

# Bridestowe & Sourton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 - 2034 Referendum Version



# Neighbourhood Development Plan for Bridestowe and Sourton 2016 - 2034

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# Chapter 1. Introduction and background

## 1.1 Preamble

- 1.1.1 This Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is the plan for the two West Devon parishes of Bridestowe and Sourton, and represents the communities' vision and priorities for how we would like to see the local area change in the coming years. In doing so it sets out our local planning policies which will be considered as and when any proposals for development come forward in either parish.
- 1.1.2 The Plan is not intended to cover every issue identified as being important to the communities. It has a focus on responding to proposals for development and the appropriate use of land. It puts us, as the communities, in the driving seat when it comes to having a say over what, how and where development should take place where it requires planning permission.
- 1.1.3 The Plan and its policies reflect our parishes' characteristics and the ambitions of our communities. The non - planning issues that arose from the consultation have been included in Appendix X (Community Aspirations). The two Parish Councils are committed to addressing these aspirations although some may not be deliverable at a parish level.
- 1.1.4 A list of the various reference documents referred to in this plan can be found in Appendix II and on both Bridestowe's and Sourton's websites.
- 1.1.5 The Plan covers the period from 2016 to 2034 and we are required to ensure that it is in general conformity with the adopted Joint Local Plan prepared by Plymouth City Council, West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council. Also the plan must not conflict with the adopted Dartmoor National Park Authority's Local Plan, the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document. It also needs to comply with the policies in the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan.
- 1.1.6 We recognize that our NDP is a response to the needs and aspirations of the local community as understood today and current challenges and concerns are likely to change over the plan period. Bridestowe Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery.

## 1.2 Background to the plan

- 1.2.1 Bridestowe and Sourton are adjoining parishes in the district of West Devon; both are rural parishes, separate and distinctive, yet sharing common threads and jointly using certain amenities and facilities.
- 1.2.2 Both parishes face similar challenges - reduction in public transport, rural isolation, oversubscribed local schools and concern about potential inappropriate development. Both share a desire to have a voice in the local development that will occur in the decades ahead.
- 1.2.3 With this commonality, Bridestowe and Sourton Parish



## Bridestowe and Sourton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 - 2034

Councils, encouraged by central government, decided in 2013 to develop a joint parish plan. It was agreed that Bridestowe PC would hold the funds for the project and be the lead body in grant applications.

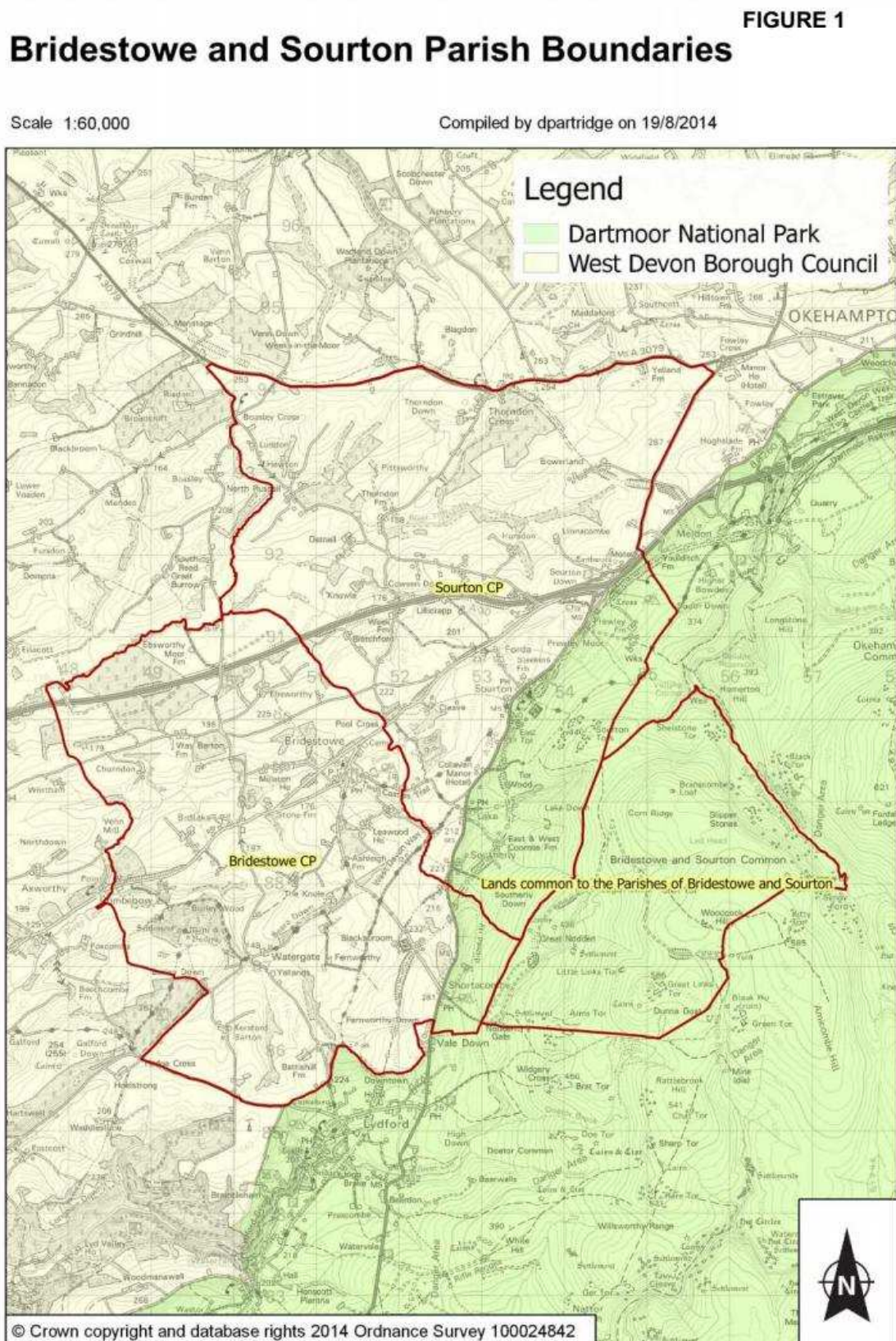
- 1.2.4 With the development of a new Strategic Plan by West Devon Council, which proposed allocating new housing to Bridestowe, a decision was taken to 'upgrade' to a neighbourhood development plan that, unlike a parish plan would, if successfully made, have statutory power and become part of the Development Plan for the Parishes.
- 1.2.5 Background data, feedback from community organisations and businesses plus local research had already been collated. With a working group in place, a constitution adopted and officers in post plus funding from Devon County Council's Town and Parish Fund, a smooth transition from parish plan to emerging neighbourhood development plan was achieved. Further engagement and consultation would be required to build on these foundations.
- 1.2.6 The two parishes of Bridestowe and Sourton were formally designated as a Neighbourhood Development Plan Area in December 2014 through an application to West Devon Borough Council and Dartmoor National Park Authority under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (part 2 S6).
- 1.2.7 The Plan has been prepared by the Bridestowe and Sourton Joint Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group, whose members are parishioners and representatives from both Parish Councils.





### 1.3 The neighbourhood plan designated area

1.3.1 In accordance with part 2 of the Regulations, West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) and Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA), the two relevant local planning authorities, publicised the application from Bridestowe and Sourton Parish Council and advertised a six-week consultation period. The application was approved by WDBC and DNPA in December 2014 and the parishes of Bridestowe and Sourton designated as the Neighbourhood Area (Fig 1. Red line denotes boundary)



## **1.4 Community engagement and consultation**

- 1.4.1** Bridestowe and Sourton's joint Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been developed from the views of local people, businesses, community organisations including young people's groups and the local schools' federation. Views have been gathered using a variety of different consultation approaches including stalls at local fetes and popular events and regular monthly evening meetings open to all.
- 1.4.2** Arising from the public meetings, a consultation group of 48 households was established. Some were individuals that had expressed an interest in being involved from the outset and others came forward from both parishes to represent specific sectors of the community, for example, the pre school, the youth groups, businesses and churches. All members of this consultation group have been sent and given the opportunity to comment on and contribute to all documents prepared by the Steering Group, in tandem with everyone else who was encouraged to access and comment on the evolving documents. The households involved in the consultation group include more than 10% of the population of the two parishes.
- 1.4.3** A comprehensive paper survey was distributed to every household in the area in 2015. Regular bulletins about the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan have been included in the monthly newsletter circulated to every household in the two parishes and current summaries have been posted at regular intervals on both village web-sites. Social media have been employed to elicit feedback and views from younger parishioners.
- 1.4.4** In addition to the residents' consultation, a wide range of stakeholders were invited to give their views and share insights. Local businesses were asked to complete either a paper-based survey or respond online. Separate surveys were carried out to gain insight into specific areas such as recreation.
- 1.4.5** A housing needs survey, with questionnaires delivered to every household in the two parishes was commissioned in 2016 after a successful application to the National Lottery for funding. The full results of the surveys are included in Appendices III and IV of this document and more detail of the consultative process appears in Appendix I

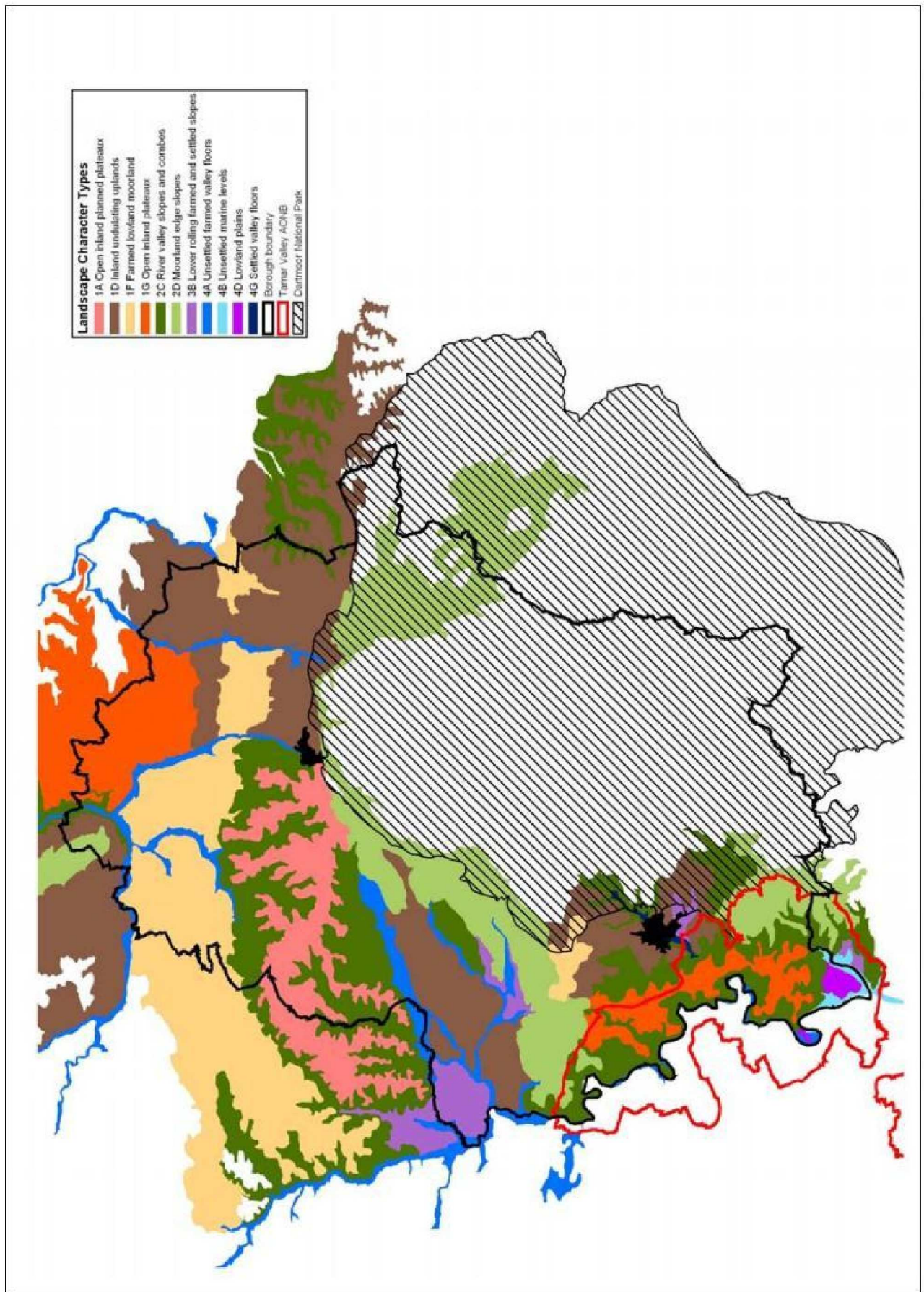
## **1.5. Profiles of Bridestowe & Sourton**

### **Location**

- 1.5.1** Bridestowe and Sourton are adjoining parishes in the district of West Devon. The A30 dual carriageway, the main access to Cornwall, runs through both parishes of the Neighbourhood Plan area, with the main Okehampton to Tavistock road (A386), running North - South, bisecting Sourton village.
- 1.5.2** The cities of Exeter and Plymouth are 30 miles to the east and 25 to the south respectively and can be reached by regular but limited bus services. The nearest mainline railway stations are in Plymouth and Exeter although plans to run trains from Okehampton to Exeter are underway. The towns of Okehampton and Tavistock are local shopping centres and offer library services, medical centres, secondary schools, community hospitals etc.



Figure 2. Map showing Landscape Character Types



- 1.5.3** Both parishes contain Common Land in the Dartmoor National Park, parts of which are held jointly. This provides rough grazing, a small part of which is used by the military for live firing practice. The scenic quality is reflected by the 'National Park' status, which is the highest worldwide landscape designation.
- 1.5.4** The Landscape Character map (*Figure 2*) sets the designated area within the locality showing the mix of moorland, farmland, river valley slopes and coombes - all of which contribute to its distinctive identity. Both are rural parishes, separate and distinctive, composed mostly of undulating farm land given over almost entirely to pasture.
- 1.5.5** Sourton Parish consists of a small village with no real nucleus, which has a public house, but no shop, together with several small hamlets. The school in the parish is in an isolated position, standing virtually alone, a good couple of miles from most of the scattered hamlets and the village itself, and predominantly serves the parish of Bratton Clovelly.
- 1.5.6** Bridestowe in contrast, has a village centre, part of which is designated as a conservation area, with a shop and post office, public house, school and preschool at its heart plus a few small satellite hamlets.
- 1.5.7** Bridestowe has two small rivers running through the heart of the village: Cranford Brook originates on Dartmoor south of Sourton and the brook flows through the centre of the village to join with the River Lew within the recreation ground area. There have been historic instance of flooding at the highway bridging points as a result of debris collecting under the bridges.
- 1.5.8** The beauty of the area makes it a popular holiday destination and a place where retired people aspire to live.

### **Size and population**

- 1.5.9** Bridestowe parish has a total of 2,036.16 hectares and a population of 576 (240 households), whilst Sourton parish has a larger area, 3,396.53 hectares but a smaller population, 413 (180 households). [2011 Census data].
- 1.5.10** Sourton's population has been relatively static over the past 20 years, while Bridestowe's population has increased due to recent housing developments.
- 1.5.11** The proportion of the population aged under 16 and over 65 is shown in Table 3.1, in Chapter 3 and shows a slightly lower proportion of people under 16 and a substantially higher proportion over 65 than the national average.
- 1.5.12** The two primary schools within the NDP area, are fully subscribed. Both schools have received good Ofsted reports, and attract children from outside the NDP area. "Treetops" is the thriving pre-school with additional Before, Afterschool & Holiday club services and located in part of the Bridestowe Village Hall building. It functions as a hub within the community and further afield for families and children alike. It is under pressure to expand as it not only serves the local area but also attracts children from the surrounding parishes.





