



# Plan Mid Devon

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Sustainability  
Appraisal Scoping  
Report  
January 2022

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Local Plans set a vision and framework for the future development of an area. They are at the heart of our planning system with a requirement by law, that planning decisions are taken in line with the Local Plan unless there are other overriding material considerations. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the objectives of a Local Plan<sup>1</sup>, which includes a key objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 1.2 Mid Devon is beginning the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the district, 'Plan Mid Devon'. The document will cover Mid Devon District, excluding part of the district within Dartmoor National Park and will set out the strategy and framework for the area. This will include the level and distribution of development over a to 2043 set within a vision that looks further ahead (to 2053). Mid Devon covers an area of 353 square miles (914km<sup>2</sup>), has a population of 83,290<sup>2</sup> and is situated between Dartmoor National Park, Exmoor National Park and the Blackdown Hills. The document will consider a wide range of factors including climate change, the economy, the natural and built environment, health and well-being, the community and infrastructure. The evidence base for the Local Plan will consider other plans and programmes that may have a bearing the content and direction of Plan Mid Devon. Once adopted, Plan Mid Devon will replace the current 'Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033'.
- 1.3 Plan Mid Devon will set a framework through its adopted planning policies, which influence a range of plans and programmes. This includes planning applications where planning decisions are taken in line with the Local Plan. Masterplans, in which the Local Plan identifies and allocates strategic sites with policies that set out the agreed principles for development. Neighbourhood Plans, which must be in conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan to meet their basic conditions test and Supplementary Planning Documents which build upon and provide more detail about policies in the Local Plan.
- 1.4 In order to be in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 [SEA Regulations] and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, any plan must be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). SA/SEA (or SA for short) is a legal requirement and important for testing the 'soundness' of Local Plans that is required by the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)<sup>3</sup>. It assists in promoting sustainable development through integrating sustainability considerations into plan making. It is an iterative, ongoing process and integral to plan making. The process helps to consider the effects of the plan (and the effect without the plan) on the environment, people and the economy. It helps planning authorities to consider the merit of a variety of options to help determine the sustainable policy decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (2021) Chapter 3

<sup>2</sup> Nomis Mid-Year Population estimates (2020)

<sup>3</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (2021) para 35

- 1.5 Guidance on the preparation of the SA can be found on the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) website which includes the following flowchart which sets out the SA process alongside Local Plan preparation<sup>4</sup>.

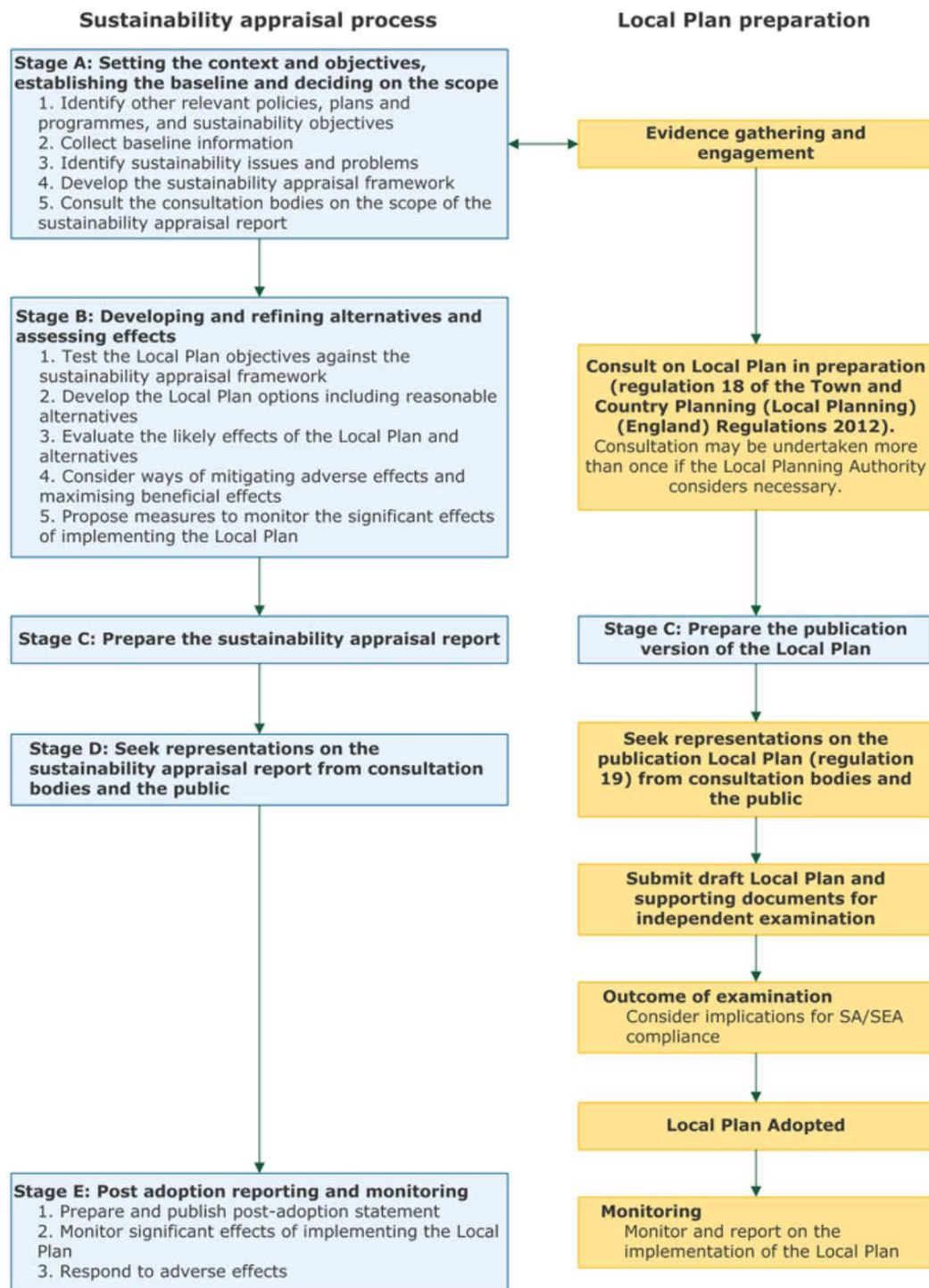


Chart 1: Sustainability Process and Local Plan preparation

<sup>4</sup> National Planning Policy Guidance Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal (Published February 2015, last updated December 2020)

- 1.6 The SA will highlight potential negative impacts of the plan and in doing so provides the opportunity for these effects to be avoided or mitigated. It is possible that in some cases development which is in some aspects less sustainable from one perspective may still take place, for example, where the social and/or economic benefits outweigh environmental impact. Appendix 1 and 2 signpost how the SEA/SA requirements have or will be met throughout the development of this Local Plan. This scoping report is the first stage in the preparation of an SA for Plan Mid Devon. It will be developed and updated as the Local Plan is prepared.

## **2 Relevant plans, programmes and strategies**

- 2.1 The first stage of undertaking a SA involves identifying and taking account of other relevant policies, plans and sustainability objectives. The Local Plan will not be a document developed in isolation. Its content will be influenced by a large number of factors including UK legislation, national policies and other plans and strategies at a local level. Understanding the relationship between the Local Plan and these policies is important as it will influence the options considered in preparation of the plan. Information on these relationships will reveal where there are shared objectives or inconsistencies and constraints to be addressed. Generally only adopted plans, programmes and strategies have been fully considered as part of this stage of the SA given that draft documents are subject to change.
- 2.2 In August 2020, the Government published and consulted on a set of reforms to the planning system through the White Paper “Planning for the Future”. These proposals include simplifying the role of Local Plans, so that they identify areas for growth, renewal and protection, they include clear rules rather than general policies for development, and that they are visual, map based and standardised. The Government is currently analysing feedback and further details are awaited. Given the draft status of this document, it has not formed part of the reviewed plans and programmes at this stage. As new relevant plans, programmes and strategies are identified and adopted throughout the plan preparation process these will be considered alongside the development of the Local Plan.
- 2.3 The reviewed plans, programmes and strategies have been grouped into theme areas. Many of the themes will cut across each other, however to allow analysis they have been collated under particular headings. Only the conclusions from the review of relevant plans are contained below; the full review of plans and strategies can be found within Appendix 3.

### **Climate Change**

- 2.4 The UK is committed to achieving targets in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to tackle climate change. Devon County Council has declared a ‘Climate Emergency’ and has initiated a county-wide partnership to ensure Devon becomes Carbon Neutral by 2050. Mid Devon District Council formally signed the declaration to meet the county-wide carbon plan but will aim for Mid Devon to become carbon neutral by a more ambitious date of 2030. Planning has a significant part to play in achieving these targets for reducing carbon emissions. The reviewed plans, programmes and strategies identify that planning can help minimise the impacts of climate change through development in sustainable locations, supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy development, improve the energy efficiency of the fabric of buildings and minimise waste in development.

### **Wealth and Prosperity**

- 2.5 National Government has an objective to achieve prosperity across the UK with a focus on ‘clean growth’. The planning system should support the development of strong, sustainable and balanced economic growth. The rural economy is recognised as providing an important contribution to the national economy. Locally there is an ambition to deliver a growth agenda and increase prosperity. Energy, high value engineering and digital, are areas identified as the

heart of the local economy with opportunities to drive clean and inclusive growth across multiple sectors.

#### **Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits**

- 2.6 The plans, programmes and strategies reviewed identify the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment. The natural and built environment contributes to sustainable and distinctive places to live and work and helps to deliver positive and sustainable economic growth. National policy identifies the need to provide net gains for biodiversity and sets out the importance of respecting environmental limits in the context of climate change including flood risk, reuse of existing resources and improving resilience. Recently a national plan to deliver effective tree-based climate mitigation has been published and the Environment Act includes a measurable output for biodiversity net gain.

#### **Health and Well-being**

- 2.7 The reviewed plans and strategies set out the importance of delivering an integrated approach to new development. Access to services and facilities, the creation of safe lifetime neighbourhoods and the availability of local greenspace are vital in the creation of healthy and inclusive communities which meet changing needs. Supporting healthy communities forms part of one of the three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development. National planning policy sets out that planning policy and decisions should aim to achieve healthy places which enable and support healthy lifestyles.

#### **Rural Areas**

- 2.8 Rural areas are home to a significant proportion of our population. Rural businesses make a substantial contribution to the economy and should be supported to grow. Agriculture remains an industry that has faced many challenges but is an important feature of our rural areas. Rural areas experience social issues such as poor access to services and facilities, whilst the growth of their economies may be hampered by poorer broadband speeds. National Policy seeks to support a prosperous rural economy. Programmes such as connecting Devon and Somerset has invested in digital communication in our rural areas. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.

#### **Access to New Technologies and Digital Communications**

- 2.9 The importance of digital infrastructure is identified nationally with a target for all parts of the country to have full fibre broadband coverage by 2033 and for the majority of the population to have 5G coverage by 2027. It is seen as a fourth utility with everyone benefiting from improved connectivity. It is identified that improved connectivity increases innovation and productivity across the economy, bringing significant rewards<sup>5</sup>. Mid Devon has some of the most digitally isolated areas in the UK and poor broadband speed and mobile coverage is identified as a

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<sup>5</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2018) Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review

barrier for economic growth<sup>6</sup>. A local government led programme is underway to help improve the digital connectivity of Devon and Somerset.

### **Homes**

- 2.10 The reviewed plans and strategies has highlighted an urgent need to address the housing emergency. An insufficient numbers of homes have been provided to meet needs and there is an increasing gap between the cost of new homes and wages. There is a need to address housing affordability and diversify the housing market, opportunities may include alternative housing solutions such as custom and self-build, modern methods of construction and cohousing/community led housing. There is also a need to consider specialist housing such as that for older persons, this may rise to the need for proposals including sheltered accommodation, care homes and nursing homes. There is also a requirement to assess the need for traveller sites and to plan for these in a sustainable manner over a reasonable timescale.

### **Infrastructure and How We Travel**

- 2.11 The reviewed plans and strategies highlight the importance of delivering infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It is important to identify, coordinate and align infrastructure with growth. Infrastructure covers a wide range of features including roads, water, sewers, electricity, gas and telecommunications. Investment in infrastructure will drive wider economic benefit. In relation to the provision of infrastructure, there is also a goal to meet the UK's net zero target by 2050 and to decarbonise transport which will have an influence in how future infrastructure is delivered and achieved.

### **How Places Look and are Used**

- 2.12 The 2021 NPPF significantly edits the chapter on 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' with a much bigger focus placed on making 'beautiful' and sustainable places. The use of plans, design policy, guidance and codes is identified to achieve this. The important contribution trees make to the character and quality of urban environments is emphasised in this iteration of the NPPF with the requirement for planning policies and decisions to ensure that new streets are tree-lined and opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments. The role of the National Design Guide and National Model design code is also set out whereby local design guides or codes must be consistent with the principles set out in these documents. The Mid Devon Design Guide (2020) is an SPD for the current Local Plan and provides a range of non-prescriptive guidance for development within Mid Devon.

### **Town Centres**

- 2.13 The 2021 NPPF continues to identify the important role that town centres play at the heart of local communities. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions that take a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. In 2020, there were some significant changes to the Use Class Order and permitted development rights in 2021 that allows greater flexibility for changes of use for traditional town centre uses. Plans that are local to Mid Devon

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<sup>6</sup> Economic Strategy for Mid Devon (2019-2024) MDDC



such as the Mid Devon Corporate Plan and the Economic Strategy seek to regenerate town centres and ensure that towns are vibrant, prosperous and have a positive atmosphere.

### **Communities and Neighbourhood**

- 2.14 National policy seeks strong, vibrant healthy communities and the Mid Devon Corporate Plan echoes this goal in seeking sustainable and prosperous communities. The reviewed plans, programmes and strategies set out the importance of liveability of where you live for all, with access to a range of services, facilities and open spaces. Local communities are given powers to achieve a shared vision for their area through a variety of ways including Neighbourhood Plans. The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted (made) in June 2021 and forms part of the statutory development plan for the Cullompton area. The Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan vision identifies Cullompton as a market town with a distinct character and identity rooted in a rich history that will be conserved as the town grows. To meet the needs of an expanding population, a mix of housing will be provided reflecting the character of the town. Housing and amenities will integrate the needs of people and nature, and the high street will be a pedestrian-friendly economic and social centre for the community.

### 3 Baseline information

- 3.1 The next stage of undertaking an SA focuses on collecting baseline information about Mid Devon. The information collected provides a basis for predicting and monitoring effects and helping to identify sustainability challenges. The information collected is drawn from a range of sources, such as, national plans and strategies and combined with local monitoring data.
- 3.2 Much of the information represents generic data about the district, rather than data specifically generated in relation to the development of the Local Plan. Some of it will have been relevant in the production of previous local development documents, whilst other data will have been updated more recently. Some information may not be up to date, but may be the most recently available. The information provided covers a broad range of environmental, social and economic matters which when collectively understood help to assess sustainability.

