that prevailing in the surrounding area.

Development proposals should accord with the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Design Codes.

- 8.16 Policy BisC07 recognises that development proposals requiring planning permission will come forward for additions, alterations, new building, and redevelopment within each of the settlements in the Parish.
- 8.17 There is no doubting the unique character of Clyst St Mary old village but, having a distinct character and charm and its own vernacular also applies to the other settlements of the area.
- 8.18 The NPPF, para.131, tells us that *“good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”*. We expect very high standards of design for new development, but the community feels it has often been let down by the development industry. Policy BisC07 requires new development to be sympathetic and complementary to its location and neighbours rather than harmful. To guide developers the Bishops Clyst Design Codes and Guidelines<sup>25</sup> has been prepared on behalf of the Parish Council.
- 8.19 The purpose of the Design Code is to guide developers, in the interests of sustainable development, to make sure that new development respects the distinctive visual character of its location and the area generally. It is not about preventing development nor preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. The Design Code considers the detailed design references, materials, finishes, street scenes, and landscapes that collectively define the sense of place and how these may be reflected in new developments.
- 8.20 Development proposals should ensure that they will preserve or enhance the architectural and historic character of the designated conservation areas.

---

<sup>25</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/ezclf1q/design-codea-and-guidelines-final-document.pdf>

## Policy BisC08 Local Green Space

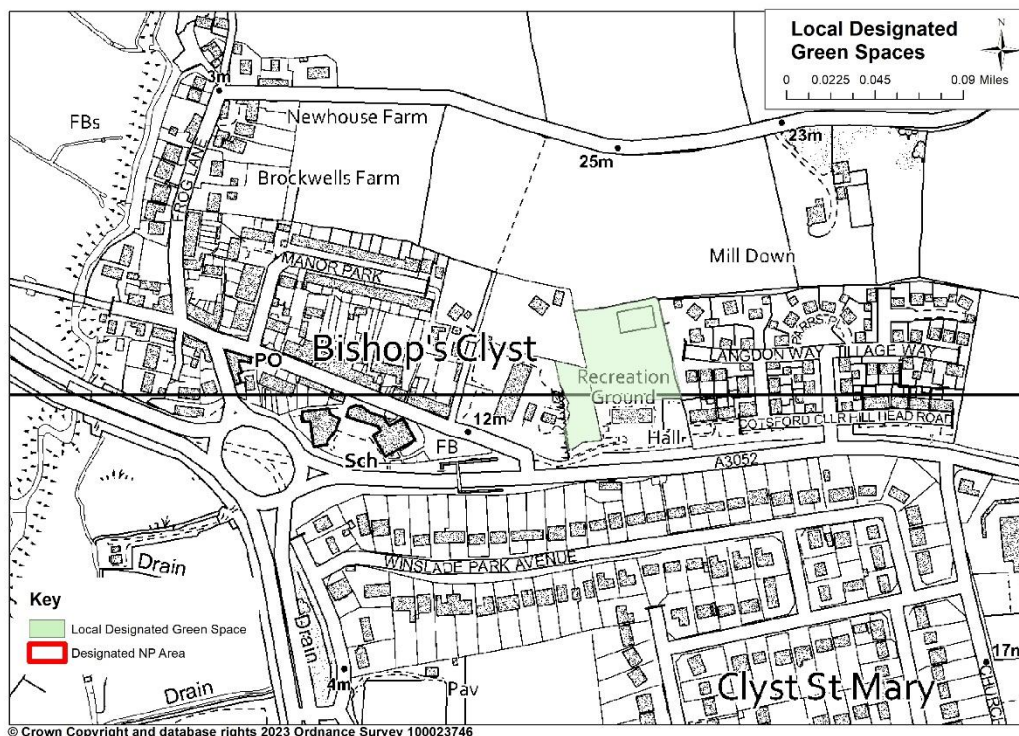
The following area is designated as a Local Green Space:

- Queen Elizabeth Field

Inappropriate development on any designated Local Green Space named in this policy will only be supported in very special circumstances.

- 8.21 The NPPF, para.106, gives us the right to designate green amenity and activity areas that are highly regarded by the community as 'local green spaces' and give them protection for current and future generations via a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.22 Development on sites designated as local green space should be limited to that which is deemed appropriate by being ancillary to its existing recreation or amenity use. Exceptional circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the designated space by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations such as where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss. In these instances, the local green space to be lost should be replaced by alternative green space that will benefit the community and the area.
- 8.23 **Queen Elizabeth Field** is designated as Local Green Space and subject to policy BisC08 having been assessed as meeting the required criteria (of paragraph 107 of the NPPF). It is designated as 'Local Green Space' in recognition of its importance to the amenity and vitality of the area and to protect it for enjoyment by local people.
- 8.24 This important open space (see Map 7) serves as the village green for Clyst St Mary and the focus of outdoor community activity. Over several years, a voluntary and very active Recreation Committee has raised funds and provided a very well equipped and maintained children's play area with a range of modern, safe play apparatus. The Committee also provided funds for the construction of a multi-discipline hard surfaced sports area (MUGA) at the top of the large Parish Council Field behind the Village Hall. The field serves as a safe open space for families to enjoy for junior sport and is used for a range of community events.

Map 7 – Queen Elizabeth Field



### **Policy BisC09 Sustainable Development**

New development will be supported where it meets relevant policies in this plan and provided:

- a) sustainable construction and drainage techniques and energy conservation measures are incorporated within the development proposals;
- b) provision is made wherever possible for connection to the latest high-speed broadband and other communication networks;
- c) opportunities to further safe and secure pedestrian and cycle links are incorporated wherever possible;
- d) it does not result in the loss of land of local amenity value or recreational importance, unless an alternative space of equal or greater size, quality and convenience is included as part of the proposal;
- e) natural habitats are protected during construction, and measures to improve biodiversity are incorporated including, but not limited to, bee bricks, bat and bird boxes and hedgehog highways; and
- f) the need to design out crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour to ensure ongoing community safety and cohesion, has been taken into account.

- 8.25 Policy BisC09 requires all development proposals to be cognisant of the latest advice and guidance on sustainability. Buildings should be designed and constructed in accordance with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and achieve, as a minimum, the nationally described standards.
- 8.26 Sustainable construction methods should:
- use renewable and recyclable materials
  - reduce the embodied energy in building materials
  - minimise the energy consumption of the finished building
  - reduce on-site waste
  - protect the natural habitats during and after the construction phase
- 8.27 Sustainable buildings should:
- be highly energy efficient, using only renewable energy via smart energy systems
  - utilise sustainable drainage systems (SUDS)
  - minimise water consumption and maximise rainwater harvesting
  - integrate bee bricks, bat and/or swift boxes<sup>26</sup> within all suitable buildings
- 8.28 Sustainable layouts should:
- ensure the disposition of buildings maximise passive solar gain
  - encourage and prioritise safe walking and cycling
  - provide adequate facilities for electric and hydrogen vehicles
  - designing out crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour (advice is available from Devon and Cornwall Police)

---

<sup>26</sup> in accordance with the British Standard for Integral Nest Boxes (BS42021:2022)

### Policy BisC10 Infrastructure

All proposals for new development must make provision for physical and social infrastructure to address its impacts. Applications for residential development will be required to demonstrate how the infrastructure needs of the development are addressed. Proposals for new development that cannot demonstrate adequate measures to deliver appropriate infrastructure provision to offset its impacts will not be supported.

- 8.29 The concern that exists amongst parishioners regarding the capacity and quality of local infrastructure cannot be over-stated. Local facilities in Clyst St Mary are limited. With no doctor's surgery, residents must use surgeries at a distance, none of which are easily reachable by public transport. Traffic congestion at the A376 roundabout and the roads approaching it causes delays, congestion as well as health and safety issues in the village. There are recurring problems with sewage flooding, involving raw sewage running through the streets in the lower part of the village and surcharging toilets of low-lying houses. Solutions to these key issues must be found before there is further major development in the area.
- 8.30 Community consultation in September 2022<sup>27</sup> highlighted concerns about the impact of major development on the sewage system, flood defences, highway capacity, pedestrian safety and the inadequacies of the footpath and cycle network, parking space, community facilities, health services and pupil places at the Primary School.
- 8.31 Many of these issues lie beyond the remit of a neighbourhood plan but it was felt that our Plan should at least reference these concerns and make it clear that we regard Local Plan Strategy 50 – 'Infrastructure Delivery' to be very important. It states that "*infrastructure provision should be phased to meet development, and failure to provide or absence of relevant infrastructure will be grounds to justify refusal of permission*".
- 8.32 Local plans are required to plan positively for the development and make sufficient provision for the infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles, and policies of the NPPF, para.20. The NPPF, para.11, makes it plain that all plans should align growth and infrastructure. Development should only be permitted where it is supported by appropriate infrastructure that is provided in a timely manner. Major new development must not put an intolerable strain on local infrastructure just to achieve the desired growth numbers for the district.
- 8.33 The 2018 draft of the new Local Plan acknowledges that infrastructure provision will need to come forward with major development proposals. "[East Devon District] *Council will produce an Infrastructure Delivery Plan that will set out key requirements recognising the need for improved transport links and road improvements, district heating connections, new education provision, high speed broadband and other services and facilities to ensure sustainable development is delivered.*"
- 8.34 Development proposals should include a realistic assessment of their impact on the existing local infrastructure, services and facilities and demonstrate how impacts will be addressed so as not to disbenefit existing residents and businesses or harm the natural or physical environment. Major development proposals are expected to make a significant contribution towards improvements to the physical and social infrastructure of the neighbourhood area to accommodate an increase in the local population. Evidence should be included with any planning application that the relevant undertakers or providers have confirmed that they will

---

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BCNP-Review-Community-Questionnaire-Analysis-feb22.pdf>

have the capacity to accommodate the proposed development, which may, as in the case of education provision, need to be secured through a Section 106 agreement.

- 8.35 The East Devon Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule<sup>28</sup> means that any development granted permission above a certain size is liable to pay a CIL levy to be spent on infrastructure projects. A proportion of the levy (25%) accrued from developments in the neighbourhood area will be passed to Bishops Clyst Parish Council, to be invested, at the discretion of the Parish Council, in community-related infrastructure projects. This local investment will be co-ordinated with that of East Devon District Council for maximum benefit and sustainability.

