

East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042



Site Selection report

Sidbury



East Devon – an outstanding place

February 2025

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Introduction

East Devon District Council is preparing a Local Plan covering the period 2020 to 2042 that will allocate sites for development. The site selection process is a judgement that balances top-down strategic issues relating to the Local Plan district-wide housing and employment requirements and the spatial strategy for the distribution of development, with the specific factors in the site assessments.

For each settlement, a Site Selection report contains the assessment of sites and identifies those recommended to be allocated, alongside those that are not recommended.

This report contains a summary of the assessment and selection of sites in Sidbury.

Full picture of sites considered

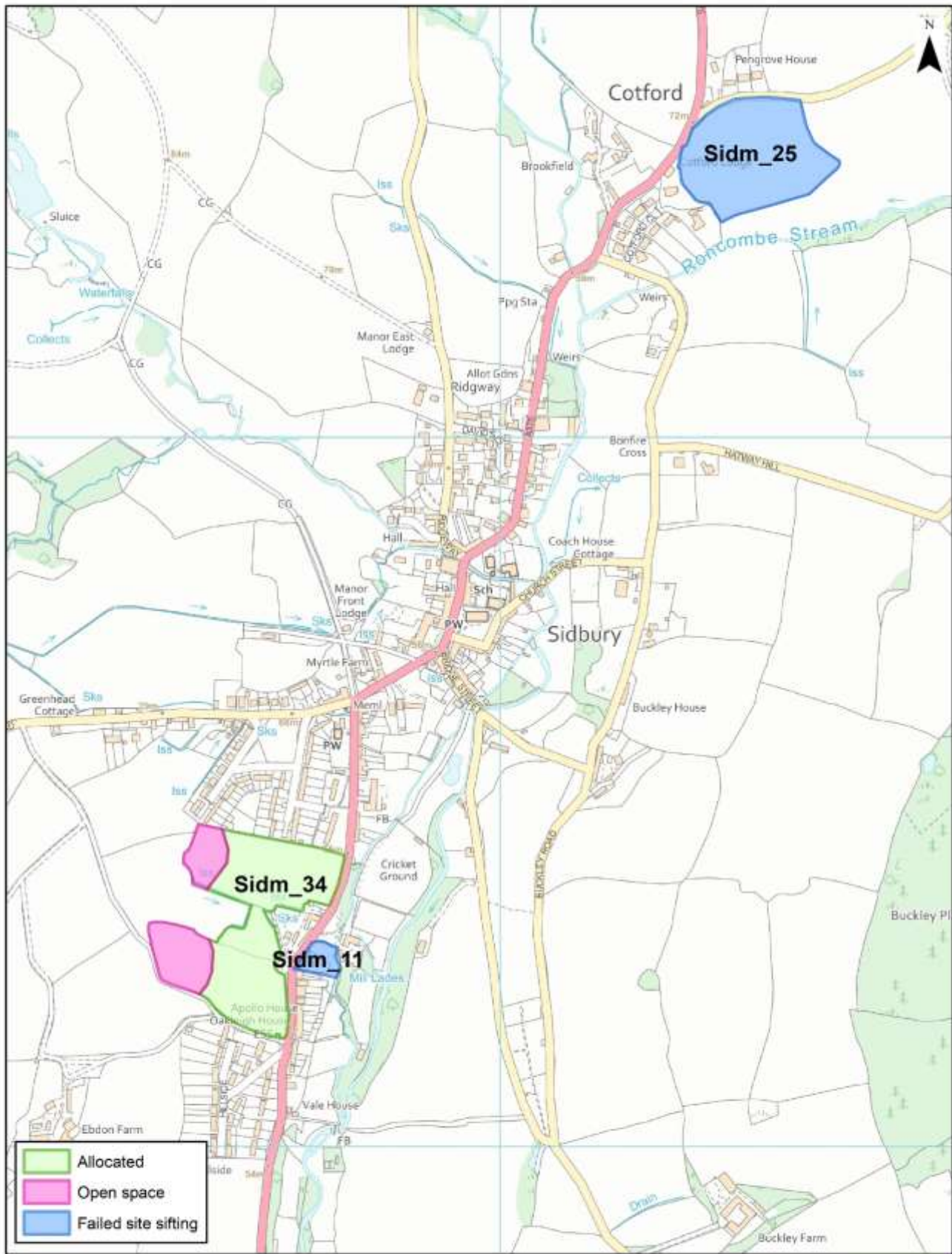
As part of the overall work there have been a number of calls for sites. Submitted sites are recorded on the map over the page. Noting that the picture is complicated by the fact that – in some cases – overlapping sites, and variations with for example differing boundaries, have been submitted at different points in time.