#### Location and characteristics

- 3.3 Mid Devon is an inland area in the south west of England, lying roughly equidistant between the Bristol and English Channel coasts. It covers an area of 353 square miles, situated between Dartmoor National Park, Exmoor National Park and the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has a population of approximately 83,290<sup>7</sup>. The significant urban areas of Exeter and Taunton are just beyond the southern and eastern boundaries of the district respectively. Major east-west transportation routes run through the district, including the M5, A361, A30 and the Great Western Mainline Railway.

#### Climate change

- 3.4 The world's climate is changing with greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide building up in the atmosphere in large quantities since the industrial revolution. These greenhouse gases form a 'blanket' around the planet which traps heat from the sun and causes the earth to heat up. The higher the amounts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the warmer the Earth becomes. Recent climate change is happening largely as a result of this warming, with smaller contributions from other natural influences such as variations in the Sun's output. Evidence shows since the industrial revolution the increase in greenhouse gases is almost entirely due to human activity<sup>8</sup>. There are many risks associated with climate change including increased concentrations of pollutants in low water levels, damaged ecosystem services and biodiversity, increased extreme weather events such as flooding and drought, ocean acidification and changes in seasonal events. These impacts can affect a wide range of features including our natural environment, businesses, transport networks, communication links and food production.
- 3.5 In 2008, the UK passed the Climate Change Act requiring the reduction of greenhouse and other gas emissions by at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. In 2019 an amendment of the target for 2050 was made from 80% to 100% (net zero). In 2015, 196 parties at COP21 in Paris

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<sup>7</sup> Nomis Mid-year population estimates 2020

<sup>8</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2014) Climate Change Explained

adopted a legally binding international treaty on climate change to ensure the rise in global temperatures would stay below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels.

- 3.6 In May 2019 Devon County Council agreed to declare a 'Climate Emergency' and to initiate a county-wide partnership to ensure Devon becomes Carbon Neutral by 2050. This means that the total carbon emitted by the county as a whole will need to be balanced out through an equivalent amount of carbon savings. Mid Devon District Council signed the declaration but has a more ambitious target to become carbon neutral by 2030.
- 3.7 Since declaring the climate emergency and announcing carbon reduction targets, the Government has increased incentives for renewable energy schemes, which includes encouragement of planning applications for wind turbines and field-scale solar energy development. The current Local Plan is supportive of renewable energy development in sustainable locations, however it does not allocate sites for these uses, with the exception of urban extensions. Progress, is being made locally to achieving these carbon reduction targets. The 2020 Carbon Footprint report produced by Devon County Council states that the gross emissions in the county in 2019/20 were 48% below our baseline year of 2012/13 and the net carbon footprint was 51% below the base year.
- 3.8 In March 2020, Covid-19, a contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was first declared by the World Health Organisation as a pandemic. Various measures were introduced in England during the pandemic to minimise social contact including lockdowns, which restricted travel, social contact and encouraged home working. In 2020, according to the latest Carbon Brief analysis UK, the greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 11% largely due to lockdown restrictions. The report notes that since this was a unique situation, the emissions are expected to rise again, depending on the speed of the recovery, remaining restrictions and the impact of ongoing structural changes.

### **Wealth and prosperity**

- 3.9 National Government has an objective to achieve prosperity across the UK. Locally there is an ambition to deliver a growth agenda and increase prosperity. The Mid Devon economy is typified by high rates of employment. Of the 47,100 residents (ONS population estimates 2017) aged between 16 and 64, 85% were economically active. This is significantly higher than the South West and the UK rates. However, many of the jobs in Mid Devon are low waged and low skilled. The average work place earnings are 11% lower than the national average. The percentage of Mid Devon workforce holding a degree or higher qualification (NVQ 4+) at 31.4% is well below the national average. Mid Devon has strong links to surrounding areas, particularly to Exeter to the south, with over a third of the resident population commuting out of the district for work. Mid Devon is relatively strong in manufacturing, but its economy is dominated by traditionally low productivity (GVA) sectors such as retail, distribution and agriculture. There are high levels of self-employment and a large number of micro-enterprises particularly in the rural areas. Of the 4,510 businesses in Mid Devon, 92.2% are micro businesses with less than 10 employees. While Mid Devon has a high 3-year business survival rate, the business start up rates are relatively low compared to national and regional averages<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Economic Strategy for Mid Devon (2019-2024) MDDC

Opportunities in the current Local Plan have been sought by setting out policies that will help deliver growth in a high-quality environment and through allocations including at J27 of the M5 motorway which has potential to serve as an arrival point and gateway for visitors to the district as a destination in its own right that can benefit the economy.

- 3.10 The rural economy is recognised as providing an important contribution to the National economy. Agriculture is an important part of the Mid Devon economy. While much farming activity falls outside the planning system, agricultural development can be essential to supporting modern farming and ensure a sustainable rural economy. The current Local Plan includes a policy specifically for agricultural development. It also includes policies for equestrian, tourism and leisure development, and also to support the diversification of the rural economy.
- 3.11 The United Kingdom formally left the European Union on 31st January 2020 and a transition period ended on 31st December 2020. Rules governing the new relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union took effect from the 1st January 2021. While there have been some notable immediate impacts on certain sectors of the economy and supply chains nationally, there remains longer term uncertainty, including for farming and financial sectors. The national economy has also been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic through shutdowns and disruption these have caused. In Mid Devon, the effect of the pandemic has had, and will likely continue to have, an impact on the local economy. Devon County Council modelling evidence suggest that the Mid Devon economy will retract by around 10% (roughly 3% more than the rest of the UK) and it anticipates a 5-year recovery journey<sup>10</sup>. The biggest concern for the District is the rise in unemployment.

#### **Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits**

- 3.12 Mid Devon has a wealth of heritage assets adding to the character of the district. There are 2,584 listed buildings and of those 48 are Grade I listed. The area has 49 scheduled monuments, 3 registered parks and gardens, a wide range of non-scheduled archaeological remains and 169 non-designated heritage assets. The history of the three main towns in the district Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton form a large part of their character. Tiverton grew from a ford across the rivers Exe and Lowman to become the biggest town in the district. Its historic centre has many buildings from a number of different periods. Cullompton is also an old town with some Grade I and almost a hundred Grade II listed buildings and Crediton is a historic market town with medieval burgage plots still visible in the south side of the High Street.
- 3.13 There are 51 Conservation Areas, 17 of those have Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA), and 12 out of the 17 also have Management Plans. Cullompton has an Article 4 direction in place, which offers a degree of protection over and above that of the conservation area designation. There are currently 22 heritage assets registered at risk: 3 conservation areas, 3 Grade II\* listed buildings and 16 Scheduled monuments. There are also potential conflicts between the protection of heritage assets and mitigating the impact of climate change, for example, where

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<sup>10</sup> Mid Devon District Council (January 2021) Covid 19 Economic Response Update, Economy Policy Development Group

home owners wish to install renewable energy features, such as solar PV arrays on roofs in a conservation area or on a listed building. Such developments may not positively contribute to local character or may reduce the significance of the heritage value of a building. This represents a potential conflict of sustainability objectives.

3.14 Due to the geology and landform in Mid Devon, there is a great variety of biodiversity in the district. The landscape is also a valuable resource for agriculture and tourism. There's almost 500 miles of Public Rights of Way and a wealth of green infrastructure. There are 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 3 local nature reserves, 2 nature reserves managed by Devon Wildlife Trust, over 8 km<sup>2</sup> of ancient woodland and over 200 regionally important geological sites. The east part of the district is a part of Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a small portion of Dartmoor National Park is within the southern border and the district in addition shares its northern border with Exmoor National Park. While there are no designated European sites (e.g. SPAs, SACs), some are within 10 km of the district with the closest, the Culm Grasslands' immediately adjacent to the north western boundary. Part of the western side of the district also falls within the transition zone of North Devon Biosphere Reserve, an area recognised for its high biodiversity value combined with sustainable use of natural resources for the benefit of local communities. The Grand Western Canal meanders 11¼ miles from Tiverton to the hamlet of Lowdwells (near the Somerset border). It is designated as a Country Park and a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as well as forming part of the heritage of the district it encompasses a wide range of habitats such as woodland, hedgerows, open water and ponds.

3.15 Biodiversity is however in long-term decline, with habitats becoming increasingly fragmented and degraded as a result of changing land use and agricultural practices. Analysis by the Natural History Museum<sup>11</sup> suggests the United Kingdom has just 53% of its biodiversity remaining as a result of human activity, and is one of the most depleted countries in the world in terms of biodiversity, whilst the State of the Nature Report<sup>12</sup> assets that within the last forty years, more than 1 in 7 wildlife species have either been threatened with extinction, or have become extinct. National policy seeks to reverse this trend.

### **Health and well-being**

3.16 A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Devon (June 2021) looks at the current and future health care needs of the local population to inform and guide the planning and commissioning of health, well-being and social care services within a local authority area. Mid-Devon has a growing aging population, with the 65-84 age group predicted to grow by 23% from 2021 to 2040, and the 85+ age group nearly doubling over that period. While younger age groups are proportionately smaller compared to the rest of England, health inequalities are still significant across these age groups. Hospital admissions for children and young people in Devon are considerably higher for mental health conditions, self-harm and injuries.

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<sup>11</sup> Ashworth, James (October 2021) Analysis warns global biodiversity is below 'safe limit' ahead of COP 15, Natural History Museum

<sup>12</sup> State of nature report (2019) National Biodiversity Network

- 3.17 The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted health inequalities including the differences in people's health and well-being that result from the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, work and age. For example, the pandemic has impacted social and community networks, showing that lack of social contact has a detrimental impact on mental health (causing or facilitating anxiety and depression). It has also had a negative impact on individual lifestyle factors such as lack of exercise and unhealthy diet, causing other health issues.

#### **Rural areas**

- 3.18 Mid Devon is predominantly rural with a significant proportion of the land in agricultural use, which is an important industry for rural areas. It supplies most of our food and helps to influence the character and appearance of the countryside through the impact of farming practices and how land is managed. Agricultural Labour Force figures show that approximately 8% of the Mid Devon workforce is directly involved in agriculture, and 18.5% of Mid Devon businesses are dependent on agriculture either as primary producers, processors, manufacturers or retailers. Food processing is a major element of the manufacturing sector.
- 3.19 Mid Devon has a network of villages and hamlets. Their provision of local shops, services and community facilities plays a vital role in maintaining rural prosperity and contributes to the overall sustainability of the district. Larger villages can often be complete, compact and connected neighbourhoods, whereas smaller villages and more rural areas rely on their access to larger settlements for their services and facilities or work in connection with each other as a cluster. However, changing shopping and cultural habits and lack of opportunities for the growth of village communities can impact on the vitality and viability of villages.
- 3.20 While some villages benefit from a connection to the railway network (Yeoford, Copplestone, Lapford), others are reliant on local bus services for public transport. For most people residing outside the three main towns reliance on the car is, and will continue to be, the main means of travel. The 2011 Census has shown that nationally, 48.9% of rural households had 2 or more cars or vans compared with 28.5% of urban households. In general, people living in rural areas will have lower levels of accessibility and journey times are likely to be longer to places of employment, schools, shops, healthcare and other facilities.
- 3.21 National planning policy makes clear that planning policies and decisions should support a prosperous rural economy through the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business – through both conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. This can include farm diversification and the development of other land-based rural businesses.

#### **Access to new technologies and digital communications**

- 3.22 Mid Devon has some of the most digitally isolated areas in the whole of the UK in terms of broadband speeds and coverage, which is mostly due to the highly rural nature of the area. In comparison to other local authority areas in Devon, Mid Devon has 28% of connections less than 30MB, in comparison to 16% each in East Devon and Teignbridge and 8% in Exeter City<sup>13</sup>. There is a programme underway, 'Connecting Devon and Somerset' which a local government-

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<sup>13</sup> Economic Strategy for Mid Devon (2019-2024)

led partnership and has been set up to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the market has failed to invest. It is bringing connectivity and opportunities to many more isolated homes, businesses and communities helping to plug the gaps in commercial infrastructure.

### **Homes**

- 3.23 The baseline evidence of local housing need in Mid Devon indicates a need to provide approximately 365 new homes per annum. This is based on the standard method for assessing local housing need as set out in national planning policy. The standard method identifies the minimum annual housing need figure and there is generally an expectation that the standard method will be used to inform plan preparation.
- 3.24 Nationally, for many years there has not been enough new homes being built to meet needs, and there has been an increasing gap between the price of those homes and being able to afford to buy or rent them. In Mid Devon (2019) full time employees can typically expect to spend around 9.3 times their workplace-based annual earnings on purchasing a home, higher than the England average ratio of 7.8. Housing affordability is a significant issue in Mid Devon. Access to housing for those on lower incomes is only likely to be achieved through the provision of defined affordable housing at below market rent or price levels. There is a need to pay particular attention to providing affordable and social rent properties. The majority of new affordable homes are built as a developer contribution on market housing schemes. The current local plan requires that on sites on 11 homes or more in Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton a target of 28% affordable homes will need to be provided. On sites elsewhere of 6 homes or more a target of 30% affordable homes applies.
- 3.25 As a rural district, there are a number of distinct housing challenges including a highly dispersed, ageing housing stock and pockets of social isolation (often relating to age, poverty, slow broadband speeds and lack of transport). Mid Devon also has an ageing population and projections indicated that the biggest rise in future population growth will occur amongst older people with the proportion of people over 60 is likely to increase significantly over the next 20 years. The current Local Housing Needs Assessment indicates that approximately 7% of Mid Devon's population were limited a lot in their day to day activities and 17% were limited a little in their day to day activities due to a long term health problem or disability. Furthermore, it is estimated that approximately 20.3% of households in Mid Devon include a member with a disability. The trend in demographic changes is likely to result in greater demands for housing suitable for older people and those with disabilities including sheltered accommodation, care homes and nursing homes.
- 3.26 In addition, there is strong demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in Mid Devon. There are currently 72 entries on the Council's Register, although secondary demand sources indicate that the actual demand is significantly higher. As part of the previous Local Plan, the Council also prepared a longer term strategic demand assessment. This identified that there is a demand for approximately 44 custom and self-build plots per year and 4 intermediate affordable custom and self-build plots per annum. The Council has a legal duty to grant sufficient permissions for custom and self-build plots to meet a demand equivalent to the

number of plots within a given 'base period' (12 month period from each October) on the register.

- 3.27 Furthermore, National planning policy makes clear the requirement for local authorities to assess the need for travellers sites and to plan for these in a sustainable manner over a reasonable timescale. The current local plan includes provision for 25 new pitches for gypsies and travellers as part of major housing developments on the edge of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton. These locations are considered the most sustainable for new sites, although the Local Plan allows for other sites in suitable locations elsewhere in Mid Devon.