#### **Policy BisC11 Clyst St Mary Settlement Boundary**

Development proposals on land within the defined settlement boundary of Clyst St Mary (see Map 8) will be supported where the development:

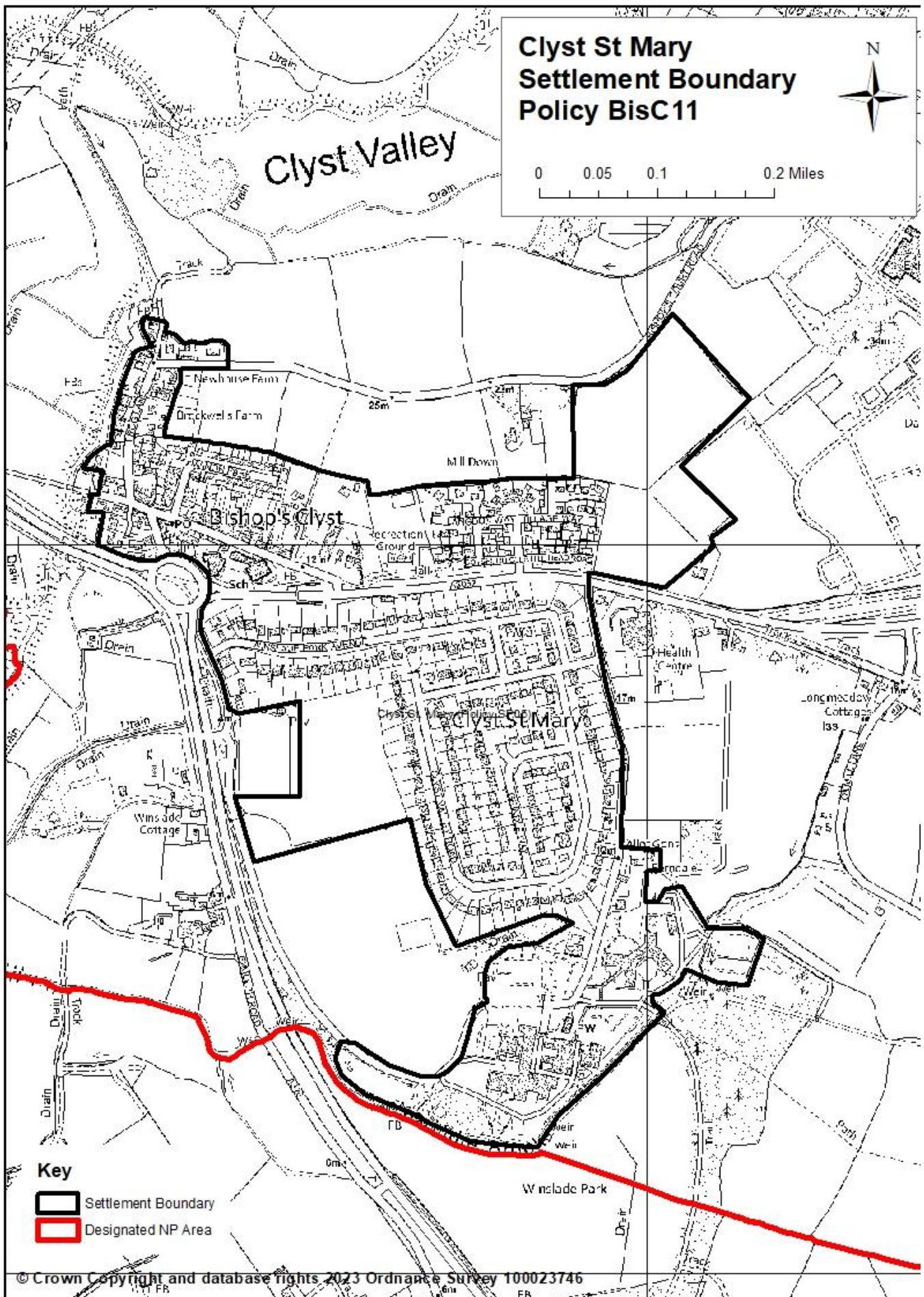
- a) benefits from a safe and suitable access for all road users;
- b) does not impact upon the privacy of any adjoining properties;
- c) is consistent with the character of the locality; and
- d) does not increase flood risk or exacerbate existing sewage disposal problems; and
- e) is generally in compliance with other policies in the development plan.

Areas outside the settlement boundary will be regarded as countryside and subject to 'development in the countryside' policies in the development plan.

- 8.36 The focus of new development in the parish is on Clyst St Mary, despite its infrastructure constraints. To constrain development and protect the countryside, a settlement boundary has been defined as shown on Map 8. This boundary is an up-date on the 'built-up area boundary' defined in the East Devon Villages Plan (adopted 26th July 2018). It has been amended to take account of developments that have taken place or been committed since that time, and to reflect the site allocation policies in the development plan, and also to be consistent with the criteria used by the local planning authority to define the settlement boundaries for the emerging Local Plan (2020-2042)<sup>29</sup>. Land allocated for residential development in policy BisC12 is included within the new settlement boundary shown on Map 8.
- 8.37 Policy BisC11 facilitates infill development and redevelopment within the defined settlement area of Clyst St Mary if it becomes necessary, and as long as the development proposal is appropriate to its location. Policy BisC11 reflects the NPPF, para.135, requirement to ensure the development that does take place will add to the overall quality of the area, helps establish a strong sense of place and responds to the local character and history of the Parish.
- 8.38 All areas outside the settlement boundary are regarded as countryside where development should be severely restricted and will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plan policy (see policy BisC04). There could be circumstances where development, as an exception to policy BisC11, may be supported outside the defined settlement area. The most likely 'exceptions' to be supported adjoining or just outside the settlement boundary of Clyst St Mary, relate to community uses – such as a play area, allotments, recycling centres and the like, which meet an identifiable local need.

<sup>28</sup> [https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/3721613/cil-cs\\_approved.pdf](https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/3721613/cil-cs_approved.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/j5jlpSYM/ksd-010-settlement-boundaries.pdf>



## 9. Housing Development

### Overview

- 9.1 The old village of Clyst St Mary is largely a mixture of 19th and early 20th century development with the addition of Manor Park, built in the 1960s, and small numbers of modern infill developments. Most of the rest of the built-up area consists of Winslade Park, a garden estate also built in the 1960s, to the south of the Sidmouth Road and Greenspire a site to the east of the Village Hall alongside the Sidmouth Road built from 2016. The site containing Winslade House and Clyst House is allocated for residential development in the adopted Local Plan and expected to provide over 70 new dwellings.
- 9.2 The other main settlements in the neighbourhood area comprise of Sowton, a historic village of only 41 dwellings and Cat & Fiddle, a self-contained retirement park development of 151 homes, which provides properties exclusively in the 1 or 2-bedroom range.
- 9.3 The 2021 Census tells us that the area is home to 670 households. 85% of dwellings are owner occupied, 11% private rented and 4% social rented. Renting opportunities relatively are few and house prices are a problem for many wishing to buy a home in Clyst St Mary. Average house prices in Clyst St Mary are amongst the highest in East Devon, being surpassed only by the more prestigious towns on the south coast and on the Exe estuary. Most properties on the market in 2023 were selling for over £300,000. Most sales in Clyst St. Mary during the past year were detached properties, selling for an average price of almost £550,000. Park homes at Cat and Fiddle were selling for over £200,000. Overall, sold prices in Clyst St. Mary over 2023 were 25% up on 2017.
- 9.4 The approval of over 200 new homes in the past five years with their proportion of affordable dwellings (estimated to be 36 units) more than meets the identifiable housing needs emanating from the Parish. Although the number being provided by new developments is far fewer than the Local Plan requirement, especially at Winslade House.
- 9.5 The latest information provided by EDDC, in May 2024, on local housing needs indicates that there are 20 households on the Housing Choice Register with an interest in affordable housing in the Clyst St Mary area. Only nine of these households are ranked in bands B to D<sup>30</sup> and therefore regarded as being in some form of housing need. Half of those in need are seeking a 1-bedroom house, the other half need a 2/3-bedroom house.
- 9.6 We recognise that the neighbourhood area is required to provide for a share of future housing needs and demands in the district. For larger housing developments, of more than nine dwellings, we prefer to see a mix of dwelling sizes being provided, but planning permissions must set a minimum number that are suitable for small households.
- 9.7 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that further housing development will:
- ‘fit in’ with what is needed and what’s around it
  - contribute to a mix of housing that helps meet local need in an affordable manner
  - include an amount of social housing provision whenever possible
  - enhances the character of the area
- 9.8 In general, the Parish Council supports the District Council policy requirement for larger developments to include 50% affordable homes.

---

<sup>30</sup> Band A – *Emergency Housing Need*, Band B – *High Housing Need*, Band C – *Medium Housing Need*, Band D – *Low Housing Need*, Band E – *No Housing Need*

- 9.9 The village of Clyst St Mary has been identified by East Devon DC as one of the district's 23 'service villages',<sup>31</sup> where limited development should be allowed, to meet local needs.
- 9.10 Government policy requires that local plan policy sets out housing requirements for all designated neighbourhood areas. The local planning authority was asked to provide a housing requirement figure for the neighbourhood area for the plan period, aligned to the emerging Local Plan (2020-2042). In October 2024, the Strategic Planning Committee of EDDC agreed that a minimum of an additional 72 new homes, above those already completed and committed by planning permission, are required. The Committee further resolved to give the community "*the choice about where these homes are accommodated through the Neighbourhood Plan*".

As part of the neighbourhood plan examination, East Devon District council has provided an up-to-date housing statement with reference to the status of this housing requirement in terms of its emerging new Local Plan and the latest revision of the NPPF (2024), and the implications for the neighbourhood plan, as follows:

As a result of the revised standard method, the Local Planning Authority cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and the Local Plan is being progressed under transitional arrangements (Annex 1 of the NPPF, 2024) to make provision for 80% of standard method housing numbers, based on the revised methodology.