Initial work undertaken involved sifted out sites that failed to meet certain specified considerations, particularly as highlighted by the work of the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment Panel and in their assessment, where they concluded that sites were unacceptable for development.

Non-developable conclusions were based on technical assessment, not policy judgement, and included sites where for example it was concluded that safe highway access could not be achieved. Also through this sifting work, sites were sifted out where they were assessed as remote from settlements falling in the local plan hierarchy.

Sites sifted out of the process at this stage were:

- Sidm_11 – Planning permission granted;
- Sidm_25 – Site is a rural greenfield away from the built-up area of Sidbury; would not pass Stage 2 sifting.



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Sites subject to detailed assessment

This section of the report provides information on sites that passed the sifting stage and draws conclusions on assessment results (noting that site assessment follows on in separate report sections – though in this report we provide summary details on fuller assessment that has been undertaken).

Overview

Site reference	Number of dwellings / hectares of employment land	Allocate?
SIDMOUTH RURAL WARD		
Sidm_34	Sidm_34a – 38 dwellings and 0.15ha of employment Sidm_34b – No additional dwellings/employment land (not recommended for allocation)	Yes, in part

1. Site Reference: Sidm_34

Site details

Settlement: Sidbury

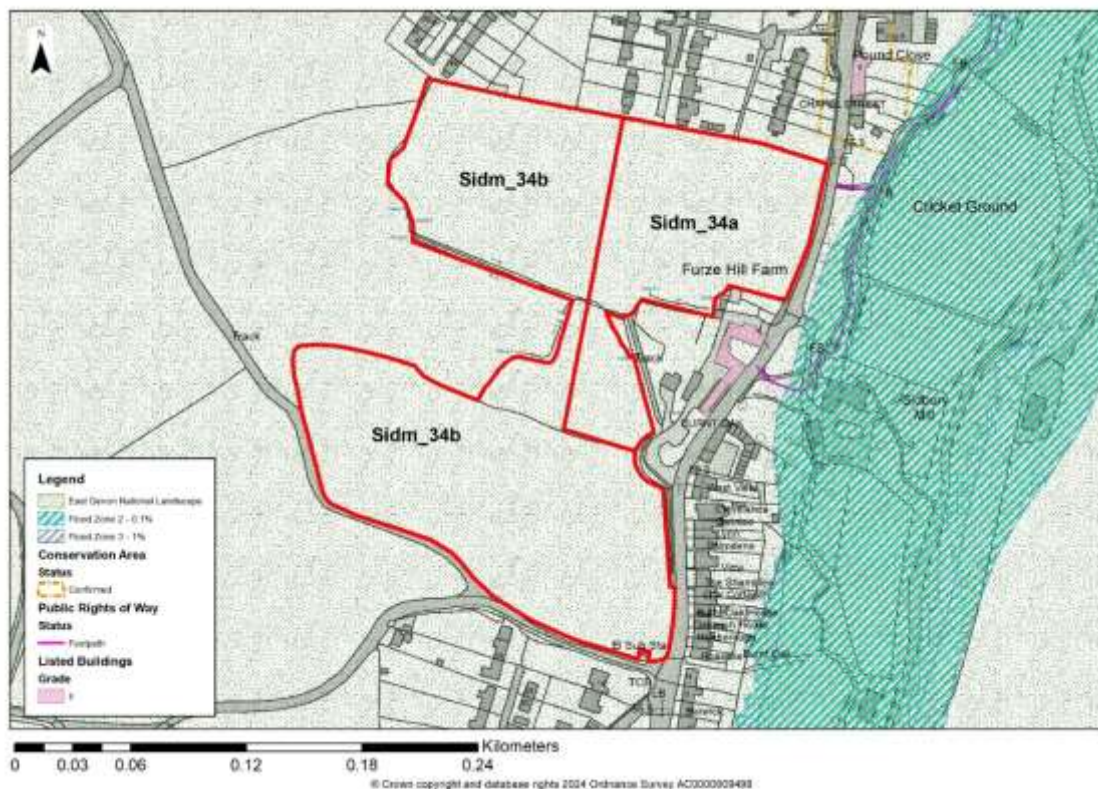
Reference number: Sidm_34a & Sidm_34b

Site area (ha): 4.03 (Sidm_34a – 1.14 & Sidm_34b – 2.89)