#### **Infrastructure and how we travel**

- 3.28 Mid Devon is situated to the north of the city of Exeter, one of the most rapidly expanding economies in the country, and falls within its sphere of influence as part of both the Exeter Travel to Work Area and Exeter Housing Market Area. The district is well connected and accessible to the South West and beyond by the M5 motorway and the Great Western mainline railway. Bus service provision varies significantly across the District with some villages benefitting from a daily service and others having no service at all. This in turn creates a reliance on private car use. The current Local Plan seeks to maximise this opportunity by allocating land for development and setting out policies that will help deliver quality growth in a high-quality environment. The existing Local Plan 2013 – 2033 seeks to ensure that new development is served by appropriate and timely delivery of infrastructure. In addition, it makes provision for facilities such as schools, green infrastructure and community halls, as well as care homes or other provision for older people in recognition of the district's aging population and its associated needs. The plan also guides development to locations where there is sufficient sewerage capacity, or require that increased capacity will be provided.
- 3.29 National policies identify the importance of delivering infrastructure and sustainable transport to meet the needs to existing and new communities. It is important to identify, coordinate and align infrastructure with growth. Investment in infrastructure will drive wider economic benefit. There is also a goal to meet the UK's net zero target by 2050 and to decarbonise transport. Alongside this the Government announced a phasing out of the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars from 2030 with all new cars and vans to be fully zero emission from 2035.
- 3.30 There are currently multiple stakeholders involved in infrastructure. For example, Devon County Council is the local transport authority and local education authority, Highways England is responsible for motorways and major A-roads and Network Rail is responsible for the railway network. Infrastructure includes a wide range of services and facilities including utilities such as electricity, gas and waste water and with various stakeholders such as Western Power Distribution, National Grid and Wessex Water.

#### **How places look and are used**

- 3.31 Mid Devon is one of 14 councils nationally chosen to test the new National Model Design Code. The design code seeks to ensure that the future developments have regard to the local character, protect the environment and include wellbeing factors. The document provides detailed guidance on the production of local design codes, and it expands on ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide. The new National Planning Policy



Framework (2021) focuses strongly on designing beautiful places, expecting every street to be tree-lined and recommends to refuse poor quality schemes.

- 3.32 In addition to the planning policy on high quality design in the current Local Plan, the council has recently adopted a new Mid Devon Design Guide. It contains guidance on how development can be built in accordance with good design practice. It states that the design has to maintain the distinctiveness of the district, addressing climate change, build sustainably and protect and enhance natural and built environment.
- 3.33 One of major development projects in Mid Devon is Culm Garden Village. It is one of 14 areas designated by the Government and is to be developed under the Garden City Principles. Since the Mid Devon Design Guide and the National Model Design Code put emphasis on character and distinctiveness, the design of the Garden Village will have an important role to play in showcasing high quality design that reflects the principles of both guidance.

#### **Town centres**

- 3.34 Mid Devon's three main towns – Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton each have key roles in providing a range of shops, employment and services for their communities and their environs. However, their town centres face a challenging future due to changing national retailer requirements, online shopping and reduced consumer spending. This has become more pronounced due to the Covid-19 pandemic and with greater reliance on shopping over the internet and home deliveries.
- 3.35 It is recognised that the town centre is at the heart of a market town's community. For this reason the adopted Local Plan identifies 'primary shopping areas' in the three main town centres, where the shopping function will be safeguarded and enhanced. Within these 'primary shopping areas' are areas of 'primary shopping frontage' where retail development is concentrated, including a high proportion of uses such as food, drinks, clothing and household goods. The Local Plan has a requirement that at ground floor level the proportion of A1 (retail), A2 (financial and professional) and A3 (café and restaurant) will not be permitted to fall below 85% of all units.
- 3.36 In September 2020 the Government simplified the use classes order to help achieve its policy objective to rejuvenate and safeguard the vitality and viability of town centres. This included replacing use Classes A1, A2, A3 and Class B1 (Business) into a new 'Class E' (Commercial, Business and Service), which has enabled a wider range of use changes within this new class. The Government has subsequently brought into force from 1st April 2021, and which will take effect from 1st August 2021 a permitted development right for change of use from the Class E to residential use, which is intended to help bringing forward new homes through the conversion of existing buildings. This only applies to properties under 1,500 square metres of floorspace, and to properties that have been in Class E use for 2 years and have been vacant for 3 months ahead of a prior approval application date to the Council. Prior approval is where confirmation is sought from the Council that specified parts of a development are acceptable, before work can commence, and this allows the Council to consider the proposals and their likely impacts in regard to certain factors (e.g. noise, odour, waste handling, opening hours, air

quality, design and appearance, transport impact, risk from flooding) and how these may be mitigated.

### **Communities**

- 3.37 Mid Devon currently has three designated towns and twenty two designated villages. At the time of writing Mid Devon has one 'made' neighbourhood plan at Cullompton and three further designated areas at Tiverton, Silverton and Crediton. It also has one of only 14 areas in the Country awarded Garden Village Status by the Government in January 2017, the Culm Garden Village, which has the potential to deliver up to 5,000 sustainable new homes in a country park landscape, with jobs, community facilities and transport all integrated with Cullompton.
- 3.38 The District of Mid Devon is highly rural in nature with more than half of the population of some 83,000 scattered in villages and in the rural hinterland. Mid Devon has a very low population density of 0.9 people per hectare<sup>14</sup> and there is the challenge of ensuring we have sustainable neighbourhoods with everyday needs within easy reach for our communities for the wide range of neighbourhoods in our district.
- 3.39 2019 data in comparison to 2015 demonstrates that Mid Devon has become less deprived with a ranking of 162 out of 317 in comparison to 152 out of 317. However Mid Devon is ranked poorly at 54 for living environment in the deprivation domain. This measures the proportion of houses that do not have central heating, the proportion of homes that fail to meet the decent homes standard, air quality and road traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists<sup>15</sup>. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of living conditions and the quality of the physical environment. The need for social distancing and restrictions imposed on public gatherings and travel have meant changes to the way we live, work and take leisure activities.

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (September 2019) The English Indices of Deprivation 2019

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (September 2019) The English Indices of Deprivation 2019

## **4 Likely future changes without implementation**

- 4.1 Further to establishing the baseline position, there is also the need to consider the likely evolution of the environment without the implementation of Plan Mid Devon. This also helps to inform the identification of sustainability issues. It is worth noting that the Adopted Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 is currently in place, and so in the medium term, there are a range of spatial planning policies to tackle some of the wider objectives and challenges identified in the relevant plans, programmes and strategies and baseline conditions. Indeed a range of policies from this adopted plan may remain in Plan Mid Devon if they are considered effective, robust and up-to-date. However, there is a legal requirement to review Local Plan policies and spatial development strategies at least once every 5 years. As such, although the Adopted Local Plan extends to 2033 there is a probability that the Adopted Plan would be found out-of-date prior to 2033 where there is a change in circumstances and/or context. Where this may occur, development proposals would be considered on an ad hoc basis and will predominantly be guided by national planning policy and other legislation.
- 4.2 Establishing changes in the future is not always straightforward with a range of factors that can pull in different directions. There is also an element of the unknown, however based on what we know presently, set out below is a description of the key potential future changes in the absence of an update to the Local Plan.

### **Climate change**

- 4.3 International awareness of Climate Change and its impacts has increased. Locally Devon County Council agreed to declare a 'Climate Emergency' and to initiate a county-wide partnership to ensure Devon becomes Carbon Neutral by 2050. Mid Devon District Council signed the declaration but has a more ambitious target to become carbon neutral by 2030. This position needs to be endorsed through relevant plans and programmes, including the Local Plan Update. The current Plan supports low carbon opportunities and identifies locations for sustainable development however the Plan does not provide the emphasis on carbon neutrality required to meet the ambitious net zero target for the Council.
- 4.4 Today there is a different context to when the current adopted Local Plan was written. The experience gained from the Covid-19 pandemic crisis has led to changes in the way people work with an increase in homeworking and changes in the way people travel. More recent concepts such as a circular economy which is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, regenerating natural systems, the One Planet concept where development through its low impact either enhances or does not significantly diminish environmental quality are not currently placed at the forefront of the adopted Local Plan. Without an updated Local Plan, opportunities to meet the changes in demands, the way people live and work, new concepts and information which in turn can support our response to Climate Change and help Mid Devon and the UK achieve its carbon neutrality targets may not be fully appreciated.

### **Wealth and prosperity**

- 4.5 The current Local Plan identifies the economic needs up to 2033, however there may have been a change of circumstances since the adoption of this Plan with potential changes in retail behaviour and the impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit on the economic picture in Mid Devon. Without a review of the Local Plan there will not be the opportunity to promote and support those businesses in this changing economic environment through planning policy. More flexible or pro-active policies may be needed to avoid stagnation of the local economy and to encourage and attract inward investment.

### **Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits**

- 4.6 Whilst many environmental and heritage designations are protected by other legislation, without an updated Local Plan the impacts of future developments outside of the parameters of the Adopted Local Plan will be considered ad hoc and reactive as applications come forth. An updated Local Plan provides the opportunity to plan strategically and provide strategic mitigation where required to meet the range of challenges identified including the tension between different sustainability objectives such as mitigating the impacts of climate change, the protection of the built environment and the mitigating the net decline of biodiversity. It can support by directing development that may be needed due to changing circumstances and requirements to those areas where impacts can be minimised or in doing so identify where this is not possible and provide mitigation or a clear justification of overriding public interest.

### **Health and well-being**

Public health and land use planning are closely linked, with the planning system we have today born out of a need to address public health. Our recent experience of the Covid-19 pandemic with the need for social distancing and restrictions imposed on public gatherings and travel have meant changes to the way we live, work and take leisure activities. The types of homes people live in, the availability of private amenity space, proximity of places of employment, schools, shops, and access to green space and opportunities for walking, cycling and other forms of exercise have been brought into focus. The current Local Plan already promotes healthy communities through the delivery of important services, facilities and healthy travel. However, without the updated Local Plan the opportunity to reflect on the changes in how we live and identification of areas for improvement may not be fully achieved. There would also be the risk that the features in the adopted Local Plan which seek to promote healthy living may be weakened where the plan is found out of date in future years.

### **Rural areas**

- 4.7 Mid Devon has a network of villages and hamlets. Their provision of local shops, services and community facilities plays a vital role in maintaining rural prosperity and contributes to the overall sustainability of the district. Without the updated Local Plan, changing shopping and cultural habits and lack of opportunities for the growth of rural communities could impact on the vitality and viability of rural areas in Mid Devon. The current Local Plan provides the protection of community facilities, without an updated Local Plan there is the risk the Plan could be found out-of-date whereby National Planning policies would then take precedence.

### **Access to new technologies and digital communications**

- 4.8 Mid Devon still has some of the most digitally isolated areas in the whole of the UK in terms of broadband speeds and coverage, which is mostly due to the highly rural nature of the area. There is a programme underway, 'Connecting Devon and Somerset' which a local government-led partnership and has been set up to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the market has failed to invest. It is bringing connectivity and opportunities to many more isolated homes, businesses and communities helping to plug the gaps in commercial infrastructure. However further intervention is needed, there may be areas in Mid Devon where the latest technologies and digital communications are not fully reached. Continual improvement of our access to new technologies and digital communications is needed for our communities both for their social and economic well-being. A lack of investment in this area can impact on the growth for businesses and future competitiveness of Mid Devon. Without the updated Local Plan opportunities to be pro-active and reflect on the importance of this area in light the Covid-19 pandemic, which has increased our reliance on digital communications for businesses and communities, could be missed.

### **Homes**

- 4.9 There is potentially a need to amend the supply of housing within the time period of the Local Plan and beyond it due to changing housing needs and national requirements. In the absence of this, certain policies within the current Adopted Local Plan will become out-of-date and the housing development will not be plan led. There is also a risk that housing affordability will continue to worsen, and the gap between the price of homes and household income will continue to increase. Specific housing types for older people and people with disabilities such as sheltered accommodation, care homes and nursing homes and/or accessible and adaptable housing may not be provided for without local planning policies which may become a significant issue given Mid Devon's ageing population and likely future demographic changes.
- 4.10 In addition, in order to accord with the latest national policy there is a need to support diversification of housing supply, for example through the provision of self-build and custom housebuilding, Modern Methods of Construction and co-housing/community led housing. In respect of custom and self-build there is a legal requirement to grant enough suitable serviced plots to meet the demand. In the absence of further policy, there is a risk of failing to discharge this duty. Finally, there is a requirement in national policy to assess the need for traveller sites and to plan for these in a sustainable manner over a reasonable timescale. The absence of an updated Local Plan misses the opportunity to identify new sites for gypsy and traveller accommodation as part of larger developments on the edge of towns, or in suitable sustainable rural or semi-rural locations elsewhere in the district. Failure to do so may lead to the Council not meeting its legal duties through the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **Infrastructure and travel**

- 4.11 There may be a need to amend the supply of housing or commercial development due to a changing context and national requirements, for example where there is a higher population predicted either within the adopted plan period or a need to plan beyond the current plan period of 2033. Without an updated Local Plan, development will be ad hoc and applications

will be determined without the updated Local Plan spatial overview. There may be consequential cumulative adverse impacts where development is not planned for strategically. Issues may include, air pollution, carbon emissions, congestion and highway safety. An updated Local Plan provides the opportunity to strategically plan development for a 20 year period including beyond 2033 and sustainably plan for future development which takes into account cumulative impacts. This can also facilitate step change in reaching national and local aspirations that have come forth subsequent to the Adopted Local Plan such as the Climate Change Emergency declaration. Changes also include the Government announcement that from 2035 all new cars and vans must be fully zero emission which is likely to result in an increase in the number of electric vehicles. Although the existing Local Plan already includes minimum standards for the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, this was not in the context of this latest announcement. Without an updated Local Plan the opportunity to fully realise the requirements for new development in the latest context may not be met. There are multiple stakeholders involved in infrastructure and travel, without an updated Local Plan any new development will risk having a limited strategic overview and may not achieve early collaboration between the wide range of infrastructure stakeholders.

#### **How places look and are used**

- 4.12 National government has placed an emphasis on good design in recent years with the National Design Guide 2019, NPPF 2021 and trialling local design codes of which Mid Devon is a pilot. In the absence of the updated Local Plan, there is the potential that places won't reach their full potential of good design. Opportunities to improve place making, local communities and good design may be missed. Without an updated Local Plan we may fail to seize opportunity to set a high bar for beauty and design quality in accordance with the National Design Code, Guide and ambitions of the NPPF.

#### **Town centres**

- 4.13 Mid Devon's three main towns Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton each have key roles in providing a range of shops, employment and services for their communities and their environs. However, the town centres face a challenging future due to changing national retailer requirements, online shopping and reduced consumer spending. This has become more pronounced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The current Local Plan recognises that the town centre is the heart of a market town's community and identifies 'primary shopping areas' and 'primary shopping frontage' where retail development is concentrated. The adopted Local Plan seeks to protect the vitality of these areas by supporting retail, financial and professional units and café and restaurant uses. It had an aim of ensuring the level of A1, A2 and A3 uses did not fall below 85%. However, changes to use classes in 2020 and permitted development rights in 2021 has meant that this policy can no longer achieve its objective in the same way. While these changes have the potential to enable more people to live in the three main town centres in Mid Devon, increase footfall and help support the evening economy, it also has potential to result in the loss of shops and other commercial uses, breaking up areas of primary shopping frontage and eroding the character and appearance of their primary shopping areas. It is not known what the scale of impact might be and whether the benefit of more residential use in town centres might outweigh any losses of commercial uses and would not fundamentally

harm the vitality and viability of the town centres. Without the updated Local Plan consideration of the changes to the current environment such as the use classes and changing shopping habits cannot be fully considered with policies to support our changing needs.