The housing requirement set for the Neighbourhood Plan is derived from work undertaken for the emerging Local Plan that used a methodology informed by strategic considerations of locations/settlements suitable for development of differing scales and individual site assessments. This is supported by a robust and detailed technical evidence report and the response received to formal rounds of Local Plan consultation.

The total housing requirement figure for 2020-2042 for the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Area is a minimum of 169 dwellings, of which 72 are expected to be provided for through the Neighbourhood Plan. This is also set out in emerging Local Plan Policy SD14.

This housing requirement relates to the emerging Local Plan spatial strategy for the district which directs 'new development towards the most sustainable locations in East Devon', through continuing a focus of development on the 'west end' of the district, including a further new community (that will fall partly within this Neighbourhood Area) and via a settlement hierarchy which includes the village of Clyst St Mary as one of 23 'service villages' where 'limited development will be allowed'. These are "settlements with good local facilities, providing essential services and infrastructure for their immediate rural areas and supporting more localised, sustainable development" than settlements higher up the hierarchy.

The figure of at least 72 that the Neighbourhood Plan cites therefore derives from the latest available spatial strategy for the district, which in turn is underpinned by the latest evidence and technical assessment work that takes account of local assets, circumstances, and constraints. It is not an apportionment of the district housing requirement and there is no requirement or expectation on the neighbourhood plan to make provision in excess of this to meet the minimum district housing requirement. However, the Neighbourhood Plan is at liberty to plan for more than the 72 dwellings, as it has done by allocating land for 'at least' 72 dwellings and through the development boundary setting for both this housing site and the

---

<sup>31</sup> settlements with a relatively good range of local facilities either in the settlement or nearby and are 'service villages' for both the settlement and immediate surrounding rural area.

village settlement boundary. Furthermore, it should be noted that in terms of the proportion of the district housing requirement, only 2 other settlements of the 23 in this tier of the settlement hierarchy have provision for a higher level of growth within the emerging Local Plan than Clyst St Mary village. There are also significant constraints to expansion at the village, together with a comparably high level of commitments associated with the on-going redevelopment at Winslade Park as well as the further growth expected in the wider Neighbourhood Area from the planned new community.

The agreed minimum of 72 by our Strategic Planning Committee as the net identified housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to make provision for therefore continues to be seen as a reasonable and justified housing requirement based on all the circumstances, including the latest revision of the NPPF.

- 9.11 Based on previous advice from EDDC, the Review Group considered that circa 100 new dwellings would be an acceptable target for the period of the updated Neighbourhood Plan so as not to create a local scarcity of homes, nor negatively impact first-time buyers and new households that wish to form in the area. On this basis the Review Group, with expert assistance, identified land availability and assessed its suitability for allocation for residential development. Importantly the Review Group wanted to ensure that any land allocated for new housing is in the best location to ensure the resultant development would have a significantly positive impact on the future wellbeing and sustainability of the neighbourhood area and communities.
- 9.12 In recognition of the few opportunities for residential development within the defined settlement area, Bishops Clyst Parish Council commissioned a thorough site search and assessment based on a local call-for-sites<sup>32</sup>. This exercise concluded that the most suitable location for new residential development was on the periphery of the village of Clyst St Mary. A short-list of sites, which were judged to have some development potential by the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group, were made the subject of community consultation in September 2022.
- 9.13 Unsurprisingly given the scale of recent developments, the obvious local infrastructure deficiencies, and the comparative lack of housing need within the Parish, the community made plain that it was not keen to support further growth unless significant benefits to the area's infrastructure and facilities were to be derived<sup>33</sup>.
- 9.14 The land allocated by policy BisC12 is that considered to be most favourable to the community's objectives. It would enable a limited amount of new housing and sustainable growth to occur during the plan-period and meet the Local Plan requirements.
- 9.15 Its orderly development will require substantial improvements to the water supply, sewerage and sewage treatment and water disposal and, will require safe and satisfactory vehicular access arrangements to be agreed, which will not worsen an already overloaded highway network and avoids requiring residents to use either Bishops Court Lane or Frog Lane.

---

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Bishops-Clyst-Site-Residential-Selection-Process-Report-9Jun22.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BCNP-Review-Community-Questionnaire-Analysis-feb22.pdf>

### **Policy BisC12 Land East of Clyst St Mary**

Land to the east of Clyst St Mary as shown on Map 9 is allocated for residential development to provide at least 72 dwellings, which cater for local needs and demands.

This allocation will need to come forward on the basis of an agreed masterplan for the whole site that clearly demonstrates how comprehensive development will be undertaken and implemented to deliver a fully integrated and co-ordinated housing scheme that complies with the requirements of this policy. The masterplan must include measures to provide fully for infrastructure requirements and appropriate mechanisms for apportionment of development costs and contributions across separately owned land parcels. Planning permission will not be granted for any individual parcel of land in the allocation in the absence of this Masterplan.

The masterplan for the land shown on Map 9 will be supported, subject to the provision of:

- a) a satisfactory vehicular access from the A3052, which includes a signal-controlled crossing to the A3052 to provide a pedestrian and cycle connection to Church Lane;
- b) an estate road linking the development to the A3052 junction and to Bishops Court Lane to be fully constructed as part of the first phase of the development. The estate road to be constructed to an adoptable standard suitable for vehicular traffic, to a specification to be agreed with the Local Highway Authority, with access to and from Bishops Court Lane limited to pedestrians and cyclists, until such time that the necessity of providing a vehicular access is confirmed following adoption of the East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042. In the event of the requirement for a vehicular link between the development and Bishops Court Lane, this should be open to the public before occupation exceeds 80% of the total houses on the site and traffic mitigation measures implemented on Bishops Court Lane and Frog Lane to deter their use by through vehicular traffic. The detail specification and timing of the proposed estate road should be included in a S106;
- c) the Clyst Valley Trail cycle route being incorporated through the development to connect with Bishops Court Lane along with other relevant cycle and vital pedestrian links;
- d) the provision of safe pedestrian routes through the development which can allow connection to existing or proposed footpaths, to enable residents to walk safely to bus stops, school and village services, and other local facilities and locations, with best endeavours to connect to adjacent development e.g. Tillage Way, and subsequently to the Village Hall;
- e) adequate play and amenity space with satisfactory arrangements to cover its future maintenance;
- f) an overall housing density, design and layout in accordance with the Bishops Clyst Design Codes and Guidance;
- g) a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures that satisfy identified local needs and meet local demand, based on up-to-date local housing needs information;
- h) affordable housing provision, which satisfies the requirements of the LPA;
- i) a layout incorporating tree planting and landscape elements which both protects the residential amenity of Greenspire and effects a gradual transition from built area to countryside to reduce landscape and visual impacts on the Clyst Valley;
- j) landscaping and peripheral boundary treatment, which retains existing trees and hedgerows, providing a minimum 10m wide woodland buffer strip to the boundary with Bishop's Court Lane to give satisfactory screening of the development in views from the Clyst Valley Regional Park, and adequately protects priority habitats in the vicinity of the site;
- k) a heritage assessment, where relevant, to demonstrate that the significance of any nearby designated or non-designated heritage asset will be satisfactorily conserved or enhanced;

- l) a water supply, drainage, and sewerage scheme for the whole site, which ensures there will not be any worsening of foul and surface water flooding to existing properties in Clyst St Mary; and
- m) the development conforming with other relevant policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The site lies within the Zone of Influence for the Exe Estuary SPA and the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SPA and SAC. All new residential development is required to accord with the requirements set out in the current South-East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy or any successor document.

