

A photograph of the Staverton railway station. The station building is a single-story brick structure with a grey tiled roof. A black sign with white lettering reads 'STAVERTON'. To the right, a red train carriage is visible with the number 'V19740'. In the foreground, there are railway tracks, a stone wall, and a concrete platform. A green curved line is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Staverton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

November 2022

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
E.B. Graduate Environmental Planner	R.P. Senior Environmental Planner	A.P. Associate Director	N.C.B Technical Director

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name (initials)	Position
V1.0	15 th November 2022	Version for Neighbourhood Group comment	16 th November 2022	N.C.B.	Technical Director

Prepared for:

Staverton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
Plumer House
Third Floor, East Wing
Tailyour Road
Crownhill
Plymouth PL6 5DH
United Kingdom

aecom.com

© 2022 AECOM Limited. All Rights Reserved.

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited (“AECOM”) for use of Locality (the “Client”) in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.

Front cover: Staverton Station, located along the South Devon Railway. Image taken from an article published on [Devon Live](#).

Table of Contents

Non-Technical Summary	i
1. Introduction	1
Background	1
SEA Screening for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan	2
SEA explained	2
Structure of this SEA Environmental Report.....	3
2. Local Plan context and vision for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.....	4
3. What is the scope of the SEA?	5
Summary of SEA Scoping	5
Key Sustainability Issues.....	8
SEA Framework	11
4. Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.....	14
Defining reasonable alternatives	14
Housing numbers to deliver within the neighbourhood area.....	14
Discussion on potential site options	14
Potential site options considered through the SEA	15
What are the appraisal findings at this stage?.....	19
Developing the preferred approach.....	38
5. Appraisal of the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan	39
Staverton Neighbourhood Plan policies	39
Approach to this appraisal.....	40
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	40
Climate Change	41
Landscape.....	42
Historic Environment.....	43
Land, Soil, and Water Resources.....	44
Community Wellbeing	45
Transportation	46
Conclusions at this current stage	47
6. What are the next steps?	49
Appendix A SEA Scoping – Context Review and Baseline Information.....	50

Non-Technical Summary

What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

A strategic environmental assessment (SEA) has been undertaken to inform the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan. This process is required by the SEA Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plan groups use SEA to assess Neighbourhood Plans against a set of sustainability objectives developed in consultation with interested parties. The purpose of the assessment is to help avoid adverse environmental and socio-economic effects through the Neighbourhood Plan and identify opportunities to improve the environmental quality of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan and the quality of life of residents.

What is the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan?

The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (June 2022), which included information about the neighbourhood area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

- Identify, describe, and evaluate the likely significant effects of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan and alternatives; and
- Provide an opportunity for consultees to offer views on any aspect of the SEA process which has been carried out to date.

The Environmental Report contains:

- An outline of the contents and main objectives of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan and its relationship with other relevant policies, plans and programmes.
- Relevant aspects of the current and future state of the environment and key sustainability issues for the area.
- The SEA Framework of objectives against which the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed.
- The appraisal of alternative approaches for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.
- The likely significant effects of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects as a result of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan; and
- The next steps for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan and accompanying SEA process.

Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan

Housing numbers to deliver through the Neighbourhood Plan

As discussed within **Chapter 2** within the main body of the Environmental Report, the JLP indicates that Staverton and Woolston Green / Landscope can accommodate around 20 homes each, totalling 40 homes across the neighbourhood area.

Discussion on potential site options

With a view to meeting the housing target for the parish, the Steering Group were keen to consider where the dwellings should be delivered within the neighbourhood area. In light of this, the Steering Group undertook initial assessments of the various sites in the parish¹ in terms of their suitability, availability, and achievability for the purposes of a potential Neighbourhood Plan allocation.

A total of 30 sites were considered through the initial site assessment process. Sites were identified via a local 'call for sites' exercise along with sites which were put forward in South Hams District Council's latest Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).²

Sites were initially discounted on the basis that they were not suitable, available, or achievable; or not favoured by the local community through a local consultation process. Additional considerations were given to local policy provisions within the JLP relating to the sustainable villages within the 'Thriving Towns and Villages' Policy Area. In particular:

- Policy TTV26 'Development in the countryside', which states that isolated development in rural areas will be avoided and only permitted in exceptional circumstances.
- Policy TTV27 'Meeting local housing needs in rural areas', which stipulates that residential development proposals on sites adjoining or very near to an existing settlement may be permitted providing that it can be demonstrated that it meets a proven need for affordable housing for local people; and
- Policy DEV8 'Meeting local housing needs in the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area', which presents specific targets for affordable dwellings on sites which would deliver between six and ten dwellings and sites which would deliver eleven or more dwellings. It is acknowledged by the Steering Group that there is no affordable housing requirement within the JLP for developments of five dwellings or fewer.

Further details can be found in the site assessment evidence base document accompanying the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

Potential site options considered through the SEA

Following the site assessment process, three of the eleven sites surrounding Staverton village were identified as potential locations to consider for a

¹ The initial site assessment report contributes to the evidence base for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan and accompanies the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

² South Hams District Council (2017): [SHELAA Site Information Packs - South Hams](#)

Neighbourhood Plan allocation. The sites are as follows (as shown in **Figure 4.1** within the main body of the Environmental Report):

- Site 8: East of Southford Lane.
- Site 10: Newtake Field; and
- Site 13: Field beside Dodbrook Cottages.

This is linked to their alignment to JLP policy with respect to identifying suitable locations for development within the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area. Specifically, these were the only available site options which are 1) adjacent or very near to the village boundary and 2) of a size which, if brought forward for development, could deliver an appropriate percentage of affordable dwellings.

With reference to Site 8 and Site 13, the results of the initial site assessment process indicated that the sites performed relatively favourably. The indicative capacity for each site is calculated at twelve dwellings which, if brought forward, would meet and slightly exceed local housing targets. However, further engagement between the Steering Group and the landowners for these two sites determined that neither owner was prepared to release large areas of land. Specifically, the owner of Site 8 was prepared to release land to deliver two dwellings, and the owner of Site 13 was prepared to release land to deliver up to four dwellings. In this respect, neither site would reach the minimum housing thresholds (i.e., six dwellings) requiring developers to deliver a percentage of affordable dwellings in line with JLP policy provisions.

Regarding Site 10, the results of the initial site assessment process indicated that there are potentially significant constraints to development at this location. The constraints relate to the steeply sloping aspect of the site, access concerns, and the contribution the site has to the village setting given its visual prominence. Additionally, a significant amount of land within the neighbourhood area was previously owned by the Church Commissioners, and the Steering Group are aware that there are areas of land surrounding Staverton village (which has the potential to impact Site 10) which are covered by restrictive covenants. This may impact upon the viability of bringing sites forward for development.

In light of the considerations presented above, the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites in Staverton village. However, the Steering Group and Parish Council are committed to working with South Hams District Council to identify suitable locations for development in Staverton village in order to contribute towards local housing requirements.

Woolston Green / Landscope

Following the initial site assessment process, a total of seven sites were identified as potential locations to consider for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation. All seven sites are adjacent or very near to the settlement boundary for Woolston Green / Landscope, aligning to JLP policy with respect to identifying suitable locations for development within the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area.

Since the completion of the initial site assessment process, one of the seven sites 'Land at Beara Farm' has received conditional approval for 14 dwellings (ref: [1419/20/FUL](#)). With respect to housing numbers, this leaves a residual requirement of six dwellings to meet local housing targets.

To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at each of the relevant sites.

In this context, the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping (see **Chapter 3** within the main body of the Environmental Report) and the baseline information. These appraisals undertaken through the SEA have been undertaken separately to the initial site assessments undertaken for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

The sites are listed in **Table NTS1** and shown in the figure in **Chapter 4** within the main body of the Environmental Report.

Table NTS1: Potential site options considered through the SEA

Site Assessment ref.	SEA ID	Name of site, address	Size (Ha) ³
Site 1	Site A	Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green	1.51
Site 19	Site B	Field west of the lane to Blackler Barton	0.72
Site 18	Site C	Field east of the lane to Blackler Barton	0.90
Site 2	Site D	Land behind The Live and Let Live Pub	0.80
Site 4	Site E	Land next to Beara House	0.21
Site 14	Site F	Land beside The Live and Let Live Pub car park	0.81

Appraisal findings

The results of the appraisal of the site options are presented in **Table 4.2** to **Table 4.7** within the main body of the Environmental Report. A summary of the findings is presented below in **Table NTS2**. This provides an indication of how the sites have performed in relation to each of the SEA Themes, with the colouring as follows:

- Green: likely positive effects resulting from an allocation at this location.
- Yellow: likely to be limited or no effects resulting from an allocation at this location.
- Blue: likely to be uncertain effects resulting from an allocation at this location (i.e., there are constraints, but the effects are perhaps dependent or influenced on the design and mitigation measures which could be brought forward as part of a proposal).
- Red: likely negative effects resulting from an allocation at this location.

³ Represents total site size and not necessarily total developable area and is taken from the site assessment evidence base document accompanying the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan. For Site 14, Site 18, and Site 19, the sizes of these sites were not provided within the site assessment evidence base document. In this respect, AECOM have utilised Google Earth's measuring tool to determine the size of these sites.

Table NTS2: Summary of SEA site appraisal findings

Site	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Climate Change	Landscape	Historic Env.	Land, Soil and Water Resources	Community Wellbeing	Transport	
Site A	Red	Yellow	Blue	Red	Blue	Yellow	Blue	
Site B	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	
Site C	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Red	
Site D	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Red	
Site E	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	
Site F	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	
Key								
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)				Red	Likely positive effect			Green
Neutral/no effect				Yellow	Uncertain effect			Blue

Current approach taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan

To deliver the housing target of 20 dwellings within Woolston Green / Landscope, the Neighbourhood Plan allocates Site A ‘Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green’ for six dwellings (see Policy SNP4 within the Neighbourhood Plan). The choice of site allocation has been informed by the findings of the site assessments undertaken for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, community consultation events, and the SEA findings.

The remaining 14 dwellings will be met on ‘Land at Beara Farm’ which has conditional approval (ref: [1419/20/FUL](#)). The Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of the development at ‘Land at Beara Farm’ and seeks to make some additional recommendations for developers to ensure that 1) community aspirations are delivered through the design of the scheme and 2) any constraints to development are appropriately addressed. These are discussed within the plan appraisal section in **Chapter 5** in the main body of the Environmental Report.

In response to the identified issues associated with the potential site options surrounding Staverton village, the Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating sites in Staverton village. However, the Steering Group and Parish Council are committed to working with South Hams District Council to identify suitable locations for development in Staverton village in order to contribute towards local housing requirements. This includes establishing a Community Land Trust for the benefit of the local community and working with local landowners to identify further potential sites for affordable housing. A review of the eight sites which were considered through the initial site assessment process (but later discounted) is also likely to be completed, to ensure a “no stone left unturned” approach to the identification of potential sites. In this respect, it is anticipated that any sites which are brought forward in Staverton village during the plan period would be allocated as exception sites for affordable housing, aligning with JLP policy provisions for the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area.

Appraisal of the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan

The submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan presents 16 planning policies for guiding development in the neighbourhood area. These were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering.

Chapter 5 within the main body of the Environmental Report presents the findings of the appraisal of the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan. Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process has assessed the policies put forward through the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SEA themes:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- Climate Change.
- Landscape.
- Historic Environment.
- Land, Soil, and Water Resources.
- Community Wellbeing; and
- Transportation.

The assessment has concluded that the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood is likely to have significant positive effects in relation to the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA theme through delivering housing which meets local needs, by supporting accessibility to services and facilities, enhancing community facilities, and through promoting the vitality of the local economy. This will support social inclusion, the quality of life of residents, and community vitality. Positive effects in relation to the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA theme are also linked to the Plan's promotion of green infrastructure enhancements and encouragement of healthier modes of travel. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for housing development in Staverton village, there is a strong emphasis through the Plan to continue working with key stakeholders to identify suitable locations for development in order to contribute towards local housing requirements. This is more likely to support a diverse and balanced community.

The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is also likely to lead to positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape' SEA theme. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's emphasis on protecting and enhancing the relationship between the natural and built environment (i.e., between the villages and the open countryside), safeguarding the open countryside from inappropriate development, and through incorporating high-quality and sensitive design through new development proposals.

In relation to the 'Historic Environment' SEA theme, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan includes several measures which seek to conserve and enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets (and their settings). As the proposed site allocation at Site A 'Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green' is within proximity to designated heritage assets, it is recognised that an allocation at this location has the potential to have some indirect impacts on the significance of these heritage assets. In this respect, **the SEA recommends** that

the wording of the site-specific policy (Policy SNP4) or Policy SNP10: Heritage and Conservation is enhanced to encourage development proposals to complete a proportionate heritage impact assessment at the planning application stage to help to understand the significance of the heritage features and the potential impacts of new development areas. This will ensure that appropriate mitigation is provided to assuage any concerns by Historic England.

Additionally, the Neighbourhood Plan will bring positive effects in relation to the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme through seeking to retain and enhance ecological networks through the design of new development areas, in addition to encouraging net gains. However, given the approaches taken forward through the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will help limit potential effects from new development areas rather than secure significant enhancements, these impacts are less likely to comprise significant positive effects overall. Within the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), several recommendations in the form of additional policy wording have been made to ensure that adequate mitigation measures are delivered by developers at the planning application stage. These recommendations, which relate to the use of functionally linked land by the qualifying features of the South Hams SAC (i.e., greater horseshoe bats), can be viewed within the HRA. Providing that the recommended mitigation measures within the HRA are appropriately reflected within the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, no adverse impacts to the integrity of internationally designated sites are expected as a result of the policies and proposals within the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

Regarding the 'Climate Change' SEA theme, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will potentially lead to positive effects through supporting development proposals which include low carbon energy sources and energy efficiency measures, sustainable and natural drainage to address any localised flood risk issues, and renewable energy generating infrastructure to address the climate crisis. However, this is dependent on the extent to which these mitigation and adaptation measures are incorporated into the design of the schemes.

The Neighbourhood Plan will also initiate several beneficial approaches regarding the 'Transportation' SEA theme, given its focus on enhancing the active travel network, including public rights of way and cycle routes, and encouraging sustainable modes of transportation. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that residents will likely remain reliant on private vehicles to access neighbouring communities which have a greater variety of services, facilities, and amenities.

The Neighbourhood Plan will also initiate several beneficial approaches for the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme through the implementation of objectives which seek to limit pollution and improve the environmental quality of the parish. Although the proposed site allocation would result in the loss of greenfield land, the scale of development to come forward is not likely to result in the loss of any significant areas of greenfield land within the neighbourhood area or significantly encroach into the open countryside.

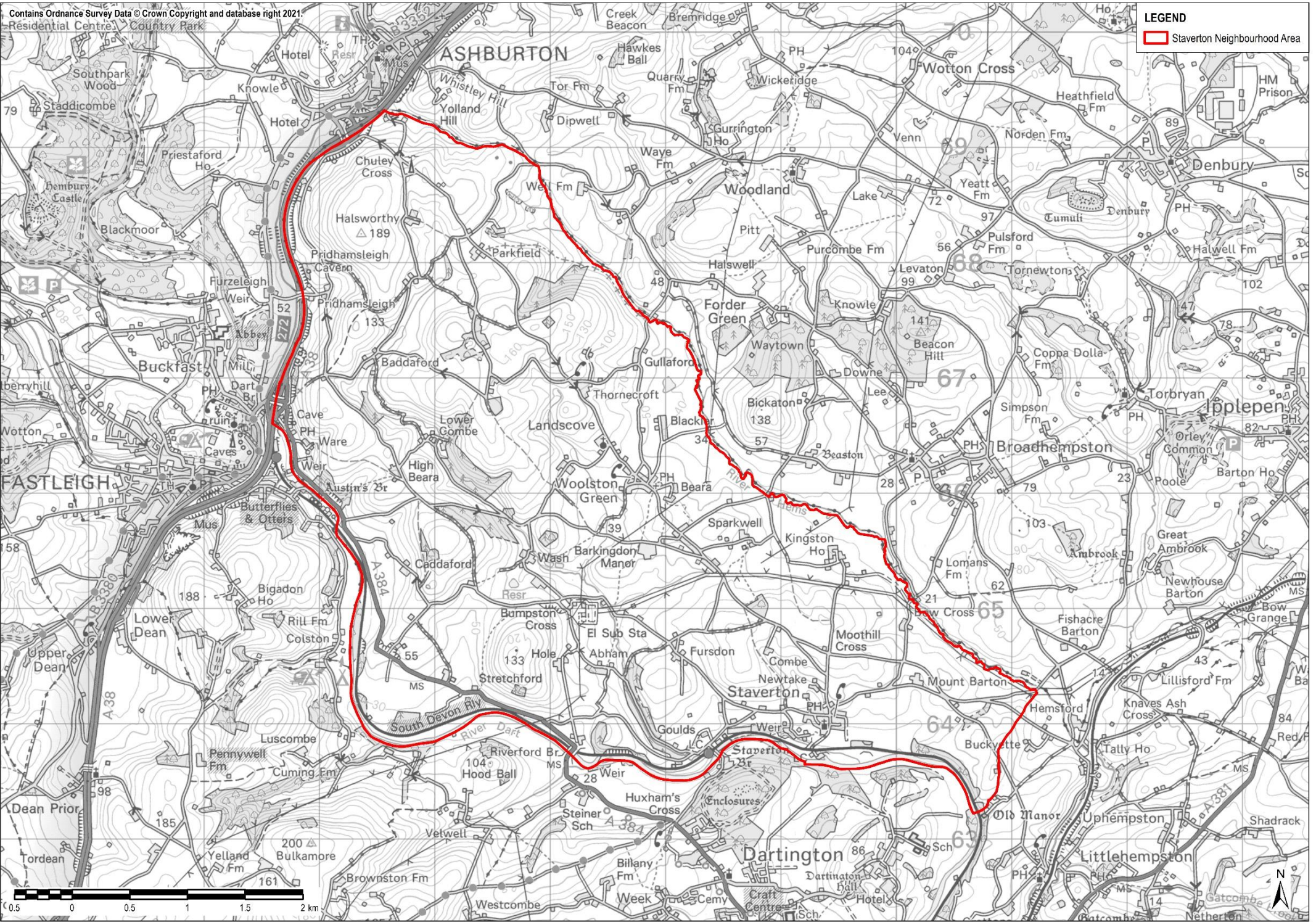
Next steps

The SEA Environmental Report accompanies the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan to the responsible authority, South Hams District Council, for Independent Examination.

At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.

If the Independent Examination is favourable, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by South Hams District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area.

LEGEND
[Red outline box] Staverton Neighbourhood Area



1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared under the Localism Act 2011⁴ and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012⁵, and in the context of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034⁶.
- 1.3 The key information relating to the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is presented in **Table 1.1** below and the neighbourhood area is depicted in the figure above.

Table 1.1 Key information relating to the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan

Name of Responsible Authority	South Hams District Council
Title of Plan	Staverton Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	<p>The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a neighbourhood plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034.</p> <p>The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the neighbourhood area.</p>
Timescale	2021 to 2038
Area covered by the plan	The neighbourhood area covers the civil parish of Staverton, located in south Devon (South Hams District), as shown in the figure above.
Summary of content	The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy, and range of policies for the neighbourhood area.
Plan contact point	Alison Alexander: Chair, Neighbourhood Group Email: alisonalexander@aol.com

⁴ UK Government (2011) 'Localism Act 2011' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵ UK Government (2012) 'The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶ Plymouth Council (2019) 'Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034' can be accessed [here](#).

SEA Screening for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.4 A Neighbourhood Plan requires SEA where it is likely to have significant environmental effects. In this respect, Neighbourhood Plans are more likely to be screened in as requiring an SEA if both the following apply:
- 1) the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared within a neighbourhood area with significant environmental constraints, such as, for example, Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or large concentrations of heritage assets; and
 - 2) the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to allocate sites for development.⁷
- 1.5 Following Regulation 14 consultation with the statutory consultees between January and March 2022, Historic England advised that in their view an SEA process was likely to be required for the Neighbourhood Plan. This was given the historic environment constraints present in the neighbourhood area and Historic England's view that the Neighbourhood Plan (as consulted on) allocated land for development in sensitive locations.
- 1.6 In light of this outcome, an SEA process is being undertaken to meet the specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).

SEA explained

- 1.7 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the potential impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key environmental issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating potential negative impacts and maximising the potential for positive effects. Through this approach, the SEA for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the emerging plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.8 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
- i. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues.
 - ii. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for consultation alongside the draft plan (i.e., the draft Staverton Neighbourhood Plan) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e., discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

⁷ DLUHC (February 2022): Chief Planner's Newsletter, February 2022 "Strategic Environmental Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans: Timely and effective screening" accessible [here](#)

Structure of this SEA Environmental Report

1.9 This document is the SEA Environmental Report for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan and hence needs to answer all four of the questions listed below with a view to providing the information required by the SEA Regulations. Each of the four questions is answered in turn within this report, as follows:

Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report to meet the regulatory⁸ requirements

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... ⁹
What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline of the contents and main objectives of the plan.
What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship with other relevant plans and programmes. The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What's the scope of the SEA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What is the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.
What are the key issues and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key problems/issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.
What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. The likely significant effects associated with alternatives. Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.
What are the assessment findings at this stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The likely significant effects associated with the submission version of the plan. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the submission version of the plan.
What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next steps for the plan making / SEA process.

⁸ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

⁹ NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

2. Local Plan context and vision for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan

Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 (hereafter referred to as “the JLP”) ¹⁰ was adopted in 2019 and forms part of the development plan for the administrative areas of Plymouth, South Hams, and West Devon. Within the ‘Thriving Towns and Villages’ chapter, the JLP identifies the two key settlements within the neighbourhood area - Staverton and Woolston Green / Landscope - as sustainable villages which have a *“limited but vital provision of services and amenities”*.
- 2.2 The JLP supports growth in these sustainable villages to meet local needs and encourages communities to identify sites to meet these needs (particularly through the preparation of neighbourhood plans). The JLP indicates that Staverton and Woolston Green / Landscope can accommodate 20 dwellings each, totalling 40 dwellings across the neighbourhood area (see Policy TTV25).
- 2.3 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for South Hams, alongside, but not as a replacement for the JLP. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the JLP and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the JLP to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in South Hams, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.

Vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.4 The vision for the Neighbourhood Plan captures the community’s views and aspirations for the parish as expressed through the consultation process. It therefore forms the basis on which the neighbourhood objectives and proposed policies have been formulated.

“

“A vibrant, resilient and sustainable community that enables all generations to flourish in work and leisure, committed to conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the natural environment and becoming net zero carbon by or before 2030.”

Vision Statement for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan

”

- 2.5 The vision is underpinned by objectives which are grouped under the following themes: healthy communities; housing; business and enterprise; design and heritage; natural environment; transport; energy efficiency and flooding. Neighbourhood Plan policies are also grouped and organised by these themes.

¹⁰ Plymouth Council (2019) ‘Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034’ can be accessed [here](#).

3. What is the scope of the SEA?

Summary of SEA Scoping

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*.
- 3.2 In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.¹¹ These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SEA in June 2022.
- 3.3 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional, and local plans and strategies relevant to the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Baseline data against which the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
 - The key sustainability issues for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan; and
 - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.4 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below.

Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
Historic England <i>Historic Places Adviser (email response received on 27th July 2022)</i>	
We are pleased to see that Section 6 The Historic Environment takes a rigorous approach to providing an evidence base for local heritage assets.	Comment noted.
We would encourage the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to have regard to the evidence base when revising the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The evidence base presented within the final SEA report ought to underpin the justifications for the allocated development sites. We encourage the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to seek the advice of the Local Authority conservation officer, who is best placed to assist with this specific task.	Comment noted. This advice has been communicated to the Steering Group. Neighbourhood Plan policies have been informed by baseline studies, community consultation, and via the evidence base (including the outputs of the SEA and HRA process).

¹¹ In-line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because *‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme’*.