**Bridestowe Primary School, then and now and Boasley School in Sourton Parish**

## Heritage

**1.5.13** The area is steeped in history and this is reflected by the fact that there are 448 entries in the Historical Environment Record that pertains to Bridestowe and Sourton. Bronze Age remains such as hut circles and tumuli still exist on the moor. In 1991 remains of a Roman road and possible signal station were found at Sourton Down while nearby in 1643 a battle between the Royalists and Parliamentarians took place. Some farmsteads date from the Saxon period and are named in the Domesday Book. An extensive Norman earthwork can be seen among the trees of Burley Wood in Bridestowe parish. Some mostly unsuccessful mining took place in both parishes in the nineteenth century but more importantly small outcrops of limestone were quarried and the stone burned in kilns for use as an agricultural fertiliser and in the building trade. The sites are now deeply flooded and are valuable wildlife havens. An ice factory was set up on the slopes of Sourton Tor in 1875 but it was a short-lived venture, undermined in part by mild winters.

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains four Grade II\* and 65 Grade II listed buildings. 13 of the listed buildings are located within the Bridestowe conservation area.

**1.5.14** During the Second World War Bridestowe was home to three army camps and the American troops stationed at Leawood were in the forefront at the D Day landings. The concrete bases and road layout of one of these army camps are still present within the Leawood Estate lands.



## **Recreation**

### **i) Green spaces**

Sport and recreation form an important element in the life of Bridestowe and Sourton. The National Park and Fernworthy Down provide open access for walkers and horse riders whilst bridle paths, the Granite Way and Pegasus Way provide additional access for cyclists and riders. Paragliders are a regular sight, launching from Sourton Tor to share the thermals with the buzzards. Bridestowe's Sporting Green provides a good range of children's play equipment but a lack of facilities for older children has been identified. Bridestowe's Cricket Club is well established and has a youth team drawing from a wider catchment. Both the Cricket Pitch and the Sporting Green are two of the valued local green spaces within Bridestowe and are being designated as part of this NP process, along with small local green spaces at the heart of Sourton and Bridestowe villages. Sourton has no play facilities for children.

### **ii) Community facilities**

Bridestowe and Sourton village halls are used heavily and host many recreational pursuits, including art classes, sugarcraft classes, short mat bowls and belly dancing. There is a well supported plan to create a hard surface pitch adjacent to Bridestowe village hall for a range of games including tennis and basket ball; sources of funding for this are being explored.

## **Housing - past, present and future**

- 1.5.15** Sourton village has seen little building since the Second World War apart from Trescote Way, a substantial development of bungalows built in the 1970's under previous planning regulations. Although technically within Sourton parish, Trescote Way's proximity to Bridestowe village leads residents to perceive themselves as part of that community.
- 1.5.16** Bridestowe village has had three significant residential developments in the past thirty years which have almost doubled its population. The rest of the parish inhabitants live in small hamlets or scattered farms, some of whose outbuildings have been converted to dwellings.
- 1.5.17** Bridestowe and Sourton have a wide range of housing, with a relative excess of larger homes and lack of smaller homes suitable for young people and for older residents seeking to downsize but still live within the community. Redressing this imbalance in housing stock is an important feature of the policies in this Neighbourhood Development Plan, and is supported by the NPPF, the Joint Local Plan, Dartmoor National Park Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2006-2026 and the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan.
- 1.5.18** Data from the 2011 Census show that Bridestowe has 240 households of which 70.4% are owner occupied (national average 63.3%), 6% social rented (national average 19.3%), and 20.4% privately rented (national average 16.8%). For Sourton there are 180 households, 81.7% are owner occupied, 3.9% social rented and 12.2% private rented.
- 1.5.19** Average incomes in West Devon are lower than the national average, particularly for people who work in the Borough (see Chapter 3), whilst the average price of a 2-bedroom terraced house in Okehampton is currently in the range of £140,000 – £180,000 ([www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)); a starter home in a sought after rural setting is considerably more expensive. WDBC in their strategic plan 2011 states that 38% of households cannot afford private rental and 75% cannot afford home ownership. The imbalance between incomes and available low-cost housing emphasises the importance to the Parishes of measures to increase the provision of affordable housing, both to buy or rent.



- 1.5.20** Several sites have been proposed in Bridestowe by landowners for possible development as a result of WDBC call for land. All 5 proposed sites were adjacent to but outside the original settlement boundary. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process the working group have sought to redraw the boundary to include these sites. Initially Sourton had not been identified as a development area by WDBC, but in June 2017 while the Neighbourhood Plan was being prepared, one application for 9 new dwellings was submitted and approved in Sourton village.
- 1.5.21** In the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036, Sourton is in the category of Villages and Hamlets, which are the National Park's smallest, most sensitive and isolated settlements, but which still have small- scale housing and business needs which need to be supported. These settlements have no settlement boundaries and more limited development opportunities. The section of Sourton parish that is not in the National Park Boundary also remains categorised by West Devon Borough Council as 'unsustainable', which means that the presumed response will be a refusal for future housing proposals.
- 1.5.22** In Bridestowe, of those 5 sites put forward in early 2015, 2 have been granted planning consent, one in 2017 and the other in 2018 preceding the completion of this Neighbourhood Plan. The approved developments will contribute in terms of numbers to the overall allocation for Bridestowe as suggested in the adopted Joint Local Plan. .  
Of the three remaining sites, one is specifically for sheltered housing for the elderly and not in conflict with the other developments. Late in the Plan's development it was decided to remove one of the two remaining sites as it overlooked the conservation area, in particular the church, and development here would have led to significant objection from English Heritage. The final two sites has been formally allocated for housing development: site assessments of both sites appear in Appendix V of the Evidence Base with the relevant mini briefs in the policy section.

### **Employment and incomes**

- 1.5.23** Currently the main industries are agriculture and tourism. Most farms concentrate on fattening cattle and sheep and a few keep dairy cows. Farm diversification is becoming more common and so the interrelationship between farming and tourism becomes more complex. Both parishes have a caravan and camping park, public houses which serve food and have facilities for Bed and Breakfast. Bridestowe has a thriving village shop and post office. A long established residential home with separate supported living bungalows for the elderly frail, provides local employment as do a busy garage, café and hotel close to the A30.
- 1.5.24** Incomes are generally lower than the national average (see Chapter 3) and unemployment is low.  
Despite the relatively low wages locally, the poor provision of public transport means that many people need to own a car to commute to work; 51% of households within the two parishes own 2 cars (national average 32%) whilst 8.3% have no access to a car (national average 25%).  
Bridestowe and Sourton as part of West Devon have a low wage economy and higher living costs contribute to levels of fuel poverty locally [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015].

## Living in the Neighbourhood Area

- 1.5.25 In an early consultation, people were asked what they liked about living in the area; above all they valued the landscape with its proximity to Dartmoor.
- 1.5.26 Another finding was a strong sense of community and this is supported by the many clubs and societies that meet regularly, plus the social facilities offered by the village halls and the churches. Annual events like the Bridestowe Ram Roast and Sourton's Produce Show are always well attended.
- 1.5.27 The area has very low levels of crime. New development based on the attributes of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) and the principles of Secured by Design, will contribute to the existing safe and accessible environment.

## Why the Landscape is important

- 1.5.28 Dartmoor National Park overlaps with the section of the Neighbourhood Plan area that lies east of the A386 and the impressive skyline of moor and rocky tors is much admired. The Joint Local Plan states clearly the importance of *'Protecting, conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of south west Devon's countryside, protecting the countryside from inappropriate development, and maximising our environmental assets.'* (Strategic Objective SO6, 8 page 168)
- It is these assets, exemplified in parishes such as Sourton and Bridestowe, that draw tourists and those wishing to retire to the area. Key to conserving what people come here to enjoy - the scenic countryside - means not only maintaining the habitats and field systems that make up the landscape, but ensuring that development does not intrude or blight it.
- 1.5.29 Good, well designed housing, sited in areas where that development is not intrusive, can ensure that both the landscape and the built environment can happily co-exist.
- 1.5.30 Stunning views of Sourton, Bridestowe and in the far distance Bodmin Moor can be glimpsed for the first time from the A30 heading West as the road approaches the Sourton Cross. Other breathtaking views are accessed from various vantage points within the parishes and ensuring that these are not compromised by development is of great importance in this Neighbourhood Development Plan.

## 1.6 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

- 1.6.1 External factors will impact on the two parishes and it is prudent to recognize that these may necessitate a review of the Neighbourhood Development Plan within the plan period.

### Improving rail links

- 1.6.2 Improving connectivity and supporting the development of future rail freight opportunities, improving the rail link between Cornwall, Plymouth and the rest of the country is of great importance to the Region. The Tavistock to Plymouth and Okehampton to Exeter rail links, two projects provisionally approved by the Local Authority, will have an impact on the local



area making it more attractive to commuters wishing to locate to a rural area with good rail links to the two cities. Demand for increased housing development is a likely consequence of such developments.

Currently there are significant impediments to local businesses, to the development of tourism, and to the broader economic development of West Devon caused by the absence of a rail service. The potential impacts of rail service re-opening on the local and regional economy are likely to be significant and on balance positive. (see Appendix VIII).

### **Community energy projects**

- 1.6.3** The move away from reliance on fossil fuels to cleaner sources of energy is a national and international priority as part of the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015, to which the UK Government is a signatory.

Engaging in community energy projects that through collective action could contribute to energy generation and perhaps reduce the cost of energy for consumers, has strong support from residents (see Appendix III) and is in line with local strategic policy.

There are however natural concerns that intrusive renewable installations could mar the highly-valued landscape and so microgeneration schemes are deemed more suitable.

### **Farming**

- 1.6.4** Although agriculture directly accounts for a small percentage of local employment, its indirect involvement (e.g. equipment supply and maintenance, retail and tourism) is much greater, and its role in both parishes is historical and enduring.
- 1.6.5** Britain's exit from the European Union could impact unfavourably on the incomes of farmers and major uncertainties are currently contributing to reduced investment and limited agricultural developments. Diversification and innovative land use of traditional agriculture land may occur in the years to come.



*The White Hart Inn, Bridestowe*



*Springfield Residential Home, Bridestowe*

## Chapter 2: Planning Policy Context

### 2.1 What is a neighbourhood Development Plan?

#### 2.1.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs)

NDPs are a way in which local communities, such as those within the Parishes of Bridestowe and Sourton, can formulate development management policies, and set out local standards and criteria against which planning applications for the development and use of land and buildings will be assessed in the parishes of Bridestowe and Sourton.

#### 2.1.2 NDPs were established through the ***Localism Act 2011 and Schedules 4A & 4B of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990*** and accordingly must meet the following basic conditions:

- They must generally conform with the strategic policies of the formally adopted Development Plan for the area; in the case of Bridestowe and Sourton this is the Joint Local Plan(2019), together with the Dartmoor National Park Authority's adopted Local Plan, the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management and Delivery Plan as well as the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan 2018-2036.
- They must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019)
- Contribute to achieving sustainable development; and,
- Be compatible with European Union (EU) law and human rights obligations.

#### 2.1.3 Plymouth, West Devon and South Hams have prepared a Joint Local Plan which was adopted in April 2019 and sets out the overarching strategy for the area, setting out where development will take place, what areas should be protected, and how the area will change through to 2034.

In this neighbourhood Development Plan, we have sought to follow the principles set out in the Joint Local Plan.

### 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework(NPPF)

#### 2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012 and revised in February 2019 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

The NPPF is supported by detailed guidance (National Policy Planning Guidance, NPPG) on how the framework and its contents should be applied locally and nationally. Both the NPPF and the NPPG are available at: <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>



## **2.3 The NPPF states:**

### **2.3.1**

*Non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies.*

*Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies<sup>16</sup>.*

*Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently. para 28 -30*

## **2.4 The process of submission, examination and adoption of the Neighbourhood Development Plan**

- 2.4.1 Before submission the NDP must undergo Pre-submission consultation and publicity. The way in which this must be done is set out in Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/contents/made> ).
- 2.4.2 The Bridestowe and Sourton NDP underwent this process of pre-submission consultation from January to April 2018.  
After taking account of all submissions and suggestions made under the Regulation 14 consultation, the final version of the report will be produced, for submission to West Devon Planning Authority(Lead Planning Authority) under Regulation 15.
- 2.4.3 Both Sourton and Bridestowe straddle the National Park boundary resulting in our neighbourhood plan area falling within the jurisdiction of both the the Dartmoor National Park Authority and West Devon Borough Council Local Planning Authorities. DNPA & WDBC have an agreed joint protocol in place which sets out their working arrangements including establishing a 'Lead Authority' as the primary contact for each Neighbourhood Plan Group. WDBC is the Lead Local Planning Authority for the Bridestowe and Sourton NDP and as such is the primary contact for the NDP group.
- 2.4.4 This current version of the NDP is the draft for submission under Regulation 15 and has been produced to ensure the widest consultation with local residents.
- 2.4.5 When submitted to the Local Authority under Regulation 15 the Neighbourhood Development Plan will undergo examination to test whether it meets the basic conditions and other relevant legal conditions.

2.4.6. At the end of the process of examination, the Examiner's Report will be sent to the West Devon Planning Authority and DNPA, and to the Bridestowe and Sourton Parish Councils. The examiner has three options in assessing the NDP:

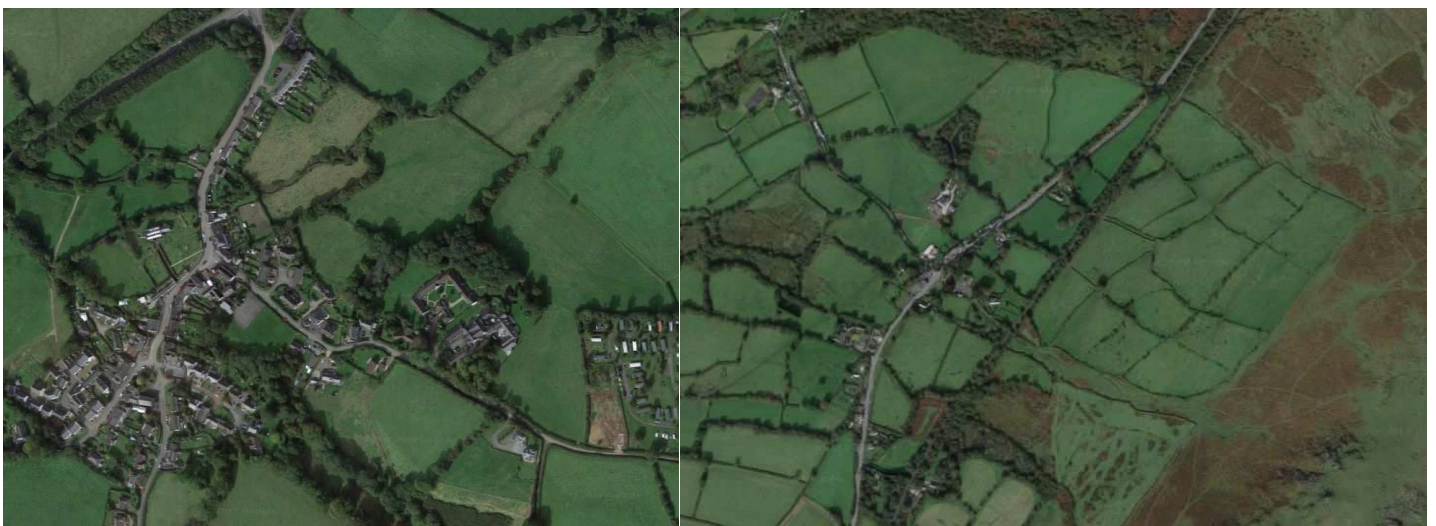
1. That the Plan proceeds to referendum as submitted
2. That the Plan is modified by the West Devon Planning Authority and/or DNPA to meet the basic conditions and the modified version proceeds to referendum
3. That the Plan does not proceed to referendum

2.4.7 The West Devon Planning Authority (WDPA), jointly with the DNPA will then set out its decision and reasons in a "decision statement". If the WDPA and DNPA are satisfied that the Plan meets the basic conditions they must decide to proceed to referendum as soon as reasonably possible.

2.4.8 The Local Authority will then organise a referendum on the Plan, in which all adult residents of both parishes who are on the electoral register will be entitled to participate. If the referendum accepts the NDP (by a simple majority of those who vote) it will be "made" – i.e. adopted.

