

# Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

Environmental Report to accompany the submission  
version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

November 2019

## Quality information

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## Revision History

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Revision date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Authorized</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
V1.0	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2019	Initial draft for Neighbourhood Group comment	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2019	Nick Chisholm- Batten	Associate Director
V2.0	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019	Updated draft for Neighbourhood Group comment	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019	Nick Chisholm- Batten	Associate Director
V3.0	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2019	Further version	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2019	Nick Chisholm- Batten	Associate Director
V4.0	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2019	Submission version	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2019	Nick Chisholm- Batten	Associate Director

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## Non-Technical Summary

### What is Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

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

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

### What is the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan?

The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to South Hams District Council in autumn 2019.

### Purpose of this Environmental Report

This Environmental Report, which accompanies the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan, is the latest document to be produced as part of the SEA process. The first document was the SEA Scoping Report (July 2019), which includes information about the Neighbourhood Plan area's environment and community.

The purpose of this Environmental Report is to:

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

The Environmental Report contains:

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

## Assessment of reasonable alternatives for the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

### Housing numbers and level of growth to deliver through the Neighbourhood Plan

The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan which was adopted in May 2019. The Joint Local Plan 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.

The Joint Local Plan outlines a spatial strategy for Plymouth and South West Devon through setting out provisions for the Plymouth Policy Area and the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area. It aims to promote rural sustainability by maintaining and developing strong social networks and traditions in the villages of the area, enhancing their character and local distinctiveness, balancing their demographic profiles and improving their resilience to change. However, it makes no specific comment on the sustainability of villages within or closely adjacent to the AONB, such as Aveton Gifford.

Strategic Objective SO9 within the Joint Local Plan aims to enable the development of new homes, jobs and community infrastructure sufficient to meet the local needs of the sustainable villages identified in the area and the village networks they serve. Policy TTV25 supports SO9, which states that 'provision in the order of 550 homes will be sought from the sustainable villages as part of the overall housing supply for the TTV Policy Area'. The Joint Local Plan does not however identify sites for development within the villages defined as a 'sustainable village' but takes an approach which aims to enable development to come forward in these villages which reflects their sustainability, and which will respond to local needs. In these locations, the Local Plan states that it is important to strike a balance so that development maintains or improves the viability of the villages whilst also being of an appropriate scale and meeting the needs of local people. It is also seen to be important that any development in the sustainable villages also respects the character of the villages, and particularly of any landscape designations such as the AONBs.

The Neighbourhood Plan area is partly within the South Devon AONB. Given the location of part of the Neighbourhood Plan area within the AONB, the Local Plan does not propose a housing number for Aveton Gifford to deliver.

Two housing needs assessments have been undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, in October 2016 and October 2018. Both of these highlighted that there was no residual need to deliver additional housing in the parish during the plan period.

In light of the requirements of the Joint Local Plan and the findings of the housing needs assessments undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sought to explore whether to facilitate an additional level of growth in the Neighbourhood Plan area during the plan period.

To support decision-making on this element of the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process considered three broad options relating to the number of homes to be taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst it is recognised that the Joint Local Plan does not seek to provide an indicative housing number for the Neighbourhood Plan area during the plan period, and local housing needs assessments have been inconclusive as to whether there is a need for additional housing, the SEA process assessed three options with a view to supporting decision making on this key element of plan making.

The three options were as follows:

- **Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area (i.e. delivery of no further dwellings in the plan period)
- **Option 2:** Delivery of up to c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

- **Option 3:** Delivery of over c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan.

**Table 4.1** in this Environmental Report presents the findings of the appraisal of Option 1 to Option 3 outlined above.

### Assessment of potential sites for housing allocations

Community consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan to date has highlighted that there is a desire to deliver an element of development in the parish which will support the vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes through facilitating the delivery of affordable housing of a type and tenure for local needs, and through supporting the delivery of new community facilities (including potentially a new village car park). It would also provide a degree of certainty as to the type and location of development which comes forward in the parish during the plan period.

This process has identified Aveton Gifford as a sustainable village capable of accommodating development to address local needs.

In light of this, the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to take forward in the region of 30-40 dwellings during the plan period. This is with a view to supporting the vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area, promoting growth which meets local housing needs, and delivering community infrastructure. This figure is deemed to be appropriate to achieve these aims, whilst ensuring that the sensitive environment of the parish can be protected and enhanced.

To further support the development of a spatial strategy to deliver 30-40 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan, the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has considered alternative locations for delivering housing in the parish.

Following a Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites process undertaken in late 2016, an independent and objective site assessment was undertaken for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. This considered 12 sites. The findings of the site assessment were presented in a Site Assessment Report dated April 2017.<sup>1</sup>

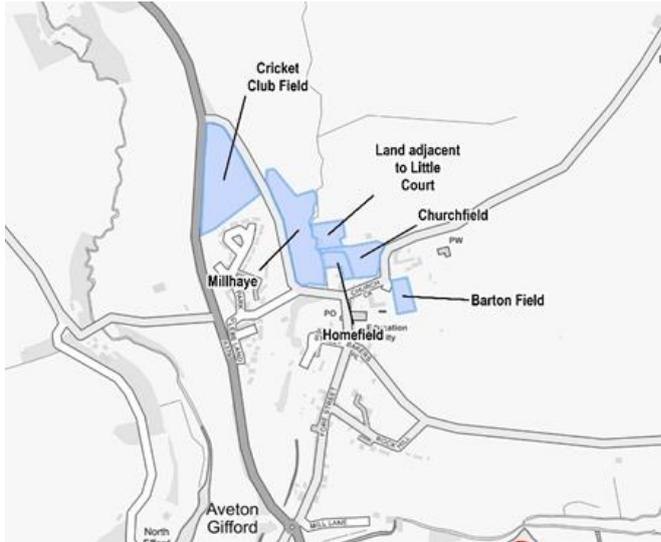
To support decision making on potential locations of development to deliver the proposed housing number for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA undertook an assessment of the key environmental constraints in the vicinity of a number of the sites.

Given the need for alternatives considered through the Neighbourhood Plan to be reasonable, the consideration of sites through the SEA process has focused on six of the twelve sites. The remaining six sites were not deemed to be appropriate for assessing through the SEA process for a number of reasons, including, for example the site being withdrawn by the owner, having unacceptable access issues, being of inappropriate size, or being under community use.

The sites considered through the SEA process were as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> AECOM (April 2017) Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment Report



**Figure NTS1: Site considered through the site assessment undertaken through the SEA**

These sites were then considered in terms of their suitability for allocating development through the Neighbourhood Plan. To inform this process, the SEA process undertook an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the sites and potential effects that may arise as a result of delivering development at these locations. The sites were therefore considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision making questions developed during SEA scoping (Chapter 3) and the baseline information.

**Tables 4.4 to 4.9** in the main body of the Environmental Report present the findings of the appraisals. A summary of the appraisal findings is presented below:

**Table NTS1: Summary of SEA site appraisal findings**

Site	Biodiversity and geodiversity	Climate change	Landscape	Historic environment	Land, soil and water resources	Population and community	Health and wellbeing	Transport
Site 1	Yellow	Red	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Red
Site 2	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Green	Green	Blue
Site 3	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red
Site 4	Yellow	Red	Blue	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Site 5	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Blue	Green	Green	Green
Site 11	Yellow	Blue	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Blue

Key	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	Red
Neutral/no effect	Yellow
Likely positive effect	Green
Uncertain effects	Blue

Following the consideration of these sites, three of the above sites have been allocated in the latest version of the Neighbourhood Plan. In this context the Millhaye and Churchfield sites have been taken forward as a single site for 26 homes. In addition, the Barton Field site has been allocated for 6-8 homes.

The sites allocated in the neighbourhood plan are those which were (a) indicated by landowners as being available for development, (b) performed well or reasonably well in the Neighbourhood Plan site assessments, and (c) can deliver the development needed by the local community.

In particular, the site at Millhaye / Churchfield is located in close proximity to the village hall, school and shop and is an amalgamation of adjacent sites which in combination will be able to deliver not only housing (including affordable homes) but also a new car park. The landowner has indicated his willingness to collaborate in bringing such development forward. The site at Barton Field is well located in relation to the village and performs particularly well in the site assessment. It is suitable for the 6-8 houses proposed.

## Assessment of the submission version of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

The submission version of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan presents ten planning policies for guiding development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Utilising the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during the earlier scoping stage of the SEA, the SEA process assessed the policies put forward through the current version of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan. The Environmental Report has presented the findings of the assessment under the following SEA Themes:

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

The assessment has concluded that the current version of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant long term positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Community' and 'Health and Wellbeing' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on providing new housing to meet local needs in accessible locations, the provision of new community infrastructure in Aveton Gifford, the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure networks in the area and the protection and enhancement of the quality of the public realm and neighbourhood distinctiveness.

The allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan have the potential to have impacts on the setting (but not the fabric) of features and areas nationally and locally designated for the historic environment in Aveton Gifford. In addition, the proposed allocations, whilst not within the South Devon AONB, can be viewed from, and as such are in the setting of, the AONB. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan however proactively respond to these constraints, including through having a close focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and villagescape character, and on conserving and enhancing the setting and fabric of the historic environment in the parish. Taken together, the policies will help limit negative effects from new development on landscape/villagescape character and on the setting of the historic environment, and promote longer term positive effects through securing enhancements to local distinctiveness. Overall therefore, no significant effects have been identified in relation to the 'Landscape' and 'Historic Environment' theme.

The Neighbourhood Plan facilitates the delivery of up to 40 homes on two greenfield sites. This has the potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land in the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, given the lack of detailed land classification having been undertaken in the parish, it is unclear whether this will lead to the loss of areas of the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. As such, the significance of impacts in relation to the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme are uncertain.

In relation to the 'Climate Change' theme, whilst flood risk issues exist on one of the allocated sites, the most sensitive parts of the site are not proposed for residential uses. In addition, the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have a strong focus on addressing fluvial and surface water flood risk issues

which provide an additional level of protection in relation to flood risk over and above the provisions of national and local policies. As such, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan will have overall positive effects in relation to climate change adaptation.

In terms of the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' and 'Transportation' themes, the Neighbourhood Plan will initiate a number of beneficial approaches. These are not though considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and the scale of proposals.

## Next steps

This Environmental Report accompanies the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, South Hams District Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.

At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.

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



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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in support of Aveton Gifford's emerging Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.
- 1.3 It is currently anticipated that the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to South Hams District Council later in 2019 and undergo a referendum in 2020.
- 1.4 Key information relating to the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan is presented in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan**

Name of Responsible Authority	Aveton Gifford Parish Council
Title of Plan	Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan
Subject	Neighbourhood planning
Purpose	<p>The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared as a Neighbourhood Development Plan under the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The plan will be in general conformity with the Plymouth and South West Joint Local Plan.</p> <p>The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan will be used to guide and shape development within the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>
Timescale	To 2034
Area covered by the plan	The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan area covers the parish area of Aveton Gifford in the district of South Hams in Devon ( <b>Figure 1.1</b> )
Summary of content	The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan will set out a vision, strategy and range of policies for the Neighbourhood Plan area.
Plan contact point	David Davis-Berry, Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  davidbparish@btinternet.com

## SEA explained

- 1.5 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a mechanism for considering and communicating the impacts of an emerging plan, and potential alternatives in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SEA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding and mitigating negative impacts. Through this approach, the SEA for the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maximise the developing plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.6 SEA is undertaken to address the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations) which transpose into national law the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive<sup>2</sup>. It also widens the scope of the assessment from focussing on environmental issues to further consider social and economic issues.
- 1.7 The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan has been screened in by South Hams District Council as requiring an SEA. To meet this requirement, the Neighbourhood Plan is undergoing an SEA process which incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive.
- 1.8 The SEA will be undertaken to meet specific requirements prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations).
- 1.9 Two key procedural requirements of the SEA Regulations are that:
  1. When deciding on 'the scope and level of detail of the information' which must be included in the Environmental Report there is a consultation with nationally designated authorities concerned with environmental issues; and
  2. A report (the 'Environmental Report') is published for alongside the Draft Plan (i.e. the proposed submission version of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan) that presents outcomes from the environmental assessment (i.e. discusses 'likely significant effects' that would result from plan implementation) and reasonable alternatives.

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<sup>2</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC

## Structure of this SEA Environmental Report

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

**Table 1.2: Questions that must be answered by the SEA Environmental Report in order to meet the regulatory<sup>3</sup> requirements**

Environmental Report question	In line with the SEA Regulations, the report must include... <sup>4</sup>	
<b>What's the scope of the SEA?</b>	What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.</li> </ul>
	What is the sustainability 'context'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant environmental protection <b>objectives</b>, established at international or national level.</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.</li> </ul>
	What is the sustainability 'baseline'?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.</li> <li>The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.</li> <li>Any existing environmental <b>problems</b> which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.</li> </ul>
	What are the key issues & objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key <b>problems/issues</b> and <b>objectives</b> that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment.</li> </ul>
<b>What has plan-making/SEA involved up to this point?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the <b>alternatives</b> dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach).</li> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>alternatives</b>.</li> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of <b>alternatives</b> appraisal/a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the current version of the plan.</li> </ul>	
<b>What are the assessment findings at this stage?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The likely significant effects associated with <b>the submission version of the plan</b>.</li> <li>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing <b>the submission version of the plan</b>.</li> </ul>	
<b>What happens next?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next steps for plan making / SEA process.</li> </ul>	

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>4</sup> NB this column does not quote directly from Schedule II of the Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation.

## 2. Local Plan context and vision for the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

### Local Plan context for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 2.1 The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan which was adopted on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and covers the time period up until the year 2034. The Joint Local Plan 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. It brings together previous work that has already been carried out by the three councils on South Hams 'Our Plan', West Devon's 'Our Plan' and the Plymouth Plan<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.2 The Joint Local Plan outlines a spatial strategy for Plymouth and South West Devon through setting out provisions for the Plymouth Policy Area and the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area. It aims to promote rural sustainability by maintaining and developing strong social networks and traditions in the villages of the area, enhancing their character and local distinctiveness, balancing their demographic profiles and improving their resilience to change. However, it makes no specific comment on the sustainability of villages within or closely adjacent to the AONB, such as Aveton Gifford.
- 2.3 Strategic Objective SO9 within the Joint Local Plan aims to enable the development of new homes, jobs and community infrastructure sufficient to meet the local needs of the sustainable villages identified in the area and the village networks they serve. Policy TTV25 supports SO9, which states that 'provision in the order of 550 homes will be sought from the sustainable villages as part of the overall housing supply for the TTV Policy Area'. Notably, the latest Joint Local Plan does not identify sites for development within the villages defined as a 'sustainable village' but takes an approach which aims to enable development to come forward in these villages which reflects their sustainability, and which will respond to local needs. In these locations, it states that it is important to strike a balance so that development maintains or improves the viability of the villages whilst also being of an appropriate scale and meeting the needs of local people. The Joint Local Plan also states it is important that any development in the sustainable villages also respects the character of the villages, and particularly of any landscape designations such as the AONBs. Through this approach, the Joint Local Plan seeks to achieve a balance so that development maintains or improves the viability of the villages whilst also being of an appropriate scale and meeting the needs of local people and the environment.
- 2.4 Neighbourhood plans will form part of the development plan for South Hams District, alongside, but not as a replacement for the Local Plan. The Joint Local Plan seeks to give communities a solid framework within which appropriate community-led planning policy documents, including neighbourhood plans, can be brought forward. Neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and can develop policies and proposals to address local place-based issues. In this way it is intended for the Local Plans to provide a clear overall strategic direction for development in the district, whilst enabling finer detail to be determined through the neighbourhood planning process where appropriate.
- 2.5 The preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is supported in the Joint Local Plan as a means of identifying local development needs and bringing forward suitable development. As highlighted above, the Joint Local Plan makes no specific comment on the sustainability of villages within or closely adjacent to the AONB. However, neighbourhood groups in these locations are enabled by the provisions of the Joint Local Plan to determine whether settlements in their Neighbourhood Plan areas should be considered as a 'sustainable village' appropriate for delivering growth to meet local needs.

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<sup>5</sup> West Devon Borough Council, South Hams District Council and Plymouth City Council (2019): 'Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034', [online] available to access via: <  
<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/JLPAadoptedVersion.pdf> > [last accessed 21/06/19]

## Vision, aims and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

2.6 The vision statement for the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan, which was developed during the earlier stages of plan development, is as follows:

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### **A VISION FOR AVETON GIFFORD**

- *a) The village and surrounding areas will show a small but continuous growth in housing and population.*
  - *b) In doing so the village will retain its village feel and remain vibrant as a community of friends and neighbours.*
  - *c) The buildings and natural heritage of the area will be retained and protected.*
  - *d) The open spaces and recreational areas including the River Avon will be conserved.*
  - *e) Development must not change the nature of Aveton Gifford but will enhance it.*
- 

**Vision statement for the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan**



## 3. What is the scope of the SEA?

### SEA Scoping Report

- 3.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “*When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.<sup>6</sup> These authorities were consulted on the scope of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan SEA in July 2019.
- 3.2 The purpose of scoping was to outline the ‘scope’ of the SEA through setting out:
- A context review of the key environmental and sustainability objectives of national, regional and local plans and strategies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - Baseline data against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed;
  - The key sustainability issues for the Neighbourhood Plan; and
  - An ‘SEA Framework’ of objectives against which the Neighbourhood Plan can be assessed.
- 3.3 Responses received on the Scoping Report, and how they were addressed, have been summarised below.

**Table 3.1: Consultation responses received on the SEA Scoping Report**

Consultation response	How the response was considered and addressed
<b>Natural England</b>	
<i>Victoria Kirkham, Consultations Team (email response received on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2019)</i>	
Natural England has no specific comments to make on this neighbourhood plan SEA scoping.  However, we refer you to the advice in the attached annex which covers the issues and opportunities that should be considered when preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.	Comment noted. The annex has provided an essential reference point during the SEA process.
<b>Historic England</b>	
<i>David Stuart, Historic Places Adviser (email response received on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019)</i>	
We have not been involved in the preceding SEA Screening exercise and therefore do not know the basis upon which South Hams District Council has determined that a full SEA is required. As we have indicated to AECOM in previous SEA Scoping consultation responses, it would be helpful if the introduction to the Report could summarise why an SEA is necessary as this would help focus attention on the issues which need to be addressed and the degree and nature of supporting evidence necessary to satisfy the SEA process. (Note: we have looked at the Plan’s website but could find no information on the SEA Screening exercise).	Comment noted. The Neighbourhood Plan has been screened in by South Hams District Council as requiring an SEA.

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

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## Consultation response

## How the response was considered and addressed

The Report identifies the absence of an Appraisal and Management Plan for the Conservation Area (para 6.9, p28). It asserts that as a consequence it will not be possible to readily determine the features of special architectural and historic interest within the village and the pressures that they face.

From the recent revised Regulation 14 consultation we received we note that the Plan proposes to allocate sites for development. An appropriate assessment of the potential impact of those allocations on heritage assets will need to determine which assets are relevant, the nature of their significance, and the likely level and nature of any individual and collective impact upon them. Such an exercise will need to include the potential for impact on the Conservation Area – its setting and views into and out of it, as well as those special features within it.

Comment noted. The potential likelihood of significant historic environment impacts through Neighbourhood Plan proposals have been considered and appraised through the SEA process, specifically within Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this Environmental Report.