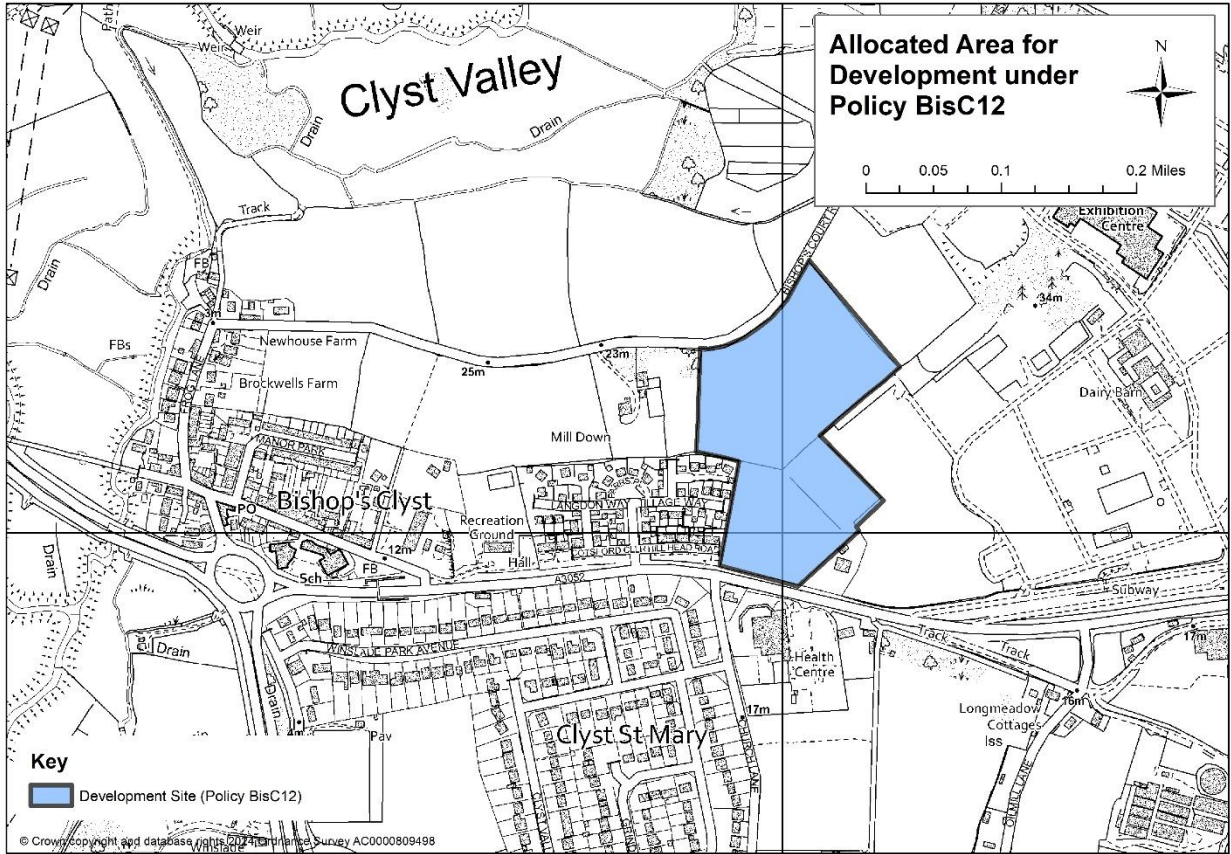
- 9.16 Land to the east of Clyst St Mary village adjoining the recently built Greenspire development, as identified on Map 9, is allocated for residential development by policy BisC12, which sets out the key requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan. Detailed development proposals and planning applications should be preceded by a Masterplan for the whole site that reflect these requirements and shows the key design principles that underpin the layout of the overall development scheme. The Masterplan should be subject to agreement with Bishop Clyst Parish Council and the local planning authority.
- 9.17 The development should deliver, as a minimum, the net strategic housing requirement for Clyst St Mary as indicated by the LPA is necessary to comply with the requirements of the new Local Plan. The maximum number of dwellings on the site should be constrained by design considerations. The overall development should respect its setting in terms of scale, height and massing and acknowledge the rurality of the location. The development should be complementary in character to that of Greenspire and in accordance with the Bishops Clyst Design Code and Guidance<sup>34</sup>.
- 9.18 The allocated land is within Clyst Valley Regional Park. Development should comply with the Regional Park's objectives, including the establishment of high-quality landscape that will mitigate the landscape and visual impact of the development on the Clyst Valley. As advised by the SEA, it will be important to ensure that any biodiversity net gains not achievable on the site are directed towards protecting nearby priority habitats, such as the deciduous woodland southwest of Westpoint Arena, and take "*opportunities to enhance the ecological connections across the site (between this Woodland and Woodpasture and Floodplain Grazing Marsh across Bishop's Court Lane)*"<sup>35</sup>.
- 9.19 The presence of the Grade II Red Lodge nearby will require an appropriate heritage assessment to ensure the significance of this heritage asset is recognised and, in accordance with the NPPF, development proposals serve to conserve and enhance its value.
- 9.20 Development proposals should recognise the local demand for small dwellings and include a range of dwelling types and sizes that will provide for a mixed and balanced community. Affordable housing provision must be in accordance with Local Plan and the East Devon Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document. The type and tenure of housing provision should reflect local housing needs and policy, as advised by the East Devon Housing Needs and Strategy Team. Priority in the allocation of affordable housing should be given to local households.

---

<sup>34</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/ezclfy1q/design-code-and-guidelines-final-document.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> [https://bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241113-Clyst-St-Mary-and-Sowton-NP\\_SEA-Environmental-Report\\_v3.0.pdf](https://bishopsclyst.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241113-Clyst-St-Mary-and-Sowton-NP_SEA-Environmental-Report_v3.0.pdf)

- 9.21 Critical to the development of this site are satisfactory access and egress arrangements for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. The development should have a separate access off Sidmouth Road (A3052) and facilitate crossing of the A3052 to Church Lane for active transport modes and not depend on vehicular access or egress via Greenspire. Arrangements, which will need to be agreed with the Local Highway Authority, should ensure safe and efficient access and egress that will not cause additional congestion or delays on the A3052. Road layout and design should provide adequately for the safety of all anticipated road users as well as the amenity of residents and comply with the standards and requirements of the Local Highways Authority. The planning application should be accompanied by an appropriate assessment of traffic impacts in the area and travel plan measures.
- 9.22 As part of the package of traffic management measures, Bishop Clyst Parish Council would actively support the closure of Frog Lane to motor traffic, other than for access, if that should prove possible and permissible by the Local Highway Authority. This may be facilitated by the delivery of the New Community proposed in the draft East Devon Local Plan 2020 – 2042, which is likely to significantly alter the local road network and may enable existing traffic to be removed from southern parts of Bishops Court Lane (leading to Frog Lane). Alternatively, this could be facilitated by provision of a vehicular link between Bishops Court Lane and the proposed estate road through the land allocated for development under policy BisC12 subject to support from the Highway Authority. However, the latter would likely require traffic management measures to be introduced in conjunction with the development to reduce the priority for traffic travelling west on Bishops Court Lane and generally discourage other than local motor traffic from using Bishops Court Lane, to advance its status as a quiet lane suitable for cycling. The necessity of a vehicular link between Bishops Court Lane and the development is therefore proposed to be confirmed following adoption of the East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042, which is expected to provide additional information regarding the infrastructure to be delivered in conjunction with the proposed New Community.
- 9.23 Development of the land affords an opportunity to extend the Clyst Valley Trail for cyclists and walkers. A safe route, agreeable to the Local Highway Authority, should be an integral part of the masterplan. Safe pedestrian/cycle links to Clyst St Mary village and other local facilities and destinations, which negate the need to use the A3052, should also be provided for. There are several recreation opportunities for youth and adults in the vicinity. However, the development should include safe play opportunities for younger children near to home and adequate informal recreation/amenity space.
- 9.24 The need to ensure water supply, drainage, and sewerage are more than adequately provided for, is paramount. Provision must comply with the requirements and standards of South West Water and other relevant bodies.
- 9.25 Larger residential developments do, in certain locations, create the need for additional employment land. The proximity of many employment opportunities accessible by foot and public transport, and the business development policies of the Neighbourhood Plan, negate the need to promote a mixed-use development on the allocated for development by policy BisC12.



## 10. Community Facilities & Services

### Overview

- 10.1 Clyst St Mary is a thriving village with a strong sense of community. This is due in part to the facilities which are available in the village. It has its own primary school. There is a thriving village shop, the Half Moon Inn and a modern village hall which is well used by the community. Although Sowton Village has no shop or school, Sowton Village Hall provides an essential community facility. Residents of the Cat and Fiddle Residential Park are well served by the nearby Cat and Fiddle public house. National Highways has echoed the importance of there being local facilities and services to reduce the need to travel. Currently, local people must travel out of the Parish to access medical facilities.
- 10.2 Clyst St Mary Primary School is a popular village primary school with 180 pupils on roll. It attracts many pupils from inside and outside its catchment area because it has a reputation for providing *“a nurturing environment for our pupils. We inspire our pupils to be aspirational, resilient and kind”*<sup>36</sup>. The School expects the numbers of in-catchment pupils to increase as new developments take place and is prepared to accommodate them. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the right of any village child to a place in the village school should they wish to avail themselves of it. The Primary School is regarded as an important asset to the village which reinforces our sense of community.
- 10.3 Physical access to the Primary School is problematic. By arrangement with the Village Hall, most parents dropping children off at school now use the Village Hall car park. This has reduced parking problems. It has the disadvantage however that parents and children must use a length of the village street where there is no footpath. This route is also used by parents bringing children on foot from Winslade Park and from Greenspire.
- 10.4 Both Clyst St. Mary and Sowton have village halls managed by their own committees. Clyst St. Mary has a modern hall with full kitchen facilities and other amenities. There is a large car park, and the hall is regularly used with limited available letting times. The Clyst St Mary Village Hall Committee has produced plans for an extension to provide an additional meeting room. Sowton Village Hall is in the old school building. It is thatched and a listed building. It does not have the same amenities as Clyst St. Mary Village Hall and is not used as frequently. It also suffers from a lack of parking space. The Parish Council continues to support the halls as need arises.

---

<sup>36</sup> Email from Head Teacher 29 October 2022

**Policy BisC13 Community Facilities**

1. Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of community facilities will only be supported where:
  - a) there is no reasonable prospect of viable continued use of the existing building or facility which will benefit the local community;
  - b) they have been subject to consultation with the local community; and,
  - c) it will provide an alternative community use.
2. Proposals for new community facilities that meet a local need will be supported provided:
  - a) they will not result in an adverse impact on the amenity of any existing neighbours, including businesses;
  - b) there are safe and satisfactory pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements; and
  - c) adequate servicing and parking arrangements.

- 10.5 The Parish is fortunate to have several community facilities that serve local needs and help ensure we retain a sense of being a sustainable community. They are the churches and village halls at Clyst St Mary and Sowton, The Half Moon Inn and Mills Stores at Clyst St Mary and The Cat and Fiddle Inn.
- 10.6 The community does not want to lose any of these precious community facilities. They should continue to be at the heart of community life for many years to come. The NPPF, para.98, encourages us to 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. Policies S32 and RC6 of the Local Plan protects against the loss of existing community facilities that are needed by the community.
- 10.7 We recognise that to protect what we have, means ensuring they can develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable and retained for the benefit of the community. Policy BisC13 enables community facilities to change and adapt to remain relevant i.e. to meet local needs and serve changing social, health and community wellbeing purposes. It supports development at these facilities, of an appropriate scale and character, as long as it does not result in activities that would constitute an unacceptable nuisance to nearby residents and uses and conforms with the development restrictions that apply to listed buildings, or development in proximity to listed buildings and structures, and other design requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan or Local Plan.

### **Policy BisC14 Primary School Provision**

Development proposals to improve existing primary school facilities will be supported where it:

- a) would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area's natural and built environments;
- b) can be safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists;
- c) has appropriate vehicular access and does not adversely impact upon traffic circulation;
- d) would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents or other adjacent uses; and
- e) does not conflict with other policies in the development plan.

- 10.8 As the population of the Parish grows through new housing development, Clyst St Mary Primary School may need to expand further. The Parish Council is keen that every young child resident in the Parish has the opportunity of a place at their local Primary School. Policy BisC14 provides support for the provision of space and facilities that will ensure the Primary School has the capacity accommodate all local demand during the plan period. It is the view of Devon County Council, as the education authority, that whilst there is sufficient capacity at the Primary School for the level of development currently proposed for Clyst St Mary in the Neighbourhood Plan, the School is on a constrained site and "*should not be expanded further*".
- 10.9 Major development in the area is required to provide safe walking links to the School. Any opportunity to improve pedestrian access to the School and dropping-off arrangements would be welcomed.