2.4.9 The weight to be accorded to Parish led development management policies contained in a Neighbourhood Development Plan which has been "made" (i.e. adopted) will be equal to that of policies developed at both District and National level, ensuring that local residents have a real and greater voice in the quality and contribution of new development to local community facilities and the character of the rural landscape within the Parishes. However, NDPs are not a potential tool to stop development from happening in the first place.

*Aerial views of Bridestowe and Sourton villages.*





## Chapter 3. Issues and Proposals raised by People in the Local Community

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Neighbourhood Planning Group sent out a questionnaire in April 2015 to all parishioners asking them to consider what they thought was important about their parish, features they valued, aspects they didn't like, and changes they would like to see. Parishioners were also consulted on additional points at two well attended annual events, the Bridestowe Ram Roasts, and at numerous other consultation events in both parishes over the period from August 2014 to Summer 2018.



3.1.2 Monthly open meetings were held, alternating venues between the two parishes. As noted in Chapter One, 48 households, including more than 10% of the total population of the two parishes have been closely involved in providing feedback via email or in person at every stage of the plan's development .



3.1.3 More detailed information on the extensive evidence base, including reports on the Parishes' consultations can be found in Appendix I and via Bridestowe's and Sourton's websites.

3.1.4 This section of the Plan looks at the results of that consultation, highlighting the issues raised and the proposals that were put forward, as well as highlighting issues raised by other consultations and research. Further detail on the consultation process is given in the accompanying Consultation Statement

3.1.5 The issues considered in this chapter relate to future land use and are therefore directly relevant to the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). Other issues identified that do not fit into this category such as new recreational facilities for older children, traffic calming measures, and establishing a green off-road cycle/walking route between the 2 communities are dealt with by both parish councils jointly. See Appendix X (Community Aspirations).

#### **The April 2015 Questionnaire (see Appendix III for details)**

3.1.6 A total of 178 questionnaires were completed out of approximately 475 questionnaires distributed; people chose to respond either on line or by completing the paper questionnaires. This gives an approximate 38% return overall.

3.1.7 Despite the length of the questionnaire - 42 questions in the main section and another 26 in the supplementary sections - most people completed the whole questionnaire, and few people omitted any significant parts.

3.1.8 Most questionnaires included information about all members of the household and the households from which completed questionnaires were received included a total of 397 people; this is 40% of the total population of the parishes of Bridestowe and Sourton (Total population 996 in the 2011 census).

3.1.9 A detailed report of the consultation process and the results of the April 2015 questionnaire and the May 2016 Housing needs assessment are given in Appendix III and Appendix IV respectively.

### **Summary of the main issues raised in the consultation processes.**

Housing including traffic and transport	<p>More high-quality affordable homes required to meet local need</p> <p>More housing for younger and older people</p> <p>Inevitable increase in village traffic with development</p> <p>Small pockets of developments rather than one large site</p> <p>Insufficient car parking</p> <p>Speeding traffic endangering pedestrians</p>
Environment and Heritage	<p>Threat to valued landscape from development</p>
Employment/Economy	<p>More employment opportunities to boost local economy</p> <p>Utilisation of brownfield sites for new businesses</p> <p>Need for improved broadband speeds</p>
Low Carbon development	<p>Ensuring appropriately scaled renewable energy installations</p>
Community wellbeing	<p>Poor recreational facilities specifically for over 12s</p> <p>Lack of facilities for physical activities</p> <p>Need to protect existing amenities</p>

These issues fed into the five main themes of the Plan



## 3.2 HOUSING

### Background.

- 3.2.1 West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) in the adopted Joint Plymouth and South West Devon Local Plan, has suggested that a figure of 30 additional homes to be built in Bridestowe for the period 2014 – 2034 would be considered as sustainable. As the strategic housing needs assessment is just a snapshot of the first 5 years of the Plan period, the total for the whole of the plan period may be higher than that.
- 3.2.2 The Joint Local Plan contains the most recent comprehensive assessment of the likely future housing needs for the Local Authority area, and the local parishes of Bridestowe and Sourton. We have therefore used this assessment as indicative of the likely need for new housing in the two parishes over the period covered by this Neighbourhood Development Plan. The importance of having accurate figures of housing need through a Housing Need Assessment has been highlighted in the para 60 of the NPPF (2019). It also sets a minimum of 10% for affordable housing in major developments with exemptions to this in the case of rural exception sites and places extra emphasis on meeting identified need numbers.
- 3.2.3 As mentioned in Chapter 1, Sourton has been assessed by both Local Authorities as a community that is unsuitable for sustainable housing development as it has no shop or school within the main settlement. Sourton is identified as one on the National Park's villages and hamlets, which are the Park's smallest, most sensitive and isolated settlements, but which still have small-scale housing and business needs which need to be supported. These settlements have no settlement boundaries and more limited development opportunities.
- 3.2.4 The WDBC Sub-Regional Housing Market and Needs Assessment (HMNA), carried out in 2006, highlighted the need for more affordable homes and a growing gap between the need for, and the current provision of, appropriate housing, including both affordable housing and market price housing for elderly and disabled residents in West Devon.
- 3.2.5 As noted in Chapter 1, and shown in Table 3.1 below, the 2011 Census showed that the proportion of the population in the two parishes aged over 65 is significantly higher than the national average, whilst the proportion between 15 and 29, and the proportion under 16 are both significantly lower than the national average.
- 3.2.6 This is in line with the local perception of an ageing population caused by increased life expectancy, and people retiring to the area, with younger potential residents being priced out of the property market. These demographic pressures are factors contributing to the increasing need for both low cost high quality affordable housing and the need for housing suitable for older residents seeking to downsize but remain within the community.

**Table 3.1. Age of population**  
[2011 Census]

	Bridestowe	Sourton	National average
Under 16	93 (16.1%)	61 (14.7 %)	18.9%
Over 65	156 (27.1%)	129 (31.2%)	18%



3.2.7 There is a significant issue of out-migration among young people in the area, particularly school leavers, with 3 times more 15-19-year-old people leaving the area than coming in. The retired population of West Devon is projected to rise by 56% by 2026. (The Great Dartmoor Leaf 2015 -2020).

In 2006 an Employment Land Review identified that West Devon has a high proportion of relatively low paid employment opportunities. (WDBC Strategic Plan 2011)

This is confirmed in more recent (2016) data from the Office for National Statistics:

**Average Gross weekly pay**

(Source: ONS annual survey 2016)

	West Devon	Great Britain
Full time workers	£431.8	£540.2

3.2.8 There are also notable differences between average annual earnings of residents in employment and workplace earnings, suggesting that those with higher qualifications and earning power are commuting out to work, while those commuting into West Devon to work are in lower paid employment. (CPRE Report Rural Connections 2015)

3.2.9 The discrepancy between local incomes and the high cost of housing is detailed in Chapter 1. The affordability gap is such that in 2016 the average home in West Devon cost 9.7 times the average income in West Devon, having risen from 5.6 times average income in 2000.

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths> )

3.2.10 Many of the older residents although of retirement age still work, many in agriculture, making the profile of the local economy slightly different from national statistics.

3.2.11 The work of the Sub-Regional Housing Market and Needs Assessment also showed that in West Devon about 87% of newly forming households are looking to occupy one or two bedroom units. However, within the Borough only 34% of current stock is of one or two bedrooms.(Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017) These figures, together with the results of our housing needs assessment indicate that there is a need for smaller housing including both affordable homes and market price homes rather than larger homes.

**Table 3.2. Distribution of sizes of housing stock compared to national average:**

[Source: 2011 Census]

	Bridestowe	Sourton	National average
Houses with 1-2 bedrooms	34.2%	26.1%	39.6%
Houses with 4 or more bedrooms	30.8%	27.8%	18.9%

**Bridestowe and Sourton Housing Needs Survey**

3.2.12 To obtain accurate, up to date data a Housing Need Survey (HNS) was carried out in April 2016 with funding from the National Lottery. (See Appendix IV for detailed report). All households in Bridestowe and Sourton were canvassed.

3.2.13 Detailed and accurate information on existing housing stock was obtained together with a clearer understanding of what type of housing was needed to meet the present and future needs of the local population.

3.2.14 The survey identified a current need for a minimum of 12 units of affordable housing, with 1-3 bedrooms, in the two parishes, together with a need for at least 9 market price smaller homes for residents seeking to downsize within the locality.

3.2.15 There is also a need for homes with level access that would suit young families, the elderly and those with disabilities. People with disabilities require wide, level access within the home.

3.2.16 Although the response rate to the questionnaire was higher than in most similar recent surveys, (38%), the actual level of housing needs identified in this survey must be considered to be a bare minimum requirement.

3.2.17 The delivery of the 12 affordable units (identified in the HNA in 2016) could not realistically be delivered in a 5 year period. A more achievable and deliverable target of 8 units has been set for each of the 5 year phases - this represents two thirds of the total identified and will ensure that a total of 24 units will be delivered if the demand remains at a consistent rate throughout the Plan period.

### Where should new homes be sited in Bridestowe and Sourton?

3.2.18 The questionnaire sent to all Bridestowe and Sourton households in 2015 show generally the community supports an increase in the housing stock. Development within the settlement boundaries was the preferred location (50% of respondents), rather than outside the village or in the outlying hamlets, and a significant minority (25%) favoured conversion of existing agricultural buildings. Despite this preference Bridestowe has no infill sites that will accommodate more than 1 or 2 houses.

3.2.19 Several specific sites for possible development, were put forward by local landowners in response to WDBC call for sites(SHLAA). This took place in Feb/March 2015 just before the questionnaire was circulated.

We included our own call for sites in the questionnaire (Question 17) To ensure that no possible sites had been overlooked and appealed to everyone as well as landowners to suggest possible sites. One site was suggested by parishioners but was withdrawn at the landowner's request.

3.2.20 The sites were set out in the questionnaire and residents were asked their opinions on them (5 sites in Bridestowe and 1 in Sourton).



**The location of sites put forward in Bridestowe (See map Appendix XV)**

1. Town Farm; Adjacent to Town Meadow
2. On the northeast side of Pool Hill
3. On the south side of Pig's Leg lane/Rectory Road
4. Between Bridestowe Cemetery and Hunter's Moon
5. North side of Pig's Leg lane/Rectory Rd (Proposed housing for the elderly, adjacent to Springfield Residential Home)

3.2.21 It should be noted that all the sites put forward for Bridestowe fell outside the settlement boundary but were adjacent to it. The decision was made in June 2018 to redraw Bridestowe's settlement boundary to include the sites.

In February 2019, further revision of the settlement/development boundary was carried out. Public consultation showed local support by parishioners and the changes were endorsed by the two parish councils. The revised, tighter boundary should provide a useful planning tool for guiding, controlling and identifying the limits of future development for the village.

One site was proposed in Sourton, northwest of the A386 near the Highwayman Inn as shown in Chapter 1 (this site has now been granted planning consent).

3.2.22 The responses revealed a considerable variation in opinion as to which site or sites in Bridestowe would be appropriate options; the proposed site between the cemetery and Hunter's Moon received the greatest number of most positive responses and the lowest proportion of objections.

At a later event, the Ram Roast, parishioners were asked if certain conditions could make any of the sites more acceptable. There was broad agreement that if the possible new development at Town Farm was provided with its main vehicular access from the old A30 this could help alleviate traffic problems through Bridestowe Village.

3.2.23 There has been a long history of concern about sewerage provision for the previous new developments of housing in the village and concern was expressed by many people that further development would overload an already struggling system.

3.2.24 Asked if there were other specific sites in either parish that would be suitable for new housing developments, land adjacent to (on the North side of) Launceston Road was suggested by several people. To date this site has not formally been proposed as a possible site for development by the landowner.

There was a clear preference for several smaller developments rather than a single large new housing development.

This was confirmed by the findings of the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) - 91% of respondents favoured small pockets of development (i.e. developments of 10 or fewer homes).

3.2.25 The site on the northeast side of Pool Hill is very close to and overlooks the village Conservation Area and the Church (which has a 2\* listing). Acting on advice from the West Devon Planning Department that, in their opinion, any building on this site would be very unlikely to be given Planning approval, (and thus its inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan as a site for presumed development would be potentially misleading), it was decided that the site should not be included. However the site is adjacent to the Settlement Boundary and the decision does not prevent the landowner from seeking future planning approval for a smaller scale development under Policy H4 of this Neighbourhood Plan (Rural Exception sites).



## Size and type of new housing in Bridestowe and Sourton

3.2.26 56% of respondents to the extensive 2015 questionnaire thought it was important that some of the new housing in the villages should be low cost/affordable housing to rent and many emphasised how important it was that local residents, particularly young people, should be given preference in allocating such homes.

Young couples with an income of £22.5k per annum each, (the average wage in West Devon) will not be able to afford a mortgage even on the cheapest of houses; their only route would be to participate in a community housing scheme. The Government's 'Starter Home Initiative' launched in 2014 is still very unlikely to be affordable for young couples on average or minimum wage.

3.2.27 The findings of the Housing Needs Survey in 2016 revealed that a total of 12 households in the two parishes were identified as being in current housing need, (9 in Bridestowe and 3 in Sourton), 11 of which will need a 1- or 2- bedroom home and one will need a 3-bedroom home. Of these, 9 will need affordable rented accommodation, whilst 3 could afford shared ownership. Because of mobility needs three will require level access. A further 9 households of older residents expressed the wish for smaller market price accommodation to allow them to downsize within the locality. Self build was an option that was supported by 11 respondents.

## Style of new housing in Bridestowe and Sourton

3.2.28 When asked which features of new homes were particularly important, low energy design, traditional and local style, green space and off-road parking were all rated as being particularly important, whilst almost half of the respondents gave contemporary (21st century) style the lowest possible score.

### Housing issues that are important to local people:

- Need for developments of smaller (1-3 bedrooms) and affordable homes in preference to larger or more expensive homes.
- Development should preferably be within the settlement boundary if possible.
- Support small pockets of development rather than large developments.
- Support conversion of agricultural buildings where these are amongst other farm buildings.
- Consider suggested sites in the Plan in the light of residents' opinions, especially giving weight to suggestions on how to reduce any negative aspects.
- Support developments that take account of residents' opinions as expressed in this Plan, with particular weight being given to approaches to minimise the identified negative aspects of each of the proposed sites for development.
- Include statements on the importance of good design, sensitive to the character of the communities
- Support the use of sustainable drainage systems to reduce the potential impact of new and existing developments with respect to surface water drainage discharges.

The policies in this plan will seek to address these issues.

### 3. 3 EMPLOYMENT

- 3.3.1 Historically, in this rural area, agriculture has made an important contribution to the local economy of West Devon for centuries; it has played a major role in shaping and maintaining the Borough's landscape character. (JLP 2013-34 page 226).
- 3.3.2 Although agriculture provides only about 7.5% of total employment, this figure is still above the national average, and, as noted in Chapter 1 many other residents are dependent on agriculture related employment (e.g. equipment supply and maintenance, retail and tourism).
- 3.3.3 Tourism is an important part of West Devon's economy and within the two parishes there is a wide variety of holiday accommodation on offer from hotels, bed & breakfast, bunk barns, self-catering cottages and camping and caravan parks. Visitors swell the numbers using existing facilities, shops, pubs, garages and make use of bike hire facilities to explore the Granite Way, an increasingly popular Sustrans route. Tourism not only contributes to the local economy but provides employment.
- 3.3.4 An ageing population brings with it a need for residential accommodation and community care services. Springfield is a well-established residential home within Bridestowe with extra care bungalow accommodation; many of its employees are drawn from the local area, where it is one of the most important employers. Residential and nursing homes in Okehampton also provide local employment opportunities.
- 3.3.5 There are many small businesses and trades that serve the local communities, such as electricians, builders, providers of financial services, chiropodists, mobile hairdressers etc. Also of the 10 members of staff employed at Treetops Preschool, 7 live locally.
- 3.3.6 The JLP acknowledges the importance of agriculture, tourism and small rural businesses. One of its strategic outcomes is that *"the rural and urban landscapes will continue to enjoy national recognition and contribute to a thriving rural economy through investment in traditional industries and innovative diversification."* (JLP 2013-34 page 179)
- 3.3.7 It is important to encourage diversification to secure a successful rural economy. *"Supporting rural entrepreneurial culture and setting aside land to support start up survival rates will help build resilience in the rural economy"*. (JLP page 266)
- 3.3.8 Rates of employment are close to the national average: in the 2011 Census 72.6% of people of working age in Sourton and 73.2% in Bridestowe were described as economically active compared to the UK average 76.7%. As noted in Chapter 1, this figure is distorted by the relatively large number of family farms in the parishes, to which many family members contribute although they may not be formally identified as economically active.
- 3.3.9 From the 2011 Census 5.5% of working age residents were reported to be receiving 'out of work' Benefits (National Average 8.4%). Many people work from home (see Appendix III).