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p>Environment Agency <i>Planning Adviser (email response received on 18th July 2022)</i></p>	
<p>In general, we consider that it is unlikely that neighbourhood plans will result in any significant environmental effects unless the plan allocates or encourages development over that set out in the Local Plan. Otherwise, we consider that any potential for environmental effects from growth in the parish should already have been addressed through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which supported the adopted Local Plan. We note your conclusions and have no comments to make on this at this stage.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Natural England <i>Lead Adviser (email response and letter received 21st June 2022)</i></p>	
<p><u>General comments</u></p> <p>Staverton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group should consider that the neighbourhood plan will need to be subject to the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna, referred to herein as the “Habitats Regulations”. The Habitats Regulations apply to plans “likely to have a significant effect” on the national site network. The Conservation of Habitats and Species regulation 2017 (as amended) have been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 to ensure that the strict protections afforded to sites, habitats and species under the EU Habitats and Wild Birds Directives continue.</p> <p>The two proposed site allocations are within the South Hams SAC Sustainance Zone and, therefore, Natural England advise that a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment is undertaken to fully assess whether the neighbourhood plan should be subject to an appropriate assessment.</p>	<p>The submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a HRA which considers the potential likelihood of significant impacts to internationally protected sites. The findings and recommendations within the HRA have been considered by plan makers whilst finalising Neighbourhood Plan policies.</p> <p>Potential impacts to protected sites for biodiversity associated with the Neighbourhood Plan’s policies and proposals is further discussed within this SEA Environmental Report, specifically within the consideration of reasonable alternatives (Chapter 4) and the appraisal of the Neighbourhood Plan policies (Chapter 5).</p>

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<p><u>Policy context</u></p> <p>Natural England has not reviewed the plans listed. However, we advise that the following types of plans relating to the natural environment should be considered where applicable to your plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green infrastructure strategies • Biodiversity plans • Rights of Way Improvement Plans • Shoreline management plans • Coastal access plans • River basin management plans • AONB management plans. • Relevant landscape plans and strategies • South Marine Plans • Devon Climate Emergency Plan • Water Resource Management plans • Environment Act • The 25 Year Environment Plan 	<p>The baseline information and context review which has informed the SEA process is presented in Appendix A within this Environmental Report. This includes the list of relevant plans and programmes (and links to these documents) organised by SEA theme.</p>
<p><u>Baseline information</u></p> <p>Existing environmental evidence can be gathered from various sources including online data sources like MAGIC, Local Environmental Record Centres (LERCs) and strategies for green infrastructure, open space provision, landscape character, climate and ecosystem services and biodiversity opportunity mapping.</p> <p>Please see the attached annex for our advice on sources of local plan evidence on the natural environment.</p>	<p>The recommended sources of evidence and the annex have been essential reference points during the SEA process.</p>
<p><u>Sustainability objectives</u></p> <p>Community Wellbeing – we welcome the inclusion of a sub-objective that will ‘facilitate green infrastructure enhancements’, however, we would suggest the objective also includes an assessment of whether the Plan improves community access to green infrastructure and nature; and whether it seeks to avoid impacts on the quality and extent of existing green infrastructure/recreational assets.</p> <p>Land, Soil, and Water Resources – agree the objectives are appropriate but suggest that ‘Avoid the development of the best...’ is replaced with ‘Avoid the loss of the best...’.</p>	<p>The SEA Framework of objectives has been revisited and updated to include these recommendations. The full SEA Framework is presented later in Chapter 3 of this Environmental Report.</p>

3.5 Baseline information (including the context review and baseline data) is presented in **Appendix A**. The key sustainability issues and SEA Framework are presented below.

Key Sustainability Issues

Air Quality

- According to data from 2021, there are no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the neighbourhood area. The nearest AQMA is 2 km to the south, in Totnes.
- Designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area are potentially sensitive to air pollution issues. The effects of the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to these concerns will be explored in the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan could present opportunities to improve accessibility and support more local and sustainable journeys / connections. These opportunities will be explored in the 'Community Wellbeing' and 'Transportation' SEA themes.
- The effects of traffic and congestion will be explored in the 'Transportation and movement' SEA theme.

3.6 Due to the absence of any significant air quality issues raised in relation to the draft Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, **the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- Internationally designated sites within proximity to the neighbourhood area include South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and South Dartmoor Woods SAC.
- The whole of the neighbourhood area is within the Buckfastleigh Caves Sustenance Zone and Landscape Connectivity Zone associated with the South Hams SAC.
- Nationally designated sites within and within proximity to the neighbourhood area include four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Ashburton Road Cuttings SSSI, Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI, Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI, and Bulkamore Iron Mine SSSI.
- The western half of the neighbourhood area (including the settlement of Woolston Green) is within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone for "all planning applications (except householder) outside or extending outside existing settlements/urban areas affecting greenspace, farmland, semi natural habitats, or landscape features such as trees, hedges, streams, rural buildings/structures."
- Locally important sites within the neighbourhood area include Staverton Nature Reserve and a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats.

Climate Change

- South Hams District Council has declared a climate change and biodiversity emergency, resolving to support local authorities (and, by extension, Neighbourhood groups) to help tackle climate change through plan-making where possible.
- The transport sector continues to be a key challenge in terms of reducing emissions. The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan provides opportunities to guide development towards the most accessible locations in the neighbourhood area and require local infrastructure (including walking and cycling infrastructure) improvements where appropriate.
- Opportunities to influence per capita emissions could be sought the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan process, particularly by planning for integrated and connected development, which reduces the need to travel and supports opportunities to travel by more sustainable modes.
- The neighbourhood area is at risk of varying levels of surface water flooding and has areas of land in Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 – following the watercourses that are present. Surface water run-off from development can exacerbate the risk of flooding by increasing the run-off from land to water courses.
- Opportunities to enhance the resilience of the both the neighbourhood area and its residents, to the effects of climate change should be sought. This can include adaptation strategies, green infrastructure enhancement, flood betterment measures, infrastructure development, and increased renewable energy sources.

Landscape

- There are a range of landscape features present within the neighbourhood area which contribute to the character and quality of the landscape. These features should be protected and enhanced where possible.
- New development has the potential to lead to incremental change in landscape and villagescape character, and visual amenity.
- The relationship between the settlements and the open countryside is an important part of the character and special qualities of the neighbourhood area.

Historic Environment

- With a variety of designated heritage assets within and surrounding the neighbourhood area, development of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to deliver a spatial strategy that avoids or minimises impacts for the historic environment.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to develop the existing evidence base in relation to the historic environment. It also poses an opportunity to further heritage understanding in the neighbourhood area through exploring the heritage assets in the area.

- There is an identified heritage asset 'at risk' within the neighbourhood area. Any opportunity to restore or support appropriate management plans for the conservation of this asset should be explored.
- It will be important to ensure that future development avoids/ minimises impacts upon the historic environment and maximises opportunities to improve the public realm and green infrastructure, to the indirect benefit of heritage settings.

Land, Soil, and Water Resources

- The provisional Agricultural Land Classification data indicates the neighbourhood area is underlain with areas of Grade 2, Grade 3 and Grade 4 agricultural land. However, the data does not differentiate between Grade 3a and Grade 3b land. As a finite resource, Grade 3a (best and most versatile) should be protected where possible.
- The Hems – Upper and the Dart waterbodies, and their associated tributaries, run through the neighbourhood area. Development should avoid impacts to water quality for both these waterbodies and within the identified groundwater source protection zones and drinking water safeguard zone.
- Plan making should consider how local decisions affect water supply, such as water accessibility issues, and ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is in place to accommodate new development areas.

Community Wellbeing

- The services, facilities, and amenities within the neighbourhood area supports community vitality and the quality of life of residents, with the availability of community assets essential for continued growth.
- As the requirements of the working population continue to change, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is likely to be a requirement for adaptable dwellings which can accommodate more flexible working practices.
- Housing affordability and the availability of appropriate dwellings for residents are key concerns for the local community.
- Based on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation data, the South Hams 002B Lower Super Output Area is within the top 10% most deprived deciles for the 'Barriers to Housing and Services' and 'Living Environment' sub-domains.

Transportation

- There is a train station in the neighbourhood area but is part of a heritage line. The nearest National Rail station is in Totnes. There are limited bus services within the neighbourhood area.
- There is an extensive Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network in the neighbourhood area, and development should seek to connect with and where possible extend these PRoW and maximise opportunities for active travel.

- The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to change travel patterns in the short, medium and (potentially) longer term.

SEA Framework

- 3.7 The SEA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard ‘tests’.
- 3.8 Each proposal within the current version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will be assessed consistently using the framework.

Table 3.2: SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid or, if not possible, minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, including internationally and nationally designated sites, and provide net gains where possible? • Support the integrity of the designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity located within proximity to the neighbourhood area? • Protect and enhance priority habitats, semi-natural habitats, species, and the ecological network connecting them? • Support the national habitat network, particularly Network Enhancement Zone 1 and identified restorable habitat? • Achieve biodiversity net gains and support the delivery of ecosystem services and multifunctional green infrastructure services? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks? • Support and promote access to and interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?
Climate change	Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the neighbourhood area and increase resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of journeys made and reduce the need to travel? • Promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling, public transport, and EV infrastructure? • Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria? • Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources, or reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources? • Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, considering the likely future effects of climate change? • Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the neighbourhood area? • Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing runoff where possible? • Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
Landscape	Protect and enhance the character and quality of the immediate and surrounding landscape and villagescape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the local landscape and villagescape character, key sensitivities and features, and quality of place? • Conserve and enhance local identity, diversity, and settlement character? • Protect visual amenity and locally important views in the neighbourhood area? • Support the integrity of the landscape in the neighbourhood area in accordance with the Devon Landscape Character Assessment?
Historic environment	Protect, conserve, and enhance the historic environment within and surrounding the neighbourhood area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance buildings, structures, and areas of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their settings? • Support access to and the interpretation and understanding of the historic environment? • Support the undertaking of archaeological investigations and, where appropriate, recommend mitigation strategies? • Protect the integrity and the historic setting of key finds of cultural heritage interest as listed in the Devon and Dartmoor HER?
Land, soil, and water resources	Ensure the efficient and effective use of land, and protect and enhance water quality, using water resources in a sustainable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land, including the regeneration of underutilised brownfield land? • Identify and avoid the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land? • Support the minimisation, reuse, and recycling of waste? • Avoid any negative impacts on water quality and support improvements to water quality? • Ensure appropriate drainage and mitigation is delivered alongside proposed development? • Protect waterbodies from pollution? • Maximise water efficiency and opportunities for water harvesting and/or water recycling? • Protect SPZs and NVZs in the neighbourhood area?
Community wellbeing	Ensure growth in the neighbourhood area is aligned with the needs of all residents, improving accessibility, anticipating future needs and specialist requirements, reducing deprivation, and supporting cohesive and inclusive communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing? • Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes? • Meet the needs of all sectors of the community? • Provide flexible and adaptable homes that meet people's needs, particularly the needs of an ageing population? • Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people? • Encourage and promote social cohesion and active involvement of local people in community activities? • Facilitate green infrastructure enhancements? • Improves community access to green infrastructure and nature and avoids impacts on the quality and

SEA theme	SEA objective	Assessment questions (will the proposal help to...)
		<p>extent of existing green infrastructure/recreational assets?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction? • Minimise fuel poverty? • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing residents?
Transportation	Promote sustainable transport use and active travel opportunities and reduce the need to travel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the objectives within the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes? • Encourage a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and enable sustainable transport infrastructure enhancements? • Improve local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement? • Facilitate working from home to reduce the use of private vehicles to access workplaces outside of the neighbourhood area? • Reduce the impact of the transport sector on climate change? • Improve road safety? • Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?

4. Consideration of reasonable alternatives for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

- 4.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the Environmental Report must include...
- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
 - The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives appraised.
- 4.2 The ‘narrative’ of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. Specifically, this chapter explains how the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan’s development strategy has been shaped through considering alternative approaches for the location of housing in the neighbourhood area.
- 4.3 The following sections therefore describe how the SEA process to date has informed the preferred development strategy for the neighbourhood area and potential locations for development.

Defining reasonable alternatives

- 4.4 Whilst work on the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan has been underway for some time, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive explanation of work to date, but rather to explain work undertaken to develop and appraise reasonable alternatives.
- 4.5 Specifically, there is a need to explore the strategic factors that have a bearing on the establishment of reasonable alternative approaches (i.e., in relation to the level and distribution of growth) and the work that has been undertaken to date to examine site options (i.e., sites potentially in contention for allocation in the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan). These factors are then drawn together to arrive at reasonable alternatives.

Housing numbers to deliver within the neighbourhood area

- 4.6 As discussed within Chapter 2 of this Environmental Report, the JLP indicates that Staverton and Woolston Green / Landscope can accommodate around 20 homes each, totalling 40 homes across the neighbourhood area.

Discussion on potential site options

- 4.7 With a view to meeting the housing target for the parish, the Steering Group were keen to consider where the dwellings should be delivered within the neighbourhood area. In light of this, the Steering Group undertook initial assessments of the various sites in the parish¹² in terms of their suitability,

¹² The initial site assessment report contributes to the evidence base for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan and accompanies the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

availability, and achievability for the purposes of a potential Neighbourhood Plan allocation.

- 4.8 A total of 30 sites were considered through the initial site assessment process. Sites were identified via a local 'call for sites' exercise along with sites which were put forward in South Hams District Council's latest Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).¹³
- 4.9 Sites were initially discounted on the basis that they were not suitable, available, or achievable; or not favoured by the local community through a local consultation process. Additional considerations were given to local policy provisions within the JLP relating to the sustainable villages within the 'Thriving Towns and Villages' Policy Area. In particular:
- Policy TTV26 'Development in the countryside', which states that isolated development in rural areas will be avoided and only permitted in exceptional circumstances.
 - Policy TTV27 'Meeting local housing needs in rural areas', which stipulates that residential development proposals on sites adjoining or very near to an existing settlement may be permitted providing that it can be demonstrated that it meets a proven need for affordable housing for local people; and
 - Policy DEV8 'Meeting local housing needs in the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area', which presents specific targets for affordable dwellings on sites which would deliver between six and ten dwellings and sites which would deliver eleven or more dwellings. It is acknowledged by the Steering Group that there is no affordable housing requirement within the JLP for developments of five dwellings or fewer.
- 4.10 Further details can be found in the site assessment evidence base document accompanying the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

Potential site options considered through the SEA

Staverton village

- 4.11 Following the site assessment process, three of the eleven sites surrounding Staverton village were identified as potential locations to consider for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation. The sites are as follows (as shown below in **Figure 4.1**):
- Site 8: East of Southford Lane.
 - Site 10: Newtake Field; and
 - Site 13: Field beside Dodbrook Cottages.
- 4.12 This is linked to their alignment to JLP policy with respect to identifying suitable locations for development within the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area. Specifically, these were the only available site options which are 1) adjacent or very near to the village boundary and 2) of a size which, if brought forward for development, could deliver an appropriate percentage of affordable dwellings.

¹³ South Hams District Council (2017): [SHELAA Site Information Packs - South Hams](#)

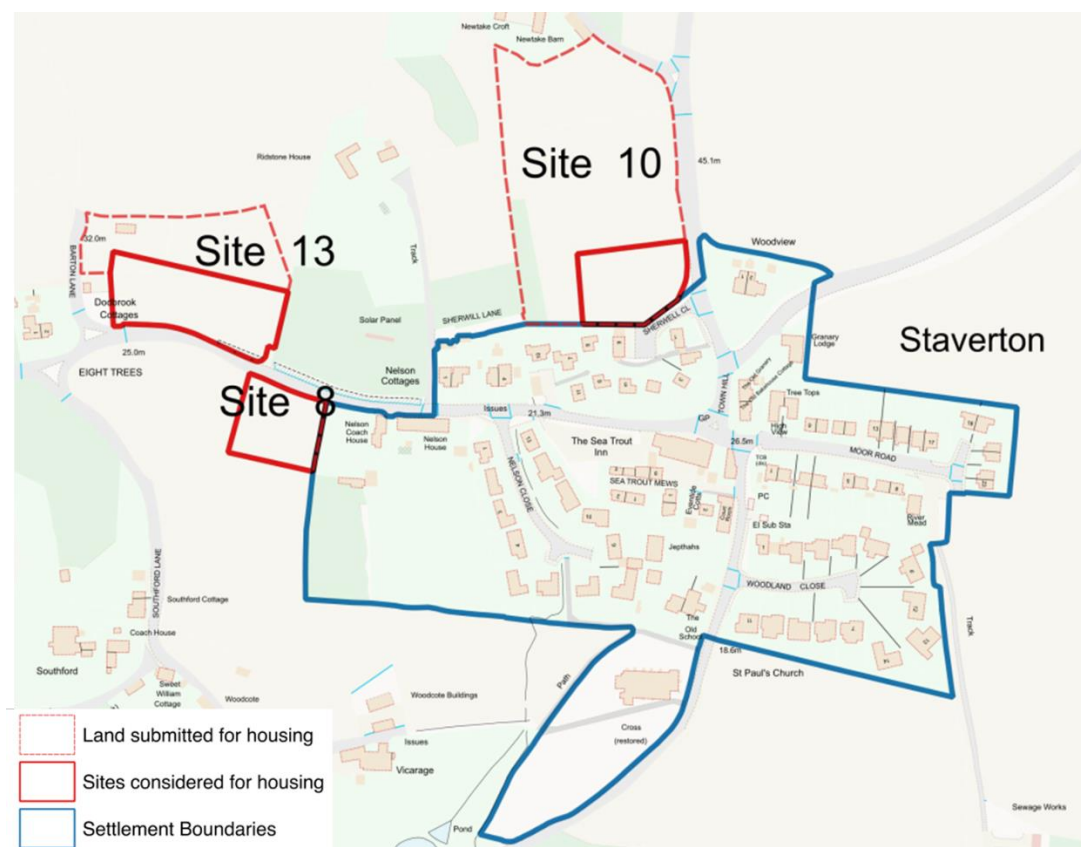


Figure 4.1: Sites identified as potential locations for development in Staverton

4.13 With reference to Site 8 and Site 13, the results of the initial site assessment process indicated that the sites performed relatively favourably. The indicative capacity for each site is calculated at twelve dwellings which, if brought forward, would meet and slightly exceed local housing targets. However, further engagement between the Steering Group and the landowners for these two sites determined that neither owner was prepared to release large areas of land. Specifically, the owner of Site 8 was prepared to release land to deliver two dwellings, and the owner of Site 13 was prepared to release land to deliver up to four dwellings. In this respect, neither site would reach the minimum housing thresholds (i.e., six dwellings) requiring developers to deliver a percentage of affordable dwellings in line with JLP policy provisions.

4.14 Regarding Site 10, the results of the initial site assessment process indicated that there are potentially significant constraints to development at this location. The constraints relate to the steeply sloping aspect of the site, access concerns, and the contribution the site has to the village setting given its visual prominence. Additionally, a significant amount of land within the neighbourhood area was previously owned by the Church Commissioners, and the Steering Group are aware that there are areas of land surrounding Staverton village (which has the potential to impact Site 10) which are covered by restrictive covenants. This may impact upon the viability of bringing sites forward for development.

4.15 In light of the considerations presented above, the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites in Staverton village. However, the Steering Group and Parish Council are committed to working with South Hams District Council to identify suitable locations for development in Staverton village in order to contribute

towards local housing requirements. This includes establishing a Community Land Trust for the benefit of the local community and working with local landowners to identify further potential sites for affordable housing. A review of the eight sites which were considered through the initial site assessment process (but later discounted) is also likely to be completed, to ensure a “no stone left unturned” approach to the identification of potential sites. In this respect, it is anticipated that any sites which are brought forward in Staverton village during the plan period would be allocated as exception sites for affordable housing, aligning with JLP policy provisions for the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area.

Woolston Green / Landscope

4.16 Following the initial site assessment process, a total of seven sites were identified as potential locations to consider for a Neighbourhood Plan allocation. All seven sites are adjacent or very near to the settlement boundary for Woolston Green / Landscope, aligning to JLP policy with respect to identifying suitable locations for development within the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area.

4.17 Since the completion of the initial site assessment process, one of the seven sites ‘Land at Beara Farm’ has received conditional approval for 14 dwellings (ref: [1419/20/FUL](#)). With respect to housing numbers, this leaves a residual requirement of six dwellings to meet local housing targets.

4.18 To support the consideration of the suitability of the shortlisted sites for a potential allocation of a type appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has appraised the key constraints and opportunities present at the each of the relevant sites.

4.19 In this context, the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping (see **Chapter 3**, above) and the baseline information. These appraisals undertaken through the SEA have been undertaken separately to the initial site assessments undertaken for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

4.20 The sites are listed in **Table 4.1** and shown in the figure below.

Table 4.1: Potential site options considered through the SEA


Site Assessment ref.	SEA ID	Name of site, address	Size (Ha) ¹⁴
Site 1	Site A	Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green	1.51
Site 19	Site B	Field west of the lane to Blackler Barton	0.72
Site 18	Site C	Field east of the lane to Blackler Barton	0.90
Site 2	Site D	Land behind The Live and Let Live Pub	0.80
Site 4	Site E	Land next to Beara House	0.21
Site 14	Site F	Land beside The Live and Let Live Pub car park	0.81

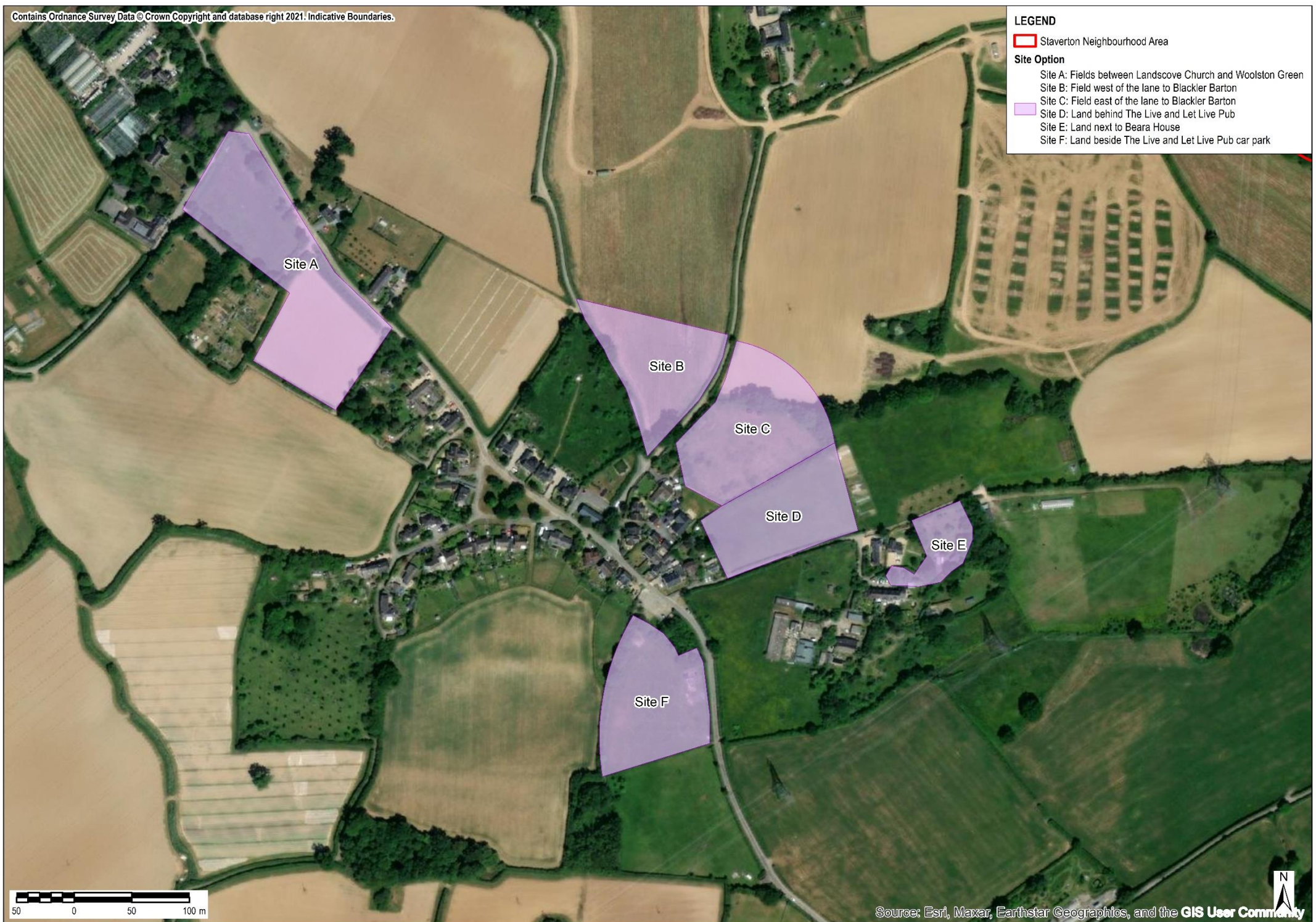
¹⁴ Represents total site size and not necessarily total developable area and is taken from the site assessment evidence base document accompany the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan. For Site 14, Site 18, and Site 19, the sizes of these sites were not provided within the site assessment evidence base document. In this respect, AECOM have utilised Google Earth’s measuring tool to determine the size of these sites.