## 11. Business and Jobs

### Overview

- 11.1 Unemployment is not a local problem. There is a range of job opportunities available in the neighbourhood area. Despite this, all three settlements in the Parish are largely dormitory in nature i.e. most of the working residents travel outside the Parish for their work.
- 11.2 The principal centre of work is, of course, Exeter. However, with much improved modern communications, we discern changing trends in work location. One trend has been the closure of branch offices in small towns and centralisation of work forces in larger towns like Exeter. On the other hand, newly established businesses no longer need to be located in the large centres of population and are seeking accessible out-of-town sites, either on single sites or on business and technology estates like nearby Hill Barton, Sowton Industrial Estate, the Science Park and Sky Park, all of which are in close proximity to the parish area boundary.
- 11.3 The neighbourhood area has several established business areas, which have increased in number with the redevelopment of Winslade House, which adds more than 40 businesses. Whilst we are not keen to lose local work opportunities, there is little community support for further major business development that attracts people into our rural area daily for work and which will likely exacerbate the nuisances associated with traffic, servicing, and parking.
- 11.4 Since the Covid pandemic homeworking has increased, especially now broadband reliability and speed is not an issue. This means that whilst most of the residents of the Parish probably work in Exeter, many may be working nearer to home more frequently in future.
- 11.5 The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is protecting existing employment and business space, enabling their improvement as necessary and facilitating suitable home-based enterprise. Business development outside of the confines of the built-up area should remain restricted.

### Business and Jobs Policies and their Explanation/Justification

#### **Policy BisC15 Existing Business Space**

Proposals for change of use of existing business premises away from employment activity will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer economically viable, and all reasonable steps have been taken to let or sell the site or building for employment purposes for a period of at least 12 months to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, and they are otherwise in accordance with all relevant policies in the Development Plan.

- 11.6 Clyst St Mary is recognised by the local planning authority as a service centre that meets most of the day-to-day needs of residents. It is the continuing presence of local businesses available to serve the local community that makes Clyst St Mary a vibrant and sustainable community and a convenient focal point for its rural hinterland. They also offer very valuable and handy employment opportunities for local people.
- 11.7 Policy BisC15 protects existing business premises and land in the Parish area from change of use unless it is clear they are redundant. Applications for a change of use to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities should only be permitted if it is demonstrated that the business premises or land in question have not been in active use for at least 12 months; and during that period they have been actively and continuously marketed at a realistic and viable price and that no sale or let has been achieved and, therefore, there is little or no prospect of the premises or land being reoccupied by an employment generating user.

- 11.8 Much of the neighbourhood's business activity takes place on the four definable business areas shown on Map 10. Policy BisC16 that follows, addresses the issues and opportunities associated with the business areas.

#### **Policy BisC16 Business Areas**

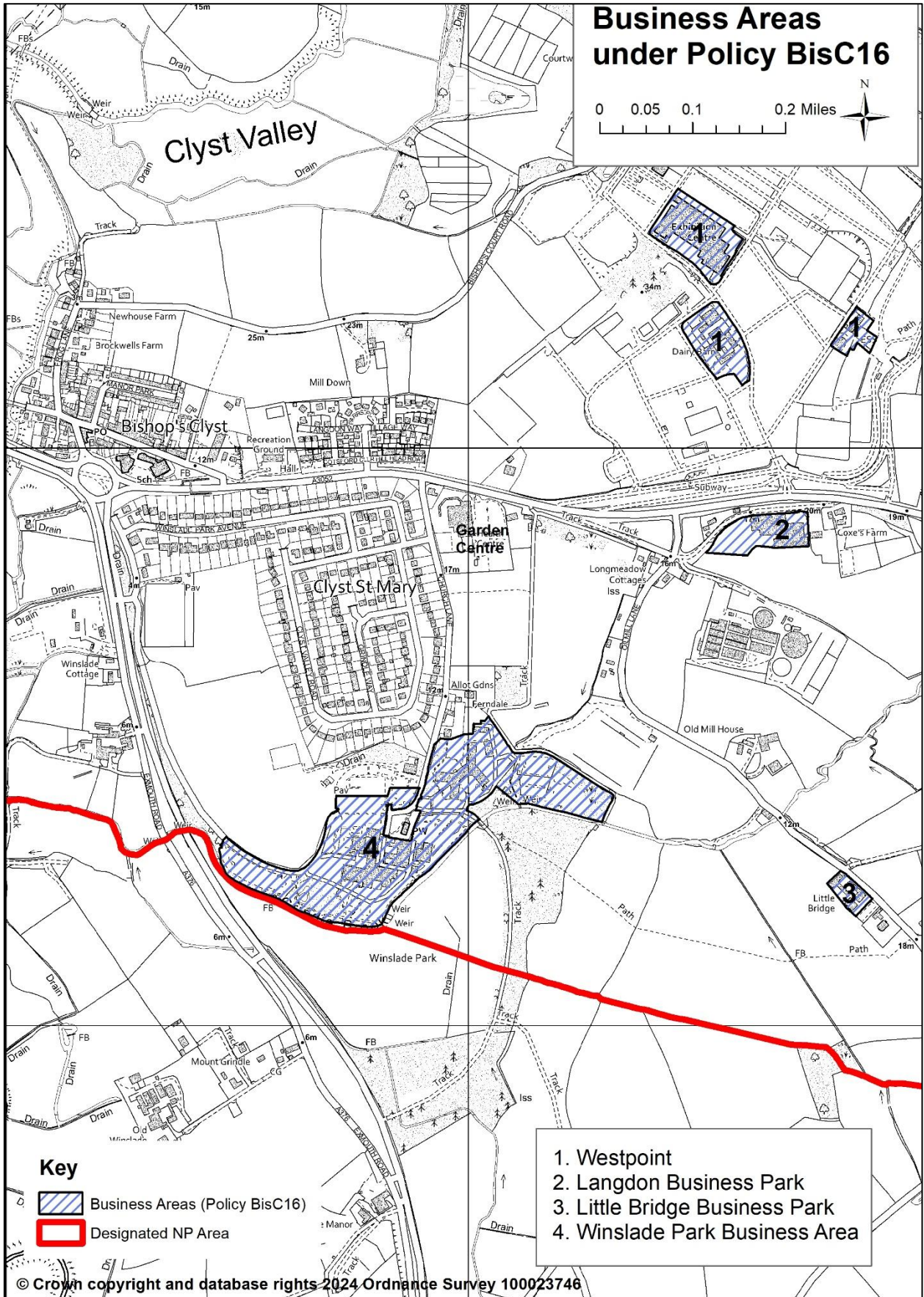
Other than where permitted elsewhere in the development plan, development proposals on the business areas listed below (and identified on Map 10) will be supported provided they are in keeping with those uses and business activity already on the sites and do not lead to the outward expansion of the sites.

1. Langdon Business Park
2. Little Bridge Business Park
3. Westpoint
4. Winslade Park

All business/commercial development should:

- a) respect the character of its surroundings by way of its scale and design;
- b) not harm the surrounding landscape;
- c) not adversely affect the significance of any listed building, heritage asset or setting;
- d) not have an adverse effect on its neighbours;
- e) not have any significant adverse impact on the transport network and parking conditions;
- f) safeguard residential amenity and road safety;
- g) be accessible by a range of modes of sustainable transport including on foot, by bicycle, or by public transport;
- h) mitigate any adverse effects of noise, air pollution light pollution and water pollution; and
- i) ensure the development will be safe from flood risk and not increase the flood risk elsewhere.

- 11.9 The rate at which land has been used up for commercial development in the surrounding area, and even in the neighbourhood area since the Millennium has been a matter of concern to the community. The first version of the Bishops Clyst Neighbourhood Plan 2017, sought to restrict commercial development to designated business sites to minimise the scattered siting of small business developments around the neighbourhood area and to protect the countryside.
- 11.10 This approach has been endorsed by the community in consultations during 2021, when less than a third of respondents (30%) thought that business development in the area should be further encouraged.
- 11.11 Policy BisC16 supports a policy of focussing and facilitating business development on the four locations in the neighbourhood area that are most able to accommodate growth without having a negative impact on the surrounding area and the highway network (see Map 10). Proposals for new business-related development will be supported where they are to be located within the business areas named in policy BisC16, if the defined business area is able to accommodate the development, any harm to surrounding areas is avoided, and the road system is judged to be able to cope with its implications. Any new development should ensure there is adequate provision for service and delivery vehicles, and on-site vehicle parking provision is sufficient.



### **Policy BisC17 Business Development**

1. Proposals to provide small-scale employment opportunities on major new residential developments, or through the change of use of an existing building, or the redevelopment of a brownfield site will be supported provided that the proposals:

- a) do not involve the loss of a dwelling;
- b) contribute positively to the character and vitality of the local area;
- c) do not impact detrimentally upon designated or non-designated heritage assets and their settings;
- d) do not significantly harm residential amenity; and
- e) do not adversely impact upon road safety.

2. Proposals for new development that combines living and small-scale employment space, where the living element is subordinate, will be encouraged provided there is no significant adverse impact on residential amenity and character.

3. Where planning consent is required, small-scale, home-based businesses will be supported provided it can be demonstrated that:

- a) residential amenity and the character of the location will not be unacceptably harmed by virtue of noise and disturbance, smell, traffic generation, scale, design, appearance, or nature of operations;
- b) the operation of the business activity can be contained within the existing curtilage of the premises; and
- c) the operation of the business activity does not require substantial external modification of the premises.