#### **Location of new businesses, their size and factors inhibiting local business development.**

- 3.3.10 Almost 60% of respondents to the Bridestowe and Sourton questionnaire thought that encouraging new business to the parishes was quite or very important. New housing without

access to new job opportunities could lead to the two parishes becoming “dormitory” settlements with the occupants all commuting outside for work, leaving the villages empty and soulless. The great majority of respondents (78%) favoured siting new businesses on already developed sites within settlement boundaries if possible, whilst 15% of respondents preferred development on farmsteads.

No respondents suggested encouraging a large enterprise to locate to the area. Local residents showed great appreciation of existing small businesses and trades and a desire to see them flourish.

- 3.3.11 Factors adversely affecting local businesses include business rates (noted by 19%), lack of suitable premises (25%), lack of skilled labour (25%) and poor broadband connection (50%). Of the 149 respondents who reported using broadband internet, 42% found it be poor or variable, with many respondents reporting extreme slowing of their internet connections during the early evenings and at weekends, whilst many drew attention to the wide discrepancy in service depending on how far they were from the main villages.
- 3.3.12 Although the broadband service has improved since April 2015 with the provision of fibre optic connections to the main cabinet in Bridestowe village, this has not resulted in a measurable improvement in service for residents living more than a mile or so from the cabinet. Whilst there is a current programme to provide wide area high speed Wi-Fi internet connection to areas outside the reach of the fibre optic network the precise specifications, geographical provision and accessibility of this proposed new service is not yet clear for residents of the two parishes.
- 3.3.13 For 80% of residents who use the Internet for business purposes a fast connection was reported as being important or very important, particularly for those who worked from home. Factors that might support or facilitate local businesses included faster broadband (mentioned by 82%) better public transport (mentioned by 41%), and business accommodation units to lease (mentioned by 22%). On a positive note, almost half of those completing this section (47%) stated that they would or might be able to offer work experience or apprenticeships to local young people in the future. The questionnaire included a section specifically to canvass the views of those running or considering starting a business.
- 3.3.14 A total of 36 respondents completed this section, including 31 who currently run a business here and 5 who are thinking of expanding relocating or starting a business here. These included 9 farm-based businesses, 2 based in business premises and 28 who conduct at least part of their business from home. Most are quite small, with 12 employing 1-3 people, 3 employing 4-10 people, and 2 employing more than 10 people.

**Employment issues that are important to local people:**

- Support sustainable growth and expansion of appropriate, new small businesses as well as existing ones
- Support new business units in appropriate local locations through conversion of existing buildings or discreet well-designed new buildings
- Promote the retention and development of local facilities, such as shops, pubs, etc.
- Encourage improvements in broadband connection, including the provision of transmission facilities for high speed Wi-Fi or mobile phone-network-based broadband where this can be achieved without significant negative visual impact.

The policies in this plan will seek to address these issues.



### 3.4 TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC

- 3.4.1 West Devon is a rural, sparsely populated area and there is heavy reliance on the car to access essential services and facilities. Both parishes have seen the reduction of public transport services. WDBC, in its strategic core plan (2006-2026), recognises that public transport is not accessible to everyone and that certain rural areas run the risk of isolation despite larger villages having a bus service.
- 3.4.2 The relative lack of public transport in the two parishes and the concomitant increased dependency on cars leads to an increased need for car parking within any proposed new housing development (see below).
- 3.4.3 The Joint Local Plan notes an intention to promote flexible car use through park and ride facilities, car sharing and car clubs and to promote good quality, accessible and safe footpaths and cycle routes.
- 3.4.4 The JLP states *'Development will be required to contribute positively to the achievement of a high quality, effective and safe transport system in the Plan Area. It will promote sustainable transport choices and facilitates sustainable growth..... Development proposals should therefore, where appropriate:'.5. Provide for high quality, safe and convenient facilities for walking, cycling, public transport and zero emission vehicles. (JLP DEV29 page 287)*

#### **Possible railway developments. (see also Appendix VIII).**

- 3.4.5 The Joint Local Plan sets out an intention to reinstate the railway from Bere Alston to Tavistock, to reduce congestion on the A386 into Plymouth. This is reinforced in the South West of Tavistock Masterplan with funding for the railway and associated infrastructure to come in part from proposed development. This proposal is supported by both Devon County and Plymouth City councils in their respective transport plans. Depending on funding, it is possible that Tavistock station could be open from 2022.
- The East of Okehampton masterplan seeks to safeguard the ability to provide a shelter, platform and car park as an alternative point to access rail services, as part of proposed development. This sits within aspirations to reinstate daily passenger services between Okehampton and Exeter (Facilitating Economic Growth in South Hams and West Devon -JOHT Resources Ltd, May 2014).
- 3.4.6 This leaves a relatively small gap in the rail line, between Meldon and Tavistock. Re-establishing a second main line from Exeter to Plymouth has been explored and benefits to the local and regional economy are clear. The 2015 report commissioned by the Campaign for Protection of Rural England (CPRE) Rural Reconnections; The social benefits of rail reopening\*, highlighted the increased likelihood of local housing development; the reinstatement would transform the locality into a commuter belt for Exeter and Plymouth. The proposal for reinstatement of this railway was also viewed in a mainly positive light by the cost/benefit analysis conducted on behalf of Dartmoor National Park.
- [ \* <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/rail/item/3986-rural-reconnections>]
- In the questionnaire in 2015 respondents were asked in the questionnaire whether they supported or opposed the possibility of the railway being re-opened between Meldon and Tavistock. Of the 162 respondents who answered this question, 64% were in favour or strongly in favour and 20% opposed or strongly opposed the idea.

- 3.4.7 Whilst the potential advantages of better travel links to the rest of the country, and the possibility of not needing to take the car for long journeys were recognised and emphasised by many respondents, the possible disadvantages of disruption during construction, increased noise and adverse effects on the cycle track were also identified. The potential benefits of being able to travel easily to work in Exeter or Plymouth for local residents were to some extent balanced by the likelihood of increased numbers of people moving to the area, with increasing pressure on housing and house prices.
- 3.4.8 Overall however the overwhelming view was to support the proposed development, with many people making this conditional on retaining the cycle track in its present or slightly revised position.
- 3.4.9 As noted in Chapter 1, opening of additional rail links will have substantial and only partially predictable effects on the local economy and housing needs. Such a development will potentially require review of policies in this Plan within the time period that the Plan covers (2016-2034).

### **Traffic in the Villages.**

- 3.4.10 Major roads run through the parishes: the A30, old A30 (West Devon Way) and A386. Because of the speed of traffic on the A386 through Sourton village and the old A30, crossing these roads is hazardous and it can prove particularly difficult to cross safely for those who are hard of hearing, or unable to walk briskly. Reducing the speed of traffic through the village of Sourton has strong support and is one of the listed 'Community Aspiration' (Appendix). There was interest in reducing the speed limit on the old A30 as it passes the Village Hall and turn off to the village, which had strong local support but wasn't pursued. When development of sites close to the road occurs, traffic calming and speed reduction measures may be revisited. Additionally, the volume of traffic through Bridestowe was considered a problem by 58% of respondents. Children walking from the primary school to Treetops Preschool have no complete pavement route.
- 3.4.11 Sourton village's parking problems are centred on the inadequate off road parking area adjacent to the village hall and church. Not only is there a public footpath leading up onto the moor but it is one of several access points to the Granite Way cycle path, so congestion is inevitable especially at peak times. Similarly at Prewley Moor visitors wishing to walk or cycle spill over from the limited allocated parking inconveniencing residents in the hamlet who wish to park outside their houses. The increasing popularity of cycle paths is leading to congested access points.
- 3.4.12 West Devon Borough Council do not address speeding problems in their strategic plan but residents in both main villages expressed a wish for future housing developments to be linked to the introduction of possible traffic calming/ speed reduction measures. Whilst outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan these aspirations are important to the local population. Some of these issues are aspirational and are included in the comprehensive list in Appendix X.

### **Bus Services**

- 3.4.13 Although buses pass through the centre of Sourton, Bridestowe residents must walk some distance to the nearest bus stop. A recurring theme in many responses was the inadequacy of the bus services and, in particular, the lack of a usable bus service to Tavistock.

A further concern raised by many people was the distance of the bus stops on the old A30 from the village in Bridestowe and the great difficulty faced by the elderly, those with limited mobility, or those with young children of getting up Pool Hill to the bus stops.

- 3.4.14 The community transport Ring and Ride service operates to take people with no access to a vehicle to Okehampton and Tavistock once a week. Only 8% of respondents reported that they used the Ring and Ride service – mainly for travel to Tavistock or Okehampton, and 15% reported that a locally organised community car service would be of interest to someone in the household.

## **Parking**

- 3.4.15 The questionnaire highlighted that 62% of people have 2 or more cars available for use in the household whilst 10.6% had no car. Cars parked on the roadside in the middle of Bridestowe village narrow the road to such an extent that the free flow of traffic is difficult. This problem is particularly bad at the start and end of the school day when the additional volume of traffic makes it difficult to get through the village at all. There is concern that with an increase in the village population, further pressure will be put on the road system by the increased number and movement of cars, thus increased provision of off-road parking is seen as essential for any new housing development.

### **Parking and traffic issues that are important to local people:**

- Ensure that all developments in Bridestowe have sufficient off road parking provision for residents and visitors.
- Encourage developments where traffic is not increased in the centre of the village.
- Support the provision of additional parking in Sourton
- Ensure that development around Sourton Down does not lead to additional parking along the closed section of the old A386.
- Support in principle the opening of the railway, but flag up concern about the potential consequential increased number and price of houses in the parishes.
- Ensure that residential and environmental amenity is not adversely affected by traffic;
- Ensure the provision of new and improved footpaths not just within new developments but with appropriate extensions to create safe pedestrian routes to the key locations in the villages
- Ensure that roads in new developments should be wide enough to allow vehicles (especially emergency vehicles) to pass each other without using the pavements;
- Promote the development of cycleways with entry points that provide adequate parking facilities.
- Explore traffic calming and speed reduction measures

The policies in this plan will seek to address these issues.

## **3.5 YOUNG PEOPLE, SPORT AND RECREATION**

- 3.5.1 Provision of play facilities for primary school aged children is generally good in small communities with play equipment funded and maintained by parish councils. Older children are less well served.

*“Children and young people in rural Devon are at greater risk of social isolation which has consequences for their emotional and physical health and wellbeing. Isolation and lack of*



*reliable and affordable public transport impacts on their ability to access education, recreational facilities and services.”* from Devon County Council’s “Rural Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Devon 2010 -2013” (Children and young people).

This Report recognises the unique problems faced by young people living in rural areas such as long walking distances to school buses and/or public transport on unlit, isolated and/or unsafe country roads; heavy reliance on school bus transport that can make it difficult to participate in extracurricular activities due to rigid bus timetables, fewer youth clubs/activities within smaller settlements.

3.5.1 One 19-year-old living in the area, said the lack of a rail service left youngsters feeling isolated. “We’re only 30 miles from Exeter, but it’s as though you’re at the end of the world. Having no train reduces the choices for everything – shopping, nights out, even college.” Limited opportunities, boredom and low self-esteem impacts on the wellbeing of this age group and can lead to high-risk activities including antisocial behaviour, substance misuse and self-harm as well as tension with other residents.

3.5.1 The 2015 questionnaire sought the views of respondents on provision for the needs of children and young people. Whilst social, play and recreational provision in the parishes for the needs of children aged between 4 and 11 years was considered as excellent by over 60% of people, provision for children aged 12-14 and over was considered very poor by 80% of respondents.

Many respondents made suggestions about how to better serve the young people of the parishes, including establishing a skate park in the sporting green/ playground area, more activities focused on their needs and better public transport to allow teenagers to access Okehampton or Tavistock. Many respondents drew attention to the hazards faced by teenagers playing or skateboarding in the villages because of the speed and high volumes of traffic, as well as the hazards to children from large traffic volumes at the beginning and end of the school day.

3.5.1 A section of the questionnaire that was specifically aimed at children and young people was only completed by 15 (6 boys and 9 girls) and not all answered all questions. Because of this poor uptake a further survey was carried out in July 2015 targeting young people (see Appendix III). Reassuringly 76% of the respondents to the comprehensive questionnaire said that they thought Bridestowe and Sourton were good places to grow up – and cited safety, peace, good links to the countryside, the parks and sporting facilities as things they particularly liked.

3.5.1 Poor internet connection, poor public transport (to meet with friends from other villages or Okehampton) and a lack of activities focused on teenagers in the parishes, plus lack of access to a skate park were all given as things they did not like about living here. Only 25% thought that they would stay in the parishes when they grew up, and 50% thought they would not, whilst 25% were not sure. The things they said they did not like about Bridestowe and Sourton as listed above were all cited as reasons they might not stay (presumably with their own future children in mind).

**Recreational issues that are important to local people:**

- Promote the provision of better facilities for older children
- Promote opportunities for play and physical activity
- Support development that enhances and increases community facilities, recreation and local services within the core villages

The policies in this plan will seek to address these issues.

### 3.6 THE ENVIRONMENT AND AMENITIES

- 3.6.1 The scenic quality of the area is reflected in the fact that part of the area is designated as a National Park (the highest status possible for landscape). The beautiful scenic nature of the area is well recognised. Devon County Council in their landscape character assessment in 2008 described the local area thus:
- 3.6.2 *“A gentle agricultural landscape of high scenic quality, characterised by ribbon-like rivers. Slow-flowing, meandering streams fringed by trees glide through quiet, inaccessible floodplains. A semi-regular pattern of fields, edged with hedges and earth banks, covers the undulating landform and adds pattern and texture to the landscape. The area feels remote and peaceful, and away from Okehampton has seen very little C.20th development; the scattered stone-built farms and villages have a timeless quality. Narrow, earth-banked lanes thread across the valleys, contrasting with the A30 which cuts across the landscape”.*
- 3.6.3 Single wind turbines are a feature of the local area but are not numerous and none have been installed within the two parishes.
- Photovoltaic panels (solar electricity) and solar thermal panels (solar hot water) are becoming more common and Boasley School is an example of an amenity building that has deployed them. Following the results of a renewable energy feasibility study, instigated by Okehampton Town Council and Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council, the group CORES (Community of Okehampton Renewable Energy Society) has been set up as a community benefit society by a working group of volunteers. CORES aims to generate electricity locally, sell it at near half-price to local businesses and put the profit made to good community use in the Okehampton area.

#### Physical well-being

- 3.6.4 If the built environment is well planned and implemented to a high standard, it will have a beneficial impact on the physical well-being of its inhabitants.
- The goal should be to create an environment which enables and supports healthy lifestyles, for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, allotments, opportunities for play and recreation and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.
- 3.6.5 There is strong community support for safeguarding existing parish assets - halls, schools, churches and sports fields and an enthusiasm for creating future sports' facilities and green ways. The supplementary questionnaire circulated in July 2015 that sought the views of younger residents in particular on the subject of recreation, revealed that 69% of respondents were interested in keep-fit classes and 43% in playing tennis. Maximising the opportunity for physical activity, including sports and leisure by providing/improving facilities and sharing use of community buildings has strong local support, particularly if this caters for the needs of the 11 - 18-year-old age group as they are perceived to be poorly served.
- 3.6.6 Bridestowe's shop and post office is visited by over 50% of respondents to the main questionnaire every day, with an average of 4,000 shop transactions alone every month. With the closure of banks in the local towns the post office offers the opportunity to pay in and withdraw money.