LEGEND

 Staverton Neighbourhood Area

Site Option

- Site A: Fields between Lanscove Church and Woolston Green
- Site B: Field west of the lane to Blackler Barton
- Site C: Field east of the lane to Blackler Barton
-  Site D: Land behind The Live and Let Live Pub
- Site E: Land next to Beara House
- Site F: Land beside The Live and Let Live Pub car park



What are the appraisal findings at this stage?

4.21 Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the appraisal has been presented through the seven SEA themes, as follows:

- Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
- Climate Change.
- Landscape.
- Historic Environment.
- Land, Soil, and Water Resources.
- Community Wellbeing; and
- Transportation.

4.22 The appraisal considers the relative sustainability merits of each of the potential site options. Findings are presented as a commentary on effects. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the relative performance of the potential site options in relation to each theme considered.

4.23 Sources of information to support the appraisal has included (amongst others): Ordnance Survey maps, MAGIC Interactive Map¹⁵, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps for England¹⁶, Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification maps¹⁷¹⁸, Google Earth¹⁹, reports and interactive mapping layers available on South Hams District Council's webpages²⁰, the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER)²¹, the Devon Environmental Viewer²², and baseline studies provided by the Steering Group (available to access via the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan's website)²³.

4.24 **Table 4.2** to **Table 4.7** below present the findings of the appraisal of the site options for each of the SEA themes. **Table 4.8** which follows presents a summary of the appraisal findings.

¹⁵ MAGIC (2021): 'Interactive Map', [online] available to access [here](#)

¹⁶ Environment Agency (2021): 'Flood Map for Planning', [online] available to access [here](#)

¹⁷ Natural England (2010): 'Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps and Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile Land', [online] available to access [here](#)

¹⁸ Natural England (2017): 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic Scale Map for the South East Region (ALC019)', [online] available to access [here](#)

¹⁹ Google (2022): 'Google Earth', [online] available to access [here](#)


²⁰ South Hams District Council (2022): 'Planning Policy', [online] available to access [here](#)

²¹ Devon County Council (2022): 'Historic Environment Record', [online] available to access [here](#)

²² Devon County Council (2022): 'Devon Environmental Viewer', [online] available to access [here](#)

²³ Staverton Parish Council (2022): 'Staverton Neighbourhood Plan Website', [online] available to access [here](#)

Table 4.2: Site A

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site A: Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green
	
<p>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p>	<p>The South Hams SAC is located approximately 3 km west of the site. Additionally, the site is within the Landscape Connectivity Zone associated with this designation. It is recognised this site is also part of the South Hams Greater Horseshoe Bats SAC buffer zone.</p> <p>This site is also approximately 3 km east of the Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI (and is within the Buckfastleigh Caves Sustenance Zone), approximately 2.8 km south-east of Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI and approximately 3.4 km south-east of Ashburton Road Cutting SSSI. However, the site does not overlap with SSSI IRZs for the types of development that could potentially be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential and rural non-residential).</p> <p>There are no BAP Priority Habitats on the site or in proximity to the site that could be impacted by development. However, there are trees and hedgerows located along the site boundaries. These features should be retained and enhanced (where appropriate) within new development areas, alongside the delivery of net gains.</p>
<p>Climate Change</p>	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Woolston Green / Landscope and an intensification of use at this location. However, the level of development to come forward at this site is not likely to significantly impact local CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>With regards to flood risk issues, the whole site is within Fluvial Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of flooding from rivers. The north-eastern boundary next to the road is at low risk of surface water flooding. It is noted that the South Hams Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), published in 2015, indicates infiltration sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) may be appropriate across the neighbourhood area to alleviate excess water in flood events.</p>

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site A: Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green
Landscape	<p>The site is not within or within proximity to a National Park, AONB or any green belt land. The nearest designation, Dartmoor National Park, is approximately 3 km north-west of the site. According to the Devon County Council Environment Viewer, this site is within the Mid Dart Valley and Slopes local landscape character area; building development is listed as a threat to this landscape type. The site is generally open in character.</p> <p>This site is at a higher elevation in comparison to the existing built-up areas in Woolston Green / Landscope. It is therefore likely that development at this site may be seen from surrounding areas and contribute to the wider setting of the settlement. However, there is partial screening in place provided by the tall hedgerows along the site boundaries.</p> <p>Additionally, it is noted that development at this site could significantly alter the form and open character of the village by closing the gap between the village and the church. Additionally, development at this site could obstruct some views of the church. Nonetheless, development in the southern section of the site would complement the existing form of development along the southern side of the result, resulting in a continuation of existing development patterns at this location.</p>
Historic Environment	<p>The site is not within or in proximity to a historic conservation area. There are no scheduled monuments or registered parks and gardens in proximity to the site, and no features listed on the local Historic Environment Record (HER) have been recorded on or in the immediate vicinity of the site.</p> <p>Although there are no listed buildings within the site boundaries, the site is less than 100 m from four listed buildings – the Grade II Hill House, Grade II Lych Gate to South East of St Matthew Church, the Grade II* Church of St Matthew to the north-west, and the Grade II* Woolston Green Farmhouse to the south-east. Without appropriate mitigation, development at this site has the potential to impact the setting of these historic environment assets and therefore impact their significance. It is also noted that development at this site could obstruct some views of the church in its rural setting – which could impact on its setting and significance.</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>According to the indicative ALC for the South West region provided by Natural England, this site is underlain by Grade 3 ‘Good to Moderate’ agricultural land. However, the site is predicted to have a low likelihood of containing best and most versatile (BMV) land. Development on the site would result in the loss of greenfield land and would not encourage the most efficient use of land in the neighbourhood area (i.e., reuse of brownfield).</p> <p>There are no watercourses within or in proximity to this site, but the site does overlap with the SWSGZ5014 Safeguard Zone for surface water. However, the type of development to come forward at this site is not likely to significantly impact this Safeguard Zone, as its principal risk is from the use of pesticides. There are no drainage or service problems identified at this site.</p>



SEA Theme	Commentary, Site A: Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green	
Community Wellbeing	<p>Woolston Green / Landscope is relatively well served by services and facilities, with the settlement offering built facilities like the Landscope Village Hall and the Live and Let Live Inn, with the Landscope C of E Primary School, the St Matthew Church and the Hill House Nursery café on the outskirts of the settlement boundary to the north-west. The South Hams Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study (OSSR) indicates that the settlement has open spaces in the form of allotments and the village green. As the site is adjacent to the settlement, new development at this location will be in proximity to local services and facilities.</p> <p>However, the closest supermarket and medical facilities can be accessed in Buckfastleigh (approximately 3 km west) and Totnes (approximately 6 km south). Therefore, an allocation at this site may also likely result in an increased need to travel to access key services and amenities.</p>	
Transportation	<p>There are no railway stations in proximity to the site. There is a bus stop less than 20 m north of the northern site boundary, which allows access to the 165 service. A further two stops are approximately 100 m down the road towards the centre of Woolston Green, again providing access to the 165 service. This service provides access to Totnes, Dartington, Staverton and Broadhempston.</p> <p>The site provides connectivity to the local road network, which is the main route into the settlement of Woolston Green / Landscope on approach from the north west. Access into the site is via a turning off the road, although it is recognised that the road itself is a relatively narrow single lane track with passing points, so might not be suited for more frequent use.</p> <p>There are no PRow on or in proximity to the site, and there is no pavement to facilitate safe pedestrian access to the centre of Woolston Green. However, there is a wide verge that residents could make use of to keep off the road. It might be possible to develop this verge into a pavement.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.3: Site B

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site B: Field west of the lane to Blackler Barton
-----------	---



Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The South Hams SAC is located approximately 3.4 km west of the site. Additionally, the site is within the Landscape Connectivity Zone associated with this designation. It is recognised this site is also part of the South Hams Greater Horseshoe Bats SAC buffer zone.


This site is also approximately 3.4 km east of the Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI (and is within the Buckfastleigh Caves Sustenance Zone), approximately 3.3 km south-east of Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI and approximately 3.6 km south-east of Ashburton Road Cutting SSSI. However, the site does not overlap with SSSI IRZs for the types of development that could potentially be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential and rural non-residential).

There are no BAP Priority Habitats on the site, however there is an area of traditional orchard less than 10 m west of the site that could be impacted by development. Whilst direct impacts on this habitat from development at this site are not anticipated, disturbance may take place from noise and light pollution. Additionally, there are trees and hedgerows located along the site boundaries, and there are mature hedgerow trees in the southern corner. Access to the site would involve some hedgerow loss; the remaining features should be retained and enhanced (where appropriate) within new development areas to avoid impacts on biodiversity and to deliver net gains.

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site B: Field west of the lane to Blackler Barton
Climate Change	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Woolston Green / Landscope and an intensification of use at this location. However, the level of development to come forward at this site is not likely to significantly impact local CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>With regards to flood risk issues, the whole site is within Fluvial Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of flooding from rivers. There is no risk of surface water flooding on the site or adjacent to it. It is noted that the South Hams Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), published in 2015, indicates infiltration sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) may be appropriate across the neighbourhood area to alleviate excess water in flood events.</p>
Landscape	<p>The site is not within or within proximity to a National Park, AONB or any green belt land. The nearest designation, Dartmoor National Park, is approximately 3.2 km north-west of the site. According to the Devon County Council Environment Viewer, this site is within the Mid Dart Valley and Slopes local landscape character area; building development is listed as a threat to this landscape type.</p> <p>This site is at a similar elevation to the existing settlement, inclining slightly towards the north. It is therefore unlikely that development at this site would be seen by surrounding buildings. Additionally, there is partial screening in place provided by the tall hedgerows which should filter the site out of view from surrounding buildings. However, development at this location would extend the settlement boundary to the north, into the open countryside.</p>
Historic Environment	<p>The site is not within or in proximity to a historic conservation area. There are no scheduled monuments or registered parks and gardens in proximity to the site, and no features listed on the local HER have been recorded on the site. There are no listed buildings on or in proximity to this site that would be affected by development.</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>According to the indicative ALC for the South West region provided by Natural England, this site is underlain by Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land. The land is predicted to have a low likelihood of containing BMV land. However, development on the site would result in the loss of greenfield land and would not encourage the most efficient use of land in the neighbourhood area (i.e., reuse of brownfield).</p> <p>There are no watercourses within or in proximity to this site, and the site is not within an NVZ.</p>
Community Wellbeing	<p>Woolston Green / Landscope is relatively well served by services and facilities, with the settlement offering built facilities like the Landscope Village Hall and the Live and Let Live Inn, with the Landscope C of E Primary School, the St Matthew Church and the Hill House Nursery café on the outskirts of the settlement boundary to the north-west. The South Hams Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study (OSSR) indicates that the settlement has open spaces in the form of allotments and the village green. As the site is adjacent to the settlement, new development at this location will be in proximity to local services and facilities.</p> <p>However, the closest supermarket and medical facilities can be accessed in Buckfastleigh (approximately 3 km west) and Totnes (approximately 6 km south). Therefore, an allocation at this site may also likely result in an increased need to travel to access key services and amenities.</p>

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site B: Field west of the lane to Blackler Barton	
Transportation	<p>There are no railway stations in proximity to the site. There are two bus stops an approximate 220 m walk along the road to the centre of Woolston Green that allow access to the 165 service. This service provides access to Totnes, Dartington, Staverton and Broadhempston.</p> <p>The site provides connectivity to the local road network, with the road along the western site boundary a main route into the settlement of Woolston Green / Landscope on approach from the north. The road along the eastern site boundary is a private no-through lane.</p> <p>There are no PRow in vicinity of the site, and there is no pavement on the adjacent road to provide safe pedestrian access to the centre of Woolston Green.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect


Table 4.4: Site C

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site C: Field east of the lane to Blackler Barton
	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The South Hams SAC is located approximately 3.4 km west of the site. Additionally, the site is within the Landscape Connectivity Zone associated with this designation. It is recognised this site is also part of the South Hams Greater Horseshoe Bats SAC buffer zone.</p> <p>This site is also approximately 3.4 km east of the Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI (and is within the Buckfastleigh Caves Sustenance Zone), approximately 3.3 km south-east of Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI and approximately 3.6 km south-east of Ashburton Road Cutting SSSI. However, the site does not overlap with SSSI IRZs for the types of development that could potentially be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential and rural non-residential).</p> <p>There are no BAP Priority Habitats on the site, however there is an area of traditional orchard approximately 40 m west of the site and three areas within 100 m to the south that could be impacted by development. Whilst direct impacts on this habitat from development at this site are not anticipated, disturbance may take place from noise and light pollution. Additionally, there are trees and hedgerows located along and within the site boundaries. These features should be retained and enhanced (where appropriate) within new development areas, alongside the delivery of net gains.</p>

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site C: Field east of the lane to Blackler Barton	
Climate Change	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Woolston Green / Landscope and an intensification of use at this location. However, the level of development to come forward at this site is not likely to significantly impact local CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>With regards to flood risk issues, the whole site is within Fluvial Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of flooding from rivers. There is no risk of surface water flooding on the site or adjacent to it. It is noted that the South Hams Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), published in 2015, indicates infiltration sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) may be appropriate across the neighbourhood area to alleviate excess water in flood events.</p>	
Landscape	<p>The site is not within or within proximity to a National Park, AONB or any green belt land. The nearest designation, Dartmoor National Park, is approximately 3.2 km north-west of the site. According to the Devon County Council Environment Viewer, this site is within the Mid Dart Valley and Slopes local landscape character area; building development is listed as a threat to this landscape type.</p> <p>This site is at a similar elevation to the existing settlement, inclining slightly towards the north-east. It is therefore unlikely that development at this site would be seen from surrounding areas. However, whilst the hedgerows along the site boundaries provide an element of screening, there are likely to be some direct views into the south of the site from neighbouring properties. Development at this location would extend the settlement boundary to the north west, into the open countryside.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The site is not within or in proximity to a historic conservation area. There are no scheduled monuments or registered parks and gardens in proximity to the site, and no features listed on the Historic Environment Record have been recorded on the site. There are no listed buildings on or in proximity to this site that would be affected by development.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>According to the indicative ALC for the South West region provided by Natural England, this site is underlain by Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land. The land is predicted to have a low likelihood of containing BMV land. However, development on the site would result in the loss of greenfield land and would not encourage the most efficient use of land in the neighbourhood area (i.e., reuse of brownfield).</p> <p>There are no watercourses within or in proximity to this site, and the site is not within an NVZ.</p>	
Community Wellbeing	<p>Woolston Green / Landscope is relatively well served by services and facilities, with the settlement offering built facilities like the Landscope Village Hall and the Live and Let Live Inn, with the Landscope C of E Primary School, the St Matthew Church and the Hill House Nursery café on the outskirts of the settlement boundary to the north-west. The South Hams Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study (OSSR) indicates that the settlement has open spaces in the form of allotments and the village green. As the site is adjacent to the settlement, new development at this location will be in proximity to local services and facilities.</p> <p>However, the closest supermarket and medical facilities can be accessed in Buckfastleigh (approximately 3 km west) and Totnes (approximately 6 km south). Therefore, an allocation at this site may also likely result in an increased need to travel to access key services and amenities.</p>	

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site C: Field east of the lane to Blackler Barton	
Transportation	<p>There are no railway stations in proximity to the site. There are two bus stops an approximate 220 m walk along the road to the centre of Woolston Green that allow access to the 165 service. This service provides access to Totnes, Dartington, Staverton and Broadhempston.</p> <p>Whilst the site provides connectivity to the local road network, the road is a private no-through lane which is perhaps less suitable for frequent use. Access into the site would likely need to be established along this private lane, which might not be viable.</p> <p>There are no PRow in vicinity of the site.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.5: Site D

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site D: Land behind The Live and Let Live Pub
	
<p>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p>	<p>The South Hams SAC is located approximately 3.5 km west of the site. Additionally, the site is within the Landscape Connectivity Zone associated with this designation. It is recognised this site is also part of the South Hams Greater Horseshoe Bats SAC buffer zone.</p> <p>This site is also approximately 3.5 km east of the Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI (and is within the Buckfastleigh Caves Sustenance Zone), approximately 3.3 km south-east of Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI and approximately 3.8 km south-east of Ashburton Road Cutting SSSI. However, the site does not overlap with SSSI IRZs for the types of development that could potentially be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential and rural non-residential).</p> <p>There are no BAP Priority Habitats on the site, however there are six individual areas traditional orchard within 100 m to the south that could be impacted by development. Whilst direct impacts on this habitat from development at this site are not anticipated, disturbance may take place from noise and light pollution. Additionally, there are hedgerows located along three of the four site boundaries (north, south, and west). Access from the adjacent lane would involve the loss of some of the hedgerow; the hedgerows should be retained and enhanced as much as possible to avoid biodiversity impacts and to help deliver net gains.</p>

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site D: Land behind The Live and Let Live Pub	
Climate Change	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Woolston Green / Landscope and an intensification of use at this location. However, the level of development to come forward at this site is not likely to significantly impact local CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>With regards to flood risk issues, the whole site is within Fluvial Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of flooding from rivers. There is no risk of surface water flooding on the site or adjacent to it. It is noted that the South Hams Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), published in 2015, indicates infiltration sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) may be appropriate across the neighbourhood area to alleviate excess water in flood events.</p>	
Landscape	<p>The site is not within or within proximity to a National Park, AONB or any green belt land. The nearest designation, Dartmoor National Park, is approximately 3.3 km north-west of the site. According to the Devon County Council Environment Viewer, this site is within the Mid Dart Valley and Slopes local landscape character area; building development is listed as a threat to this landscape type.</p> <p>Although this site is located on the edge of the settlement, development here would partially close the gap between the neighbouring hamlet of Beara. The site is relatively open in character, and the SHELAA assessment for this site indicates the site affords open views to the wider countryside.</p> <p>This site is located close to the village and is at a similar elevation to the existing built-up area of the settlement, declining slightly towards the east. Whilst there is an element of visual screening provided by the hedgerows along the site boundaries, there is likely to be direct views into the east and south of the site from nearby properties.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The site is not within or in proximity to a historic conservation area. There are no scheduled monuments or registered parks and gardens in proximity to the site, and no features listed on the Historic Environment Record have been recorded on the site. There are no listed buildings on or in proximity to this site that would be affected by development.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>According to the indicative ALC for the South West region provided by Natural England, this site is underlain by Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land. The land is predicted to have a low likelihood of containing BMV land. However, development on the site would result in the loss of greenfield land and would not encourage the most efficient use of land in the neighbourhood area (i.e., reuse of brownfield).</p> <p>There are no watercourses within or in proximity to this site, and the site is not within an NVZ. No drainage problems have been identified on this site.</p>	
Community Wellbeing	<p>Woolston Green / Landscope is relatively well served by services and facilities, with the settlement offering built facilities like the Landscope Village Hall and the Live and Let Live Inn, with the Landscope C of E Primary School, the St Matthew Church and the Hill House Nursery café on the outskirts of the settlement boundary to the north-west. The South Hams Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study (OSSR) indicates that the settlement has open spaces in the form of allotments and the village green. As the site is adjacent to the settlement, new development at this location will be in proximity to local services and facilities.</p> <p>However, the closest supermarket and medical facilities can be accessed in Buckfastleigh (approximately 3 km west) and Totnes (approximately 6 km south). Therefore, an allocation at this site may also likely result in an increased need to travel to access key services and amenities.</p>	




SEA Theme	Commentary, Site D: Land behind The Live and Let Live Pub	
Transportation	<p>There are no railway stations in proximity to the site. There are two bus stops an approximate 270 m walk along the road to the centre of Woolston Green that allow access to the 165 service. This service provides access to Totnes, Dartington, Staverton and Broadhempston.</p> <p>The site provides connectivity to the local road network, with access provided by a no-through lane via a turning from the main route through the village centre. However, the SHELAA indicates it is unclear whether satisfactory vehicular access could be achieved for this site. There are also concerns with access to the site due to poor visibility on the junction with little scope for improvement. Additionally, the lane is a single-track road which is perhaps less suited for frequent use.</p> <p>There are no PRow on the site, but there are two footpaths in proximity. One is located approximately 50 m south-west along the road and allows pedestrian access to Barkingdon Manor to the south. The other is located approximately 40 m south and allows pedestrian access to Memory Cross to the south. There is no safe pedestrian to or from this site as there is no pavement on the road.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.6: Site E

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site E: Land next to Beara House
	
<p>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p>	<p>The South Hams SAC is located approximately 3.6 km west of the site. Additionally, the site is within the Landscape Connectivity Zone associated with this designation. It is recognised this site is also part of the South Hams Greater Horseshoe Bats SAC buffer zone.</p> <p>This site is also approximately 3.6 km east of the Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI (and is within the Buckfastleigh Caves Sustenance Zone), approximately 3.5 km south-east of Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI and approximately 4 km south-east of Ashburton Road Cutting SSSI. However, the site does not overlap with SSSI IRZs for the types of development that could potentially be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential and rural non-residential).</p> <p>Half of this site overlaps with the BAP Priority Habitat traditional orchard type; this habitat extends adjacently to the south of the site. There are an additional two areas of traditional orchard within 100 m to the west and south-west that could be impacted by development. There will be direct impacts to the traditional orchard habitat on site if development were to occur here, and indirect impacts will occur for the other areas of traditional orchard through disturbances from noise and light pollution. Additionally, there are hedgerows located along the site boundaries, especially to the east and west. These features should be retained and enhanced (where appropriate) within new development areas, alongside the delivery of net gains.</p>

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site E: Land next to Beara House
Climate Change	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Woolston Green / Landscope and an intensification of use at this location. However, the level of development to come forward at this site is not likely to significantly impact local CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>With regards to flood risk issues, the whole site is within Fluvial Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of flooding from rivers. There is no risk of surface water flooding on the site, however the western part of the site is in proximity to an area at high risk of surface water flooding. It is noted that the South Hams Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), published in 2015, indicates infiltration sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) may be appropriate across the neighbourhood area to alleviate excess water in flood events.</p>
Landscape	<p>The site is not within or within proximity to a National Park, AONB or any green belt land. The nearest designation, Dartmoor National Park, is approximately 3.5 km north-west of the site. According to the Devon County Council Environment Viewer, this site is within the Mid Dart Valley and Slopes local landscape character area; building development is listed as a threat to this landscape type.</p> <p>This site is relatively screened from view from the trees and hedgerows located along and within its boundaries. Whilst there are buildings located to the west, views into the site are likely to be short and limited. Providing the trees and hedgerows are maintained and enhanced through the design of new development, an allocation at this location is likely to assimilate into the surroundings and not encroach into the open countryside. However, residential development at this location would be a contrast to the surrounding uses, which are largely agricultural.</p>
Historic Environment	<p>The site is not within or in proximity to a historic conservation area. There are no scheduled monuments or registered parks and gardens in proximity to the site, and no features listed on the Historic Environment Record have been recorded on the site. There are no listed buildings on the site that would be impacted by development here, however the Grade II Beara Farmhouse is within 100 m south-west of the site. Given its proximity to the site, development here could potentially impact on the setting of this historic environment asset and therefore its significance.</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>According to the indicative ALC for the South West region provided by Natural England, this site is underlain by Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land. The land is predicted to have a low likelihood of containing BMV land. However, development on the site would result in the loss of greenfield land and would not encourage the most efficient use of land in the neighbourhood area (i.e., reuse of brownfield).</p> <p>There are no watercourses within or in proximity to this site, and the site is not within an NVZ. There are no known drainage problems.</p>