- 11.12 The community may be averse to further commercial development on any significant scale in the neighbourhood area, but it is sympathetic to the growing trend and desire by local people to work locally or from home. The Parish Council recognises it is good for the local economy, and it helps reduce travel to work traffic.
- 11.13 The NPPF, para.86, encourages us to *“allow for new and flexible working practices, such as live-work accommodation”*.
- 11.14 The change of use of a redundant building or a small brownfield site for employment purposes is supported if it does not harm the character or amenity of the location and does not result in a major<sup>37</sup> building project.
- 11.15 The Local Plan makes provision for a small proportion of employment space on major new developments. Policy BisC17 allows for such provision if the development offers benefits to the local community by way of employment or services, or some of the dwellings are live-work accommodation.
- 11.16 Policy BisC17 recognises the appeal and value of home-based enterprise. Our policy is generally supportive of small-scale development within the curtilage of a dwelling, for appropriate business purposes by the dwelling’s occupants, if it will not result in any unacceptable impact on neighbours or the environment.

---

<sup>37</sup> The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more

## 12. Travel and Transport

### Overview

- 12.1 The 'traffic problems' experienced in the neighbourhood area are greater than in many other parishes of a comparable size. Traffic problems are high on most residents' list of issues and nuisances and the Parish Council is keen to promote improvements. However, 'traffic problems' mean different things in different parts of the Parish.
- 12.2 Sowton is a quiet cul-de-sac far enough away from the A30 not to be affected by its heavy traffic. It has suffered over the years, however, with the building of motorway junction 29 and subsequent road closures and restrictions on access and egress to the village. The Cat & Fiddle Residential Park sits alongside the busy Sidmouth Road. The Park itself is 'quiet' and there is a footpath, though of low quality, along the A3052 leading to Clyst St Mary village.
- 12.3 Clyst St Mary is at the junction of two extremely busy roads, the Sidmouth Road (A3052) and the Exmouth Road (A376). The Sidmouth Road runs right through the middle of the settlement area. The inconvenience of this is alleviated somewhat and made much safer for pedestrians by a footbridge across the road and a light-controlled crossing.
- 12.4 The roundabout at Clyst St Mary is very busy for most of the day, and during the morning and evening rush hours, there are long tailbacks on all three roads. At busy times, many motorists approaching the roundabout on the Sidmouth Road attempt to jump the queue by using the village street as a rat-run and re-joining the traffic at the roundabout. Winslade Park also suffers from rat-running to avoid the roundabout at peak times. Large events, whenever they take place at Westpoint, add substantially to the traffic problem.
- 12.5 Parking space in Clyst St Mary village is not equal to the demand put upon it by residents and visitors. The Parish Council has provided two car parks in the village allowing free parking but excludes lorries and camping vehicles. Parking is limited to two hours during the daytime, but this is not enforced by the Parish Council. The car parks are well used by residents, business customers, and visitors. There is an element of misuse on occasions which can be difficult to manage.
- 12.6 Despite the traffic congestion and parking difficulties car ownership remains high. According to the 2021 Census, nearly half of all households (46.9%) owned two or more cars. A large majority of persons who travel to work continue to do so by motor vehicle.
- 12.7 The Parish is relatively well served by bus services. There is an adequate bus service from Clyst St Mary to Exeter, Sidmouth, Honiton, and Seaton. Additionally, service 58 between Exmouth and Exeter can be accessed at Sandygate roundabout. Residents of Sowton Village can make use of buses on Service 4 serving the old A30 route at Blackhorse. Residents of Cat and Fiddle wishing to catch a bus going in the Exeter direction must cross a busy road with fast traffic.
- 12.8 The Parish has comparatively few public rights of way, no bridleways, and a network of footpaths and cycleways, which parishioners would like to see improved, extended, and better connected to the wider network.
- 12.9 The main cycle route across the area is enabled on the footpath beside the A3052 from the Cat and Fiddle to the top of the village street and then across the old bridge and the north side of the A376 to the current parish boundary at the M5 motorway interchange. A short section of footpath and cycleway, originally part of a footpath to Church Lane, also provides access to Winslade Park via the pelican crossing on the A3052. A fully connected, fit-for-purpose Clyst Valley Trail through the Regional Park, is an ambition the Parish Council shares with Devon County Council and hopes the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan will help facilitate.

**Policy BisC18 Footpaths and Cycleways**

Appropriate improvement and enhancement of public rights of way will be supported as long as their value as wildlife corridors is not harmed.

The appropriate creation and improvement of footpaths and cycleways to form a coherent, connected, and safe network in and around the neighbourhood area and to onward destinations, including the Clyst Valley Trail, will be supported provided there is no negative impact on designated habitats.

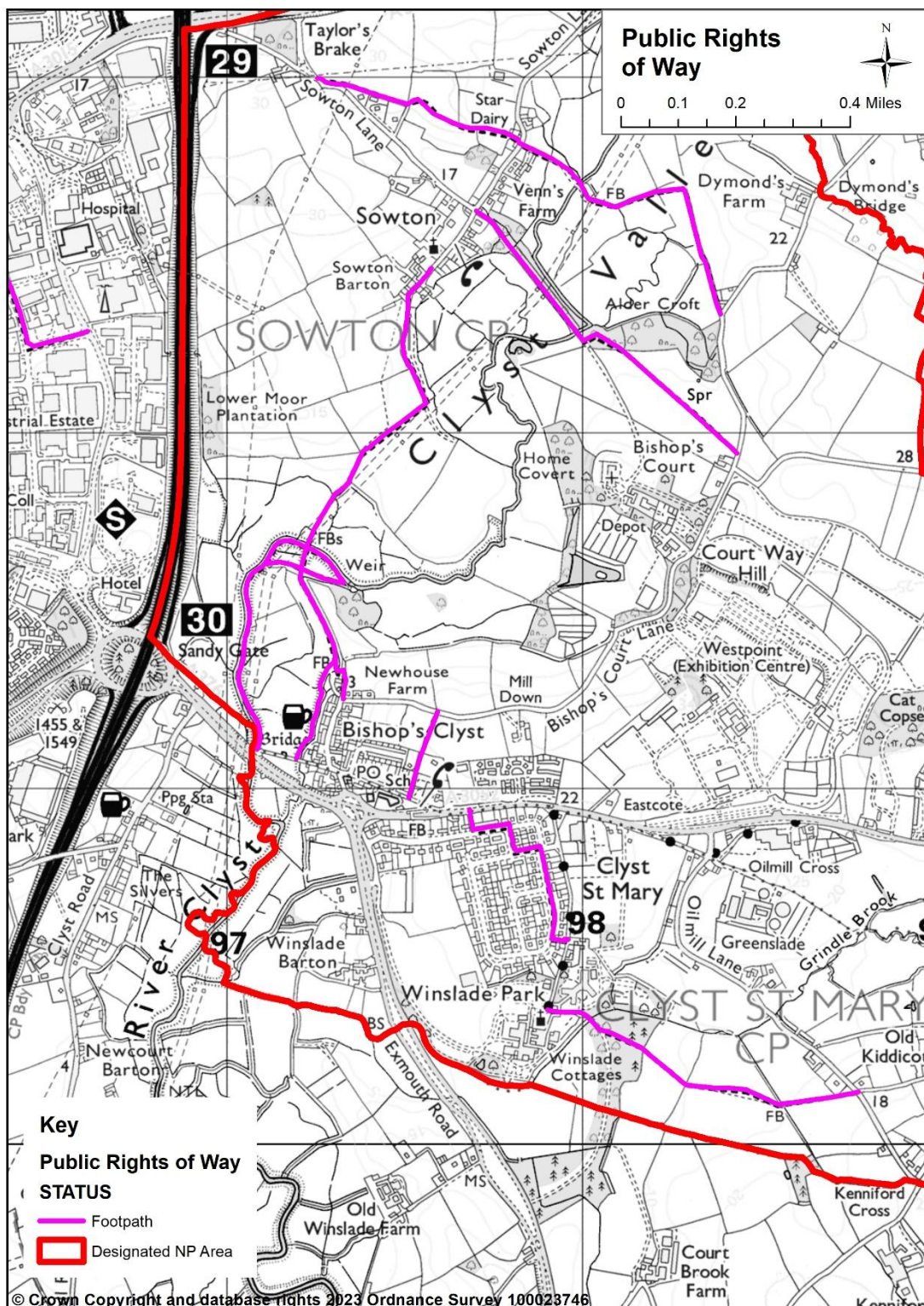
- 12.10 The neighbourhood area is not particularly pedestrian-friendly. There is no footpath along the A376 towards Exmouth. The footpath alongside the A3052 is only on one side and inadequate in width in parts for wheelchair users and push chairs, or for pedestrians and cyclists to share comfortably and safely. Sowton has only a small length of footpath opposite the Church. Many of the throughfares in the old village of Clyst St Mary lack pavements. Their narrowness has negated the introduction of pavements, despite motor vehicles becoming wider and traffic ever heavier in volume, particularly on the village street and Frog Lane.
- 12.11 The presence of the primary school on the village street means young children as well as adults must walk on the highway with no protection from the traffic. The situation is made even more hazardous by the parked vehicles on the narrow street, which force pedestrians out into the middle of the street to get past. This is especially notable in the vicinity of the village shop. The speed limit in the old village is set at 20 mph but, in practice, drivers often exceed it.
- 12.12 The bottom end of Winslade Park Avenue was the original Exmouth Road. It too has no footpath, meaning access to and from the properties fronting the old road, the Clyst Valley Football Club, and the road leading to Winslade House is hazardous for pedestrians.
- 12.13 The Parish Council has been in dialogue with Devon CC Highways about the alignment of the Clyst Valley Trail through the Parish. It is an eight-mile walking and cycling route through the Clyst Valley Regional Park. There are several route options to traverse Clyst St Mary, although none are without some difficulty; notably the safe and comfortable crossing of the A376 and the A3052. Development in accordance with policy BisC12 may offer further and better alternatives.
- 12.14 Over 80% of respondents to the Community Questionnaire 2014 were concerned about the lack of or inadequacy of pavements and footpaths. Those concerns remain in 2021. Pedestrian safety, lack of safe cycle routes and the inadequacy of pavements/footpaths are all high on the list of traffic and transport issues reported by the community.
- 12.15 The current public rights of way network is shown on Map 11. The number of footpaths is low but together they offer the prospect of a circular walking route around the Parish. Policy BisC18 supports improvements and extensions to the network in the interests of better accessibility, multi-purpose use, user safety, and the general encouragement of responsible access to and enjoyment of the countryside.
- 12.16 The Parish Council welcomes proposals for safer, car-free routes in the Parish and supports the provision of additional footpaths and cycleways to minimise use of the road network. The Parish Council has committed to investing over £100,000<sup>38</sup> in providing a new car-free route from the old village to Greenspire. This is an important link between a new residential

---

<sup>38</sup> From the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fund it has access to

development and the facilities and services available at the heart of the village. Similar links should be part of the plans for all new major developments.