### **Communities**

- 4.14 The current Local Plan designates 22 villages and 3 towns. Sustainable development underlies the adopted Local Plan with development guided to our more sustainable locations in the District. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of living conditions and the quality of the physical environment. The need for social distancing and restrictions imposed on public gatherings and travel have meant changes to the way we live, work and take leisure activities. The types of homes people live in (and their affordability), the availability of private amenity space, proximity of places of employment, schools, shops, and access to green space and opportunities for walking, cycling and other forms of exercise have been brought into focus. The reviewed plans, programmes and strategies set out the importance of liveability of where you live for all. Without an updated Plan there is the risk the Plan could be found out of date in which development would be ad hoc without strategic overview and may not lead to sustainable neighbourhoods. The opportunity to bring to the forefront the concept of the 20 minute neighbourhood whereby daily needs of residents are within a short distance from their homes may not be fully achieved.

## 5 Sustainability issues and challenges

5.1 The next stage in the appraisal process involves the identification of any sustainability challenges that relate to Mid Devon. These issues will have been highlighted as part of the review of relevant plans and, baseline data and identifying the likely future changes for the district without the implementation of Plan Mid Devon set out earlier in this document. This initial list bullet point the key sustainability issues identified at this stage of the SA and may expand further as a result of consultations undertaken as the Local Plan is prepared. The issues identified will also inform the sustainability objectives which form the basis of the framework to appraise the Local Plan strategy and policies as set out in the next section of this document.

5.2 This scoping report has highlighted the following sustainability issues within Mid Devon:

- Covid-19 Recovery
- Climate change
- Reaching Carbon Neutral Targets
- Waste reduction
- No natural progression of business space for businesses
- Low levels of inward commuting but strong out-commuting
- Low retention of high attaining school leavers
- Achieving clean growth
- Low business start up rates
- Uncertainty of the outcomes of the UK formally leaving the European Union
- Potential impacts on the natural and built environment from development
- Biodiversity levels continuing to fall
- Rich historic environment with some heritage assets at risk
- Conflict between some sustainability objective e.g. climate change and historic environment
- Deprivation in living environment
- Air quality issues
- High car dependency across the district
- Rural accessibility
- Access to new technology and digital communications
- Poor broadband speeds
- Meeting Mid Devon's future housing needs
- Housing becoming increasingly unaffordable
- Traffic congestion on specific routes in Mid Devon and cumulative traffic impacts
- Low wage and low skilled jobs leading to commuting out of the district for work
- Low business start up rates
- Ensuring well-designed places
- Town centre challenges due to changing national retailer requirements, online shopping and reduced consumer spending.
- Declining town centre health
- Access to everyday needs through sustainable modes of transport or everyday resources within easy reach



- Lack of, or unsafe pedestrian and cycling routes
- An aging population
- Loss of community services and facilities

## 6 A framework to assess sustainability

- 6.1 A framework is used to understand the sustainability effects of the Local Plan as it is being developed. This framework is central to the process of the SA and has been developed consisting of sustainability objectives, each of which includes a number of elements against which a policy will be appraised. The framework includes factors highlighted through this report that will affect the sustainability of the Local Plan.
- 6.2 The framework below offers a similar approach to that used in the previous Mid Devon SA for the current Local Plan 2013-2033. This approach is considered to offer flexibility as the new Local Plan will contain both high level strategic policies, site allocations and detailed policies to guide development management decisions.
- 6.3 The sustainability objectives proposed are distinct from the objectives of the Local Plan, though they may in some cases overlap with them. Some of the objectives have an interrelationship and some elements covered will cut across each other, however to allow analysis certain features have been collated under particular objectives. They will provide a way of checking whether the Local Plan objectives are sustainable and will test the social, environmental and economic effects of the plan. The indicators are not fixed at this stage, and can be amended in response to input received as a result of the scoping consultation exercise, if required.

Sustainability objective	Elements covered include
A) Protection of the natural environment	Habitats and biodiversity; flora and fauna; protected species; landscape
B) Protection and promotion of a quality built environment	Heritage assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and gardens, locally listed assets, archaeology; design and quality of development
C) Mitigating the effects of climate change	Reduced flood risk; promotion of low carbon or renewable energy; reductions in carbon emissions; walking and cycling provision; low carbon buildings; climate emergency and moving to net-zero carbon
D) Safeguarding and minimising resource use	Quality of soils, including contaminated land; water quality, including consideration of water framework directive objectives; minimisation of waste; impact on best and most versatile agricultural land
E) Promoting economic growth and employment	Increasing jobs; reducing out-commuting; skills training; rural vitality; tourism provision

Sustainability objective	Elements covered include
F) Supporting retail	Safeguarding the vitality and viability of town centres; relationship between new development and town centres; supporting viability of shopping facilities in rural areas
G) Meeting housing needs	Supply of housing; housing mix; house size; housing affordability; appropriate housing density to location; proximity to services and facilities
H) Ensuring community health and wellbeing	Community support for proposals; access to open space and recreation; limiting air, noise and light pollution to levels that do not damage human health or natural systems; integrated and sustainable forms of travel including walking, cycling and public transport; social deprivation; safe and secure environments; sustainable neighbourhoods; rural vitality
I) Delivering the necessary infrastructure	Roads and transportation; schools; health services; community facilities; green infrastructure; telecommunications; new technologies and digital connectivity

Table 1: Sustainability Appraisal Framework Objectives

6.4 In order to consider the impact of the Local Plan against the sustainability objectives, a scoring system is proposed as set out below. A score will be provided against each of the objectives to highlight a policy or proposal's sustainability impacts. The use of a scoring system with a range from +3 to -3 will highlight the scale of any potential impact so that it is possible to differentiate between a marginal or significant impact. The value and vulnerability of any existing designations including any recognised protection status of landscapes likely to be affected will also be considered and will influence the score. Pre and post mitigation scores will be provided where appropriate. Collectively, this will allow consideration of a policy's overall impact and permit comparison with other policies or proposals. Where negative impacts are highlighted, it will also permit proposals or policies to be modified and then rescored in order to determine whether their sustainability impacts have been made more positive.

Score	Rationale
+3	The policy/proposal will have a significant positive contribution towards achieving the objective
+2	The policy/proposal will have a positive impact in contributing towards achieving the objective
+1	The policy/proposal will have a minor positive impact in contributing towards achieving the objective
0	The policy/proposal will have no impact or will have some positive and some negative impacts thereby having a balanced effect in contributing towards achieving the objective
-1	The policy/proposal will have a minor negative impact in contributing towards achieving the objective
-2	The policy/proposal will have a negative impact in contributing towards achieving the objective
-3	The policy/proposal will have a significant negative contribution towards achieving the objective

Table 2: Sustainability Appraisal Framework Scoring Matrix

- 6.5 For site based appraisals, an appraisal guidance table is provided at Appendix 4 to help support consistent scoring for comparable sites. This sets out general guidance in applying the SA Framework pre-mitigation scoring for common considerations when assessing site options. A cumulative approach is suggested when considering each objective, for example, if a site scores a slight negative on more than one element within an objective an overall negative impact would be considered. Where the impact is uncertain an indicative score should be provided along with a '?'. In some cases, the scoring may differ from this guidance due to site-specific context. Post-mitigation guidance has not been provided, as the mitigation considered is likely to be different for each site and will be assessed on its own merit.
- 6.6 In addition to the scoring process, a brief description of the option considered will be provided which will identify the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects and a summary of information will be provided. This summary will describe the impact against each of the sustainability objectives, setting out the nature of the impact, how each is experienced and whether any of the impacts noted are offset by other effects of the policy. The summary can also set out additional mitigation measures that may be considered, the nature of impacts, probability, duration, frequency and whether the effects are reversible. It will describe whether impacts are secondary, cumulative, synergistic, temporary, permanent, short, medium or long-term. Furthermore the transboundary nature of the effects will be summarised where relevant. To ensure a proportionate approach, appraisals will focus on the environmental, economic and social impacts likely to be significant<sup>16</sup>. Where no or negligible impacts are considered these may not be mentioned in the appraisal

<sup>16</sup> National Planning Policy Guidance – Strategic environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 To meet the requirements of the SEA Directive, the Council must seek the views of the three statutory environmental consultation bodies – Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England. They are consulted upon and have the opportunity to comment on the scope and level of detail of the environmental information contained within this report. Local communities and other bodies are also being consulted on the content of this report.

## Appendix 1: Signposting table of how the SA meets the SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 1 – Criteria for Determining the Likely Significance of Effects on the Environment)

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 1)	Covered in SA
1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to -	
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	Chapter 1 Introduction of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021', sets out the purpose of the plan and the area it covers. This Chapter identifies examples of the types of projects such a planning applications that will follow the Local Plan's framework.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	Chapter 1 Introduction of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021', sets out the, purpose of the plan and the area it covers. It provides examples of the types of other plans and programmes that will be influenced by it.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	Chapter 1 Introduction of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021', identifies that a key objective of the Local Plan as set out in the NPPF (2021) is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	Chapter 2 Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies of and Appendix 3 Reviewed Plans, Programmes and strategies (full list), Chapter 3 Baseline Information, Chapter 4 Likely Future Changes Without Implementation and Chapter 5 Sustainability Issues and Challenges of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' combined identify the full suite of environmental problems relevant to the Local Plan. Chapter 5 Sustainability Issues and Challenges provides a summary of these environmental problems.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment	Chapter 2 Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies of and Appendix 3 Reviewed Plans, Programmes and strategies (full list) 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' identifies relevant plans,

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 1)	Covered in SA
(for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	programmes and strategies for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment including those in relation to waste management or water protection. Chapter 6 A framework to assess sustainability identifies a framework to assess the sustainability effects of the Local Plan including minimisation of waste and consideration of water framework directive objectives.
2. Characteristics of the effects of and the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to -	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' sets out a framework the sustainability effects of the Local Plan whereby in addition to a scoring process the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects are considered in a summary of information for each appraised option.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' sets out a framework the sustainability effects of the Local Plan, whereby the cumulative nature of effects is considered in the summary of each appraised option. A guidance table Appendix 4 SA Framework – Site Appraisal Guidance is also provided for site based appraisals which suggests a cumulative approach when considering each objective.
(c) the transboundary nature of the effects;	Chapter 2 Relevant plan, programmes and strategies of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' identifies relevant plans and programmes. Transboundary effects will also be considered at a later stage once options are considered as the Local Plan develops.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' sets out a framework the sustainability effects of the Local Plan, this includes risks to human health or the environment.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent	Chapter 1 Introduction of the 'Plan Mid Devon

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 1)	Covered in SA
of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);	Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' sets out the spatial extent of Mid Devon Local Plan and the population. Chapter 6 a Framework to Assess Sustainability sets out a framework to assess suitability whereby this will be applied to each option considered which will include a brief description of the option to be considered.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—  (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;  (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or  (iii) intensive land-use; and	Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' sets out a framework the sustainability effects of the Local Plan which will include consideration of the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected and notes that this will influence the framework scoring for each option assessed where applicable. This is repeated in Appendix 4 SA Framework – Site Appraisal which provides an appraisal guidance template for site based options.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess the Sustainability of the 'Plan Mid Devon Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report 2021' sets out a framework for the sustainability effects of the Local Plan which will include consideration of the protection status of landscapes, including recognised protection status of such landscapes.



## Appendix 2: Signposting table of how the SA meets the SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2 – Information for Environmental Reports)

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021):</b></p> <p>‘Chapter 1 Introduction’ of this report sets out the contents and main objectives of the plan.</p> <p>‘Chapter 2 Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies’ of this report sets out the relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.</p> <p>‘Appendix 3 Reviewed Plan, Programmes and Strategies (full list)’ provides a full list of reviewed plans and programmes.</p>
b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021):</b></p> <p>‘Chapter 3 Baseline information’ of this report considers the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment. ‘Chapter 4 likely future changes without implementation’ considers the likely evolution without the implementation of the updated Local Plan.</p>
c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021):</b></p> <p>‘Chapter 2 Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies’ of this report sets out the relationship with other relevant plans and programmes which have been grouped into themed areas.</p> <p>‘Chapter 3 Baseline information’ of this report considers the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment, it provides some identification of existing environmental characteristics that could be affected by the Plan</p> <p>‘Chapter 4 Likely Future Changes without Implementation’ identifies the environmental characteristics likely to be significantly affected in the</p>

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
	<p>absence of an updated Local Plan.</p> <p>‘Chapter 5 Sustainability issues and challenges’ of this report summarises the sustainability issues identified by the Sustainability Appraisal scoping report.</p> <p>‘Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability’ sets out nine sustainability objectives covering the wide range of themes likely to be relevant for the Local Plan. It is intended that these objectives within the framework proposed will provide a way of checking the environmental, social and economic characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by Plan Mid Devon as it is developed.</p> <p>‘Appendix 3: Reviewed Plans, Programmes and Strategies (full list)’ provides a full list of reviewed plans and programmes and provides greater detail on environmental characteristics likely to be affected and therefore which should be considered as part of the updated Local Plan.</p> <p>‘Appendix 4: SA Framework – Site Appraisal Guidance’ provides a template framework to assess sites following the nine sustainability objectives identified in Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability.</p>
d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021):</b></p> <p>‘Chapter 3 Baseline Information’ of this report considers the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment, it provides identification of existing environmental challenges which are relevant to the plan including any areas of particular environmental importance.</p>
e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021):</b></p> <p>‘Chapter 2 Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies’ of this report sets out the relationship with</p>

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	<p>other relevant plans and programmes which have been grouped into themed areas. This chapter identifies factors and policy defined by legislation, national policies and other plans and strategies at a local level which are relevant to the plan, including environmental considerations to be taken into account during the Plan preparation.</p> <p>‘Appendix 3: Reviewed Plans, Programmes and Strategies (full list)’ provides a full list of reviewed plans and programmes which is summarised in Chapter 2.</p>
f) the likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors (these effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative impacts);	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021)</b></p> <p>‘Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability’ sets out nine sustainability objectives covering the wide range of themes likely to be relevant for the Local Plan. It is intended that these objectives within the framework proposed will provide a way of checking the environmental, social and economic characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by Plan Mid Devon as it is developed. This chapter recognises the interrelationship between the objectives with some elements covered cutting across each other, however to allow analysis certain features have been collated under particular objectives. The chapter sets out the how the effects will be considered including secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term, permanent, temporary, positive and negative impacts through a scoring system and summary.</p> <p>‘Appendix 4: SA Framework – Site Appraisal Guidance’ provides a template framework to assess sites following the nine sustainability objectives identified in Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability.</p>