We have previously advised the community to utilise our guidance on such exercises but in our recent advice could find no evidence that it has been used. We would therefore take this opportunity to reiterate the desirability of using this guidance to ensure that the SEA process and the site assessments in particular are suitably informed and can constitute an adequate evidence base. This guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets, Site Allocations, and SEAs, along with updated guidance on Neighbourhood Plans, can be found on our website:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/>

<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/gpa3.pdf/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/>

Comment noted. The recommended guidance has provided an essential reference point during the SEA process. The context review section for the historic environment baseline information (presented in Appendix A) has been updated to reference the guidance.

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## Environment Agency

*Fiona Anderson, Customers & Engagement Officer (email response received on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019)*

In general, we consider that it is unlikely that neighbourhood plans will result in any significant environmental effects unless the plan allocates or encourages development over that set out in the Local Plan. Otherwise we consider that any potential for environmental effects from growth in the parish should already have been addressed through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which supported the adopted Local Plan.

Please note, this is a standard response. If you consider the plan will result in significant environmental effects, please re-consult us.

Comments noted.

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

## Key Sustainability Issues

### Air Quality

- There are no exceedances or anticipated exceedances of national air quality objectives.
- Traffic and congestion arising from planned new development within and surrounding the area have the potential to increase emissions; however, this is unlikely to significantly affect air quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Due to the absence of air quality issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area, **the air quality theme has been scoped out for the purposes of the SEA process.**

### Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- Andrew's Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- There are ten CWS located wholly or partly within the Neighbourhood Plan area. These are: South Efford Fields, Avon Valley/ Aveton Gifford Bridge, Waterhead, Pond Farm, Were Down Marsh, St Milburgh's Marsh, Avon Estuary, Stiddicombe Creek and Idston Wood.
- There are several BAP Priority Habitats within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area. The habitats include: Deciduous Woodland, Broadleaved Woodland, Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland and Coastal and Floodplain grazing marsh.

### Climate Change

- Any increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area (associated with the delivery of new housing and employment land) has the potential to increase overall greenhouse gas emissions in the Parish. However, this is unlikely to be significant either as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan alone or in-combination with other plans and programmes.
- The total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita within the South Hams are greater than the regional and national totals and the overall percentage reduction of emissions within the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2005 and 2016 was similar to the regional and national totals.
- The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area is located within Flood Zone 1, showing that there is a <0.1% chance (1 in 1000) of river flooding in any given year. However, some of the built up areas of Aveton Gifford are located within Flood Zone 3 where there is a high probability of flooding; representing that there is a 1% (1 in 100) or greater chance of flooding happening each year.
- The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan should seek to increase the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change by supporting and encouraging adaptation strategies.

### Landscape

- The Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is recognised as a nationally designated landscape.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the South Devon NCA which is identified as a plateau, dissected by steep valleys and rivers, most rising on the adjoining Dartmoor NCA.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area lies across two landscape character areas described as: 'a plateau landscape dissected by major rivers (the Avon and tributaries of the Dart) where the interplay of upland and valley is the defining characteristic, and an open, elevated and exposed farmed plateau which has a strong coastal influence and is deeply incised by the three scenic estuaries of the Yealm, Erme and Avon.'
- The potential effects of development proposed through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan may have implications for the overall character and appearance of the landscape in the future.

## Historic Environment

- There are a variety of heritage assets within or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area, including one Grade II\* and 34 Grade II listed buildings.
- Aveton Gifford Conservation Area lies within the Neighbourhood Plan area, however in the absence of a Conservation Area Appraisal it is difficult to gain a detailed understanding of the key characteristics of, and challenges faced by the Conservation Area.
- Following a high-level review of the HER for Devon and Dartmoor, there are 85 records within Aveton Gifford including a variety of archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscapes dating from the Roman period to the present day.
- Development has the potential to affect the significance of heritage assets and their settings, both positively and negatively.

## Land, Soil and Water Resources

- There is a lack of evidence to ascertain agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area. National provisional quality datasets indicate that the majority of land within the Neighbourhood Plan area is Grade 3 and as part of a precautionary approach it is noted that there is the potential for loss of high quality (Grade 3a 'best and most versatile') agricultural land.
- The Neighbourhood Plan area is located within the 'Avon Salcombe and Kingsbridge' catchment area which contains seven waterbodies, all of which have 'good' chemical status and either 'moderate' or 'good' ecological status.

## Population and Community

- The population of Aveton Gifford increased at a greater rate between 2001 and 2011 than the South Hams, the South West of England and England averages.
- Generally, there are a similar proportion of residents within the 60+ age category within the Neighbourhood Plan area (31.3%) in comparison to the totals for South Hams (32.8%), however this is slightly greater than the South West of England (26.4%) and England (22.3%).
- The proportion of residents with the 60+ age category is likely to continue to increase.
- There are low levels of deprivation within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## Health and Wellbeing

- 83.4% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', slightly greater than the totals for the South Hams (81.8%), the South West of England (81.4%) and England (81.4%).
- A smaller proportion of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area report that their activities are limited in some way compared to regional and national averages.

## Transportation

- The nearest railway station to the Neighbourhood Plan area is in Ivybridge, approximately 5.5km away. Totnes station has a wider range of services available which is approximately 13.2km away.
- There is one bus service which runs from the Neighbourhood Plan area providing hourly services to Kingsbridge, Modbury, Yealmpton and Plymouth.
- There is a high number of car ownerships and a high reliance on the car within the parish.
- The A379 runs through the centre of the Neighbourhood Plan area connecting residents to the settlements of Kingsbridge and Plymouth via Modbury, Yealmpton and Brixton.

## SEA Framework

3.5 The SEA Framework provides a way in which environmental effects can be defined and subsequently analysed based on standard 'tests'. Each proposal within the submission version of the Calstock Neighbourhood Plan will be assessed consistently using the framework.

SEA Objective	Assessment questions
<b>Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>	
Protect and enhance all biodiversity and geological features.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the status of the nationally and locally designated sites of significance within and/ or adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary, including Andrew's Wood SSSI and the ten CWS?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats?</li> <li>• Protect and enhance locally designated sites?</li> <li>• Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to ecological networks, including through improvements to multifunctional green infrastructure networks?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> </ul>
<b>Climate change</b>	
Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within the Neighbourhood Plan area	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of journeys made?</li> <li>• Reduce the need to travel?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>• Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>• Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>• Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> </ul>
Support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Improve and extend green infrastructure networks in the plan area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>• Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff (either within the plan area or downstream)?</li> <li>• Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area?</li> <li>• Increase the resilience of biodiversity in the area to the effects of climate change, including through enhancements to ecological networks?</li> </ul>

<b>SEA Objective</b>	<b>Assessment questions</b>
<b>Landscape</b>	
Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and villagescapes.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and enhance the quality and integrity of the South Devon AONB and its setting?</li> <li>• Support landscape character of the landscape character areas covering the Neighbourhood Plan area?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance landscape and villagescape features?</li> </ul>
<b>Historic Environment</b>	
Protect, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage resource within the Neighbourhood Plan area, including the historic environment and archaeological assets.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve, enhance and support the integrity of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the archaeological resource of Aveton Gifford?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance local diversity and character?</li> <li>• Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic environment?</li> </ul>
<b>Land, Soil and Water Resources</b>	
Ensure the efficient and effective use of land.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the use of previously developed land?</li> <li>• Avoid the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, which in the parish may comprise Grade 3 agricultural land?</li> <li>• Protect the integrity of mineral safeguarding areas?</li> </ul>
Use and manage water resources in a sustainable manner.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support improvements to water quality?</li> <li>• Minimise water consumption?</li> <li>• Protect surface water resources?</li> </ul>
<b>Population and Community</b>	
Cater for existing and future residents' needs as well as the needs of different groups in the community, and improve access to local, high-quality community services and facilities.	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community facilities?</li> <li>• Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities?</li> <li>• Minimise fuel poverty?</li> <li>• Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents?</li> </ul>
Reduce deprivation and promote a more inclusive and self-contained community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the availability and accessibility of key local facilities, including specialist services for disabled and older people?</li> <li>• Support the provision of land for allotments and cemeteries?</li> </ul>

<b>SEA Objective</b>	<b>Assessment questions</b>
<p>Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and ensure an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes, types and tenures.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the provision of a range of house types and sizes?</li> <li>• Support enhancements to the current housing stock?</li> <li>• Meet the needs of all sectors of the community?</li> <li>• Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>• Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>• Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	
<p>Improve the health and wellbeing residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups?</li> <li>• Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards?</li> <li>• Promote the use of healthier modes of travel?</li> <li>• Improve access to the countryside for recreational use?</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	
<p>Promote sustainable transport use and reduce the need to travel.</p>	<p>Will the option/proposal help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel?</li> <li>• Facilitate working from home and remote working?</li> <li>• Improve road safety?</li> <li>• Reduce the impact on residents from the road network?</li> </ul>

## 4. What has plan making / SEA involved up to this point?

### Introduction

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

### Housing numbers to deliver through the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.4 As highlighted in Section 2.1, the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in the context of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan which was adopted in May 2019. The Joint Local Plan 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.
- 4.5 The Joint Local Plan outlines a spatial strategy for Plymouth and South West Devon through setting out provisions for the Plymouth Policy Area and the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area. The Joint Local Plan aims to promote rural sustainability by maintaining and developing strong social networks and traditions in the villages of the area, enhancing their character and local distinctiveness, balancing their demographic profiles and improving their resilience to change. However, it makes no specific comment on the sustainability of villages within or closely adjacent to the AONB such as Aveton Gifford.
- 4.6 Strategic Objective SO9 within the Joint Local Plan aims to enable the development of new homes, jobs and community infrastructure sufficient to meet the local needs of the sustainable villages identified in the area and the village networks they serve. Policy TTV25 supports SO9, which states that 'provision in the order of 550 homes will be sought from the sustainable villages as part of the overall housing supply for the TTV Policy Area'. The Joint Local Plan does not however identify sites for development within the villages defined as a 'sustainable village' but takes an approach which aims to enable development to come forward in these villages which reflects their sustainability, and which will respond to local needs. In these locations, the Local Plan states that it is important to strike a balance so that development maintains or improves the viability of the villages whilst also being of an appropriate scale and meeting the needs of local people. It is also seen to be important that any development in the sustainable villages also respects the character of the villages, and particularly of any landscape designations such as the AONBs.
- 4.7 The Neighbourhood Plan area is partly within the South Devon AONB. Given the location of part of the Neighbourhood Plan area within the AONB, the Local Plan does not propose a housing number for Aveton Gifford to deliver.
- 4.8 Two housing needs assessments have been undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan in October 2016 and October 2018. Both of these highlighted that there was no residual need to deliver additional housing in the parish during the plan period.

## Level of growth to deliver through the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.9 In light of the requirements of the Joint Local Plan and the findings of the housing needs assessments undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group sought to explore whether to facilitate an additional level of growth in the Neighbourhood Plan area during the plan period. This was in part to determine whether Aveton Gifford should be considered as a 'sustainable village' in the context of the Joint Local Plan.
- 4.10 To support decision-making on this element of the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process considered three broad options relating to the number of homes to be taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst it is recognised that the Joint Local Plan does not seek to provide an indicative housing number for the Neighbourhood Plan area during the plan period, and local housing needs assessments have been inconclusive as to whether there is a need for additional housing, the SEA process has assessed three options with a view to supporting decision making on this key element of plan making.
- 4.11 The three options are as follows:
- **Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area (i.e. delivery of no further dwellings in the plan period)
  - **Option 2:** Delivery of up to c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan
  - **Option 3:** Delivery of over c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan
- 4.12 These options were considered through the SEA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed during scoping (see Section 3.5).
- 4.13 **Table 4.1** presents the findings of the appraisal of Option 1 to Option 3 outlined above. These are presented through the eight sustainability themes through which the SEA Framework is presented. To support the appraisal findings, the three options have been ranked in terms of their sustainability performance against the relevant theme. It is anticipated that this will provide the reader with a likely indication of the comparative sustainability performance of the three options in relation to each theme.

**Table 4.1: Appraisal findings: reasonable alternatives linked to level of development to deliver through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan**

**Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area (i.e. delivery of no further dwellings in the plan period)

**Option 2:** Delivery of up to c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

**Option 3:** Delivery of over c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

SEA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Biodiversity and geodiversity	<p>In terms of the biodiversity constraints present in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the north east of the parish is within an IRZ for 'Residential development of 50 units or more' for the Andrew's Wood SSSI. Option 3, through potentially delivering a level of growth above the 50 dwelling threshold, has the potential to lead to adverse effects on this nationally designated site. This includes through recreational pressures and disturbance. However the part of the parish within the IRZ is away from the built up part of the parish, and development taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan would be unlikely to take place in this location. As such, all three options are unlikely to have significant effects on this site.</p> <p>Effects on local biodiversity assets in the Neighbourhood Plan area (including the ten County Wildlife Sites and numerous BAP Priority Habitats present in the parish) have the potential to take place under both Option 2 and 3, including through habitat loss and direct and indirect impacts on species and ecological networks. These effects are likely to be increased through the delivery of a higher delivery of housing in the Neighbourhood Plan area. As such Option 3 has the potential to lead to an increased magnitude of effects on biodiversity assets locally.</p> <p>Housing delivery however provides opportunities for biodiversity enhancements, such as green infrastructure improvements and enhancements to ecological networks through developer led contributions. In this context opportunities for biodiversity net gain are likely to be more limited through the limited level of growth promoted through Option 1.</p> <p>All allocations have the potential to have impacts on biodiversity assets if located inappropriately and have poor design and layout. Likewise all allocations have the potential to promote net gains in biodiversity value. As such, for all sites the potential effects on biodiversity depends on elements such as the provision of green infrastructure to accompany new development areas and the retention and incorporation of biodiversity features.</p>	1	2	3

**Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area (i.e. delivery of no further dwellings in the plan period)

**Option 2:** Delivery of up to c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

**Option 3:** Delivery of over c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

SEA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Climate change	<p>In terms of climate change mitigation, the options which facilitate an increased level of development (Option 3, and to a lesser extent, Option 2) will lead to an increased level of greenhouse gas emissions due to an enlarged built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area.</p> <p>Option 3, through facilitating larger scale sites, may however enable more effective improvements to walking and cycling and public transport links through the infrastructure opportunities afforded by larger allocations. Overall however, Option 3 is likely to lead to the largest increases in emissions of the options through facilitating additional growth. The effect on per capita emissions however depends on the location of new development and infrastructure provisions accompanying new development</p> <p>In terms of climate change adaptation, enhancements to the Neighbourhood Plan area's green infrastructure networks will be a key means of helping the plan area adapt to the effects of climate change. This includes through helping to regulate extreme temperatures and surface water run-off. In this context the direct provision of green infrastructure improvements to accompany new development areas may be more achievable through Options 2 and 3, including through mechanisms such as the community infrastructure levy.</p>	1	2	3
Landscape	<p>The south western part of the Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the South Devon AONB. This includes much of Aveton Gifford village. As such development in the vicinity of Aveton Gifford village has the potential to impact on the special qualities or distinctive landscape character of the AONB without appropriate design and layout. This includes directly through landtake, or indirectly through impacting on the setting of and views to and from the AONB.</p> <p>In this respect all options have the potential to lead to impacts on the landscape character of the AONB. However, through increasing the scale of development to be taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, Option 3 has increased potential to lead to adverse effects. This includes through loss of landscape features, visual impacts and impacts on noise quality linked to increased traffic flows. Options 1 and Option 2, through promoting a more limited scale of development, is less likely to lead to significant effects on landscape and villagescape character. Given the scale of development proposed under Option 3, development taken forward through this option is likely to require allocations which constitute 'major development' in relation to the provisions of the NPPF, which, even if it is not within the AONB, may affect the setting of and views to and from the AONB.</p>	1	2	3

**Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area (i.e. delivery of no further dwellings in the plan period)

**Option 2:** Delivery of up to c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

**Option 3:** Delivery of over c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

SEA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Historic environment	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment, as highlighted by the presence of 35 listed buildings and the presence of the Aveton Gifford Conservation Area (which covers much of Aveton Gifford village).</p> <p>The scale of development proposed through Option 3 has increased potential to lead to significant adverse effects on the fabric and setting of historic environment assets. Option 2, whilst also having the potential to lead to impacts on the historic environment, provides increased opportunities for ensuring that avoidance and mitigation measures can be implemented to limit impacts. The option also has the potential to support the reuse and rejuvenation of existing heritage assets in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Whilst Option 3 also has the potential to support the rejuvenation of heritage assets, the scale of development proposed through the option has the potential to lead to significant impacts on the historic environment overall.</p> <p>Option 1, through limiting development has the most potential of the options to limit impacts on the historic environment. However the option largely precludes significant opportunities for delivering enhancements to the fabric and setting of historic environment assets.</p>	1	2	3
Land, soil and water resources	<p>An increased scale of development through Option 3, and to a lesser extent, Option 2, has additional potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land. This includes potentially in the parish areas of land classified as Grade 3a agricultural land, which is land classified as the 'best and most versatile'.</p> <p>In terms of water and soil quality, it is difficult to come to a conclusion regarding the potential for development at any given location to result in negative effects without an understanding of the design measures that will be put in place. For example sustainable drainage systems – SuDS – are an effective means of minimising surface water runoff and hence pollution.</p>	1	2	3

- Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area (i.e. delivery of no further dwellings in the plan period)
- Option 2:** Delivery of up to c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan
- Option 3:** Delivery of over c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

SEA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Population and community	<p>In terms of affordable housing, such provision may be easier to deliver through the allocations delivered through Option 2 and Option 3. Whilst all new developments involving one or more dwellings are liable for the community infrastructure levy, concentrating the delivery of housing at larger sites may help enable the securing of additional contributions to site specific mitigation through Section 106 planning agreements (it should be noted however that such contributions are typically required to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable). A 10 unit threshold currently exists for affordable housing contributions. However, within AONBs, the exemptions would apply only to developments not exceeding 5 new homes; developments of 6 to 10 homes could pay a commuted sum, either at or after completion of the development. As such, Options 2 and 3 provide opportunity for delivering affordable housing in the parish and contributing towards meeting local housing needs.</p> <p>In terms of the provision of services and facilities, the delivery of CIL monies and similar mechanisms are likely to be more achievable through the allocations facilitated through Options 2 and 3. Similarly potential enhancements to the vitality of the village provided by an increased population growth through these options may support the availability and viability of services, facilities, amenities, and public transport links. Conversely however, an increased level of development proposed under Option 3 may increase pressures on local services and facilities, as well as the local transport network.</p> <p>Taking the above into consideration, Option 2 is likely to provide the level of growth to facilitate housing delivery which will meet Aveton Gifford's local needs, support existing services, facilities, and community vitality, whilst also enabling the impact of growth to be managed.</p>	3	1	2
Health and wellbeing	<p>The delivery of an increased level of housing provision has the potential to concentrate effects on road safety and noise quality from increased traffic flows at certain locations. This may have effects on the health and wellbeing of residents. Impacts however depend on the location of new development areas and the integration of elements such as sustainable transport provision.</p> <p>Additional development may support the delivery of new infrastructure in the parish which supports the health and wellbeing of residents. This may include, for example new community facilities or green infrastructure provision. As such Option 2 and 3 may support the delivery of such infrastructure.</p>	2	1	3

- Option 1:** Delivery of the minimum number of dwellings to meet the indicative housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan area (i.e. delivery of no further dwellings in the plan period)
- Option 2:** Delivery of up to c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan
- Option 3:** Delivery of over c.40 additional dwellings through the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan

SEA theme	Discussion of potential effects and relative merits of options	Rank of preference		
		Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3
Transport	<p>The provision of an increased level of housing has the potential to increase existing congestion issues in the village. This is significant given the limited capacity of the road network in parts of the village, with narrow roads.</p> <p>However, the provision of new and improved sustainable transport infrastructure to accompany new housing development, including pedestrian/cycle links may be more feasible with the larger scale of development proposed through Option 3, and to a lesser extent through Option 2. This is a key consideration given the high reliance of residents on the private car. The delivery of a higher level of housing may also support the provision of further transport infrastructure in the parish, including additional car parking.</p> <p>Through promoting smaller scale housing provision across the plan area, Option 2 has increased potential to facilitate the development of new housing at locations which are more integrated with the existing built up area of Aveton Gifford. This has the potential to allow at some locations easier access to the village's services and facilities and public transport links by sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling.</p>	3	1	2

## Preferred approach of the Neighbourhood Plan: Housing delivery

- 4.14 Community consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan to date has highlighted that there is a desire to deliver an element of development in the parish which will support the vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes through facilitating the delivery of affordable housing of a type and tenure for local needs, and through supporting the delivery of new community facilities (including potentially a new village car park). It would also provide a degree of certainty as to the type and location of development which comes forward in the parish during the plan period.
- 4.15 This process undertaken through the Neighbourhood Plan has identified Aveton Gifford as a sustainable village capable of accommodating development to address local needs.
- 4.16 In light of this, the current version of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to take forward in the region of 30-40 dwellings during the plan period. This is with a view to supporting the vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area, promoting growth which meets local housing needs, and delivering community infrastructure. This figure is deemed to be appropriate to achieve these aims, whilst ensuring that the sensitive environment of the parish can be protected and enhanced.