SEA Theme	Commentary, Site E: Land next to Beara House	
Community Wellbeing	<p>Woolston Green / Landscope is relatively well served by services and facilities, with the settlement offering built facilities like the Landscope Village Hall and the Live and Let Live Inn, with the Landscope C of E Primary School, the St Matthew Church and the Hill House Nursery café on the outskirts of the settlement boundary to the north-west. The South Hams Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study (OSSR) indicates that the settlement has open spaces in the form of allotments and the village green.</p> <p>However, the closest supermarket and medical facilities can be accessed in Buckfastleigh (approximately 3 km west) and Totnes (approximately 6 km south). Additionally, the site is located to the north west of the settlement (in the hamlet of Beara) and is less well positioned with respect to proximity to local services and facilities. Therefore, an allocation at this site may also likely result in an increased need to travel to access key services and amenities.</p>	
Transportation	<p>There are no railway stations in proximity to the site. There are two bus stops an approximate 430 m walk along the road to the centre of Woolston Green that allow access to the 165 service. This service provides access to Totnes, Dartington, Staverton and Broadhempston.</p> <p>The site provides connectivity to the local road network, with access provided by a no-through lane via a turning from the main route through the village centre. There are also concerns with access to the site due to poor visibility on the junction with little scope for improvement. Additionally, the lane is a single-track road which is perhaps less suited for frequent use.</p> <p>There are no PRoW on the site, but there is one footpath in proximity; it is located approximately 30 m west. There is no pavement on the road to facilitate safe pedestrian access.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect

Table 4.7: Site F

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site F: Land beside The Live and Let Live Pub car park
	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>The South Hams SAC is located approximately 3.4 km west of the site. Additionally, the site is within the Landscape Connectivity Zone associated with this designation. It is recognised this site is also part of the South Hams Greater Horseshoe Bats SAC buffer zone.</p> <p>This site is also approximately 3.4 km east of the Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI (and is within the Buckfastleigh Caves Sustenance Zone), approximately 3.3 km south-east of Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI and approximately 3.9 km south-east of Ashburton Road Cutting SSSI. However, the site does not overlap with SSSI IRZs for the types of development that could potentially be taken forward through the neighbourhood plan (i.e., residential, rural residential and rural non-residential).</p> <p>There are no BAP Priority Habitats on the site, however there are two individual areas traditional orchard within 20 m to the east that could be impacted by development. Whilst direct impacts on this habitat from development at this site are not anticipated, disturbance may take place from noise and light pollution. Additionally, there are hedgerows located along three of the four site boundaries (north, east, and west). It is likely access to the site will involve the loss of some of the hedgerow; the remaining features should be retained and enhanced (where appropriate) to reduce biodiversity impact and deliver net gains.</p>

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site F: Land beside The Live and Let Live Pub car park	
Climate Change	<p>Development of this site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of Woolston Green / Landscope and an intensification of use at this location. However, the level of development to come forward at this site is not likely to significantly impact local CO₂ emissions.</p> <p>With regards to flood risk issues, the whole site is within Fluvial Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of flooding from rivers. There is no risk of surface water flooding on the site or in proximity to it. It is noted that the South Hams Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), published in 2015, indicates infiltration sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) may be appropriate across the neighbourhood area to alleviate excess water in flood events.</p>	
Landscape	<p>The site is not within or within proximity to a National Park, AONB or any green belt land. The nearest designation, Dartmoor National Park, is approximately 3.3 km north-west of the site. According to the Devon County Council Environment Viewer, this site is within the Mid Dart Valley and Slopes local landscape character area; building development is listed as a threat to this landscape type.</p> <p>The hedgerows and trees located along the northern and western site boundaries likely provide visual screening from properties in the village centre. However, development at this location would result in an extension of village to the south into the surrounding countryside, altering the village character.</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The site is not within or in proximity to a historic conservation area. There are no scheduled monuments or registered parks and gardens in proximity to the site, and no features listed on the local HER have been recorded on the site or in proximity to it. There are no listed buildings on or in proximity to the site.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>According to the indicative ALC for the South West region provided by Natural England, this site is underlain by Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land. The land is predicted to have a low likelihood of containing BMV land. However, development on the site would result in the loss of greenfield land and would not encourage the most efficient use of land in the neighbourhood area (i.e., reuse of brownfield).</p> <p>There are no watercourses within or in proximity to this site, but the site does overlap with the SWSGZ5014 Safeguard Zone for surface water. However, the type of development to be brought forward at this site is not likely to significantly impact this Safeguard Zone, as it is at risk of pesticides.</p>	
Community Wellbeing	<p>Woolston Green / Landscope is relatively well served by services and facilities, with the settlement offering built facilities like the Landscope Village Hall and the Live and Let Live Inn, with the Landscope C of E Primary School, the St Matthew Church and the Hill House Nursery café on the outskirts of the settlement boundary to the north-west. The South Hams Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study (OSSR) indicates that the settlement has open spaces in the form of allotments and the village green. As the site is adjacent to the settlement, new development at this location will be in proximity to local services and facilities.</p> <p>However, the closest supermarket and medical facilities can be accessed in Buckfastleigh (approximately 3 km west) and Totnes (approximately 6 km south). Therefore, an allocation at this site may also likely result in an increased need to travel to access key services and amenities.</p>	

SEA Theme	Commentary, Site F: Land beside The Live and Let Live Pub car park		
Transportation	<p>There are no railway stations in proximity to the site. There are two bus stops an approximate 230 m walk along the road to the centre of Woolston Green that allow access to the 165 service. This service provides access to Totnes, Dartington, Staverton and Broadhempston.</p> <p>It is possible to establish access into the eastern section of site via the road which runs alongside its eastern boundary. This road is relatively wide at this location and connects to the village centre approximately 150m to the north west. Access into the northern section of the site is possible, although this would pass through The Live and Let Live Pub car park.</p> <p>There are no PRow on the site, but there is one footpath adjacent to the site to the west, which provides pedestrian access to Barkington Manor to the south. There is no pavement on the road to facilitate safe pedestrian access. However, the width of the road may potentially accommodate a footpath.</p>		
Key			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effect	

Summary of appraisal findings

Table 4.8: Summary of SEA site appraisal findings

Site	Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Climate Change	Landscape	Historic Env.	Land, Soil and Water Resources	Community Wellbeing	Transport
Site A	Red	Yellow	Blue	Red	Blue	Yellow	Blue
Site B	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue
Site C	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Red
Site D	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Red
Site E	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red
Site F	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Blue	Yellow	Yellow

Developing the preferred approach

Choice of sites taken forward as allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.25 To deliver the housing target of 20 dwellings within Woolston Green / Landscope, the Neighbourhood Plan allocates Site A ‘Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green’ for six dwellings (see Policy SNP4 within the Neighbourhood Plan). The choice of site allocation has been informed by the findings of the site assessments undertaken for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, community consultation events, and the SEA findings.
- 4.26 The remaining 14 dwellings will be met on ‘Land at Beara Farm’ which has conditional approval (ref: [1419/20/FUL](#)). The Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of the development at ‘Land at Beara Farm’ and seeks to make some additional recommendations for developers to ensure that 1) community aspirations are delivered through the design of the scheme and 2) any constraints to development are appropriately addressed. These are discussed within the plan appraisal section in **Chapter 5** below.
- 4.27 In response to the identified issues associated with the potential site options surrounding Staverton village (as discussed earlier within **Chapter 4**), the Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating sites in Staverton village. However, the Steering Group and Parish Council are committed to working with South Hams District Council to identify suitable locations for development in Staverton village in order to contribute towards local housing requirements. This includes establishing a Community Land Trust for the benefit of the local community and working with local landowners to identify further potential sites for affordable housing. A review of the eight sites which were considered through the initial site assessment process (but later discounted) is also likely to be completed, to ensure a “no stone left unturned” approach to the identification of potential sites. In this respect, it is anticipated that any sites which are brought forward in Staverton village during the plan period would be allocated as exception sites for affordable housing, aligning with JLP policy provisions for the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area.

5. Appraisal of the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan. This chapter presents:

- An appraisal of the current version (i.e., the submission version) of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan under the seven SEA theme headings.
- The overall conclusions at this current stage.

Staverton Neighbourhood Plan policies

5.2 To support the implementation of the vision statement for the Neighbourhood Plan, the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan puts forward 16 policies to guide new development within the neighbourhood area.

5.3 Policies were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering. Earlier draft versions of the policies have been revisited and updated in light of the responses which were received through community consultation, Regulation 14 consultation, and through recommendations and suggestions proposed through the SEA process and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process. The policies are listed below in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Neighbourhood Plan policies

Policy reference	Policy name
SNP1	Sustainable Communities
SNP2	Settlement Boundaries
SNP3	Local Green Spaces
SNP4	Housing Development
SNP5	Affordable Housing and Single Plot Exception Sites
SNP 6	Business, Employment and Tourism Development
SNP7	Reuse of Redundant Farm Buildings
SNP8	Broadband and Telecommunications Infrastructure
SNP9	Design and Construction
SNP10	Heritage and Conservation
SNP11	Landscape and Biodiversity
SNP12	Tranquillity and Dark Skies

Policy reference	Policy name
SNP13	Travel and Transport
SNP14	Renewable Energy
SNP15	Energy in New Development
SNP16	Sustainable Drainage

Approach to this appraisal

- 5.4 For each SEA theme, ‘significant effects’ of the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect ‘characteristics’ will be described within the assessment, as appropriate.
- 5.5 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects to ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.
- 5.6 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking account of the criteria presented within Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect ‘characteristics’ are described within the assessment as appropriate.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.7 The submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is accompanied by a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)²⁴ which has considered in detail the potential impact pathways between the proposed site allocations and internationally designated sites. Several recommendations in the form of additional policy wording have been made to ensure that adequate mitigation measures are delivered by developers at the planning application stage. These recommendations, which relate to the use of functionally linked land by the qualifying features of the South Hams SAC (i.e., greater horseshoe bats), can be viewed within the HRA. Providing that the recommended mitigation measures within the HRA are appropriately reflected within the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, no adverse impacts to the integrity of internationally designated sites are expected as a result of the policies and proposals within the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.8 Under national legislation, the site allocations within Policy SNP4: Housing and Development must deliver a 10% minimum net gain in biodiversity. With

²⁴ AECOM (November 2022): HRA for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan’, report prepared on behalf of the Steering Group, contributing to the evidence base for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

reference to important ecological features, the proposed allocation at Site A 'Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green' does not contain any BAP Priority Habitats. However, 'Land at Beara Farm' contains areas of traditional orchard BAP Priority Habitat on site. Additionally, both sites have trees and hedgerows along their boundaries. In this respect, Policy SNP2: Settlement Boundaries stipulates development will be permitted inside the settlement boundary of Woolston Green, where the two allocated sites are located, so long as it causes no significant adverse impacts on natural assets, which will include features of biodiversity value. Policy SNP9: Design and Construction indicates that all development will be expected to protect, conserve, and enhance local biodiversity. Policy SNP11: Biodiversity and Landscape works to ensure development protects and enhances features that make a biodiversity contribution. The policy also indicates tree planting will be welcomed in associated with development alongside the wilding or verges and hedges, to improve biodiversity connectivity within the neighbourhood area. These policies demonstrate the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan has carefully considered the role biodiversity has in the local landscape and should help to protect and enhance ecological features through the design of development. Additionally, the decision notice for 'Land at Beara Farm' indicates the recommendations, mitigation and enhancement measures included in the Ecological Report published in 2020 must be fully implemented prior to the start of development.^{25,26}

- 5.9 More broadly in relation to safeguarding biodiversity assets, local green spaces in the neighbourhood area have been designated in part due to their richness of wildlife. Safeguarding these areas under Policy SNP3: Local Green Spaces will stabilise and potentially improve biodiversity in these areas. Policy SNP6: Business, Employment and Tourism Development indicates that economic development proposals are supported providing that it can be demonstrated that the proposals would not cause detrimental impacts to the local environment. Furthermore, Policy SNP14: Renewable Energy stipulates small scale renewable energy development will be welcome where there are no unacceptable impacts on biodiversity, which again provides protection.

Climate Change

- 5.10 The extent to which the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan has the potential to support climate change mitigation efforts is dependent (in part) on a distribution strategy which promotes development at locations in closer proximity to the existing services and facilities in the neighbourhood area. In this respect, the settlement of Woolston Green / Landscope is relatively well served by services and facilities, defined as a 'sustainable village' within the JLP. As the proposed site allocations are adjacent to the settlement boundary, the Neighbourhood Plan will facilitate new development areas within proximity to local amenities. However, it is recognised that residents will likely need to travel further afield to access a greater variety of services and amenities (such as supermarkets and medical facilities).

- 5.11 Further contributing to climate change mitigation efforts, Policy SNP4 stipulates that new development will be designed to incorporate low carbon construction

²⁵ South Hams and West Devon Planning Search (2021) 'Decision notice – 23/12/2021' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁶ South Hams and West Devon Planning Search (2020) 'Ecology report – Updated Ecological Impact Assessment May 2020 – 04/06/2020' can be accessed [here](#).

techniques, sustainable use of resources and high energy efficiency. This will eliminate the use of fossil fuels by adopting low and zero carbon energy sources (where appropriate) and promoting the efficient re-use and recycling of resources. Policy SNP9 goes on to state that all development should target zero-carbon emissions, meet the latest sustainable construction standards, minimise the use of non-renewable resources, maximise solar gain and maximise sustainability and energy efficiency. Policy SNP14 encourages proposals for renewable energy development, subject to the consideration of the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan policies and local policy provisions. Policies SNP9 and SNP13: Travel and Transport also indicate electric charging points should be provided for new development. Furthermore, Policy SNP13 outlines how the local public transport network will be maintained and enhanced, with a view to reducing carbon emissions by lowering the number of private vehicles on the road.

- 5.12 With reference to adapting to the effects of climate change, both site allocations under Policy SNP4 are located within Fluvial Flood Zone 1 and therefore have a low probability of flooding from watercourses. However, Site A 'Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green' is located next to an area at low risk of surface water flooding. In this respect, Policy SNP16: Sustainable Drainage outlines the need for all development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems that meet current standards. This will help to adapt to the impacts of flooding. Additionally, the planning decision notice for 'Land at Beara Farm' stipulates that pipework should be included across the site to facilitate a discharge point to ensure any surface water drainage systems operate efficiently and do not cause an increase in flood risk.
- 5.13 With further reference to adapting to the effects of climate change, Policy SNP3 and Policy SNP11 seek to protect and enhance landscape and biodiversity features, including local green spaces. The provisions of these policies will safeguard natural carbon sequesters located within the landscape (e.g., trees and hedgerows) and positively respond to the potential effects of climate change (particularly from extreme weather events) through providing summer shading and shelter and reducing surface water run-off issues. It is also anticipated that the provisions of the NPPF and JLP policy will help to guide development away from the areas at highest risk of flooding.

Landscape

- 5.14 An overview of the landscape and villagescape considerations for the proposed site allocation is provided below:
- Site A 'Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green': This site is at a higher elevation in comparison to the existing built-up areas in Woolston Green / Landscope. It is therefore likely that development at this site may be seen from surrounding areas and contribute to the wider setting of the settlement. However, there is partial screening in place provided by the tall hedgerows along the site boundaries. Additionally, it is noted that development at this site could significantly alter the form and open character of the village by closing the gap between the village and the church. Development at this site could also obstruct some views of the church. Nonetheless, development in the southern section of the site (which is where the location of development within the Neighbourhood Plan

is proposed) would complement the existing form of development along the southern side of the result, resulting in a continuation of existing development patterns at this location.

- 5.15 In the context of the above, Policy SNP11 works to protect the landscape – stipulating that development cannot harm the landscape but should protect and enhance important features that make a positive contribution to it. This includes features like trees, hedge banks and green lanes. Policy SNP12: Tranquillity and Dark Skies states that development shall cause no undue disturbance, noise, or light pollution. In this way development on the site will lead to the protection and enhancement of important landscape features in Woolston Green, which is a positive impact. Policy SNP2 also demonstrates that landscape is an important component of the neighbourhood area by indicating development within the designated settlement boundaries will not be permitted where they cause significant adverse impacts on the surroundings, ensuring the wider setting of the settlements are protected. Additionally, the design considerations put forward through Policy SNP9 will help to facilitate opportunities for high quality design and layout to be incorporated within new development areas. Specific reference is given to ensuring that the design is in scale and keeping with its setting, respects and enhances local character, and safeguards local distinctiveness.
- 5.16 With reference to any non-residential development proposals which may come forward during the plan period, Policy SNP6 indicates business, employment and tourism infrastructure development will be supported where it causes no detriment to the local environment, which encompasses the landscape. Policy SNP10 also indicates landscape elements that contribute to the value of historic environment assets will be preserved. Additionally, under policy SNP14, small scale renewable energy developments will be welcomed where they have no unacceptable impacts, including on the landscape; thus ensuring the landscape is protected from unsuitable development. Furthermore, renewable energy design should appropriately consider the landscape when designing infrastructure, paying attention to the siting and scale of the development in the wider landscape.
- 5.17 Enhanced habitats (trees, hedgerows, grass, shrub, etc.,) can also form important parts of landscape and villagescape character, enhancing the street scene and providing screening to restrict undesirable views. Key policies in this regard include Policy SNP3 and Policy SNP11 which seek to improve green connections between new development areas and the surrounding landscape.

Historic Environment

- 5.18 With reference to the proposed site allocation at Site A 'Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green', the key heritage constraints are identified as follows:
- Although there are no listed buildings within the site boundaries, the site is less than 100 m from four listed buildings – the Grade II Hill House, Grade II Lych Gate to South East of St Matthew Church, the Grade II* Church of St Matthew to the north-west, and the Grade II* Woolston Green Farmhouse to the south-east. Without appropriate mitigation, development at this site has the potential to impact the setting of these historic environment assets and therefore impact their significance. It is also noted

that development at this site could obstruct some views of the church in its rural setting – which could impact on its setting and significance.

- 5.19 Although Neighbourhood Plan policies have a strong focus on ensuring high-quality design through new development proposals (see Policy SNP9), **the SEA recommends** that the wording of the site-specific policy (Policy SNP4) or Policy SNP10: Heritage and Conservation is enhanced to encourage development proposals to complete a proportionate heritage impact assessment at the planning application stage to help to understand the significance of the heritage features and the potential impacts of new development areas. This will ensure that appropriate mitigation is provided to assuage any concerns by Historic England.
- 5.20 Historic environment sensitivities are further reflected by Neighbourhood Plan policies and proposals which focus on the conservation and enhancement of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, and their settings.
- 5.21 For example, Policy SNP10 works to ensure the preservation of landscape and / or street scene elements that contribute to the value of the designated historic environment assets. The policy indicates non-designated heritage assets that make a positive contribution to the character, views and setting of their location should be conserved and enhanced. Additionally, Policy SNP2 indicates development within the village settlement boundaries will be permitted where development will not cause significant adverse impacts on historic assets.
- 5.22 More broadly, delivering net gains in biodiversity and facilitating green infrastructure enhancements can have beneficial impacts in terms of the built environment, and by extension, the setting of the historic environment. Key policies in this regard include Policy SNP3 and Policy SNP11 which are discussed in more detail within the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' and 'Landscape' appraisals, above. In addition to supporting enhancements to the setting of features and areas of historic environment interest, this has the potential to support and strengthen the character of the built environment.

Land, Soil, and Water Resources

- 5.23 Although a detailed agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken for most of the neighbourhood area, it is noted in the predictive land quality assessment that the undeveloped areas surrounding Woolston Green / Landscope have a relatively low likelihood of containing best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Nonetheless, the proposed site allocation through Policy SNP4 will result in the permanent loss of greenfield land and would not encourage the most efficient use of land in the neighbourhood area (i.e., reuse of brownfield). However, it is important to note that Site A 'Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green' is adjacent to the existing village boundary and the scale of development to come forward at this location (six dwellings in total) is not likely to result in the loss of any significant areas of greenfield land within the neighbourhood area or significantly encroach into the open countryside. Additionally, Policy SNP11 indicates that development should avoid building on good and moderate quality agricultural land, including Grade 3, unless there is no alternative and the benefits of the development to the community outweigh the need for protection.

- 5.24 The Neighbourhood Plan also has a strong focus on protecting the open countryside from inappropriate levels of development. For example, several policies also seek to protect key features of landscape and biodiversity interest and promote green space and open space. Key policies in this regard include Policy SNP3, Policy SNP9, and Policy SNP11. While these policies do not specifically seek to address land, soil and water resources, the policies will indirectly help promote and protect these resources, including the promotion of high-quality green networks in the neighbourhood area and the protection and enhancement of key landscape and villagescape features. This will help support the capacity of the landscape and villagescape to regulate soil and water quality.
- 5.25 Concerning the protection of watercourses, Policy SNP16 affirms that new development areas should adopt best practice in sustainable drainage. This will indirectly contribute to water quality improvements through limiting suspended solids entering watercourses from surface water run-off.

Community Wellbeing

- 5.26 To deliver the housing target of 20 dwellings within Woolston Green / Landscope, the Neighbourhood Plan allocates Site A for six dwellings (see Policy SNP4 within the Neighbourhood Plan). The choice of site allocation has been informed by the findings of the site assessments undertaken for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, community consultation events, and the SEA findings. The remaining 14 dwellings will be met on 'Land at Beara Farm' which has conditional approval (ref: [1419/20/FUL](#)). Both sites are 1) adjacent or very near to the village boundary and 2) of a size which, if brought forward for development, could deliver an appropriate percentage of affordable dwellings. This will ensure that new development areas are located within proximity to local services and facilities and address a key issue within the community with respect to the availability of affordable dwellings.
- 5.27 In response to the identified issues associated with the potential site options surrounding Staverton village (as discussed earlier within **Chapter 4**), the Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating sites in Staverton village. However, the Steering Group and Parish Council are committed to working with South Hams District Council to identify suitable locations for development in Staverton village in order to contribute towards local housing requirements. This includes establishing a Community Land Trust for the benefit of the local community and working with local landowners to identify further potential sites for affordable housing. A review of the eight sites which were considered through the initial site assessment process (but later discounted) is also likely to be completed, to ensure a "no stone left unturned" approach to the identification of potential sites. In this respect, it is anticipated that any sites which are brought forward in Staverton village during the plan period would be allocated as exception sites for affordable housing, aligning with JLP policy provisions for the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area.
- 5.28 The quality and type of development is a key influence on the quality of life of residents. In this respect, Policy SNP4 indicates that development proposals providing affordable housing for local people will be particularly welcome and supported. Policy SNP9 provides criteria and guidance for potential proposals with a view to implementing high quality design and layout within new

development areas. The quality of housing will also be supported by both Policy SNP4 and SNP9 which set out several provisions which seek to support energy efficient and low carbon development. This will help to address issues such as fuel poverty, which is important in the current economic climate given the rising costs of living. In this respect, the neighbourhood area will help facilitate the delivery of high quality and inclusive homes and neighbourhoods with the potential to promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents.

- 5.29 A key aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan is to ensure that the provision of community facilities continues to reflect the needs of a changing and increasingly diverse population, and that these facilities are accessible to all. Policy SNP1 indicates development that supports the strength and vitality of the community will be welcomed, especially that which will meet local needs which otherwise would not be met. Additionally, the policy indicates proposals for additional community facilities and infrastructure will be supported where appropriate. These policies will help to support the vitality of the sustainable villages in the neighbourhood area and enable people to live locally.
- 5.30 The Neighbourhood Plan also seeks to promote the economic vitality of the area and support employment opportunities. For example, Policy SNP6 works to improve the area's economic infrastructure, supporting development of adaptable spaces for businesses and live / work accommodation. Adapting existing buildings to facilitate working from home is also supported through the policy. Additionally, Policy SNP8: Broadband and Telecommunications Infrastructure stipulates proposals to expand mobile phone coverage, electronic communications and broadband networks will be encouraged. In this respect, enhanced infrastructure will improve community wellbeing by allowing for greater connectivity in work and personal life, whilst also recognising the importance of small businesses and homeworking in the area.
- 5.31 More broadly, Neighbourhood Plan policies and proposals have a strong emphasis on delivering public realm improvements (including through green infrastructure provision). Green infrastructure provides space for recreation and relaxation, and access to nature has been evidenced to improve people's health and wellbeing, through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation²⁷. Key policies in this respect include Policy SNP9, Policy SNP11: Landscape and Biodiversity, and Policy SNP13: Travel and Transport. The quality of the living environment will also be supported by policies which encourage the protection of adequate and well-located public amenity space of an appropriate size and type, see Policy SNP3: Local Green Spaces. This will support physical and mental health and wellbeing of the local community.