- 3.6.7 The rural surroundings are an important leisure asset for local inhabitants wanting to be physically active; they enjoy the proximity to the Dartmoor National Park providing many opportunities for walking, cycling, horse riding and other outdoor pursuits. Almost 25% of respondents reported using footpaths and cycle paths several times a week.



### **Social well-being**

- 3.6.8 The numerous clubs and church activity indicate a strong community spirit. There is an appetite for additional activities such as dance and evening classes. Creating places and spaces for people to meet promotes community engagement, helps foster community spirit and counter rural isolation. Creating a social hub for young people was one suggestion put forward.
- 3.6.9 It is important to ensure that the disabled as well as the able-bodied have equal access to all aspects of community life.  
Measures to address local transport deficiencies by introducing alternative schemes like car sharing should be encouraged. Increased connectivity through telecommunications is not only important for rural enterprise and home-working but allows fuller interaction for young and old across the area and beyond.

### **Landscape, renewable energy and amenities.**

- 3.6.10 The landscape is treasured by parishioners with 100% of respondents to the questionnaire considering it important or very important to them and 100% of respondents considered conserving unspoilt countryside, village greens, open spaces, wildlife designated conservation areas and rights of way was important or very important to them. In the survey 34% said that they used the footpaths and cycle paths on a regular basis.  
Development of existing footpaths to improve pedestrian and possibly cycle access between the villages received unanimous support.
- 3.6.11 A significant majority of respondents to the questionnaire showed strong support for small scale developments of each type of renewable energy other than wind turbines, but strong opposition to larger scale developments. There was some opposition to the development of wind turbines on any scale.  
Several alternative suggestions were made by respondents, including several suggestions of installation of community sized ground source heat pump systems as possible sources of low cost renewable heating within villages or settlements.  
In response to a question to gauge interest in a community energy scheme as a way to buy electricity, gas, oil or other fuels at lower cost, or to manage and generate energy, 83% of respondents expressed a definite or possible interest.

3.6.12 Amongst the specific local facilities listed the ones rated as most important included the Village Halls, and Methodist Hall, the pubs, the sporting green and cricket field, the children's play area, but overwhelmingly the one rated the most important by the largest number of people was Bridestowe Shop and Post Office.

**Community - centred issues that are important to local people:**

- Include a strong statement about the importance of the landscape quality to ensure that development does not diminish the scenic quality of the area.
- Support small scale renewable energy projects
- Investigate local community energy schemes, possibly linking in with Okehampton
- Ensure that community facilities are protected
- Promote opportunities for physical and social activities

The policies in this plan will seek to address these issues.



## Chapter 4: Vision and Objectives

### 4.1. Our Vision for Bridestowe and Sourton.

- 4.1.1 In consultation with the community, the established vision for Bridestowe and Sourton is to secure a strong future for both parishes by supporting sustainable development that meets the needs of current and future residents without detriment to the unique and highly prized landscape and environment and without jeopardizing the strong community feeling that exists and the feeling of safety and security that residents value.

### 4.2 Our Aims:

1. **Housing development.** To support and facilitate provision of suitable housing to meet the current and future housing needs of residents of the Parishes
2. **Scale and location.** To keep housing development to a small scale to retain the essential character of the villages and within or adjacent to the core settlement to prevent sprawl
3. **Good Design.** To ensure that any new developments are designed to integrate with adjacent buildings; this is achieved by appropriate design, materials and layout.
4. **Conserving and Enhancing.** To conserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity, natural habitats and cultural heritage of the Parishes through:
  - sensitive design which protects and enriches the landscape and built setting in new developments and
  - identification of key landscapes, views and heritage assets to be protected.
5. **Promotion of Small Businesses.** To promote the local economy through support for traditional types of rural employment (such as farming, forestry, and related practical skills) and other forms of small-scale independent businesses (including hospitality and sustainable tourism) appropriate to the location.
6. **Renewable Energy.** To encourage small-scale renewable energy production in new developments on or within the home and in the existing built environment where location and design are sensitive both to the local environment and to residential amenity.
7. **Wellbeing.** To conserve and enhance educational, social, cultural and recreational facilities in the Parishes, including communal open spaces, footpaths and cycle paths.

To help deliver the vision, the following objectives have been agreed and grouped under five themes: Housing, Environment and Heritage, Employment and Local Economy, Low Carbon Development and Community Wellbeing

Theme	Aims	Objectives
<b>1. Housing</b>	<p>To support and facilitate provision of suitable housing to meet the current and future housing needs of residents of the Parishes.</p> <p>To keep housing development to a small scale to retain the essential character of the villages and within or adjacent to the core settlement to prevent sprawl.</p> <p>To ensure that any new developments are designed to integrate with adjacent buildings; this is achieved by appropriate design, materials and layout.</p> <p>To encourage small-scale renewable energy production in new developments on or within the home.</p>	<p>1 a) To support a limited amount of new housing to meet assessed local needs including a greater range of affordable housing in small pockets of development within the settlement boundary.</p> <p>b) To provide a mix of housing types including smaller homes for the elderly wishing to downsize and young singles/ couples or families needing first home.</p> <p>c) To encourage sensitive development with reference to a Village Design Statement to reinforce local distinctiveness.</p> <p>d) To ensure that development is located away from flood risk area</p> <p>e) To support energy conservation in design and incorporate energy production within the home.</p>
<b>2.Environment and Heritage</b>	<p>To conserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity, natural habitats and cultural heritage of the Parishes through sensitive design which protects and enriches the landscape and built setting and identification of key landscapes, views and heritage assets to be protected.</p>	<p>2.a) To protect and enhance the villages' open spaces.</p> <p>b) To ensure policies minimise negative impact on the high quality of the natural environment with its protected wildlife interests.</p> <p>c) To ensure policies protect and enhance the historic environment and heritage assets</p>
<b>3.Employment and Local Economy</b>	<p>To promote the local economy through support for traditional types of rural employment (such as farming, forestry, and related practical skills) and other forms of small-scale independent businesses (including hospitality and sustainable tourism) appropriate to the location.</p>	<p>3.a) To ensure policies support local commercial enterprises</p> <p>b) If possible, to identify potential new premises/ sites for existing or new businesses</p> <p>c) To seek on-going improvements to digital connectivity which is beneficial to all enterprises, especially those working from home</p> <p>d) To ensure through policies that development has minimal impact on the landscape</p>
<b>4.Low Carbon Development</b>	<p>To encourage small-scale renewable energy production in new developments on or within the home and in the existing built environment where location and design are sensitive both to the local environment and to residential amenity.</p>	<p>4.a) To support microgeneration but with conditions that ensure minimal impact on landscape</p> <p>b) To encourage new developments to incorporate energy conservation measures through housing and business policies</p>
<b>5.Community Wellbeing</b>	<p>To conserve and enhance educational, social, cultural and recreational facilities in the Parishes, including communal open spaces, footpaths and cycle paths.</p>	<p>5.a) To protect existing facilities with conditions for change of use</p> <p>b) To sustain and improve local facilities for existing and new residents</p> <p>c) To encourage the delivery by action groups or PCs of some of the community aspirations that will promote physical and social activity</p>

## Chapter 5. Our Policies and General Development Principles

### 5.1 Settlement and Housing

Housing growth and development is one of the key issues of this Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5.1.1 In the adopted Joint Local Plan (JLP) by Plymouth City Council, West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Councils, Bridestowe has been categorised as a 'Sustainable Village' and a figure of 30 additional homes for the period 2014 – 2034 has been suggested as both sustainable and improving the viability of the village. It is our intention that within each 5 year period of the Plan's life, two thirds of the identified affordable needs must be delivered and meet the need of those wishing to downsize. (Both parishes have below the national average number of smaller houses i.e. 1-2 bedrooms.)

■ Consultation  
■ responses  
■ 100% valued highly  
■ the natural beauty  
■ of parishes

#### General Development Guidelines

- 5.1.2 The overwhelming majority of people in the Community Questionnaire stated that they valued highly the natural beauty and related features of their parishes and therefore any new build development must be in harmony and in scale with the character of its surroundings, thus being sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area as the NPPF urges. In Bridestowe there is a conservation area that must be taken into account. (See Appendix VI Village Design Statement). All developments must be well sited in the landscape and take full account of the historic environment. To address light pollution unnecessary forms of artificial lighting in proposed development will be discouraged in line with DNPA's aspiration to achieve Dark Sky status. To ensure that new development has a minimal environmental impact, applications should also include techniques that promote energy conservation and reduce energy demands for heating and lighting. The results of the Community Questionnaire highlighted the importance of providing homes designed for low energy consumption with 60% of respondents considering this an extremely important design feature.
- 5.1.3 There is concern that in the past, planning decisions have not always given sufficient regard to these local factors. The General Development Guidelines will apply to all new development throughout the two parishes whether in the form of housing or other forms of development.

### SECTION 1 Settlement boundaries and Housing allocation

- 5.1.4 This section is guided by the Plan's Objectives Nos. 1, 2 & 3 - *Housing development; Scale and location; Good design ; Flood risk*. Development within or adjacent to the settlement boundaries was the preferred location of respondents to the comprehensive questionnaire. Bridestowe had no infill sites that would accommodate more than 1 or 2 houses but sites put forward were adjacent to the settlement boundary.

#### Policy H1 Sustainable housing development

Proposals for new housing development will be supported at a scale and in locations that are in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, development plan policies and relevant neighbourhood plan policies, where they support the continued sustainability and viability of communities in the Plan area by providing new homes, including but not limited to affordable and local needs housing to meet the objectively assessed local housing needs of the Plan area.

- 5.1.5 As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process a new settlement boundary has been drawn up for Bridestowe village to enclose the sites. The community was consulted; support was very strong and no objections were identified. It was agreed that this boundary will provide a useful planning tool for guiding, controlling and identifying the limits of development for the village. (Fig.5.1)



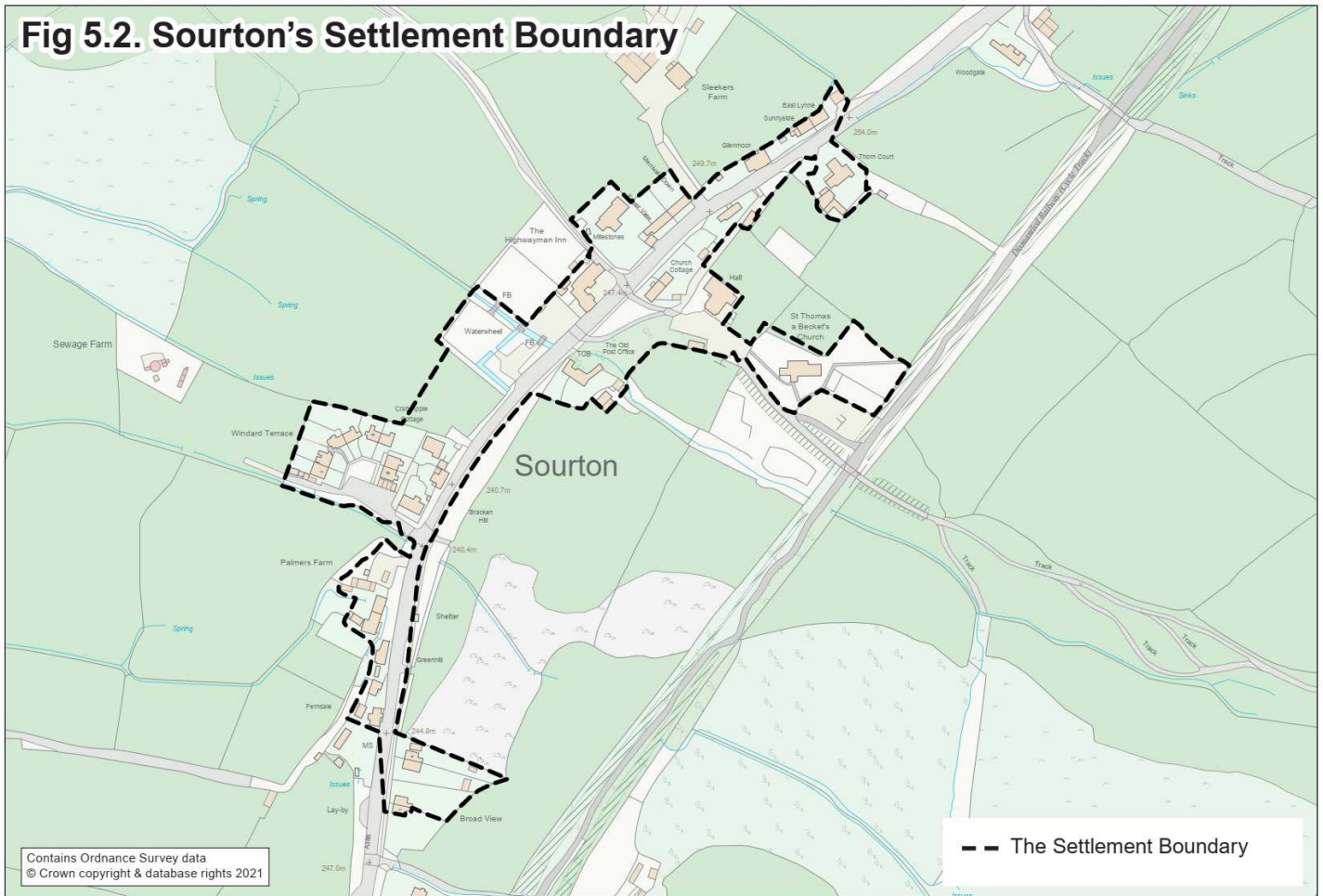
## **Sourton's status**

- 5.1.6 Sourton had been assessed by both Local Authorities as a community unsuitable for sustainable housing development as it has no shop or school within the main settlement. This predated the start of the NP process. However in 2014 a proposal for a development in the centre of the village was approved by WDBC and as the approved application of 9 houses did not include any affordable units. Sourton Parish Council responded to concerns raised by parishioners about this development that was perceived as inappropriate given Sourton's



status. Sourton PC drafted a settlement boundary using DNPA rationale because part of the village falls within the Park. The tightly drawn settlement boundary includes existing and consented housing. (Fig 5. 2) This will ensure that any future development is within the nucleus of the village and will discourage any further ribbon development and maximise an affordable housing development option. After public consultation and PC approval the boundary is now part of the Bridestowe and Sourton Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**Fig 5.2. Sourton's Settlement Boundary**



**Policy H2 Settlement boundaries for Bridestowe and Sourton**

The development of Bridestowe and Sourton shall be focused within the development boundaries of Bridestowe and Sourton as identified in Fig 5.1 and Fig 5.2.

Development proposals will be supported within the development boundary subject to compliance with other policies in the development plan.

Development proposals outside the development boundary will not be permitted unless they are in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plan.

In DNPA's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan document(2008) Sourton is categorised as a 'Rural Settlement' where small scale development essentially serving identified needs arising from within that settlement and its parish will be acceptable in principle.(Policy COR2)

The section of Sourton parish that is not in the National Park Boundary remains categorised by West Devon Borough Council as 'unsustainable', which means that the presumed response will be a refusal for future housing proposals.

#### 5.1.7 Housing allocation in Bridestowe

The JLP sets a housing requirement for Bridestowe of 30 additional dwellings to be provided over the period 2014-2034. This level of growth can be accommodated by a combination of development coming forward on existing sites which already have planning permission and allocating new housing sites. Site 1 and Site 3, shown in Figure 5.3, already have planning consent and can accommodate 24 and 4 dwellings respectively. Sites 4 and 5 are allocated in the NDP for further housing development and can accommodate up to 35 and 20 dwellings respectively, although Site 5 is identified as being suitable for sheltered housing for the elderly, rather than mainstream housing, given its location adjacent to the existing Springfield Residential Home. In total, therefore, the NDP provides land for up to 83 new dwellings which is a more than an adequate supply of land to meet Bridestowe's needs up to 2034.