## Assessment of reasonable alternatives for site allocations

- 4.17 To further support the development of a spatial strategy to deliver 30-40 dwellings through the Neighbourhood Plan, the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has considered alternative locations for delivering housing in the parish.
- 4.18 Following a Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites process undertaken in late 2016, an independent and objective site assessment was undertaken for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan. The site assessment considered the following sites in the parish, listed below. The location of these sites is presented in the subsequent map.

**Table 4.2: Sites assessed through the site assessment undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan**

Name	Size
Site 1: Land adjacent to Little Court*	0.33 ha
Site 2: Barnfield*	1.3 ha
Site 3: Churchfield*	0.46 ha
Site 4: Homefield*	0.24 ha
Site 5: Land between Court Barton Garden and Pulley's Close*	0.33 ha
Site 6: Land between The Hive Pre-School and Bakers Hill	0.19 ha
Site 7: Land to the east of The Hive Pre-School	1.47 ha
Site 8: Large Agricultural Field to the east of St Andrew's Church	10.1 ha
Site 9: Land to the north of Mill Lane	1.77 ha
Site 10: Land between the River Avon, sewage works and car park	0.8 ha
Site 11: Cricket Club Field*	1.62 ha
Site 12: Land at the south east corner of Icy Park	0.41 ha

- 4.19 The findings of the site assessment were presented in a Site Assessment Report dated April 2017.<sup>7</sup>
- 4.20 To support decision making on potential locations of development to deliver the proposed housing number for the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA undertook an assessment of the key environmental constraints in the vicinity of the sites.
- 4.21 Given the need for alternatives considered through the Neighbourhood Plan to be reasonable, the consideration of sites through the SEA process has focused on six of the twelve sites. The reasons for the sites being or not being considered through the SEA process are as follows:

<sup>7</sup> AECOM (April 2017) Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Site Assessment Report

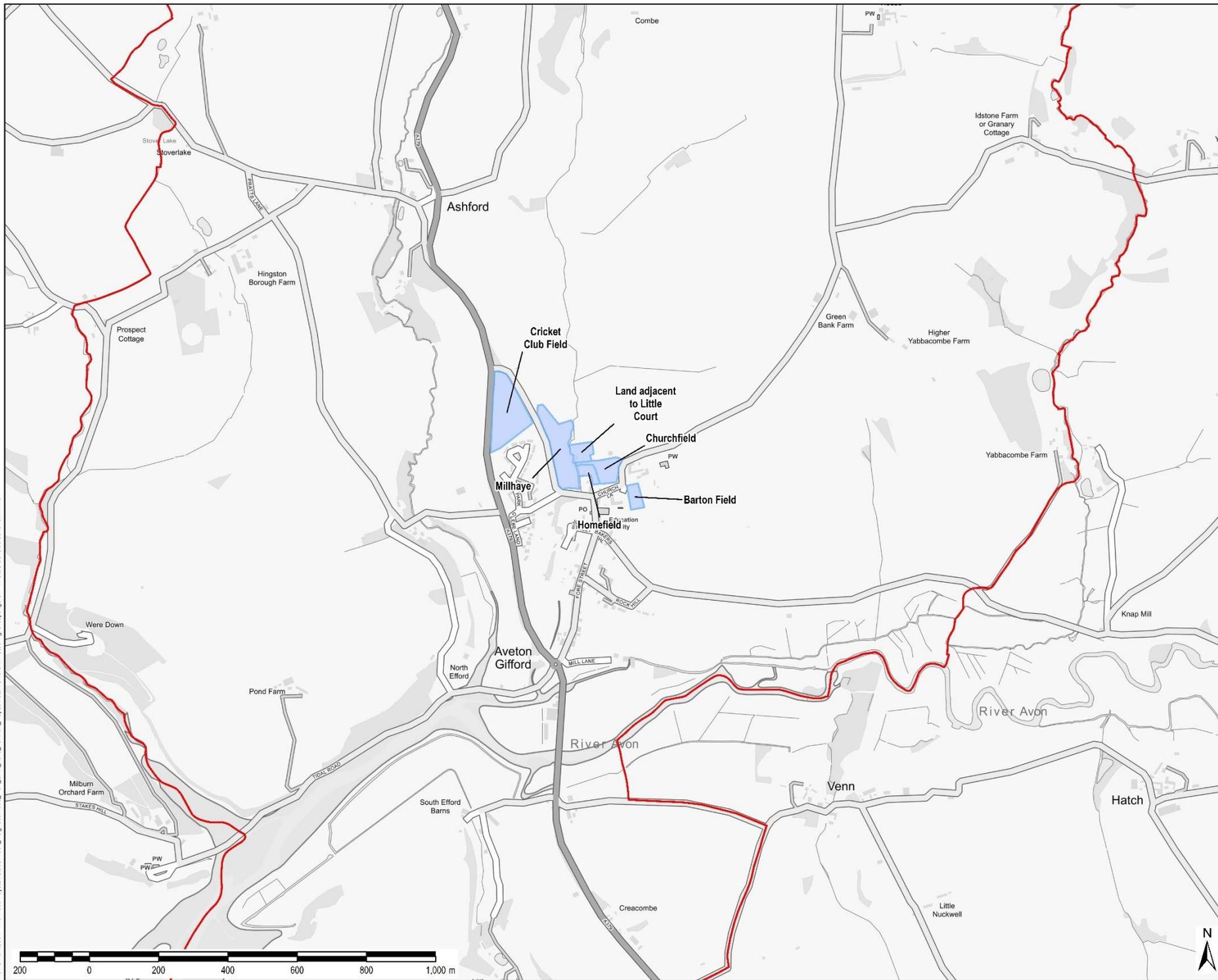
**Table 4.3: Sites considered through the SEA process**

Name	Included in the assessment undertaken as part of the SEA process?
Site 1: Land adjacent to Little Court	<b>Yes.</b> Site is available.
Site 2: Barnfield (Millhay)	<b>Yes.</b> Site is available.
Site 3: Churchfield	<b>Yes.</b> Site is available.
Site 4: Homefield	<b>Yes.</b> Site is available.
Site 5: Land between Court Barton Garden and Pulley's Close (Barton Field)	<b>Yes.</b> Site is available.
Site 6: Land between The Hive Pre-School and Bakers Hill	<b>No.</b> Gaining access to the site would involve the knocking down of one or more buildings which are integral to the setting of the Aveton Gifford Conservation Area.
Site 7: Land to the east of The Hive Pre-School	<b>No.</b> Site has gained planning permission.
Site 8: Large Agricultural Field to the east of St Andrew's Church	<b>No.</b> Site is too large to deliver the level of housing potentially to be taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan and is not of an appropriate scale.
Site 9: Land to the north of Mill Lane	<b>No.</b> Site has been withdrawn by landowner.
Site 10: Land between the River Avon, sewage works and car park	<b>No.</b> Site has been withdrawn by landowner.
Site 11: Cricket Club Field	<b>Yes.</b> Site is available.
Site 12: Land at the south east corner of Icy Park	<b>No.</b> Site is owned by South Hams District Council and comprises important open space and recreational facilities for the community. Access to the site is currently not achievable from the existing highways network.

4.22 To support the consideration of the suitability of the remaining six sites for potential allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan, the SEA process has undertaken an appraisal of the key environmental constraints present at each of the sites and potential effects that may arise as a result of housing development at these locations. In this context the sites have been considered in relation to the SEA Framework of objectives and decision-making questions developed during SEA scoping (Chapter 3) and the baseline information.

4.23 The tables which follow present a summary of this appraisal and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the eight SEA themes.

File Name: I:\5004 - Information Systems\60571087 - Neighbourhood Plan\_CBE\_2018\_202202\_Maps\Aveton Gifford NP Steering Group\Figures 4-1 - Sites Considered for SEA.mxd



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**LEGEND**

- Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Site Option

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Purpose of Issue: **FINAL**

Client: **AVETON GIFFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Project Title: **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE AVETON GIFFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title: **SITES ASSESSED FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE SEA**

Drawn: CN	Checked: JW	Approved: TS	Date: 17/09/2019
AECOM Internal Project No.: 60571087		Scale: GD/A3 1:10,000	

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North Arrow

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Rev: **01**

## SEA site assessment findings

4.24 The tables below present a summary of this assessment and provide an indication of each site's sustainability performance in relation to the eight SEA themes.

**Table 4.4: Site 1: Land adjacent to Little Court**

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 1: Land adjacent to Little Court
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or within proximity to the site. The site does not overlap with an SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the type of development which is likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. residential, rural residential, rural non-residential).</p> <p>At the local level, there are no BAP priority habitats within or adjacent to the site. There is a woodland corridor extending north from the site into the Avon Valley, which contains a few mature trees.</p>
Climate change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location. The site is in good proximity to the services and facilities in the village centre, helping to limit the need to travel to local facilities (and associated greenhouse gas emissions).</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the western section of the site is a wetland area and is located within Flood Zone 3. Areas of land within this section of the site also have a 'medium' risk of surface water flooding.</p>
Landscape	<p>The site is approximately 100m to the north of the existing settlement boundary of the village. Development would contrast the character of the landscape which immediately surrounds the site, which is predominantly agricultural greenfield land.</p> <p>There are some long views to the north over the Avon Valley and the site is potentially visible from the South Devon AONB, including from the Avon Estuary Walk. However, due to the relatively small size of the site and given its location approximately 100m to the north of the existing built-up area of the parish, development at this location is less likely to significantly change the character of any viewpoints over the village from the AONB.</p> <p>At the local level, the whole of the site is within the 'River Valley Slopes and Combes' Landscape Character Type (LCT), as stated within the South Hams and West Devon Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The overall landscape strategy for the LCT is to "protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges"<sup>8</sup>.</p>
Historic Environment	<p>The Aveton Gifford Conservation Area is located approximately 100m to the south of the site. Due to the presence of existing buildings along Church Lane and the row of trees located along its southern boundary, the site is screened from view from the Conservation Area. This limits the potential impacts to the setting of the Conservation Area associated with an allocation at this location.</p> <p>The Grade II listed 'Farm Buildings at Tree Farm' is located approximately 100m to the south of the site, along Church Lane. This nationally designated listed building is also screened from view from the site by the row of trees.</p> <p>No features on or in the immediate vicinity of the site are listed on the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER). The nearest feature, 'Corn Mill north of Aveton Gifford' (Monument ID: MDV21132) is approximately 75m to the south of the site (at its nearest point).</p>
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken on the site. However, the regional agricultural land classification map for South West England (published by Natural England) indicates that the site is underlain by Grade 4 (poor)</p>

<sup>8</sup> South Hams District Council (2018): 'Landscape Character Assessment: Chapter 3 – The Landscape Character of South Hams', [online] available to access via: <<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/article/4940/Landscape-Character-Assessment>> last accessed [01/10/19]

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 1: Land adjacent to Little Court	
	<p>agricultural land, which has a less than 20% chance of containing land classified as the 'best and most versatile' for agricultural purposes<sup>910</sup>. Nevertheless, an allocation at this location would result in the permanent loss of an area of greenfield land.</p> <p>Regarding mineral resources, the site does not overlap with a mineral safeguarding area as defined within the Devon Minerals Local Plan, which was adopted in February 2017.</p> <p>The western boundary of the site is adjacent to Parson's Brook, a tributary of the River Avon. The brook flows southwards through the Neighbourhood Plan area. The site is not within a groundwater source protection zone (SPZ) or a nitrate vulnerable zone (NVZ).</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs.</p> <p>In terms of the relative distance from local services and facilities, the site is located approximately 100m to the north of Fore Street, which provides access to local services and facilities including a post office, village shop, village hall and primary school.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is within proximity to two areas of open space. Rectory Lawn is located behind the village hall on Fore Street, with Parson's Green playing ground accessible via Jubilee Street. The nearest health centre facilities are in Modbury and Kingsbridge, accessible via the A379.</p>	
Transportation	<p>Access to the site is difficult. There is an existing entry point into the northern section via a track passing Little Court, which is suitable for vehicles. However, the track does not currently extend into the site, and would need to navigate down a relatively steep slope to provide a connection.</p> <p>The site is located at relative proximity to services and facilities in Aveton Gifford village centre which will limit the need for residents to travel for some day-to-day services and facilities. The nearest bus stop is located approximately 100m to the south of the site, at the boundary between Church Lane and Fore Street, with an hourly service to Kingsbridge, Modbury, Yealmpton and Plymouth.</p> <p>It is useful to note that there is currently no footpath located between the site, the bus stop and Aveton Gifford village centre. Therefore, existing pedestrian connectivity is relatively poor.</p>	
<b>Key</b>		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

**Table 4.5: Site 2: Millhaye**

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 2: Millhaye	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or within proximity to the site. The site does not overlap with an SSSI IRZ for the type of development which is likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. residential, rural residential, rural non-residential).</p> <p>At the local level, there are no BAP priority habitats within or adjacent to the site. There are several mature trees located along the eastern and western site boundaries, which are of some sensitivity from an ecological perspective. Along the eastern boundary, these trees form part of a woodland corridor extending to the north along Parson's Brook. These features could be retained and enhanced through development proposals.</p>	

<sup>9</sup> Natural England (2011): 'Agricultural Land Classification Map South West Region (ALC006)', [online] available to access via: <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/144017?category=5954148537204736>> last accessed [01/10/19]

<sup>10</sup> Natural England (2017): 'Likelihood of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land – Strategic Scale Map South West Region (ALC018)', [online] available to access via: <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5624668800679936?category=5208993007403008>> last accessed [01/10/19]

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 2: Millhaye	
Climate change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location. However, the southern section of the site is in good proximity to the services and facilities in the village centre, helping to limit the need to travel to local facilities.</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, Parson's Brook flows adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. There are areas of land located towards the eastern site boundary and within the south eastern section of the site which are located within fluvial Flood Zone 3. These areas also have a 'medium' risk of surface water flooding. As such, these parts of the site are heavily constrained by flood risk issues.</p>	
Landscape	<p>In terms of location, the site adjoins the built-up part of the village and development (at the northern section of Aveton Gifford). However, the site currently provides an open aspect from the village and as such, new development at this location would likely affect local landscape and villagescape character. The site also borders the South Devon AONB and given the relative size of the site, development of the whole site will likely change the character of views across the village from the AONB, including from the Avon Valley Walk.</p> <p>At the local level, the whole of the site is within the 'River Valley Slopes and Combes' LCT, as stated within the South Hams and West Devon LCA. The overall landscape strategy for the LCT is to "protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges".</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The nearest nationally designated listed building is located approximately 50m to the south east of the site (Farm Buildings at Tree Farm). This is however screened from the site from other buildings located on Church Lane.</p> <p>The Aveton Gifford Conservation Area is located directly to the south east of the site. Therefore, development on the site has the potential to impact on the setting and special qualities of the conservation area in the absence of sensitive design mitigation measures. However, it is useful to note that key heritage assets in the Conservation Area are screened from view by the trees located along the site boundaries. Nonetheless, there are some views over the village and the conservation area which are likely from the north west part of the site, due to the sloping topography.</p> <p>No features on or in the immediate vicinity of the site are listed on the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER). The nearest feature, 'Corn Mill north of Aveton Gifford' (Monument ID: MDV21132) is approximately 10m to the south east of the site (at its nearest point).</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken on the site. However, the regional agricultural land classification map for South West England (published by Natural England) indicates that the site is underlain by Grade 4 (poor) agricultural land. However, the predictive ALC assessment indicates that the site has a greater than 60% chance of containing land classified as the 'best and most versatile' for agricultural purposes. An allocation at this location would result in the permanent loss of an area of greenfield land.</p> <p>Regarding mineral resources, the site does not overlap with a mineral safeguarding area as defined within the Devon Minerals Local Plan, which was adopted in February 2017.</p> <p>The eastern boundary of the site is adjacent to Parson's Brook, which is a tributary of the River Avon. The brook flows southwards through the Neighbourhood Plan area. The site is not within a groundwater SPZ or an NVZ.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs.</p> <p>In terms of the relative distance from local services and facilities, the site is located approximately 50m to the north east of Fore Street, which provides access to local services and facilities including a post office, village shop, village hall and primary school.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is within proximity to two areas of open spaces. Rectory Lawn is located behind the village hall on Fore Street. Parson's Green playing ground is accessible via Jubilee Street. The nearest health centre facilities are in Modbury and Kingsbridge, accessible via the A379.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The site has access to the key route into the village from the A379 and there is potential to establish an entry point at the southern site boundary. However, the unnamed road passing adjacent to the site boundary is relatively steep sloping and is banked by walls</p>	

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 2: Millhaye	
	<p>and trees. This limits the extent of the sight lines from the site, which is safety concern.</p> <p>The site is located in good proximity to services and facilities in Aveton Gifford village centre which will limit the need for residents to travel for some day-to-day services and facilities. The nearest bus stop is located directly to the south of the site, at the boundary between Church Lane and Fore Street, with an hourly service to the settlements of Kingsbridge, Modbury, Yealmpton and Plymouth.</p>	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

**Table 4.6: Site 3: Churchfield**

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 3: Churchfield	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or within proximity to the site. The site does not overlap with an SSSI IRZ for the type of development which is likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. residential, rural residential, rural non-residential).</p> <p>At the local level, there are no BAP priority habitats within or adjacent to the site. The trees bordering the northern boundary extend to Parson's Brook to the west and join a woodland corridor which extends north into the valley towards a network of hedgerows and fields. These could be retained and enhanced through development proposals.</p>	
Climate change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location, although these are unlikely to be significant. The site is in good proximity to the services and facilities in the village centre, helping to limit the need to travel to local facilities (and associated greenhouse gas emissions).</p> <p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, the north western corner of the site is adjacent to Parson's Brook, with land immediately adjacent to the brook within Flood Zone 3 and having a low to medium surface water flood risk potential. Nonetheless, the vast majority of the site is within Flood Zone 1.</p>	
Landscape	<p>Churchfield is sensitive from a landscape character perspective, with long views over the Avon Valley, village and South Devon AONB. The site is also visible from the AONB due to its elevated location within the village, including from the Avon Valley Walk.</p> <p>At the local level, the whole of the site is within the 'River Valley Slopes and Combes' LCT, as stated within the South Hams and West Devon LCA. The overall landscape strategy for the LCT is to "protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges".</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The Grade II listed 'Farm Buildings at Tree Farm' is located approximately 20m to the south of the site. Likewise, Aveton Gifford Conservation Area is located adjacent to the southern and eastern boundaries of the site. Therefore, development on the site has the potential to impact upon the setting and special qualities of these designated heritage assets in the absence of sensitive design mitigation measures. However, it is useful to note that the heritage assets are partly screened from view by the trees located along the site boundaries. Nonetheless, there are some views over the village and the conservation area which are likely from the north eastern section of the site, due to the sloping topography, and parts of the site will have views to and from the listed building.</p> <p>No features on or in the immediate vicinity of the site are listed on the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER). The nearest feature, 'Corn Mill north of Aveton Gifford' (Monument ID: MDV21132) is approximately 25m to the south west of the site (at its nearest point).</p>	