Address: Land between Furzehill and Hillside, Sidbury, EX10 0QZ

Proposed use: Mixed use

Site map



Photos



Site Assessment Summary and Conclusion

Infrastructure

n.b. This site was submitted as part of the 2022 Call For Sites, so has not been through the Housing and Economic Land Availability (HELAA) process; therefore, we do not have comments from DCC Highways or DCC Education. However, we do have comments on an earlier submitted site (Sidm_10) which encompasses the northern most portion of Sidm_34. **DCC Highways:** Access off Furzehill is preferable with a continuous footway, rather than off the A375 which is narrow with no footpath and would need significant improvements. **DCC Education:** 85 ha+ sites proposed, mainly to north and north-eastern outskirts and west. One large site within the town proposed at Knowle. Sidmouth primary has some capacity to support some development but nothing like on this scale. Large development would require a new primary school site. Sidbury primary has no capacity to support development and no ability to expand the existing school. Additional secondary capacity required. Need for safe walking routes.

Landscape

Short distance views into site from the A375 are limited due to topography and mature vegetation, but the site is clearly visible from elsewhere in the NL, for example from Buckley Road across the valley to the east. Overall, the site has a high-medium landscape sensitivity to new development.

Historic environment

Heritage assets present: 1 - Grade II listed Furzehill Farm, 2 - Sidbury Conservation Area. Grade II listed Furzehill Farm 9m to south east, open views of site are available from this asset, currently view to agricultural field. Sidbury Conservation Area 13m to north east has views into southern part of the site. Potential impact on setting of these two heritage assets. Overall, Moderate - Change affecting the special character of assets, where elements which contribute to their significance and their setting are harmed.

Ecology

Arable fields surrounded and divided by mature hedgerows and trees. The site is 10m from an unconfirmed wildlife site, 31m from a nature recovery network area and 35m from a habitat of principle importance; it falls within both the Beer Quarry & Caves SAC bat consultation zone and the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SAC HRA mitigation zone. Overall, there is a significant moderate adverse effect predicted on ecology.

Accessibility

Eight out of 12 facilities within 1,600m of site, located in village of Sidbury (footway to north on A375).

Other constraints

Grade 3 agricultural land. Medium risk of surface water flooding on southern boundary of site.

Within Green Wedge in adopted Local Plan 2013-31 or made Neighbourhood Plan?

No

Opportunities

Could form part of an extension to DCC's cyclepath / pedestrian link between Sidbury and Sidford.

Yield (number of dwellings or hectares of employment land)

Forty-three dwellings.

Contribution to spatial strategy

The scale of growth at this site in isolation would be consistent with the spatial strategy at Sidbury as a Service Village for limited development to meet local needs. However, if other sites are proposed for allocation, consider whether the level of development is too high for the spatial strategy.

Should the site be allocated?

Yes, in part.

Reasons for allocating or not allocating

This site can provide an opportunity for limited development well aligned to existing built-up area and present an opportunity to provide improved pedestrian pathways from the Hillside Estate through to the village core. Further heritage and landscape impact work on any future proposal would be required. The site is within the East Devon National Landscape and particular care will be needed to avoid adverse impacts, especially on higher westerly site parts where open space provision may be appropriate.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment**Context****Landscape designation context**

East Devon NL

For sites within NL, applicable special qualities

Series of three fields within the NL with housing to the north and south, open fields to the west and Furze Hill Farm & the A375 to the east.

Other relevant biodiversity, historic environment and/or geological designations

n/a

Pebblebed Heaths mitigation zone.

Heritage assets present: 1 - Grade II listed Furzehill Farm, 2 - Sidbury Conservation Area. Grade II listed Furzehill Farm 9m to south east, open views of site are available from this asset, currently view to agricultural field. Sidbury Conservation Area 13m to north-east has views into southern part of the site.

Landscape Character Type and relevant key characteristics

Four-fifths 3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes and one-fifth 3A: Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes

Local landscape character of site and immediate surrounds

Three interconnecting fields, the northernmost and southernmost being the larger, sloping from the north-west to the south-east.

Does the local landscape character of the site and immediate surrounds conform to published assessments?

Yes

General and site-specific affects that could arise from development

Located entirely within East Devon NL, this sloping site - currently in agricultural use - is well related to nearby housing but may have access issues.