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021)</b></p> <p>‘Chapter 6 A Framework to Assess Sustainability’ sets out a framework to assess the sustainability of the Plan. It provides the opportunity to consider mitigating factors in the policy or proposal and the ability to suggest additional mitigation where appropriate. It will also permit proposals or policies to be modified and then rescored in order to determine whether their sustainability impacts have been made more positive.</p> <p>‘Appendix 4: SA Framework – Site Appraisal Guidance’ provides a template to assess sites following the Framework set out in Chapter 6.</p>
h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021)</b></p> <p>This has not been undertaken at the scoping stage of the SA. The Local Plan is at a Regulation 18 consultation stage which represents a scoping stage of the Plan to decide what should be included in the Plan. As such reasons for selecting alternatives is not possible. However the SA scoping does introduce the proposed framework to assess sustainability in Chapter 6 ‘A Framework to Assess Sustainability’, which describes how the assessment is to be undertaken and includes an ‘uncertain’ effect as part of the framework to assist in identifying where there were any difficulties encountered in compiling the required information.</p>
i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with regulation 17;	<p>This has not been considered at the scoping stage of the SA. The Local Plan is at a Regulation 18 consultation stage which represents a scoping stage of the Plan to decide what should be included in the Plan. As such a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring cannot yet be considered. This will be considered at a later stage as the plan</p>

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
	progresses.
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021)</b></p> <p>A non-technical summary is published alongside the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021). A summary of which paragraphs meet the requirements of the above headings is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Para 1 – 3</li> <li>b) Para 4 – 6</li> <li>c) Para 7 – 8</li> <li>d) Para 3-8</li> <li>e) Para 3</li> <li>f) Para 7 – 8</li> <li>g) Para 7 – 8</li> <li>h) N/A at this stage of the Local Plan process</li> <li>i) N/A at this stage of the Local Plan process</li> </ul>
The report must include the information that may reasonably be required taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment, the contents and level of detail in the plan or programme, its stage in the decision-making process and the extent to which certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels in that process to avoid duplication of the assessment (Article 5.2)	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021)</b></p> <p>Chapter 1 ‘Introduction’ provides an introduction and context of Mid Devon District and the proposed production of a Local Plan. The Report considers relevant plans and programmes in Chapter 2, baseline information about Mid Devon in Chapter 3, Sustainability issues and challenges in Chapter 5 and set out a framework to assess sustainability for consultation in Chapter 6.</p> <p>The Chapter 1 ‘Introduction’ and signposting table identifies the stage of the Local Plan and this signposting table in Appendix 2 makes clear where certain matters are more appropriately assessed at different levels e.g. where the SEA directive has not been met within the SA due to the stage of the Local Plan.</p>
<b>Who should be consulted during SEA/SA process</b>	

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
<p>Authorities with environmental responsibility, when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information which must be included in the environmental report (Article 5.4)</p>	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021):</b></p> <p>Chapter 7 'Consultation' identifies that the Council will provide the opportunity to the three statutory environmental consultation bodies Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England to comment on the SA. The opportunity to comment on the scope and level of detail of the information contained within the scoping report will also be provided to local communities and other bodies for a minimum of 6 weeks. Every person and organisation including statutory consultees that appear on the Mid Devon Planning Policy database at the time of publication will be informed of the opportunity to comment on the Plan Mid Devon Scoping Report and associated documents including the SA.</p>
<p>Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Article 6.1, 6.2)</p>	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021):</b></p> <p>Chapter 7 'Consultation' identifies that the Council will provide the opportunity to the three statutory environmental consultation bodies Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England to comment on the SA. The opportunity to comment on the scope and level of detail of the information contained within the scoping report will also be provided to local communities and other bodies for a minimum of 6 weeks. Every person and organisation including statutory consultees that appear on the Mid Devon Planning Policy database at the time of publication will be informed of the opportunity to comment on the Plan Mid Devon Scoping Report and associated documents including the Sustainability Appraisal. It is the earliest stage in the plan preparation process providing early and effective opportunity within appropriate timeframes for authorities with environmental responsibility and the public to express their opinion.</p>

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
Other EU Member States, where the implementation of the plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment of that country (Article 7)	Not relevant to the SA of the Mid Devon Local Plan.
<b>Decision-making</b>	
The environmental report and the results of the consultations must be taken into account in decision-making (Article 8)	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021)</b></p> <p>This SA Scoping Report 2021 was provided alongside the suite of materials relevant to the Plan Mid Devon Issues Scoping Consultation to MDDC Cabinet November 2021, who in taking into account the materials before them including the SA would decide on whether to consult on the materials presented.</p> <p>Consultation will be undertaken on the Plan Mid Devon Scoping Report and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The results of the consultation will be taken into account in decision-making.</p>
<b>Provision of information on the decision</b>	
<p>When the plan or programme is adopted, the public and any countries consulted under Article 7 must be informed and the following made available to those so informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the plan or programme as adopted</li> <li>• the environmental report</li> <li>• a statement summarising               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme</li> <li>b. how the environmental report has been taken into</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2021)</b></p> <p>This requirement is only required when the plan or programme is adopted. The Local Plan is at a Regulation 18 consultation stage which represents a scoping stage of the Plan to decide what should be included in the Plan.</p>

SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
<p>account,</p> <p>c. the opinions expressed in response to:</p> <p>i. the invitation referred to in regulation 13(2)(d)</p> <p>ii. action taken by the responsible authority in accordance with regulation 13(4)</p> <p>have been taken into account;</p> <p>d. how the results of any consultations entered into under regulation 14(4) have been taken into account;</p> <p>e. the reasons for choosing the plan or programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with; and</p> <p>f. the measures that are to be taken to monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of the plan or programme (regulation 16)</p>	
<b>Monitoring</b>	
<p>Monitoring of the significant environmental effects of the plan's or programme's implementation with the purpose of identifying unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage and being able to undertake appropriate remedial action (regulation 17(1)).</p> <p>Monitoring arrangements may comprise or include arrangements established for other purposes</p>	<p>This has not been considered at the scoping stage of the SA. The Local Plan is at a Regulation 18 consultation stage which represents a scoping stage of the Plan to decide what should be included in the Plan. As such, monitoring measures will be considered at a later stage as the plan progresses.</p>



SEA Directive Requirements (Schedule 2)	Covered in SA
(regulation 17(2)).	

### Appendix 3: Reviewed Plans, Programmes and Strategies (full list)

#### Climate Change

Plans/programmes/strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Climate Change)
The 2008 Climate Change Act (Amended 2019)	The Climate Change Act places a legal requirement on the Government to dramatically reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It must also prepare the UK for the effects of climate change. An amendment to the Act was made in 2019 to the 2050 target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from 80% to 100%.
Paris Agreement 2015	Legally binding international treaty on climate change. Adopted by 196 Parties at COP21 In Paris 12 Dec 2015 and entered into force on 4 Nov 2016. Global agreement to limit global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. Countries aim to reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible to achieve a carbon neutral world by mid-century.
Connecting the Culm (2012 – present) [2021 last updated]	The Connecting the Culm project is part of Co-Adapt, an international programme working to test ways of making river catchment more resilient to the impacts of climate change (mainly flooding and drought), using nature-based solutions.
Devon climate emergency declaration (2019) DCC, MDDC	At a full Council Meeting 21 Feb 2019, DCC agreed to declare a 'Climate Emergency' and to initiate a county-wide partnership to ensure Devon becomes Carbon Neutral by 2050. This action was prompted by the 15 <sup>th</sup> Special Report from the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warning that a 2°C Rise in global temperatures would put up to 30% of all species at risk of extinction, 90% of tropical coral reefs would be lost, crop yields would reduce and droughts would become more common. The IPCC has recommended that by 2030, global GHG emissions should be reduced by 45% of 2010 levels and 100% by 2050. MDDC joined DCC along with other organisations to form the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group. May 2019 the partnership endorsed a declaration to reduce carbon emissions through 'collective action, innovation and influence' and is now a formal partner in the process to produce a county-wide carbon plan.
The Carbon Plan: Delivering our Low Carbon Future (HM Government, 2011)	The Carbon Plan sets out how the UK will achieve decarbonisation within the framework of energy policy. Within the next 10 years the plan requires the development and deployment of new technologies that will be needed to halve emissions in the 2020s. Domestic transport emissions account for nearly a quarter of UK emissions; to achieve target vehicles will need to run on ultra-low emission technologies such as electric batteries, hydrogen fuel cells and plug-in hybrid technology. These changes will bring

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Climate Change)
	environmental benefits including improved local air quality. Encouraging the use of public transport, cycling or walking will boost the reduction in emissions. By 2050, all buildings will need to have an emissions footprint close to zero, using better insulation, energy-efficient products and having heating from low carbon sources. Manufacturing processes will need to deliver a fair share of emissions cuts. By 2050 emissions from the power sector will need to be close to zero.
Clean Growth Strategy (2017) HM Government	Clean growth means growing our national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. This strategy sets out a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of 'clean growth'. Objectives 1. To meet domestic commitments at lowest net cost 2. To maximise social and economic benefits for UK. To meet objectives UK will nurture low carbon technologies, processes and systems that are as cheap as possible. Key policies and proposals include improving business and industry efficiency. Improving energy efficiency of homes. Roll out low carbon heating. Accelerate shift to low carbon transport. Deliver clean, smart, flexible power. Enhance the benefits and value of natural resources. Lead in the public sector. Government leadership in driving clean growth.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. It should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience, encourage reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing building and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2020-2024	Encourages growth in locations that provide low carbon homes. Support clean growth industry sectors. Zero carbon policies for new development. Encourage retro-fitting of measures to reduce energy use in buildings. Encourage 'green' sources of energy, supply new policies and develop plans to de-carbonise energy consumption in Mid Devon. Identify opportunities to work with landowners to secure additional hedgerow planning and reforestation. Encourage new housing and commercial developments to be exemplars in terms of reducing carbon use. Increase recycling and reduce waste. Explore large-scale tree-planting projects and re-wilding and address carbon pressure. Promote sustainable farming. Encourage communities to deliver their own projects to reduce carbon emissions. Use new development as opportunities to help communities to become increasingly sustainable and self-sustaining at neighbourhood level (district heating, energy use, recycling/re-use systems etc). Increase recycling rates and reduce amounts of residual waste generated.

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Climate Change)
Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (Nov 2020)	The plan outlines how the UK will invest in clean and innovative/pioneering technologies to mitigate the effect of climate change. The points cover strategies on clean technologies (offshore wind, low carbon hydrogen, nuclear power, zero emission vehicles, green public transport, cycling and walking, jet zero and green ships), greener buildings, investing in carbon capture, usage and storage, while protecting the natural environment.
Devon Waste Plan to 2031 (Adopted 2014) DCC	Provides the policy framework for decisions by Devon County Council on planning applications for waste management development over the period to 2031. Over the period to 2031, Devon will lead the way in sustainable waste management by working towards a zero waste economy while treating unavoidable waste as a valuable resource.
Resources and Waste Strategy (DEFRA, 2018)	Sets out how we will preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. Minimise the damage caused to our natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully and by tackling waste crime.
National Planning Policy for Waste (2014)	Sets out waste hierarchy and locational criteria for waste management.
Waste Management Plan for England (DEFRA, 2021)	The Waste Management Plan for England is an analysis of the current waste management situation in England. The plan does not introduce new policies or change how waste is managed in England. Aim is to bring current waste management policies together under one national plan.
<b><u>Climate change – sustainability conclusions</u></b> <p>The UK is committed to achieving targets in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to tackle climate change. Development has a significant part to play to help achieve these targets for reducing carbon emissions. Planning needs to minimise vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, and support the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy development. Improving the energy efficiency of the fabric of buildings, reuse materials and encouraging low or net zero carbon energy sources will limit CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Minimising waste and following the waste hierarchy will contribute to tackling climate change.</p>	

**Wealth and prosperity**

<b>Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed</b>	<b>Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Wealth and Prosperity)</b>
The Plan for Growth (HM Treasury/BIS, 2011)	The Government's economic policy objective is to achieve strong, sustainable and balanced growth evenly shared across the country and between industries. Goals include making the UK one of the best places in Europe to start, finance and grow a business (through the implementation of a presumption in favour of sustainable development, liberalisation of use classes and guarantees on planning application decision timetable) and encouraging investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy (including through increased investment in low carbon technologies).
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
Build Back Better Plan (HoSW LEP – Accessed from website 2021)	Evidence base identifies Energy, High Value Engineering and Digital as the dynamic heart of the local economy (Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay) with opportunities to drive clean and inclusive growth across multiple sectors. Build back better focuses on accelerating opportunities through the delivery of transformational LEP sponsored programmes of activity.
Local Industrial Strategy (HoSW LEP, 2020)	Sets out how we can realise the area's potential (Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay) capitalising on new and emerging technologies whilst reducing the area's carbon footprint, increasing social mobility and protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2020-2024	Economy is one of four priorities in the Corporate Plan. Opportunities it identifies include working with developers to secure plans for the J27 'Devon Gateway' development site. Consider acquiring or creating new business parks to accelerate economic growth. Identify strategic and tactical interventions to create economic and community confidence and pride in the places we live. Facilitate the creation of exciting new commercial opportunities within strategic developments.
Economy Strategy for Mid Devon (2019-2024)	This Economic Strategy sets out the District Council's ambition to support and drive forward the local economy over the next five years. It reviews the statistical evidence that underpins the local economy and the national and regional policy framework within which it is set. The strategy identifies the overall aims of the Council – to increase wages and skills, increase prosperity and deliver a growth agenda.