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 3: Churchfield	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken on the site. However, the regional agricultural land classification map for South West England (published by Natural England) indicates that the site is underlain by Grade 4 (poor) agricultural land, which has a less than 20% chance of containing land classified as the 'best and most versatile' for agricultural purposes. Nevertheless, an allocation at this location would result in the permanent loss of an area of greenfield land.</p> <p>Regarding mineral resources, the site does not overlap with a mineral safeguarding area as defined within the Devon Minerals Local Plan, which was adopted in February 2017.</p> <p>The north western corner of the site is adjacent to Parson's Brook, which is a tributary of the River Avon. The brook flows southwards through the Neighbourhood Plan area. The site is not within a groundwater SPZ or an NVZ.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs.</p> <p>In terms of the relative distance from local services and facilities, the site entrance is located approximately 200m to the north east of Fore Street, which has access to local services and facilities including a post office, village shop, village hall and primary school.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is within proximity to two areas of open spaces. Rectory Lawn is located behind the village hall on Fore Street. Parson's Green playing ground is accessible via Jubilee Street. The nearest health centre facilities are in Modbury and Kingsbridge, accessible via the A379.</p>	
Transportation	<p>Existing access to the site is currently unsuitable for vehicles. There is potential to create an entry point to the north eastern section of the site, via a track which connects to the local road network. However, the road passing adjacent to the site boundary is relatively steep sloping and is banked by walls and trees. This limits the extent of the sight lines from the track, which is safety concern.</p> <p>The site is located at relative proximity to services and facilities in Aveton Gifford village centre which will limit the need for residents to travel for some day-to-day services and facilities. The nearest bus stop is located approximately 50m to the south west of the site, at the boundary between Church Lane and Fore Street, with an hourly service to the settlements of Kingsbridge, Modbury, Yealmpton and Plymouth.</p> <p>It is useful to note that there is currently no footpath located between the site, the bus stop and Aveton Gifford village centre. Therefore, existing pedestrian connectivity is relatively poor.</p>	
<b>Key</b>		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

**Table 4.7: Site 4: Homefield**

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 4: Homefield	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or within proximity to the site. The site does not overlap with an SSSI IRZ for the type of development which is likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. residential, rural residential, rural non-residential).</p> <p>At the local level, there are no BAP priority habitats within or adjacent to the site. There are mature trees bordering the western site boundaries, which are of some biodiversity value. These could be retained and enhanced through development proposals.</p>	
Climate change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location. However, the site is in good proximity to the services and facilities in the village centre, helping to limit the need to travel to local facilities (and associated greenhouse gas emissions).</p>	

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 4: Homefield	
	<p>In relation to adapting to the effects of climate change, land within the western section of the site is within Flood Zone 3, with Parson's Brook providing the boundary of the site. Some areas of land in this section of the site have a 'medium' surface water flood risk.</p>	
Landscape	<p>Whilst the site is located adjacent to the northern boundary of the existing settlement, development would contrast the character of the landscape which immediately surrounds the site which is predominantly agricultural greenfield land.</p> <p>There are some medium and long views to the north over the Avon Valley and the site is potentially visible from the South Devon AONB, from the Avon Estuary Walk. However, due to the relatively small size of the site and given its location adjacent to the existing built-up area of the parish, development at this location is less likely to significantly change the character of any viewpoints over the village from the AONB.</p> <p>At the local level, the whole of the site is within the 'River Valley Slopes and Combes' LCT, as stated within the South Hams and West Devon LCA. The overall landscape strategy for the LCT is to "protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges".</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>The Aveton Gifford Conservation Area is located immediately to the south of the site, with the Grade II listed 'Farm Buildings at Tree Farm' located approximately 20m to the south east of the site. Therefore, an allocation at this location has the potential to impact upon the setting and special qualities of these designated heritage assets in the absence of sensitive design mitigation measures. However, it is useful to note that the heritage assets are partly screened from view by the trees located along the site boundaries.</p> <p>Regarding the Devon and Dartmoor HER, 'Corn Mill north of Aveton Gifford' (Monument ID: MDV21132) partly overlaps with the southern section of the site. Due to the relatively small area of the site which is occupied by this heritage asset, it is likely that this feature could be retained and enhanced through development.</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken on the site. However, the regional agricultural land classification map for South West England (published by Natural England) indicates that the site is underlain by Grade 4 (poor) agricultural land, which has a less than 20% chance of containing land classified as the 'best and most versatile' for agricultural purposes. Nevertheless, an allocation at this location would result in the permanent loss of an area of greenfield land.</p> <p>Regarding mineral resources, the site does not overlap with a mineral safeguarding area as defined within the Devon Minerals Local Plan, which was adopted in February 2017.</p> <p>The western boundary of the site is adjacent to Parson's Brook, which is a tributary of the River Avon. The brook flows southwards through the Neighbourhood Plan area. The site is not within a groundwater SPZ or an NVZ.</p>	
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs.</p> <p>In terms of the relative distance from local services and facilities, the site is located approximately 25m to the north of Fore Street, which provides access to local services and facilities including a post office, village shop, village hall and primary school.</p>	
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The site is within proximity to two areas of open spaces. Rectory Lawn is located behind the village hall on Fore Street. Parson's Green playing ground is accessible via Jubilee Street. The nearest health centre facilities are in Modbury and Kingsbridge, accessible via the A379.</p>	
Transportation	<p>The likely entrance to the site will be via a driveway joining Fore Street. However, an extension and widening of this driveway would be necessary to accommodate additional vehicular use and directly connect the site to the local road network.</p> <p>The site is located at relative proximity to services and facilities in Aveton Gifford village centre which will limit the need for residents to travel for some day-to-day services and facilities. The nearest bus stop is located approximately 25m to the south of the site, at the boundary between Church Lane and Fore Street, with an hourly service to the settlements of Kingsbridge, Modbury, Yealmpton and Plymouth.</p>	
<p><b>Key</b></p>		

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 4: Homefield	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

**Table 4.8: Site 5: Barton Field**

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 5: Barton Field	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	<p>There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or within proximity to the site. The site does not overlap with an SSSI IRZ for the type of development which is likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. residential, rural residential, rural non-residential).</p> <p>At the local level, there are no BAP priority habitats within or adjacent to the site. The hedgerow along the southern site boundary connects to a network of hedgerows with small trees which border agricultural field margins to the east of the site. These could be retained and enhanced through development proposals.</p>	
Climate change	<p>Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location, although these are unlikely to be significant. The site is in good proximity to the services and facilities in the village centre, helping to limit the need to travel to local facilities (and associated greenhouse gas emissions).</p> <p>There is a small brook located along the southern site boundary. Nevertheless, the site is wholly located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low risk of flooding.</p>	
Landscape	<p>In terms of landscape sensitivity, the site is located outside of the South Devon AONB boundary and is well screened. Neighbouring residents have views onto the site. However, these are short views in from small windows on the side of their properties.</p> <p>At the local level, the whole of the site is within the 'River Valley Slopes and Combes' LCT, as stated within the South Hams and West Devon LCA. The overall landscape strategy for the LCT is to "protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges".</p>	
Historic Environment	<p>From a historic environment perspective, the nearest listed buildings are approximately 40m to the north east of the site, namely: Court Barton (Grade II) and Railings, Wall, and Gate to the front of Court Barton (Grade II). They are largely screened from the site. The grounds of the Grade II* listed Church of St Andrew, whilst approximately 60m from the site, are not readily visible, with any ground level views into the site from the church screened by trees and existing development.</p> <p>Part of the northern section of the site lies within the Aveton Gifford Conservation Area. Therefore, development could potentially detract from the special qualities of the conservation area in the absence of sensitive design mitigation measures.</p> <p>No features on or in the immediate vicinity of the site are listed on the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER). The nearest feature, 'Vault in the parish of Aveton Gifford' (Monument ID: MDV51243) is approximately 40m to the north of the site (at its nearest point).</p>	
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>The regional agricultural land classification map for South West England (published by Natural England) indicates that the site is underlain by Grade 3 (good to moderate) agricultural land. In the absence of a recent agricultural land classification, it is currently not possible to determine whether the site is underlain by Grade 3a or 3b land. However, the predictive ALC assessment indicates that the site has a less than 20% chance of containing land classified as the 'best and most versatile' for agricultural purposes. Nevertheless, an allocation at this location would result in the permanent loss of an area of greenfield land.</p> <p>Regarding mineral resources, the site does not overlap with a mineral safeguarding area as defined within the Devon Minerals Local Plan, which was adopted in February 2017.</p>	

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 5: Barton Field	
	There is a small stream which is located within a ditch along the southern site boundary. The site is not within a groundwater SPZ or an NVZ.	
Population and Community	Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs. The site is within 150m proximity to the northern entrance to Fore Street, which provides access to local services and facilities including a post office, village shop, village hall and primary school.	
Health and Wellbeing	The site is within proximity to two areas of open spaces. Rectory Lawn is located behind the village hall on Fore Street. Parson's Green playing ground is accessible via Jubilee Street. The nearest health centre facilities are in Modbury and Kingsbridge, accessible via the A379.	
Transportation	Access to the site is achievable from the existing road network, with an entry point to the north eastern section of the site via Pulley's Close. Additionally, the track bordering the western site boundary has the potential to create an additional entry point. The site is located at relative proximity to services and facilities in Aveton Gifford village centre which will limit the need for residents to travel for some day-to-day services and facilities. The nearest bus stop is located approximately 150m to the west of the site, at the boundary between Church Lane and Fore Street, with an hourly service to the settlements of Kingsbridge, Modbury, Yealmpton and Plymouth.	
Key		
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects

**Table 4.9: Site 11: Cricket Club Field**

SEA theme	Commentary, Site 11: Cricket Club Field	
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	There are no European or nationally designated biodiversity or geodiversity sites within or within proximity to the site. The site does not overlap with an SSSI IRZ for the type of development which is likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. residential, rural residential, rural non-residential). At the local level, the site has a relatively low ecological value. There are no BAP priority habitats within or adjacent to the site. The hedgerows which border the site should be retained through development proposals.	
Climate change	Development of the site will lead to inevitable increases in greenhouse gas emissions from an increase in the built footprint of the village and an intensification of uses at this location. Whilst the site is approximately 350m from the services and facilities in the village centre, there is currently no footpath along the unnamed road between the site and Fore Street. Therefore, an allocation at this location is less likely to limit the need to travel to local facilities and do less to limit associated greenhouse gas emissions. The site is wholly located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low risk of flooding. The site is also not as risk from surface water flooding.	
Landscape	The whole of the site is within the boundaries of the South Devon AONB, designated for due to its significant landscape value. Whilst the site benefits from visual screening due to the hedgerows located along its boundaries, there are short views into the site from properties along the southern site boundary, with some longer views extending northwards over the Avon Valley. At the local level, the whole of the site is within the 'River Valley Slopes and Combes' LCT, as stated within the South Hams and West Devon LCA. The overall landscape strategy for the LCT is to "protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon hedges".	

<b>SEA theme</b>		<b>Commentary, Site 11: Cricket Club Field</b>	
Historic Environment	<p>There is a Grade II listed milestone on the layby approximately 20m to the east of the site. It is unlikely that development on the site would impact upon the setting of this historic feature due to its location on the opposite side of the road and relative screening which is provided by the hedgerow along the site boundary. The Aveton Gifford Conservation Area is approximately 250m to the south east of the site.</p> <p>Regarding the Devon and Dartmoor HER, 'Nursery Garden in the parish of Aveton Gifford' (Monument ID: MDV45331) is located close to the south western corner of the site. Due to the relatively small size of this heritage asset, and its location on the edge of the site it is likely that this feature could be retained (if required following further investigation) through development.</p>		
Land, Soil and Water Resources	<p>A recent agricultural land classification assessment has not been undertaken on the site. However, the regional agricultural land classification map for South West England (published by Natural England) indicates that the site is underlain by Grade 4 (poor) agricultural land, which has a less than 20% chance of containing land classified as the 'best and most versatile'.</p> <p>It is useful to note that the site is not currently used for agricultural purposes. Nevertheless, an allocation at this location would result in the permanent loss of an area of greenfield land.</p> <p>Regarding mineral resources, the site does not overlap with a mineral safeguarding area as defined within the Devon Minerals Local Plan, which was adopted in February 2017.</p> <p>There are no watercourses within proximity to the site. The site is not within a groundwater SPZ or an NVZ.</p>		
Population and Community	<p>Allocation of the site will contribute positively towards meeting local housing needs.</p> <p>Although the site is in the northern section of the village, the northern entrance to Fore Street is approximately 350m to the south east, with access to the local post office, village shop, primary school and a bus stop with services to neighbouring towns.</p>		
Health and Wellbeing	<p>Currently, the site is used for recreational purposes, hosting several matches during the cricket season along with local community and fund-raising events. The regular noise from traffic using the A379 road (directly adjacent to the western site boundary) impacts upon the tranquillity of the site, although the hedgerow does provide a buffer. The nearest health centre facilities are in Modbury and Kingsbridge, accessible via the A379.</p>		
Transportation	<p>Access to the site is readily achievable from the existing highway network, with an entry point at the north eastern corner via the road leading off the A379 bypass. The site is bordered by the A379 bypass to the north and east, which extends into the northern section of Aveton Gifford. The A379 is directly adjacent to the western site boundary.</p> <p>The site is located within proximity to services and facilities in Aveton Gifford village. The nearest bus stop located approximately 250m to the south west of the site at the boundary between Church Lane and Fore Street, with an hourly service to the settlements of Kingsbridge, Modbury, Yealmpton and Plymouth.</p> <p>However, it is useful to note that there is currently no footpath located along the unnamed road between the site, the bus stop and Aveton Gifford village centre. Therefore, existing pedestrian connectivity is relatively poor.</p>		
<b>Key</b>			
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)		Likely positive effect	
Neutral/no effect		Uncertain effects	

**Table 4.10: Summary of SEA site appraisal findings**

Site	Biodiversity and geodiversity	Climate change	Landscape	Historic environment	Land, soil and water resources	Population and community	Health and wellbeing	Transport
Site 1	Yellow	Red	Blue	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Red
Site 2	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Green	Green	Blue
Site 3	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Red
Site 4	Yellow	Red	Blue	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Site 5	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Blue	Green	Green	Green
Site 11	Yellow	Blue	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Blue

Key	
Likely adverse effect (without mitigation measures)	Red
Neutral/no effect	Yellow
Likely positive effect	Green
Uncertain effects	Blue

## Current approach in the Neighbourhood Plan and the development of Neighbourhood Plan policies

### Choice of sites taken forward for the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.25 Three of the above sites have been allocated in the latest version of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Millhaye and Churchfield sites have been taken forward as a single site for 26 homes. In addition, the Barton Field site has been allocated for 6-8 homes.
- 4.26 The sites allocated in the neighbourhood plan are those which were (a) indicated by landowners as being available for development, (b) performed well or reasonably well in the Neighbourhood Plan site assessment, and (c) can deliver the development needed by the local community.
- 4.27 In particular, the site at Millhaye / Churchfield is located in close proximity to the village hall, school and shop and is an amalgamation of adjacent sites which in combination will be able to deliver not only housing (including affordable homes) but also the new car park which the village needs. The landowner has indicated his willingness to collaborate in bringing such development forward. The site at Barton Field is well located in relation to the village and performs particularly well in the site assessment. It is suitable for the 6-8 houses proposed.

## Neighbourhood Plan policies

4.28 To support the implementation of the vision, objectives and preferred spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan, the submission version of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan puts forward ten policies to guide development in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

4.29 The policies, which were developed following extensive community consultation and evidence gathering, are as follows:

**Table 4.11: Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan policies**

Policy Number	Policy Name
Policy AG1	Development and the Settlement Boundary
Policy AG2	Design and Layout of New Development
Policy AG3	Affordable, Self-Build and Sheltered Housing
Policy AG4	New Business and Employment Development
Policy AG5	Development at Millhay and Church Field
Policy AG6	Development Adjoining Pulleys Close – Barton Field
Policy AG7	Community Facilities, Transport and Infrastructure
Policy AG8	Protecting the Landscape and Biodiversity
Policy AG9	Heritage and Conservation
Policy AG10	Local Green Spaces

4.30 These policies have been assessed in Chapter 5.

## 5. What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?

### Introduction

- 5.1 The aim of this chapter is to present appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the current submission version of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan. This chapter presents:
- An appraisal of the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan under the eight SEA theme headings; and
  - The overall conclusions at this current stage.

### Approach to this appraisal

- 5.2 The appraisal is structured under the eight SEA themes taken forward for the purposes of the SEA.
- 5.3 For each theme, 'significant effects' of the current version of the plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations. So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.
- 5.4 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

### Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 5.5 In terms of the allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan, none of the sites are in locations with significant sensitivity for biodiversity, and development at the locations proposed will not lead to the loss of key habitats or impact on ecological networks.
- 5.6 The key Neighbourhood Plan policy which seeks to support the integrity of biodiversity assets in Aveton Gifford is Policy AG8 (Protecting the Landscape and Biodiversity). This seeks to protect and enhance designated sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area, including SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites, and also protect and enhance key habitats and species. The policy also seeks to safeguard and enhance key landscape features of biodiversity importance such as green space, green lanes, the estuary, salt marshes and trees, and incorporate "...*high quality landscaping which retains existing features...restores degraded landscapes, and provides mitigation from harm.*" Recognising the key biodiversity habitats present in the Neighbourhood Plan area, this policy will therefore support the parish's ecological networks through enhancing linkages for biodiversity and supporting improvements to habitats. This will also support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area's biodiversity in relation to the likely impacts of climate change on key habitats and species.
- 5.7 A number of further policies will also have indirect positive effects for biodiversity networks. For example Policy AG10 (Local Green Spaces) supports the protection and enhancement of key areas of open space, including through designating them as Local Green Spaces and Policy AG1 (Development and the Settlement Boundary) seeks to ensure that no significant adverse impacts take place on 'natural assets'.
- 5.8 As such, the Neighbourhood Plan effectively supports national and Local Plan policy provisions with regards to biodiversity.

## Climate Change

- 5.9 The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan contains a number of policies which have direct relevance to climate change considerations. The assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan's performance with regard to climate change is outlined below, with discussions relating to climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation.