Transportation

- 5.32 With reference to local public transport networks, the settlement of Woolston Green / Landscope is not connected to the rail network. However, there are bus services which pass through the settlement which provide connections to nearby communities in Totnes, Dartington, Staverton and Broadhempston. As the proposed allocations through Policy SNP4 are adjacent to the village boundary, new development will be delivered in proximity to local public transport networks. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that residents will likely

²⁷ Natural England (2021): 'Green Infrastructure Network Framework' [online] available to access via: [this link](#)

remain reliant on private vehicles to access neighbouring communities which have a greater variety of services and facilities. Whilst the proposed allocations have the potential to exacerbate traffic and congestion issues within the neighbourhood area, the scale of development to come forward is perhaps less likely to significantly increase overall traffic levels.

- 5.33 In the context of the above, the Neighbourhood Plan has a focus on encourage a modal shift towards sustainable and active travel. For example, Policy SNP13 indicates that development should make appropriate provision for pedestrians and cyclists and should contribute towards maintaining and enhancing local public and community transport, including transport services, footpaths, and cycle paths. This message is also communicated in policy SNP1 and SNP2, which encourage proposals to be located in proximity to the boundaries of the sustainable villages, which are the settlements which are best served by public transport provision within the neighbourhood area.
- 5.34 The potential impacts of traffic and movement is considered through a range of policies. Policy SNP2 demonstrates development within the settlement boundaries within the neighbourhood area will be permitted where it will not cause significant adverse impacts on traffic, parking, or safety. Policy SNP6 indicates that this type of development will be supported where plans demonstrate there will be safe and adequate access and parking. Additionally, the Neighbourhood Plan also indicates that 20 mph zones are a priority for the neighbourhood area, especially around Staverton village as the road becomes a 'rat-run' for traffic between the A38 and Torbay.

Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.35 The assessment has concluded that the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood is likely to have significant positive effects in relation to the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA theme through delivering housing which meets local needs, by supporting accessibility to services and facilities, enhancing community facilities, and through promoting the vitality of the local economy. This will support social inclusion, the quality of life of residents, and community vitality. Positive effects in relation to the 'Community Wellbeing' SEA theme are also linked to the Plan's promotion of green infrastructure enhancements and encouragement of healthier modes of travel. Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate sites for housing development in Staverton village, there is a strong emphasis through the Plan to continue working with key stakeholders to identify suitable locations for development in in order to contribute towards local housing requirements. This is more likely to support a diverse and balanced community.
- 5.36 The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is also likely to lead to positive effects in relation to the 'Landscape' SEA theme. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's emphasis on protecting and enhancing the relationship between the natural and built environment (i.e., between the villages and the open countryside), safeguarding the open countryside from inappropriate development, and through incorporating high-quality and sensitive design through new development proposals.
- 5.37 In relation to the 'Historic Environment' SEA theme, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan includes several measures which seek to conserve and enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets (and their

settings). As the proposed site allocation at Site A 'Fields between Landscope Church and Woolston Green' is within proximity to designated heritage assets, it is recognised that an allocation at this location has the potential to have some indirect impacts on the significance of these heritage assets. In this respect, **the SEA recommends** that the wording of the site-specific policy (Policy SNP4) or Policy SNP10: Heritage and Conservation is enhanced to encourage development proposals to complete a proportionate heritage impact assessment at the planning application stage to help to understand the significance of the heritage features and the potential impacts of new development areas. This will ensure that appropriate mitigation is provided to assuage any concerns by Historic England.

- 5.38 Additionally, the Neighbourhood Plan will bring positive effects in relation to the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' SEA theme through seeking to retain and enhance ecological networks through the design of new development areas, in addition to encouraging net gains. However, given the approaches taken forward through the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will help limit potential effects from new development areas rather than secure significant enhancements, these impacts are less likely to comprise significant positive effects overall. Within the HRA, several recommendations in the form of additional policy wording have been made to ensure that adequate mitigation measures are delivered by developers at the planning application stage. These recommendations, which relate to the use of functionally linked land by the qualifying features of the South Hams SAC (i.e., greater horseshoe bats), can be viewed within the HRA. Providing that the recommended mitigation measures within the HRA are appropriately reflected within the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan, no adverse impacts to the integrity of internationally designated sites are expected as a result of the policies and proposals within the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.39 Regarding the 'Climate Change' SEA theme, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will potentially lead to positive effects through supporting development proposals which include low carbon energy sources and energy efficiency measures, sustainable and natural drainage to address any localised flood risk issues, and renewable energy generating infrastructure to address the climate crisis. However, this is dependent on the extent to which these mitigation and adaptation measures are incorporated into the design of the schemes.
- 5.40 The Neighbourhood Plan will also initiate several beneficial approaches regarding the 'Transportation' SEA theme, given its focus on enhancing the active travel network, including public rights of way and cycle routes, and encouraging sustainable modes of transportation. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that residents will likely remain reliant on private vehicles to access neighbouring communities which have a greater variety of services, facilities, and amenities.
- 5.41 The Neighbourhood Plan will also initiate several beneficial approaches for the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme through the implementation of objectives which seek to limit pollution and improve the environmental quality of the parish. Although the proposed site allocation would result in the loss of greenfield land, the scale of development to come forward is not likely to result in the loss of any significant areas of greenfield land within the neighbourhood area or significantly encroach into the open countryside.

6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 The SEA Environmental Report accompanies the submission version of the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan to the responsible authority, South Hams District Council, for Independent Examination.
- 6.2 At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with local planning policy.
- 6.3 If the Independent Examination is favourable, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by South Hams District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area.

Appendix A SEA Scoping – Context Review and Baseline Information

A.1 Air Quality

Context review

Table A1.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A1.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the air quality SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
Environment Act	2021
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
The Clean Air Strategy	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations	2017
Environment Act	1995
South Hams 2021 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)	2021
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	2019

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider the principles outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which seek to reduce or mitigate air quality impacts during development whilst simultaneously taking advantage of opportunities to improve air quality. Measures include, but are not limited to; sustainable transport solutions, limiting the need to travel, compliance with pollutant limits or objectives, and the enhancement of green infrastructure. Smaller-scale development should consider the potential for cumulative effects in relation to air quality. The NPPF also states that planning policies should contribute towards compliance with pollutant limit levels or national objectives; acknowledging air quality management areas, clean air zones and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Moreover, the NPPF indicates that new and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.
- The Clean Air Strategy outlines how the government will tackle all sources of air pollution. The strategy proposes goals to cut public exposure to particulate matter pollution and outlines required action to meet these goals. Furthermore, it seeks to recognise wider sources that cause poor air quality, such as diffuse sources and smaller contributors. The proposed measures include new legislation and local powers to act in areas with air pollution issues.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan establishes how the government will expand net gain approaches to include air quality improvements, such as planting more trees in urban areas and changing fuel supplies. In particular, ‘Goal 1 Clean air’

and the policies contained within 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' directly relate to the air quality SEA theme.

- The UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide is focused on lowering nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions to statutory limits as quickly as possible. The plan acknowledges that an improvement in air quality and a reduction in emissions is important and aims to position the UK at the forefront of vehicle innovation by making motoring cleaner.
- Local authorities are required to monitor air quality across the district, report regularly to Defra and act where nationally set levels and limits of pollutants are likely to be exceeded under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995). Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene, and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as air quality management areas (AQMA) and local authorities are required to produce an air quality action plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area. Under Schedule 11 in the Environment Act (2021), a local authority must identify any parts of its area in which it appears air quality standards or objectives are not likely to be achieved within the relevant period. Additionally, local authorities must also identify relevant sources of emissions that are considered partly or wholly responsible for failing to achieve air quality standards or objectives in the area. As such, the South Hams 2021 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) is the last available report for the neighbourhood area; fulfilling the requirements of the local air quality management (LAQM) as set out in Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995).
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. In particular, this includes:
 - Policy DEV2 – Air, water, soil, noise, land and light;
 - Policy DEV13 – Consideration of sites for Travellers and Travelling Showpeople; and
 - Policy DEV29 – Specific provisions relating to transport.

Summary of Current Baseline

According to the South Hams 2021 Air Quality ASR, there are no AQMA or action plans in the neighbourhood area. The AQMA within South Hams cover areas within Ivybridge, Totnes and Dean Prior. The Totnes AQMA is approximately 2 km to the south of the neighbourhood area.

Air quality monitoring in the South Hams is undertaken for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂); the main source for this is local traffic emissions, which has an annual national objective of not exceeding 40 ug/m³. Other than NO₂ there are no other pollutants of concern in the South Hams area.

The Totnes AQMA had recorded NO₂ levels around the national objective with no obvious change until 2019 when it lowered to 37 ug/m³. Levels lowered again in 2020, but this may be due to COVID-19 having an impact through enforced lockdowns.

South Hams District Council, in partnership with West Devon Borough Council, is actively taking measures to reduce pollution to below the current objective levels. Measures which are proposed include ensuring that greener travel options are

encouraged, implementing further low emission vehicle infrastructure, and ensuring any potential air pollution problems caused by development are appropriately identified and addressed through planning.

Summary of Future Baseline

Future development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to increase traffic, congestion, and their associated emissions. In the absence of suitable planning and mitigation, this could lead to a deterioration in air quality. Therefore, mitigation measures should be incorporated into the design of new development areas to maintain (and where possible, improve) air quality.

It is considered that the present shift towards the use of sustainable transportation, including active travel modes and electric vehicle use, has the potential to support longer term air quality improvements. Furthermore, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a shift towards employees working from home, which also contributes to emissions reduction. Planning for these factors during development will have a positive impact on air quality.

A.2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Context review

Table A2.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A2.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the biodiversity and geodiversity SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
Environment Act 2021	2021
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework	2012
The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper)	2011
Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services	2011
Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act	2006
UK Biodiversity Action Plan	1994
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	2019

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Environment Act makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England, in addition to creating biodiversity gain site registers and biodiversity credits. It recognises there is a duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and encourages the identification of suitable areas through biodiversity reports and local nature recovery strategies. Furthermore, habitat maps are expected to include recovery and enhancement areas which are currently, or could become, important for biodiversity.

- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, which indicate that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance soils and sites of biodiversity and / or geological value. Plans should also identify, map, and safeguard components of wider ecological networks, promote positive action for priority habitats and species, and pursue opportunities to secure biodiversity net gains. The NPPF also states that if development causes substantial harm and cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated, then planning permission should be refused.
- The NPPF also supports the establishment and enhancement of habitat networks and green infrastructure to allow for more resilience to current and future pressures for biodiversity.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan places importance on improvements to the natural environment, such as achieving clean air and water, reducing environmental hazard risk, and encouraging sustainable resource use. This will be accomplished through a variety of actions including implementing sustainable land management, engaging in nature recovery, and connecting people to the environment.
- The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a response to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which calls for the development and enforcement of national strategies and associated action plans to identify, conserve and protect existing biological diversity, and to enhance it wherever possible. In particular, the BAP identifies priority species and habitats that are most threatened and require conservation action. The UK BAP is succeeded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, which aims to ensure that biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored, and wisely used, and ecosystem services are maintained. This helps to sustain a healthy planet that delivers essential benefits for everyone.
- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustaining economic growth, prospering communities, and personal wellbeing. It adopts a landscape approach to protect and enhance biodiversity and aims to create a green economy, whereby the economic growth and the health of natural resources sustain each other.
- Reflecting the commitments within the NEWP, Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services aims to stop overall biodiversity loss, support healthy and well-functioning ecosystems, and establish coherent ecological networks.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act details nature protection in the UK, which includes wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and National Parks. It extends the UK Government's duty to biodiversity and establishes the role of Natural England, which is responsible for safeguarding England's natural environment, making sure it is protected and improved whilst ensuring people enjoy, understand, and access it.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. In particular, this includes:
 - Policy SPT12 – Strategic approach to the natural environment;

- Policy DEV26 – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation; and
- Policy DEV28 – Trees, woodlands, and hedgerows.

Summary of Current Baseline

Special Areas of Conservation

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (known as the Ramsar Convention) is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and appropriate use of wetlands and their resources²⁸. In the UK, many Ramsar sites were also designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)²⁹. To ensure European Directives were operable in the UK after the EU transition period, changes were made through the implementation of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019³⁰. In doing so, SPAs and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) form a national site network within the UK³¹, comprising of sites already designated under the Nature Directives (i.e., 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC) and any additional sites designated under the 2019 Regulations.

Whilst there are no Ramsar sites or SPAs within or in proximity to the neighbourhood area, there are two SACs within 3 km of the parish boundary: South Hams SAC and the South Dartmoor Woods SAC. The location of these designations is shown in the figures at the end of the chapter. The whole of the neighbourhood area is within the Buckfastleigh Caves Sustenance Zone and Landscape Connectivity Zone associated with the South Hams SAC.

The South Hams SAC³² covers approximately 126.87 ha and is characterised by:

- Coastal sand dunes, sand beaches, machair (2%);
- Shingle, sea cliffs, islets (5%);
- Heath, scrub, maquis and garrigue, phygrana (10%);
- Dry grassland, steppes (10%);
- Improved grassland (10%);
- Other arable land (5%);
- Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (25%);
- Coniferous woodland (5%);
- Mixed woodland (10%);
- Inland rocks, screes, sands, permanent snow and ice (3%); and
- Other land (including towns, villages, roads, waste places, mines, industrial sites) (15%).

²⁸ Ramsar Convention (2014) 'Introducing the Convention on Wetlands' can be accessed [here](#).

²⁹ EU (1979) 'The European Birds Directive (79/209/EEC)' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁰ UK Government (2019) 'The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' can be accessed [here](#).

³¹ Defra (2021) 'Policy Paper: Changes to the Habitats Regulations 2017' can be accessed [here](#).

³² JNCC (2015) 'South Hams SAC' can be accessed [here](#).

The South Dartmoor Woods SAC³³ covers approximately 2159.06 ha and is characterised by:

- Inland water bodies (standing water, running water) (2%);
- Bogs, marshes, water fringed vegetation, fens (2%);
- Heath, scrub, maquis and garrigue, phygrana (17%);
- Dry grassland, steppes (9%);
- Broad-leaved deciduous woodland (67%); and
- Coniferous woodland (3%).

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected to conserve their wildlife and / or geological value. Within the neighbourhood area there are two SSSIs, and within 1 km of the parish boundary there are a further two SSSIs. The location of these designations is shown in the figures at the end of this chapter. Further information is provided below.

- Ashburton Road Cuttings SSSI is located in the northern section of the neighbourhood area. Covering an area of 5.8 ha, it is designated for its geological composition. According to the latest condition survey, this SSSI was 100% in favourable condition³⁴.
- Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI is located in the northern section of the neighbourhood area. Covering an area of 7.9 ha, it is designated for its network of cave passages representative of the Pleistocene period of geological history, and its accumulation of fossils and materials. According to the latest condition survey, this SSSI was 86.26% in favourable condition and 13.74% in unfavourable-declining condition³⁵.
- Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI is located outside of the neighbourhood area to the west. Covering an area of 26.3 ha, it is designated for its caves dating from the Pleistocene geological period, its accumulation of debris and fossils, and mineral deposits. The SSSI also has significant importance as a winter roost site for Greater Horseshoe Bats. According to the latest condition survey, this SSSI was 39.5% in favourable condition and 60.5% in unfavourable-recovering condition³⁶.
- Bulkamore Iron Mine SSSI is located outside of the neighbourhood area to the south-west. Covering an area of 8.75 ha, it is designated for its importance for bat species, in particular Greater Horseshoe Bat, Lesser Horseshoe Bat and Natterer's Bat. According to the latest condition survey, this SSSI was 100% in favourable condition³⁷.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) are a GIS tool/dataset that map zones around each SSSI according to their sensitivities. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location, and thresholds of development which indicate a need to consult Natural England. In this respect, the western half of the neighbourhood area (including the settlement of Woolston Green)

³³ JNCC (2015) 'South Dartmoor Woods SAC' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁴ Natural England (no date) 'Ashburton Road Cuttings SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁵ Natural England (no date) 'Pridhamsleigh Caves SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁶ Natural England (no date) 'Buckfastleigh Caves SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁷ Natural England (no date) 'Bulkamore Iron Mine SSSI' can be accessed [here](#).

is within an IRZ for “*all planning applications (except householder) outside or extending outside existing settlements/urban areas affecting greenspace, farmland, semi natural habitats, or landscape features such as trees, hedges, streams, rural buildings/structures.*” In this respect, consultation with Natural England may be required for any applications which come forward in these locations.

Locally important sites

Bought by the Parish Council from the Church Commissioners in 1993³⁸, the Staverton Nature Reserve comprises two sections – the public access boardwalk area, and a fenced off inner area which is left unmanaged to encourage natural processes³⁹. It is likely this site supports a range of species, including those that have been recorded within 1 km of the reserve – such as species of bat, deer, invertebrates, and a variety of birds⁴⁰. The Nature Reserve was sold to Staverton Wildlife Conservation Society – a community benefit society – in 2015.

Priority habitats and species

There are a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority habitats within and in proximity to the neighbourhood area. This includes ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, traditional orchards, wood pasture and parkland, good quality semi-improved grassland, and lowland meadows. The location of the habitats is shown in the figures at the end of this chapter.

Ancient woodland takes hundreds of years to establish. It is considered important for its wildlife (often including rare and threatened species), and soils. Ancient woodland includes land that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. This means the following is included under its designation:

- Ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration; and
- Plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer and broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi⁴¹.

Within the neighbourhood area there are two areas of ancient woodland – Hooper Hayes Copse by Ruggadon Plantation (north of Woolston Green), and Parsonage Wood in the south of the neighbourhood area.

In terms of the national habitat network, much of the neighbourhood area is covered by areas of Network Enhancement Zones 1 and 2⁴², especially around the settlements of Woolston Green and Staverton, as well as along the southern parish boundary. Network Enhancement Zone 1 is deemed most suitable for habitat re-creation supporting the primary habitat, whilst Zone 2 is most suitable for new habitats and green infrastructure. Additionally, the area around the settlement of Staverton falls within a Network Expansion Zone. These areas are identified as suitable locations for connecting and linking up habitats across a landscape with new habitat creation.

³⁸ Staverton Parish Council (no date) 'Nature reserve history' can be accessed [here](#).

³⁹ Staverton Parish Council (no date) 'Nature Reserve Information' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁰ Staverton Parish Council (no date) 'Ecological Study – Dec 2019' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴¹ GOV.UK (2022) 'Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions' can be accessed [here](#).

⁴² Natural England (2020) 'National Habitat Network Maps' can be accessed [here](#).

The Devon Biodiversity Record Centre⁴³ will contain archives of protected and notable species within Devon, including those species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981⁴⁴ and under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The BAP Priority Habitats and ecological designations within and surrounding the neighbourhood area are likely to support populations of protected species.

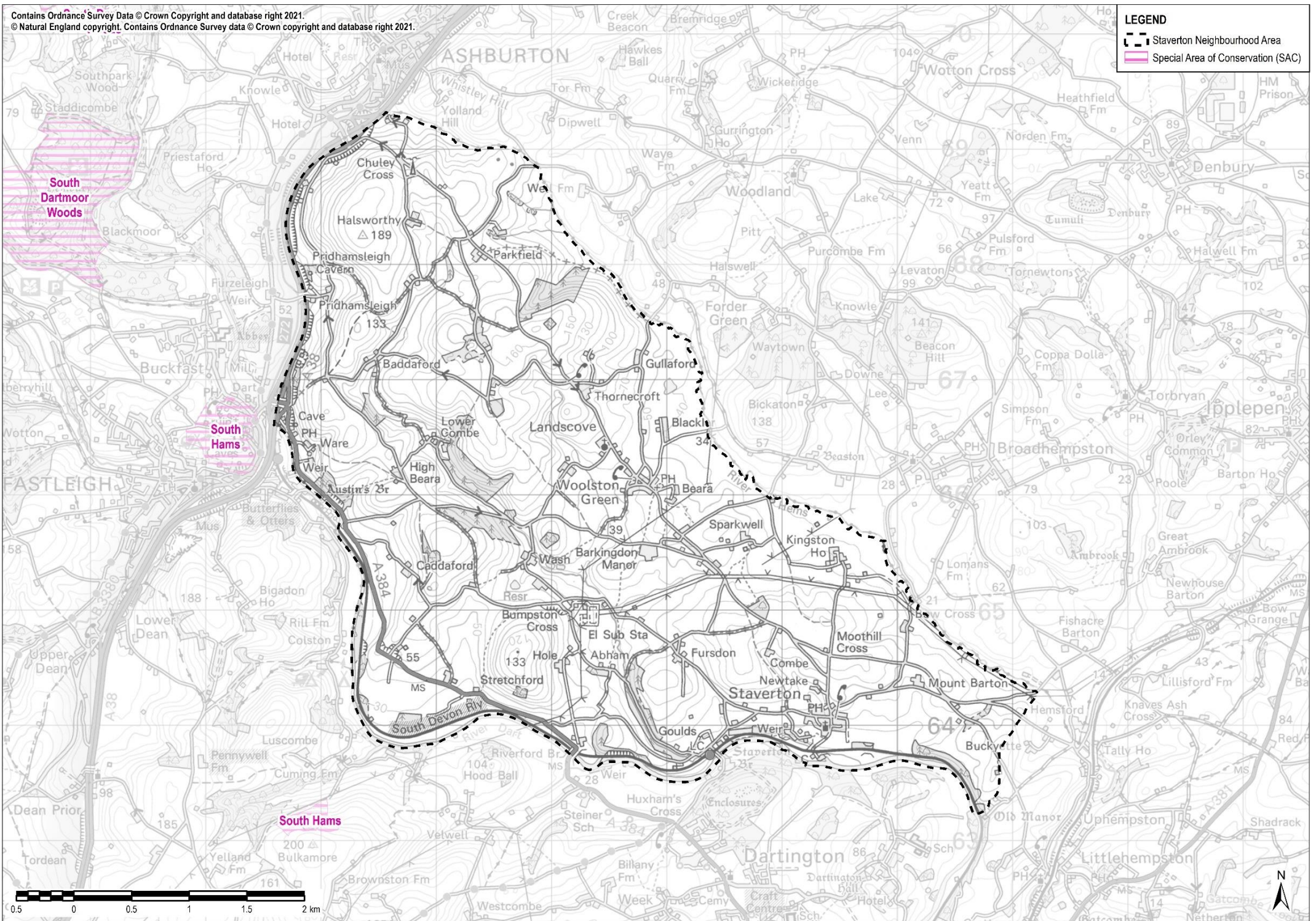
Summary of Future Baseline

Habitats and species will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the neighbourhood area, with the potential for negative impacts on the wider ecological network. This may include a loss of habitats and impacts on biodiversity networks, which may be exacerbated by the effects of climate change. This has the potential to lead to changes in the distribution and abundance of species and changes to the composition of habitats.

The neighbourhood area presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species, and designated sites at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats, but also the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of new development to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised within the neighbourhood area.

⁴³ The Devon Biodiversity Record Centre website can be accessed [here](#).

⁴⁴ UK Government (1981) 'The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981' can be accessed [here](#).