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Wealth and Prosperity)
Safeguarding Our Soils: A Strategy for England (DEFRA, 2009)	Planning decisions must take sufficient account of soil quality, particularly when significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land are involved. The document also considers the need for local authority officers to make proportionate and robust decisions regarding the remediation of contaminated land. Sustainable remediation that does not involve the wholesale removal and replacement of soil should be encouraged.
Rural Economy Growth Review (DEFRA, 2011)	Businesses in rural areas make a substantial contribution to the national economy, generating about 22% of employment. Between 2001 and 2009, the population of England's rural areas grew 10% faster than urban areas. There are strong interdependencies between market towns and their rural hinterlands. Smaller businesses play a relatively strong role in rural areas, accounting for over 50% of employment in rural areas, whilst home working rates are more than twice as high in rural than urban areas. Growth of rural businesses is restricted by broadband coverage, with 23% of rural household having no or slow connections. Populations of rural areas tend to be older than urban populations, and there are a substantially lower proportion of ethnic minority backgrounds.
Foresight. The Future of Food and Farming (Government Office for Science, 2011)	The global food system will experience an unprecedented confluence of pressures over the next 40 years. Population size will increase, raising demand, whilst competition for land, water and energy will intensify, while the effects of climate change will become increasingly apparent. Priorities for action include making sustainable food production central in development; working on the assumption there is little new land for agriculture; promoting sustainable intensification; including the environment in food system economics; reducing waste; anticipate major issues with water availability for food production and work to change consumption patterns.
Build Back Better: our plan for growth (2021) HM Treasury	The plan sets out government's strategy to support economic growth through significant investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation. The objective is to achieve economic prosperity across the UK. It includes stimulating short-term economic activity and drive long-term productivity improvements via record investment in broadband, roads, rail and cities; supporting productivity growth through high-quality skills and training; supporting our small and medium-sized enterprises to grow through new schemes to boost productivity; invest in net zero to create new opportunities for economic growth and jobs across the country.
Clean Growth Strategy (2017) HM Government	Clean growth means growing our national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. This strategy sets out a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of 'clean growth'. Objectives 1. To meet domestic commitments at lowest net cost 2. To max social and economic benefits for UK. To meet objectives UK will nurture low carbon technologies, processes and systems that are as cheap as possible. Key policies and proposals include improving business and industry efficiency,. Improving energy efficiency of homes. Roll out low carbon heating. Accelerate shift to low carbon transport. Deliver clean, smart,

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Wealth and Prosperity)
	flexible power. Enhance the benefits and value of natural resources. Leading in the public sector. Government leadership in driving clean growth.
Policy brief – how increased connectivity is boosting economic prospects of rural areas (DEFRA, 2014)	The policy brief identifies the importance of rural areas is set to grow as increased connectivity enables more flexible working, further growth in knowledge-based industries in rural areas and increased transfer of innovation. The continuation of such trends could be expected to lead to stronger productivity growth, job creation and higher output in rural areas than urban. The Government is supporting these trends and enabling rural areas to harness their economic potential by investing in connectivity.
<p><b><u>Economy and economic development – sustainability conclusions</u></b></p> <p>The planning system should support the development of strong, sustainable and balanced economic growth. National Government has an objective to achieve prosperity across the UK. The rural economy is recognised as providing an important contribution to the National economy. Mid Devon is largely a rural district and the rural economy is an important feature to be considered. There is a greater focus on clean growth which links to the Climate Change priorities. Locally there is an ambition to deliver a growth agenda and increase prosperity. Energy, high value engineering and digital area identified as the heart of the local economy with opportunities to drive clean and inclusive growth across multiple sectors.</p>	

**Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits**

<b>Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed</b>	<b>Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits)</b>
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006	The act places a duty on public authorities (replacing s74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) to have regard to biodiversity as far as is consistent with the proper exercise of their functions.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	The act sets in place protective measures for wildlife, including wild birds and plants.
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	An Act to make provision for public access to the countryside. Requires local authorities to have regard to nature conservation when performing rights of way functions, including power to divert PROWs away from SSSIs. The act gives greater protection to wildlife and natural features by making provisions for the conservation of biodiversity, and improving protection for SSSIs.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	The framework requires that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The historic environment should be protected, enhanced and supported through planning policies, preventing unnecessary devaluation of the historic assets and their settings. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to protection and enhancement of biodiversity and minimise impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Local plans should also make provision for green infrastructure, requiring new developments to include green infrastructure. Local planning authorities are required to support the transition to low carbon future, taking full account of flood risk, minimise vulnerability, encourage the reuse of existing resources and improve resilience. The framework identifies that strategic policies should be informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, and should manage flood risk from all sources. It cautions to take into account all sources of flood risk and the current and future impacts of climate change.
Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan (2019-24)	The plan highlights the special qualities of the AONB as the isolated, unspoilt rural area; the diversity of landscape patterns and pictures; the unique geology; and the architectural appeal. Priorities include maintaining and enhancing the features that make the landscape distinctive; ensure conservation and understanding of the historic environment (buildings, archaeology, landscape); to conserve and enhance important wildlife habitats and unique geology by forming coherent and resilient networks; to protect high



Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits)
	quality water, air, soils and land form impacts of the climate change; to support sustainable farming and forestry practices that conserve and enhance the special qualities of the AONB; sustainable recreation and tourism, based on the qualities of the landscape; new development to be of the highest quality, in keeping with landscape, historic character and other special qualities; to provide and manage appropriate transport networks and services; and a sustainable rural economy that conserves and enhances landscape character.
Exe Estuary Management Plan 2016-2021	The Plan gives consideration to the management of the wider Exe catchment area. Policies include usage of sustainable drainage systems to improve water quality in the catchment, improved understanding about the link between catchment land use, water quality and sediment deposition in the Estuary, and development or co-ordination of partnerships to identify, manage and improve water quality within the Exe Estuary and its catchment. It further points out that the ecological status of the catchment is affected by factors such as source pollution from mixed agricultural run-off and point source sewage discharges.
A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018)	The national plan outlines the steps the government proposes to take to enhance the natural environment. Those steps include land sustainability, recovering nature, increasing resources efficiency and reducing pollution and waste, overall protection and improvement of the environment. The government introduced plans for a Nature Recovery Network to protect and restore wildlife and provide opportunities to re-introduce species that we have lost from our countryside. It also outlined the plan to commission a Review of National Parks and AONBs.
Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)	The act created Natural England and the Commission for Rural Communities. It also expanded the biodiversity duty to all local authorities, community, parish and town councils, police, fire and health authorities and utility companies. Section 40 of the act requires every public authority to have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity.
The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024 (2021)	The government has committed to spend over £500 million to increase tree planting rates across the UK. The action plan encourages local authorities to form partnerships with local communities and work with developers to plant and manage trees.
Emergency Tree Plan for the UK (2020)	The Plan aims to deliver effective tree-based climate mitigation. The key recommendations are to expand the tree cover by protecting the existing trees and woodland, afforestation, promote natural regeneration and increase public funding for the protection, restoration and expansion of native woodland. It encourages local authorities to protect trees outside woods,

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits)
	commission and deliver tree and woodland strategies by 2020 and ensure that development land includes trees.
Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement (Forestry Commission England 2013)	The policy statement sets out clear priorities for future Government policy-making, focused on protecting, improving and expanding our public and private woodlands. It covers, among other things, the future of the Public Forest Estate, woodland creation and management, the economic development of the forestry sector, community involvement in local woodlands and tree health.
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) including 2019 Regulations	Provides the protection of European Site and sets out the requirements of a Habitat Regulations Assessment to assess the impact of a plan or programme on a European site.
Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (DEFRA, 2002)	The strategy sets a mission for the next decade requiring a halt to overall biodiversity loss, support to healthy well-functioning ecosystems and to establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. In particular, reducing environmental pressures on biodiversity is a specific concern. This will be undertaken through reforms of the planning system to ensure a strategic approach to planning for nature.
England Biodiversity Strategy – Climate Change Adaptation Principles (DEFRA, 2008)	The document sets out principles for conserving biodiversity and protecting them from the direct and indirect impacts of climate change. The principles include conserving existing biodiversity, conserving protected areas and all other high quality habitats, conserving the range and ecological variability of habitats and species, maintaining existing ecological networks, creating buffer zones and high quality habitats, understand change is inevitable, make space for the natural development of rivers and coasts and raise awareness of the benefits of the natural environment to society.
Environment Act (2021)	The Act makes provision for environmental targets, improvement plans and policies, about air quality, water and land drainage, measurable biodiversity net gain in planning, local nature recovery strategies, habitats regulation and tree felling.

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits)
The Nature of Devon – A Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan (Devon County Council, 2005)	Objectives of the action plan include ensuring that planning policies recognise the importance of biodiversity and the geological features of Devon, to ensure consideration is given to nature conservation issues in the implementation of planning, to reconcile the objectives of bio- and geodiversity conservation with the need for economic and social development in achieving environmental sustainability and to maintain a dialogue with relevant authorities leading to the identification of all sites of national or international geological heritage which do not benefit from SSSI status.
National Heritage Protection Plan (English Heritage, 2012)	The plan seeks to ensure that England's historic environment is not needlessly at risk of damage, erosion or loss; is experienced, understood and enjoyed by local communities; contributes to sustainable and distinctive places to live and work; and helps deliver positive and sustainable economic growth.
The Heritage Statement 2017 (DCMS)	Sets out the Government's vision and strategy for Heritage and the historic environment. At government level we will continue to emphasise the value of the historic environment and its role in creating great places to live, work and visit.
Flood and Water Management Act (2010)	Outlines local authorities to take responsibility for the co-ordination of flood risk management in their area. The 'lead local flood authority' will be the County Council and they will develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local food risk management. The act mandates that policies should aim to reduce water consumption and prevent surface water flooding.
South West River Basin Management Plan (Environment Agency, 2015)	The plan is prepared under the European Water Framework Directive, which requires all EU countries throughout the European Union to manage the water environment to consistent standards. This plan provides a framework for action and future regulation. Priorities include prevention of deterioration of water bodies, statutory protection of bodies of water that have specific uses, implementation of legally binding objectives for each quality element in every water body and progressive reduction of pollution of groundwater.
EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)	This directive establishes a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater. The framework promotes sustainable water use, ensures reduction of pollution of groundwater and prevents its further pollution. The framework also contributes to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts for provision of the sufficient supply of good quality surface water and groundwater, and for the protection of territorial and marine waters. It is transposed into UK law and therefore remains in place following Brexit.

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits)
Future Water: The government's water strategy for England (Defra 2008)	The strategy sets out a framework for water management and vision for the water sector in 2030. It sets out the steps that are needed to provide sustainable delivery of secure water supplies and an improved and protected water environment. Minimum water efficiency standards for all new homes, preparation of 25-year water resources management plans by water companies, supporting farmers in the adoption of more environment-friendly farming practices and promotion of sustainable drainage are just a few of measures the strategy is putting forward.
Devon Minerals Plan 2011-2031(Adopted 2017) DCC	Provides the policy framework for decisions by DCC on planning applications for mineral development over the period to 2033, together with decisions on non-mineral development by other planning authorities that may affect mineral resources. Vision: minerals development in Devon will provide timely and adequate supply of minerals of national and local importance, while maintaining the County's quality of life and reinforcing the quality, distinctive character, diversity and sustainability of its outstanding environment.
<p data-bbox="181 707 1444 738"><b><u>Natural and historic built environment and respecting environmental limits – Sustainability conclusions</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="181 762 2054 962">The plans, programmes and strategies reviewed identify the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment. The natural and built environment contributes to sustainable and distinctive places to live and work and helps to deliver positive and sustainable economic growth. National policy identifies the need to provide net gains for biodiversity and sets out the importance of respecting environmental limits in the context of climate change including flood risk, reuse of existing resources and improving resilience. Recently a national plan to deliver effective tree-based climate mitigation has been published and the Environment Act was passed in 2021.</p>	

**Health and well-being**

<b>Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed</b>	<b>Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Health and well-being)</b>
Lifetime neighbourhoods (MHCLG, 2011)	The report contains guidance on the design of neighbourhoods to make them inclusive regardless of age or disability. The components that make up lifetime neighbourhoods include good access (enabling residents to get out and about in the area they live), services and amenities (neighbourhoods with a mix of residential, retail and employment uses and access to services including health, post office, banking facilities or cash machines), safe and inclusive built environments, with locally accessible greenspace and a range of affordable housing choices (based on inclusive design principles with adaptable space/layout to meet changing needs).
Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England (HM Government, 2011)	Housing and planning policies should widely positively reflect the wide range of circumstances and lifestyles of older people, who already occupy nearly a third of all homes. Planning for homes and communities where older people can remain involved with their families, friends and communities and able to choose where and how they live. New housing developments need to make suitable provision for ageing populations in the long-term, ensuring a mix of property types, including Lifetime Homes.
National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2021)	Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. Planning policies and decisions should help to provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. Public safety should be promoted. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2020-2024	Promote new, more integrated approaches to promoting good health and healthier living especially in the context of planned new developments. Seek opportunities to address public health issues and disparities to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Mid Devon. Work with NHS and other health bodies to promote use of our leisure centres.
Health and Social Care Act (2012)	The Bill is a part of a plan to modernise the NHS. It introduces Health and Wellbeing Boards in all upper tier local authorities that will strengthen joint working between local government and the NHS. The local democratic legitimacy of commissioning of health and care services is increased by the boards as they bring together various stakeholders to assess and develop strategy to address the needs.
Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020-2025) 2019	The strategy sets out four priorities: (1) to create opportunities for all by narrowing gaps in educational attainment and adult skills, reducing child poverty levels, supporting economic growth in more disadvantaged areas and increasing social mobility; (2) to create healthy, safe, strong and sustainable communities by improving housing conditions and reduce homelessness, creating conditions

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Health and well-being)
Devon Health and Wellbeing Board	for good health, physical activity and social interaction, supporting healthy workplaces and schools and helping keep communities safe; (3) to focus on mental health by reducing loneliness, identifying people at risk and intervening and promoting a positive approach; and (4) to support people to stay as healthy as possible for as long as possible by enabling people to live healthier lives, detecting the early signs of disease, supporting those living with long-term conditions and supporting carers to improve and maintain their own health and wellbeing.
<p><b><u>Health and wellbeing – sustainability conclusions</u></b></p> <p>The reviewed plans and strategies set out the importance of delivering an integrated approach to new development. Access to services, the creation of safe lifetime neighbourhoods and the availability of local greenspace, services and facilities for communities are vital in the creation of healthy, inclusive communities which meet changing needs.</p>	

**Rural areas**

<b>Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed</b>	<b>Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Rural areas)</b>
Rural Statement (DEFRA, 2012)	Rural areas are home to one-fifth of the English population, and 28% of England's businesses. The key priorities include wanting rural businesses to make a sustainable contribution to national growth; engaging directly with rural communities; wanting rural people to have fair access to public services and be actively engaged in shaping the places in which they live.
Rural Economy Growth Review (DEFRA, 2011)	Businesses in rural areas make a substantial contribution to the national economy, generating about 22% of employment. Between 2001 and 2009, the population of England's rural areas grew 10% faster than urban areas. There are strong interdependencies between market towns and their rural hinterlands. Smaller businesses play a relatively strong role in rural areas, accounting for over 50% of employment in rural areas, whilst home working rates are more than twice as high in rural than urban areas. Growth of rural businesses is restricted by broadband coverage, with 23% of rural household having no or slow connections. Populations of rural areas tend to be older than urban populations, and there are a substantially lower proportion of ethnic minority backgrounds.
Foresight. The Future of Food and Farming (Government Office for Science, 2011)	The global food system will experience an unprecedented confluence of pressures over the next 40 years. Population size will increase, raising demand, whilst competition for land, water and energy will intensify, while the effects of climate change will become increasingly apparent. Priorities for action include making sustainable food production central in development; working on the assumption there is little new land for agriculture; promoting sustainable intensification; including the environment in food system economics; reducing waste; anticipate major issues with water availability for food production and work to change consumption patterns.
Policy brief – how increased connectivity is boosting economic prospects of rural areas (DEFRA, 2014)	The policy brief identifies the importance of rural areas is set to grow as increased connectivity enables more flexible working, further growth in knowledge-based industries in rural areas and increased transfer of innovation. The continuation of such trends could be expected to lead to stronger productivity growth, job creation and higher output in rural areas than urban. The Government is supporting these trends and enabling rural areas to harness their economic potential by investing in connectivity.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies and decisions should support a prosperous rural economy. Planning policies and

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Rural areas)
	decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, and recognise the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agriculture is necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.
Safeguarding Our Soils: A Strategy for England (DEFRA, 2009)	Soil is a fundamental and essentially a non-renewable natural resource, providing an essential link between the components that make up our environment. Soils vary hugely from region to region and even from field to field. Soils perform valuable functions including nutrient cycling, water regulation, carbon storage, support for biodiversity and wildlife, and providing a platform for food and fibre production and infrastructure. Soils have been degraded by human actions, and are vulnerable to erosion, compaction and loss of organic matter; such changes are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. By 2030 all England's soils will be managed sustainably and degradation threats tackled successfully. Planning decisions must take sufficient account of soil quality, particularly when significant areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land are involved. The document also considers the need for local authority officers to make proportionate and robust decisions regarding the remediation of contaminated land. Sustainable remediation that does not involve the wholesale removal and replacement of soil should be encouraged.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan (2020-2024) MDDC	Rural Devon is a great gift to us and the planet. We will challenge the suburbanisation of the countryside while encouraging growth in locations that provide low carbon homes for our communities. This will sit alongside the economic opportunities of greater digital connectivity in rural areas, our support for clean growth industry sectors and a thriving agricultural industry that showcases sustainable food-to-fork practices and low food miles to market.
Economy Strategy for Mid Devon (2019-2024)	The strategy identifies high levels of self-employment and a large number of micro-enterprises particularly in the rural areas. Mid Devon remains a largely rural district with outstanding natural capital but with issues around rurality, including economic isolation and a lack of services and resources in the rural areas which suppress rural potential. There is a need for greater investment in digital infrastructure and support for a diversified rural economy to unlock rural economic growth. The strategy has an objective for the district's rural economy to be successful and is synonymous with being truly 'Green'.
Connecting Devon and Somerset (2014-present) programme	Connecting Devon and Somerset is a local government-led partnership and has been set up to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the market has failed to invest. It is bringing connectivity and opportunities to many more isolated homes, businesses and communities helping to plug the gaps in commercial infrastructure.