### Climate change mitigation

- 5.10 In terms of climate change contribution, per capita greenhouse gas emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with the wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.11 Whilst the delivery of homes through the Neighbourhood Plan will increase greenhouse gas emissions either directly through construction, or indirectly through an increase in population, the built footprint of the area and associated travel and consumption behaviours, this level of housing would likely be mirrored by the approval of planning applications. As such the level of development proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan will not lead to significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions over and above that would be seen otherwise.
- 5.12 The spatial strategy for the Neighbourhood Plan will help limit per capita greenhouse gas emissions through seeking to focus new development in close proximity to Aveton Gifford village centre. The locations of these allocations have access to the local post office, village shop, primary school and a bus stop with services to neighbouring towns. This will help reduce the need for residents to travel for some day-to-day facilities and reduce car dependency, helping to limit emissions from road transport. This will be supported by a number of the policies seeking to explicitly encourage walking and cycling through enhanced pedestrian and cycle provision. This is discussed in more detail under the 'Transportation' SEA theme below.
- 5.13 The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to apply energy efficiency standards within new development. In this context the Code for Sustainable Homes was formally withdrawn in a Ministerial Statement published on 25th March 2015, which outlined the Government's new national planning policy on the setting of technical standards for new dwellings and Local Plan making. In addition to this, the Deregulation Act also brought in a clause which amended the Planning and Energy Act 2008 to prevent local authorities from requiring higher levels of energy efficiency than existing Building Regulations. On this basis, it would not be appropriate for the Neighbourhood Plan to set specific targets for energy efficiency as part of a design policy. However Policy AG2 (Design and Layout of New Development) seeks to incorporate measures within new development areas to reduce carbon through the use of renewable energy, water and waste recycling and energy efficiency measures.

### Climate change adaptation

- 5.14 In relation to the sites allocated through the Neighbourhood Plan, the Millhaye part of the Millhaye / Church Field site is constrained in part by flood risk issues. In this context Parson's Brook flows adjacent to the boundary of this part of the site, and areas of land located towards the eastern site boundary and within the south eastern section of the site are located within fluvial Flood Zone 3. These areas also have a 'medium' risk of surface water flooding. The western edge of the Church Field part of the site is also within an area of fluvial flood risk area (although this is a very limited area given the shape of the allocated site). In terms of the further site allocated for residential uses, the Barton Field site is not constrained by significant flood risk issues.
- 5.15 The flood risk issues at Millhaye / Church Field are recognised by the policy for the site, Policy AG5 (Development at Millhaye and Church Field). This allocates a car park in the part of the site with flood risk issues rather than housing. The policy also seeks to ensure that suitable and satisfactory drainage and flood prevention measures are incorporated within new development areas, and the site is effectively masterplanned.

- 5.16 Other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan also have a strong focus on limiting flood risk issues. In this respect Policy AG2 (Design and Layout of New Development) seeks to ensure that measures to minimise flood risk and satisfactory foul and surface water drainage measures are incorporated within new development areas and Policy AG7 (Community Facilities, Transport and Infrastructure) seeks to ensure that new community facilities do not exacerbate existing flood risk and drainage issues, and that contributions are secured where appropriate towards the maintenance of Parsons Brook, which is vital to minimise fluvial flood risk in the village. It is also recognised though that the provisions of the NPPF and national policy (including relating to the sequential and exception test) will help guide development away from flood risk areas and ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.
- 5.17 As highlighted by the NPPF, well planned green infrastructure can help an area adapt to, and manage the risks of climate change (including flood risk). Enabling and providing for green infrastructure within the Neighbourhood Plan area is therefore a key way in which the Neighbourhood Plan can help to promote climate change adaptation measures. Responding to this, Policy AG10 (Local Green Spaces) designates a number of areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area as Local Green Space. Alongside, Policy AG8 (Protecting the Landscape and Biodiversity) seeks to protect and enhance landscape features which will help support the resilience of the Neighbourhood Plan area to the effects of climate change including extreme weather events. Key landscape features in this regard include trees, salt marshes, the estuary and open spaces.
- 5.18 As such, the Neighbourhood Plan sets out a range of provisions which will support positive gains with regard to climate change adaptation measures within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## Landscape

- 5.19 The south western part of the Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the South Devon AONB. This includes much of Aveton Gifford village. As such development in the vicinity of Aveton Gifford village has the potential to impact on the special qualities or distinctive landscape character of the AONB without appropriate design and layout. This includes directly through landtake, or indirectly through impacting on the setting of and views to and from the AONB.
- 5.20 None of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan allocations are within the AONB. However the Millhay / Church Field allocation is within the setting of the AONB. In this respect the Millhay part of the site, whilst adjoining the built-up part of the village, borders the AONB and has the potential to change the character of views across the village from the AONB. The Church Field part of the site allocation also visible from the AONB due to its elevated location within the village and its long views over the Avon Valley and village. The Barton Field allocation is less sensitive in landscape terms, and is not visible from the AONB.
- 5.21 These potentially significant impacts on landscape character are recognised by the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. A key Neighbourhood Plan policy in this regard is Policy AG8 (Protecting the Landscape and Biodiversity). With respect to the South Devon AONB, the policy seeks to ensure that new development proposals have due regard to the special qualities of the AONB, with reference to "*national and local strategic policies to protect and enhance the AONB and the South Devon AONB Planning Guidance.*" The policy also seeks to ensure that new development areas safeguard and enhance local features that make a positive contribution to the landscape, including green space, green lanes, estuary and salt marshes. The policy also states that new development should incorporate high quality landscaping which retains existing features, reinforces local landscape character, restores degraded landscapes, and provides mitigation.
- 5.22 The provisions of Policy AG8 with regard to the protection and enhancement of landscape character are also supported by the other policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. In this respect Policy AG1 (Development and the Settlement Boundary) highlights that development within the settlement boundary will be supported provided it is in scale and character with the site and surroundings, and will cause no significant adverse impacts on the AONB. The policy also strictly limits development outside of Aveton Gifford village in open countryside, which are often the locations in the Neighbourhood Plan area of highest sensitivity for the AONB. Policy AG2

(Design and Layout of New Development) also highlights that new development should be of high design quality and not compromising the character or amenity of the AONB, and be generally small-scale and in keeping with the village scene. Landscape character will also be supported by the policies which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment (as discussed under the Historic Environment theme below).

- 5.23 In this respect, whilst new development taken forward for the Neighbourhood Plan will lead to impacts on landscape character, including potentially relating to the setting of the AONB, the Neighbourhood Plan policies set out a comprehensive range of provisions which will help limit adverse impacts on landscape character from these potential new development areas, and also facilitate enhancements. This includes through setting out a range of provisions which directly seek to minimise impacts on the AONB. However, given the scale of development located within the setting of the AONB, some residual adverse impacts on landscape character are likely to remain.

## Historic Environment

- 5.24 The Neighbourhood Plan area has a rich historic environment resource, with much of the village of Aveton Gifford being covered by the Aveton Gifford Conservation Area.
- 5.25 In terms of the allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan, the Grade II listed 'Farm Buildings at Tree Farm' is located approximately 20m to the south of the Church Field part of the Millhaye / Church Field site. The Aveton Gifford Conservation Area is also located adjacent to the southern and eastern boundaries of the allocated site. Whilst most key heritage assets in the conservation area are screened from view by the trees located along the site boundaries, there are some views over the village and the conservation area from the site due to the sloping topography, and parts of the site will have views to and from the listed building.
- 5.26 With regard to the Barton Field allocation of 6-8 houses, part of the northern section of the site lies within the Aveton Gifford Conservation Area. The nearest listed buildings to the site, which are relatively screened, are approximately 40m to the north east, namely: Court Barton (Grade II) and Railings, Wall, and Gate to the front of Court Barton (Grade II). The grounds of the Grade II\* listed Church of St Andrew, whilst approximately 60m from the site, are not readily visible, with any ground level views into the site from the church screened by trees and existing development.
- 5.27 No further features listed on the Historic Environment Record are present on the allocated sites.
- 5.28 In light of the above constraints, development on the allocated sites therefore has the potential to impact upon the setting and special qualities of these designated heritage assets in the absence of sensitive design mitigation measures. In this respect the historic environment constraints which have the potential to be affected by allocations are acknowledged by the site allocation policies. Policy AG5 (Development at Millhaye and Church Field) highlights that new development should "...*demonstrate high quality design that respects the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area and contributes positively to its setting. Development should also seek to conserve and enhance the setting of the Grade II listed farm buildings at Tree Farm to the south of the site.*" In addition the policy seeks to ensure that a masterplanning-led approach will be taken to taking forward development on the site. This will help ensure that development is sensitive to the setting and historic environment of the locality. In terms of the Barton Field allocation, Policy AG6 (Development Adjoining Pulleys Close – Barton Field) highlights that development "...*should demonstrate high quality design that respects the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area and contributes positively to its setting*". The relatively small scale of development at the site will also help contribute to a development which fits appropriately within the setting of the sensitive historic environment of the area.
- 5.29 Policy AG9 (Heritage and Conservation) will further support the setting of the historic environment in the parish, highlighting that development should "...*conserve and enhance designated and non-designated historic and heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground, by having regard to national and local strategic policies for heritage and*

*conservation.*” In addition the policies which will support high quality design and landscape (as discussed under the ‘Landscape’ SEA theme above) will contribute to a high quality public realm which will help conserve and enhance the setting of the historic environment.

- 5.30 In this respect, the significance of potential negative effects from new development on the parish’s rich cultural heritage resource will be limited by the policy provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan with regard to the design of development, the historic environment and provisions relating to landscape/villagescape character. The policies, through promoting improvements to the public realm, will also support enhancements to the fabric and setting of the historic environment.

## Land, Soil and Water Resources

- 5.31 The proposed site allocations at Millhaye / Church Field and at Barton Field will take place on undeveloped land. Recent land classification has not been undertaken in the two areas; as such it is not possible to confirm whether the land comprises land classified as the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. However, as highlighted in the site assessments, the predictive ALC assessment indicates that the Millhaye / Church Field has a greater than 60% chance of containing land classified as the ‘best and most versatile’ for agricultural purposes and the Barton Field site has a less than 20% chance of containing land classified as the ‘best and most versatile’ for agricultural purposes.
- 5.32 The site allocations are not located within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone.
- 5.33 A number of the policies seek to protect key features of landscape and biodiversity interest, aim to protect designated sites, areas of landscape sensitivity and promote green space and open space (see Section 5.19 to 5.23). While these policies do not specifically seek to address land, soil and water resources, the policies will indirectly help promote and protect these resources, including through the promotion of high quality green networks in the Neighbourhood Plan area and the protection and enhancement of key landscape features. This will help support the capacity of the landscape and villagescape to regulate soil and water quality.

## Population and Community

- 5.34 The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan sets out a range of provisions which will support the quality of life of the parish’s residents.
- 5.35 In terms of housing numbers, the Joint Local Plan does not provide a number for the Neighbourhood Plan to deliver for the parish. However, as acknowledged through the Neighbourhood Plan, there remains a demand for locally affordable housing, and as such the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to take forward in the region of 30-40 dwellings during the plan period. This is with a view to supporting the vitality of the parish, promoting growth which meets local housing needs, and delivering community infrastructure. Given this is anticipated to meet locally defined objectively assessed housing need, it is assumed that this growth quantum will help meet housing needs arising locally.
- 5.36 Supporting this further, Policy AG3 (Affordable, Self-Build and Sheltered Housing) sets out a range of provisions for delivering homes for local needs. This includes through seeking to ensure affordable housing is made available for those with a local connection and is of high quality (and indistinguishable from market housing). It also encourages the provision of land for self-build properties, and for promoting high quality sheltered housing and accommodation for the elderly.
- 5.37 Accessibility to services and facilities is a key influence on the quality of life of residents and community cohesion. In relation to the proposed allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan, these are accessible to the services and facilities present in the village centre, and are also accessible to key public transport links. Policy AG1 (Development and the Settlement Boundary) also seeks to limit development in less accessible parts of the parish. Accessibility will be further supported by the Neighbourhood Plan’s focus on supporting the vitality of the village centre and new community provision. A key policy in this regard is Policy AG7 (Community Facilities, Transport and Infrastructure). This seeks to support additional

community facilities and infrastructure, and preclude development that would result in the loss of the village shop or pub, or which would adversely affect the amenity value of a local community facility, unless under exceptional circumstances. The policy also highlights a number of priorities for community infrastructure, including: the refurbishment or rebuilding of the Memorial Hall (village hall); relocation of Memorial Hall car park to facilitate the village hall scheme; contributions to help support parish and community-owned amenities; and the provision of a footbridge to cross the River Avon. Policy AG7 also safeguards expansion land for the use of Aveton Gifford School and seeks to protect the church's role as a community facility.

- 5.38 The vitality of the Neighbourhood Plan area will be further supported by Policy AG2 (Design and Layout of New Development), which seeks to ensure that new development is of high quality design, delivers new community infrastructure and green infrastructure provision, is accessible by walking and cycling and supports community cohesion and safety. Policy AG10 (Local Green Spaces), which designates seven key open spaces in the village as Local Green Space will also support community wellbeing.
- 5.39 Policy AG4 (New Business and Employment Development) promotes new employment uses in the parish and also facilitates a change of use of suitable redundant farm buildings to employment use where specific criteria are met. This will support the economic vitality of the village and promote employment opportunities for local people.
- 5.40 Overall therefore, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant long term positive effects for community vitality in Aveton Gifford.

## Health and Wellbeing

- 5.41 Supporting health and wellbeing, there is a strong focus on delivering suitable housing for the different age groups and housing needs represented in the Neighbourhood Plan area. Recognising the trend of an ageing population within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the quality and availability of housing for older people is an important contributor. Regarding this, Policy AG3 (Affordable, Self-Build and Sheltered Housing) identifies that sheltered housing and accommodation for the elderly will be supported and should be laid out to incorporate high quality outdoor communal space, good access to public transport and suitable parking provision for residents, staff and visitors.
- 5.42 In relation to the quality of life and the wellbeing of local residents, Policy AG2 (Design and Layout of New Development) aims to ensure development is attractive, inclusive and accessible, reducing opportunities for crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour and supporting community safety and cohesion. Policy AG1 (Development and the settlement boundary) states that development will be of an appropriate density and will cause no significant adverse impacts on local amenity, traffic, parking or safety. Additionally, Policy AG7 (Community Facilities, Transport and Infrastructure) aims to support additional community facilities and infrastructure, providing the proposal will include safe and satisfactory access and parking arrangements. Policy AG7 also aims to provide traffic calming and other measures to reduce traffic speeds and volumes and improve pedestrian safety in the village. These policies are particularly important from a health and wellbeing perspective, in terms of enabling local residents to safely access local services and amenities, and supporting road safety.
- 5.43 Policy AG2 (Design and Layout of New Development) refers to new development being linked to the village centre by safe walking and cycling routes and be served by safe highway access. Additionally, Policy AG7 (Community Facilities, Transport and Infrastructure) seeks to provide a footbridge to cross the Avon. Improving walking and cycling routes allows for residents and pedestrians to move around the parish safely without the use of a car. This will promote active lifestyles and will positively supporting the emotional and wellbeing of local residents by encouraging measures which prioritise safety and community cohesion.
- 5.44 There is now robust evidence that access to the natural environment improves people's health and wellbeing through encouraging healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation. The benefits to emotional wellbeing and mental health resulting from close contact with the natural environment are well-documented. Reflecting this, there is a strong drive to maintain and

improve access to open spaces through the Neighbourhood Plan. In this context, Policy AG10 (Local Green Spaces) designates six green spaces which will be safeguarded from development. Additionally, Policy AG2 (Design and Layout of New Development) seeks to incorporate a high standard (quality and quantity) of private open space and provision of public open space or contribution towards off site provision. This will promote recreational opportunities, with benefits for health and wellbeing.

- 5.45 Overall, the Neighbourhood Plan sets out a range of provisions which will enhance health and wellbeing within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

## Transportation

- 5.46 In terms of the proposed allocations taken forward through the Neighbourhood Plan, all of the sites are accessible to the key services and facilities present in the village centre, and are also accessible to key public transport links, including bus stops with hourly services to Modbury and Kingsbridge. Accessibility will be further supported by the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on ensuring new development will be linked to the village centre by safe walking and cycling routes (Policy AG2) and providing a footbridge to cross the Avon (Policy AG7). This will help reduce the need to travel for key services and facilities and promote accessibility to key amenities by alternative modes of transport to the private car. The designation of green spaces (Policy AG10) will also increase the likelihood of residents walking and cycling as alternative modes of transport.
- 5.47 The Neighbourhood Plan also includes policies which seek to reduce the impact on residents from the road network and improve road safety. For example, Policy AG1 (Development and the settlement boundary) highlights that development will be permitted inside the village settlement boundary providing it will cause no significant adverse impacts on traffic, parking or safety. Policy AG2 (Design and Layout of New Development) also states that new development should be linked to the village by safe highway access. Additionally, Policy AG7 (Community Facilities, Transport and Infrastructure) states that traffic calming and other measures should be undertaken to reduce traffic speeds and volumes and improve pedestrian safety in the village.
- 5.48 Policy AG5 (Development at Millhay and Church Field) emphasises a requirement that development at this site will have a public car park to the south of the site, with about 30-50 car parking spaces to serve the needs of the village which will be usable for public use and good safe pedestrian and vehicular access. Policy AG3 (Affordable, Self-Build and Sheltered Housing) also refers to parking provision stating that accommodation should be laid out to incorporate good access to public transport and suitable parking provision for residents, staff and visitors.
- 5.49 Finally, policy AG4 (New Business and Employment Development) states that new business development will be supported providing it will not increase traffic through the village.
- 5.50 Overall, the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan relating to the 'Transportation' SEA theme are tailored towards accessibility by sustainable modes of transport, with a requirement for new development to provide suitable and safe road access along with an appropriate amount of parking space for privately owned vehicles.

## Conclusions at this current stage

- 5.51 The assessment has concluded that the current version of the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan is likely to lead to significant long term positive effects in relation to the 'Population and Community' and 'Health and Wellbeing' SEA themes. These benefits largely relate to the Neighbourhood Plan's focus on providing new housing to meet local needs in accessible locations, the provision of new community infrastructure in Aveton Gifford, the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure networks in the area and the protection and enhancement of the quality of the public realm and neighbourhood distinctiveness.
- 5.52 The allocations proposed through the Neighbourhood Plan have the potential to have impacts on the setting (but not the fabric) of features and areas nationally and locally designated for the historic environment in Aveton Gifford. In addition, the proposed allocations, whilst not within

the South Devon AONB, can be viewed from, and as such are in the setting of, the AONB. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan however proactively respond to these constraints, including through having a close focus on protecting and enhancing landscape and villagescape character, and on conserving and enhancing the setting and fabric of the historic environment in the parish. Taken together, the policies will help limit negative effects from new development on landscape/villagescape character and on the setting of the historic environment, and promote longer term positive effects through securing enhancements to local distinctiveness. Overall therefore, no significant effects have been identified in relation to the 'Landscape' and 'Historic Environment' theme.

- 5.53 The Neighbourhood Plan facilitates the delivery of up to 40 homes on two greenfield sites. This has the potential to lead to the loss of productive agricultural land in the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, given the lack of detailed land classification having been undertaken in the parish, it is unclear whether this will lead to the loss of areas of the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. As such, the significance of impacts in relation to the 'Land, Soil and Water Resources' SEA theme are uncertain.
- 5.54 In relation to the 'Climate Change' theme, whilst flood risk issues exist on one of the allocated sites, the most sensitive parts of the site are not proposed for residential uses. In addition, the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have a strong focus on addressing fluvial and surface water flood risk issues which provide an additional level of protection in relation to flood risk over and above the provisions of national and local policies. As such, it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan will have overall positive effects in relation to climate change adaptation.
- 5.55 In terms of the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' and 'Transportation' themes, the Neighbourhood Plan will initiate a number of beneficial approaches. These are not though considered to be significant in the context of the SEA process given the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and the scale of proposals.