Consultation responses  
50%want development  
within Bridestowe village  
or adjacent to the  
settlement boundary  
32%favour plots of 6 or  
more within or adjacent  
and only  
17% favour plots of 15 or  
more

5.1.8 Two of the five sites in Bridestowe (numbered 1 and 3 on Fig.5. 3) have received approval for planning applications since the start of the NP process, leaving the remaining sites (4 and 5) available for housing allocation in the future. (A map showing all the development sites appears in Appendix XV.)

Site assessments were carried out, highlighting any constraints such as hedgerows, access, etc. These can be found in Appendix V. A mini design brief has been written for the two sites and appear as Policies H3 a and b.

#### Allocated Sites

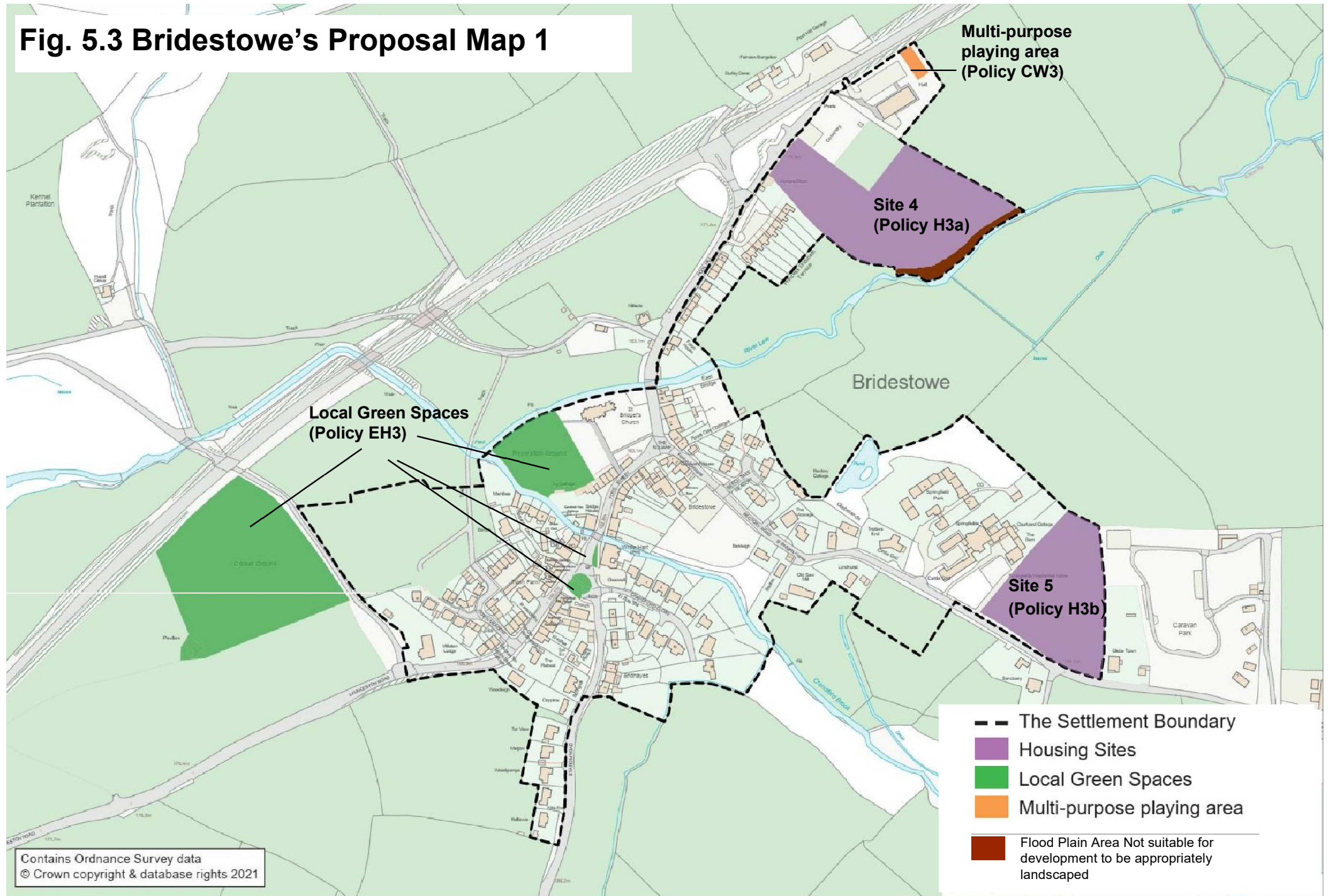
##### 5.1.9 Land Adjacent to the Cemetery

This site is intended to provide up to 35 new homes of an appropriate range, mix and type to meet local needs, over the period 2016 - 2026 (First and second 5 year phases). The lower part of the site lies adjacent to the flood plain of the River Lew and before any development commences, it is important that a full site specific flood risk assessment is undertaken to establish the true extent of the flood plain and thereby ensure that all development avoids encroaching into the flood plain. Consideration could also be given to creating a green floodplain corridor along the River Lew to minimise flood risk and to bring amenity, health, recreation and biodiversity benefits to the community.

#### Land At Springfield Residential Home

5.1.10 This site is intended to provide some 20 sheltered houses for the elderly over the next two 5 year phases (2016 -2026) These buildings will form an extension to the existing Springfield Residential Home (The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire results highlighted the need for housing suitable for the elderly and frail.)

**Fig. 5.3 Bridestowe's Proposal Map 1**





### Policy H3 Allocated Sites

The Neighbourhood Development Plan identifies the following sites for housing allocation in Bridestowe and are shown on Figures 5.3. Proposal Map :

**Site ref:**

**Number of dwellings**

4. Land adjacent to the Cemetery

up to 35

5 Land at Springfield Residential Home

20

Proposed sheltered housing for the elderly, adjacent to Springfield Residential Home

Development proposals will be supported on the above sites provided the development accords with relevant policies within the neighbourhood plan and the development plan.



Note: The actual area of Site 4 that can be used for housing development is reduced slightly as it encroaches on the flood zone. See Proposal Map Fig. 5.3.





## Detailed Site Considerations

5.1.11 Development is expected to be carried out in consultation with West Devon Borough Council and Bridestowe Parish Council. In considering the granting of planning permission for the two allocated sites, in addition to demonstrating compliance with the general requirements set out in the adopted Joint Local Plan for Plymouth and South West Devon and all the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan, particular regard should also be given to the following requirements:

### Policy H3a. Land Adjacent to the Cemetery

Any application should be accompanied by:-

- A site specific Flood Risk Assessment to identify the true extent of the area of flood risk, to ensure that all development including new buildings and land raising will avoid encroachment into the flood plain at the southern edge of the site and
- A Landscape Visual Assessment with landscape proposals that reflect the importance of ensuring this development does not detract from the special qualities of the Dartmoor National Park, and
- An approved Waste Water and Surface Water Drainage Strategy, that recognises the possible need for some limited on-site cut and fill to ensure the site's drainage system can be gravity fed, and
- A Transport Assessment to consider any necessary changes to the road layout on Pool Hill and off the A30, and
- An assessment of how the proposed development is intended to meet local housing needs (as well as other required documents), and
- Include substantial landscaping to screen the site.

### Mini Brief

- The preferred site access would be via the closed road.
- The development should create a positive visual frontage, providing an attractive entrance to the village that is in character with the area. It is important that visual screening of existing trees is maintained.
- Be of a density that reflects the rural nature of the area, giving an impression of space and avoiding uniform house and plot layouts.
- Design of the houses takes into account the view and should centre on public open green spaces, including selected tree planting, to be provided within the development.
- Include a children's play space in accordance with adopted standards
- Limit the height of development so that it is not prominent in the landscape
- Existing hedgerows to be maintained and managed to maintain and enhance the wildlife interest. Existing hedgerow height should be maintained to provide adequate screening
- Be designed to mitigate any potential adverse impacts upon existing residential and community interests
- This development may be required by legal obligation to provide or contribute towards wider and long term planning benefits reasonably associated with the alleviation of any such impacts.

### **Policy H3b. Land at Springfield Residential Home, Bridestowe**

Any application should be accompanied by:-

- A Transport Assessment to reflect concerns about the volume of traffic in the country lane and lack of a pavement,
- An approved Waste Water and Surface Water Drainage Strategy that recognizes the possible need for some limited on-site cut and fill to ensure the site's drainage system can be gravity fed
- An assessment of how the proposed development is intended to meet local housing needs (as well as other required documents).

Mini brief

- The preferred site access from beside the existing access to Springfield House from Pigs Leg Lane.
- Design should include selected tree planting to be provided within the development.
- Limit the height of development so that it is not prominent in the landscape
- Existing hedgerows to be maintained and managed to maintain and enhance the wildlife interest. Existing hedgerow height should be maintained to provide adequate screening
- Be designed to mitigate any potential adverse impacts upon existing residential and community interests - this development may be required by legal obligation to provide or contribute towards wider and long term planning benefits reasonably associated with the alleviation of any such impacts.

### **Justification for Policy H3a and b**

5.1.12 In terms of the form of development, the community, through Policies H1, H5, EH1, 3 and 4, has expressed the need for new homes to be sensitively placed in the landscape, to meet a range of design requirements, with suitable planting schemes and a sensitive boundary treatment so that the development is blended into the surrounding countryside. The special qualities of the Dartmoor National Park, which identify what is distinctive about Dartmoor, and help to identify what is most important to be conserved, enhanced and enjoyed, are defined in the Dartmoor National Park Management Plan 2020-25 <sup>1</sup>

### **Housing Need**

5.1.13 Public consultation indicated, on all occasions, a clear desire for genuinely affordable housing for local people with a housing need. A definition of 'local housing need' was agreed drawing on this view; the criteria are more stringent than that of the LA in order to ensure the housing needs of the local population can be met.

#### *Definition of Local Housing Need.*

5.1.14 In this Plan, "local need" with reference to housing provision is defined as housing provided specifically for people who meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Existing residents of Sourton or Bridestowe parishes establishing a separate household;
2. People who do not live in the Parishes but who have a current and long- standing link (of at least 5 years) to the local community including a previous period of residence in the Parishes or an adjacent parish;
3. People who are in, or are taking up permanent substantive employment in an already established business within the Parishes or an adjacent parish;
4. People who must leave tied accommodation within the Parishes or adjacent parish;
5. Those residents of the two parishes who currently live in accommodation that is unsuited to their needs and who are unable to find suitable accommodation within their local community.

1. [https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0025/98611/Dartmoor-National-Park-Management-Plan-2020-2025-consultation-draft-WEB.pdf](https://www.dartmoor.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0025/98611/Dartmoor-National-Park-Management-Plan-2020-2025-consultation-draft-WEB.pdf) )

#### Policy H4 Rural Exception Sites

Development proposals on sites outside but adjacent or near to the development boundaries of Bridestowe and Sourton, whose primary purpose is to provide affordable housing to meet local needs in perpetuity and to enhance or maintain the vitality of the communities will be supported, where they:

- a) accord with the Development Plan; and
- b) are clearly affordable housing led; and
- c) would be well related to the physical form of the settlement and appropriate in scale and character and appearance.

In addition, proposals should demonstrate a consideration of the impacts on landscape and landscape setting of the settlement.

- 5.1.15 Affordable housing on exception sites may take the form of rented housing through a social housing provider, shared equity housing (part ownership/part rent), and potentially - 'starter homes', sold at below market price to younger people. However subject to negotiations, these may include an element of market housing, to help make the social housing schemes viable, all of which it is anticipated should be developed and co-ordinated by Housing Associations or similar social housing providers such as Community Land Trusts.

Housing Needs Assessment  
**89% in favour of a small scale development of affordable housing for local people**

#### Identifying housing need

- 5.1.16 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering group decided to carry out a survey to assess accurately the level of housing need across the two parishes and a Housing Needs Assessment was carried out in April 2016. The survey identified a need for 12 affordable homes within the next 5 years, 9 in Bridestowe and 3 in Sourton, 11 of which will need 1-2 bed roomed home and 1 a 3 bedroom home. Of these 12, 9 will need affordable rented accommodation while 3 could afford shared ownership. 3 will require level access. Incidentally the survey also revealed several households (11) interested in self build. A further 9 households of older residents expressed a wish for smaller, market priced accommodation that would allow them to downsize within the locality.
- Not only is there a need for affordable housing but also an identified need for smaller properties for those households wishing to downsize and a demand for specialist housing, as the population continues to age. The NPPF requires us to "plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities....." (para. 50).

Housing Needs Assessment  
**37 people seeking homes better suited to needs**

#### Improving housing stock

- 5.1.17 Market value houses will make up the larger proportion of the developments within the settlement boundary. Bridestowe has a disproportionate number of larger homes and an attempt should be made to redress this imbalance in the housing stock and this accords with the Local Authority's strategic objective.

#### Quality of Design

- 5.1.18 Policy H5 seeks to define certain aspects of what is meant by high quality design and seeks to ensure that all new development incorporates the criteria identified below where relevant to the application.
- In an area in which the cost of housing is high relative to incomes, and many people live in conditions of fuel poverty there is a very strong requirement to ensure that running costs of buildings are as low as possible and thus high standards of insulation and

energy conservation are particularly important.

- 5.1.19 Quality of design need not add to cost but certainly adds to the quality of wellbeing. Whilst houses should not be crammed in together, 'residential development will be at the highest density compatible with the creation of an attractive living environment, in scale with its surroundings and safeguarding the amenities enjoyed by nearby residents.' WDBC Core Strategy 2011.
- 5.1.20 Good design can overcome problems of density. Developments should be able to demonstrate that the positioning of houses within the development and adjacent to existing properties has been carefully thought through and provided so that no one feels overlooked or cramped by neighbouring properties.
- 5.1.21 Although this is a low crime area, the fear of crime can undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Safe and accessible developments, with well defined pedestrian routes and public space will improve the perception of safety and may discourage antisocial behaviour.

#### **Policy H5 Design and Quality of New Development**

Applications for new development will be supported provided they meet the following criteria:

- a) It demonstrates high quality design through the use of scale, density, layout, height and mass, materials and detailing, that reflects local character and distinctiveness; and
- b) Where feasible and proportionate to the scheme, incorporates sustainable construction techniques and energy conservation measures and small scale energy production; and
- c) Utilises sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and sewage disposal methods; and
- d) Where feasible and proportionate to the scheme enhances biodiversity; and
- e) It respects and works with the existing landscape and natural and historic environment; and
- f) It protects individuals and property from overlooking and loss of privacy, overshadowing and overbearing impacts, and unreasonable noise and disturbance; and
- g) It improves safety through design and layout, minimising opportunities for crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.
- h) It minimises light pollution particularly for developments outside or at edges of existing settlements

In addition, proposals should demonstrate a design process that has clearly considered the design principles as set out in the Village Design Statement in Appendix VI

#### **Dark Skies**

- 5.1.22 The inclusion of a criterion to minimise night pollution is included and accords with DNP's emerging policy to preserve dark night skies and this may apply to developments outside but visible from DNP.

#### **Conversion of redundant buildings for residential use**

- 5.1.23 Conversion of rural buildings is becoming more frequent especially with the decrease in traditional farming and increased diversification and there is support in the local communities as long as there is minimal impact upon the wider landscape.

The NPPF states that LPAs should avoid new isolated homes on the countryside unless there are special circumstances including where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.

Consultation  
responses  
48% support  
conversion  
of  
agricultural  
buildings



5.1.24 As a result of recent changes to 'Permitted Development' in relation to agricultural buildings and their conversion, there will be cases where planning applications are required. In a rural locality, future development opportunities that do not impact upon the wider landscape are limited. Conversions of old barns and farm buildings can, however, provide opportunities for new accommodation and a valuable and appropriate re-use of buildings which could make a positive contribution to the local character of the area, as well as meeting housing needs. Such developments also make use of past investment in building materials and the energy used in their construction, and so contribute towards a more sustainable form of development.