**Rural areas – sustainability conclusions**

Rural areas are home to a significant proportion of our population. Rural businesses make a substantial contribution to the economy and should be supported to grow. Agriculture remains an industry that has faced many challenges but is an important feature of our rural areas. Rural areas experience social issues such as poor access to services and facilities, whilst the growth of their economies may be hampered by poorer broadband speeds. National Policy seeks to support a prosperous rural economy. Programmes such as connecting Devon and Somerset has invested in digital communication in our rural areas. In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs.

Access to new technologies and digital communications

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Access to new technologies and digital communications)
Economic Strategy for Mid Devon (2019-2024) MDDC	The Economic Strategy sets out the District Council's ambition to support and drive forward the local economy from 2019-2024. With regard to digital connectivity it identifies that poor broadband speed and coverage are a significant barrier to growth for businesses. Mid Devon has some of the most digitally isolated areas in the whole of the UK in terms of broadband speeds and coverage and some of the district's worst served areas for broadband area also the areas with the worst transport infrastructure. Broadband is recognised as playing an ever increasingly strong role within business and therefore it is imperative that broadband issues across the district area addressed.
Greater Exeter Digital Connectivity Strategy (Adroit Economics for and on behalf of Greater Exeter Local Authorities) (2018)	The strategy is intended to provide a framework for both immediate and long term local authority initiatives and will provide the basis for inclusion of digital connectivity policy in the land use planning process, through inclusion of policy in the GESP. Greater Exeter's digital connectivity targets to reflect UK Government's latest targets. The Proposed Greater Exeter digital connectivity strategy seeks to be forward looking, to identify and put measures in place to help deliver future connectivity needs and infrastructure. Note the Great Exeter Strategic Plan is no longer being sought however the strategy is still relevant for the area previously considered by GESP which includes the Mid Devon District area.
Creating transformational digital infrastructure for Greater Exeter (scoping report from CBN in association with Adroit economics, 2019)	Provides outputs of consultation and exploration process design to support the implementation of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan through the creation of new digital infrastructure. The report sets out three sections, making the case for intervention, describing the methods and collaborative frameworks that can be used and recommended actions and structures designed to enable the implementation of transformational digital infrastructure. Note the Great Exeter Strategic Plan is no longer being sought however the report is still relevant for the area previously considered by GESP which includes the Mid Devon District area.
Connectivity and Infrastructure (DCC, 2021 area of focus)	By focusing on connectivity and take-up, investing in digital and non-digital infrastructure and promoting innovation, research and development we aim to help improve productivity and build a stronger local economy which will create higher standards of living or people in Devon, especially those in isolated rural areas. Aim is to ensure everyone in Devon has some access to a PC and the

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Access to new technologies and digital communications)
	internet, all people and businesses have the opportunity to benefit from high-speed broadband connection, including rural and isolated areas, key community buildings including schools and libraries are well served with a high quality broadband infrastructure, gaps are closed in regional and local inequality of access.
Connecting Devon and Somerset (2014-present) programme	Connecting Devon and Somerset is a local government-led partnership and has been set up to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the market has failed to invest. It is bringing connectivity and opportunities to many more isolated homes, businesses and communities helping to plug the gaps in commercial infrastructure.
The digital communications Infrastructure strategy (DCMS, 2015)	The 2015 strategy announces an ambition that ultrafast broadband of at least 100 Mbps should become available to nearly all UK premises. Freeing up further 4G spectrum, piloting superfast satellite connections and looking to increase the Universal Service Obligations will ensure that rural communities are not left behind. The Government's role in supporting industry is to remove barriers to investment, to cut the red tape that increases the cost of rollout and to ensure the continuance of the stable regulatory framework that makes the UK an attractive place to invest.
Connectivity – building world-class digital infrastructure for the UK (DCMS,2017)	The UK's digital infrastructure must be able to support the rapid increase in traffic providing coverage with sufficient capacity to ensure data can flow at the volume, speed and reliability required to meet the demands of modern life. Broadband and mobile must be treated as the fourth utility, with everyone benefiting from improved connectivity. Improved connectivity also increases innovation and productivity across the economy, bringing significant economic rewards. For most people, it is the quality of connection that matters, not the means of delivery. Look at what consumers want as they go about their lives where they live, work and travel in this digital age.
Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (DCMS, 2018)	In the coming decades, fixed and mobile networks will be the enabling infrastructure that drives economic growth. The UK is the world leader in superfast connectivity with more the 9% of premises covered. However, next generation Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) or 'full fibre' coverage is only 4% whereas world leaders like South Korea (c99%) and Japan (c97%). Mobile coverage is also improving with 67% of UK landmass has 4G signal from at least one operator (78% in 2017). For the UK to be the best place to start and grow digital businesses, we need greater investment to build fixed and wireless networks that are fit for the future. The Government has set clear, ambitious targets for the availability of full fibre and 5G networks, 15 million premises connected to full fibre by 2025, coverage across all parts of the country by 2033. Majority of the population to have 5G by 2027.
London Plan (2021)	Example of plan which provides a planning policy to drive full fibre technology. Policy S16 sets a minimum standard for every new home and business in London to be able to receive full fibre broadband connections. This seeks to benefit the residents and

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Access to new technologies and digital communications)
	businesses of new development but also by pulling wholesale infrastructure into the area to serve the new building, this will make installing connections to any surrounding homes or businesses more affordable.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	Advanced, high quality and reliable communications is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology and full fibre broadband connections.
<p><b>Access to new technologies and digital communications – sustainability conclusions</b></p> <p>The importance of digital infrastructure is identified nationally. It is seen as a fourth utility with everyone benefiting from improved connectivity. It is identified that improved connectivity increases innovation and productivity across the economy, bringing significant rewards. Mid Devon has some of the most digitally isolated areas in the UK and poor broadband speed and mobile coverage is identified as a barrier for economic growth. Already there is a local government led programme to improve the digital connectivity of Devon and Somerset.</p>	

Homes

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Homes)
Housing and Planning Act 2016 (HM Government, 2016)	This act introduced a number of changes to housing policy and the planning system. Part 1 – New Homes in England, addresses the issues of starter homes and self-build and custom house building.
Self-build & Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016); Self-build & Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016; and Self-build & Custom Housebuilding (Time for Compliance & Fees) Regulations 2016 (HM Government, 2015 – 2016)	<p>A package of legislation that places a number of duties and responsibilities on local authorities to increase the supply of self-build and custom housebuilding. In summary, the duties are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A requirement to keep and maintain a register of individuals / associations of individuals who are interested in self-build and custom housebuilding;</li> <li>• A requirement to have regard to the register when carrying out planning, housing, land disposal and regeneration functions; and</li> <li>• A duty to grant planning permission which requires that suitable development permission is granted for enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in the area.</li> </ul>
Fixing our broken housing market (HM Government, 2017)	This sets out plans to boost the supply of new homes in England and includes measures to build homes faster and diversify the housing market.

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Homes)
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	The National Planning Policy Framework supports the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes. Strategic policies should be informed by a local housing needs assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance. Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing need for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. Planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability.
Planning policy for traveller sites (MHCLG, 2015)	There should be fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. Local planning authorities should work collaboratively to develop fair and effective strategies to meet need through the identification of land for sites, planning over a reasonable timescale. In doing so, the Green Belt should be protected, and plan-making should aim to reduce the number of unauthorised developments. New policies should be fair, realistic and inclusive, and should increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations, reducing tensions between settled and traveller communities and enabling provision of suitable accommodation from which travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure whilst having due regard to the protection of local amenity and the environment.
Planning Practice Guidance (MHCLG, 2012 – 2021)	This sets out how the government's planning policies for England are expected to be applied. One key area is 'Housing and economic needs assessment' which sets out the methodology for assessing local housing needs. The standard method identifies the minimum annual housing need figure and there is generally an expectation that the standard method will be used to inform plan preparation.
Affordable Homes Update – Written Ministerial Statement (UK Parliament, 2021)	This statement issued substantial changes to planning policy which came into effect on 28 June 2021. The issues covered in the statement include, the definition of a First Homes, eligibility criteria, setting developer contributions, plans, development management and transitional arrangements, level of discount, exception sites and delivering shared ownership homes.
Self and Custom Build Action Plan (HM Government, 2021)	This sets out a number of interventions including better access to mortgage finance through a new 'Help to Build' scheme in order to deliver low deposit mortgages and improve the affordability of home ownership.

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Homes)
'Denied the Right to a Safe Home': Exposing the Housing Emergency (Shelter, 2021)	This states that the UK is experiencing a housing emergency characterised by millions of people denied a safe home, thousands of families stuck in temporary accommodation and people living on the streets. It argues that the current housing system is unaffordable, unfit, unstable and discriminatory.
Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (One Planet Council, 2010)	This is a sustainable development scheme (originally introduced in Wales) which takes forward low impact developments that either enhances or does not significantly diminish environmental quality. One Planet Developments can take a number of forms including single homes, co-operative communities or larger settlements.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2020 - 2024	'Homes is a key priority within the Corporate Plan. Some of the key aspirations include delivering more affordable housing and greater numbers of social rented homes; working with Community Land Trusts; introducing zero carbon policies, encouraging Modern Methods of Construction and self-build opportunities and working to initiate the delivery of the new garden village at Culm
Mid Devon Sustainable Housing Strategy 2021 - 2025	Sets a clear direction for the next five years, to offer more housing with more choice by developing new homes and improving existing homes and communities. There is particular focus on affordable and social rent properties alongside a strong commitment to having low-carbon, accessible and adaptable homes. The strategy is divided into four chapters: Housing, Optimise, Making the Most and Engage (HOME).

**Housing – sustainability conclusions**

Nationally the country has not been building enough homes to house its population, and therefore significantly boosting the supply of homes is a priority. The proportion of the population of people above retirement age has increased and there is a need to provide appropriate housing in response. Providing for an ageing population or people with disabilities may need to be addressed through the delivery of homes that can be adapted as peoples circumstances change, or through the delivery of extra care housing. Housing diversification is a key issue and the Plan will need to provide a wider range of alternative housing solutions including Modern Methods of Construction, custom and self-build and co-housing/community led housing. A wide variety of home types should be provided, across a range of tenures to meet the needs of the population. In response to the fact that house prices are nearly ten times local earnings, there is a need to provide affordable housing to address long social housing waiting lists. Such issues are also acutely felt in some of the more rural locations of the district, where house prices may be even higher, and will need to be addressed through affordable housing delivery to meet an identified need. Provision for the needs of gypsies and travellers should be made planned for which seeks to balance their locational, economic and social needs with the protection of amenity and the environment. There is a need for modern homes to be environmentally sustainable, and meets the consumer demands of the population, including provision of sufficient storage space and private outdoor space.



**Infrastructure and Travel**

<b>Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed</b>	<b>Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Infrastructure and Travel)</b>
National Infrastructure Plan 2016-2021 (Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 2015)	This Plan runs until 2021 and so a further update may be available during the Local Plan preparation process. The National Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out how the government will support the delivery of infrastructure projects and programmes to 2021. It includes dedicated support for private sector investment. Investment in infrastructure will drive wider economic benefits including; supporting growth and creating jobs, raising the productive capacity of the economy, driving efficiency, boosting international competitiveness.
National Infrastructure Strategy (HM Treasury, Nov 2020)	The Strategy sets out the government's plans to transform the UK's infrastructure networks. It is based around three central objectives: economic recovery; levelling up and strengthening the Union; and meeting the UK's net zero emissions target by 2050. This will be enabled by clear support for private investment and through a comprehensive set of reforms to the way infrastructure is delivered.
Gas Generation Strategy (DECC, 2012)	Gas is an integral part of the UK's generation mix and is a reliable, flexible source of electricity. The government expects that gas will continue to play a major role in our electricity mix over the coming decades, alongside low-carbon technologies as we decarbonise our electricity system. Measures outlined in the plan are designed to ensure that: adequate gas generation capacity is available, including ensuring we maintain an appropriate capacity margin to maintain security of electricity supply; flexible plant is available to meet the intermittency associated with renewables and that the necessary gas supply infrastructure is in place to support the role of gas in generation.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	Identify and coordinate the provision of infrastructure. Align growth and infrastructure. Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities such as those arising from major improvements infrastructure. The Framework does not contain specific policies for nationally significant infrastructure projects which are determined by the Planning Act 2008 and relevant national policy statements for major infrastructure. Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals so potential impacts of development on transport can be addressed, opportunities are realised, opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are pursued, environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Infrastructure and Travel)
	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.
Department for Transport Outcome Delivery Plan 2021-2022 (2021)	Improve connectivity across the UK and grow the economy by enhancing the transport network, on time and on budget. Build confidence in the transport network as the country recovers from Covid-19 and improve transport users' experience, ensuring that the network is safe, reliable and inclusive. Tackle climate change and improve air quality by decarbonising transport. Increase global impact by having an innovative, outward-facing approach.
Outcome and response to ending the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans (2021)	The main outcomes were: 1) The phase out for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans will be brought forward to 2030. 2) From 2035, all new cars and vans must be fully zero emission at the tailpipe.
Local Transport Plan: Devon and Torbay Strategy 2011-2026	Devon and Torbay's transport system will offer business, communities and individuals safe and sustainable travel choices. The transport system will help to deliver a low carbon future, a successful economy and a prosperous, healthy population living in an attractive environment. Objectives include: deliver and support new development and economic growth; making best use of transport network and protect existing transport assets; 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'.
<b><u>Infrastructure – sustainability conclusions</u></b> The reviewed plans and strategies highlight the importance of delivering infrastructure to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It is important to identify, coordinate, align infrastructure with growth. Investment in infrastructure will drive wider economic benefit. There is also a goal to meet the UK's net zero target by 2050 and to decarbonise transport.	