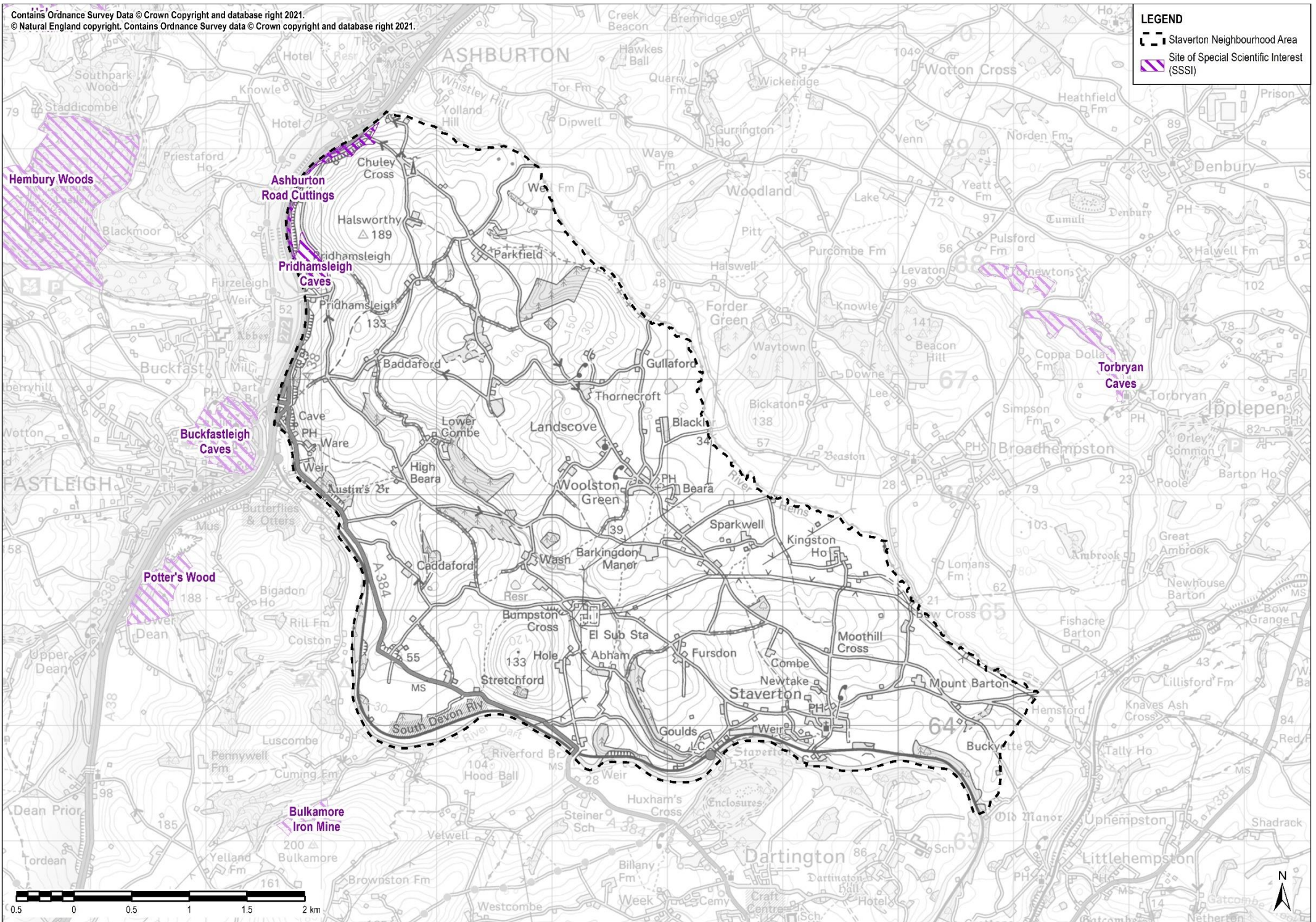


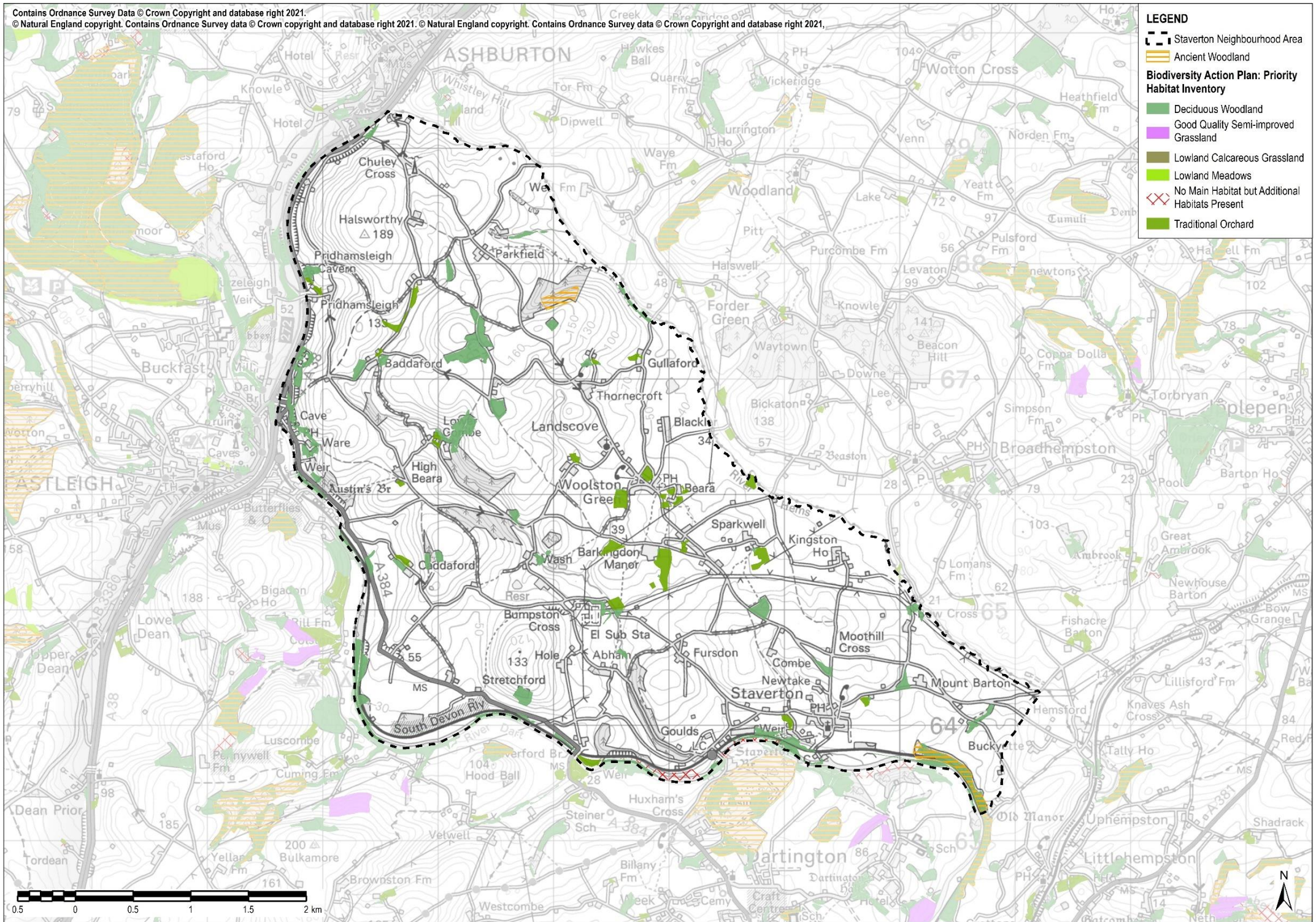
LEGEND

- Staverton Neighbourhood Area
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

LEGEND

- Staverton Neighbourhood Area
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)





A.3 Climate Change

Context review

Table A3.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A3.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the climate change SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener	2021
National Infrastructure Assessment	2021
The UK Sixth Carbon Budget	2020
The Clean Air Strategy 2019	2019
The National Adaptation Programme and the Third Strategy for Climate Adaptation Reporting	2018
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
The Clean Growth Strategy	2017
UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017	2017
Flood and Water Management Act 2010	2010
Climate Change Act 2008	2008
Devon County Council Carbon Reduction Plan 2020-2030	2020
Devon Climate Emergency Interim Devon Carbon Plan	2020
South Hams District Council Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy	2020
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	2019
Devon County Council Climate Change Strategy	2018
Emerging Devon Climate Emergency Adaptation Plan	Emerging

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, including adopting a proactive planning approach to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies are expected to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, avoid inappropriate development in the flood plain zone, and support the move to a low carbon economy. The NPPF recognises the potential for planning to shape places to better contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and deliver long-term resilience.
- The Clean Growth Strategy, Clean Air Strategy and the Net Zero Strategy are a collection of documents seeking to progress the government's commitment to becoming net zero by 2050 under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The documents outline how the government will tackle air pollution sources whilst maintaining an affordable energy supply and increasing economic growth. This parallels with the 25 Year Environment Plan, which seeks to manage land resources sustainably, recover and reinstate nature, protect soils and habitats,

increase resource efficiency, improve water quality, and connect people with the environment. Of note in the 25 Year Environment Plan are the following: 'Chapter 1: Using and managing land sustainably', 'Chapter 6: Protecting and improving the global environment', 'Goal 4: A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought' and 'Goal 7: Mitigating and adapting to climate change'.

- The National Infrastructure Assessment is published every five years and analyses the UK's long-term economic infrastructure needs to create a strategic vision and recommendations. The baseline report states that climate change will increase pressures on all sectors, including economic infrastructure.
- The National Adaptation Programme outlines the government's response to the second Climate Change Risk Assessment, demonstrating the actions the government is currently taking and actions it will be taking in the future. It outlines risks that fit within the priority areas identified by the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017:
 - Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses, and infrastructure.
 - Risks to health, well-being, and productivity from high temperatures.
 - Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation, and industry.
 - Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils, and biodiversity.
 - Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
 - New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants, and animals.
- The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provides for better and more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes, and businesses, in addition to aiding in safeguarding community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges and protecting consumer water supplies. It also highlights alternatives to traditional engineering to flood risk management.
- The UK Climate Change Act 2008 establishes a framework to develop an economically viable emissions reduction path. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 put in place the legally binding target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Climate Change Act includes the following:
 - The UK Government must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a minimum of 100% of 1990 levels by 2050.
 - The document requires the government to produce legally binding carbon budgets – a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five-year period.
 - The Act requires the government to assess and prepare for the risks and opportunities linked to climate change for the UK.
- The Sixth Carbon Budget is the legal limit of UK net greenhouse gas emissions and requires the country to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 relative to 1990

levels. This puts the country on track to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.

- The Devon County Council Carbon Reduction Plan 2020-2030 outlines how the council will reduce carbon emissions – reducing the 2012 / 13 corporate carbon footprint by a minimum of 70% by 2030 / 31 and how emissions will be reduced following that deadline.
- The Devon County Council Climate Change Strategy sets out how the council will prioritise its activity to continue to work towards achieving a local low carbon society. It states that Devon County Council will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, transport, waste and energy through a variety of schemes, for example – identifying new business models and opportunities for investment and prioritising new energy technologies that allow for more efficient use of energy already in circulation.
- Local authorities and various organisations in Devon have come together to form the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group with the aim to help the county reach net zero, reverse impacts of climate change on biodiversity and prepare for future risks. The group is producing a Devon Adaption Plan and a Devon Carbon Plan. The interim carbon plan has been published and outlines eight objectives to strive towards achieving lower emissions. These eight objectives include a move to a more circular economy, minimising energy consumption and engaging with communities.
- The South Hams District Council Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategy outlines how the area will become net zero by 2050, including reducing resource consumption, supporting a move away from finite energy resources in favour of renewable sources, increasing tree canopy cover on council owned land and supporting working virtually following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. In particular, this includes:
 - Policy SPT1 – Delivering sustainable development;
 - Policy SO11 – Delivering high quality development;
 - Policy DEV28 – Trees, woodlands and hedgerows;
 - Policy DEV32 – Delivering low carbon development; and
 - Policy DEV35 – Managing flood risk and water quality impacts.

Summary of Current Baseline

Contribution to climate change

The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order of 2019 requires carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the built environment to be monitored and recorded at the local authority level. The CO₂ emissions shown in **Figures A3.1** and **Figure A3.2** below are derived from data supplied by the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2020) 'UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005-2008' can be accessed [here](#). The data tables used to generate Figures 4.1 and 4.2 can be downloaded from this page.

As demonstrated in **Figure A3.1**, the largest contributing sector with regards to CO₂ emissions in Devon was the industry and commercial sector until 2014 – where the transport sector contributed more. The transport sector continues to contribute the highest levels of CO₂ across the three sectors in the region, though it has been decreasing since 2017.

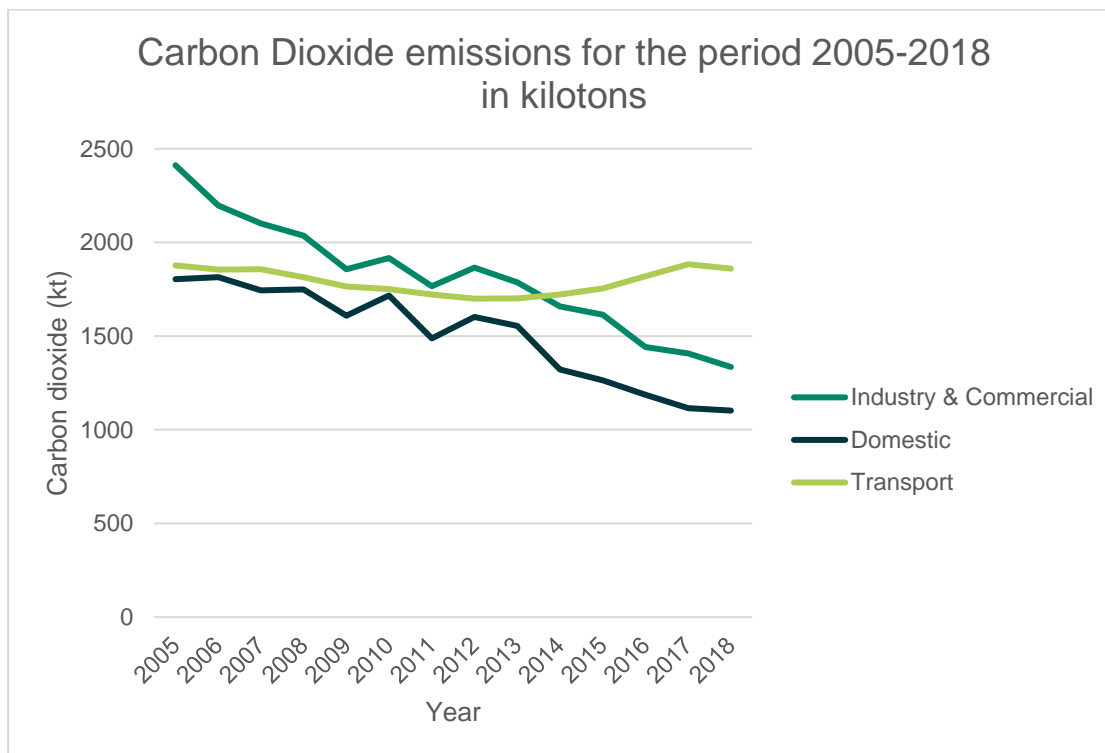


Figure A3.1: CO₂ emissions in kilotons per year for each sector in Devon (2005-2018)

The introduction and uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) will contribute positively towards the reduction of road transport related emissions. In line with assumptions made by the Department for Transport’s ‘Road to Zero’ report (2018)⁴⁶, it is assumed that ULEV uptake will increase rapidly in the coming decade. Therefore, all vehicles could be ultra-low emission (powered either by hydrogen or electricity) by 2030, thus the CO₂ emissions from the transport sector have the potential to decrease.

Figure A3.2 below indicates that CO₂ emissions per capita have been generally lower than the average for England during 2005-2018, but have been higher than the average for the South West region. Devon has experienced the lowest decrease in per capita emissions over the examined period; a decrease of an average 3.1 tons per capita. This is in comparison to an average of 3.2 tons per capita in the South West region and 3.5 tons per capita for England.

⁴⁶ Department for Transport (2018) ‘The Road to Zero’ can be accessed [here](#).

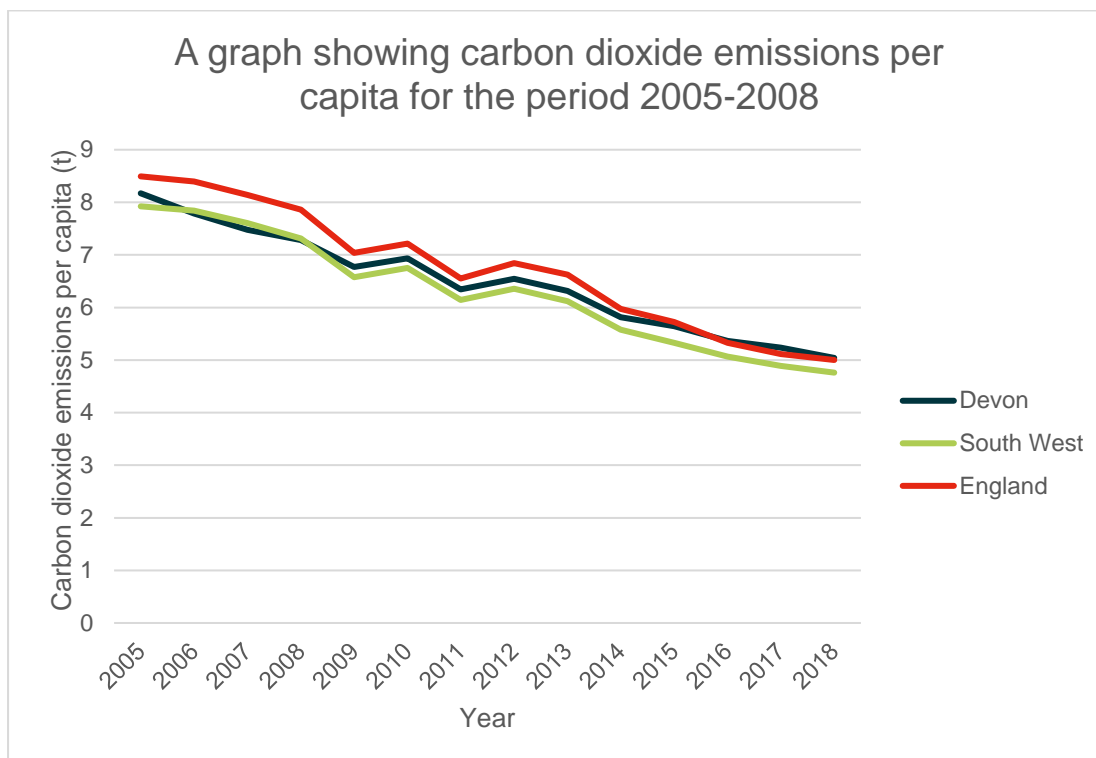


Figure A3.2: CO₂ emissions per capita (in tons) for Devon, the South West region and England (2005-2018)

Potential effects of climate change

The UK Climate Projections (UKCP18) programme is a climate analysis tool that provides the most up-to-date assessment on potential future climatic changes in the UK based on climate model simulations⁴⁷. Projections can be downscaled to a regional level across the UK, allowing for specific evaluations of a selected area.

The UKCP18 projections conclude the effects of climate change for the South West, under the high emissions “business as usual” scenario RCP8.5, are likely to be as follows (as compared to 1981-2000):

- 2021-2040:
 - An average 1.18 °C increase in mean winter temperatures;
 - An average 2.11 °C increase in mean summer temperatures;
 - An average 0.21 mm increase in mean winter precipitation rate; and
 - An average 0.35 mm decrease in mean summer precipitation rate.

⁴⁷ Met Office (no date) ‘UK Climate Projections (UKCP)’ can be accessed [here](#).

- 2061-2080:
 - An average 2.95 °C increase in mean winter temperatures;
 - An average 5.07 °C increase in mean summer temperatures;
 - An average 0.86 mm increase in mean winter precipitation rate; and
 - An average 0.86 mm decrease in mean summer precipitation rate.

If these changes occur, the neighbourhood area may face a range of risks, including:

- Increases in cases of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer period as well as illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight;
- An increase in the risk of injuries and deaths caused by storm events, due to both the increase in quantity and magnitude;
- Changes to water resources, in terms of quality and quantity;
- An increased risk of flooding, including changes in vulnerability to 1 in 100-year floods, and a need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their distribution, particularly their southern edge, and a spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Increased drought events, both in quantity and magnitude; and
- Heat related impacts to local infrastructure, e.g., road surfaces melting.

Flood risks

Figure A3.3 below indicates the areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3 within the neighbourhood area. This figure indicates that the majority of the neighbourhood area is within Flood Zone 1, with areas adjacent to the watercourses predominantly in Flood Zone 3. In particular, areas of land towards the western and southern boundaries of the neighbourhood area are within Flood Zone 3 – this includes the area around the settlement of Staverton.

Figure A3.4 below demonstrates that similar areas are at risk of surface flooding, in particular the areas adjacent to watercourses and the western and southern neighbourhood area boundaries are mostly at high risk. Within the settlements, surface water flooding along streets and paved areas is exacerbated somewhat during heavy rainfall events as drains become clogged or reach capacity.

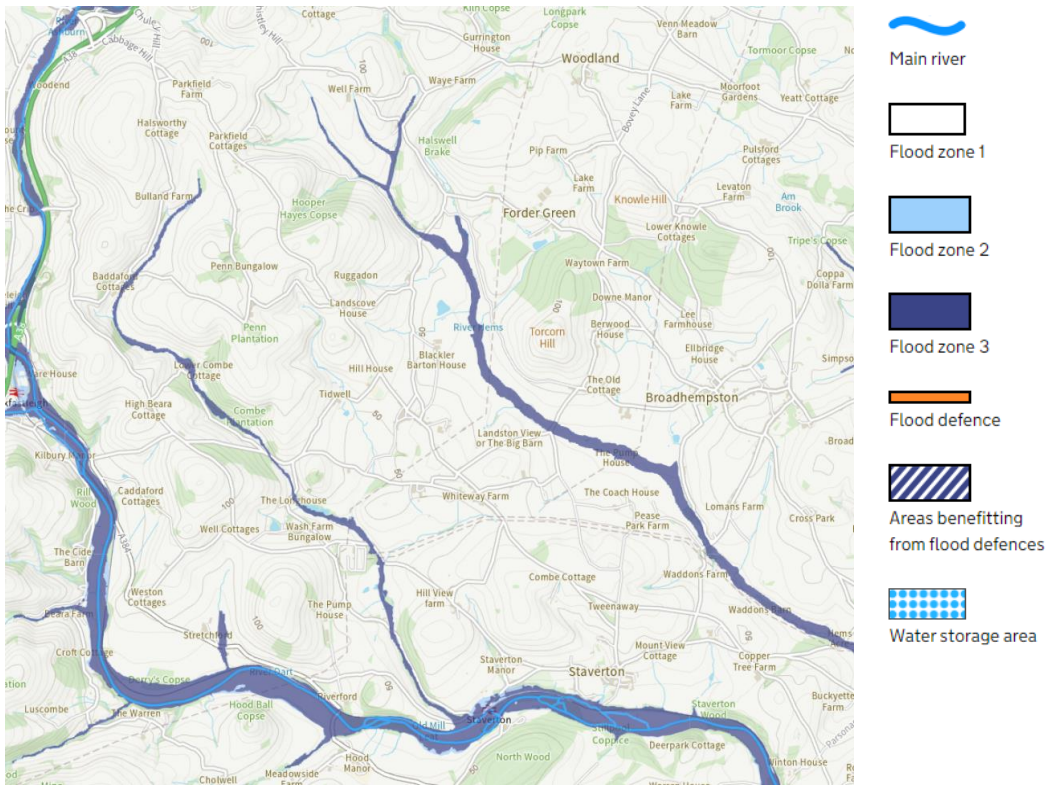


Figure A3.3: Fluvial flood risks within the neighbourhood area

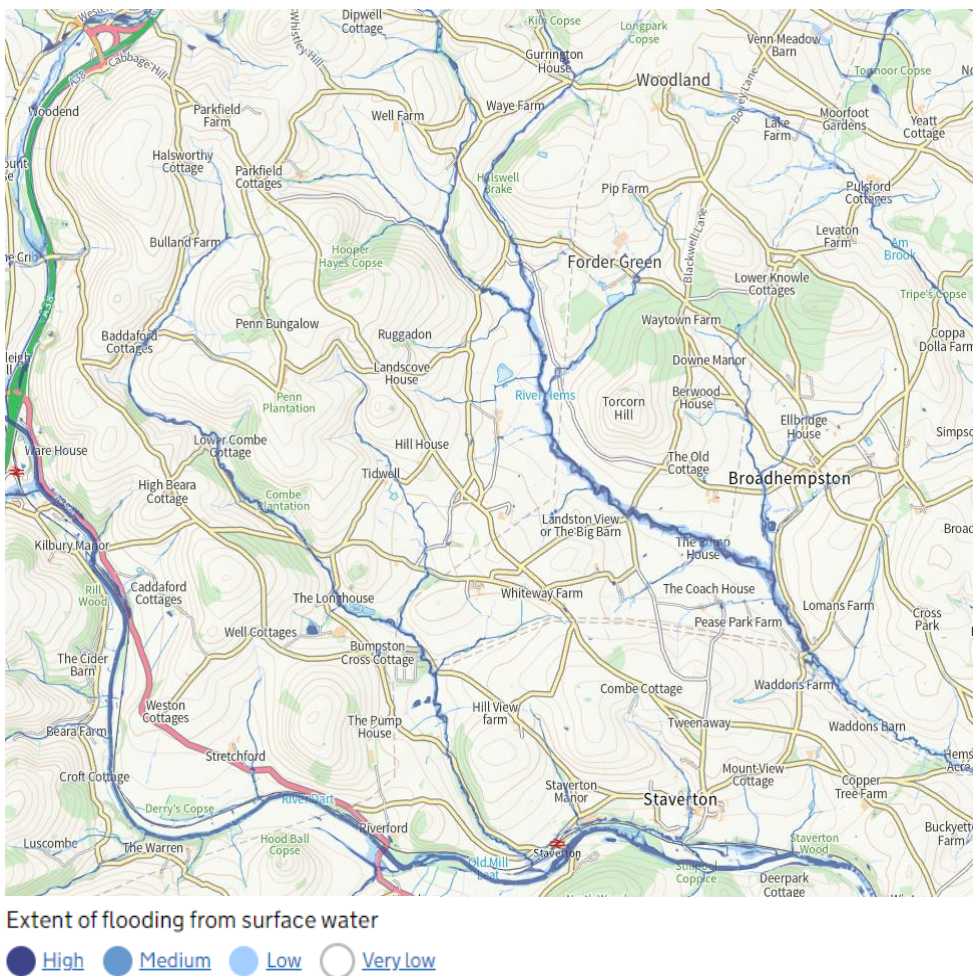


Figure A3.4: Surface water flood risks within the neighbourhood area

Summary of Future Baseline

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the neighbourhood area. In turn it is likely the neighbourhood area will experience an amplified level of risk associated with climate change and a subsequent increase in need for resilience and adaptation measures. New development has the potential to increase flood risk through changing surface and ground water flows, overloading existing inputs to the drainage and wastewater networks, and / or increasing the number of residents exposed to areas of existing flood risk.