**Policy H6 Conversion of Buildings in the Countryside**

Outside Dartmoor National Park and where planning permission is required, the conversion of redundant or disused rural buildings of substantial and permanent construction which positively contribute to an area's rural character for residential uses will be supported where:

- a) A suitable access to the building is in place or can be created without damaging the surrounding area's rural character and the road network can support the proposed use; and
- b) The building can be converted without significant alteration, extension or rebuilding; and
- c) The design will respect the original character of the building and its surroundings; and
- d) The development will retain any nature conservation interest associated with the site or building, and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible; and
- e) It protects individuals and property from overlooking and loss of privacy, overshadowing and overbearing impacts, and unreasonable noise and disturbance.

In addition, support will be given to proposals where the design process has clearly considered the existing context and its response to climate change and changing social conditions including need for adaptability. Within the National Park the relevant planning policies in the adopted Dartmoor National Park Authority's Local Plan, the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document and the policies in the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan will apply.

**Traffic and parking**

5.1.25 In rural areas car ownership is higher because of poor public transport and the need to commute to work. Only 5.7% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area either catch a train, bus, minibus, coach or walk to work (2). With new housing development comes an inevitable increase in traffic and a need for off road parking.

Consultation  
responses  
**51% of  
households  
own 2 cars**

5.1.26 Bridestowe and Sourton's residents have both expressed strong views on traffic problems; Sourton has speeding traffic along the A386 which makes it hazardous to cross the road and to park outside properties. Bridestowe has a congested main street due to on street parking. Most properties in the middle of Bridestowe village do not have off road parking. With reduced public transport there is a reliance on cars in this rural area and often households have more than one to allow travel to work.

The current Joint Local Plan policy does not include criteria relating to road and pavement layout and parking. The consultation highlighted that 51% of households own 2 cars and the community has expressed concern about the amount of on-road parking in residential areas and how it impedes the normal flow of traffic causing drivers to take risks. The congested road means that large vehicles are sometimes not able to get past the parked cars and the bus will no longer come into the village for this reason. There is anxiety that it could impede emergency vehicles.

5.1.27 The arrival and departure of children from the village primary school and visits to the village shop and post office add to the congestion. Primary school children walking up to use hall facilities are forced to walk on the road at one point as there is no pavement. The NPPF encourages development design that creates 'safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones.' There is real concern that new development will only exacerbate the existing problems so any new development within the villages must address these problems. For these reasons Policy H7 seeks an allocation of parking space in new developments that correlates with house size. It also justifies concerns raised by the community

There is interest in creating a public parking area within the village although there is no obvious site; however discussion with landowners may result in a solution coming forward. This aspiration is outlined in Community Aspirations (Appendix X)

**Policy H7 Transport and Accessibility.**

All new development should:

- a) provide an appropriate level of off street parking i.e. 2 parking spaces for 2 bedroom houses and 3 for larger houses, subject to viability and, where possible, include additional off road visitor parking spaces; and
- b) demonstrate a safe and suitable access to the site for all people and not cause a significantly adverse impact on the local road network that cannot be managed or mitigated; and
- c) where feasible, discourage on street parking; and

**Flood risk and mitigation**

5.1.28 With two small rivers, Crandford Brook and the River Lew running through the village the threat of flooding is taken seriously. Houses were flooded in the village in 2006 after heavy rain led to the rivers bursting their banks. There is great concern in Bridestowe about the risk of flooding and for this reason Policy H8 is included. The Parish Council ensures a supply of sand and sandbags is available and the Emergency Plan gives advice on dealing with flooding. Dealing with water drainage is an important element in development delivery and the NPPF has put increased emphasis on the deployment of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). These systems are designed to reduce the potential impact of new and existing developments with respect to surface water drainage discharges. SuDS is one of the criteria of Policy H5. A recent report (3) highlighted that the onus is on the Local Authority to ensure they have a monitoring and/or a reporting regime in place to monitor SuDS deployment in their adopted local plans. The report shows some shortcomings by Local Authorities and so part of the review and delivery of this Plan must be to ensure that there is no dereliction of duty on their part.

Flood maps are produced by the Environment Agency. Map 1 in the Evidence Base shows the flood risk areas within Bridestowe.

**Policy H8. Flood risk**

Development should be located away from areas at risk of flooding, and flood measures are included in the development to ensure that flood risk in surrounding areas is not increased in accordance with existing policies.

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment report 2019, page 66

3. The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) report, entitled 'A review of the application and effectiveness of planning policy for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)', 2018

## SECTION 2: The Environment and Heritage

5.2.1 This section is guided by the Plan's Objective No. 2 a, b &c: *To conserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity, natural habitats and culture heritage of the Parishes.*

5.2.2 This Neighbourhood Plan recognises the special blend of rich heritage and scenic qualities that makes this designated area such an exceptionally beautiful area. In an early consultation, people were asked what they liked about living in the area; above all they valued the landscape with its proximity to Dartmoor and this view has been repeatedly expressed by the community throughout the consultation process. The need to preserve and protect the landscape whilst embracing the need for further development, including infrastructure, must be balanced accordingly.

The NPPF and the two Local Authorities attach great importance to preserving and enhancing this unique landscape.

### Policy EH 1. General Landscape

The siting, scale, form, layout, design, materials and landscaping of any development proposal should respect, conserve and enhance, wherever possible, the rural nature and existing visual landscape character of the area, its wildlife and the heritage value of the Parishes.

In addition, development should also respect the important contribution the open countryside makes to the setting and visual quality of Bridestowe and Sourton,

In particular, new development should, wherever possible:

- a) Maintain existing hedgerows, trees and woodland; and
- b) Provide for the planting of new trees and hedgerows on boundaries and within sites and the creation of wildlife habitats.

Within the National Park the relevant planning policies in the adopted Dartmoor National Park Authority's Local Plan, the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document and the policies in the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan will apply.

### Diversification in farming and implications for the landscape

5.2.3 The designated area is shaped by its farming heritage. "A gentle agricultural landscape...a semi regular pattern of fields, edged with hedges and earth banks, covers the undulating landform and adds pattern and texture to the landscape" from Devon County Council's landscape character assessment. With the decline in farming there is a threat that diversification and innovative land use may erode the much valued rural landscape. Horse riding and other equestrian activities are popular forms of recreation and sport in the countryside that can fit well with farming activities and help to diversify rural economies. However care should be taken that such developments don't detract from the appearance of the historic landscape. These concerns inform Policy EH2

### Policy EH.2 - Farm Diversification

Outside Dartmoor National Park proposals for development that enable farm diversification or for changes required for agriculture or appropriate land management practices, which respect or enhance the natural environment will be supported, providing that proposals are complementary to, or compatible with, the existing agricultural use.

## Local green spaces

5.2.4 The responses to the community questionnaire demonstrated very strong support and appreciation for and of the local green spaces as well as the value attached to the areas of unspoilt countryside within and beyond both parishes.

Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. They do have to meet the criteria set out in the NPPF namely that the local green space is close to the community, holds a special local significance and is not an extensive tract of land.

5.2.5 Four have been identified in the two villages and are outlined in *Table 1* with the specific characteristics of each area. (Photos on page 44) A map showing the sites appears in Appendix XII. Two are relatively small, but nonetheless contribute towards the character of the villages and are important to those who live in the immediate locality, as well as the wider community.

The designation process will be carried out separately having confirmed that this is the wish of the communities.

**Table 1**

Space, site and location	Characteristics	Green space value
<b>1. Bridestowe's Sporting Green</b> in centre of village adjacent to the church  Slightly less than 1 hectare	A play area with good selection of play equipment, including goal posts and tables and benches. Fringed by mature trees and stream	Conveniently situated and used by children and families. Used for annual fetes and music events. Well used footpath runs down eastern edge.
<b>2. Bridestowe Cricket field</b> Separate to the village on western side  Approx 2 hectares	Large; accessible by footpath and by road, bordered by hedges and mature trees	Long established cricket club that draws from several local parishes. Active and successful with strong local support.
<b>3. Small green space in centre of Bridestowe village</b>  200 sq. metres	In village centre and includes narrow strip outside White Hart, with benches, bus shelter, plaque and redundant kiosk.	Attractive and well maintained area that adds character to village centre.
<b>4. Sourton's village green</b>  200sq. metres	Below church and adjacent to hall. Mature copper beech with circular seat, notice board and Saxon cross	Gives Sourton village an attractive focal point. Access to footpath and cycle route (Granite Way)

### EH3 – Local Green Space Designations

The areas shown in Table 1 are the designated as Local Green Spaces, namely Bridestowe Sporting Green, cricket field and central green space and Sourton's village green. Proposal Maps Figs 5.3 and 5.4  
Development on these areas will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances.





1. The Sporting Green



2. The Cricket Field

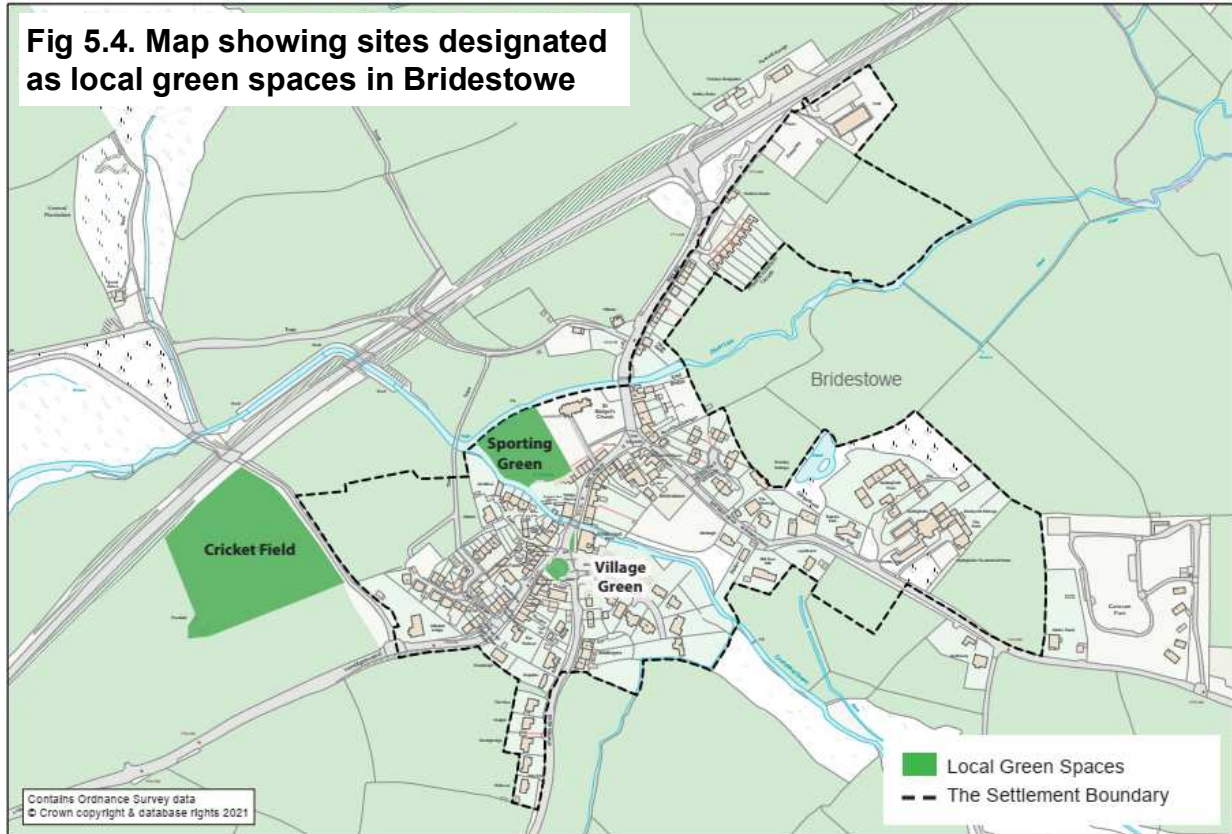


The 2 green spaces at the heart of Bridestowe(3) and Sourton (4) villages

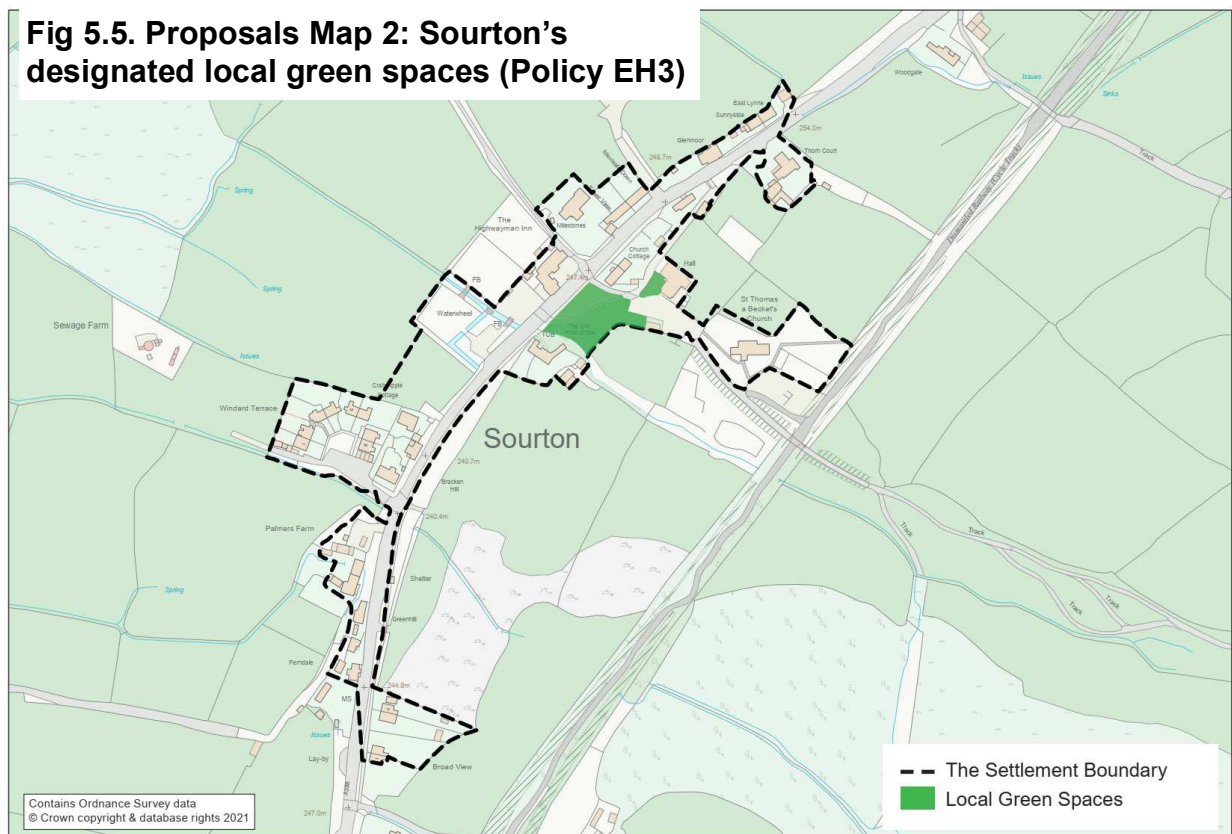




**Fig 5.4. Map showing sites designated as local green spaces in Bridestowe**



**Fig 5.5. Proposals Map 2: Sourton's designated local green spaces (Policy EH3)**



## Wildlife and natural habitats

5.2.6 Both parishes share common land within the National Park most of which is categorised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. There are additional wildlife sites of which Sourton Quarry is also a SSSI; of the 17 species of bats in the UK, 14 make their home at the quarry site. The areas of countryside outside of these areas play an important role acting as green corridors for wildlife.

- 5.2.7 Specialised habitats such as Rhos and culm pasture (wet grassland), are common in the two parishes and are regarded as priority habitats for Natural England.

Woodland is another feature of the parishes. The Leawood Estate (which owns much of the land in Bridestowe and some in Sourton) has mature trees planted throughout the estate and these have a real impact on the landscape. The beech tree avenue on Station Road is a famous feature and protected by a Tree Preservation Order. There are many miles of hedgerows, numerous streams, ponds, road verges, and an abandoned quarry all of which play a significant role in supporting a wide range of wildlife.