**How places look and are used**

<b>Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed</b>	<b>Key messages for Local Plan and SA (How places look and are used)</b>
National Planning Policy Framework (2021, MHCLG)	The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. These national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or codes.
National Design Guide (2019)	This guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It forms part of the government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools. Buildings are an important component of places, however good design involves careful attention to other important components of places including the context for places and buildings, hard and soft landscape, technical infrastructure, social infrastructure, layout, form and scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing.
National Model Design Code (2021)	The National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. The Code sets out clear design parameters to help local authorities and communities decide what good quality design looks like in their area. It forms part of the government's planning practice guidance and expands on the ten characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide, which reflects the government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design. The code focusses on the layout of new development (including street pattern), how landscaping should be approached (including the importance of streets being tree-lined), the factors to be considered when determining whether facades of buildings are sufficiently high quality, the environmental performance of place and buildings and taking into account local vernacular, heritage, architecture and materials.
Mid Devon Design	The document highlights the important role of local Design Guides in setting out an understanding the local context and analysis of

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (How places look and are used)
Guide SPD (2020)	local character and identity. The guide provides a variety of non-prescriptive guidance, reinforces the identification and facilitation of local distinctiveness and through design representation of the unique landscape and settlement form of Mid Devon and interaction between the two. The Design Guide provides easy steps to ensure the design of sites throughout the district are influenced and respond to the district's contrasting distinctiveness by responding to the character understanding the district and how the landscape influences the design
<p><b>How places look and are used – Summary</b></p> <p>The 2021 NPPF significantly edits the chapter on 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' with a much bigger focused placed on making 'beautiful' and sustainable places. The use of plans, design policy, guidance and codes is identified to achieve this. The important contribution trees make to the character and quality of urban environments is emphasised in this iteration of the NPPF with the requirement for planning policies and decision to ensure that new streets are tree-lined and opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments. The role of the National Design Guide and National Model design code is also set out whereby local design guides or codes must be consistent with the principles set out in these documents. The Mid Devon Design Guide (2020) is an SPD for the current Local Plan and provides a range of non-prescriptive guidance for development within Mid Devon.</p>	

**Town centres**

<b>Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed</b>	<b>Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Town centres)</b>
National Planning Policy Framework (2021, MHCLG)	Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should define a network and hierarchy of town centres, define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, retain and enhance existing markets and where appropriate introduce new ones, allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres or edge on centre where appropriate, recognise the importance role of residential development in town centres.
Mid Devon Corporate Plan 2020-2024 (MDDC)	Promote the regeneration of our town centres by working with landlords and property developers to improve and increase the supply of quality housing. Identify strategic and tactical interventions to create economic and community confidence and pride in the places we live, this includes a continued focus on Town Centre Regeneration.
Economy Strategy for Mid Devon (2019-2024)	Towns are vibrant, prosperous and have a positive atmosphere. The Council working with town centre and rural partners can help to: reshape the retain and leisure offer of our town centres and improve the physical environment so that people want to shop and spend their leisure time there, create a 'sense of place' so that people are proud to live and work in Mid Devon and promote the natural beauty of the rural landscape and the historic built environment.
Mid Devon Town Centre Masterplans (2021 ongoing)	Mid Devon District Council has planned to undertake masterplans for the town centres of Tiverton, Cullompton and Crediton. These masterplans have not yet been finalised or adopted however should be considered when updating a new Local Plan.
The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020	The 2020 use class order is relevant in this section of the plans, programmes and strategies reviewed as it significantly amends the use classes including replacing traditional town centre use classes A1, A2 and A3 into Class E which has a wider range of uses (Commercial, Business and Service). A permitted development right for change of use from Class E to residential use in 2021 has also been introduced.

**Town Centres – Summary**

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) continues to identify the important role that town centres play at the heart of local communities. The NPPF seeks planning policies and decisions that take a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Plans that are local to Mid Devon such as the Mid Devon Corporate Plan and Economic Strategy seek to regenerate town centres and ensure that towns are vibrant, prosperous and have a positive atmosphere. There were some significant changes in the Use Class Order in 2020 and permitted development rights in 2021 that allows greater flexibility for changes of use for traditional town centre uses.

**Communities and Neighbourhood**

<b>Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed</b>	<b>Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Communities and Neighbourhood)</b>
Localism Act 2011	The aim of the act was to devolve more decision making powers from central government to local communities. The act contained a number of changes to the planning system, including the abolition of the regional strategies and the new 'duty to cooperate'. The act contains more rights for communities, including the community right to bid for assets of community value, community right to build, and neighbourhood planning.
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG, 2021)	<p>Support strong, vibrant, healthy communities. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. Planning policies and decisions should help to provide social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. Public safety should be promoted. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Sufficient school places available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Ensure fast delivery of other public infrastructure such as further education colleges, hospitals, criminal justice accommodation.</p> <p>Non- strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies. Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision of their area. Communities can use Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders to grant planning permission. The NPPF seeks to achieve well designed places which function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, sympathetic to the local character and history, create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit, support local facilities, transport networks, green and other public spaces, places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.</p>
Mid Devon Corporate Plan (2020-2024) MDDC	Creating sustainable and prosperous communities. Affordable housing for local people. Bring higher skill and better paid jobs, promoting economic development and greater economic diversity. Strategic cycle routes. Digital connectivity. Post-16 education provision. Promote new, more integrated approaches to promoting good health and healthier living. Improve the health and well-being of everyone in Mid Devon. Reduce long distance commuting and support people seeking to led a more 'local' life; living, working, eating, shopping and spending locally.

Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Communities and Neighbourhood)
Equality Act (2010)	The Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance quality of opportunity for all.
Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan (2020-2033)	Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan was approved on 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2021. The Council formally adopted (made) the Cullompton Neighbourhood Plan on 30 <sup>th</sup> June. The Plan forms part of the statutory development plan for the Cullompton area and carries full weight for guiding planning applications submitted to the Council for determination and decisions on these. Their vision identified Cullompton as a market town with a distinct character and identity rooted in a rich history that will be conserved as the town grows. To meet the needs of an expanding population, a mix of housing reflecting the character of the town. Housing and amenities will integrate the needs of people and nature. The high street will be a pedestrian-friendly economic and social centre for the community.
Lifetime neighbourhoods (MHCLG, 2011)	The report contains guidance on the design of neighbourhoods to make them inclusive regardless of age or disability. The components that make up lifetime neighbourhoods include good access (enabling residents to get out and about in the area they live), services and amenities (neighbourhoods with a mix of residential, retail and employment uses and access to services, safe and inclusive built environments, with locally accessible greenspace and a range of affordable housing choices (based on inclusive design principles with adaptable space/layout to meet changing needs).
Government response to the second report of 2017-2019 of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry into housing for older people (MHCLG, 2018)	Our society is ageing with 18% of people over 65 and 2.4% over 85 in 2016 and the proportion of those over 85 is projected to double over the next 25years. While this is something to celebrate, it also presents challenges as people's housing needs and preferences change as they grow older and may want to make changes to the way that they live. This paper recommends the Government introduces a new national strategy for older people's housing.



Plans/programmes/ strategies reviewed	Key messages for Local Plan and SA (Communities and Neighbourhood)
Policy paper	
Culm Garden Village (2017)	The Culm Garden Village is one of 14 areas awarded Garden Village Status by the Government in January 2017. Located to the east of Cullompton, the Garden Village has the potential to delivery up to 5,000 sustainable new homes in a country park landscape, with jobs, community facilities and transport, all integrated with Cullompton itself. The Garden Village should be a holistically planned new settlement that enhances the natural environment and offers high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities.
<b>Communities and Neighbourhood – sustainability conclusions</b> National policy seeks strong, vibrant healthy communities and the Mid Devon corporate plan echoes this goal in seeking sustainable and prosperous communities. The reviewed plans, programmes and strategies set out the importance of liveability of where you live for all with access to a range of services, facilities and open spaces. Local communities are given powers to shared vision for their area through a variety of ways including Neighbourhood Plans.	

## Appendix 4: SA Framework – Site appraisal guidance

The following table sets out general guidance in applying the SA Framework pre-mitigation scoring for common considerations when assessing site options. This guidance will help support consistent scoring for comparable sites. A cumulative approach is suggested when considering each objective, for example, if a site scored a slight negative on more than one element within an objective an overall negative impact would be considered. The value and vulnerability of any existing designations likely to be affected will also influence the score. Where the impact is uncertain an indicative score should be provided along with a ‘?’. In some cases, the scoring may differ from this guidance due to site-specific context. Post-mitigation guidance has not been provided, as the mitigation considered is likely to be different for each site and will be assessed on its own merit.

Sustainability objective	Elements covered	Pre-Mitigation
A) Protection of the natural environment	Habitats and biodiversity; flora and fauna; protected species; landscape	<p>Neutral impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the site is within a town or existing development forms a backdrop of the site</li> <li>• If the site is appropriately screened, for example by being hidden in a fold of a hill</li> </ul> <p>Slight negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small site on the landscape (less 100 dwellings/10,000sqm)</li> <li>• Impact on a Tree Preservation Order</li> <li>• Impact on a protected landscape</li> <li>• Impact on local wildlife</li> <li>• Loss of hedgerows that provide screening</li> <li>• Existing development forms a backdrop but the site is highly visible</li> </ul> <p>Negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large site on the landscape (100 dwellings/10,000sqm +)</li> <li>• Site is highly visible and there is no existing development forming a backdrop</li> </ul>

Sustainability objective	Elements covered	Pre-Mitigation
B) Protection and promotion of a quality built environment	Heritage assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and gardens, locally listed assets, archaeology; design and quality of development	<p>Positive impact</p> <p>Large scale town centre improvements</p> <p>Slight positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small scale town centre improvements</li> <li>• Good relationship with the settlement</li> </ul> <p>Slight negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on Listed Buildings / Conservation Area</li> <li>• Impact on Archaeological potential</li> <li>• Poor relationship with the settlement</li> </ul>
C) Mitigating the effects of climate change	Reduced flood risk; promotion of low carbon or renewable energy; reductions in carbon emissions; walking and cycling provision; low carbon buildings	<p>Slight positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus service</li> <li>• Train service</li> </ul> <p>Neutral impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood zone 1</li> <li>• No train services (as limited areas have a train service and therefore it would not necessarily be expected of all areas in Mid Devon)</li> </ul> <p>Slight negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small scale development, potential impact on groundwater (less 100 dwellings/10,000sqm)</li> <li>• No delivery of Sustainable Urban Drainage</li> <li>• Small watercourse</li> <li>• Source Protection Zone</li> <li>• No bus service</li> </ul>

Sustainability objective	Elements covered	Pre-Mitigation
C) Mitigating the effects of climate change (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale sites due to potential carbon impact</li> </ul> <p>Negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale development, potential impact on groundwater (100 dwellings/10,000sqm +)</li> <li>Flood Zone 2/3</li> </ul>
D) Safeguarding and minimising resource use	Quality of soils, including contaminated land; water quality, including consideration of water framework directive objectives; minimisation of waste; impact on best and most versatile agricultural land	<p>Positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brownfield land</li> </ul> <p>Neutral impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small scale grade 4-5 agricultural land</li> </ul> <p>Slight negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale grade 4-5 agricultural land</li> <li>Small scale grade 3 agricultural land</li> <li>Minerals Consultation Zone</li> </ul> <p>Negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small scale grade 1-2 agricultural land</li> <li>Large scale grade 3 agricultural land</li> <li>Contaminated land</li> </ul> <p>Significant Negative Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale grade 1-2 agricultural land</li> </ul> <p><i>Small scale = &lt;20ha</i>  <i>Large scale = &gt;20ha</i></p>

Sustainability objective	Elements covered	Pre-Mitigation
E) Promoting economic growth and employment	Increasing jobs; reducing out-commuting; skills training; growth of rural businesses; tourism provision	<p>Significant positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale commercial development</li> </ul> <p>Positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small scale commercial development</li> </ul> <p>Slight positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale residential development</li> </ul> <p>Neutral impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small scale residential development</li> </ul> <p>Negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small scale loss of commercial development</li> </ul> <p>Significant negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale loss of commercial development</li> </ul> <p><i>Small scale = &lt;100 dwellings / 10,000sqm</i>  <i>Larger scale = &gt; or equal to 100 dwellings /10,000sqm</i></p>
F) Supporting retail	Safeguarding the vitality and viability of town centres; relationship between new development and town centres	<p>Significant positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial development within a town centre</li> </ul> <p>Positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large scale residential development within a town (&gt; or equal to 100 dwellings)</li> </ul> <p>Slight positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small scale residential development within a town (&lt; 100 dwellings)</li> </ul>

Sustainability objective	Elements covered	Pre-Mitigation
F) Supporting retail (continued)		<p>Neutral impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial development outside of a town centre</li> <li>Residential or commercial development within a village</li> </ul>
G) Meeting housing needs	Supply of housing; housing mix; house size; housing affordability; appropriate housing density to location; proximity to services and facilities	<p>Significant positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential large scale development</li> </ul> <p>Positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential medium scale development</li> </ul> <p>Slight positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential small scale development</li> </ul> <p>Neutral impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial development</li> </ul> <p><i>Small scale = 1-19 dwg</i>  <i>Medium scale = 20-99 dwg</i>  <i>Large scale = 100+dwg</i></p>
H) Ensuring community health and wellbeing	Community support for proposals; access to open space and recreation; limiting air, noise and light pollution to levels that do not damage human health or natural systems; integrated and sustainable forms of travel	<p>Positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a community service</li> </ul> <p>Slight positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town sites - walking distance to services</li> </ul> <p>Neutral impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village sites - designated village</li> </ul>

Sustainability objective	Elements covered	Pre-Mitigation
H) Ensuring community health and wellbeing (continued)	including walking, cycling and public transport; social deprivation; safe and secure environments	<p>Slight negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Town sites – beyond walking distance to services</li> <li>• Village sites - not a designated village</li> <li>• Village sites – designated village but large development e.g. 100+ housing</li> <li>• Requires footpath provision</li> <li>• Loss of undesigned recreational land</li> <li>• Impact but not loss of designated open space</li> </ul> <p>Negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of a community service</li> <li>• Loss of a designated Local Green Space</li> <li>• Large site which will require new community services and facilities</li> </ul>
I) Delivering the necessary infrastructure	Roads and transportation; schools; health services; community facilities; green infrastructure; telecommunications	<p>Positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant infrastructure e.g. relief road</li> </ul> <p>Slight positive impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green infrastructure is provided</li> </ul> <p>Neutral impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access is achievable</li> <li>• School has capacity for additional development</li> </ul> <p>Slight negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No infrastructure provided, small site (&lt;100 dwellings/10,000sqm)</li> <li>• School is at capacity, places can be supported through developer contributions</li> </ul>

Sustainability objective	Elements covered	Pre-Mitigation
I) Delivering the necessary infrastructure (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access is achievable but would require additional works</li> </ul> <p>Negative impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School is at capacity, development proposed would require a new school</li> </ul>