## 6. What are the next steps?

- 6.1 This Environmental Report accompanies the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan for submission to the Local Planning Authority, South Hams District Council, for subsequent Independent Examination.
- 6.2 At Independent Examination, the Neighbourhood Plan will be considered in terms of whether it meets the Basic Conditions for Neighbourhood Plans and is in general conformity with the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan.
- 6.3 If Independent Examination is favourable, the Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to a referendum, organised by South Hams District Council. If more than 50% of those who vote agree with the Neighbourhood Plan, then it will be 'made'. Once made, the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the development plan for Aveton Gifford Parish.

# Appendix A Context Review and Baseline

## A1 – Air Quality

### Context Review

The UK's Air Quality Strategy<sup>11</sup> details a long-term vision for improving air quality in the UK, which involves objectives and policies for the different pollutants and the environmental implications associated with these.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>12</sup> (NPPF) include:

- 'Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, considering the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.'
- 'Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.'
- 'New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.'

Published in January 2018 by the UK Government, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'<sup>13</sup> sets out a number of goals and policies in order to help the natural world regain and retain good health. In this context, Goal 1 'Clean Air' and the policies contained within 'Chapter 4: Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' within the 25 year plan directly relate to the air quality SEA theme.

In terms of the local context, South Hams District Council is required under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995) to monitor air quality across the Borough, report regularly to DEFRA, and take action where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), benzene (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>6</sub>) and particulates (PM<sub>10</sub>). Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and local authorities are required to produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to improve air quality in the area. Adopted in 2013, the AQAP for the district of South Hams<sup>14</sup> outlines a variety of measures for improving air quality in the three designated AQMAs within the district.

Policy DEV2: Air, water, Soil, noise, land and light in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) also relates to the Air Quality theme.

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<sup>11</sup> DEFRA (2007) The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69336/pb12654-air-quality-strategy-vol1-070712.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69336/pb12654-air-quality-strategy-vol1-070712.pdf) [last accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>12</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>13</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [last accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>14</sup> South Hams District Council (2013): 'Air Quality Action Plan', [online] available to download via: <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/article/3902/Air-Quality> [last accessed 28/06/19]

## Summary of Current Baseline

As of February 2018 there are three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the district of South Hams, all of which are designated for exceedances in the annual mean concentration objective of  $40\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  for nitrogen dioxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ ):

- Dean Prior AQMA (declared in 2005): close to the A38 Devon Expressway;
- Ivybridge AQMA (declared in 2009): at locations along Western Road (the B3213); and
- Totnes AQMA (declared in 2009): at locations close to the A385.

As stated in the 2018 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)<sup>15</sup>, all three AQMAs continue to report exceedances in the annual mean objective concentration of  $\text{NO}_2$ . However, none of the designated AQMAs in the district of South Hams are located within or in a location likely to be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan area.

South Hams District Council is not currently monitoring air quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area. The 2018 ASR states that non-automatic monitoring of  $\text{NO}_2$  was completed at 23 sites during 2017, all of which were located in Dean Prior, Ivybridge and Totnes.

## Summary of Future Baseline

Whilst no significant air quality issues currently exist within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the provision of new housing and/or employment land within the Neighbourhood Plan area has the potential for adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as  $\text{NO}_2$ , particularly along the main routes through the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, given the current baseline for air pollutants, this will have negligible impacts on air quality.

Implementation of the aims and objectives contained within the Air Quality Action Plan, along with the policies in the Local Transport Plan (discussed in Chapter 9), present opportunities to continue to improve air quality within both the Neighbourhood Plan area and the wider district.

Additionally, South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council have prepared a 'Clean Air Strategy' for the area covered by these two local authorities. This strategy further contributes to improving air quality at both the local and regional level.

## A2 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

### Context Review

The EU Biodiversity Strategy<sup>16</sup> was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>17</sup> (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to 'contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment' including by 'helping to improve biodiversity.'
- 'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value [...], take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'

<sup>15</sup> South Hams District Council (2018): 'Air Quality Annual Status Report', [online] available to download via: <<https://www.southhams.gov.uk/article/3902/Air-Quality>> last accessed [21/06/19]

<sup>16</sup> European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0244&from=EN> [accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>17</sup> MHCLG (2019) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 21/06/19]

- ‘Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with the statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.’
- ‘To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
  - a. Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
  - b. Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.’
- Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for biodiversity.
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined.

The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)<sup>18</sup> sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It was in part a response to the UK’s failure to halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity by 2010, and it signalled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other, and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

Reflecting the commitments within the Natural Environment White Paper and the EU Biodiversity Strategy; the ‘Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services’<sup>19</sup> aims to ‘halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people’.

The recently published 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>20</sup> sets out the Government’s environmental plan of action over the next quarter century, in the context of Brexit. The Plan aims to tackle the growing problems of waste and soil degradation, improving social justice through tackling pollution and promoting the mental and physical health benefits of the natural world. It also sets out how the Government will address the effects of climate change. These aims are supported by a range of policies which are focused on the following six key areas:

- Using and managing land sustainably;

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<sup>18</sup> HM Gov (2011) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228842/8082.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf) [last accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>19</sup> DEFRA (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf) [last accessed 28/06/19]

<sup>20</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [last accessed 28/06/19]

- Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes;
- Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing;
- Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste;
- Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and
- Protecting and improving the global environment.

In this context, Goal 3 'Thriving plants and wildlife' and the policies contained within Chapter 2 'Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes' and Chapter 5 'Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans' directly relate to the Biodiversity SEA theme.

At the local level policies in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) that relate to the Biodiversity and Geodiversity theme include:

- DEV25: Nationally protected landscapes;
- DEV26: Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation; and
- DEV28: Trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

In 1998 The Nature of Devon-Biodiversity Action Plan was published, identifying 29 key wildlife habitats and 251 key species as a priority for conservation action. Action Plans were produced for the 17 habitats and 20 species identified as requiring a county wide approach to their conservation. Devon's Biodiversity Action Plan was updated to include Geodiversity in 2009. The Devon Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan<sup>21</sup> is presented in eight volumes:

- Introduction to the revised edition;
- Section A: Summary;
- Section B: A vision for variety;
- Section C: Planning for biodiversity and geodiversity conservation in Devon;
- Section D: A review of Devon's wildlife and geological heritage;
- Section E: Setting out priorities;
- Section F: Turning plans into action; and
- Appendix i: 'Priority Species' & 'Species of Conservation Concern' in Devon.

## Summary of Current Baseline

### *European and Nationally designated sites*

There are no European designated sites within or in close proximity to the Neighbourhood Plan area.

There are no SSSIs that fall within the Neighbourhood Plan area. However, Andrew's Wood SSSI is adjacent to the Neighbourhood Plan area on the north eastern boundary. Notified in March 1985 'Andrew's Wood SSSI' is approximately 23.4 ha in size and the citation statement for the SSSI states the following<sup>22</sup>:

*Andrews Wood, a mosaic of species-rich grassland, wet heath and secondary woodland, supports the largest known colony in Britain of a nationally rare plant the Heath lobelia *Lobelia urens*.*

*The site, which formerly comprised a series of old fields but which has now partly reverted to woodland, supports a variety of different vegetation types developed on soils derived in part from slates and grits of Lower Devonian age and in part from post-glacial gravel and head deposits.*

<sup>21</sup>Devon Council (2009) Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan [online] available at <<https://new.devon.gov.uk/environment/wildlife>> [last accessed 28/06/19]

<sup>22</sup> Natural England (no date): 'Parsonage Wood SSSI', [online] available to download via: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1000373&SiteName=parsonage&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=> [last accessed 28/06/19]

*Many of the old fields retain areas of species-rich grassland and have swards characterised by the abundance of Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and also by the occurrence of such herbs as black knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre*, cuckoo flower *Cardamine pratensis*, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica* and betony *Betonica officinalis*. In some areas the grassland is marshy and is characterised by the occurrence of hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*, fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, marsh pennywort *Hydrocotyle vulgaris*, greater bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus uliginosus* and bog pimpernel *Anagallis tenella*. In others, wet heath containing heather *Calluna vulgaris* and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* occurs. Taken together these grasslands support the largest British colony of a nationally-rare plant, the heath lobelia *Lobelia urens*. Elsewhere, Andrews Wood comprises somewhat ill-drained, secondary woodland traversed by numerous hedge-banks and small water courses. The woodland is largely dominated by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* but contains abundant silver birch *Betula pendula* together with some ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and locally beech *Fagus sylvatica*. The shrub layer is dominated by hazel *Corylus avellana* and there is vigorous development of honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and ivy *Hedera helix*. The ground vegetation is characterised by the abundance of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, with colonies of opposite-leaved goldensaxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* on the banks of the small water courses. The old hedge banks are a feature of the site and are locally characterised by the abundance of bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and hard fern *Blechnum spicant*. The mosaic of grassland, heath and woodland supports a rich fauna. The breeding bird community is representative of woods in south-west England, and there are also breeding populations of dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, common lizard *Lacerta vivipara* and adder *Vipera berus*. The invertebrate fauna is rich and includes such typical butterflies as marbled white *Melanargia galathea*, silver-washed fritillary *Argynnis cydippe* and small pearl-bordered fritillary *A. selene*.*

The most recent condition assessments for the SSSI indicate that 100% of the SSSI is considered to be in a 'favourable' condition.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool/dataset which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. In this context, part of the Neighbourhood Plan area surrounding Andrew's Wood SSSI is located within an IRZ for residential and/or rural-residential developments. For residential, this applies to residential development of 100 units or more. For rural residential, this applies for any residential development of 10 or more houses outside existing settlements/ urban areas. However, it is only the north eastern area of the parish which is within an SSSI IRZ; the built up area of Aveton Gifford is not within an SSSI IRZ.

### *Locally designated sites*

County Wildlife Sites (CWS) make up approximately 4% of Devon and are designated due to the presence of particular habitats and species, such as traditionally managed species-rich lowland meadows, upland oak woodlands, lowland fens and mires. Some sites are designated due to the presence of particular species such as curl bunting, bastard balm and great crested newt. CWS are designated through a strict criteria and data regarding the sites is collected by the Biodiversity Monitoring Framework<sup>23</sup>. In this context, there are ten CWS located wholly or partly within the Neighbourhood Plan area. These are: South Efford Fields, Avon Valley/ Aveton Gifford Bridge, Waterhead, Pond Farm, Were Down Marsh, St Milburgh's Marsh, Avon Estuary, Stiddicombe Creek and Idston Wood.

There are a range of Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats within and surrounding the Neighbourhood Plan area. The habitats include: Deciduous Woodland, Broadleaved Woodland, Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland and Coastal and Floodplain grazing marsh.

<sup>23</sup> Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (no date) County Wildlife Sites [online] <<http://www.dbr.org.uk/county-wildlife-site-survey/>> [last accessed 21/06/19]

## Summary of Future Baseline

Habitats and species are likely to continue to be offered protection through the higher level planning framework, however; they will potentially face increasing pressures from future development within the Neighbourhood Plan area with the potential for negative effects on the wider ecological network, which can be exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan presents an opportunity to maximise benefits for biodiversity by including consideration of important habitats, species, undesignated sites, and connections between designated sites and undesignated sites at a localised scale, and at an early stage of planning for future growth. To maintain and improve the condition of biodiversity in the future, it will be important to not only protect and enhance important habitats but the connections between them. It will be crucial to effectively coordinate the delivery of housing, employment and infrastructure to ensure that opportunities to improve green infrastructure and ecological corridors are maximised both within the Neighbourhood Plan area and in the surrounding areas.



## A3 – Climate Change

### Context Review

The UK Climate Change Act<sup>24</sup> was passed in 2008 and established a framework to develop an economically credible emissions reduction path. It also highlighted the role it would take in contributing to collective action to tackle climate change under the Kyoto Protocol, and more recently as part of the UN-led Paris Agreement. The Climate Change Act includes the following:

- The Act commits the UK to reducing emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels.
- The Act requires the Government to set legally binding ‘carbon budgets’ - a cap on the amount of greenhouse gases emitted in the UK over a five year period. The carbon budgets are designed to reflect the cost-effective path to achieving the UK’s long-term objectives. The first five carbon budgets have been put into legislation and run up to 2032.
- The Committee on Climate Change was set up to advise the Government on emissions targets, and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The National Adaptation Programme requires the Government to assess the risks to the UK from climate change, prepare a strategy to address them, and encourage key organisations to do the same.

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is published on a 5-yearly cycle in accordance with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008. It required the Government to compile an assessment of the risks for the UK arising from climate change, and then develop an adaptation programme to address those risks and deliver resilience to climate change on the ground. For both the 2012 and the 2017 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Adaptation Sub-Committee commissioned an evidence report aiming to understand the current and future climate risks and opportunities. The evidence report<sup>25</sup> contains six priority risk areas requiring additional action in the next five years, identified below:

- Flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure;
- Risks to health, wellbeing and productivity from high temperatures;
- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry;
- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity;
- Risks to domestic and international food production and trade; and
- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals.

Published in January 2018 by the UK Government, ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’<sup>26</sup> sets out a number of goals and policies in order to help the natural world regain and retain good health. In this context, policies contained within Chapter 1 ‘Using and managing land sustainably’ and Chapter 6 ‘Protecting and improving the global environment’, Goal 4 ‘A reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards such as flooding and drought’ and Goal 7 ‘Mitigating and adapting to climate change’ directly relate to the Climate Change SEA theme.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>27</sup> (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is an environmental objective to ‘contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment’ including by ‘mitigating and adapting to climate change’ and ‘moving to a low carbon economy.’ ‘The planning system

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<sup>24</sup> GOV.UK (2008) Climate Change Act 2008 [online] available at:  
[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents?sm\\_au=iVVt4Hr6tjgnqNj](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents?sm_au=iVVt4Hr6tjgnqNj) [last accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>25</sup> GOV.UK (2017) UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Report January 2017 [online] available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2017> [last accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>26</sup> HM GOV (2019) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [last accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>27</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 21/06/19]

should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.'

- 'Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.'
- 'Local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies that are being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.'
- Direct development away from areas at highest risk of flooding (whether existing or future). 'Where development is necessary, it should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.'

The Flood and Water Management Act<sup>28</sup> highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings);
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water;
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

Further guidance is provided in the document 'Planning for SuDS'.<sup>29</sup> This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.

At the local level, The Devon Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2014-2020) aims to encourage more effective risk management by advising flood risk practitioners and the public on how flood risk will be managed and how duties under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) will be fulfilled. Further guidance is provided in the document 'Planning for SuDS'. This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.

Released in 2007, the most recent Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the South Hams District aims to provide an assessment of the impact of all potential sources of flooding within the district in order to provide recommendations of suitable mitigation measures. An SFRA Level 1 Addendum updated this SFRA in 2016 as a result of changes to planning policy and to available data since the original SFRA was published.

Furthermore, at the local level policies in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) that relate to the Climate Change theme include:

- DEV32: Delivering low carbon development;
- DEV33: Renewable and low carbon energy (including heat); and

<sup>28</sup> Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents> [last accessed 21/06/19]

<sup>29</sup> CIRIA (2010) 'Planning for SuDS – making it happen' [online] available to access via [http://www.ciria.org/Resources/Free\\_publications/Planning\\_for\\_SuDS\\_ma.aspx](http://www.ciria.org/Resources/Free_publications/Planning_for_SuDS_ma.aspx) [last accessed 24/06/19]

- DEV35: Managing flood risk and water quality impacts.

## Summary of Current Baseline

### *Contribution to climate change*

In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change suggests that the district of South Hams has had consistently higher per capita emissions total than that of both the South West of England and England as a whole since 2005. South Hams has observed an 36.9% reduction in the percentage of total emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012, similar to the reductions for the South West of England (36.7%) and England (37.6%).

### *Potential effects of climate change*

Following the success of the UK Climate Projections released in 2009 (UKCP09), the Met Office recently released the UK Climate Projections for 2018 (UKCP18).<sup>30</sup> UKCP18 provides the most up to date climate observations and projections out to 2100, using cutting-edge climate science. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change (under medium emissions scenarios 50<sup>th</sup> percentile) for South West England during the period 2040-2059 compared to the period 1981-2000 are likely to be as follows<sup>31</sup>:

- The central estimate of increase in annual mean temperatures of between 2°C and 3°C; and
- The central estimate of change in annual mean precipitation of +10 to +20% in winter and -20% to -30% in summer.

Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the Neighbourhood Plan area, including:

- Increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
- Increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
- Increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
- Increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
- Increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- Effects on water resources from climate change;
- Reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- Adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- Increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- Changes in insurance provisions for flood damage;
- A need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- A need to upgrade flood defences;
- Soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- Loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- Spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- Deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures;
- Changes to global supply chain;
- Increased difficulty of food preparation, handling and storage due to higher temperatures;

<sup>30</sup> Data released 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 [online] available at: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/collaboration/ukcp> last accessed 24/06/19]

<sup>31</sup> Met Office (2018): 'Land Projection Maps: Probabilistic Projections', [online map] available to access via: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/collaboration/ukcp/land-projection-maps> [last accessed 24/06/19]

- An increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for business;
- Increased demand for air-conditioning;
- Increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- Risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- Flooding of roads.

### **Flood risk**

The areas at highest risk of flooding in the Neighbourhood Plan area are those near the River Avon and its tributaries which are in Flood Zone 3. The River Avon has its source on Dartmoor and the section of river at Aveton Gifford flows into the sea at Bigbury-on-Sea. Flood Zone 3 is of a high probability of flooding; representing that there is a 1% (1 in 100) or greater chance of flooding happening each year. The flood risk areas present in the Neighbourhood Plan area includes the village centre of Aveton Gifford<sup>32</sup>.

Surface water flooding is a risk for some parts of the Neighbourhood Plan area, with sections of medium-high risk predominantly located around the River Avon and its tributaries<sup>33</sup>.

Completed in 2007, the most recent Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)<sup>34</sup> for South Hams outlines that the River Avon has a catchment area of 115km<sup>2</sup> to its tidal limit at Aveton Gifford.

Completed in 2016, an addendum to the SFRA<sup>35</sup> states that Aveton Gifford is a village at risk from tidal flooding and has been noted to have a number of properties flooded in the summer and winter floods of 2012, as well as the winter floods in 2013/2014. There has recently been flood attenuation works on the bridge across Church Lane.

### **Summary of Future Baseline**

Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events in the Neighbourhood Plan area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change, with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.

A Critical Drainage Area (CDA) is a discrete geographic area where multiple and interlinked sources of flood risk cause flooding in one or more Local Flood Risk Zones (LFRZ) during severe weather, impacting people, property and/or local infrastructure. South Hams District Council may wish to designate their own CDAs (in the absence of any designations from the Environment Agency)<sup>36</sup> within the Neighbourhood Plan area within the future, for reasons such as surface water capacity issues.