Map 11 – Public Rights of Way



### **Policy BisC19 Parking Provision**

1. Development proposals should provide off-road vehicle parking and servicing spaces commensurate with the level and intensity of the proposed use and the accessibility of the location, to facilitate unimpeded road access for other road users, including motor vehicles and pedestrians.
2. New residential development should provide a minimum of one off-street parking space for dwellings with 1-2 bedrooms, and a minimum of two off-street spaces for dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms. Proposals for housing developments of four or more dwellings should provide one further off-street visitor parking space per four dwellings.
3. New residential development should provide parking and storage space for cycles in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan.
4. Proposals to provide additional off-road parking spaces in Clyst St Mary and Sowton villages will be supported where they do not have an adverse impact on:
  - a) local character;
  - b) residential amenity;
  - c) highway safety; and,
  - d) flood risk (including local surface water flooding)
5. Wherever practicable, permeable materials for surface parking areas shall be used and facilities for charging plugin and other ultralow emission vehicles should be incorporated into the proposal.
6. For public parking areas, as a minimum, the provision of electric vehicle charging points should be in accordance with the prevailing requirements of the development plan.

- 12.17 There is a significant parking problem in the old village of Clyst St Mary. Sowton village is also lacking in off-street parking space.
- 12.18 At Clyst St Mary, congestion and road safety concerns are caused by on-street parking in the village street, especially around the village shop and, in recent times in Frog Lane. There are only two public car parking areas with a combined capacity of 51. There are few other off-road parking areas for residents to use. The roads of the old village of Clyst St Mary do not have sufficient capacity to accommodate all the cars owned by residents and satisfy the needs of regular visitors.
- 12.19 Policy BisC19 requires all new developments to make adequate provision for off-street parking for users and visitors and not add to the current problem. In residential developments parking requirements are commensurate with other East Devon neighbourhood plan areas. New public/visitor parking areas should be discretely sited, adequately screened and provide a proportion of disabled parking spaces along with facilities for charging plugin and other ultralow emission vehicles which should be expandable as demand increases in future years.

### **Policy BisC20 Vehicular Access to Sowton Village**

Proposals for improved alternative vehicular access to Sowton Village with walking and cycling lanes will be supported.

- 12.20 Whilst the residents of Sowton village enjoy the peace and tranquillity of their location, and the lack of through traffic they are vulnerable to being cut-off by circumstances. A fire at a cottage on the road into the village a couple of years ago prevented access to the village for what seemed a considerable period. The matter was raised with the Parish Council, and it was agreed that it would be a good idea to investigate an alternative access, even if it were only available in emergencies.
- 12.21 Policy BisC20 is supportive in principle to an additional vehicular access route being created particularly if it also provides a safe walking and cycling route.

## 13. Sports and Recreation

### Overview

- 13.1 We are proud of the community recreation facilities we have in the Parish. The Parish Council owns land adjacent to the Village Hall in Clyst St Mary on which it has invested substantially in providing for recreation on the field and play area that was designated as a 'Queen Elizabeth II Field', along with 1,392 spaces nationally, to mark the Diamond Jubilee of, HM Queen Elizabeth, and to "*protect a legacy of parks and green spaces throughout the UK in perpetuity*"<sup>39</sup>. The Field is protected from development by policy BisC08 in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 13.2 Clyst Valley FC has been at its current location at the western side of Winslade Park since 1957. It is one of the oldest clubs in Devon. Its home is a site that is held in trust by four trustees for the benefit of Clyst Valley Football Club and its members. It is also registered as a sports ground with Sport England. On occasions the Club has expressed concern about the constraints and limitations placed upon it by its current location and its willingness to move to a bigger and better site if available.
- 13.3 The Parish is host to some significant private sports facilities. Exeter City FC has a large sports complex at the eastern end of the Parish, adjacent to the A3052. This includes several football pitches and a clubhouse with changing rooms. The Club has a 25-year lease on the Clifford Hill Training Ground site (Cat and Fiddle site) and has committed significant investment in the facility over the past few years, including a £3m two-storey indoor facility, which includes a fitness suite, canteen facilities, large changing and physiotherapy facilities, office accommodation and multi-use theatre/match preparation/classroom space.
- 13.4 Despite initial concerns in 2012 from the Parish Council regarding traffic problems and the loss of agricultural land, Exeter Youth Rugby (part of the Exeter Chiefs) is now fully established on a 4.2ha. site at Oil Mill Lane. It has recently invested in a permanent clubhouse and changing rooms.
- 13.5 The redevelopment of Winslade House requires the retention of most of the existing sports facilities on site, including the gym and swimming pool. The developer has committed to their use by the wider community secured through a legal agreement.

---

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.fieldsintrust.org/history>

**Policy BisC21 Sports and Recreation Facilities**

1. Development which would result in the loss of the following public sports facilities to a non-sports use on the following sites:

- A. Clyst Valley Football Ground
- B. Winslade Park Sports and Recreation Area

will not be supported unless:

- a) the applicant satisfactorily demonstrates that there is no continuing demand for the facility, and it is not possible to use the facility for other sports; or
- b) alternative provision of at least an equivalent quality, size, suitability, and convenience within the Neighbourhood Plan Area is made.

2. Development which would result in the change of use of the following private sports facility to a non-sports or recreation use on the following sites:

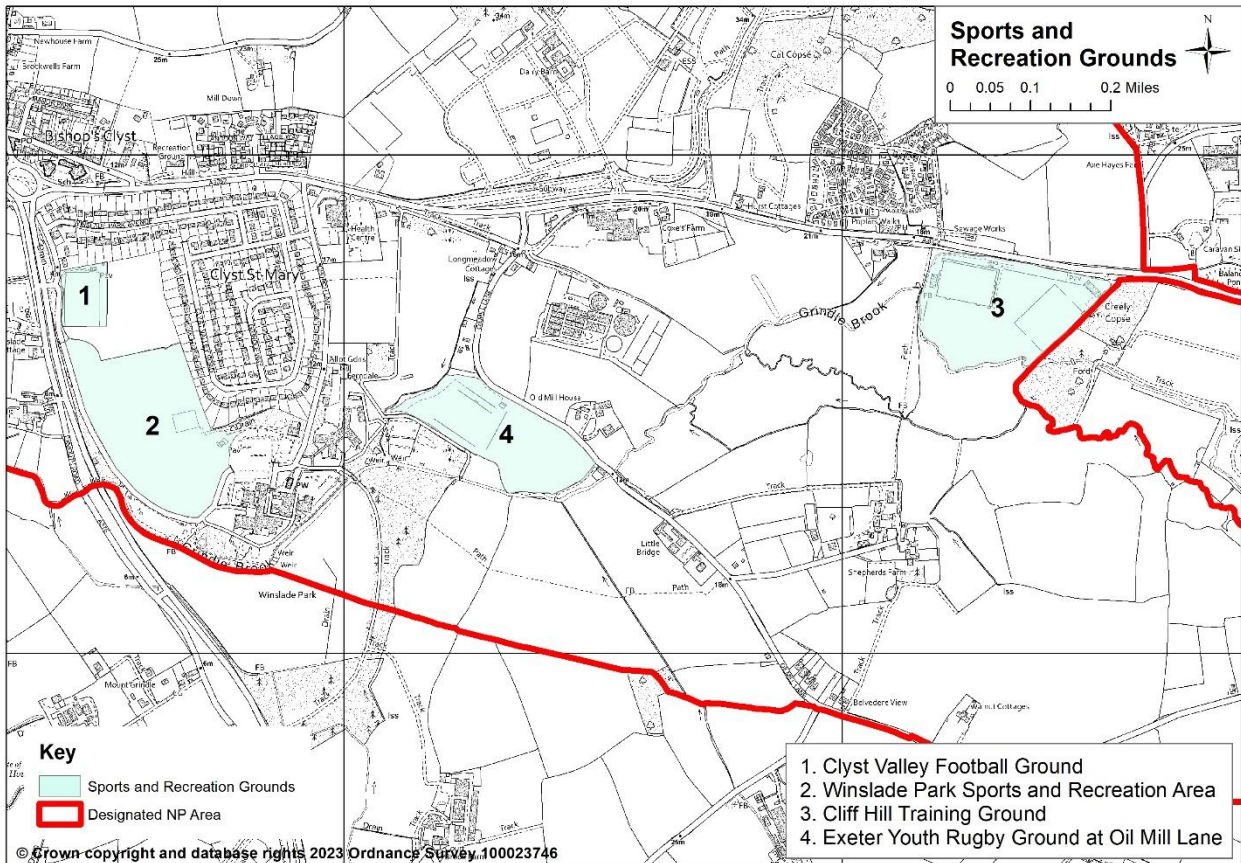
- C. Clifford Hill Training Ground
- D. Exeter Youth Rugby Ground at Oil Mill Lane

will be resisted. If there is no continuing demand for sports or recreation use of the facility, the site should revert to its former use.

3. Improvements and extensions to existing sports and recreation facilities that meet a proven need and/or increase opportunities for local people to participate in leisure, recreation, play and associated social activities will be supported provided that:

- a) they do not create unacceptable disturbance to neighbouring properties by way of noise, light spillage, and unsociable hours;
- b) the use of any floodlighting has mitigation measures in place to protect nearby residential property and areas of nature conservation; and
- c) access and sufficient off-road parking can be satisfactorily provided without harming existing residential and other uses and highway safety is maintained.