Analysis

Physical and natural characteristics	
Medium-high	The site is very characteristic of this part of the NL, as captured in the landscape character assessment.
Cultural and historic associations	
Medium-high	Heritage assets present: 1 - Grade II listed Furzehill Farm, 2 - Sidbury Conservation Area. Grade II listed Furzehill Farm 9m to south east, open views of site are available from this asset, currently view to agricultural field. Sidbury Conservation Area 13m to north-east has views into southern part of the site. Potential impact on setting of these two heritage assets. Overall, Moderate - Change affecting the special character of assets, where elements which contribute to their significance and their setting are harmed.
Relationship to existing settlement edge	
Low-medium	This site borders 20th C housing to the north and south.
Experiential landscape character	
Medium	Experiential landscape character prompts Remote / Isolated / Wild / Tranquil Rough Buildings: Modern / Historic / Farm buildings / Dwellings / Small scale Transport Corridors: Winding rural lanes Condition: Undeveloped/ Unmanaged Scenic Quality: Medium
Views	
Medium-high	Short distance views into site from the A375 are limited due to topography and mature vegetation, but the site is clearly visible from elsewhere in the NL, for example from Buckley Road across the valley to the east.
Overall landscape susceptibility	
High	Site is within NL. Development would be evident in passing along roads near to the site but would be seen in the context of existing houses.
Within nationally designated landscape?	
Site is within a designated landscape and has very high landscape value.	
Degree of intervisibility with nationally designated landscape	
If outside designated landscape, factors which may raise or lower value from moderate	

Landscape value
Very High – Nationally or internationally designated for landscape value (NL/ WHS)
Overall landscape sensitivity
High / Medium
Landscape guidance: opportunities in relation to development
High/medium landscape sensitivity (located entirely within East Devon NL however set in the context of modern residential development), and minor heritage impact.

Historic Environment Site Assessment

Notes on history of area

Sidbury village is situated in the Sid valley just a few miles inland from Sidmouth. It was one of the earliest settlements in Devon, having an iron age fort at Castle Hill. It is situated on the River Sid, which rises at Crowpits Covert (OSGB36 Grid reference SY138963) and runs for 6 miles (10 km) to Lyme Bay at Sidmouth. Sidbury is mentioned in the Domesday Book as the manor of Sideberia, held by Bishop Osbern of Exeter.

Overall conclusion

Medium: no significant effects which cannot be mitigated. An impact is predicted, but would not compromise the asset(s) cultural heritage value to the extent that the attributes that led to its designation, or ability to understand or appreciate its value, are diminished or compromised. Mitigation may make the impact acceptable. The overall significance of the asset would not therefore be materially changed.

Step 1. Identify any heritage assets potentially affected	
Is the site within 100 metres of a designated heritage asset?	Yes Grade II listed Furzehill Farm 9m to south east, open views of site are likely from this asset. Sidbury Conservation Area 13m to north east has views into southern part of the site. Potential impact on setting of these two heritage assets.
Could development of the site affect any heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or its setting?	Yes Designated assets outside of site / no non-designated implications
List any heritage assets potentially affected.	1 - Grade II listed Furzehill Farm, 2 - Sidbury Conservation Area HER checked - no additional features.

Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset
Heritage asset 1

Description of asset	Furzehill CHAPEL STREET, SIDBURY 1. 1633 (West Side) Furzehill including walls and out- houses round yard SY 1391 2/212 II 2. 2 storey stone farmhouse with long 3 windows front at right angles to road. Some alterations. Thatched roof. Gable end to road has tablet with partly illegible date "177-". One angle of gable end has stone buttress and gate pier combined. C19 wood casements. Door has C18 dentil corniced hood on small brackets with later iron supports to front. Later verandah to front and brick addition on west side of house. Stone and cob outhouses and walls, (outhouses thatched) enclose the 2 sides of yard and extend in rectangular block along road.
Significance of asset and setting	Medium
Relationship of site with heritage asset	The site sits adjacent to and on higher ground to the heritage asset. The site forms part of the setting of the farmhouse, being land highly likely to be directly associated to the original function.
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	Significant
Further assessment required?	No

Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset

Heritage asset 1	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	Major Development would have an adverse affect on the character, appearance and setting of the designated asset.
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	No, site is closely related to the asset and small in scale.
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	Yes, increased urbanisation, domestic paraphernalia, traffic, light pollution, noise.

Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm

Heritage asset 1 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	No
Heritage asset 1 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	Yes

Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	No
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	No
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	No
Could design avoid harm?	No
Notes	

Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset

Heritage asset 2

Description of asset	Sidbury Conservation Area Sidbury Conservation Area includes most of the historic core of the village, which has managed to retain its character and rural atmosphere to a remarkable extent in view of how close the outer suburbs of Sidmouth have encroached to surround Sidford to the south. Within the existing conservation area are about 85 individually listed buildings giving 46 separate list entries. There are also an additional 6 non-statutory local list entries covering a further 12 dwellings.
Significance of asset and setting	Medium
Relationship of site with heritage asset	Site is 14m from the southern extent of the conservation area. On approach to the conservation area from the south, the site forms a natural unspoilt visual break that frames the road ahead. Modern development to the north of the site already has an impact on the original setting of the conservation area.
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	Moderate
Further assessment required?	No

Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset

Heritage asset 2

What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	Moderate Development of the land would have an adverse impact that would further erode the character and setting of the conservation area.
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	Visual impact could be lessened by setting development away from the roadside.
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	Increased traffic movements. Question of access with the most obvious access through residential estate to the north directing traffic into conservation area.

Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm

Heritage asset 2 maximising enhancement

Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	No
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	No
Heritage asset 2 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	Yes
Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	No
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	No
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	No
Could design avoid harm?	No
Notes	

Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 3	
Description of asset	
Significance of asset and setting	
Relationship of site with heritage asset	
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	
Further assessment required?	

Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 3	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	

Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm	
Heritage asset 3 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	
Heritage asset 3 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	

Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	
Could design avoid harm?	
Notes	

Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 4	
Description of asset	
Significance of asset and setting	
Relationship of site with heritage asset	
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	
Further assessment required?	

Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 4	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	

Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm	
Heritage asset 4 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	
Heritage asset 4 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	
Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	
Could design avoid harm?	
Notes	

Step 2. Existing contribution of site to significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 5	

Description of asset	
Significance of asset and setting	
Relationship of site with heritage asset	
Level of contribution (site to heritage asset)	
Further assessment required?	

Step 3. Identifying potential impact on significance of heritage asset	
Heritage asset 5	
What impact would development have on the heritage asset and its setting?	
Could the site be developed in a way that minimised potential impact?	
Would the development affect the heritage asset in other ways?	

Step 4. How to maximise enhancements and avoid harm	
Heritage asset 5 maximising enhancement	
Could the development improve public access to and interpretation of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable further research and recording of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable better revealing of the significance of the heritage asset?	
Would development enable the asset to be removed from the at risk register?	
Heritage asset 5 avoiding harm	
Are there reasonable alternative sites?	
Could the site boundary be changed to avoid harm?	
Could the amount of development be reduced to avoid harm?	
Would a different type of development (use) avoid harm?	
Could design avoid harm?	
Notes	

Ecological Assessment

Context – Sites and features (desk study)

Site / feature name	Geographic value	Distance from site / feature (metres)	Predicted impact
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	International	3416	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Special Protection Area (SPA)	International	6136	Minor adverse effect predicted

			(not significant)
Ramsar site	International	16162	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)	National	9465	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	National	3416	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	National	3771	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Regional	1979	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Ancient Woodland Inventory Site (AWSI)	Regional	1700	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
County Wildlife Site (CWS)	County	1100	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Unconfirmed Wildlife Site (UWS)	County	553	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Draft Nature Recovery Network areas (NRN)	County	25	Significant moderate adverse effect predicted

Section 41 Habitat of Principle Importance (including rivers and streams, excluding hedgerow)	County	31	Significant moderate adverse effect predicted
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Comments

Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)

Within River Axe SAC Nutrient catchment zone? No

Within Beer Quarry and Caves SAC bat consultation zone? Yes

Within East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SAC HRA mitigation zone? Yes

Within Exe Estuary SPA HRA mitigation zone? No

Within East Devon Pebblebed Heaths 400m exclusion zone? No

Number of European sites potentially impacted by site: 1

On site assessment

Does the site consist of any habitats other than agriculturally improved grassland or arable (excluding small/negligible areas of habitat)?

No.

Presence of veteran or ancient trees

See notes. Needs more comprehensive survey

Large numbers of mature trees within hedgerows or otherwise

Yes.

Presence of ponds not identified on aerial imagery

No.

Networks of small field parcel and hedgerows (any areas where allocation is likely to require removal of substantial areas of hedgerow to facilitate a suitable development footprint)

Yes. The site is spread over three large fields but development would be limited to two small sections of the two northernmost fields

Any other incidental features of ecological interest (protected/notable species incidentally recorded)

No.

Is there any evidence which contradicts the desk study results?

No.

Conclusion

Significant moderate adverse effect predicted