In terms of climate change contribution, greenhouse gas emissions generated in the neighbourhood area may continue to decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production, and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the neighbourhood area would likely contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions, and these increases are considered likely with or without the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

A.4 Landscape

Context review

Table A4.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A4.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to the landscape SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
National Model Design Code	2021
The National Design Guide	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	2019

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan should consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing protected landscapes, landscape character, and scenic beauty. The scale and extent of development within these areas should be limited and development within their setting should be mindfully located and designed to avoid/minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- The NPPF also recognises the role of green infrastructure in landscape settings, as well as the positive contribution that land remediation can have on despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated, and unstable land.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan and National Design Guide outline the same aims as one another, focusing on creating a cleaner, greener country that puts the environment first and celebrates the variety of natural landscapes and habitats present in the UK. Design is focused on creating beautiful, enduring, and successful places, which respond to local character and provide a network of high quality and green open spaces. Of note is 'Chapter 2: Recovering nature

and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’ and ‘Goal 6: Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment’.

- The National Model Design Code states that all design codes should include a landscape and open space strategy that incorporates the existing natural features and new structural elements. It recognises that landscapes can be major drivers in the design process.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. In particular, this includes:
 - Policy DEV23 – Landscape character;
 - Policy DEV25 – Nationally protected landscapes; and
 - Policy DEV28 – Trees, woodlands, and hedgerows.

Summary of Current Baseline

Nationally protected landscapes

There are no nationally protected landscapes within the neighbourhood area (i.e., AONBs, National Parks, or Green Belt land). The nearest nationally protected landscape – Dartmoor National Park – is located directly to the north west of the neighbourhood area, over 3 km from the nearest settlement which is likely to accommodate new development during the plan period (Woolston Green). In this respect, Neighbourhood Plan proposals are not likely to impact the integrity of Dartmoor National Park.

National Character Areas

National Character Areas (NCAs) are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries. This makes them valuable in creating decision-making frameworks for the natural environment.

The neighbourhood area overlaps with one NCA – 151 South Devon. This NCA⁴⁸ wraps around the southern and western edge of Dartmoor – the boundary marked by the A38. Key characteristics of this NCA include rounded hills separated by steep and intricate wooded valleys, drowned river valleys, arable and pasture fields, wildflower rich hedge banks that are often treeless, and settlements positioned in sheltered valley locations. The patchwork nature of this NCA has resulted in a rich and complex mosaic of habitats that support many species.

Local landscape character

Landscape and villagescape character play an important role in understanding the relationship between people and place and identifying recognisable and distinct patterns in the landscape which make one area different from another. Landscape and villagescape character assessments can both help identify the value of landscapes and villagescapes, in terms of visual and amenity value.

⁴⁸ Natural England (2014) ‘NCA Profile: 151 South Devon (NE338)’ can be accessed [here](#).

Following a review of the Devon County Council Environment Viewer⁴⁹ and the Devon Landscape Character Assessment⁵⁰, it is concluded the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan sits within two character areas, specifically: Ashburton and Dartmoor Foothills, and Mid Dart Valley and Slopes. Additionally, the landscape character assessment map⁵¹ for the South Hams indicates the neighbourhood area is indicative of two landscape types; 1E Wooded ridges and hilltops, and 3B Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes.

The Ashburton and Dartmoor Foothills character area⁵² forms the eastern edge of Dartmoor National Park and is characterised by a rural feel, hummocky topography, steep wooded valleys, rolling hills and slopes, a mosaic of irregular fields with semi-natural woodlands and hedgerow trees, heath, bracken, and rough grazing. It acts as a transitional landscape between the moorland core of Dartmoor and the developed areas on its periphery and provides important habitats for species, especially rare bat species. Future threats include an increase in traffic, renewable energy installations, intensification of agriculture and change in woodland composition.

The Mid Dart Valley and Slopes character area⁵³ comprises the River Dart Valley and its tributaries and its surrounding hills and slopes. The area has narrow valleys with limited tree cover, and has distinctive limestone geology, semi-natural habitats, mixed and broadleaved woodland, and good quality agricultural land. Threats to this landscape include the increase in domestic tourism, building development (extensions, new agricultural buildings and conversion of traditional buildings and attached land), agricultural intensification and renewable energy installations.

Visual amenity

It is useful to note that views of and across the neighbourhood area are also an important factor to consider in the planning process, as the scale, height, and mass of development can ultimately impact on important views. Changes like development and landscape change can see these important views and vistas degraded overtime.

Summary of Future Baseline

New development has the potential to lead to small, incremental, but cumulative changes in the landscape character and quality within the neighbourhood area. This includes the loss or damage of features and areas with an important visual amenity value. The Neighbourhood Plan can help guide development so that it does not negatively impact upon the landscape and visual features which contribute to the distinctive character of the area.

It should be noted that the planning system has tools in place to offer a degree of protection to the landscape. Therefore, new development will not necessarily result in harm. Furthermore, locally distinctive landscape features, characteristics and special qualities can be protected, managed, and enhanced through appropriate planning policies. It is further recognised that new development that is appropriately designed and landscape led could support the area's intrinsic landscape character

⁴⁹ Devon County Council Environment Viewer (2021) can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁰ Devon County Council (no date) 'Devon's landscape character assessment (DLCA) can be accessed [here](#).

⁵¹ South Hams (2018) 'Landscape Character Assessment' can be accessed [here](#). Download the Overview Map for the South Hams from the Downloads box.

⁵² Devon County Council (no date) 'Ashburton and Dartmoor foothills' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵³ Devon County Council (no date) 'Mid Dart Valley and Slopes' can be accessed [here](#).

and quality. This could include regeneration that improves the setting of the villages, delivering green infrastructure improvements and / or new recreational opportunities and the identification and / or enhanced framing of key views.

A.5 Historic Environment

Context review

Table A5.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A5.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the historic environment SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
National Model Design Code	2021
The National Design Guide	2019
Historic England: Heritage and Climate Change	2022
Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal Designation and Management	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: The Setting of Heritage Assets	2017
Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	2016
Historic England Advice Note 3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans	2015
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	2019

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The key principles for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment are as follows:
 - The historic environment is a shared resource;
 - Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment;
 - Understanding the significance of places is vital;
 - Important places should be managed to sustain their values;
 - Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent, and consistent; and
 - Documenting and learning from decisions is essential⁵⁴.
- The significance of a place is the crucial element that supports the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Significance is the collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, no matter what form

⁵⁴ Historic England (2008) 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' can be accessed [here](#).

the place takes. This means a singular building, an archaeological site, or a larger historic area, such as a whole village or landscape, can be important.

- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider the principles set out in the NPPF, which seek to conserve and enhance historic environment assets in a way that compliments and works with their significance. The NPPF pursues planning policies and decisions that are understanding to local character and history without preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation and change. The NPPF supports the use of area-based character assessments, design guides and codes, and masterplans to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places.
- The NPPF indicates proposed plans should ensure the design of streets, parking areas and other transport elements reflect current national guidance including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code. Design codes can set out a necessary level of detail in sensitive locations. In the case of the historic environment, they can indicate specific ways to maintain local character.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan and the National Design Guide recognise and reiterate the role of the historic environment in supporting healthy and thriving ecosystems, landscapes, and cultural values. Of note in the 25 Year Environment Plan is 'Goal 6: Enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment'.
- Historic England's Heritage and Climate Change strategy document details the impacts climate change could have on heritage in the future, and highlights the role of heritage in climate action. The vision of the document is to ensure the role of heritage in the global fight to limit climate change and its impact on people and places by 2040 – working to mitigate, manage risk and adapt.
- Historic England's Advice Notes provide further guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Of relevance for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan is the emphasis on the importance of:
 - Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest that underpin designations and the consideration of how settings and / or views contribute to the significance of heritage assets.
 - Recognising the value of implementing controls through neighbourhood development plans, conservation area appraisals and management plans; and
 - Appropriate evidence gathering, including the clear identification of any issues that threaten an area, asset character, or appearance that merit the introduction of management measures.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. In particular, this includes:
 - Policy SPT11 – Strategic approach to the historic environment; and
 - Policy DEV21 – Development affecting the historic environment.

Summary of Current Baseline

Listed buildings

Listed buildings are nationally designated heritage assets that are protected through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990⁵⁵. According to the National Heritage List for England provided by Historic England⁵⁶, there are 31 listed buildings in the neighbourhood area: two Grade 1, six Grade II* and 23 Grade II listed buildings.

The Grade I listed buildings are as follows:

- Church of St Paul (Historic England List Entry Number: [1108524](#)); and
- Staverton Bridge (Historic England List Entry Number: [1324955](#)).

The Grade II* listed buildings are as follows:

- Woolston Green Farmhouse (Historic England List Entry Number: [1108491](#));
- Kingston House (Historic England List Entry Number: [1108525](#));
- Dovecote approximately 100 metres north west of Pridhamsleigh Manor (Historic England List Entry Number: [1108528](#));
- Church of St Matthew (Historic England List Entry Number: [1108532](#));
- Pridhamsleigh Manor Farm House (Historic England List Entry Number: [1147332](#)); and
- Woodend Farmhouse (Historic England List Entry Number: [1308548](#)).

Scheduled monuments

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)⁵⁷ allows for the investigation, presentation, and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest, making provision for the regulation of operations or activities that could affect ancient monuments and archaeological areas. Scheduled monuments are nationally designated sites which are protected under this legislation. According to the National Heritage List for England, there is one scheduled monument in the neighbourhood area – Dovecote 100m north of Pridhamsleigh (Historic England List Entry Number: [1019241](#)).

Registered parks and gardens

Historic England's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England', established in 1983, currently identifies over 1,600 sites assessed to be of significance.

The Grade II* listed Dartington Hall⁵⁸ is immediately to the south of the neighbourhood area, located to the south of the River Dart. A summary of the principal reasons for its designation as a registered park and garden is provided below:

⁵⁵ UK Government (1990) 'Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁶ Historic England (no date) 'National Heritage List for England – Search the List – Advanced Search' can be accessed [here](#). Select which heritage categories you'd like to view and enter 'Devon' into the 'County' box and then 'Staverton' into the 'Parish (Civil / Non-civil)' box and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

⁵⁷ UK Government (1979) 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act' can be accessed [here](#).

⁵⁸ Historic England (2022): 'Dartington Hall', [online] accessible [here](#)

- Representative example: it is a particularly important and largely intact example of a C20 designed landscape incorporating the remains of an earlier medieval landscape;
- Association: the C20 garden was principally designed by H Avray Tipping, Beatrix Farrand and Percy Cane, nationally and internationally renowned landscape architects and designers;
- Artistic interest: the garden includes high quality sculptures by Willi Soukop (statue of a donkey, 1935), Henry Moore (Reclining Figure, 1946; listed Grade II*), and Peter Randall Page (Jacob's Pillow, 2005);
- Documentation and influence: the site is particularly well documented and as evident from contemporary articles the qualities of its design and planting scheme were well respected; and
- Group value: it has particularly strong group value with, and provides an important context to, the listed buildings that form part of Dartington Hall (including Grade I, II* and II), as well as the remains of the deer park and the medieval hall (both scheduled ancient monuments).

Locally important heritage features

It is noted that not all of the neighbourhood area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations and non-designated features contribute a large part of what people interact with on a day-to-day basis. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are important to local communities.

The Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies important and distinctive structures or features that positively contribute to the local sense of place and distinctiveness of the county. Following a high-level review of the HER via the Heritage Gateway⁵⁹, there are 265 documented local records within the neighbourhood area, including several locally important buildings, field boundaries, ditches and banks, catch meadows, earthworks and enclosures, and quarries. During the subsequent stages of the SEA process, the Devon and Dartmoor HER shall be explored in further detail to consider the potential impacts associated with the plan proposals on these assets.

It is noted that a range of archaeological finds and other historic features have been uncovered and identified in and around the neighbourhood area but lack legal protection.

Heritage at risk

Since 2008, Historic England has produced an annual Heritage at Risk Register, which highlights historic environment assets that are seen to be 'at risk'. According to the 2021 Heritage at Risk Register for the South West⁶⁰, there is one heritage asset within the neighbourhood area that is considered to be at risk – the Church of St Paul (Historic England List Entry Number: [1108524](#)).

However, it is important to recognise that Heritage at Risk registers for areas outside of London do not contain information about the status of Grade II listed buildings. As

⁵⁹ Heritage Gateway (2021) 'More Detailed Search' can be accessed [here](#). Open the link, change the tab from 'map' to 'admin location', type 'Staverton' into the administrative location search bar and press the search button at the bottom of the page.

⁶⁰ Historic England (2021) 'Heritage at Risk Register 2021 – South West' can be accessed [here](#).

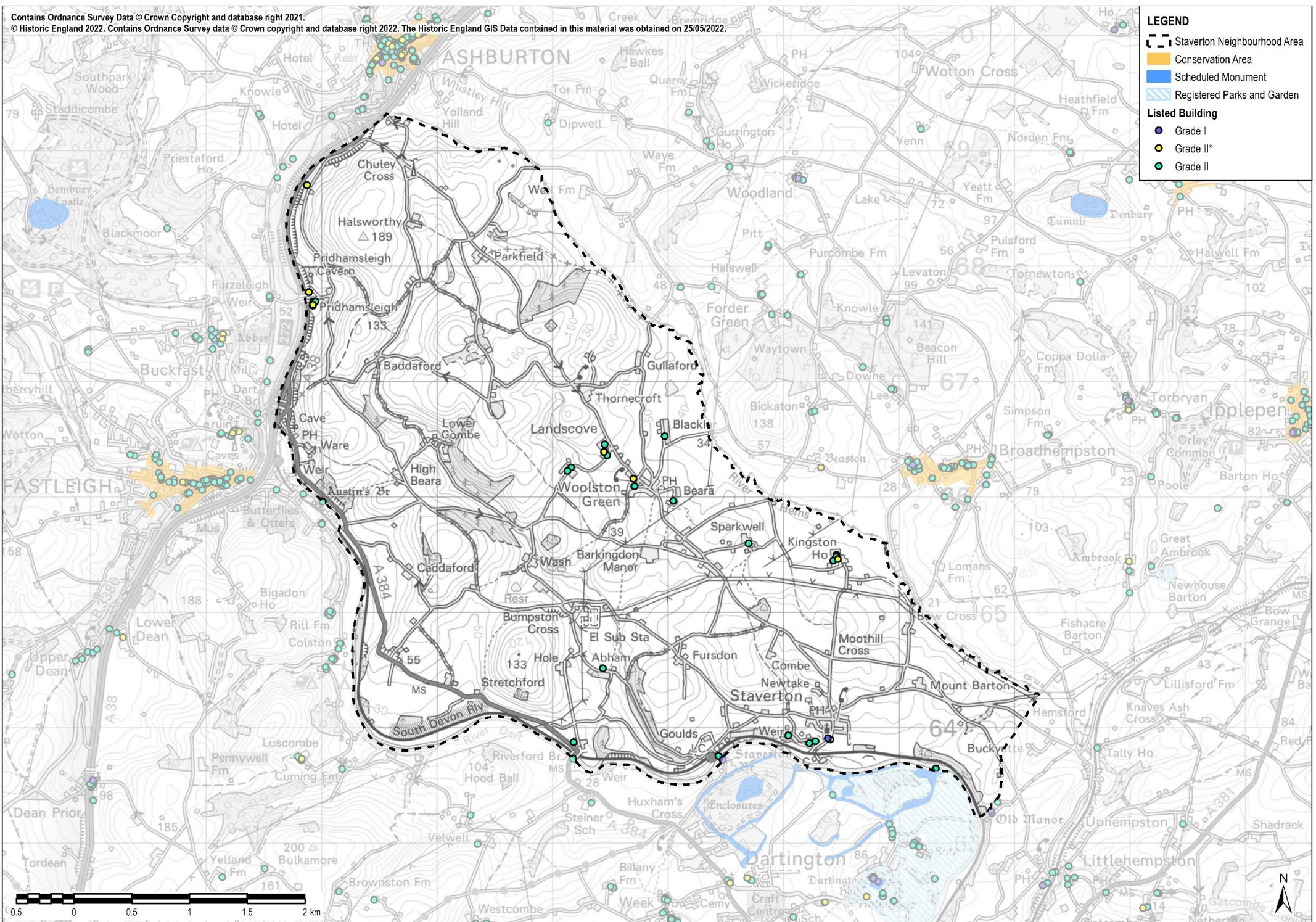
such, it is currently not possible to determine whether any of the Grade II listed buildings within the neighbourhood area are at risk.

Encouraging and facilitating improvements to the condition of heritage assets within the neighbourhood area is recognised as an opportunity for the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan.

Summary of Future Baseline

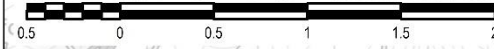
New development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of heritage assets, for example, through inappropriate design and / or layout. It should be noted, however, that existing historic environment designations offer a level of protection to heritage assets and their settings. Additionally, the planning system has in place tools to offer a degree of protection to heritage assets and their settings, reducing the potential impacts of development to some degree.

It is recognised that planning for development could provide opportunities for positive effects for the historic environment. This may include new management plans for assets 'at risk', an updated evidence base to compliment information and data associated with conservation areas, public realm and access improvements, or opportunities to better reveal the significance of an asset or increase enjoyment of the historic environment.



LEGEND

- Staverton Neighbourhood Area
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Parks and Garden
- Listed Building
 - Grade I
 - Grade II*
 - Grade II



A.6 Land, Soil, and Water Resources

Context review

Table A6.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A6.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the land, soil, and water resources SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
Waste Management Plan for England	2013
Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England	2011
Water for Life	2011
Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England	2009
South West Water - Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP)	2019
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	2019
Devon Minerals Plan 2011-2033	2017
Devon Waste Plan	2014

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF which pursue the protection of high-quality soil resources and the improvement of the water environment. It recognises the wider benefits of natural capital and the need to consider the long-term implications of climate change and ways in which to build resilience in this respect. The NPPF encourages efficient land use, utilising brownfield land opportunities and land remediation schemes where appropriate and delivering environmental gains.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan discusses measures to improve soil quality, restore and protect peatlands, use water more sustainably, reduce pollution, maximise resource efficiency and minimise environmental impacts. Of note is 'Chapter 1: Using and managing land sustainably', 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste', 'Goal 2: Clean and plentiful water', 'Goal 5: Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently' and 'Goal 8: Minimising waste'.
- Future Water: The Government's water strategy for England sets out how the water sector will look by 2030 for both people and wildlife. The vision also includes valuing and protecting water resources and delivering water to customers in a fair, affordable, and cost-reflective manner. Water for Life highlights the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It details the measures that will be deployed to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

- The Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England policy paper seeks to ensure that all soils in England will be managed sustainably, and degradation threats minimised successfully by 2030. This policy paper also seeks to secure sustainable and resilient water resources in addition to the improvement in waterbody quality. The Waste Management Plan for England identifies measures being taken to move towards a zero-waste economy, which includes national waste plan which seeks to identify measures being taken to move towards a circular economy in which resources are kept in use for longer. To do this, there needs to be a maximisation in the value of resources used and a minimisation in the waste created.
- South West Water's WRMP outlines the priority of the water provider to ensure a resilient and high-quality water supply system and details how mitigation of impacts on water, like population growth and climate change, will be carried out over the plan period.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. In particular, this includes:
 - Policy DEV2 – Air, water, soil, noise, land, and light; and
 - Policy DEV32 – Waste management.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also be required to be in general conformity with the Devon Minerals Plan and the Devon Waste Plan. These plans identify and safeguard sites and resources important to the continued sustainable management of mineral extractions and waste arisings.

Summary of Current Baseline

Soil resources

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural land' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being the 'best and most versatile' (BMV) land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. In this context, there is a need to avoid loss of higher quality BMV agricultural land.

As shown in the left-hand image in **Figure A6.1** below, the majority of the neighbourhood area is underlain with Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' agricultural land, with areas of Grade 4 'Poor' land around Landscope and Woolston Green. Additionally, there are areas of Grade 2 'Very Good' agricultural land around Staverton⁶¹. In the absence of a detailed assessment, it is not possible to determine whether the Grade 3 land is Grade 3a (BMV land) or Grade 3b (not BMV land).

Figure A6.1 also shows the results of Natural England's 'Predictive Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment' for the South West region in the right-hand image⁶². It indicates the neighbourhood area is underlain with areas of low to high likelihood of BMV land, in addition to urban / industrial areas in Landscope and Staverton (as associated with the built environment in these locations).

⁶¹ Natural England (2010) 'Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶² Natural England (2017) 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic scale map South West Region' can be accessed [here](#).