In terms of climate change contribution, per capita greenhouse gas emissions generated in the Neighbourhood Plan area may continue to decrease with wider adoption of energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies. However, increases in the built footprint of the Neighbourhood Plan area would contribute to increases in the absolute levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

<sup>32</sup> GOV.UK (2019): 'Flood Map for Planning', [online] available at: <<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/>> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>33</sup> GOV.UK (2017): 'Long term flood risk assessment for locations in England', [online] available to access from: <<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/>> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>34</sup> South Hams District Council (2007): 'Strategic Flood Risk Assessment', [online] available to download via: <[https://www.southhams.gov.uk/media/2000/Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-Level-1/pdf/12.Strategic\\_Flood\\_Risk\\_Assessment\\_Level\\_1.pdf](https://www.southhams.gov.uk/media/2000/Strategic-Flood-Risk-Assessment-Level-1/pdf/12.Strategic_Flood_Risk_Assessment_Level_1.pdf)> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>35</sup> JBA Consulting (2016) 'South Hams District Council SFRA Level 1 Addendum' [online] available to access via <<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SouthHamsDistrictCouncilSFRALevel%201Addendum.pdf>> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>36</sup> GOV.UK (2017): 'Flood Risk Assessment in Flood Zone 1 and Critical Drainage Areas', [online] available to access via: <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-assessment-in-flood-zone-1-and-critical-drainage-areas>> [last accessed 24/06/19]

## A4 - Landscape

### Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>37</sup> (NPPF) include:

- ‘Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [...]. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.’
- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for ‘conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.’
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments ‘are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).’
- ‘Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - a. Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils
  - b. recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and
  - c. remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.’

The policies contained within Chapter 2 ‘Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’ environment’ of the Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’<sup>38</sup> directly relates to the Landscape SEA theme.

At the local level, the vision for the 2019-2024 Management Plan for the South Devon AONB aims for an inspirational landscape that is valued, recognised and treasured forever for its nationally important natural beauty and distinctive character. The AONB has ten special qualities to summarise the unique ‘natural beauty’ for which the South Devon AONB is designated as a nationally important protected landscape. These are its:

- Fine, undeveloped, wild and rugged coastline;
  - Ria estuaries (drowned river valleys), steep combes and a network of associated watercourses;
  - Deep rural rolling patchwork agricultural landscape;
  - Deeply incised landscape that is intimate, hidden and secretive away from the plateau tops;
  - Iconic wide, unspoilt and expansive panoramic views;
  - A landscape with a rich time depth and a wealth of historic features and cultural associations;
  - A breadth and depth of significant habitats, species and associated natural events; and
  - An ancient and intricate network of winding lanes, paths and recreational routes.
- In order to achieve this vision, the Management Plan outlines a variety of policies and objectives for the South Devon AONB, grouped into three overarching themes and 14 sub-themes:

Place:

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<sup>37</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 14/06/19]

<sup>38</sup> HM GOV (2019) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [last accessed 24/06/19]

- Landscape Character;
- Natural resources & climate;
- Biodiversity and geodiversity;
- Historic environment;
- Farming & land management;
- Coast and Marine; and
- Rivers and Estuaries.

People:

- Tourism, Access & Recreation;
- Planning and Sustainable Development;
- Transport & Highways;
- Rural Economy and Services; and
- Community and Culture.

Partnership:

- Awareness and Communication; and
- Management, Organisation & Partnerships.

Additionally, the South Devon Estuaries Management Plan (2016-2024) aims to take a co-ordinated management approach which aims to secure the sustainable use, enjoyment and understanding of the five estuaries within the South Devon AONB: the Yealm, Erme, Avon, Salcombe-Kingsbridge and the Dart. The Plan outlines a variety of objectives and actions in order to achieve the following vision<sup>39</sup>:

*“The South Devon AONB Estuaries will be valued, recognised, treasured and conserved for their important natural beauty and rich historic heritage, their distinctive local character as part of the AONB, their individual uniqueness and their environmental importance to the wider natural and human community”.*

At the local level policies in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) that relate to the Landscape theme include:

- DEV23: Landscape character; and
- DEV25: Nationally protected landscapes.

## Summary of Current Baseline

### South Devon AONB

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are conserved and enhanced. The primary purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, as confirmed by Section 82 of the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act).

Designated in August 1960, the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers approximately 34,000 ha of coastline, estuaries and countryside, and overlaps the entirety of the Neighbourhood Plan area. The AONB also incorporates the South Devon Heritage Coast, which covers the 75km of coastline between Wembury Beach (near to the Yealm Estuary) and Sharkham Point (near to Brixham). The following list of special qualities define the unique ‘natural beauty’ for which the South Devon AONB is designated as a nationally important protected landscape:

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<sup>39</sup> South Devon AONB (2016): ‘Estuaries Management Plan 2016-2024’, [online] available to download via: <http://www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/about-the-aonb/looking-after-the-aonb/aonb-management-plan/estuaries-management-plan-public-consultation/> [last accessed 27/06/19]

- Fine, undeveloped, wild and rugged coastline;
- Ria estuaries (drowned river valleys), steep combes and a network of associated watercourses;
- Deep rural rolling patchwork agricultural landscape;
- Deeply incised landscape that is intimate, hidden and secretive away from the plateau tops;
- Iconic wide, unspoilt and expansive panoramic views;
- A landscape with a rich time depth and a wealth of historic features and cultural associations;
- A breadth and depth of significant habitats, species and associated natural events; and
- An ancient and intricate network of winding lanes, paths and recreational routes.

### *National Character Areas*

The Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan area lies within the National Character Area (NCA): South Devon.

The South Devon NCA<sup>40</sup> is predominantly a plateau, dissected by steep valleys and rivers, most rising on the adjoining Dartmoor NCA. Towards the coast the often wooded valleys and rias are remote and hard to access from the land. The majority of the area consists of mixed farming, with fields flanked by Devon hedgebanks and narrow winding lanes. The south of the area contains many internationally important coastal and estuarine habitats. The quality and character of the area is recognised by designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), containing all of the South Devon AONB and part of the Tamar Valley AONB. Mixed farming remains the main agricultural occupation, although there has been a slight decrease in the numbers of livestock seen in the landscape.

Key characteristics of the South Devon NCA include:

- Rounded hills, without strong patterns, separated by steep, intricate wooded valleys with fast flowing rivers;
- Diverse and complex coastline, often reaching deep inland along rias and estuaries. Distinctive cliff formations with raised beaches and caves. The classic landform of Slapton shingle ridge and lagoon, which supports many internationally important bird species and rare plant communities;
- Rias, or drowned river valleys, with large expanses of tidal water and mudflats extending far inland. The rias are often steep-sided, with broadleaved woodland down to the tidal edge;
- Arable and pasture fields, with larger fields on the higher flatter land and a more intact, smaller irregular field pattern on the valley flanks. When ploughed the characteristic red soils add to the pattern of the landscape;
- Wildflower rich, often treeless, hedgebanks providing field boundaries and borders to the typical narrow sunken lanes linking scattered farmsteads and hamlets;
- Villages and towns generally in sheltered valley locations or at the heads of rias, with the larger urban settlements located at either end of the coastal stretch. Rural buildings of local stone and slate, with some cob and thatch; and
- Industrial heritage of the mineral mining in the Tamar Valley, with mine chimneys, quarries and mining settlements. Distinctive landscape of ball clay extraction in the Bovey Basin.

### *Devon Landscape Character Assessment*

At the local level, the Devon Landscape Character Assessment (DLCA) describes the variations in character between different areas and types of landscape in the county. It provides an evidence base for local development frameworks and plans, articulating what people perceive as distinctive and special about all landscapes in Devon. Additionally, it also sets out strategies and guidelines for the protection, management and planning of the landscape. The majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area

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<sup>40</sup> Natural England (2018) NCA Profile: 151 South Devon [online] available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/1911063?category=587130> [last accessed 27/06/19]

is located within the 'Mid Avon and West Dart Valleys and Ridges'<sup>41</sup> character area describes as 'a plateau landscape dissected by major rivers (the Avon and tributaries of the Dart) where the interplay of upland and valley is the defining characteristic. Located some distance from the coast (and of a lower elevation than the coastal plateau) the focus of this landscape is inland and from higher ground there is a strong visual association with Dartmoor on the north-western skyline. From the narrow plateau ridges the valleys below have surprisingly little influence on landscape perceptions; within the valleys themselves the landscape is generally enclosed by woodland. There is no definite grain or pattern to the valleys and this contributes a sense of disorientation. Most of this landscape is feels remote and is only lightly settled. The historic lanes, intact villages, church tower landmarks and historic sites contribute a strong sense of time-depth and intactness. Within the sheltered Avon valley the river flows between overhanging trees and there is an air of peace and seclusion'.

The Neighbourhood Plan area also partly lies within the 'Bigbury Bay Coastal Plateau'<sup>42</sup> character area, described as 'an open, elevated and exposed farmed plateau which has a strong coastal influence and is deeply incised by the three scenic estuaries of the Yealm, Erme and Avon. Views out to sea and along the coast are contained within Bigbury Bay. Overall, this area is sparsely settled although church spires in the nucleated villages that rest on the upper slopes of valleys or on the plateau are notable vertical features and landmarks'.

Within the character areas, the following four landscape character types overlap with the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary<sup>43</sup>:

- 1B: Open Coastal Plateau;
- 3C: Sparsley settled farmed valley floors;
- 3G: River Valley Slopes and Combes; and
- 5A: Inland elevated undulating land.

## Summary of Future Baseline

New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and villagescape character and quality in and around the Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan area. This includes from the loss of landscape features and areas with an important visual amenity value.

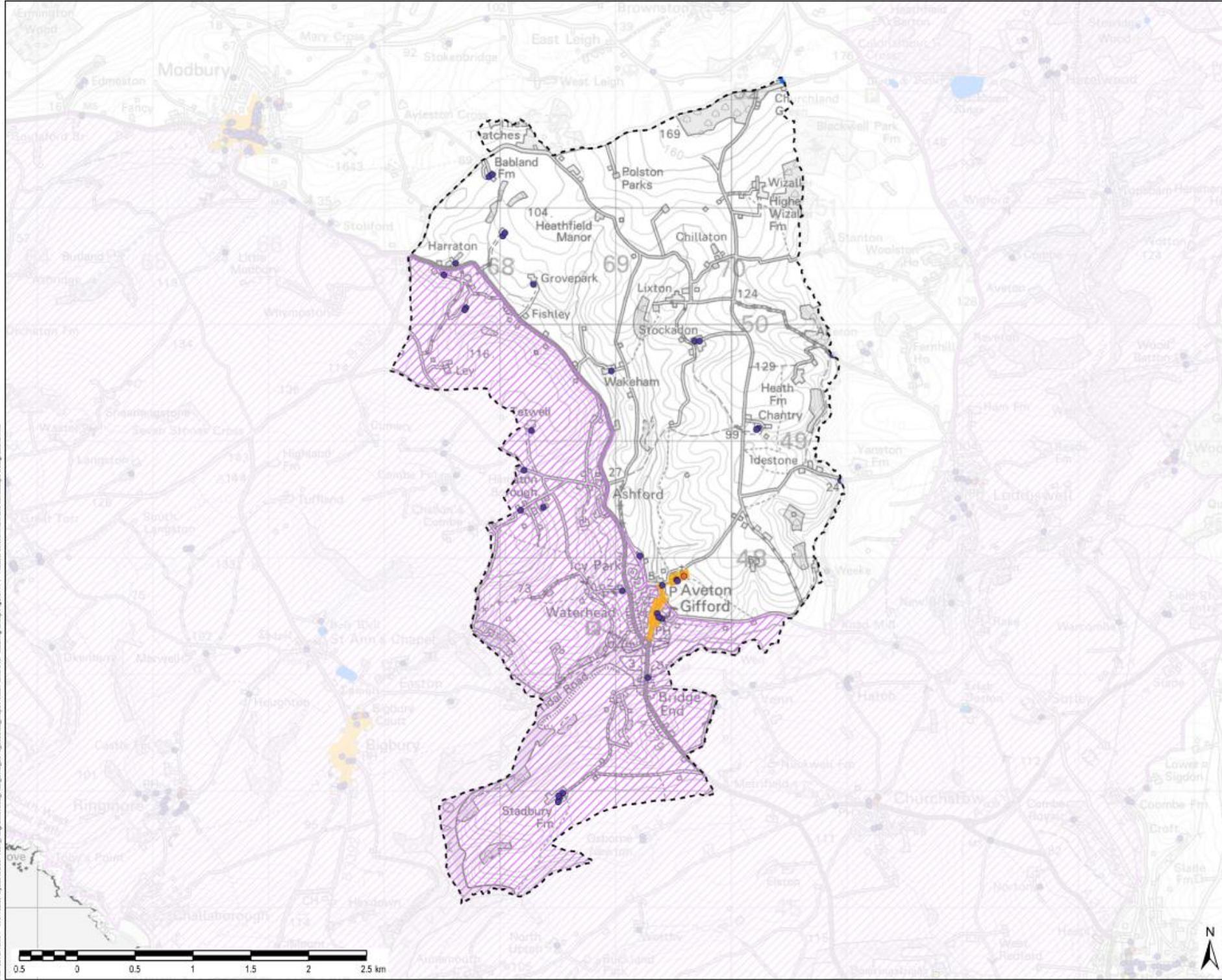
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<sup>41</sup> Devon County Council (no date): 'Mid Avon and West Dart Valleys and Ridges', [online] available to access via: <<https://www.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devon-character-areas/south-hams-area/mid-avon-and-west-dart-valleys-and-ridges>> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>42</sup> Devon County Council (no date): 'Bigbury Bay Coastal Plateau', [online] available to access via: <<https://new.devon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/landscape/devon-character-areas/south-hams-area/bigbury-bay-coastal-plateau>> [last accessed 16/02/18]

<sup>43</sup> LUC (2017): 'A Landscape Character Assessment for South Hams and West Devon', [online] available at: <<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/LandscapeCharacterAssessmentSouthHamsAndWestDevon.pdf>> [last accessed 27/06/19]

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**LEGEND**

- - - Aveton Gifford Neighbourhood Plan Area
- Record of Scheduled Monument
- South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Conservation Area

**Listed Building**

- Grade I
- Grade II\*
- Grade II

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Species of Issue **FINAL**

Client  
**AVETON GIFFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Project Title  
**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE AVETON GIFFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Drawing Title  
**LANDSCAPE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT DESIGNATIONS**

Drawn	Created	Approved	Date
CN	JW	TS	27/06/2016

AECOM Internal Project No: 60571087 Scale @ A3: 1:30,000

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Sheet Number  
**FIGURE A4.1**

Page Number  
**01**

## A5 – Historic Environment

### Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>44</sup> include:

- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy making provision for ‘conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure.’
- Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments ‘are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation of change (such as increased densities).’
- ‘Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - a. Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils
  - b. recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and
  - c. remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.’
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an ‘irreplaceable resource’ that should be conserved in a ‘manner appropriate to their significance’, taking account of ‘the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits’ of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness.
- Plans should set out a ‘positive strategy’ for the ‘conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment’, including those heritage assets that are most at risk.
- ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.’

Additionally, the National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>45</sup> states that Neighbourhood Plans should include enough information, where relevant, ‘about local heritage to guide decisions and put broader strategic heritage policies from the local plan into action at a neighbourhood scale’ and ‘about local non-designated heritage assets including sites of archaeological interest to guide decisions’.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 2 ‘Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes’, Goal 6 ‘Enhanced beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment’ of the Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’<sup>46</sup> directly relates to the Historic Environment SEA theme.

Historic England is the statutory body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England’s spectacular historic environment. Guidance and advice notes provide essential information for local planning authorities, neighbourhood groups, developers, consultants, landowners and other interested parties on historic environment considerations, and are regularly reviewed and updated in light of legislative changes. The following guidance and advice notes are particularly relevant and should be read in conjunction with the others.

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<sup>44</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 24/06/19]

<sup>45</sup> GOV (2018) Planning practice guidance [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [last accessed 24/06/19]

<sup>46</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [last accessed 27/06/19]

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2016)<sup>47</sup> outlines ways to manage change that conserves and enhances historic areas in order to positively contribute to sustainable development. Principally, the advice note emphasises the importance of:

- Understanding the different types of special architectural and historic interest which underpin the designations; and
- Recognising the value of implementing controls through the appraisal and/or management plan which positively contribute to the significance and value of conservation areas.

The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans: Historic England Advice Note 3 (October 2015)<sup>48</sup> and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA): Historic England Advice Note 8 (December 2016)<sup>49</sup> provides support to all stakeholders involved in assessing the effects of certain plans and programmes on the historic environment. It offers advice on heritage considerations during each stage of the SA/SEA process and helps to establish the basis for robust and comprehensive assessments, including in relation to site allocations.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (December 2017)<sup>50</sup> provides general advice on understanding setting, and how it may contribute to the significance of heritage assets and allow that significance to be appreciated, as well as advice on how views can contribute to setting. Specifically, Part 2 of the advice note outlines a five stepped approach to conducting a broad assessment of setting:

- Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
- Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
- Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
- Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
- Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 11 (October 2018)<sup>51</sup> outlines the importance of considering the historic environment whilst preparing the plan (section 1), which culminates in a checklist of relevant issues to consider, followed by an overview of what this means in terms of evidence gathering (section 2). Sections 3 to 5 of the advice note focus on how to translate evidence into policy, understand the SEA process and Historic England's role in neighbourhood planning.

At the local level policy DEV21: Development affecting the historic environment in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) relates to the Historic Environment theme.

## Summary of Current Baseline

Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms. Listed buildings hold

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<sup>47</sup> Historic England (2016): 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Advice Note 1', [online] available to download via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>> last accessed [01/10/19]

<sup>48</sup> Historic England (2015): 'The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans – Advice Note 3', [online] available to access via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/>> last accessed [01/10/19]

<sup>49</sup> Historic England (2016): 'SA and SEA: Advice Note 8' [online] available to download via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/sustainability-appraisal-and-strategic-environmental-assessment-advice-note-8/>> last accessed [01/10/19]

<sup>50</sup> Historic England (2017): 'Setting of Heritage Assets: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition', [online] available to download via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/>> last accessed [01/10/19]

<sup>51</sup> Historic England (2018): 'Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment', [online] available to download via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/neighbourhood-planning-and-the-historic-environment/>> last accessed [01/10/19]

special historic or architectural interest for the community; these buildings are often selected because they provide insights into the history of the region. There are three categories for listed buildings:

- Grade I (with exceptional interest, only 2.5% of all listed buildings).
- Grade II\* (with greater special interest, only 5.8% of all listed buildings).
- Grade II (with special interest, 91.7% of all listed buildings).

The Neighbourhood Plan area contains one Grade II\* and 34 Grade II listed buildings.

Conservation Areas are designated because of their special architectural and historic interest. Conservation Area appraisals are a tool to demonstrate the area's special interest, explaining the reasons for designation and providing a greater understanding and articulation of its character - mentioned within the 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' advice note by Historic England<sup>52</sup>. Ideally, appraisals should be regularly reviewed as part of the management of the Conservation Area and can be developed into a management plan.

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, Aveton Gifford Conservation Area is located across the built up settlement of Aveton Gifford. However, at present there is no up to date Conservation Area appraisal. Therefore it is not possible to readily determine the features of special architectural and historic interest within the village and the pressures that they face.

It should be noted that not all of the area's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and are seen as important by local communities.

Following a high-level review of the Historic Environmental Record (HER) for Devon and Dartmoor (accessed via the Heritage Gateway)<sup>53</sup>, there are 85 records within Aveton Gifford including a variety of archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscapes dating from the Roman period to the present day. These include causeways, bomb craters, bridges, weirs and fords.

## Summary of Future Baseline

New development in the Neighbourhood Plan area has the potential to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets; for example through inappropriate design and layout. It should be noted; however, that existing historic environment designations offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings.

Conversely, new development need not be harmful to the significance of a heritage asset, and in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan area there may be opportunity for new development to enhance the historic setting of the village and better reveal assets' cultural heritage significance.