Policies EH4 and EH5 reflect the importance attached to the natural environment by the local community.

Consultation  
responses  
**81% considered  
wildlife important  
to them**

**Policy EH 4. Wildlife Protection** All developments are expected to accord with national policy and the planning policies of the local planning authority and should not cause significant direct or indirect harm to any site designated for its wildlife value. Developments should retain any nature conservation interest associated with the site or building and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. Proposals to protect or restore any existing features, or to create new features of wildlife habitat - particularly where these form linkage between habitats in or beyond the site - will be supported.

**Policy EH 5. Trees and Hedgerows**

Proposals for all new development should include measures for the protection during the course of development of existing trees/hedgerows of significant landscape, amenity, biodiversity historic or conservation value. Where appropriate, such proposals should include provision for additional planting of native trees and hedges to enhance the landscape character of the wider area within the two parishes.

## **Heritage**

- 5.2.8 The area is steeped in history and this is reflected by the fact that there are 448 entries in the Historical Environment Record that pertains to Bridestowe and Sourton. Local churches, Sourton's Saxon Cross, Lake Viaduct and the abandoned ice works are a few of the valued heritage assets.
- 5.2.9 As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process the community has been encouraged to identify non designated heritage assets; these include stone troughs, benches, a redundant telephone kiosk and many more. This creates a log of valued installations that contribute to the local character of the area.

**Policy EH 6. Heritage Assets**

In accordance with national policy the potential impact of the development proposal on a heritage asset and its setting should be fully assessed. The relevant historic environment record should have been consulted as a minimum requirement. Due regard should be given to the list of non designated heritage assets which has been compiled by the communities (Appendix X)

### SECTION 3: EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

- 5.3.1 This section is guided by the Plan's Objective No.3, a - d: *To promote the local economy through support for traditional and existing types of rural employment ; identify potential new sites and improve connectivity.*
- 5.3.2 Historically, in this rural area, agriculture has made an important contribution to the local economy for centuries; more recently the number of visitors coming to this area has made tourism increasingly important. Despite the rural nature of the parishes, there are varied businesses within the two parishes including sole traders, family run businesses, employers of local and non-local people, care providers for the frail elderly and those working from home, including some providing online services or goods.

#### Sourton's anomaly

- 5.3.3 Sourton Cross is an area to the north eastern edge of Sourton parish close to the A386 and A30 junction where there is a significant pocket of commercial businesses which is anomalous to the rest of the parish, designed to meet the needs of passing traffic, especially during the summer months. The large petrol station with an integral shop is used by the local population but the fast food outlets, Travel Lodge and Woody's Diner cater more for passing travellers and lorry drivers. The development is utilitarian in nature and large expansion will not enhance an area which could be described as a scenic gateway to the rest of the parishes. Therefore further expansion beyond Permitted Development will not be supported.

#### Building resilience

- 5.3.4 In line with the Local Authorities' policies to promote rural regeneration and build resilience within the rural economy and the NPPF requirement to support a prosperous rural economy, this Neighbourhood Plan hopes to promote and support a distinctive and flourishing local economy in the shape of small scale businesses.

- 5.3.5 A section of the questionnaire was specifically targeted at local businesses. Respondents to the questionnaire favoured expansion of local businesses on existing sites as well as encouraging new enterprises. Many respondents in their free text comments emphasised that housing development without increased employment opportunity was unsustainable.

Consultation  
responses  
**60% thought  
encouraging  
new business  
quite or very  
important.**

#### Policy E1. General Business Development

Outside the National Park, applications for new small-scale business development and uses will be supported subject to fulfilling all the following criteria:

- the development is in an accessible and sustainable location
- the scale and nature of the proposals would not have significant adverse impacts on the amenities of adjoining businesses and householders, on the landscape or on sites designated for their biodiversity importance
- the scale and nature of the proposals would be compatible with other land-use activities
- any increase in traffic resulting from the proposal can be safely accommodated on the local road network
- sustainable forms of construction, providing energy conservation measures & renewable energy are used, wherever practicable
- provision is made for parking appropriate to the needs of the development
- landscaping and green screening is deployed, where necessary to reduce visual impact.



### **Policy E2. Small Scale Business Expansions**

Business development on land already in employment use in Bridestowe and Sourton will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- a) The scale and nature of the proposals would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of adjoining activities; and
- b) The scale and nature of the proposals would not have unacceptable conflicts with other land-use activities; and
- c) The proposal would not have unacceptable impacts on the local road network; and
- d) They provide sustainable forms of construction, energy conservation measures and renewable energy where feasible; and
- e) Provision is made for parking appropriate to the needs of the development; and
- f) They would contribute to the character and vitality of the local area; and
- g) They would not adversely affect residential amenity

5.3.6 Young people will inevitably drift away without employment opportunities. In the section aimed at young people in the General Questionnaire 50% of the respondents did not envisage returning to the village to live after completing education. Lack of affordable housing and few employment opportunities may influence their choices.

### **Impediments to Business Growth**

5.3.7 In the business section of the questionnaire respondents identified a lack of suitable premises as one impediment to business development coupled with a shortage of skilled labour. Within Bridestowe's and Sourton's settlement boundary there is very limited space for development, certainly no brownfield sites or redundant buildings.

5.3.8 However Sourton Down, a hamlet just under a mile away from Sourton, has a pocket of business activity: a cycle hire business and a newly refurbished cycling cafe and cycling centre both benefit by their proximity to the Granite Way cycle path. The owner of a garden machinery repair business flagged up that lack of premises was hampering his expansion. When one of these businesses considered expanding, those living nearby expressed concern that this would result in parking congestion in the residential area of Sourton Down. This concern demonstrates the need for any business expansion to provide additional parking within their premises.

There is strong support for local businesses and loss of any would dent the local economy and local employment opportunities

However the community strongly supports the reuse of redundant buildings as it would prove less intrusive within the landscape. Proposals for development would have to meet the criteria set out in Policy H6.

5.3.9 Farm and other buildings in the outlying parts of the parish have a potential role to play in supporting businesses and providing premises for workshops. The wider range of opportunities which may arise for appropriate rural building conversions, particularly in respect of the "business and enterprise in rural areas" uses, is referenced in para 28 of the NPPF.

### **Policy E3. Protection of employment sites**

Outside Dartmoor National Park, employment sites within the plan area shall be retained for employment use unless appropriate advertising and publicity fails to attract a new business after 1 year and the owner can prove that the site is no longer viable for employment use. Within the National Park the relevant planning policies in the adopted Dartmoor National Park Authority's Local Plan, the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document and the policies in the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan will apply.

## Good communications

- 5.3.10 More people set up businesses that are based on-line and can be run from home and respondents wanted faster broadband speeds as this was seen as a major obstacle to running their businesses effectively. Poor mobile phone signal will frustrate business activity. The NPPF recognises that advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. With this in mind, new development must be able to connect to the best available broadband network and to take advantage of future improvements to it.

### Policy E 4. Communications Infrastructure

Outside Dartmoor National Park proposals which seek the expansion of telecommunication facilities, electronics communication networks and high-speed broadband along with improvements to connectivity will be supported so long as the proposal does not have a harmful impact on the landscape, heritage assets, biodiversity, national park special qualities and residential amenity.

Within the National Park the relevant planning policies in the adopted Dartmoor National Park Authority's Local Plan, the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document and the policies in the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan will apply.

## Tourism development

- 5.3.11 Tourism is an important part of West Devon's economy and within the two parishes there is a wide variety of holiday accommodation on offer from hotels, bed & breakfast, bunk barns, self catering cottages and camping and caravan parks. Visitors swell the numbers using existing facilities, shops, pubs, garages and make use of new enterprises such as the bike hire facilities at Sourton Down to explore the Granite Way, an increasingly popular Sustrans route. Tourism not only contributes to the local economy but provides employment. The NPPF encourages neighbourhood plans to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments whilst respecting the character of the countryside.

In the neighbourhood plan area redundant farm buildings have already been proposed as potential residential units, or to become business workshops.

They also can be converted into popular self catering units even within a working farm and this diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses is encouraged by the NPPF. Any conversion for tourist use must adhere to Policy H6.

Business consultation response  
81% wanted faster Broadband speeds to aid their business and only 24% rate mobile signal as good

### Policy E5. Tourism Development

Outside Dartmoor National Park, proposals for the development and expansion of tourism - related businesses will be supported providing that:

- the scale of development is small and proportionate to existing activity and the immediate locality
- the potential impact on neighbouring residential properties is acceptable having regard to potential noise and disturbance
- they do not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape and are mitigated by extensive landscaping and visual screening
- traffic, access and highway issues are satisfactorily addressed

Within the National Park the relevant planning policies in the adopted Dartmoor National Park Authority's Local Plan, the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document and the policies in the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan will apply.

## SECTION 4: DELIVERING LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT

- 5.4.1 This section is guided by the Plan's Objective No. 4: a & b *To encourage small-scale renewable energy production in new developments or within the home (Policy H4 ) and in the existing built environment where location and design are sensitive both to the local environment and to residential amenity.*
- 5.4.2 There was strong support evidenced in the General Questionnaire for small scale photovoltaic (solar electricity) and solar thermal (solar hot water) developments. Larger scale installations evinced significant opposition
- 5.4.3 Sourton and Bridestowe are in an area of low wages and very high property prices. To make homes not only affordable to buy, but to run, it is important that as well as good insulation, energy saving devices and small scale renewable energy production become a standard part of the house build and the local community. See Policy H5 b. On such a small scale it is difficult to mitigate climate change but it is possible to reduce our carbon footprint, as a step towards it.

### Policy LC 1 Microgeneration energy development

Outside the National Park, proposals for microgeneration renewable energy infrastructure will be supported that are compatible with the landscape sensitivity of the Parishes and does not, either individually or cumulatively, have an adverse impact on the special qualities of of the landscape within the plan area or the setting of Dartmoor National Park. These projects will be supported provided the following conditions are met:

1. The siting and appearance of any proposed development must ensure minimal impact on the landscape considering the landscape context, scale and openness, visual amenity, cumulative effects and settlement pattern;
2. Any associated structures must sit well in the landscape and be similar in height and extent to existing structures in the local landscape so as not to adversely affect visual horizons and the key vistas listed in Appendix VII;
4. The siting, scale and design of the energy generating infrastructure does not compromise public safety and allows continued safe use of public rights of way;
5. The developer must show evidence that the development will have no adverse impacts in terms of drainage, noise, vibration, amplitude modulation, visual reflection, dazzle, odour,electromagnetic interference or other adverse impacts on neighbouring properties associated with the installed equipment; and
6. The developer must show evidence that the development will have no adverse impact on the natural environment or local hydrology.

Within the National Park the relevant planning policies in the adopted Dartmoor National Park Authority's Local Plan, the 2008 Core Strategy and 2013 Development Management and Delivery Development Plan Document and the policies in the emerging Dartmoor Local Plan will apply.

## SECTION 5: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

5.5.1 This section is guided by Objective No. 5: a, b & c Community Wellbeing. *To conserve and enhance education, social, cultural and recreation facilities in the Parishes, including communal open spaces, footpaths and cyclepaths.*

### Community Facilities

5.5.2 There is strong community support for the primary schools: both Bridestowe and Boasley(within Sourton parish) were rated as good in their latest Ofsted inspections. Treetops Pre-School and Extended School Provision is highly rated . It accepts children from a wide catchment area.

Whilst most people felt that the services and resources available for young children in the parishes were good or excellent, many people expressed concern at the lack of services and facilities for older children, adolescents and young adults. Creating a social hub for young people was one suggestion put forward and is listed as a 'Community Aspiration' and a project that can be carried forward by the community. For a full list of Community Aspirations see Appendix X.

5.5.3 The NPPF contains requirements to promote healthy communities and promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. Riverside Stores and Post Office proved to be the most popular facility within the two parishes.

Consultation  
response  
**50% visit  
Riverside  
Stores daily**

### Policy CW1 Community assets and facilities

Community assets and facilities that are valued by the community will be protected and changes of use resulting in the loss of these assets will not be supported unless the following can be demonstrated:

a) The proposal includes alternative provision, on a site within the Parishes, of equivalent or enhanced facilities. Such sites should be accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and have adequate car parking; or

b) Satisfactory evidence is produced that there is no longer an economic justification to protect the asset and all reasonable efforts have been made to secure alternative business or community or social enterprise re-use.

Existing community facilities:

#### Education

Bridestowe Primary School  
Boasley Primary School  
Treetops Pre school

#### Community buildings

Bridestowe Village Hall  
Methodist Church Hall  
Sourton Village Hall

#### Churches

3 Churches: St Bridget's  
St Thomas a Becket  
Bridestowe Methodist Church

#### Sport and Leisure

Town Meadow's small green space with limited play equipment

Sporting Green \*  
Bridestowe Cricket Field \*  
Bridestowe and Sourton village green\*

\* *designated local green spaces*



a) Do not have an adverse impact on residential amenity; and

Any proposals for built development that are on sites used for these amenities but not associated with these uses and/or will result in the loss of these facilities, will not be supported.

**Fig 5.6. Potential site of all weather pitch adjacent to Village Hall**

The map shows the village of Bridestowe, bounded by a dashed black line. The River Low flows through the settlement. Key features include:

- Village Hall:** A large building complex outlined in orange.
- Pitch Site:** An area immediately adjacent to the Village Hall, outlined in orange, designated as the potential site for an all-weather pitch.
- Other Features:** Post Hill Garage, Fairview Surgery, Quaker Gate, Post Office, Cemetery, Humanes Street, Church Lane, and East Bridge.
- Legend:**
  - Orange box: Multi-purpose playing area
  - Dashed black line: The Settlement Boundary
- Scale:** 0m, 100m, 200m.
- Source:** Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright & database rights 2021.

Proposals to provide an all-weather pitch adjacent to the village hall, as shown in Figure 5.6, will be supported providing they do not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

5.5.4 The general questionnaire revealed that people strongly supported improved sport and recreational facilities. An all weather pitch adjacent to Bridestowe Village Hall was one suggestion that had a lot of support, and would help to meet the need of younger people seeking improved recreational facilities. With obesity seen as increasing issue by health professionals and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, opportunities to increase physical activity would be beneficial.

Creating places and spaces for people to meet promotes community engagement, helps foster community spirit and counter rural isolation; contributions from developers will help accomplish this.

## SECTION 6 - IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

- 6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan is aimed at providing strong local input into the local planning development and protection of the parishes. As illustrated above, the Plan has been prepared following extensive community and stakeholder consultation. The Plan's policies and the manner in which they are implemented will aim to ensure that the vision and objectives for the plan will be met over the Plan period.
- 6.2 The monitoring and evaluation will involve local people in an ongoing basis in the process of plan-making, monitoring and delivery of development. For example the parish councils will monitor new development which must incorporate SuDs and ensure that the LAs are fulfilling their duty in monitoring this deployment (See page 48 'Flood Risk' section)
- 6.3 If the Local Authorities decide to adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the relevant Parish Council will qualify for 25% raised as a result of certain developments within the parish and collected by WDBC. (Parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan receive a maximum of 15%.) Contributions secured through Community Infrastructure Levy and/or Section 106 Agreements or, where appropriate, direct provision, will be used to improve or provide community infrastructure requirements and/or improvements identified by Bridestowe or Sourton Parish Council.
- 6.4 The opportunity to secure CIL or section 106 funding from some new developments could assist in funding schemes that are on the communities' Aspiration List (Appendix X), as well as drawing on the parish precept and potential grant funding.  
The Parish Councils will report on progress of the Plan's implementation to all households in the parish. The Plan will be subject to review in the next 3-5 years.

The use of Community Infrastructure Levies or 106 agreements

Any Community Infrastructure Levy or 106 agreement generated by development within the boundary of the Plan area and paid over to Bridestowe Parish Council should, subject to having no likely significant effect on protected European Sites, be used to:

- deliver community sports and leisure facilities identified in policy CW2 and CW3 and/or
- deliver projects or achieve objectives identified as a community aspiration (Appendix X) and/or
- support other infrastructure necessary to address the demands that development places on the area, such as green infrastructure, recreation and other necessary facilities.