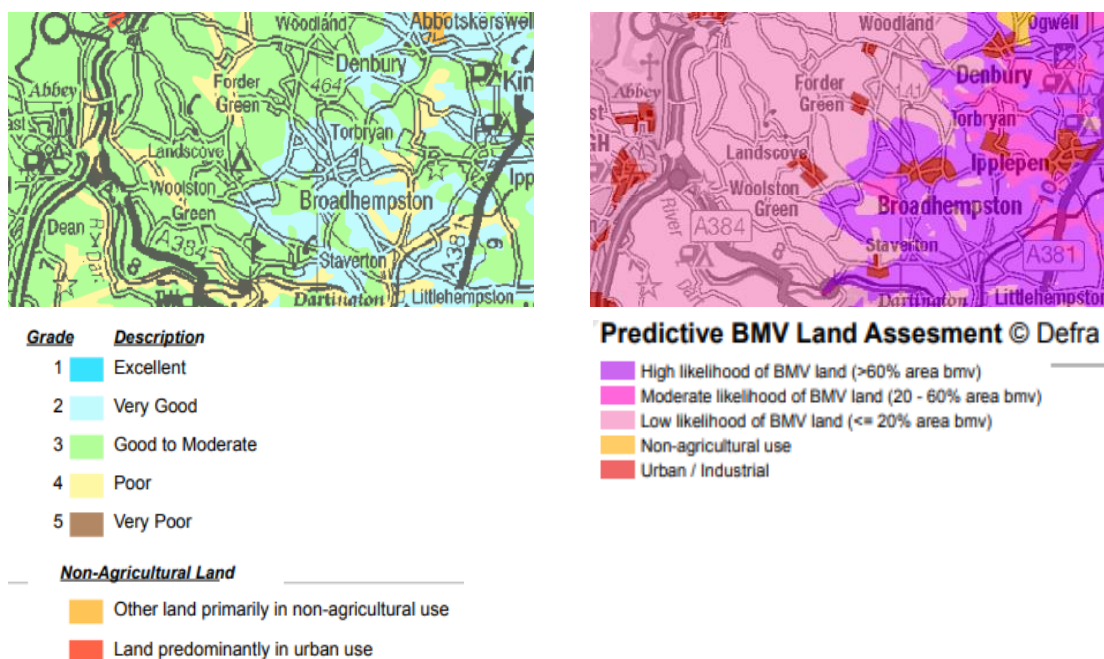


Figure A6.1: ALC and the likelihood of BMV land within the neighbourhood area

Mineral resources

Mineral resources are defined as natural concentrations of minerals or bodies of rock that have the potential to be of economic interest in the present or the future due to their inherent properties. As minerals are a non-renewable resource, minerals safeguarding is deployed as the process through which it is ensured that non-minerals development does not needlessly prevent the future extraction of mineral resources⁶³.

The neighbourhood area is not within a minerals safeguarding area, however there is an aggregates safeguarding area less than 2 km from the north-eastern parish boundary.

Water quality

The neighbourhood area is located within the South West River Basin District. Specifically, within the Devon South management catchment and within the Dart Start Bay and Torbay operational catchment⁶⁴. There are two main waterbodies and their associated tributaries within the neighbourhood area, the Hems – Upper waterbody and the Dart waterbody.

- The Hems – Upper waterbody⁶⁵ was awarded a good ecological status in 2019 but failed the chemical classification due to the presence of the priority hazardous chemicals Mercury (and its compounds) and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs).
- The Dart Water Body⁶⁶ was awarded a moderate ecological status in 2019 but failed the chemical classification due to the presence of Mercury (and its compounds), PBDEs and Perfluoro-octane sulphonate (PFOS).

⁶³ UK Government (2014) 'Guidance: Minerals' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁴ Environment Agency (2022) 'Dart Start Bay and Torbay Operational Catchment' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁵ Environment Agency (2022) 'Hems – Upper Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁶ Environment Agency (2022) 'Dart Water Body' can be accessed [here](#).

Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) represent areas at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution, identifying rules in relation to the use of fertilisers and manures as well as a requirement to prevent water pollution from farming areas⁶⁷. According to the interactive map⁶⁸ most of the neighbourhood area is within the drinking water safeguard zone SWSGZ5014 (surface water) and is at risk from pesticides.

Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes, and springs that are used for public drinking water supply⁶⁹. There are areas around Abham Copse and Clay Copse that are within Zone I – Inner Protection Zone and Zone II – Outer Protection Zone. Additionally, there are areas of Zone I and Zone II around Baddaford Cottages, Lower Combe Cottage, and Penn Plantation.

It is important to acknowledge that new legal advice from Natural England recommends that new developments should only be permitted if they are nutrient neutral. This is due to nutrient pollution becoming a greater issue for freshwater habitats and estuaries – which speed up certain plant growth, disrupts natural processes, and impacts wildlife⁷⁰. However, this is a regional issue that is beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to address.

Summary of Future Baseline

New development in the neighbourhood area has the potential to impact areas of BMV agricultural land. In this context there could potentially be opportunities to avoid developing Grade 3a agricultural land by directing development toward areas of Grade 3b land where this is available. Additionally, the regeneration of brownfield sites is encouraged, wherever possible.

Future development has the potential to affect water quality and availability through increased consumption and pollution, wastewater discharges, water runoff and modification. South West Water are likely to maintain adequate water services over the plan period; therefore, it will be important for new development to avoid negative impacts on water quality, and instead contribute to reducing consumption and improving efficiency.

A.7 Community Wellbeing

Context review

Table A7.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A7.1: Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the community wellbeing SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On	2020
Healthy and Safe Communities Planning practice guidance	2019

⁶⁷ UK Government (2018) Nitrate vulnerable zones can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁸ UK Government (2021) Nitrate vulnerable zone designations and appeals 2021 to 2024 can be accessed [here](#).

⁶⁹ UK Government (2017) 'Groundwater Protection' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁰ UK Government (2022) 'Nutrient pollution: reducing the impact on protected sites' can be accessed [here](#).

Planning for Sport Guidance	2019
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment	2018
South Hams and West Devon Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027	2022
Devon Moving Together 2022-32 Strategy Framework	2022
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	2019

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which seek to retain and enhance access to community services and facilities. The NPPF recognises the benefits of having a range of local provision to support community needs. In addition, the NPPF recognises the benefits of creating cohesive communities in safe environments where the fear of crime (and crime itself) does not undermine resident quality of life.
- The NPPF recognises the role of development plans in helping to deliver access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity, therefore contributing to the health and wellbeing of communities. The health benefits of access to nature, green spaces and green infrastructure are further reiterated in the 25 Year Environment Plan. Additional guidance is available through the Healthy and Safe Communities Planning practice guidance.
- The 2020 Health Equity in England Report identifies a health gap between less and more deprived areas, which has grown in the last decade. This means an increased amount of people can expect to spend more of their lives in poor health with a stalled, or even declining, life expectancy.
- The Planning for Sport Guidance seeks to help the planning system provide formal and informal opportunities for everyone to take part in sport and be physically active, setting out twelve principles.
- The South Hams and West Devon Homelessness Strategy aims to address the current levels of homelessness, examine factors likely to impact on future levels of homelessness, ensure there is sufficient accommodation for all, provide services to prevent homelessness and promote a cultural change so homelessness is viewed in a wider context than just lack of accommodation.
- The Devon Moving Together strategy aims to help ensure everyone in Devon is active for life and to help change people's lives through movement. It outlines three long-term aims: positive experiences, reduced inequalities, and committed partners.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. In particular, this includes:
 - Policy DEV1 – Protecting health and amenity
 - Policy DEV3 – Sport and recreation;
 - Policy DEV4 – Playing pitches;
 - Policy DEV5 – Community food growing and allotments;

- Policy DEV8 – Meeting local housing need in the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area;
- Policy DEV9 – Meeting local housing need in the Plan Area;
- Policy DEV13 – Consideration of sites for Travellers and Travelling Showpeople;
- Policy DEV15 – Supporting the rural economy;
- Policy DEV27 – Green and play spaces; and
- Policy DEV30 – Meeting the community infrastructure needs of new homes.

Summary of Current Baseline

Population and age structure

According to the City Population website⁷¹, which uses the 2011 Census data, the neighbourhood area had a total 805 residents. This is estimated to have increased to 828 in 2020, an increase of approximately 2.9%.

In 2020 it was estimated that approximately 17.4% of the population of the neighbourhood area was between the ages of 0-17, with 52.3% between the working ages of 18-64, and 30.3% within the over 65 age band.

Figure A7.1 below, sourced from the City Population website⁷², shows the estimated gender and age group split based on mid-2020 estimates (E 2020).

⁷¹ City Population (2021) 'Staverton' can be accessed [here](#).

⁷² Ibid.

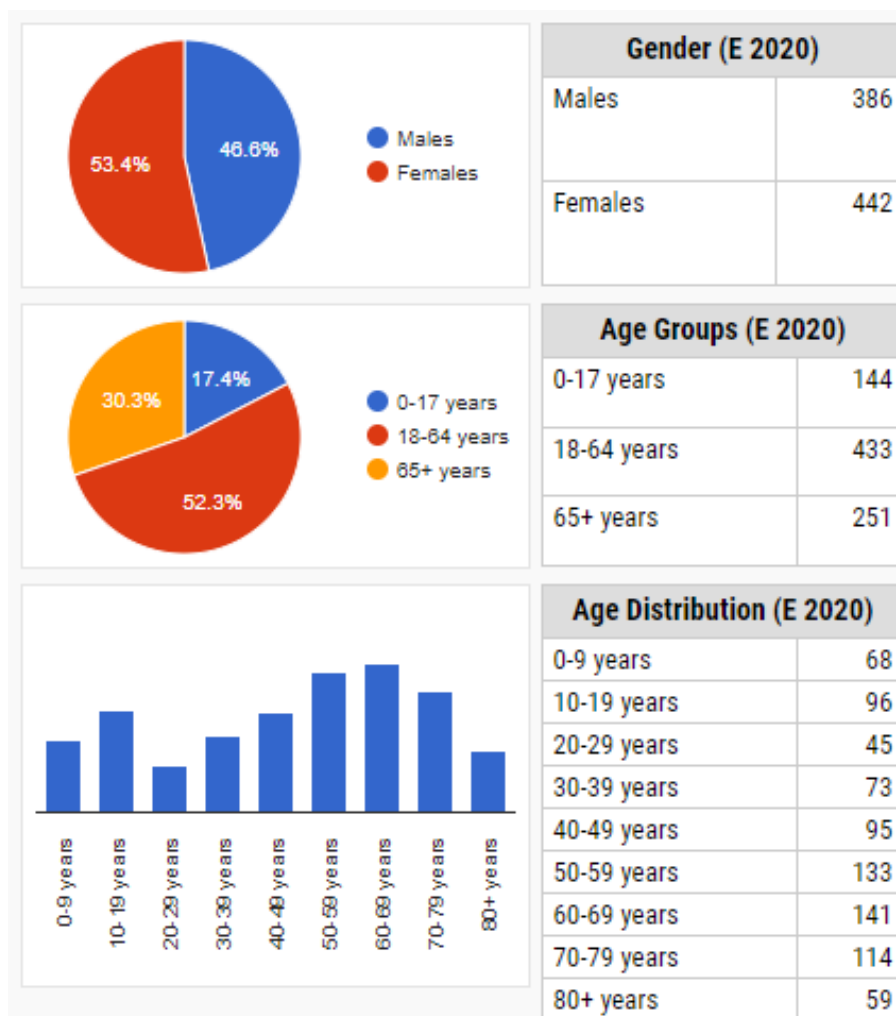


Figure A7.1: Estimated gender, age group and age distribution split for the neighbourhood area according to the City Population website

Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation and is the combination of seven different domains as described below:

- Income: the proportion of the population experiencing a deprivation relating to low income. There are a further two subsets of this measure:
 - Income deprivation affecting children: the proportion of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived families; and
 - Income deprivation affecting older people: the proportion of all adults aged 60 and above that experience income deprivation.
- Employment: the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those who want to work but cannot.
- Education, skills, and training: the lack of attainment and skills in the population.
- Health deprivation and disability: the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health.
- Crime: the risk of personal and material victimisation at the local level.

- **Barriers to housing and services:** the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, split into ‘geographical barriers’ linked to physical proximity and ‘wider barriers’ linked to access to housing.
- **Living environment:** the quality of the local environment, categorised into ‘indoors living environment’ to measure the quality of housing and ‘outdoors living environment’ to measure indicators like air quality and road traffic accidents.

Lower super output areas (LSOAs)⁷³ are designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardised geographies intended to be as consistent as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2019, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived.

In this respect, the neighbourhood area overlaps with one LSOA – South Hams 002B, which was within the 50% most deprived neighbourhood group in 2019. This LSOA is within the South Hams District, which was ranked 219 out of 317 local authorities in 2019, with the first being the most deprived. **Table A7.2** below demonstrates the level of deprivation in this LSOA across the deprivation domains. Reflecting this information, the neighbourhood area is particularly deprived in relation to the ‘barriers to housing and services’ and the ‘living environment’ domains.

Table A7.2: IMD rankings for the South Hams 002B LSOA

Deprivation domain	Rank
Income	18,686 (amongst 50% least deprived neighbourhoods)
Employment	17,462 (amongst 50% least deprived neighbourhoods)
Education, skills, and training	29,225 (amongst 20% least deprived neighbourhoods)
Health deprivation and disability	29,487 (amongst 20% least deprived neighbourhoods)
Crime	29,436 (amongst 20% least deprived neighbourhoods)
Barriers to housing and services	1,115 (amongst 10% most deprived neighbourhoods)
Living environment	430 (amongst 10% most deprived neighbourhoods)

Housing tenure

According to the Staverton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Draft Version⁷⁴, there is a wide range of housing types, tenures, and ages available across the neighbourhood area. However, there is a high cost for housing, which means even the smaller properties are usually beyond the range for local first-time buyers. Additionally, there is a need for affordable homes for young people and families.

As reported by Zoopla⁷⁵, the average house price in Devon is £325,944 – with terraced houses selling for an average of £255,643, semi-detached houses selling for an average of £300,991 and detached houses selling for an average of £470,123.

⁷³ The Indices of Deprivation Explorer can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁴ Staverton Parish Neighbourhood Group (2022) ‘Staverton Parish Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Draft Version’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁵ Zoopla (2022) ‘House prices in Devon’ can be accessed [here](#).

Furthermore, according to Zoopla⁷⁶, the average house price in Staverton is £453,667 – with terraced houses selling for an average of £315,000, semi-detached houses selling for an average of £670,000 and detached houses selling for an average of £434,250. This suggests that the neighbourhood area has higher than average house prices in comparison to the regional trends, further exacerbating affordability issues.

Figure A7.2 below indicates housing tenure in the neighbourhood area. According to 2011 Census data, approximately 74.5% of the neighbourhood area population own their house outright or with a mortgage or loan. In terms of renting, approximately 5.8% of the population socially rent and around 17.8% privately rent. Approximately 1.8% of the population live rent free.

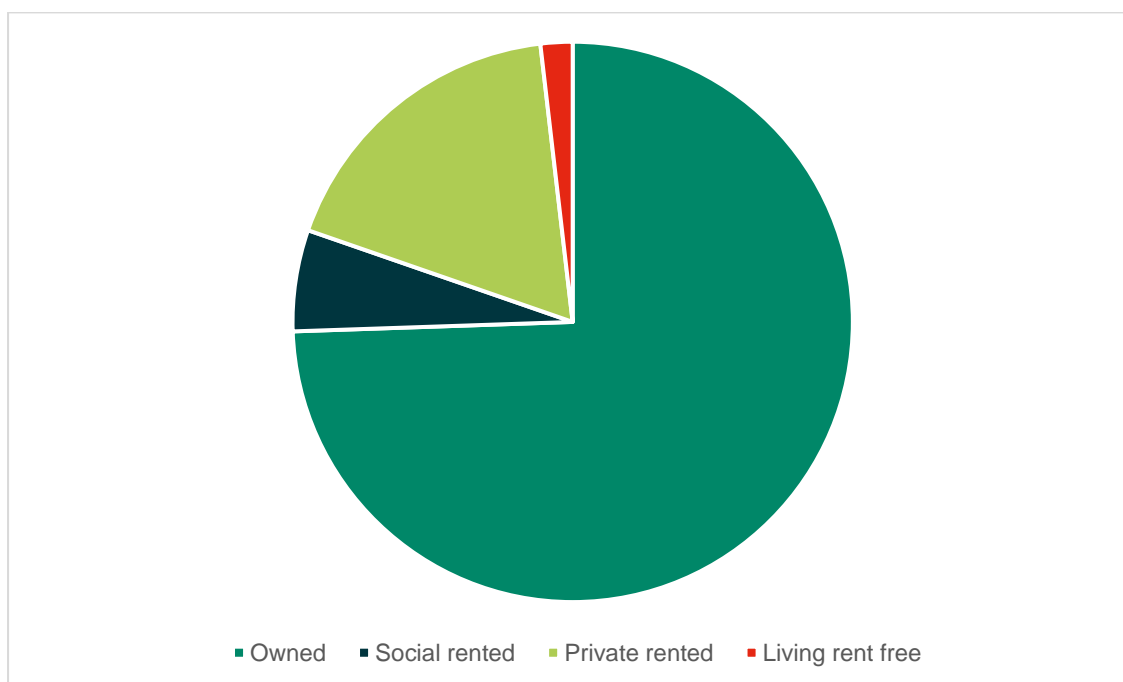


Figure A7.2: Tenure by household composition for the neighbourhood area (based on 2011 Census data)

Community assets and infrastructure

An overview of the services and facilities within the neighbourhood area is provided below^{77,78}:

- Playgrounds – Staverton Playing Fields and Landscope;
- A selection of schools (both state and fee paying) – including pre-schools such as St Christopher’s Prep School and Nursery (state) and primary schools such as Landscope Primary School (state) and St Christopher’s CofE in Staverton. Additional primary schools, nurseries and secondary schools are accessible out of the neighbourhood area, for example in Totnes, Ashburton, Exeter, Torquay, Broadhempston and Dartington.
- Staverton and Landscope Youth Club;

⁷⁶ Zoopla (2022) ‘House prices in Staverton, Devon’ can be accessed [here](#).

⁷⁷ The review of the services, facilities and amenities was conducted via a high-level Google maps search – focusing on each area in turn and making a note of the different features.

⁷⁸ Staverton Parish website (2022) can be accessed [here](#).

- Two village halls – Lanscove Victory Hall and Staverton Courtroom;
- Tennis court at Staverton Playing Field;
- Staverton Pavilion and Playing Field;
- Multiple Inns and B&Bs, including the Sea Trout Inn and Blackler Barton B&B;
- Allotments;
- A garden centre;
- A local farm shop;
- The Riverford Field Kitchen restaurant; and
- Two churches – St Paul de Leon and St Matthew.

Green infrastructure networks

Access to gardens, parks, woodlands, and rivers have played a huge part in helping people through the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost nine in ten adults surveyed by Natural England reported that being in nature makes them feel happy, and nearly three quarters of adults were concerned about biodiversity loss in England⁷⁹.

Within the neighbourhood area, green spaces include⁸⁰:

- Staverton Nature Reserve;
- Allotments;
- Playgrounds;
- Staverton Pavilion and Playing Field;
- Staverton Riverside Walk;
- Woolston Green Triangle;
- St Paul de Leon Churchyard; and
- St Matthew Churchyard.

Summary of Future Baseline

As the population of the neighbourhood area increases and ages, there is likely to be increasing pressure on services outside of the neighbourhood area (due to a lack of health and care facilities within the neighbourhood area). This highlights the need to support the retention of existing facilities in the area, including open green space, which has been increasingly used and valued through the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors are more likely to be appropriately considered and addressed through planned development rather than unplanned development.

The suitability and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies throughout the neighbourhood area.

⁷⁹ Natural England (2020) People and Nature survey can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁰ Staverton Parish website (2022) can be accessed [here](#).

Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also changed the way people work and shop. For many people, working from home is likely to continue to form part of a more flexible approach. The effects of increased levels of home working are further discussed under the ‘Transportation’ SEA theme below.

A.8 Transportation

Context review

Table A8.1 below presents the most relevant documents identified in the policy review for the purposes of the SEA.

Table A8.1: Plans, policies, and strategies reviewed in relation to the transportation SEA theme

Document title	Year of publication
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	2021
Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain	2021
Transport Investment Strategy	2017
Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034	2019
Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3 2011-2026 - Strategy	2011

The key messages emerging from the review are summarised below:

- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will need to consider the principles outlined in the NPPF, which influence plans and development proposals to ensure they consider transport issues from the earliest stages, address any known issues, and maximise opportunities to increase accessibility to sustainable transport. Larger developments are expected to limit the need to travel and offer a genuine choice of transport modes. However, it is recognised that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural environments.
- Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain sets out how the UK Government will deliver emission reductions and associated benefits in the country; presenting the path to net-zero transport in the UK and the commitments and actions necessary to make progress on this path.
- The Transport Investment Strategy sets out investment priorities to improve the connectivity, effectiveness and reliability of transport network whilst simultaneously reducing impacts on the natural environment. Furthermore, the document places great emphasis on making cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys.
- The Staverton Neighbourhood Plan will also need to consider the relevant policies that are outlined in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan. In particular, this includes:
 - Policy SPT8 – Strategic connectivity; and
 - Policy SPT9 – Strategic principles for transport planning and strategy.

- The Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 2011-2026, sets out proposed transport solutions for the county up to 2026 with a focus on greater efficiency in the transport system, better use of resources, providing for a growing population and their demands, reducing non-renewable energy resources, and lowering carbon emissions. In this respect, the Staverton Neighbourhood Plan should seek to align with the strategic policy aims of this plan.

Summary of Current Baseline

Rail network

Located towards the southern boundary of the neighbourhood area (to the west of Staverton village, along New Lane), Staverton train station is part of the South Devon Railway heritage line that runs steam engine journeys from Buckfastleigh to Totnes⁸¹. The nearest National Rail station is Totnes train station, located an approximate 10-minute drive south (around 6.3 km) of the neighbourhood area. This station⁸² offers regular services to regional and national destinations, including services to Plymouth and Cornwall, Newton Abbot, Exeter and Taunton, and to destinations further afield including Bristol, London Paddington, Reading, Cardiff Central, Birmingham, the north of England and Scotland. Newton Abbot train station⁸³ is an approximate 25-minute drive north (around 13 km) of the neighbourhood area and offers similar services as Totnes station, as well as providing services to Exmouth, Torquay, and Paignton.

Bus network

According to the Staverton Parish website, there are limited bus services that run through the neighbourhood area. Key services are described below.

Countrybus 165 Totnes-Broadhempston⁸⁴ stops at Landscope and Staverton between Monday and Saturday, with approximately six services per day.

Additionally, the Devon bus map⁸⁵ indicates the 88 Totnes-Buckfastleigh-Newton Abbot service provided by Stagecoach South West also passes through the neighbourhood area. The service can be accessed on the A384.

The Staverton Parish website⁸⁶ indicates there is a Ring and Ride service that runs between the neighbourhood area and Ashburton every Thursday – intended for those unable to drive or unable to access public transport.

Road network and congestion

The neighbourhood area borders the A38 in the north west, and the A384 is within the parish to the south west. The A384 connects to the A38 in the north and the A385 in the south. The A38 is one of the primary transport routes in and out of the South West, connecting to the M5 at Exeter.

The neighbourhood area is mostly comprised of minor roads and narrow country lanes. There are significant pinch points, especially at Staverton Bridge. However, the network is understood to be able to accommodate the traffic that uses it, with only minor congestion issues near to schools during drop off and pick up times.

⁸¹ South Devon Railway (no dates) 'Our Line' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸² Great Western Railway (2022) 'Totnes' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸³ Great Western Railway (2022) 'Newton Abbot' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁴ Countrybus (2015) 'Totnes-Broadhempston' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁵ Devon Bus Map (no date) can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁶ Staverton Parish (no date) 'Bus Services' can be accessed [here](#).

Routes through Staverton act as rat runs between the A38 and A385 at locations east of Totnes and Torbay.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

According to the Staverton Parish website, there are approximately 6.8 km of public footpaths, 6 km of bridleways and 8.9 km of byways^{87,88} within the neighbourhood area. The parish website also states the Parish Council is working on publishing a number of circular walks.

Summary of Future Baseline

Given the limited public transport options for the parish, it is likely private vehicle usage will continue as the primary mode of transport for residents. In this respect, additional development within the neighbourhood area has the potential to exacerbate the identified issues for the road network.

There may be opportunities to support enhancements to pedestrian and cycle links across the parish, including to existing public transport networks.

As discussed in previous chapters, considering the COVID-19 pandemic and changing working habits, the provision of infrastructure to facilitate working from home is likely to positively contribute towards transport management. Whilst negative effects of new development on the transport network are likely to be mitigated in part by new infrastructure, there will be a continuing need for development to be situated in accessible locations.

⁸⁷ Staverton Parish (no date) 'Footpaths and Byways' can be accessed [here](#).

⁸⁸ Staverton Parish (no date) 'Staverton Parish Rights of Way' can be accessed [here](#).