## A6 – Land, Soil and Water Resources

### Context Review

The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy<sup>54</sup> presents a strategy for protecting soil resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

The EU Water Framework Directive<sup>55</sup> (WFD) drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. The Environment

<sup>52</sup> Historic England (2016): 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Advice Note 1', [online] available at: <<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>53</sup> Heritage Gateway (2019): Historic Environmental Record for Devon and Dartmoor, [online] available to access via: <[https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results\\_Application.aspx?resourceID=104](https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Application.aspx?resourceID=104)> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>54</sup> European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: <[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm)> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>55</sup> European Commission (2016) The EU Water Framework Directive – integrated river basin management for Europe [online] available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/index_en.html) [last accessed 27/06/19]

Agency is establishing 'Significant Water Management Issues' and recently presented second River Basin Management Plans to ministers. The plans seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>56</sup> (NPPF) include:

- 'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - a. Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; and
  - b. recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'.
- 'Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.'
- 'Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains.'
- Planning policies and decisions should 'give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs', and 'promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.'
- Taking a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for water supply.
- Prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of water pollution.
- The government has produced a separate plan that specifically deals with planning policy in relation to waste management; this should be read in conjunction with the NPPF.
- Encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances'.
- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply.
- With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy will be published as part of the National Waste Management Plan.

Along with the policies contained within Chapter 1 'Using and managing land sustainably' and Chapter 4 'Increasing resource efficiency, and reducing pollution and waste', Goal 2 'Clean and plentiful water', Goal 5 'Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently' and Goal 8 'Minimising

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<sup>56</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 27/06/19]

waste' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'<sup>57</sup> directly relates to the land, soil and water resources SEA theme.

Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A Strategy for England<sup>58</sup>, which sets out a vision for soil use in England. Furthermore, the Water White Paper<sup>59</sup> sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources.

In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England<sup>60</sup> recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

The National Waste Management Plan<sup>61</sup> provides an analysis of the current waste management situation in England, and evaluates how it will support the implementation of the objectives and provisions of the revised Waste Framework Directive<sup>62</sup>. This includes an assessment of the need for new collection schemes, additional waste infrastructure and investment channels, as well as providing general or strategic waste management policies.

At the local level policies in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) that relate to the Land, Soil and Water Resources theme include:

- DEV2: Air, water, soil, noise, land and light; and
- DEV35: Managing flood risk and water quality impacts.

## Summary of Current Baseline

### Soil Resources

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

At the local level a detailed classification has not been undertaken for the majority of the Neighbourhood Plan area. As such, there is a need to rely on the national 'Provisional Agricultural Land Quality' dataset.

The Provisional Agricultural Land Quality dataset<sup>63</sup> shows that the Neighbourhood Plan area is predominantly covered by Grade 3 agricultural land; however, without the subset grading (3a or 3b) it is not possible to tell at this stage whether the agricultural land is considered to be 'best and most versatile'. It is also important to note that the national dataset is of very low resolution and may not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of the agricultural land quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

<sup>57</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>58</sup> DEFRA (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-our-soils-a-strategy-for-england> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>59</sup> DEFRA (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228861/8230.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228861/8230.pdf) [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>60</sup> DEFRA (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69401/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69401/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf) [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>61</sup> DEFRA (2013) Waste Management Plan for England [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/265810/pb14100-waste-management-plan-20131213.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265810/pb14100-waste-management-plan-20131213.pdf) [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>62</sup> Directive 2008/98/EC

<sup>63</sup> Natural England (2018) Agricultural Land Classification map South West Region (ALC006) [online] available at < <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/144017?category=5954148537204736>> [last accessed 27/06/19]

## Water Resources

Groundwater Source Protection Zones (SPZs) have been defined by the Environment Agency in England and Wales to protect groundwater sources such as wells, boreholes and springs that are used for public drinking water supply. The Neighbourhood Plan area does not intersect with any SPZs.

The EU Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) requires Member States to identify areas where groundwater has nitrate concentrations of more than 50 mg/l nitrate or is thought to be at risk of nitrate contamination. These areas are designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) and, as such, are recognised as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. Member States are required to establish Action Programmes in order to reduce and prevent further nitrate contamination. The Neighbourhood Plan area does not intersect with any NVZs.

## Water Quality

The Neighbourhood Plan area is located within the 'Avon Salcombe and Kingsbridge'<sup>64</sup> catchment area. There are seven waterbodies located within this catchment area, with the 'Avon-Lower' (a tributary of the River Avon) joining the River Avon at Aveton Gifford

All seven waterbodies have 'good' chemical status. Ecological status of the waterbodies varies between 'moderate' and 'good' ecological status.

## Summary of Future Baseline

Future development has the potential to affect water quality through diffuse pollution, waste water discharges, water run-off, and modification. However, water companies are likely to maintain adequate water supply and wastewater management over the plan period, and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality within the Neighbourhood Plan area and wider area.

In the absence of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification assessment for the majority of the Parish, it remains uncertain whether new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area will lead to losses of higher quality (best and most versatile) agricultural land.

# A7 – Population and Community

## Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>65</sup> (NPPF) include:

- 'One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is a social objective to; 'support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing.'
- To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing, strategic policies 'should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.'
- The size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site where possible.

<sup>64</sup> Environment Agency (2016): 'Avon Salcombe and Kingsbridge', [online] available to access via: <<http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3022>> [last accessed 27/06/19]

<sup>65</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 24/06/19]

- Recognise the important contribution of small and medium sized development sites in meeting housing needs. Local Plans should identify land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, and neighbourhood planning groups should also consider the opportunities for allocating small and medium-sized sites.
- In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- Ensuring that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' and taking a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

The 'Ready for Ageing?' report, published by the Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change<sup>66</sup> warns that society is underprepared for an ageing population. The report states that 'longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises'. The report recognises that the supply of specialist housing for the older generation is insufficient for the demand. There is a need for central and local Government, housing associations, and house builders to ensure that these housing needs are better addressed, giving as much priority to promoting an adequate market of social housing for the older generation as is given to the younger generation.

Policies contained in Chapter 1 'Using and managing land sustainably' and Chapter 4 'Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste' of the Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment'<sup>67</sup> directly relate to the Population and Community SEA theme.

At the local level policies in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) that relate to the Population and Community theme include:

- TTV1: Prioritising growth through a hierarchy of sustainable settlements;
- TTV2: Delivering sustainable development in the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area;
- TTV27: Meeting local housing needs in rural areas;
- DEV8: Meeting local housing need in the Thriving Towns and Villages Policy Area;
- DEV9: Meeting local housing needs in the Plan Area; and
- DEV10: Delivering high quality housing.

## Summary of Current Baseline

### Population

Based on 2011 Census data, the population of Aveton Gifford is 856 residents and increased at a higher rate (10.9%) between 2001 and 2011 in comparison to the South Hams (1.6%), the South West of England (7.9%) and England (7.9%) averages. Approximately 1.0% of the population of South Hams live within the Neighbourhood Plan area<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) Ready for Ageing? [online] available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201213/ldselect/ldpublic/140/140.pdf> [last accessed 24/06/19]

<sup>67</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [last accessed 04/04/19]

<sup>68</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Population Density 2011 (Table QS102EW); Population Density 2001 (Table UV02)

## Age Structure

Generally, there are a similar proportion of residents within the 60+ age category within the Neighbourhood Plan area (31.3%) in comparison to the totals for South Hams (32.8%), however this is slightly greater than the South West of England (26.4%) and England (22.3%)<sup>69</sup>. Additionally, a similar proportion of residents are within the working age categories (25-44 and 45-59) in the Neighbourhood Plan area (45.5%) in comparison to the totals for the South Hams (42.5%), the South West of England (44.7%) and England (46.9%). 23.1% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are within the younger age categories (0-15 and 16-24), lower than the totals for the South Hams (24.8%), the South West of England (35.2%) and England (30.8%).

## Household Deprivation

Census statistics measure deprivation across four 'dimensions' of deprivation, summarised below<sup>70</sup>:

- **Employment:** Any person in the household (not a full-time student) that is either unemployed or long-term sick
- **Education:** No person in the household has at least a level 2 qualification and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student.
- **Health and Disability:** Any person in the household that has generally 'bad' or 'very bad' health or has a long term health problem.
- **Housing:** The household accommodation is either overcrowded (with an occupancy rating of -1 or less), in a shared dwelling or has no central heating.

Fewer households are deprived within the Neighbourhood Plan area (50.5%) in comparison to the South Hams (52.2%), the South West of England (55.2%) and England (57.5%). Out of the 50.7% of households which are deprived in the Neighbourhood Plan area, the majority are deprived in either one or two dimensions, similar to the regional and national trends.

## Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights, as described below. The seven deprivation domains are as follows:

- **Income:** The proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income, including those individuals that are out-of-work and those that are in work but who have low earnings (satisfying the respective means tests).
- **Employment:** The proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market, including those individuals who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities
- **Education, Skills and Training:** The lack of attainment and skills in the local population.
- **Health Deprivation and Disability:** The risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Morbidity, disability and premature mortality are also considered, excluding the aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation.
- **Crime:** The risk of personal and material victimisation at local level.
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** The physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services, with indicators categorised in two sub-domains.
  - a. 'Geographical Barriers': relating to the physical proximity of local services
  - b. 'Wider Barriers': relating to access to housing, such as affordability.
- **Living Environment:** The quality of the local environment, with indicators falling categorised in two sub-domains.

<sup>69</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Age Structure 2011 (Table KS102EW)

<sup>70</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Households by Deprivation Dimensions 2011 (Table QS119EW)

- c. 'Indoors Living Environment' measures the quality of housing.
  - d. 'Outdoors Living Environment' measures air quality and road traffic accidents.
  - Two supplementary indices (subsets of the Income deprivation domains), are also included:
    - i. Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index: The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families.
    - ii. Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index: The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation.
- 6.5 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are standardised geographies designed to be as consistent in population as possible, with each LSOA containing approximately 1,000 to 1,500 people. In relation to the IMD 2015, LSOAs are ranked out of the 32,844 in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Ranks are normalised into deciles, with a value of 1 reflecting the top 10% most deprived LSOAs in England and Wales.
- 6.6 The Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the LSOA South Hams 008A. This LSOA is within the 50% most deprived LSOAs in England.

### *Housing Tenure*

Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, 72.6% of residents either own their home outright or with a mortgage, greater than the totals for the South Hams (71.7%), the South West of England (67.4%) and England (63.3%). There are fewer residents within socially rented accommodation and privately rented accommodation in the Neighbourhood Plan area in comparison to the regional and national totals<sup>71</sup>.

### *Education*

Based on the 2011 Census data<sup>72</sup>, 14.8% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area have no qualifications, slightly lower than the total for the South Hams (17.2%), the South West of England (20.7%) and England (20.7%). Comparatively, 39.8% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area have a Level 4 qualification or above, which is higher than the total for the South Hams (34.3%), the South West of England (27.4%) and the total for England (27.4%).

### *Employment*

Regarding employment within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the following three occupation categories support the most residents<sup>73</sup>:

- Skilled trades occupations (21.5%)
- Professional occupations (18.9%); and
- Managers, directors, senior officials (13.0%).

Overall, 53.5% of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area are employed in one of the above three occupation categories, higher than the totals for the South Hams (48.7%), the South West of England (41.0%) and England (39.7%). This suggests that the Neighbourhood Plan area has a highly skilled workforce, supported by the percentage of residents with a Level 4 qualification or above.

## **Summary of Future Baseline**

As the population continues to age, this has the potential to place pressures on the existing services and facilities within the timeframe of the Neighbourhood Plan. This could negatively impact on the future vitality of the local community and economy.

Considering that the area is not deprived in relation to indices such as health deprivation and disability, it is expected that increasing numbers of elderly residents will continue. This can have

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<sup>71</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Tenure-Households 2011 (Table QS405EW)

<sup>72</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: Highest Level of Qualification 2011 (Table QS501EW)

<sup>73</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Occupation 2011' (Table KS608EW)

implications for housing and may indicate a need for more specialist accommodation to meet the needs of the elderly in the future.

Overall levels of deprivation in the Neighbourhood Plan area are likely to remain low.

## A8 – Health and Wellbeing

### Context Review

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>74</sup> (NPPF) include:

- One of the three overarching objectives of the NPPF is a social objective to; ‘support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural wellbeing.’
- ‘Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.’
- Policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and wellbeing of communities. Development should avoid building on existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields.
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

The policies contained in Chapter 3 ‘Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing’ of the Government’s ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’<sup>75</sup> directly relates to the health and wellbeing SEA theme.

Other key national messages in relation to health include; Fair Society, Healthy Lives<sup>76</sup> (‘The Marmot Review’) which investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that there is ‘overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities’.

The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in providing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012<sup>77</sup> transferred responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Devon identifies key features of interest within the area and raises important issues for discussion. The main challenges in Devon are linked to population, equality and diversity, economy, community and environment, deprivation, starting well, living well and ageing well.

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<sup>74</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 26/06/19]

<sup>75</sup> HM GOV (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment [online] available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf) [last accessed 26/06/19]

<sup>76</sup> The Marmot Review (2011) The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning [online] available at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170106161952/http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/item.aspx?RID=106106> [last accessed 26/06/19]

<sup>77</sup> Health and Social Care Act 2012: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents/enacted>

At the local level, Policy DEV1: Protecting health and amenity in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) relates to the Health and Wellbeing theme.

## Summary of Current Baseline

### *Health indicators and deprivation*

Deprivation is a significant contributor to poor health and can have adverse effects on wellbeing, with elements related to poor housing quality, living environment, income and employment previously discussed in detail in the 'Population and Community' section of Appendix A. 83.4% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area consider themselves as having 'very good health' or 'good health', slightly greater than the totals for the South Hams (81.8%), the South West of England (81.4%) and England (81.4%). Similarly, the percentage of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area considering themselves to have 'bad health' or 'very bad health' is 4.0%, lower than the totals for the South Hams (4.9%), the South West of England (5.2%) and England (5.4%)<sup>78</sup>.

The total percentage of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area who report that their activities are limited 'a little' is broadly similar to the regional and national totals. There are a slightly lower number of residents within the Neighbourhood Plan area who report that their activities are limited 'a lot' (7.4%) in comparison to the South Hams (8.2%), the South West of England (6.9%) and England (8.3%). Overall, 82.8% of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area report that their activities are 'not limited', slightly higher than the total for South Hams (80.8%), but broadly similar to the South West of England (81.6%) and England (82.4%).

## Summary of Future Baseline

Health and wellbeing levels within the Neighbourhood Plan area are generally better than regional and national averages with a higher percentage of residents reporting 'good' or 'very good' health.

A growing and ageing population within the Neighbourhood Plan area may increase the reported cases of disability, reduce the levels of good health, and place future pressures on health services in the area. Similarly, ongoing cuts to community services have the potential to lead to effects on health and wellbeing.

Obesity is also seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

## A9 – Transportation

### Context Review

European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth.

Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>79</sup> (NPPF) include:

- 'Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:
  - a. The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed
  - b. Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised
  - c. Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued

<sup>78</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'General Health 2011' (Table QS302EW)

<sup>79</sup> MHCLG (2018) National Planning Policy Framework [online] available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/728643/Revised\\_NPPF\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/728643/Revised_NPPF_2018.pdf) [last accessed 27/06/19]

- d. The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account
- e. Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.'
- 'Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.'

At the local level, each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to produce and adopt a Local Transport Plan through the Local Transport Act 2000, as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008. The Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 for Devon and Torbay aims to deliver a transport system to meet economic, environmental and social challenges. The plan is seeking to deliver the aspirations of Devon and Torbay councils, stakeholders, businesses and the public. To achieve Devon and Torbay's vision the strategy has five key objectives:

- 'Deliver and support new development and economic growth;
- Make best use of the transport network and protect the existing transport asset by prioritising maintenance;
- Work with communities to provide safe, sustainable and low carbon transport choices
- Strengthen and improve the public transport network; and
- Make Devon the 'Place to be naturally active'.
- A new Lower Thames Crossing;
- Bifurcation of port traffic;
- Transport infrastructure to support growth in the Thames Estuary including Crossrail extension to Ebbsfleet;
- A solution to Operation Stack;
- Provision for overnight lorry parking;
- Journey time improvements and Thanet Parkway Railway Station;
- Ashford International Station signalling;
- Rail improvements; and
- Bus improvements.

At the local level, the following policies in the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (2014-2034) relate to the Health and Wellbeing theme:

- SPT9: Strategic principles for transport planning and strategy
- SPT10: Balanced transport strategy for growth and healthy and sustainable communities; and
- DEV29: Specific provisions relating to transport.

## Summary of Current Baseline

### *Rail network*

The Neighbourhood Plan area is not directly connected to the rail network, with no stations located within its boundaries. The nearest railway station to the Neighbourhood Plan area is in Ivybridge, approximately 5.5km to the north. Ivybridge station is a calling point for intermediate services between Cornwall and Exeter. A wider range of services are available from Totnes (approximately 13.2km to the north east of the Neighbourhood Plan area), including stations in Cornwall, Plymouth, Exeter, Taunton, Reading, London, Bristol and the midlands and the north.

### *Bus network*

Regarding the local bus network, there is currently only one bus service which runs once an hour Monday to Saturday. It provides services to Kingsbridge, Modbury, Yealmpton and Plymouth. The first bus service runs at 6:30, with the last buses departing at 18:40.

### *Cycle and footpath network*

National Cycle Network route 28 runs through the centre of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Regarding the local footpath network, the South West Coast Path<sup>80</sup> passes through the village of Bigbury on Sea and extends over 1,000km around the south west coastline through Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. Aveton Gifford also has a well-developed public rights of way network.

### *Road network and congestion*

The A379 runs through the centre of the Neighbourhood Plan area connecting residents to the settlements of Kingsbridge and Plymouth via Modbury, Yealmpton and Brixton. Additionally, there is a network of smaller country roads and lanes which pass through the Neighbourhood Plan area, connecting residents to the nearby settlements of Loddiswell, Churchstow and Bigbury. Tidal Road is located within the Neighbourhood Plan area, along the River Avon. This road is regularly covered by the tide and therefore not accessible all the time.

### *Availability of cars and vans*

Based on the 2011 Census data<sup>81</sup>, 93.5% of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area have access to at least one car or van, which is significantly higher than the percentages for the South Hams (86.7%), the South West of England (81.1%) and England (74.2%). The total number of households in the Neighbourhood Plan area with access to at least two cars or vans (56.5%) is over 10% higher than the total for the South Hams (43.9%), and the total for the South West of England (37.6%) and almost 25% higher than the total for England (32.0%).

### *Travel to work*

The most popular method of travelling to work in the Neighbourhood Plan area is via driving a car or van (47.1%) greater than the totals for South Hams (41.1%), the South West of England (41.4%) and England (36.9%). A higher percentage of residents in the Neighbourhood Plan work mainly from home in comparison to the regional and national trends. In contrast, a lower proportion of residents walk to work or catch a bus, minibus or coach<sup>82</sup>.

## **Summary of Future Baseline**

A continued reliance on the private car is highly likely within the Neighbourhood Plan area, particularly given the size of the village and its rural nature; residents are likely to continue to travel outside of the Neighbourhood Plan area to access key services and facilities.

New development has the potential to increase traffic and lead to additional congestion issues within the Neighbourhood Plan area. Additionally, public transport use is likely to remain low compared with private car use given the lack of public transport options.

Given the scale of development likely to come forward through the Neighbourhood Plan area, it is unlikely that this development will contribute to any significant improvements in public transport provision.

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<sup>80</sup> South West Coastal Path Association (2018): 'South West Coast Path: Interactive Map', [online] available to access via: <<https://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/#>> [last accessed 28/06/19]

<sup>81</sup> ONS (no date): 'Car or Van Availability 2011', (Table QS416EW)

<sup>82</sup> ONS (no date): Census 2011: 'Method of Travel to Work 2011' (Table QS701EW)