- 13.6 Policy BisC21 protects the sites indicated on Map 12 for use as sports and recreation spaces and facilitates their improvement and enhancement in the interests of meeting local sport and recreation demands. The following have significant value in providing conveniently local opportunities to use high quality facilities for the local community.
- 13.7 **Clyst Valley Football Ground** – The football ground was gifted to the football club, Clyst Valley FC, in 1957. It has been in use continually by the Club since that date. Four trustees hold it in trust for the benefit of Clyst Valley Football Club and its members. It is used by the Village Primary School for annual Easter Egg Walks and its annual sports day.
- 13.8 **Winslade Park Sports and Recreation Area** – As part of the planning approval for major residential and business development at Winslade House, the developer has agreed to improve and enhance sports and recreation facilities and open space on the site and committed to allowing community use of facilities in perpetuity. The area defined on Map 12, is expected to include, in accordance with the planning permission, football pitches of various sizes with a new sports pavilion, a cricket ground and replacement pavilion, and refurbished tennis courts.
- 13.9 The neighbourhood area has accommodated the private training facilities of two of the area’s major professional sports clubs. Professional sport is based on ambition. Recent developments at the two complexes at **Clifford Hill** and on **Oil Mill Lane** reflect that ambition. The Parish Council does not wish to deny success to either club but expects the design, construction, and operation of any development to be sustainable in its impact on the environment and non-harmful to the rural character of the area in which it lies. An approach to development that is required of proposed changes at all the sports facilities in the neighbourhood area.



## 14. Monitoring

- 14.1 There is no statutory requirement for the impact of this Plan and its policies to be monitored. However, Bishops Clyst Parish Council will assess the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan on development in the Parish, by monitoring the effectiveness of its policies in informing and influencing the decision-making process on planning applications. The Parish Council will do this by referring to this Plan when commenting on planning applications and considering the contents of the officers' reports and the eventual outcome.
- 14.2 This is the second edition of the Neighbourhood Plan for the Clyst St Mary and Sowton parish areas (Bishops Clyst). It has come about in part because of the monitoring process, and the emergence of site-specific proposals within the neighbourhood area in association with the new Local Plan.
- 14.3 A full or partial review of this Plan may be 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. The adoption of a new East Devon Local Plan could be one such occurrence that may trigger a review.

## Glossary of Terms

The following terms may be used in the Clyst St Mary and Sowton Neighbourhood Plan:

**Active Transport Modes** – are ways of getting around using human power such as walking, cycling, or using a non-motorized wheelchair, but can be extended to include powered chairs and mobility scooters.

**Affordable Housing** - housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one of the various definitions of affordable housing in the NPPF<sup>40</sup>.

**Aged or Veteran Trees** - the NPPF defines aged or veteran trees as: *“A tree which, because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value for wildlife, in the landscape, or culturally”*.

**Ancient Woodland** – a woodland which has existed since the year 1600 or earlier.

**Bridleways** - are footpaths, but additionally users are permitted to ride, or lead a horse, and ride bicycles. Horse drawn vehicles are not allowed. Cyclists must give way to pedestrians and horse-riders. Motorcycling is not allowed.

**Biodiversity** - is the term used to describe the whole variety of life on Earth. It includes not only all species of plants and animals, but also the complex ecosystems they live within. It ranges from species and habitats which are considered commonplace to those considered critically endangered.

**BS5837** - is the **British Standard for Trees** in relation to design, demolition, and construction. The latest version was published in 2012. It applies to all trees that could be affected during the design, demolition or construction phase of a development. It is mandatory to comply with BS5837 when considering any development project in the vicinity of trees, whether planning permission is required.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** - is a charge placed on certain types of development. The charge is spent on supporting local infrastructure. CIL usually applies to developments of over 100sqm of new residential floor space, or 1000sqm of new commercial floorspace. In areas that are parished and have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, 25% of CIL funds are passed to the parish once the local authority has received the money. This CIL apportionment does not have an annual cap.

**Concept Plan** - is a higher-level strategic document than a masterplan. The aim of the concept plan is to show in a simple and clear way the key design principles that underpin the layout of the proposed development. It should include an indicative layout and illustrate key components such as access points, focal points, broad street and green space layouts and key site features to be retained.

**Conservation Area** - An area of special architectural or historic interest, designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1991, whose character and appearance it is desirable to preserve and enhance. There are special rules on some development in conservation areas.

**County Wildlife Site (CWS)** - an area of significance for its wildlife in at least a county context i.e. it may be of county, regional or even national importance.

**Curtilage** - The area normally within the boundaries of a property surrounding the main building and used in connection with it.

**Design Code** - Rules and requirements for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components are detailed and precise, and usually build on an overall design vision or masterplan for a site or area.

**Development Plan Document (DPD)** - these are spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination, which form the development plan for a local authority. They can include a core strategy, site-specific allocations of land, area action plans and generic development control policies.

---

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

**Devon Bank** – walling with soil giving added weight and stability, originating in Devon.

**Economically Active** - Persons in work or actively seeking work.

**Farm Diversification** - activities undertaken on surplus land to support farming incomes, including, for example, forestry, leisure, and tourism.

**Flood Risk Assessment** - An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs, and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

**Flood Zones** - have been created by the Environment Agency to be used within the planning process as a starting point in determining how likely somewhere is to flood. A flood zone is predominantly a planning tool and doesn't necessarily mean somewhere will or will not flood.

**General Permitted Development Order (GPDO)** - The Town and Country Planning GPDO 1995 provides permitted development rights for a specified range of development, meaning that those activities do not require an application for planning permission. However, agricultural buildings and certain telecommunications equipment covered by permitted development rights are also subject to a prior approval procedure.

**Green Infrastructure** - A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Habitat of Principal Importance (previously called BAP priority habitat)**- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats are those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).

**Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)** - A HRA tests the impacts of a proposal on nature conservation sites of European importance and is a requirement under EU legislation for land use plans and projects.

**Infill Development** - The development of a relatively small gap between existing buildings.

**Historic Environment Record (HER)** - The Devon Historic Environment Record (HER) is a comprehensive resource of the historic environment of Devon. It provides information about archaeological sites, historic buildings, historic landscape and other heritage features within Devon. It can be viewed online including in map form.

**Landscape Character Area (LCA)** - Single unique areas that are the discrete geographical area of a specific landscape type.

**Listed Buildings** - Buildings which have been recognised by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) as having special architectural or historic interest.

**Local Green Space** - Green areas of particular importance to local communities, which meet the criteria of the NPPF (para. 107), designated as 'local green space' to provide special protection against development.

**Local Plan** - A portfolio or folder of documents (Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), setting out the planning strategy for a local planning authority area.

**Local Planning Authority** - The public body whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a specific area. All references to local planning authority apply in this Plan to East Devon District Council

**NPPF** - The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate, and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of communities.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - A plan prepared by a town or parish council or a neighbourhood forum for a specific neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**PPG** - The Government's Planning Practice Guidance is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

**Permissive Paths** - It is possible for landowners to allow access over their land without dedicating a right of way. These accesses are called permissive paths. To the user, they are often indistinguishable from normal highways, but there are some significant differences:

- A permissive path must have some sign or similar indication that it is not intended to be a right of way
- The landowner can close off or divert the path if they wish to do so, without any legal process being involved
- The landowner can make restrictions which would not normally apply to highways, for example to allow horse riding but not cycling, or the other way around

**Permitted Development Rights** – Permission to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application to a local planning authority, as granted under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (see GDPO above).

**Public Open Space (POS)** - land provided in urban or rural areas for public recreation, though not necessarily publicly owned.

**Public Right of Way** - is a highway over which the public have a right of access along the route.

**Qualifying Body** - Either a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum, which can initiate the process of neighbourhood planning.

**Section 106** - The section of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that provided for the creation of planning obligations, now replaced by Section 46 of the 2004 Act. Section 106 agreements allow local authorities to ensure that developers provide the infrastructure needed to support new developments. Often referred to as 'planning gain'.

**Self-Build and Custom-Build Housing** - Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

**Statutory** - required by law (statute), usually through an Act of Parliament.

**Stepping-Stones** - Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**SUDS** - A solution which manages surface and groundwater sustainably by mimicking natural drainage regimes and avoiding the direct channelling of surface water through networks of pipes and sewers to nearby watercourses. SUDS aim to reduce surface water flooding, improve water quality, and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the environment.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** - Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - The consideration of policies and proposals to assess their impact on sustainable development objectives.

**Sustainable Development** - is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Tourism Related Business** – a business that offers sustainable accommodation or recreation space to visitors to the area, for example those who wish to enjoy the countryside and natural environment of the locality.

**Tree Sizes** – small tree <10m; medium tree 10m – 15m; and large tree 15m-25m+.

**Use Classes** - The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 put uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.

**Wildlife Corridor** - a continuous area facilitating the movement of wildlife through rural or urban environments

*General Design Considerations*

*“This section sets out a series of general design principles followed by questions against which the development proposals should be evaluated. As an initial appraisal, there should be evidence that development proposals have considered and applied the following general design principles:*

- 1. Development should demonstrate synergy with, and be complimentary to, existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement/access, and land use type;*
- 2. Development should relate sensitively to local heritage buildings, topography/ landscape features, countryside setting and long-distance views;*
- 3. Development should reinforce or enhance the established character of the settlement;*
- 4. Development should integrate with existing access; public rights of way, streets, circulation networks and understand use;*
- 5. Development should explore opportunities for new development to enhance access to public green space, to reflect settlement needs;*
- 6. Development should reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness, avoiding pastiche replication;*
- 7. Redevelopment of heritage buildings including farms should aim to conserve as many vernacular features as is practicable;*
- 8. Development should retain and incorporate important existing landscape and built-form features into the development which add richness;*
- 9. Building performance in terms of ‘conservation of heat and fuel’ over and above building regulations, should be a key design driver for new development;*
- 10. Development should respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form, and massing;*
- 11. Development should adopt contextually appropriate materials and construction details. Embodied carbon toolkits should act as a guide to material specification;*
- 12. Development should ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access, and parking relate well to each other; to provide safe, connected, and attractive spaces;*
- 13. Net Zero aims should be integrated, and development should adopt low energy and energy generative technologies within the development at the start of the design process; and*
- 14. Development should use nature-based water management solutions/ SUDS (see glossary) to manage on-site water and boost biodiversity habitat.”*

---

<sup>41</sup> <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/ezclf1q/design-codea-and-guidelines-final-document.pdf>